

ZIMBABWE

Injustice and Political Reconciliation

Edited by
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Published by



*The financial assistance of the
Swiss Agency for Development and Co-operation is gratefully acknowledged*

DEZA
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DIREKTION FÜR ENTWICKLUNG UND ZUSAMMENARBEIT
DIRECTION DU DÉVELOPPEMENT ET DE LA COOPÉRATION
DIREZIONE DELLO SVILUPPO E DELLA COOPERAZIONE
SWISS AGENCY FOR DEVELOPMENT AND COOPERATION
AGENCIA SUIZA PARA EL DESARROLLO Y LA COOPERACIÓN



Published by the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation
46 Rouwkoop Road, Rondebosch 7700, Cape Town, South Africa
www.ijr.org.za

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ISBN: 0-9584794-4-5

Produced by Compress www.compress.co.za
Cover design by Chaz Maviyane-Davies

Marketing and sales agent: Oneworldbooks
www.oneworldbooks.com

Distributed by BlueWeaver
Orders to be placed with Blue Weaver
PO Box 30370, Tokai 7966, Cape Town, South Africa
Fax: +27 21 701 7302
E-mail: orders@blueweaver.co.za

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Foreword

Zimbabwe was a beacon of hope at the time of independence in 1980. It promised a move beyond the kind of coercive rule entrenched by colonialism and Ian Smith's white minority regime. The promise was undergirded by political reform, the restructuring of education policy, and military integration. In time, however, reports surfaced of a reversion to violence as a means of resolving political conflict. These patterns of coercion and authoritarianism have since intensified to the point of crisis.

Debate has been heated. Appeals have been made by some Zimbabweans that South Africa draw on its influence to instigate political change and force opponents to the negotiating table. South Africans have, in turn, frequently been accused of responding to the Zimbabwe crisis in terms of their own dilemmas and solutions. Pressure from the West to address violations of human rights and civil liberties in Zimbabwe has been heavily compromised by reminders of the role of Western nations, in particular Britain, in pillaging the country through imperial conquest, colonial rule and post-colonial manipulation.

Amidst this debate, it is crucial that the insights, perspectives and proposals of Zimbabweans themselves be heard. The present volume does just this. It offers the views of an array of Zimbabwean commentators who chart patterns of historical injustice and ponder a range of options for what may, broadly understood, be termed a politics of political reconciliation for Zimbabwe.

Justice and reconciliation need to be inextricably linked. It is unrealistic to ask victims and survivors of gross violations of human rights to reconcile in the absence of justice. It is at the same time necessary to broaden the understanding of justice to include realistic options for the building of civic trust, the promotion of a human rights culture and the pursuit of economic transformation. Realistic programmes of reconciliation suggest ways of getting there. They are about an inclusive, restorative understanding of justice.

Understood as a political strategy, reconciliation is a beginning, involving a decision to take the first steps towards the higher goal of sustainable peace. It is a process that is rarely linear. It is invariably

uneven, requiring restraint, generosity of spirit, empathy and perseverance. It needs necessarily to be sustained and energised by concrete goals and a shared vision of what can and might yet be accomplished.

In societies emerging from histories of violent division, this kind of reconciliation is not a utopian ideal – it is a necessity. It is often the only realistic alternative to a return to coercion and a re-escalation of violence. It creates a space within which to pursue economic, social and restorative justice.

The Institute for Justice and Reconciliation has over the past eighteen months facilitated a debate among a group of Zimbabwean analysts, scholars and activists who have pondered a pragmatic yet principled way forward for their beleaguered country. We have decided to publish the contributions of this group, augmented by papers from other Zimbabweans – not as final comment but as work in progress. The intent is to stimulate further debate both before and after the proposed elections.

There are no easy solutions to the Zimbabwean conflict. The steps required to move beyond the present impasse require careful thought. There will no doubt be conceptual and political compromises made in the process of any settlement of the crisis. Above all there will need to be deep listening, careful thought and courageous action. It is hoped that the Zimbabwean voices included in this volume will help stimulate this process.

Charles Villa-Vicencio

Executive Director

Institute for Justice and Reconciliation

Acknowledgements

This book grows out of a process of consultation, extended debate and a strong commitment to dialogue on tough questions. As such, it has inevitably incurred a number of debts of gratitude.

Each of the contributing authors has brought a unique and rigorously developed set of perspectives to the table. A number of people have further become integral to the dialogue, in particular Jennifer Chirega, Wellington Mbofana and Bella Matambanadzo. The ongoing exchange has come to exemplify, in practice, the reconciliatory spirit that is the heart of the book: co-operation amidst difference, intellectual openness, perseverance and generosity of spirit.

Beyond the group itself, support came from a range of quarters. Compress have continually shown a steady commitment to delivery and excellence. Language editor, Andrew van der Spuy, followed by proofreader, Di Kilpert, have worked painstakingly with the text. Zimbabwean artist, Chaz Maviyane-Davies, generously provided the project artwork and cover design. Karin Alexander gave additional editorial support when it was most needed. Institute for Justice and Reconciliation Executive Director, Charles Villa-Vicencio, has provided unwavering critical support to the project from the outset. And throughout the process, the Institute has enjoyed the generous, substantial support of the Swiss Agency for Development and Co-operation.

INTRODUCTION

Unreconciled differences

The limits of reconciliation politics in Zimbabwe

Brian Raftopoulos

In the 24 years since independence Zimbabwe has moved from being perceived as a model of racial reconciliation in a post-guerrilla-war context to receiving widespread condemnation as a result of the ruling party's repudiation of this reconciliatory politics. This period has been characterised by different phases, which will be set out briefly in this Introduction. The various chapters in this book will discuss the central issue that the book aims to address, namely the problems and challenges that have confronted the Zimbabwean polity in attempting to build a politics of reconciliation in the context of gross inequalities inherited from settler colonial rule, and within the constraints of particular international pressures. Many of the chapters also attempt to plot a way forward from what has generally come to be known as the Zimbabwean crisis, a particular configuration of political and economic processes that has engulfed the country and concentrated the attention of the region since 2000. Against the background of the emergence of an authoritarian nationalist state confronted with increasing internal dissent, the ruling party has since 2000 carried out a series of political and economic interventions, marked by the widespread use of violence (Redress Trust 2004) but conducted through the tropes of anti-colonial redress and an anti-imperialist critique that have found widespread resonance in the region and on the African continent (Hammar et al. 2003; Phimister and Raftopoulos 2004).

The outcome of this revived nationalist assault by the Zimbabwean ruling party has been a repudiation of the national policy of reconciliation that was enunciated by the newly independent state in 1980. As we will discuss below, this was a policy born of a compromise

between the liberation movement, the former colonial power and the settler elite, and constructed within a particular set of international pressures. Confronted in 2000 with the first real challenge to its rule, Zanu PF, led by Robert Mugabe, radically restructured the terrain of Zimbabwean politics towards a politics of frontal assault that had as its major targets the former colonial power, Britain, the local white population, the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), the civic movement and in general the farm workers and urban populations, among whom the opposition had developed its major support. Against this broad array of 'enemies' and 'traitors', Mugabe and his party declared political war, in a confrontation whose contours have definitively changed the political landscape in Zimbabwe.

This book sets out to understand the limits of the politics of reconciliation that were attempted in Zimbabwe for most of the last 24 years, the years of Zimbabwe's independence. It also tracks the political responses that can emerge in a situation where a combination of unresolved long-term historical grievances and undemocratic post-colonial state practices produces a particular strain of authoritarian politics through the modality of a heightened racialised discourse. The legacy of this form of politics would be a new set of problems, not only those issues of economic redress that the Zimbabwean ruling party has purported to address, but also the continued deployment of ruling party violence to subdue the voices of dissent and the broadly constructed 'enemies of the people'. As a result of the particular forms of land occupation, the economic interventions based on a contested process of state patronage, the damage to the judiciary, the politicisation of the military and a virulent media campaign aimed at the demonisation of several 'others', enormous challenges await the development of new democratic structures and spaces in Zimbabwe. However, the crisis also presents new opportunities, for while living through the forms of extreme politics that have marked the Zimbabwean landscape over the last few years many Zimbabweans have also developed a new legacy of civic co-operation defined by a respect for the politics of constitutionalism and democratic accountability.

Independence, the policy of reconciliation and the state

The Lancaster House agreement, which ended the liberation war in Zimbabwe in 1979, and the constitution that emerged from it, together

embodied a series of compromises over minority rights, in particular on the future of land ownership in the country, and guaranteed white representation in parliament. In effect the constitution gave settler capital a decade-long period of consolidation, during which issues around the radical restructuring of the legacy of economic inequality were effectively put on hold. The Lancaster House settlement was determined by a series of national, regional and economic forces that established the contours of the compromise that necessitated the policy of reconciliation announced by President Mugabe in 1980. These forces have been well described by Ibbo Mandaza:

Mugabe would have to begin the delicate task of nation-building in an atmosphere of intense suspicion and even hostility on the part of those he had defeated at home; against the covert threats of military, political and economic destabilisation from South Africa; and with the pervasive threat of economic and political blackmail by the imperialist powers that had been the undertakers of the Lancaster House Agreement but were now seeking to keep the new state in line. (Mandaza 1986:42)

Mugabe's reconciliation speech itself clearly embodied this 'delicate task of nation-building' as it set out to allay the fears of both the white minority and the international community:

Henceforth you and I must strive to adapt ourselves, intellectually and spiritually to the reality of our political change and relate to each other as brothers bound one to the other by a bond of comradeship. If yesterday I fought you as an enemy, today you have become a friend and ally with the same national interests, loyalty, rights and duties as myself. If yesterday you hated me, today you cannot avoid the love that binds you to me and me to you. Is it not folly, therefore, that in these circumstances anybody should seek to revive the wounds and grievances of the past? The wrongs of the past must now stand forgiven and forgotten. (Mugabe 1980)

Continuing, Mugabe proclaimed:

It could never be a correct justification that because the Whites oppressed us yesterday when they had power, the Blacks must oppress them today because they have power. An evil remains an evil whether practised by white against black or by black against

white. Our majority rule would easily turn into inhuman rule if we oppressed, persecuted or harassed those who do not look or think like the majority of us. (Mugabe 1980)

The language of reconciliation thus set the tone for the period of state consolidation that was the major priority of the ruling party, Zanu PF, after 1980. For, unlike the transition in South Africa in 1994 in which the neo-liberal economic policies of the ANC placed the issues of black economics on the agenda in the immediate post-liberation period (Southall 1990), the reconciliation policy of Zimbabwe's ruling party, constructed within a purported discourse of socialism, placed less emphasis on legitimised private accumulation than on the extended reach and interventionism of the state. The first two chapters in this book, those by Sachikonye and Davies, describe both the slow progress made in the spheres of the land and the economy in the 1980s, and the state's major shift in the post-2000 period to carrying out a largely elite-centred redistribution process in the face of a growing loss of legitimacy of the ruling party, and the possibility of electoral defeat. Both chapters point to the disastrous economic costs of the political crisis in Zimbabwe, and indicate the major obstacles that confront a reconstruction programme in the country. Moreover, these chapters also point to the ways in which the politics of patronage proscribe the development of a dominant economic class with a national project of transformation (Berman 2004:48).

As the new ruling party set out to place its stamp on the Zimbabwean polity, it became clear early on in the post-independence period that its reconciliation policy would be based on the subordination and control both of other political parties and of civil society. The mid-1980s crisis in Matabeleland and the violent state response to it displayed a number of traits that would mark the authoritarian statism of the post-2000 period, namely the 'excesses of a strong state, itself in many ways a direct Rhodesian inheritance, and a particular interpretation of nationalism' (Alexander et al. 2000:6; see also CCJP/LRF 1997). The outcome of this conflict was the Unity Agreement in 1987, which, while it ended the atrocities in Matabeleland, effectively emasculated the major opposition party PF Zapu and confirmed the regional subordination of Matabeleland. Thus, while the ruling party used the language of reconciliation to structure its relations with the white elite and international capital, it deployed the discourse of unity to control

and subordinate the major opposition party and the incipient civic forces. (For an elaboration of this, see the chapter by Barnes in this volume.) Moreover, as with other African states, beneath the language of unity, political tribalism continued to operate, 'held together by tenuous coalitions of ethnic leaders based on promised divisions of the resources of the state' (Berman et al. 2004:8). The chapter by Eppel describes the horrors of the Gukurahundi in Matabeleland and the Midlands in the mid 1980s, and the unresolved legacy of the atrocities of this period. Eppel also describes the continuous use of violence by the state against its citizenry throughout the post-colonial period, and the culture of impunity that has accompanied it. Thus the state language of reconciliation and unity has been persistently shadowed by state violence and coercion.

One of the central problems of the state has been the issue of war veterans, and more particularly their role and terms of compensation in the independence dispensation. While there is a certain continuity in the ways that the ruling party has used the veterans to consolidate state power (Kriger 2003), the lack of a comprehensive approach to the integration of war veterans has created both a festering problem for the state and a ready source for mobilisation of a state in crisis. As the ruling party faced a growing challenge from opposition forces from the late 1990s, the war veterans and the ideology of 'war veteranism' became an essential part of the armoury of the ruling party as it dropped its policy of reconciliation in favour of a selective authoritarian nationalism (Hammar et al. 2003). The chapter by Nyathi describes some of the major problems that have accompanied this development.

The chapters by Rupiya, Goredema and Chuma discuss the ways in which the armed forces, the law and the media have been used to consolidate the rule of Zanu PF. Rupiya describes the difficult task of reconciling the different armies that took part in the conflict during the liberation struggle and the many successes that were achieved. He also looks at the continental peacekeeping role of the Zimbabwean armed forces and the high esteem in which the professionalism of these forces is held at continental level. This has been a crucial aspect of the growth of Mugabe's stature in Africa and the solidarity he has received in the face of broader international condemnation. However, Rupiya also points to the increasing politicisation of the armed forces

since the late 1990s, their increasing commitment to the dominant party and the difficulties this is likely to pose for a future political dispensation. Under the present conditions it is unlikely that the armed forces would tolerate any government other than Zanu PF. Similarly Goredema's chapter analyses the ways in which the relative independence of the judiciary has been severely undermined since the onset of the political crisis. What was once an arena in which the unjust interventions of the executive could be challenged with a fair amount of success has been largely restructured to facilitate the particularist demands of the ruling party. Chuma's chapter charts the course of Zanu PF's increasing monopoly of the control of the media, which has radically narrowed a key public arena. In all three cases a development within a key state institution has severely reduced the spaces for a national reconciliation process.

Official nationalism and contested identities

A particularly damaging feature of the ruling party's response to the crisis in Zimbabwe has been the state's overarching articulation of an intolerant, selective and racialised nationalist discourse. Through the deployment of what Ranger (2004) has called 'patriotic history' the ruling party has conducted a saturated ideological attack on a range of internal 'enemies' as part of a sustained project of delegitimising opposition politics (Raftopoulos 2003). The outcome has been a narrowing of a usable national past and the further loss of democratic space in which to conduct a critical national dialogue about both the colonial past and the post-colonial present. Instead, Zanu PF has set out to expunge any complex viewing of the past, preferring a monologue around the centrality of the ruling party itself, and the inherent 'outsider' status of any historical interventions which have not fed into this one-dimensional discourse.

The chapters by Barnes, Raftopoulos, Muponde, Muzondidya and Alexander deal in various ways with the discourses of history and nationalism that have been constructed by the ruling party in the post-independence era. The chapter by Barnes demonstrates that in the teaching of history in schools since 1980, the emphasis has been more on racial unity among the formerly oppressed groups than on racial reconciliation between the major racial groupings. As Barnes summarises her argument:

... in Zimbabwean nationalism and nationalist educational historiography, the concept of a bifurcated racial unity, although at times bitterly contested, has been more successful than that of racial reconciliation ... [T]he success of unity was no accident, ... it was achieved at the direct expense of reconciliation.

Raftopoulos's chapter discusses the outcome of this dialectic, in the form of the authoritarian nationalism that has dominated the official nationalism of the state throughout the present crisis. The proscriptions on a more critical reading of the past and the essentialised constructions of race have created new blockages to the deepening of a politics of national reconciliation. It is true that there are many sources in the past for the construction of fixed and seemingly naturalised notions of racial identity, and that this remains a key reservoir for nationalist mobilisation in former settler states. Muponde's chapter discusses the ways in which Mugabe's rhetoric on the land and 'strangers' resonates in the Zimbabwean literary tradition and in the 'social and symbolic conditions that a singular experiencing of "history" has created'. Certainly there are examples in the literature that express common experiences of racial oppression. Shimmer Chinodya in his short story 'Among the Dead' describes his view of whites in the following terms:

I shuffled in my chair. I was in no mood for nostalgia. I had never thought that whites could be lonely. In fact I had never thought about them at all, except as our oppressors. I wasn't ready to move away from the stereotypes. (Chinodya 1998:30)

However, while Muponde has emphasised the broader symbolic resonance of the Mugabe message in the literary imagination, others have pointed to a more differentiated literary response in which the land is the 'subject of a great debate, and ... no simple answers are generated by struggle alone' (Chan and Primorac 2004:65). In a separate paper Muponde makes the important point that Mugabe's nationalism also contains a particular rendition of manhood; as Mugabe often expresses it, it is a nationalism for '*amadoda sibili*', real men. As Muponde observes:

In advancing a discourse that suggests the recuperation of manhood, solely underwritten by ZANU PF, Mugabe holds the promise of a Zimbabwean renaissance founded on patriarchal principles. He holds the promise of a new politics of maleness which in the Zimbabwean imagination was on the wane. (Muponde 2004:7)

This ‘recuperation of manhood’ that has accompanied Mugabe’s authoritarian nationalism has also included a visceral anti-gay campaign by the President himself. This attack on homosexuality and reassertion of nationalist manhood is part of a longer historical response of the nationalist movement to the colonial process in which the ‘discursive unmaning of African men by whites was progressively abetted by the destruction of the material base of traditional African masculinity’ (Epprecht 1998:641). Such conceptions of manhood have also been deployed to maintain so-called ‘traditional’ notions of womanhood. Describing the struggles of the women’s movement in Zimbabwe, McFadden has observed that:

Faced with the demands and threats of African men that they conform to an outdated notion of womanhood upon which the imaginary authentic African identity is premised and that they do not disrupt the cultural and social base of male rule in the public and private spheres middle class women are defiantly re-defining themselves as citizens who make choices increasingly as individuals, based on their access to and control over critical social and material resources within their respective societies. (McFadden 2002:5)¹

While the revived nationalism of the ruling party has been constructing a series of exclusions, the racial minorities in the country have faced severe difficulties in attempting to negotiate a place in the post-independence dispensation. These difficulties stem both from the legacies of identity construction under colonial rule and also from the limits and increasingly intolerant protocols of nation-building in the post-colonial period. In her chapter Alexander attempts to understand the constituent elements of white identity in Zimbabwe, both by tracing some of the major contours of its historical lineage, and by unravelling its post-colonial features. Alexander traces what she views as

... the formation of a white community unified by race, over and above ethnicity or class, whose national identity was founded on racialism and an idea of nation that excluded the majority of its inhabitants.

However, it is important to note that notwithstanding the seeming unity of race in definitive periods of Zimbabwe’s history, the white

community was also a divided entity. As Mlambo has written in one of a series of excellent articles on white immigration in Rhodesia:

... despite the outward semblance of unity, the white Rhodesian community was deeply divided by, among other factors, racism and cultural chauvinism which emanated mostly from the settlers of British stock, evoking starkly strong reactions from other white groups in the country such as Afrikaners. (Mlambo 2000:140)

Mlambo also notes that the demography of white Rhodesians revealed them to be a 'society of immigrants and transients, most of whom did not stay long enough to establish roots in the country' (1998:124). This particular feature has been used by the Zimbabwean ruling party to great effect in characterising whites as effectively British and therefore without genuine claims to Zimbabwean nationhood.

Alexander describes the particularity of 'raced' white identity and its exclusionary notion of culture, which has served to justify positions of political and economic dominance in the colonial and post-colonial periods respectively. In the colonial period this notion of culture had as one of its central features a certain 'etiquette of whiteness', to use Allison Schute's phrase. Schute provides a very useful account of the place of such racial etiquette in settler identity. She writes that becoming Rhodesian

... was not simply a matter of assuming a racially superior mode vis-à-vis the subordinate African peoples. Crude racism could not be defended and therefore newcomers had to be taught the nuanced world of racial etiquette.' (Schute 2004:6)

An important feature of such racial etiquette was that 'inter-racial familiarity undermined whites' custom of social distance with Blacks, which in turn threatened white solidarity' (2004:6). Additionally, for the majority of the white population there has been little understanding of the history of black Zimbabweans, except as told through white narratives. This problem has been exacerbated in the last few years by a deluge of official 'nationalist history' that has grossly narrowed the focus of national history. One of the long-term results of this historical process has been what Alexander refers to as the 'schizophrenia of whiteness', which is a 'result of white lives being lived separate from and yet dependent

on a majority that most do not know or understand beyond the level of appearances’.

Given such historical constraints, the policy of reconciliation remained merely a formal political hope, especially given the continuing legacy of structural inequality in the sphere of the economy. One consequence of this limited vision has been the eagerness of the ruling party to celebrate the exceptional in white achievements while at the same time carrying out a more general denigration of this particular minority. The case of white Zimbabwean swimmer, Kirsty Coventry, a triple medallist at the Athens Olympics in 2004, is illustrative of this process. As a reward for her achievement the Zimbabwean state presented her with a diplomatic passport and US\$50 000. Mugabe was at the forefront in praising her, stressing her inclusion in the national project as ‘our Gold Girl’, and reassuring her with the words ‘you are our future ... you are one with us, we are together’. In this discourse the stabilised white icon can easily be incorporated into the essentialised nationalism of contemporary Zimbabwe. It is not disruptive of a more general process of exclusion of the white minority and, because of its exceptionality and singularity, it does not transgress the bounded notions of black–white relations currently propagated by the state. The result of this process was the creation of a particular icon, draped in the national flag, cocooned from the lived realities of nationalist coercion and contained by the puerile homilies of selective reconciliation – a genuine national heroine manipulated by a crude party trick.

Continuing the discussion of minorities, Muzondidya’s chapter deals with what he calls the ‘invisible minorities’ in Zimbabwe, namely Coloureds and descendents of immigrants from Malawi, Zambia and Mozambique. These groups have suffered differing levels of discrimination by both the colonial and post-colonial states. Drawing on the work of Mamdani, Muzondidya refers to Coloureds as ‘subject races’ who were regarded as inferior to whites, but because of their long history of contact and racial affinity with whites were ranked at the intermediate level in the racial hierarchy. The descendents of immigrants from neighbouring countries were regarded as non-indigenous and therefore not entitled to land. In both these cases the post-colonial state has displayed either continued ambivalence or outright hostility in terms of including the members of these groups

as citizens and giving them access to resources in both the land reform process and the indigenisation process more generally. As Muzondidya observes, the category of African/Zimbabwean in independent Zimbabwe has been restricted to include

... only ancestral Zimbabweans (groups which were on Zimbabwean soil before the imposition of colonial rule) ... leaving the subject minorities of the country in an anomalous position where they are, depending on the context, regarded as either not indigenous at all or 'not the right kind of indigenous'.

Muzondidya thus concludes that in Zimbabwe race 'has remained the main basis for inclusion and exclusion'.

Attempting to break the deadlock

Since the late 1990s there have been several attempts, both internally and externally, to reach a breakthrough in the Zimbabwean crisis. Between 1998 and 2000, a major constitutional debate took place in the country which for the first time since 1980 involved a popular national process of discussion. As it turned out, this debate was as much about the performance of the ruling party as it was about the substantive issues in the proposed constitution. Thus a process that began with the potential to move towards a new constitutional dispensation ended in a politics of bitter division, with the ruling party using its defeat in the 2000 constitutional referendum to impose a new authoritarian politics on the Zimbabwean citizenry. Kagoro's chapter traces some of the major features of this process, outlining both the progress and the pitfalls of the debate. Kagoro ends on a note of hope that a renewed constitutional process could still present the country 'with an opportunity to build national consensus and define new institutions'.

Muchena's chapter looks at the role of the church in attempting to serve as a modality for reconciliation between the major contending parties in Zimbabwe. The chapter provides an overview of the various attempts at national and regional level to involve the church in a mediating role, and the continued obstacles that have confronted this process. At every stage the ruling party has shown itself to be obstructive of the churches' efforts, often vilifying those church representatives that it has considered 'opposition politicians'. The

result has been a continually stalled process of attempted mediation. Muchena concludes pessimistically that while the church could play a critical role 'in the transition of Zimbabwe to a greater and respected democracy', this task at present looks like a 'mission impossible'.

South Africa and the Zimbabwe crisis

As the Zimbabwean crisis has deepened, the role of South African diplomacy in attempting to find a way forward out of the impasse has come under increasing scrutiny. In its attempt to avoid isolation from the liberation legacy in Southern Africa while at the same time pursuing its goal of continental leadership of Nepad, the South African government has constructed a policy of 'quiet diplomacy' on the Zimbabwe question. Unable to escape the resonance of Mugabe's anti-colonial and anti-imperialist onslaught, the Mbeki government has at the same time been unable to construct its own vision of the relationship between sovereignty and democracy to counter Mugabe's strong political position in the region. The result has been a South African policy position that has continually trailed Mugabe's interventions and resulted, by virtually all accounts, in a certain complicity on the part of the Mbeki government. Phimister's chapter provides a discussion of South Africa's diplomatic position on the Zimbabwe question and concludes with an indictment of the region's position on the Mugabe regime:

While Southern Africa's governing elites are hypersensitive to Western hypocrisy, they are oblivious to tyranny in their midst. Those who continue to hope that the South African government will bring Harare to heel are therefore likely to be disappointed.

Conclusion

In former settler societies in which race has been a central signifier of political and social identity, compounded by a global environment in which this category has been hardened, race 'and the hard-won, oppositional identities it supports are not likely to be lightly or prematurely given up' (Gilroy 2000:12). In Zimbabwe the crises over the legacies of colonial rule and post-colonial legitimacy have certainly hardened state politics around the race question. The result has been an extraordinarily prohibitive conception of national belonging and a

severe closing down of spaces for discussion of citizenship, economic transformation and democratisation. While the Zimbabwean ruling party has underlined the centrality of race in Zimbabwe's history, its own vision has become trapped in the confines of this category. The challenge, as Erasmus rightly points out, 'is to find ways of recognising race and its continued effects on people's everyday lives, in an attempt to work against racial equality, while at the same time working against practices that perpetuate race thinking' (Erasmus 2004:30).

Endnotes

- 1 In response to the appointment of a woman, Joyce Mujuru, as Vice-President of Zanu PF in December 2004, Zimbabwean feminist Everjoice Win has written that: 'Women have entered the political arena in Southern Africa in increasing numbers. We have learnt that unless we are present and participate equally at decision-making tables, our needs will not be adequately met' (*Mail and Guardian* 24.12.04–06.01.05).

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CHAPTER 1

The promised land

From expropriation to reconciliation and *jambanja*

Lloyd M. Sachikonye

I cannot see any conflict arising in the sphere of freedom and non-racial democracy if the victors and losers join hands ... (Mugabe 1980)

Reconciliation in Zimbabwe was truly a miracle. In spite of the sufferings of the war and gross injustices of colonialism, there were no Nuremburg trials, little evidence of racial hatred, and no radical attempts to dispossess the whites after independence ... (Auret 1992)

If land, cattle and labour had been great issues of the 1890s, only the first of these remained to be settled in the 1990s. But the whites seemed to wait on events. What would have happened had they made some form of affirmative approach to black land-hungry peasants we will never know. What would have happened had the government entered into a serious dialogue backed by all their authority, with the landowners in the 1980s, we will never know... (Harold-Barry 2004)

Introduction

Most literature on post-independence politics and society in Zimbabwe makes reference to a 'policy of reconciliation' adopted by the new government installed in 1980. With the benefit of hindsight, it is now clear that this policy did not amount to more than well-calculated rhetoric on the part of the new administration to allay fears that the white population might have had at the time. Almost 25 years

later, the euphoria that surrounded the 'reconciliation' rhetoric now appears quite misplaced and naive.

While there may not have been Nuremburg trials or witch-hunts of the former oppressors in the 1980s, in due course there would be both a fanning of racial hatred and appropriation of white property, decidedly from 2000 onwards. This is not to decry the optimism that attended Zimbabwe's achievement of independence and the goodwill extended to the Mugabe government in the 1980s in a region that was then still experiencing apartheid and repression (in Namibia and South Africa). But it should be observed that the supposed 'reconciliation policy' was never seriously translated into a systematic programme of reconciliation between past foes, between racial groups and between interest groups. Nor was the policy itself subjected to a substantive analytical critique (Cliffe and Stoneman 1989; Auret 1992).

This chapter examines the *problématique* of reconciliation in relation to the 'land question' as it has evolved and manifested itself in Zimbabwe. It is a question that was long a festering sore in inter-racial relations both prior to, and after, independence. The process of radical land redistribution (or *jambanja*) between 2000 and 2003 would dramatically illustrate the superficiality of post-independence 'reconciliation'. However, this chapter will begin by situating the 'land question' in its historical context, then it will reflect on the factors that delayed or blocked the resolution of the question during the first 19 years of independence, before assessing how the remaining façade of reconciliation crumbled in 2000. Finally, it will address the issues of the consequences of *jambanja* and the prospects for reconstruction of the land and agriculture.

The roots of the land question

The history of the land question unfolded over a period of 100 years, depositing a residue of memories of dispossession, trauma and hardships amongst the deprived blacks, and of conquest and superior production techniques amongst white land-owners (Palmer 1977, 1990; Moyo 1995). State-sanctioned evictions of blacks from better-endowed land began in the 1890s but continued well into the 1950s and 1960s. Memories of dispossession were stoked by the liberation struggle, which was mainly waged in rural areas, including the areas

where there was commercial farming land.

What were the forms and long-term significance of this colonial expropriation of land? We have argued elsewhere that the land question essentially centred on the patterns that land distribution assumed through expropriation, also termed primary or 'primitive' accumulation (Sachikonye 1989). Given that the development of the appropriated land required considerable amounts of labour, it was decided to create 'tribal reserves' both to reduce peasant competition and to provide the basis for migrant labour. In short, the subordination of peasant commodity production and the tapping of migrant labour supplies became necessary in order to establish capitalist agriculture more securely.

The task of recommending the allocation of land (to settler farms, 'native reserves' and later African Purchase Areas) was carried out by several Land Commissions. The first was appointed in 1894, in Matabeleland, and it recommended the eviction of the Ndebele from the highveld around Bulawayo to the Gwaai and Shangani reserves. These were described as 'badly watered, sandy and unfit for settlement' (Moyana 1984). Even the British Resident Commissioner, Richard Martin, condemned the inhospitable conditions in the reserves, while the Ndebele themselves initially refused to settle in them. Indeed, the 1896 uprising by the Ndebele and Shona was largely precipitated by the expropriation of their lands. The post-1897 situation lent greater impetus, but no solution, to the land question. Agrarian interests pressed harder for the eviction of peasants from alienated land, and the excision of more land from the better-endowed reserves. In 1914, another commission was appointed, which proved to be heavily biased in favour of the white settlers' interests. It recommended that about 5.6 million acres be added to, and 6.6 million acres be deducted from, the existing 20 million acres of reserves (Palmer 1977). Much of the 5.6 million acres was located in the inhospitable areas of Omay, Gwaai, Chimanda and Chiswiti. Furthermore, in the 14 new reserves, 2 out of 3 million acres consisted of extremely poor land.

Some of the land expropriated from the reserves was transformed into extensive ranches. A case in point was Matibi in south-eastern Rhodesia where the British South Africa Company (BSAC) subsequently created the 2.5-million acre Nuanetsi ranch. Elsewhere in the colony, further excisions from reserves yielded 2.5 million acres,

which included some good land within 20 miles of the railway line. In sum, the 1914 Commission thus succeeded in reducing the size of most reserves with access to the main markets and therefore intensified the squeeze on the peasantry. However, the encroachment on the reserves by the agrarian bourgeoisie persisted long after the implementation of the Commission's recommendations. This was the background against which the Land Commission of 1925 was appointed. The agrarian bourgeoisie demanded legislation that would specify that no Africans would be allowed to purchase land in European areas. The 1925 Commission itself recommended segregated land ownership. It proposed that 6.8 million acres of un-alienated land be sold to blacks as African Purchase Areas (APAs). This meant that the total amount of land allocated to Africans now amounted to about 29 million acres, compared to 48.6 million acres of white land. The bulk of the Commission's report was embodied in the Land Apportionment Act of 1930, which, for the next nearly 50 years, formed the basis of land ownership in the colony.

The net effect of the successive land legislation was considerable disruption of peasant production. Population movements ensued as a consequence of mass evictions, and continued until the 1960s. In both quantitative and qualitative terms, the agrarian bourgeoisie gained immensely from land allocation. White settler land was greater in acreage and higher in quality, being mainly located in agro-ecological regions 1 to 3. It was well served with transport infrastructure, and, together with credit and subsidies of various types, contributed directly to the growth of capitalist agriculture.

Conversely, the quality and size of land allocated to peasant producers proved to be a formidable constraint on their agricultural development. The impact of land legislation on the peasants in such areas as Chipinge, Chiota, Svosve and Belingwe was adverse, according to well-documented historical case studies (Zachrisson 1978; Moyana 1984; Phimister 1984; Van Vulpen 1983). For instance, in the Chiota and Svosve reserves in the Marondera area, increased population pressure created ecological problems. Because environmental degradation was attributed to soil erosion and cattle over-stocking, the official response was compulsory de-stocking in both reserves. This was an unpopular measure which 'disturbed relations between Africans and agricultural personnel' (Van Vulpen 1983). An additional set of

problems conspired to undermine peasant commodity production: these were lack of access credit, fertiliser and marketing facilities, and low crop prices. Resistance to land expropriation occurred in various pockets of the country. The most famous instance of such resistance was that spearheaded by the Tangwena in the Nyanga area in eastern Zimbabwe in the 1960s (Moyana 1984).

By the time independence was attained in 1980, the population of blacks living on land had increased severalfold, thus further intensifying pressure on land. Land hunger had become more acute. It affected the livelihoods of most peasants but also those of a significant proportion of black workers who were still dependent on rural areas for supplementary income and material support in retirement or during periods of unemployment. In sum, land expropriation was a significant aspect of the process of colonial conquest and of modernisation through large-scale commercial agriculture and proletarianisation. It was a major social engineering programme undertaken by the colonial state. The consequences of that programme of modernisation and social engineering would reverberate well beyond independence in 1980 into a new century.

Uneasy reconciliation and land from 1980 to 1999

Although the theme of 'reconciliation' featured in the first major national broadcast by the leader of the new government, Robert Mugabe, in April 1980, it was not translated into a coherent policy or project afterwards. Tentative rapprochement with Ian Smith of the former ruling party, the Rhodesian Front, soon came to a dead end. The government of national unity, which included Joshua Nkomo and other ministers belonging to PF Zapu, crumbled in 1982. A fratricidal conflict in Matabeleland lasted till 1987. Although there was co-option of individual white and PF Zapu figures into the cabinet, this did not represent a substantive effort at constructing national reconciliation. Equally significantly, there was no official attempt to document the crimes and killings, torture and displacements that had occurred during the 15-year-long liberation struggle. There was thus no determined attempt to come to terms with the legacy of a struggle in which more than 30 000 people, mainly blacks, had died. An opportunity for documenting the perpetrators and victims of violence and deprivation was missed. So was that of establishing propitious conditions for claims

for justice and compensation, and thus the necessary preconditions for healing and reconciliation. In short, a historic opportunity to exorcise the demons of the national past was missed.

Clearly, there were limits, indeed obstacles, to political reconciliation. This could be partly explained by the autocratic style of rule that the Mugabe government soon adopted, and its veiled ambitions to construct a 'one-party state'. There were also limits to what may loosely be termed 'economic reconciliation'. Early government economic and social policies were not systematically shaped to provide for empowerment of the previously disadvantaged blacks. The new political class was not keen to provide conditions for the growth of a substantive black bourgeoisie or to encourage the development of an informal sector. Attempts at social redistribution through expansion of education and health services were not sustainable after a few years.

How was the 'land question' affected by the absence or deficit of reconciliation? The Lancaster House independence constitution was a major brake on the speed and scope of land reform during the first ten years of independence. It restricted the purchase of land for redistribution by means of the stringent 'willing seller, willing buyer' provisions. During the constitutional negotiations themselves, the land issue had easily proved to be the most contentious point. According to the late Joshua Nkomo:

... we knew that vast acreage were lying idle and therefore without market price in areas formerly reserved for white ownership. To buy areas adequate for resettling the many land-hungry African farmers, who had been confined to the former tribal trust lands, would be beyond the financial ability of the new state. (Nkomo 1984)

There were unconfirmed reports that it was only after the Americans 'promised' a package of US\$1.5 billion that the logjam in the negotiations was broken.

The 'land question' was largely left hanging after the Lancaster House negotiations. The 'promised' financial package was not forthcoming. The British government was unprepared, unlike in Kenya, to 'buy out' white farmers who wished to dispose of their land. The new constitution constrained the capacity of those who had been dispossessed of their land to claim it. As one analyst argued:

... the majority of blacks who were dispossessed of their land by the colonial state and thereafter denied the right to own land were further restricted in what they could do with state power to remedy the social injustice... (Tshuma 1997)

However, regardless of the history of expropriation, henceforth all Zimbabweans were to enjoy abstract equality in the eyes of the law and would have their fundamental interests, such as private property rights, protected from unjustified government interference by the rule of law. At the same time, the ideology of property as a human right had a hollow ring in the context of a Zimbabwe where memories of the dispossession of indigenous people of their land, and the creation of private property rights for the settlers, were still fresh (Tshuma 1997). We will return below to the contending strands in the debate on how the land question should have been resolved.

Here we shall provide an overview of how land reform was executed from 1980 to 1999. During this period, land reform focused on settling people on land acquired on a 'willing seller, willing buyer' basis from white commercial farmers. But the cost of the land was high. As we observed above, the independence constitution thus tied the government's hands by entrenching property rights so that only underutilised land could be compulsorily purchased. To the degree that the purchase involved immediate payment of full value in foreign exchange, the cost requirement significantly restricted the government's room for manoeuvre on the land question during this period.

This was the structural context in which the government's land reform programme operated, with its centrepiece being the resettlement of the poor and landless. It was a programme whose overall objective was to resettle 162 000 households on 9 million ha of land. This would have represented a transfer of about 23 per cent of households from congested communal lands onto new land. This was not to be. Owing to the above-mentioned resource constraints and limited political will, only about 48 000 households had been resettled by 1989.

In the 1990s, on the whole, there was curiously less urgency attached to grappling with the land question. This was perplexing in view of the earlier impetus together with the expiry of the restrictive clauses of the Lancaster House constitution in 1990. Fewer than 25 000 new settler

households received land between 1990 and 1997. However, by 1997, the total number of resettled households now amounted to 71 000, on 3.6 million ha of land. This was a far cry from the original target of 162 000 households. An interesting parallel development was that by the mid-1990s, about 500 black farmers had graduated into fully-fledged commercial farmers. About 80 per cent of them had bought farms with their own resources, while the remainder rented leasehold farms from the state. The official explanation for the slow-down in land reform in the 1990s was that the 'willing seller, willing buyer' approach had become much more expensive.

However, compared to the later phase of land reform, this period of redistribution was distinguished by its peaceful and orderly character. First, the process of selecting settlers for resettlement was, by and large, transparent. Second, resettlement itself was accompanied by provision of essential inputs such as seed and fertiliser, and infrastructure such as roads, clinics and schools. On the whole, land reform during this period made 'impressive strides towards its principal objectives' (ODA 1996). The majority of the beneficiaries gained considerably through provision of increased opportunities for income generation, and the availability of services such as health and education.

Several factors combined to exacerbate the 'land crisis' as the 1990s drew to a close. First, the demographic conditions, influenced by population increase, made land hunger more acute than at any other time since independence. Rumbings of discontent over delayed land resettlement grew louder and louder in most rural areas. Second, the economic structural adjustment programme (ESAP), which was implemented between 1990 and 1995, failed to revive economic growth, with the net result of job lay-offs in some industries. Unemployment grew in conditions of deepening poverty both in urban and rural areas. Some analysts saw a link between deteriorating conditions of livelihood in rural areas and the subsequent pressure for land occupations in 2000 (Kanyenze 2004).

Third, there was a stand-off between the Zimbabwe government and the new British Labour government over the scope and terms of land reform. The latter set new conditions for financial aid for a new round of land reform. The conditions revolved around a new emphasis on priorities of good governance and poverty reduction (Adams 2003). Fourth, the ruling elite now had a direct interest in

land ownership as an avenue for accumulation and so began to assert its interest more vocally. Not only did it seek to hog leased state land by hook or crook, it pressed for what it termed the 'de-racialisation' of land ownership. Finally, the political environment was changing with a growing opposition movement that threatened to unseat a regime which was mired in a deep economic crisis and whose support was shrinking. This constellation of factors set off alarm bells for the Mugabe government in February 2000 when it lost a referendum on a draft constitution. The land issue now became an issue of political survival in an election year. Land hunger could be manipulated to improve the electoral fortunes of Zanu PF, apart from finally resolving the land question 'once and for all'. This was the immediate context of the fast-track programme (*jambanja* or Third Chimurenga).

Perspectives on *jambanja*

The trajectory of the fast-track reform programme from 2000 to 2003 is now well known through numerous journalistic and academic reports. The mode in which the programme was implemented generated a great deal of heated debate domestically and internationally. This debate continues (Moyo 2001; Hammar et al. 2003; Sachikonye 2003; and Masiwa 2004). A number of key reports have documented the official version of why and how the reform programme was executed, while independent assessments have examined the implications of the programme for livelihoods and human rights (HRW 2002; FCTZ 2002, 2004; Norwegian Refugee Council 2003). This chapter does not intend to rehearse this material but seeks to explain the significance of *jambanja* for the irretrievable breakdown of what was still known as *reconciliation*. The start of *jambanja* in February 2000 clearly represented a new phase in the 'land crisis' that had been smouldering for the better part of the 1990s. It also marked a change in the tone of President Mugabe's pronouncements on black and white relations. Furthermore, the concepts of sanctity of private property and 'rule of law' were spurned and drastically revised. This paradigm shift in thinking about land rights, property rights, compensation and what was termed 'an agrarian revolution' was orchestrated to provide justification for the 'land occupations' that took place between 2000 and 2003.

There were basically three perspectives on the 'land occupations' which were organised by war veterans, state agencies including

the army, and Zanu PF youth with the participation of some of the peasants. The first one draws on history and assigns a great deal of the blame to the British:

... the British Conservative Government under John Major had agreed to assist with further funding for land reform in 1996. However, with the coming to power of the Labour Government in 1997, things came to a head. The Labour Government refused to advance the process of land reform, in effect revoking Britain's obligations as per the Lancaster House understanding... This unprecedented stance by the British Government marked the beginning of worsening relations between the two Governments... (Utete Report 2003)

According to this perspective, this misunderstanding was but a short step to 'land occupations' in 2000. Disappointed by the pace of land redistribution, 'the people responded, bringing pressure to bear on government by resorting to vigorous protests and land occupations' (Utete Report 2003). Thus, according to this interpretation, land occupations were a reaction to delayed land reform and Britain's abdication of its responsibility to finance that reform. Indeed, an amendment to the constitution placed the responsibility for compensation for the land of commercial white farmers squarely on the British. Section 16A was added to the constitution in 2000 to 'enable the people of Zimbabwe to regain ownership of their land', and accordingly:

... the former colonial power has an obligation to pay compensation for agricultural land compulsorily acquired for resettlement, through an adequate fund established for the purpose; and if the former colonial power fails to pay compensation through such a fund, the Government of Zimbabwe has no obligation to pay compensation for agricultural land compulsorily acquired for resettlement... (Utete Report 2003)

The Zimbabwe government thus basically deployed historical, bilateral and legal factors to justify the land occupations that began in 2000.

Some analysts have lent credence to this position by making observations on the background to, and motivations for, land

occupations. Examples have been cited of communities that drew on their historical experiences of dispossession as in the Svosve area, and of others that drew on their experiences during the liberation war (Marongwe 2002; Moyo 2001). For example, it was observed that farms were occupied because the farm-owners had been staunch supporters of the Rhodesian Front government, which used to harass the local community. There were similar cases in the two Matabeleland provinces:

... for example, a farm in Bulilamangwe district was occupied mainly because the farm was used as a shooting range for the Rhodesian army. The local community was also harassed. Occupiers also claimed that military attacks on freedom fighters were carried out from that farm. The social tension between the farmer and the villagers was high even before the farm occupations started... (Marongwe 2002)

But there was another, contending perspective, one that de-emphasised the significance of historical experience and stressed the sanctity of property rights and the 'rule of law'. For instance, it was argued that no security was offered to commercial farmers and that the government had systematically reneged on agreements and rebuffed attempts to resolve issues of contention (CFU 2003). Furthermore, in February 2000 the majority of commercial farming land was owned by white farmers 'who had paid the then ruling market price for it, or who had inherited it from ancestors who had done so' (Hunter et al. 2001). This land 'might have changed hands lawfully many times ... the owners had not taken it by force or stolen it from anyone'. Those few white farming families who owned land inherited through an ancestor who received it from the Chartered Company did not number more than a dozen (Hunter et al. 2001). According to this perspective, it was a travesty of justice to seize land from those who had bought it lawfully. The commercial farmers therefore pointed out that the land acquisition process from 2000 was implemented in a lawless and disorderly manner, with illegal occupations, interruptions of production operations, theft of property and human rights violations (CFU 2003). Finally, in the opinion of a legal analyst:

... on the narrow view of the rule of law, there is no doubt that the land occupations of 2000 and the refusal of government to enforce

court orders were contrary to the rule of law. This is because both actions were not in accordance with the rule of law as it stood and this is the basis upon which the courts ruled that the rule of law had been overthrown. (Madhuku 2004)

There is a third perspective on the rationale and course of the land occupations. It is a perspective that is sensitive to the tension between the 'rule of law' and 'social justice' claims. It has been argued as follows:

... the Zimbabwe Government assumes that international human rights impede land reform. Our perspective is the reverse. International and regional human rights instruments provide the basis for reconciling protection of private property and individual rights with social justice... The land issue will not be adequately addressed unless other rights-based approaches are included ... (Derman and Hellum 2004)

A variant of this perspective is one that recognises that the 'land question' has been manipulated as a political resource by the Mugabe government. It has been 'discursively monopolized and over-simplified by the ruling party and used as a disciplinary and exclusionary device' (Hammar and Raftopoulos 2003). In the meantime, the opposition movement had been slow in finding 'its footing within the discourse of radical land redistribution, remaining within a liberal, if not neo-liberal framework of private property and market-driven reform' (Hammar and Raftopoulos 2003).

These three perspectives continue to animate the debate on the 'land question'. But increasingly more attention is now being paid to what the consequences and implications of *jambanja* have been, and what the new challenges are. For instance, are the objectives of *fair and transparent* redistribution and greater productivity by small farmers and higher export earnings being achieved? In short, has the land question now been settled 'once and for all'? And what are the prospects for the future? We turn to these issues in the last part of this chapter.

Concluding remarks: towards the future

To some analysts, the *jambanja* programme undid what little remaining sentiment or semblance of 'reconciliation' still existed in

the country at the beginning of 2000 (Buckle 2001). Clearly, it had an adverse impact on human rights, on civil liberties (in short, rule of law), and also on food security (UNDP 2002). It inaugurated an era of repressive authoritarianism, an era that continues (Hammar et al. 2001; Harold-Barry 2004). As observed above, the literature on 'reverse expropriation' of the land of 4 500 white farmers and the erosion of the livelihoods of approximately 200 000 farm workers is now relatively extensive (Sachikonye 2004; Masiwa 2004; Vision for Agriculture 2004). By mid-2004, only about 500 white farmers were engaged in agricultural production on their farms (CFU 2004).

Production of the key commodities has been on a downward spiral since 2000. It will be neither easy nor possible to restore production levels in the next five years, owing to a variety of factors, which range from a deficit in farming skills and experience to constraints on resources, especially credit, seed and fertiliser. Food security has been under threat owing to low yields since 2001. But of profound concern has been the corruption that has permeated land allocation, especially amongst the elite. This corruption has taken the form of ownership of multiple farms in contravention of the 'one person, one farm' policy. Despite appeals and warnings from President Mugabe and Minister Nkomo to return the additional farms, some members of the ruling elite have continued to hold on to them. One report observed that in July 2004 some 329 people owned multiple farms (*Financial Gazette* 15.07.04). What were termed 'resistance and clandestine manoeuvres' had a combined effect of maintaining the status quo with respect to multiple farm ownership. The wrangles over multiple farm ownership show that the land reform programme was not just a straightforward matter of appropriating land for distribution amongst those in need of it. Clearly, the impetus for it had come from a mixture of different interests and motives. As we have observed elsewhere:

... the timing of the scramble for land was almost impeccable. It followed an acceptance, however grudging, that thousands of families had been settled by the first quarter of 2002. However, due to the fact that most of this land was in prime agro-ecological areas with good infrastructure, the competition for it was very intense. Some of the prime farming areas which experienced disputes over ownership included Mazowe, Goromonzi, Chinhoyi, Shamva,

Marondera and Beatrice areas ... There was apprehension that a black land-owning elite was emerging ... (Sachikonye 2003a)

Conflicts over land ownership did not only exist amongst the elite but also between them and small resettled farmers. The Mugabe government suffered from diminished credibility owing to this corruption and internal conflict over this issue.

At the same time, the evidence suggested that the land issue had not been resolved 'once and for all'. Early government claims that 300 000 households had been allocated land under the A1 model and that 51 000 farmers would begin to farm under the A2 model turned out to be grossly exaggerated. According to the Utete Report, the numbers were much lower, at 127 000 small farmers under A1, and 7 600 large farmers under A2. More worryingly, however, a government audit in mid-2004 revealed that about 249 000 people were on the waiting list for A1 land, and 99 000 on the list for A2 land (*Financial Gazette* 15.07.04). If this information is broadly correct, then well under half of those who applied for land received it. The unsystematic and opaque approach to land reform had resulted in 'double allocations' in the absence of computerised data on beneficiaries and on farms. Thus *jambanja* cannot, and will not, be the last word and phase of land reform. It is a colossal social engineering project that is already beset with inherent contradictions, some of which have erupted in political infighting among the ruling elite themselves.

In the light of the mistakes and shortfalls of *jambanja*, the question becomes: what needs to be done to relieve the situation? Perhaps the starting point should be an exercise of stock-taking of land reform by the Zimbabwe government, but one in which other stake-holders are involved in order to ensure the credibility of the findings. Such a stock-taking exercise has also been called an audit. In principle, the idea of an audit seems acceptable to a range of players (Vision for Agriculture 2004; UNDP 2002). A multi-stakeholder audit would have the value of restoring confidence amongst the donor community that the government was committed to making a fresh start. Such an audit would identify all land claimants, including former owners of the farm, farm workers and new land reform beneficiaries; it would establish the size and location of the landholdings and the size and nature of the physical assets owned or claimed (Roth 2003). Such an audit should seek to comprehensively identify all land and property claims and to correct the information

where these claims are multiple and overlapping. An accurate inventory based on such an audit would be the starting point for the formulation of a revised land policy and agrarian strategy.

The second set of issues requiring priority attention would be compensation and justice claims. *Jambanja* resulted in loss of land and other property, hard-won lifelong investments, and even life and limb by farmers and farm workers, not to mention the eradication of livelihoods. A great deal of trauma and stress was also caused by the particular forms of intimidation, coercion and violence that accompanied *jambanja*. There needs to be an open discussion of realistic ways of compensating those who lost property and livelihoods (UNDP 2002). The setting-up of an international trust fund for this purpose would be a step in the right direction; this would also provide a face-saving formula for those donor countries that have been highly critical of the way *jambanja* was implemented. But the mechanism through which claims for compensation and justice are made should be carefully considered, and it should have a measure of independence from the central government. As far as possible, compensation and justice settlements should provide opportunities for *reconciliation* between erstwhile adversaries, leading to a *healing* process.

The third set of issues would concern the setting-up of a structure to deal with land-related conflicts on a regular basis. The number and duration of such conflicts has multiplied since *jambanja* was completed. They have an adverse effect on production and relations between large and small farmers, and between farmers and farm workers. Local land boards could play an important moderating role in the resolution of conflicts.

Fourth, land reform in Zimbabwe, as elsewhere in Southern Africa, is threatened by the prevalence of HIV/Aids. The gains accruing from access to land are being wiped out by illness and deaths caused by the epidemic (IDS and FAO 2004). Production and family structures are under severe stress. Land reform programmes should incorporate HIV/Aids prevention strategies.

Finally, land reform should be addressed in a holistic manner. Interventions such as an audit, compensation and justice claims, conflict resolution mechanisms and HIV/Aids strategies should be addressed in a much broader framework of policy. A new land policy should be crafted on the basis of consensus amongst stakeholders:

small and large farmers, established and emergent farmers, and farm workers. One of the urgent issues that such a policy should sort out is the issue of tenure security. There should be widespread consultation and debate on whether the dominant form of tenure will be freehold, 99-year leases or communal tenure. More broadly, a legal land regime should contain instruments that enable future governments to address Zimbabwe's colonial legacy and current economic structures more fairly and equitably. The discourse on rights, if broadened to include social and economic rights, would lead to new and different claims relating to land with different policy outcomes (Derman and Hellum 2004). Amongst others, such rights would include the right to livelihood for farm workers; the right to equal protection of tenure and access to resettlement for women; and the right of farm workers' children to education, health and physical security.

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Memories of underdevelopment

A personal interpretation of Zimbabwe's economic decline¹

Rob Davies

Many of the people I criticize will say that I have gotten it wrong: they may even produce evidence that contradicts my views of what happened. I can only offer my interpretation of what I saw. (Stiglitz 2002:xv)

Introduction

This essay is a personal interpretation of aspects of Zimbabwe's crisis, based on impression rather than on detailed research. I have adopted this approach for two reasons. Firstly, space and time do not permit a longer-term research project. Secondly, much of the argument is inherently difficult to justify by systematic references to evidence. Details of corruption or abuse are inherently difficult to provide. That does not mean we should not talk about them, but when we do so we should acknowledge that the anecdotes and personal information that shape our individual interpretations might not be representative. I acknowledge this; those who dislike the approach should regard this essay as putting forward hypotheses that may or may not be sustained by further research.

I begin the essay with a crude estimate of the costs of the current decline, as a backdrop for the paper. I then sketch a possible framework for understanding the evolution of Zimbabwe's political economy since independence. In the third section I try to use this framework to draw lessons about methodology, and about economic justice in transitional societies.

The costs of economic decline

Although this essay is not intended to provide a detailed, data-intensive analysis of the recent performance of the Zimbabwean economy, it is useful to have some idea of the magnitude of the economic decline. The latest National Income Accounts are for 2000, so we have to rely on estimated growth rates to bring them up to the present. If we apply the growth rates announced by the Minister of Finance in his budget statements each year, then real income per head in 2004 is projected to be 46 per cent less than it was in 1996, the year before economic decline set in. If we take the figures from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), then it will be 53 per cent less. Clearly we do not need to quibble about the exact numbers – these magnitudes are enormous. But to measure the cost of the decline we should compare income per head in 2004 with what it would have been without eight years of decline. Of course, this is a hypothetical number, and there will be disagreement on how to estimate it. But consider the following alternatives. If the economy had grown over the period at the same average rate that occurred between 1990 and 1996 – years that included serious droughts as well as the effects of liberalisation – then real income per head would have been 97 per cent higher than the Minister projects it to be. Of course, this is optimistic. But even if the economy had ‘only’ declined annually at the rate it did during the 1991–92 drought – one of the worst the country has experienced – income per head would be five per cent higher; the effects of the last eight years have been similar to having the worst drought in living memory for each of the eight years.

I would not want to insist on these illustrative, ballpark figures. But I would like to address two reactions that apologists for recent events might have. Firstly, GDP per head is only a crude indicator of ‘welfare’ and we should at least take distribution into account. Unfortunately we do not have any sensible recent measures of distribution of income in Zimbabwe. However it seems unlikely that the gap between rich and poor has narrowed since 1997. Inflation notoriously redistributes real income from wage earners to rentiers. There can be no doubt of the decline in the share of national income going to those who derive their income from employment. Many have lost their jobs and most of those who have retained them earn less from them.

The second reaction may be that the land reform programme, by redistributing a primary productive asset, has laid the foundation

for more egalitarian income generation in the future; the decline in incomes now is thus a necessary cost for a better future. We do not yet know whether the factual element of this argument – that there will be a better distribution of income in the future – is true or not, although, given the continuing appropriation of land by the new elite, many Zimbabweans will be dubious. However, those who make the argument need to demonstrate that the putative gains will occur sufficiently soon to offset the actual current costs. Even if we unrealistically assume that Zimbabweans have a high preference for future over current income, the economy would have to experience historically implausible double-digit growth in order for the losses of the past eight years to be offset over the next ten years.² With lower growth, the shift in distribution has to be enormous to compensate for the losses. Furthermore, these kinds of moral justifications based on inter-temporal changes in welfare are fraught with problems. It is likely that many of the people who bear the costs now will not be the ones who benefit in the future. It is also true that those who make this argument most vociferously are generally those who benefit now, but bear no cost. By and large, those who like to repeat Lenin's dictum that one cannot make an omelette without breaking eggs are talking of someone else's eggs.

There seems to be a view amongst apologists for recent events that the main costs of the 'reforms' have been borne by the white farmers who had their land taken. But the direct costs that these represent are much smaller than the indirect costs to the economy, which have actually been borne – and will continue to be borne – by 'ordinary' Zimbabweans. Under the surface of the apparent reclamation of property stolen by imperialists, the reality is that the reforms represent a massive redistribution of income and wealth amongst the decolonised.

The above is intended merely to illustrate the dimensions of the economic impact of the reforms, not to measure it definitively. It is also not intended to be the basis for an economic argument that structural changes are not worth undertaking unless the economic benefits outweigh the costs. There are non-economic benefits in the form of pride and self-esteem that derive from nationalistic reforms. But it is necessary to be aware of the narrower economic costs of achieving these benefits.

Finally, I acknowledge that the above cursory examination of the costs has been undertaken in such a way as to give maximum leeway

to the case for the land reform programme. I have not entered into any consideration of whether a more serious and committed government could have reformed the land tenure system of Zimbabwe without the disruption and cost that the actual exercise has imposed.

The state, the economy, and wealth acquisition since independence

In what follows I sketch an argument that the evolution of the economy and of economic policy since independence might be understood within the context of a process of acquisition of private wealth. I suggest that it would be wrong to interpret this as a part of a process creating a new 'capitalist' class, since what has been accumulated is not capital, but simply private wealth.

This theme might seem to agree with the notions of a 'national democratic revolution', as argued by Moyo and Yeros (2004). However, I will argue that, on the contrary, the evolution has weakened that revolution. Zimbabwean capitalists are less autonomous now than they were earlier. Rather than capital being accumulated, it has been destroyed. If one believes that a national democratic revolution is important for the development process, one also has to believe that Zimbabwe has regressed rather than progressed.

Although a continuous thread can be traced through the whole period, the process changed character at various times. It is useful to consider three periods – 1980–1990, 1990–1997 and 1997 to the present. In each of these periods, the character of the programme of wealth acquisition changed, becoming increasingly more rampant.

The successful eighties

The strands of several stories interweave through the political economy of Zimbabwe in the 1980s. The most commonly told charts a successful attempt to address issues of poverty and social welfare. A second might be a political story concerning the consolidation and centralisation of power over the state. A third concerns that state as a site for personal accumulation.

The government significantly improved social welfare in the 1980s. The rapid expansion of the education system and improved access to both preventative and curative health services were the most notable successes. The rise in marketed output of maize and cotton

from communal areas is also often cited, although it is not clear how widespread this success was. Minimum wage legislation probably raised wages, in the early period at least. Although the resettlement programme was small, there were also some successes there.

No rewriting of history can negate these achievements and their significant outcomes.

However, the gains were easily reversible, since they were based primarily on redistribution rather than growth, and the redistribution was of income rather than assets.

For example, the expanded education system was predicated upon the ability of the budgetary process to continue to finance it, while the health gains depended on the support of donors. The measures did not create their own sustainability, but, to the extent that they placed unsustainable burdens on the budget, carried the seeds of their own destruction. However, we are here concerned with the character, not the macroeconomics, of these gains. They can all be characterised as centralised gifts to the poor. They did not empower recipients to continue to receive – and expand – the benefits in a sustained way.

Of course, expenditures on health and education are investments in human capital and therefore should provide the basis for sustained benefit. But they are ‘capital’ only in so far as they permit higher income flows in the future, and this requires employment expansion. The failure to expand jobs thus created a climate in which the value of investment in human capital could not be realised. This is important for understanding the real tragedy of the current crisis.

Under land reform, government was willing to give people access to land but not title. This perpetuated systems of clientism, in which beneficiaries remained beholden to the State – and local power structures. Although minimum wages were used to tackle inherited problems of inequality and discrimination, this made workers beholden to the state for wage increases, undermining the development of collective action through trade unions and any strength that worker organisations might have developed.

A second theme of the 1980s is the centralisation of state power. While the rhetoric was one of empowerment and upliftment, the reality was centralisation. Examples can be found in government’s approach to wages and labour relations, land redistribution, and health management, amongst other issues. Examples include:

- attempts by government to impose its own leadership on the trade union movement. When this was resisted, government resorted to labour relations legislation to vest power in the State.
- refusal to award title to resettled land. This meant that title was transferred from the private to the public domain. The effect was to place control in the hands of politicians and bureaucrats at the centre.
- closing down the embryonic primary health care systems that had developed before independence in some liberated areas, partly with impetus from guerrillas but largely as spontaneous developments at the village level. Employees of the Ministry of Health replaced elected village health workers, centralising power (Sanders 1992).
- centralisation of control over the economy, newspapers, banks, some industrial businesses, some mines and so on.

At the time many of these moves were intentional, based upon a view that the state was central to the development process. Nonetheless, however noble the motivation, the effect was to concentrate power in the hands of individuals. In so far as the political process denies effective control over politicians by the electorate, state power means individual power.

This process was often found in post-colonial Africa, justified on the grounds that the state – often regarded as an important engine for development in societies emerging from colonialism – was itself embryonic and needed to consolidate power. In Zimbabwe's case the threats to the new government, particularly from South Africa's direct and proxy subversion, provided an argument that convinced many. The problem is of course that consolidation of state power in practice means consolidation of the personal power of those at its helm. In only a handful of countries around the world has constitutionality and the rule of law been sufficiently established for it to be accepted that, rather than being the fount of law, the state itself is also subject to law.

It is salutary to recall Bill Warren's argument about dependency theory as nationalist mythology (Warren 1980). In broad terms he argues that although the Third World is dependent on and conditioned by the global economy, dependency theory provided a convenient excuse for national elites to disguise their true agenda by cloaking it in the apparently progressive rhetoric of confronting dependency.

This is particularly resonant in Zimbabwe today. Radical rhetoric is appropriated by those in power to legitimate what would otherwise be unacceptable.

In Zimbabwe in the eighties, all of the arguments for state centralisation provided what were apparently acceptable justifications. The logic of socialism – and many these days have difficulty remembering the climate of the Cold War – suggested that a strong state was necessary for development. But the primary reasons for consolidation of state power were not to move forward with a socialist agenda, but rather to consolidate power, not of Zanu PF, but for the leaders of Zanu PF. Whether or not they were initially committed socialists, or simply committed to the welfare of the people, by the end of the decade the balance had shifted to those who saw politics as a means of acquisition of private wealth. Willowgate provided the most obvious example of the level of personal interest driving the leadership, but there are many other examples: the perpetual discussion and flouting of the leadership code; the establishment of Zanu PF commercial enterprises; the direct use of state contracts for business accumulation.

There is nothing intrinsically wrong with this. Transitional justice requires that the state should use its power to redress historic injustices. The Rhodesian state had previously been a primary site of accumulation for white settlers, which could justify the use of the independent state to create a similar class of black capitalists. It is not particularly a moral issue. But it should be seen for what it was – the socialist rhetoric in which it was shrouded should not prevent us from recognising it.

The third theme of the 1980s was the use of the state as a site for acquisition of personal wealth. Again, there are many indicators of this.

The most obvious related to corruption. Some was high-profile and led to prosecutions, starting with the Paweni case. However, even in such cases, action was not taken against political leaders implicated. Even when individuals were implicated in stealing resources from the party (e.g. election T-shirts), there was a curious reluctance to act. Things came to a head with Willowgate. Other corruption was less prominent, for example, the widespread and well-known subversion of the administered foreign-exchange allocation system by 'briefcase'

businessmen, who used their 'emergent' status to obtain privileged access to foreign exchange or import licences that they sold to established white businesses, or the abuses of the public tender system.

The state was also used for acquiring personal wealth through indirect corruption, some of it relatively benign. For example:

- Shortly after independence the government provided support to civil servants, allowing them to acquire houses that they could not otherwise afford. This was well motivated; the new senior civil servants had been excluded from this modest personal acquisition by the racism of the past, so they found that they were expected to live at a much lower standard than not only their white counterparts but also indeed their juniors. Clearly this was an injustice that needed to be addressed. However, the manner in which it was addressed had the consequence of using State resources for individual enrichment.
- When attempts were made to freeze high-level incomes, and the private sector responded by introducing a range of perks (income in kind), the state matched many of these. As a result it is still *de rigueur* for senior jobs to come with cars – in a way that astounds visitors from developed countries. This helped develop a culture in which it is now essential for businesses to give their managers costly status symbols, even when the businesses they run have been technically bankrupted. This is so much the norm now that I doubt many managerial Zimbabweans can understand the criticism.
- The party's attempt to introduce a 'Leadership Code' – restricting accumulation by leaders – was honoured entirely in the breach; it is difficult to think of any leader who acted as if constrained by it.
- The policy of persuading South African-owned companies to divest from Zimbabwe provided fertile ground for acquisition of assets at knock-down prices.

Apart from the explicit corruption, the examples given above are relatively innocuous and could be justified on the basis of restoring justice in a transitional context. However, their cost should be assessed not solely by the direct impact they had, but also by their more insidious influence upon the national psyche. They legitimate

the use of state resources for personal wealth acquisition; the boundary between acceptable and unacceptable forms expands and blurs.

I have been at pains in this section to speak of personal wealth acquisition rather than accumulation of capital; for what was being accumulated was generally not capital. Even those emergent businessmen who used access to the state to develop trading empires were not engaged as part of the reproductive circuit of capital. These episodes of looting and misuse of public power have been endemic in all emergent capitalist societies, so it might be argued that this is a necessary phase in the move towards the development of an indigenous capitalist class. However, whether acquisition of private wealth is a prelude to capitalism or simply individualised beneficence depends crucially on whether it makes a transition from wealth to capital. In Zimbabwe we do not yet see the resources acquired in these ways being invested in productive assets, but rather in conspicuous consumption. Indeed the most striking case of emergent capitalists (as opposed to emergent businessmen) – Econet – seems to have happened in the face of constraints from the state rather than by looting it. At best we can say the jury is out – it is too early to say whether personal wealth acquisition has sown the seeds for a new capitalist class or simply enriched some feudal barons.

The neo-liberal nineties

The introduction of the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) in 1990 was not a sudden change of policy, but the culmination of a trend noticeable throughout the 1980s. Most government policy statements in the 1980s combined an inconsistent blend of populist wish-lists and control-oriented dirigiste thinking with the orthodox macroeconomics found later in ESAP. Although there was a strong disconnect between policy statements and policy implementation, many actual policies in the 1980s presaged the neo-liberal nineties. As has been well documented in numerous sources, there were strong undercurrents of neo-liberalism beneath Zanu PF's socialist rhetoric from the outset of independence. Finally, the erosion of many of the control measures that the government had operated since independence in effect moved policy towards structural adjustment.

ESAP was therefore not a surprise. Nonetheless, there are some puzzling aspects of Zanu PF's explicit adoption of the neo-liberal

policies it embodied. Although such programmes had been introduced throughout Africa in the 1970s and 1980s, this has usually happened after a change of political regime. In Zimbabwe, the break in economic policies was coupled with a continuity of political power. The same ministers who had previously extolled the virtues of socialism and economic controls now espoused market forces and liberalisation. It is somewhat paradoxical why they did so.

This question can be broken into two related sub-questions: why did the reforms come when they did? and why did they take the form they did? I think the second of these can be answered fairly straightforwardly. With the end of the Cold War, neo-liberalism had become the only game in town; it would have been more startling if, at that time, government had adopted more dirigiste or socialist policies. But the presence of neo-liberal tendencies discernible in the 1980s suggests that there was already support for such policies within Zanu PF. So the first of the sub-questions above is the interesting one. Why did Zanu PF explicitly embrace structural adjustment in 1990? What changes had occurred in the 1980s that made something that was unacceptable in 1980 acceptable in 1990?

One possible explanation takes the government's rationalisation at the time at face value. There was a need for change because growth rates were too low and the binding constraint of foreign exchange earnings had to be broken. Since neo-liberalism had become the only game in town, ESAP was the only way forward. This set of explanations is consistent with the interpretation of economic policies in the eighties as a struggle between ideologists and technocrats. ESAP was the apogee of Dr Chidzero's influence.

While there may be some truth in this, it appears to be based on a rather superficial analysis. If one believes that Zanu PF's erstwhile socialism was not a complete charade – at least for some members – then one wants a deeper explanation for the apparent conversion. Most analysts would like to believe that there were some deeper forces at work. It is easy to concoct such explanations, although their veracity is harder to determine. I consider two possibilities below.

Some see the change as a result of pressure exerted by the World Bank and IMF. While there was pressure, I think it is wrong to see the policy as forced on an unwilling Zanu PF. Although ESAP contained most of the elements found in Structural Adjustment Programmes

(SAPs), it had risen out of a fairly extensive domestic review process, which had begun with the Trade Liberalisation study in 1987. The similarity to Bank programmes was in part because ESAP followed the conventional economic wisdom for dealing with the problem that the government was attempting to address: how to raise the rate of growth in the face of a foreign currency constraint. In fact, the government proceeded to implement some aspects of ESAP not only faster than the programme documents spelled out but also faster than many Bank officials felt wise. For example, the pace of import liberalisation was more rapid than initially stated and, in the face of credibility problems over the sustainability of the policy, fuelled speculative stockpiling. Similarly, Bank officials who regarded them as needlessly creating hardship and political antagonism for no gain privately opposed the introduction of school fees for primary schools.

The Bank's primary input into the design of ESAP was to write the section of the *Framework* (GOZ 1991) dealing with social dimensions. The government had omitted this entirely from the document it had prepared, so it was written in Washington. In fact, the Zimbabwean government appeared to pay little attention to social costs. Only three of the eighty-one paragraphs in the *Policy Statement* announcing ESAP are devoted to social dimensions, and suggest that government's concern with 'vulnerable segments' was because of the trouble they might make rather than any intrinsic concern with poverty alleviation.

A different – and less well-explored – hypothesis is that by 1990 the limits of the state as a site for personal wealth acquisition were being reached. The fiscal constraints on state expenditures limited the scope for patronage, rent seeking and other forms of personal wealth acquisition. The scope of arenas such as abuse of foreign exchange administration was also shrinking as low economic growth limited the spoils. Possibly also Willowgate exposed the dangers of this route. At the same time, the number of claimants on these sites was increasing. Probably the rise of a more self-confident indigenous business class also contributed. People with little affinity for Zanu PF's socialist ideology, and with weak liberation credentials, were confident that their claims to be representing not simply the nationalist but the Zanu PF project would not be challenged. The educational successes of Zanu PF were also creating a young group of middle class aspirants, who were impatient, but excluded. The change of policy held out the hope for

such people that they would be able to 'get rich quick'. There was thus a climate that made ESAP acceptable. It should be remembered that one of the main arguments for liberalising the foreign exchange administration system was that the rules under which it operated supported the status quo – i.e. white businesses – and created a barrier to entry of new participants – i.e. aspiring black businesses.

While there is the danger that such an explanation falls into the historicist fallacy, a detailed analysis of alliances within Zanu PF and the rising business class might provide some supportive evidence. However, whether or not ESAP was consciously designed to promote personal wealth acquisition, it is incontrovertible that one of its consequences was to open the way for the rise of an indigenous speculative entrepreneurial ('rentier') class. The most notable examples of this have been in the financial sector. ESAP encouraged financial liberalisation to foster competition and (supposedly) improve efficiency. Although Access to Capital was not directly a part of financial liberalisation, it was probably the first obvious financial scam. As soon as it advertised an ability to pay depositors monthly interest rates higher than the annual rates offered by other institutions, it revealed itself as a pyramid scheme. However, the authorities appeared unwilling to deal with it. We do not know the full story behind this unwillingness. I suspect that it was partly because the milieu created made it difficult to be seen to be closing down something that sold itself as a vibrant venture capital operation. At the same time, the perpetrators of the fraud said that they were set up and scapegoated by political heavyweights.

Apart from such obviously fraudulent schemes, the early and mid-1990s saw the establishment of new, indigenous banks and financial institutions. In principle this was desirable. However, not all such banks were built on sound foundations. As has been seen with financial liberalisation elsewhere in Africa – indeed throughout the history of banking everywhere – the prospect of making a fortune using other people's money attracts cowboys as well as honest bankers. It has been apparent for some time that the banking regulatory apparatus in Zimbabwe was insufficient to protect the public. Some of the new bankers used political connections to avoid stringent monitoring. There was also reluctance on the part of authorities to be seen to be placing obstacles in the way of genuine indigenisation. However, as I

shall argue below, the leeway given to new institutions has probably turned out to be counterproductive in the longer run.

There are similar examples of businesses outside the financial sector that took advantage of the opening-up of the economy under ESAP, but which operated on unsound practices. The stories that emerged after the collapse of the Boka 'empire' were reminiscent of feudalism rather than capitalism. Some of the activities of the International Business Development Centre (IBDC) – such as using political power to prevent banks from claiming assets that had been used as business collateral – might have protected individuals, but harmed the emergence of a serious business class. The same could be said about the nonsense around the attempts to invoke the *in duplum* 'law'; while it may seem unfair that interest payments exceed the capital borrowed, the consequence of the 'law' was to dry up the flow of loans to genuine businesses.

Some of the individuals who were upheld as examples of the 'new' businessmen were essentially asset strippers, taking over existing businesses (often on favourable terms deriving from their status as self-proclaimed harbingers of indigenous capitalism) and running them into the ground. The rise of real interest rates also provided fertile grounds for wealth acquisition. It is difficult not to make money in such a climate. The frenzy for buying financial assets even spread to older white Zimbabweans who saw their financial wealth rise rapidly through the Treasury Bill bubble.

So whether or not the hypothesis explains the adoption of ESAP, the consequence of ESAP was to create a different mode of wealth acquisition. Many of the studies of ESAP between 1990 and 1996 focus on the other side of the coin – the hardship created for the low-paid, and the loss of jobs. But it should be recognised that a fair number of people benefited from ESAP.

These two explanations of why Zanu PF explicitly adopted ESAP when it did are not mutually exclusive and it is likely that both operated. In addition, there is a good chance that much of ESAP occurred by default rather than design. Although there had been a domestic process of consultations leading up to ESAP, these did not constitute a debate. It seems that any debates within the cabinet were not heated affairs. Some senior cabinet ministers have claimed they had always been opposed to ESAP, but their opposition did not drive

them to resign as a principled protest. Certainly the debates did not move into the public domain in any serious way.

1997 to the present

Although ESAP had many faults, the early 1990s saw some growth and by 1996 there appeared to be a possibility that – by its own criteria – the programme was bearing fruit. However, 1997 saw a reversal of these trends and marks the start of the current economic and political crisis. Many would date this from the collapse of the Zimbabwe dollar on 14 November 1997. Numerous factors contributed in different degrees to this, including the cumulative effects of the government's failure to tackle the budget since the beginning of ESAP and the unbudgeted payments to war veterans. The latter indicated once and for all government's unwillingness to exercise control over its expenditure in the face of demands, and signalled the likely unravelling of ESAP.

The broad contours of events since then are well-known: the engagement in the DRC that started in 1998, the further deterioration of the economy, the rejected constitution in 2000, the immediately subsequent land invasions and their evolution into the fast-track land programme, and the rise of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) as a serious opposition. We are not concerned here with an explanation of the causes of these events but rather with illustrating how the private wealth acquisition project changed over this period.

The evidence suggests that after 1997 wealth acquisition took on a more rampant character compared to the relatively restrained approach of the 1980s. As the economy unravelled, it provided opportunities for those who wished to extract rents much more openly than before. The management of the foreign-exchange market provided quick returns for those who had access to foreign exchange. These returns were captured not only by shady dealers in back alleys, but relatively openly by formal institutions. The parallel market operated in a way not seen during the 1980s, when foreign exchange was also in short supply. There were two reasons for the difference. Firstly, the premium on foreign exchange, created by government maintaining an overvalued official rate in the face of dwindling supplies, was much higher than it had been in the 1980s. Secondly, a number of the institutions created under financial liberalisation, particularly Bureau de Change and Foreign Currency Accounts, made it more difficult to

control parallel market dealings. In fact such dealings were implicitly legalised by government's attempts to distinguish a parallel market from a black market.

As the shortages in the economy developed, the scope and scale of rent-seeking activities blossomed. Fuel shortages coupled with access to official foreign currency created fortunes for some. Supermarkets in the northern suburbs were able to extort high margins on imported luxury goods, often from a largely expatriate clientele.

The period also saw the creation of further financial institutions, particularly asset management companies. Many of these ostensibly did well, but mainly because of the boom in the stock market. The industrial share price rose from an average of 464 for 1998 to 1055 for 2000 (1990 = 100) and to a staggering 160 634 for August 2004. It is difficult not to look as though you are making money under these circumstances. Subsequent banking collapses have shown that the primary concern of many of the asset managers was their own personal fortune rather than the well-being of their clients' funds: expenditure on managerial cars and grandiose offices took precedence over sound profit making.

With the attempt to reimpose a controlled economy after 1997, government resorted to the usual panoply of exceptions and ad hoc policies that tend to accompany such regimes in an attempt to offset their negative consequences. Special exchange rates were introduced for certain exports while subsidised loans and 'special facilities' targeted particular sectors and activities. These exceptions created further grounds for rent seeking. With regard to special loans, it seems that the authorities did not – and still do not – understand the concept of fungibility: cheap loans should not be thought of as financing the activity they are supposedly targeted at, but rather as releasing recipients' own funds for other activities. For example, receiving a loan to pay off trade credits allows the recipients to put their own funds – which would have had to be used to pay the trade credits – into the stock exchange. Since nominal interest rates on these loans have been well below inflation rates, the schemes have in effect paid recipients to take the money and speculate with it.

The policy of trying to keep interest rates low was partly responsible for the rise in inflation. Unlike the early 1990s, the immediate driver of inflation after 2000 was expansion of credit to the private sector rather than to government. This has created an apparent dilemma

for government. Many of the companies that received cheap loans would be bankrupted if interest rates rose to positive real levels; this would have knock-on effects on the banking system. However, bringing inflation down will probably require more realistic interest rates. The dilemma for government is therefore deciding which of its constituencies it should hurt – special interests or the general populace. The continuance of special schemes suggests that it has chosen the latter. Unfortunately, this probably simply delays the day of reckoning and increases the hurt caused when the economy eventually collapses.

Other avenues for private wealth accumulation opened up over the period. For example, the venture into the DRC created many business opportunities for army personnel and their relatives. It may be that this has driven the politicisation of the army noted by other commentators, as the economic fortunes of some senior army personnel have become tied to current economic conditions.

One of the most surprising illustrations of the rampant character of the recent acquisition of private wealth is the whole rather murky saga of Zexcom (Zimbabwe Ex-Combatants Company), the investment fund set up for ex-combatants to invest the gratuities they received in 1997. While the facts are disputed, it is widely claimed that leaders misappropriated money so invested. If this is true, it is probably one of the saddest commentaries on the extent to which individuals were willing to go to acquire wealth.

Finally, although available evidence is very much disputed, there are ample stories of abuse of the fast-track resettlement programme that suggest that it is also part of the rampant acquisition of private wealth. Apart from official government and parliamentary reports that have indicated abuse of the A2 scheme, there are many anecdotes – some reported in the *Herald* – suggesting that, in at least some instances, land acquisition has been a vehicle for asset stripping, converting productive assets into private wealth. Maybe history will reveal the truth and extent of these abuses.

Finally, we may ask how the most recent events – following the appointment of Dr Gono as Governor of the Reserve Bank – fit into this framework. I believe that the jury is still out. At the time of writing the opinion of the majority of commentators appears to be that he has turned the economy around and things are looking

up. Although definitive data are not available, there is anecdotal evidence to suggest that, on the contrary, the 'new' policies will actually hasten economic collapse. Many exporters are closing down, unable to compete at the current exchange rate. While it seems as if there has been devaluation, in practice the new policies have replaced a working foreign-exchange market with a highly controlled one. The system effectively means that exporters have to purchase foreign exchange for imports at a rate that is 25 per cent more than they receive for their exports. This is not designed to encourage the export growth that is necessary to really turn the economy around. Paradoxically, it was only the existence of the parallel market previously that protected firms from government policies and kept them viable. Now that this market has been virtually closed, many exporters are mainly occupied with negotiating redundancy terms with their work force.³

It is not yet clear how the tightening-up of policies since the start of 2004 fits into the project of acquisition of private wealth. On the one hand, action seems to have been taken against a number of individuals who only acquired their wealth because of previous support from government. On the other hand, however, it is not obvious that the policies are closing off all channels for such acquisition for everyone. There are still opportunities for rent seeking provided by the various controls, the patronage of government on land distribution, the privileged interest rates and so on. At this stage it appears that what is going on is a realignment of political and economic alliances, rather than the ending of the agenda of private wealth acquisition.

Lessons

The above framework was not presented in order to give a detailed and substantiated analysis of the Zimbabwean economy, but rather to provide a backdrop against which some lessons concerning the problems of addressing economic justice in transitional societies may be drawn. I hope this essay points to two different kinds of lessons. First, I hope that it provokes academic debate concerning interpretation of Zimbabwe. Second, and more important, I hope that it suggests some generalisable lessons for those concerned with transitional justice.

Methodological issues

Although this is not the place to engage in arcane methodological debates, I think it may be appropriate to comment briefly on how my hypothesis relates to some other interpretations.

Can the current events be interpreted as ‘primitive accumulation’ as suggested by David Moore (see, for example, Moore 2003)? Marx used this term to denote the process of initial or primary accumulation that took place out of the pre-capitalist structures that gave birth to capitalism. In brief, primitive accumulation comprises two components of a single process. Firstly, producers are separated from the means of production (typically land), creating a working class that depends on wage-labour. Secondly, merchants, guild masters and other elements of the pre-capitalist economy are transformed into a capitalist class. In modern debates, attention seems to focus more on the former component than on the latter; my hypothesis might be interpreted as filling in this gap.

I do not think this is a correct interpretation. The separation of producers from the land took place in Zimbabwe under colonialism. One might want to argue that it was an incomplete process. However, I think that raises serious methodological problems for the primitive accumulation school (if I may so call it). If one wants to use this approach, it is wrong to focus on the separation aspect. One should rather concentrate on wage dependency. It does not matter that someone has access to a small plot on which they can sustain themselves, provided they are forced, in some way, to participate in the wage economy. Thus, under colonialism, hut and poll taxes were measures that forced producers to engage in the cash economy, even without land alienation.

If one took the land reform programme in the way that Zanu PF tries to sell it, one would have to argue that it is in fact aimed at undoing the primary accumulation that had occurred earlier – restoring land to producers. I personally do not think it does this, but I certainly do not think it is sensible to argue that at independence there were large numbers of pre-capitalist producers who are now being separated from their means of production.

An alternative but very similar interpretation is that what we are seeing is a ‘national democratic revolution’. This is what Moyo and Yeros (2004) argue, at the same time asserting that progressive critics

of the programme fail to perceive its fundamentally progressive nature. My arguments concerning the evolution of methods of personal wealth acquisition can, I think, easily be seen as consistent with this interpretation. As I understand it, a national democratic revolution requires the emergence of a local national bourgeoisie; the acquisition I have pointed to would probably be part of the creation of one.

However, I have a number of problems with this interpretation. As I have argued above, recent events have destroyed capital in Zimbabwe, not accumulated it. This destruction is not simply a physical destruction of a productive asset. Even though the physical assets acquired from commercial farmers might continue to exist physically, the changed structure of the economy has devalorised those assets. Physical assets designed to service large-scale farming do not act in the same way when transferred to small-scale farming.

Of course, Marxists would argue that capital is not a 'factor of production' but a social relation. Accumulation is a process not only of quantitatively increasing physical means of production but also enlarging the sphere of human interactions that are dominated by the logic of capital. It is very difficult to determine whether capital in this form has been accumulated or decumulated in Zimbabwe. One test might be whether more Zimbabweans have their lives governed by 'capital logic' now than previously. It is hard to believe so. The rise in unemployment, the collapse of industry, the closing down of commercial agriculture and the increased informalisation of the economy all suggest otherwise.

Another test might be how the balance between absolute and relative surplus value as forms of extraction has been affected by recent events. Simplistically, absolute surplus value entails 'direct' exploitation – reducing real wages, increasing the length of the working day and so on; relative surplus value entails 'indirect' exploitation – primarily cheapening wage goods by technical progress. A standard Marxist view is that capitalism shifts from absolute towards relative surplus value as it develops. It seems to me that the acquisition I have tried to illustrate earlier has been a peculiarly rampant form of absolute extraction. It is not clear how this accords with the view that a national democratic revolution has been moved forward.⁴

These methodological approaches all attempt to look beyond the immediacy of daily politics and individuals to interpret events as the unfolding of forces beyond individuals – globalisation, national

democratic struggles, primitive accumulation, etc. Interpreting the present as history in this way carries the danger that it appears to exculpate those involved in daily struggles. If events in Zimbabwe are part of some broader evolution of Zimbabwean economy and society, then those personally responsible for specific injustices and abuses are simply carrying out their historical mission.

This is a particular problem for those who are interested in the project of reconciliation and justice. For justice is surely about the here and now, and not about some future recompense. Someone who has suffered an injustice may, if they have an uncommon degree of objectivity, acknowledge that it was perpetrated in some broader systemic mission, but nonetheless will feel the injustice and desire restitution. While we may be embroiled in the playing out of historical forces, individuals exercise choice over what they do and how they do it. Those who feel that injustices they commit are justified on the basis of some larger historical mission should take comfort in the view that history will prove them right. But they should also recognise that the present will judge, reward and punish their deeds according to current norms and morality. This does not mean that there is a single, culture- and class-free morality. But in this context I would view immorality as lack of integrity – proclaiming one morality while acting against it; for example, proclaiming that your political motivation is to better the general populace, so that you obtain their support – while acting against them.

Addressing transitional justice

Zimbabwe's experience contains many lessons for those concerned with the problem of economic justice in transitional societies. For me, the story I have outlined demonstrates how difficult it is to address the issue in a sustainable way, and the dangerous ease with which the agenda of transitional justice can be appropriated for personal gain.

I believe that the Zimbabwean experience encapsulates the inherent problems. The injustice inherited from a racist, colonial economy – or from any economy in which people are excluded from economic well-being because of their membership of an identifiable group – is generally conceived of as an injustice towards the excluded group. Although obviously it manifests itself as injustice to specific individuals, when we speak of restitution or correcting the injustice of the past, we think of the group rather than its individual members. Thus we may believe

that Zimbabwe's inherited injustices needed to be addressed by black empowerment or indigenisation. But programmes to implement such restitution inescapably confer privilege on individuals. Creating an environment that compensates for the previous exclusion of blacks from capital accumulation will not allow *all* blacks to become entrepreneurs or capitalists. There is thus an inherent problem of how to decide which individuals in the group will be privileged to be the individual recipients of group empowerment.

There is no way around this conflict; the only issue is how best to manage it. The Zimbabwean experience largely shows how it should *not* be managed. It highlights the danger that individuals may privilege themselves, appealing spuriously to the group agenda while pursuing the individual one.

In part, the problem arises because restitution is backward-looking, attempting to provide recompense for the past. Thus one of the primary objectives is a transfer from those who benefited from the injustice to those it harmed. In the Zimbabwean case, for example, the Zanu PF approach sees the issue as recovery of land stolen during the colonisation. The immediate cost is seen as borne by the white farmers whose farms have been confiscated. This is justified (in the minds of the apologists), since the white farmers are (supposedly) the beneficiaries of the initial colonial land alienation.

If, however, one takes a forward-looking view, the problematic is different. Now it is not about punishment and restitution, but about ensuring that the legacy of the past injustice does not perpetuate injustice. The costs of any programme of restitution – and the question of who bears them – should now be looked at differently. It is not a question of how much harm was done in the past and to whom, but how much benefit a particular restitution programme will generate in the future and for whom.

To put this in a concrete form, consider the framework of the evolution of Zimbabwe's post-independence political economy that I have sketched above. The real costs of the 'personal wealth acquisition' project have been imposed on ordinary Zimbabweans, in terms of economic decline and foregone growth. This could well be a cost that they would find worth paying if the beneficiaries were an emergent capitalist class that might provide the basis for better growth in the future. But as yet we do not see evidence of this;

how many of the briefcase businessmen of the 1980s successfully transformed into new-millennium capitalists? Instead, it appears that previously accumulated capital has been destroyed or, in effect, converted into private wealth. This has happened largely with the blessing of the government. Its policies have created the conditions for rentier capitalism, creating greater incentives for rent-seeking and speculation than for accumulation of productive capital. This has created the environment in which self-privileging individuals are able to appropriate the language of nationalism and anti-imperialism for self-aggrandisement.

A land reform programme designed from this forward-looking perspective might still have confiscated land held by white commercial farmers. But it would have required individual recipients to pay for it – over time – not so as to compensate previous holders, but to ensure that resources were available for equitable future development. The individual beneficiaries of group empowerment would thus be paying something back to the group. Such payment would also act to filter genuine farmers from asset strippers. Similarly, creation of new financial institutions would not be done on the basis of concessions to a privileged few, but would require repayment to the group for individual privileges.

It may well be that such pleasant schemes cannot be organised in the real world. Perhaps rescuing the future from the past is necessarily an uneven and unjust process. What we are seeing in Zimbabwe at present, however, is the destruction of the future by the rhetoric of redress for the past.

Endnotes

- 1 Apologies to Edmundo Desnoes for misappropriating the title of his book. Thanks to Brian Raftopolous, Brian Kagoro, Tyrone Savage and others on the Project for comments and suggestions.
- 2 Economists would do these calculations by discounting the stream of income flows back to some common year. For the above exercise I assumed a discount rate of 1 per cent – which says that an individual would prefer to be paid \$101.01 a year from now rather than \$100 now; I also assumed that the unreformed economy would experience zero growth in real income per head from 2005 onwards. I then estimated the net present value of the unreformed income stream over the period

1997–2014. Finally I calculated what growth rate in the reformed real income per head would give the same net present value. It is clear that these assumptions reduce considerably the estimated cost: raising the discount rate to 10 per cent and the projected unreformed annual growth rate to 2 per cent raises the required growth rate from 15 per cent to 21 per cent per year.

- 3 The level of self-delusion around these policies is well illustrated by the oft-repeated figures released by the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe (RBZ) on foreign exchange earnings. For example, it is said that Zimbabwe earned US\$1.2 billion between January and August 2004, a figure that is compared with the 'US\$301 million earned for full 2003' (*Herald* 16.09.04). This latter figure is nonsense. It perhaps represents the amount of forex that was surrendered to the RBZ, but it certainly does not represent Zimbabwe's forex earnings. The control mentality of the authorities continually leads them to confuse the two.
- 4 Maybe those who propose one or other of these arguments should consider Preobrazhensky's notion of 'primitive socialist accumulation'. When considering how the Soviet state in the 1920s could accumulate, he argued that, in the same way capitalism extracted the means for its accumulation from pre-capitalist forms, socialism could extract its surplus from pre-socialist forms – primarily existing capitalist industries and richer peasantry. One could perhaps develop an analagous concept of 'primitive nationalist accumulation' to describe the processes I have attempted to characterise above.

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‘Gukurahundi’

The need for truth and reparation¹

Shari Eppel

Historical context

Zimbabwe is a nation with more than a century of unresolved conflicts. These include racism rooted in colonialism, as well as other conflicts which predated and were intentionally exacerbated by colonialism. Zimbabwe is a nation with a poor tolerance for political diversity and a leadership that has been committed to never leaving power voluntarily. In the last forty years, the country has had substantially only two political leaders – Ian Smith, from 1964 until 1979, and Robert Mugabe, from 1980 until the present (2004). Both leaders have ruled the country more or less as a one-party state, and both have been embroiled in civil wars to destroy legitimate alternative political voices. The violence since 2000 should be seen as part of this larger historical pattern of political intolerance: the reaction of the state in the last five years to the sudden rise of a popularly based opposition party, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), can be better understood in relation to this same state’s reaction in the 1980s to the only other sizeable opposition party in the last 25 years, namely the Zimbabwe African People’s Union (Zapu).

Although there have been repeated cycles of state violence, Zimbabwe in the last three decades has avoided facing the truth and punishing perpetrators for politically motivated atrocities. The failure to deal with the truth of events during the 1970s, and again with the truth concerning the massacres of the 1980s, has contributed to the fact that after one civil war, and one period of brutal state repression, our nation is embroiled once more in a cycle of state-orchestrated violence and denial, and seems to have learned very little at the

official, national level in terms of accountability, truth telling, and peace building.

Background to Gukurahundi

Robert Mugabe became the first prime minister of Zimbabwe in April 1980. Famously, he called for reconciliation of all warring factions in his inaugural speech to the nation, and ‘drew a line through the past’. Zimbabwe was then a nation bitterly divided by colonial rule and nearly two decades of civil war. The liberation forces had themselves been divided since 1963, after the splitting of Zapu into two parties, Zapu and the Zimbabwe African National Union (Zanu). The divisions between Zapu and Zanu and their two guerrilla armies, the Zimbabwe People’s Revolutionary Army (Zipra) and Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (Zanla), deepened in the 1970s, when there was fierce fighting between these forces, both within and without Zimbabwe (CCJP and LRF 1997).²

Suspicion and distrust between ex-Zipra and ex-Zanla cadres during the process of integrating these armies and the Rhodesian army into one national army led to defections and caching of arms on both sides. Clashes between Zipra and Zanla in Bulawayo in November 1980 and February 1981 led to deaths, arrests and the imposition of curfews.³ In the course of 1981–82, many factors contributed to an unstable situation, particularly in the western half of the country, where Zapu support was strongest.⁴ Many parties contributed to this, including: those 300 or so ex-Zipras who eventually became a loose association of dissidents, responsible for crimes including murder, assault and destruction of property; those ex-Rhodesian agents who undermined the new Zimbabwe; and the South African apartheid government, which sponsored a small group of ‘Super Zapu’ dissidents in order to inflame an already volatile situation, and who also backed various acts of sabotage during the 1980s.⁵

However, beyond any doubt, the greatest burden of guilt for atrocities in the 1980s lies with the Zimbabwean government forces, in particular the notorious 5 Brigade, or ‘Gukurahundi’ Brigade. This brigade consisted almost entirely of ex-Zanlas, and was trained by North Koreans. Surveys and the few histories of this era published to date place the responsibility on government forces for in excess of 90 per cent of atrocities against innocent civilians, including women and youth,

between 1982 and 1987.⁶ Five Brigade was answerable to Mugabe himself, being outside of the usual army command structures.

Five Brigade: 1982–1985

Five Brigade was trained by the North Koreans during 1982, and was deployed in Matabeleland North and the Midlands in late January 1983. Within weeks of deployment, its soldiers had massacred thousands of civilians, and tortured thousands more. As they murdered and destroyed, 5 Brigade told victims that they were being punished because they were Ndebele – that all Ndebeles supported Zapu, and all Zapu supporters were dissidents. Massacres, mass beatings and destruction of property occurred in the village setting in front of thousands of witnesses, and few families were left untouched by this epidemic of violence (CCJP and LRF 1997).

As news of these killings escaped from curfew areas, an outcry grew, and the government withdrew 5 Brigade for 'retraining'. They were redeployed in Matabeleland South in February 1984. This was a severe drought year, and this time the violence was accompanied by the political manipulation of food: no food was allowed in or out of the province, bringing 400 000 people to the brink of starvation (CCJP and LRF 1997).⁷ Killings in well-witnessed settings took place less frequently in 1984, because civilians were detained in camps, the most notorious of which is Bhalagwe camp in the Matobo District. Here, thousands were tortured and hundreds killed, their bodies thrown down mine shafts. As those detained together often did not know each other, it is harder to trace the precise details of who was murdered and where their remains are, although some grave-sites linked to 1984 have been identified.

1985 was an election year, and killings and violence rose again. This time, Zanu PF Youth Brigades⁸ were responsible for much of the political violence in urban and peri-urban settings, including the burning of houses, assaults and murder. In rural areas of Matabeleland and the Midlands, the sinister phenomenon of disappearances replaced the witnessed murders of previous years. Recent interviews have indicated that 5 Brigade, working in allegiance with the Central Intelligence Organisation (CIO) and Police Internal Security Intelligence (PISI), oversaw the abduction and murder of scores or hundreds of Zapu and community leaders during early 1985.⁹ In spite

of five years of relentless and brutal suppression, including the arrests of the top Zapu leadership, who were charged with treason in two separate instances, Zapu once again won all the seats in Matabeleland in the 1985 election.¹⁰

The state thereafter switched tactics. Zapu was banned: verbal threats combined with mediation between the parties led eventually to the Unity Accord of 1987. In terms of this accord, Zapu leaders were given a few seats in the Zanu government, and Zapu ceased to exist as a separate party. The signing of the Unity Accord in December 1987 was followed a few months later by a blanket amnesty, in April 1988, and the creation of a de facto one-party state.¹¹

Silence and impunity

For more than a decade after the repression and massacres of the 1980s, most people nationally and internationally remained in ignorance of the true scale and devastating impact of these events on affected regions. In contrast, scarcely a family in Matabeleland escaped the violence of those years, and the people of that province were forced to live with their silenced memories of horror and fear. A 1998 survey carried out in affected rural areas indicated that a staggering 75 per cent of rural civilians interviewed were survivors of state-organised violence, and that 80 per cent of these had suffered violence in the 1980s, rather than during the liberation war (Eppel 1998).¹² Villagers in rural Matabeleland consistently refer to the violence of the 1980s as far worse than that of the liberation war.

We can still be eliminated at any time ... this wound is huge and deep ... The liberation war was painful, but it had a purpose, it was planned, face to face. The war that followed was much worse. It was fearful, unforgettable and unacknowledged. (CCJP and LRF 1997:60)

The amnesty of April 1988 was portrayed in the state media of the time as benefiting mainly dissidents, and the surrender of the remaining 122 dissidents received extended coverage.¹³ However, it was clearly an estimated 3 500 members of 5 Brigade who benefited most: they were pardoned for the murders of 10 000 civilians, the rape and torture of tens of thousands more, and property destruction often resulting in total loss for victims, across most of Matabeleland and parts of the Midlands.¹⁴

While perpetrators were rewarded with amnesty, victims to date have not been compensated. On the contrary, senior officials in government have yet to fully acknowledge the scale and impact of the atrocities. Mugabe did on one occasion state that if excesses had occurred, then this was 'regrettable', referring to the 1980s massacres as a 'time of madness' (*Sunday Mail* 11.05.97). However, most people in Matabeleland do not view this statement as an adequate apology or explanation. The atrocities as they unfolded were also clearly systematic and orchestrated and not the acts of a few 'mad' individuals. Atrocities continued over four years, and strategies changed; in 1983, the massacres were simultaneous and widespread; in 1984, Bhalagwe Camp was carefully resourced and planned, as were the forced disappearances of 1985. The unrelenting repression of Zapu and those civilians perceived as supporting Zapu was neither short-lived nor accidental. The full truth of these years has not been told and, without, truth, most victims interviewed indicated that they have found it hard to put the events behind them and move on.¹⁵

State policies, 1980–1988 and 2000–2004: similar tactics

State-organised violence and rhetoric

The state has never given Zimbabweans a convincing assurance that the massacres of the 1980s will not recur. Rather, the reverse is the case: in Matabeleland every election campaign since the rise of the MDC has been accompanied by repeated threats of a return of the Gukurahundi massacres. It has become standard procedure for elections in Matabeleland to be accompanied by threats from the ruling party of forced disappearances, forced deprivation of food along political lines, and violence.¹⁶ In May 2004, during a by-election rally for a parliamentary seat in Lupane, Matabeleland North, the vice-president of Zimbabwe, Joseph Msika, promised a return to war if Zanu PF did not win the seat.¹⁷ This rally took place within a kilometre or two of mass graves of civilians murdered seemingly as part of Zanu PF policy 20 years ago; such threats resonate among people who remember 5 Brigade.

For many practical reasons it could be surmised that state-sponsored killings on a similar scale could not easily recur in Zimbabwe. The

world has changed in the last twenty years; the existence of the Internet means that information cannot be controlled in the way it was during the 1980s, where a few roadblocks were enough to prevent most news from reaching the towns. Mugabe's and Zanu PF's status among developed nations has shifted dramatically, particularly in the last five years. In 1983, many gave the new Zimbabwe the benefit of the doubt when talk of massacres began, as in parts of Zimbabwe many positive developments were taking place, such as improved access to health and education. The dissidents indeed existed, and were committing crimes, and Mugabe had the right to sort out the security problem in his country; apartheid South Africa was indeed destabilising the region – behind this rationale, the massacres took place, while the international community by and large ignored them.

While mass killings on this scale could not now take place without comment, more than 300 people have been killed in the last four years; the vast majority of victims have been assumed MDC supporters, killed by supporters of the ruling party; once more, that these are political murders has been officially denied, and the perpetrators, who are often well known, have had *de facto* impunity. Apart from the murders, thousands of cases of torture and assault of MDC supporters have been recorded, and hundreds of thousands of civilians have been displaced by political violence, including the destruction of homesteads and farm invasions. Only a handful of arrests have taken place of those who are known to have committed heinous crimes, yet thousands of opposition supporters have been arrested on false charges, or for trying to engage in ordinary democratic activities, such as peaceful protests, rallies or public meetings in closed buildings.¹⁸

The political violence since 2000 has led to a new understanding of what really happened in Matabeleland and the Midlands by those outside of the affected areas: the 1980s violence was regionalised, and primarily understood only in the affected regions. The current state violence, in keeping with support for the MDC, affects the entire country, which has meant new, widespread retrospective empathy with those who suffered previously, on the part of those who suffer now.

To support Zanu was to be an enemy of the state: since 2000, Zimbabweans have heard the same rhetoric in relation to support for the MDC. Supporters of the MDC have been vilified as Western puppets, terrorists, and the enemy, with an agenda of recolonising

Zimbabwe. For the first time, Shona-speaking regions of Zimbabwe understand that the so-called dissident era provided Zanu PF with an opportunity to crush the only vibrant political opposition of that time, Zapu. In a not altogether dissimilar way, the land invasions since 2000 have provided a front for unrelenting repression of the opposition MDC.¹⁹ There is a continuity in approach by Zanu PF over the decades: apparently legitimate fronts for political repression have been maximally exploited in government propaganda – then, the need to crush dissidents, now, the need to redistribute land – and the large grain of truth in this rhetoric has silenced that international criticism that could have changed the situation. Meanwhile, the democratic space has been vastly diminished.

Condemnation of current events has been loud from European nations and the USA, who have placed travel bans on Zanu PF leadership and repeatedly censured the government. However, Third World governments, including those in Africa, have been loath to criticise all these events, much as the whole world hesitated to criticise the repression of the 1980s. The repression of the MDC has taken place behind a smokescreen of land invasions; Mugabe has therefore been hailed as a great hero who is teaching the British a lesson by reclaiming stolen land, and this image strikes a deep emotional chord in Africa. In the political context of the early 21st century, it is really only southern African governments that can effectively bring Mugabe to book – and it is these governments that seem unwilling to do so (see Phimister, this volume).

Control of information

Silencing all points of view that deviate from official versions of events has been a long-standing strategy of Zanu PF. The Zimbabwean government has since the 1980s enacted laws and enforced state repression to make access to any 'truth' but theirs almost impossible on a daily basis within and without Zimbabwe. In the 1980s, this was comparatively easy; by using roadblocks and movement curfews behind the rationale of a high security risk, news of killings and torture could be controlled. The daily papers at that time were all state-controlled, as were radio and television. Reading archives of the state media of the 1980s is a surreal experience; in Bulawayo, while thousands were being massacred a few kilometres away, *The Chronicle*

was almost silent, blaming dissidents for what little violence was acknowledged.²⁰ This explains why in 1983 most people in unaffected parts of Zimbabwe did not realise what was happening: there was no easy route to knowing. During the 1990s, independent newspapers established themselves, but their voices and the voices of international journalists have been all but eliminated in Zimbabwe in the last five years, so that increasingly Zanu PF's version of events is once more the dominant and almost only one in the nation. The current looming clampdown on non-governmental organisations is a further step in this suppression of information.²¹

Amnesties and state impunity

The amnesty of 1988 was one in a long line of amnesties since 1979 and is part of an established pattern of perpetrators being pardoned at the expense of victims. By 2000, Zimbabwe had had no fewer than five blanket amnesties, which in almost every case have benefited most those who perpetrated crimes against their fellow Zimbabweans on behalf of the government of the day.²² Events since 2000 indicate the outcome of this policy. Since 2000, perpetrators have tortured blatantly without any attempt to hide their identity, and with no attempt to hide the evidence of torture – a clear indication of assumed impunity. Lack of prosecutions indicates that this assumption is well founded. There was once more a general amnesty in October 2000, pardoning all political crimes up to August 2000, except for murder, rape and fraud. There has been no amnesty for political crimes committed since 1 August 2000, which run to thousands, yet very few have been brought to book for such crimes, which include murder, arson, torture and rape.

Amnesties have played a role in muzzling the truth of atrocities at a national level. If crimes are not prosecuted but are rather pardoned, their details do not reach the official public forum. Anyone who refers back to the 1980s massacres is accused by government of reopening old wounds – yet victims refer to these wounds as festering and in need of the truth in order to heal.²³

Impact of impunity on democratic participation

The issue of community destruction as a result of violence is one that has extensive ramifications in southern Africa. Destroying the cohesive

functioning of communities has been a deliberate, strategic policy by the governments of many African countries, including Zimbabwe. A weak community is a politically compliant one. The legacy of this destruction is felt today. Apathy, depression, and an unwillingness to assume leadership roles are not untypical in our communities. The chances of promoting democratic participation and of people standing up for their human rights in the future are seriously diminished in such communities. The task of speaking out is made harder for survivors when impunity exists. In Zimbabwe, perpetrators of violence are still in powerful positions, and survivors are often silenced and afraid. Many civilians in affected areas believe the massacres could happen again, even if there are reasons why this is unlikely. For victims, this belief seems plausible, considering the politically motivated violence and impunity of the last four years.

Two decades of distrust of Zanu PF, combined with a perception of systematic under-development of their region, led civilians in rural Matabeleland to vote overwhelmingly for the MDC in 2000, and again in 2002, in spite of fear and intimidation.²⁴ But this has also predictably drawn Zanu PF attention back to the region, and civilians fear massive repression in any future elections, as Zanu PF attempts to regain lost political space – and face – in Matabeleland. Considering the failure of their brave anti-Zanu PF vote in 2000 and 2002 to change the situation in Zimbabwe, and the fact that the economic position and repression have worsened over the last four years, very few have any faith any more at this point in the power of their vote to change anything. The outcome of the 2002 election in particular left many demoralised and disbelieving. By-elections since then have been marred by violence and voter apathy; people were prepared to overcome their fears in the belief that it was possible to vote Zanu PF out of power, but few MDC supporters believe that elections are free and fairly run now, and they have little faith in their ability to remove this regime democratically. They also once more see the state encouraging the torture of its perceived opponents, and impunity being granted to the perpetrators. They therefore think twice before placing life and limb at risk in order to take part in a fraudulent process. Reversing the current voter apathy will be a major challenge in a new political dispensation.

Impact of impunity on the spirits of the dead

It is no coincidence that the 1980s massacres involved deliberate desecration of cultural needs surrounding death, making the honourable public recognition of these deaths almost impossible. Five Brigade made a point of forbidding mourning and on occasions forced people to take part in grossly disrespectful behaviour, such as dancing and singing on the shallow graves of the newly murdered. In other cases people were threatened with death – and were in fact killed – if they cried for the dead. Others were forced to leave bodies where 5 Brigade chose, on pain of death. Mass graves were very common: between two and twenty people might share a small grave.²⁵ Derek Summerfield refers to the need to publicly remember the dead in order to heal people in situations of mass murder:

Those abusing power typically refuse to acknowledge their dead victims, as if they had never existed and were mere wraiths in the memories of those left behind. This denial, and the impunity of those who maintain it, must be challenged if survivors are to make sense of their losses and the social fabric is to mend. (Summerfield 1995:495)

The amnesty of 1988 and official behaviour since then means that the dead of the Gukurahundi era are still denied. Often there are still no death certificates for the dead, as their fate was never officially recorded, and officials remain obstructive on this issue to date.²⁶ Even where the burial sites of the murdered are known, the lack of culturally appropriate funerals has left people in a state of suspended mourning. While people have certainty about their dead, this at times offers small consolation, tied up as it is with shameful memories of how survivors may have been forced to take part in degrading practices at the time of murder – and there can also be little solace in vivid memories of the brutal ways in which people died. Very often, particularly in murders linked to 1984 and 1985, the dead are ‘disappeared’, their precise burial sites unknown. The spirits of all these unmourned, dishonoured dead are considered to be angry and aggrieved, and a multitude of family and community misfortunes are attributed to them.

Amnesty and de facto impunity have caused great suffering, particularly to the families of those murdered or ‘disappeared’. This experience has been repeated in the post-2000 era, the best-known

case being that of Patrick Nabanyama, kidnapped in broad daylight in June 2000 by war veterans and never seen again. His abductors were pardoned. There is little belief among ordinary citizens of Zimbabwe that the courts can deliver justice in relation to state murders. Certainly there is no living memory of this being possible.

Reparation: what needs to be done

As long as the current political reality obtains, there is no possibility of instituting a meaningful policy of reparation for victims. This section therefore intends to raise suggestions that could be more fully debated in a new political reality at some undefined future time. The policies put forward here are not exclusively related to abuses of the 1980s: many people have been victimised in two or three different eras, and the need for reparation pertains to all eras.

It is a matter of great concern that the tens of thousands of Zimbabweans who have suffered torture and other violations at the hands of the state and its agents are not further abused in the future – *including by having false expectations raised of the likelihood of either justice or reparation*. It is quite clear that, considering the scale of what has happened in the last 40 years, only a tiny fraction of cases will ever see justice in formal court processes, supposing amnesties allowed this. On the other hand, justice is one of those items quickly negotiated away entirely in the interests of a peace accord or transitional phase.

The numbers of perpetrators run to thousands who are responsible for murder, destroying homesteads, torturing with such instruments as barbed wire or screwdrivers, raping women and denying their fellow citizens food. To prove the vast majority of these cases will be close to impossible in terms of the type of evidence required by courts. Yet the social fabric has been seriously damaged, not least by the advent of the youth militia, who have been turned into a band of destructive thugs.²⁷

The task facing Zimbabwe as a nation in the years ahead is how to reintegrate shredded communities in such a way that perpetrators and victims can live together, but that victims are not singled out to make concessions to make this work. For example, in Zimbabwe's recent past – in the late 1990s – there were occasions when victims of dissident attacks that had left them permanently disabled had to live alongside dissidents who had been first amnestied – and then

rewarded by receiving Z\$50 000 payouts in 1997 as war veterans. The victims were entirely legally excluded from financial assistance, while their persecutors, because they were war veterans, suddenly had government pensions for life. Some of these persecutors are once more persecuting these same neighbours with impunity in the current violence.

Reparations and the 1970s

Zimbabwe has its own rather negative history of reparations relating to abuses under the Rhodesians. In the 1970s and since independence, a comparative handful of victims were beneficiaries of reparations from government funds.²⁸ The Commission of Inquiry into the Administration of the War Victims' Compensation Act found gross abuses in the late 1990s (Commission of Inquiry 1998: chapter 11.16). Many rich and highly positioned claimants received huge fraudulent payouts while poor rural victims were sidelined. The Inquiry notes that *over 95 per cent of beneficiaries have been war veterans*. In terms of the Act, around 50 000 of the 52 400 claimants are war veterans.²⁹ These figures are clear evidence that very few of the projected total of 50 000 still-surviving civilian victims from this era were ever compensated.

Reparations and the future

Zimbabwe is a small country with limited resources and limited court systems – the temptation to promise, or even imply, that there will be justice on a large scale must be avoided as it clearly will not happen. Individual compensation will also be beyond the reach of a recovering nation on any meaningful scale and should also therefore not be promised or implied.

Lustration

Yet victims in Zimbabwe want justice – like victims everywhere. However, *with an intensive education campaign, many victims would probably see lustration (purification) processes as at least partial justice*, and would feel relieved to know that those who tortured them have been removed from positions of authority.³⁰ If such removals were carried out with reasonable publicity, with lists of names in the press, for example, lustration would serve to replace the need for dozens of trials of middle-ranking officials. Justice could be restricted to senior

people in government, to send the first-ever message to Zimbabweans that senior office does not exempt you from responsibility to obey the law. Trying those who conceived policy and gave orders from the top would remove the need to try those below, who could be removed from office through some less arduous process in terms of burden of proof.

Possible community-based solutions

Zimbabwean rural communities have existing mechanisms for dealing with miscreants at the local level, with local leadership having powers to intervene in relation to minor civil offences. It might be possible to set up procedures based on existing ones to bring local justice to local perpetrators. Such processes could be similar to those in East Timor, or Rwanda, in terms of community courts. However, there would be a need to consult extensively with local leadership including chiefs and headmen to conceptualise how this might be done in the Zimbabwean context. Unfortunately, in the case of 'Gukurahundi', the majority of crimes were committed by 5 Brigade, who are not from Matabeleland, and whose precise identities are not known to victims. The possibility of local truth-telling involving perpetrators from the 1980s is therefore limited, although not impossible.³¹

Help in rebuilding destroyed homesteads at local levels could be considered, perhaps from NGOs in conjunction with government, through processes encouraging communities to work together to help neighbours, by providing basic wages to local unemployed youths. Materials for rebuilding rural homesteads are not usually very costly, so this could be a manageable venture cost-wise. Amani Trust Matabeleland did something along these lines on a small scale in the late 1990s, by paying children orphaned by Gukurahundi to help repair houses of other Gukurahundi victims too disabled to repair their own houses. The number of destroyed homesteads is probably not so numerous as to make this a cumbersome process.

There are apparently excellent programmes in Sierra Leone involving reintegration of child soldiers by involving them in very specific reconstruction tasks that simultaneously provide skills through experience. Perhaps we could learn from the experiences of the Sierra Leoneans, which have also incorporated local cleansing rituals to make perpetrators acceptable to their communities.

Physical rehabilitation of victims

Certainly physical rehabilitation for victims should be introduced immediately as a free service throughout the healthcare system – but even this has limited potential, considering levels of access to healthcare, quality of healthcare, and the fact that many problems linked to assaults are chronic.

Before current violence made this impossible, Amani Matabeleland was in 1999 in the process of trying to establish a pilot *home-based rehabilitation programme*, by training family members to administer basic physiotherapy to torture victims in rural homes. This programme was conceptualised on the assumption that thousands of torture victims suffer low-grade pain permanently and, because of this pain, do not undertake long walks or long bus rides, to rural clinics that in any case do not have the facilities to provide physical rehabilitation for chronic patients. Home-based care programmes could be considered for use on a larger scale in the future.

Psychological rehabilitation – community empowerment and truth telling

In the experience of Amani Trust Matabeleland, one-on-one psychotherapy by outside ‘experts’ is not necessarily a solution to trauma in the community setting, nor is one-on-one truth-telling necessary (Eppel 2002). Much of the process of talking about the past can be carried out in the context of community meetings, perhaps facilitated by impartial outsiders. Such gatherings could also be task-orientated, aimed at solving some shared problem, rather than just talking because telling the truth is in itself a good thing to do. Deciding how to access needed development that might be on offer as communal reparation could facilitate discussions about the past – who was to blame for what, and how to keep control of future governments. The output of these discussions could be formally recorded in its entirety, through simple use of tape recorders for example, for analysis by researchers, and used to produce a ‘Nunca Mas’-type report on the Guatemalan model. This would document in a psychosocial communal way, rather than an individualistic forensic way, the impact of state violence on communities. It could, as with the Guatemalan model, be produced in a way that facilitated teaching of history and democratic principles back at the level of the source communities.

It should be added that the one group of torture victims that does not have an appropriate cultural space in big meetings is rape victims, and ways of facilitating rehabilitation of this probably sizeable group need to be considered.

A caveat: victim burn-out at ‘truth telling’

While most victims of the 1980s violence have yet to tell their stories, there are others who have repeatedly told their stories, to different human rights organisations and journalists, and have done so under the impression that to do so will bring some material return, or access to free rehabilitation – which with few exceptions has not occurred. Any truth-gathering process should be very careful not to raise the expectation that something will come to the individual or community as a result – unless this is actually going to be the reality. To offer and not fulfil is to reinforce the negative perception, already dominant in rural Matabeleland, that governments and outsiders are not to be trusted and make empty promises for their own motives. Governments torture and lie about it and make empty promises about development when there is an election – this is the fact of experience throughout living memory. To make further empty promises would serve to undermine what is most important now – the need to make governments accountable and to empower rural communities to better withstand torture by governments in the future.

Mass graves

In Matabeleland, the issue of mass graves dating mainly to the 1980s and the need to exhume and reburial the dead or honour them in some other manner has been an overriding one. Amani Trust, Matabeleland, has extensively documented this, and has also undertaken exhumations with the facilitation of the Argentinean Forensic Anthropology Team (EAAF) in order to return human remains for respectful reburial (Eppel 2000). The graves, the bones, the angry spirits and the surviving relatives have once more had to put their needs on hold because of the current violence, but it is beyond doubt that this issue will be raised as of paramount concern in the future.

The exhumation of mass graves has obvious, as yet unutilised, forensic possibilities, in terms of proving that massacres took place and possibly in facilitating prosecutions. However, while most

families might approve of their dead having the opportunity to accuse and incarcerate their murderers, combining court processes with community processes must be done in a way in which family emotional needs are not sidelined by the evidential needs of the courts. This is also a costly procedure and although training by the EAAF, which continues to date, has given some local NGOs a limited capacity to exhume the bodies, government support should be available for aspects of exhumation exercises.

Memorialisation

There have been calls for a memorial at Bhalagwe Camp to commemorate those who died and were tortured there. At the same time, recent research by Amani Trust Matabeleland, involving extensive lengthy tape-recorded interviews with over 60 people in Zimbabwe, including academics, traditional leadership and victims, indicates a disillusionment with 'heroes' acres', which are not necessarily seen as African or useful, but rather have come to suggest corrupt political practice. Our research further shows that this attitude is common throughout southern Africa and perhaps rather than trying to build new heroes' acres to counterbalance the 'Zanu' ones, there should be extensive consultation on what needs to be done in terms of memorialisation. A place is clearly needed to honour the 'disappeared' dead, but traditional leadership have mixed feelings about where to rebury the exhumed dead, or the now-living heroes once they die, with some contending that in order for ancestral spirits to play a role in their family's life their bodies need to be buried nearby and not in a remote place. This might explain the current tangible neglect of provincial and district heroes' acres. Whatever happens to memorial processes in the future, it could be suggested that something like regional museums recording the history of their region, as told by the communities themselves, should be promoted over places where politicians can make abusive self-aggrandising speeches.

There are doubtless many creative possibilities for rebuilding the damaged nation that is Zimbabwe, and probably many of them will not require huge resources, but rather human inventiveness and co-operation between government, communities and NGOs. What will be needed is extensive consultation with communities themselves, in particular their leadership, facilitated by those who have some idea of

the bounds of the possible – this will help us to look way beyond the very limited justice and reparation that the courts of Zimbabwe will be able to offer to a mere handful out of the tens of thousands of victims looking for some kind of redress.

Endnotes

- 1 'Gukurahundi' refers to the first rain of summer that washes away the chaff left from the previous season: civilians in Matabeleland see themselves as the rubbish that had to be washed away. Mugabe gave this name to 5 Brigade at their passing-out parade in December 1982.
- 2 This report outlines in brief the antagonisms and other factors that predisposed the nation for the events of the 1980s. The current chapter can refer only in brief to these events.
- 3 The Dumbutshena Commission of Inquiry into these events has been suppressed to date.
- 4 In the 1980 elections, Zapu won all seats in this region, representing 20 per cent of the population.
- 5 It is not possible in this chapter to unravel the full history of these years; readers are referred to CCJP and LRF (1997) or to Alexander et al. (2000). The details of the 1980s in what follows have relied on these works.
- 6 CCJP and LRF (1997) states that out of 7 246 violations reported to their researcher, 7 104 or 98 per cent were attributed to government agents, and of these 5 743 or 80 per cent were committed by 5 Brigade.
- 7 Since the 1980s Zanu has a history of abusing food for political ends, which is why there was a high degree of concern linked to the shortage of food in the country at the end of 2004, the refusal of the government to allow the World Food Programme to distribute on a large scale, and the looming election of 2005.
- 8 Since coming to power in 1980, Zanu has been predisposed to using youth indoctrinated with its propaganda to commit violence against political opposition – since 2001 youth militia have once more been a major tool of the ruling party.
- 9 Personal interviews with ex-members of 5 Brigade.
- 10 Dumiso Dabengwa and Lookout Masuku were accused of treason in 1982, tried and found innocent but detained until 1986; in 1985, five Zapu MPs and eight ex-Zipra army commanders were detained

and some were accused of treason. Charges were later dropped, but the accused were kept in detention for many months. Arrest on false charges was a common strategy against Zapu throughout the 1980s.

- 11 The Zimbabwe Unity Movement and the Forum Party both made attempts in the ensuing ten years to establish a viable opposition, but were infiltrated and destroyed. The full history of these parties is not the topic of this chapter.
- 12 This 1998 survey was carried out by the current author on behalf of the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace: the full results have to date not been published by the Catholic Bishops' Conference. 751 people were randomly interviewed by 20 researchers over a three-week period.
- 13 Dissident numbers were estimated by Emmerseon Mnangagwa himself to be around 300 at their peak; while they committed terrible crimes, atrocities attributable to them are around five per cent of the total or less. Even according to official state releases, which undoubtedly exaggerated dissident crimes, they are indicated as having murdered between 150 and 400 people during the 1980s, depending on the government source (CCJP and LRF 1997:167).
- 14 The true number of dead will probably never be known; some estimates put it as high as 20 000.
- 15 Extensive research and interviews by the author over the last decade, plus anecdotal information from other researchers.
- 16 Multiple primary interviews by Amani Trust, Matabeleland, during the 2000 parliamentary elections, 2001 rural district council elections, and 2002 presidential elections. See Physicians for Human Rights, Denmark, reports on torture in Zimbabwe (2002).
- 17 ZBC news bulletin, 08.05.04.
- 18 See Solidarity Peace Trust (2004) for details of civilian arrests.
- 19 While land inequities were – and still are – enormous in Zimbabwe, the vast majority of acts of political repression and violence have occurred not on commercial farms, but in rural and urban areas removed from them. This indicates that the violence is linked less to land than to destruction of the MDC.
- 20 *The Chronicle* is Bulawayo's state-owned daily. The massive difference between media reports and statements about events made by victims is well illustrated in CCJP and LRF (1997), where separate databases of human rights violations were compiled, one using *The Chronicle* as a

- source, and the other using church records and interviews with people in affected areas. It is hard to believe it is the same period of history.
- 21 The muzzling of media and civil society voices is explored elsewhere in this volume, and the point here is just that such muzzling of other voices dates back to the 1980s, as do many other strategies we see today.
 - 22 There were amnesties in 1979 and 1980, which predominantly benefited Rhodesian army members but also pardoned crimes by Zipra and Zanla. The 1988 amnesty made 5 Brigade unanswerable for the estimated 10 000–20 000 people it massacred; it also pardoned a handful of dissidents for their approximately 300 murders. The October 2000 amnesty again clearly benefited government agents and their supporters most: human rights organisations documenting political violence found more than 90 per cent of violations were at the hands of Zanu PF.
 - 23 Author's interviews with victims, collected 1995–2004.
 - 24 Matabeleland stood out in 2000, when rural areas voted almost solidly for the MDC: 21 out of 23 seats in Matabeleland went convincingly to the MDC. Elsewhere in the nation, the MDC overwhelmingly took the urban vote, while rural areas tended to vote for Zanu PF. Overall, Zanu PF, in a contest marred by state violence, narrowly won 51 per cent of the vote.
 - 25 Disposal of the dead could also mean forcing villagers to assist in the throwing of bodies down mine shafts; at times, bodies were left out in the open, to be scavenged by animals.
 - 26 This in turn has caused practical problems for their children, who cannot acquire birth certificates. See CCJP and LRF (1997).
 - 27 For a full discussion of the youth militia programme, see Solidarity Peace Trust (2003). Since 2001, school leavers have received training in Zanu PF doctrine and have been used to commit acts of violence against the 'enemy', meaning MDC supporters.
 - 28 The Victims of Terrorism (Compensation) Act of August 1973, chapter 340, which was made effective back to 1 July 1972, and The War Victims' Compensation Act of 1980, which included victims from 1972 to 1980, and was broadened to include war veterans and those who would under the Rhodesian Act have been considered 'terrorists or terrorist collaborators' and have been excluded from compensation.

- 29 This excludes all the other compensations they have had such as payouts, pensions and initial demobilising benefits.
- 30 For example, Perence Shiri, who commanded 5 Brigade, is currently Commander of the Zimbabwe Air Force.
- 31 In a very few instances, 5 Brigade soldiers involved in murders have approached surviving families and asked to make amends as they are being persecuted by the angry spirits of the murdered (interviews by current author).

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Reintegration of ex-combatants into Zimbabwean society

A lost opportunity

Paul Themba Nyathi

Introduction

In the last seven years, after more than a decade of relative obscurity, Zimbabwe's ex-combatants have once again become key players in the unfolding events of their nation. Headlines around the world have recorded the 'land revolution' in Zimbabwe, in which 4 000 white commercial farmers have been displaced by war veterans frustrated by their need for land.¹ This chapter will contend that while the genuine need for land redistribution has been long neglected by the Zimbabwean government, the land invasions, occurring as and when they did, have been a smokescreen for the real purpose of political violence in the last five years – which has been to try and destroy the political opposition, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC). This chapter will not examine the complexities of the land invasions and the motivations behind them, but will rather give an overview of the nation's failure to reintegrate its ex-combatants and meet their social and economic needs over the last 25 years. Owing to this failure, thousands of ex-combatants are living lives of poverty and marginalisation, and their primary identity, more than two decades after the end of the civil war, is that of ex-combatants. These two factors, combined with President Robert Mugabe's realisation in 2000 that his popularity was waning in the face of a vibrant opposition, have paved the way for Mugabe to exploit the ex-combatants to destroy the very democratic space they originally fought to create.

'War veterans' – a heterogeneous group

An estimated 50 000 ex-combatants remain in Zimbabwe today, although some observers have challenged this number, saying that it is too high. Combatants came from many walks of life, and contributed either in combat, or through playing a mainly administrative role in camps outside the country. There was also a small, highly educated elite, who came back to Zimbabwe and were either given senior posts in government, or went ahead to establish themselves in the private sector, in businesses or white-collar jobs. This minority 'reintegrated' themselves, in the sense that they have not needed to be beneficiaries of special programmes.²

War veterans have adopted a variety of political viewpoints within Zimbabwe in the last twenty years, and particularly in the last five years, which have seen dramatic polarisation of society at all levels, including among the war veterans themselves.³ This chapter will focus on that majority of ex-combatants who were originally recruited from the masses of poorly educated rural poor, and who, for a variety of reasons that will be raised here, have remained poorly reintegrated and at the political beck and call of the ruling Zanu PF government.

Historical context: 1980–1997

In April 1980, Zimbabwe achieved independence, ending a civil war of more than a decade. The civil war was fought between the combined Rhodesian armed forces on the one hand, and Zipra (the Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army), the armed wing of Zapu (the Zimbabwe African People's Union), and Zanla (the Zimbabwe National Liberation Army), the armed wing of Zanu (the Zimbabwe African National Union) on the other. Zipra and Zanla shared the aim of ending colonial rule, but were antagonistic to one another as well, and frequently fought against each other in the field.

At independence, the new Zimbabwe faced the problem of how to selectively integrate members of these two guerrilla armies and the existing Rhodesian army into one Zimbabwean army, and also the problem of how to demobilise and reintegrate thousands of ex-combatants who would not be absorbed into such a combined armed force. Historical tensions between Zanla and Zipra dated back to 1963, when the Zanu–Zapu split took place. Over the ensuing two decades, this split had been entrenched by growing differences in combat

training culture. Integration therefore proved problematic; the legacy of hostility between Zipra and Zanla has led to accusations that to date the army is not properly integrated, but the details of the process of integration are not the primary focus of this chapter.

The Gukurahundi era of the 1980s, during which a specially trained force of ex-Zanlas hunted down and killed an estimated 10 000 civilians in the western half of the country, including ex-Zipras and those believed to support Zapu, is covered in a separate chapter of this book and will not be dealt with here.⁴ Suffice it to say that the problematic dynamics between Zipra and Zanla, and the massacres of the 1980s need to be understood as part of the sad legacy that to date has not been dealt with adequately in Zimbabwe, and that continues to play an undeniably negative role in the lives of many war veterans – and in the communities in which they live.

Demobilisation: government benefits, 1980

Government at independence believed that reintegration was a simple matter of demobilisation, and not a process that required a comprehensive policy that would need to be implemented for years. Their policy therefore did not deal adequately with the issue, and there was no multi-pronged approach, for example looking specifically at the needs of women or of war-disabled ex-combatants in a systematic way.⁵ No attempts were made to prepare communities for the reappearance of ex-combatants, nor was there any programme aimed at resolving problems that developed in communities accepting back ex-combatants.

During the war, debate about where the revolution was heading was grossly insufficient; it was simply stated that it was heading 'towards freedom'. There was ideological confusion; depending on the guerrilla army concerned, there was a Chinese ideology, a North Korean ideology, and a Soviet ideology, each of which influenced both training and expectations. Hierarchies immediately established themselves after independence, with the most highly skilled war veterans being absorbed into all the best posts in government and the civil service. The leadership soon proved itself to be actually capitalist by inclination, amassing personal wealth in spite of the leadership code of ethics. In contrast, socialism was applied to lower-ranking ex-combatants, who were directed into co-operatives and collective

living. During the war, various versions of socialism were applied to the lower ranks, in the name of discipline – command was centralised, with no democracy or transparency surrounding decision-making. People who were used to following orders were ill-equipped to organise themselves into co-operatives. Most war veterans who opted for reintegration through organised programmes had had no formal education before the war. They therefore clung to the one thing that gave them status in their communities – the fact that they were liberators. This gave them identity and pride in a world in which they were ill-equipped to compete.

Traditional ceremonies – and Heroes' Acres

Some families performed traditional cleansing ceremonies for returning family members, but at the national level this was not considered necessary. In retrospect, a national traditional ceremony of cleansing could have been beneficial, and it would have opened the way for other similar events at the local level.

Instead, the government instituted 'Heroes' Acres' on the socialist model, at national, provincial and district levels, where 'deserving' ex-combatants were buried and continue to be buried. However, the process of identifying who should be regarded as a hero has been entirely usurped by Zanu PF, with those who have served the party's interests in the last few years being assured of space in Heroes' Acres, regardless of whether they have tortured or murdered, and with little concern for their actual war credentials.

Mugabe appears to use these funerals as a pretext for making major policy statements, and to rail against perceived enemies. His speeches aim at glorifying the revolution and those who fought in it. There is no humility, no introspection, no recognition that the liberators also need to be forgiven for those crimes that were perpetrated in the course of revolution. Funerals are used to lecture the nation on the unending debt of all Zimbabweans in perpetuity to those who fought the liberation war. This has succeeded in further alienating ex-combatants from ordinary Zimbabweans who made unrecognised sacrifices for the struggle, and from those millions of young Zimbabweans who have no memory of the war.

Heroes' Acre events stand in stark contrast to traditional ceremonies, which always begin by recognising that 'we are nothing',

'we are instruments of the spirits'. Traditional ceremonies recognise that while those who returned are heroes, they are also, many of them, killers in need of forgiveness.

General demobilisation benefits

In 1980 those war veterans who were not earmarked for absorption into the new national army were demobilised. Each received Z\$400, which at that time was equivalent to US\$400. This was considered start-up money, but it was not enough to be useful. Most ex-combatants became destitute very quickly, and remained so. Money payouts did little to improve their position; this money did not open employment doors, create jobs, or give recipients enough collateral for further loans. This 'golden handshake' was an attempt to give recognition to those who had liberated the nation. However, it began a contentious debate around the right of ex-combatants to financial compensation, a debate which still rages today.

The government also set up a Ministry of Co-operatives, placing ex-combatants in co-operative farming and other ventures. While government provided the land, other inputs, including training, were seen to by the NGO sector. In Manicaland alone, around 250 farms were handed over to groups of war veterans for co-operative use. However, in 1995 the government repossessed these farms in Manicaland because they were being underutilised, and were not producing.

NGO contribution to reintegration

The NGO sector contributed to reintegration in a way that was designed to complement government efforts. However, it is clear that certain fundamental mistakes were made. Training was often partial as well as poorly planned and followed through. Years of Marxist ideological training had emphasised the role that could be played by co-operatives, and this was the primary model used to create employment for ex-combatants. It proved unsuitable for a variety of reasons. Co-operatives, whether facilitated by government or backed by NGOs, have tended to fail.

The Zimbabwe Project Trust (Zimpro) was set up soon after independence, specifically to facilitate projects and skills development for ex-combatants. In world terms, Zimpro's work

was groundbreaking: in the 1980s there were few NGOs anywhere dealing with reintegration on a massive scale. Another NGO was the Organisation of Collective Co-operatives (OCCZim), which organised collective ventures, including farms.

However, few reintegration programmes aimed to really reintegrate war veterans to the point where being war veterans was no longer their main identity. On the contrary, co-operatives and training available only to ex-combatants ensured that they lived their lives in parallel to their communities, and not as an integrated part of them.

Farms were set up for war veterans only, as were other forms of co-operative. Members had specific benefits and were supposed to adopt a specific way of being in the world, which in some ways was at odds with traditional ways of structuring rural society. In many instances therefore, they remained 'the other' rather than being accepted back and returned to normality in the eyes of their neighbours. This situation was exacerbated by the failure of so many of the ventures set up exclusively for war veterans, which left those involved not only alienated from their communities, but also, eventually, 'failures'.

Collective living is alien to local culture, apart from very specific forms of co-operation at community level. For example, on occasion families come together to help the old or disabled to plough their fields, in a one- or two-day co-operative effort. But on the traditional model, families and not whole communities manage harvests and the product of labour. No comprehensive attempt was made to spread the co-operative philosophy beyond the programmes for ex-combatants.

It was inevitable that there would be clashes between traditional and co-operative expectations over some issues. For example, if you live in a co-operative culture where you work to receive an equal share, what happens when members of the extended family come to stay? What benefits should extend to visiting family in such situations, when co-operative members themselves are subject to strict codes of conduct in terms of contributing labour in order to qualify for a share in production?

Training

Most ex-combatants had little formal education and few skills. However, too much of the training offered to ex-combatants was poorly planned, and was offered on a 'one size fits all' basis. Five-day

courses in one skill or another were on offer every few weeks, but they did not necessarily build on the previous month's training, and there was little structured guidance as to who suited which training programme.

Much of the training was irrelevant to the needs of war veterans. For example, many ex-combatants were trained in basic bookkeeping, but they had no businesses that needed books. Furthermore, the level of training they had was not sufficient to make them readily employable in bookkeeping in ordinary businesses. Those running the finances of co-operatives needed more than bookkeeping skills: they did not have adequate business management skills. If people have no previous business management experience, how can they be expected to successfully manage the income and expenditure of 20 families, in a society that is only partially socialist, and with little government support or subsidy?

There was an assumption that giving ex-combatants very basic training in business skills would enable them to become self-employed. However, this assumption failed to take into account the culture of war: a few months' training is not going to change a mindset. Soldiers live one day at a time, and generally spend money as it comes in. It could have been anticipated that most war veterans would prove highly unsuited to running businesses, as this is in fact a highly skilled and not a casual affair. Many businesses set up by groups of ex-combatants had failed by the end of the 1980s.⁶

Failed expectations

By the 1990s, many war veterans were angry and vengeful. Most ventures set up for and by war veterans had failed by that time, yet the leaders in government were clearly profiteering while ignoring their less fortunate colleagues from the struggle. Ex-combatants had to struggle with an identity crisis: they knew they were 'winners' in terms of the revolution, but what did they have to show for it? Most had expected real material benefits – to own big houses and drive cars. But most had returned with little education, and found themselves doing menial labour.

Money payouts and a little skills training here and there had clearly not worked. In retrospect, government should have organised long-term employment for ex-combatants, employment that took the

combatants' experience and strengths into consideration. Combatants have one major skill that can be used positively, and that is to mobilise communities around a specific cause. In recent years, Zanu PF has once more exploited this skill negatively, with the land invasions, which have, to the detriment of the country, also utilised the other predominant skill of combatants – committing violence.

With creative thought, it would have been possible to utilise the ex-combatants' ability to mobilise their own communities towards development programmes where other more skilled fellow-citizens could work alongside them to everyone's benefit. Isolating war veterans on co-operatives was a mistake both socially and economically, with some co-operatives becoming little more than ghettos. There is no social reintegration in such an experience. The war veterans should have been encouraged to see themselves as a resource to the communities in and of themselves, coming to promote the community as a whole, and not just the significance of the struggle.

War veterans and the present crisis: 1997–2004

Impact of the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP)

In the mid 1990s, Zimbabwe was starting to decline economically, and the World Bank encouraged it to structurally adjust its economy and remove protective import–export barriers and exchange controls. By this time, many war veterans were already poor and unemployed, as the economy entered a period of belt tightening that resulted in businesses laying off more people.

Zimbabwe had inherited a highly centralised economy, and businesses that were not very competitive did not survive. With the advent of ESAP and the lifting of restrictions on imports, locally made products could not compete with the packaging and marketing strategies of international brands. Small-scale co-operatives raising chickens and producing eggs could not compete; neither could village-level cosmetic or school uniform co-operatives. Many war veteran enterprises that had survived the 1980s could cope with manufacturing and marketing at the level of the rural business centre, but were ill-equipped to deal with this more competitive environment. They closed by the dozen in the late 1990s.

Pressure from the War Veterans' Association, 1997

During the late 1990s, the Zimbabwe National Liberators War Veterans' Association (ZNLWVA) was reorganised under the leadership of a charismatic and unscrupulous man, Dr Chenjerai Hitler Hunzvi, whose war credentials remain highly dubious. He reorganised the war veterans into a highly effective lobbying force, and carved out a niche for his association in a Zanu PF that was tired, corrupt and visionless. Hunzvi used violence and threats of violence against Zanu PF and its patron Robert Mugabe, if certain demands were not met. In the face of this pressure and in fear of losing the war veterans' substantial and key support ahead of elections, Mugabe capitulated to their demands and, without consulting Cabinet or considering the budgetary and economic repercussions, the President unilaterally offered the approximately 50 000 war veterans cash gratuities of Z\$50 000 each, free healthcare and education for their families, and Z\$2 000 monthly pensions for life.⁷ This resulted in the immediate crash of the Zimbabwe dollar, which halved its value overnight on what is known as 'Black Friday' in November 1997.

With these payouts, Hunzvi set up Zexcom (Zimbabwe Ex-Combatants Company). Many thousands of war veterans entrusted their benefits to this company. Zexcom was supposed to capitalise business and housing schemes for war veterans – but the fund was looted and a senior war veteran served a jail term for defrauding the fund of its money. There were undoubtedly many in the leadership involved in this corruption, which once more left ordinary war veterans bankrupt. The payouts also served to increase popular resentment against ex-combatants.

The war veterans: land invasions and political role since 2000

The payouts set the stage for a dynamic that has been central since that time – a relationship between Mugabe and the war veterans that has been mutually exploitative, and which has given the President a vast unofficial government-supporting force prepared to break the law in order to keep him in power, while hoping themselves to continue benefiting materially. After these payouts, war veterans gave loyalty directly to Mugabe rather than to Zanu PF party structures. Mugabe used the war veterans to supplant the formal party structures, and by so doing, he weakened the party's ability to challenge him. From

then on, he could use the war veterans to intimidate his would-be opponents within or without the party, effectively entrenching his own position.

Mugabe's attitude seems to be that those who liberated the country are owed eternal, unqualified loyalty by current and forthcoming generations, and that the only legitimate government of Zimbabwe is one headed by war veterans, or by those who place the significance of the War of Liberation before other concerns.⁸ This 'war liberation psychosis' is a dominant factor in Zimbabwe today; and it could be argued that other governments in the southern African region have a similar attitude, perceiving liberation parties as deserving to hold an eternally special place in their countries' political space.

In February 2000, Zanu PF suffered its first-ever defeat at the polls, when a majority voted against the government-proposed revised constitution in a referendum. Within two weeks of this poll defeat, land invasions began, and after decades of failing to adequately address the land issue, Zanu PF started a massive campaign to displace commercial farmers from their land and to redistribute the land to war veterans and others. These land invasions were led by war veterans. Government media reminded the nation that the war had been about land for the people. After two decades, government was beginning to resettle people in a hasty and haphazard way, accompanied by violence and the displacement of an estimated 300 000 farm workers and their families.⁹ A hundred and sixty thousand war veterans and other peasants were given small plots of land from commercial farms, while the war veteran hierarchy in the form of government ministers and army leadership were given the best farms intact. The government also revived racist propaganda, 'reminding' war veterans that the whites remained the enemy, and blaming the referendum defeat on South African-based Zimbabwean whites who had supposedly crossed the border at Beitbridge in their thousands to vote down Mugabe's constitutional proposal.

The short-sightedness of this programme is already clear just a few years on: massive tracts of land supposedly allocated to war veterans and others remain unoccupied and unutilised, while at least 3 million Zimbabweans will face starvation in 2004–5. Without adequate schooling, healthcare and other infrastructure, those who have been resettled will not be better off than before, or able to generate food

and foreign exchange through production of commercial crops. At best, under current conditions, some of these farmers will manage to subsist.

At the same time as the land invasions were occurring, and under their effective cover, thousands of human rights violations took place, aimed at millions of opposition party supporters, as Zanu PF faced the first real threat to its political power in 20 years, in the form of the MDC. The Zanu PF propaganda machine falsely presented the MDC as a party bent on reversing the gains of independence and as opposed to land redistribution; Zanu PF conflated the genuine demands for free and fair elections and the right to democratic choice with an attack on what they consider an unlegislated but inviolable principle – that only a war veteran can rule the country.¹⁰

The vast majority of human rights violations in the last three years have been at the hands of the war veterans, and the vast majority of violations have also occurred not on commercial farms but in the surrounding rural areas where the majority of Zimbabweans live.¹¹ Furthermore, there has been a very clear pattern of violations coinciding with election periods: in return for the promise of land, the war veterans have been used to carry out dirty campaigns on behalf of Zanu PF.

Government's message: war veterans are above the law

The government and Robert Mugabe in particular have sent a strong message to war veterans: that violent coercion pays and is in fact the only law of the land at this time. War veterans have been given impunity for tens of thousands of acts of violence and destruction over the last three years, including murder, torture, assault, theft, and the burning of property.¹² It is apparent that, as government has been unable to meet the material needs of war veterans over the years, putting them above the law is a compensation for their continued material poverty.

Throughout this exercise, leaders in southern Africa have hesitated to criticise the Zanu PF government, because it has managed to portray these events as a fight against a renewed threat of colonialism, as a 'Third Chimurenga (revolution)' in which a small Third World nation finally teaches the coloniser Britain a lesson and takes land back from the whites. Implicitly, the actions of war veterans in Zimbabwe

have been given a regional blessing, even though they have involved gross crimes, which, in more than 95 per cent of cases, have been against fellow black citizens, mostly poor rural peasants – the very people who made unrecognised personal sacrifices during the 1970s in order to feed and protect these same war veterans.

Summary of the government attitude to war veterans

Government did not work to reintegrate war veterans in any structured way. It offered them haphazard benefits without skills training or other inputs and support, which promoted one-off spending sprees that only served to whet the appetite of these mainly very poor and marginalised people for more money. Furthermore, by capitulating to violent pressure on several occasions, and by actively encouraging gross crimes against others, government has sent a message to war veterans that they can break the law with impunity, and that violence will get them what they want.

Any reintegration that may have taken place has been largely reversed in the last three years, with war veterans singled out in government propaganda as a separate and special group in society; as happened in Matabeleland in the 1980s, war veterans have once more been used by Zanu PF to handle the unpleasant task of committing crimes against their fellow citizens in order to maintain the party in power.

For many war veterans there is a gap between the rhetoric that has once more given them elevated status, and their real treatment in the last three years. Already, there are reports of war veterans resettled in the last two years now being thrown off some farms by more powerful government officials, and even having their newly built shacks burnt to the ground to ensure their dispersal. Others sit on their smallholdings and ask in vain for the inputs and support that they will need in order not to starve this coming year. It seems that as far as some in government are concerned the mass of war veterans have served their purpose for now, and can be sidelined once more, while the elite war veterans reap the fruits of this latest 'Chimurenga', as they did with the previous one.

However unhappy some war veterans may be with this situation, they have been rendered entirely dependent on Zanu PF by events over the last four years. All they have is the ability to sell their violence for use in Zanu PF's strategies when they are called on to do so, in

exchange for the dubious recognition this brings.

In short, the government views war veterans as a handy reserve force to do its dirty work and to campaign violently and illegally when elections loom. Between elections, they are largely ignored. This attitude cannot but have had profound effects on the war veterans themselves and on the communities that are once more being terrorised, ostensibly in the name of a revolution, but in reality because they have dared to support the concept that no liberation party has the right to rule in Zimbabwe indefinitely. In some communities, polarisation between ex-combatants and others has never been greater.

Zimbabwe: the challenge ahead

A massive task awaits Zimbabweans, who, once there is political change in their nation, will have to deal with reintegrating those who should have been reintegrated 25 years ago. Both government and civil society will face the enormous challenge of how to deal with the past in order to build a better future. The war veterans are already an elderly group, mostly ranging in age from 50 to 80 or more. By the time the political space exists to reassess their roles, they may mostly be beyond employment age, and in need of social services and pensions rather than skills training and jobs. It must be emphasised that many hundreds of war veterans have also turned perpetrator in the last five years, committing gross crimes, including murder, torture and property destruction, with impunity. The challenge is how to repair the damaged social fabric without being perceived to reward those who have evaded justice at the expense of victims.

In addition to the war veterans, thousands of Zimbabwean youth may also need reintegration. Youths as young as 15 are being brutalised through the 'national youth service training'.¹³ Even though Zimbabwe is not currently engaged in a war involving hundreds of deaths, the social fabric is being systematically destroyed: children trained as youth militia by ex-combatants wreak havoc in their own rural communities. These young people are being taught to see anyone who supports the MDC as the enemy. They are being taught to hate and to commit acts of violence against their own families and community members.

Zimbabwe as a community is profoundly divided, with divisions dating back to the war of liberation being exacerbated by current

events. The process ahead is not one of simply reintegrating the new breed of combatants, the youth militia, and of making renewed efforts to reintegrate the old ex-combatants – it will be necessary to rebuild the entire nation and heal rifts within families, communities and provinces. It will take many resources and many different approaches to facilitate this. As regards reintegrating the ex-combatants, it is possible that the splinter groups already existing among the war veterans, namely the War Liberators' Platform, and the Liberators' Peace Platform, could play a key role. Those ex-combatants allocated land under the current resettlement programme will have to have their position assessed as part of the general land audit that will be necessary if a meaningful way of rebuilding the devastated agricultural economy is to be devised. Suitable infrastructure and skills training will need to be provided in those areas where resettled groups remain on their allocated land. This time, it will be essential that any process of reintegration does just that – and does not treat ex-combatants, including youth militia, as a special group deserving of training and employment privileges precisely because they were perpetrators, while their tens of thousands of victims are stranded without compensation.

It is clear that the nation as a whole cannot move forward until the past – including the post-2000 era of violence – is reassessed and faced honestly by all parties. A process of truth-telling and accountability should be an essential part of any reintegration policy. Many of the lingering problems between war veterans and their communities today have been caused by the failure to deal honestly with the less pleasant aspects of the war of liberation, as well as the crimes linked to the colonial regime before the war, and also a national failure to face the truth of the Gukurahundi massacres. Add to this the urgent need to deal with the current suffering caused by five years of torture, repression and corruption, and the task at hand is a large one, involving many generations of both victims and perpetrators. But it is necessary for Zimbabweans as a nation to go through some process of accountability, involving both truth and punishment, before it will be reasonable to expect any other programmes of reintegration – skills training, local cleansing ceremonies, job creation – to have any chance of lasting success.

Endnotes

- 1 The terms 'war veteran' and 'ex-combatant' are used interchangeably in this chapter.
- 2 This has not prevented rich and well-established ex-combatants from being among the most successful beneficiaries of both the War Victims' Compensation Fund and the recent land acquisition programme, in spite of government proclamations that the latter was intended to benefit landless peasants with no other source of income.
- 3 Currently, there are two opposition groupings of war veterans, the War Liberators' Platform in Mashonaland, and the Liberators' Peace Platform in Matabeleland. Both have distanced their membership from the ideology and behaviour of the dominant Zimbabwe National Liberators War Veterans' Association (ZNLWVA). In addition, others have stood back from the current political melee; there are thousands who have filled other roles and attained identities outside of Zanu PF politics and ex-combatant structures. This group are fully 'reintegrated' and feel no solidarity with the members of the ZNLWVA or their demands.
- 4 CCJPZ (1997) gives comprehensive details of this period of massacres in the west of the nation. The massacres should not be viewed as primarily the result of failed army integration, although this played a part. Rather, it is clear that it was Robert Mugabe's intention to create a one-party state from the time he came into power, and the unstable situation provided an excuse to oppress Zapu-supporting regions ruthlessly.
- 5 Around 5 000 females were demobilised. Skills training for them was inappropriately sexist; their reintegration into communities that viewed them as 'spoiled goods' sexually, and as 'threatening' because of their 'warrior' experience, was problematic in many instances. Similarly, handicapped ex-combatants were woefully under-catered for. This chapter cannot explore these issues in depth.
- 6 A few succeeded and exist to date, such as Vukuzenzeli near Zvishavane in the Midlands, which over the years has developed towards sharing of amenities but not profits. Co-operatives failed partly as a result of macro-economic conditions and policies, especially Economic Structural Adjustment in the 1990s – as indeed did many businesses not run on co-operative principles. Some failed as a result

- of corrupt leadership and, in Matabeleland in the 1980s, government seized co-operative businesses that had been established by Zipra.
- 7 Z\$50 000 was worth around US\$10 000 then. Monthly pensions have been upgraded and have remained above the minimum wage.
 - 8 For example, in August 2004 at the hero's funeral of Mark Dube, Mugabe stated that his successor would have to be a war veteran.
 - 9 The land issue and the legitimate, long-standing need for organised redistribution are dealt with in other chapters in this book and will not be explored here.
 - 10 Morgan Tsvangirai, President of the MDC, is a Trade Union leader and not a war veteran.
 - 11 Monthly reports from the Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum consistently show that around ten per cent of violations are committed by uniformed forces and the balance by 'war veterans' or Zanu PF youth, including militia.
 - 12 In October 2000 an amnesty gave impunity to all political crimes except murder and rape, but de facto impunity exists even for these crimes, and for all crimes committed since 2000.
 - 13 The issue of current youth-related problems, especially those linked to youth militia, will not be dealt with here.

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Contextualising the military in Zimbabwe between 1999 and 2004 and beyond

Martin R. Rupiya

Introduction

The current crisis in Zimbabwe is characterised by the reciprocal phenomena of the politicisation of the military and the militarisation of politics. This raises important questions: why has this situation arisen? What impact has this had on hitherto apparently stable relations between the military and civil society? By implication it also raises the question of who or what constitutes the military. Once we have determined this, we need to answer another question: why does the military acquiesce in the politicisation project? The last question should also illuminate the objectives of those responsible for creating the new political and military conditions obtaining in Zimbabwe and assess whether or not these have been achieved. If they have, then what is the future of the military in the post-reconstruction era in Zimbabwe? These are weighty questions but they need to be posed and solutions need to be found if the country is going to return to sustainable internal stability in the future.

The transition to militarism

Just a few weeks before the watershed parliamentary elections of June 2000, the military, through its spokesperson, Lieutenant Colonel Chancellor Diye, issued a statement declaring its neutrality and indicating its willingness to work with whatever party would emerge victorious from the polls. At the time, the country enjoyed stable civil–military relations and the statement did not draw much attention or comment. However, subsequent events soon shattered the tranquillity of these relations. The seeds of the disruption lay in the

highly contested poll of 2000. While we can cite the June poll as the turning point, ominous signs had already become noticeable following the referendum of February 2000. The referendum rejected a position preferred by government in a move perceived as representing the agenda of the political opposition and civic society.

Results of the June 2000 poll were very close, ending in acrimony and numerous court actions. The ruling party, the Zimbabwe African National Union (Patriotic Front) was returned to office with a hugely reduced majority of only five seats, while the opposition, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), barely ten months old, captured a credible 57 seats.¹ Although the MDC lost the majority of the parliamentary seats in the polls, when it mounted a series of court challenges afterwards, a number of constituency results were overturned in its favour. The basic argument advanced was that the political opposition had been unable to campaign owing to the political violence unleashed by the ruling party employing state, defence and security structures.

The MDC continued to gather strength even after the June 2000 poll, and its popularity was evident in the results of urban, local government and mayoral polls around the country.

From the time of the referendum of February 2000, the parliamentary poll of June 2000 and the urban local government election held before 2002, a trend established itself in the political arena, reflecting growing support for the MDC. The reasons for the steady but unrelenting ebb in the fortunes of the ruling party were mixed. Confining ourselves to the main ones only, these included: the natural tendency, demonstrated by voters throughout the world, to rebel against the establishment; deteriorating standards of living related to inappropriate economic policies, aggravated by the impact of globalisation; a bloated bureaucracy characterised by unauthorised and unbudgeted public expenditure that was not necessarily linked to complementary productive-sector generation of surplus; withdrawal of Western financial institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank by September 1999; the introduction of a highly contested constitution; lack of robust action by the state in cases of corruption; and what was perceived as simply a mood for change.

Taken together, the factors represented a mixed bag of internal and external causes of concern for the electorate with the blame

largely laid at the door of the incumbent government. As a result, the electorate voted against Zanu PF. This trend also coincided with an external sentiment that was at odds with the incumbents, further reinforcing the internal–external camp which was agitating for political change.² In retrospect, however, the genuine causes that gave birth to alternative political voices in the life of the country have since been somewhat overshadowed by the clumsy attempts of external forces to take advantage of the real or imagined weaknesses of the ruling party. It was against this background of increasing support for the political opposition that the country prepared itself to hold the presidential elections in March 2002.

The implications of the March 2002 presidential poll were far-reaching. On the one hand, the majority ruling party could be faced with a loss of power once its president lost the poll, while in terms of the country's constitution, the opposition, if their candidate won, would be in a position to invite 30 of its members to occupy controlling seats in the House, effectively overturning the ruling party's parliamentary majority. Operating in a winner-take-all parliamentary system, such an arrangement would effectively sideline the ruling party for the next five to seven years, although in theory they would still enjoy a parliamentary majority. Stated differently, winning the presidential election would present the MDC with an opportunity to reverse their marginal loss in June 2000, while for Zanu PF, retaining the presidency would represent a last stand against the debilitating trend that had been in force since February 2000. Faced with such a dilemma, the ruling party made a decisive move to capture the presidential election, employing all instruments available to it, including the open use of the military.

Barely weeks before the presidential election, on 9 January 2002, the chief of the armed forces, flanked by the heads of the various services, prescribed the type of candidature that would be 'acceptable' in running for the office of president. In the view of these senior officers, individuals who lacked 'liberation credentials' were expressly excluded. By implication, one of the contestants, the MDC's trade unionist candidate, was immediately excluded.

It is not difficult to understand the import and purpose of the military's announcement. It was clearly designed not only to cast doubt on the candidature of the political opposition but also to

intervene against the growing tendency of the electorate to vote for the opposition. Put more crudely, the ballot had to be nullified if the ruling party was to continue in power after 2002. As Decalo argues:

The most important causes of military intervention in politics are not military but political and reflect not the social and organizational character of the military establishment but the political and institutional structure of society. (Decalo 1990:3)

The announcement by the military did not go unchallenged. There was a robust rejection of it from the political opposition,³ and from the Chairman of the National Constitutional Assembly, Dr Lovemore Madhuku. The latter published an open letter in the press, challenging the military to refrain from entering the political arena on the side of the ruling party. There was also a response from the Chairman of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) organisation, Mozambican president Joachim Chissano, who publicly rebuked the military and asked that the generals refrain from interfering in politics and confine themselves to their defined task.

Viewed against this background, the politicisation of the armed forces can be seen to have occurred not from military motives but owing to the deliberate actions of the ruling party. The purpose was, and continues to be, the creation of increased space for the military in politics as a counterweight to the unprecedented and persistent influence of the political opposition amongst the voters, especially those in urban communities throughout the country.

Did the intervention by internal and external actors succeed in dissuading the military from active participation in politics in open support of a particular party? In the opinion of the present author, it is common cause that this has not been the case. Available evidence from credible sources shows that this advice was ignored. A report by the African Union Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (2002), is illustrative of this.⁴ The commission issued a damning condemnation of the situation in Zimbabwe, especially of the role of the military in the crisis, and called for the disbandment of several units, including the militia (*Zimbabwe Independent* 16.07.04; Morgan 2004). Other reports coming out of the strictly controlled media environment also share the conclusions of the AU commission.

Understanding the motivation for the politicisation of the military

The change in political and military relations that had taken place between February 2000 and January 2002 was unprecedented in the country's short history: unprecedented because Zimbabwe's military had been brought up on a strict diet of the Maoist principle of 'the political always being superior to the barrel of the gun' when they were initially established as armed factions of the nationalist liberation movements, the Zimbabwe African People's Union (Zapu) and the Zimbabwe African National Union (Zanu). To transform themselves and begin to participate in politics openly as part of attempts to influence election outcomes was for them to travel a new road. But what explains this 'privatisation of the armed forces' and the readiness of these forces to respond accordingly?

As we saw in the section on the deterioration of the political situation, there were internal and external reasons that converged to push the military into the political arena. The following discussion will focus on two elements of the situation in support of this argument. One of these is the external factors that led the armed forces to reject the opposition and find common cause with the ruling party. The second element is the internal dynamics of the structure, composition and command of the armed forces between 1980 and 1999, which partly explains who and what constitutes the military and why it acquiesced in partisan party-political control. We begin by analysing the external factors.

External factors that pushed the military into the arms of the ruling party

Part of the reason for the military's support of the ruling party was the different responses of the two major political parties when the army was placed under severe strain by the West in the complex machinations associated with its involvement in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DR Congo) from August 1998 onward (International Crisis Group 2000:6–7; 28).

Briefly, the Zimbabwe Defence Force was deployed owing to a formal request to the SADC regional security organisation from a member state whose territory had been invaded. As is now common knowledge, there was a response from three countries, Angola, Namibia and Zimbabwe, which constituted themselves as the SADC

Allies in the DR Congo. However, it soon turned out that there was a greater interest at stake, which the intervention of these allies threatened to upset.⁵

The United States, Britain and other Western countries took active steps to vilify the SADC Allies' intervention in the DR Congo.⁶ One of the manifestations of the deteriorating political relations between Britain in particular and Zimbabwe was the decline in military co-operation between the two, when the former reneged on contractual agreements to supply 'spare parts for 10 Hawk jets purchased under the Thatcher Government in the early 1980s' (Talbot 2000). Significantly, this was happening barely a month before the crucial referendum of February 2000, with its political implications as referred to above.

More specifically, sanctions were imposed on the Zimbabwe Defence Force (ZDF), officers were asked to withdraw from Western military and staff colleges, and a deliberate campaign was begun to try and cast the involvement of the military in politics as stemming from the motive of personal profit. Faced with this situation, Zimbabwe found itself fighting on several fronts. Apart from pursuing the war in the Congo, the government and the ZDF were forced to procure exorbitantly priced spare parts from third parties and middlemen; they were continually hounded to justify expenditure to international financial institutions such as the IMF and the World Bank, and they had to field rebuttals to the information and propaganda war that was being carried out by Northern news groups. This external onslaught created an atmosphere in which government and the military felt themselves to be under constant threat. That the country and the military survived under such conditions seems almost miraculous. However, Zimbabwe was operating with certain strategic advantages.

Several closely related aspects of that war contributed to the overwhelming success of the ZDF. The first was that its participation was a complete surprise. No one, not even the ZDF officers who were eventually deployed in the DR Congo, had any inkling that they would be involved there. In the adversary's camp, no contingency plan had been made for fighting a well-equipped conventional force from another country. Second, the adversaries in the war in the Congo had not prepared themselves to confront more than the rebel and rag-tag opposition in and around Kinshasa and were therefore no match for the superior forces deployed from Zimbabwe. Third, there was the

overwhelming use of air power against ground troops. Sometimes these troops would move in single-lane vehicular formations that made easy targets for the combat aircraft and helicopters. The final dimension was the spontaneous action of the local people. Since May 1997 when Mobutu had been ousted, the majority of Congolese had opposed the Tutsi-backed rebel movement, which had initially supported the new president, Laurent Desire Kabila, but later turned against him. Consequently, once they saw that the intervention force from SADC had arrived, ordinary people simply swung into action, capturing and manhandling the invading rebels. This action quickly drove the rebels out of urban Kinshasa, complementing and consolidating the SADC Allies' tenuous early gains.

Faced with such stiff military opposition, contingents from Burundi, Rwanda and Uganda quickly disengaged and withdrew east, where they regrouped. Here they had the benefits of shortened lines of communication that soon translated into military dominance in the eastern Congo until the end of the war. However, by late 1999 their retreat to the east resulted in battlefield superiority for the SADC Allies and the DR Congo government in the central and western parts of the country. This removed the anxiety and pressure associated with defeat in battle. After December 1999, the situation in the Congo could be characterised as 'no peace, no war'; there was simply a series of tactical skirmishes with no strategic impact on the course of the war, which had entered a phase of latent and low-intensity conflict.

Back home, the MDC almost naively joined the West's call for the withdrawal of the forces, taking the (incorrect) position that the army had been deployed for personal reasons. This only served to further undermine the opposition in the eyes of the beleaguered military, and to push the national army into the arms of the more amenable ruling party and government.

Ironically the external and internal pressure that was applied as an indirect way of undermining the ruling party had the reverse effect, bringing it and the military together more closely at the expense of the emerging political opposition. This situation informed the political reaction and strategy adopted by the ruling party against the increasing political tide of opposition during the critical period of 2000 to January 2002.

However, in order for the ruling party to achieve such an understanding with the national defence force, the composition of the latter, especially its command and control elements, had to lead it to identify with the ideological and philosophical standpoint of the former. This is the background against which the second element that contributed to the army's support of the ruling party can be best understood. In other words, it is necessary to explore the nature of the relationship between the professionalising and integrated armed forces and the ruling party after 20 years of independence.

Changes in the command and the integrated elements of the ZDF, 1980–1987

In this section, we attempt to answer the question of why the armed forces forged a closer relationship with the ruling party in independent Zimbabwe and also seek to explain the military's readiness, as an institution, to acquiesce to partisanship.

Examination of the history of the ZDF since its inception in 1980 to 2002 provides us with information concerning the personalities involved and the command and control of the key institutions that were in place in January 2002. After winning the polls outright in 1980, Zanu elected to establish a Coalition Government of National Unity with Zapu, its ethnic rival in the liberation war. The new government of national unity was responsible for creating new majority rule institutions, one of the most important being the national army. Membership of the new 35 000 strong army, organised into four brigades, was to be drawn in equal numbers from the three existing armed factions that were still located at the assembly points after the elections. These factions were Zanla, Zipra and the former colonial Rhodesian Security Forces (RSF). A Joint Military Command (JMC) was created, comprising military commanders of each of the armed factions, who would serve under the Prime Minister and Minister of Defence, Robert Mugabe (Davidow 1984:91).

In June 1980, the majority of white former RSF officers, led by Lieutenant General Peter Walls, resigned their posts and left the country for the then apartheid South Africa, effectively leaving the JMC in the hands of former combatants from Zanla and Zipra. Tension and rivalry still characterised relations between Zanla and Zipra, a fact that had led to clashes during the final phase of the liberation struggle.

During the early cantonment period of the Ceasefire and Monitoring phase before the elections, this had forced the Commonwealth Monitoring Force to separate the Zanla and Zipra combatants into separate assembly points (Rice 1990:54–60). In the first year of independence, political differences between Zanu and Zapu resurfaced in the run-up to local government elections in November, and soon intensified into widespread conflict. By the end of the year, this renewed rivalry undermined the Coalition Government, leaving Zanu in total control (see Nkomo 1984:103). This had implications for the balanced new national army integration process that had been mooted some seven months earlier.

The political problems affecting military integration were only resolved in December 1987 when the two parties, Zanu and Zapu, again came together in a renegotiated Unity Accord. Although this also created space for new military posts, the die had been cast and positions secured by Zapu under this agreement were not as important as the initial process in 1980 had suggested they would be.

There was a second reason for the special relationship between the ruling party, Zanu PF, and the military that emerged in the chaos of the early 1980s. This was the establishment of special units that had particular links with the ruling party, outside the official framework that was being set up with help from the British Military Advisory and Training Team (BMATT).

At the height of the dissident war, it was clear that the new state was weak and needed urgent strengthening against threats posed not only by the local clash with former Zapu–Zipra elements but also against machinations by apartheid South Africa, which was determined to pursue a proactive defence strategy against the perceived invasion by the African National Congress (ANC) guerrillas of Mkhonto we Sizwe. Earlier, in 1981, there had been an attack on the residence of Robert Mugabe (then Prime Minister), which demonstrated the seriousness of the threats.

In April 1980, Zimbabwe elected to join the Front Line States (FLS), an organisation made up of independent African countries positioning themselves to assist African peoples in minority regime countries in Southern Africa. Angola, Mozambique, Tanzania, Nigeria, Botswana and Zambia constituted the FLS in 1980. The initiative was given a boost by an assistance offer of £12.5 million pounds' worth

of military equipment and 106 training instructors from North Korea. New units were established, including the Presidential Guards, a Fifth Infantry Brigade, the Zimbabwe Peoples' Militia and an Anti-Air Regiment.

It is clear that these units, created at the height of the internal clashes, gave unquestioned allegiance to the ruling party. Their deployment, informed by the politically volatile situation in Matabeleland soon after they had completed their training, had disastrous results. As has now become public knowledge, the Zimbabwean President is on record as admitting the regrettable deployment of the military in Matabeleland before 1988. At the height of the internal conflict, a major development in the 'dissident war' was the arrest and detention of Zapu military commanders Lieutenant General Lookout Masuku, his deputy, Dumiso Dabengwa, and other senior officers. These figures were part of the tripartite JMC, and their detention left the Zanu generals in total control of the new army.

The brief period between 1980 and 1987 established the core elements that support the strategic vision and the command and control of the armed institutions in the country today.

Impact of the events in Matabeleland

By 1990, the Matabeleland atrocities were a done thing. The situation outside the country was normalising following President de Klerk's assumption of office and Mandela's 'release in 1989' (the actual event was delayed until February 1990 in order to prepare the ANC cadres to grasp the new reality). This development also influenced events in nearby Mozambique where protocols led to the signing of the 1992 Rome Treaty and the departure of the ZDF in April 1993.

The actual impact of the events in Matabeleland on the military has never been assessed, but anecdotal evidence suggests that it left former Zipra cadres in the national army traumatised by feelings of having abandoned their people during the intense conflict period. Many had families and relatives caught up in the conflict and therefore were affected personally. The effect on the broader society has also been difficult to ascertain, as Zapu ended the conflict as partners in government once again. In a demonstration of the lingering reluctance to join the ruling party, Zanu PF, one political party continued to use the designation 'Zapu' even after the Unity Accord but was not successful

in gaining support, owing to the charisma and influence of the leader Joshua Nkomo, who had taken the greater part of Zapu into the ruling party. However, the Western Matabeleland vote of 2000, a year after Nkomo's death, was almost solidly behind the newly established opposition Movement for Democratic Change. This was seen by many as tactical voting 'for anything but Zanu PF' – a mindset that dominates the area. If this assumption is true, then we can conclude that the use of force in the 1980s only served to harden attitudes and deepen the political divides in the country reflected in ethnic, linguistic and regional representation. Accepting this evidence must pose a challenge to those who are in political office or who aspire to it.

It was after the web of insecurity that had characterised the Southern African situation was lifted, followed closely by the release of Nelson Mandela from jail in February 1990, that the Zimbabwe government authorised a commission of inquiry to investigate the concerns about military conduct in Matabeleland. The findings of this government-sanctioned inquiry appeared to confirm all the anecdotal accusations that had been made. Although the report has never been made public, the President found occasion, during public ceremonies, to regret the deployment of armed forces in Matabeleland, to use his own words, 'in a moment of madness'. Similar harrowing findings were later confirmed by an independent survey commissioned by Oxford University academics. Given the overwhelming evidence concerning conduct in the country's fiercely contested political arena, several important lessons can be drawn from this first phase of Zimbabwe's regrettable use of the military in the current crisis.

Is history repeating itself in the current crisis?

There are several points to acknowledge in the current situation. The first is that traditional political differences are evident that have formed the context for the response through military means. The second is that Zimbabwe's internal differences were to some extent encouraged by external powers. The third is that after 1980–81 the decision-making mechanism was exclusively made up of functionaries of the single ruling party. The fourth is that the creation of military units during the conflict exhibited overtly partisan tendencies, leading to the regrettable incidents. Not surprisingly, many of these units had to be reformed or quietly disbanded, or else their commanders had to be

replaced, while personnel were redistributed after internal and public commissions of inquiry confirmed serious tendencies. Significantly, however, the rapprochement reached with Zapu in December 1987 did not extend to the defence and security decision-making, command and control realms of the state. Only a few ambassadorial and military attaché posts were allocated to former members of Zapu. They were not given posts in the Defence and Security Ministries or put in command of any institutions.

From that time until 1999, the threshold year for Zimbabwe's current crisis involving the military, the key decision-makers in the executive structure and institutions were all members of the ruling party. The highest organ of the national supreme Defence Council is chaired by the President, and the Ministries of Defence, Foreign Affairs and Intelligence are all held by cadres exclusively drawn from Zanu PF. This was also true of the various services, which were all headed by members of the ruling party until the recent appointment of Lieutenant General Philip Sibanda, who is a former Zipra combatant. The implication of the fact that this chain of policy and practitioner posts is occupied by members of a single party is that the debates in committee are likely to be uncritical of what may appear to be acceptable norms. The Matabeleland experience confirms this assertion.

The interim period 1990–1999: the ZDF's credibility on the continent

One of the difficulties of pointing out the errors of the military involvement in politics in Zimbabwe is the very healthy relationship the armed forces have forged with the rest of the African continent over the last twenty years or so. To try and present the Zimbabwean military as carrying out repressive actions against its own citizenry goes against the grain of chivalry and contradicts the Pan Africanist image that the military and the country have established for themselves in the eyes of outside watchers. A brief survey below demonstrates the level of outside involvement that has served to create these favourable impressions.

Since its establishment, the ZDF has served the country well as an instrument of foreign policy. In the early 1980s, its Pan Africanist role in Mozambique earned it the praise and gratitude of its neighbours. After that, Zimbabwe deployed its defence force in Africa at a time

when consent by belligerents was a precondition. Troops saw service in Angola and in Somalia, where they distinguished themselves when they remained behind after the Western forces began pulling out in late 1993. They also served on the ground in Rwanda, monitoring the massacres that took place between April and June 1994 even after the UN had decided to reduce its presence in that country. Soon afterwards, the forces of the new government in Kigali were in Zimbabwe, receiving military training and assistance as they struggled to establish themselves, creating opportunities for effective co-operation and solidarity between southern African nations. Finally, the forces were deployed in the DR Congo in August 1998, as part of the SADC Alliance, and they proceeded to distinguish themselves in helping to blunt what many have described as a regional and international conspiracy to overthrow the government of Laurent Kabila.⁷ Following the deployment of a UN peacekeeping force, the Zimbabwean forces withdrew in October 2002. The role of the Zimbabwean military as a foreign policy tool in Africa endeared both the country and its armed forces to other Africans on the continent. However, it is precisely the failure of the emerging political opposition to appreciate and understand this dimension of the role of the armed forces in external operations that has created and reinforced the impression that it is an 'imperialist extension' with only very tenuous national roots.

The impact of military involvement in politics in Zimbabwe

However, by taking note of external assessments made of the country's military and its relationship with its own society, we are forced to concede that at home the armed forces have become part of the crisis. The first independent and credible confirmation of this was the report by the delegation of the AU Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights that visited the country in June 2002. The delegation found that rights were being trampled and that violence was being committed against perceived political opposition, all in the name of the ruling party and government. Several named military and police units were being employed for these purposes. The report also found that there was no recourse to justice, either through the Ombudsman's Office, the judiciary or the police. Moreover, the report called for

some of the units accused of carrying out the acts to be disbanded and the institutions reformed. A second source confirming the military involvement and also reflecting on its impact on society was the recent AfroBarometer Report No. 42 (IDASA 2004). This public opinion survey, carried out in April and May 2004, revealed a gripping fear of the military amongst the population, rated as high as 82%. Individually, the popularity of the military amongst the population was rated as 55% while that of the police stood at 52%. These statistics are significant as they reflect the fact that on average over 45% of the population does not support the national institutions. Given the initial quest in 1980 to establish national entities, this is a serious setback. Furthermore, there is a 3% difference between the popularity of the defence force and that of the police force, demonstrating which of the two has more direct, but adverse, daily contact with the people. If we accept the findings of the AU delegation and the public opinion survey cited, this represents a concrete challenge that has to be addressed in winning back society's trust of the military.

Independence in 1980 created conditions and opportunities that shifted the Zanu–Zanla hierarchy into the new government structures with hardly any disturbance of the relative authority of its members, and this continued even after the Unity Accord of 1987. Responsibilities such as national security and guaranteeing the territorial integrity of the new state rested squarely on the shoulders of the new commanders and the new force, giving it a special place as a national institution after 1980. The fate of the new force, deployed in the DR Congo in August 1998, and under threat not only from the rebel movements in that war but also from external players in the West, and the response of the ruling party in Harare, partly explain how the force was more than ready to acquiesce and conform to the new set of relationships encouraged by the ruling party in 2002. The brief discussion below illustrates this point more fully.

The challenge of reforming the security sector at the time of decolonisation was not unique to Zimbabwe or Zanu PF. Other examples abound, especially in Southern Africa. In Tanzania, the government and the ruling party, Chama cha Mapinduzi (CCM), had given birth to the Jeshi la Wananchi la Tanzania, the Tanzanian People's Defence Force (TPDF), in September 1964, following the abortive mutiny of January the same year. Given the near national chaos of the situation in early 1964,

there is no doubt that the TPDF has been crucial to Tanzania's nation building. However, the multiparty politics of the 1990s forced CCM to consider loosening ties with the TPDF. In order to effect this political and social change, the country has embarked upon an open, consultative road of policy reform that has taken on board many of the recommendations made by the Justice Francis Nyalali Commission (1991). The major thrust of the recommendations include abandoning recruitment through the party, professionalising the command and control structures, devolving more powers to parliament and away from the presidency, and creating a perceptible distance between the institutions and the party. The objective of these changes is to inculcate a new national ethos amongst the TPDF cadres.

In Angola, the ruling party, the People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), is facing a similar problem. Following the killing of the leader of the Movement for the Total Liberation of Angola (Unita), Jonas Savimbi, in February 2002 in Luena, the government announced a unilateral ceasefire and a desire to work with what was left of Unita. While allowing for the various Unita factions in Ovambo, in parliament in Luanda, and in exile, to come together and transform themselves into a single political party, the MPLA also embarked on serious demobilisation and reform of the military. Some elements of Unita were integrated with the Forces Armadas de Angola (FAA) and the thrust has been to transform the institution into a national entity that is not directly under party political control (ICG Africa 2003:1-3).

Finally, similar struggles surrounding a dominant political party that had given birth to the nucleus of the country's armed forces and was then confronted with the necessity of loosening the control strings took place in Mozambique, Namibia, Botswana and South Africa.

The examples given demonstrate the common hurdles that post-conflict states have to overcome in order to bring about internal peace and stability.

Suggesting a future role for the armed forces in politics Zimbabwe's armed struggle against the settler colonial structure required Herculean efforts, in which the military played a critical role, accounting for over 30 000 deaths (Martin and Johnson 1981: 72). In post-colonial Zimbabwe, the military will remain central to the consolidation of peace and stability in the country. It is responsible

for maintaining national security and ensuring the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the country. Given the unfortunate nature of political violence that characterises internal political activity against a background of ethnic and regional differences, strategies that address political tolerance, co-existence and accommodation need to be devised in order to eliminate the fratricidal tendencies of the last four decades. Operating against the national interests, these tendencies have been exploited by international interests which, at various times, stoke the fires of overreaction. The result is an entrenched polarisation of Zimbabweans, creating an impression of lawlessness and instability that could easily be avoided. The use of the military to carry out violent repression of the opposition not only tarnishes the image of the incumbent ruling party but also detracts from the efforts made in transforming the military into a truly national institution since 1980. The acid test for this rests with the people, who have so far indicated a cautious acceptance and support of the military.

Finally, the military in Zimbabwe can learn from the experience of the Tanzanians, who argue that:

- Membership of a political party compromises soldiers' discipline.
- The political party in power must strive to distance itself from employing its structures to influence the military. In a multiparty political system, the military is apolitical. (This is not to say that it is unconcerned with political affairs.)
- Soldiers may join the parties of their choice but may not openly identify with any particular party, nor may they publicly air opinions about party politics.
- New recruits should be protected and not asked about their political party membership or affiliation.
- Finally, a recommendation was also made that civic education programmes should be set up to teach soldiers about the country's constitution, its ethics, and the important national objectives, including basic principles of government and business, as part of their normal training.

Since the summary removal of Masuku and Dabengwa in the early 1980s, there has been some progress towards appointing institutional commanders who were once affiliated to Zapu, with the recent appointment of Lieutenant General Philip Sibanda as Army

Commander. At the level at which he operates, he can be expected to register the opinions of the electorate from Western Matabeleland. This is crude politics, in which the learning curve of a new nation still has to peak, requiring public gestures to reassure particular sections of society that they are represented. It is incumbent on the political opposition in the country to recognise and acknowledge this initiative positively if they are going to escape the charge of being irresponsible citizens.

Another thing that should provide internal stability is targeting the nation's decision-making mechanism on military issues and exposing it to criticism from experts and independent institutions in order to provide balance.

The nation cannot afford two major blots on the record of the armed forces within a single generation. A mistake was made and the violations of the Matabeleland episode during the 1980s have been admitted to, and we are convinced that similar evidence is going to force the country's political leadership to utter another *mea culpa*. In the current conflict, these accusations have lost the military the moral high ground and the objectivity that should characterise the response to externally generated 'regime change' strategies supported by 'colonial beneficiaries' within the country.

Endnotes

- 1 A small independent party took one seat.
- 2 UK (2001) was designed to impose an arms embargo on Zimbabwe, and has been renewed every year; see also Talbot (2000, 2003), Slaughter (2002).
- 3 The MDC Secretary-General, Prof. Welshman Ncube, issued a public statement rejecting the presidential criteria set out by the military.
- 4 Morgan (2004) cites the decision taken in May 2001 in Tripoli, Libya, to send a fact-finding mission on behalf of the African Union Commission on Human and People's Rights (the African Commission) to determine the climate of human rights in Zimbabwe. The mission was in Zimbabwe from 24 to 28 June 2002. Tellingly, it pointed out that the weakness and partisanship of the Ombudsman's Office was leading to the public's losing confidence in the office; and it called on the Zimbabwe government to end the politicisation of the national police and military; to restore the credibility of the judiciary; to desist

- from publicly rebuking the judiciary; and to address the biased use of the state-controlled media. See also Amnesty International (2004).
- 5 See UN Security Council Resolution (2001:16 para 76) on 'plausible' but contestable reasons for Zimbabwe's involvement.
 - 6 See United States (2001) and the European Union Council (2002), renewed each year since (2003, 2004). These instruments effectively imposed an arms embargo on the country and later added a list of persons from government, military and associated business persons who were denied access to the USA and the EU. See also, 'Zimbabwe: Demining Hit with Withdrawal of US/EU Funding' (UN IRIN News 27.02.04).
 - 7 There is a history to the UN Security Council Report (2001). Analysts have pointed out that the first survey benefited from the close co-operation of the French intelligence, allegedly working against Rwanda, who provided the mission with evidence and pointed them in directions that proved useful. However, it has been learnt that when the first report came out and had little effect on Zimbabwe, Britain again demanded that the experts go back and compile yet another report that included Zimbabwe. The result was disappointing. The reasons that the Addendum suggests for the deployment of Zimbabwean troops in the Congo (para 76 p. 16, as cited above in full) are little more than bland guesses. A more credible summary is Blunt (2001:1-5).

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Whither judicial independence in Zimbabwe?

Charles Goredema

For, in a democracy like ours, power belongs ultimately to the people. Those who exercise power do so on behalf of the people to which they must always be accountable. No species of power is exempt from the universal tendency to corrupt those who wield it. Our Judiciary is no exception. No person who wields power should therefore be exempt from the obligation to be accountable to us the people and to God.

In a democracy, there is need for vigilance so as to ensure that every institution or individual remains within the bounds of the law. Our Judiciary deserves the people's critical democratic attention regarding the manner in which it exercises the power entrusted to it. It is unfortunate that the propaganda of 'Judicial imperialism' masquerading as 'Judicial independence' has been so insidious that many otherwise insightful people have failed to see the grave mistakes being perpetrated by some sections of the Judiciary. As a result, the current scrutiny of the Judiciary has been long in materialising. The rhetoric of Judicial independence must not be allowed to continue to be used to mask the reality of Judicial despotism ... It is therefore the democratic right and duty of the people of Zimbabwe, as a free people, to monitor and control the power of the Judiciary. (Zanu PF Member of Parliament Webster Shamu opposing a motion critical of the Zanu PF caucus's censure of certain judges; *Hansard* 22.02.01)

Introduction

The judiciary in Zimbabwe comprises the presiding officers of various levels of adjudicative tribunals, namely the High Court, the Supreme Court, the Administrative Court, the Labour Court and the magistrates' courts.¹

The independence of the judiciary has been raised, discussed and interpreted in Zimbabwe in just about every year in the last decade or more – perhaps more often than in any other part of Southern Africa. On many occasions, interpretations of judicial independence have been quite diverse and irreconcilable. Ironically, contemporary Zimbabwe is the last place where one would have expected such controversy to be centred. In 1991, the Commonwealth heads of government gathered in Harare to adopt what became known as the Harare Declaration. They pledged themselves to protect and promote ‘the fundamental political values of the Commonwealth’, which they understood to include ‘democracy, democratic processes and institutions which reflect national circumstances, the rule of law and the independence of the judiciary, [and] just and honest government’. In this regard, they affirmed the position stated earlier by the United Nations, that each member state should guarantee the independence of the judiciary through its constitution and national laws (United Nations General Assembly 1985).

In 2002, former Zimbabwean Chief Justice Anthony Gubbay located judicial independence within the debate about the structuring and administration of political authority within a state. He chose to link it to the power to control, thus:

Yet, clearly, the power to control is maintainable only in a situation in which an independent judiciary and bar exist. A judiciary that is not independent from the executive and legislature renders the checks and balances implicit in the concept of separation of powers ineffectual. And a bar that is loath to challenge before the courts enactments and actions viewed as in conflict with the rule of law, because of political pressure, an unwillingness to attract criticism from the government or the public, or from fear of an adverse impact upon its livelihood, fails in its allied duty and function to ensure that the rights of the individual are respected and enforced. (Gubbay 2002)

It follows that if the judiciary is to control the allocation or use of power, it has to be separate from, and to the highest practicable degree free from, the pressure and interference of those whose exercise of power it is required to control. Among the pillars of the state, the judiciary should be functionally distinct from government and from

the legislature. While judges are not absolved from all censure, limitations are imposed on the extent to which they can be criticised, especially by the other institutions of the state.² Even more restrictive limits should restrain the ability of government to interfere with the tenure of office of judges, or conditions of service.

The present crisis

Some of the roots of the crisis within the state in Zimbabwe are identified in the speech by Webster Shamu quoted as the epigraph to this chapter. In that speech Shamu expresses the view that government's overall ideology is always informed by, and represents, popular interests. The judiciary should either share that ideology, or at least be accountable to the policies articulated by government. If it contradicts government positions on issues, whether ideological, political or diplomatic,³ the judiciary is being disloyal to the people at large, and to the state which represents them. The argument has been expressed by others, notably President Mugabe⁴ and Minister of Justice Patrick Chinamasa.⁵ In November 2000, an influential sector of the ruling party, called the War Veterans' Association, expressed its disagreement with judicial impediments to the designs of government (to acquire agricultural land through extra-legal means) more vehemently, by invading the Supreme Court and threatening judges and lawyers.⁶

Since the early nineties, it has emerged that government and certain sections of the legislature are not comfortable with the notion of a judiciary that is independent in this sense. Friction between judicial decisions and government aspirations has recurred with nauseating regularity. Tension has often been precipitated, and sometimes exacerbated, by constitutional changes initiated by government and ratified by parliament. In terms of the concept of separation of governing powers, there is nothing intrinsically amiss with government proposing law to parliament, and submitting to the power of parliament to ratify, reject or modify the proposed law. The conflict with the judiciary revolves around the manner in which the power to make law has been invoked by government, using the majority available to it as a structure of the ruling party. What has risen to the forefront of the debate is the nature of the law-making, especially where the laws have sought to either nullify judicial decisions (in advance or retrospectively) or exclude judicial review altogether.

Almost invariably, the conflict has played itself out in the arena of fundamental rights. As the only court with jurisdiction to determine the definition and content of constitutional rights, the Supreme Court was at the centre of what escalated from a series of skirmishes in the mid-eighties to a full-blown storm by the end of 2001. Former Chief Justice Gubbay, who found himself in the eye of the storm, described the threat to judicial independence in Zimbabwe at the time as emanating from two sources: legislative abuse and unlawful action. In a colloquium paper, he chronicled a series of constitutional amendments made subsequent to 1991, many of which were rebuttals of Supreme Court decisions on constitutional matters (Gubbay 2002: note 2). In one case, an amendment pre-empted a court decision.⁷

Government's inclination to invade the territory conventionally assigned to the judiciary persisted beyond the Gubbay era. In 2002, government sought to prevent the courts from determining the validity of electoral challenges arising from the violent parliamentary elections of June 2000. The majority of challenges had been brought by the main opposition party, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC). The initiative failed. Later, in 2004, the power of the courts to determine the legality of pre-trial detention of persons accused of certain offences, colloquially classified as 'economic sabotage', was infringed by presidential decree, in the form of regulations based on the Presidential Powers (Temporary Measures) Act, which provided that no court would have jurisdiction to consider bail for a suspect charged with economic sabotage for up to 21 days.⁸

In March 2001 the International Bar Association sent a delegation of seven distinguished lawyers to examine the state of the relationship between the executive and the judiciary in Zimbabwe. In April, the delegation reported emphatically that the government was threatening the independence of the judiciary. The threat manifested itself in the multiplicity of cases in which court orders were ignored by government officials at various levels colluding in the intimidation of judges, and in a sustained campaign to force the resignation of targeted judges.⁹ Threats of violence formed part of the campaign – the Minister of Justice was reported to have told the Chief Justice that government could not guarantee his personal safety should he refuse to take early retirement. The Chief Justice was eventually forced into early retirement. Pressure was also exerted on other

judges of both the Supreme Court and the High Court, which resulted in further resignations. The manner in which government secured these resignations constituted the most notable breach of the independence of the judiciary since the achievement of independence in Zimbabwe.

It was reported in 2001 and 2002 that judicial officers in the lower courts had been subjected to illegitimate pressure. The major instances involved cases with political connotations. Magistrates in the provincial centres of Bindura, Chipinge, Karoi and Mutare have been subject to considerable intimidation by supporters of the ruling Zanu PF party to either grant or deny bail to suspects in whom the party has had an interest.

The impact of government action on the reconciliation process

In view of the fact that Zimbabwe is essentially a society in transition in the social, political and economic spheres, it is important to inquire into the effect of the tense relations between government and the judiciary on the reconciliation process. At the simplest level, the following question may be asked: has the overall impact been to hinder or advance the reconciliation agenda? One is hesitant to engage fully in the debate on this question on account of the multiplicity of subsidiary themes that it throws up. In so far as it is relevant to the independence of the judiciary, the predominant theme it raises is that of transformation. It was clear that the judiciary inherited at independence would have to be transformed. A judiciary structured differently from the colonial one was more likely to play a part in the larger exercise of transforming other institutions and systems in Zimbabwe. At the same time, the independence constitution envisaged the imperative to transform all facets of the public sector. The challenge was that, unlike the case with the legislature and government, no democratic selection processes could be relied on to achieve the required transformation. Judicial positions are not attained by election in Zimbabwe. The only issues were the direction and pace of transformation. The elected organs of state had the responsibility to direct transformation in the judiciary.

Just as the need to transform the Zimbabwean judiciary was unquestionable, so was the need to do so in a systematic and transparent manner. A key objective of transformation was to attain

equity in the composition of the judiciary (in terms of race, gender and physical ability). The colonial legacy, which was characterised by the exclusion of non-white Zimbabweans from judicial positions, coupled with the racial diversity of the country's population, made it critical that transformation occur in terms of agreed objectives and targets. In setting these, the criteria to be considered in making appointments should have been determined and articulated.

The majority of judicial officers serving in the superior courts when the serious fallout between government and the judiciary began in the first quarter of 2000 were appointed after 1980. Government had a relatively unrestrained capacity to pursue transformation in making appointments. While transformation was cited on a number of occasions, no known guidelines or criteria appear to have been adhered to. As a result, the process remained susceptible to manipulation by the appointing authority. The process of removal of judges could also be abused. There were no equity factors or targets against which to evaluate the decisions that were effectively taken by the executive in managing the composition of the judiciary. On several occasions between 1990 and 1999, appointments were made from the white sector of the legal profession while other racial sectors were overlooked.

In a country made up of diverse communities, one of the objectives of reconciliation is to afford each of the different communities either a stake in the governance of the country, or a fair chance to gain such a stake. Demographic representation is but one way of achieving this goal; it is by no means the only one. The absence of objective criteria in judicial transformation has resulted in this dimension of reconciliation being overlooked, or ignored altogether. Since 1999, the pendulum has swung in favour of exclusively black appointments. At the time of writing, the higher judges in Zimbabwe are, with one exception, all black. The lower judiciary is exclusively black. Even though there is no explicit rule against appointing from other sectors, the prospects of a non-black candidate being appointed are bleak. It is fair to say that, as a result, the non-black sectors feel a sense of alienation from the mainstream of national discourse.

The major barriers to resolving the problem

The commitment to which member states of the United Nations bind themselves in respect of judicial independence stipulates that:

The independence of the judiciary shall be guaranteed by the State and enshrined in the Constitution or the law of the country. It is the duty of all *governmental and other institutions* to respect and observe the independence of the judiciary. (Emphasis added.)

A major barrier to respect for judicial independence in contemporary Zimbabwe is government intolerance of control or accountability. In the words of President Mugabe, government will 'brook no interference' with its power and authority. This stance has been exhibited through numerous instances of defiance. Towards the close of 2003, the Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights ruefully observed:

In Zimbabwe we have had the executive refusing to enforce certain court orders that are seen to be unfavourable to the state or the ruling ZANU PF party. The executive has also attacked the judiciary openly, quite unprofessionally and unfairly in a number of cases. The government of Zimbabwe however has a history of attacking the judiciary or members of the legal profession each time the executive is unhappy at certain judicial decisions. (*Zimbabwe Independent*)

The Zanu PF government's record regarding respect for court rulings clearly demonstrates that it considers itself to be superior to the judiciary and to have the licence to pick and choose which decisions to comply with and which to ignore. Government is aware that in disrespecting court prescriptions it acts extra-legally or illegally, but since this does not attract any penalties, it adopts this course anyway. Local public disapproval and international criticism are not considered to be deterrents.¹⁰

A second challenge to judicial independence stems from the economic meltdown that has become a feature of Zimbabwe since the late nineties. The decline in economic performance has affected the entire fabric of Zimbabwean society, and the judiciary has not been spared. The resources available to the judiciary as an institution have been considerably reduced, with adverse consequences for its capacity to perform its work competently and impartially. Salaries cannot keep up with the cost of living, and the state is not able to afford the cost of supporting the needs of magistrates for transport and accommodation. Working conditions have continued to deteriorate every year.¹¹ The condition of the main magistrates' court for civil

cases in Harare typifies the parlous state of affairs. The court is located in a dilapidated quarter of the city, conveniently shielded from public view by the head office of the state telephone corporation on the one side and the new government offices on the other. Attrition levels remain unacceptably high.

The working conditions of the judiciary make incumbents vulnerable to illegitimate direct and subtle influence from government and other sources. It is public knowledge that each of the judges of the superior courts has been offered one or more of the farms that were forcibly seized from commercial farmers in President Mugabe's much-proclaimed 'land reform' programme. Some have taken up the offers, and now occupy farms whose acquisition may still be contested in court. As has been the case with other allocated farms, occupiers have not been issued with title deeds. Occupation is therefore precarious, and conditional on the continuation of a good relationship between occupier and the issuing authority. Judges who refused offers came under some pressure to explain their reasons for doing so.¹² The government subsequently decided to issue 4x4 vehicles to the 'farmer judges' for use on the farms.

Apart from its capacity to buy the loyalty of the judiciary, or key levels of it, government is also able to patronise individual judges on a selective basis, at the expense of the independence of the judiciary. It is widely believed in legal circles that the government has exploited the promotion processes in the superior courts for this purpose. In 2001, seniority was overlooked in promotion to the Judge Presidency, the highest office in the High Court, in the same way that it was overlooked in the appointment of Chief Justice Chidyausiku. In each case at least two other eminently suitable judges were overlooked, in favour of judges considered amenable to the will of the government. Where government is inclined to manipulate the disposal of cases, the positions of Judge President and Chief Justice could be considered strategic, in the allocation of cases,¹³ representation of peers and protection of the judiciary generally. It should be noted that both the Judge President and the Chief Justice have benefited from the 'land reform' programme.

As adjudicators, judges and magistrates should be able to stand above the disputed matters. If they can be secretly influenced by litigants, they are not independent, and cannot dispense justice. At the

heart of the accusation levelled at the Gubbay Supreme Court during the parliamentary debate referred to above is the allegation that the court did not distance itself from the interests of big business and the commercial farming community. Both entities were under the control of whites, and connected to certain Western countries whose interests were inimical to black economic empowerment and advancement. Shamu argued that the judiciary had thereby undermined its own independence. He seemed to confine himself to the disputes decided by the Supreme Court after land acquisitions began in March 2000. As this chapter shows, the conflict between the court and government has a longer history. Be that as it may, the contention has to be examined in the light of the decisions in cases where the interests of these alleged allies came into confrontation with those advocated by Zanu PF.

Land acquisition for resettlement commenced in the early eighties. The litigated history of the disputes over land acquisition dates back to March 2000, when the High Court issued an order for occupiers of land to vacate and for the Commissioner of Police to execute the order. The application was not contested, and it is inconceivable that the court could have refused to grant the order sought. Following procrastination, and then an attempt by the Commissioner of Police to have the order set aside, the matter ended up in the Supreme Court in November 2000. The court ruled in support of the High Court decision, and directed the Commissioner of Police to comply. The decision was reiterated in December 2000. Thereafter, the matters were taken into the political arena and out of the courts, with the President declaring that the courts could do as they pleased, as government would not even be defending itself before them.

In the face of government's delinquency in living up to its international and constitutional commitments to treat judicial independence as sacrosanct, the question is, who should bring it to book? Outside of government, the only other organised state structure with the power to do so is the legislature. It is tempting to suggest that parliament in Zimbabwe should come to the assistance of the judiciary in its conflict with the executive. There are several factors that detract from the viability of this suggestion. Key among them is the exclusion of parliament from the processes by which members of the judiciary are selected. Magistrates are civil servants, recruited and appointed by the Ministry of Justice. Tenure is determined by the rules regulating

the civil service, as are transfers and other conditions of service. Promotions are decided within the hierarchy of magistrates, and, to a limited extent, are free of the direct intervention of government. If the minister develops an interest in advancing or frustrating a particular appointee, however, it is easy for him to bring his influence to bear through the Permanent Secretary for Justice, who is subordinate to him. In spite of representations that magistrates have made over the years,¹⁴ no magistrates' commission has been established in Zimbabwe.

The recruitment and appointment of judges of the tribunals for Administrative Law and Labour disputes is entirely the prerogative of government, through the Minister of Justice. In practice, the recruitment of judges of the High Court is left to the Minister of Justice. There are no constitutional or legislative strictures to regulate the discharge of this responsibility. The constitution empowers the President to appoint a judge after consulting the Judicial Services Commission. Parliament may only become aware of a pending appointment if the commission disagrees with him. Even then, the President is merely obliged to report the name of the proposed appointee and that there has been a disagreement. There is no parliamentary veto or ratification permissible. The risk of controversy over a judicial appointment is pre-empted by the manner in which the Judicial Service Commission is constituted. The Chief Justice chairs it, with the other members being the Chairman of the Public Service Commission, the Attorney-General and two other persons who have legal qualifications. The President thus appoints every one of the commissioners. This does not necessarily mean that the commission is subject to the directives of the President. However, its function in the appointment of judges is a consultative and not a dispositive one. It does not carry out any background or competence checks on appointees, or interview them. The commission is faced with a fait accompli once the Minister of Justice has persuaded the President as to the suitability of a candidate for appointment.

The elevation of judges to the Supreme Court is also the prerogative of the President. While the law is not specific as to where the initiative should come from, it would seem to be consistent with the independence of the judiciary that this should be at the instance of the Chief Justice, in consultation with the commission and the Judge President. Seniority and competence, as well as the existence

of a vacancy, should be important determinants. The most recent appointments to the Supreme Court in Zimbabwe occurred in the heat of controversy, at the instance of the Minister of Justice, and without regard to seniority. In a statement, the minister told the state-run newspaper the *Herald* that the (three) new judges were being appointed to 'handle litigation by white farmers who are contesting and indeed frustrating the government's land reform programme'.¹⁵

In the speech that is quoted at the beginning of this chapter, Mr Shamu also said:

Whatever decisions judges make are supposed to be done [sic] on behalf of the people on whose behalf the Judiciary's power is exercised. The Judiciary wields so enormous a power that if it brands a person a criminal no power on earth can remove that brand. The stigma of the conviction remains forever. Even the President can only spare the life of a convict or the condemned person from punishment but only the Judiciary can set aside the conviction. The consequence of misapplication of this awesome power is frightening to say the least. (*Hansard* 22.02.01)

Implicit in his statement is the idea of invoking public opinion as a check on arbitrary decision-making by judges and magistrates. Although it is an idea with merit, in so far as it may have a bearing on transparency and accountability, the mechanics of how public opinion can be incorporated into adjudication are not clear. The manner in which cases are introduced into the judicial system, tried and decided does not leave much room for the expression of relevant public opinion. To be taken into account, popular sentiment should have found its way into the law, either through legislation or as part of precedent. The exception consists of rare cases in which direct evidence is given of such sentiment. If what Mr Shamu meant was that the operations of the judiciary should be transparent and accountable, he had a valid point. Transparency in this regard refers to accessibility and amenability to public scrutiny, while accountability implies that actions and decisions should be explained and subject to correction if erroneous.

The existing judicial system is relatively transparent in the sense described. All courts in the hierarchy set out above are normally open to the public when trials are contested. Most cases that come before trial courts do not directly concern the public interest, and are

therefore unlikely to attract the attention of persons other than relatives and business partners of the parties involved. Even in such cases, the documents used by the litigants and shown to the court are seen only by a limited circle of people. The oral evidence is, however, presented and challenged in open court, as are most judgments. There is no public-interest litigation system in Zimbabwe. The possibility of gaining access to court proceedings as *amicus curiae*, which is well established in the Constitutional Court in South Africa, is rare in Zimbabwe.

Within the judicial hierarchy, decision makers are accountable to their peers and the superior courts. The system of judicial precedent is intended to reinforce this kind of accountability. The system works best when decisions are explained. The jury system, which seems to function even in the absence of reasons for decisions, does not exist in Zimbabwe. The review of decisions of the magistrates' courts by the High Court continues to function. In mid-2004 concerns were raised about the long delays affecting some reviews, but the problem appeared to be confined to a few judges.

The media can play an important role in facilitating judicial accountability, by securing and publicising information on the functioning of courts, and exposing inequities in the system. They may also report on threats to the independence of the judiciary. To do so, however, they have to be informed, competent and independent. Media capacity and independence has come under severe strain in Zimbabwe since 2001. The print media are dominated by government-controlled newspapers that operate mostly as party mouthpieces.

The quest for a way forward: an examination of the options

The flaws highlighted above are important in mapping out a way beyond the current morass. It seems clear that no institution dedicated to promote judicial independence exists in Zimbabwe. There are some structures on which to build a future independent judiciary. Since its birth, Zimbabwe has had a constitution which provides for an independent judiciary. Every person charged with a criminal offence is theoretically presumed to be innocent until he or she has either genuinely pleaded guilty or been proved guilty in a court of law. The existence and extent of civil rights that are in dispute should be determined in a fair and public hearing by a competent, independent,

and impartial tribunal. The presumption of innocence and the right to have disputed issues fairly and competently adjudicated are difficult to enforce without a judiciary that is independent. An independent judiciary is key to ensuring the rule of law in any society, and such independence is the ideal situation. Judicial independence is the sum total of the autonomy that is experienced on a personal level by its individual members. From the standpoint of each of its members this means that, for functional purposes, they are secure from:

- parliamentary interference
- government interference
- illegitimate pressure from other levels of the judicial hierarchy
- economic pressure
- criminal enterprises
- corrupting influences
- partisan political influence.

One should concede that this state of affairs, based as it is on model benchmarks, has not been attained in any country in the region. It is, for instance, improbable that any organ of the state could be insulated from economic pressure. It is also not quite practicable in a country with a small elite, like Zimbabwe, to keep the judiciary completely sheltered from the political winds swirling around it. The experience of judiciaries around the world demonstrates that the most dangerous sources of interference with the judiciary are government institutions and political parties (Kelly n.d.). The suggestions in this section are intended to achieve relative protection from these entities and enable the judiciary to exercise the necessary measure of autonomy.

The most fundamental changes will require constitutional reconstruction. In the first place it is necessary to establish institutional arrangements to support judicial independence. The recruitment and appointment of judges and magistrates at all levels should be transparent and objective. During the Constitutional Review process of 1999–2000 the view that an expanded Judicial Services Commission should take over the role of appointing judicial officers of all levels received much support.¹⁶ Submissions made at the time did not detail what a new commission should look like, but it is submitted that each level of the judiciary should be represented. The commission should also permit the representation of the legislature, the Ministry of Justice

and the Law Society. It should include one judge of the Supreme Court, one judge of the High Court, a judge of the Administrative Court, a judge of the Labour Court, a regional magistrate, a provincial magistrate, a member of the parliamentary committee responsible for legal affairs,¹⁷ a member of the Council of the Law Society, the Permanent Secretary for Justice, the Ombudsman and the Attorney-General. It should be open to any of these constituent members to appoint alternative representatives. The commission should be able to work through committees, and to invite temporary members whose expertise is required for specific purposes.

Vacancies in any of the courts should be advertised in the public press, and the commission should handle the recruitment, interviewing and (if necessary) examining of applicants and appointing of those considered suitable in terms of predetermined criteria. A basic requirement, reiterated in the Basic Principles, is that a person selected for judicial office should be appropriately trained, and have integrity and demonstrable ability. On account of imperatives such as gender and racial representativeness, legislation should be enacted laying down guidelines for the commission. Once selection decisions have been made, the commission may notify the President to make the appointments. South Africa's Judicial Services Commission and Magistrates' Commission provide examples of how the proposed system will work. Nomination committees like those that exist in all Canadian provinces would also be effective in implementing the proposed system. As Judge Kelly points out (n.d.), Canada abandoned a system similar to the one prevailing in Zimbabwe precisely because of concerns that it was resulting in the appointment of supporters of whatever party was in power.

It should be the function of the commission to administer the promotion of judicial officers in all courts on the basis of predetermined criteria. It should also be responsible, through a committee, for judicial disciplinary processes. Delay or failure to perform judicial duties should be a disciplinary infraction. In discharging its disciplinary functions, the commission should be bound by the Basic Principles on the Independence of the Judiciary. For this purpose, these principles should be incorporated into local law.

Security of remuneration and of tenure are essential to judicial independence.¹⁸ For practical reasons, they are often discussed

inseparably. In terms of the Basic Principles, the term of office of a judge, and his or her security, remuneration, conditions of service, pension and retirement age should be adequately secured by law. While the present constitutional dispensation proclaims these conditions in Zimbabwe, the economic decline continues to give the assurances a hollow ring. The Basic Principles mean that the salary of a judge should be adequate, fixed and secure. Judicial salaries may be fixed and secure, but they are hardly adequate for the hyper-inflationary environment that has prevailed since 2000.¹⁹ The plight of retiring judges is even worse, as the value of state pensions has virtually collapsed in the period 2000–2004.

Notwithstanding the state of the economy, it is suggested that in the short term the system by which the judicial budget is put together and administered should be reviewed. While the legislature should retain the power to allocate funds to the judiciary, these funds should not form part of the allocation to the Ministry of Justice, or indeed any other ministry. A department that is accountable to the Judicial Services Commission should be established to administer funds allocated to the judiciary.

In a context devoid of a culture of public-interest litigation, ensuring that the judiciary is not influenced by criminal enterprises, corrupting influences or political partisanship can be quite problematic. It is often said that one way of achieving this is through monitoring by civil society. Conditions in Zimbabwe do not support such monitoring. Civil society is not well organised enough, or sufficiently interested in the judicial system as such, to perform this task. In any event, civil society would need information that the prevailing laws make difficult to access. For instances, judges and magistrates are not required to disclose their incomes and assets and liabilities. It is quite difficult in the present circumstances to detect whether a particular judicial officer is benefiting from patronage. One is hesitant to recommend the disclosure of assets of the judiciary on a selective basis. In the final analysis, a constitutional prescription is required, making it mandatory for all public office holders to make such a disclosure.

The International Bar Association concluded its report on Zimbabwe with a request for government to desist from threats or inducements to lawyers and judges. In the wake of the report, several judges of the High Court, the Supreme Court and the Administrative

Court were reported to have resigned. All had at one point or another been subjected to vituperative criticism by government ministers and officials. At the time of writing, one more judge of the High Court had resigned, adding credence to the notion that the pressure by government on targeted members of the judiciary had not abated.

One of the most vocal pressure groups in Zimbabwe, the National Constitutional Assembly, has long argued that the governance problems in Zimbabwe can be attributed to the continued existence of a constitution that was imposed from above, and which is without democratic legitimacy. As an explanation of the ease with which government has been able to interfere with the independence of the judiciary, the proposition may well be inadequate. It would, however, explain the exclusion of all stakeholders other than the Chief Justice and government from the composition and administration of the higher judiciary.

Endnotes

- 1 At the time of writing, the Supreme Court comprised: Chief Justice G. Chidyausiku, and judges of appeal W. Sandura, V. Ziyambi, M.A. Cheda and L. Malaba. The following judges sat in the High Court: Judge President P. Garwe, Y. Omerjee, T.B. Karwi, R. Makarau, B. Hlatshwayo, A.M. Gowora, C.K. Hungwe, S. Mavhangira, M. Cheda,* L.M. Kamocha, G.M. Chiweshe,* S.H. Mungwira, A. Guvava, N.N. Ndou,* B.T. Paradza, L. Makoni, A.M. Chitakunye, T.P. Uchena, and E.C. Bhunu.

(* Indicates that the judge is based in Bulawayo.)

The Administrative Court was presided over by: S.M. Nare (Bulawayo), S. Bere (Mutare), B.T. Chivizhe, and C. Machaka, while the judges of the Labour Court were: N.T. Mutshiya (Senior President), E. Makamure, G. Mhuri, L. Hove and G. Musariri. All judges of the Supreme Court and the Labour Court were based in Harare. Judges of the Administrative and Labour Courts are officially referred to as presidents.

- 2 In re Chinamasa 2001 (2) SA 902 (ZSC) or SC 113/2000, the Supreme Court pointed out that the exercise of freedom of expression in a democracy permitted criticism of judgements and individual judges. Criticism which is gratuitous and unsubstantiated, and imputes improper or corrupt motives, however, attracts criminal sanctions on

the basis that it could impair public confidence in the administration of justice. For this reason the law still recognises the offence of contempt of court.

- 3 The Minister of Justice prevented a judge of the Supreme Court from attending an International Bar Association (IBA) meeting in Malawi. The minister justified this action on the grounds that the IBA once produced a report critical of the state of Zimbabwe's judiciary, and might produce a negative report on Malawi, which would harm relations between Zimbabwe and that country. The minister declared that the judge should not have accepted the invitation.
- 4 President Mugabe's first conflict with the judiciary occurred while he was Prime Minister in 1982, in the wake of disagreements about the legality of post-acquittal detentions of suspected saboteurs. He expressed the view that the courts, which leaned in favour of the suspects' release, could act as they pleased, but government would do as it pleased. In the period since 2000, he has attacked individual judges and the judiciary collectively on various occasions.
- 5 The minister's contempt for the judiciary generally, and for certain of its members, is not a secret. In 1999 as Attorney-General he castigated a judge of the High Court as an agent of imperialism. On becoming a member of the cabinet, he went on the warpath against judges, partly on racist grounds, but occasionally on spurious ideological ones. Hence he has described some judges as 'Eurocentric', others as 'the main opposition to the ruling party', or generally 'unguided missiles'. In revealing remarks the minister cautioned that black judges should not consider that they had become judges 'solely through their own merit', implying that the ruling party had secured judicial positions for them. Since the beginning of 2001, Chinamasa has been credited with hounding several judges out of office. In this regard, see the activities attributed to him by a former administrative court judge, Michael Majuru (*Daily News Online*, July 2004).
- 6 The threats were continued by the association's then leader in parliament, Chenjerai Hunzvi, who ordered judges to resign, as their days were numbered.
- 7 The Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment Act was passed in 1991. It redefined section 15(1) of the Constitution so as to declare that execution by hanging was not an inhuman or degrading punishment. The reason for the amendment was that the Supreme Court had been

due to hear a test case in which argument was to be presented on the question of whether execution by hanging was a violation of section 15(1). Both the state and the defence had been required to adduce evidence as to the reliability of the various procedures and precautions adopted in execution by hanging; and to address the physical pain and mental anguish, if any, to which the condemned person is subjected in this process. The amendment pre-empted the court from deciding on the controversial issue. The Minister of Justice announced to parliament that the amendment was necessary ‘in order to prevent the Supreme Court from doing away with the death sentence (a punishment sanctioned under the Constitution) via the back door’. The amendment also declared that corporal punishment inflicted upon a male under the age of eighteen years could not amount to inhuman or degrading punishment or treatment. This part of the amendment effectively overruled the majority decision of the Supreme Court in *State v A juvenile* 1989 ZLR 61 (SC); 1990 (4) SA 151 (ZSC).

- 8 Statutory Instrument 37 of 2004 and Statutory Instrument 41A of 2004.
- 9 Report of the International Bar Association, April 2001.
- 10 In the 1980s clashes between the executive and the judiciary centred around detentions without trial, such as those of the York brothers and Dumiso Dabengwa. In the wake of the York brothers case, Robert Mugabe (then Prime Minister) openly declared that the measures that his government proposed to take (detention without trial) were extra-legal. In subsequent years, government has defied the courts by unlawfully detaining journalists (Mark Chavunduka and Ray Choto), deporting them (Joseph Winter and Andrew Meldrum), occupying land (CFU v Commissioner of Police) and suppressing the press (Associated Newspapers of Zimbabwe cases). The government’s obduracy in all these cases attracted criticism, which it brushed aside and ignored.
- 11 Some of the appalling conditions were graphically captured by journalist Jan Raath:

In the Harare Magistrates’ Court it has been decided to keep the public toilets permanently locked rather than clean them. The floors of the courthouse are thick with dust, the walls sticky with grime and the only cheerful aspect to the building is the sparrows that flutter in and out of the broken windows of the

courtrooms. The High Court in Zimbabwe's capital is no better. Recently Chris Andersen, an advocate, rose in D Court to stop a draught coming through a door. The door fell off its hinges. Judges and magistrates have to write evidence down verbatim, in longhand, because tape recorders rarely work. The High Court photocopy machine – used to print judgments for distribution in the legal profession – lay idle for several months recently because the toner had run out. (*The Times* [UK] 17.08.04)

- 12 An Administrative Court judge, Michael Majuru, publicly claimed to have been offered a farm by a banker who has strong ties to the ruling party in exchange for ruling in favour of government against an independent newspaper, the *Daily News*, in 2003. The judge refused, which precipitated a tirade of abuse and harassment from Minister Chinamasa, and later, a smear campaign.
- 13 Case allocation in the High Court is the function of the registrar, but in practice in the more important cases the Judge President performs this role. This role has become strategic because of perceptions of selective deployment of the criminal law, as witnessed in corruption cases and politically tainted cases.
- 14 Through the Magistrates' Association.
- 15 As if to confirm the mandate, the judges joined new Chief Justice Chidyausiku in reversing a decision by the Supreme Court under Judge Gubbay on the legality of land seizures. The court has since made other questionable rulings, e.g. in regard to the banning of the *Daily* newspaper, in *Association of Independent Journalists and Two Others v The Minister of State for Information and Publicity in the President's Office and Two Others* (SC 136/02).
- 16 Based on notes compiled during the period. The author participated in numerous hearings of the Constitutional Review Commission, as a member of the Fundamental Rights Committee.
- 17 The current committee is called the Parliamentary Legal Affairs Committee.
- 18 See the Canadian case of *Valente v R* [1985] 2 S.C.R. 673, 24 D.L.R. (4th) 161.
- 19 At the time of writing, the average monthly income of a judge of the High Court ranged between Z\$2.75 million (US\$491) and Z\$3 million (US\$536). The official rate of inflation at the end of August 2004 was 321%.

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Liberating or limiting the public sphere?

Media policy and the Zimbabwe transition,
1980–2004

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Introduction

This chapter examines the arena of media policy and regulation in terms of the current Zimbabwean government's attitude towards the definition and constitution of the post-colonial public sphere. The discussion locates inherited policy mechanisms and the reforms undertaken in the post-independence era within the matrix of the sociopolitical and economic constraints and opportunities confronting the elite that came to power in 1980 and has continued to consolidate its rule since then.

This chapter assumes that the broadening of the public sphere, accessible at independence mainly to a privileged minority white elite, was in principle both a moral and political imperative in the new dispensation. It was, in other words, an inextricable part of the 'transformation' project that accompanied the attainment of majority rule. As public forums, the media were also in principle faced with the task of articulating the cause of 'national reconciliation', a sociopolitical agenda that the new government set out on its assumption of office in 1980.

The relationship between state and media – manifested both in policy and in patterns of media representation – is not simply linear; it is complex and moreover conditioned by factors sometimes located outside both the state and the media, factors which shift in time and space. However, a consistent pattern – comprising a systematic combination of both coercion and coaxing – emerges from this analysis

as a predominant feature of state–media relations in Zimbabwe. Inherited from the colonial state, this pattern was carried over into the new dispensation with cosmetic modification. The result was a media policy that massively impacted on the shaping of discourse concerning salient transitional themes, not least national reconciliation.

This chapter contends that notwithstanding the visible changes that occurred in ownership, staffing and editorial reorientation of the media at the outset of democratic transition, the expansion of the public sphere has largely remained limited to select – and increasingly elite – official voices in the political hierarchy. It also argues that while the new policy regime acknowledged, in principle, the potential of the media as an institutional site for national debate on the question of reconciliation, among others, in practice the media became an instrument for the negation of both debate and national reconciliation.

A contradictory transition

In 1980 Zimbabwe experienced what Rozumilowicz (2002:19) terms an ‘externally-pacted’ transition after close to a decade of armed struggle and failed attempts at negotiating an acceptable internal political settlement. The transition to majority rule and democracy formally ended close to a century of British colonialism characterised by political and economic disenfranchisement of the African majority and a vigorous state apparatus committed to perpetuating these inequalities. In 1980, therefore, the political, racial and economic hostilities that defined coloniser–colonised relations and that had been sustained over generations were in principle expected to give way to the creation of a multiracial society.

In the negotiation process leading to the 1980 elections, the fact that none of the warring parties had achieved outright victory on the battlefield made the ensuing political settlement – the Lancaster House Agreement – a curious blend of elements of both the *ancien régime* and the nationalist camp (see Mandaza 1987; Herbst 1990; Darbon 1992). The Zimbabwean transition, emerging as it did from what appeared to be the patently irreconcilable social programmes and agendas of warring parties, was therefore bound from the beginning to be contradictory and tension-ridden. Thorny issues such as the distribution of power within the new state, land reform,

and the direction of economic and social policy were constant sites of contention between the 'new' and 'old' elites (and their local and international allies) throughout the Zimbabwe transition.

Underlying many of the policies adopted by the new government in the early days of majority rule was a sense of inconsistency and uncertainty. For example, the government employed a rhetoric of socialist transformation, while in practice the Rhodesian economy, characterised by both free-market enterprise and selective state intervention in the agriculture, mining and manufacturing sectors, and designed originally to cushion a small white elite, remained intact. Policies such as the 'Growth with Equity' plan, under which government drastically increased social spending on health, education and housing, were implemented within a predominantly capitalist economy – largely controlled, moreover, by local white, South African and multinational capital.

In 1980 Zanu PF did not inherit 'a weak colonial state that had been hurriedly improved for Independence and on which they could quickly put their imprimatur' (Herbst 1990:30). Instead, the nationalist regime took over 'a bruised, but not defeated settler state which contained powerful anachronistic elements that were hostile to the political project of the new regime' (Herbst 1990:30). The task of radically remodelling that state without upsetting the peace accord, not least by inviting the wrath of apartheid South Africa, was as difficult as it was unavoidable. In this context, the domain of public policy – including the much-lauded national reconciliation – became an attempt to strike an even balance between a nationalist political project premised on socialist values and the often narrow interests of local and international capital.

Reforming media policy: opportunities and constraints

At independence, the new government was confronted with the key task of reforming an infrastructure that had been designed in the interest of the white minority for close to a century. In a process that entailed an intricate balancing act between forces of continuity and forces of change, debate on policy reform became what Herbst (1990) has described as a contest between the ideological and technocratic wings of the ruling Zanu PF. In this contest, argues Herbst, the technocratic wing wielded control over 'specialised' sectors such as

health and the economy, while the ideological wing retained control of 'non-specialised' portfolios such as foreign policy and, one may add, the media.

Consistent with reform in other social institutions, media policy was redesigned to expand service provision and public access to it. This effort was also marked by a cautious preservation of aspects of the prevailing set of arrangements as a result of the much-vaunted national programme of reconciliation, as well as economic and other geopolitical factors. The fear of a white skills exodus and capital flight also gave cause for caution.

By 1980, the mainstream media in Zimbabwe had been tailored to serve the interests of a minority state experiencing a costly war at home and economic sanctions from abroad (Windrich 1981). At independence, the South African-based Argus Press enjoyed a monopoly of the press in Zimbabwe through its subsidiary Rhodesia Printing and Publishing Company (RPP), which operated two dailies and three weeklies. The dailies were *The Herald* and *The Chronicle*, while the weeklies were the *Sunday Mail*, the *Sunday News* and the *Manica Post*. Throughout the period of Ian Smith's Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) and earlier, these newspapers constituted what could be termed a white minority public sphere. They were, as Shamuyarira argues, 'designed from the outset to promote the cause of White settler colonialism and business interests in South Africa' (Windrich 1981:5).

Alternative publications that made efforts to provide platforms for blacks or liberal whites had been closed down under the Law and Order (Maintenance) Act of 1960 and a litany of other security laws during the twilight years of the colonial regime. Some of the casualties of the restrictive legislation included the *African Daily News*, *Umbowo* and *Moto* magazine among a few other irregular but highly critical publications. Apart from the RPP publications, the print media landscape in 1980 also consisted of the weekly *Financial Gazette*, *Parade* magazine and later *Moto*, which returned to the streets as a monthly.

Like the print media, but even more emphatically, broadcasting had been shaped to the propaganda needs of the besieged colonial state. The Rhodesian state had effectively controlled, through the Ministry of Information, the range of representations made available to the public through the broadcasting station for the 15 years of UDI. With South

African help, the Rhodesia Broadcasting Corporation had succeeded in shutting out even the liberal voices within the white community (see Windrich 1981). Official paranoia was made manifest in the much overplayed notion, 'know your enemy' (captured in a book of that title by the regime's propaganda chief, Ivor Benson), which sought to align local political dissent with foreign, communist enemies. Ironically, the notion of foreign enemies trying to unseat a 'democratically elected' government through local opposition and sections of the media was not confined to the Rhodesian state. In the new millennium, the discourse of anti-imperialism – a fitting parallel to anti-communism – would be replayed and reiterated by the post-colonial regime in the face of contested political legitimacy and fierce opposition. The government of Zimbabwe, as will be illustrated later in this chapter, would abandon itself to a frenzy of draconian lawmaking to shut down privately owned newspapers and silence journalists perceived to be 'state enemies'. In fact, by the close of Zimbabwe's second decade of independence the public press would effectively have become a divisive institution with the mandate of identifying and persecuting 'them' while cheering on the nationalist leadership and its cronies.

In 1980, the new government's policy towards media reform acquired two basic but problematic features. In the area of broadcasting, Rhodesian-style full state control was asserted soon after independence. Nathan Shamuyarira, the new regime's Minister of Information and Tourism, wrote that the rationale for the new policy on the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC) was 'to transform the state broadcasting corporation into an agency reflecting the realities of democratic rule' (Windrich 1981:5). Most of the newly-recruited staffers at the ZBC were former Zanu PF guerrilla fighters who had operated the Voice of Zimbabwe nationalist propaganda radio from Mozambique and Tanzania. The policy of strict state control over broadcasting in Zimbabwe survived the deregulation and liberalisation trends fashionable in the 1990s and persisted into the new millennium. Like its predecessor, the post-colonial state cited, among other reasons, security and the perceived role of broadcasting in national development to explain its continued domination of the airwaves. The use of the media, particularly radio, in the state's developmental agenda excluded minority groups and dissenting voices. In most post-independence elections, both radio and television were effectively

used by the ruling party to warn voters of the dangers of casting a ballot for the 'other'. (On the use of state media against political opposition in the 1990 elections, see Moyo 1992.) Rather than becoming a site for national reconciliation, the public broadcaster performed a divisive role in accordance with the strategic needs of the dominant blocs within the new regime. By the end of 2004, Zimbabwe remained the only country in Southern Africa where broadcasting was strictly a state monopoly.

Within print media, transformation occurred largely at the level of ownership, staffing and editorial reorientation. The new government, with Nigerian aid, bought up the Argus Press shares in the RPP and, now with a controlling stake, renamed it Zimbabwe Newspapers (1980) Ltd. The new company was to be operated by a trust, the Zimbabwe Mass Media Trust (ZMMT), which was in principle autonomous, democratically constituted and tasked with transforming and rolling out the press. The rolling-out process entailed putting rural communities, which constitute about 70 per cent of the population of the country, within reach of the press. Immediately after assuming majority ownership of Zimbabwe Newspapers, the government, through the ZMMT, began a process of 'indigenising' the individual newspapers by making senior editorial appointments and insisting on editorial policies that reflected the state's developmental and transformation agenda.

Media and state: the coercive mating dance

Shaped as it was by the contradictory impulses of democracy and authoritarianism, the process of media reform and transformation in Zimbabwe were not matched by a concomitant expansion of the public sphere. The replacement of colonial ownership models in both the print media and broadcasting, with a non-profit trust model for the public press and a state control model for broadcasting, manifested the Janus-faced nature, not only of media reform, but also of the broad transformation project in post-1980 Zimbabwe.

One of the most visible changes in the new Ministry of Information and Tourism (later renamed the Ministry of Information, Posts and Telecommunications) was the redeployment of the 13 press censors whose job, for a decade and half, had been to censor newspaper material deemed offensive to the Rhodesian Front government before

publication. The infamous overt censorship had been sustained with such dexterity that significant sections of the Rhodesian public had actually bought into the myth of the impossibility of black majority rule (see Windrich 1981; Frederikse 1984). The discontinuation of official censorship and the redeployment of press censors was therefore a political step that, in principle, was symbolic of the new relationship between the state and the press.

In an interview with the Swedish magazine *Contact* in 1980, Zimbabwe's then Prime Minister Robert Mugabe was asked whether his new government would allow 'an open, critical press as in the Western democracies'. He replied: 'Yes, sure. This you will see, quite a lot of open criticism in the press. I'm for the freedom of the press, really, freedom of expression' (*Financial Gazette* 19.09.80). At that time, the Minister of Information, Nathan Shamuyarira, wrote that the new government had introduced a policy regime which ensured that, 'not only will the media be genuinely free in independent Zimbabwe; they will also be responsible and responsive to the will of the majority' (Windrich 1981:6). He painted an ugly picture of a past, 'when the media were exclusively preoccupied with the narrow interests of a settler minority', contrasting this sharply with a future where the media would serve as 'a vital link between government and people and as a vanguard in the continuing struggle for social transformation and mental decolonisation' (Windrich 1981:6).

Besides official assurances about a somewhat rosy impending media policy dispensation, the Lancaster House constitution also provided, albeit rather economically, for media freedom as an extension of freedom of expression. Chapter 20(1) makes reference to 'freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart ideas and information without interference, and freedom from interference with [an individual's] correspondence'.

Official rhetoric and constitutional provisions notwithstanding, the most vivid illustration of the new government's ambiguous approach to the media was the retention of the legal arsenal the previous regime had deployed. In addition to the State of Emergency – which was lifted only in July 1990 – the new 1980 government retained, without amendment to sections dealing with the access to public information, laws such as the Official Secrets Act (Chapter 11:09) and the Law and Order (Maintenance) Act (Chapter 11:07). Other pieces of legislation,

including the Privileges, Immunities and Powers of Parliament Act and the skewed defamation law, were also inherited, kept intact and applied to the media at different phases of the country's transition (see Ndlela 2003).

Looking at post-colonial media policy in Zimbabwe, one is faced with the question of whether in reality the new political establishment was actually committed to the values that it preached. Emerging out of this question is another, namely whether the retention of the colonial legal edifice was a mere administrative compromise occasioned by Lancaster House or a strategic coalescence of old and new elite interests in a new polity obliged to present itself in terms of non-racial democracy and national reconciliation. There is no easy answer to these questions. Moreover, the problem was not peculiarly Zimbabwean. Ronning and Kupe (2000) argue that media policies pursued after independence by many African governments that had emerged out of liberation movements reflected the discrepancy between a democratic and an authoritarian impetus. The fight for independence and egalitarian values had a dual legacy.

The ZMMT, created in 1981 as an articulation of the new government's media policy, was in principle driven by the idea that the press should be free, non-partisan, mass-oriented, accessible and responsible for the national interest (Saunders 1991; Ronning and Kupe 2000). The Trust's monumental task was to manage the transforming press and expand the public sphere in line with the government's developmental agenda. In principle 'an autonomous body of independent and distinguished Zimbabweans' (Shamuyarira 1981:5), it was to manage a broad spectrum of activities that ranged from media training to media production. Under its control was the Zimpapers newspaper group, the newly-renamed Zimbabwe Inter Africa News Agency (Ziana), and the Zimbabwe Institute of Mass Communication (Zimco), which the Trust was tasked with launching. In principle, the ZMMT was a laudable experiment that would ensure the creation of media personnel, media products and in general a public print media system that could sustain the developmental and democratic programmes of the transforming nation state.

The formation and operation of ZMMT was, however, beset by contradictions. According to Saunders (1991), the Trust faced a host of problems, from its financial reliance on the Ministry of Information,

to its own non-representativeness. If the government anticipated that the Trust could sustain itself financially, perhaps on account of the fact that its inherited portfolio, namely Zimpapers and Ziana, were not running at a loss at the time, then it was proven wrong not long after the launch of the Trust. Another argument, which Saunders implicitly suggests, is that perhaps the ruling elite anticipated that the Trust would inevitably be forced to fall back on the state for financial support, opening it up to the strategic interests of the state. If this line of argument is pursued further, then the creation of the Trust in the first place could be viewed as a 'window dressing' to convince the outside world that democratic institutions were evolving in the new state. This would have been convenient in light of the international spotlight on the country's transition, the political economy of donor funding and foreign direct investment, and the domestic politics of national reconciliation. The real motives behind its establishment aside, however, ZMMT was from the beginning financially incapable of expanding the public sphere according to the letter and spirit of its Notarial Deed of Trust. It scrounged for basic operational finances such as salaries from donor agencies and the state, and its real control over both Ziana and Zimpapers was questionable (see Rusike 1990; Saunders 1991; this was also suggested by William Saidi, editor of the *Daily News on Sunday*, in an interview in 2004). Eventually it gave up even its control over Zimco to the Ministry of Manpower Training and Development.

Besides being poorly funded, the Board of Trustees was not representative of the social and political interest groups in Zimbabwe. Shamyarira's statement that the board members were distinguished Zimbabweans was correct, but that was all they were. The founding trustees were seven professionals associated in one way or another with the ruling Zanu PF. These included a prominent medical doctor, the University of Zimbabwe's Vice-Chancellor, a lawyer, an industrialist, and two other professionals. Just like the Media and Information Commission formed 20 years later by the same government, it lacked the representation of media professionals themselves as well as that of other social groupings within civil society such as trade unionists, women's groups, and minorities. The fact that it was a predominantly middle-class board with no solid policy constituency outside ruling party circles, combined with the crisis of funding, rendered the

ZMMT incapable of maintaining the kind of independence and autonomy expected of it as a public institution. Matters were not helped by the fact that there was no institutional framework to support it besides the state.

The community newspaper roll-out programme, spearheaded by the Community Newspaper Group (CNG) and one of the ZMMT's chief projects aimed at expanding rural public spheres, had a weak financial base from the outset. Regional and rural newspapers launched in the late 1980s and early 1990s, including the *Masvingo Provincial Star*, *Chaminuka News*, the *Telegraph*, and the *Gweru Times*, were beset with problems of undercapitalisation and inadequate advertising support from their constituencies. This was compounded by the fact that the envisaged donor support for the rural newspaper project did not meet the state's expectations. Owing to these factors, and also to severe mismanagement, the scope and quality of news coverage in the community news media was generally poor.

Given that the circulation of national newspapers in the country remained limited to major urban centres, the only significant source of information for people in rural, semi-urban and farming communities was the radio, and this the state kept out of private or civil society hands for over two decades. As stated earlier, the government's policy on broadcasting was one of strict editorial control, and this reduced the predominant 'national' medium – radio – to a heavily ideological state apparatus.

The conceptual and strategic weaknesses of ZMMT throughout its existence allowed the Ministry of Information to become the central player in public information policy (Rusike 1990). The state's policy towards Zimpapers took two related forms, namely strong interference with and continual frustration of independent-minded editors, and the appointing of malleable editors who shared the ruling party's broad political and social vision (William Saidi in interview, 2004). A great deal of self-censorship was inculcated in Zimpapers editors and writers through swift action against those who failed to toe the official line, and also through various threats of disciplinary action against Zimpapers journalists by government officials. In December 1981, the Minister of Housing, Eddison Zvobgo, publicly warned Zimpapers that the ruling party would 'rout' and 'thoroughly get rid of' the company's 'pseudo-editorial professors' who, besides not having

participated in the liberation struggle, were working as ‘imperialist agents’ (*Sunday Mail* 13.12.81). Seven years later, the Minister of Defence, Enos Nkala, ordered – although without success – the editor of the Zimpapers-owned *Chronicle* to drop investigations into the illegal activities of senior government officials who were acquiring scarce new motor vehicles at discounted rates and then reselling them. The investigative series became a celebrated moment in Zimbabwean journalism. It should be noted, however, that the exposure of the ‘Willowgate’ scandal, as it became known, was an exception rather than the norm in the history of the public press in Zimbabwe.

As early as September 1981, Jean Maitland-Stuart, then editor of the *Manica Post*, was forced to resign after both the Prime Minister and the Minister of Information reprimanded her for an article criticising the use of North Korean experts to train the Zimbabwean National Army’s Fifth Brigade, which was later to be deployed to quell dissident activities in the Midlands and North and South Matabeleland provinces (Nyahunzvi 2001). As later emerged, the army committed shocking atrocities among civilian communities in the three provinces. In 1985, Willie Musarurwa, the first black editor of the *Sunday Mail*, was fired after reporting on a financial scandal at the state-owned national airline, Air Zimbabwe (William Saidi in interview, 2004). According to Elias Rusike, then General Manager of Zimpapers, Musarurwa’s letter of dismissal, received under the directive of the Minister of Information, stated that the editor had to be relieved of his duties because, ‘under (his) editorship, the *Sunday Mail* acted like an opposition newspaper’ (interview, 2004). Musarurwa’s successor, Henry Muradzikwa, was fired two years later after the paper carried a story claiming that 60 Zimbabwean students had been deported from Cuba for unspecified health reasons, which many people understood to mean HIV/Aids.

It therefore seems evident that the Zimbabwe government’s media policy was shaped from the outset by a broad hegemonic project. This in turn reduced both the public press and the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation to an uncritical acceptance of the ruling party’s social and political agenda. Moreover, contradictions emerging in the transition itself were mirrored in the public media – but largely from the point of view of a powerful constituency in the ruling bloc. This was typified, to devastating effect, in the ways the media covered the atrocities

committed by the army in Matabeleland and Midlands provinces between 1982 and 1987. Notwithstanding the existence of alternative versions of events, the media consistently reported the official line (see Saunders 1999). This in turn helped shape the skewed national reconciliation that was to emerge when the atrocities ended.

This pivotal historic moment aside, public media in general served as a mouthpiece for the state's ostensible reconciliation agenda. Singled out for occasional media chastisement were not only opposition parties (mainly PF Zapu), but also the white population. In the run-up to the 1985 election, the state-controlled *Herald* devoted considerable space to bashing the opposition and the whites. In one instance, the paper uncritically quoted the Prime Minister as promising a 'clean-up' of whites after the elections, 'so that we remain only with the whites who want to work with the government' (*Herald* 04.07.85). In an editorial comment the following day, the same paper took a swipe at whites who voted for the opposition:

There will not be anything to stop the ruling party ... from effectively dealing with those who have spurned the policy of reconciliation like the dissidents and their supporters and the Rhodesian Front ... Five years have been long to repent. Those five years are up. Those who wished to repent have and those who have not do not deserve a second chance. They now need to be dealt with in the language they understand – muscle. (*Herald* 05.07.85)

The success of the ruling party in creating mediated public spheres defined and dominated by official ideology was due partly to the absence of vibrant institutional support systems for journalists as professionals and partly to the lack of a tradition of independent and objective journalism within the mainstream media. While the government inherited a strong state that had been a crucial vehicle for both social cohesion and coercion, journalism as an institution inherited a weakened Rhodesia Guild of Journalists that for the most part had played to the gallery (see Windrich 1981). So weak had the Guild been in the face of blatant censorship by the UDI regime that in its periodic resolutions it would make token criticisms of official censorship, accompanied by 'realisations' that censorship was 'in the interest of Rhodesia's national security' (Windrich 1981:64). What was inherited in 1980 was therefore a journalists' union that was more or less an extension of the state and,

given the race and class composition of the Guild, an institution that broadly shared the colonial state's vision.

The replacement of the Guild by the Zimbabwe Union of Journalists (ZUJ) did not alter the prevailing state-media relations. The new coterie of black journalists and editors in the public press, a good many of whom felt they had to be aligned to the ruling party agenda to survive, found little difficulty in dovetailing their professional agenda with the ruling party's political and social programme, with far-reaching implications for their role as journalists and employees. Further, the fact that the ZUJ was a member of the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU), itself an organisation that the ruling bloc had successfully created and brought under its ambit at independence, did not help matters. That the ZUJ, two decades after its formation, still had no secretariat or any clear policy on various aspects of journalism practice in Zimbabwe is a reflection of its institutional weakness in relation to the state.

If the government's policy approach to the public media bordered on direct coercion, state-private press relations were characterised by indifference on the part of the former, punctuated occasionally by accusations of the latter's reluctance to transform (see Saunders 1991). Save for the Catholic-owned *Moto* magazine, the private press during this period was almost entirely owned by white capital, and largely retained its pre-independence outlook. The *Financial Gazette* remained an exclusively upmarket business publication with very little interest in mainstream politics; *Moto* continued to produce cutting-edge popular journalism tinged with Christian missionary flavour; and *Parade* stayed in its 1950s mould: a platform for aspiring lower-middle-class black township-dwellers interested in popular genres of sports writing, short stories and music journalism (for a discussion of *Parade* and the later *Horizon* magazine, see Kupe 1997).

Although in the second decade of Zimbabwe's independence the expanded private press would constitute a critical terrain where anti-hegemonic struggles would be launched by popular social groups, this press posed no real threat to the ruling party's political security during the first decade of independence. It fared rather poorly in comparison to the public press in terms of circulation and market share, which also perhaps explains the state's swift seizure of editorial autonomy from the public media.

Media policy in the era of 'second winds of change'

Africa in the 1990s experienced what some have dubbed the 'second winds of change'. In general terms this phrase refers to the spread of multi-party democracy to challenge one-party systems in most parts of the continent, following the dismantling of socialist regimes in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. These changes at the global level also marked the end of the Cold War and signalled the beginning of a new era, dominated by a single superpower and the 'triumph' of liberal governance and neo-liberal models of economic management. For Zimbabwe, both the changes in geopolitics and internal fissures within the transforming state had a profound impact on the formulation and articulation of media policy in the 1990s and the early years of the 21st century.

Whereas in the first decade of independence white domination of the private press and a few other sectors of civil society had served as a locale for limited counter-hegemonic mobilisation, the post-1990 era saw the state's authority being challenged by a diversity of competing voices and social interests across a spectrum of race and gender and class (see Chuma 2003). Student movements, women's groups and workers (including civil servants) mobilised against the state, in the wake of increased public disgruntlement with the management of the economy and allegations of official corruption in crucial sectors such as fuel procurement, foreign currency control and land reallocation. The initial promise of the newly adopted Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) gave way to deepening poverty and social restlessness (Mlambo 1997).

Against this background, the press, especially the private press, became a significant terrain for mobilisation around issues of poverty, democratic rights and corruption, especially as expressed by those opposed to the government. In a context where the opposition was poorly organised and posed no real threat to the incumbent government, as evidenced by its dismal performance during successive elections (see Moyo 1992; Makumbe and Compagnon 2000), the private press assumed, by default, a range of roles normally performed by the opposition. This was to lead to a harsh response from the government, especially as the political stakes were upped at the dawn of the 21st century. The government-private press relationship in this period was characterised by blackmail and slander, threats and the detention of journalists. With regard to the public media, there was no change in government policy. In fact, so pronounced was state control

of public journalism that even some government officials complained that the media had lost any semblance of credibility. In July 1992, Public Service Minister Eddison Zvobgo remarked that his fellow ministers had turned to the BBC and CNN for credible information about local events 'as a respite to (our) daily bread'. He criticised the public media's 'shrill personality cult syndrome characterised by the incipient extolling of often meagre virtues of the political leaders of the day' (*The Insider* 03.92).

From Linquenda House to Munhumutapa Building: media policy in the era of 'threats to sovereignty'

Viewed in retrospect, the assurance that Mugabe gave in 1980 that his government would allow an open critical press (see the earlier reference to the *Contact* interview) strikes a particularly sad and ironic note. The executive restlessness and paranoia that characterised UDI in the '60s and '70s reproduced itself in the independent Zimbabwe of the 21st century. While the '80s had witnessed little in the way of media regulation – largely because the state was secure politically – from 2000 the country entered an era of frenzied lawmaking that by comparison makes the previous years look lethargic.

Faced with an unprecedented threat to its political security, the ruling elite resorted to both legal and extra-legal processes designed to contain the media and an increasingly restless civil society. Although resistance to the ruling elite had been building up since the late 1980s, its most concrete manifestation was in February 2000 when the majority of Zimbabweans voted 'no' to a draft constitution that was widely seen as shaped to accommodate the needs of the ruling party. The referendum 'marked a particular watershed in Zimbabwe's post-independence political history, precipitating dramatic shifts in the country's political, economic, social, cultural and spatial landscapes' (Hammar and Raftopoulos 2003:1). Some of these 'dramatic shifts' include the wave of farm occupations by the peasants and war veterans and the escalation of state-supported violence – all these crystallising into what has generally been termed the 'Zimbabwe crisis'.

It was in the arena of media policy that perhaps the most dramatic shifts occurred. Despite President Mugabe's public acknowledgement of the results of the referendum, the ruling party and government accused the media, in particular the newly launched *Daily News* and

a few other private weeklies, of campaigning for the 'no' vote. The new cabinet appointed after the June 2000 elections was faced with the task of executing what became known as the 'Third Chimurenga'. This became more than just land occupations: it extended to stamping out the opposition, punishing the private press for not being 'patriotic' and allegedly working in cahoots with Western powers to effect regime change in Harare, purging the public press of 'disloyal' journalists and editors, intensifying the anti-colonial rhetoric against the West, and introducing 'patriotic history' to the nation.

Within the realm of the media, the first indication of things to come was the dissolution of the old Ministry of Information, Posts and Telecommunications and the formation of a new, trim Department of Information and Publicity in the President's Office. In physical terms, Linquenda House in downtown Nelson Mandela Street – previously used to house the old ministry and accessible to the general public – was vacated by the new department, which moved further east to Munhumutapa Building, which is guarded 24 hours a day, seven days a week, by patrolling security agents.

If the new department located within the President's Office became inaccessible, the extent of its detachment from the citizens was also reflected much more vividly at the symbolic level. It passed various laws and implemented policies without any consultation outside ruling party circles. In the first 30 months of its existence, the department oversaw the deportation of virtually all foreign journalists working in Zimbabwe, the periodic arrests of most local journalists working for the private press and the promulgation of some of the most repressive media laws in the country's history.

In particular the infamous Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA), passed in 2002, was designed to silence the critical media and increase the influence of the Minister of Information on mediated communication in the country. AIPPA controversially provides for the registration of journalists by a Media and Information Commission (constituted by officials hand-picked by the minister), and for registration of media organisations by the same commission. Registration certificates can be cancelled at any time should the minister and the commission deem it necessary. Unaccredited journalists may not be employed anywhere in the country, and any organisation that employs such journalists is liable to a fine.

One of the most devastating consequences of AIPPA was the closure of three privately owned newspapers in the space of just eight months. The *Daily News* and its sister weekly *Daily News on Sunday* were shut down in September 2003, and the weekly *Tribune* in May 2004. With regard to the *Daily News*, it can be argued that the state applied both legal and extra-legal methods to silence what it perceived from the outset as a serious threat to its political security. The resort to the law in 2003 followed two bombings, one at the office of the paper's editor-in-chief in 2000, and one at its printing press in 2001. In neither case was anyone prosecuted, prompting speculation that state operatives had a hand in the attacks.

Under AIPPA, the public is granted very limited access to information and in practice public bodies are not accountable to the public. Majority foreign ownership of media is outlawed and the government is empowered to collect and use personal information without seeking permission from or advising the individual.

Other pieces of legislation passed since 2000 include the Public Order and Security Act (POSA) of 2002 and the Broadcasting Services Act (BSA) of 2002. The BSA has created conditions that make it almost impossible to operate a private commercial or community broadcast station in Zimbabwe. The state-appointed Broadcasting Authority of Zimbabwe (BAZ), which is in control of licensing, has the authority to interfere with the editorial content of broadcasts and enforce 75 per cent local content. The Act also empowers the minister to amend, suspend and terminate licenses, and to set licensing conditions for broadcasters through his control of BAZ. On the other hand, POSA, among a litany of other deterrents to free expression, criminalises the publication of 'false statements prejudicial to the State' (section 15). To a paranoid state, even the mildest criticism of a state organ can appear to be prejudicial.

The Department of Information and Publicity, which enjoys virtually unlimited funding from the President's budget, has since its establishment launched its multi-pronged, multimedia campaign both in support of the land reform programme and against the country's perceived enemies. The campaign, ostensibly intended to safeguard the country's sovereignty, has been premised on the assumption that 'you are either with us or against us'. Journalists perceived to be critical are dealt with in various ways, ranging from verbal attacks and sackings to beatings and incarceration. The establishment of the Media and

Information Commission also means that critical journalists may risk having their practising licences revoked.

By all accounts, the relationship between the media and the state since independence has been and remains unsustainable and unhealthy. The new century in Zimbabwe, rather than heralding an era of democratic regulation and policing of the media in the interest of liberating the public sphere, has seen the shrinking of democratic space for public debate. The public media in particular have been reduced to hapless cheerleaders, not dissimilar from what they were in the colonial era and perhaps even worse. On the other hand the private press continues to face an uncertain future, not just because of declining spending on advertising in a shrinking economy but also because of the ominous threat posed by a belligerent media policy regime. At the same time, the private press, while providing the much-needed alternative public spheres, has arguably not been able to transcend the bifurcated terrain of the Zimbabwe debate, especially in the new century. It has become to the opposition and parts of civil society what the public media are to the ruling party and government.

The challenge for a democratic media policy

In conclusion, the process of transforming the postcolonial media was clearly skewed from the outset, largely because it was left to the emerging ruling elite to do with as it needed. The result was a failure to democratise participation in the mediated public sphere by groups or interests other than those sanctioned by the ruling elite. The absence of institutional structures to support the 'reformed' media did not help matters.

Also, in a transition characterised by contradictory impulses and tensions, media policy became an incomprehensible series of responses to various challenges and, simultaneously, an attempt to attain hegemonic control over the transforming society. The deployment of the ruling party's ideological wing in the arena of media policy was designed to aid this hegemonic project (see Herbst 1990).

Given the state's failure to implement a media policy regime predicated on the creation of accessible, inexpensive, free and non-partisan media, what emerged in place of an ideal public sphere was, to draw on the language of Jürgen Habermas, a 'representative publicity' (Habermas 1989; Peters 1993). This form of 'public sphere', rather than

being a site for citizen participation through discussion, is a 'display of prestige, not critical discussion, spectacle, not debate and appearance before the people, as on stage, not for them' (Peters 1993:545).

The media, particularly the mainstream press, radio and television, can make a significant contribution to national reconciliation in Zimbabwe. But such a contribution can only be expected from a public media system that is free, professional, accountable and well provisioned. That Zimbabwe faces a critical challenge in reforming media policy is clear. Such reform should not be piecemeal, and participation in authoring it should be national in character. While the state naturally assumes a central role in policy reform, lessons from the past should render it imperative to include various social groups, not least journalists themselves, in the intricate process. In addition, given the centrality of the media as sites for the articulation of national debate, control of the public media especially should not be left to just one set of interests. Institutional structures should be established that guarantee editorial and programming autonomy for both the press and broadcast media. A common trend in democratising nations is to fund such institutions through the national treasury and make them accountable to parliament. Had it not fallen prey to weak financing and lack of institutional backup outside the ruling bloc, the ZMMT could have exemplified this ideal. Further, interaction between the state and journalists' unions on matters affecting journalism practice should be regular and beneficial. The current policy regime bears no trace of any such interaction.

The failure of the rural media expansion programme should be seen as an opportunity for rethinking policy. The question of funding for such projects remains central, and should be addressed not just by the state but also by rural communities themselves, by civil society and by representatives of local capital. It is highly unlikely that the current rural media project spearheaded by the government-owned New Ziana will make a fundamental break with the policies of the past. Issues of poor funding and lack of autonomy from the ruling elite will continue to cry for attention as long as the country operates in the same policy environment, notwithstanding the cosmetic name changes.

Finally, media reform in Zimbabwe should of necessity be located in a matrix of political and economic reform that emphasises options for transcending the growing polarisation of Zimbabwean society. Media as institutions are shaped by changes and trends in other

institutions, especially political and economic ones, much as these institutions are also variously shaped by the media. Situated within the context of the broad political economy of transition, media reform should be designed as a break with long-running historic patterns of state coercion if it is to be truly transforming.

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Reconciliation, ethnicity and school history in Zimbabwe 1980–2002¹

Teresa Barnes

Introduction

This is not a chapter about what was – or is. It discusses, rather, popularised versions of one aspect of the Zimbabwean past: ethnic relations after the achievement of independence in 1980. Focusing on portrayals of the relationship between the country's two largest ethnic groups, the chapter asks, in the context of a stated national policy of reconciliation in the early 1980s, how did national history syllabi and high school history textbooks portray the history of the Shona and Ndebele peoples? Did reconciliation as a national social goal have meaning in terms of ethnicity, or did it only refer to the calming of racial antagonism?

Political background

Zimbabwe was originally colonised in 1890 by a group of South African- and British-backed mercenaries, inspired, among others, by Cecil John Rhodes. In gratitude the soldiers-of-fortune-cum-miners-and-farmers named their new colony Rhodesia, and proceeded to try to build a 'white man's country'. In 1980, a bitter and brutal civil war between African nationalists and the white regime was ended by a British-brokered peace settlement which led to 'one person, one vote' elections. The elections were won by the nationalist organisation/political party, the Zimbabwe African National Union (Zanu). The other major player in the nationalist armed struggle, the Zimbabwe African People's Union (Zapu), also contested the elections and won a minority of seats in the new parliament. The Zanu leader, Robert Mugabe, became the first leader of independent Zimbabwe in April 1980.

The first 15 years of the challenges of independence in Zimbabwe resulted in tremendous progress in meeting the needs of the majority:

for example, in education, health and housing. In education, an enormous expansion occurred in aggregate school enrolments, and in the number of trained teachers and of school premises by the end of the 1980s (Mackenzie 1988; Edwards and Tisdall 1990; Nhundu 1992). Primary enrolments increased from approximately 800 000 in 1979 to nearly 2.3 million by 1986 (Dorsey 1989). Secondary education was not free, but increased enrolments were similarly impressive: from 66 000 pupils in 177 schools in 1979 to 537 000 pupils in 1 300 schools in 1986 (Dorsey 1989; Colclough et al. 1990; Courtenay 1999). Under heavy economic and political pressures, many of these gains have been significantly eroded since 1999/2000.

Enemies or allies?

In 1980, Robert Mugabe's government honored a clause of the peace settlement that reserved a few Parliamentary seats for white voters (de Waal 1990:121).² A policy of National Reconciliation was proclaimed:

If yesterday I fought you as an enemy, today you have become a friend and ally with the same national interest, loyalty, rights and duties as myself. If yesterday you hated me, you cannot avoid the love that binds you to me and me to you ... The wrongs of the past must now stand forgiven and forgotten. If ever we look to the past, let us do so for the lesson the past has taught us, namely that oppression and racism are inequalities that must never find scope in our political and social system. It could never be a correct justification that because the whites oppressed us yesterday when they had power, the blacks must oppress them today because they have power. An evil remains an evil whether practised by white against black or black against white ... Democracy is never mob-rule ... (Meredith 2002; de Waal 1999:49)³

In Zimbabwe, the word 'reconciliation' generally refers to race relations, where 'whites' are settlers from Europe or South Africa or their descendants, and 'blacks' are indigenous African people (Frederickse 1992). Relations between indigenous groups are referred to with a somewhat different vocabulary. The main trajectory of political history of indigenous Zimbabweans has moved along a debatable fault line of historical tensions between the Shona (of the central, north and eastern parts of the country) and the Ndebele (mainly of

the south and west). Although there are other ethnic communities in Zimbabwe – ‘coloured,’ Asian, Venda and Tonga, for example (see Worby 1994) – the central issue of the ethnic question in Zimbabwe has been the existence and/or extent of a historical animosity between the Shona and the Ndebele. When this issue has been addressed after independence, it has usually been with the use of the terminology of ‘unity’ rather than of reconciliation, as will be shown below.

Portrayals of Shona–Ndebele relationships were manipulated during the colonial era in order to divide and rule (de Waal 1990:89). The colonially-propagated narrative was that, in the 19th century, defenceless Shona peoples were attacked by the fierce Ndebele warriors coming from the south, who, fleeing the wrath of Shaka Zulu, crossed the Limpopo and proceeded to raid for cattle, women and land. Raids continued until the Pioneer Column arrived in the 1890s and put an end to this oppression. In the colonial version, then, the Shona are disorganised weaklings; the Ndebele are mindless militaristic bullies, while the enlightened white settlers and the British South Africa Company bring peace, order, God and the Union Jack.

[In the 1890s] Whites believed that the Shona peoples would not rebel [against colonial rule] because they believed that the Shona had no roots, no sense of history...whites believed that the Ndebele too would not rebel because they believed that Ndebele society, no matter how centralized and effective it had been in the past, had also been so arbitrary and oppressive that it had been abhorrent to most of those involved in it. Whites believed that the Shona welcomed Company rule as a protection against the Ndebele ... (Ranger 1967:2)

This narrative was propagated in later Rhodesian history books, and certainly, as in the example below, in history textbooks.

Class Review Questions

1. Which European people said they owned Mashonaland?
2. The amaNdebele often raided the, killed many men and took their cattle and grain.
3. In 1893 manywere killed in a raid near Some ran into the fort and asked to be protected.
4. Write down five reasons for the Matabele War.
5. Before the Europeans came to Rhodesia, there were half a million

Africans here. How many Africans were there after fifty years of European rule? (*Discovering Rhodesian History*, 1975, quoted in Frederickse 1982: 225)

This narrative of Shona victimisation and Ndebele aggression was powerful and difficult to dislodge; as late as 1999, Ranger noted, 'For far too long the only history of Matabeleland known to Zimbabweans has been the bloody saga of Mzilikazi and Lobengula, with its emphasis on the Ndebele as invaders, raiders and conquerors' (Ranger 1999:5).

The corollary to these 'notions of traditional hostility' (CCJPZ 1997: 28) was that progressive nationalism at least partly turned on disproving or discrediting the narrative of Shona–Ndebele enmity. Thus, regarding the liberation war of 1967–80, despite the close (although not universal) correlation between Shona people and Zanu, and between Ndebele people and the Zimbabwe African People's Union (Zapu), and despite the wartime rivalries between them, it was politic to emphasise that differences were neither 'tribal' nor fundamental, but rather, concerned tactics. For example,

The rift in the nationalist movement was seized upon by the propagandists, who attempted to fit the split neatly into their 'tribally'-divided model. In fact, the breakaway from the Zimbabwe African Peoples Union (ZAPU) in 1963 and the formation of the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) *was not a purely ethnic squabble*, but a rejection of the conciliatory policies then endorsed by ZAPU's leadership. ZAPU was not a movement exclusively supported by Ndebele-speakers, but included large numbers of people who spoke Shona dialects. ZAPU leader Joshua Nkomo was inaccurately stereotyped as Ndebele, although he is Kalanga – a Shona sub-group which has close cultural affinities with the Ndebele. Similarly, the Ndebele-speakers among ZANU's leaders and soldiers were also conveniently overlooked by analysts who saw only 'tribally'-based divisions straining the Patriotic Front alliance. (Frederickse 1982:226–227) (Emphasis added.)

The alliance between Zanu and Zapu was hard-won in the waning years of the liberation struggle;⁴ it was put under very serious strain immediately after independence as some guerrillas from both camps balked at the disarming and demobilisation exercise that was meant to open up integration of Zanu's army), Zipra (Zapu's army)

and former Rhodesian forces. Fighting broke out in 1981, souring the atmosphere and leading to some Zipra ex-combatants breaking away from the process. In the context of continuing efforts from apartheid South Africa to destabilise the new majority government, the state sent a North Korean-trained unit to hunt out the former Zipra 'dissidents' in Matabeleland. This escalated into a brutal, undeclared war against the rural population of Matabeleland, which was accused of giving support and aid to the disaffected guerrillas. The Gukurahundi, as it came to be known, was a time (1983–87) of many atrocities committed against a largely unarmed and already war-weary rural population in the south and the west. Although largely a silenced conflict in the country at the time, it has now been identified as a shameful national episode (Werbner 1991; CCJPZ 1997; Ranger 1999; Alexander et al. 2000).

A balanced assessment of the interplay of the 'enmity narrative' and the complex histories of the relationship between Zanla and Zipra was given by an influential independent report on the human rights abuses perpetrated during the Gukurahundi period.

The differences and similarities between Zipra and Zanla, and the manipulation of popular belief about antagonism between 'Shona' and 'Ndebele' are contentious topics. Suffice it to say, first, that there were some differences between Zipra and Zanla in training and outlook, and some negative memories of one another which added to the complexity of integrating the two forces into one army after independence. And, second, that divisions created by recruitment patterns and party loyalties played all too easily into oppositions between Shona and Ndebele speakers (CCJPZ 1997:28).

In summary, then, the tenor of portrayals of the Shona–Ndebele relationship – and of its shadowy twin, the Zanu–Zapu relationship – was in flux in the early years of independence, and was quite definitely subject to political manipulation. In 1987, the nation heaved a collective sigh of relief when Zanu and Zapu signed the Unity Accord, which brought the period of formal contestation between the two groups to an end.

The production of textbooks and new history syllabi, 1980–90

For the first decade of independence, secondary schools continued to teach history according to a syllabus which had been available since

the mid-1970s. The slow pace of revising the syllabus was a matter of frustration to many.⁵ Syllabus 2160, which was in use in this period, had an equal emphasis on European and central African history. In the available books, however, even the history of central Africa was discussed as the history of European settlement in the region, focusing on Western culture and politics and denigrating African culture, society and political initiatives – or ignoring these altogether (Harber 1989:108).

In 1983 it was announced that all school syllabi would be redesigned ‘in tune with...national development plans’ (Mungazi 1988). An important accompanying initiative, ‘education with production’ did not live up to its early promise to transform the national curriculum from its inherited, purely academic focus into more practical and realistic directions (Jansen 1993). In secondary schools, therefore, the structure of the educational system continued unchanged: four years of secondary education led to examinations at the standard of the old British O level examinations, followed by two years of A level study for the best pupils, with scores determining university entrance. There was no system of continuous assessment. The O and A level papers were examined by the Cambridge, UK, examinations syndicate until their localisation/nationalisation in 1995.⁶

Regarding the actual production of textbooks, Zimbabwe developed a vibrant publishing industry after independence. In 1996 it was estimated that there were 50 publishing companies in the country, some well-versed in large-scale production; there were two paper mills; and paper such as coverstock was also sourced through large international donations. In short, the publishing infrastructure was sufficient to meet the country’s textbook needs; indeed, textbook sales made up over 80 per cent of the publishing market (Mphasi and Bamhare 1996).

Textbooks were written and produced entirely in the private sector, with book content following syllabus guidelines set by the Curriculum Development Unit (CDU) of the Ministry of Education (Brickhill 1997). Schools received annual financial allocations from government for textbook purchase, which they were able to spend at their own discretion (in the mid-1990s, government allocated Z\$60–80 million annually to schools for textbook purchase). Ideally, schools provided all textbooks at no charge to pupils, with parents responsible only for extra or replacement copies. This ideal in book provision was rarely

reached, however, with critical textbook shortages throughout the 1990s, as book funding was unable to keep pace with the huge surge in enrolments (Mphasi and Bamhare 1996).

In the mid-1980s, a team consisting of staff of the CDU, 'one lecturer from each of the teachers' colleges, the Subject Education Officers (inspectors), and one elected teacher representative from each province', worked on the production of a history syllabus with new content and methodology (Proctor 1990:78–9). Their goal was a syllabus that would rectify the errors and fill the silences of the colonial historical narrative, and bring the weight of new scholarship to bear on the welcome task of giving a new nation a new history. The result of their labours was History Syllabus 2166 – referred to hereafter as 'the nationalist syllabus' or as '2166' – on which the first examinations were set at the end of the 1991 school year.⁷ The textbooks that are discussed below were written for Syllabus 2166, and were first published in the period 1991–95.

Changing history, 1991–2002

Syllabus 2166, the nationalist syllabus, came into effect in 1991 and lasted (with one major revised version in 2000) until 2002. It was Zimbabwe's first concerted attempt to write its own, new history for its own people. As with national syllabi in all subjects, 2166 was used in all government schools (i.e. not just those of one community or another). As developed, it represented several compromises between 'a small group of motivated, progressive individuals, mainly teachers', and 'a large majority of very conservative lecturers and administrators' (Proctor 1990). Nonetheless, 2166 was, in many ways, a radical departure from 2160 in terms of both methodology and content.

Methodologically, according to notes produced by the CDU, 2166 encouraged a varied approach to history teaching, involving problem-posing, problem-solving, role play, written exercises and discussions – as antidotes to the rote-learning styles of the past. It took a thematic approach to historical topics, emphasised a skills-based approach by relying on a wide variety of source-based exercises, and encouraged the development of empathy as a tool of historical understanding (CDU, n.d.). Subsequent revisions of the syllabus have carried the same statements of methodological approach.

In terms of content, 2166 was a very long syllabus, examined in two parts. The topics for the first exam paper (33 per cent of the final mark, examined through source-based questions) were:

1. Comparative pre-capitalist modes of production in East and Central Africa (late Stone Age to early Iron Age; Iron Age states of Mutapa and Rozvi; Zulu and Ndebele states);
2. Comparative industrial capitalism (Britain, Germany, USA, Japan);
3. Imperialism, capitalism and resistance in Zimbabwe, 1890–1950;
4. Revolution and socialist transformation (Marxist ideas; Russian and Chinese revolutions to present day).

Paper 2 of the exam (67 per cent of the final mark) asked essay questions drawn from the following topics. The syllabus said that 12 questions would be presented, of which examination candidates would choose three.

1. Comparative pre-capitalist modes of production in East and Central Africa (late Stone Age to early Iron Age; Iron Age states of Mutapa and Rozvi; Zulu and Ndebele states);
2. Comparative industrial capitalism (Britain, Germany, USA, Japan);
3. Nationalism and imperialism (colonialism in Zaire or Ghana; Algeria or Kenya); WWI;
4. Capitalism in crisis (Great Depression; Fascism; WWII);
5. Imperialism, capitalism and resistance in Zimbabwe, 1890–1950;
6. Revolution and socialist transformation (Marxist ideas; Russian and Chinese revolutions to present day);
7. World anti-imperialist struggles and neocolonialism (Namibia, Tanzania, Algeria, Uganda, Ghana, Nigeria, Angola, Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau, South Africa, Palestine, Cuba, Vietnam, Zimbabwe);
8. Post-1945 international relations (UN, Warsaw Pact, non-aligned movement, European Community, OAU).

The nationalist syllabus was thus quite a long, top-heavy construction, with heavy emphasis on comparative industrialisation, progress, revolution and social history, and in comparison to both previous and future syllabi (see below), on source-based enquiry.

After a government-appointed commission criticised the overly academic bent of the O level system in 1999, 2166 was revised slightly in 1999–2000 in terms of content (Nziramasanga Commission 1999). Plans were put in place to make history a voluntary subject, as pupils

would be streamed into vocational and academic channels, with history only compulsory for the latter. However, the revised 2166 syllabus and the planned 'downgrading' of history were both shelved when a new syllabus, 2167, was introduced in 2002.

Syllabus 2167 is in use in Zimbabwe as of this writing. It differs greatly from 2166. 2167 is much more tightly focused, specifically on Zimbabwean history, with some attention to South Africa and Mozambique. Paper 2 of the 2167 exam is general 20th-century world history, departing from the focus in 2166 on political revolution and comparative anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist struggles. The only specific exception to this in 2167 is the Chinese revolution.

The changes in skills development and examination assessment are also dramatic. Up until 1991, a successful history student would have been an excellent writer of traditional essays, which were the only vehicle of assessment. For the nationalist syllabus, a successful student would have been good at writing essays but also would have excelled in recognising and interpreting source-based documents (such as primary documents, letters, photographs, quotations from books, etc.). Since 2002, however, a successful history student does not have to write an essay or interpret sources. Instead, the student has to be very adept at answering shorter, 'structured' questions in which more weight (17 out of a total of 25 marks) is given to 'recall' and 'description' in an answer, and less weight (8 marks) to 'interpretation and analysis'.⁸

The textbooks' portrayal of ethnicity and reconciliation⁹

This section will look at the way that the new textbooks published in the early 1990s for use with the first 2166 syllabus portrayed issues of ethnicity and asks the following questions:

- A. How is the relationship between African groups before the establishment of colonialism presented?
- B. Do the books differentiate between ethnic groups in terms of the impact of colonialism on their lives?
- C. Are ethnic groups presented as monolithic?
- D. How is the period of army operations in Matabeleland in the 1980s presented?
- E. How is the 1987 Unity Accord presented?
- F. Are other minority groups discussed in the textbooks?

The 19th century

The textbooks, in one way or another, all take issue with the portrayal of the Ndebele simply as raiders in perpetuity. Some press the point that the Ndebele state gradually developed a fairly diversified agricultural economy (Prew et al. 1991:72). For example:

But because of constant movement on the journey northwards [after 1838], cattle often obtained though [sic] the raiding system became the basis of the economic wealth of the state ... But recent objective historical studies show that the impact of the Ndebele on the pre-existing societies was not all pervasive ... outlying areas were integrated into the state system on the basis of payment of tribute through the provision of youngmen [sic] to the king's amabutho (regiments), labour for the king's fields and through the supply of grain and sometimes cattle. In return, such communities were left to engage in their traditional economic activities ... It has also to be noted that there was peaceful cross-cultural fertilisation of ideas and beliefs between the Ndebele and Shona groups ... (Moyana and Sibanda 1999:18–19)

Similarly, some discussed change over time in the relationship and interestingly, also claimed that the Shona fought back against the Ndebele (Parsons 1991:51).

By the 1880s the Shona-speaking chiefdoms of the central plateau had acquired guns from the Portuguese and were increasingly able to resist Ndebele expansion ... This was not yet on a scale to challenge Ndebele dominance, but communities were able to limit the extent of Ndebele power and raids ... (Proctor and Phimister 1991:63)

An exception to this rule used quite inflammatory language to describe the progress of the Ndebele and others through southern and central Africa in the 19th century.

Through Tshaka, we see the worst possible exploitation of people by an Iron Age kingdom. But this was only the beginning. Fragments of groups shattered by the Zulu army were to continue the Zulu practices wherever they went. By 1845, some of these fragments had almost reached the equator. On their way, they shattered and destroyed countless groups and individuals ... (Mukanya 1995:31)

Did colonialism have a differential impact on ethnic groups?

Here, the books are united in their portrayal of the impact of colonialism as affecting all African people in the country in similar ways.

Once Rhodes and the BSAC [British South Africa Company] knew that there was no 'Second Rand' in either Mashonaland or Matabeleland, they stole the people's wealth. In this period, the Ndebele and the Shona had their cattle seized, and were subjected to taxes and forced labour ... (Proctor and Phimister 1991:220)

In all the books, markers of ethnicity are subsumed in a 'settler vs Africans' narrative.

'The development of the settler economy was paralleled by a determined attack on African autonomy and economic self-sufficiency. The whites expropriated African land and cattle. In Matabeleland, as many as 250 000 cattle were taken by the settlers following the defeat of the Ndebele people in the war of 1893. The expropriation of the African people's means of production was accompanied by increasing exploitation of their labour as the settler economy grew. Africans were forced to work on mines and other sectors of the settler economy ... (Mlambo 1995:109)

Are the Shona and Ndebele presented as monolithic groups?

One could argue that in order to fight the tendency to stereotype blandly, cultures should be presented as the work of individuals where debate, dissension and consensus-making mechanisms are at work. The history texts do try to disaggregate the Shona and Ndebele to some extent. They present a kind of class system within the 19th century Ndebele state and posit that 'the Shona' were actually an amalgam of ethnic sub-groups such as Kalanga, Rozvi, Zezuru, etc. (Mukanya 1995:34; Prew et al. 1993:70, 73; Parsons 1991:51). Whether or not these categories were manifested in differences in cultural practices and beliefs, however, is not discussed in any depth.

Military operations in Matabeleland in the 1980s

Three of the books surveyed mention the Gukurahundi period; two adopt a cautious tone. Given that the major exposés of the war were

not published in Zimbabwe until the mid to late 1990s, it is interesting that it was covered at all. Prew et al. (1993:187) write:

The integration of the [armed] forces [after 1980] ... went fairly smoothly, with the exception of an upsurge of fighting in Matabeleland which began in 1981. The revolt was quickly quashed but, after large ZAPU arms caches were discovered, its leaders were dismissed from the Cabinet and several were detained. A period of activity by 'dissidents' followed and the national army was deployed in the south-west of the country. Many innocent people were killed as a result of this conflict, which ended only after ZANU and ZAPU agreed to unite as one political party in 1987.

Mlambo (1995:202) was similarly brief:

At the time of writing, the country had been governed by ZANU PF since independence. In the early 1980s, differences between the two major political parties in the country, ZANU and ZAPU, threatened to plunge the country into a civil war as tensions between them sometimes spilt into armed conflict. The subsequent agreement between the two parties to merge saved the country from the calamity of a disastrous civil war and came as a relief to all Zimbabweans.

Mukanya (1995:193), however, does not acknowledge government military operations in Matabeleland at all:

... some sections of PF-ZAPU did not accept the electoral defeat of 1980. Although their representatives were brought into the government, they continued to scheme against that government and to plot a coup. In 1982, fighting erupted in Esigodini between ZANLA and ZIPRA that were being integrated. Many lives were lost and some of the ZIPRA cadres retreated into the bush to continue the fight as guerrillas. They disrupted all government efforts to reconstruct Matabeleland and many schools closed down.

The 1987 Unity Accord

For two reasons, the books that were published up to about 1994 say little about the ultimately successful effort to join Zanu and Zapu together into Zanu PF in 1987. Firstly, the 2166 syllabus focused mainly on nationalism and the liberation struggle and the achievement

of independence. Secondly, the lead time necessary for writing and publication meant that 1987 was very contemporary history when the books were being written and there was very little hindsight or perspective available. One simply mentions 'the joint ZANU/ZAPU alliance called ZANU (PF)' (Prew et al. 1993:189); another, 'the subsequent agreement between the two parties to merge' (Mlambo 1995:202). Books published after 1995 (some revisions of the earlier versions) contain more detail. Moyana and Sibanda (1999:81) include a short section on the Unity Accord, including an undated quote from Mugabe:

It ought to have been the Magma [sic] Carta of Zimbabwe, a charter which would bind once and for all, the two major tribes of Zimbabwe, namely the Shona and Ndebele, into one ...The Unity Accord, thus, form[s] the bedrock upon which peace, democracy, social justice and prosperity should be built.

Are other minority groups discussed in the textbooks?

Without exception, the textbooks surveyed for this project do not mention other ethnic minorities in Zimbabwe at all. There are no surveys of population demographics or descriptions of diverse 'traditional' cultural practices.¹⁰ There are one-sentence descriptions of migrant workers from Malawi and Zambia working in the mines and farms during the colonial period (Proctor and Phimister 1991: 229), and of the 'foreign' background of early trade union organisers such as Clements Kadalie and Robert Sambo from colonial Nyasaland (Mukanya 1995:160). Otherwise, the textbooks treat the term 'African' simply as synonymous with 'Shona and Ndebele'.

Teachers' views on reconciliation and ethnicity

In 2002, ten history teachers from secondary schools in Harare were interviewed about their experiences in teaching the nationalist syllabus and their perspectives on it. All interviewees were African, and were interviewed in English by a research assistant, Mr Government Phiri.¹¹ The research questionnaire had four sections: teaching and teaching materials, nationalism and the syllabus, whether the syllabus had helped to develop students as critical thinkers, and the contribution of the history syllabi and textbooks to social dynamics.

In terms of reconciliation, race and ethnicity, the teachers were unanimous that the nationalist syllabus took an 'us and them' approach to teaching history; and were nearly unanimous (9/10) that the portrayal of white Zimbabweans in the textbooks had contributed to social intolerance. A representative comment was:

White Zimbabweans have en masse been portrayed as devils, murderers, thieves, etc. and this has increased social intolerance and racial tension.

However, when asked if a decade of teaching the nationalist syllabus had contributed to reconciliation in the country, one teacher was not sure; three said no; six said that it had contributed to reconciliation between Shona and Ndebele people in the country, but not between whites and blacks. Although the teachers supported the content and methodological aims of the nationalist syllabus, they felt that the textbooks written to teach it had at least perpetuated social divisions rather than healing them. It is tempting, though, to speculate that the amalgamation of Shona and Ndebele – as Africans – into a 'we' narrative, from which whites were firmly conceptually excluded in the nationalist historiography, has contributed to ethnic reconciliation. As one teacher put it:

[The nationalist syllabus] has contributed to reconciliation between Shona and Ndebele. Now people are concentrating on white vs black and not Shona vs Ndebele.

Conclusion

Zimbabwe developed a brave new form and content of nationalist history for schools which brought the message of legitimate African agency and essential African unity to the nation's classrooms. The colonial-era narrative of ethnic victimisation and aggression was thrown aside in favour of a story of an intransigent racial oppression of a gradually uniting national population. The ironic fact that this is arguably quite an accurate portrayal of Zimbabwean history should not blind us to the fact that its post-colonial construction was hardly a foregone conclusion.

These textbooks have distinct silences, and one such involves the identification and historicisation of minority groups in Zimbabwe.

Although it is beyond the scope of this chapter, it should be noted that a highly politicised and excluding notion of citizenship has become an important battleground in contemporary Zimbabwean politics. For example, farm workers whose families may have originally hailed from neighbouring countries such as Malawi, Zambia and Mozambique, have been defined since the late 1990s as no longer eligible for Zimbabwean citizenship – despite the fact that many families and individuals were born in the country and know no other home (Rutherford 2003:191–216).

The evidence presented in this chapter suggests that in Zimbabwean nationalism and nationalist educational historiography the concept of a bifurcated racial unity, although at times bitterly contested, has been more successful than that of racial reconciliation.

The comments of the history teachers, in fact, clearly suggest that the success of unity was no accident, and that it was achieved at the direct expense of reconciliation: ‘we’ Africans were oppressed by the white other – ‘them’. Thus, as in a fictional account:

Wizards well versed in treachery and black magic came from the south and forced the people from the land. On donkey, on foot, on horse, on ox-cart, the people looked for a place to live. But the wizards were avaricious and grasping; there was less and less land for the people. At last the people came upon the grey, sandy soil of the homestead, so stony and barren that the wizards would not use it. There [the people] built a home. (Dangarembga 1989:18)

‘The Zimbabwean people’ is a concept that has admitted of some diversity in ethnic, but rarely in racial, terms. The nationalist history syllabi and textbooks reviewed in this chapter represented – and promoted – a definition of ‘the people’ as only those two groups which finally forged linked identities in struggle against the yoke of racial and colonial oppression. So far, historiographically, there has been no real space or legitimacy for other narratives.

Endnotes

- 1 The support for this project from the Carnegie Council for Ethics in International Affairs is gratefully acknowledged.
- 2 By agreement, this clause fell away after the 1985 election, in which, however, white voters pointedly supported unrepentant Rhodesian Front representatives.
- 3 This speech was given by Mugabe on 4 March 1980, the day the election results were announced. A 'swords into ploughshares' speech followed on 17 April 1980, the eve of the first national Independence Day.
- 4 Notwithstanding the antagonism of both organisations towards former members who formed hybrid groups such as Zipa and Frolizi; see White 2003.
- 5 There was considerable impatience on the part of teachers who waited eagerly, year after year, for the new curricula and teaching materials which would break with the colonial past (personal recollection of the author).
- 6 The process of localisation of O level exams began in 1984; after 1990, exams were set and graded by trained Zimbabwean staff and only accredited by the Cambridge exams syndicate. Information drawn from the Zimbabwe School Examinations Council website: www.zimsec.co.zw/notice.html, accessed 10 November 2003.
- 7 It should be noted that Syllabus 2166 was the most popular and widely chosen of three possible post-independence O level history syllabi. 2157 covered modern world history since 1919 and 2168 was for 'candidates in central and southern Africa'.
- 8 A critic of the 2002 syllabus revisions might charge that the study of history in Zimbabwe has been narrowed down to a virtual history of Zanu: China supported Zanu during the liberation struggle, so it is still in the syllabus; the sad story of the Great Depression puts the US – now critical of the Mugabe government – in a bad light. Conversely, the achievements, progress and class struggles of the Industrial Revolution in Britain, and the study of comparative industrialisation and social change have all been excised. Methodologically worst of all, perhaps, structured short answers support the development and articulation of critical thinking skills to a much smaller extent. On the other hand, it could be pointed out that by all accounts the 2166 syllabus was far too long and too heavily oriented towards the purely

- academic skills of essay writing and debating. At any rate, in this 'narrowed' reincarnation, history has returned, after a brief hiatus in 2001–2002, to being a compulsory subject; whatever perspectives one might have on 2167, it is currently 'the law of the land'.
- 9 The author of this chapter was a member of the team for one of the books, *People Making History*; another member of that team, James Kilgore (also the author's partner) was living under the pseudonym John Pape at the time. The author of another book, *Dynamics of History*, also wrote under a pseudonym: S. Mukanya is Aeneas Chigwedere, who became the national Minister of Education in 2001.
 - 10 Such perspectives might be included in geography or social science syllabi. However, the historiography is silent on these matters.
 - 11 July–August 2002. The interviewees were all trained teachers with university or teacher's college degrees; four were women; the group had an average of 10.8 years of teaching experience. Each one reported using more than one history textbook in classes, and all reported that there were insufficient numbers of textbooks to service their students.

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Nation, race and history in Zimbabwean politics

Brian Raftopoulos

Introduction

One of the central features of the Zimbabwean crisis, as it has unfolded since 2000, has been the emergence of a revived nationalism delivered in a particularly virulent form, with race as a key trope within the discourse, and a selective rendition of the liberation history deployed as an ideological policing agent in the public debate. A great deal of commentary has been written to describe this process, much of it concentrating on the undoubted coercive aspects of the politics of state consolidation in Zimbabwe. My intention in this paper is to provide a more careful examination of the ideological project of the Mugabe regime and, in particular, to concentrate on the ways in which both ‘insiders’ and ‘outsiders’ are defined in this national project. In this analysis it is important to keep in mind that, in a Gramscian sense, the Zimbabwean crisis has also resulted in the reconstruction of the post-colonial state in order both to provide the modality for, and to consolidate the accumulation drive of, the ruling party elite in the country (Raftopoulos and Phimister 2004 forthcoming).

However, the manner in which the ideological battle has been fought by Zanu PF as a party and a state is of particular importance in trying to understand the ways in which a beleaguered state is attempting to extend not only its dominant economic and political objectives, but also its ‘intellectual and moral unity, posing all questions around which the struggle rages not on a corporate level but on a “universal” plane, and thus creating the hegemony of a fundamental group over a series of subordinate groups’ (Gramsci 1971:182). For the manner in which Mugabe has articulated the Zimbabwean crisis has impacted not only on the social forces in the country but also on the African continent and the Diaspora. Such an ambitious political outreach demands that

we view the Zimbabwean state as more than a 'simple, dominative or instrumental model of state power', but as a state with a more complex and multi-dimensional political strategy (Hall 1996:429; Hall 1980).

In this multi-dimensional strategy, the state has monopolised the national media to develop an intellectual and cultural strategy that has resulted in a persistent bombardment of the populace with a regular and repeated series of messages. Moreover, this strategy has been located within a particular historical discourse around national liberation and redemption, which has also sought to capture a broader Pan Africanist and anti-imperialist audience. A key tenet of this redemptionist logic has been the reawakening of the Zimbabwean nation from the colonial nightmare into a more essentialist African consciousness, defined by the select bearers of the liberation legacy. As one media ideologue of the ruling party expressed it, 'right now we are destroyed spiritually. We are suffering from what psychologists say [sic] somnambulism. We are really sleepwalking, walking corpses, zombies... We are carrying other people's world view' (Gandhi and Jambaya 2002:10).

Moreover, in articulating this ideological strategy, the ruling party has drawn on deep historical reservoirs of antipathy to colonial and racial subjugation in Zimbabwe, Southern Africa and Africa more generally, and on its complex inflections in the Diaspora. Thus the Mugabe message is no mere case of peddling a particular form of false consciousness, but carries a broader and often visceral resonance, even as it draws criticisms for the coercive forms of its mobilisation. Additionally for many progressive African intellectuals there is an internal tension over the content and form of politics of Mugabe's Pan Africanist message, particularly in the face of the dominant message of Empire offered by the Bush-Blair axis. Thus within Zimbabwe the opposition to Mugabe is not only expressed in the political polarisation in the country, but often in the more complex forms in which the nationalist messages are interpolated within 'our selves', given both the historical resonance of the messages and the unpalatable coercive forms of the delivery of such messages.

Nation and race

In Zimbabwe the state has a monopoly control over the electronic media through such laws as the Broadcasting Services Act (2002) and the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (2002).

Through such instruments the ruling party has been able to saturate the public sphere with its particularist message and importantly to monopolise the flow of information to the majority rural population. Through this extensive media control the idea of the nation has been conveyed in essentialist and Manichean terms. Thus, as a report on the ways in which Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC) delivered views on the nation in 2002, concluded:

ZBC's conceptualisation of 'nation' was simplistic. It was based on race: The White and Black race. Based on those terms, the world was reduced to two nations – the White nation and the black nation and these stood as mortal rivals. The Black nation was called Africa. Whites were presented as Europeans who could only belong to Europe just as Africa was for Africans and Zimbabwe for Zimbabweans. (Gandhi and Jambaya 2002:4)

The report further noted that in the national broadcaster's definition of nation:

Blackness or Africanness was given as the cardinal element to the definition. The exclusion of other races deliberately or otherwise from the 'African' nation was an attempt to present Africans as having a separate and completely exclusive humanity to any other race. (Gandhi and Jambaya 2002:5)

As a constituent part of such essentialist ideas on the nation, Zanu-PF ideologues often presented Manichean views on national values. In a programme called 'National Ethos' an intellectual close to the ruling party proclaimed:

Since the value system of the Europeans, of the White man, of the Rhodesian in Zimbabwe, is exclusive, it is racist, it does not have any place for us ... we should come up with this kind of ethos: Zimbabwe for Zimbabweans, Africa for Africans, Europe for Europeans. This is the starting point because that's what they do. (Gandhi and Jambaya 2002:8)

This view echoed Mugabe's attack on Blair at the Earth Summit in Johannesburg in 2002, and repeated in South Africa in April 2004. In Mugabe's words:

And that's why I told him that he can keep his England... Yes we

keep our own Zimbabwe close to the bosom, very close. (*Herald* 27.04.04)

Thus the repetitive thrust of the national broadcaster's political programming has been towards an essentialist perception of nation and race, linked to Manichean views on national values, and bound up with a narrow and restrictive view of national unity. In the words of one of the party intellectuals:

You must understand that as Zimbabweans and as Africans ... we are trying to come up with one thinking, one vision of survival as a race because we are attacked as a race. (Gandhi and Jambaya 2002:8)

For the Mugabe regime the emergence of the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) in 1999 was a manifestation of foreign British and white influence in Zimbabwean politics. This construction of the opposition thus placed them outside of a legitimate national narrative, and thrust it into the territory of an alien, un-African and treasonous force that 'justified' the coercive use of the state in order to contain and destroy such a force. Mugabe's description of the MDC aptly captures this characterisation of the opposition:

The MDC should never be judged or characterised by its black trade union face; by its youthful student face; by its salaried black suburban junior professionals; never by its rough and violent high-density lumpen elements. It is much deeper than these human superfluous; for it is immovably and implacably moored in the colonial yesteryear and embraces wittingly or unwittingly the repulsive ideology of return to white settler rule. MDC is as old and as strong as the forces that control it; that converge on it and control it; that drive and direct; indeed that support, sponsor and spot it. It is a counter-revolutionary Trojan horse contrived and nurtured by the very inimical forces that enslaved and oppressed our people yesterday. (Mugabe 2001:88)

The opposition having been discursively located as an alien political force, the full coercive force of the state was brought to bear on those regarded as 'unpatriotic' and 'puppets of the West'. Deploying elements of the police, the intelligence service, the army, the war veterans, party supporters and the youth militia, the ruling party has inflicted enormous damage on the personnel and structures of the

opposition. As a result, since 2000, 90 per cent of MDC MPs have reported violations against themselves, 60 per cent have reported attacks on their families and staff, while 50 per cent have had their property vandalised or destroyed. Additionally the MDC leadership have spent 'months in police cells, in prison and in the courts, facing charges ranging from high treason and murder, to spreading alarm and despondency' (Zimbabwe Institute 2004:16). This ruling party violence unleashed against the MDC was accompanied by Mugabe's formal renunciation of the policy of reconciliation towards the white community that his government had adopted in 1980. In 2002, in response to the white support for the opposition, he declared:

We extended a hand of reconciliation to people like Ian Smith and said that if you want to stay in this country and obey our laws under Black majority rule with you coming under them, stay. Was that right or wrong? I think that today at conscience I say on behalf of the party we made a mistake. When you forgive those who do not accept forgiveness, when you show mercy to those who are hard-hearted, when you show non-racialism to die-hard racists; when you show a people with a culture – false culture of superiority based on their skin – and you do nothing to get them to change their personality, their perceptions, their mind, you are acting as a fool. (Gandhi and Jambaya 2002:9)

Commentators on the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation, building on this position, denounced those Zimbabweans who voted for the MDC as badly raised children who had strayed outside of 'our world view':

The problem is very fundamental, and that is upbringing... Our children, who vote against their own heritage, who vote against their own people, who vote together with whites, who fight on the side of whites, they don't know the difference between the White man's world view and our world view, the White man's agenda and our agenda. (Gandhi and Jambaya 2002:11)

Aside from the white population, urban residents have been a major target of the ruling party's coercive and ideological attacks, because of their dominant support for the opposition. Historically the relations between the liberation movement and urban workers

have been characterised by ambiguities and tension (Raftopoulos and Yoshikuni 2001). Thus, the fact that the MDC emerged out of the labour and constitutional movements, both largely urban-based, cemented the view within the ruling party that this segment of the population remained a problem for nationalist mobilisation. Since the late 1990s, when a strong opposition emerged, the workers have been consistently derided as 'totemless', deracinated and at the periphery of the liberation legacy. They have been characterised as 'the ones who are leading the nation astray', unlike the peasants who are always 'on the right path ... not distracted by issues that are peripheral ... [and] know the fundamentals' (Gandhi and Jambaya 2002:6). Yet unlike the 'alien' whites, who can be expelled from the body politic, black urban workers are less easily dispensed with. Therefore while Zanu PF have used various state organs against urban residents, the policy has also been to bring these 'misguided Africans' back into 'our world view'. Thus Mugabe's paternal advice to his party:

We have a strong basis for recovering support in urban areas. There is palpable disenchantment with the opposition and people want to be walked back to their party. Let us assist them through vigorous campaigning and strong resilient structures. (Mugabe 2001:102)

Nation, history and culture

Scholars have observed that the writing of history has often been used to 'legitimate' the nation state, both in an attempt to 'naturalise' it as the central principle of political organisation, and to make it the 'subject and object of historical development (Berger et al. 1999:xv). In Zimbabwe there has been clear evidence of this process since 2000 in particular. Terence Ranger has recently tracked the emergence of this 'Patriotic History', noting its narrowing focus, its resentment of 'disloyal' historical questions, its antagonism towards academic history and its highly politically charged nature (Ranger 2004 forthcoming). As part of the attempts to revive Zanu PF's political fortunes in the 2000 general election and the 2002 presidential election, the ruling party placed a strong emphasis on reviving the narrative of the liberation struggle in general and the heroic roles of Zanu PF and Mugabe in particular. An unbroken thread of struggle was woven, incorporating the First Chimurenga of the 1890s, the Second Chimurenga of the

1970s and the Third Chimurenga of land occupations in the period from 2000 and beyond. In the official history of the ruling party the transcendent feature of the three phases was the continuous nationalist struggle for sovereignty and dignity. From Ambuya Nehanda to Robert Mugabe and the national liberation movement the teleology of national consciousness unfolded with an ineluctable logic, contradicting the findings of the recent historiography on Zimbabwean nationalism (Raftopoulos 1999). This construction of a long and continuous past for the nation, even while confronting the challenges of modernity, is a common feature of nationalist movements (Eley and Suny 1996). Additionally, in rolling out this message, the emergence of the MDC and the civic movement is viewed as an interruption and a detour in the 'legitimate' history of national liberation.

Mugabe has been at the forefront of proclaiming the need to write 'correct' history:

Measures will be taken to ensure that the History of Zimbabwe is rewritten and accurately told and recorded in order to reflect the events leading to the country's nationhood and sovereignty.

Furthermore Zimbabwean History will be made compulsory up to Form Four. (Mugabe 2001:65)

This position was restated by the Zanu PF Secretary for External Affairs in April 2004, noting that the party had in the last few years introduced the teaching of history in the National Youth Service scheme, a euphemism for the ruling party youth militia. As Mutasa lamented:

We erroneously did not fan the fire of our nation and struggle for independence among our children. That fire almost went out as our children knew nothing of that invaluable history. (*The Voice* 25.04.04)

In line with such pronouncements the ruling party has announced its intention to compile the profiles of the leaders and freedom fighters in the party for use in secondary schools, 'and for general education of our people concerning the struggles of several generations of our people for their land and their rights'. The Publications section of Zanu PF's Information and Publicity Department has been tasked with producing such information through books, pamphlets and reports

about the First, Second and Third Chimurengas (Zanu PF 2003:69).

The government has also introduced a compulsory course, known as 'National and Strategic Studies' at colleges and polytechnics. The content of the course, according to a recent account, is a highly selective history designed to glorify the ruling party. Recent exam questions have included:

- 'Which political party represents the interests of imperialists and how must it be viewed by Zimbabweans?'
- 'African leaders who try to serve the interests of imperialists are called what and how do you view patriotism?' (*Independent* 26.03.04)

The National Broadcaster, particularly in the year of the Presidential election in 2002, steadily churned out its version of African History, including such statements from a small group of commentators:

Whites did not have a history. By the time we had civilisations whites were still in caves ... The oldest excavations were found in Africa especially in South Africa and in geological times, you find that the centre of the universe was Africa. (Gandhi and Jambaya 2002:7)

These commentators have also stressed the continuities of Zimbabwean and African history, as well as making unproblematic links to black histories in the Diaspora, in the service of the ruling party's political project of a revived Pan Africanism. Mafeje has commented that the use of 'Africinity' by some 'modern black intellectuals' has become a 'pervasive ontology that straddles space and time' and extends beyond continental Africans 'to all Blacks of African descent in the diaspora' (Mafeje 2000:69). This is certainly the case in Zimbabwe where the ruling party and the intellectuals close to it have made both political and ideological links to a particular formulation of black history in the Diaspora, with no attention to the historical and cultural disjunctions between the two. The showing of Alex Haley's 'Roots' in the run-up to the 2002 presidential election was a clear illustration of this attempted linkage. In turn this notion of a common African history is juxtaposed to a homogeneous conception of whiteness.

In this narrative of liberation, a common African history and Pan Africanist solidarity, the land has played a determining role as the key marker of a common struggle. It has formed the centrepiece of

the ruling party's construction of belonging, exclusion and history. The official discourse on the liberation struggle has been marked by the translation of a multi-faceted anti-colonial struggle into a singular discourse designed to legitimate the authoritarian nationalism that has emerged around the land question since 2000 (Hammar et al. 2003). In Mugabe's words:

We knew and still know that the land was the prime goal for King Lobengula as he fought British encroachment in 1893; we knew and still know that land was the principal grievance for our heroes of the First Chimurenga, led by Nehanda and Kaguvu. We knew and still know it to be the fundamental premise of the Second Chimurenga and thus a principal definer of the succeeding new Nation and State of Zimbabwe. Indeed we know it to be the core issue of the Third Chimurenga which you and me are fighting, and for which we continue to make such enormous sacrifices. (Mugabe 2001:92–3)

During the 2002 presidential election this liberation rhetoric was accompanied by a cultural programme that saturated the public with liberation war films, documentaries and dramas, promoting Zanu PF generally and Robert Mugabe in particular, while also carrying strong messages against whites. Music, co-ordinated by the Department of Information and Publicity, was produced in the form of the Third Chimurenga series of albums. The songs regularly included an emphasis on the sharp racial delineations in the nation. For example the song '*Mwana Wechu*' ('Son of the Soil') by Taurai Mteki intoned 'the Country is ours / ... / Zimbabwe is for Black people.' Another song, by Comrade Chinx, carried the same message: 'They came from Britain, America... They do not know that the land is for Blacks and full of milk and honey' (Gandhi and Jambaya 2002:12). In these songs the 'enemies of the people' were also given warnings, as in a song written by the then Minister of Youth, Gender and Employment Creation, Elliot Manyika: 'There are some people who have become sell-outs/ because of their love of money/... inability to reason./ Take such people and teach them the ZANU PF dogma/ ZANU PF was born out of blood' (Gandhi and Jambaya 2002:12).

Amongst the most damaging aspects of the telling of this national narrative through a series of dualisms (black/white, British/Zimbabwean), and compressions of the various aspects of the anti-

colonial struggle into a single field of force, has been the enormous loss of complexity in the presentation of the colonial encounter. The complexity of the settler-colonial period (not least of which included the changing relations between the black elite and different settler regimes) has been flattened into a Mugabe-Blair colonial encounter (White 2003:97). While the demonisation of whites has served the needs of authoritarian nationalist politics in Zimbabwe, it has prevented a more creative, tolerant and difficult dialogue on the European influences in the making of Zimbabwean identities. For such a dialogue would not be conducive to the kind of Manichean diatribes on nation and race that have in recent years constituted the standard fare of Zanu PF politics. In Southern Africa, where the scars, memories and structural legacies of white supremacist politics are still very much alive, the politics of nationalism will for the foreseeable future, and of necessity, include the articulation of racial redress, often referred to as 'The National Question'. The form that this will take, however, will in large part be determined by the broader terrain of democratic struggle in particular countries.

The ongoing national question

The Mugabe government has worked hard to generalise its model of resolving the national question, based largely on the model of land reform through violent land occupations, articulated through a Pan Africanist and anti-imperialist discourse. Moreover, in this model the human rights question and the democratic demands of civic groups are dismissed as an extension of Western intervention, with little relevance to the 'real issues' of economic empowerment. It is certainly true, as Shivji has pointed out, that the human rights discourse can often be the acceptable face of neo-liberalism (Shivji 2003: 115). However, Shivji has dangerously underestimated the strategic importance of fighting around human and civic rights questions, when confronted by repressive nationalist regimes legitimating their politics through purportedly progressive redistributive policies. Moreover, when such a position is addressed through a less-than-critical call for a revived nationalism on the continent (Shivji 2004), it is very difficult to understand what the progressive features of such nationalist politics would look like. Certainly the experience of Zimbabwe's revived nationalism is not encouraging.

In South Africa the Zimbabwean debate has taken on a particular resonance, not least because of the apparent popularity of Mugabe with many South Africans. On a broader level there are many aspects of the history and politics of Zimbabwe that resonate in the current South African context (Raftopoulos and Phimister 2004 forthcoming; Southall 2003; Melber 2003). Zimbabwean commentators close to the ruling party have not hesitated to 'shame' the South African government into taking more Africanist political positions. A recent article in the state weekly paper, entitled 'South Africa's black nation must stand up', was unambiguous in its intent:

The South African black elite has demonstrated a sickening penchant and yearning for acceptance and inclusion by white liberals and the West to a point where their public conduct is such a charade that they have squandered many opportunities to take leadership not just in South Africa but also across the continent and the world. Black South African lawyers, journalists, business people and diplomats are so embarrassingly pretentious in their conduct and expression of views that they become at once annoying and irrelevant as they never come out as folks with minds of their own. By and large they seem uncomfortable to be Africans and are always keen to find an apology for their own existentialism. (*Sunday Mail* 25.04.04)

It has to be said that this pompous and accusatory tone is not uncommon amongst the Zanu PF elite, and it has often elicited a certain diffidence from the black elite in South Africa in their efforts not be seen as sub-imperial actors, working outside of the Africanist position. Mugabe has been particularly adept at positioning the ANC in this strategic difficulty. Joel Netshitenzhe expressed these dilemmas in a series of strategic problems that confront the ANC on the Zimbabwe question:

How do we ensure that ... persuasion makes the maximum impact?
 How do we avoid a situation in which our public stance achieves the opposite of our objectives, including popular mobilisation against South Africa as Big Brother trying to impose its will on others?
 How do we discourage the tendency towards total collapse and the emergence of a 'failed state' of ethnic fiefdoms, attached to which would be complexities of a 19th century history which has close and emotional ethnic connections to South Africa. (*The Star* 25.02.04)

On the left of the ANC alliance the ambiguities on the Zimbabwe question have been striking, vacillating between a grudging admiration for the redistributive rhetoric of the land occupations, a distrust of the perceived neo-liberal leanings of the MDC, and a concern over the repressive politics of Zanu PF. Thus Pallo Jordan has set out his analysis of the Zimbabwean crisis in the following terms:

While a number of parties and governments have adapted to and embraced the post-liberation wave, others thought they could resist it by riding the leopard of other sources of discontent. ZANU (PF) chose the latter course and embraced illegal land occupations as though it had initiated them. It then harnessed the energy of that movement for electoral purposes using its activists to intimidate political opponents and to impress voters into supporting it. (Jordan 2003:172–3)

Jordan then observes that, given this situation, ‘principled socialists have consequently felt obliged to repudiate the Tonton Macoute methods of Zanu (PF) while holding at a distance the MDC, a democratic opposition that seems to lack a social conscience’ (Jordan 2003:173). The Communist Party, after a good deal of hesitation and conflicting signals and wary of straining relations with its senior alliance partner, finally emerged with a position on the Zimbabwean situation. The party stated that the crisis in Zimbabwe was a symptom of a ‘stunted and perverted national democratic revolution in which a parasitic, bureaucratic bourgeoisie has emerged as the dominant class stratum’. Moreover, the Zimbabwean situation illustrated that ‘the demagogic appropriation of a progressive nationalist discourse by a bureaucratic capitalist stratum, invariably drives a wedge between radical third-world nationalism and democracy’ (Nzimande 2004). Listening to the debate on Zimbabwe, it is clear that the issues have been as much about South African politics as the debacle in Zimbabwe. Moreover, in developing their varying responses to the contradictions in Zimbabwean politics, those on the left have become, in Devan Pillay’s apt phrase, ‘spellbound by the anti-imperialist rhetoric’ (Pillay 2003:62).

Moreover, the ‘spell’ of anti-imperialism and the resonance of the race debate in Zimbabwe have found a broader canvas for their articulation in the Diaspora. In addition to cementing the support of

other liberation movements in Southern Africa, Zanu PF has actively cultivated linkages with a few black civic groups in the US, the UK and Australia in an attempt to build Pan Africanist solidarity around the Mugabe project. At a conference of National Liberation Movements organised in Harare in April 2004, three solidarity groups from the Diaspora were in attendance, namely the December 12 Movement from the US, the Black United Front from the UK and the Aboriginal Nations and People of Australia. In a statement of solidarity with the conference the Black United Front declared:

We want to revolve and turn back to the way of our ancestors and fathers, back to the African heart, mind and spirit, freedom, justice and equality regardless of creed, colour or class. We want to become an African family again. The most important thing is to unite – black man and the African woman to produce an African child.
(*The Herald* 26.04.04)

Once again we can see Zanu-PF connecting problems of racism in the West to the revived nationalism in Zimbabwe. It should be noted, however, that groups such as the December 12 Movement have been challenged within the African-American intellectual community. One critique from a group of prominent African-American progressives criticised ‘a twisted kind of Black ‘solidarity’ that mirrors the ‘patriotism’ of the white Right in the US’. Furthermore they condemned those groups ‘issuing thinly veiled threats’ and appropriating to themselves ‘the colours Red, Black and Green’ and labelling as ‘treasonous all Black criticism of their current Strong Man of choice, Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe’ (*The Black Commentator* 2003). While it can be argued that groups such as the December 12 Movement have no significant presence in black politics in the US, the continued problem of racism in the West provides the terrain for such race-based identification. Moreover the decline of the Western left and its weakness in dealing with the issues of race in its own politics has further opened up spaces for more narrowly nationalist interventions.

Conclusion

A decade ago I wrote an article on ‘Race and Nationalism’ (Raftopoulos 1994) in Zimbabwe. In re-reading the piece in recent weeks what

strikes me most about the analysis, apart from an underestimation of the potential for a revived nationalist project by the ruling party, was its strictly national focus, which even then was a limitation of the article. In 2004 it is impossible to confront this subject meaningfully without addressing the broader reach of its effects at both regional and international levels. Mugabe has not only defined the national project around a selective reading of nationalist history and an exclusivist construction of the nation, he has also sought to ensure that this message resonates in other black struggles both regionally and internationally. This exclusive mobilisation around race has been a part of Zanu PF's outlook since its inception (Brickhill 1999: 35). This was unlike the different conditions in South Africa, which produced more emphasis on non-racialism in the liberation movement. However, it needs to be said that even in South Africa this tradition is already facing strong challenges as the ANC embraces a more Africanist ideological stance.

Zanu PF has set itself the task of establishing a hegemonic project in which the party's narrow definition of the nation is deployed against all other forms of identification and affiliation. In this project the media and selected intellectuals have been used to provide a continuous and repetitive ideological message, in order to set the parameters of a stable national identity conducive to the consolidation of the ruling party. As Zimbabweans listen to the radio, watch television and read the daily newspapers, all controlled by the ruling party, they are being 'informed' about what it means to be a 'good Zimbabwean', and a 'genuine African'. They are also being told who is the 'enemy' within and without and advised to confront such 'enemies' with ruthless exclusion if necessary. For the present this political assault has seriously closed down the spaces for alternative debates around citizenship and national belonging.

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The worm and the hoe

Cultural politics and reconciliation after the Third Chimurenga¹

Robert Muponde

... can the worm bask
in amity with the hoe
which only yesterday cut its spine
into halves? (Mahoso 1989:15)

Introduction

The Third Chimurenga, better known as ‘the crisis’, is premised on a platform of political and cultural ideologies that Terence Ranger (2004) has called ‘patriotic history’. It is a virulent, narrowed-down version of Zimbabwean history, oversimplified and made rigid by its reliance on dualisms and binaries of insider/outsider, indigene/stranger, landed/landless, authentic/inauthentic, patriot/sell-out. The net effect of operating these binaries is the institution of othering as a permanent condition of political and cultural life where ‘difference’ translates unproblematically into ‘foe’. For the other to insist on being different is to invite the title of enemy of the state: it is to invite treason charges upon oneself.

The Third Chimurenga has been successful in troping difference as irreconcilable with the authentic and the patriotic. It has also been unusually successful in calling attention to itself as more than ‘a moment of madness’, but rather a recrudescence of powerful urges within the Zimbabwean (read Zanu PF) psyche to render the idea of the nation a taboo and citizenship synonymous with totem. The tabooing of nation, its inviolability and sacrosanct nature, is ritually recited and rehearsed at the burial of ‘national’ and ‘provincial’ heroes,

all of whom must come from one totem, Zanu PF. This tabooing of nation has resulted in inauthentic defilers of the shrine-nation being evicted and beaten out of the charmed circle of Zimbabweanness. 'Totemless' people have not only included city dwellers (who allegedly support the opposition party, MDC), but white commercial farmers, foreign journalists (black or white), and the troubled farm labourers (who are deemed to be permanent migrants).

In the process of vetting and evicting the 'defilers' of the nation, the totem-eating migrants/strangers/settlers, Robert Mugabe has come across as the tormented, self-righteous messiah, a father and strong-armed figure whose life is an instance of a mythopoeic narrative of suffering and fighting for 'the people'. His life, and that of his political party, is both a trope of the narrow path to the salvation of 'the people', and iconic material for the constitution of what it means to be 'Zimbabwean'. Zanu PF *is* the people, and the people *are* Zanu PF, in itself an equation that creates an indivisible utopian community. But it is a community of hermetically sealed and time-proofed identities. Mugabe's is a politics of reconstruction and 'return to the source', in which there is a clear and vicious selective reproduction of the people in a selectively reproduced and redistributed land-space. This land-space is a tight matrix which is more than a metaphor of the 'house of stone', the ancient ruins which are the eponym of the country. The 'house of stone' is a mindset which is as inflexible as it is stony in its seeming timelessness and imperviousness. To be accommodated in it entails the acquisition and grooming of certain features that fit the description of the real 'Zimbabwean'.

These features are branded onto the citizenry, the means to the end being the consistent deployment of Goebbels-like impassioned sound-bite politics, and terrorist and mafia-type strategies that include arson, torture, bone-breaking, displacement, and suchlike 'final solution' tricks. In brief, the Third Chimurenga is a revival of essentialist and nativist politics, something comparable to Adolf Hitler's ideal of the Aryan race. The challenges which this Third Chimurenga represents for reconciliation politics are many. They defy easy oppositions of victim/victimiser, dictator/democrat, power/powerlessness. In this chapter I explore a few cultural sites in order to tease out some of the intricacies that may be involved in the politics of reconciliation and reconstruction after the Third Chimurenga.

The imagery of victimhood

The emotional asset base of Robert Mugabe's power is warehoused in bitter remembrance of victimhood. The experience and condition of victimhood is transformed into a mythopoeic matrix of suffering which is branded into the consciousness of what Mugabe considers '*amadoda sibili*', real men. There is a way in which the nightmares and traumas of the past, whether experienced individually or collectively, are invested as an insurance policy against present and future power shifts. It is necessary therefore for Mugabe's party to invest in ritualising the memory of past victimhood. It is no wonder that ownership of past victimhood is privatised by Zanu PF, and is 'passed on' via totemic and lineage politics. Zanu PF has made it mandatory for anyone who wants to aspire to lead the party or the country, or both, that whoever they are, they must bear the markings of war, or at least flea-bites of exile and incarceration. It should not surprise anyone that Morgan Tsvangirai had to be baptised by Zanu PF into jail culture, which he lacked, and is being made to feel what it is like to die for your country (he had never faced the possibility of the hangman's noose before), hence the 'treason trials'. What is being created in the minds of both would-be rulers and would-be ruled is that it is a precondition for holding power that one should be cleansed through pain and torture, a rite of passage for office bearers, and that one should claim descent from a network of victim alliances and lineages. To exercise power means also to be ready to transform subjects into true victims, or how else will they experience and inherit power?

The imagery of unending victimhood is part of a complex cache of metaphors that exist in our poetry and fiction. There is little indication in the poetry and fiction that one can reconcile with the fact that one is no longer a victim, but a victimiser, or neither victim nor victimiser. The entrenched interests in the existential binaries of victim/victimiser seem to be one of the major challenges of creating an alternative politics in which the basis of entering and living politics is not retribution or recuperation of a wounded self. The dynamics of victim politics, much treasured for purposes of claiming legitimacy and relevancy, complicates the issue of reconciliation in Zimbabwe.

Robert Mugabe has repeatedly described himself as bearing the brunt of MDC violence, intolerance and terrorism. He has compiled a modest list of Zanu PF heroes and heroines who were maimed,

or died, while trying to defend national (read Zanu PF) sovereignty from MDC attack. These 'heroes' and 'heroines' belong to the Third Chimurenga, and a few have now been buried in the National Heroes' Acre. The MDC has also compiled a long list of its heroes and heroines who have died at the hands of Zanu PF. Each party considers itself the victim of the other. There is a way in which both parties' clamouring for the status of victim could be considered vote-seeking behaviour. It is both empowering and disempowering in the long term.

But at the centre of this quest for victimhood is not only the desire to accumulate legitimising symbolic capital, but a deep-seated phobia of living the life of the victimised. It is as if it is impossible to rule if one has not been a victim. Rulership itself is based on the institutionalised and memorialised fear of being a victim again. It is not for nothing that Mugabe's Zanu PF has now controversially renewed its mandate to (mis)-rule through the use of the rallying call, 'Zimbabwe will never be a colony again!' It is important to acknowledge both the imaginative and political potency of the dynamics of the victim-image for purposes of understanding why reconciliation in such a scenario conjures images of death, capitulation, and subjection. Mugabe has not hidden the fact that absolute sovereignty is only guaranteed by outright, unambiguous victory through the gun and/or the ballot box. Absolute sovereignty means nothing short of the annihilation or, as in the preferred lingo of opposition politics in Zimbabwe, 'swallowing', of opponents. It is not possible to be absolutely sure of one's rulership if the opponent is not absolutely pummelled into submission and, it is hoped, disappearance. Failure to subjugate and swallow the opponent is a mark of emasculated power. This is the politics that the MDC has absorbed as well: if it cannot win a majority, it cannot rule. The winning of a majority does not only mean an easy walk to State House, but painful humiliation of the 'losers'. The opposition too would be incapable of working with what they oppose. They would prefer a situation where they would have no need to negotiate with a vanquished party. To be vanquished means to lose voice and legitimacy. It means death. It should not be surprising that Mugabe is increasingly seeking the 'burial' of the MDC in 2005. The MDC itself is chafing at the prospect of having to co-exist with the seemingly invincible Zanu PF. Both parties prefer to enter negotiations only when there is the danger of losing power altogether, and therefore the prospect of being swallowed or buried. The need to

negotiate from 'a position of strength' is not only one of the familiar mantras in reconciliation politics in Zimbabwe, but a potent cliché fired by the desire to annihilate the opponent/enemy. A 'position of weakness' cannot be negotiated and reconciled with. It does not get justice, but the jackboot.

The legacy of battlefield politics is not easy to loosen: it is much easier to pass on. The ruler is only comfortable when living with those in his camp. There is no attempt to seek opposition to one's views, as the opposition is viewed consistently and increasingly as a distraction to the party-state's single-mindedness. The opposition is not considered as offering necessary intelligent dissent, nor is it viewed as a potential partner in the business of governing. Nor does the opposition think it has a viable role to play unless it is ruling. These opposition practices have given rise to ruling parties that ironically rule in opposition to their electorate. In other parts of Africa, and indeed in Zimbabwe, opposition parties have foundered because they cannot sustain the role of an opposition, which is often understood by them to be a part-time occupation, only becoming full-time when ministerial posts are secured. Opposition parties often hibernate when there is a long lull in electoral activity, only to resurface and come to life on the eve of an important campaign. This practice has often led to the 'zombification' of opposition politics, making opposition both fleeting and irrelevant, hence the desire by ruling parties to disregard and destroy the inconvenience it brings to political life, and the subsequent normalisation of repressive rule by the ruled and the ruler alike.

This presents enormous challenges for reconstruction politics, because it is not simply a question of levelling the election playing field, but of changing cultures and styles of power and the constellation of political practices that criminalise dissent, loss of elections, and the minority. There is need to get rid of political paradigms that link the winning and losing of power to manhood and conquest. In Zimbabwe, there is a way in which the 1979 Lancaster House negotiations to achieve peace, and the subsequent decreed reconciliation of 1980, were viewed as an emasculation of the liberation forces and an acknowledgment of the politics of capitulation associated with post-colonial elites, when the gun (representing 'real men') could easily have simplified the process. Negotiated peace settlements are viewed with great suspicion both by the ruling parties and by the opposition.

Besides the dangers of being weakened and losing constituencies, there is also the danger of disappearing into the belly of the whale, so to speak. Joshua Nkomo's Zapu comes to mind immediately as an instance of this: when it negotiated peace under the jackboot of Mugabe's Zanu PF, it was stripped of its political identity and assets, and was forced to assume the identity of Zanu PF. Mugabe's ruling party is a compulsively narcissistic party which can only be happy when every aspect of political life reflects its own face. The horror of being ingested and tucked into the belly of Zanu PF has meant that opposition parties in Zimbabwe would rather break away than agree with Zanu PF on matters that would appear to be of national interest. In the imagination of the opposition, agreeing with Zanu PF on anything fundamental means going the Zapu way. Zanu PF has also adopted this position: agreeing with the opposition means at best being defeated, and at worst being a sell-out. The maintenance of the images of victimhood and ingestion have ensured that negotiating peace and reconciliation in Zimbabwe is more fraught with violence than making war would be.

The injustice of reconciliation before 2000

It is necessary here to explore the cultural politics that militate against prospects of lasting reconciliation. The poets and novelists quoted here are by no means the only ones who have metaphorised the predicaments of being read within Third Chimurenga politics. They only represent a sample of writers whose sensibilities collude with, or are appropriated by, Mugabe's nativist politics. It is necessary to bear in mind the fact that there are generic precedents to the Third Chimurenga project, making it difficult to throw cordons around specific political figures or historical events as targets for investigations and recriminations. The cultural continuum of collusion is highly complex. I say this not in order to paralyse, but to caution 'action', and in the hope of making it more meaningful. The dynamics of the relationship between the sensibilities of the ruled and the ruler are such that they give the impression of there being a fluid co-existence of collusion and antagonism. This paradox is reflected in cultural politics which simultaneously exhort the black leadership to discard 'unjust' reconciliation and cry foul when the failure of reconciliation leads to atrocities and the attrition of human rights.

Very often national reconciliation endeavours have concentrated on 'prominent' cultural, political and religious leaders, with 'reconciliation packages' emerging after settlements have been reached at the end of sponsored conferences. The proponents of such reconciliation have often been surprised by the simmering bitterness and resurgence of violence from 'below' when 'truth' and 'justice' had seemed achievable. This is true of Zimbabwe.

In a poem titled 'Zimbabwe', Tafataona Mahoso (1989) constructs the argument for the rejection of reconciliation after 1980 (see Muponde 2000). The same arguments have been dusted off and rejuvenated by Robert Mugabe in his Third Chimurenga project. In 'Zimbabwe', Mahoso questions the necessity of fighting a liberation war where the heroism and sacrifices are mocked by those who led the war. He views the post-1980 reconciliation as amnesiac, insensitive and unjust. Indeed, there was no broad-based consensus on the modalities of truth-telling and justice-seeking, if any existed, as the reconciliation was a pronouncement from Robert Mugabe which amounted to a decree. Mahoso reminds his audience that the wounds from the war are deep, and they will not heal miraculously, just because everyone is required to forgive and forget. It is difficult to unwrite the memory of wounds and to live as though the war was never a reality. To do this, Mahoso argues, 'we would mulch memory's eyes / with the dying autumn leaves' (1989:13). We would make impossible promises, such as: 'All wounds henceforth freed from the need / for time to heal, freed from the eternal nodule of pain' (1989:13). Mahoso ridicules and rants against the short-sightedness of the coterie of nationalists who allowed themselves to be duped and bullied at the Lancaster House conference in 1979:

To submit weary nerves to massaging showers
to consolation and conciliation doled down
from the citadels of power

Yet, without anaesthesia,
will the nerve reconcile itself
to the naked knife? (1989:14–15).

Mahoso chooses imagery that makes it impossible to imagine coexistence and reconciliation between the 'nerve' and the 'naked

knife', the 'worm' and 'the hoe', the 'lamb' and the 'fox', the 'bulldozer' and the 'stump'. He writes:

On whose terms, dear commander
shall the lamb feed together
with the fox? (1989:15).

It is most unlikely that the lamb would dictate the terms. In this case the lamb is the oppressed victim, the black person. In Mahoso's poetic logic, the fox is the white settler.

He asks again:
... can the worm bask
in amity with the hoe
which only yesterday cut its spine
into halves? (1989:15).

The effect of his poetic logic is to induce in his audience a feeling of community of victimhood against whoever is described as the fox, the naked knife, the hoe or the bulldozer. It enables the 'victim' to weave magically into the poet's anguish and militancy. If Mugabe considers reconciliation a 'mistake', he certainly echoes Mahoso's poetic condemnation of it much earlier: 'The marrow of divided memory runs / deeper than magnanimity' (1989:15). For Mahoso, patriotism should be linked to the rejection of this reconciliation between the 'hoe' and the 'worm' and should lead to a resurgence of militant action. It seems that the position of the hoe, the fox, the knife and the bulldozer is more desirable for purposes of finding a definitive solution to the questions of justice and power, but is still unsustainable for as long as the violated and vanquished parties (the lamb, the worm, and the stump) mobilise their collective memories of hurt and violation against 'the powerful'. Mahoso's poetry points to the futility of jackboot politics when pitted against the indestructible work of memory. Memory is the weapon of the weak against the powerful, and it is this memory of power's excesses that Mugabe called 'ugly history' and a 'moment of madness' when he was called upon to explain the atrocities his ruling party committed in Matabeleland. But it has always been difficult to handle the question of memory in reconciliation studies. Forgiving and forgetting has not always been adequate as a coping tool against the power surges of suppressed and veiled memory.

In a book discussing the politics of reconciliation in Zimbabwe, Victor de Waal (1990) enthuses over 'the magnanimity of its forgiveness' (1990:87) and quotes the examples of Martin Luther King, Kenneth Kaunda, and others in advocating the Gandhian philosophy of non-violent resistance. He accuses those like Mahoso who are itching for a renewal of the struggle of 'traces of racism in reverse, anti-white feeling' (1990:87). He reduces the renewal of the struggle to black racism, and those ex-combatants who feel that things have not worked out well are derogated as 'the pathological few who get a thrill from killing' (1990:87). He commends one ex-combatant who was fortunate enough to escape post-independence vagabondage and got himself a piece of land: 'He was tired. He wanted to grow things. Perhaps it is due to this closeness to the land, to the healing processes of nature, that so many of the people of Zimbabwe are finding it possible to allow the wounds of the past to heal' (1990:88).

It may be true, in a romantic sense, and in the politics of Third Chimurenga as well, to imagine that the majority of the people would allow their wounds to heal if they got their land back. But there is nothing intrinsically healing in nature in an environment characterised by vicious and systematic dispossession of the weak and underprivileged. Dambudzo Marechera, in his posthumous work, *Cemetery of the Mind* (1992), ridicules the concept of reconciliation with white people, arguing that 'reconciliation only works when justice is / seen to be done. / Otherwise all whites are lumped with the killers' (1992:141). The poet/critic Emmanuel Ngara (1992) in 1982 wrote a quasi-eulogy on Zimbabwe's reconciliation, seeing it as 'A call to exchange hearts of hate for hearts of love / To beat these bayonets of blood into ploughshares of plenty' (1992:33). Because he had not attempted to analyse the material base of this 'exchange', he was rudely weaned from his trusting, paradisiac idealism by the pronounced socioeconomic anomalies of post-independence Zimbabwe. In 1991 he wrote an angry poem, 'What Cause for Celebration?':

What cause have we to celebrate
 When the very watchdogs we hired to guard our homes
 Now bite our thighs and frighten our children
 In broad daylight
 But welcome the burglar who comes in the dark of night
 And offers them bones to chew? (1992:36).

'Watchdogs' is a derogatory reference to the black leadership, and it may also refer to holders of public offices who are elected to safeguard the interests of the majority. But these leaders are viewed as traitors in league with the former colonial masters with whom they reconciled for 'bones to chew'.

Reconciliation cannot simply be reduced to matters of 'hearts', 'love', forgiving and forgetting. Whereas Victor de Waal (1990) dubs racist and pathological those Africans who reject reconciliation and seek renewal of the struggle for socioeconomic justice, Tafataona Mahoso argues that the need for justice lingers in many parts of the world:

... Western vigilantes continue
the hunt for Nazi bosses
in South American hideouts,
thirty-five years after the holocaust
they will neither forget nor forgive,
until 'the lion shall eat straw like an ox
and dust shall be the serpent's food' (1989:16).

Mahoso's logic could be extended to include the punishment of all 'unforgiveable' atrocities committed by black guerrillas and Rhodesian soldiers prior to 1980, and Mugabe's ruling party after independence in 1980. Atrocities committed by Mugabe's ruling party in Matabeleland have been archived by Mugabe himself as 'ugly history' that should not be remembered. Those committed by Mugabe after 2000 have not yet found an apt archive, except that they are recalled as part of the unavoidable collateral damage of the Third Chimurenga. Mahoso seems to be concerned with inciting memory against what he calls 'citadels of power' and 'imperialists'. He seems to be unaware of the atrocities that Mugabe's ruling party committed in early 1980, although his poetry was published in 1989. Mahoso practices what Urvashi Butalia (2000) described as the 'selective amnesia and memory [that] are at the root of the relationship between human beings and their history' (2000: 277). In cultivating particular tropes of memory, he illuminates certain aspects of the past while excluding the others. The work of memory should be central in reconciliation studies. It helps to unearth hidden and suppressed voices and to account for them. It is important, as Butalia discovered, to 'listen to that most unheard of things, silence,

and to understand it, to work with it' (2000:278) without resorting to simple opposition between speech and silence. For instance, Mahoso's poetry is indeed 'speech' against silence, but the binaries he adopts silence other important experiences and histories.

Mahoso seems to describe the victim state selectively and inflexibly. He views it rigidly in time and race categories which lend themselves easily to binaries such as 'coloniser vs colonised', 'black vs white'. Marechera falls into the same category, but tries to allow for 'floor-crossing' among the 'killer' whites. Emmanuel Ngara's binaries are not only simplified to 'leaders vs the led', 'power vs powerlessness', but are a poetic testimony to the top-down approach to reconciliation politics. The top-down approach allows for leaders to rule and speak on behalf of the powerless, hence it was easy for Mugabe to broker and announce 'reconciliation' on behalf of an unconsulted majority in 1980. The poetry I have discussed above is a record of the intense confusion and bitterness not only among cultural workers but also among a majority of people, some of whom would continue to defy the ruling party as early as the 1980s and invade white commercial farms on their own in order to seek justice for themselves. These are people who have continued to view their victim state in terms of unresolved Manichean categories of black/white, power/powerlessness, victim/victimiser.

We should remind ourselves once again that the asset base of any vindictive justice, such as Mugabe is exercising presently, is resourced by the continuation of such unresolved polarities in socioeconomic realities after the Third Chimurenga. The anomalies created by Mugabe's ambitious effort to correct the imbalances in land distribution are an error of the era which has resulted in most of the land being given to Zanu PF party card-holders, and all those perceived to be in the opposition being refused access to land. It is like a reversal and reliving of the divisive colonial land apportionment acts prior to independence, this time justified only because it is being carried out by a black government which perceives itself to have the majority behind it. Mugabe, in his book of speeches *Inside the Third Chimurenga* (2001), explains the logic behind the so-called 'Fast Track' land redistribution. He describes it in terms of a gold-rush, or treasure hunt:

Surely we are the first claimants, the first beneficiaries of Fast Track. After all we carry the majority of the people. We have no

apologies to make on this one. Let MDC supporters get allocated land in Britain where they have been getting pounds and politics. They cannot benefit from policies they have rejected and even opposed. (2001:123).

In order to correct the overcorrected imbalances of land redistribution after the Third Chimurenga, the opposition parties will have to try to reclaim land mainly settled by Zanu PF card-holders, most of them the much-feared war veterans, and wrest the war-cry 'Our land is our prosperity' from Zanu PF in order to redistribute the land with a sense of justice and fairness. The Third Chimurenga has recreated and re-institutionalised a historical injustice, with all the attendant polarities in its wake, and over which attempts at reconciliation and peace-building in the past have faltered, and over which they will again falter in the near future.

'Patriotic history' and 'settler' politics

Elsewhere (Muponde 2004) it has been argued that there are generic precedents to the Third Chimurenga project, and that the mindsets revealed in the production of cultural texts prior to 2000 bear the markings of much of what informs Mugabe's 'patriotic' project. This collusion makes it difficult for writers, and even opposition politicians, to come up with new subjects and new politics. The writer or poet who was urging Mugabe to seize land and forget about reconciliation a decade ago now finds he has to endorse the 'war veterans' actions or else try and find ways of distancing himself from his own writings. It is a difficult choice, as the opposition party MDC has discovered. It means having to rely on unconvincing mantras such as 'we support land reform, but not the way Mugabe is managing it.'

Chenjerai Hove's *Bones* (1988) is one of the major novels that is caught up in the politics of the Third Chimurenga. This is not the place to discuss it in detail, but suffice it to say that in Hove's novel, violence is not only a central motif in the memory of land, but an inalienable constituent of what shapes the history of Zimbabwe. While Hove does not necessarily advocate vindictive politics as does Mugabe, and indeed offers his character Marita as a mouthpiece for what is most likely a repeat of the 'worm and the hoe' model of reconciliation, the politics of authoring the different other/settler is present both in his novel and in the 'patriotic history' project of the Third Chimurenga. In

Hove's novel the white settler is portrayed as an anomalous other and a harbinger of disorder, destruction, poverty and disease. The persona in *Bones* warns:

There is disease on the land. Disease spreads on the land like a mat, with everybody seeing it and not wanting to shout it to the whole village. Disease spreads with the coming of those who have walked the land without knees. The people without knees have knelt and broken their legs on our land, so they will not leave to go to the land of their own fathers. (1988:54)

'The people without knees' are the white settlers. In other parts of the novel they are called 'locusts of disease'. Robert Mugabe, in his 1970s speeches, imagines the war in the same terms as set out in Hove's *Bones*: 'Let us rid our home of this settler vermin' (Mugabe 1983:18). Mugabe depicts the war of liberation as a storm that has come to cleanse the land of disease, dirt and chaff brought in by the white settler: 'Let every enemy post, nook or hiding place be hit by the fury of the *People's Storm*' (1983:27). Dambudzo Marechera in *House of Hunger* (1978) speaks of a black generation 'eaten to the core by the syphilis of the white man's coming'. To show that the white settler is not part of the land, and should be driven out of the land in order to nurse the nation back to health, 'Mothers, children, trees, insects, birds, animals, they all joined in the war-songs of the people' (1988:58). The killing and displacement of white farmers, and those opposed to the Third Chimurenga, is viewed by Mugabe in terms that recall *Bones*. It is a continuation of the war to ensure that 'the locusts will not be seen again / and strangers will not think that / he who accepts them is full of foolishness' (Hove 1988:60). The witchcraft of Mugabe's rhetoric on land and 'strangers' works precisely because it finds resonances in the social and symbolic conditions that a singular experiencing of 'history' has created.

Ash Wednesday

There is need for a deeper inward-looking, a sort of Ash Wednesday, in our literature and culture in order to understand the root of public behaviours that result in atrocities and autocracy. Solomon Mutsaers' *Chaminuka: Prophet of Zimbabwe* (1983) is an example of the construction of a national allegory in which the Ndebele people, led

by King Lobengula, are constantly described as warlike invaders who 'decimated whatever they came in contact with' (1983:4). Dambudzo Marechera in *House of Hunger* (1978) views Lobengula in terms that echo the widespread and deep-rooted resentment of Ndebele history in Zimbabwe. Commenting on Lobengula's intelligence as a king when he signed away to Rudd the land that did not actually belong to him, the narrator in *House of Hunger* muses: 'The one thing that bugs me about the man is that he even loved white men. That he killed my people like cattle, the way Germans killed Jews. And he loved white men' (1978:43). Patrick Chakaipa, in *Karikoga Gumiremiseve*, heaves a sigh of relief, as does the narrator in *House of Hunger*, that at least the Shona escaped the fate of being enslaved by the Ndebele. Patrick Chakaipa thanks the white people for coming to stop the Ndebele raids on the Shona, while Marechera writes: 'We did not I suppose want to be slaves of either the heroic Ndebele or the Lendy-Jameson gang. Jameson said: "Mashonas are servants of white men". Mtshete said: "To whom do the Mashona belong if they do not belong to the [Ndebele] king?"' (1978: 42). These xenophobic musings in Zimbabwean literature are important to consider in any discussion of the attempted ethnic cleansing in Matabeleland after 1980. There is a way in which the attempted genocide in Matabeleland was viewed as 'pay-back' time by the Shonas. But more important, the former Zapu nationalists, now co-opted into Zanu PF, seemed to understand why there should not be open discussion about retribution or compensation. Joseph Msika, currently Vice-President in Mugabe's government, attempted to explain away the atrocities by asking a question that went something like this: 'What if the Shona also asked for compensation for what the Ndebele did to them a century ago? Who will pay for it?'

One of the first important novels to break the silence on the 'Gukurahundi' massacre is Yvonne Vera's *The Stone Virgins* (2002). It is one of the few novels that confronts the questions of history and what Terence Ranger called Zanu PF's 'twisted nationalism'.

Yvonne Vera restores Ndebele history and traditions to the centre of national politics in order to recover the polyethnic character and spirit of Zimbabwe. She has one of her major characters rebuild the beehive huts of Lobengula's kraal in the wake of the 1980s ethnic cleansing. It is a daring fictional gesture that questions the continued

use of the word 'settler' and 'stranger' to describe other ethnic groups. The question of who is settler and stranger is central to the Third Chimurenga, but it appears that Mahmood Mamdani's questions could be directed to the architects of this 'patriotic history' project in order to map alternative scenarios for justice and reconciliation in Zimbabwe. Mamdani writes:

The postcolonial struggle for justice – for redress of colonial wrongs – raised a basic question: What is a settler? The term did not invoke a legal category: colonial laws had spoken only of natives and non-natives. Settler was a libel that natives hurled back at the beneficiaries of colonial rule. As different forms of nationalism emerged – narrow or inclusive, cultural or political, reactionary or progressive – each form arrived at a different understanding of what settler was. Was the settler experience based on immigration, or on conquest? Was every non-native a settler? If settlers had come into being through conquest and owed their existence to a state that enforced settler prerogative, then the abolition of that prerogative – and the state that enforced it – would also abolish 'settler' and 'native' as political identities. But if settlers were created by migration, then nothing less than repatriation would resolve [the] settler question. (Mamdani 2003:43)

In Zimbabwe, citizens are 'settlers' when they 'oppose' Zanu PF. The party has turned Zimbabwean citizens into 'settlers' not only by striking fear into the hearts of white people and opposition activists, but also by making existence so precarious that any investment one makes in the country is rendered uninsurable. Stability, whether financial or professional, is increasingly being sought in foreign currency and foreign lands. Increasingly, citizens educate their children in order to leave the country. There is a sense in which citizens who have remained in Zimbabwe view themselves as marooned in hostile territory, and are on the lookout for a rescue team. Those already in the Diaspora view themselves as the lucky few that slipped out of a hostage situation.

But some citizens are 'settlers' in other overt and subtle ways. They acquiesce to the label of 'settler' and behave as 'strangers'. This is true of certain sections of Zimbabwean society that have remained distanced from the politics and social processes of the nation, whether in terms

of sport, national holidays, or education. They have continued to be spiritually dissociated from the land that gave birth to them, hoping for a day when they would return 'home'. I do not have space to give a detailed discussion of these sections of Zimbabwean society that fuel Mugabe's resentment and enable his vindictive politics, but it is true that certain ethnic groups have continued to call themselves British, Malawian, Mozambican, Zambian, Indian, etc., in a situation that requires total immersion in national processes. But some citizens are 'settlers' in the sense that they have allowed a totalitarian regime to blossom and strip them of their assets and rights. They have normalised Zanu PF's privatisation of Zimbabwean history, and appropriated the politics of the victim image. They have given up their land and homes to settle in the Diaspora as migrants, thus 'agreeing' with Mugabe that they have a 'home' elsewhere where they get their pounds and politics.

Conclusion

How can reconciliation and justice work in a society whose cultural politics perpetuates repression? Vocabularies and practices of these 'mindsets' should be changed. The social spaces that allow the burgeoning of this 'patriotic history' project should be reconverted to spaces of broader and deeper democratic aspiration. It is not enough to haul Mugabe before a court of law for human rights violations when he is only an institution supported by a very virile intellectual and cultural force whose tradition runs deep. Mugabeism is not a sudden eruption of neo-primitivism, but something that is deep-seated, something with roots within the social and political practices of a broader constituency. The normalisation of repressive rule that is occurring in Zimbabwe is not only a result of 'closed options', as optimistic politics seems to suggest, but a confirmation of how infectious and invasive Mugabe's politics can be. Any discussion of transitional justice should include the prospect of an upsurge of nostalgia for Mugabe's rule, which might scupper attempts at formulating negotiated alternative politics. In the cultural sphere, there is now the need to produce alternative reading and interpretive frameworks to counter and replace the images of victimhood, 'patriotic' history, and the language with which we have described our own as well as other ethnic people's citizenship in Zimbabwe.

Endnotes

- 1 A version of this chapter was presented as a public lecture titled 'The Worm and the Hoe: Cultural Politics and Reconciliation in Zimbabwe' at The Nordic Africa Institute, Uppsala, Sweden, 18 November 2004.

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Orphans of the empire

An analysis of elements of white identity and ideology construction in Zimbabwe¹

Karin Alexander

The first casualty of conflict is identity and ... re-defining identity is a fundamental step towards reconciliation ... A group that neglects this essential stage is likely to become frozen in a permanent quest for identity that often expresses itself in rigid and aggressive forms of ethnicism or nationalism. (Antjie Krog, *Country of My Skull*)

This chapter explores a divide in the citizenship of Zimbabwe, establishing what it means to certain white Zimbabweans to be white and how that meaning interacts with the daily experience of living in an ostensibly multi-racial, majority-led Zimbabwe. The divide has its roots in the legacy of colonialism and is compounded by the fact that, in the twenty years since independence, whites have not been called upon to extend their privilege 'across the colour bar', nor have they volunteered to do so (Simon: in interview).

Using the opinions and stories of white Zimbabweans, the chapter traces the interplay between definitions of the self and the 'other' that allow for the representation of others in a manner that prescribes roles and positions in the social hierarchy. Racial identity, constructed thus, can be used as a justification for 'ideological subordination' (Nakayama and Martin 1999:133). The chapter is written from and about the standpoint of whites in the politically turbulent Zimbabwe of today with an eye to seeing this moment in history as a second chance to determine 'whether race, class and gender slip past one another once again or collide and hold on long enough to see truly innovative exchanges' (Hill 1997:12).

White Zimbabweans, historically a numerical minority, have become a persecuted minority over the last five years. This shift in their status

within the nation has left them feeling caught between a decision to remain in the country of their birth and a decision to emigrate and start over in an alien place. What puzzled the author, as a white Zimbabwean, was that whites in the country could not understand how or why they felt alienated and unwelcome despite having largely abdicated from actively engaging in the project of nation building over the last twenty years.

For decades, white Zimbabweans have tended to live as ‘colonialists’, which they interpreted as better than living as ‘colonizers’ (Memmi 1967:19). Yet, in not using the moment of decolonisation to redefine themselves and their situation, white Zimbabweans have condemned themselves to being ‘tolerated foreigner[s]’ – ‘White Africans’ (Memmi 1967:38). White Zimbabweans missed the opportunity to refuse colonialism in its entirety in 1980 because they did not appreciate that the ‘the facts of colonial life are not simply ideas, but the general effect of actual conditions’ (Memmi 1967:13). Independence, for whites, represented a change in terms of identification, from being white to being privileged. In this way, whiteness became ‘not a conscious or reflected on part of their sense of who they are’ (Dyer 1997:5).

The result of living *off* Zimbabwe, rather than *in* it, is that sectors of the white community have yet to rise above a colonial superiority complex, ‘the outcome of a double process: – primarily economic, – subsequently, the internalization – or better, the epidermalization – of this (superiority)’ (Fanon 1986:12). This complex lies at the heart of white identity construction and is perpetuated by a social structure that allows whites to live in a ‘schizophrenic reality’, picking and choosing what it is they will countenance as their ‘lives’ (Julie: in interview).

Over the past six years, many in Zimbabwe have struggled and continue to struggle for democracy. The government has fought its people in order to retain power. It has subjected the black majority to persecution, torture and intimidation. It has created a terrifying group of youths who have beaten up and murdered citizens, including white farmers. Further, it has subjected the white minority to a rhetoric that frames them as colonialist enemies not only of the state but also of the black majority. The combination of the physical and the rhetorical threats has made white Zimbabweans ‘suspect that [they] will have no place in the future of the nation’ (Memmi 1967:38).

In likening white Zimbabweans to Memmi's 'colonizer who refuses', I aim to illustrate the importance of the particular shape that decolonisation took in Zimbabwe (Memmi 1967:19). The change in government did not bring attendant changes in social organisation and thus whites who wanted to object to the continued inequality of the races could do so only if they were able to see beyond their privilege and only if they were willing to trade their privilege in. The fact that the white community as a whole did not engage in the process of change has resulted in a situation where government can make claims about 'the whites' that mask the differentiation within the white population.

The responses to the questionnaire that provided part of the data for this research (see endnote 1) presented a paradox. Participants all considered themselves Zimbabwean. To them, this meant a range of things, all of which centred on 'a sense of belonging' that was derived from being born and living in the nation all their lives. Yet, later in the questionnaire, participants were asked whether they felt white Zimbabweans were seen as 'other' by the majority and if so, what being an 'other' meant to them. Ninety per cent believed they are seen as 'other' in terms of being either 'outsiders', the 'minority', 'different', or as one fifty-five year old man put it, 'a marginal group that doesn't have any place in the Zimbabwe set-up.' This contradictory sense of self in relation to the nation is understandable when white identity construction is set in the context of its historical development.

Initially, white identity construction took the form of a process of racialised 'othering' within the discourse of superiority that was the colonial encounter. It progressed to the status of ideology when it became necessary to explain why the African majority was not to be granted the same rights as the white minority and when the policy of segregation was born. The result was the formation of a white community unified by race, over and above ethnicity or class, whose national identity was founded on racialism and an idea of the nation that excluded the majority of its inhabitants.

It is argued in this paper that the alienation felt by the white Zimbabweans surveyed is a function of the 'raced' national biography that established Rhodesia. Racism phrased as nationalism underwrote an ideology of dominance that whites have found it difficult to shake, and it has prevented many of them from being able to truly imagine

themselves as Zimbabwean. They are, in essence, 'Orphans of the Empire'; while they live in and love Zimbabwe, they do not feel that they are considered native.

Race or nation

Benedict Anderson argues that a racial nation is not a nation, by virtue of the fact that it defies a basic principle of any imagined community, namely the fundamental assumption of 'a deep horizontal brotherhood', because only certain people are part of the imagined community (Anderson 1991:6). In Anderson's formulation, a nation is organised around race if the concept of race is used to dominate and subordinate groups within its own borders. In investigating the extent to which white Zimbabweans shape their identity around race, the issue at stake is not whether they consider themselves as a race or a nation but the extent to which their primary allegiance continues to be racial or national.

Historically, whites allied themselves along racial lines and progressively, in both Southern Rhodesia and Rhodesia, settlers and citizens constructed the state to serve themselves as a race. This drive for the construction of a white identity was derivative of the need to establish 'hegemony' and the right to 'minority' rule (Kennedy 1987: 32). Hegemony, in the context of colonial Africa, was built on a racist idea. It was 'the belief in the superiority of one's own race as against other races, with the intention of gaining privileges and the right of domination' (Schipper 1999:6).

The early settler Rhodesians classified the Africans, and themselves, in terms of an evolutionist tradition of thought characteristic of colonialism which they 'exploited to label people and to justify their exclusion from a mutually beneficial partnership' (Schipper 1999:1). The Africans were 'like children', an early form of the settlers who were 'indolent' and 'simple' and required 'supervision' in order to move to a more advanced stage (Kennedy 1987:163).

In addition, colonialism pioneered 'the transposition of racial arguments into the sphere of culture' (Malik 1996:129). For the settlers of Rhodesia, culture became an integral part of their self-definition and identity construction. The status of Africans and their role in society were linked to their colour and to certain cultural traditions and practices that the settlers did not understand or found abhorrent.

Culture, defined as 'a set of rules, implicit or explicit, of standardized modes of behaviour and thought to which the members of a community conform', became a means by which to determine inclusion or exclusion from society (Kennedy 1987:188). Identity then, as a function of culture, had to be consciously and fastidiously constructed through the creation and propagation of a series of myths, which ensured its insularity. Antjie Krog defines myths as 'unit[s] of imagination which make it possible for a human being to accommodate two worlds' (Krog 1999:289). If such myths are sustained long enough to become entrenched in the social reality of a populace, they take on a power such that a whole host of images, consequences and reasoning can be summed up in a single word. In settler Rhodesia, the two most effective myths were the constant threat of 'rebellion' and the fear of the 'black peril' (Kennedy 1987:128). Rebellion was a threat to life and the 'black peril' a threat to racial purity in the form of the rape, by black men, of defenceless women who had been brought in to increase the numbers of the white population.

In the racialised Rhodesia that followed Ian Smith's UDI, the 'black peril' continued to be a powerful justification for segregation, as did ideas of sanitation and disease. White Rhodesians voted in a government that rejected the ideas of partnership espoused by the liberal governments of the Federation years and, through segregation, sought to preserve 'the good life under perpetual minority rule' (Austin 1975:72). This involved the suppression of ethnic or class differences amongst whites in order to construct a mythic collective identity. Initially, there was a prejudice against whites who were not British and who, in consequence, were deemed to be of a lower class, like the Afrikaners from South Africa. However, settlers continued to pour in from South Africa and eventually outnumbered the Britons by a third. As a result, 'social inequality' amongst the white population began to undermine white claims to superiority and compounded the threat of an educated black majority being able to usurp white dominance of the economy (Summers 1994:195). In an attempt to minimise this internal threat to superiority, money was poured into white schools and the government demanded that all white children attend school. In this way, coupled with voting rights and other forms of legalised privilege, being part of the white community came to be more beneficial than being British, Afrikaans or of any other ethnicity.

White Zimbabweans inherited the philosophies of segregation from the Rhodesia of Ian Smith and, too, the systems of mythical and ideological justification. The pernicious power of these myths and justifications resides in the fact that when, for example, their insidious phraseology is used (such as calling adult male gardeners 'garden boys'), it 'switches on a whole system of comforting delusions' which explain away the need to treat Africans or blacks in an egalitarian manner (Krog 1999:289). The explanatory power of these myths makes them forms of ideology, the stories groups tell themselves and others in order to convince the general population that following the interests of the elite is in the best interests of the whole.

Race in the region of Rhodesia/Zimbabwe, then, was first used as a biological concept based on outward physical characteristics, and subsequently as a social construct under the rubric of 'culture'. In the process of shifting to 'culturalism', a belief that difference must be nurtured but separated, race was sanitised and relegated to the unconscious via the logic of segregation based on the myths of dominance (Malik 1996:143). 'Culturalism' allowed for 'racism without races', and, for some, the shift from Rhodesia to Zimbabwe could be made without necessitating a new form of identity and with the readily available ideological justification of 'culturalism' (Malik 1996:143).

Self-definition: minorities and majorities, 'othering' and negation

In Zimbabwe, 'minority' is still a term that carries racial connotations. Whites see themselves as politically powerless and under threat because of their numbers, while they retain significant economic power and wealth. For those surveyed, 'majority' is now a term that refers to the larger black Shona population. Initially 'majority' covered both the Ndebele and the Shona peoples. Increasing persecution and neglect of the Ndebele, a black minority, has led whites to consider them as separate from the general 'majority'. What is significant about these categories is that 'minority' and 'majority' are not inherently 'raced' terms. Ascribing minority or majority status according to race obscures differences of ethnicity, political leaning, belief systems and traditions that permeate the entire nation of Zimbabwe. It indicates the belief that the white community in Zimbabwe has certain common characteristics and traditions.

In addition, the racialisation of minority and majority discourse can facilitate a process of selective remembrance. In contrast to the collapsing regime of Robert Mugabe, Ian Smith's Rhodesia can take on a romanticised glow that conveniently obscures its less marketable features. In *African Laughter*, Doris Lessing notes with some irony, 'I am afraid we have to accept the fact that citizens everywhere are going to judge their government by how well they eat, never mind about democracy' (Lessing 1993:327).

A nation re-imagined daily by its inhabitants requires a 'narrative of identity', a story that locates it in time and provides a sense of continuity (Anderson 1991:205). Anderson argues that, unlike individuals, nations have no identifiable point of origin and exit from the world. Therefore, the 'biography of [any] nation' is written backwards from the now (Anderson 1991:204). It is written 'up time' rather than 'down time' and relies on the past to paint and explain the present through a process of selective remembering.

The national 'biography' subscribed to by the majority of the white Zimbabweans who participated in this study is a story that tells history through the eyes of the white pioneers, colonials and later, Rhodesians. This biography is simultaneously the access to a specific history and the process through which white identity was constructed and evolved over time.

Whereas, in the past, Southern Rhodesian and Rhodesian 'whiteness and white identity were discursively constructed through the oppositional construction of black identity in particular contexts of domination and subjugation', in Zimbabwe, whiteness and white identity rely on a conception of who whites were, as a ruling elite (Nakayama and Martin 1999:137). This retrospective approach to identity construction is both a defence mechanism and a means by which sectors of the white population explain their continued dominance of the economic sphere. The failings of the present administration allow these white Zimbabweans to sit back and reflect that they were right all along. While the whites surveyed generally acknowledge that Ian Smith was wrong and UDI a 'mistake', it makes their claims to superiority (implicit or overt) appear less unfounded, to themselves, when they can cite the economic collapse of the nation and dictatorship in contrast to the Rhodesia they have chosen to remember.

The paradox of the 'white African' in Zimbabwe, and his or her attendant sense of alienation, stems from the majority of whites having acted and imagined themselves out of a place in the nation of Zimbabwe. The assumption of an identity in which race comes before nation, as in 'white Zimbabwean', makes race the allegiance that is central to the idea of the self. It can no longer be 'too much to ask one's imagination to visualize one's own end'; white Zimbabweans need to realise and be given space to realise the power of being 'reborn [as] another [self]', a non-racial self (Memmi 1967:40).

'Us': who 'we' are

Simon, one of the interviewees, noted:

Racism is an easy explanation. The labelling process of racism is one that makes the definition of who you are against who you are not very easy. You are white, therefore you are educated, wealthy, hardworking, etc. You are black, therefore you are uneducated, pernicious, savage etc. It means there are none of those messy –'well, maybe he's alright and maybe I'm not as clever as him.' The generalisation quality of racism makes who you speak to or deal with, or what you engage in, an easy decision.

When asked, 'what does it mean to you to be white?', respondents gave a wide range of responses that illustrate the diversity of individual opinion on the community as a whole, while also highlighting the recurrent themes of history and a superior cultural inheritance that is attributed to their 'European' ancestry. Few respondents recognised race as 'an accident of birth' and in general, being white allowed for the construction of an identity in which they see themselves as a form of role model for the 'majority'.

When asked to cite the first five historic moments of Zimbabwe that came to mind, respondents generally included independence and the most recent elections. In addition, most responses referenced the arrival of the Pioneer Column, Smith's UDI and the War of Independence. This sense of historical continuity from Rhodesia to Zimbabwe suggests that for whites their origins in Europe remain an important part of their identity and the way in which they process living in Zimbabwe.

In ascribing the history of the civilising mission to themselves, white Rhodesians and Zimbabweans were able to define themselves as leaders with motivation and qualities that differentiate them from other whites and from the black population. In interview, Ian Smith phrased this heritage as:

You know, people who were pioneers and who came ... to this country, or Canada, Australia, New Zealand ... they were stronger than the people who stayed at home in Britain. If you had spirit ... you went out, if you didn't you just sat back there in Britain – they were a different class of people ... You had to be a different person to be a pioneer ... and that was the sort of stock, when they bred – they bred Rhodesians.

An interviewee named Elizabeth describes it more locally, using her definition of herself to ascribe characteristics to black Zimbabweans:

We have got inbred in us, because of the way we were brought up and perhaps because of our heritage, just about everyone [white] has got some kind of leadership quality. Whereas they haven't because they only ever had like one chief, one king, one ruler and he was the, the god. And the rest of them were subservient, they didn't ever have to make a decision. (Addition mine.)

In this formulation, whites are pictured as natural leaders. What Nicholas describes as a 'ruggedness' inherited from the pioneers is here made into an inherent superiority and ability to shape the future.

Elizabeth, born and bred in Rhodesia and Zimbabwe, who gave her heritage as Zimbabwean, nonetheless describes her history as English history. As the oldest of the interviewees, her answer was not unexpected, because she grew up in Rhodesia. However, for Simon and Sheila, educated during the crossover, the situation was not much different. Simon described learning history as a 'world concept' with African history as a segment containing 'huge gaps' and covering the activities of the whites in Africa up until about 1960. Sheila described her syllabus as 'Zimbabwean history' but went on to elaborate:

Well, when I say Zimbabwean history, we learnt about Lobengula and the settlers coming up and ... that sort of stuff but not in terms of Zimbabwean history from a Zimbabwean point of view. If that makes sense. I mean I'm still, when they talk about the First

Chimurenga and this, that and the other – I have no idea what that's all about, which is very ignorant, but I don't.

Here, the history of Zimbabwe is white history. For her, there is no history attached to the War of Independence in 1980 that is not white history, a situation that simultaneously ascribes a lack of history to black Zimbabweans.

Nicholas, born and bred in the new Zimbabwe, had to actively pursue knowledge about African history, as it was not taught to him in school. He remains convinced that white culture is predominantly British and based on a British model but makes a point of adding:

My reading of colonial African literature, right, at the moment I'm reading *Martha Quest* by Doris Lessing, and it strikes me as being very obvious that, that the settler or colonialists do have a great deal of, or do have a great deal to answer to. Now, whether that can be addressed in today's context or not, I, I don't know ... but it just strikes me as obvious that whites don't realize just how much ... they mistreated the blacks during the colonial period.

Nicholas's mention of this highlights two things. The first is that there are young whites eager to know more about the history from which they stem. The second is that the source of this information was a book about whites, by a white Zimbabwean. It is a text that could be described as a form of counter-narrative in its critique of white Rhodesian society, but nonetheless is contained within the structure of a white telling of white history, rather than a text to do with Zimbabwe as a whole.

The theme of the handover of power having happened too fast was a recurrent one in interviews. Interviewees all believed black Zimbabweans to be capable of running a government but they differed on the time scale and were often committed to the idea that whites still needed to show them the way. A sense of history that locates white Zimbabweans on a continuum of civilisation, in which their ancestors are seen as pioneers of Western values and age-old traditions of an amorphous 'European' nature, establishes whites as a model. This model is then used to compare their running of the country with the way it is run by the blacks.

The general lack of realisation of white wrongs, means that white Zimbabweans judge the present government by how it treats citizens

and manages economics without the attendant knowledge of how separate their experience of Rhodesia was from the black Zimbabwean experience of Rhodesia. The historical and cultural heritage that white participants ascribed to themselves has allowed them to redefine their role in the nation. Ideologically, they have shifted the logic that necessitates their presence from one of outright domination to one of themselves as a role model to guide and shape the future of the country. It is no less an ideology of dominance, just one that is easier to reconcile with the social world that they now inhabit.

Them: who 'they' are

Working discursively from their knowledge of themselves, the white Zimbabweans surveyed have constructed several images of the black 'majority'. This entails a general ascription of cultural characteristics that is shaped and grouped by two sets of circumstances: the War of Independence and the current political situation, which has allowed an elision to develop in which the 'majority' has become indistinguishable from the government. It is also invariably derived from a limited interaction with the 'majority', extrapolating experience with a few to an assumed understanding or knowledge of a whole.

However, as a function of the segregated manner in which most white lives have been lived, their knowledge of the few in the black population comes from their servants, those few blacks they have come into contact with, or from what other whites have told them. As a result, it can cloud their interpretation of the whole in a manner that serves to simultaneously alienate them from the population and to justify their stereotyping.

When asked to give a list of adjectives that describe blacks, white respondents frequently offered the words 'friendly' and 'patient' as positive characteristics of the 'majority'. However, the complete list of adjectives is heavy on negative characteristics. Where whites see themselves as assertive and responsible, they generally see blacks as unassertive, disappointing, uncommitted, underprivileged, unimaginative, unrefined, untruthful and unemployed. 'Traditional' was a recurrent adjective in questionnaire responses referencing the black community, and it is a summation and explanation of the differences for most whites. The inclusion of a lack of privilege and unemployment in the white conception of the black community is

significant as the two terms exemplify the daily reality of the difference between the racial communities, a difference that structures their interaction and their interpretation of one another.

Whites theorise about these traits in order to use them as a map to navigate and understand the social world in which they live. While culture is cited as the root cause of most 'black' failings, there is also recognition that education plays a part. Those surveyed credit themselves, and Zimbabwe, for having one of the best educational systems in the world. Education is significant here because the connection between education and majority or minority status defines the standard of education received.

Historically, white access to education and black access to education are not comparable, but the resource disparity in schools is not part of the logic white participants gave for blacks being less educated, though it is often a lament one hears that is stated as fact rather than as a feature of society. The preferred logic with regard to uneducated blacks echoes colonial notions of the Africans' inability to learn outside the bounds of their culture, so that culture is the reason education has not breached the divide. This is a typical form of white reasoning: whites expect blacks to conform to their ideas of social relations and customs and interpret any inability to do this as a lack of culture, rather than a difference in operating systems.

The majority of the white Zimbabweans who participated see the African cultures with which they interact as a reason for characteristics they observe and disapprove of; culture serves to explain though not to absolve. It is something that is partly a result of 'upbringing', of one's cumulative learning and experience within society and partly a function of predetermined, immutable heritage. As a result, participants' theorising about black culture and traits is often either a resigned acceptance of what they see as a lack of ability to change or an incomprehension at the lack of 'gratitude' for what whites contribute and have contributed to Zimbabwe (Austin 1975: 70).

The belief that the Shona are not a belligerent people was expounded by participants throughout the country and serves them as an explanation of the population's continued support of Mugabe. The belief also justifies participant inactivity in the political arena in terms of the question, 'can't you guys see what you've done, it's

up to you? This is the government you chose' (Sheila: in interview). This approach is the rubric under which all that is perceived as wrong within the society and the government can be conveniently painted with a black brush. For sectors of the white community a lack of planning is black, corruption is black, jealousy is black, misgovernance is black; the list is endless.

In the new Zimbabwe of 1980, the War of Independence, fought between Ian Smith's white Rhodesia and the black nationalists who longed to govern themselves, played a formative role in white understanding of the 'majority'. An accurate telling of the events surrounding and during the war has yet to emerge. There are white accounts and black accounts.

At the time, Rhodesian propaganda pitched the war as one between 'Western Christian democracy' and communism (Julie: in interview). This conception of the war justified the white struggle to maintain 'minority' rule, because it was not a question of whites not wanting to be governed by blacks, it was a question of their fighting on behalf of the nation against terrorism and communist takeover. The younger generations of interviewees, owing to their birth in the last years of the war, were either not subject to the propaganda in the same way or were not subject to it at all, and now see it more for what it was. One of the youngest, Nicholas, had the most accurate conception of the situation as:

[It was] the regime of Ian Smith versus the, well there were several black majority parties who were fighting to get majority independence rule. That's who it was between.

These more factual interpretations of who the adversaries in the war were have a side effect of their own. While they contain recognition of the fact that Ian Smith had been wrong, they maintain the idea of a clear divide between the black and white populations of Zimbabwe and divide the black population into the 'majority' and the terrorists – 'those faceless "ters", "gooks", blacks' (Simon, in interview). The separation of 'us' and 'them' was thus carried through into the new Zimbabwe. This unknown entity 'the terrorists' became the government of the new Zimbabwe in 1980. They were given faces and names at that point but sectors of the white population found it difficult to shift from utter hatred of them under the label 'terrorists' to faith in them as 'nationalists'.

A further result of this assumption of power by the 'unknown entity' was that many whites could retain the belief that the 'majority', epitomised by their servants and the blacks they continued to 'see' but not interact with, were happy to have whites in the country and were not committed to changing the status quo any more than the whites were. President Mugabe's famous reconciliation speech allayed fears of the government adopting a radical policy with regard to past injustices or present inequalities and so life settled back into its usual routine. In the last six years, however, that situation has changed. A large proportion of the white population, now vilified in the press, feel a renewed isolation.

Since their arrival, sectors of the white population in Rhodesia/Zimbabwe have misunderstood the black response to their presence. In times of crisis, this misunderstanding of the 'other' in their world is also a source of anger and frustration, an easy way to apportion blame. Whereas in the 1970s Rhodesia was unique (if infamously so as a white enclave) within Africa and therefore worth fighting for, Zimbabwe has come to resemble just another 'African basket case' (Simon: in interview).

Once you lose the ability to see people around you in their humanity, generalisations that help to reconcile your desires with your reality are easier to make. The move to grouping black Zimbabweans with black Africa has its microcosm in white reactions to demonisation by the government. It has become increasingly infrequent for whites to distinguish between the 'majority' and the government or its war veterans. Elizabeth explained the difficulty of drawing this line as follows:

We're starting to blame. You know we, we feel that because the masses, okay I accept that they have been intimidated, that they have been beaten, they've had everything, but because they haven't been strong enough to stand up for themselves and their rights and try and change things, I stand guilty of accusing them all for getting us into this mess. It's very wrong but I can't go around and say, you're okay, you're not, you're okay, you're not. So yes, as a black race, because they will not stand up for themselves at all and we are not enough to stand up for ourselves I, I put the blame squarely. I lump them all together. That's quite honest.

The process at work is clear in her statement. As a white Zimbabwean she feels that, as a racial 'minority', there is no way for herself or any whites to influence the government, there are not enough of them. Therefore, it has been up to the black 'majority' to regulate the government and they have clearly, in her eyes, failed to do that. 'Thus the majority who were being terrorised into voting [are] cast in the mould of the government' (Simon: in interview).

Aside from a lack of faith in black governance, the move from considering black Zimbabweans as an entity to lumping them with the continent of Africa as a whole has meant the re-racialising of community boundaries in Zimbabwe. The white Zimbabweans surveyed pick and choose the aspects of black Zimbabweans that they will consider definitive of the whole and, in this way, race has returned to the forefront of Zimbabwe. It has made it easy for 'these so-called differences [to] be used to justify economic, political and cultural relations' (Schipper 1999:6). The Rhodesian system of political, economic and social segregation did not survive the War of Independence. However, its ideological underpinnings have remained and are resurfacing with renewed strength. 'From a logic of individuals and individual opportunity, 'the 'unit of social analysis' is and has been the 'racial communit[ies]' within the nation – the divide of 'us' versus 'them' being maintained by the misgovernance of a few (Summers 1994:3).

'Starting to grow a country'²

When I asked interviewees what it would mean to them, hypothetically, to wake up tomorrow and find that they were black, responses varied between worries about the loss of identity and heritage, to problems with aspects of black culture. For most, if they could retain the same social standing, they were not too concerned either way and yet, always, the expression of that sentiment was followed by a rejoinder. As Nicholas put it, 'I mean I wouldn't like go out and build a grass hut or something!' Julie, John and Simon all expressed the joy of perhaps having a deeper understanding of the culture. It was like a dream come true for Julie as a first-generation Zimbabwean. 'You'd be real, authentically belonging!'

Franz Fanon dismissed all hope of white Africans ever fully integrating into multi-racial communities because of a colonial legacy

that removes their ability to see others as human before seeing them as 'raced'. 'What the colonial ... lacks, is awareness of the world of Others, a world in which Others have to be respected. This is the world from which the colonial has fled because he cannot accept men as they are' (Fanon 1986:107). For Albert Memmi, the move to living a non-'raced' life is not impossible, just difficult to approach, as 'to refuse colonization is one thing; to adopt the colonized and be adopted by them seems to be another; and the two are far from being connected' (Memmi 1967:23).

In eight out of the twelve interviews included in this study the language in which the future possible outcomes for the country are discussed is economic; a return to stability and the lifestyle that is the best thing about being Zimbabwean. In light of the current turmoil, the desire for a return to normality is not to be undermined. However, only Timothy and John saw the problem as rooted in more fundamental issues and therefore necessitating solutions that go beyond just changing the government.

Both men pointed to a lack of institutional (government or otherwise) support for the project of reconciliation begun in 1980. John talked about the government as encouraging divisiveness and noted that he did not foresee 'a scenario of, a positive way of going forward together as different nationals, as different races, and different communities within a nation'.

The issue of race, for example, is one that Timothy acknowledges as 'out there', problematic and therefore, in need of attention. In 1980, he felt the church and the state dealt with the issue inadequately and he still believes little will change without the institutional support of a strong humanitarian constitution. At the base of Timothy's argument is the simple and yet elusive issue of 'understanding'; the solution being: get people to grow together and discover their similarities and not just their differences.

A society, for John, is an arena of equal opportunity that recognises the varying weaknesses and strengths of its members. He sees his own privilege only in terms of a lack of government attention to the real issues at stake. 'We're all Zims together, let's be proud of that, not be upper class or lower class by virtue of our skin colour.'

'Our definition of self guides our actions, but it guides them within the constraints of the possible actions available to us – and our choice

of action is expanded or limited by our access to resources' (Garey 1999:52). In order to become 'Zimbabweans' and participate in the nation as equal partners, the majority of white Zimbabweans have to redefine their identity and reorder their priorities. If they love the nation to such an extent that dying in a foreign land is something they have nightmares about, the majority of white Zimbabweans have to begin to learn from and to like the peoples and cultures with which they share the nation.

As illustrated in this chapter, the resources available to the white Zimbabweans surveyed have been forms of white knowledge, and hence actions taken in the name of a white self are inherently 'raced'. It follows that if self-definition is informed by contact with the 'other' then action will encompass consideration of the 'other'.

Conclusion

As illustrated in this chapter, the biography that certain white Zimbabweans attribute to themselves tells a story of white interaction with Africa. Separation and privilege in education and job opportunities formed a racial community that is an ignorant 'Other' in that the majority of its members have a limited knowledge and understanding of the people who share the nation of Zimbabwe with them. Thus, rather than be part of an imagined community that is the multiracial Zimbabwe, there are white Zimbabweans who are self-imagined 'insiders'. If they are unable to deconstruct the myths around which their lives are built and to critically assess their own whiteness, they will remain '[t]he outsiders who will never really belong, even though they try their utmost' (Schipper 1999:151).

White settler Rhodesia was an archetypal example of socially constructed identity, and its propagation through myths that entrench themselves as societal norms. The settler government and its elite strove to create a community of whites because the nation offered them a set of opportunities that class conflict had denied them in Britain. Race entered the discussion at the point where Africans began to compete for white resources and thus shaped identity construction as a process of exclusion. The result, a conscious process of self-alienation, both from the environment within which white settler Rhodesians lived and from the people among whom they lived, has had implications for their identities that permeate the present.

White alienation cannot solely be attributed to the process of self-definition and identity construction. It is derivative of the combined heritage of racial identity construction and racial social organisation. The ideology that is the institution of whiteness dictates the conditions of the public spheres that white Zimbabweans engage in and, as such, explains 'how a disjuncture [has] arise[n] between the world as it is known directly in experience and as it is shared with others' (Smith 1987:55). The schizophrenia of whiteness is a result of this 'disjuncture', a result of white lives being lived separate from and yet dependant on a 'majority' that most do not know or understand beyond the level of appearances.

This chapter has subscribed to the idea of white Zimbabweans as 'Orphans of the Empire' because whites want the state and the society to operate within familiar Western structures that they see as the best way forward. The white 'superiority complex', however, is 'a myth only for him who can go beyond it' (Fanon 1986:80). The label 'Orphans of the Empire' is applicable to the majority of the white Zimbabweans who participated in this study because the racial nature of their self-perceptions and identity construction gave them a place in white-run Rhodesia but has prohibited them from 'emigrating' wholeheartedly to Zimbabwe. Now, however, 'The carpet has been pulled out from under [them] and [they've] been shaken out' (Jean: in interview). If the white population chooses, or is allowed, to continue living in the country, and if they can 'together' enter a 'zone of non-being...where an authentic upheaval can be born', white Zimbabweans may yet discover the power of the non-racial, over and above the multi-racial, nation (Fanon 1986:10). It remains to be seen whether all sectors of the white community have it in them to 'tear off the shameful livery put together by centuries of incomprehension' and whether they can face their fellow citizens in the naked attire of the human condition (Fanon 1986:14).

Endnotes

- 1 This chapter is an edited version of a chapter of a thesis (Alexander 2002), written in partial fulfilment of the requirements for a Social Studies degree at Harvard University. It is based on data derived from a questionnaire survey of white opinion, with 150 respondents, and from 12 interviews conducted by the author between August and December 2001. Out of respect for the privacy and confidentiality of those who gave their time in interview, the names that appear in the text are not the real names of the individuals who participated.
- 2 John, interview by author, tape recording, Harare, Zimbabwe, 22 December 2001.

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‘Zimbabwe for Zimbabweans’

Invisible subject minorities and the quest for justice and reconciliation in post-colonial Zimbabwe

James Muzondidya

Not much has been written on the question of justice and reconciliation in Zimbabwe, and the little that has been written on the topic has focused on the two major races of the country: blacks and whites. Precisely because the current discourses on rights and entitlements, justice and reconciliation have exclusively focused on the black and white binary, the existence and experiences of other groups both within and outside this binary, and also the contradictions embedded in such discourses, have been obliterated.

This chapter focuses on some of the forgotten subject minorities, especially those minority groups that have been ignored or marginalised in most popular discourses. These diverse subject minorities that today constitute what I would refer to as ‘the invisible subject minorities’ consist, firstly, of descendants of immigrants from Malawi, Zambia, Mozambique, most of whom came as migrant labourers to work on the farms and mines in the early days of colonial rule when Rhodesia was faced with an acute shortage of labour. The combined population of this category of Zimbabwe’s ‘invisible subject minorities’ today is estimated to be over two million. The second group consists of Coloureds, a phenotypically diverse group of people, of historically and culturally diverse backgrounds, who held an intermediate status in the Rhodesian racial hierarchy, distinct from the white and African populations. The first group of Coloureds to settle in the country consisted, in the main, of people of ‘mixed race’ descent from Mozambique, and Griquas, Malays and Cape Coloureds from South Africa, whose main language was Afrikaans and who were

assimilated into an Afrikaans subculture. A significant proportion, if not majority, of the Coloured community today is locally born, and descended from unions between whites and Africans or between Indians and Africans. There are also people of Indian descent from South Africa and India, the majority of whom came to Rhodesia in search of economic opportunities and, alongside Coloureds, occupied a distinct social stratum. Included in this category are Goanese Indians, who came from the Portuguese colonies of Mozambique and Goa, spoke Portuguese and Indian languages, and were partially assimilated into Portuguese colonial culture. Most of them came as indentured labourers working on the construction of the Beira railway line. Finally, there are Zulus, Fingos and Basotho from South Africa and Lesotho, many of whom also came into the country in search of employment and better economic opportunities. Because of a shared linguistic culture, many of the Zulus and Fingos have been assimilated into the Ndebele.¹

To fully understand the issue of justice and reconciliation in post-colonial Zimbabwe as it relates to the above groups, one needs to go back to the colonial period and explore the dimensions of power and how it was exercised and defined.

The colonial state and subject minorities

Colonial Rhodesia, like most colonies of the region, was a fragmented or bifurcated state in which race, colour and historic origin determined one's access to resources and position in society. Laws and institutions introduced from the very inception of the colony all divided the population into three major racial categories: European; Asian and Coloured; and Native.² Race defined social and political relations between members of these different categories. Race was also the medium through which colonial power was exercised, and economic and political power, as exercised and defined in the Rhodesian colonial state, was essentially a black and white issue. Whites, as Mamdani has explained, constituted citizens, while blacks constituted colonised subjects (Mamdani 1996: 2001).

While the colonial state defined and exercised its power through the black and white binary, it did not regard the colonised black subjects as one homogeneous unit. It distinguished between two kinds of colonised groups: those regarded as indigenous and those not regarded

as such (Mamdani 2001:24–28). Under Government Notice no. 223 of 1898, which prohibited the settlement of colonial 'natives' in African villages, 'natives' were subcategorised into 'colonial natives' and 'aboriginal natives of Southern Rhodesia', the former being defined as 'all members of the Zulu, Bechuana, and Zambesi tribes, all kaffir tribes of the Cape colony, and any native not being the descendent of an aboriginal of Rhodesia'; and the latter being defined as Shonas and Ndebeles and any other groups regarded as indigenous to the land (Southern Rhodesia 1912:321). Also constructed as non-indigenous by the colonial state were the non-African immigrant subject groups such as Indians/Asians, Cape Coloureds and other people of 'mixed race' descent, comprising what Mamdani calls the 'subject races' (Mamdani 2001:27–28). The 'subject races,' like all subject groups, were regarded as inferior to whites, but were thought to have benefited from their long history of contact and racial affinity with whites. These groups were therefore ranked second in the colonial racial hierarchy, above all African groups, who were seen as the embodiment of savagery and assigned the lowest position (Muzondidya 2002:78–80).

Within this context of categorisation and discrimination based on colonial legislation and practice, colonial subjects were also accorded differing rights and privileges. For example, in the urban domain, only 'aboriginal natives of Southern Rhodesia' were compelled to stay in locations when the first locations were set up under the Town Location Regulations in the 1890s. Coloureds and Asians, together with other non-indigenous African groups, were moved to segregated residential residences only in the 1930s, following the enactment of the Land Apportionment Act of 1930 (Yoshikuni 1989:39; Muzondidya 1996:70–86). Under the Vagrancy Act and the Registration of Natives Regulations, 'natives' or Africans alone were obliged to carry passes (Palley 1966:122, 144).

In the rural sphere, the native reserves or Tribal Trust Lands, which since independence have been known as Communal Areas or Lands, were viewed as the natural or customary home for indigenous Africans (aboriginal natives of Southern Rhodesia). All those constructed as non-indigenous, including the numerous workers from Malawi, Zambia and Mozambique who were recruited to work on the farms and the mines, many of whom even settled in the country after retirement, were not entitled to land rights in the Tribal Trust Lands. The few

who did acquire land there could only do so through underhand dealings (Rutherford 2003:202).

In the workplace, the colonial state also reserved specific jobs for specific subject groups. Wages differed according to ethnic and racial categorisations. In the specific case of the subject races, the colonial state gave them preferential treatment in terms of jobs and salaries. Though subject to discrimination, they also continued to receive preferential treatment under the law and other petty benefits throughout the colonial period. Unlike black Africans, whose presence in the urban areas was strictly controlled by the Urban Areas and Accommodation Act of 1948, Coloureds and Indians were permitted unrestricted access to the cities. Until the ascendancy of right-wing politics and the coming to power of the strictly segregationist Rhodesia Front in the 1960s, the two groups were also allowed limited access to services and facilities open to whites, such as whites-only hospitals, schools, hotels, and restaurants and other recreational facilities. They were, in addition, given limited voting powers, and under the 1969 constitution, they were formally categorised as 'European' (Muzondidya 2005: chapters 3 and 4; Kaplan 1991).

The position and experience of subject minorities, especially the subject races, under Rhodesian settler colonialism, like that of many other subject minorities across the continent such as the Arabs of Zanzibar, the Berbers of North Africa, the Tutsi of Rwanda and Burundi, the Lebanese of West Africa and the Indians and Coloureds of South Africa, was, however, a contradictory one. It was an experience, to put it in Mamdani's words, 'marked by both petty privilege and discrimination' (Mamdani 2001:28).

Subject races were clearly defined as inferior, discriminated against and for all practical purposes excluded from European society. For example, though they were classified 'European' in the 1969 constitution, and despite the Amended Land Apportionment Act of 1941 and the subsequent Land Tenure Act of 1969, which theoretically gave them land rights in any European Area of the colony, Coloureds and Indians could not occupy or buy land and fixed property in strictly white areas. Both the Land Tenure Act and the constitution had restrictive clauses prohibiting the 'transfer, alienation, renting or assignment' of 'European land' to 'any person not being a person wholly of European descent', and both Coloureds

and Indians were not regarded as 'wholly of European descent' under the provisions of the very Act and constitution that classified them as 'European' (Southern Rhodesia 1969 Constitution). Furthermore, the unwritten policy of the Lands Department, as its director at one time explained, was to decline sales of stands and farms to Indians and Coloureds (Muzondidya 1996:101). Above and beyond this, in practice white firms and individuals barred these two groups from occupying such areas by refusing to sell or to rent property to non-white groups and by including restriction clauses in their title deeds (Muzondidya 2005: chapter 3; Palley 641–2). The denial of land rights to Coloureds and Asians in both European and 'native' areas left them the only racial groups without full rights to land ownership.

Further to this, though both Coloureds and Indians were entitled to vote on the common voters' roll under the 1969 constitution, they could only vote for white candidates to represent their interests in parliament. Like Africans, Coloureds and Indians were also excluded from some government and municipal public amenities under the Municipal Amendment Act of 1967, which gave municipalities powers to enforce segregation on public amenities (Muzondidya 2005: chapter 4). A few private hotels and restaurants provided Coloureds and people of Indian descent with limited service, but they were not allowed to eat inside.

In the job market, in spite of their being beneficiaries of the colonial job reservation policy, the employment opportunities for Coloureds and Indians were restricted to specific job categories and posts. For example, in the Rhodesian Railways these groups' employment opportunities were mainly restricted to such positions as gangers or supervisors of African labour. Many enterprises within the private sector, such as banks, oil companies and breweries, were virtually closed shops for these two groups. Influenced by both racial prejudice against Asians and Coloureds and fear of being undercut by relatively cheaper Coloured and Indian artisans, white workers also used various methods to block their entry into skilled positions. One of these was to show their reluctance to work side by side with Coloured and Asian artisans; employers were consequently reluctant to engage Coloured apprentices. Another was to threaten to boycott white employers and businesses engaging Coloured and Asian labour in skilled grades. All this effectively checked the upward mobility of Coloured and Indian skilled and professional workers (Muzondidya 2005: chapters 3 and 4).

Even in the public sector, where some jobs were opened up for Coloureds and Indians from the mid-1960s so that they could replace whites, who were being increasingly absorbed into the expanding private sector, employment opportunities for these groups continued to be highly restricted in some government departments. By the early 1970s, the police force had no Asian or Indian person working for it, and no Coloured person held a commissioned rank in the army. Up to the end of colonial rule there was only one Coloured magistrate, Christopher Greenland, who was appointed to the magistrate's bench only in 1973 (Muzondidya 2005: chapter 4).

Though occupying an intermediate position in the hierarchical structuring of colonial society, and often doing colonial middle-class jobs as junior clerks, secretaries, and supervisors of African labour, as well as being integrated into the machinery of colonial rule as agents, whether in the state apparatus or in the market place, subject races were part of the colonised and their benefits were petty (Muzondidya 2005: chapter 4). Basically projecting them as alien, the colonial state viewed all subject minorities as being there solely to work and not to stay. Their citizenship rights were never clearly defined and remained as ambiguous as their status within the country. In the final analysis, whatever benefits subject minorities derived from their limited access to the colonial state and its petty privileges were overridden by the widespread discrimination they suffered.

Political and economic restructuring in the immediate post-colonial period and the politics of justice and reconciliation

Whereas colonial Rhodesia was bifurcated, as described above, post-colonial Zimbabwe set out to be a unified or integrated state, a place where one's race, colour, language and historic origin did not necessarily play any part in determining access to resources.

The post-colonial project of restructuring the inherited colonial racial order in order to build a just and non-racial society was approached from two angles. At the political and ideological levels, emphasis was placed on dismantling colonial institutions and laws promoting racial disharmony. Soon after the attainment of independence, the legal status of racial distinctions and their institutional supports was erased. While, for the purposes of voting

and representation, Zimbabwe's constitution retained the racial distinctions that had been established earlier, race was no longer used to determine people's access to resources and position in society (Kaplan 1991).

The government also sought to restructure society and change group attitudes by promoting reconciliation between the previously antagonistic and disintegrated groups of the nation. Here the main emphasis was on achieving reconciliation between whites and blacks, who were defined as the main antagonistic groups.

In the economic sphere, justice and reconciliation was sought through black economic empowerment, the Africanisation of the public service and the active development of a black middle class. Within the first few years of independence, in the public sector, some Europeans and at lower levels some Coloureds and people of Indian descent were placed in positions of equality with or subordination to Africans (Kaplan 1991).

For a number of reasons, the justice and reconciliation project had the least success. Although the government tried to change the structures of power and society after coming into power, it was only able to effect minimal changes. The rapid Africanisation of certain sectors of the economy which occurred in the early years of independence, for example, only took place in the public sector, where the government had direct control. It was not reproduced in the private sector, which remained in the hands of white and international capital (Raftopoulos 1995:6).

Political reconciliation proved to be equally elusive, and observers who have commented on the justice and reconciliation project have argued that the main problem was that the Lancaster House constitution, intended as it was to safeguard both the political and economic interests of minority whites against a black majority in need of economic justice, stalled prospects for justice and reconciliation. Many politicised whites, observers have also argued, did not reciprocate the hand of friendship and the offer of reconciliation extended by the incoming government (De Waal 2002; Kaplan 1991; Alexander 2002). In the absence of concerted pressure for justice and economic reform from both the government and the impoverished masses, many privileged whites found it all too easy to settle down as if they were not expected to make a contribution towards addressing

the inherited racial imbalances in wealth between blacks and whites. Such whites, according to Banana, remained largely secure in their positions of economic privilege over blacks because of their huge capital investments (Banana 1996:22).

Writing in 1982, Kaplan observed that 'whites, acknowledging their loss of political primacy, have focused on maintaining their economic status but have made few attempts to accommodate themselves to a changing social order' (Kaplan 1991). This belief, many other observers have commented, lulled many Rhodesians into a false sense of economic security.

The maintenance of their pre-independence privileges was seen as absolutely normal. Prejudices and the destructive social relations they generated were kept alive. Explicit acceptance of responsibility for the past and for the future was an exception, not the rule. This 'culture of contentment' led to the persistence of serious economic and social inequality, most visible in the skewed distribution of land and in the wealth that is so obvious in the white suburbs of cities like Harare. (Huyse 2003)

While group attitudes were quite important in sealing the fate of the justice and reconciliation project in Zimbabwe, there were also fundamental weaknesses in the adopted approach which doomed it from the start. To begin with, the issue of justice and reconciliation in the post-colonial order was approached from a very narrow perspective, particularly with regard to the ideological content defining such a complex process. Any successful justice and reconciliation project requires ideological clarity, first, in terms of the overall aims and objectives of the exercise, and second, in terms of the criteria to be used in identifying both victims and beneficiaries. Yet in the Zimbabwe case, the process was never rigorously debated in order to come out with an agreed model of justice applicable to the country and its complex past: a past in which both victims and beneficiaries were found in various strata of society. In fact, there was no national dialogue on the issue, and very few individuals and groups, if any, were ever consulted by the government. Crucial decisions had to be made on the basis of assumptions, and this left the programme lacking in ideological clarity. For example, when one looks at the immediate post-independence political arrangements, it is evident that the

decision to exclude subject races from the common voters' roll was made on the basis of an assumption that, because these two groups were categorised as 'European' in the Rhodesian constitution, their interests were tied to those of the former white settlers. Implicitly, such a decision affirmed the popular misconception that Coloureds and Asians, like whites, were beneficiaries of colonialism and its racial inequalities. Most subject races had problems with this and expressed their concern through various forms of protest (Muzondidya 2000; 2005: chapter 5).

In the confusion and uncertainty over the justice and reconciliation project of the first years, the position of subject minorities remained anomalous. Their place in the post-colonial Zimbabwe state was never fully defined, just as it has never been defined in the days of the liberation struggle when subject minorities, especially the non-African subject races, and their identities, were treated as an adjunct to the nationalist movement rather than as an integral part of it (Muzondidya 2005: chapter 5).

In fact, the position and citizenship status of subject minorities in post-independence Zimbabwe was never officially clarified or publicly debated. However, in the few definitions of nationalism and constructions of citizenship that were proposed in the post-independence period, it was apparent that subject minorities were not viewed as part of the post-colonial state. In the cultural and political imagination of most Zimbabweans, and in the postcolonial ideologies of majoritarianism and nativism which dominated discourse in the post-independence order, subject minorities continued to be seen as outsiders. For instance, studies of farm workers by Lloyd Sachikonye, Blair Rutherford and Dede Amonor-Wilks have shown how this group, comprising mainly Malawian, Zambian and Mozambican immigrants and their descendants, was marginalised in both the postcolonial redistributive programmes and the dominant politics of belonging and citizenship unfolding in post-independence Zimbabwe (Sachikonye 2003; Rutherford 1996, 2003; Amonor-Wilks 1995, 2000). Generally projected as aliens (even though many of the second-, third- or fourth-generation Zimbabweans of Malawian, Mozambican and Zambian descent have no links to the countries of their ancestral origin), and also lacking in literacy, farm workers continued to experience difficulty in regularising their citizenship status and accessing rights and privileges

enjoyed by their fellow citizens. Many continued to be 'bound to farm owners in a quasi-feudal relationship', surviving on low wages, living in appalling housing conditions and having very little access to health services and schools (Sachikonye 2003:15; 22–24).

Even when it was clear that many second-, third- or fourth-generation Zimbabweans of Malawian, Mozambican and Zambian descent could not legally claim citizenship in the countries of their ancestral origin, they continued to be issued national identification cards bearing the designation 'alien' (Amanor-Wilks 2000). For many years after independence, many of their numbers living and working on the farms remained outside the normal governance structures available to other Zimbabwean communities and had limited political representation in the structures of power and governance, which placed them among the most marginalised of Zimbabwe's populations. Until late 1997, farm workers were barred from voting in local government elections because they were not property-owning ratepayers or rent-payers (Amanor-Wilks 2000).

Examined from any angle, the moral consciousness, the political behaviour, and the civic and legal rights of immigrant farm workers and their descendants, as Rutherford (2003) has argued, continued to be defined through a process of historical imagination which anchored their identity in their location on the farms and their presumed relationship with white farmers. In terms of belonging, immigrant farm workers and mineworkers did not easily fit into the post-colonial nation, and have never done so; and so have been largely excluded from the national project of development and its associated institutional arrangements (Rutherford 2003:203).

As with other subject minorities, the subject races too have never fitted easily into the post-colonial nation of Zimbabwe. Like Zimbabweans of Malawian, Mozambican and Zambian descent, they have had very little room to participate in decision-making processes and to represent themselves in the system of governance. In both the official and public discourses, they have continued to be seen as non-indigenous settler minorities, falling outside the 'classic' definition of 'Zimbabwean'. Evidence of this can be found in an incident reminiscent of the 1964 racial controversy in Zambia over the choice of Henrietta Monteiro, a 20-year old Coloured, as Miss Zambia; in 1987 a Miss Teen Queen Beauty Contest organised in Bulawayo ended in

an uproar when the audience protested because the event was won by two Coloured girls and an Indian girl (*Sunday News* 16.08.87). More recently, Wesley Gilbert, a Coloured player for the Harare soccer club, Dynamos, complained about being subjected to racial taunts by some soccer team supporters when playing for the national soccer team (*Zimbabwe Mirror* 15–21.06.01).

The citizenship rights of subject races, as with other subject minorities, also continued to be ignored, and Coloureds and Asians were rarely included in the programmes aimed at achieving post-colonial justice. For example, the government's land reform programme in the first decades of independence did not take into account the demands of subject minorities for justice. During the first phases of land restructuring, government focus was on resettling communal peasants. Emphasis was placed on solving the problems of rural poverty and land hunger among the peasantry, and this meant addressing the land needs of 'natives' who had communal homes. Up until 1999, when the government's land policy framework for the first time acknowledged the need for farm workers to be resettled alongside land-hungry peasants, very little attention, if any, was paid to those living outside communal areas (Amanor-Wilks 2000; Sachikonye 2003:18). In reality, what this meant was that Zimbabweans of foreign descent, who in the main resided on mines and commercial farms, and subject races, who were essentially concentrated in urban areas, were excluded from the implementation of the government's land reform programme, which was aimed at achieving social justice for the underclass.

Since independence, subject minorities have also not been fully incorporated into many other government programmes aimed at achieving social justice for the formerly exploited. Such programmes, ranging from Africanisation to indigenisation or black economic empowerment, have not only been conspicuously silent on the position and status of subject minorities, but have also lacked clarity and conviction with regard to them (Muzondidya 2005; Seirlis 1999: 305–365). The main problem here is that the category 'African' or 'Zimbabwean' in post-colonial Zimbabwe, as in many other parts of post-colonial Africa, has been essentialised and viewed as an attribute of race and skin colour rather than history and encounters. Indigeneity has similarly been defined in primordial terms, outside the tapestry of Africa's history of migrations and encounters (Mamdani 2001:159–184;

Erasmus 2001:20–25; Greenstein 1998:34; Malaquias 2000:107). It has been restricted to include only ancestral Zimbabweans (descendants of groups which were on Zimbabwean soil before the imposition of colonial rule) such as Shonas, Ndebeles, Ndaus and Shangaans, leaving the subject minorities of the country in an anomalous position where they are, depending on the context, regarded as either not indigenous at all or ‘not the right kind of indigenous’.

The subject races, who, under colonialism, had a position of relative privilege over other colonised subjects, have especially felt the effects of this radical trajectory in the politics of race and indigeneity adopted by the post-independence government. To a large extent, the adopted approach has not only undermined but also delegitimised the justice demands of subject races as part of the disadvantaged victims of colonialism in need of economic redress. According to the testimony of one Coloured entrepreneur from Bulawayo, when he tried to register for land with the black economic lobby group, the Affirmative Action Group, he was harshly dismissed as an undeserving case (www.goffal.com/goffalnews). Many other Coloureds have complained about marginalisation from black empowerment programmes adopted from 1980 (*Sunday Mail* 24.05.81; *Sunday Mail* 20.04.97; *Herald* 23.12.96). As one Coloured resident of Harare expressed it:

Indigenisation means nothing to us [as] we are being excluded from the whole process as if we were not born in Zimbabwe. For instance, you talk of resettlement and housing for all – how many Coloured people have been resettled or had homes built for them since independence? (*Herald* 23.12.96)

On the whole, Coloureds and Indians were excluded from contemporary discourses about ‘empowerment’ and ‘indigenisation’. This is in spite of the evidence showing that Coloured and Indian communities were economically marginalised under colonialism and that some of the widespread cases of poverty during the colonial period were found in these communities, especially in the Coloured communities (Muzondidya 2001: chapter 4).

Post-2000 reconfigurations of political and economic power and politics

The events and processes which have occurred in Zimbabwe over the past four to five years, particularly around the issue of land reform, have demonstrated that the post-independence order has not led to the disappearance of the old, segmented, racial and ethnic order and that the justice and reconciliation project is far from being achieved. Since its defeat in the referendum of 2000 on constitutional change, the Zimbabwean government has abandoned both its conciliatory political approach and the inclusive nationalism of the early period and adopted a radical, exclusive nationalist stance, coupled with the extensive deployment of violence, which has resulted in a serious polarisation of society. One of the central features of the new order, as Raftopoulos has aptly described it, 'has been the emergence of a revived nationalism delivered in a particularly virulent form, with race as a key trope within the discourse, and a selective rendition of the liberation history deployed as an ideological policing agent in the public debate' (Raftopoulos, this volume).

The redeployment of race in the political and social arena has resulted in a reconstitution of the whole discourse of rights, justice and citizenship in Zimbabwe. The issue of rights and entitlements, as in the colonial period, is now being defined in terms of a racial binary: the black and white binary, without any middle ground. In the post-2000 scenario, the nation state has increasingly been conceived as the political expression of a single or a dominant and relatively homogenous ethnic or racial group: 'native Africans'. In the historical text/narrative that has emerged, only 'native Africans' or *vana vevhu / abantwana bomhlabathi* ('children of the soil'), as they have been referred to in contemporary political discourse, have been projected not only as the original and true inhabitants of Zimbabwe but also as having pre-eminent rights over the country's land and other resources. In the racial delineations which have been established through day-to-day political statements and politically inspired songs churned out by the country's radio and television stations every day, Zimbabwe is for black people only, and whites are foreigners or usurpers, with little or no permanent stake in the country. All whites living in the country have been occidentalised; they have been projected as 'Europeans who could only belong to Europe just as Africa was for Africans and

Zimbabwe for Zimbabweans' (Gandhi and Jambaya 2002:4, 12, cited in Raftopoulos 2005; Raftopoulos 2003:230).

This redeployment of race and ethnicity in the discourse of rights, or what Mbembe calls the 'struggle for the codification of new rights and privileges', has had important implications for the exercising of the citizen rights of subject minorities and their claims to social justice (Mbembe 2001:67, 68). For instance, since the enactment of the Citizenship Amendment Act (2001), the legal citizenship of most subject minorities has been a murky issue and this has had important implications for their civic and legal rights. The Citizenship of Zimbabwe Amendment Act specifically targeted whites for disenfranchisement before the crucial 2002 presidential elections, but it has also dispossessed many other Zimbabweans of foreign descent of their right to vote or decide on any questions of major importance.³ Most of the people required to renounce either their foreign citizenship or their entitlement to foreign citizenship or their parents' foreign citizenship, especially those in the rural farming communities, have no access to information on the new laws and no access to resources. The actual process of renunciation is laborious and expensive, while in some cases there is not even any basis for renunciation.

The projection of Zimbabwean whites as foreigners with limited rights has also been extended to other Zimbabweans of foreign descent and others constructed as alien by both colonial and post-independence ideologies. In a letter sent to the *Daily News*, Bertram Tabbett, an official of the National Association for the Advancement of Mixed Race Coloureds, a Coloured pressure group formed in 2001, complained about the contemptuous treatment Coloureds had received from government officials. 'Coloured people are visibly and verbally treated with disdain and contemptuously dismissed with xenophobic comments such as "Endai kuBritain, varungu" [Go back to Britain, you white people]' (*Daily News* 12.07.02).

Zimbabweans of Malawian, Zambian and Mozambican descent have similarly continued to be marginalised from the nation in the current politics of race and ethnicity. They have been projected as foreigners and derogatively termed *mabwidi emutaundi* ('people without rural homes') (Rutherford 2003:200). This kind of representation has been reproduced not only in public discourses but also in official ones. At a campaign rally in 2000, President Mugabe singled out residents of the

working class suburb of Mbare for supporting the opposition MDC, and referred to them as 'undisciplined, totemless elements of alien origin' (*Daily News* 14.10. 02).

Even the notions of entitlement that have evolved in the current processes and politics of land reform have revolved around an exclusive concept of citizenship and nationhood, reformulated around essentialised categories of indigeneity, race and ethnicity (Raftopoulos 2003:25–26). These essentialised notions have increasingly been used to exclude subject minorities from the nation and other entitlements. As the Coloured civil activist Virginia Pinto recalls:

A few years ago I was chosen as President of the Indigenous Business Women's Organisation. ZANU PF complained, saying how can a Coloured person lead us? I was forced to stand down and today the organisation has collapsed. And again at a recent meeting in Masvingo on Women in Local Government, my name was put forward for some leadership post. But it was a big mess and my name was scrapped off because I am Coloured. My brother Douglas Manhanga, who owns Kutapira Engineering here in Mutare, faced the same problems. When his application for a loan for indigenous businessmen got approved, they visited him to see his firm. When they saw him they queried and said to him 'but you are not black.' However, it was no longer possible to reverse the decision. (NAAC 2003)

Broadly, the politics of race and ethnicity have been readily deployed to challenge the claims of all subject minorities to social justice. Responding to Coloured people's calls for inclusion in the land reform program, a government minister, Aeneas Chigwedere, dismissively argued against such claims by asserting that Coloureds, as a group, were politically aligned to white settler interests and 'if we give them land we would be giving it back to the white man' (*Sunday Mail* 04.04.01).

The government, indeed, has not adopted an overt policy excluding subject races from its Fast Track land redistribution programme. However, very few Coloureds and Zimbabweans of Indian descent have been allocated land and the major complaint has been that only the politically connected among these groups have benefited (*Daily News* 28.09.02; *Dispatch Online* 08.09.01). The rest, as Maureen

Muparadzi, a founder member of the NAAC, has pointed out, have been excluded on grounds of race. To cite her words:

... some Coloureds have tried to register and be allocated pieces of land like our black counterparts but have been told that they should register with their village headman. Everybody knows we do not have village headman. Is that not a subtle way of discriminating against us? (*Sunday Mail* 04.04.01)

Many other Coloureds and Zimbabweans of Indian descent have been excluded from certain spaces in the nation state and ownership processes through the deployment of race and ethnicity. The most overt racial attack directed against subject races has been the 2002 threat of seizure of land and property belonging to people of Indian descent by war veterans and members of the black economic empowerment lobby group, the Affirmative Action Group (AAG). In a document entitled 'Operation Liberation: Indians Watch Out', and in his press interview with the state-controlled paper, *The Herald*, Andrew Ndlovu, then Secretary of Projects for the War Veterans' Association, and his war veteran colleagues, accused the country's people of Indian descent, as a collective, of being unpatriotic 'economic looters' who had not only bought 'nearly all the developed land in cities' after 1980 but were also responsible for fuelling the black market (*Business Day Online* 25.04.02). As Ndlovu boldly declared:

Nothing will stop us from reclaiming commercial land from Indians. If they do not stop looting our economy they will leave us with no choice but to go door to door making sure all Indians in the cities are complying with instructions from war veterans. (*Business Day Online* 25.04.02)

In Bulawayo, the AAG document sent out to local Indian businessmen similarly vilified Zimbabweans of Indian descent as a group, and threatened to seize their property. The document, entitled 'Indigenisation versus Indians', reads:

Black people did not die for this country so that Indians could go on oppressing them ... In Bulawayo, a town of two million people, how can a group of less than 10 Indians own half of the central business district? ... These people cannot amass wealth at the expense of the black people. What happened in Uganda is exactly what is going to

happen here in Zimbabwe. I support the President on the issue of grabbing land back for the people. It is our land. We fought for it. It belongs to us. Even if we get it and destroy it, it is our land, we can do whatever we want with it. The same applies to the buildings that are owned by Indians, we need to take them back for the benefit of black people. (www.goffal.com/goffalnews)

The circulation of the AAG document was followed by the occupation of an apartment belonging to a Mr Narandas Hassamal, an Indian businessman, by members of the AAG (www.goffal.com/goffalnews). In both cases the government was quick to act on the threats, and Andrew Ndlovu was arrested and charged with breaching a section of the Public Order and Security Act (*Daily News* 19.09.02; *Dispatch Online* 18.05.02). However, the important message emerging from these developments is the way in which subject minorities have continued to be constructed as aliens in Zimbabwe's post-colonial discourse about rights and entitlements. In the post-2000 Fast Track land resettlement programme, such constructions saw the largely 'foreign' farm workers and their families not only subjected to intimidation and violence but also further marginalised as a group in land resettlement. By early 2003, approximately 200 000 or two-thirds of the original 320 000 farm workers had been displaced from commercial farmland (Sachikonye 2003:5). Fewer than five per cent of them had received resettlement land under the Fast Track programme, in spite of the fact that a survey carried out by the government in 2001 had indicated that about half of the farm workers preferred to be allocated land for resettlement (Sachikonye 2003:24–25; Government of Zimbabwe 2001:7).

Beyond primordiality and exclusivity

The current and dominant conceptions of Zimbabwean nationhood, as expressed in both public and official discourses, have been not only essentialist but also based on the simplistic binary of black and white. In those terms, Zimbabwe, with all the complex tapestry of its past and future, has been reduced to a country where people's entitlements and access to resources are based on race and origin.

At the same time, what this politics of race and colour has done is to ignore the reality of the complexity and diversity of blackness and whiteness, obscure major differences in the various groups of the country and marginalise groups that do not neatly fit within

the simplistic binary of race from the whole discourse of rights and entitlements. As a result, the ongoing public and official debates and contestations over rights and entitlements in Zimbabwe, mainly over land and other economic resources, have glossed over important complexities and contradictions in the issue of post-colonial justice and rights.

The new notions of justice and rights evolving in post-2000 Zimbabwe, and the current definitions of nation and indigeneity, seeking as they do to confer rights, nationality and indigeneity on only those groups which were in the country before the imposition of colonial rule, have been not only primordial but also restrictive. They have largely sought to exclude all Zimbabweans of foreign descent, including both whites and blacks and others constructed as alien, such as Coloureds and Zimbabweans of Asian descent, from both the economic restructuring processes and the political processes vital for the nation-building project. Yet modernity in politics, as Mamdani has poignantly asserted, is about moving from exclusion to inclusion; from repression to incorporation; giving those previously alienated a stake; and broadening the bounds of lived community (*Monitor Online* 12.08.04).

The continued resonance of race and ethnicity, and the government's active deployment of these identities in the social and political arena have also led to an accentuation of tensions, conflicts and divisions among the various racial and ethnic groups, and the creation of new grounds for future conflict. For subject minorities, the current processes have exacerbated their feelings of marginality on the basis of group identity. The active deployment of race and ethnicity, at the same time, has meant that race, as in the colonial period, rather than citizenship, remains the main basis for inclusion and exclusion (Mamdani 2001:28–32). In real terms, the current processes in Zimbabwe display a failure to move beyond colonialism and the structures it created, a problem experienced across the continent and responsible for many of its conflicts and tensions. The issue of justice, as pursued by the current Zimbabwean government, has been a case of 'justice turned upside down' (Mamdani 2004:9–14). Where the Rhodesian state emphasised white minority rights over majority rights, the current regime has simply turned the tables and emphasised majority rights over minority rights.

The key dilemma then, as Mamdani has posed it in the case of Rwanda, is how to build a state and society that embraces the interests of a historically oppressed and economically exploited majority alongside an equally aggrieved and fearful minority (Mamdani 2001). The answer to this cannot be found in adopting policies that seek to privilege one group over another on the basis of undefined and uninterrogated notions of indigeneity, as agitated for by conservative pan-Africanists like Abebe Zegeye (Zegeye 2004:3–5). What is needed is a different way of conceiving of both the nation and indigeneity, and the development of a discourse of rights and justice which is inclusive and allows for the building of a social and political system in which all citizens stand in the same relation to the state and feel equally included in the structures of both political power and economic power. Such a conception does not necessarily have to forget the significance of the past or the part played by race in the structuring of economic and political power in Zimbabwe, but it does not have to be obsessed with the past or race and origin.

Conclusion

This chapter has argued that the current discourses of justice and rights and citizenship and nationality, which tend to define and seek to address these issues mainly in terms of indigeneity and race, have been problematic in both interpretation and application. The policy positions adopted have, at the same time, not only advanced contradictory perspectives on justice but also structured the debate about these issues in very narrow terms. More importantly, the historical processes unfolding in Zimbabwe have engendered feelings of exclusion and insecurity among other groups, especially the subject minorities, who have been marginalised from the current processes. In fact, the way in which the 'native vs settler' dialectic has characterised the current debates on reform, justice and equity in Zimbabwe has meant that race, as in the colonial period, rather than citizenship, has remained the main basis for inclusion and exclusion. Yet today's post-colonial state is not only made up of natives or a single ethnic or racial group. The nation state consists of millions of people who originate, historically, from different parts of the world. It also consists of different racial groups, including subject races like the Coloureds, whose origin as socially distinct groups or communities is a recent phenomenon,

dating to the colonial period. Much more importantly, the current division between 'settlers' and 'natives' is not only ahistorical, but also inaccurate in its racial exclusiveness, which fails to recognise both the multi-ethnic nature of contemporary African societies and the fluidity in their identities.

Endnotes

- 1 The results of the 2002 Population Census show that the current Coloured population stands at about 32 000, but this figure could be an underestimate, given the problems encountered in collating statistics for the 2002 census and the politics of figures in most population censuses the world over. A significant proportion of the Coloured population is now living in the Diaspora, scattered all over continental Europe, the Americas and the southern African region. The population of Zimbabweans of Indian descent is estimated to be between 10 000 and 12 000. There are many more groups in Zimbabwe who, through their numerical insignificance and lack of both political and economic power, qualify to be regarded as minorities. These include the Ndebele, who have been marginalised in post-independence Zimbabwe and constitute about 15 per cent of the national population, the Tonga and Kalanga, who are minorities within the Ndebele minority, the Shangaan/Tsonga in the southeast of the country and the Venda in the southwest. The experiences of these groups have, however, been discussed in most post-independence discourses about minorities, and are not dealt with in this chapter, which focuses exclusively on those minorities rarely discussed in official and public discourses.
- 2 'Native', as defined in the Firearms Act of Southern Rhodesia, meant 'any person being, or being a descendant of, any aboriginal native of Africa', while 'Asian' referred to 'all Chinese, Indians and Malays or their descendants' and 'Coloured' referred to 'any person other than an Asiatic or native who has the blood of an Asiatic or native'. 'European' referred to people of Caucasian or European descent who, in the main, constituted white settler society. See Southern Rhodesia 1912: 270, 1963:22.
- 3 This amendment requires those who seek to retain or acquire Zimbabwe citizenship, and who have a second citizenship, to provide documentary proof within six months to the Registrar-General that they have legally renounced that foreign citizenship. This legislation

affects a significant constituency – second- and third-generation Zimbabweans – all of whom enjoyed the rights of citizenship prior to 6 January 2002. The Act denies citizenship to anyone whose parents were born outside of Zimbabwe unless claims to a second citizenship are renounced. Although in 2003 the government further amended the Citizenship Act to exempt from the 2001 Citizenship Act descendants of African immigrants originating from the SADC region, section 9 of the Citizenship Act has continued to render many Zimbabwean people descended from immigrants stateless (see Citizenship of Zimbabwe Amendment Act 2003).

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Constitutional reform as social movement

A critical narrative of the constitution-making debate in Zimbabwe, 1997–2000

Brian Kagoro

The contradictions in contemporary Zimbabwean society are intimately related to the social and economic legacies of colonialism (Campbell 2003:268–280). The state that Zanu PF took over in 1980 was faced with severe social, economic and cultural dislocations that rendered both reconciliation and change elusive. The continuation of these dislocations in the post-independence era was the inevitable consequence of the peace settlement and the independence constitution negotiated at Lancaster House in 1979. The Lancaster House settlement placed a (largely rhetorical) emphasis on peace and reconciliation at the expense of truth, justice and equity.

Zimbabwe's political development or regression since 1980 has been centred on attempts to resolve the unfinished business of Lancaster House. The constitution-making process described in this chapter has fundamentally been about moving Zimbabwe beyond the colonial legacy entrenched in an inequitable settlement. The chapter seeks to demonstrate how Zimbabwe's governance crisis is related to the Lancaster House settlement. It further seeks to present a critical narrative of the efforts made by civil society to revisit questions of national reconciliation, truth and justice that had been overlooked at Lancaster House. The aim is to demonstrate that a thorough and inclusive process of constitutional reform has the potential to remedy Zimbabwe's governance crisis. In particular, it will be argued that a participatory constitution-making process is a means of moving towards national healing and reconciliation.

The Lancaster House settlement

When the liberation struggle ended in 1979, the belligerents met at Lancaster House in the United Kingdom to negotiate a ceasefire and a new constitution for Zimbabwe. While 'the stated aim of [the new] government was to build a "socialist and egalitarian society" in Zimbabwe' (Roussos 1988:xxi), the colonial constitution accepted by the Zanu PF government cast a shadow over any attempts at change (Roussos 1988). The constitution that was agreed upon reflected a compromise between the transfer of power to the black nationalist movement leaders and the entrenchment of the economic privileges of the white settlers and international capital (Mandaza 1986). It was discredited as an attempt by settlers or imperialists to disempower the new democratically elected government (Ncube 1996).

The British-mediated Lancaster House constitution enshrined several highly contentious provisions concerning the presidency, white representation, citizenship and land redistribution.

The presidency

The Patriotic Front (PF) was in favour of having an American-style executive President rather than the ceremonial head of state proposed by the British. The PF felt that after years of deliberate disruption, disunity and war every effort had to be made to foster unity and national solidarity. In their view only a popularly elected President could manage this task. The British rejected this argument on the basis that such a position could easily be abused and become a means for the establishment of a dictator.

White representation

The PF was premised on the policy of non-racialism and was not in favour of the proposal to reserve twenty seats in parliament for white Zimbabweans. It was argued that

apart from being blatantly undemocratic, it is dangerous to foster the unfortunate tendency of the settler community to separate itself from the people and to regard itself as not being an integral part of the population.¹

These pleas were rejected, and the provision was included.

Citizenship

Britain proposed that Zimbabwe should automatically 'inherit' all persons who were given 'citizenship' by the Smith regime. This included bands of mercenaries who had been enlisted by the Smith regime to fight against the liberation forces. The British also suggested that the new constitution should provide for dual citizenship. The PF were concerned about the security ramifications of such a simplistic approach. There was – in the estimation of the PF – a possibility of abuse of 'humanitarian intervention' on behalf of foreigners.² The provision was nonetheless included.

Land redistribution

The position of the PF on land redistribution seems to have been simply that the party should leave no stone unturned to ensure that, under the new constitution of Zimbabwe, the government elected by the people could solve the basic injustices associated with land distribution and ownership. Land dispossession remained the most deeply felt injustice in Zimbabwe. The PF insisted that the dispossession of land was the first major wrong that the settlers had committed against Zimbabwean people, and that this wrong had been repeatedly and continuously perpetrated and had become a very present reality in the lives of black Zimbabweans.³

The final constitution included the following provisions (in Section 16): (1) A ten-year limitation on the future government's power to acquire land compulsorily for state purposes; and (2) payment of 'adequate compensation' for any land acquired under the 'willing seller, willing buyer' scheme. The constitution entrenched the right of persons living in Zimbabwe to freely remit the compensation received for land outside the country. The PF argued that this essentially meant that any Zimbabwean government seeking to meet legitimate demands for land reform would bankrupt itself, and ruin any attempts it might be making to reconstruct or develop the country. The British and Americans assured the PF that they would create an international fund to pay for any necessary resettlement policy without mortgaging the people of Zimbabwe, or forcing them to pay for land that in their lifetime had been taken from them without compensation. The British and the Americans, without putting pen to paper, promised the nationalists US\$2.5 billion for the purposes of land reform within the first ten years.

The nationalists feared that acceding to British demands represented a compromise that would undercut the people's struggle for liberation.. However, the PF saw their urgent task as one of avoiding a situation where Zimbabwe was pushed into independence in a state of war. In the PF's view such a Zimbabwe 'would be open to internal instability and external intervention'. The PF accepted the iniquitous settlement at Lancaster House despite their strong reservations regarding some of the terms. The test they applied to objectionable clauses was to ask 'whether the government of Zimbabwe could govern effectively despite their presence in the Constitution'. On this basis the PF decided that they would be able to live with the disputed provisions until a future government could pass the necessary constitutional amendments.

The Lancaster House constitution was open to amendment only after a period of eight years (Rotberg 2000:58). As a result, the first decade of the new Zimbabwe was characterised by compromise, and has been described as 'a post-white settler situation in which the former white settlers [found] themselves with such political and economic guarantees as would be the envy of any former colonisers in the decolonisation process' (Mandaza 1986:3). Government action was limited to 'pragmatism', and "transformation" came to mean "balance" (Sylvester 1991:101).

The path to reconciliation

Zimbabwe's new rulers were faced with the critical challenges of transformation and integration. These challenges revealed the fault lines in the newly independent society. The PF had promised that upon assumption of power they would abolish the capitalist relations of production prevailing in the colonial state, arguing that such relations were diametrically opposed to substantive democracy (Robert Mugabe, interviewed by the BBC, 20 April 1980). These radical promises were negotiated away at Lancaster House and therefore became unattainable within the context of Zimbabwe's transition to majority rule.⁴ Paradoxically, the capacity of the state significantly to improve the material plight of the masses lay in its ability creatively to transform the exploitative economic relations inherited from colonial rule and its willingness to redistribute resources such as land and minerals. The failure to achieve structural transformation

effectively meant that questions of authority and integration remained unanswered.

Mugabe's real challenge lay in uniting the compartmentalised races of Rhodesia as one Zimbabwean society living within a newly democratic nation. Zimbabwe moved towards a 'policy of reconciliation' through declarations by the new Prime Minister, made in a series of addresses to the nation.

As we become a new people we are called to be constructive, progressive and forever forward-looking, for we can not afford to be men of yesterday, backward-looking, retrogressive and destructive. Our new nation requires of every one of us to be a new man, with a new mind, a new heart and a new spirit ... If ever we look to the past, let us do so for the lesson the past has taught us, namely that oppression and racism are inequalities that must never find scope in our political and social system. An evil remains an evil whether practiced by white against black or black against white. *Our majority rule could easily turn into inhuman rule if we oppressed, persecuted or harassed those who do not look or think like the majority of us. Democracy is never mob rule.* (Mugabe 1980) (Emphasis added.)

The post-independence government attempted to enact in a top-down fashion both reconciliation and reparations.⁵ These two policies were never interrogated, appropriated or appreciated by the broad masses, which continued to grapple with racism and socioeconomic exclusion.

Despite these sentiments, the bulk of the white community either shunned or remained indifferent to the reconciliatory overtures extended to them by the Mugabe government. In particular, separatism persisted amongst elite white groups in farming, industry and commerce. In addition, there was an almost immediate failure of reconciliation amongst opposed segments of the black population. This was manifest in the mass murders and disappearances in the Midlands and Matabeleland between 1984 and 1987. Zimbabwe's current morass is – in part – related to this failure to resolve the national question.

Consolidation of power

In 1987 the executive introduced the Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment Act. This amendment created an executive presidency

with an unlimited term of office. The executive presidency marked a fundamental break with the juridical assumptions of the Westminster constitutional model framed at Lancaster House in 1979. It shifted power significantly towards the executive, effectively marginalising the legislature and the judiciary in the process (Makumbe and Compagnon 2000). This development marked, as elsewhere on the continent, an abandonment of the classic notion that the purpose of constitutions is not to facilitate the exercise of state power but to limit it (Okoth-Ogendo 1991:7).

It was in the context of this increasing state authoritarianism that a critique of the ruling party emerged in the late 1980s. The critique emanated from the student and labour movements, both of which were surfacing after nearly a decade of repressive state paternalism (Schiphorst 2001). The main focus was on questions of corruption, human rights and governance. There were also calls for reform from within Zanu PF, as the party battled with its own internal dynamics, symbolised by the revolt of the war veterans in 1997.⁶ Intellectuals, opposition political parties, NGOs and human rights groups all added their voice to these calls for increased democratisation and transparency.

The formation of the National Constitutional Assembly

The National Constitutional Assembly (NCA) was founded on 14 May 1997 with a membership drawn from religious organisations, professional associations, grassroots structures, trade unions, academic institutions, media bodies, business groups, women's groups, political parties and human rights groups. It was originally conceived as a one-year project 'to carry out public education on the constitution of Zimbabwe and its shortcomings as well as to organise debate on possible constitutional reform' (NCA constitution, section 3.5). Its mandate was to 'establish a new tolerant, transparent and democratic legal, political, social and economic order and a New Constitutional framework upon which governance can be founded' (NCA Constitution, section 3.5).⁷

The NCA clearly stipulated that it was simply encouraging public participation in constitution-making rather than providing a launch pad for individual political agendas and ambitions (Agenda 3.1 1998). Its aim was to subject the constitution-making process in Zimbabwe

to popular scrutiny with a view to entrenching the principle that constitutions are made by and for the people. From the outset, the NCA highlighted the importance of allowing the citizens of Zimbabwe the space and voice to impact on government policy and processes.

The NCA was officially launched on 31 January 1998. The launch was attended by about 600 delegates drawn from the entire geographic and social spectrum of Zimbabwe (Agenda 3.2 1998). Delegates greeted the initiative with great anticipation.

This must be something that is going to create change, initiate the right process, to form a constitution that is for the people, so that it represents the interests of everybody who has anything to say, the interests of everyone who is ... a Zimbabwean. (Agenda 3.2:7)

The NCA intended the constitution-making process to address historical and contemporary socioeconomic and political challenges confronting Zimbabwean society. Delegates at the launch further recommended that an independent and impartial body should lead the constitutional reform process; that the people, through a constitutional referendum, should ratify the new constitution written by the people of Zimbabwe; and that the process and its structures should be non-partisan (NCA Annual Report 1998).

Zanu PF's legal secretary Eddison Zvobgo dismissed the NCA thus: 'How can a few people sit under a tree and claim to be a National Constitutional Assembly? They are neither constitutional nor an Assembly' (*Herald* 30.01.98). Zanu PF tried to derail the NCA using two strategies: co-option and pre-emption. They declined to attend the launch, claiming that their involvement would prejudice the independence of the constitutional review that Zanu PF was planning for the future (NCA Annual Report 1998). When it seemed unlikely that the NCA would give in, the Zanu PF biannual congress held in Mutare on 4–6 December 1997 called for a constitutional review process. A motion to this effect was tabled in parliament in February 1998 (Agenda 3.2 1998).

The parliamentary motion called upon the executive to introduce a mechanism to review the constitution. This process was to be regarded as the preliminary phase whose proceedings and recommendations would be presented to the Zanu PF politburo and central committee. This would be followed by a second phase, at the state level, in which

the Minister of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs would publish a white paper and receive representations and evidence from all segments and sectors of society (*Herald* 31.01.98).

Building a people's constitution⁸

In the foreword to the 1998 NCA Annual Report the then chairperson of the NCA, Morgan Tsvangirai, spelt out the broad conceptual beliefs and objectives of the organisation:

- It should steer the country 'towards the creation of a new democratic order';
- The people should be the key players in the process of building a new constitution for Zimbabwe. For this reason, 'the NCA [would] not participate in a defective [constitution-making] process' that was not 'democratic, transparent and all-inclusive'; and
- The government's involvement in the making of the constitution should be 'facilitative and not determinative'.

He further cautioned that:

... if the government fails to [respond positively to calls for constitutional change] in circumstances of clear objective need and sufficient expression of demand for change, the people have the right to make their own constitution, in which case they do so in direct confrontation and in opposition to the government of the day.
(NCA Annual Report 1998)

The NCA leadership believed, as early as 1998, that a political alternative was needed in order to ensure that the constitutional agenda was translated into substance. This belief raised innumerable moral questions regarding the role to be played by civic leaders in facilitating the emergence of such a political alternative.

By June 1998, the NCA was preparing itself to enter the politics of reform in a sustained way, and possibly as an alternative to the weak collection of opposition parties. However, any attempt to transform the NCA into a political party would have been an exercise in bad faith since there had been an express undertaking to keep it free from partisan political interests. In the end, several NCA leaders joined together with labour leaders to form a new political party, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), on 11 September 1999.

Between 1997 and 2000, the Zimbabwean economy moved from steady decline into economic free fall. This was precipitated by the unbudgeted payment of Z\$4.5 billion in compensation to veterans of the war of liberation, and exacerbated by Zanu PF's military involvement in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The growing economic frustrations of ordinary Zimbabweans, coupled with increased government repression, resulted in a series of mass demonstrations and boycotts, commonly known as stay-aways. The increased repression and economic degeneration served to illustrate, for Zimbabweans, the disregard that the executive had for the rule of law and for criticism, and added weight to the NCA's claims that Zimbabwe was faced with both a constitutional crisis and one of governance.

Talks about the constitutional process

The events surrounding the NCA launch unintentionally helped to achieve the NCA's objective of pushing the state into a constitutional reform process. In July 1998 the NCA submitted a statement to the government setting out its proposals. The NCA submission clearly stated that it was the duty of the incumbent government to facilitate a constitution-making process without seeking to control or dominate the exercise. It called for the setting up of an appropriate legal framework that would ensure participation by all sectors of Zimbabwean society. This framework was to include a law providing for the election of a broadly representative Constituent Assembly. The Constituent Assembly would consult Zimbabweans and thereafter prepare a report, in constitutional form, for debate and adoption. The draft constitution as approved by the assembly of citizens would then be put to a national referendum.

The government expressed doubt at the prudence of electing a Constituent Assembly, arguing that there was inadequate time before the 2000 general election. Instead, it suggested the appointment of a commission consisting of all the members of parliament and representatives of various civil society organisations (CSOs) with equal representation. The NCA requested time to consult its constituents and consider this counterproposal (*Zimbabwe Independent* 09.10.98).

The government–NCA negotiations suffered a major blow when riot police used teargas to disperse NCA marchers on 31 October 1998. The NCA had organised peaceful marches to protest against

the country's involvement in the war in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and to press the need for constitutional change (*Herald* 02.11.98). At the end of 1998 the question of the process to be followed for constitutional reform remained unresolved.

The government's constitutional commission and process

On 26 April 1999 President Mugabe, by Statutory Instrument 138A of 1999, set up a Constitutional Commission of Inquiry. The commission was charged with the responsibility of initiating a process of constitutional review and presenting a new constitution to him before 30 November 1999 (the Zimbabwe Constitutional Referendum Report). The commission consisted of 400 members drawn largely from the ruling party and a few from the private sector and a cross-section of state-friendly CSOs. In arriving at the draft constitution the commission was directed by the President to 'afford the people of Zimbabwe the opportunity to author and found their constitution enshrining freedom, democracy, transparency and good governance' (Statutory Instrument 138A of 1999).

The commission gathered evidence through the holding of public meetings throughout Zimbabwe and the receiving of oral and written submissions. Its draft constitution was to be put to the people in a referendum, and if accepted it would be made into law. The state had – so it seemed – managed to hijack the process of constitution making by pretending to accommodate NCA demands without addressing questions of representation, composition and ownership of the process.

The People's Constitutional Convention

The NCA held an extraordinary general meeting on 13 April 1999. This meeting resolved to convene an all-stakeholders constitutional convention from 18 to 20 June 1999. The meeting was to be a Peoples' Constitutional Convention (PCC), and it attracted over 7000 people from across the political and geographic spectrum (NCA Annual Report 1999:12).

The PCC had three goals: to define more succinctly the process to be followed in evolving Zimbabwe's next constitution; to define mechanisms that would guarantee genuine national consultation,

debate and discussion regarding constitutional principles and the actual content of the new constitution; and finally to demand that a national referendum be held before the new constitution could be adopted into law (NCA Task Force 1999:11–13).

In particular, the PCC resolved not to give any evidence to the government's Constitutional Review Commission (CRC) and to register its rejection of the CRC process as inherently defective. The NCA boycotted the government process, arguing that it violated the principles that it had submitted to the government previously. The government resolved to proceed without the NCA and began an intensive publicity campaign to delegitimise the NCA. The stage was set for a protracted clash between the two processes of constitutional reform, one led by civil society and the other by the state.

The PCC mandated the NCA to mobilise and educate the people on the reasons and modalities for rejecting the CRC process. It further mandated the NCA to collect and collate the people's views and positions on the content of the new constitution and thereafter to summarise, synthesise and produce these in the form of a working draft constitution. The PCC also outlined the basic minimum constitutional and electoral reforms that would form a precondition for the parliamentary elections in 2000.⁹

The relationship between the NCA and the political parties remained fairly controversial. In 1999, after an initial period of prevarication, the NCA formally admitted political parties into its membership. This served to engender a more inclusive process and carried recognition of the fact that:

It is important to retain political parties in the NCA as they form part of the stakeholders and also hold political mandate on behalf of their constituencies to go beyond the NCA's mandate, which is limited to constitutional reform. The fact that the government has refused to take cognisance of legitimate issues raised by the NCA and its partners shows that the ultimate solution to the constitutional question is a political one. (NCA Task Force 1999: paragraph 7.0)

The peoples' views?

The government commission began its work in August 1999 and had completed its consultation with the people of Zimbabwe by the end

of September 1999. It held about 5000 meetings countrywide and consulted about 700 000 people. In the original draft submitted to President Mugabe on 30 November 1999, the CRC had included a land and property clause that provided far more generous compensation than the Lancaster House Constitution. Mugabe queried this position in his speech to the Zanu PF congress in December 1999. In response the CRC produced, in mid-January 2000, what it termed 40 clarifications to the draft constitutions. Included in these so-called clarifications was an amendment to the land clause, which stated that the government would be absolved from paying compensation for expropriated land if Britain did not make the funds available. The draft constitution provided for increased executive powers with respect to military intervention within and outside of Zimbabwe. The so-called '40 amendments' included the introduction of compulsory national service for Zimbabweans of a certain age group. More fundamentally, the draft constitution's limitation of the presidential term of office did not apply to the incumbent.

In producing the draft constitution the Constitutional Commission did not faithfully record the views that it had gathered in the interviews recorded in the CRC reports. Key concerns raised by women's groups with regard to access to and ownership of land were classed as directory principles of state as opposed to enforceable rights. Equally so, the right to strike, for which workers had been agitating, was specifically excluded. As a result, the final draft produced by the CRC was a departure from what those interviewed had said.

The NCA campaign against the CRC draft constitution started on 30 November 1999, prior to the amendment of the Land Clause. The NCA message was simple: the draft constitution would not deliver a more equitable power structure in Zimbabwe.

The NCA: education for freedom

The NCA employed a multi-pronged strategy involving education, conscientisation and politicisation of the populace. They used rallies, marches, conventional workshops and seminars targeted at specific interest groups such as women, youth, traditional leaders and minority groups. This included a community outreach programme using specially trained facilitators to discuss the constitution with rural communities and collect their views on reform.

The community outreach programme faced several challenges. Whether they were drawn from inside or outside the community, facilitators were often greeted with cynicism. Factors such as family background, status, political history, age, gender, religion, class, perceived level of ability and literacy still mattered a great deal. Questions of ability and credibility became key considerations in the outreach programme, as did communication and relationship building.

These initial problems highlighted two areas of concern. The first was that the utility of the constitutional project was not immediately clear to the recipient communities. The second was that the constitutional agenda was less urgent for communities than their other pressing needs. In order to ensure that the outreach programme performed as required, various mechanisms of follow-up were instituted and complemented by the media, which carried out on-the-spot checks on the NCA education programme and its impact on the community (*Financial Gazette* 15–21.01.00).

In addition, the NCA engaged a media consultant to handle its publicity. A strategy was developed that used different media for different key target audiences. This included the production of a logo for corporate identification. Remote rural areas were reached by touring drama groups especially trained in interactive community drama and equipped with vernacular print and graphic material to reinforce their message. The local radio broadcast service for indigenous languages was extensively used to penetrate those rural communities that had access to the electronic media. Urban audiences were targeted using billboards, newspaper adverts and radio and television adverts.¹⁰

The 2000 constitutional referendum

The referendum on the government's draft constitution was held on 12 and 13 February 2000, in an atmosphere that was severely polarised and in which the state media aggressively marginalised dissenting voices. A total of 1 300 000 citizens voted in the referendum. Fifty-four per cent voted against the draft constitution, while 46 per cent voted for its adoption. The results of the referendum shocked the state, the ruling party and many observers. The people of Zimbabwe had done the unthinkable; they had defied the might of the state and won. The success of the 'no' vote provided the electorate with a sense of the

possible. It represented a major step towards imagining alternative futures.

The referendum result was significant for a number of reasons. It was the first national rejection of a major political position put forward by the ruling party. At one level it was a protest vote against the manner in which the constitution-making process had been carried out by the government. At another level, the vote represented an angry protest against the performance of the government and the parlous state of the economy (Moyo, Makumbe and Raftopoulos 2000). The way the ruling party had used the race factor had raised interesting issues about the articulation of race in contemporary Zimbabwean politics.¹¹ Finally, by rejecting the state's draft constitution, Zimbabweans asserted their power to resist state domination and attempts to deny them their right to name their world and thereby re-constitute it.

NCA achievements

The NCA effectively mobilised the population, built critical awareness, provided civic education and feedback, and initiated an alternative political process. It was able to link participatory constitutionalism to everyday issues, rights of citizenship and the development of the population. In so doing, it helped transform the contours of citizenship and in particular the rights, privileges and duties associated with them.

The NCA gave voice, self-respect and dignity to the Zimbabwean people. In addition, it laid the groundwork for an alternate approach to democratisation after 1997. It popularised and legitimised issue-driven politics by focusing on constitution making, and offered a model of leadership that was not premised on attaining political power. In this way it acted as a check and balance to both Zanu PF and the opposition. The NCA also effectively engaged the political class – both in Zanu PF and the MDC – around key national questions. It built a functional coalition that demonstrated the value of teamwork by defeating the state in the national constitutional referendum in February 2000.

The NCA's most significant success was in pressuring the state into conceding the need to initiate a participatory constitutional review process, which culminated in the setting up of the CRC in 1999 and the historic constitutional referendum in February 2000. Over the years, the NCA successfully established itself as a political force of

which a significant number of Zimbabweans had high expectations. It legitimised and demonstrated the potency of non-violent mass action.

The NCA after 2000

The NCA's broad objective to create a discourse concerning the exercise and practice of political power in Zimbabwe had been achieved. However, the referendum victory was to a large extent a pyrrhic one. The objective of a new constitution had not been achieved and the government's response to the 'no' vote caught the NCA and its allies off guard. The official government position was that it accepted the referendum defeat as an expression of a desire by the people of Zimbabwe to return to the amended Lancaster House constitution.

This distortion of the motivations behind the rejection of the draft constitution was immediately followed by state-sponsored invasions of white-owned commercial farms and unprecedented political violence ahead of the June 2000 parliamentary elections. The violence was perpetrated by youth militia, created under the guise of a national youth service programme, and the war veterans. Both groups have openly associated themselves with the ruling Zanu PF and its electoral campaign, and have been implicated in the majority of the human rights violations committed since 2000.

The 'no' vote was a vote against both the draft constitution and the Mugabe government. The polarisation that followed cast the NCA reluctantly into the forefront of national politics. Its alliance with the MDC became an albatross around its neck: it meant that the NCA would always be seen as an extension of the MDC. As a result, MDC politics – and at times conflicts – were reproduced within the NCA structures. This symbiotic relationship with the MDC also meant that the NCA experienced increasing difficulty in accessing rural areas that had been designated 'no go' areas for the opposition. Its rapport with the government and traditional leadership suffered a similar fate.¹²

Reflections on the NCA process

The struggle for historical justice is, in part, interested in histories from below, the grassroots perspectives. However, it is difficult to redeem voices that have been branded unworthy of social circulation or distorted by politicisation over many years. In these social justice initiatives, law and law making are key sites of struggle.

The NCA process demonstrates the possibility of appropriating the language of law and rights to effect social change. The use of law in this manner carries with it the danger of reproducing the systems of repression in society by conforming to certain ideas of what is normal and what is deviant. Society, as a conglomeration of institutions and discursive formations, contains different 'regimes of truth' that underpin a variety of power relations. It is hard to conceptualise meaningful social change, let alone justice, in any systematic way without thinking about these power relations.

The language of law and rights allows power relations and their attendant systems of domination to be more easily understood and challenged by disenfranchised communities. The NCA process allowed citizens to appreciate how power works through the institutions and rules which regulate their daily lives. It specifically sought to address the question of those excluded and marginalised by the nationalist project, namely women, the peasantry and the urban working class.

The question remains: can grassroots communities speak through initiatives like the constitutional reform agenda of the NCA? The NCA conceptualised citizenship as participation as well as rights, that is, as a process and an outcome. In insisting on the significance of process, the NCA invoked the old African philosophy of recognition of and respect for the other, commonly referred to as *ubuntu*. Recognition established the link between social exclusion and citizenship. It merged the material complaints related to historical inequities of resource distribution with the relational question of being seen and heard 'because you are'.

The NCA argued that inadequate social participation is related to social exclusion and disempowerment. In turn disempowerment was conceptualised as the denial – or non-realisation – of citizenship rights. Despite the ideological limitations of this argument, it had transformative value for the positioning and amplification of grassroots voices. It shifted the focus of the democratisation debates from mere outcomes and institutional arrangements to political and economic processes and the power relations attendant on them. The focus on process treated grassroots groups as self-determining agents rather than passive victims on whose behalf the intellectual or activist must speak and act.

The NCA process characterised emancipation as self-development (empowerment) achieved through participation. This contradicted notions of communities as helpless recipients of elite decisions. Critical citizen participation sought to address the twin problems of socioeconomic injustice and cultural and symbolic injustice.

Conclusion

The challenge of getting to truth and dealing with injustice is at the core of the democratisation and constitution-making processes in Zimbabwe. At independence there was a disjuncture between the need to make progress on fundamental economic and social issues and the quest for justice and healing for the victims of colonial rule. The country repeated this same mistake when Zapu and Zanu PF signed a Unity Accord in 1987. The truth about the 1980s massacres in the Midlands and Matabeleland has yet to be acknowledged or fully documented by the government. The failure of reconciliation in Zimbabwe can be explained by the absence of truth and participation.

Restorative justice implies a transition from a violent, repressive and exclusive past to a rights-based society that recognises the dignity of all. Transition requires a baseline of right and wrong, to humanise the perpetrators and victims alike through disclosure of hidden truths and forgiveness of acknowledged wrongs. This process is but the beginning of the quest for national healing. There is the extra challenge of defining national values, a new vision and institutional framework. This is impossible without a new constitution, a new legal framework and a new political culture. Participatory constitution-making processes are therefore a medium through which to achieve restorative justice. In this sense a national constitution becomes much more than a power map, it becomes society's baseline of right and wrong.

It is insufficient for human rights violators and beneficiaries of past injustice simply to express regret and shame for the wrongs done to others without taking remedial action. Public shaming is insufficient punishment. The construction of a new ethos requires trust and mutual respect. This is impossible as long as the socioeconomic inequities of the past linger on in the lives of the victims. Equally so, transformation is impossible without dismantling the status quo. This latter exercise must muster an extraordinary degree of domestic consensus and broad-based participation. The constitutional debate in Zimbabwe

is about how to construct parameters of power that guarantee a more humane society based on truth, justice and reconciliation. The process of constitution making thus presents the country with an opportunity to build national consensus and define new institutions.

Endnotes

- 1 The British suggestion to place Zimbabweans of Asian and Coloured descent on the white voters' roll as opposed to the common roll for blacks was vehemently opposed by the Patriotic Front.
- 2 The argument was made by Professor Reginald Austin, a delegate of the PF at the Lancaster House talks. The British made some concessions to the PF's views on special white representation and some aspects of dual citizenship. However, they refused to consider the PF's arguments regarding the executive presidency.
- 3 Between 1945 and 1959 the Rhodesian state forcibly moved 85 000 people from their land. Between 1964 and 1973 a further 88 000 were dispossessed. None of these people were compensated. The result was that whites, who constituted 3 % of the population, now held 38 million acres of arable land whilst the 97 % of the population who were African had to share 42 million acres of largely non-arable land.
- 4 The nationalist leadership agreed to the oppressive clause 16 of the constitution, which effectively precluded them from forcibly expropriating land for resettlement within the first decade of independence. The same clause guaranteed the white landowners 'adequate compensation', payable in foreign currency. This was evidently beyond the new government's means.
- 5 In 1975 the Rhodesian government had passed a statute that indemnified Rhodesian security forces for violations committed in the bona fide execution of their duties. A similar statute was passed in 1980 indemnifying combatants from both sides of the war. The new government immediately enacted a War Victims Compensation Act, under which a fund and processes for procuring compensation were established. It later transpired that the majority of the claimants under this legislation were government leaders and army commanders. Many of these made false claims about the extent of their disabilities.
- 6 The war veterans had been neglected by the state since 1980. In 1997 they regrouped and besieged State House, demanding to talk to the

- President and to be paid gratuities and benefits. This was a rare show of defiance on their part.
- 7 The whole idea of citizens making the Zimbabwe they wanted became the NCA slogan for 1998–1999. The exact parameters of what this entailed were not clear to those NCA members who wanted a reform of the constitutional text and a modification of the status quo. I note in my conclusion that for some citizens this entailed a total revision of the existing social, political and legal order, an abandonment of Western legal forms and a creation of an entirely new ethos of governance. For the majority of NCA members, however, it sufficed to have a new constitutional text achieved through public consultation. It is debatable whether this latter view amounts to reconstitution or mere reform.
 - 8 Material used here has been from the NCA Annual Reports for the years 1998, 1999 and 2000.
 - 9 These conditions included: an independent electoral commission (IEC) to run and manage the elections with full executive authority, with a membership to be agreed on by all contesting political parties; the establishment of a system of proportional representation; the holding of parliamentary and presidential elections concurrently; and the abolition of all non-constituency seats.
 - 10 See M & M Consultants' 'We The People': A Campaign to Promote Public Participation in the Drawing Up of a New Constitution By and For the People of Zimbabwe', March 1999.
 - 11 Senior government officials attempted to mobilise the electorate by raising the spectre of a white conspiracy to oppose the draft constitution because of that section of the draft dealing with the compulsory acquisition of land without compensation.
 - 12 The NCA increasingly resorted to street protests as a way of raising awareness. In response, the government disrupted many of its public meetings, street marches and other gatherings.

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The church and reconciliation

A mission impossible?

Deprose T. Muchena

You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trodden under foot by men. Matthew 5 v 13

Introduction

The church has played a critical role in the social, economic and political life of Zimbabwe for many decades. It cannot be divorced from the challenges facing the country today, as it is the only institution that can claim to have a high degree of contact with people at all levels. Also, it is the only institution that can still claim to stand on neutral ground and thus offer itself as a centre of hope, a centre for the reconciliation of ideas, opinions, positions and people. Zimbabwe is extremely polarised today. The country is faced with the challenge of reversing this polarisation and ridding itself of the organised violence and torture and the high levels of intolerance that are a manifestation of the crisis it is experiencing.

Whether the church can rise to this challenge is another issue. What is clear is that the historical role of the church in Zimbabwe, its part in the liberation struggle, its ministry, its presence and its social role today place it at the centre of the search for national solutions in the country. It can play a meaningful role in bringing the country's crisis to an end. Playing this role is an important component of the church's pastoral, partnership and prophetic functions.

Bishop Rubin Phillip elucidated this when he addressed delegates at a conference on Zimbabwe in Pretoria recently.¹ He stated:

The church has a prophetic role to play. It is exhorted by Christ to call evil for what it is ... We are not given [a] mandate to choose

under which dispensation we choose to speak ... The church must partner with other [institutions of] civil society and the government. These efforts must include mediation, honest brokering and consensus building.

For this to happen there is a need for leadership on the part of the church. This leadership needs to be fearless. It must have courage, influence, capacity and experience in dealing with complex political situations. Also needed are an enabling environment and political will. Three years after the disputed 2002 presidential elections, the crisis in Zimbabwe is far from over: in fact, it is deepening. The positions of Zanu PF and the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) are acutely at variance with each other. There are tremendous obstacles to achieving reconciliation in Zimbabwe. Among these are political and social polarisation, severe tensions, and the belligerent attitude of the Zimbabwe state, as well as some low-intensity militarisation of state structures, including the government's use of militia and ex-military personnel in civilian structures and in parastatals.²

With only a short while left before elections, pressure is mounting on Zimbabwe to restore the conditions necessary to allow a peaceful transition out of the present crisis and unleash the abundant potential of the country for national development. All energies must be focused on making this very difficult transition a reality. Any alternative is too ghastly to contemplate. There are several possible routes to reconciliation, including the use of judicial institutions, political dialogue, church-led reconciliation and community-led initiatives. It is not clear which model suits the situation in Zimbabwe at this stage, as the country does not fit easily into any of the usual categories of post-conflict countries, post-military dictatorships or post-independent societies. This is why the first major step to any resolution of the Zimbabwe problem has to be political dialogue between the two major political parties – a dialogue that would necessarily embrace civic interests, and one to which the church is integral. Only such a dialogue is capable of opening a path to tolerance and the reconciliation of political positions, ideas, approaches and persons.

The role of the church in Zimbabwe

This chapter cannot exhaustively analyse the role that the church has played in Zimbabwe's political life in general or in reconciliation

efforts in particular. It seeks simply to examine the role that the church has played and could play in the current crisis. It looks at the various ecumenical groups and individuals who have acted to build a foundation for peace, tolerance and reconciliation in Zimbabwe, and the platforms that the churches have created for this. It also looks at the immediate challenges facing the church as it navigates the political process in Zimbabwe in search of an enduring solution to the crisis.

'Reconciliation' in this paper is taken to mean political dialogue, the promotion of tolerance among and within communities, and the peaceful coexistence of people and communities with varied political affiliation. The reconciliation we are considering in this context should not be confused with the process that formed the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa, as this was suited to the political and historical circumstances and imperatives of that country. When the time and conditions are right, Zimbabwe may well need a model of its own which is unique to its circumstances. At this stage, we cannot outline any definite model, as conditions on the ground suggest that the Zimbabwean crisis is still far from over, and that what is needed is essentially tolerance of varied political opinion, affiliation and conviction, accompanied by a restoration of democratic governance and human rights, the pursuit of political dialogue, and free and fair elections.

History suggests that the church can help to lay the foundation and provide the moral support for such an exercise. During the liberation struggle, the church was in the front line. It supported the liberation of the oppressed, actively promoted justice and human rights and identified with the suffering. It demanded accountability on the part of the colonial government (see, for example, McLaughlin 1996). The then Rhodesian Christian Council, now the Zimbabwe Council of Churches, played a critical role in supporting the cause. Not only were most of the former nationalist leaders educated at mission schools, but the churches themselves provided massive social support to liberation fighters and their families. Key church leaders were involved in the Lancaster House constitutional conference, and the church played a critically supportive role in post-independence reconstruction programmes. While government is not comfortable with the continued involvement of the churches in the political process, there is enough documented evidence to show that, in continuing to participate,

churches have generally been acting more as preservers of continuity than as agents of change. The church is well positioned, as a result, to work practically on reconciliation programmes.

It is within the theological mandate of the church to seek peace and promote justice and reconciliation, but it cannot achieve these things by itself. It can only create an enabling environment for communities, people and political actors to come together and be reconciled, as is sorely needed in Zimbabwe. As Rubin Phillip argues, the church can do this in partnership with civil society and the government. Much that is happening now within the ecumenical movement among the church leadership provides hope that the church can carry out this mission. This will be examined in more detail in the sections that follow.

The ecumenical actors

There are three key recognisable groups of churches in Zimbabwe, which have fortunately set aside their differences and begun to co-operate more in recent years. These are the Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC), comprising more than 20 Protestant churches and about 11 associate members; the Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe (EFZ), consisting of about 60 member denominations of the evangelical persuasion; and the Roman Catholic Church, whose secular arm, the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP), has historically championed the cause of justice and peace. An interdenominational committee of churches, called The Heads of Christian Denominations, forms a further dimension to the church in Zimbabwe. There are also activist church organisations such as the Zimbabwe National Pastors' Conference (ZNPC), the Ecumenical Support Services (ESS) and the Students' Christian Movement (SCM). These draw their members from various churches but work at the civic level and take a vigorous approach to issues. All these groups are concerned with similar issues: promoting peace, tolerance, human rights and good governance in partnership with civil society.

After independence, the church mostly stayed out of politics, opting to concern itself with social development issues. Except for the role of the Catholic Bishops' Conference and its work in Matabeleland, and the CCJP's advocacy role following the Matabeleland massacres,³ the church's attention was focused on non-political issues. With the advent of the 1990s, the church joined the discourse on economic policy in

general and the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) in particular. The ZCC, for example, was instrumental in pioneering economic justice work, national budget advocacy and dialogue with government on general economic policy. In 1995 and 1996, the ZCC, the CCJP and the EFZ joined forces to initiate the first major civic education initiative, which culminated in these bodies monitoring the 1995 general elections.

The ZCC in particular is credited with initiating the constitutional debate and eventually setting up the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA), which set the pace of the nationwide constitutional debate in the late '90s. The NCA was the first post-independence civic movement to defeat the government; this happened in a constitutional referendum held in February 2000. This gave the Zanu PF government a wake-up call that led to it changing strategies in the run-up to June 2000 elections and afterwards. Farm invasions, company invasions, violence, rape, torture and turning rural areas into 'no-go zones' for civil society and opposition supporters are among the strategies that the government used to fight elections in 2000 and 2002.

Promoting peace, dialogue and reconciliation

In the period from 2000 to 2004, the church's involvement in the socioeconomic and political life of Zimbabwe expanded, not least because of the prevalence and impact of the deadly HIV/Aids pandemic, but also, importantly, because of the disturbing culture of violence, the institutionalisation of hatred and the politics of vengeance that have seized control of Zimbabwe's political terrain. Politically motivated organised violence and torture, rape, arson and murder have been ably documented by human rights organisations under the umbrella of the Zimbabwe NGO Human Rights Forum. Most of the perpetrators were affiliated to Zanu PF, and often they went unpunished.⁴ This is consistent with the general selective application of the law that the Zimbabwe police force has adopted.

Such acts became more frequent between 2000 and 2002, prompting various church leaders to speak out. In May 2002, Sebastian Bakare, the bishop of the Anglican diocese of Manicaland, exhorted Zimbabweans to reject violence, criticised those who were abusing women, children and men for political reasons, and called for

reconciliation among the people of Zimbabwe (*Daily News* 07.05.03). Archbishop Pius Ncube of the Catholic diocese of Bulawayo has regularly criticised state excesses in his sermons and his addresses to the media, a practice which earned him the dubious honour of being designated an enemy of the state.

Various church groups mounted platforms demanding an end to the culture of violence, intimidation and disrespect for human rights, particularly on the part of the Zanu PF government. In April 2001, the CCJP hosted an ecumenical dialogue in the city of Masvingo, at which various church organisations and traditional organisations met. The churches condemned the use of violence as a method of settling political differences. The dialogue hailed peace and promoted tolerance and reconciliation as the cornerstones needed for a just society.

In July of the same year, the ZCC heads of member churches hosted a conference in the resort town of Victoria Falls, where they invited senior government ministers and Zanu PF and MDC leaders to share perspectives on how Zimbabwe could move forward without violence, violation of human rights, rape and intimidation. They also discussed national issues such as land reform and the economy. They challenged John Nkomo, the national chairman of Zanu PF and Minister of Home Affairs, to do everything in his power to secure the rule of law. Subsequently they issued a strongly worded pastoral letter (Zimbabwe Council of Churches 2001), in which they called upon the government to restore the rule of law, respect court orders, take measures to stop violence and rebuild the economy.

The ESS issued a brave and frank solidarity statement to the same ZCC Heads of Churches Conference. Part of the statement read:

Our economy, formerly one of the strongest in the region, is in tatters. Production levels have dropped drastically, unemployment has soared to new levels, prices of basic necessities go up every week and our health and education levels have deteriorated to new lows ... The situation is no better in the political sphere, where violence, rape and intimidation seem to have become the rule of the day. Many parts of the country have been plunged into [a] de facto state of warfare, often at the instigation of the very leaders who are supposed to defend the lives and rights of people ...⁵

In February 2002, the Zimbabwe National Pastors' Conference hosted a conference in the city of Gweru with the theme 'Prophetic Ministry in Times of Crisis'. The conference briefed pastors on the extent of political violence in Zimbabwe and received inputs from civic practitioners who were involved in assisting victims of political violence. The pastors resolved to participate in actions that promoted peace, non-violence and reconciliation.

A series of pastoral visits co-ordinated by ESS and the ZNPC were made to politically troubled spots such as the Chimanimani, Chipinge and Mashonaland Central areas. The visitors' mission was to intensify the call for an end to violent politics and engage law enforcement officers and political leaders in the issues facing the nation. While these visits did not necessarily accomplish all they intended, they did broaden the role of the church in promoting non-violence, peace and reconciliation, while opening doors to further initiatives and building confidence in the broader ecumenical fraternity so that such efforts could be elaborated.

Southern African ecumenical solidarity

Events in Zimbabwe have clearly demonstrated that it is possible for the church to take a lead in building reconciliation between politically variant positions. The role of the church in the political process is essentially one of midwifery. The church can act as midwife to a process of reconciliation if it is equipped with sufficient negotiation skills, political will and leadership, a supportive environment and solidarity from neighbours in the Southern African region and from the international ecumenical family. A key feature of the role of the church in promoting political dialogue and reconciliation in Zimbabwe has been the work of regional church leaders, particularly from South Africa, who have shown greater clarity on the issues confronting Zimbabwe and her people, and a deeper commitment to an objective solution, than has been the case with their political leaders. The South African Council of Churches, some leaders of the Catholic Church, the leaders of Churches of the Province of KwaZulu-Natal and the Free State,⁶ and Archbishop Desmond Tutu, among others, have either made key statements, taken bold steps to identify with the suffering masses of Zimbabwe, or spoken about the Zimbabwean crisis and affirmed the prophetic role of the church in the country. Their actions

have given critical support to local efforts, boosted the confidence of the church in Zimbabwe and affirmed the actions of their struggling brothers and sisters.

Perhaps the highest expression of this active ecumenical solidarity came from the Anglican Archbishop of Cape Town, the Right Reverend Njongonkulu Ndungane. Supported by a number of ecumenical activists in South Africa and Zimbabwe, the archbishop took the bold decision of embarking on a reconciliation mission to Zimbabwe. In February and March 2003 he visited the country twice and met with political leaders, including President Robert Mugabe, the leader of the MDC, Morgan Tsvangirai, church leaders, civil society leaders and human rights organisations. Ndungane's visits were generally well received by people in Zimbabwe and essentially energised local efforts at mediation. They heightened the expectations of political observers, the church community and citizens about the role the church could play in Zimbabwe. The state, not comfortable with the possibility of losing the initiative, responded by trying to locate the conflict as one between Britain and its former colony, and by asking the archbishop to direct his efforts at the UK. The state also tried to give the church a bad name by prescribing a role for it and defining the area of politics as one where only governments could operate. This is consistent with the kind of relationship that exists between the church and state today. The church is routinely labelled as part of the opposition by the government press. This was made clear when the government named the ZCC alongside the Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition, Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights and Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN) as organisations that were opposed to it.⁷

Church initiatives to bring about reconciliation

As far back as 2000, a troika made up of Bishop Patrick Mutume of the Roman Catholic Church, Bishop Trevor Manhanga, the president of the EFZ, and Bishop Sebastian Bakare, the president of the ZCC, started working to encourage dialogue among Zimbabwean political parties in the province of Manicaland. The three bishops started to engage low-level political leaders, promoting reconciliation across the province; and since they were national leaders working with a cross-section of church leadership, the authority of the church gave them a mandate to build bridges in the deeply divided country. This initiative

grew and the bishops began preparing the ground for mediation between the leadership of the MDC and Zanu PF.

In July 2003, the bishops held ground-breaking meetings with President Robert Mugabe and Morgan Tsvangirai. They called for a relaxation of positions, for a cessation of hostilities and for reconciliation. They challenged political leaders to set the stage for national reconciliation in a deeply polarised country. They argued that if Zimbabwe was to be depolarised, the political leaders needed to set an example by reaching out to one another.

The bishops also offered to facilitate negotiations between the two parties and endorsed the need for a home-grown solution to the crisis. They made a series of statements calling for dialogue and cessation of hostilities, challenging the politicians to rise up and lead by example. The MDC embraced the bishops' offer while Zanu PF welcomed it cautiously. Regardless of the rhetoric deployed at that time, it cannot be said that Zanu PF accepted the offer. The party's actions have spoken louder than its words. Political arrogance, the siege mentality and preoccupation with retention of power seem to be obstacles preventing Zanu PF from moving towards reconciliation. The party seems to know no other way of maintaining or retaining power than the combative one.

As part of the consolidation of their demand for dialogue, which it was hoped would pave the way for reconciliation, the bishops engaged with political leaders in the Southern African region, local church leaders, and ordinary church members. The readiness with which SADC leaders received the bishops demonstrated the potential influence of the church and the need to support a church-driven reconciliation programme.

While the ecumenical troika was largely successful in Southern Africa, Zanu PF continued to harden its position, in part as an attempt to absolve itself from the charge of having created the Zimbabwe crisis. At one point, the combative Justice Minister, Patrick Chinamasa, took a swipe at the bishops, alleging that they were frontmen for the MDC. At the time of writing, the bishops are still optimistic about their mission. This mission is a difficult one, partly because the co-operation needed from Zanu PF at the highest level is not forthcoming. For example, when the bishops asked for the two major political parties to submit their positions in writing so that the process

of mediation could begin in earnest, only the MDC complied with the request. The bishops have continually run into problems in trying to secure a meeting with President Mugabe since the initial exploratory meeting in 2003.

It seems that Zanu PF has turned its back on the only available home-grown option for ending polarisation, renewing the country and putting it on a path of sustainable and lasting peace, legitimacy and development – the path of reconciliation. While there still seems to be space for trying to establish common ground by creating tolerance and reconciliation between different political positions, the space is getting smaller and, unless there is a new development, the bishops may be facing an impossible task in moving the agenda forward. All the evidence points to an uncompromising Zanu PF.

The MDC, for its part, has decided for the time being to suspend participation in all elections until the playing field is levelled in accordance with the SADC Guidelines on Elections adopted by the Heads of SADC states in Mauritius in August 2004, and also in accordance with the MDC's own 'Restore'.⁸ The crisis of legitimacy is deepening, and the country could slide into full-blown chaos. This is what the church is trying to avoid.

Initiatives led by churches in the region have been much welcomed. In October 2004, the SACC and a number of South African civic groups hosted an important conference in Pretoria to discuss minimum conditions for elections in Zimbabwe. Several presentations were made by church leaders from Zimbabwe, South Africa and Kenya. The broad range of participants demonstrated the desire to offer assistance to Zimbabwean civil and church communities, and showed that there was a possibility of doing so. In November 2004, a week-long conference was convened by the Association of Evangelical Alliances in Africa, attended by 38 delegates from 12 SADC countries.⁹ This conference explored the situation in Zimbabwe, and called for the restoration of democracy, lasting peace, free and fair elections, and a culture of accountability. These actions by churches in other sub-Saharan countries have provided the local churches with a measure of renewed energy and bolstered their role in working for reconciliation and lasting peace in Zimbabwe.

Challenges for the church

Importantly, the church, though well positioned to lead the way, seems to lack the necessary resources and clout to move the dialogue forward. The government of Zimbabwe has been trying to play off one group of churches against another. To achieve this, it relies on a select group of church leaders who 'see no evil, hear no evil and speak no evil'. These are paraded on the government-muzzled radio and television and at press and state functions as representing the voice of the church. The Reverend Obadiah Musindo of the controversial Destiny Ministries is a well-known government supporter who routinely appears on state television giving sermons or running workshops alongside government officials. He is believed to operate from rented offices at the extremely expensive Sheraton Hotel in Harare. There is a risk that this kind of action on the part of the government will divide the church. More often than not, church leaders and groupings are finding themselves on the defensive as the government labels them 'political' and accuses them of having hidden agendas.

Courageous church leaders like Roman Catholic Archbishop Pius Ncube are shamelessly demonised by the government press, which tends to get angry whenever the state is criticised. Others such as Bishops Bakare, Mutume and Manhanga have either been marginalised or are refused any opportunity to be heard in the national media; some, like Manhanga, have actually been arrested. The many less eminent but vigorously engaged pastors have experienced significant acts of intimidation, harassment and political labelling, as part of a strategy which has effectively silenced some of them. Arguably the agenda of the Zimbabwean government is to tarnish the image of those church leaders it considers critical, thereby compromising their objectivity and their standing in the eyes of the public. The inclusion of churches in the growing groups of organisations under surveillance by the state security sector is indicative of this.

The work of church leaders can be dangerous. In August 2004, the parish office of a Presbyterian pastor fiercely committed to the promotion of human rights was gutted by fire. It is not known who started the fire. Tests by officers of the Zimbabwe Electricity Power Authority ruled out any electrical fault. 'Investigations' by the police have not yielded any results, while curiously the investigating officers on the case have been replaced. Parishioners are fearful for their

pastor's life as it is not far-fetched to ascribe the burning of the office to political motives.¹⁰

Conclusion

The church is well placed to play a critical role in transition to a greater and more respected democracy. It is also well placed to seek peace and promote reconciliation, although achieving this may look like a mission impossible. The church has been in a similar position before. It played a critical role in ending colonialism and in negotiating the transition to a post-colonial state – which, as we have noted, has since become a state governed by colonial-style tools of oppression. The church can challenge the current state of affairs and work to resolve the political challenges of Zimbabwe.

The church has to speak out on behalf of the oppressed, the weak and the vulnerable, as it has done throughout history. This is part of its mission. Zimbabweans deserve better than their unflattering identity as citizens of a failing state. The important task is to reconcile Zimbabweans so that Zimbabwe can move forward, re-enter the community of civilised nations, and prosper. This process must begin with dialogue between and among Zimbabweans. This will have to be a dialogue between the political parties as representatives of the people and their political beliefs. Dialogue can lead to negotiations and to solutions that may be durable, but it will take stamina, political will, a fair degree of influence on people, and a serious and committed leadership. It is here that the church can play a significant role. Is the church ready for these challenges?

Endnotes

- 1 Bishop Rubin Phillip of South Africa made this presentation at a conference on 'Minimum Standards for Elections in Zimbabwe', organised by the South African Council of Churches in conjunction with the Institute for Democracy in South Africa (IDASA), the Centre for Policy Studies and the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation, in Pretoria, September 2004.
- 2 There has been a careful restructuring of the state, local government, central government, the media and society through legislative and political means by the Zanu PF government. Key parastatals such as Noczim and GMB are run by former and current military personnel,

while former members of the youth militia are being placed in local government, health and education institutions as part the government's drive towards politicising these institutions and structures.

- 3 The Matabeleland massacres refer to the war waged by the government of Zimbabwe, ostensibly to fight 'dissidents' who were operating in the Matabeleland area. The government linked dissident activities with Zapu, providing a *raison d'être* for the genocide that followed. It is not known how many civilians died as a result of this government-sponsored operation, but conservative estimates put the figure at around 20 000. The 'Matabeleland issue' has never been resolved. It is a major challenge for efforts to achieve peace and reconciliation in Zimbabwe.
- 4 See the Amani Trust reports for 2000, various Zimbabwe NGO Human Rights Forum reports, and Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights reports for the period 2002–3.
- 5 A message of solidarity to the Heads of Christian Churches on the occasion of their meeting in Victoria Falls, July 2001.
- 6 An interdenominational group of seven people (five clergy and two laypeople) from KwaZulu-Natal and the Free State made a pastoral support visit to Zimbabwe to exchange ideas with Zimbabweans. This visit established relations between Zimbabwean and South African churches at the grassroots level.
- 7 These groups were among those that The Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) wanted to meet in their fact-finding mission of early November 2004, which ended in their expulsion by the Zimbabwean government.
- 8 'Restore' is the name of the MDC document which sets out a list of demands for election reforms, and names the standards that the party would like to see 'restored' before they participate in elections.
- 9 The conference, held in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe's second-largest city, 8–12 November 2004, committed itself to supporting the efforts of the local church leadership in fostering reconciliation among Zimbabweans, building lasting peace and restoring the dignity of Zimbabweans.
- 10 This is based on an interview with the said pastor, who did not want to be named for fear of victimisation.

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South African diplomacy and the crisis in Zimbabwe

Liberation solidarity in the 21st century

Ian Phimister

Introduction

For many people, resolution of the current crisis in Zimbabwe has long seemed to be within South Africa's economic and political reach. Her economic power looms large over the entire southern African subcontinent, not least in Zimbabwe itself where South African capital and business is omnipresent. With an industrial production at least five times bigger than that of all the other countries in the region combined, South Africa enjoys a stranglehold over her landlocked neighbours' rail and road links. Increasingly the source of regional energy supplies as well, South Africa arguably dominates southern Africa more completely now than at any time during the past one hundred years. More hegemonic power than partner, South Africa, both before and after 1994, invariably imposed unequal trade treaties on the smaller countries surrounding it (Mlambo 2001; Barber 2004).

If South Africa manifestly had the economic muscle to enforce her will in Zimbabwe, it also appeared to be in her political interests to do so. Economic decline, political violence and human rights abuses beyond the Limpopo River all made a mockery of President Thabo Mbeki's envisaged African Renaissance. At the same time, they undermined the credibility of his Nepad (New Partnership for Africa's Development) project, turning as it does on the promotion of good governance in return for increased investment in Africa by the West (Bond and Manyama 2004). Above all, they flew in the face of the values officially informing South African foreign policy for Africa as a whole and Southern Africa in particular. These values, according to the

Minister of Foreign Affairs, Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, encompassed democracy, good governance, people-centred development, peace, stability and security (as cited in Sachikonye 2004:3). Yet at no point has the South African government either criticised the actions of those in power in Harare, or lifted a finger to help the victims of state oppression. The purpose of this chapter is to account for this apparent paradox. It does so, first, by describing the course of South African diplomatic policy over the last three years or so, as the Zimbabwean crisis has intensified. In the second section, more briefly, it examines the range of explanations put forward by scholars for this behaviour, before concluding that far from South Africa being an essential aspect of the solution to the crisis in Zimbabwe, it is actually a crucial part of the problem.

South Africa's diplomatic policy in the last three years

By 2002, Mbeki and the ANC had moved from a policy of so-called 'quiet diplomacy' towards Zimbabwe, characterised on the one hand by regular electricity and fuel subsidies, and on the other by occasional criticism from key individuals such as the Governor of the Reserve Bank, to one of open support for President Robert Mugabe and his Zanu PF government. Prior to that date, Pretoria's sympathies, although always on Harare's side, were initially somewhat restrained. In part this reflected a continuation of the coolness that had earlier characterised personal relations between Nelson Mandela and Mugabe. More prosaically, they were constrained by delays contingent on the redirection of South African foreign policy along lines broadly favoured by Mbeki after his inauguration as president in April 1999. Consequently it took time for the new dispensation to emerge. When opening the Zimbabwe Trade Fair in Bulawayo in May 2000, Mbeki even called for the land invasions, unleashed by Zanu PF in the aftermath of its stunning constitutional referendum defeat in February, to be addressed in 'a co-operative and peaceful manner', noting that 'peace, stability, democracy and social progress in Zimbabwe are as important for yourselves as they are for the rest of the region' (*ANC Today* 23.05.00). But this marked the first and last occasion that Mbeki and the ANC voiced such sentiments. As the scale of popular opposition to Zanu PF became increasingly clear, so ANC support for its fellow liberation movement intensified. It took

great pleasure in Zanu PF's victory in the controversial parliamentary elections in June 2000, as did the South African cabinet when releasing a statement welcoming 'the conduct of the elections in Zimbabwe'. For their part, the heads of state of the SADC (Southern African Development Community) expressed 'satisfaction that the elections were held in a transparent, peaceful, free and fair environment, in accordance with our shared democratic principles and values' (*Pretoria News* 7.08.00).

Two months later, the ANC hosted a seminar of former liberation movements, prominent amongst which was Zanu PF. Its primary purpose was the analysis of elections in the region, with a view 'to sharing experiences, strengthening party-to-party relations and co-operating ... to deepen the gains of the revolution ... in Southern Africa'. Attention was also paid to those forces deemed to be 'against change and transformation'. As Mavivi Myakayaka-Manzini, the ANC's head of international relations, explained, 'Never before have these parties come together like this. We are linked not only in the agreements sealed through our governments but our relationships are also sealed in blood. We fought with each other [sic] in our battle for liberation'. South Africa could benefit from the experience of other countries, she added. 'In Zimbabwe the transition was smooth in the beginning but now they have come across some problems. We need to see what can be done and learn from that' (*Sunday Times* 15.10.00). The lesson which Mbeki himself drew from events as they unfolded in Zimbabwe was that criticism of his policy was indicative of a deeply entrenched racism among white South Africans. 'Some are convinced that we are savages and that we must therefore do everything in our power to prove ... [otherwise] to the satisfaction of white South Africa' (*ANC Today* 23.03.01). This he declined to do, and in December 2001 a high-powered ANC delegation visiting Harare assured listeners to the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation that 'President Mbeki is a friend of Zimbabwe' (Sapa 21.12.01).

In mid-March 2002, immediately after presidential elections that were condemned as neither free nor fair by every observer group except the South African and Organisation for African Unity missions, the ANC's Deputy President flew to Harare where he publicly hugged Mugabe and congratulated him on a 'legitimate and valid' victory (*Daily Telegraph* 15.03.02). A few days later, the ANC National Executive

Committee weighed in with an attack on 'hostile forces, particularly the United Kingdom' which were trying to destabilise Zimbabwe by calling for sanctions. 'We will never align ourselves with the US and Britain', declaimed the ANC's Secretary General. 'If it's possible for [British prime minister] Tony Blair to say the election won't be free and fair unless one side (MDC) wins in Zimbabwe, they'll do the same for South Africa as well tomorrow' (Reuters 18.03.02). Yet the subsequent decision of the Commonwealth to suspend Zimbabwe from membership for a year left Mbeki trying to make the best of a bad job. Having agreed to serve as part of a troika along with the leaders of Australia and Nigeria to monitor events in Zimbabwe, the South African president sought to have it both ways in a cabinet statement that simultaneously supported the Commonwealth while endorsing the election result. It was left to a member of the ANC's National Executive Council to accuse the West of wanting to 'impose presidents of their choice in our region. Zimbabwe is only a strategic hill. The objective is South Africa. The gross interference into [sic] the internal affairs of Zimbabwe by Western powers is a dress rehearsal for South Africa. Their strategy is to weaken as much as it is possible governments and parties of the former national liberation movement in southern Africa. We condemn an attitude that says elections shall be deemed free and fair only if the results accord to the interests of the Western powers' (*Pretoria News* 23.03.02).

While Mbeki contented himself with blocking attempts by the Australian prime minister to invoke further sanctions against Zimbabwe, the ANC made it absolutely clear where its sympathies and priorities lay. A meeting in Windhoek of the SADC's ruling parties 'unequivocally condemned the unsubstantiated, grossly fabricated and far-fetched propaganda deliberately perpetrated against the Government, people and sovereignty of Zimbabwe by those who are bent on sowing the seeds of discord, confusion, strife and anarchy in our region'. Further condemned were attempts by the West to 'install puppet regimes and to impose surrogates that guarantee the exploitation of our resources'. In short, attacks on Zimbabwe reflected a racist agenda that had no respect for African aspirations. It was in this context that the subcontinent's ruling parties resolved to support the 'irreversible land reform and resettlement programme taking place in Zimbabwe in accordance with its Constitution and laws' (*Herald*

30.05.02). Indeed, much of the focus of the ANC's international work, it was subsequently revealed, involved building 'relations with progressive forces in Africa, strengthening relations with our historical counterparts in southern Africa – Swapo, MPLA, Frelimo and Zanu PF – and building ties of co-operation with other African countries' (*Umrabulo* 08.02).

Ties with Zanu PF most certainly were strengthened. Speaking in Pretoria after an official visit by Zimbabwean government ministers and senior party functionaries in November 2002, the South African Foreign Minister, Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, endorsed Mugabe's oft-repeated claim that Britain must compensate white farmers for land seized by 'war veterans', because after all it was the former who had benefited from land theft during the colonial era (*Financial Gazette* 14.11.02). This public display of support was further buttressed by an invitation to Zanu PF to send a delegation to attend the ANC's 51st national congress, scheduled for the following month. At the ensuing meeting, Dlamini-Zuma again expressed solidarity with Mugabe. She warned the EU that the forthcoming European Union–Africa summit would be in jeopardy if Zimbabwean government officials were excluded under the terms of sanctions imposed on supporters of the Mugabe regime. 'It's up to them [Europe] to see how they overcome the problem,' she insisted. 'It is in their court. We as Africans are ready to go. The question is, are they ready to receive us? There is no Africa that can exist without Zimbabwe. Africa is indivisible.' Mugabe could scarcely have put it any better. Certainly the Zanu PF delegation had nothing to complain of about their reception in Stellenbosch. Deliberately chosen as a venue to underscore the triumph of African nationalism, the erstwhile citadel of Afrikanerdom rang to assertions of liberation struggle and ideological solidarity. Hailing Zanu PF as a progressive organisation, the ubiquitous Dlamini-Zuma, now wearing her hat as an ANC National Executive Committee member, reminded journalists that both the ANC and Zanu PF 'fought colonialism and oppression in our countries. We liberated our countries from the yoke of colonialism and we set to improve the lives of our people in our respective countries'. The two organisations would determine their countries' own destinies, 'not to be dictated to by somebody else' (*Mercury* 20.12.02).

The South African government was quick to give practical expression to this policy of increasingly overt support for Mugabe

and his followers. With the backing of Nigeria's President Obasanjo, Mbeki urged the Commonwealth to readmit Zimbabwe into the Commonwealth. In February 2003, Obasanjo wrote a letter to the Australian prime minister, John Howard, recommending that in order to bring the Zimbabwean crisis to a speedy end, the international community should be encouraged to redeem pledges of financial assistance for the land reform process; positive engagement with Zimbabwe should be continued; and the Commonwealth should continue to make its good offices available for mediation between Zimbabwe and the United Kingdom. Obasanjo's recommendations were made on the basis of his and Mbeki's assumption that a normalisation of politics had begun to return to Zimbabwe. That this was patently untrue seemed not to bother Mbeki at all. Instead, when the Commonwealth Secretary General announced that, contrary to South Africa and Nigeria's wishes, he was extending Zimbabwe's suspension from the Commonwealth, Pretoria was outraged. Its High Commissioner in London was authorised to announce that African members of the Commonwealth were all opposed to Zimbabwe's continued suspension. The South African statement argued that in the absence of Commonwealth consensus, the Secretary General's action amounted to a 'political and procedural travesty' (*Argus* 21.03.03).

The assumption behind these blatant attempts to legitimise Mugabe's authoritarian regime soon enough became clear. At a regional think-tank held near Pretoria in March 2003, senior South African officials emphasised that ANC policy was predicated on the belief that Zimbabwe's government was genuinely representative. Insisting that Mugabe had been democratically elected as president, they ignored the open derision that accompanied their presentations. Far from the land reform programme having been violent and haphazard, it was proving a great success. Incredulous Zimbabweans attending the seminar were treated to moving tales of smiling peasants tilling fertile land previously held by white farmers. Nowhere in this misleading narrative was there any mention of the vast swathes of previously productive farmland now lying fallow. Neither the fate of black farm workers nor the huge acreage seized by Mugabe's cronies was mentioned (*The Star* 07.03.03). Just how successful Mugabe and his supporters had been at winning the support of complicit South African ministers, and more enduringly at presenting themselves as

the champions of poor landless blacks, was underscored some six weeks later when Mbeki himself portentously intervened. Writing at length in the ANC's online publication, *ANC Today*, the South African president developed a line of thought first given expression by the ANC's Secretary General, Kgalema Motlanthe, not long after the party's December 2002 congress. While repeating the official government line that only Zimbabweans could find solutions to their problems, Motlanthe confirmed opposition suspicions of ANC bias in favour of Zanu PF when he argued that Zimbabwe's problems were not the result of the policies of one man or a rapacious elite. 'Zanu-PF is in trouble not because it does not care about ordinary people, but because it cared too much', he said. 'I am not convinced that the problems in Zimbabwe can be resolved by removing Mugabe from office. The problems are much more deep-seated', turning as they did on unsustainable social spending designed to redress the inequalities of the colonial past (*The Star* 22.01.03).

It was precisely this interpretation that Mbeki also favoured. The picture which he went on to paint of the situation in Zimbabwe was one in which a benevolent elite, committed to the poor, had failed to appreciate that the massive social expenditure characteristic of the first two decades of independence was ultimately unsustainable. 'Contrary to what some now claim', Mbeki patronisingly explained, 'the economic crisis currently affecting Zimbabwe did not originate from the desperate actions of a reckless political leadership, or from corruption. It arose from a genuine concern to meet the needs of the black poor, without taking into account the harsh economic reality that we must pay for what we consume'. Once again invoking the solidarity of the liberation struggle – 'as patriots who occupied the same trench of struggle with Zimbabwe when we, together, battled to end white minority rule in our region' – Mbeki argued that it was the tide of events, not 'because there are demonic people in Harare', which had 'carried [Zimbabweans] ... to destinations we may not have sought'. What opponents of the regime saw as the increasingly authoritarian nature of the state and its massive abuse of human rights Mbeki preferred to see as the inevitable consequences of the actions of well-intentioned authorities struggling with dwindling resources to contain 'social instability as the poor respond to the pains of hunger'. In the face of global economic forces beyond its control, the Zimbabwean

state would have to 'emphasize law and order', but this was a vicious cycle because 'as it responds in this way, the less will it be able to address anything else other than law and order. The more it does this, the greater the absence of order and stability' (*ANC Today* 09.05.03).

In making this argument, Mbeki was clearly sending a signal to restive elements within the Tripartite Alliance (of the ANC, Cosatu [Congress Of South African Trade Unions] and the South African Communist Party), calling for a relaxation of the government's neo-liberal economic policies, even as he bolstered his own liberation struggle credentials by supporting Zanu PF. Indeed, if Mbeki needed any reminding of just how much support Mugabe's policies seemingly enjoyed amongst black South Africans, it came the same month his on-line prognostications appeared, when Zimbabwe's president paid an official visit to South Africa. The occasion was the state funeral of Walter Sisulu, one of the ANC's most revered leaders. Mugabe's formal appearance in Soweto's cavernous First National Bank stadium was greeted with thunderous applause. His subsequent trip to Fort Hare University, his alma mater, in South Africa's impoverished Eastern Cape Province, was no less rapturously received. Attending a graduation ceremony at which Zimbabweans were prominently represented, Mugabe 'smiled and nodded in acknowledgement as [the university praise singer] ... described him as an "African hero" for his land policy, [and] ... called on him to "please, please chase the whites from our land"'. 'In a sense President Mugabe of Zimbabwe was speaking for black people worldwide when he addressed the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg last year,' announced veteran South African journalist Harry Mashabela. 'The pervasive venom being heaped on Mugabe from a variety of quarters in the western world ... [is] because he wouldn't hold back the quest for more land, and refused to browbeat the war veterans as they invaded white farms' (*The Star* 16.05.03).

As long as he continued to enjoy the direct and indirect support of Mbeki and the South African government, Mugabe remained beyond the reach of the West. Never was this more obvious than during President George Bush's visit to South Africa in July 2003. Despite advance criticism of the Mugabe regime, not least by the American Secretary of State, Colin Powell, when push came to shove, neither Bush nor Powell was actually prepared to go beyond

the limits preferred by Pretoria. With no vital American interests at stake and no doubt realising that any attempt to topple Mugabe risked destabilising Mbeki, the White House backed off. The South African president was left more or less free to pursue his own course. Telling Powell that it was 'ill-advised for him to create the impression that he is directing what South Africa should do', Mbeki, revelling in his description by Bush as 'an honest broker' and the 'point man on Zimbabwe', put a pro-Mugabe gloss on events. He not only claimed that the Zimbabwe crisis was on the way to being resolved, but that South African-sponsored talks between Zanu PF and the MDC were already under way. Although this was simply not the case, the angry dismissal by the MDC's leader, Morgan Tsvangirai, of Mbeki's 'false and misleading' attempt to 'shield Mugabe by buying him time' was largely ignored. In South Africa itself, Mbeki's 'triumph' was hailed by the state-controlled broadcasting services, while in Zimbabwe, the Minister of Information celebrated 'a loud climb-down by a[n American] president all along misled' (*Sunday Times* 13.07.03).

Emboldened by this development and bolstered by his elevation to the deputy presidency of the African Union, Mugabe subsequently insisted that any talks with the MDC would have to be conducted entirely on his terms. The occasion could scarcely have been more evocative of Zanu PF's anti-colonial and liberation struggle credentials. Addressing a Heroes' Day rally just outside Harare in mid-August 2003, Mugabe insisted that 'those [the MDC] who would go together with our enemies abroad cannot at the same time want to march alongside us as our partners. No, we say no to them, they must first repent'. The army was lavishly praised and prudently rewarded for its role in suppressing the mass strikes and stay-aways earlier in the year, and Africa's leaders were thanked for their solidarity. 'Despite deliberate attempts by both internal and external forces to destabilise our programme, Zimbabwe has received great support from our African brothers', he declared, 'notably presidents Mbeki and Obasanjo, in attempts to find solutions to our own challenges' (*Mercury* 12.08.03). As for the rest, ordinary Zimbabweans were left to make do with endless propaganda jingles on radio and television urging them to remain resilient: '*rambai makashinga* [continue to endure] – our land is our prosperity' (*Sunday Times* 03.08.03).

This particular display of recalcitrance made it quite clear that Mugabe saw no need to compromise. Although some African voices, notably that of Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu, had been raised against Zanu PF's actions from the start (*Weekend Argus* 12.01.02), Mugabe's fellow African leaders had all along remained silent where they had not actually declared their support for him. But the first cracks in this unity now began to appear. In November 2003, Nigeria's President Obasanjo was forced to leave Harare without securing a commitment from Mugabe and Zanu PF to talks with the MDC. Nor was he able to find any evidence that human rights concerns had been addressed. Back in Lagos, an obviously embarrassed Obasanjo declared that Mugabe, contrary to his own confident expectation, would not be invited to attend the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Abuja. Overshadowed by the absent Mugabe, the Abuja meeting was predictably acrimonious even as it unexpectedly confirmed Zimbabwe's suspension, a decision which prompted Harare to announce that it was withdrawing from the Commonwealth. Proclaiming that the seizure of white-owned farmland was a 'success for all of Africa', Mugabe denounced the Commonwealth as an 'Anglo-Saxon unholy alliance'. 'We abhor high global highhandedness of the strong and powerful; we abhor unilateral interference in the internal political affairs of other countries, especially smaller states. We accordingly jealously guard our sovereignty against such interference' (*The Guardian* 03.12.03).

For the Zimbabwe government-owned *Herald*, Harare's only daily paper since the banning in September 2003 of the independent *Daily News*, leaving the Commonwealth only dealt 'with the symptoms and not the cause of the disease'. The real issue was not the Commonwealth 'or any other third parties', but Britain 'and its Prime Minister, Tony Blair'. Zimbabwe should sever diplomatic ties with London because sanctions brought about by Britain had 'savaged' the economy. 'The country's political landscape has been put into disarray following the creation of the British-sponsored MDC and a host of non-governmental organisations that have sought to cause mayhem and instability in the country by staging foolish demonstrations and media campaigns designed to precipitate instability and undermine the Zimbabwean government'. International concern about human rights, democracy, press freedom and the independence of the judiciary were, the *Herald*

concluded, 'a smokescreen to maintain the colonial grip [of Britain] on Zimbabwe' (*Herald* 09.12.03).

In all of this, the *Herald* was simply repeating the oft-expressed view of the Minister of Information that the West was seeking 'regime change in Zimbabwe ... through acts of economic sabotage ... under cover of instruments of democracy, human rights, rule of law, good governance, to sound reasonable' (*Mail & Guardian* 07.11.03). Much more important was the fact that it almost immediately became clear that this was also the position held by all of Zimbabwe's partners in the 14-nation Southern African Development Community, the South African government, and Mbeki himself. Thwarted in attempts both to replace the incumbent Commonwealth Secretary General with a candidate whom they could bend to their will, and to restore Zimbabwe to full membership, Mbeki and his entourage had returned home angry and defiant. A statement issued by the South African Department of Foreign Affairs on behalf of Lesotho, currently chairing SADC's Politics, Defence and Security committee, deplored 'the dismissive, intolerant and rigid attitude displayed by some members of the Commonwealth'. The decision to keep Zimbabwe suspended, noted South Africa's Deputy Foreign Minister, had been 'procedurally wrong and undermines the very principles of democracy that many claim to champion'. It was a decision that said less about Zimbabwe than it did about an already divided Commonwealth whose very relevance was at stake (*Mercury* 10.12.03; *The Guardian* 12.12.03).

The tone sounded by Mbeki a few days later in his weekly online letter was notably aggrieved. In words which might have been penned by Mugabe himself, he argued that Britain was the problem, not Zimbabwe. At the core of the present crisis in Zimbabwe was the land question, for which successive British governments were entirely culpable as it was they who had 'protected the property rights of the white settler colonial "kith and kin"'. Zanu PF, whose liberation struggle credentials were impeccable and whose democratic bona fides in the last presidential election had been vouched for by the South African Observer mission, if not by the Commonwealth, had only been singled out for attack once the West deliberately decided to 'treat human rights as a tool for overthrowing the government of Zimbabwe'. Quoting the Kenyan writer, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, to the effect that 'imperialism has [so] distorted the view of African realities

... [that] it has turned reality upside down', Mbeki maintained that Zimbabwe was a prime example of this process. 'Those who fought for a democratic Zimbabwe, with thousands paying the supreme price during the struggle, and forgave their oppressors and torturers in a spirit of national reconciliation, have been turned into repugnant enemies of democracy', he wrote. 'Those who, in the interest of their "kith and kin", did what they could to deny the people of Zimbabwe their liberty, for as long as they could, have become the eminent defenders of the democratic rights of the people of Zimbabwe' (*ANC Today* 12.12.03). Having delivered this broadside, and admonishing African intellectuals to 'always refuse to "rationalise the upside-down way of looking at Africa"', Mbeki then left for Harare where he met at length with Mugabe and Zanu PF, and briefly with the opposition MDC. 'Our countries have shared common problems. As they shared the common problems of oppression, they share common problems today', he declared on arrival. 'President Mugabe can assist us to confront the problems we have in South Africa so that we can assist you to solve the problems that face Zimbabwe' (*Herald* 18.12.03).

With Nigeria increasingly written off by Harare as a dupe of Western interests for having acquiesced, however reluctantly, in the extension of Zimbabwe's suspension from the Commonwealth (*Vanguard* 25.02.04; *Sunday Mail* 08.08.04), the importance of Mbeki and the SADC's continued support for Mugabe could hardly be exaggerated. Misleading claims by Mbeki in February 2004 that Zanu PF and the MDC were about to embark on formal talks to resolve their differences (*Business Day* 10.02.04) were followed a day later by further ministerial expressions of understanding and sympathy for Zimbabwe's plight. Refusing to criticise Zimbabwean legislation obliging news media to register with the government or face closure, South Africa's Minister of Foreign Affairs went on to argue, as Mbeki had done before her, that it was Britain's backing for white settlers in its former colony which had complicated efforts to find a political solution to the crisis (*The Star* 11.02.04). As this line of argument was essentially the same as the one long pursued by Zanu PF, it not only received prominent coverage in Zimbabwe's state-controlled press, but also was taken up in one form or another by Mugabe himself at the end of the month. Speaking at one of several elaborate celebrations held to mark his 80th birthday, Mugabe attacked Britain and the United States for seeking to topple

his regime. So long as the MDC was 'dictated upon from abroad', he added, 'we will find it extremely difficult to negotiate with them ... We can't discuss with allies of the Western countries that want to destroy our economy'. Only once the MDC's 'umbilical cord' with the West was severed, would he listen to what it had to say. "They should try to be part of us, they should try to think as Zimbabweans, as Africans' (*Business Day* 25.02.04).

Not, apparently, that such behaviour would make much difference anyway. Mugabe was quoted as saying, that whatever happened '[Morgan] Tsvangirai will never defeat me in an election'. It was a claim Mugabe could make, secure in the knowledge that in recent weeks he had signed a presidential decree permitting detention without bail for up to four weeks, even as two of the country's last remaining independent judges resigned their posts. In much the same period the chairman of the National Constitutional Assembly was brutally assaulted by armed police and left for dead during a march for constitutional reform (*Sunday Times* 22.02.04). An appeal to Mbeki from the South African Council of Churches urging him to send a delegation to Harare to rekindle talks between Zanu PF and the MDC drew only the blandest of non-committal replies: 'President Mbeki agreed with the churches that there was no substitute for dialogue and that South Africa should do everything possible to assist the people of Zimbabwe to find a solution to their problems' (*Cape Times* 25.02.04). This certainly left Mugabe free to threaten to put his opposition to 'eternal sleep', as he again ruled out talks with the MDC. 'There is no room for unity with those that do not believe that this country and its forests, animals, even snakes and mosquitoes belong to us' (*Sunday Mail* 04.04.04). Basking in plaudits from delegates attending a conference of former southern African liberation movements and their African-American and British sympathisers, as well as a renewed pledge of support from Namibia's President Nujoma, towards the end of April Zimbabwe's leader flew south to attend Mbeki's second-term presidential inauguration. An honoured guest, Mugabe was one of a handful of African heads of state invited to the ceremony. When he and his wife arrived at Pretoria's Union Buildings, they received a standing ovation from the assembled South African and foreign dignitaries. Their reception from the crowd was more ecstatic still. 'Thousands of party-goers attending a public concert on lawns below the buildings

whooped and cheered as huge television screens showed Mugabe's arrival', reported Reuters. 'He is a hero as far as the African struggle is concerned', confided one black businessman. 'He has done so much to liberate the African people. We know the problems that are going on in Zimbabwe, but they will bounce back' (*The Star* 27.04.04).

In fact, this was precisely what appeared to be happening. By midyear, Mugabe was convinced that the tide of events was now running strongly in his favour (Reuters 26.04.04; *Herald* 29.04.04). SADC support for his regime had waxed rather than waned; inflation had begun to fall; and Zanu PF had racked up a series of by-election victories, leaving the MDC in disarray, 'hit by factionalism and demoralised by ... relentless street pressure from pro-government youths'. Little wonder, then, that Mugabe was described by the press as 'walking with a new spring in his step' (*Pretoria News* 31.05.04). When he addressed the concluding session of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of Nations annual summit, held in Maputo during the last week of June 2004, Mugabe's confidence was matched only by his intransigence. 'Eleven years I spent in prison fighting for democracy, for one man, one vote and for us now to hear a voice from London saying there is no democracy, no freedom, no human rights observed in Zimbabwe is very offensive and repulsive', declared Mugabe. For this reason 'we will not allow erstwhile imperialists to come and judge our election ... [they] must be supervised only by people of our region, people of Africa, people in the Third World'. Commenting on the sustained applause which greeted Mugabe's remarks, Mozambique's President Joachim Chissano told a news conference after the end of the summit that the Zimbabwean leader had 'taken advantage of the situation to clarify his position ... [and] many heard that message favourably and with a great deal of sympathy' (*Mail & Guardian* 25.06.04).

Mugabe's speech was made a matter of weeks after the expiry of Mbeki's self-imposed deadline for a resolution to the crisis in Zimbabwe. The previous year, Mbeki had taken it upon himself at the annual World Economic Forum Africa meeting to predict that some kind of political agreement would be made within the next 12 months, but when pressed at the 2004 summit to account for the failure of his prediction, the South African president was utterly unfazed by the question. 'Generally things are moving quite well towards addressing insecurity and instability on the continent', he

said. 'All of these conflicts [in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Sudan, Liberia, and Zimbabwe] are at least moving in the right direction' (*Cape Argus* 03.06.04). While an open letter from Amnesty International and 20 human rights groups, many of them based in Zimbabwe, urging the South African government in particular to take a 'more public stand in resolving the crisis in Zimbabwe' went unanswered (*Mail & Guardian* 25.06.04), Mbeki's indirect response made it clear where he thought the problem lay. At the end of June, the MDC leadership was summoned to Pretoria where Mbeki told them 'he was frustrated by the slow pace of dialogue' (*Cape Times* 02.07.04). What his official spokesperson did not disclose, however, when informing the news media of that particular meeting, was that some time earlier in the month Mbeki and leading ANC officials had met secretly with senior members of Zanu PF. Held in the ANC's central Johannesburg headquarters, the purpose of the meeting was to forge closer political ties between the two 'sister' parties. With both parties acknowledging that Zanu PF delegations 'regularly visited the ANC to study organisational and strategic issues', a Zanu PF politburo member revealed that the ANC 'has in principle agreed to send between four and six "strategists" to assist [Zanu PF] during the forthcoming election' (*Sunday Times* 11.07.04).

Although this specific arrangement was immediately denied by ANC Secretary General, Kgalema Motlanthe (*Sunday Times* 11.07.04), further signs of South African support were not long in appearing. On 3 July 2004 the African Union's Commission on Human and People's Rights presented its long-delayed report on the situation in Zimbabwe and certain other African countries. Based on a fact-finding mission to Zimbabwe in June 2002 soon after the disputed presidential elections, the report found that there was sufficient evidence 'to suggest pervasive human rights violations'. Having been presented with 'testimony from witnesses who were victims of police violence and other victims of torture while in police custody ... [together with] evidence that a system of arbitrary arrests took place', the mission was 'prepared and able to rule that the [Zimbabwe] government cannot wash its hands of responsibility for these happenings' (*Financial Gazette*, 8–14.07.04). Furious that the report's contents had finally found their way into the public domain, Zimbabwe's Foreign Affairs Minister, Stan Mudenge, insisted that his government had not seen nor had a chance to respond

to its findings. But his demand that the report, which he described as the work 'of British agents in Zimbabwe ... [and] fit only for the dustbin' (*Herald* 09.07.04), should simply be thrown out by the African Union, ran into objections from Nigeria. It was at this crucial juncture that the South African Minister of Foreign Affairs, Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, 'climbed into the ring to support him' (*Mail & Guardian*, 09.07.04). Her intervention, for all that she subsequently denied that she had supported Zimbabwean attempts to shelve the report, apparently succeeded in having discussion postponed until such time as the Harare government formally responded (*Mail & Guardian* 16.07.04). The report, as a result, was neither adopted by the AU's foreign ministers, nor was it included on the agenda of the summit of African leaders in Addis Ababa later that same week (*Cape Argus* 09.07.04).

The African Union's failure to adopt its own human rights report was greeted with dismay by the MDC. 'It will simply serve to increase and prolong the suffering of the people of Zimbabwe', observed one party official. 'The bureaucratic and procedural pretext that has been used to justify postponing discussion of an important internal document ... is perplexing and contradictory given that the AU, since its inauguration, has built up an impressive reputation as a force for good in Africa' (*Weekend Argus* 10.07.04). But if the divisions within the AU provided a glimmer of hope for the embattled opposition within Zimbabwe, the continued solidarity evinced by the Southern African Development Community permitted no such optimism. A two-day SADC summit held in the middle of August at the Grande Baie beach resort in Mauritius resounded to praise for Mugabe and Zanu PF's stand against Western imperialism. 'Let SADC speak with one voice, and let the outside world understand, that to us Africans land is much more than a factor of production, we are spiritually anchored in the lands of our ancestors', announced Tanzanian president Benjamin Mkapa, the organisation's outgoing chairman. 'Time has passed. We forgive those who did this to our ancestors, but now that we are in power, we cannot run away from our historical duty to set right these historical wrongs and injustices' (Reuters 16.08.04).

It was only because Zimbabwe had taken action against the legacy of colonialism that it was now criticised by the West. 'We are tired of being lectured on democracy by the very countries which, under colonialism, either directly denied us the rights of free citizens, or

were indifferent to our suffering and yearnings to break free and be democratic', Mkapu continued. The common electoral laws and rules that the SADC leadership were about to adopt would be in keeping with the region's political, social and cultural background. 'In democracy as in all other things, no one size fits all. Multiparty democracy and its attendant elections must never be a cover for the destabilisation of our countries'. Just where the SADC saw the emphasis lying between democratic practice and regime stability soon enough became clear. In an intervention demonstrating perhaps that the SADC is not entirely without a sense of humour, the chairman of the Politics, Defence and Security committee, Lesotho's prime minister Pakalitha Mosisili, painted a glossy picture of democracy in the subcontinent. 'I am happy to report that democracy is not just well, but is thriving', he said (Reuters 16.08.04). Similar sentiments were expressed by the Mauritian prime minister and incoming SADC chairman, Paul Berenger, who pointedly praised Mugabe, while insisting that regardless of what the West thought, next year's elections in Zimbabwe would be free and fair (Reuters 16.08.04; *The Guardian* 18.08.04).

For the veteran Zimbabwean ruler, who along with his fellow leaders had readily signed up to the new procedural code of electoral conduct, this was all familiar grist to the mill. Within days of Mugabe's return to Harare, details were published of a new bill that would ban foreign human rights groups. Under the terms of the Non-Governmental Organisations Bill, all non-governmental groups would be required to register with a regulatory council. Local organisations would be barred from receiving foreign funding, and no group whose "sole or principal objects involve or include issues of governance" – seen as "the promotion and protection of human rights and political governance issues" – would be licensed' (*Sunday Times* 22.08.04). As the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare readily explained, 'This legislation should not come as a surprise to patent adversaries of the government. It was long overdue. Foreign-funded and foreign organisations have demonstrated that they are a threat to national security when it comes to governance issues' (*The Star* 23.08.04). Drawing the appropriate conclusion from this, the MDC announced that it would not participate in any polls until the government implemented 'real' electoral reforms. 'It's one thing to be beaten up or killed for taking part in elections', declared the MDC's leader, Morgan

Tsvangirai, 'but it's another to have the election rigged as well' (*Cape Argus* 25.08.04).

Explanations that have been put forward for this behaviour

For all that a consistent pattern of South African government and ruling party support for the present regime in Harare emerges clearly from the above account, most observers, at least initially, found it hard to explain. Unable or unwilling to look beyond the apparent contradiction between support for Mugabe and Zanu PF, and the democratic and non-racial ideals of South Africa's own recent liberation struggle, they cast about for possible reasons for Pretoria's indulgent policy towards its northern neighbour. Prominent amongst possible explanations are the alleged economic interests at stake; the specific historical ties forged during anti-colonial struggle; the defence of national sovereignty and resentment of Western pressure; hostility towards, or at best, suspicion of labour movements; and the dynamics of liberation politics generally. That South Africa has significant economic interests in Zimbabwe is obvious enough, and indeed a strong case has been made for seeing Mbeki's support for Mugabe and Zanu PF as essentially a vehicle for 'securing the economic ... interests of an emergent black South African bourgeoisie, in both the state and private sectors'. The location of the latter in both the ANC and in government energy parastatals such as Eskom and Sasol, so the argument runs, benefited hugely from successive rescue packages extended to their Zimbabwean counterparts. Moreover, events during 2003 gave added currency to its claim that

the attempt to forge an elitist political deal (masquerading as a consensual "government of national unity") should be seen as what it is – confirmation that Mbeki's bottom line remains one of securing the strategic interests of South African capital whilst simultaneously consolidating his government's role as the main African arbiter of both a regional and continental capitalist political economy. (McKinley 2004:362)

It is, however, a perspective that may have overestimated Pretoria's institutional capacity to deliver such rewards, even as it has

underestimated the impact on banking and business of the collapse of property rights and legal title.

If the economic argument is not entirely convincing, nor is the notion that the ANC's policy towards Mugabe turns on a profound sense of shared historical ties forged with Zanu PF during the anti-colonial struggle. Contrary to some claims (ICG 2002:17), these were actually far from close. The ANC's sympathies were always with Zanu's main rival, the Zimbabwe African People's Union, led by Joshua Nkomo. Zanu, for its part, always supported the Pan Africanist Congress, which was bitterly opposed to the ANC. Moreover, Harare, wary of unduly provoking the then apartheid regime, never allowed the ANC to establish military camps in Zimbabwe. There may be something in the idea that a prickly sense of national sovereignty has caused South Africa, and for that matter, other countries in the Southern African subcontinent, to ignore Western demands, especially where these have been perceived as hypocritical and delivered in hectoring tones. In a region where memories of colonial exploitation are still raw, there is no doubt that 'new' Labour's selective sanctimoniousness gave particular offence. Yet even these hurt feelings were easily enough soothed, as witnessed by Bush's successful flattery of Mbeki during his South African visit. More importantly, it would seem that external affairs have been influenced by internal considerations. South African foreign policy has been considerably more contingent on domestic political forces and events than some analysts are willing to recognise. Mbeki's attitude towards the crisis in Zimbabwe takes full account both of the potentially unsettling precedent that would be established by an MDC government in Harare, and of the apparently widespread support for Mugabe by black South Africans.

But above all, it would appear that Mbeki's support finds its strongest expression within a politics of liberation solidarity more broadly conceived than one restricted to the immediate past, albeit one which has been decisively shaped by Mugabe himself. It is primarily political sympathies of this kind that have drawn Mbeki and the ANC ever closer towards Mugabe and his regime (Sachikonye 2004). Sharing broadly similar pasts in which 'opposition to established leadership and received theory was regarded as both illegitimate and reactionary' (Southall 2003:259), neither the ANC nor other Southern African ruling parties have succeeded in transforming themselves from

what had been 'hierarchical and authoritarian liberation movements'. All of them, whether Zanu PF, Swapo, the MPLA or the ANC itself, have remained 'militaristic, vertical, undemocratic, violent and repressive' (Freeman 2004:19, as cited in Southall 2003). Whether or not, as one analyst has argued, aspects of the colonial system actually 'reproduced themselves in the struggle for its abolition and subsequently in the concepts of governance applied in post-colonial conditions' (Melber 2003), the essential point is that 'singularly and collectively, the ruling elites of southern Africa have demonstrated that they are less interested in democracy than they are in pursuing their self-interest and retention of power'. Protests about 'human rights violations and abuses of constitutions in neighbouring states are overlooked and suppressed, buried in African leaders' concern "not to interfere in the domestic affairs of other countries"' (Southall 2003: 268; Good 2002, as cited in Southall 2003).

There is little comfort to be derived from such a conclusion. While Southern Africa's governing elites are hypersensitive to Western hypocrisy, they are oblivious to tyranny in their midst. Those who continue to hope against hope that the South African government will bring Harare to heel are therefore likely to be disappointed. Whatever apprehensions Pretoria may once have entertained about the economic consequences for South Africa of backing Zanu PF have largely disappeared. The strength of the South African rand, like all commodity currencies, now turns on China's demand for raw materials, and not solely on market perceptions of regional instability. For the past 18 months or more, the ANC has been free to extend every possible support to its 'sister' movement, Zanu PF. This is not to say that a deal to bring about Mugabe's retirement will not be brokered. Indeed, this will be a key aspect of Zanu PF's revitalisation, but it will comprise the reform and renewal of an erstwhile liberation movement whose assumed right to govern in perpetuity is bound up with the future of every other ruling party in the region. What it will not encompass is ANC help for an upstart political party such as the MDC is perceived to be (Freeman 2004:12). Nor can it be denied that Mbeki has all along made it perfectly plain where the logic of his and the ANC's political position lay. Writing in 2002 and quoting from Mozambican president Joachim Chissano, Mbeki explained that 'today, just like yesterday, our strength lies in our ability to act

together. We are like vital organs. We can only live or die together. Our experience of the common liberation struggle of our peoples and of safeguarding our independence, whose roots date back to the glorious experience of the Front Line States, gives us the conviction that we will be victorious ... None has a possibility to succeed while another fails' (as cited in Freeman 2004:11). It is in this sense that democratic forces in Zimbabwe understand that they are fighting not just for Zimbabwe, but for the future of the entire subcontinent (Freeman 2004:21).

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