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Special Issue on Zimbabwe (II)

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Introduction: Special Issue on Zimbabwe 2

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Our last Special Issue on the Zimbabwe Elections came out two weeks before the June 27th run-off presidential election. This was before opposition leader Morgan Tsvangirai of the MDC announced his decision not to contest the run-off election because of the extreme violence used against the MDC candidates, supporters, and alleged supporters. This issue of the ACAS bulletin is concerned with the aftermath of the elections of 2008, offering analysis of the outcome of the parliamentary election results of the March elections, the ways in which the political violence during May and June have fundamentally altered the possibility of a non-violent political dispensation in Zimbabwe, and, perhaps of most current interest for readers, the unfolding of “power sharing” negotiations that began with the September 11, 2008 signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between Mugabe’s ZANU(PF), Tsvangirai’s MDC-T, and a smaller splinter group led by Arthur Mutambara, (the MDC-M).

Our first article, written by Oxford University scholars **Jocelyn Alexander and Blessing-Miles Tendi** offers a very insightful narrative of the events surrounding this year’s elections and the ways political alliances and interests began to unravel as the ZANU(PF) insiders came to grips with the reality that they had suffered a stunning electoral defeat in March. Alexander and Tendi provide the specific details so often lacking in the polemical characterization of the events of the summer in the mainstream media.

Norma Kriger, one of the foremost analysts of Zimbabwean political violence, militarism, and the state, who also wrote a detailed summary of the March elections in our last Special Issue (ACAS Bulletin 79), follows up in this issue with a brief

analysis of what the Memorandum of Understanding represents. As her informed analysis of the limits of electoral politics showed last time, her understanding of power politics in Zimbabwe once again raises doubts about whether “power sharing” can achieve anything close to what some claim possible.

Our last issue was full of the immediacy of asking for intervention of some sort to stop the violence against the MDC and its supporters. The level of that violence is still being documented, and the excellent collection of reports on the Sokwanele-Zvakwana (“Enough is Enough”) website suggests over 2,000 separate incidents of violence during the election, and these have not completely stopped. Our sharpest criticisms in the last issue were for the South African government of Thabo Mbeki. We asked for South Africa to take a more direct approach, as it is the only regional power with a direct influence over Mugabe. Once Mugabe made himself president after the flawed June elections and headed off for the African Union meeting in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt, it was clear he expected it to be “business as usual” assuming that regional and AU leaders welcomed him back into the “club of dictators”. The meeting did not turn out the way Mugabe expected: in fact, there were outspoken criticisms from some African leaders, notably from Liberia, Senegal, Nigeria, Kenya, Botswana, and Zambia. Many other leaders remained quiet. In the weeks that followed, Mbeki did manage to push the negotiations toward a “power sharing” solution to the impasse. It would appear Mbeki hoped Mugabe would accept negotiations toward power sharing as the best way to “normalize” the situation and allow Mugabe and his associates to continue in power as before. On the MDC’s side, Tsvangirai had to convince his supporters that power sharing would be transitional, leading to fresh elections in no less than two years. Once again, Mugabe let Mbeki down by at first ignoring Tsvangirai and naming his own government. After all Mbeki, as the leader of the SADC negotiating team on Zimbabwe for the past six years, has consistently claimed to have had the situation under control. But every time he left

Harare with “Mugabe’s word”, Mugabe would do as he pleased. It was no wonder that Tsvangirai grew tired of Mbeki as mediator, and that Mbeki himself seemed hesitant to return to Harare once he had been stripped of the presidency of the ANC and South Africa at the end of September.

All of these diplomatic efforts, while better than accepting Mugabe’s war against his own people as legitimate, has done nothing to bring the economic, health, and social crises in Zimbabwe under control and the most telling evidence of this has been the displacement of Zimbabweans into the greater southern African region. As each day passes and the economic and political situation inside Zimbabwe continue to worsen, these migrations have become an act of survival.

Amanda Hammar, program coordinator at the Nordic Africa Institut in Uppsala, Sweden, provides an important overview of these displacements beginning with the farm invasions and evictions in 2000, the urban removals under Operation *Murambatsvina* in 2005-6, and electoral ‘cleansing’ and punishment in 2008. Hammar’s article provides a way for scholars and students to gain access to the important research currently underway by international scholars on the impact of these displacements for Zimbabweans and for the region.

Blair Rutherford, a professor of anthropology at Carleton University in Ottawa, Canada, provides a look into his ongoing research project in the Limpopo Province of South Africa, a province bordering Zimbabwe where many migrant workers have come over the past 8 years, and in increasing numbers over the past 3 years. The status of Zimbabweans in Limpopo province, their precarious position as illegal farm workers, and their vulnerability to criminals and the state, gives an insight into the difficulties Zimbabweans confront in South Africa, even those who were not victims of last summer’s violent attacks in South Africa.

Professor **Clapperton Mavhunga** of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Boston addresses to a key issue in Zimbabwe--press and Internet censorship. As ZANU(PF) has tried to keep a tight control on the press, ever since passage of the media laws banning most foreign press and closing media critical of ZANU(PF), the proliferation of high quality Internet news sources have flourished. Much like the battle over the radio waves in the Rhodesian days, new technologies allow for new ways to get information in and out of the country. The Zimbabwean government, however, has also turned to new technologies of Internet censorship and spying, and, as Mavhunga argues, opponents of the Mugabe regime have retaliated with their own cyber-guerilla tactics.

The next three articles in this issue reflect in their own way the great frustration among activists and scholars over the contradictory messages and political categories these “power sharing” talks have brought to the fore. A common theme among all three is the way rhetoric and action have reached new heights of hypocrisy in Southern African politics, and the need for scholars to understand and respect the history of progressive movements in the region. Such progressive traditions need to be reaffirmed and reconstituted in order to support those on the front lines in such difficult times.

The first, by **Tamuka Chirimambowa**, is a denunciation of the ZANU (PF) regime under Robert Mugabe, exposing the disjuncture between the ruling party’s anti-western, anti-imperial rhetoric and two factors which undermine the legitimacy of this rhetorical strategy. First, historically, Chirimambowa itemizes a variety of instances over the past 20-odd years when Mugabe or the ruling party were in fact eager seekers of the funding and markers of respectability offered by western institutions, from the World Bank to universities granting honorary degrees. Second, with an eye to the present, Chirimambowa foregrounds the crushing poverty of the majority of Zimbabweans and the desperate out-migration of millions of Zimbabweans, leading him bitterly to

note that no food is left for people to serve their hungry families for dinner. All that remains to put on the average Zimbabwean's dinner plate is the cold comfort of the regime's anti-imperialist rhetoric, which originally had borne so much promise for better days ahead for the black majority at the dawn of Zimbabwe's independence. Chirimambowa, who is currently a graduate student in South Africa, and who was a former student leader at the University of Zimbabwe, has lived much of the hardship of which he writes.

The next article, by **Horace Campbell**, Professor of African American Studies and Political Science at Syracuse University in New York, and a scholar who has previously written numerous polemics against ZANU(PF) in the past, now also shares his frustrations with the MDC and its various internal divisions. Campbell argues that the divided MDC has moved away from their more progressive origins in a trade union movement that genuinely battled for the rights of Zimbabwean workers. While trade unionists still support Tsvangirai, Campbell presents a bleak picture for Zimbabwean workers moving forward (between a political rock and an economic hard place) and calls for progressive trade unionists and activists in South Africa and the region to redouble their efforts to assist Zimbabwean workers.

David Moore, professor of anthropology and development studies at the University of Johannesburg, and also, as he explained so well in the last ACAS Bulletin, an academic who struggles with the challenges of being a concerned scholar and a journalist, writes critically of the power-sharing talks and the political alliances and personalities involved. His understanding of the intricacies of MDC factionalism provides insights into the problems faced by the MDC as they seek out ways to both protect their supporters and at the same time hold onto the legitimacy afforded them by their electoral victories in 2008.

This ACAS Bulletin ends with a review and a concluding editorial. The review is written by **Sean**

Jacobs, a professor of communications at the University of Michigan and Co-Chair of the Association of Concerned Africa Scholars. Jacobs reviews Heidi Holland's *Dinner with Mugabe*, a best-selling book that has received a lot of attention for her portrayal of Mugabe. Jacobs' review offers insights into Mugabe's personality, while also arguing that there is more to the Zimbabwean crisis beyond what is often attributed to one man's psychosis.

The concluding editorial suggests the need to look seriously at the parallels between tactics used during the political violence of the past summer (and still ongoing) with the tactics used by a ZANU-controlled Zimbabwean state and military during the *Gukurahundi* in the early 1980s. The shadow of the *Gukurahundi* is yet another key reason to challenge ZANU(PF)'s legitimacy to govern after stealing another election and using political violence to terrorize those who bravely voted against them.

Although the majority of articles in this issue deal with politics, it is important to remember the extremely precarious situation faced by so many Zimbabweans today. Drawing from anecdotes told to the editors by friends living in Zimbabwe, it is clear that life for most Zimbabweans is a daily struggle for survival, hour-by-hour, meal-by-meal. One example is the absurdly low limits set by the government for individual daily bank ATM withdrawals. This amount is not sufficient to accomplish many, if any, of the daily expenditures that sustain life. It is not always possible even to withdraw the limited amount permitted. It is not unheard of for a resident of one of Harare's high-density suburbs to arrive at the bank in the city centre at 5 AM and find that one is already number 1,000 in the queue. If that day's allotment is what one needed in order to get transport home, where there might –if one were fortunate – be a meager meal of sadza and greens, and then the bank runs out of cash before you can withdraw, then one must wait and try again the next day, with workers sleeping at their place of employment. By the next

day, with no calories ingested in the intervening hours, some workers have been known to faint with hunger. This occurs in a city where the big “chefs” drive around in their Mercedes and have their food brought in from South Africa or Botswana. This crisis has turned just about everyone without access to a real currency into an informal trader. Where even basic commodities produced in Zimbabwe are first smuggled into neighboring countries where they can be sold in a real currency, and then are resold to Zimbabwean traders who bring them back into Zimbabwe.

The health care system has become a nightmare for those who do not have access to forex and drugs from neighboring countries. There are thousands and thousands of people with every manner of medical need. A woman with returning breast cancer and no foreign exchange can get an X-ray but cannot get surgery, cannot get chemotherapy, cannot even get opiates to ease the pain as she waits for death. Children who fall ill with a violent case of diarrhea due to impure water from the Bulawayo water system – which totters on the edge of functional due to lack of water supply and insufficient chemicals to treat what water is there – will die of their ailment unless they are one of the lucky families that has a relative in South Africa who sends home remittances. In Harare, the capital of Zimbabwe, clean water has become a problem, particularly in those areas where raw sewage now pours into the streets and has in some places entered into the makeshift wells people use for their water. Cases of cholera are on the increase.

Pay for state employees is not sufficient to support even basic costs – not transport, not food, not rent, not school fees. It is therefore no surprise that nurses, doctors, and teachers have left the country in massive proportions. Many schools are left with ill-trained teachers or simply have large numbers of vacancies. Since teachers have often been the first targeted for politically motivated persecution, this has further undermined the educational institutions. Children whose families actually scrape together the funds for school fees therefore find themselves not

always experiencing adequate instruction, and right now are left facing their O-levels unready to write passing exams.

We hope that this issue and the last issue (ACAS Bulletin 79) will prove helpful to scholars and students. The editors would like to thank our contributors for taking the time to write such thought provoking and informative articles and **Jesse Benjamin, Sean Jacobs** and **Jacob Mundy** for their hard work in publishing and disseminating the ACAS Bulletin. There is a great deal of information available on the Internet about Zimbabwe, but we hope having a more focused collection of informative articles and opinion pieces may help to start students and scholars on their way to better understanding, teaching, and hopefully advocacy. Zimbabweans bravely continue to oppose tyranny, censorship, and dictatorship. Those of us who enjoy the freedom of speech need to find ways to do more in solidarity with the many brave Zimbabweans who continue to endure tortures, beatings, imprisonments, and exile in their struggle for a better future.

If you are going to be at the African Studies Association Meeting in Chicago, we will be holding the second annual meeting of the Zimbabwe Scholars Group at 7:30 pm on Saturday November 15th, in the Missouri Room. We are fortunate to have **Professor Horace Campbell** as our speaker and the title of his talk is “**When Voting is not enough for a Democratic Transition: lessons from Zimbabwe, Kenya and the Pan African World**”. There will also be an ACAS sponsored roundtable on the Zimbabwean elections and their aftermath at the ASA meeting on Friday November 14th at 10:15 am in the Arkansas Room.

If you are not able to attend this year’s ASA meeting, please spread the word about these Zimbabwe-related events. Also, please contact the editors by email if you would like to learn more about the Zimbabwe Scholars Group and perhaps contribute to future publications, or simply to comment on any of the articles in this issue.

A Tale of Two Elections: Zimbabwe at the Polls in 2008¹

Jocelyn Alexander (University of Oxford)
Blessing-Miles Tendi (University of Oxford)

Zimbabwe's politics are profoundly shaped by violence. Violence has motivated, divided and united each of Zimbabwe's political parties in distinctive ways, it has shaped their ability to mobilise, their constituencies and their ideology, it has marked successive electoral contests and it has been used to transform the state. The ruling Zanu(PF)'s 'third chimurenga', launched in 2000, is rooted in a historical narrative of violence that links the uprisings against conquest in the 1890s to the liberation war of the 1970s and the battle to reclaim the nation's white-owned farmland in 2000. For those in opposition politics, the violence of the third chimurenga evokes a different lineage: the extreme repression – known as Gukurahundi – that was launched against Zanu(PF)'s liberation-era rival Zapu in the 1980s, and the violence periodically directed at civic and political opponents of Zanu(PF) since then.²

Zimbabwe's most recent polls, held on 29 March and 27 June respectively, marked two ends of a spectrum of violence and electoral politics. The first round – for house, senate, presidency and local councils – was the least violent of the third chimurenga era and produced results that stunned

Zanu(PF). The battered and divided Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) won a parliamentary majority, while Morgan Tsvangirai, leader of the larger MDC faction, received more votes than any other presidential candidate, though not enough – according to the contested official figures – to avoid a run-off. The opposition's success sparked an extremely violent reaction from the ruling party and its securocrat ideologues that led to Tsvangirai's withdrawal just days before the June run-off poll, allowing Zanu(PF)'s Robert Mugabe to claim victory. The 29 March election redeemed a popular faith in the electoral process that had waned over the past 8 years of opposition defeats. There was in its aftermath a moment of jubilation in which alternative visions of Zimbabwe's political future and a halt to its record-breaking economic decline seemed possible. The presidential run-off went a long way toward undermining this briefly renewed faith in the power of the vote and to laying bare the deeply problematic nature of both the liberation-struggle logic and the militarised means by which Zanu(PF) sustains its claims to power.

It would be a mistake, however, to see the foregoing as simply the triumph of crude authoritarianism, rooted in coercion, over a revived democratic idealism. Both Zanu(PF) and the MDC are too complex, compromised and divided to allow for so simple an analysis, and the behaviour of both is shaped by a state that carries in its fractured institutions contradictory logics and practices, bureaucratic and law-bound as well as partisan and coercive. It is in interstices and divisions of this kind (within and between the parties and within and between state institutions) that the struggle for Zimbabwe's political future is being fought, and it is on this varied terrain that any power-sharing agreement among the parties will need to take root. With these considerations in mind, we explore the two rounds of recent elections and then go on to reflect on the future of violent politics in Zimbabwe.

The March 29 Elections

1. This article was first published in *Politique Africaine*, 111, 2008, and is reproduced here (in English) with the kind permission of the editors of *Politique Africaine*. We owe many thanks for comments and criticism to Vincent Foucher, Brian Raftopoulos, Adrienne LeBas, Tim Scarnecchia, Shari Eppel and Dave Anderson.

2. Zanu (PF) is the Zimbabwe African National Union (Patriotic Front); Zapu is the Zimbabwe African People's Union. The violence of Gukurahundi was focused on the western Matabeleland provinces, home to Zimbabwe's Ndebele-speaking minority, and Zapu's stronghold. As a consequence of the campaign of violence, Zapu was absorbed by Zanu(PF) under the Unity Accord of 1987.

It is not too much of an oversimplification to argue that violence has been an essential glue for Zanu(PF), necessary to both the maintenance of party discipline and electoral success, while it has played the opposite role for the opposition, constantly threatening the MDC's capacity, integrity and unity.

That the MDC has struggled to maintain unity is not surprising. It is a young party with inexperienced leadership and diverse constituencies, from trade unionists to civics, professionals and students to white farmers and farm workers, all of whom have faced extraordinary pressures almost since the moment of the party's inception in 1999. On top of massive job losses, extreme economic hardship and targeted, violent repression, hundreds of thousands of MDC supporters were displaced and at times disenfranchised as a result of the seizure, occupation and chaotic resettlement of the vast majority of Zimbabwe's white-owned large scale farms from 2000 and the urban 'clean up' operation of 2005, known as Operation Murambatsvina, under which unplanned and 'illegal' homes were destroyed on a massive scale.³ The communal areas, where black smallholders lived, faced increasing surveillance by the hierarchy of officially recognised chiefs, headmen and village heads, who were now called upon to play a partisan role alongside war veterans, militias and Zanu(PF) functionaries, and the use of access to food (and often to services and land) to enforce political loyalty in a series of drought seasons. Many MDC supporters left the country in search of jobs and safety.

The MDC's response to its repeated electoral losses and the anger and organisational weaknesses produced by these pressures was to develop parallel structures outside the party's main organs, run by

young 'militants' and answerable to a handful of leaders allied to Morgan Tsvangirai. These measures resulted from Zanu(PF) repression and the need to organise against it, but in practice they fostered secrecy, distrust and a 'culture of violence' within the party that echoed that of Zanu(PF) and produced heated disputes over the role of democracy and the accountability of leaders.⁴ After years of dissension, the MDC split in late 2005 over these issues and growing regionalist and ethnic tensions.⁵ Many of the leading lights of the party, including Secretary General Welshman Ncube and Vice President Gibson Sibanda, broke away to form a new MDC under the leadership of former student leader and robotics professor Arthur Mutambara. Morgan Tsvangirai remained as leader of the larger MDC formation, which would come to be known as MDC-T.

In the year prior to the 2008 elections, a systematic attack on the MDC leadership and structures in Harare, overwhelmingly focused on MDC-T, reinforced divisions within the opposition and further undermined its organisational capacity. Both MDCs launched campaigns for the 2008 elections in early 2007, while civic groups organised protests around economic and human rights issues. Zanu(PF)'s response to this renewed activism was to target political and civic leaders, from national to constituency levels. The most notorious incident occurred on 11 March 2007 when a 'prayer meeting' called by the Save Zimbabwe Campaign, a coalition of civic organisations and churches, and both MDCs was set upon by riot police.⁶ Morgan

3. On land see Jocelyn Alexander, *The unsettled land: state-making and the politics of land in Zimbabwe 1893-2003*, James Currey, Oxford, 2006. On Operation Murambatsvina, see Debby Potts, 'Restoring order? Operation Murambatsvina and the urban crisis in Zimbabwe', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 32, 2, 2006 and further below.

4. See Adrienne LeBas, 'The politics of collapse: political responses to violence and displacement in Zimbabwe', paper presented to the conference on political economies of displacement in post-2000 Zimbabwe, Johannesburg, 9-11 June 2008.

5. The best account is Brian Raftopoulos, 'Reflections on opposition politics in Zimbabwe: The politics of the Movement for Democratic Change', in B. Raftopoulos and K. Alexander (eds), *Reflections on Democratic Politics in Zimbabwe*, Institute for Justice and Reconciliation, Cape Town, 2006.

6. See Human Rights Watch (HRW), *Bashing dissent: escalating violence and state repression in Zimbabwe*, vol. 19, no. 6(A), May 2007.

Tsvangirai and other leaders were viciously beaten in and outside police custody. Tsvangirai's stronghold in Harare was subsequently subjected to a campaign of abductions, torture and police intimidation. Mutambara and his supporters received less attention, a difference Mugabe justified on the grounds that Tsvangirai did not 'know how to behave', in contrast to Mutambara.⁷ This was coded language for a broader discourse which painted Tsvangirai, the trade unionist and grade school graduate, as an uneducated 'boy' unworthy of the company of men with university degrees, a tactic that has long been used in nationalist politics.⁸ For Mugabe, Tsvangirai's ambitions were 'hollow' because they were 'not clothed in any greater understanding and intellectual appreciation'.⁹

This history of divisive pressure ensured that the MDC factions were not only much weakened, but also that they treated one another with suspicion and even paranoia. The MDC factions' attempts to reunite before the 2008 polls fell apart in February, apparently owing to the Tsvangirai MDC's decision 'to establish its dominance in both its existing areas of support and in those areas claimed as strongholds by the MDC Mutambara', notably the western Matabeleland regions where the MDC had won by large majorities in previous elections, and from which many of the most influential leaders of the Mutambara MDC hailed.¹⁰ The violence and division within the MDC deeply demoralised a party whose mantra was democracy, human rights, and tolerance, and that had been born not least out of the horror of Zanu(PF)'s past uses of violence.

If violence threatened the MDC's very identity as well as its unity, it formed an essential part of

Zanu(PF)'s efforts to maintain party discipline and support. Zanu(PF) faced serious challenges in 2008. Prime among them was its inability to control Zimbabwe's planet-leading rates of economic contraction and record-breaking inflation (officially over 2 million percent in July 2008). In language tired from years of repetition, Zanu(PF) sought to blame everything from the very existence of the opposition to the devastated economy on the country's neo-imperial enemies abroad. It portrayed itself as engaged in mortal combat with the MDC and its allies who together had impoverished the people through the imposition of sanctions. Populist price controls and, in the run up to the elections, the distribution of various perks, from football team sponsorship to T-shirts and food, did little to convince that Zanu(PF) could relieve people's misery.¹¹

Economic pressure not only threatened to undermine Zanu(PF)'s voter base, but it also fed into the ongoing succession struggle that bubbled under the party's seemingly smooth surface. Two main factions, reportedly led by retired General Solomon Mujuru and former Central Intelligence Organisation (CIO) head and Rural Housing Minister Emmerson Mnangagwa, had been maneuvering in more or less visible ways for years but had not succeeded in out-flanking Mugabe. Zanu(PF) had disciplined its own with a combination of threat, enticement and ideological argument since 2000, with the effect of consistently rewarding those 'hardliners' willing to employ violence against their opponents (inside and outside the party) and to proclaim their undiluted allegiance to the third chimurenga.¹²

The March elections brought an additional element into the mix in the shape of the new 'dawn'

7. Solidarity Peace Trust (SPT), *Destructive engagement: Violence, mediation and politics in Zimbabwe*, Johannesburg, 10 July 2007, p. 16, and see pp. 20-21.

8. See Geoffrey Nyarota, 'Politics, the educated elite and related matters', *The Zimbabwe Times*, 14 August 2008.

9. Blessing-Miles Tendi, 'Wanted: Politicians with degrees in people', *New Zimbabwe*, 22 February 2008.

10. SPT, *Punishing dissent, silencing citizens: The Zimbabwe elections 2008*, Johannesburg, 21 May 2008, p. 10.

11. See Busani Mpfu, 'The battle for electoral turf in Bulawayo's townships in the March 29 2008 harmonised elections', ms., 2008.

12. See Adrienne LeBas, 'Polarization as craft: party formation and state violence in Zimbabwe', *Comparative Politics*, July 2006, on the violent and other techniques used to police Zanu(PF)'s internal divisions and recentralise power within the party since 2000.

promised by former Zanu(PF) Minister of Finance Simba Makoni's entrance into the presidential race as an independent.¹³ Makoni's candidature, launched in February, sparked a vitriolic reaction from Mugabe, who labelled Makoni a prostitute, and an inept one at that – at least prostitutes had clients, the president argued – and likened him to an over-inflated frog.¹⁴ This was a variation at least on the endless repetition of the epithet 'puppet' for Tsvangirai. (Ironically it was the Tsvangirai camp that suggested Makoni was a 'stooge' of the West.)¹⁵ Makoni seemed to offer a new threat. He was seen by many as a possible route to Zanu(PF) renewal in a version acceptable to the West and to Zimbabwe's powerful South African neighbour. Makoni carefully positioned himself as a reformer who would revive not destroy Zanu(PF) and as a technocrat who could fix the economy, something Mugabe and his hardliners patently could not. Feverish rumours regarding which factions within Zanu(PF) had pledged their support to Makoni abounded in the media, beerhalls and halls of power, with favourite choices including Mujuru and retired General Vitalis Zvinavashe.¹⁶

Makoni's campaign was followed from modest rally to modest rally by an excited international and independent Zimbabwean press, but it soon became apparent that it was disorganised, underfunded, and vulnerable to Zanu(PF) obstruction.¹⁷ In the end the

only Zanu(PF) heavyweight who backed Makoni was Dumiso Dabengwa, a man who commanded some respect in the western regions of Matabeleland for his legendary role as head of Zapu's military intelligence in the liberation war, but who had been unable to win an election for Zanu(PF) since 2000.¹⁸ It seemed the price of leaving Zanu(PF) for a rapidly darkening dawn was too steep. Makoni's rumoured supporters retreated into the party fold.

If Makoni did not divide Zanu(PF), he did play into the MDC's divisions. Having failed to reach an agreement with Tsvangirai, Mutambara's MDC decided to back Makoni's doomed bid for President, while still fielding its own candidates for the parliamentary elections. In many seats two – and sometimes three, owing to further divisions within MDC-T¹⁹ – opposition candidates faced a single Zanu(PF) rival.

The parlous state of the opposition, the failure of Makoni to attract substantial support, and the distractions of succession politics, contributed to Zanu(PF)'s 'complacency', as Mugabe put it, and so to the fact that it waged a campaign less violent than in previous years.²⁰ An additional restraining factor on the use of violence was the critical response of the 15-nation Southern African Development Community (SADC) to the 11 March 2007 attacks on MDC and civic leaders noted above. In their aftermath, the SADC mandated South African President Thabo Mbeki to lead negotiations between the MDCs and Zanu(PF). Though these negotiations were roundly criticised for their evasions and Zanu(PF)'s continued use of violence while negotiating, they did produce some changes to the playing field before they were

13. See accounts in Norma Kriger, 'Can elections end Mugabe's dictatorship?', *Association of Concerned Africa Scholars Bulletin*, 79, Spring 2008; Brian Raftopoulos, 'The "frog" and the "puppet": The Makoni moment and opposition politics in Zimbabwe', *Perspectives*, 2, 2008; Shari Eppel, 'Matabeleland: Its struggle for legitimacy and the relevance of this in the 2008 election', *Perspectives*, 2, 2008.

14. 'Mugabe tightens his grip', *Mail and Guardian*, 3 March 2008.

15. 'Bennett says western diplomats want to impose Makoni', SW Radio Africa Hot Seat, 22 February 2008.

16. International Crisis Group, 'Zimbabwe: prospects from a flawed election', Africa Report No. 138, Washington, DC, 20 March 2008; Raftopoulos, 'The "frog"'; LeBas, 'The politics of collapse'.

17. See 'CIO disrupt Makoni Plan', *Zimbabwe Independent*, 29 February 2008.

18. Following Zapu's absorption by Zanu(PF) in 1987 Dabengwa had become a Zanu(PF) minister.

19. Even after the formation of the Mutambara MDC, MDC-T was plagued by divisions caused by power struggles, personality politics and the imposition of electoral candidates from the centre.

20. 'Mugabe urges party unity, vigorous campaign', *China View*, 17 May 2008; 'Party must unite: President', *The Herald*, 26 May 2008.

broken off as a result of Mugabe's unilateral setting of an election date in January 2008. Key repressive and electoral laws were amended, allowing 'limited yet important openings in the political sphere', and crucially requiring the public posting of results outside each polling station, an innovation which was to allow the opposition to track and publicise the vote tallies as they emerged.²¹ This was still a far from level playing field,²² but it did allow the MDCs to campaign in rural areas with a freedom not enjoyed since 2000.²³

On the campaign trail, Tsvangirai drew huge crowds. His party's slick and positive advertising campaign, with its emphasis on political change, economic recovery, and promises of compensation and truth-telling about past state atrocities, held a wide appeal. It stood in stark contrast to Zanu(PF)'s name-calling and threats and the ubiquitous pictures of a fist-waving Mugabe. Zanu(PF) promised – as it had for years – that 'Zimbabwe will never be a colony again'. Zanu(PF) would 'punish and forever silence puppet sanctions-mongers'.²⁴

Zanu(PF) had not lost its capacity to mobilise – clientelism, coercion and ideological appeals still carried significant weight. However, the relative lack of violence, and the opening of political space it allowed, was sufficient for Zanu(PF) to lose its advantage. In the parliamentary vote, MDC-T swept Harare (as expected) save for one anomalous constituency; Zanu(PF) won under 20% of the vote in 18 of 23 constituencies. MDC-T also swept Bulawayo where the Mutambara MDC had been expected to do well owing to its ticket of Matabeleland heavyweights. Urban voters stuck to parties not individuals: in Bulawayo and Harare relative unknowns on the MDC-T ticket beat well known incumbents on the Mutambara ticket.²⁵ The

Mutambara MDC seems to have been badly hurt by the decision to back Makoni, who was seen by many as in effect Zanu(PF), by its lack of resources and negative campaigning against Tsvangirai, as well as a low voter turnout.²⁶ The greatest shock was delivered to Zanu(PF) in its rural strongholds. MDC-T made serious inroads in the Mashonaland heartland, as well as other rural areas. As LeBas shows, Zanu(PF) polled between 10% and 30% fewer voters in its core constituencies compared to earlier elections. Its loss of vote share was greatest where it had previously had the highest levels of support.²⁷

Of the 210 parliamentary seats on offer, the MDC-T won 99 seats, Mutambara's MDC won 10 (entirely in rural Matabeleland), and Zanu(PF) won 97. An additional seat was won by Jonathan Moyo, famous former Zanu(PF) Minister of Information, standing as an Independent in his home constituency of Tsholotsho, while three seats were delayed due to the untimely deaths of candidates. Of the latter, two were eventually won by Zanu(PF), and one by MDC-T. The opposition's weaknesses and divisions did not prevent a MDC-T victory, but they were still costly: the combined MDC votes would have beaten Zanu(PF) in an additional 10 constituencies, thereby producing a far safer MDC majority in parliament.²⁸

As the results flowed in officially and unofficially, via a slow drip of pronouncements from the official Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) and a much more rapid outpouring from the MDC and from text messages and pictures on people's cell phones of results posted at each station, a sense of euphoria took over in the MDC-T camp and of foreboding among Zanu(PF). But then a delay was carefully engineered: the presidential results were not officially announced until May 2, and while they confirmed a Tsvangirai victory, they did not

21. SPT, *Punishing dissent*, pp. 10-11.

22. E.g., HRW, *All over again: Human rights abuses and flawed electoral conditions in Zimbabwe's coming general elections*, vol. 20, no. 2(A), March 2008.

23. SPT, *Punishing dissent*, p. 11, and see pp. 21, 32. Kriger, 'Can elections end Mugabe's dictatorship?', pp. 1-2.

24. See posters reproduced in SPT, *Punishing dissent*, p. 60.

25. LeBas, 'The politics of collapse'.

26. Mpfu, 'The battle for electoral turf'.

27. LeBas, 'The politics of collapse', pp. 25-26. Also see HRW, 'Bullets for each of you': state-sponsored violence since Zimbabwe's March 29 elections, June 2008.

28. See 'Opposition split propels ZANU PF', *Financial Gazette*, 6 April 2008.

give him the necessary 50% plus one vote necessary to avoid a run-off, an outcome that sparked much suspicion. The ZEC also undertook recounts in 23 constituencies – sparking fears of post-facto rigging, though the results remained unchanged. The public posting of the vote tallies meant ‘no one can privatise the result’, as MDC Secretary General Tendai Biti put it,²⁹ but it also meant that who voted for whom was known at the local levels, a fact that would return to haunt the opposition in the violent onslaught that was to come.

The June 27 Presidential Run-off

Zanu(PF)’s response to its surprise defeat on the 29th of March was at first unclear. Would there be an offer of power-sharing? Would there be an abdication? Rumours abounded of Zanu(PF) approaches to Tsvangirai (later confirmed by Tsvangirai) to discuss a Mugabe concession or some form of power-sharing.³⁰ People feverishly sent texts and e-mails to one another speculating as to whether ‘the old man’ was really down and out. An initial optimism among MDC supporters rapidly turned to worry as the delays dragged on and talk of meetings at the highest levels of Zanu(PF) and the security forces filtered out.

The story that eventually emerged suggested that the Joint Operations Command or JOC, made up of the heads of the army, air force, prison service, police and CIO, and reportedly led by Emmerson Mnangagwa, decided within days of the election to deploy a strategy of delay and violence in order to hold onto the all-important executive.³¹ Succession politics played a role once again: as noted, since 2000 those in Zanu(PF) who defended the third

chimurenga most vocally and adopted strategies of violence flourished. Mnangagwa was a presidential hopeful who had recovered from a precipitous fall from favour in 2004 by backing Mugabe’s candidature at Zanu(PF)’s controversial December 2007 congress, thereby thwarting rival faction leader Solomon Mujuru. Mnangagwa and his allies sought to guarantee Mugabe’s survival, secure his favour, and so reinvigorate their claim to succession. Mnangagwa even took on the role of Mugabe’s election agent.

That the JOC was intimately involved in the decision to wage violence is telling. Since 2000, Zimbabwe’s state has been described as increasingly ‘militarised’, with military men being appointed in key positions throughout the state, and an expanding range of decisions and actions being taken by the military, from political strategy to the formulation and implementation of agrarian and economic policy.³² The removal of decision-making authority from the once mighty ministerial bureaucracies of the Zimbabwean state had started in the 1990s, crucially around the land issue.³³ Then it had been the party that had begun to tread where the experts had once held sway. Now it seemed even the Zanu(PF) politburo had to follow the JOC’s lead.³⁴ The JOC had also openly entered the political field, declaring in 2002 that the security forces could ‘not accept, let alone support or salute’ anyone without liberation struggle credentials, meaning of course Tsvangirai.³⁵ Such threats were regularly repeated.³⁶ The security force chiefs purported to speak for Zimbabwe’s sovereignty; they also sought to protect their power and the business empires many of them had amassed.

29. Quoted in Chris McGreal, ‘Secret Mugabe meeting ponders military move or fixed result – but not admission of defeat’, *The Guardian*, 1 April 2008. McGreal reported that the MDC had photographed the vote tallies at over 8,000 of 9,000 polling stations.

30. See Morgan Tsvangirai interview on BBC Hardtalk, 17 April 2008.

31. See Kriger, ‘Can elections’, pp. 2-3; SPT, *Punishing Dissent*; ‘Inside Mugabe’s violent crackdown’, *Washington Post*, 5 July 2008; Cuthbert Nzou, ‘Hawkish ally leads Mugabe fightback’, *ZimOnline*, 30 April 2008.

32. Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni, ‘Nationalist-Military alliance in Zimbabwe and the fate of democracy’, *African Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 6, 1, 2006, pp. 49-80.

33. See Angus Selby’s account of this period, ‘Commercial farmers and the state: Interest group politics and land reform in Zimbabwe’, DPhil thesis, University of Oxford, 2006.

34. On land issues, see e.g., ‘Vice-president pleads with army to stop farm seizures’, *ZimOnline*, 1 October 2007.

35. ‘Army deals blow to Mugabe rival’, BBC, 9 January 2002.

36. Interview by Blessing-Miles Tendi with Constantine Chiwenga, 3 September 2006.

When Mugabe wobbled, they stepped in to ensure his and Zanu(PF)'s survival.

The coercive nature of the response followed from the locus of the decision-making and the analysis that the MDC had won because it had been allowed too much political space. Zanu(PF) is of course no stranger to violence. It had used violence in every previous election, by far the most dramatically in 1985 when it faced Zapu at the polls.³⁷ The modus operandi specific to the 1985 elections could be read once more in the spread of violence in April and May 2008. This was no coincidence: several members of the JOC – most notoriously Perence Shiri and Emmerson Mnangagwa – had been directly involved in the 1980s violence.³⁸

Another Kenya?

In the aftermath of the March polls, there was much talk in and out of Zimbabwe of parallels with Kenya's recent and bloody elections. The government warned the opposition not to 'try a Kenya'; some people talked of doing so.³⁹ There were parallels in the popular belief in illegitimate electoral practices, the spread of violence, the high stakes involved in winning control of a too-powerful executive, disagreements among elites over the 'rules of the game', and a stalemate that seemed only capable of resolution by negotiation. But a closer comparison specifically of patterns of violence shows how different these cases were. Analysts of Kenya have argued that the post-election violence that gripped that country in early 2008 took the form that it did owing to the long-standing processes by which the state had abdicated or lost its monopoly on violence (in part as a result of promoting political violence by paramilitary and non-state actors), the unstable, clientelist and ethnically driven nature of party politics, and the

exploitable nature of historical grievances over land. The violence differed markedly across constituencies, was driven by local militias and gangs, sometimes allied to particular politicians but often acting with autonomy, and was aimed overwhelmingly at people defined as ethnic 'others' and 'immigrants'.⁴⁰

Zimbabwe was different. The state had not lost its monopoly on violence. The security forces were the key organisers and perpetrators of violence, often using party youth or youth militias (trained and deployed from 2001), and veterans (effectively mobilised by Zanu(PF) in 1997), to carry out beatings, intimidation and torture, but with senior military, intelligence and political coordination. In April key figures – named in human rights reports – directed violence and the establishment of 'bases' for youth militia and veterans at clinics, schools, formerly white-owned farms and other venues.⁴¹ Over time, the day-to-day implementation of the violence was devolved to the militias, who were in May and June the predominant perpetrators of violence, but with ongoing direction by senior officials. Unlike Kenya, there were no incidents where gangs and militias in effect took control of towns or rural areas: there were no 'virtual shadow states'.⁴² This was centrally orchestrated violence, and it was also – again in stark contrast to Kenya – almost entirely one-sided. Isolated incidents where MDC supporters struck back proved the rule. Human rights groups estimated that just one per cent of violent incidents could be attributed to the MDC, while 102 of 106 political murders confirmed between April and June were of MDC supporters

37. For continuities, see Norma Kriger, 'Zanu(PF) strategies in general elections, 1980-2000: Discourse and coercion', *African Affairs*, 104, 414, 2005, pp. 1-34.

38. SPT, *Desperately Seeking Sanity*, p. 23.

39. See Terence Ranger, 'Elections and identities in Kenya and Zimbabwe', Opening address to Britain Zimbabwe Society workshop, Oxford, 27 June 2008, for a series of illuminating comparisons.

40. See the excellent issue of the *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, 2, 2, 2008, devoted to the Kenyan elections, especially Susanne D. Mueller, 'The Political Economy of Kenya's Crisis', pp. 185-210, and David Anderson and Emma Lochery, 'Violence and Exodus in Kenya's Rift Valley, 2008: Predictable and Preventable?', pp. 328-343.

41. See the excellent reports by SPT, *Punishing dissent and Desperately seeking sanity*, and HRW, *Bullets for each of you*.

42. Mueller, 'The political economy', p. 193.

and were carried out by Zanu(PF) allies or state actors.⁴³

The targets of violence were overwhelmingly MDC leaders and constituencies, not ethnic 'others'. This was an ideologically driven battle, as much of the post-2000 violence had been: ideas mattered, something that seems to be almost entirely absent in explanations of Kenyan violence. The foregoing accounts for differences in both the practices and language of violence and the far harder boundaries between parties in Zimbabwe.⁴⁴ Where the opposition is characterised as traitorous to the nation, in league with foreign powers, and in effect beyond the protection of the law, the easy side-switching seen among Kenyan politicians is difficult: there was virtually no side-switching between MDC and Zanu(PF) politicians.⁴⁵ The deep polarisations of Zimbabwean politics that this state of affairs underscores emerged repeatedly in understandings of the meaning of the vote. In the run-up to the run-off, Zanu(PF) Publicity Secretary George Charamba wondered how 'a mere X on a piece of paper, all done in time shorter than life-creating ecstasy, can steal a free people, steal a heritage, steal a freedom, steal a land, steal a future'; 'we will have to shoot – yes shoot – the ballot box for the preservation of our independence.'⁴⁶ How could the pen beat the gun? How could it beat God? Mugabe declared that, 'The MDC will never be allowed to rule this country – never ever. Only God, who appointed me, will remove me – not the MDC, not the British.'⁴⁷

Zanu(PF) statements indicated little reason for the MDC to participate in elections. But they did not mean that Zanu(PF) did not care about winning the vote. It cared deeply. The run-off violence was first and foremost retribution for having dared to vote 'wrongly'. Code-named Operation Mavhoterapapi ('where did you put your cross?'), it aimed to punish, terrorise and re-educate on a model that drew explicitly on the liberation war of the 1970s. Pungwes – the night time meetings guerrillas used to mobilise during the liberation war – were held in which 'sell-outs' were beaten, slogans chanted, and MDC supporters forced to bring forward and burn their party regalia. Political loyalty had to be publicly displayed; violence was put to use as a form of edification.

Given this logic, the focus of the worst violence in Zanu(PF) strongholds made sense. As the Solidarity Peace Trust has shown in painstaking detail, 'In areas in Mashonaland East and Central in particular, wards and villages that had shown a high MDC vote were mercilessly targeted, in what can be seen as both a policy of punishment for "betraying" ZANU, and a pre-emptive strike ahead of the run off.'⁴⁸ The local level polling station results were now used to target MDC voters. Villages were singled out as were known activists – people who had campaigned openly days and weeks before. These were exceptionally brutal attacks involving prolonged and crippling torture, massacres and abductions. Where MDC officials were not found at their homes, their spouses, children and parents were treated as surrogates.⁴⁹

There was also a fresh wave of violent farm invasions in which over 130 of the few remaining white farmers were reportedly evicted within weeks.⁵⁰ Mugabe promised 'the colonists' that this was the 'final solution', while the state media suggested that white farmers who had left the

43. SPT, *Desperately seeking sanity*, pp. 20, 25, 35, 38; SPT, *Punishing dissent*, p. 30.

44. See Blessing-Miles Tendi, 'Zimbabwe's third *chimurenga*: The use and abuse of history', DPhil thesis, University of Oxford, 2008.

45. LeBas, 'The politics of collapse'. On the fluidity of Kenya's political parties and their 'non-programmatic clientist' nature, see Mueller, 'The political economy', pp. 199-202.

46. *The Herald*, 3 May 2008.

47. Rowan Philip and Dominic Mahlangu, 'Only God will remove me!', *Sunday Times*, 22 June 2008.

48. SPT, *Desperately seeking sanity*, p. 28.

49. SPT, *Desperately seeking sanity*, p. 29; SPT, *Punishing dissent*, pp. 36-7.

50. 'Over 130 white farmers evicted in 3 weeks: CFU', *ZimOnline*, 17 April 2008.

country were returning in numbers to repossess their farms in anticipation of an MDC victory. They were – quite absurdly – accused of attacking innocent veterans, and of seeking to re-establish the colonial order.⁵¹ This centrally directed and ideologically driven assault was a far cry from the locally orchestrated and ethnically framed land struggles of Kenya.

In a change of strategy in May and June, ‘bases’ were set up in the MDC stronghold of Harare, and spread through the entire city, even (for the first time) in the plushest of the capital’s suburbs. Beatings and attacks on property were common as was forced attendance at all night pungwes at the bases. There were murders of a number of MDC politicians and their families, as well as reports of death lists of key grassroots activists, some of whom were abducted and killed with a professional ruthlessness.⁵² The bodies of some abducted activists have been found dumped on farms and in hospitals and morgues; many are simply missing. The funerals of those killed became public events in which senior politicians participated, and the dead were remembered as martyrs.⁵³

MDC leaders, activists and sympathisers were also jailed on a large scale. Not even the most senior escaped: dozens of MPs were arrested; Morgan Tsvangirai was detained repeatedly, and MDC-T Secretary General Tendai Biti was jailed on charges of treason. As they had for some years, arrests served as a form of immediate punishment: without any conviction, or even the pretext of obtaining a conviction, MDC activists could be held, beaten, tortured, and subjected to dehumanising conditions

characterised by severe overcrowding and compounded by a lack of food, ablution facilities, mosquito and lice infestation and the threat of serious disease.⁵⁴

On 5 July the MDC released a statement summing up the toll of violence: over 1,500 of its activists, including 20 MPs and parliamentary candidates, were said to be in police custody on charges related to political violence. A total of 103 supporters had been killed. About 5,000 supporters, including many polling agents and council candidates, were missing after having been abducted. Many more were in hiding or in hospital. This was carefully targeted violence intended to ‘decimate the party and its structures’.⁵⁵

The door to political space that had opened, however imperfectly, prior to the March elections had been viciously slammed shut. It became impossible for the MDC to hold any public meetings whatsoever, even in the stronghold of Harare, while the state press allowed the MDC no voice, refusing even to take paid advertisements, and covered the goings on as if it was the opposition that posed a threat to public order.⁵⁶ Morgan Tsvangirai and his Secretary General Tendai Biti spent much of the period (when they were not detained) outside the country on a regional and continental tour, seeking African support. The party was left rudderless for long periods, and some criticised Tsvangirai for abandoning his followers back home.⁵⁷ In the end, the violence led Tsvangirai to withdraw from the election just days before the poll, handing Mugabe a hollow victory. Mugabe

51. Amy Ansell, ‘Operation “final solution”: Intimidation and violence against white farmers in post-election Zimbabwe’, *Association of Concerned African Scholars*, 79, 2008, pp. 1-8.

52. SPT, *Desperately seeking sanity*, p. 21.

53. See e.g., Jonga Kandemiiri, ‘Zimbabwe opposition buries one slain activist while another succumbs to injuries’, VOA News, 17 July 2008; Marlon Zakeyo, ‘What Price for Peace?’, 7 August 2008, http://changezimbabwe.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=15.

54. SPT, *Desperately Seeking Sanity*, p. 23. In a 2005 study of nearly 2,000 political arrests since 2000, the SPT found that only 4 convictions were made, none for crimes of violence. SPT, ‘Policing the State’, September 2005.

55. ‘1,500 MDC activists in jail, youth leader hospitalised’, Statement of MDC Information and Publicity Department, *ZimOnline*, 5 July 2008.

56. Media Monitoring Project Zimbabwe, ‘Statement on the performance of the “public” media during the 2008 presidential run-off election campaign’, Harare, 27 June 2008.

57. See the critical account of Stephen Chan, ‘The tragedy of Morgan Tsvangirai’, *Prospect Magazine*, August 2008.

was hurriedly sworn in and once again claimed to be the legitimately elected President of Zimbabwe.

Unlike previous elections, however, the brazen violence and manipulations of this round were not brushed under the carpet by the region's governments. Zambia and Botswana, both of which had a track record of criticising Zanu(PF), were most forthright in their condemnation, but there were also critical words from leading members of the ANC (other than Mbeki), the ANC Alliance and Tanzania. Crucially, the SADC judged that the election 'did not represent the will of the people of Zimbabwe', and pushed for a renewal of the Mbeki-led negotiations between the MDCs and Zanu(PF). On July 21 Mugabe, Tsvangirai and Mutambara signed a Memorandum of Understanding establishing the conditions for talks, effectively picking up where they had left off in January.⁵⁸

Living with the unexpected

Zimbabwe's elections form part of a broader landscape changed by violence. An important strand of writing on Zimbabwe since 2000 has emphasised how inexplicable and unpredictable life has become there. The things that once seemed to define Zimbabwean aspirations and expectations – the promise of progress, due reward for hard work, predictable, formal institutions and rules – have been distorted by arbitrariness, economic collapse and, crucially, by violence.

Jeremy Jones has explored the suspension of the norms and rules surrounding what Zimbabweans understand as 'real work' caused by economic collapse.⁵⁹ 'Real work' was associated with wage labour, masculine adulthood and a 'straight' life of sincerity, openness, legality and bureaucracy. It was the ideal. The reality was what was popularly known as 'kukiya-kiya', a word denoting crooked,

opportunistic, only marginally (if at all) legal practices that exploited the distortions of a hyper-inflationary, fast contracting economy. The young men of Chitungwiza town (located 30 kilometres outside Harare) to whom Jones spoke expressed their 'anger and wonder' in the face of what the economy was, as opposed to what it was supposed to be. Their anger and wonder was a mark of the speed with which the formal economy, and its attendant social symbols, institutions and values, had been shattered, leaving in its wake a state of confusion and nostalgia, corroded institutions and extreme hardship.

There are parallels in the political sphere. Since the start of the third chimurenga Zimbabweans have expressed anger and wonder at the actions of their government, and specifically with the ways in which it used violence to deliberately, if only ever partially, abrogate the law and undo a bureaucratic mode of governance. Commentators wrote of the 'normalising of the abnormal', of how 'launching the unexpected' had become a 'government "trade mark"'.⁶⁰ The land occupations required the construction of new forms of authority and the violent dismantling of old ones. Even so, echoes of the desire for planning and order lived on in the modalities of land pegging and settlement in straight lines, and in the government's concerted efforts to legalise its actions after the fact.⁶¹ Governance increasingly proceeded by the militaristic announcement of 'operations', none more devastating than Operation Murambatsvina – operation 'clean up the filth', or 'restore order' in its English version. Directed at illegal housing and informal traders in urban areas, it resulted in the

58. See the succinct account in SPT, *Desperately seeking sanity*, pp. 8-13.

59. Jeremy Jones, "Nothing is straight in Zimbabwe": The rise of the *Kukiya-kiya* economy 2000-2008', paper presented to the conference on 'political economies of displacement in post-2000 Zimbabwe', Johannesburg, 9-11 June 2008.

60. Masipula Sithole, 'Public Eye', *Financial Gazette*, 28 March 2001, and Joost Fontein, 'Anticipating the tsunami: Rumours, planning and the arbitrary state in Zimbabwe', *Africa*, forthcoming, respectively.

61. See contributions on land and local politics in Amanda Hammar, Brian Raftopoulos and Stig Jensen, *Zimbabwe's unfinished business: Rethinking land, state and nation in the context of crisis*, Harare, Weaver Press, 2003; JoAnn McGregor, 'The Politics of Disruption: War Veterans and the Local State in Zimbabwe', *African Affairs*, 101, 402, 2002, pp. 9-37.

destruction of the homes and/or livelihoods of over 700,000 people. As Joost Fontein writes, it was experienced as both a reassertion of a recognisable – and desirable – set of commitments to ‘order’ embodied in bye-laws and planning documents, and arbitrary, partisan violence.⁶²

Everywhere state violence, still entwined with bureaucracy and the law, brought new and unexpected forms of power that threatened Zimbabweans’ understanding of themselves as citizens. Nonetheless, the civic and political opposition, while all too aware of the unpredictable and coercive aspects of the state, has continued to appeal to the state not (or not just) in its guise as the creature of Zanu(PF) repression, but also as a set of institutions still answerable to rights-bearing citizens. Such behaviour is rooted in decades-old strands of nationalist thinking, practices of the state in much of the post-independence period when the judiciary fought hard to protect its independence, the police solved crimes, teachers taught and doctors healed, and in the rights-focused and non-violent civic and opposition politics that emerged so powerfully in the 1990s. The legalistic strategies that have marked so much of MDC politics (controversially – there have always been pressures to adopt ‘other means’) speak of a powerful liberal political imaginary.⁶³ MDC and civic activists report crimes, even political crimes, to the police even now,⁶⁴ and they have gone to court again and

again, demanding that the state adhere to a set of norms far removed from its dominant practices. Victims of violence in recent months demand justice and that, they say, means prosecution in the courts and the imprisonment of the guilty: such views speak of a vivid belief in the possibility of such things.⁶⁵ It is not entirely wishful thinking.

In the aftermath of periods of repression, the police and courts have haphazardly arrested and prosecuted people for political crimes. Such was the case in 2000 and 2002, and once again in the aftermath of the 2008 run-off.⁶⁶ *The Standard* reported on 20 July the case of a Matabeleland magistrate who jailed a war veteran for nine years for stock theft. He admitted taking and killing a cow to feed the partisans of a local ‘base’.⁶⁷ There have been similar reports of arrests for property damage and assaults by Zanu(PF) supporters in Masvingo, Matabeleland and Mashonaland.⁶⁸ The Zimbabwe Peace Project reported a new police initiative in July, called – tellingly – Operation Wanga Watuma Nani? or Who Gave Authority?, in which police in some areas shut down Zanu(PF) bases and arrested militia members and veterans for a variety of crimes from assault to robbery.⁶⁹ Against the odds and with great bravery, lawyers continue to use the law successfully to defend political rights while the dense network of Zimbabwean human rights NGOs documents where and how the law has been broken and stresses the necessity of its enforcement.

The insistence on behaving as rights-bearing citizens is not something that can survive violence forever, however. Appeals to the law through formal state institutions have too often failed. Even after the start of negotiations in July 2008 some state institutions tolerated and abetted the contradictory claims to authority and

62. Fontein, ‘Anticipating the tsunami’.

63. It could be argued that the MDC’s legalism played into Zanu(PF)’s hands. However, the adoption of ‘other means’ – i.e. a politics of violent confrontation – may well have suited Zanu(PF) far better, offering it the opportunity for far more comprehensive repression on the scale of the 1980s. Adopting such strategies may also have had a devastating effect on democratic practice within the MDC.

64. See, e.g., accounts in SPT, *Desperately seeking sanity*, p. 38; SPT, *Destructive engagement*, p. 24; HRW, ‘Bullets for each of you’; ‘MDC – Manicaland update’, <http://www.thezimbabwean.co.uk>, 1 September 2008; Jocelyn Alexander, ‘Punishment and politics in post-2000 Zimbabwe: State craft and political imaginaries’, paper presented to the conference on ‘political economies of displacement in post-2000 Zimbabwe’, Johannesburg, 9-11 June 2008.

65. SPT, *Desperately seeking sanity*, p. 40.

66. Alexander, ‘Punishment and politics’.

67. ‘War veteran jailed for stock theft’, *The Standard*, 20 July 2008.

68. SPT, *Desperately seeking sanity*, p. 24; Pers. Comm., SPT, 18 August 2008.

69. Zimbabwe Peace Project (ZPP), *Post run-off presidential election report no. 4*, July 2008.

understandings of 'law' and 'crime' held by the veterans and militias who still manned bases in many rural areas. Reports multiplied of Zanu(PF) militias and veterans who beat and extorted goods and labour from internally displaced MDC supporters (real or imagined) who returned to their rural homes after the June elections. Returnees were charged with the crimes of 'selling out', 'seeking refuge', and 'seeking asylum'. Some were told to 'join former British Prime Minister Tony Blair in London or pay a beast so they can be "accepted back" into the community'.⁷⁰ This was both a money-making business and an assertion of authority, rooted in the third chimurenga's violent practice and ideological conviction, that was entirely at odds with a restoration of bureaucracy and law.

Conclusion

The Zimbabwean state has a convincing monopoly on violence but its continued abuse of that monopoly may sow the seeds for its future demise.⁷¹ Violence has created a new political generation. Thousands of militia members have carried out extreme abuses in the name of Zanu(PF), and may not be willing to give up violence as a means of survival if not politics. In Harare, where bases were shut down in July, militias reportedly turned to violent crime; in Manicaland, unpaid militia members allegedly turned to illegal diamond mining in August.⁷² For others, activism in the opposition has broken their belief in the promise of the law and the power of the vote. A significant and growing constituency in the

MDC has argued since the defeat of 2000 that legal appeal and electoral participation could not succeed in the face of Zanu(PF)'s violence and the corruption of state institutions. In her interviews with MDC activists in 2006, LeBas was 'struck by the extent to which the violence of [MDC] party youths was considered legitimate or at least justified as a natural or even necessary response to the violent political system'.⁷³ Where the police and courts offer no redress, human rights groups stress that victims of violence may retaliate outside the law.⁷⁴ Such acts are a rarity so far, but a generation schooled in violence and steeped in the language of sell-outs on the one hand and martyrs on the other is growing up fast, and it is doing so amidst communities that have been deeply divided by the intimate exercise of political violence.

Will a negotiated power-sharing agreement offer the possibility for the revival of institutions capable of delivering justice and protecting rights, as well as delivering Zimbabweans from the kukiya-kiya economy? The signs are not propitious: the Memorandum of Understanding signed on 21 July committed the parties to ending violence and resuming humanitarian aid. Neither occurred in the first weeks of negotiation. In mid-August, at least 12 MDC MPs still faced politically motivated criminal charges. Since the June 27 elections, 32 MDC supporters have been killed - two since the signing of the Memorandum. The official restrictions on humanitarian aid instituted on June 4 were only suspended (and then only partially so) on 29 August, leaving many of Zimbabwe's most vulnerable people without food and medicines.⁷⁵ This was bad faith on Zanu(PF)'s part, and it was underlined when Mugabe took a break from the

70. Caiphas Chimhete, 'Join Blair in London war veterans tell MDC returnees', *The Standard*, 20 July 2008. Also see ZPP, *Post run-off*; Jonga Kandemiiri, 'Parts of Zimbabwe's Manicaland Province still 'no-go' zone for opposition', VOA, 14 August 2008. Some 55 bases in Manicaland and Mavingo were reported to be operational on 5 August. See 'The list: Operational ZANU-PF militia torture camps', 5 August 2008, <http://www.hararetribune.com/index.php?news=167>.

71. Much on the Kenyan model. See David Anderson, *Violence and politics in Kenya: African democracy in crisis*, Oxford, James Currey, forthcoming.

72. SPT, *Desperately seeking sanity*, p. 38; 'MDC - Manicaland update', respectively.

73. LeBas, 'The politics of collapse', p. 24.

74. SPT, *Desperately seeking sanity*, p. 38. See 'Zanu-PF militia thug punished', 15 August 2008, <http://www.hararetribune.com/index.php?news=298>.

75. On political violence and the humanitarian situation, see HRW, "'They beat me like a dog': Political persecution of opposition activists and supporters in Zimbabwe', New York, August 2008; SPT, *Desperately Seeking Sanity*, pp. 15-16; ZPP, *Post run-off*; Veritas, *Bill Watch Special*, 10 September 2008.

negotiations on Zimbabwe Defence Forces day in order to reward with promotions three key figures in his June election victory – ZEC head George Chiweshe, CIO chief Happyton Bonyongwe, and Paradzai Zimondi, the prison service chief – and to praise the military for the ‘unparalleled patriotism and professionalism in the way they have carried out their constitutional role of defending our nation.’⁷⁶

The rumour-filled reporting on the secretive negotiations seemed to indicate that they were primarily about the horse-trading necessary to accommodate and assuage senior figures on all sides, not the difficult work needed to overcome the legacies of violence, impunity and failed reconciliation. This leaves the negotiations vulnerable. The MDC must convince its members as well as the civic movement which has acted as its ally that it has not given too much away. Civic leaders have loudly proclaimed their objections to the secrecy and exclusiveness of the talks, and to the possibility of perpetrators of political violence being granted amnesties or a continued hold on office. For them, the bullet must not beat the ballot. Mugabe must convince the Zanu(PF) hawks and security force chiefs that he has not given too much away, and thereby left them vulnerable to prosecution, retribution or poverty. They have accrued economic as well as political and coercive power, and they have repeatedly said they will not recognise the authority of Tsvangirai whatever the outcome of elections. Will they do so on the back of negotiations? The bare minimum price is likely to be impunity for human rights abuses and continued control over key security institutions. Such a deal will alienate much of the MDC and many of its civic allies. It will make transforming institutions of governance from the logic of arbitrary and partisan violence to the predictability of bureaucracy and the legitimacy of democracy a formidable task. Anger and wonder are likely to live on.

76. Raymond Maingire, ‘Mugabe showers praise on the military’, *The Zimbabwe Times*, 12 August 2008.

Waiting for Power-sharing: A False Promise?

Norma Kriger (University of KwaZulu/Natal)*

Mugabe was re-elected as President in the run-off on June 27 2008 after the MDC's Morgan Tsvangirai withdrew from the contest because of the high levels of political violence and other conditions that made a free and fair election impossible. Days after Mugabe was sworn in for another five-year term, the African Union (AU) encouraged the formation of an inclusive government and expressed support for the continuation of the Southern African Development Community's (SADC's) mediation efforts.¹ On July 21 2008, all three party leaders signed the Memorandum of Unity (MOU) committing them to establish an inclusive government.² Taking much longer than the envisaged two weeks in the MOU, they signed a power-sharing agreement that provided for the creation of a new government on September 15.³ The agreement has yet to be implemented.

All the evidence suggests that President Mugabe remains uncommitted to genuine power-sharing with the two MDC formations led by Morgan Tsvangirai (MDC-T) and Arthur Mutambara (MDC-M) respectively. Mugabe took unilateral

actions that violated the MOU and more recently the power-sharing agreement. He can be expected to exploit the substantial powers he enjoys in terms of the agreement and to use other flaws in its design to minimize the compromises he must make with the opposition. That ZANU PF by itself will not be able to solve the mounting humanitarian, political and economic crises in the country seems not to be a major concern for Mugabe or his party.

The MOU required that the parties not take any decisions or measures which had a bearing on the agenda of the negotiations "save by consensus". Such decisions or measures included, but were not limited to, the convening of parliament or the formation of a new government (Paragraph 9). Other provisions of the MOU required each party to take all necessary measures to terminate political violence and to ensure the security of persons and property, and also to desist from using language that might incite political intolerance (Paragraph 10).

Mugabe violated Paragraph 9 of the MOU by unilaterally appointing provincial governors, who are also ex officio senators, and by convening parliament. On August 25, some three weeks after the MOU had expected a power-sharing agreement to be in place, Mugabe appointed eight of ten provincial governors. He held off appointing two provincial governors, evidently hoping to use these positions to entice the MDC-M House members to vote with ZANU PF to support an MDC-M candidate, Paul Nyathi, as Speaker of the House. The vote for Speaker took place later on August 25, after House and Senate members had been sworn in. When the MDC-T MP, Lovemore Moyo, was elected Speaker with the support of some MDC-M MPs (and some ZANU PF MPs), Mugabe filled the two provincial governorships with ZANU PF appointees. Mugabe opened parliament the next day. The MDC had opposed the convening of Parliament as a violation of the agreement.

Mugabe and ZANU PF also violated Paragraph 10 of the MOU relating to political violence and hate speech. The state media continued to (and still do)

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1. African Union Summit Resolution on Zimbabwe. Adopted at the 11th Ordinary Session of the African Union Assembly, July 1 2008, Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt.

2. Memorandum of Understanding between the Zimbabwe African National Union (Patriotic Front) and the two Movement for Democratic Change Formations. July 21 2008.

3. Agreement between the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) and the two Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) Formations, on Resolving the Challenges Facing Zimbabwe. September 15 2008.

denigrate the MDC and Tsvangirai and to acclaim President Mugabe and ZANU PF. The party did not dismantle (and still has not dismantled) its youth or war veterans' militia who continued to engage in political violence, albeit at much lower levels.

The power-sharing agreement specifies how many of the 31 ministries each party shall be allocated – ZANU PF (15), MDC-T (13), and MDC-M (3) - but leaves open their allocation among the parties. On October 10 President Mugabe unilaterally allocated the ministries among the three parties, thus violating the agreement, which stipulates that the President and the Prime Minister, elsewhere designated as Morgan Tsvangirai, must agree on the allocation of ministries (Article 20.1.2f). Mugabe identified all the key ministries for ZANU PF, including justice, foreign affairs, local government, information, mining, and home affairs. The finance ministry was not allocated. This allocation leaves the MDC parties chiefly with the ministries in control of the provision of services: education, health, water, and so forth. The MDC has rejected Mugabe's allocation as a violation of the agreement, and Thabo Mbeki is due to try to mediate the dispute. Notwithstanding its threats, the MDC is unlikely to withdraw from the agreement even if it fails to get the ministries it covets. Its top leaders are too eager to enjoy the spoils of power. Lovemore Moyo, the new Speaker, reportedly already has his Mercedes Benz.

ZANU PF and Mugabe also have violated the provision in the agreement in which all three parties agreed to a twelve-month moratorium on by-elections in the event of a vacancy during which time the party holding the seat prior to the vacancy would fill the vacancy (Article 21). ZANU PF National Commissar Elliot Manyika told the state media that his party was preparing to contest elections in two constituencies – those vacated following the election of Speaker of the House (MDC-T) and President of the Senate (ZANU PF). And in one of the constituencies, ZANU PF was

reportedly using intimidation to regain the constituency.⁴

The agreement also leaves President Mugabe with substantial and unambiguous powers. Given Mugabe's unilateral actions in violation of the MOU and power-sharing agreement, Mugabe is likely to use these powers to bolster his own position rather than promote power-sharing. In terms of the agreement President Mugabe chairs the Cabinet; he can declare war and peace; he can proclaim and terminate martial law; he grants pardons and can reduce, suspend, or remit sentences, on the advice of the Cabinet; he appoints the Prime Minister, the two Deputy Prime Ministers (one from MDC-T and one from MDC-M), the Ministers, and Deputy Ministers, and chairs the National Security Council. Subject merely to consultation with the Prime Minister, the President also has the power to dissolve parliament, to make key appointments as required in terms of the Constitution or any Act of Parliament, and to appoint service/executive Commissioners in terms of the Constitution. Likewise, the President has the power to allocate ministerial portfolios merely after consultation with the Vice Presidents, the Prime Minister, and the Deputy Prime Ministers. In contrast, many of the powers of the Prime Minister and the Council of Ministers, which he chairs, are vague (Articles 20.1.3 to 20.1.6).

Another major flaw of the agreement which plays into the hands of President Mugabe's resistance to power-sharing is its lack of time frames for implementation. The power-sharing structures in the agreement, and in particular the president's appointment of Prime Minister Tsvangirai, depend on the passage through parliament of a constitutional amendment bill (No. 19) which the parties agreed to support (Article 24). But there is

4. ZESN, Post-Election Update. July to September 2008. The power-sharing agreement essentially sets aside the provision in the Electoral Act that requires the official announcement of a by-election polling date within 14 days of notification of a senate or house vacancy by the House Speaker or Senate President.

no time frame for the introduction of the constitutional amendment to introduce the power-sharing government apparatus. Mugabe continues to use his old cabinet, even though eight cabinet ministers were not re-elected to parliament or appointed as senators when parliament opened, and should therefore have relinquished their posts according to the constitution (section 31E(2)).⁵ There is nothing to stop Mugabe from appointing a cabinet but his Minister of Justice (one of the ministers who was appointed a senator and is thus in compliance with the constitution) said the new government would only come into existence after the passage of the necessary constitutional amendment.⁶

Further reason for concern about the agreement being hijacked by President Mugabe and ZANU PF is that it only provides for explicit internal monitoring mechanisms that depend on the three parties themselves (Articles 22 and 23). The agreement says that its implementation shall be guaranteed and underwritten by the Facilitator (now former President Mbeki), the AU, and SADC, but there is no explicit monitoring or enforcement role for the AU and SADC (Article 22.6). And though the new President of South Africa, and the AU and SADC have confirmed their support for the continuing role of Thabo Mbeki as the mediator, one can assume that Mugabe will exploit to his advantage Mbeki's loss of formal power.

The future seems to offer, at best, more of the status quo: continued ZANU PF rule, increasing humanitarian aid from the West, more investment in the mining sector, and heavy reliance on foreign remittances from Zimbabweans in the diaspora. None of this is surprising, and the only surprise the future could hold is real power-sharing.

5. Veritas, Bill Watch 34/2008, August 30 2008; Bill Watch 35/2008, September 6 2008.

6. Veritas, Bill Watch 37/2008, September 22 2008.

The Glass Fortress: Zimbabwe's Cyber-Guerrilla Warfare

Clapperton Mavhunga (Massachusetts Institute of Technology)

Contrary to the gun battles we are accustomed to, we now have cyber-warfares fought from one's comfort zone, be it bedroom, office, swimming pool, etc but with deadly effects.¹

—Dr. Olivia Muchena, Zanu (PF) Secretary for Science and Technology

e-Introduction

By the time Russia 'e-nvaded' Georgia and paralyzed its security with cyber-weaponry in August-September 2008, Zimbabwe was in its fifth year of cyber-guerrilla warfare. Using interception gadgets, the Zanu (PF) government of Robert Mugabe jammed radio signal and web traffic that sympathized with the opposition. Online newspapers and internet radios had been using the internet to attack the Mugabe dictatorship for the past four years. Government and anti-Mugabe hackers had been trading long-range artillery fire for three decades.

This is a story of the way internet has brought together print and audio into a diverse bouquet of weapons, giving birth to the cyber-guerrilla. It is a story that must start with Strive Masiyiwa, the man who brought the internet to Zimbabwe. A former engineer with the state-owned Posts and Telecommunications Corporation (PTC), in 1994 Masiyiwa established Econet Wireless (Pvt) Ltd. amid red-faced resistance from the regime. The state refused to grant him a license, but in 1997 the Supreme Court declared the state's telecommunications monopoly unconstitutional. Only the intervention of Vice President and Zanu

supremo Joshua Nkomo prevented Mugabe from further emasculating Masiyiwa's project.²

In July 1998, Econet opened for business. In just three months, it had eclipsed the PTC's own cellular network, Net One. The licensing of Econet was a direct threat to Zanu (PF) in three ways. First, it enabled customers to bypass wire tapping by the state. Second, it led to the creation of wireless and dial-up internet connectivity. And third, Strive Masiyiwa would become the publisher of the country's only daily independent, *The Daily News*, which pricked Zanu (PF)'s corrupt feet to no end.

Snooping

Inevitably, the government started using presidential powers to crack down on internet, mobile and fixed phone users "circulating subversive e-mail inciting the public to oust President Mugabe from office". In late 2003, fourteen people were arrested for this 'offense'.³

But in March 2004, the Supreme Court declared the presidential powers unconstitutional. The full bench upheld the Law Society of Zimbabwe's argument that the presidential powers violated section 20 of the Constitution regarding freedom of expression and rendered it redundant. Mugabe could not be above the constitution.⁴

The Supreme Court ruling did not stop the government from drafting new regulations requiring all Internet Service Providers (ISPs) to censor and report all anti-Mugabe communications.⁵ Some ISPs like MWeb agreed to comply. But others

1. Lance Guma, "Mugabe regime draws up list of blacklisted websites", *SW Radio*, 10 August 2007.

2. "Joyce Mujuru Runaida Mugari, AfroAmerica Network Black Woman of the Year 2004", <http://www.afroamerica.net/pages/2/MujuruZimbabwe12242004.html>

3. Cris Chinaka, "Now e-mails are banned", *New Zimbabwe.com*, 21 November 2003.

4. "Supreme Court bars Mugabe e-mail snooping", *New Zimbabwe*, 16 March 2004.

5. "MWeb 'will obey' Zim e-mail snooping laws", *Newzimbabwe.com*, 2 June 2004

refused to accept a requirement the Supreme Court had tossed out as unconstitutional.⁶

The state could yet illegally compel ISPs to open locally registered domains (ending with '.zw') that the national internet registry, the Zimbabwe Internet Service Providers Association (ZISPA), administered under Zimbabwean law. However the state could not snoop into non-local domains like '.net', '.com', 'co.za', and 'co.uk' whose e-mail servers were located in foreign cities and owned by giants like yahoo, google, or hotmail.⁷

In October 2004, Mugabe used the Tel One and Zimpost industrial strike as an excuse to deploy army and police spooks at the telecommunication and postal companies respectively. Despite the Supreme Court decision, civic groups were worried the government was snooping anyway. In one instance, Movement of Democratic Change President Morgan Tsvangirai conceded shock when Mugabe repeated "almost word for word a conversation he had had with British Prime Minister Tony Blair".⁸

At the World Summit on Information Society (WSIS) in Tunis in November 2005, Mugabe tore into the US monopoly of the internet addressing system.⁹ He was much more worried about the role of internet in loosening his grip on power. The monopoly he was condemning internationally, Mugabe was consolidating internally. In February 2006, the Interception of Communications Bill, first introduced in 2000 as an amendment to the PTC Act, was modified and re-tabled to legalize the

presidential powers the Supreme Court had already overruled.¹⁰

The Interception Bill would empower government to establish a monitoring center to peep into phones and e-mails on the pretext of "protecting national security". A cosmetic provision was inserted allowing citizens to challenge the "monitoring warrants" in court.¹¹

Meanwhile, people were already complaining that some ISPs like Telconet, Mango, Mweb and Zimbabwe Online were blocking e-mails with political content. The central bank installed a "mail content manager" to block its employees from receiving any e-mails with words like "Morgan Tsvangirai" or "MDC". The e-mail bounced back to the sender with the message:

MailMarshal has not delivered the following message: From.... To.... Subject: Morgan Tsvangirai.... This is due to automatic rules that have determined that the intended recipient is not authorized to receive messages that have political content.¹²

The central bank routed mail through the internet hub of the state-owned Tel One.

Meanwhile, the state also jammed the medium wave signal of the US-based Voice of America station Studio 7 and the UK-based SW Radio Africa. The jamming signal was quite strong and located within or near Harare. Sources told reporters that the government had acquired equipment and training from China to jam the stations in 2005.¹³

6. Tendai Maphosa, "Some Internet Service Providers Opt Out of Zimbabwe Government Effort to Spy on Citizens", *VOANews*, 2 June 2004.

7. Robert Ndllovu, "What Mugabe can and cannot do with your e-mails", *New Zimbabwe.com*, 2 June 2004.

8. "Mugabe's spies monitoring your calls, mail", *New Zimbabwe.com*, 13 October 2004.

9. "Mugabe wants US to shed internet control", *New Zimbabwe.com*, 16 November 2005.

10. Tererai Karimakwenda, "Government to legalise interception of private communications", *SW Radio*, 20 March 2006.

11. Lance Guma, "Government unveils phone and e-mail snooping laws", *SW Radio*, 29 May 2006.

12. Lance Guma, "Internet Service Providers block e-mails with political content", *SW Radio*, 22 June 2006.

13. Violet Gonda, "Zimbabwe government jams radio stations", *SW Radio*, 27 June 2006.

In August 2006, Transport and Communication Minister Christopher Mushowe justified the Interception Bill as legislation to curb cyber crime. The state painted internet as a dangerous conveyor-belt for money laundering, terrorism, extortion, and hacking. The draft designated the Minister as the first and last point of appeal.¹⁴

The state called in soldiers, intelligence operatives, and police officers to sing hymns in praise of the bill. Army Colonel Livingstone Chineka criticized the licenses of all three mobile phone providers for compromising state security and the Postal and Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (POTRAZ) for using the wrong statute to grant the licenses. The permits had been issued under section 34 of the PTC Act that only had provisions for fixed telephones, not section 31 which required mobile service providers to use the state-owned Tel One as a gateway for international calls. Chineka recommended that Telecel and Econet be given just 30 days to switch to Net One's gateway.¹⁵ The High Court had already dismissed that argument in November as tantamount to subsidizing Tel One.¹⁶

In June 2007, Zanu (PF) used its parliamentary majority to pass the bill into law, leaving only the small issue of Mugabe's signature. A year later Colonel Chineka, a serving member of the army, was chosen Zanu (PF)'s parliamentary candidate in Zaka East.¹⁷

Even before the ink had dried on Mugabe's signature on the Interception of Communications Act in August 2007, Chinese-trained internet spooks had deployed at Mazoe Earth Satellite station, the country's gateway to Intelsat, the

world's largest commercial satellite communications services provider. It seemed the best place to set up the envisaged interception center. But experts doubted the ten spies could track "everyone's" communication short of summoning the entire state security apparatus. The real intention was to rule with fear—to make the technology work through fear, not materiality—and make an example of one or two people.¹⁸

The Interception Act compelled ISPs to install the equipment themselves at their own expense. Failure to comply would be "an offence and liable to a fine or to imprisonment for a period not exceeding three years or to both".¹⁹

By September 2007 ISPs and mobile phone providers had started installing surveillance equipment to comply with the snooping law. SW Radio reported that DHL's Harare offices were delisting from e-mail listservs that purveyed political content. ISPs like Econet's Ecoweb, Tel One's Com One, and Telecontract's Telconet were reportedly installing surveillance equipment routing via the state's interception center at Mazoe. So too were the country's three mobile phone companies Econet, Telecel, and Net One.²⁰

Technological Convergence: internet (and) radio

After being fired for taking phone-calls from an irate public protesting the violent crushing of the 1997 food riots, ZBC freelancer Gerry Jackson set up an independent station named Capital Radio. It was promptly shut down despite securing a broadcasting license. In 2001, Jackson established SW Radio Africa in London with fellow former ZBC journalists. USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) was allegedly funding this 'peace and democracy' initiative, but the US embassy in

14. Violet Gonda, "Zimbabwe bugging bill heavily criticised at public hearing", *SW Radio*, 31 August 2006.

15. Lance Guma, "Army says mobile phone companies compromising state security", *SW Radio*, 28 November 2006.

16. Lance Guma, "Army says mobile phone companies compromising state security", *SW Radio*, 28 November 2006.

17. Lance Guma, "Opposition poll boycott rattles Zanu PF", *SW Radio*, 15 May 2007.

18. Lance Guma, "Too much to monitor for snooping squads", *SW Radio*, 7 August 2007.

19. Lance Guma, "Too much to monitor for snooping squads", *SW Radio*, 7 August 2007.

20. Lance Guma, "Experts say 'don't panic' as snooping equipment is installed", *SW Radio*, 6 September 2007.

Harare refused to deny or confirm this. The BBC refuted claims by Information Minister Jonathan Moyo that SW Radio was using its studios, transmitters and frequencies.²¹

The US Government could not deny its funding of Studio 7, a VOA radio program broadcasting and streaming to Zimbabweans at home and abroad. The program started airing in 2003, growing rapidly to reach nearly one million radio and internet listeners in 2006. Its staff includes experienced print journalist and novelist Raymond Choto, former popular ZBC Radio 2 disc jockey Brenda Moyo, and *Zimbabwe Independent* reporter Blessing Zulu. USAID funds Studio 7 under its Zimbabwe Project, while VOA manages and operates the programming.²²

Because SW Radio and VOA broadcast only for a few hours on shortwave and medium wave, and considering that they can only stream podcasts, some former journalists came up with the idea of internet radio which often combines with news websites. In August 2004, a group of DJs calling themselves Africa Media Association (AMA) started a 24-hour independent internet radio station, streaming from 'somewhere in London'. Afro-Sounds FM's mission was to "entertain and inform", to fill the void the closure of the independent print and electronic media had left in Zimbabwe.²³ The group was composed of former ZBC-TV journalists.²⁴

Also in 2004, another internet radio called Zimnetradio began live streaming from 'studios' in North America, UK, Egypt and South Africa to audiences in different time zones. Listeners 'tuned in' via www.zimdaily.com, clicked the Zimnetradio link, and upon reaching it logged into the chat room and discussion forums to meet 'cyber-family'. Over

time Zimnetradio has become perhaps the most popular live phone-in, music, and news 'combo' online.²⁵

The internet has enabled exiled musicians critical of Mugabe to become journalists, activists, and disc jockeys. For example, on 18 April 2008 Canadian-based "musical critic" Viomak created Voto (Voices of the Oppressed), a radio station dedicated to protest music, message, and news. The musician says she is following in the footsteps of the Voice of Zimbabwe radio, Zanu (PF)'s popular guerrilla war broadcast courtesy of Radio Maputo, as well as Zapu's People's Voice radio from Dar es Salaam, Lusaka, Cairo, and Moscow in the 1970s.²⁶

The shortwave and internet radios from the diaspora have put the state on both technological defensive and offensive. As suburbanites turned to satellite television signals to outflank the toxic ZBC-TV propaganda, the state mooted "Operation *Dzikisai Madhishi*" (Take Down Dishes). Meanwhile the rural folk had turned to shortwave radios to receive SW Radio and Studio 7, whereupon state militias moved in demanding owners of these sets to surrender them or be killed.²⁷ Neither action achieved its ends.

Realizing the futility of physically stopping signals, the state joined in to send its own. In May 2007, it tried to launch a new shortwave radio to "provide factual information about the reality... in Zimbabwe" as a corrective to the SW Radio and Studio 7 "anti-Zimbabwean propaganda". The plan failed to take off for financial reasons.²⁸ Mugabe's regime also struck a deal with a Dubai-based IT firm JumpTV to stream its ZBC-TV mouthpiece

25. <http://www.zimnetradio.com/>

26. Harriet Chigege, "Protest musician launched internet radio on Zimbabwe Independence Day", www.kubatana.net/html/archive/artcul/080507hc.asp?sector=ARTCUL 7 May 2008.

27. "Is Zimbabwe on the verge of cyber war?" <http://www.thezimbabwetimes.com/?p=924>, 18 June 2008.

28. "Launch of Zimbabwean radio station "postponed indefinitely", www.blogs.rnw.nl/medianetwork/?p=8066 Saturday, May 26, 2007

21. Chris McGreal, "US Funds Penetrate Zimbabwe Airwaves", *The Guardian*, 24 January 2002.

22. <http://www.nehandaradio.com/voazimbabwe220807.html>

23. http://www.afrosoundsfm.com/test/about_us.htm

24. "Zimbabwe radio station goes live on internet", *New Zimbabwe.Com*, 1 October 2004.

live on the internet beginning 22 June 2007. Initially, the station offered the service free to registered users, but began charging a monthly fee of US\$9.95 starting 15 July. ZBC radio stations National FM, Power FM, Radio Zimbabwe, and SFM would be added to the project in due course.²⁹

e-Newspaper

Strive Masiyiwa went into publishing at just the time world-acclaimed journalist Geoffrey Nyarota had become fed up with teaching journalism at the Nordic SADC Journalism Center in Maputo. In 1997, Nyarota packed his bags for Harare—at just the time that Econet started transmitting its signal. The result was *The Daily News* two years later and eclipsed the state-owned *Herald*. After efforts to force the paper to tone down, the state became more aggressive. On 28 January 2001, a bomb ripped *The Daily News* press into smithereens, days after Moyo had promised to “silence” it. In 2003, the paper was officially banned as Nyarota was hounded out of Zimbabwe.³⁰

From 2004 the concept of ‘online newspapers’ began to inspire a number of vibrant projects. New Zimbabwe.com was Zimbabwe’s first news website and discussion forum. The editorial staff steered the newspaper away from its initial pro-opposition outlook to a rather ambiguous middle ground often bordering on an anti-Tsvangirai and pro-Ndebele tone supportive of the MDC-Mutambara faction.

ZimOnline.co.za began publishing the same year with the objective of filling the vacuum the banning of *The Daily News* had left. It styled itself as a news agency where articles about Zimbabwe could be

channeled to other publications for reproduction in different countries.³¹

Also in 2004, a group of Zimbabweans in the US, UK, and Canadian diaspora formed an independent political website, Zimdaily.com, which published daily. The paper styles itself as “a force that President Robert Mugabe... cannot stop”.³² Zimdaily is best known for Fair Deal, an online project started in April 2007 to flush out children (and spouses) of Zanu (PF) officials and get them deported from western countries. After all, Zanu (PF) ‘hates the West’ and castigates those who leave land redistribution and go West.³³ The project has been a huge success.³⁴

In October 2006, Nyarota established the TheZimbabweTimes.com targeting the diaspora and people at home with internet access. The materiality might have changed, but *The Daily News* principle of “telling it like it is” has remained a major selling point. In time, the ‘paper’ has attracted serious public intellectuals not necessarily aligned to the MDC, but committed to freedom and a more plural society.

Wilf Mbanga was a founding managing editor of *The Daily News*. With the constriction of a free press he relocated to the United Kingdom. In 2005 he founded *The Zimbabwean*—an online weekly critical of Mugabe’s regime that aspired to have a print circulation in the UK, South Africa—and Zimbabwe. Starting with an initial print run of 20,000, Mbanga hoped to raise the bar to 120,000

31. <http://www.zimonline.co.za/AboutUs.aspx>

32. Gift Phiri, “Independent news websites mushroom”, *The Zimbabwe Independent*, <http://www.theindependent.co.zw/news/2004/October/Friday29/911.html>, October 29, 2004.

33. “Online highlights – The fair deal campaign”, Media Monitoring Project Zimbabwe (MMPZ), Extracted from Weekly Media Update 2007-33: Monday August 20th 2007 – Sunday August 26th 2007. www.kubatana.net

34. “Australia finally deports Zanu-PF officials Children”, <http://dniinoi.wordpress.com/2007/09/07/>, September 7, 2007; Tamuka Ngwenya, “FAIR DEAL: The Re-Launch”, *Zimdaily*, 15 July 2008.

29. Lebo Nkato, “ZBC TV goes live on the internet”, *New Zimbabwe.com*, 17 July 2007.

30. Winston W. Wiley, “A defiant voice: African journalist delivers news from afar”, *Telegram & Gazette*, Dec 24, 2006; Alvin Powell, “Zimbabwean journalist Nyarota finds sanctuary at Harvard: Years of uncovering corruption brought threats, arrest”, *Harvard Gazette*, 17 April 2003 <http://www.hno.harvard.edu/gazette/2003/04.17/03-nyarota.html>

copies. The paper has thrived despite state harassment.³⁵

In all their various shades, online newspapers have distinguished themselves as a virtual reconfiguration of what Jürgen Habermas called “the public sphere”.³⁶

Hactivism

Having failed with cyber-infiltration, the state resorted to blocking access to these websites using the filters it had forced ISPs to install. More ominously it has resorted to hacking, but the fight has been anything but one-sided.³⁷

In 2005, hackers had burgled into the government website www.gta.gov.zw. A person claiming to be one of the hackers later contacted *New Zimbabwe.com* from Leicester, England, to tell them about the breach:

The idea was to hack into the website and replace everything there with slogans like ‘Robert Mugabe is a tyrant’.... We were about to achieve our goal when the whole thing crashed.... We will keep trying—the security is clearly lax.³⁸

The hacker found it ironic that the regime had coughed up public funds to install cyber-offensive weaponry, yet its databases were virtually defenseless against counter-attack.

Subsequent targets were not so lucky. On Saturday, 10 May 2008, a hacker using the user name r4b00f ‘got into’ the state-owned Zanu (PF) website for three days. Only the next Monday did staffers formally admit the intrusion. The hacker

had replaced all headlines with the word ‘*Gukurahundi*—Mugabe’s bloody campaign which left 20,000 supporters of Joshua Nkomo dead.’³⁹

Five days after the *Herald* hacking, ‘r4b00f’ attacked the *Financial Gazette* website using the same tactics, this time posting the words “Mugabe Must Go! Free Zim” and redirecting visitors to the website of the civic action group Sokwanele. *IT Business Edge* magazine summed up r4b00f’s *modus operandi* as “just another example of *hactivism*”. The *Financial Gazette* was initially Zimbabwe’s premier independent weekly before it succumbed to what media sources concluded to be a state-intelligence buyout.⁴⁰

Here is the interesting point: the idea of attacking without being seen, to the point where the hacker knew where the government could be found, even as the government could not find the hacker. So the state unleashed its fury on a visible figment of what it perceived as the enemy. On 9 June, malicious software was found on the MDC web site www.mdc.co.zw. A google-search of the words “Movement for Democratic Change” returned a warning that the website was a suspicious site and could harm one’s computer. Search engines usually do this to sites they have analyzed and found to contain viruses installed by third parties to discredit the site. Two Trojans and a scripting exploit had been installed to infect the visitor’s computer and trigger it into running 15 new processes simultaneously, thereby disabling the machine. These viruses and script had only been tagged onto one of the website’s 63 pages and was being hosted on two China-based domains, killpp.cn and nihao112.com. Google certified www.mdc.co.zw as not an intermediary—a site that is used as a warehouse for onward dissemination of viruses online. Therefore, the site had been cyber-hijacked

35. Wilf Mbanga, “Newspaper Truck Set on Fire”, *The Zimbabwean*, 26 May 2008.

36. Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a category of Bourgeois Society*. Trans. Thomas Burger with Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991).

37. Lance Guma, “Mugabe regime draws up list of blacklisted websites”, *SW Radio*, 10 August 2007.

38. “Hackers break into Zimbabwe government website”, *New Zimbabwe.Com*, 2 February 2005.

39. “Hackers Take Down Zimbabwe’s Herald”, *Technology News*, 13 May 2008.

40. “Hackers Target the Financial Gazette Website”, *The Zimbabwe Guardian* (London), 15 May 2008.

by hackers. It was vulnerable because it was using a local domain name (.co.zw).⁴¹

TheZimbabweTimes.com was next. On Tuesday 15 July 2008 it came under severe Denial of Service (DOS) attacks. After yet another cyber-attack, the news website took extra measures to fortify its security. The website assured readers it did not think their security or identity had been compromised, and that the hackers' aim had been merely to disrupt news and information distribution and comments from readers. The paper had taken "the most stringent security measures available... to screen and distinguish between authentic comments and malicious scripts". Henceforth the editors would deny access to users suspected of malicious intent.⁴²

Conclusion: those who live in glass houses

The cyber-guerrilla has proved elusive, communicating via secure e-mail and free platforms like Hushmail, S-Mail.com and KeptPrivate.com. The monitoring equipment has affected public internet cafés that used unsecured e-mail, but the guerrilla has taken cover by clothing the computer with 'anonymizing software' to shield his or her identity from snooping.⁴³ Users have switched to platforms like Yahoo, Hotmail and G-mail since they use remote servers in UK or the US.⁴⁴ They have bypassed the filters using proxies capable of hiding their actual IP address. They visit websites that are not blocked, and from there leapfrog into the blocked ones. Or they 'instant message' with Skype, MSN or Yahoo Messenger which the state's filters cannot not read without the user's password.⁴⁵

With internet, the state now lives in a glass fortress with the tainted side inside, behind a firewall impervious to hackers. The cyber-guerrillas can see the state clearly; the state cannot see them. Those who live in glass fortresses cannot throw stones, not just because they have no armor, but because they cannot find their enemies.

41. "Is Zimbabwe on the verge of cyber war?" <http://www.thezimbabwetimes.com/?p=924>, 18 June 2008.

42. "The Zimbabwe Times under attack", <http://www.thezimbabwetimes.com/?p=1637>, 16 July 2008.

43. Lance Guma, "Mugabe snooping law exposes increased repression", *SW Radio*, 6 August 2007.

44. Lance Guma, "Experts says 'don't panic' as snooping equipment is installed", *SW Radio*, 6 September 2007.

45. Lance Guma, "Mugabe regime draws up list of blacklisted websites", *SW Radio*, 10 August 2007.

Reflections on Displacement in Zimbabwe

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Introduction

Displacements of various kinds, overlaying one another across time and space, litter Zimbabwe's histories and geographies, while adding new layers to ongoing relationships with neighbouring countries. Physical, social and symbolic landscapes are all powerfully imprinted with the racialised colonial past of violent land disposessions on a massive scale,¹ and with the routinised practices of state evictions and both politically motivated and 'development induced' dislocations in post-independence Zimbabwe.² The normalisation of such practices as an ordinary dimension of statecraft reveals an intimate and sustained relationship between displacement, assertions of sovereignty, and processes of state making.³ This relationship has become further complicated in recent times by the increasingly direct links between party-political affiliation, notions of belonging (to the party, to the nation), and forms of violent displacement and exclusion.

Both threats and actual practices of party-state generated displacement have become a common feature of post-2000 Zimbabwe. Since early 2000, following the constitutional referendum that delivered the first political loss to the ruling Zanu (PF) since independence, there have been several different but related waves of *targeted mass displacement* of Zimbabwean citizens by the state or its various agents and allies (but not forgetting individual targeting of opposition figures). On unprecedented scales, people have been forcibly and often brutally removed from farms, rural

homesteads, informal urban housing, 'illegal' enterprises, factories, local council offices, schools and churches, while selected others have replaced them for longer or shorter periods. In addition, there has been widespread *indirect displacement* resulting from the ever-deepening economic meltdown that has accompanied the political crisis. The combined figures for internal displacements and cross-border 'refugee' movements generated through the different forms of political violence, physical dislocations and destitution — while still difficult to quantify accurately — are estimated to be in their millions but such figures are difficult to substantiate. This brief article provides an overview of some of the dimensions and consequences of both the most overt and less obvious forms of displacement during this period. It concludes by flagging a few amongst the many displacement-related challenges that a new government will have to address, whenever it comes into being.

Dimensions of Targeted Displacement in Post-2000 Zimbabwe

Three major waves of targeted displacement have occurred in Zimbabwe since 2000. While discrete 'operations' in themselves, they are all inter-related in both their political underpinnings and broader political, economic, social and cultural effects.⁴

Farm invasions and evictions, 2000 onwards

The land invasions that began soon after the defeat of Zanu (PF) in the constitutional referendum in February 2000, and the radical Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP) that followed, displaced hundreds of thousands of farm workers and thousands of commercial farmers and their

4. These state-driven mass displacements are often given specific names, such as Operation 'Get Up and Leave' (farm evictions), 'Clean up the Filth' (urban evictions), 'Who did you Vote For' (post-election retribution). I would argue that there is a qualitative distinction between populations forced to flee their homes or countries due to generalized violence and insecurity associated with war, for example, and those deliberately displaced by their own state and its agents or allies.

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1. See for example, Alexander et al, 2000; Moyana, 1984; Palmer, 1977; Ranger, 1999.

2. See for example Hammar, 2001; Moore, 2005; Alexander, 2006.

3. See Hammar, 2008.

respective families.⁵ The timing and form of these actions both after the referendum and a closely contested parliamentary election in June 2000, support the argument that they were intended, at least in part, as retaliatory punishment for actual or assumed support for the opposition in the referendum, and as a deterrent against such support in future elections. Yet clearly there was an unresolved struggle for land which was central to the pre-independence liberation war, and which two decades of postcolonial rule had failed to address meaningfully.

Building on sporadic, low-key, spontaneous occupations in the previous decade, the invasions rapidly became widespread and violent towards both farmers and farm workers. Initially appearing to be led and sustained by war veterans of the liberation struggle, those engaged in the early invasions (and reasons for the invasions) were in fact quite varied (Marongwe 2003), but were eventually largely party-state sponsored. This did not diminish the genuinely felt need for land by a cross-section of Zimbabweans (Matondi 2008). The overall project was legitimised politically in terms of Zanu (PF)'s proclaimed radical land revolution and its promised redistribution of mainly white-owned commercial farmland to historically dispossessed black Zimbabweans. A revived nationalism, alongside a strident anti-imperialism — the latter being amongst Mugabe's most frequent and favoured discursive strategies — convinced much of the leadership of the region and continent, as well as some scholars and independent commentators, of the authenticity of Mugabe's radical if flawed claims.⁶

5. On farm worker displacement, see for example Sachikonye, 2003, Magaramombe 2007, and ZCDT 2008. On the displacement of white commercial farmers/farming, see Selby 2006, and reports by farmers' associations such as JAG 2008, as well as various farmers' memoirs such as Buckle 2002.

6. Moyo and Yeros 2005, were among those scholars who celebrated the invasions. Critical to some degree of what they defined as the state's co-optation of an otherwise genuine land occupation movement, they nonetheless represent the post-2000 land invasions (and to a lesser

Notwithstanding the moral-political and economic need for effective land redistribution in Zimbabwe, partisan politics ensured that this was by no means a universally inclusive or even-handed project. Of those ordinary citizens allocated land under the FTLR, actual or perceived opposition supporters were largely excluded from receiving smallholder (A1) plots (ZCDT 2003), including the majority of farm workers, a high proportion being of Malawian or Mozambican descent. Not only were they generically accused of supporting white farmers and the opposition, but in addition a xenophobic discourse of denigrating unwanted 'foreigners' came into play in the violence and evictions meted out. Of the estimated 130 000 or so that gained access to A1 plots, few received the needed support from the state (itself financially depleted) in the way of capital or equipment to support successful farming, nor was there any guaranteed security of tenure (Matondi 2008). At the same time, a limited yet significant proportion of the land redistributed under the small-scale commercial farming (A2) scheme, especially in the best farming areas, was either allocated to or grabbed by ruling party-affiliated political, military, intelligence and business élites with varied capacities, available resources or commitment to farm productively. In some cases, this involved evicting war veterans and others who had actively participated in the land invasions.⁷ Paradoxically, in other cases new owners without the resources to farm leased the land out to former white farmers (Matondi 2008).

The overall effect of the invasions, evictions and resettlement — exacerbated by several droughts during the post-2000 period, and the ever-deepening economic crisis more generally — was a dramatic decline in the agricultural sector, with an estimated 50-70% drop in production of the major crops and

extent the Fast Track Land Reform Programme) as part of a 'national democratic revolution'.

7. See for example 'Meant to strengthen, land grab weakened Zimbabwe's Mugabe', *Los Angeles Times*, 16 May 2008 2008 (<http://www.zwnews.com> accessed 17 May 2008).

only 40% of land being utilised.⁸ Commercial milk production, for example, dropped from 245 million litres in 1999 to 97 millions litres in 2005.⁹ At the same time, both subsistence and surplus production in the communal lands and former resettlement areas declined. The extensive loss of production and livelihoods in all these sectors profoundly undermined food security and deepened poverty and vulnerability in both rural and urban areas, which continue to be closely linked in economic, social and cultural terms.

However, even if the overall picture of decline is undeniable and substantial support is needed to reverse these trends, as Scoones (2008) rightly notes, this is not the only story of the post-2000 land reforms. *Replacement* is the other side of displacement, and in Zimbabwe's case is unlikely to be reversed. This will present any new government with complex challenges. In the meantime, Scoones underscores a much more diverse set of altered dynamics and effects in the agrarian landscape than generally assumed. Drawing on examples from the southwest province of Masvingo, he points out several promising trends including: some private investment and successes in both A1 smallholder and A2 commercial production, but also a blurring of the two types of plots in contrast to the former strictly dualistic agriculture of pre-2000; although political patronage in land allocation has occurred, the majority (up to 60%) are considered 'ordinary' Zimbabweans, yet at the same time the mix of new farmers (including civil servants, teachers, security service personnel and business people) has introduced valuable new networks and innovations into the sector; the rural economy has altered radically with a range of new players entering into both production and supply chains. Elsewhere, in Mashonaland West, Zawe (2006) uncovers the complex and unexpected dynamics of cooperation

on two irrigation schemes between new settlers, ex-farm workers and former white commercial farmers in jointly trying (and to a significant extent succeeding) to sustain and increase production.

Urban removals under Operation Murambatsvina 2005-6

Operation Murambatsvina, which began in late May 2005 but continued well into 2006 and beyond,¹⁰ was a highly militarised nationwide exercise of mass displacement affecting all urban areas. During the operation, close to three quarters of a million people were estimated to have lost homes and/or livelihoods directly — often being forced to destroy their own properties by hand — with an estimated 2.4 million people affected in total.¹¹ Officially it was presented as a campaign to 'drive out the filth' in the urban sector. Street vendors, tuck-shop owners and small-business operators, including many with licenses, were accused variously of operating illegally, stealing foreign currency from the state, creating health hazards, or generating crime and violence. Similarly, people's self-built homes in high-density townships, some of which had been occupied for decades, were suddenly de-legalised in a reversal of the *de facto* acceptance of such structures by the state since independence, and more so since structural adjustment in 1990. Yet much as with the farm invasions, despite official discourse, in practice Murambatsvina involved a more complex and politically partisan agenda. Critics viewed the campaign as combining political retribution against opposition supporters in the cities — which were the hub of key opposition constituencies — with 'a pre-emptive strike' against growing urban discontent in a time of extreme economic hardship for which many blamed the government (Sachikonye 2006).

8. See Busani Bafana, 'Zimbabwean agriculture on its knees', *New Agriculturist*, May 2008 (<http://www.new-ag.info/08/03/develop/dev1.php> accessed 7 September 2008)

9. 'Problems in dairy farming cause 60,4% downturn in milk output', *Zimbabwe Independent*, 21 April 2006.

10. See Tichaona Sibanda, 'New Murambatsvina wave hits Kwekwe', *SW Radio*, 18 Oct 2007.

11. See for example Tibaijuka 2005; Solidarity Peace Trust, 2005; Sachikonye, 2006. For a fictional representation, see Tagwira, 2007.

Either way, the operation induced unprecedented scales of poverty, homelessness and vulnerability with both immediate and long-term effects. In the short term, many were forcibly removed to either distant rural areas with which they had few if any connections, or were relocated to peri-urban holding or resettlement camps with barely any shelter or access to food, clean water, sanitation, or the means of earning a living. Others saw crossing the border, especially to South Africa, as their only option for survival, and numbers (measured mostly in terms of deportations) certainly spiked around this time. In Zimbabwe itself, the camps, which were still in place over a year later, were guarded by security 'authorities' loyal to the ruling party which controlled, and reportedly abused, the little humanitarian assistance allowed in. Six months after the evictions began, with conditions worsening for hundreds of thousands, the Mugabe government consistently rejected international offers of humanitarian assistance, denying there was any humanitarian crisis to address.¹² In fact the President claimed that the entire clean-up operation had been well designed and was linked to a "vast reconstruction programme [of] properly planned accommodation, factory shells and vending stalls".¹³ Evidence on the ground strongly refuted such claims (Solidarity Peace Trust 2005).

Involving still further losses of businesses, jobs and informal livelihoods, and spinning the economy into further turmoil, was the introduction of draconian price controls in July 2007. Yet as Bratton and Masunungure (2005) note, despite the constant physical and economic knocks and ongoing threats, much as Scoones (2008) observes in the agrarian sector, the urban informal sector (now incorporating most Zimbabweans in one way or another) has demonstrated great 'adaptability and resilience'. What this has meant more generally is a radical

reshaping of what constitutes 'the urban' in Zimbabwe. Not only have physical spaces been altered through destruction and dislocation, but also through new forms of economic, political and social entrepreneurship. In this context, the value and exchange of cash, things, bodies, and status is being redefined in both positive and negative ways, altering gender and generational relations in particular, but also shifting relationships to the state (Jones 2008, Musoni 2008).

Electoral 'cleansing' and punishment in 2008

The period following the combined presidential, parliamentary, senatorial and local council elections of 29 March 2008 and leading up to and after the widely disputed presidential re-run on 27 June 2008, provides a grizzly and magnified picture of the kinds of politically driven violence and displacement that has underpinned life for large numbers of Zimbabweans for much of the past decade. Ruling party militias, overtly led and/or assisted by senior army officers and key Zanu (PF) political figures, initiated an intense 'war' in both the countryside and in urban areas against those accused of 'voting incorrectly' in March. (As reported by one contributor in the last ACAS bulletin on Zimbabwe in June 2008, a senior government official responsible for safeguarding the public health and well-being of Zimbabwe's children, reportedly told a crowd: "There is no place in this district where MDC supporters will be safe".) That this new campaign was conducted with undisguised impunity created a sense of invincibility amongst those committing atrocities, and in itself added to the effectiveness of the persecutions and their terror effects since there was no meaningful recourse to the law or state protection by those being targeted.

Some commentators termed this a campaign of 'electoral cleansing'.¹⁴ Houses were burned down, close to two hundred people were murdered and

12. See 'In Zimbabwe, homeless belie leader's claim', *New York Times*, 13 November 2005; 'Zimbabwe rejects UN assistance to provide shelter to victims', *People's Daily (China)*, 3 November 2005.

13. See 'Mugabe defends urban demolitions', *BBC News (online)*, 18 September 2005.

14. See 'Electoral cleansing in Zimbabwe', *BBC News*, 6 May 2008 (<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/7386316.stm> accessed 18 May 2008).

scores of others abducted without trace, thousands were brutalised through beatings, rape or torture, and scores if not hundreds of thousands were forced to flee their homes.¹⁵ Attacks on commercial farmers and farm workers — including assaults, evictions, thefts, and mass psychological torture — escalated significantly, and an estimated 40 000 farm workers alone were reportedly displaced.¹⁶ Individual opposition officials and activists, and their families, were directly targeted, as were thousands of ordinary citizens including those who participated in the official monitoring of the March elections, many of them rural teachers.¹⁷ An increasing number were forced to go into hiding or crossed the borders, fearing for their lives. Civic organisations that offered support and sanctuary to the injured and fearful, including religious institutions, themselves came under attack.¹⁸

Illegal arrests and imprisonment of the opposition, common since 2000, increased in frequency, in themselves constituting double-sided acts of

displacement. Masked as 'legal' forms of removal, they were aimed at physically and symbolically displacing the leadership of the official opposition as well as union leaders, civic activists, journalists and others, and at broadly decimating opposition support in ways reminiscent of the ethno-politicide in Matabeleland and Midlands in the 1980s.¹⁹ In addition, such practices constituted part of a more extensive project of trying to reshape the political, legal and electoral terrain in Zimbabwe in ways that would explicitly favour the ruling party.²⁰ This was timed to forestall any possible (repeat) victory for the MDC's presidential candidate, Morgan Tsvangirai, in an internationally discredited second-round presidential vote at the end of June 2008. In the end, Tsvangirai pulled out of the race due to the levels of violence against his supporters, and Mugabe's 'win', for the first time, received little legitimacy in the region or continent. This would help precipitate more intensive support for South African-brokered negotiations between the ruling party and opposition, culminating in the signing of a 'deal' on 15 September 2008 for a transitional government, albeit one whose future still remained in the balance weeks after the signing.

In the meantime, the flows of legal and illegal migrants crossing over all regional borders during this period, but especially into South Africa, intensified dramatically.²¹ This would contribute to, but by no means be the only cause of, the outbreak of unprecedented levels of xenophobic violence that swept through South Africa in mid- to late May

15. For a comprehensive overview see Solidarity Peace Trust 2008a. For selected media reports, see for example 'Political killings and abductions of MDC activists escalate', *SW Radio Africa*, 15 May 2008 (<http://www.swradioafrica.com/news/150508/killings150508/htm> accessed 19 May 2008); '40 000 displaced in Zimbabwe', *AFP*, 8 May 2008 (<http://www.zwnews.com/print.cfm?ArticleID=18737> accessed 9 May 2008); 'Farm-workers flee Zimbabwe homes', *BBC News*, 8 May 2008 (<http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/africa/7390799>, accessed 8 May 2008); '20 farms seized in Mash West', *Zimbabwe Independent*, 9 May 2008 (<http://www.zwnews.com/print.cfm?ArticleID=187378> accessed 9 May 2008); '8 more MDC supporters murdered', *Zim Online*, 14 May 2008 (<http://www.zwnews.com/issuefull.cfm?ArticleID=187776> accessed 16 May 2008).

16. See JAG, 2008.

17. See 'Zimbabwe teachers face punishment', *BBC News*, 22 May 2008 (Accessed via: <http://www.zwnews.com/print.cfm?ArticleID=18823> 23 May 2008)

18. See Celia W. Dugger, 'Zimbabwe's Rulers Unleash Police on Anglicans', *The New York Times*, 16 May 2008; 'Church turns to UN over Zimbabwe', *BBC News*, 30 May 2008 (<http://newsvote.bbc.co.uk/mpapps/pagetools/print/newsbbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/742667> accessed 30 May 2008)

19. See 'Another trade unionist arrested in Zimbabwe', *Mail & Guardian (SA)*, 16 May 2008. (<http://www.zwnews.com/issuefull.cfm?ArticleID=1877784> accessed 16 May 2008). In response to the growing political and structural brutalities experienced by those overtly targeted by the party-state, there were an increasing number of violent responses by militant opposition activists. However, this cannot be compared to the scale, nature or intent of ruling party violence against opposition supporters. See Solidarity Peace Trust 2008b.

20. See ICG 2008.

21. See 'Regional Scenario Planning for Potential Outflows from Zimbabwe', Johannesburg 13 June 2008, unpublished report.

2008.²² This led to over 60 deaths, more than 600 injuries, wide-scale looting and destruction of property, and extensive displacement of African migrants living in some of South Africa's most impoverished urban and some rural areas.²³ While affecting a wide range of foreigners, it emphasised the scale and levels of vulnerability of Zimbabweans living in South Africa, and the multiple displacements that they face as the crisis at home continues yet remains officially unrecognised by the South Africa government.

Indirect Modes of Displacement and Exclusion

In addition to the overt displacement of targeted populations, there has been less direct yet widespread displacement resulting from the extreme conditions of Zimbabwe's sustained economic and political crises. Among other things, hyperinflation (officially pegged at over 11 million per cent in September 2008), over 80% unemployment, and shortages of all basics including food, fuel and cash, has led to deepening impoverishment and desperation. Even those in formal employment cannot afford to feed their families, let alone send children to school or pay for the costs of essential medicines. The loss of livelihoods, of homes and social networks, of security, certainty, dignity and belonging, has forced large-scale movement both internally and across borders in search of resources for survival and hope for the future. The media have been full of such stories of cross-border journeys, often taken at great risk and with limited chances of success, yet this does not deter those who are desperate to flee and help their families survive.²⁴

All this has been compounded by the party-state's neglect of the majority of its citizens, including the prioritisation of public spending on state security services and the armed forces rather than on food,

health care, shelter, education or agricultural inputs for the general population. In addition, just prior to elections in June 2008, the party-state officially withheld essential humanitarian aid to large numbers of vulnerable populations, accusing donors and non-governmental organisations of trying to use this to influence the elections in favour of the opposition. (This anti-aid policy has since been reversed.) Yet there is substantial evidence of the overt politicisation of food by the party-state itself since 2000, with the persistent exclusion of opposition supporters deemed 'enemies of the state' (HRW 2003). Such practices, together with an overall decline in food production and economic crisis, have contributed to growing levels of hunger — the estimated figure for those that will need food aid by January 2009 is around 5.5 million²⁵ — and a general exodus of both skilled and unskilled labour to neighbouring countries as both documented and illegal migrants. A recent report by the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC 2008) noted that while the hundreds of thousands of internally displaced Zimbabweans produced by the campaigns of mass displacement discussed above, are in a particularly desperate situation and in need of substantial humanitarian assistance, "it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between IDPs and the general population in Zimbabwe" in terms of such needs.

Conclusion: Confronting displacement-related challenges in a new era

Following a recent 'consultative tour' of various sectors of the economy, Prime Minister Designate, Morgan Tsvangirai, identified some of the urgent political, economic and humanitarian actions that need to be taken to avert an even worse humanitarian crisis than is already at hand.²⁶ Any transitional or long-term government in Zimbabwe

22. See SAMP 2008 for an overview of xenophobic trends in South Africa in recent years. See also Hammar and Rodgers, 2008.

23. See 'Call for commission of enquiry into xenophobia attacks', *Mail and Guardian*, 17 July 2008.

24. For a relatively recent example see 'Zimbabweans flee with hope and US\$50', *IRIN (UN)*, 20 Feb 2008

25. See 'Tsvangirai on the situation in Zimbabwe', *Politicsweb*, 27 Sept 2008, (http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/sep28_2008.html accessed 29 September 2008)

26. *Ibid.*

will be faced with a host of profound challenges arising from almost a decade of deep political, economic and social crisis. However, a number of particular challenges, and paradoxical opportunities, arise as a consequence of both deliberate as well as indirect displacements on a mass scale. In this regard, millions of people have been affected in a wide range of settings and circumstances by, among other things, physical dislocation and violence, material losses (and gains), psychological and symbolic wounds, institutional change and uncertainty, altered social and cultural dynamics, and the reshaping of both economic and political domains and practices.

Some of the specific yet overlapping dimensions of displacement that will need to be addressed (taking into account their diverse, complex and often paradoxical effects) include the following: ensuring access to land and/or secure livelihoods and shelter, and secure citizenship, for the hundreds of thousands of displaced farm workers; similarly, exploring fair options for thousands of former commercial farmers to access land and/or other livelihoods, including looking into possible roles they may play either collectively or individually in productive partnerships in the agricultural sector; rethinking urban planning and allowing and supporting hundreds of thousands of displaced urban residents to recover and rebuild their homes and retrieve their livelihoods in safety; confronting the material, physical and psychological effects of wide-scale political violence and displacement, including through carefully considered truth and justice processes; facilitating the (voluntary) repatriation and reintegration of displacees/refugees based in neighbouring countries, while simultaneously recognising and building on the positive aspects of the new regional networks and social and economic dynamics that this has produced; related to this, with regard to both the region and the more distant diasporas, developing creative and flexible strategies (including the possibility of accepting dual citizenship) to regenerate key public and business sectors affected by the professional brain drain, and to make

remittances a more integral part of the economic recovery strategy. At the same time, attention needs to be given to productive and sustainable ways of supporting the new settlers, or 'replaces', providing appropriate inputs and incentives, and strengthening relevant marketing, extension, and research and development support for both smallholder and small-scale commercial agriculture.

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Zimbabweans Living in the South African Border-Zone: Negotiating, Suffering, and Surviving

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Zimbabweans working, or seeking to work, on commercial farms and elsewhere in northern South Africa have sought out livelihoods and some form of security by negotiating precarious economic opportunities and the contingent enforcement of immigration rules in an atmosphere of generally hostile sentiments towards Zimbabweans in South Africa. They are doing so largely due to the continuing catastrophic unraveling of livelihoods, social services, and personal security for the majority of Zimbabweans in their own country as ZANU (PF) has unleashed terror in a vain attempt to hang onto power as the national economy implodes. Whereas the actual working and living conditions on the farms vary dramatically as some farmers, white and black, ruthlessly exploit the desperation of many of the Zimbabweans seeking work (HRW 2006, 2007, Rutherford and Addison 2007, Bloch 2008), much policy and activist energy is focused on the immigration processes and living conditions of all Zimbabweans in this zone. In this article, I aim to sketch out some of the pressing concerns of some of the Zimbabweans in this border-zone in light of the varied government and non-governmental interventions. As a way to introduce some of these issues, let me provide some examples from recent research carried out in Musina, the South African border town with Zimbabwe, and the surrounding farms in June 2008.

“We were just walking to work before 7 a.m. when the police came rushing up and those without ID cards went running to the bushes. A few of the women later claimed the police beat them. I didn’t have my ID and got picked up. I explained to the

police that I had it back in my room [in the farm compound], so I traveled with them as they were going to the other rooms of some of the other workers they picked up, looking for their ID cards. After some time, they just let me go as they said I was ‘talking well,’ as I was speaking in their language, Venda.” These rushed thoughts came from a Zimbabwean farm worker I call Garikayi during lunchtime on June 16th, 2008, outside an orange packshed on a farm hugging the south bank of the Limpopo River in northern Limpopo province. This farm was like every other farm in this commercial farming area around Musina as the majority of its workers were Zimbabwean. He was talking about an event as routinized in the lives of Zimbabweans working or seeking work on these northern South African farms, as was the soccer tournament that had been held on this same farm the day before, attracting teams of predominantly Zimbabwean farm workers from the nearby commercial farms.

Garikayi was elaborating what I had heard the hour before from the white South African farm manager and a neighbouring white farmer. They had been talking about corporate permits, a system introduced in 2005 to enable farmers anywhere in South Africa to legally recruit farm workers from Zimbabwe (HRW 2006:16-17). These two farmers opined that corporate permits worked generally well in terms of getting Zimbabwean workers. But, they continued, they still had problems with the police and others who enforced immigration laws recognizing that these Zimbabwean farm workers were legal and should not be harassed or deported.

The two farmers illustrated this problem by talking about the police raid on the farms in this border zone that day. The farm manager said the police came early in the morning thinking they would find the workers in the compound, not realizing everyone was working on this public holiday as the farms in the area were at the height of orange picking season. The police ended up intercepting the workers walking to work from the adjacent compound. The police picked up both

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Zimbabweans seeking work on the farm as well as Zimbabweans who were working on the farms even if they had IDs. When he realized that the raid had happened, the farm manager had one of his Zimbabwean office clerks print out all the IDs and the corporate permits for his workers and drove to the army camp where those detained were being processed before being deported. As he put it, “luckily the police superintendent was someone who listened and one could negotiate with and we got them back.”

From the farm manager’s perspective, the “negotiations” entailed reminding the police about the rules they had worked out with farmers in this border-zone concerning farm-issued IDs. According to the farmers and some police officers I met, farmers could create and issue IDs to the Zimbabweans they had brought over on corporate permits and have them carry these documents for purposes of identification. The farmers pushed for this rule, for a number were concerned about giving the official immigration documents to the Zimbabwean workers themselves in case, in the words of the neighbouring farmer, “they leave with these corporate permit documents in the hope of finding work elsewhere.” The farm manager thus had to negotiate with the police superintendent to free those Zimbabweans who had either been carrying their farm-issued IDs with them, or in some cases the farmer brought their IDs with him to the camp. The farm manager was successful in freeing his workers from the camp. Prior to the introduction of corporate permits, these farm-issued IDs often worked as a recognizable legitimate document for police, soldiers and Home Affairs officials who patrol the border region, even though the Zimbabwean workers who were carrying these farmer-created cards had no legal documents authorizing their presence in South Africa (Rutherford forthcoming).

Zimbabweans like Garikayi and farmers at times have room to negotiate with the authorities enforcing immigration rules to be able to stay in South Africa, as they either draw on some

demonstration that these particular Zimbabweans belong to South Africa, the farms, or the border-zone or they pay a bribe (e.g., HRW 2007:68). Yet, there are definitely many situations that these Zimbabwean face that have very little room for negotiation, particularly in crossing the border itself.

The vast majority of Zimbabweans entering into South Africa do so through undocumented means, typically traversing the Limpopo River and making their way through the rows of fences with a wire cutter or using pre-existing holes into South Africa. Even some of the Zimbabweans who work with a corporate permit tend to “jump” the border to avoid line-ups and potentially corrupt officials at the Beitbridge border-crossing. But there are significant risks involved.

One entails drowning. Although for the most part of the year the Limpopo River has many dry patches which make it easy to walk over, during the short rainy season starting in November or so the river can be high and treacherous. As Christmas falls in this period, which is often a time when many Zimbabweans working in South Africa seek to return home during the vacation break before returning to their South African job (e.g., IRIN 2008), there often are many more Zimbabweans crossing the river.

One Zimbabwean farm worker friend whom I call Dumisani, who has worked as a lower management worker on another South African farm hugging the south bank of the Limpopo River since 2002. He, told me in June 2008 that the 2007-2008 rainy season was deadly for Zimbabweans. “The water was very dangerous this year,” he informed me. “And with even more Zimbabweans crossing into South Africa because of the mess of our country, many, many Zimbabweans died.” He then related stories of his own perilous crossing at Christmas time and all the stories circulating amongst the workers in the compound about signs of the toll the Limpopo River took on Zimbabweans. “Some people from the farm found a dead baby lying on

the Zimbabwe side of the river. It was getting late so they just left it there. Others found pieces of human flesh on the river bank. Eeee, many died in the river this past year and no one knows what happened to them as their bodies aren't recovered. They aren't given a proper burial," he sighed shaking his head. He continued, "I and a number of others saw a body going round and round in a whirlpool just off the farm property. We phoned the police to retrieve it but by the time they arrived the body had been swept away by the current...."

Rivaling in both the frequency and grisliness of the recounting of the grim tales of drownings and body parts were narratives about personal harm and suffering at the hands of humans, not water. These were accounts of attacks by the *maguma-guma*, a term that translates as people who seek to make a living through dubious means. Zimbabweans who first jumped the border before 2000-2001 have told me that there were no *maguma-guma* operating along the Limpopo River. Before then there are accounts of that term being used to describe men in Beitbridge who were involved in coercively muscling into certain markets, using violence and threats, for example, to force mopane worm sellers to sell them their harvests at a reduced price which the *maguma-guma* sold for a profit, including smuggling the regional delicacy into South Africa (Kozanayi and Frost 2002:8, inter alia). But by 2004 when I first began to do research in this border-zone, the *maguma-guma* were an established presence on the Zimbabwean side of the Limpopo River. Whereas they still practice smuggling across the border, including leading border-jumpers into South Africa (Irish 2005, Vigneswaran 2008:14-15), they are more widely known for preying on the border-crossers, robbing, beating, raping, and at times killing their victims (e.g., FMSP and MLAO 2007:10, HRW 2008:103). For many first time border-jumpers, attacks by the *maguma-guma* presaged further suffering in South Africa.

During my research in 2004 and 2005, Zimbabwean farm workers in northern Limpopo had many tales of being chased and attacked by *maguma-guma*,

particularly when they first jumped the border and they were not yet aware of the menacing presence of the attackers. At that time, these men operated in gangs solely along the Zimbabwean side of the border. During this period, farm workers told me about occasional abuse they faced in South Africa from soldiers, police, Home Affairs officials or farmers but they experienced no *maguma-guma* moving around south of the Limpopo River. By 2008, I learned the situation had changed as the *maguma-guma* were also operating on the South African side of the border.

In June 2008, I met a number of Zimbabweans living in the bushes outside of Musina, having crossed into South Africa the day or a few days before. They talked about encounters and stories of *maguma-guma* operating along the railway line from the border into Musina and other pathways Zimbabweans take and attacking the border-jumpers. Some of these *maguma-guma* active in South Africa were said to be Zimbabweans residing in South Africa as well as South Africans. Regardless of their nationality, it meant one more risk Zimbabwean migrants had to navigate as they sought some form of security and livelihood for themselves and typically their dependents awaiting back in Zimbabwe for their return as well as any remittances.

During this recent trip, I learned that there were many more recent arrivals from Zimbabwe living precariously around Musina compared to previous years. Many were fleeing the increased violence connected to the run-off to the presidential election (e.g., SPT 2008, ZHRNF 2008). I met women who said their husbands were kidnapped because they had campaigned for the MDC and young men who fled because groups of young men were press-ganging youth into joining them to terrorize MDC supporters. Others fled because they and their dependents were starving and there were minimal or non-existent livelihood strategies available to them back in Zimbabwe. But their options were not too bountiful in South Africa.

Whereas many of those who were living in the bushes on commercial farms were often seeking work on these farms, even if only on a temporary basis, many of those near Musina were biding their time until the road blocks and police sweeps decreased so they could continue their voyage further south into South Africa to the larger urban centers. In the meantime they were engaged in often highly exploitive activities to try to survive.

For instance, some of Zimbabweans living on the outskirts of Musina said they spent their days cutting wood for township residents (be they South African or Zimbabweans who have lived there for some time), doing two to three wheelbarrows of cut wood in a day in exchange for a plate of pap (called sadza in Zimbabwe, a thick maize-meal porridge that is the staple in the region). Others worked for some men to scour the long-closed copper mine in Musina itself, seeking metal scraps at night in exchange for a few Rand. A few were able to find temporary work on construction sites which have emerged throughout Musina as this border town has benefitted from an expanded retail trade as Zimbabweans with money legally cross the border to buy goods and food for re-sale back in their commodity-scarce country (IRIN 2007).

For the majority of the newly arrived Zimbabweans they were living a desperate life surviving by entering into exploitive practices and if possible receiving the charity of others. In terms of the latter, earlier in 2008 the Catholic Church in Nancefield township of Musina began providing monthly food relief to recent Zimbabwean arrivals. Medicins Sans Frontières (MSF) began providing emergency health care in late 2007 for Zimbabweans seeking refuge in South Africa, both in the farming areas and Musina township of the border-zone as well as in central Johannesburg. They complement long-term work by Save the Children (UK) working with child migrants from Zimbabwe living in Musina (e.g., Peta 2007, SC 2007).

Such targeting of Zimbabweans reportedly caused some concerns of South Africans in Musina who resented resources going to these recent arrivals from Zimbabwe, but on the whole most people confirmed that there was no widespread hostility towards Zimbabweans in this border-zone, perhaps reflecting the long history of migration of Zimbabweans to this region. In fact, during the xenophobic attacks on “foreigners” in other parts of South Africa in May 2008, notably in Gauteng province and Cape Town, there were no recorded instances of similar attacks in Musina or the surrounding area. Instead, Zimbabweans have had to contend with the varied, often hostile state practices directed against them.

Several Musina residents and Zimbabwean recent arrivals told me that there were so many roadblocks set up in this border-zone and points further south in June 2008 as the South African authorities had expected more Zimbabweans to cross the border given the increased political violence in the run-up to the Zimbabwean presidential run-off election at the end of the month as well as the deepening economic meltdown in Zimbabwe. Despite such documented hardships and persecution many Zimbabweans have faced, the aim of South African authorities has still largely been to detain and deport such “illegals” (SPT 2004, RI 2004, 2007, Vigneswaran 2008, Bloch 2008:15). As the Director General of the South African Department of Home Affairs declared in August 2007, he personally thought Zimbabweans were “economic migrants” and not refugees (cited in Roelf 2007). In July 2008, the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR 2008) decried that in the previous forty days – during the height of the electoral violence – South Africa deported 17,000 Zimbabweans and had granted asylum to only 500 of the 35,000 Zimbabweans who formally applied for refugee status even as the international agency requested the cessation of such deportations.

This skeptical if not antagonistic sentiment towards Zimbabweans was very apparent in June 2008 when I came across a number of examples of South

African authorities being resistant to recognizing Zimbabweans as legitimate asylum-seekers, let alone welcomed workers through the corporate work permit system. Zimbabweans caught by immigration enforcement authorities were still being regularly repatriated without trying to discern if there were asylum-seekers. As Darshan Vigneswaran (2008:11) observed, based on his ethnographic study of border officials in this border-zone, "officials on the South African side of the border-post often act outside of their legal obligations in order to ensure that South African borders are defended against Zimbabwean migration flows."

Several activists in Musina told me about cases of Zimbabweans who had refugee papers or sought to claim asylum being deported as well. Given the reporting of such cases and calls upon the South African government to rethink its policies towards Zimbabwean migrants (e.g., FMSP 2007, RI 2007, MSF 2008, UNHCR 2008), groups such as the UNHCR and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) were in the process of setting up permanent offices in Musina in June 2008, joining the local Musina Legal Advice Office in advocating for the implementation of South African laws concerning asylum. The government was also just establishing a Refugee Reception Centre where asylum seekers could register rather than trying to make their way to Guateng province over 400 kilometers away which they have had to do. A temporary reception centre was opened in early July 2008 and granted nearly 2000 temporary asylum permits to asylum seekers (not only Zimbabweans) by the end of the month (SABC 2008).

Echoing Vigneswaran's observation above, I also heard a number of accounts from farmers and others who work on immigration issues that some South African border-control agents and police officials were antagonistic towards all Zimbabweans, including those who were on corporate permits. Some talked about unnecessary delays in processing the paperwork at the border to outright refusals to do so as well as the constant harassment by police

of workers at the farms, such as raids that pick up Zimbabweans with permits as well as those without.

One strategy being put forward by the IOM office in Zimbabwe to minimize such problems is to establish a more formal labour recruitment scheme for South African farmers. The aim of this proposed pilot project is to produce a safe and legal temporary migration of Zimbabweans to Limpopo province farms. This plan has been worked on since 2001 after South African authorities threatened to deport all Zimbabweans working on the farms around Musina (SABC 2001; see, e.g., HRW 2006:15, IOM 2008:14). Although still a draft, the plan envisages a pilot project through which Zimbabweans from districts with a history of working on the border-zone South African farms are vetted by Zimbabwean authorities for their health conditions and criminal records. They then would send the details of the vetted applicants to the IOM Reception and Support Centre in Beitbridge for selection by the few commercial farmers from Limpopo province in the pilot project. As the corporate permit applications are being processed, IOM would educate the recruits about being a migrant farm worker in South Africa and a special passport would be given to those workers. Given the difficulty of acquiring a Zimbabwean passport these days due to, amongst other reasons severe budget limitations, most Zimbabweans working as a farm worker in South Africa on a corporate permit receive an Emergency Travel Document from Zimbabwean authorities in lieu of a passport. This pilot project would find resources for the Zimbabwean Ministry of Home Affairs to create a special passport for farm workers.

There is a bilateral stakeholder group assessing this draft program comprised of South African and Zimbabwean government officials, IOM staff, and South African farmers, albeit in June 2008 there were no trade union representatives from South Africa or Zimbabwe in this group. Nor was there anyone representing the well-over ten thousand Zimbabwean farm workers themselves living in the commercial farming area hugging the Limpopo

River (Rutherford and Addison 2007). There were still a number of issues to be decided – including what to do with the existing Zimbabweans currently working as seasonal or permanent workers on the borderzone farms themselves who would not have gone through this process to find their job, the actual ability of Zimbabwean government departments to administer this project given the deep hemorrhaging of staff and resources during this protracted economic crisis, and the highly pertinent concerns of politicization of the process, particularly with a large number of youths trained and used for terror purposes by ZANU (PF) with minimal job prospects outside of electoral contests, despite promises made to them by their ruling party trainers (e.g., SPT 2003, Moyo 2008). There are also questions about whether this will necessarily ensure the normalization of labour recruitment as the ever-worsening meltdown in Zimbabwe all but guarantees that there will still be large numbers of Zimbabweans seeking work in South Africa, including on these farms, despite the existence of formal labour recruiting channels.

Although there is a deep history of interaction and networks between people on both sides of the border, the unrelenting crisis in Zimbabwe since 2000 has led to an unprecedented number of Zimbabweans crossing the border and residing in Limpopo province. As more and more Zimbabweans suffer and seek to survive in northern South Africa, there is increasing public attention on them. Along with the international and national agencies, state institutions, and non-governmental organizations, there are also many more researchers active in this region. Largely based in key South African research centres like the Forced Migration Studies Programme at the University of Witwatersrand and PLAAS (Institute of Land, Poverty and Agrarian Studies) at the University of Western Cape, these Zimbabwean, South African, European and North American researchers are seeking to learn more about Zimbabweans working, seeking work, or passing through the commercial farms, the townships, the mines, the parks and the former homelands in northern South Africa. The

aim of much of this scholarship is to better understand their strategies, hopes, circumstances, possibilities and perils – to the forms of negotiation, suffering and survival of these Zimbabweans living in this South African border-zone – to contribute to the ever-developing frameworks of analysis and interventions by state and non-state agencies and activists. It is with this aim that I have modestly directed this article.

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Anti-Imperialism and Schizophrenic revolutionaries in Zimbabwe

Tamuka Chirimambowa

We shall be doing this (negotiating) as Zimbabweans, entirely as Zimbabweans, with the help of South Africa. There will be no European hand here.
—Robert Mugabe, 21 July 2008)

The above statement at the signing ceremony of the Thabo Mbeki-birthered Memorandum of Understanding hints at the deep and intense struggles that underlie the Zimbabwe crisis. Robert Mugabe claims that the ghosts of colonialism have come to haunt Zimbabwe and caused unforetold suffering to Zimbabweans through western imposed sanctions, and with the MDC the west is the major culprit for calling for sanctions. This attempt to reinvent the political and economic history of Zimbabwe has been discussed in academic circles; thus, Professor David Moore notes the emergence of Agrarian nationalists or what Terence Ranger terms patriotic history. This illusion has informed many policy and position debates on Zimbabwe at regional and international fora as various interested stakeholders seek to unlock the Zimbabwe logjam. However this elisionistic interpretation of the Zimbabwe crisis has been allowed at the expense of Zimbabweans' quest for change. Exhausted nationalism and anti-imperialism rhetoric has been used by the geriatric regime to gloss over the horrendous atrocities and human rights abuses it has been committing. The maiming, torture, rape, deprivation, murder and arson committed by ZANU PF becomes sanitized as a revolution brewing in Harare or what Sam Moyo and Paris Yeros terms a radicalized state seeking to undo the vestiges of colonialism. In all this blind sheepish intellectualism Mugabe emerges a hero of Black Africa.

The inaction from African institutions despite the flagrant violations of charters and declarations that they have authored reinforces the notion of a dark continent. The Banjul Charter stressing that:

The Member States of the Organization of African Unity parties to the present Charter shall recognize the rights, duties and freedoms enshrined in this Chapter and shall undertake to adopt legislative or other measures to give effect to them (Article 1).

Every individual shall be entitled to the enjoyment of the rights and freedoms recognized and guaranteed in the present Charter without distinction of any kind such as race, ethnic group, color, sex, language, religion, political or any other opinion, national and social origin, fortune, birth or other status (Article 2).

Therefore, given the centuries of slavery and colonialism in Africa, observance of these noble articles ranging from 1-62 is seen as an unnecessary luxury by Most African heads of states. The end justified the means and democracy and human rights had to be sacrificed to defend the revolution. What remains unanswered is which and whose revolution: when was it threatened and by whom? It is in attempting to answer this question that one can appreciate the emasculation of a people's quest for a decent meal that they end up with anti-imperialism for dinner on the table. Therefore despite all the hardships the general populace is expected to "Rambai Mkashinga [keep on persevering]" --- as Jonathan Moyo's infamous jingle would implore people every 15 minutes on Zimbabwe Broadcasting Television and Radio.¹

A closer introspection of Zimbabwe's economic history reveals Mugabe was the blue-eyed boy of the West in Africa. At the height of the 1980s' madness Mugabe was knighted by the queen and showered with many awards and honorary degrees by universities in the West. Therefore his recent tantrums about imperialism and anti-western diatribes are just grapes that have gone sour. In

1. "Rambai Makashinga" is the name of one of Jonathan Moyo's propaganda jingles meant to drum up support for Robert Mugabe.

essence Mugabe has to be grateful to imperialism and the west for having allowed him to ascend to the position where he is now. Heidi Holland, author of the book "Dinner with Mugabe" remarks that:

...whites because they were grateful to be out of range of fire; the British government because it had to stand by its man up north while trying to bring majority rule to apartheid South Africa; the international media because it backed Mugabe to the hilt could not contemplate its flawed judgment (in Mawowa 2007)

Definitely Mugabe's misadventures with the west are just chickens coming back home to roost. In addition, there has been a tendency to confuse nationalism with anti-imperialism within the third world analysis albeit the two concepts being not synonymous. For example, the 'Vashandi' [workers']² movement that attempted to unite the Zimbabwe African Liberation Army (ZANLA) and Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA) into the Zimbabwe Integrated People's Army (ZIPA). However Mugabe and his cohorts quashed this movement, which points out one of several contradictions that undermine his self-acclaimed anti-imperialist credentials. Kriger observes that the elimination of Vashandi was an ideological coup marking the beginning of a political culture of leftist rhetoric that has characterised post independence Zimbabwe (in Mawowa 2007). Claims from the supra-Africanists and pseudo-communists that Mugabe is a fighter of imperialism cannot be vindicated by the evidence of history. The regime's leftist rhetoric is meant to appeal to the ordinary and poor since it captures their aspirations. The self-proclaimed super patriots also claim that Africa has been a communist or socialist society. However, Mugabe's strong taste for an opulent western lifestyle is no secret as seen in his love for fine suits and shopping at Harrods. Heidi Holland records Dennis Norman alluding to Mugabe's love for bourgeoisie paraphernalia, insisting ministers put on

suits (in Mawowa 2007). Furthermore, Mawowa in his review of Holland's book observes that:

The man in most respects seems to still subscribe to his western learning even now at the height of his populist authoritarian rule that includes attacks in the west. He still retains his knighthood and one needs to see his entourage during the opening of parliament to observe that the man has lost none of his love for the western representations (2007:5).

Mugabe's life history and action do not at all point to a person who has always detested western values in spite of how he has re-branded himself.

The emergence of the Movement for Democratic Change has led to ZANU PF reviving the liberation war rhetoric and 'we freed you syndrome' and led to what Bond (2003) calls exhausted nationalism. By reviving liberation rhetoric, the ZANU PF regime is reminding the people to be grateful that they were freed from colonialism and cannot therefore make demands to the state. However, such a fallacy is a misconstruction of Zimbabwe's history for the liberation war was never a monopoly of one party. A closer inspection of ZANLA's strategies will show that even ordinary people played a crucial role in the liberation war, thus realising Mao's strategy '*the people are the sea and the freedom fighters are the fish*'. Moreover, there were some liberation songs such as '*Gandanga haridye derere mukoma rinorutsa*' which paint a different picture of the liberation struggle. Loosely translated this chorus means "a freedom fighter does not eat okra or vegetables; he or she will vomit my brother." Thus the goats, chickens and cows which the ordinary people slaughtered and other food and material support they provided were never paid for.

In the 2000 film 'Never The Same Again' Emerson Mnangagwa, when interviewed about the use of the Law and Order Maintenance Act (LOMA), a relic of colonial piece of legislation, retorted, "I do not like the Law and Order Maintenance Act, but sometimes it is handy". As the Minister of Home Affairs Mnangagwa had invoked state of emergency

2. This was a movement established by the young radicals in ZANU who sought to establish a Marxist/Socialist state in Zimbabwe and it was led by the likes of Wilfred Mhanda, aka Dzinashe Machingura.

powers provided under LOMA that saw the army resorting to heavy handedness such as the use of tankers and armoured vehicles on civilians, during the 1998 food riots in Chitungwiza, Harare, Bulawayo and other cities in Zimbabwe. Interestingly Mnangagwa had been detained and incarcerated under the same law by the Colonial Ian Smith regime during the days of the nationalist struggles and war of liberation. Therefore taking Mnangagwa's assertion it can be safely concluded that ZANU PF's claims of being inimical to imperialism is a farce.

In spite of Harare's puffing of anti-colonial rhetoric Anna Kajumulo Tibaijuka commented on the irony of the laws used to implement Murambatsvina, in which:

the Regional, and Town Planning Act, and attendant municipal bylaws emanating from the colonial era meant to keep Africans out of the cities [set] very high housing and development standards beyond the reach of the majority of the people.³

Resorting to colonial pieces of legislation that does not account for the people's historical material conditions raises fundamental questions of the Zimbabwean government's nationalist and historicist rhetoric. ZANU PF as a ruling party has lacked a coherent ideological underpinning, reducing it to its current condition as a schizophrenic citadel in terms of both members and policies. Towards the preparations for the hosting of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in 1991 in Harare, *The Herald* reported that the Harare City Council through Town Clerk Edward Kanengoni made submissions to Justice Robinson to the effect that the demolition of squatters' houses was to avoid embarrassing the

queen.⁴ Interestingly in his judgment Justice Robinson observed:

In any case, perhaps the applicant (the City of Harare) and other who are so anxious to sweep the respondents (the squatters) under the red carpet to be rolled out for her Majesty's visit to Mbare need to be reminded that the liberation war in Zimbabwe was fought over the issue of land primarily combined with the goal of justice for all.⁵

This obsession with pleasing the queen unmasks the deception that Mugabe has managed to lull the African continent and the developing world with.

In the early 1980s, in a swoop at the destitute and homeless through 'Operation Chinyavada', *MOTO* observes the government's use of the infamous Vagrancy Act of 1960, a remnant colonial piece of legislation designed to segregate black people from cities and white areas (December/January, 1984: 5). In carrying out the operations, government evoked nationalism, justifying its actions as being in the interest of the country and at the same trying to rehabilitate economic and political saboteurs. In spite of its jaundiced nationalist rhetoric it has never dawned on the ZANU PF-led government that all along they have failed to define the nature, form, content and genesis of the 'so-called' saboteurs. It is poverty, stupid! Therefore the anti-colonial and imperialism lectures that Mugabe has been delivering at the United Nations summit are a red herring. The real issues in Zimbabwe are about a liberation movement that has turned into a vampire regime. Interestingly Mugabe has become popular for lashing out World Bank and IMF policies, as undermining the sovereignty of third world governments --- yet its Reserve Bank governor, Gideon Gono's made strenuous efforts in 2005 not to be kicked out of the IMF and World Bank system. Mugabe's anti-imperialist outbursts are not informed by any revolution as most people in Africa have been made to believe but rather by anger and the history of having tasted the sweets of

3. Report of the Fact Finding Mission to Zimbabwe, to assess the Scope and the Impact of Operation Murambatsvina by the UN Special Envoy on Human Settlements issues in Zimbabwe: 56, http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/zimbabwe_rpt.pdf. Accessed on 02 September 2006.

4. *The Herald* September 1991: 1.

5. *The Herald* September 13 1991:1

imperialism. In reviewing the Economic Structural Adjustment Policy, in 1995, the IMF and World Bank gave Zimbabwe the 'highly satisfactory' rating. As Patrick Bond noted in 2000 "Indeed, just five years ago, Zimbabwe was Washington's newest African 'success story,' as Harare adopted economic policies promoted by Bank and IMF lenders, and even conducted joint military exercises with the Pentagon."⁶ All these points raise questions about Mugabe's commitment to the anti-imperialist cause.

Understanding the Zimbabwe crisis needs a careful revisiting of Zimbabwe's economic history and juxtaposing of ZANU PF's rhetoric against its actions and policies in government. Evidence at hand undermines the regime's claims of fighting imperialism. The Zimbabwe case is a good example of a government that seeks to divert attention from its failure by regurgitating anti-imperialist rhetoric. However, the schizophrenic nature of the ZANU PF regime has neared its endgame as its true colours are laid bare with every second that ticks.

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The Zimbabwean Working Peoples: Between a political rock and an economic hard place

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At the summit of the African Union in Ghana in July 2007, Robert Mugabe was given a standing ovation. Later he went outside the conference to deliver a roaring anti-imperialist speech at a huge public rally. At the Nkrumah square Mugabe was hailed as one of the most steadfast revolutionary leaders in Africa. One year later, at the African Union Conference in Cairo, Egypt, Robert Mugabe was shunned by most leaders and condemned by those who opposed the authoritarian and dictatorial methods of rule. One day prior to the conference Mugabe had been sworn in as President after a non-election where he was the only candidate. This was a far cry from his initial inauguration in April 1980 when he was sworn in as Prime Minister before a throng of hundreds of thousands. Bob Marley had led the popular anti-racist and anti-imperialist forces to this celebration and had sung, *Africans a liberate Zimbabwe*. By June 2008 Robert when Mugabe was sworn in his regime had degenerated from a party associated with the legacies of Patrice Lumumba and Kwame Nkrumah to an organization associated with the militarism and repression of Mobutu Sese Seko and Hastings Banda. Working peoples all across the region led and inspired by the Congress of South African Trade Unions opposed the Mugabe government and called for its isolation. Nelson Mandela was moved to declare that one was

witnessing a 'tragic failure of leadership in Zimbabwe.'

It is this failure that needs to be contextualized not simply as a Zimbabwean phenomenon, but as one of the forms and content of politics and political engagement in an era of economic depression and discredited neo-liberalism. All over the African continent the poor and oppressed have borne the brunt of the food crisis, the energy crisis, the health pandemics, and the crisis of the financial markets. This is the cataclysm that is being termed the worst capitalist crisis since the depression of the 1930's. While spokespersons for capitalism such as Alan Greenspan have noted the depth of the contradictions between capitalist wealth and the impoverishment of the peoples of the globe, the G8 discourse on increasing aid flows block serious analysis of the impact of the capitalist depression in Africa and other parts of the downtrodden world. Food riots and other forms of spontaneous expressions of resistance have been taking place in the absence of clear organizational forms to respond to this capitalist depression. It is in South Africa where the workers are organizing against the high food prices with marches.

Inside a country such as Zimbabwe the internal political contradictions and the dire economic conditions serve to compound the oppression of the Zimbabwean peoples. It is this oppression that calls for both clear analysis and action on the part of those who want support the oppressed and are not accessories to their oppression by overt and covert support for the Mugabe regime. The Zimbabwean working peoples have been well organized and it is in part the quality of their organization that exposed the Mugabe government and the ZANU-PF party. These organized workers and human rights activists exposed a clique of political careerists and militarists that represented itself as an anti-imperialist force in Africa. From among the ranks of the working peoples emerged various political organizations. The political party that emerged out of this alliance of working peoples is the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC).

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The MDC is only one section of the opposition to the government of Robert Mugabe which has been called illegitimate after the March 29, elections. There were organizations based on the workers themselves, organizations of small farmers, organizations of poor women, of students, of health professionals and patriotic intellectuals. Additionally, there were organizations of human rights and NGO reformers. Some of these elements were merged into a continent wide organization called the Africa Social Forum. The local formation was called the Zimbabwe Social Forum. However, the section of the opposition that had the most access to financial resources was those human rights and NGO activists who were linked to the social democratic foundations from Western Europe that are called the 'donor community.' These foundations along with the forward planners within the USA and Britain were most concerned about the potentialities of the workers in so far as in one of the strongest working class communities the electorate voted for a declared socialist in the 2002 elections. The Movement for Democratic Change had been formed as an alternative to the ruling party and since 1999 -2000 has used the elections as the main form of political engagement.

Imperative to study the background to the economic melt down

The present struggles in Zimbabwe comprise a classic struggle between those steeped in the politics of thuggery and violence and those who want a new mode of politics in Zimbabwe. In our earlier study of *Reclaiming Zimbabwe: The Exhaustion of the Patriarchal Model of Liberation*, this author spelt out the social origins of the leaders who had emerged as the leaders of the liberation movement. Our task was to reinforce the warning of Frantz Fanon that exploitation can wear a black face as well as a white one. It is now essential that progressives go back and read the historical study by Michael West, *The Rise of an African Middle Class: Colonial Zimbabwe*. West traces the growth and tactics of an African middle class which had the unenviable task of constructing itself during the

early part of the 20th century and under white minority rule. While not directly topical to the present-day, it shows how the socialization of the same class which now occupies the government there and in many other places in and out of Africa could have affected the fate of the African masses. The bottom line was that this middle class wanted to occupy the positions of the former colonial overlords without fundamentally transforming the colonial economic relations.

Though the neo-liberal discourse on Africa seeks to suffocate those seeking to understand the political quagmire the struggles of the people have generated a rich corpus of literature on the challenges of post-liberation societies in Africa. Zimbabwean scholars who are linked to the working class movement have been most prolific in their analysis of the conditions of the people. Of these scholars, Brian Raftopoulos and Lloyd Sachikonye have been unflinching in their support for the working class forces. There are two studies worth recommending, (i) *Striking Back: The Labour Movement and the Post Colonial State in Zimbabwe, 1980-2000*, edited by Brian Raftopoulos; Lloyd Sachikonye, Weaver Press Harare, Zimbabwe 2001 and (ii) Lloyd M. Sachikonye, "The Situation of Commercial Farm Workers after Land Reform in Zimbabwe," *A Report for the Farm Community Trust of Zimbabwe*, Harare, Zimbabwe, March 2003. These studies that start from the conditions of the working people can be distinguished from the prolific writings of writers such as Martin Meredith and other journalist who write from the point of view of the concern for the former white commercial farmers. In the book, *Our Votes, Our Guns: Robert Mugabe and the Tragedy of Zimbabwe*, Meredith bemoans the use of force and violence by the Mugabe regime. This book did not see the continuity between the violence of the Ian Smith regimes and the Mugabe regime.

Because of the levels of violence and oppression there are hundreds of books, articles and studies on contemporary Zimbabwe. From within the organized opposition there are different accounts

but by far the most penetrating have come from the African feminists. Women activists such as Grace Kwinjeh, Mary Ndlovu and Elinor Sisulu stand out in terms of the clarity of their writings and the focus on the need for transformative politics.

Edgar Tekere, the former Secretary General of the ruling party has written his own account of the levels of violence unleashed by the party against opponents and even against members of the party itself. The book, *Tekere: a Lifetime of Struggle* is instructive in so far as the evidence of the killings, accidents and poisoning came from an insider and not from international organs such as Human Rights Watch or the International Crisis Group.

Heightened interest after the June 27 elections

The focus of the international attention on Zimbabwe after the March 29, 2008 elections brought out the depths to which the regime has sunk. Pan African platforms such as Pambazuka news sought to bring to a worldwide audience the fatal decline and the appalling rise of inhumanity in the name of anti-imperialism and revolution in Zimbabwe. Here was a government that had clearly lost the elections and spent one month before releasing the results of this election. While the ruling party was studying its options after the results showed that it had lost the parliamentary and Presidential elections there was a reign of terror unleashed by forces within the military and security apparatus. Thabo Mbeki and the South African government were shamed into admitting that there was unprecedented violence against the people. Robert Mugabe declared war against the citizens of Zimbabwe and declared that only God could remove him from office.

This defiance from the government of Mugabe was reinforced by the organization of the run off elections on June 27. The violence, intimidation, murders and kidnapping of the opposition had reached such proportions that the leader of the opposition pulled out of the elections and sought refuge in a foreign embassy. The fact that the leader

of the MDC sought refuge in the premises of the Dutch embassy and not an African legation was very problematic. However, this low point reflected in part the reality that most African governments had been willing to make excuses for the government of Zimbabwe. By the end of June the violence reached a point where the leaders of the Southern African Development Community condemned the violence and declared that there could be no free and fair elections in Zimbabwe on June 27. The fact that the Angolan government had broken with its past full support for the actions of Mugabe and the ZANU-PF was the most striking aspect of this condemnation. The Angolan/Zimbabwean alliance had been forged in the wars in the Democratic Republic of the Congo 1998-2002. In a debate between this author and Gerald Horne on Democracy Now, Horne, author of the book, *From the Barrel of a Gun: The United States and the War Against Zimbabwe, 1965-1980*, reminded the audience that Swaziland was a dictatorship and was in no position to critique the conditions in Zimbabwe. This author would only add that the struggles in Zimbabwe by the working peoples was bringing attention to the struggles of working peoples all across Africa in so far as the conditions of oppression was one that faced all workers across the region. The reality that Robert Mugabe had declared war against the people meant that it was now necessary to condemn the violence and murder. Yet, in the midst of all of this there were nationalist and "anti-imperialists" in the United States who were defending the Mugabe regime. In reality these forces were now accessories to the war against the people of Zimbabwe.

Who are the forces in Zimbabwe?

It is the poor in Zimbabwe who have borne the brunt of the thuggery and violence meted out by the Mugabe regime. The mass of the Zimbabwean peoples (workers, farmers, students, independent clergy, patriotic business persons, committed intelligentsia, and oppressed women) have suffered in numerous ways with the quality of the lives of the people deteriorating by geometric proportions. In 2005 when the party and government launched a

military style operation against the poor in the urban areas, it called the people, filth. Thus far the electoral struggle has been one of the main forms of contestation in Zimbabwe. It must be restated that while the regime seeks to ride on its stature as the party of liberation, it will now be necessary to go back to understand the seeds of this political retrogression within the very tactics of fighting the liberation war. Not only has the regime discredited certain forms of armed actions but the violations and killings within the liberation camps and the divisions between the liberation movements will have to be re-visited. In the past the female freedom fighters were the ones who had broken the silence on the authoritarianism and commandism within the ranks of the fighters.

In the face of the rush of Thabo Mbeki to establish a Government of National Unity, it is even more urgent to go back to this commandism and militarism to reflect on the experiences of Joshua Nkomo and ZAPU in the post independence era. After the forces of ZAPU were crushed militarily and ZAPU was humiliated, Nkomo joined a government of National Unity in 1987. Of the government of National Unity, Edgar Tekere remarked in his biography,

As it turned out, ZAPU was indeed swallowed up by ZANU, leading to an effective one party state. Nkomo agreed to compromise to such an extent because he was afraid of another Gukurahundi which would wipe out the Ndebele people completely. (p.153)

Joshua Nkomo was referring to the crimes against humanity that had been carried out in the immediate post independence period when tens of thousands were killed by the regime. Jonathan Moyo, a former spokesperson for the Mugabe regime, underlined the levels of violence that had been unleashed against Nkomo in the period 1982-85. In rebutting the claims by the opposition leader Morgan Tsvangirai that the 2008 elections had been the most violent Moyo maintained,

The fact that is still crying out loud in our country waiting for resolution is that the period leading to and

after the 1985 general election was the darkest in the political and electoral history of this country. The political violence, intimidation and harassment against the membership, supporters and leadership of PF Zapu that preceded and followed that election has not been equaled by anything since then.

There is nothing to be gained in political terms by counting dead bodies in order to turn that into a political manifesto. This is what the MDC Tsvangirai and its British and American supporters have been doing with the political violence that took place in Zimbabwe between April 4 and June 25.

Jonathan Moyo went on to write,

But it is a well known fact that for some 24 months before the 1985 general election, the Matabeleland and Midlands provinces had the Fifth Brigade deployed there during which some 20,000 people were massacred while many more were tortured, maimed, had their homes destroyed or their livelihood lost. All this happened when the whole country was still under the brutal Rhodesian state of emergency and communities in Matabeleland and the Midlands provinces were under a dehumanising dusk to dawn curfew from 6pm to 6am.

Victims of these atrocities feel insulted and demeaned by Tsvangirai's false and politically insensitive claim that the violence that happened in the run up to the runoff is unprecedented in Zimbabwe's political and electoral history.

Jonathan Moyo was here seeking to score points against the leader of the MDC on the question of the scale of the violence in 1985 but behind these differences laid the reality of the traditions of political violence and murder in Zimbabwe. A full Truth and Reconciliation Commission is urgently needed in Zimbabwe to bring out the truth and to heal the society from the scars of these terror campaigns and mass murders that had been carried out in the name of African liberation.

Thabo Mbeki (recently deposed President of South Africa) and the African Union are working hard on a government of National Unity but such a unity government cannot go forward without the

demobilization of the military, security and intelligence forces that have unleashed terror against the people. Ibbo Mandaza, an insider within the ranks of the divided ZANU forces noted at the time of the launch of the Tekere book that militarism was endemic and central to the survival of the system. He had noted that the present political situation “reveals how that militarism of the liberation war has overflowed into the current situation where we have violence of the state.”

It is this violence of the state that undermines the present actions of the negotiators to establish a government of national unity without serious demilitarization of the society.

After nearly two months of negotiations between the Zanu-PF regime and the two factions of the MDC, on September 15, 2008, the press reported the signing of a power sharing deal between the different parties. Under this deal that had been characterized as ‘a mix of fire and water,’ the leader of the MDC Tsvangirai was to become the Prime Minister with his faction given 16 ministries while Robert Mugabe would head the National Security Council and hold on to 15 ministries. Even before the signing there had been prolonged differences and squabbles over who would control the crucial ministries of Finance, Defence and Home Affairs. But one month after the signing of the deal there had been no movement and more ominous was the reality that the President of South Africa was operating without the support of his own party in South Africa. Within a week of the signing of the power sharing deal Thabo Mbeki resigned as President of South Africa. Internal struggles within the African National Congress had weakened Mbeki to the point where he had no option but to resign. Even though Mbeki returned to Zimbabwe as a private citizen to attempt to get the new power sharing government moving during October 2008, the leadership of ZANU had become so belligerent that they withheld the passport of Tsvangirai when he had been scheduled to attend a SADC meeting in Swaziland.

Even before the fall of Mbeki and the intransigence of the ruling party there were dissident voices from inside Zimbabwe that decried the fact that “civil society’ and labor were excluded from the power sharing agreement. The Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions lamented the exclusion of the workers in this communiqué from their General Council Meeting,

It also noted that the process used in coming up with the deal was not all-inclusive as the civic society was not given an opportunity to participate.

The exclusion of such critical sectors as labour, and the secretive manner in which issues were discussed, do not give credence to the outcome of the deal. (<http://links.org.au/node/635>)

Other commentators argued that this was a deal between elites who wanted to stabilize the situation without a fundamental change in the political culture. These democratic forces had called the establishment of a transitional government, comprising both MDC and Zanu-PF representatives, to stabilise the country’s politics and economy and create conditions for peaceful, free and fair elections.

Brian Raftopoulos, the Zimbabwean activist referred to above, has stressed that this transitional government would not be the same as the government of national unity for which many, including Mbeki and the African Union, are advocating. He noted, “The government of national unity would be a long-term entity whereas the transitional government would remain in power only long enough to stabilise the country.”

Stabilizing the country for whom?

The stabilization of the country so that the exploitation of the working people can continue without the full presence of the international media is urgent for both the present leaders of Zimbabwe and South Africa. For the one section of the ANC leadership the alliance between capitalists in Zimbabwe and South Africa can continue without the kind of scrutiny which should be brought to bear

on the working conditions for workers on the mines and farms in South Africa and Zimbabwe. For the ZANU-PF leadership the competition for resources between the top factions of the illegitimate regime is so intense that there is need for more open relations with foreign capitalists. When the German company that printed the currency for the government signaled that it was going to stop printing the paper for the currency, this was one more blow. This is despite the fact that the currency is now so devalued that Zimbabweans need trillions of dollars to buy a loaf of bread.

The two military factions of the ZANU-PF (Mnangagwa and Chiwenga on one side and Solomon Mujuru on the other) are in a death struggle not only to keep ZANU in power but to decide which faction should have access to the foreign exchange of the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe. Thus far, those closest to Mugabe and the Governor of the Bank, Gideon Gono are the ones with the forces with the most to lose from a government of national unity or a transitional government that would seek to demilitarize the society. Multiple reports have outlined the ways in which the Mnangagwa and Chiwenga faction have mobilized the military to enhance their personal and financial fortunes in the name of liberation.

Militarism and the dog eat dog struggles

After destroying the agricultural sector in Zimbabwe in the past ten years, the top elements of ministers, civil servants, military and intelligence officials have participated in a speculative orgy and made the Zimbabwe Stock Exchange one of the most profitable for those with links to power. All of the indices of extreme economic crisis exist in Zimbabwe: more than 80 per cent unemployment, hunger, food shortages, shortages of medicinal supplies, inflation of over 230 million per cent and critical shortages of fuel, water and electricity. It is in the midst of this misery where the generals and party leaders are making huge profits from their control over the printing of money and speculating on scarce commodities. The USA and the European Union imposed limited sanctions on the leadership

but because international capitalism is no longer monolithic, the Mugabe regime has been supported by capitalists from China, Malaysia, Libya, and sections of the European Union.

British capitalists never left Zimbabwe. Standard Chartered and Barclays Bank are among the biggest British-owned banks operating inside Zimbabwe. British American Tobacco (BAT) continues with its near century old infrastructure inside of Zimbabwe and dominates what remains of the tobacco crop, while British Petroleum has a large slice of the fuel retail sector and Rio Tinto and Falgold are involved in gold mining.

The corporations with the biggest stake in Zimbabwe have been the South African mining conglomerates. Because of the degree of interpenetration of the two economies over the past century many corporations can do business inside of Zimbabwe while no longer reflecting the performances of their Zimbabwean operations on their books. One report in the *Mail and Guardian* of South Africa listed, Anglo-American Corporation, which is by far one of the most powerful transnational corporations in Southern Africa as one company planning to invest over US \$400m in the platinum mining sector. This company continues to hold large tracts of land hold interests in agro-industry and mining. South African Standard Bank, whose Zimbabwean subsidiary is Stanbic is also involved in the banking sector. Old Mutual, another major South African corporation, is involved in real estate and insurance. PPC Cement; Murray and Roberts; Truworths; Edcon, which owns the Edgars clothes retail chain is another South African companies.

Other South African companies include Hulett-Tongaat, which has a stake in Hippo Valley Sugar Estates; grocery chain Spar; and SAB Miller, which has a stake in Zimbabwe's Delta Beverages. Zimbabwe's thriving mining sector is dominated by foreign companies that include South Africa's Impala Platinum and Mzi Khumalo's Metallon Gold. While the Mugabe government has been

seizing land from commercial farmers this government has also been removing poor peasants from the land to make space for the mining companies. Metallon Gold, which owns five gold mines in the country, produced more than 50% of the country's revenue from gold production. It is not clear how much of the returns from these operations are channeled through official channels so that there are revenues for the Central Bank.

One of the byproducts of the repression in Zimbabwe has been the reality that the above named companies have been able to operate in Zimbabwe when workers did not have the protection of trade unions. As part of the crackdown on opponents of the regime the ZANU PF government has arrested and detained scores of trade union leaders. Thus in the expansion of the mining sector in the past eight years the workers in this mining sector now have even less protection than they had during the period of the anti colonial struggle. In the rush to offer new concessions to foreign mining companies who are profiting from the commodity boom, the ZANU government has trampled on the rights that the Zimbabwean workers won as a component of the independence struggle.

This alliance between Zimbabwean capitalists and South African capitalists is manifest in the support for Mugabe by elements within the ruling party in South Africa. It is this close connection between Zimbabwean capital and South African capital that partially accounted for the "quiet diplomacy" of Thabo Mbeki. The political leadership in Zimbabwe has degraded every principle of democracy, the right to collective bargaining, the rights of workers to health and safety conditions at work, the right to organize independently of employers, the right to freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, freedom of movement and freedom to participate in an open democratic political process. South African workers are defending the democratic rights of the Zimbabwean workers because they understand that ultimately they are also defending their own rights.

Who are the forces of the Opposition?

Before the collapse of the financial sector within the United States and the wholesale nationalization of sectors of the banking industry, the principal spokespersons from the west had supported a settlement in Zimbabwe where neo-liberal policies would prevail. Because of the degree of the maturity of the Zimbabwean working peoples, western 'donors' had been very active within the ranks of the opposition to ensure that the primary means of political opposition to Mugabe by the workers was channeled into the MDC organization and did not develop into a more radicalized and politicized form of engagement. In its origins the MDC owes its political support to the support of the workers in the urban areas. At the outset the militancy of the workers and members of the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions had defined the base of the party. From these beginnings the workers were joined by human rights groups, NGO elites and elements from the expropriated commercial farmer sector. There were therefore three identifiable factions of the MDC.

- (a) The first and most important was the workers, itinerant traders, unemployed from the townships, progressive clergy, students and progressive women.
- (b) The second represented the human rights and lawyer types, middle class professionals, NGO elites and constitutional activists who had convened the National Constitutional Assembly. And
- (c) The third faction represented elements from the commercial farmers and settler forces such as Eddie Cross, Ray Bennett and David Colart who joined the opposition to Mugabe.

It is the presence of the latter elements epitomized by the position of Eddie Cross that hindered a clear position on the land question by the Movement for Democratic Change.

For a short period Munyaradzi Gwisai of the International Socialist Organization of Zimbabwe represented one of the voices calling for the MDC to adopt a more radical position. Gwisai had contested the seat of the Highfield Constituency as a socialist in the ranks of the MDC and won. He was expelled from the party in 2002. From within

Zimbabwe Gwisai continued to be one voice calling for a socialist alternative for the Zimbabwean peoples.

Morgan Tsvangirai (the leader of the MDC) had survived the trade union movement in Zimbabwe to emerge as the head of the coalition of the different forces who were to form the MDC. Although his origins were with the trade union movement of Zimbabwe, the top echelons of the party were dominated by the NGO elites and those with close connection to German Social democrats. For a while Tsvangirai's leadership was threatened by a break away faction. This was the faction led by Arthur Mutambara who was even more explicit about the need for ties with South African capital and western interests. Mutambara's faction contested the 2008 elections as a separate party from the MDC led by Morgan Tsvangirai.

None of the factions of the leadership of the MDC escaped the violence and brutality. Of the three factions of the original MDC, the one that faced the least brutality were the elements from the commercial and managerial classes. These were the ones with the resources to move to and fro between Zimbabwe and South Africa when the violence escalated. The ones who have faced the brunt of the brutality have been the leaders of the workers and students. These elements have been beaten, killed and the women violated. One group of independent women who had formed the Women of Zimbabwe Arise group (WOZA) faced constant harassment. Other independent women leaders such as Grace Kwinjeh and Sekai Holland were beaten and forced into exile. See the analysis of Grace Kwinjeh on her blog: <http://www.gracekwinjeh.blogspot.com/>

The constitutionalists in the MDC were slowly eclipsed in so far as the Mugabe government made it clear after the referendum in February 2000 that the ruling party would use force and would not be open to petitions and changes in the constitution.

In the past five years it is group C -- those from the former commercial farmers and merchant elements

-- that has held decisive influence over the leadership of the MDC. This group is clear that recovery in Zimbabwe is based on the massive inflow of capital from Britain and the USA. There is the mistaken belief as represented in the writings of Eddie Cross that there are resources in the West to aid Zimbabwe. This kind of thinking has not taken into account the financial crisis that has shaken western capitalism since the sub prime mortgage crisis in the West. Economic recovery in Zimbabwe will necessitate long term investments in health, education, the infrastructure and breaking down the colonial forms of accumulation in agriculture and mining. Mugabe has Africanized this structure and a government of National Unity cannot solve the economic problems.

While the MDC represents a political opposition to a Mugabe-led government, it does not represent an opposition to capitalism in Zimbabwe. In many ways the MDC represents a "return" to a junior partner-master relationship between the Zimbabwe capitalist class and international capital. The MDC's economic plan to "rebuild the economy", is based on the neo-liberal thinking of the IMF and World Bank. Such thinking would perpetuate the orientation of the Zimbabwean economy towards the interests of global markets and investors, not the needs of the Zimbabwean people. Because of the imperialist penetration of the MDC, it has emphasized electoral engagement to oppose Mugabe, so as not to oppose capitalism.

Zimbabwe's people need and deserve that the government be judged by its peers right there in the African continent and the African Union not by the world's super powers.

Africans by and large do not regard the USA as a model human rights upholder. Its own handling of elections and the right to vote, at another level, and its range of international violations, its present entanglements in the Middle East disqualify it as a champion of Zimbabweans, at this stage.

While the policy choices of Zanu-PF have clearly demonstrated an inability to help the Zimbabwean economy (her workers, farmers and students) to sustain themselves in today's global economy, the MDC does not represent a progressive alternative. The current position as articulated by the economic spokespersons of the MDC does not entail a transformation of the economy.

History has already demonstrated that the agricultural/mining model cannot support socioeconomic transformation in Zimbabwe. Progressives should note that the Zimbabwean people are between a political rock and an economic hard place between Zanu-Pf and the MDC. Mass actions such as strikes, stay aways and other forms of protest have been severely constrained by the wave of repression in Zimbabwe in the past five years. This repression intensified in 2006-2007 but did not prevent the opposition from mounting a credible electoral challenge. This yielded some benefits in the elections of March 29, 2008.

It was this election and its aftermath that exposed the reality that change in Zimbabwe will not be easy. The stalemate over the power sharing deal conceals an even sharper divide within the society over the paths forward. It should be repeated that Thabo Mbeki has called for this government to end the possibility of a Civil War in Zimbabwe. Mbeki overlooked the fact that there is already a war against the people of Zimbabwe. Secondly, and more importantly, neither Mbeki nor the African Union has spelt out whether this Government of National Unity will be different from the previous government of National Unity that swallowed up the forces of Joshua Nkomo and ZAPU. Will those who carried out the murders, violations and kidnapping in Zimbabwe be allowed to participate in the GNU? Will this be another method of granting immunity to those who have been responsible for the most outrageous brutalities against the people since the end of formal apartheid?

Making a break with repression and violence

Those elements from the opposition who are interested in political power are continuing with the negotiations for a power-sharing deal for the government of National Unity. The forces from the ZANU leadership who want to break out of international isolation will also work for the GNU. However, neither of these forces is concerned about long-term transformation of the politics and a break from the militaristic traditions that have been legitimized as liberation traditions. One service that the Mugabe regime has rendered for the history of African liberation is for the next generation to critically assess the whole experience of the liberation struggle to unearth the foundations of the present repression. In order to make a break with economic repression, militarism, patriarchy, masculinist violence, rape and homophobic oppression there needs to be a new political culture in Zimbabwe and Southern Africa.

This political culture is already emerging with the fission in the MDC between those interested in power and those interested in the conditions of the workers, poor farmers, poor women, students and hawkers. Western European social democrats who have bankrolled the NGO elites and fostered a spirit of intellectual subservience and dependence among the constitutionalists are working over time to ensure that there is a settlement that can bring together one set of capitalists within ZANU with the most pro-capitalist sections of the opposition. It is the kind of unity that will not prioritize the demilitarization of the society.

In the face of the repression within Zimbabwe it is the organized workers in South Africa that have come out as the most forthright opponent of the Zimbabwe repression. COSATU have called for the isolation of the Zimbabwe government and a blockade of the country. Earlier the workers at the ports blocked an arms shipment from China that was destined to be used to repress the workers. The opposition of the workers across Southern Africa will re-ignite the cross-border alliances that had

been developed in the period of the anti-apartheid struggles. Inside South Africa itself, the struggles within the ANC has broken out into an open confrontation between populist forces and the neo-liberal forces around Thabo Mbeki. Jacob Zuma was able to ride on the populism to become the leader of the party. But Jacob Zuma cannot control this populism insofar as the economic conditions provide the incentive for independent organizing by the workers. The South African workers are being radicalized by the glaring disparities between the new black Bourgeoisie and the mass of the population. South African youths who support the Jacob Zuma faction should read the book of Edgar Tekere to learn how the militarism of former liberation leaders can turn into its opposite.

Governments of South Africa, of the USA and Britain as well as many of the leaders of the African Union are anxious to defuse what could develop into a revolutionary situation in Southern Africa. This is the situation where the political initiative is seized by COSATU inside South Africa in an alliance with workers in Zimbabwe, Swaziland, Malawi, Mozambique,, Zambia and Angola seek to develop a regional alliance to combat food prices, high energy costs and the absence of expenditures on health care.

In less than one generation the anti-apartheid leaders have been discredited. Imperialism understands the force of prolonged popular struggle; hence there is urgency in reaching a deal in Zimbabwe before popular forms of protests develop across Southern Africa. More than twenty years ago peaceful protests brought down the regimes of Marcos in the Philippines and the Shah of Iran. Now, in the face of the world capitalist crisis, high energy prices, food prices and the health crisis in Africa, there is a struggle for life itself. It is this struggle that offers the potential for renewal. It is for the renewal of life, village renewal, community renewal and renewal of the confidence of the people that they can make history again.

Ubuntu and revolutionary possibilities

Ubuntu and reparations anchors this renewal in so far as the poor and oppressed in the society want to be human beings. Desmond Tutu articulated the ideas of ubuntu in the period immediately following the end of apartheid but the articulators of the African Renaissance sought to redefine Ubuntu to legitimize self enrichment. The manipulation of Ubuntu by Mbeki and the capitalists should not discredit Ubuntu. Just as how the activities of George Bush and the wars in the name of god has not discredited Christianity, so progressives must distinguish between the African renaissance of Mbeki and a genuine thrust for repair and healing. Reconciliation is one important component of healing.

Ubuntu is an understanding of the shared humanity of all who live in a society. It is clearer in Zimbabwe that the local capitalists do not care about the humanity of the mass of the sufferers. This is the same for the black and white capitalists in South Africa. Ubuntu contains the seeds of revolutionary ideas if these ideas are rooted in the capacities of the people for self activity and for creative forms of struggle to move Africa to the next stage in the recovery of independence and emancipation. Here the memories of the anti-apartheid and anti-colonial struggles provide an inspiration to remind the people that it is the organizational capabilities of the poor that will change society.

Change is not enough, however. There is need for renewal and this renewal must come with repair. The reparations movement has grown internationally. This movement has declared that apartheid, slavery and colonialism were crimes against humanity. African humanity cannot be renewed without repair. Imperialism understands the force of the claims for reparative justice. In the courts of the USA progressives from South Africa are using the legal challenges to those capitalists who cooperated with the apartheid regime to heighten the awareness of the need for reparative justice. The ANC government opposes these claims for reparations. The European Union and the USA

do not want a generalized and educated campaign for reparative justice.

This then accounts for the intensity of the expenditures among the so-called NGO's. European states will finance human rights NGO's in Africa as long as they do not raise the question of reparations. Traditional communist and socialist parties are also afraid of the reparative claims in so far as the reparations debate undermines one of the core ideas of the view that the capitalist mode of production represented a positive force in Africa.

Beyond elections to prolonged democratic struggles: every cook can govern

At the age of 84 Mugabe may certainly get his wish that only God can remove him from office. Serious divisions exist within the ruling party over who will control the levers of plunder and repression. The challenge for the progressive African and for committed Zimbabwean patriots is to be able to support the short term struggles in Zimbabwe as well as the medium term struggles for profound political transformation beyond simply voting. As one Zimbabwean writer noted,

“What needs transformation are the political groupings that house our politicians and are the fertile grounds for an ideological framework that allows politics of retrogression. What also requires transformation is the economic environment that creates vast differences in resource allocation and plays into and cultivates the politics of ethnicity, gender and racial categorizations. The politics of retrogression does not define one individual; it defines the current characteristics of the post colonial African elite. That is why, in the majority of cases where there has been electoral transitioning of political power in Africa thus far, the condition of the people has not changed and the new leadership has not shown any marked changes from the actions of those they replaced.”

Recent electoral struggles in Kenya and the politics of compromise exposed the reality that while multi-partyism is essential for parliamentary democracy

and for ensuring democratic representation, its establishment as a system do not in itself ensure a New Democracy. There is no evidence from the power sharing in Kenya that there is a process underway for the creation and equitable distribution of the national wealth. A society of mass poverty, on the one hand, and massive wealth in the hands of a few, on the other, cannot develop the necessary conditions for the creation of the national wealth to its fullest potentiality, nor can it be democratic.

In contemporary Africa, where the economic depression is most deeply felt, there will be a greater reflex towards political repression by the leadership. In most parts of Africa the politics of retrogression has become the norm, and the leadership has taken – to cultural proportions – the tendency to turn their backs on the people as soon as they take office. There is a need to create new institutions to strengthen popular participation and representation. Parliamentary democracy on its own is not enough; it must be supplemented with and strengthened by other popular institutions and associations like the local governments, cooperative movements, independent workers, women, student and youth organizations, assemblies or organizations for the environmental concerns and for minority rights, and so forth. A new leadership must ensure that this is the dominant political culture, with enough flexibility to allow for changes when changes are needed to strengthen and further consolidate that culture.

This new political culture will eventually shift power from the current corrupt and unrepresentative political groupings, to local communities whose chosen representatives will be accountable to the interests of these local communities first not those of a small center that monopolizes power in the national political groupings.

The interconnection between the short term struggles for democratic spaces and democratic participation will require autonomous and independent organizing among the poor to move the society from one level of politics to the next. It is this new stage of revolution that is calling for a

higher form of democratic participation than the 'low intensity democracy' that equates democracy with voting and free markets only. The new stage of the struggle in Zimbabwe and Southern Africa need activists and thinkers who will break from the old conceptions of politics in order to deepen the concepts of sharing and cooperation that had existed before rapacious capitalism. This is the democracy that C. L. R. James wrote about in his writings on the Caribbean revolution. James had given notice to this democratic participation by distinguishing the democracy of the people's assemblies from parliaments. In the book, *Black Jacobins*, James had noted that revolution starts with the self mobilization of the people: 'but phases of a revolution are not decided in parliaments, they are only registered there.' (Page 81)

Thus it is necessary to reassert that while representative democratic participation and electoral struggles are important aspects of politics in Zimbabwe, the experiences of the opposition in the attempts to remove the Mugabe government should reinforce the reality that the central aspect of change is not in the contest for positions. It is not a democracy based on power sharing but a new democracy, a democracy where every cook can govern. This is how C. L. R James outlined this new democracy.

The over-riding idea was to organize the mass of the people not just to vote, but to govern. To govern through organs in village and town. To govern through Councils on Trade and Foreign policy, which would bring business, unions and the people to discuss the initiatives their Parliamentary leaders were pursuing, or to propose new initiatives. To govern by way of over-sight committees in every Ministry. That way for sure, government would be of the people. By the people could come later when the people in councils, in their own self-movement, would take back from the State, the remaining power vested in the State. And then proceed to a new and unparalleled democracy which would make even ancient Greek democracy look pallid by comparison.

The Zimbabwean peoples are now torn between the old politics of the old state power and the

possibilities of a higher form of political engagement where the people, through their own movements, learn the rules of politics not just to vote but to govern. For the moment the poor have thrown their support behind the MDC. This support will be squandered if the poor are not vigilant to ensure that their struggles against Mugabe do not end with an alliance between the reform elements of ZANU and the MDC without the working class base. While these negotiations are being orchestrated Africans in the Diaspora and progressives everywhere must engage the struggles in Zimbabwe in a way that will strengthen the cause of reparations, peace and justice in all parts of the world.

Zimbabwe: Failing Better?

David Moore (University of Johannesburg)*

The words of Samuel Beckett's *Worstward Ho* fit Zimbabwe. If the process of 'democratisation', liberalisation, and all those other aspects of capitalist modernity is 'westward,' then Zimbabwe under a challenged Mugabe has been heading there in almost the worst conceivable way. But for the democrats struggling to enlarge their space the words of the ultimate tragic optimist are appropriate too. More than three decades (including the liberation war after the mid-seventies) under Mugabe have meant those attempting to widen space for their democratic desires being doomed to repeat Beckett's injunction: "ever tried? Ever failed? No matter, try again, fail again, Fail better".¹ It's hard not to "throw up for good" in such a struggle, but they haven't yet. The problem, though, is finding a way to combine parliamentary and extra-parliamentary roads to that end.²



* Anthropology and Development Studies

1. Samuel Beckett, *Worstward Ho*, London: John Calder, 1983. The 'tragic optimist' school of African studies is epitomised by Christopher Cramer's exceptional *Civil War is Not a Stupid Thing: Accounting for Violence in Developing Countries*, London: Hurst & Co, 2006 (its Indiana University Press version is more boringly called *Violence in Developing Countries: War, Memory, Progress*).
2. David Moore and Tapera Kapuya 'Zimbabwe's Opposition Now: The Parliamentary Road or Mass Action on the Streets?' *Global Dialogue*, 10, 2 (August 2005), pp. 4-9.

The Deal Signed: Arthur Mutambara (MDC-M), Robert Mugabe, Morgan Tsvangirai (MDC-T) & Thabo Mbeki

As these words were written Zimbabwe was on the edge of another of its many historical precipices. Mid September's high hopes for a transitional government based on the *Agreement between the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) and the Two Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) Formations, on Resolving the Challenges Facing Zimbabwe* had seemed to come to naught. Yet there had been hope. Zimbabwe's two main parties (and the third, a small splinter of the Movement for Democratic Change — MDC-M, led by once radical university student Arthur Mutambara) signed the settlement on September 11. A huge SADC procession four days later poured praise on SADC's facilitator Thabo Mbeki for pulling the hare out of the hat, and appeared to add enough pomp and circumstance to satisfy Mugabe's royal pretensions. Many thought it would mark the beginning of his end, even if it fell far short of registering the full extent of changes in Zimbabwe's democratic contours since the MDC had been struggling for its due share of power in 1999. To be sure, warnings ensued from the National Constitutional Assembly's Lovemore Maduku that the accord was 'more of capitulation by the MDC than by ZANU-PF' that only gave 'cosmetic executive authority' for Tsvangirai³, and the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions thought it wasn't worth its paper. A hard front in the MDC led reportedly by Secretary-General Tendai Biti (also a former student radical) took its cue from civil society, opposing the parliamentarians who'd very much have liked to get down to work — and continue to get paid: by the end of October their salaries in a non-functioning parliament were only worth US\$10 a month. Harare sources claimed that Mutambara had joined his old university chum to call for abandoning the deal, although his partners Welshman Ncube and Priscilla Misihairabwi-

3. Basildon Peta, 'Tsvangirai confident that deal will work', *Sunday Independent* (Johannesburg), September 14, 2008, Edn. 3.

sMushonga, who led the 2005 split away from Tsvangirai and later invited Mutambara back from his American pursuits of robotic science and historically devoted to parliament at any cost, would presumably be against that strategy. It could be that the volatile Mutambara, badly bruised by appearing to be a Mugabe acolyte during the pre-settlement conjuncture, was recouping his student-civil society credentials.⁴



The MPs were sitting on the cusp of a significant victory: Mugabe had unilaterally called parliament — now structured by the March 29 MDC victory that even the ZANU-PF biased Zimbabwe Electoral Commission could not fix, after five weeks of trying⁵) — to sit in late August, hoping an MDC-M candidate for speaker would cause some friction on its August 23's election. But some MDC-M members voted against their candidate, as did a few

from ZANU-PF. The MDC-T's National Chairman Lovemore Moyo won the speaker's prize with 110 votes of the assembly's 210. Some of these votes weren't quite private, given that many MPs waved their marked ballots to all and sundry (thus inciting Independent MP Jonathan Moyo, ZANU-PF's former propaganda chief, to file an application to the High Court against it), and it has been said that a few were paid for by Freedom House's Orange revolutionaries: nevertheless they constituted something of a parliamentary coup. Democracy seemed to be on a roll.

Of course there was no doubt that the September 11 settlement signified dual power, not shared power. Sharing would be too warm and fuzzy a concept to describe the feelings between the MDC and ZANU-PF after an eight and a half year campaign in which the latter used every dirty trick in the book, and invented new ones when those ran out. But in spite of awkward notions such as giving Morgan Tsvangirai prime ministerial 'executive power' over a cabinet 'council' which was actually the same as the cabinet over which Mugabe would preside, and creating two deputy prime ministers from the MDCs to match Mugabe's two vice-presidents, there was a decent core to the 18 or more month transitional scheme. The drafting of the accord was almost half and half MDC liberal humanism ("DETERMINED to act in a manner that demonstrates respect for the democratic values of justice, fairness, openness, tolerance, equality, respect of all persons and human rights" and "to build a society free of violence, fear, intimidation, hatred, patronage, corruption and founded on justice, fairness, openness, transparency, dignity and equality") side by side with ZANU-PFist nationalism ("RECOGNISING and accepting that the Land Question has been at the core of the contestation in Zimbabwe", noting "the present economic and political isolation of Zimbabwe by the United Kingdom, European Union, United States of America and other sections of the International Community" and that "the primary obligation of compensating former land owners for

4. By the end of October it was reported that the MDC was proposing to remove the rival faction from the agreement. This was after Mutambara had spoken in support of Morgan Tsvangirai's decision not to attend a Southern African Development Community meeting in Mbabane called in the last week of October to settle the deal (about which more later). Zimbabwean politics is nothing if not volatile. Jason Moyo, 'MDC sets its sights on the UN', *Mail & Guardian* (Johannesburg) October 31-November 6, 2008, p. 14.

5. Susan Booyson, 'The Presidential and Parliamentary Elections in Zimbabwe, March and June 2008', *Electoral Studies*, 24, 4 (forthcoming December 2008). See also Booyson's authored Electoral Institute of Southern Africa, *The Zimbabwe Harmonised Elections of 29 March 2008, Presidential, Parliamentary and Local Government Elections with Postscript on the Presidential Run-off of 27 June 2008 and the Multi-Party Agreement of 15 September 2008*, Electoral Institute of Southern Africa Observer Mission Report No. 28, Johannesburg, 2008.

land acquired rests on the former colonial power”⁶), but a momentum borne by that intangible concept of political ‘will’ might have carried it on beyond the hackneyed past. If the MDC-T and MDC-M could have co-operated they’d have held a fragile one-seat majority in cabinet and parliament (and it was expected the ‘appointments’ to Senate and governorships would be even-handed). There would have been economic and military councils, and a widely consultative process to create a new constitution on which the National Constitutional Assembly, which started the whole process of constitutional democratisation back in 1998, started work immediately on that score. As well, a Periodic Review Mechanism, consisting of two members from each party, signified equal weighting (although one can argue that the Mutambara faction may not ‘really’ deserve equality at such a level, having only gained 10 seats and 4.83% of the March 29 vote,) on final say.

Even the naysayers seemed to think there’d be a fair sharing of important cabinet posts. The MDC, it was agreed — but never signed — had secured the departments of Home Affairs, Justice, Finance and Information Ministries while ZANU-PF retained Defence, Agriculture, Mines and Prisons. An MDC MP with a long tradition in the labour unions, eager to take up his new legislative seat, opined ‘we are not at war: Mugabe can keep the army;’ when queried on rumours that Anglo-American and the like had pushed hard for the deal — any deal! — in fear of heightened British sanctions, he joked ‘I hope they sponsor my football team.’ Even the caustic RW Johnson was buoyed by the prospect of imperial intervention: he declared that the trusty Brits would ride in to rectify the military.⁷ The crazed Gideon Gono would be no longer chair of the Reserve Bank, so the donors’ “Fishmongers” plan (named after the Harare restaurant in which the

usual suspects met to draft tough IMF-style shock therapy with lots of humanitarian band-aids) would cool an inflation rate that as of mid-October was 231,000,000%. With the help of a billion and a half dollars of aid, Zimbabwe would soon reach its (mythical) historical status of ‘breadbasket’ state. As if immaculately conceived, a 240 page ‘discussion document’ authored by a UNDP team ranging from University of Zimbabwe Management Studies professor Tony Hawkins on the right to former Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) economist Godfrey Kanyenze on the left was unveiled, promising economic nirvana (if heaven was last seen in 1991) in 12 years if growth could average five per cent annually. The ‘manufactured in Zimbabwe’ *Comprehensive Economic Recovery in Zimbabwe*⁸ struck radical political economist Patrick Bond as ‘neo-liberal’, perhaps because it said that Zimbabwe is not ready for a ‘developmental state’, while John Robertson, an economist of more orthodox bent, said it would only serve to breed bureaucrats. On signing, Tsvangirai said to the sceptical *Sunday Independent* reporter that he had to give the ‘benefit of the doubt’ to the man who had so often labelled him as Blair’s tea-boy and an ignorant ‘chematama’ (fat-face).⁹

Yet by November it looked as if none of this would come to pass. For some reason Tsvangirai had buckled to the SADC negotiator’s ‘don’t worry: crisis what crisis?’ attitude to the construction of the cabinet (along with just about everything else in Zimbabwe) and failed to gain guarantees on the distribution of posts. Thabo Mbeki, known to harbour a pungent dislike for Tsvangirai (“he could never lead Zimbabwe to liberation”, he’s reported to have said) must have foreseen his unceremonious sacking back home at the hands of the ANC’s Zuma gang, so pushed Tsvangirai to accept empty promises about that cabinet. Mugabe, who as ex-guerrilla leader (thrown into jail from 1977 to 1980

6. The best juxtaposition was this: the accord promised to “reject any unlawful, violent, undemocratic and unconstitutional means of changing governments” and also warned that “no outsiders have a right to call or campaign for regime change in Zimbabwe”.

7. RW Johnson, ‘Security is first test of Zimbabwe deal’, *Sunday Times* (London), September 14, 2008.

8. United Nations Development Programme, *Comprehensive Economic Recovery in Zimbabwe: A Discussion Document*, Harare, 2008.

9. Peta, ‘Tsvangirai confident’

by Mugabe and Samora Machel for seeming to be a threat to the former) and now co-leader of the oppositional Zimbabwe Liberation Veterans' Forum Wilfred Mhanda says will take the 1% of a deal that looks 99% against him and win, was soon to deny the MDC's place at the table. Beholden to the prospects of losing control of the ZANU-PF congress in December, and tied to a rejectionist camp led by Emmerson Mnangagwa (infamous for his role as head of security in the *Gukurahundi* that claimed thousands of lives as ZANU-PF forced Joshua Nkomo's Zimbabwe African People's Union to enter into a unity pact that no one wants to see repeated now: ZAPU was swallowed whole) he could not summon the strength to deprive any of his ministers of a place around the trough. Cutting a cabinet of thirty in half is not an easy task: nor is giving up the military or finance. The former keeps opposition in check and precludes justice for sins of the past; the latter keeps the official rate of exchange alive and thus the main channel of corruption (it takes about four billion Zimbabwean dollars to buy one American one on the parallel market, but only ten thousand if one has access to the official rate!). A Harare story that Mnangagwa pushed the unelected Justice Minister Patrick Chinamasa (who in 2002 had, with the active encouragement of perhaps the only foreign policy-maker in South Africa, Thabo Mbeki, entered into heavy negotiations with then MDC Secretary-General Welshman Ncube, thus nicely the sewing lines of division in the MDC that contributed to its split in 2005), and was severely beaten by Mugabe's bodyguards, indicates the strains in the ruling party that is governing less and less every day. The popular exaggeration of the rumour, that had Mnangagwa pushing Mugabe, was squelched by one man who knows Mugabe well: if that had happened, he said, Mnangagwa would now be dead. Mugabe himself has admitted publicly that he fears rebellion from within.¹⁰ Mugabe remembers the mid-1970s divisions in ZANU very well, and probably *après moi, la deluge*, not quite realising the storms have been pelting for nearly a decade.

10. Jason Moyo, 'Mugabe Fears Zanu-PF Rebellion', *Mail & Guardian*, October 31-November 6, 2008, pp. 13-4.

Thus on October 12, a day after the three main protagonists in the prolonged haggling over dividing the cabinet positions agreed to call in Private Citizen Mbeki, in need of consultancy fees during his forced retirement, ZANU-PF announced the cabinet: Defence, Home Affairs, Justice, Media and Higher Education (those pesky students have to be watched) would be all for the ruling party, while the two MDCs were thrown the crumbs with economic reconstruction and social welfare functions — not good candidates for winning an election in a few years *sans* the donors pitching in for a government that is not even *plus ça change*. Finance was unresolved: perhaps that was left to the itinerant negotiator to assign. Tsvangirai addressed an October 12 rally saying that unless Home Affairs would be in his hands, the deal would be off. He was facing a split in his party: some said that only a demand for a new national election would save the MDC-T face. In the meantime, concerned activists were consulting the SADC (Southern African Development Community) and AU (African Union) diplomats persuading them to call an emergency summit. The Zimbabwe Liberation Veterans' Forum, made up of war veterans opposed to their peers who allied with Mugabe in the hopes they'd get some free land, appealed to the AU and SADC to let go of the lame-duck mediator and get a new process rolling. The ZLVF wondered "what informs the position of SADC leaders by conferring legitimacy to a rogue president whose hands drip with the blood of his own people and not of his imagined enemies from the West."¹¹

As expected, the October 13-15 meetings mediated by South Africa's past president resolved only that the MDC could take Finance for its troubles. Somewhere along the line it was proposed that Home Affairs be split: the MDC could take immigration functions while the guys with guns would be in the violent party's hands. No deal: and Tsvangirai seemed to be gaining ground. Denied a

11. The Zimbabwe Liberation Veterans' Forum, 'An Appeal for the African Union to Intervene to Resolve the Zimbabwean Political Impasse', Harare: August 26 2008.

passport for months (Home Affairs says there is no paper, but swimming star Kirsten Coventry got one in days and civil servants say the document is sitting in a desk) he refused to take emergency travel documents enabling him to attend the October 20 meeting of the SADC security troika+1 (Chair, South Africa; members, Angola, Mozambique and Swaziland) in Mbabane. And so, as the summer begins in southern Africa, millions of Zimbabweans are dying faster than ever before and the MDC ups the ante to SADC as a whole (to meet in South Africa in the first week of November), then the AU, and then elections to be monitored by the UN.

The time for such an intervention whilst thousands were beginning to starve as never before, would be, however, far too long. Kwashiorkor, Pellagra (an adult form of malnutrition leading to madness and death) and Marasmus stalked the land: estimates were that five million would be in danger of starvation by January 2009. The senior doctors are bought off: as Jan Raath wrote, in September the Reserve Bank bought imported cars for the hundred or so of them. The cost? US\$5 million.¹² The state had no funds to run examinations for its schools; and towards the end of October it recalled all government vehicles from their temporary users.

A new election could bring hope or more despair. There are indications that this is what the Mnangagwa faction wants. They will take complete power in the December ZANU-PF congress and resort again to the *Gukurahundi* tactics that raised their head in the weeks before the June 27 non-election to such an extent that Tsvangirai withdrew. This line of thought predicts that the MDC will be destroyed so they had better sign a deal now.

On the other hand, if the UN could rise out of its bureaucratic lethargy and run a real election — something that, if it had taken place more than half

a decade ago, might have solved the problem in the making — the humanitarian aid would flow in. Millions of lives could be saved, and more than a modicum of democracy could creep in. However, the UN is not well-known for doing much of anything in Africa — is the Democratic Republic of the Congo a success story? — although, ironically, one of its more successful elections was managed by Zimbabwean professor of law Reg Austin, in Cambodia in 1992. If one writes off the UN, only the settlement is left. The MDC would like two years to let the Economic Council bring a material base back in, and the constitution could be debated vigorously.



Joshua Bakacheza, an MDC activist, was abducted by men in a truck on 25 June 2008 in Msasa, Harare and shot in the head a few hours later, according to his colleague who survived a bullet to the head and the lungs in the same incident. Bakacheza's body was discovered lying in the open on 5 July, after a search of ten days. This pattern of abduction and subsequent murder account for 45 known deaths during April-June 2008.¹³

Could a wounded Mbeki magically wave his wand to solve all this? Could SADC? The AU? Resorting to fantasy in something approaching an 'academic' article illustrates the surreal nature of Zimbabwe now. The fact that senior doctors drive around in hypocritical abuse of their Hippocratic Oath while grown men and women place their faith in an Aids-

12. Jan Raath, 'Aid agencies: 5m face starvation in Zimbabwe: Silently, in rundown wards, starving children lie dying - malnutrition diseases are overwhelming hospitals,' *Times Online*, October 14, 2008.

13. Solidarity Peace Trust, *Desperately Seeking Sanity: What Prospects for a New Beginning in Zimbabwe?* (Solidarity Peace Trust, July 2008).

denialist brings us back to Beckett and his tradition. Such tragedies take us back to the world of literature, a salvation in Africa's perpetual crisis. This time, a leading MDC politician still under treason charges invokes African writers to state his position. Tendai Biti, writing of the crisis in education, brings Ngugi wa Thiongo's brilliant *The Wizard of the Crow* to his side: for him Ngugi's 'Abhurian State' "brilliantly describes" what happens to ruling classes and their empty ideology of nationalism.

Faced with the frustration of failing to transform the colonial state during the national democratic stage of the struggle, nationalism degenerates and decomposes into neo-patrimony, clientelism, the imperial presidency and patronage. In short, it converts the state into a rogue state where violence, corruption and personal accumulation become vehicles for the continued reproduction of the state.

The Abhurian State ... had been fore-written by Chinua Achebe in *A Man of the People*, Sembene Ousmane in *The Last of the Empire* and Ayi Kwei Armah in *The Beautiful Ones are Not Yet Born*. At that stage, the highest level of decomposition, nationalism needs to be saved from itself or it will take the nation with it.

That is exactly where Zimbabwe is at the present moment. ZANU-PF needs to be saved from itself or it will annihilate the construct that Zimbabwe is.¹⁴

There is no doubt that the energies consumed in ridding Zimbabwe of Mugabe could be better spent elsewhere. If that one task could be achieved, it may not be chimerical to advance the proposition that the edifice he has built around himself would fall like a house of cards. One can only hope, with Beckett, that Zimbabwe's next failure will be better than usual: the doctors' cars remind us, though, that failure for some is success for others. Zimbabwe's political economy needs drastic overhauling, so those making new constitutions in this interregnum

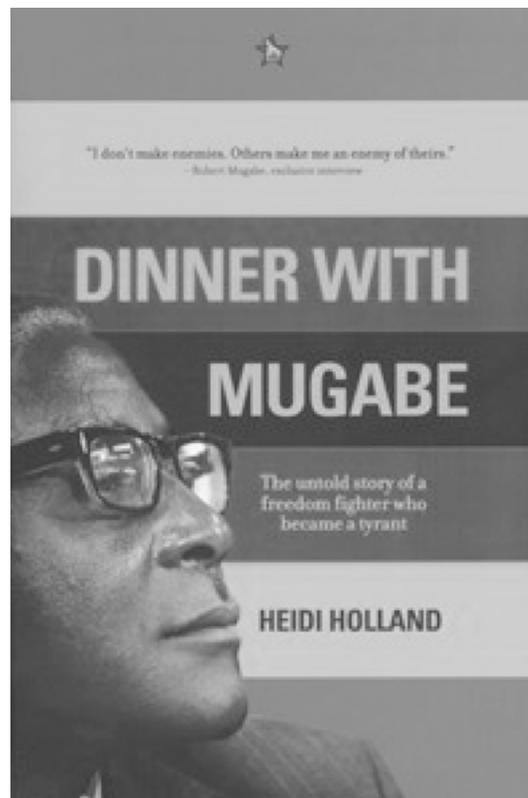
— a space in which the wisdom of those running the financial markets of the world is seen to be equivalent to Robert Mugabe's — must constitute a new economy too.

14. Tendai Biti, 'MDC: Collapse of education system an indictment of ZANU PF,' MDC Press Statement, October 13, 2008. On SW Radio Africa, www.swradioafrica.com/pages/mdconeduc131008.htm.

Review: Heidi Holland's *Dinner with Mugabe*

Sean Jacobs (University of Michigan)*

In 1957 Ghana became the first former European colony in Africa south of the Sahara to gain its political independence. Kwame Nkrumah, Ghana's new Prime Minister, invited young Africans from countries still under colonial rule to move to Ghana and help build the new country. Among the new immigrants was a young schoolteacher from Rhodesia, Robert Mugabe. The young Mugabe quickly settled in Ghana. In 1960 during a visit home to see his mother, however, Mugabe was invited to join a march against the arrest of two nationalist leaders, in the Rhodesian capital Salisbury. Facing police, the marchers stopped to hold an impromptu political rally. Somehow Mugabe found himself hoisted onto the improvised stage alongside other leaders like Joshua Nkomo, who was heading the leading black opposition group, the National Democratic Party. Mugabe gave a rousing speech ("The nationalist movement will only succeed if it based on a blending of all classes of men") and impressed nationalist leaders soon convinced him not to return to Ghana and instead become publicity secretary of the National Democratic Party that later morphed into the



Zimbabwe African People's Union or ZAPU. Three years later Mugabe engineered a split within ZAPU to form the Zimbabwe African National Union. He would dominate that country's politics from then on.

Nothing about Mugabe's earlier life portended his swift rise, according to South African journalist, Heidi Holland, in her "psycho-biography," *Dinner with Mugabe* (Penguin Group, 2008). Born in 1924, in Kutama, in the central part of the country, Mugabe was a shy, precocious child, prone to bullying by other boys. When Robert was ten years old, his father, Gabriel, a carpenter, moved away, started a second family and broke off all contact with Robert, his siblings and his mother. Mugabe's mother clung devotedly to the Catholic Church and to Robert. She told him he was marked for greatness and sent him to Jesuits for an education (Mugabe is still a devoted Catholic). Mugabe would go to study in South Africa at Fort Hare University (the alma mater of Nelson Mandela and other regional nationalist leaders). On completing his studies, he started teaching and later made his way to Ghana.

The Rhodesia that Mugabe found on his return in 1960 was a tense, violent country, especially for its black population. Zimbabwe at the time was a former British colony governed by a small, tightly knit and mainly English-speaking, white settler population who had been granted "self-rule" by the British at the expense of the country's black majority. Whites had first arrived in Zimbabwe in the nineteenth century as part of aggressive British colonial expansion north of South Africa in search of natural resources. The new arrivals, through a mixture of force and cunning, eventually dispossessed the locals of their land. In 1896 blacks rose up, in what would come to

* This article was originally published in *The National*, Abu Dhabi, Online at <http://thenational.ae>

be known as the “First Chimurenga” or liberation war. Though they fought valiantly, they lost and colonization was formalized. By the 1950s, nearly 80% of the best agricultural land belonged to whites. Most blacks were condemned to life on rural reserves, burdened by heavy taxes that forced men to work on commercial farms and mines, or move for wage work to the ghettos of Salisbury or Rhodesia’s second city, Bulawayo, in the west. The whites of Zimbabwe gradually developed a distinctive political identity and a reputation for unbending racism and prejudice.

In a 1960 speech in Cape Town, South Africa, the British Prime Minister Harold MacMillan told South Africa’s white rulers that: “The wind of change is blowing through this continent, and whether we like it or not, this growth of national consciousness is a political fact. We must all accept it as a fact, and our national policies must take account of it.” The South Africans rejected MacMillan’s advice, digging in for another three decades of undemocratic rule. Five years later Rhodesian Prime Minister Ian Smith announced a “Unilateral Declaration of Independence” from Britain vowing that blacks would never govern Rhodesia “in a thousand years.”

By this point Mugabe’s new movement, ZANU, had grown into the main opposition force largely because it exploited ethnic differences. ZANU was dominated by the majority Shona; Nkomo’s ZAPU became associated with the minority Ndebele. In 1964, Mugabe was arrested. He would only be released from prison in 1974 following an agreement between the Rhodesian government and ZANU guerrillas, by now engaged in a full-scale civil war. While in prison, Mugabe’s only son (only 3 years old at the time) passed away. Smith’s government refused him permission to attend the boy’s funeral. For Heidi Holland, the insensitivity of the Smith regime had a lasting effect on Mugabe.

Holland first met Mugabe in 1975 in Salisbury where she worked as magazine editor. She arranged for a lawyer friend to meet Mugabe secretly at her

suburban home. Over dinner Mugabe said little, but impressed Holland nonetheless: Driving Mugabe to the train station after the meeting (his ride had failed to materialize), Holland left her small son asleep alone in the house. The next day, Mugabe called to check that the child was okay.

Over the next 30 years Holland had no further contact with Mugabe, who went on to lead a brutal guerrilla war with the Rhodesian state. This war eventually exhausted the Rhodesian state and the appetite of white Rhodesians for segregation at all costs. In the late 1970s, the Rhodesian regime—stripped of support from Britain and abandoned by South Africa’s Apartheid rulers (and their backers in the US Republican Party)—initiated negotiations with the black opposition.

However, the war also bred elements of the political culture that independent Zimbabwe would later inherit: among these, the use of violence to settle political scores and to obliterate opponents, disregard for human rights, slavish reverence for authority, ideological rigidity, and corruption.

ZANU won a majority in the first democratic elections in 1980 and Mugabe was initially conciliatory to whites, guaranteeing seats for whites in the new Parliament (one went to Smith), and appointed a white man as agriculture minister (that man, Denis Norman, now living in the UK, and who does not blame Mugabe for everything that has gone wrong in Zimbabwe).

Barley two years into independence, Mugabe under the pretext of putting down a coup attempt by former guerrilla soldiers loyal to Nkomo (now opposition leader in Parliament), unleashed a murderous, North Korean-trained army special unit in the western Matabeleland province of the country (the ZAPU stronghold) indiscriminately killing civilians and guerrillas alike. In 1998, nearly a decade after this ethnic pogrom against the Ndebele, a report by Catholic Bishops Conference estimated the total number of murdered or disappeared at more than 20,000 people. Mugabe, though,

achieved his political aim: In 1987 Mugabe coerced a weak Nkomo into accepting a "Unity Accord," effectively swallowing ZAPU into the new ZANU-Patriotic Front. Not long after, Mugabe changed the Constitution to make himself executive president.

One of the legacies of that time and a testament of the power of the nationalist narrative that African independence leaders embodied, is that very few, and certainly not many of Mugabe's current Western critics, publicly objected to these murders or dared criticize him. Instead, during this time Mugabe received a knighthood from Queen Elizabeth II (he still retains a fondness for the British royal family) and honorary degrees from a number of American universities. (The Knighthood and the degrees were only taken away earlier this year). On the home front, the Zimbabwean economy was growing steadily even in the hostile shadow of Apartheid South Africa and its people were experienced improvements in their lives (especially improved access to education and health services). As Lord Carrington, British foreign secretary during the independence negotiations told Holland in her book: "But other than the killing of the Ndebele, it went tolerably well under Mugabe at first, didn't it? He wasn't running a fascist state. He didn't appear to be a bad dictator."

In 1995, street riots erupted in the capital, now Harare, against rising prices and unemployment. A mineworker, Morgan Tsvangirai, who would later emerge as Mugabe's most formidable opponent, led the newly formed Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions. Academics, human rights activists, and lawyers would later join the trade unions. Their main political focus, alongside protesting economic hardship, would increasingly revolve around reforms to the country's Constitution. In 1999, these groups would form the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC). Mugabe called their bluff and announced a referendum for 2000 to push through constitutional changes that would increase his powers and extend his tenure as President. Much to his surprise, Mugabe lost the referendum. He, and his party ZANU-PF, was clearly stung by the result.

With parliamentary elections looming and an opposition buoyed the referendum result, Mugabe and ZANU-PF embarked on a new strategy: They unleashed what Mugabe termed the "Third Chimurenga" (the guerrilla war was the "Second Chimurenga"). This involved focusing on "land redistribution," an obvious grievance. The British were blamed for abandoning promises to fund the state's acquisition of private, commercial farms to redistribute to black farmers. Whites, who still owned much of productive land and who had reluctantly come around to accept independence, also provided easy targets.

Squatters, egged on by the police and identified as "war veterans" (among them were 18 year olds who could not have fought in the guerrilla war that ended before they were born), soon invaded white-owned farms. But it soon became clear that redistribution was in the eye of the beholder: the best farms were parceled out among Mugabe's Cabinet ministers and senior army officers.

A few whites were brutally attacked and their plight predictably became front-page news in the West. In the British Parliament, members spoke once again of "the people of Rhodesia." Peter Godwin, a white journalist born in Zimbabwe, claimed that being white in post-independence Zimbabwe was "starting to feel a bit like being a Jew in Poland in 1939." What took a while to figure out was that the bulk of Mugabe's victims were black: murdered, tortured, or imprisoned. Journalists were harassed, newspaper offices closed or bombed and people were starved or denied food if they failed to join ZANU. Once again, as it did under colonial and Rhodesian rule, the bulk of the victims of the Zimbabwean government's violence were black.

In 2000 ZANU-PF narrowly won parliamentary elections marred by fraud and violence. Not surprisingly Mugabe was re-elected to another six year term in an election also condemned as deeply flawed by both Zimbabwean and foreign observers.

Since then Zimbabwe's economy has crashed—there is large-scale poverty and its currency essentially worthless. Thousands have fled to neighboring South Africa (where, incidentally, the country's president, Thabo Mbeki, remains a loyal ally to Mugabe, but Mbeki's party as well as South Africa's trade union movement have backed the Zimbabwean opposition). During this period, Mugabe and his closest aids became more delusional and their government took on a siege mentality. Heidi Holland's account of Mugabe's political career is bookended with an account of her second meeting at the end of 2007 with Mugabe in his government office. She describes a banner in his office that proclaimed "Mugabe is Right" and hearing his insistence that Zimbabwe's economy is "hundred times better than the average African economy" and predicted that within two years the economy, particularly the agricultural sector, would recover.

On March 29 of this year, Zimbabweans went to the polls again in presidential elections. When two other candidates announced they would run for president (including Mugabe's former finance minister Simba Makoni), many observers felt the opposition vote would be split and Mugabe would emerge an easy victor. The opposition had also been subjected to intimidation and violence by ZANU para-militaries and its candidate Morgan Tsvangirai had been viciously assaulted by police. However, as the first results started trickling in late election night, however, it appeared Morgan Tsvangirai held a clear lead (the MDC had recorded results as they were posted outside polling stations). The next day the electoral commission, stuffed with government sympathizers, announced that it would delay the results. A month later, and following announcements from the army and police that it would refuse to serve an MDC government, a final result was announced: Tsvangirai had won, but not by enough. So an unprecedented second round was scheduled for three month later, and police and army intimidation and attacks on opposition candidates and supporters stepped up. Days before the rerun election, however, Tsvangirai—citing

high levels of violence and intimidation—called off his participation, guaranteeing Mugabe a hollow victory. But Southern African governments, belatedly stepped in, forcing Mugabe to meet with Tsvangirai. For at least a month now, negotiators have been working to thrash out the details of a unity government. The best scenario under the circumstances is for Mugabe to retain a ceremonial presidential post and Tsvangirai as prime minister with a fair representation of MDC leaders in key Cabinet posts. But who occupies State House is not only the issue to resolve.

But larger questions remain about Mugabe's legacy for Zimbabwe's future. Why is he so interesting? Mugabe turned the security and civil services into affiliates of the ruling party, rigged elections, encouraged paramilitaries and stifled public debate. Under the cover of "Third Worldism" he also mocked real political grievances—as varied as land hunger and unequal global relations—to forward his own selfish, violent agenda. In the West, he became an example of a supposed black, specifically African, political pathology. But those critics would have to come to terms with his regime is not an aberration as Holland suggests: it is byproduct of Zimbabwe's violent colonial and white minority pasts and of the duplicity of the post-Cold War world. Finally, Zimbabwe also points to the fact that nationalism as a political ideology is fundamentally flawed even though its struggles brought about political independence. Can the MDC and Tsvangirai break the cycle? The MDC clearly presents a rupture with the predatory regimes of Smith and Mugabe and it bodes well that the MDC was forged as a post-independent, non-violent political movement. But it remains to be seen whether it can forge its own path between neo-liberalism (which is the path its boosters in the West wants for it) and appeals for more substantive democracy, including addressing the land question, from its constituents inside Zimbabwe. But first there's the small matter of consigning Mugabe to history.

Editorial: In the Shadow of *Gukurahundi*

Timothy Scarnecchia (Kent State University)

A number of the contributions to this Special Issue on Zimbabwe have made more than passing references to the *Gukurahundi*, the brutal campaign of violence carried out against the mostly Ndebele populations in Zimbabwe during the 1983 and again during the 1985 elections. It is worth reflecting on the meaning of the *Gukurahundi* for anyone interested in understanding why the ruling party, ZANU(PF), when it found itself backed against the wall by election results they thought could never happen (the March 2008 defeat of so many ZANU(PF) members of parliament AND President Mugabe himself), turned to such depraved forms of terror and political violence to punish individuals and rural villages en masse for having voted for the opposition rather than their supposedly “beloved” ZANU(PF).

In April, word started to spread of the violence against mostly Shona villagers and MDC supporters in the smaller towns of the northwestern provinces of Zimbabwe. There was here and there talk of “*Gukurahundi*” again. People began see familiar examples of tactics from the *Gukurahundi* in much of the news: the forced “conversions” of entire villages by ZANU(PF) youth, war veterans, police, and soldiers in April, May, and June 2008; the public beatings of civilians accused of voting for and supporting the MDC; the murders of party activists, of their families, and even their relatives for attending funerals.

Memories of *Gukurahundi* are extremely painful to those who survived it, or were born afterward and told of its horrors by their relatives who had lived through it, and this editorial is not seeking to make a direct comparison of recent events with those of the 1980s. While there are chilling similarities in the tactics used by the ZANU(PF) regime against its

opponents in the aftermath of the March 2008 elections, this editorial does not seek, by noting those similarities, to minimize the extent of the suffering and persecution that occurred during the *Gukurahundi*. Those who were affected by that wave of violence in Matabeleland and Midlands in the 1980s deserve recognition for the scale and depth of their losses, and the attendant political alienation that they have suffered ever since, as marginalized members of the body politic of independent Zimbabwe. The salient point to emphasize here is that the perpetrators of the *Gukurahundi* were never brought to book. The *Gukurahundi* campaign's designers in fact remain in positions of power in the current government. The continued non-admission from the regime as to the scale and intent of the 1980s atrocities, their refusal to admit the *Gukurahundi*'s ethnic character, along with the continued access to power by those who helped plan and command the *Gukurahundi* is what has allowed the ruling party to re-deploy *Gukurahundi*-like actions of political punishment at the grassroots level once again in 2008, and once again to devastating effect, albeit this time not aimed at Ndebele-speaking supporters of ZAPU, but at the Shona-speaking ZANU heartland that had turned away from the party of Mugabe and voted for the MDC.

For many people outside of Zimbabwe, the details of what the *Gukurahundi* was and how it has shaped Zimbabwean politics is little known. A great deal of criticism has been made of scholars and the international community for not looking more critically at the *Gukurahundi* when it was occurring because the world was “in love” with Mugabe and the newly independent Zimbabwe. In addition, much of the world was concentrating on fighting apartheid South Africa, so the crimes of Mugabe--seen at the time as a liberation war hero and a staunch anti-apartheid leader among the Frontline states--could be overlooked in pursuit of the goal of bringing down apartheid in South Africa.

This was a sad failure on the part of the international community, but one that should not be allowed to be repeated in 2008. As Clapperton Mavhunga's article in this issue reflects, the attempts at press censorship that were available to Mugabe's insiders in the early 1980s are much less effective in the Internet age. As described below, the details and photos of victims of these most recent attacks on innocent people are well documented and available for the world to see. The same cannot be said for the evidence of the *Gukurahundi*, but that does not mean the details are unavailable. Thanks to a republished version of the extraordinary document from 1997, the "*Report of the Disturbances in Matabeleland and the Midlands, 1980-1988*" originally written and published in 1997 by the Zimbabwean Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP) and the Legal Resources Foundation, it is possible to research and understand the stark similarities between state violence then and now.

The report republished in 2007 as *Gukurahundi in Zimbabwe: a Report of the Disturbances in Matabeleland and the Midlands, 1980-1988* (London: Hurst & Company, 2007) is well worth finding in your library or requesting that your library order a copy. The Report provides a very clear historical account of the *Gukurahundi*, a term that translates from chiShona as "the early rain which washes away the chaff before the spring rains." To briefly outline the Report's account, *Gukurahundi* was a military campaign launched in January 1983 against the civilians of Matabeleland South, Matabeleland North, and Midlands provinces by Robert Mugabe and others in the ZANU-PF leadership. In addition to military leaders, the Report suggests it was Enos Nkala and Emmerson Mnangagwa along with Mugabe who were most responsible for the planning and implementation of the campaign.

As the report details, two sources of instability had prompted Mugabe to organize the 5th Brigade, a North Korean trained force estimated to include between 2,500 to 3,500 soldiers. The first was the

presence of dissidents after Independence. The report describes how the growth of dissident numbers had increased after violence broke out between demobilized soldiers of Mugabe's ZANU and Joshua Nkomo's ZAPU at Entumbane, a suburb of Bulawayo, in 1980. In addition, the apartheid State in South Africa used former ZAPU soldiers to destabilize Zimbabwe in this period, creating a small group of "Super ZAPU" dissidents responsible for brutal attacks on civilians in an attempt to destabilize Zimbabwe and hamper the use of Zimbabwe by the ANC and PAC to organize their attacks on South Africa. The kidnapping of six foreign tourists in July 1982 became the event used by Mugabe to justify ZANU's unleashing of the 5th Brigade on the civilian population in predominantly Ndebele areas. When the 5th Brigade received their marching orders in January 1983, Mugabe handed them a flag emblazoned with the term *Gukurahundi* on it. He then sent the soldiers off encouraging them to "plough and reconstruct." It soon became clear that the 5th Brigade was not going after the dissidents and super ZAPU directly. Instead, whole villages and districts were targeted for collective punishment and the tactics used showed a strategy of terror, killing, and beatings in order to punish villagers for the presence of dissidents. The Report suggests that there were already adequate regular troops to engage the estimated 200-400 dissidents active in Zimbabwe in 1983. But the specially trained 5th Brigade, made up almost exclusively of Shona-speaking soldiers loyal to Mugabe, began to terrorize the civilian population of Matabeleland. Mugabe's call to "plough and reconstruct" was meant in terms of sending a message in the predominantly Ndebele-speaking areas of the country that ZAPU itself was no longer welcome to remain as a viable opposition party.

It is important to obtain a copy of the republished Report to understand the systematic use of torture and collective punishments during the *Gukurahundi*. Based on over 1,000 personal testimonies, the Report details extensive and extended beatings of individuals both in their home villages and also in special camps set up to make

the beatings more “efficient”. These torture camps became death camps for many victims, and those who survived often suffered physical and psychological injuries that would cause many lifelong disabilities. Families were traumatized by these beatings and the disappearances of loved ones. An appendix at the back shows one example of a list from a hospital of admitted patients, a list that shows how systematic the beatings on the buttocks causing open sores was used, as were the breaking of bones. These same tactics were deployed during the violence this past summer. A Human Rights Watch report from April 2008 describes the tactics used after “base camps” were set up in areas that had voted for the MDC;

During the day, ZANU-PF and their allies (so-called “war veterans,” youth militias and some armed men in military uniform) gather at these camps to decide on their targets, generally those known or thought to support the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC). According to witnesses, the targets are then rounded up and brought to the camps at night, where they are beaten for hours with thick wooden sticks and army batons. Human Rights Watch has interviewed more than 30 people in the last two days who have sustained serious injuries, including broken limbs, as a result of these beatings.¹

Another tactic used during the *Gukurahundi* was literally to starve out the people of rural Matabeleland. Rural shops were forced to close and curfews imposed to stop individuals from moving from urban areas to their rural areas with supplies. Most importantly, food aid was withheld from areas during periods of serious drought. People risked their lives to get to urban areas, while others were reduced to surviving off of foraging and other strategies. The same tactics have been used against the MDC over the past 6 years, with rural populations told in the past that they needed ZANU(PF) membership cards to receive food aid.

This year may be the worst yet, as the shortage of seed and fertilizer has meant fewer and fewer people can afford to plant food, and the politicizing of food aid distribution compounds the situation. During the period of the political violence, Mugabe’s government banned relief agencies and NGOs from working in Zimbabwe, and now that they are allowed to return they are finding the situation to already be dire. In addition, the Zimbabwean government reportedly managed to influence the SADC food security report to show areas of need in ZANU(PF) areas, and leaving out of the report areas controlled by the MDC.

As Alexander and Tendi have described in this issue, during the period between the March election and the June run-off, it was not the 5th Brigade, as in the 1980s, who carried out the violence but by what has been alleged to be a coordinated plan by the Joint Operation Command (JOC) to make sure that when it came time for the June 27th presidential run-off vote, the areas of traditional ZANU(PF) support would have no choice but to vote to reelect Mugabe. Once the violence began, a number of MDC candidates who had won seats in parliament were forced into hiding. The MDC organizers and anyone suspected of harboring opposition views were targets, and once again the rural teachers were forced to run or face torture and public beatings.²

In addition to the direct parallels of tactics used in both the *Gukurahundi* and this past year, the shadow of *Gukurahundi* is still an issue because of the culture of impunity it created. In 1985, as the Report describes, political violence was used before and after Zimbabwe’s second general election to guarantee a ZANU victory, and by 1988, with ZAPU no longer a political threat and the ZAPU leadership brought into the ZANU(PF) government, the perpetrators of the *Gukurahundi* were given a blanket amnesty. The authors of the *Gukurahundi*

1. Human Rights Watch, “Zimbabwe: ZANU-PF Sets Up ‘Torture Camps’” (April 19, 2008) <http://www.hrw.org/english/docs/2008/04/19/zimbab18604.htm>

2. The Sokwanele website has provided detailed accounts of the violence during the summer. A total of 2,168 cases were reported as of November 7, 2008. <http://www.sokwanele.com/map/electionviolence>

Report expressed the following concerns about the 1988 amnesty offered to all those involved in the *Gukurahundi*:

Whilst we have grave reservations about amnesties of this nature, given the lapse of time between 1988 and now and the fact that those responsible for the (more numerous) human rights violations which occurred during Zimbabwe's liberation struggle area also immune from prosecution, we do not suggest that human rights violators be prosecuted. However, it is important that those who were directly responsible for human rights violations be removed from positions which may enable them to violate human rights again in the future. History shows that the retention of the human rights violators in positions of authority can lead to those same people reverting to their old ways.³

Writing in 1997, the authors understood then what has now come to pass: to give amnesty to the soldiers and civilians involved was one thing, but to give blanket amnesty to those in power, to the ministers and generals, to the politburo and the President, only heightens the risk that the political and military leaders will use the same deadly tactics again.

The parallels between the tactics of the *Gukurahundi* and 2008's Operation *Mavhoterapapi* ("How did you vote?") will require a systematic examination by scholars and students writing on the political situation in Zimbabwe today. There are plenty of documented cases and reports of the 2008 violence available on the web. For example, reports written for Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and Solidarity Peace Trust are a good place to start.⁴ The hardworking team of Zimbabwean

journalists at the Voice of America's Studio 7 for Zimbabwe have produced a number of valuable stories of this past summer's violence, as have many Zimbabwean and non-Zimbabwean journalists for the major English-language newspapers. Perhaps the starkest imagery available to show the extent of the torture and beating are the photos of victims of the violence on the Sokwanele's Flickr photostream.⁵ These photos should be enough to convince even the most skeptical person of the magnitude and depravity of the political violence this past summer. Similar photographs from the 1980s appear in the original *Gukurahundi* Report. The psychological trauma experienced by families and survivors of this past summer's violence has been and will continue to be great. And while the Zimbabwean health infrastructure has currently ground almost to a halt, the heroic work done by churches, medical workers, and others to assist victims requires greater international recognition and financial support.

The Shadow of Gukurahundi and the Power Sharing talks

The national unity model of negotiations that Mbeki, SADC, and the AU pulled out of their hat in August and September 2008 seemed at first a perfect way to save face. It allowed South Africa and SADC to claim "ownership" of the crisis, and allowed the international community to show their concern but also to absolve themselves of any tough diplomatic choices, in particular making the illegitimate election and political violence in Zimbabwe a priority at the UN Security Council. One major problem with the talks soon became apparent, that was the inability of SADC to convince the very same ZANU(PF) leadership, who are also close business and military associates with the most powerful players in SADC (South Africa,

3. *Gukurahundi in Zimbabwe: a Report of the Disturbances in Matabeleland and the Midlands, 1980-1988*. Introduction by Elinor Sisulu. (London: Hurst & Company, 2007) 379.

Another important book is Brian Raftopoulos and Tyrone Savage (eds), *Zimbabwe: Injustice and Political Reconciliation* (Harare: Weaver Press, 2004). See especially the chapter by Sheri Eppel, "'Gukurahundi' The need for truth and reparation" pp. 43-62.

4. Amnesty International, *Zimbabwe: Time for Accountability*: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/news-and-updates/report/zimbabwes-victims-of-violence-can-no->

[longer-wait-for-political-solution-20081031](http://www.amnesty.org/en/news-and-updates/report/zimbabwes-victims-of-violence-can-no-longer-wait-for-political-solution-20081031) ; Human Rights Watch, "*They Beat Me like a Dog*": *Political Persecution of Opposition Activists and Supporters in Zimbabwe*

<http://hrw.org/reports/2008/zimbabwe0808/> ; Solidarity Peace Trust <http://www.solidaritypeacetrust.org/index.php>

5. Sokwanele Photostream <http://www.flickr.com/photos/sokwanele/>

Angola, Namibia, the DRC), that they must negotiate in good faith.

Now that this lack of good faith on the part of ZANU(PF) is self-evident to the world, there is talk of offering an alternative by organizing a new election. Here again the shadow of *Gukurahundi* appears. As David Moore perceptively observes in this issue, who will stop the current ZANU(PF) from returning to violence again if another election was to be organized? At a recent conference, Mac Maharaj facilitated a lively discussion on the topic of the suitability of a South African-style "power sharing" negotiations in other African states, as has been attempted now in Ivory Coast, Kenya, and Zimbabwe. In an interview by Peter Alegi and Peter Limb after the session, Maharaj pointed to what he saw as the main danger of such generic applications of the model in each new African crisis: "So what we are creating in these other countries [by insisting on a "national unity" or "power sharing" model]... that is, it is almost creating a culture of impunity by those who may commit gross violations of human rights and atrocities against people."⁶ There is serious concern that Mugabe will come out of these negotiations even stronger and with the support of South Africa and the majority of SADC member states.

Whatever the outcome of the SADC power sharing negotiations, it is clear that Mugabe and his ZANU(PF) insiders have managed to buy more time for themselves by understanding how fickle world interest has always been when it comes to a nation like Zimbabwe. As Horace Campbell argues in this issue, they also buy time thanks to the high levels of international mining interests in Zimbabwe. While the United States and other Western nations have used "selective sanctions" against Mugabe, the mining interests from North America, Europe, and South Africa continue to support ZANU(PF) through their constant flow of

new capital investment and in their share of profits. Richard Saunders wrote a detailed report this summer of South African investments in Zimbabwe.⁷ Saunders' report is worth reading to better understand the way South African economic interests continue to invest and take over key areas of the Zimbabwean economy. Chinese and Indian businesses have taken over key areas in mining and in steel and coal production. All of this will continue whether or not a power-sharing agreement is reached, and the general absence of discussion of how the shadow profits from these contracts are "eaten" by the predatory nature of the Zimbabwean political elite makes talks of power sharing as purely a "political" solution all the more suspect.

As concerned scholars, we need to consider ways to advise our own leaders to once again engage the Zimbabwean crisis meaningfully. The excitement around an Obama administration should be seized as an opportunity to reinvigorate US policy toward Zimbabwe. The Bush administration was very slow to realize that Mbeki was failing to negotiate in good faith between ZANU(PF) and the MDC during his six years of "quiet diplomacy". And when U.S. Undersecretary for Africa Jendayi Frazier did finally lose patience with Mbeki, she managed to alienate the South Africans even further by deciding to go to South Africa and declare the MDC's Morgan Tsvangirai as the outright winner of the presidential election while Mbeki remained quiet about the results. It would be helpful if Frazier and the US State Department could do more in the next few months behind the scenes to push SADC and South Africa toward a more responsible role in protecting Zimbabweans from violence both within Zimbabwe and within the region. The US has lost a lot of its legitimacy in Southern Africa over the past 8 years, if not the past 28 years, but the Obama administration can do a great deal to mend fences with a new South African president in January, as

6. See Peter Alegi and Peter Limb, "Africa Past and Present: Episode 16" <http://afripod.aodl.org/> The quote above is from about the 16:30 minute mark.

7. Richard Saunders, "Painful Paradoxes: Mining, Crisis and Regional Capital in Zimbabwe" *Ezine: South Africa in Africa* No. 4, August 2008 <http://www.africafiles.org/atissueezine.asp>

well as with other regional leaders. However, it is important for US policymakers not to simply accept the status quo of “on again off again” negotiations and tacitly accept South Africa’s role as the key negotiator. South Africa is deeply implicated in the Zimbabwean crisis, mostly through its neglect even to recognize it as a crisis until quite recently, and then only after xenophobic violence within South Africa targeting Zimbabweans caused an “embarrassment” to South Africa’s international image. As Hammar and Rutherford have shown in their articles in this issue, the use of Zimbabwean labor in South Africa, both highly skilled and less skilled, has been a large benefit to the South African economy--- but the poor treatment and precarious status of Zimbabweans in South Africa and the region need to be taken more seriously by SADC, and with greater coordination with relief organizations who can assist displaced and at risk populations.

The risks involved in accepting the current dispensation of on-going negotiations and lack of serious attention to food insecurity and displaced populations are troubling to say the least. Consider the results that came from the South African brokered peace in the DRC in 2002, or the American-led negotiations over the CPA in the Sudan in 2005 and again over Darfur in 2007. None of these processes have turned out particularly well, with each conflict returning to a cycle of political violence and humanitarian crises where the death tolls are still mounting. Will it be possible to avert such a fate for Zimbabwe? Is it really the case that the Zimbabwe situation constitutes a conflict resolution model? Or is it a case of a one-sided war against a civilian population? If SADC does manage to force an agreement--and the ANC’s Jacob Zuma has used that term this weekend, that “regional leaders must ‘force’ Harare deal”, who will protect the opposition from further violence once the meetings are over and the handshake photo ops are over?⁸

8. Blessing Zulu, “South Africa’s Zuma Says Regional Leaders Must ‘Force’ Harare Deal” November 7, 2008 <

Since 2000, Mugabe has gambled with the use of elections, hoping to convince the world that he actually cared about the results, while at the same time deploying violence to guarantee a ZANU(PF) victory. Each time he did this, his allies in SADC gave their stamp of approval. The events around the 2008 election showed the world just how the shadow of *Gukurahundi* has returned to action when the corrupt group around the state leadership saw their privileges challenged through legal means. SADC and the AU were unable to sweep this election under the rug, but the international community has thus far been satisfied with allowing South Africa and SADC to continue to legitimate Mugabe’s use of violence by first legitimating his role as president of Zimbabwe, and then by urging him to offer up to the MDC a piece of the political and economic pie. It now would appear that Mugabe and his “super-patriots” have failed even to agree on sharing the crumbs, as reports from this past week show renewed beatings and disappearances of MDC politicians and their supporters. To most casual observers, it would seem illogical and suicidal for Mugabe’s insiders to refuse a deal in order to protect their hold over the economic patronage they command, particularly as the Zimbabwean economy sinks even deeper for the majority of citizens. Students should investigate the intricate links this ruling group maintains to many forms of accumulation, almost all of which depend on using the privileges of state power to ensure their continued economic “success”.⁹ This is not simply

<http://www.voanews.com/english/Africa/Zimbabwe/2008-11-07-voa57.cfm> >

9. For just one recent example, see the reporting by Oscar Nkala in the *Mining Weekly*, “Zim loses \$2bn worth of diamonds a month through smuggling – central bank” (November 7, 2008). After reporting the amount claimed lost by Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe (RBZ) chief Gono, the author interviews a “senior police officer from Manicaland” who explains

‘...that the diamond smuggling syndicates cannot be uprooted because they have political and security establishment connections.’

a class of business elites who can give up their hold on the state and do something else, nor can they possibly consider any attempts at opening the state to those who might find them guilty of abusing state offices. The people around Mugabe's rule are not about to cede their power through a negotiated "power sharing" exercise.

As word of more violence in Zimbabwe begins to reach the world in November 2008, it will be very essential that South Africa and SADC be pushed towards a more active role in peacekeeping and food security. The factions within ZANU(PF) are once again preparing to prove to Mugabe--before the December ZANU(PF) meeting in Bindura--that they are more hardcore in defeating the MDC than the other factions. Again, innocent Zimbabweans will inevitably suffer. This is therefore not a time to wait for drawn-out negotiations or to expect that the new administrations in South Africa and the United States will offer a quick fix. Concerned scholars need to work together with policy makers to devise strategies and approaches. Otherwise, all the best-laid plans for a "post-Mugabe redevelopment" that now circulate around Washington and European think tanks will be meaningless. We all need to realize that there are a number of men and women in ZANU(PF) who will continue to defend the status quo should Mugabe, like two of his previous vice-presidents Joshua Nkomo and Simon Muzenda, die in office.

'Like all illegal activities that involve huge amounts of money, this problem of illegal panning and smuggling will simply not go away. Many a time we have arrested people with big stashes of diamonds and even cash in US dollars, only to get a phone call from some high-ranking government or party official to say we should release the suspects and give them back 'their' loot.

'The RBZ may want to see this ended quickly, but they would have to arrest top government and security establishment officers, who are bleeding this country to death,' says the officer.

<http://www.miningweekly.com/article.php?id=146460>
Also available at the very helpful website for research, the Zimbabwe Situation, <http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/>