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# ZIMBABWE AND POLITICAL TRANSITION

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STRATEGIC UPDATE

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*This paper looks at the factors which helped ZANU-PF as a former liberation movement retain power and lead to a one-party dominant state. It also explores the extent to which ZANU-PF is adapting to democratic politics and multiparty elections.<sup>1</sup>*

Zimbabwe's ZANU-PF offers important parallels and insights into the challenges which confront former Southern African liberation movements as they move to become parties of government. These shared aspects include the importance of personality, ethnic and clan politics which helped to shape the liberation movement during the struggle for independence. There is also the important legacy of emphasis on solidarity and lack of internal discussion and debate. Furthermore, the role of 'armed struggle' and the associated use of violence have left lasting influences. These formative attitudes and experiences forged political cultures which have continued to play out in the domestic political arena post-independence. ZANU-PF is an extreme case study of the limits of how susceptible and receptive liberation leadership may be to internal dissent and debate as they address the considerable difficulties of nation-state construction after formal independence. By late 1990s ZANU-PF was facing a profound challenge to the legitimacy of its victory, and to the legitimacy and identity of the liberation movement itself. From 2000 the struggle in Zimbabwe constituted 'a battle for the state', and this battle is continuing to play out in present-day Zimbabwe.

## **What factors helped ZANU-PF retain power and lead a one-party dominant state?**

In Zimbabwe and ZANU-PF's case the process of centralising power took place in stop-start phases: first, there was the period 1980-1987, leading to the 1987 Pact of Unity, after which ZAPU was absorbed within ZANU-PF.<sup>2</sup> The one-party phase dominated the political

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1 Acknowledgements: I am deeply grateful to Professor Brian Raftopoulos and Dr Blessings-Miles Tendi, whose arguments on the importance and presentation of history in Zimbabwe are incorporated into this paper.

2 A repetition of this absorption is the MDC's and its supporters' greatest fear.

scene until 1999, a period ended by the emergence of the Movement for Democratic Change. In the third phase post-2000, ZANU-PF maintained its dominance by restructuring state power, and attempting to manipulate the constitution and the electoral process, until the Global Political Agreement of September 2008.<sup>3</sup> The GNU was finally implemented in February 2009 with a 24-month time frame to agree a new constitution. So it can be said that we are now witnessing another, fourth, phase of significant transition. The crisis in Zimbabwe is systemic – and the literature on this is enormous. It is multi-layered and multi-faceted. In addition, it has played out, and is playing out in multiple ways. In Brian Raftopoulos' words, it involves

*“confrontations over land and property rights; contestations over the history and meanings of land and citizenship; the emergence of critical civil society groupings campaigning around trade union, human rights and constitutional questions; the restructuring of the state in more authoritarian forms, and its resisters; the broader pan-African and anti-imperialist meanings of the struggles in Zimbabwe; and the central role of Robert Mugabe.”*<sup>4</sup>

## **The central role of Mugabe and his political skills**

Richard Dowden, the *London Times*' long-standing correspondent and Editor for Africa and now the Chairman of the Royal Africa Society, was one of the first to call publicly for discussions with Mugabe in 2005.<sup>5</sup> As Dowden pointed out, in Africa politics is personal. And calculations of what is rational in an African context may not be deemed equally rational in a West European political context. There is certainly the question of Mugabe's supreme political skills, his ability as an orator and communicator, and his charismatic leadership.<sup>6</sup> We may find it extraordinary, but 'the old man' is still held in great affection by elements of the Zimbabwean population.<sup>7</sup> In the 2008 March election ZANU-PF received approximately 40% of the vote, and Mugabe's leadership of ZANU-PF retains a degree of ideologically popular support (the size of the vote is not solely down to intimidation). Furthermore, Mugabe's rhetoric and in particular his defiance of Britain, the former colonial power, strikes chords among other constituencies across Africa.

There is also the question of affinity of interest and outlook between ZANU-PF Politburo hardliners, other senior ZANU-PF leaders, and Mugabe: this is based on a combination of shared ideology (although political observers have commented that only Mugabe believes

3 This is the second Zimbabwean Government of National Unity. The first GNU was formed by the Internal Settlement of 1978, and led by Bishop Abel Muzorewa from April – October 1979.

4 Raftopoulos, B. ed. *Becoming Zimbabwe. A History from the pre-colonial Period to 2008*. Harare: Weaver Press, 2010, p.202. This is an excellent series of essays, particularly the chapter by Professor Raftopoulos on the post-independence era.

5 Dowden, R. 'Engaging with Mugabe'. *The Round Table*, Vol. 95, No 384, pp. 283-285.

6 See for example, Philip Barclay (British diplomat, British High Commission 2006-2008). See Barclay, P. *Zimbabwe. Years of Hope and Despair*. London: Bloomsbury Press, 2010.

7 Barclay. *Zimbabwe*

the Marxist rhetoric<sup>8</sup>), shared particular generational experiences and outlook. Calculations of self-interest are also part of the equation. A web of patronage and privileged access has emerged, particularly in the last 10-15 years, that the fusion of ZANU-PF and Zimbabwean state has been able to confer. This operates both at the top level among senior officials, as well as at the grass roots in the form of access to the state 'benefit system' of food. This process is a direct product, and substitute, of the erosion of broader political support for ZANU-PF in the 1990s. Growing dissent from organised labour, civil society, student and youth groups, as well as within the business community and the civil service, led Mugabe and the ZANU-PF leadership in the Politburo to search for alternative sources of support. This rising political and social discontent in the 1990s was not simply a product of ZANU-PF's poor policy choices, unemployment and rising inflation. It was matched by social grievances from other sections of society, including war veterans and landless rural populations. Politically vulnerable because of the rising economic problems associated with the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP), Mugabe offered first generous pensions, then land to appease these aggrieved constituencies. Through his astute manipulation of the constitution, use of patronage, exploitation of legitimate grievances and political antennae for populist politics, Mugabe has proved a political phenomenon. His studied alliance with the war-veterans from 1999 marked a power-shift within ZANU-PF.

### The uses and abuses of History

The presentation of history has been critical to the survival of the ZANU-PF one-party state, particularly from 2000-2005. But this manipulation of the 'national story' is not new. The party has long sought to present a triumphant single-minded narrative, but ZANU/ZANLA has never comprised a monolithic bloc, seen in the fractious history of the civilian insurrection in 1970s, its experiences in Mozambique, and the party and its military wing's relationship with its rural peasant constituency.<sup>9</sup> Similarly, the role of history proved a key element of identity and validation in the 1980s. The creation of 'National Heroes', and the destruction of colonial ones, was seen as a crucial early part of constructing a national identity in the first decade of independence. Given the recent war in which 30-80,000 people had died, it was understandable why the Mugabe government used this as a source of national legitimacy. It was 'an important emotional symbol and source of legitimacy'.<sup>10</sup> As both Ndebele and Shona-speaking communities had participated in the liberation movements, the idea of designated 'National Heroes' was a powerful source of potential national unity, but one that proved controversial – who should be deemed a national hero: should it be the living or the dead? The politicians or the liberation fighters? Should the ex-combatants be involved? And were some heroes more important than others, or were all equal? So although the ideal and ZANU-PF government rhetoric was participation

8 This is debatable, as shown by a recent conference in Bulawayo, attended by Zimbabwean and South African academics, and leading former ZIPA and ZANU members, Wilfred Mhanda (former chief Political Commissar, ZANLA), Ibbo Mandaza, Wilbert Sadomba (former ZANLA combatant and now a sociologist at UJohannesburg.) The conclusions of the conference stressed the need for alternative modalities of progress and reform, particularly organised labour.

9 See Ranger, T. & Bhebe, N. ed. *Soldiers in Zimbabwe's Liberation War*. Oxford: James Currey, 1997.

10 Kriger, Norma. 'The Politics of Creating National Heroes: The Search for Political Legitimacy and National Identity' in *Soldiers in Zimbabwe's Liberation War*, edited by T. Ranger and N. Bhebe, p.140.

and equality, the reality proved rather different. It revealed a huge disparity between the government and governed, politicians and ex-combatants. Therefore 'the self-conscious effect of the government to create national unity and political legitimacy and identity had quite the opposite effect'.<sup>11</sup>

There were other less public ways in which history was distorted or reconstructed in this first decade. In reality, the manner of victory was not a triumph of armed struggle, but instead the product of a negotiated settlement under enormous international pressure. So the Lancaster House settlement represented a constitutional compromise, under the guise of liberation victory.<sup>12</sup> The myth and narrative of land, one of the key 'National Grievances' which had proved so potent in the liberation struggle, was not firmly and openly addressed, although all parties and interested observers – British, Zimbabwean, American, Mozambican, South African and Commonwealth – clearly appreciated its significance. Similarly, the place of history on the national curriculum should be considered. The writing of standard text books emphasised the contribution of ZANU/ZANLA to the liberation victory, and either down-played or airbrushed out other players – ZAPU/ZIPRA and non-Marxist nationalist movements.<sup>13</sup>

From the late 1990s, 'patriotic history' appeared as a direct product of the emerging alliance between ZANU-PF and the war-veterans.<sup>14</sup> This narrative, particularly after 2000, drew upon wider society, and the astute use of state control of the media. This repackaging of history, and its use and distortion of legitimate grievances contributed to 'patriotic blackness'<sup>15</sup> – in contrast to the 'patriotic whiteness' of the Rhodesia Front era of 1965-1980 – and an exclusive version of national identity.<sup>16</sup> The party conscripted elements of history which it believed would generate support and undermine opposition. Themes and events which did not serve ZANU-PF's agenda were downplayed or misrepresented." The dominant narrative was 'ZANU-PF as the sole champion, past and present, of the independence and sovereignty (of Zimbabwe) under constant attack from "imperialist forces"'.<sup>17</sup> This construction of history tapped existing grievances and beliefs. It resonated in strong feelings about colonialism and perceptions of Western hypocrisy about human rights. Inequality of land ownership was key to 'the story' – land hunger and dispossession was plain for all to see – which strengthened the plausibility of the narrative. And this made 'patriotic history' very difficult to challenge.<sup>18</sup>

11 Kriger, p.140

12 Onslow, S. "Zimbabwe: Land and Lancaster House". *British Scholar*, September 2009). See also Africa All-Party Parliamentary Group report. Zimbabwe and Land, www.parliament.org, November 2009, and Chairman Hugh Bailey's accompanying statement.

13 Bishop Abel Murorewa's UANC, the Reverend Ndabaningi Sithole, Chiefs Ndweni's and Chirau's political organisations, and other African political representation, such as the 16 African MPs during the 1970s. This included the four African members of Smith's Cabinet from April 1977, and the era of Internal Settlement and Government of National Unity 1978-1979. I organised a conference at the London School of Economics in January 2006 on the Rhodesian UDI era which prompted a complaint from the Zimbabwe Office of the President that I and fellow academics were propagating a false history.

14 See Professor Terence Ranger, and Dr Blessings-Miles Tendi

15 Knox Chitiyo. Head of Africa Programme, Royal United Services Institute, to Sue Onslow, 6 December 2010

16 Tendi, B-M. *How Intellectuals made History in Zimbabwe*. London: Africa Research Institute, Counterpoints 2010

17 Tendi. *How Intellectuals made History*

18 Tendi. *How Intellectuals made History and Making History in Mugabe's Zimbabwe: Politics, Intellectuals and the Media*. Oxford: Peter Lang, 2010.

A wide spectrum of Zimbabwean intellectuals was involved in the elaboration and presentation of this patriotic history. This legitimised the persecution of opponents who were labeled 'sell-outs' – a hugely derogative and dangerous term, dating from the liberation struggle – and radically altered political debate. Political activity outside ZANU-PF orthodoxy was 'illegitimate'. It involved a sophisticated strategy in the state-sponsored media, which had assumed a greater importance with progressive government legislation and repression of the independent media. Importantly, in the rural areas, the Zimbabwean Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC) or Zimbabwean television were the principal source of outside information and news.

What was this history that Zimbabwean elites went to such pains to create? It overlooked or ignored important events: the tensions within ZANU/ZANLA in the 1970s – the purge of the short-lived Zimbabwean Independence People's Army, and the brutalisation of younger and more junior ZANLA cadres; the use of violence against 'sell-outs' in the rural communities in the liberation war; the ferocity of the Gukurahundi campaign of 1982-1985, in which between 20,000-30,000 people were killed. Crucially, whites were cast as the scapegoats, and conspiracy theories multiplied. Patriotic history successfully combined potent narratives of land and race, and external 'imperialist' enemies. However, this 'patriotic history' was not confined to the land question. ZANU-PF's victory narrative represented itself as part of a longer-narrative of Pan-Africanism and anti-colonialism. 'Sovereignty' was of key importance, the converse of colonialism. EU nominal sanctions after 2003 became the main explanation for Zimbabwe's economic difficulties, rather than ZANU-PF's increasingly disastrous monetary and fiscal policies, and were consistently portrayed as external – subtext: unwarranted – imperialist interference.

Critics or opponents of this version of history 'underestimated or misunderstood its appeal'. Disastrously, they also failed to articulate an alternative. To a degree, they were also naïve in not understanding the narrative's attractiveness to wider Zimbabwean society, and did not appreciate how their own use of words such as 'international community' and 'regime change' had very negative connotations.<sup>19</sup> As the inheritance of the anti-colonial struggle was also embedded within the trade union movement and wider Zimbabwean civil society, 'patriotic history's' anti-colonial rhetoric had an appeal outside the relatively narrow constituency of dispossessed rural communities on the land question.

### **The quality and organisation of ZANU-PF's opponents:**

The survival of ZANU-PF is also associated with the lack of determined opposition leadership. This absence of a robust opposition was itself shaped by the violence of 1977-79 experienced in the Zimbabwean rural districts of Mashonaland and Manicaland; and subsequently in 1983-1987 in Matabeleland. A genuine democratic and social challenge to ZANU-PF only emerged in late 1990s as the product of wider civil and social discontent. By

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<sup>19</sup> Tendi.

the mid-late-1990s the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) was able to overcome long-standing structural problems, including slow rates of union recruitment, non-payment of dues, and poor communications between central and regional organisations, through the formation of a wider civic alliance pressing for political reform and constitutional change: the National Constitutional Assembly. This intensification of pressure on the state led to the formation of the Movement for Democratic Change in 1999. In part this can be seen as a continuum in Zimbabwe's long history of tension between labour and nationalist politics dating back to the 1950s and 1960s.<sup>20</sup> As the NCA developed its own community outreach programmes, a lively political space for debate opened up, and the NCA received support in the rural areas from white farmers. This produced a broad coalition of interest groups: a genuine multi-racial, cross-class alliance challenging the ZANU-PF state with a democratisation agenda.<sup>21</sup> This rival political movement was also matched by emerging tensions and discussion within ZANU-PF in the late 1990s, itself the product of a combination of parliamentarians pressing for reform and in some cases for a change of leadership. The upshot was the constitutional referendum of February 2000 became a referendum on ZANU-PF rule and Robert Mugabe's leadership.

## The role of violence

The continuation of ZANU-PF as a dominant one-party state has of course also been intimately connected to the reorganisation of state structures, and the role of violence and intimidation.

First, there is the aspect of the legacy of the colonial white settler state. The incoming ZANU-PF government in 1980 did not just inherit the political economy of the white settler state. It inherited the power of the colonial state: the monopoly of the use of force, and so its security executive and legislative capacity. It also inherited well-established and particularly effective organisational structures of surveillance and control: the Central Intelligence Organisation, and the Special Branch/CID within the British South Africa Police (reconstituted as the Zimbabwe Republic Police). Furthermore, there was the legacy of the colonial state using asymmetric and disproportionate force when dealing with opposition and dissent.<sup>22</sup>

The ZANU-PF government inherited the settler state's authoritarian political culture in other ways: in the 1980s there was a marked failure to reform or democratise the traditional structures of power in the rural areas. Indeed, there was a concerted effort to replace the experiment of democratisation of local rural organisation, with ZANU-PF affiliates as regional

<sup>20</sup> Brian Raftopoulos' and Ian Phimister's extensive work and publications on labour relations and the Rhodesian settler state.

<sup>21</sup> Raftopoulos.

<sup>22</sup> During the bush war, it was not unusual for white more senior officers of the BSAP to hand suspects first to black BSAP junior members for interrogation. Beatings, therefore, whilst not formally institutionalised, were part of a police culture. Captured guerrillas were frequently shot by Rhodesian government security forces, the majority of whom were black. See Onslow, S, AHRC Oral History Project, 'Why did you fight? Narratives of the Rhodesian Bush War c.1970-1980', University of the West of England archives.

chiefs and village headmen. This meant another ZANU-PF grass-roots network for the party. Mahmoud Mamdani has described this as the continuation of the 'authoritarian, bifurcated state'.<sup>23</sup> The repressive state was again plain to see in the reorganisation of state structures from 2000, and repressive legislation in the form of the Public Order and Security Act (POSA) and Access to Information Act (2002). This emergency legislation and crackdown on the independent media had unsettling echoes of the UDI era. Formal legislation was matched by pressure on Supreme and High court judges to resign, state refusal to comply with court judgments and amnesties to people who had committed acts of violence on behalf of ZANU-PF.<sup>24</sup>

Second, violence is part of the political culture of ZANU-PF, dating back to the liberation war era. There is the place of violence in Mugabe's own thinking: he has ghoulishly joked that he had 'a degree in violence',<sup>25</sup> a reference to his eighteen other honorary doctorates. He was one of the first Zimbabwean nationalists to advocate the turn to armed struggle in the early 1960s in ZAPU, before its split into ZANU and ZAPU in 1963. He was confident in ultimate military victory in 1979, a confidence which was not necessarily shared by other ZANLA leading military commanders.<sup>26</sup>

However, it is not simply a question of attitudes of the efficacy and place of violence. There are structural factors which explain the enduring culture of political violence within ZANU-PF; namely, in the alliance between the army and party that emerged in the 1970s. As has been said, the experience of ZANLA cadres in the liberation war was brutalisation to enforce solidarity and 'discipline'. During the liberation war the use and range of violence to intimidate Shona-speaking ethnic groups inside Rhodesia was deliberately systematic and extreme, to the extent that it constituted 'a political language'.<sup>27</sup> Post-independence state-directed violence in the continuing Zimbabwean civil war in Matabeleland against the Ndebele and Kalanga people did not provoke criticism or comment from the international community, since Zimbabwe was needed as an international success story in the larger struggle against apartheid South Africa.<sup>28</sup>

The use of violence from the late 1990s onwards was a substitute for and a direct reflection of the failed nation-building project associated with the gathering crisis. Faced with the social and political consequences of the accelerating and precipitous decline of the economy, the sharp contraction of agricultural and industrial productivity, the progressive informalisation of labour, the informal dollarisation<sup>29</sup> of financial transactions, and massive internal displacement and economic and political migration, the state responded with proven techniques to quell open and suspected dissent. As Nathan Shamuyarira, ZANU-

23 Mamdani, M. *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism*. Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996

24 Raftopoulos

25 Meredith, M. *Mugabe: Power, Plunder and the Struggle for Zimbabwe*. Public Affairs: The Perseus Book Group, 2007, p.241

26 Generals 'Rex Nhongo' – now Solomon Mujuru – and Josiah Tongogara.

27 Wilfred Mhanda to Sue Onslow, Histories of the Liberation Struggle workshop, University of Cape Town, September 2008.

28 Saunders, Chris and Onslow, Sue "The Cold War in Southern Africa 1975-1990" in *The Cambridge History of the Cold War Volume III*, edited by A Westad and M Leffler. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

29 In southern Zimbabwe, it was the 'Rand-isation' of the economy



PF, stated 'The area of violence is an area where ZANU-PF has a very strong, long and successful history'.<sup>30</sup> There was a draconian response to food riots in 1998, in response to the sharp rise in the price of maize; 10 people were killed and hundreds injured. The 2000 Constitutional referendum result prompted Mugabe to look to the radical constituency of war veterans as a substitute for the loss of political support from both MDC and disaffected ZANU-PF supporters. As farm invasions were legitimised by the state and war veterans took over the Fast Track Land reform process, replacing local development committees, violence against political opponents and internal 'sell-outs' spiralled, most markedly in 2002, 2005, 2007 and 2008. Again at local level, government officials, teachers and health care workers were dismissed if they were thought sympathetic to the opposition, leading to an evisceration of bureaucracy and the civil service in the districts. There was also the violence and upheaval associated with Operation Murambatsvina in 2005. The subsequent UN report estimated that 700,000 people had been affected with a disastrous loss of livelihood. Again, in more recent years, there has been the systematic use of violence, particularly in March 2007, and in 2008 in the run-up to and aftermath of elections, referred to as 'the Fear',<sup>31</sup> and again now in the ZANU-PF heartlands of Mashonaland East, Mashonaland Central and Manicaland. What is notable about this use of violence is its targeted and specific nature in the run-up to elections. Once election monitors are in place, elections themselves have been conducted according to Zimbabwe Election Commission regulations, indicating that despite politicisation at the top, the lower levels of ZEC are scrupulous and professional in the execution of their duties.

The sources of violence are varied within the structure and organisation of ZANU-PF as a political movement: one of the key players is ZANU Youth militia. As Kenya's former 'anti-corruption tsar', John Githongo has pointed out in a different context in Kenya, violence is empowering. Here youth violence has been co-opted, licensed and encouraged by the party-qua-state, in the formation of the Green Bombers. The particular Zimbabwean political culture of T-shirts – which confer identity and affiliation, communicate and intimidate<sup>32</sup> – plays out here too. Other perpetrators are war veterans, ZANU PF supporters and 'mixed groups'. Organisational, logistical and coercive support from the state was, and is, crucial. A pattern appears of grass roots initiatives, and centralised violence and coercion, with collaboration and other violent acts from elements within the ZRP (the plain-clothed, uniform and riot police), the CID and CIO, and Zimbabwe National Army elements.<sup>33</sup> This activity is (unofficially) sanctioned by the President, as Commander in chief of the Zimbabwe Armed forces, but who consistently tells listeners in intimate conversation that he does not know the extent of what is going on.<sup>34</sup>

30 Meridith M. Mugabe: *Power, Plunder and the Struggle for Zimbabwe*. Public Affairs: The Perseus Book Group, 2007, p.241.

31 See Godwin, P. *The Fear: The Last Days of Robert Mugabe*. London: Picador, 2010.

32 See Barclay, *Zimbabwe*.

33 Source: [www.sokwanele.com](http://www.sokwanele.com) - Human rights watch monitoring of cases and pattern violence between March-June 2008.

34 Barclay, *Zimbabwe*

## How far is ZANU-PF adapting to democratic politics?

What is true is that we must move away from simple binary models of ZANU-PF and MDC.<sup>35</sup> The political reality has shifted markedly from 2008 and is now very different in 2011, in a number of crucial ways:

First, ZANU-PF has adapted to democratic politics by participating in a coalition government. Implementation remains imperfect, and very divisive, over the questions of finance and judicial portfolios, foreign radio stations, and the appointment of provincial governors and ambassadors. Full and immediate implementation of the Global Political Agreement (GPA) for ZANU-PF would however have meant carving its own tomb-stone, since it would mean relinquishing key levers of power over the state<sup>36</sup>. Therefore, the 'battle for the state', as already noted, is on-going.

At the same time, new civil and business leaders have emerged. This is manifest in the recent meeting of civic business leaders and the SADC Secretary General in Botswana, where they presented the case for postponing currently proposed elections in June 2011 because of anticipated political instability and violence, and the knock-on effect on economic activity. Single issue and determinedly independent organisations, e.g. Women of Zimbabwe Association (WOZA), remain active.

Third, the debate within ZANU-PF about the succession and the need for economic and political reform continues in private and is articulated to MDC politicians, as noted by Eddie Cross, but ZBC/ZTV maintains a strict public ZANU-PF line.<sup>37</sup> The question of succession is enormously divisive. Mugabe continues resolutely to refuse to nominate a successor.<sup>38</sup> There have been repeated press reports since 2008 that the commanders of Zimbabwe's joint forces have confronted Mugabe about his succession plans.<sup>39</sup> The ZANU-PF 11th Party Conference was scheduled in early December 2010, and was (ostensibly) be held in closed session. Although the public face was one of unity, it is strongly suspected that there was an enormously acrimonious debate behind the scenes. It is likely that Mugabe will be confirmed as head of ZANU-PF to take the party into this year's anticipated elections 'because the old man wants it'. However, Mugabe is increasingly unwell, and people know it. Jockeying for position are the usual suspects: Joyce Mujuru, Vice President of ZANU-PF, and Emerson Mnangagwa, the Defence minister, with close links with the army. Mnangagwa himself has declared ZANU-PF would not hand over power to the MDC in an election as it would be tantamount to "failing departed comrades" of the 1970s war of independence.<sup>40</sup> In the

35 Knox Chitiyo to Sue Onslow, 6 December 2010.

36 John Kagoro, in conversation with Violet Gonda, The Hot Seat, SW Radio, 6 November 2009.

37 Eddie Cross, 'Budget Debate on ZBC complete nonsense', Nehanda Radio, Zimbabwe News and Internet Radio Station, 29 November 2010 <http://nehandaradio.com/tag/eddie-cross/>

38 One very experienced Commonwealth Secretariat official commented to me that this was another classic case of a long-standing African leader, who surrounded himself with sycophants, but then who intensely despised them – leading to a conviction that 'the country cannot be trusted to these people.'

39 See the Wiki-Leaks cable report, *The Guardian*, 9th December 2010.

40 New Zimbabwe, 2 November 2010, [www.newzimbabwe.com/...Mnangagwa%20in%20MDC%20warning/news.aspx](http://www.newzimbabwe.com/...Mnangagwa%20in%20MDC%20warning/news.aspx)

same speech, MDC was also accused of doing the bidding of hostile Western countries, and labeled a puppet political party. The most pessimistic of knowledgeable Zimbabwe journalists and observers in London predict a civil war within ZANU-PF following Mugabe's inevitable death, and that the army will step in.

ZANU-PF itself is divided about the wisdom of elections. The hard-liners who have consistently tried to wreck the GPA since its creation want to end the arrangement and to hold elections in June. The charges against continued cooperation remain sanctions; foreign radio stations (on which MDC cannot deliver); contestation over the Governor of the Reserve Bank, the Attorney General, appointment of provincial governors, and ambassadors; and the claimed loss of sovereignty through the dollarisation of the economy. Others within the Politburo and party are rightly fearful that ZANU-PF will lose, and are therefore keen to either delay elections, or to prolong the coalition.

Having said that, ZANU-PF is preparing for democratic politics through the reorganisation of party structures. Although in the run-up to the last elections in 2008 ZANU-PF was relatively poorly disorganised and under-funded, it seems that the party has been swifter to begin addressing those failings than MDC factions. However, attitudes within ZANU-PF to elections are still fractious and contested. Funding is more problematic now that the Economic ministries are in MDC ministers' hands making access to state funds more difficult. Preparation of campaign rhetoric – 'Indigenisation and Empowerment' as the latest anti-imperialist watch-words – feature in speeches and state media. There is recognition that their former ZANU-PF strongholds such as Masvingo, the Midlands and Manicaland have dwindled, and that the vote in Mashonaland cannot be banked on. Because of the constituency map, the majority of constituencies are in the rural areas, which also explains the concentration of preparatory violence which is already in play: breaking up meetings on constitutional outreach and instances of violence in Mashonaland East, and Central, and Manicaland. Violence, intimidation, hate speeches and abductions have increased significantly, along with the denial of freedom of speech. In November ZANU-PF was judged responsible for 99.1% of all breaches of GPA, 40.6% of those breaches to do with attempts to control and manipulate the election process through manipulating or preventing voter registration. Operation 'Headless Chicken' has been launched by ZANU-PF activists to intimidate former ZANU-PF and MDC supporters in the Mount Darwin area. In Manicaland freelance journalists have been harassed.<sup>41</sup>

Finally, the Army – particularly the Joint Operations Command (JOC) – appears to remain crucial as power-brokers and king-makers. The non-political army formed with the fusion of 3 forces – ZRNA, ZANLA and ZIPRA under British military mission after 1980 – has now evolved to the point that its upper leadership is now all ex-ZANLA. There has been a progressive politicisation of the Army since 2000 (together with internal tensions and friction within the security forces)<sup>42</sup> caused by varying willingness to use state-sanctioned violence, which is seen by some as eroding professionalism and morale.

41 Sources: the BBC, The Zimbabwean, Sokwanele, Africa Confidential, AllAfrica.com

42 See Rupiya, Martin in *The Day After Mugabe*, edited by M. Ashurst. London: Africa Research Institute, 2007

In parallel to the politicisation of the Army there has been an accelerated militarisation of the administration of the country. With the financial and economic meltdown of the Zimbabwean economy, and the flight of socio-economic groups that were the foundation of the modern Zimbabwean economy (figures range from 3-3.5million, approximately one million of whom live in Britain), there was a progressive process of the army stepping in to run the crumbling infrastructure of the country and parastatal organisations.<sup>43</sup> Between 2000 and 2008 military personnel were running the Grain Marketing Board, National Railways of Zimbabwe, the Zimbabwe Electricity Supply Authority, and involved in organising the election.<sup>44</sup>

There are also generational factors at play within the Zimbabwean Army, now *the* dominant security force within the country. It is a gentry who are determined that 'the Young Turks' within the Army and police should remain subservient. Junior officers' allegiance is questionable, and if violence broke out, these junior officers would not side with the generals – as evidenced by incidents of indiscipline in army barracks. One of the recent crisis tipping points of the ZANU-PF regime came probably in July 2008 when junior police and army officers demonstrated against lack of pay, and the state responded with typical asymmetric violence.<sup>45</sup> Whether the army will step in with another 'guardian coup' – as it appeared to do in March/April 2008 to prevent the victory of mass mobilisation and discontent manifest in MDC's victory in the parliamentary and presidential elections – is debatable. What is certain is there is continued JOC pressure on Mugabe to appoint his successor. The Wiki-Leaks cables of 2007 indicating the army had been in private discussions with reforming elements in ZANU-PF to ensure a transition to a younger technocrat with a broader reform agenda, which would have the support of the Army,<sup>46</sup> shows a consistent line of thinking. This was also indicated in press reports in August 2008 that General Philip Sibanda and Police Commissioner Augustine Chihuri were both letting it be known that ZANU-PF should go into a coalition with MDC. Sibanda was reported as saying if MDC pulled out 'it would be a chaotic situation' which would make all of them vulnerable, and no African country would support a forceful seizure of power 'especially if they know we have been working to destroy this African Union initiated arrangement'.<sup>47</sup>

There has been progress towards democratisation and pluralism since 2008, with broad support for not returning to the appalling conditions of 2008 and early 2009. There are other indications of progress: the official welcome of seriously researched histories of Zimbabwe by the MDC Minister of Education, David Coltart, and the current review of the place (and content) of history on the national curriculum;<sup>48</sup> the picture on land reform, and

43 See Rupiya, in *The Day After Mugabe*, and Rupiya's other publications on security sector reform in Zimbabwe. See also Knox Chitiyo: *The Case for Security Sector Reform in Zimbabwe* [www.rusi.org/downloads/assets/Zimbabwe\\_SSR\\_Report.pdf](http://www.rusi.org/downloads/assets/Zimbabwe_SSR_Report.pdf)

44 Raftopoulos.

45 One Zimbabwean human rights activist recently told me that this was the point when Tsvangirai should have set up a government in exile in neighbouring Botswana, rather than stay and be co-opted.

46 *The Guardian*, 9<sup>th</sup> December 2010.

47 "Joint Operations Command splits", [www.zimbabwemetro.com/news/joint-operation-command-splits/](http://www.zimbabwemetro.com/news/joint-operation-command-splits/)

48 See David Coltart (Official Website) <http://davidcoltart.com/?p=1069> for Blessing-Miles Tendi's review, and 'Zimbabwean History in Context: A comparison of the History book with existent history curriculum and teaching'.

regeneration of the agricultural sector is 'good in parts'.<sup>49</sup> Finance Minister Biti's statement to Parliament on the budget in November 2010 noted agricultural production is up by 19.3% – reflecting a more liberalised marketing environment, and stable currencies. Short term stabilisation and modest economic revival has been achieved. Biti's commentary on 26 November predicted the economy would grow by 8.1% in 2010, and 9.3% in 2011. Mineral earnings have increased by 47%, as has the budget for education and a tax free threshold has been established at US\$225 per month, although this produced criticism from Wellington Chibebe, of the ZCTU. The diaspora is slowly returning, although the pattern from the UK is more 'maintaining a foot in both camps'. Remittances remain key.

The purpose of GPA has been problematic, but it has also been cautiously successful. Its lifespan, and therefore role has been contested. Is it to be a government of National Unity, looking to the long-term? Or a interim transitional arrangement, overseeing the drafting of a new constitution and renewed multi-party elections? A constitutional outreach programme has been carried out, although eighteen recent meetings were disrupted, and it has been suspended due to lack of funding. Electoral registration (one of the keys to the distorted vote in 2008) remains problematic, together with the issue of the vote of the diaspora. Minor political parties have emerged, and here the importance of GPA to a wider political scene should be noted, as it precludes the three coalition partners from election contests. Simba Makoni's centrist party, Muvambo Kusile Dawn (MKD), will challenge ZAPU's constituency.<sup>50</sup> There is tension within MDC-T on whether to continue, and discussion of the attractions (or otherwise) of an electoral pact with MDC-M. Observers have commented that MDC party functionaries have become so involved in current government structures that pulling out is much harder to do than staying in. There is the associated difficulty of explaining to outside supporters if the decision to pull out precipitates a return to the violence and disorder of 2008. Morgan Tsvangirai's political skills and use of a kitchen cabinet (whose own political skills are not widely respected) are frequently questioned.

2011 could be 'a perfect storm', repeating the disastrous events of 2000, with a constitutional referendum on the Kariba draft; the end of GPA, and parliamentary elections (June). If an election is held, will it see the removal of ZANU-PF at the ballot box? Yes. Will ZANU-PF cede power? No. As Mnangagwa said, 'If you don't vote for us in the next election, we will rule even if you don't want.'<sup>51</sup> The likely outcome is therefore re-booted coalition government: an MDC victory (with an election pact or separately), with support of smaller parties (ZAPU, MKD), but in coalition with ZANU-PF. What is certain is that the GPA represents a continuing struggle for the state. This struggle will be 'untidy, messy, with slow movements backwards and forwards'.<sup>52</sup>

49 See I Scoones, N Marongwe, B Mavedzenge, F Murimbarimba, J Mahenehene, & C Sukume. *Zimbabwe's Land Reform: Myths and Realities*. Harare: Weaver Press 2010.

50 ZAPU was revived under Dumiso Dabengwa's leadership in 2008.

51 Sokwanele Newsletter, 6 December 2010.

52 John Kagoro and Brian Raftopoulos, in conversation with Violet Gonda, *The Hot Seat*, SW Radio, 6 November 2009.

## Conclusion

There is no magic solution from the UN, the African Union or SADC. The international community has very limited political leverage, and sanctions are proving a stick with which to beat Tsvangirai and MDC-T.<sup>53</sup> Under President Thabo Mbeki's 'quiet diplomacy', South Africa was enormously instrumental in painstakingly persuading the warring factions of the need for compromise and political accommodation, although Mbeki's more trenchant critics argued that the South African government was effectively prolonging the political life of the ZANU-PF party-state. Observers have argued South African support for the 'liberationist brotherhood' from 2000 provided an important touchstone of support, symbolically and psychologically, for Robert Mugabe and ZANU-PF.<sup>54</sup> Within the organisational structures of SADC, sympathy for ZANU-PF at ministerial council level, as well as at lower bureaucratic level, has helped to ensure that the MDC factions' approaches were smothered or blocked as issues were neither brought to, nor raised at ministerial level. The South African President was rightly castigated for not speaking out more loudly on SADC's damning report on election abuses in 2002, but both Mbeki and his successor, Jacob Zuma, clearly see South Africa can only exert limited pressure. SADC or South African military intervention is simply out of the question, given the SANDF's debilitated military capacity.<sup>55</sup> South Africa is not the sole source of Zimbabwean energy supplies, and with the progressive implosion of the Zimbabwean economy, the threat of trade sanctions was also nullified. Indeed, it was in Pretoria's interests to minimise the Zimbabwean meltdown because of the associated massive migrant problem which exacerbated South Africa's own socio-economic and security problems. Just as Rhodesia did in the UDI era, the Zimbabwean 'question' has proved toxic for the entire region. Before, South Africa was critical in pressurising the Ian Smith government to come to terms.<sup>56</sup> Now, however, the outcome will be decided within Zimbabwe itself.

53 Among others, John Robertson, the highly respected Zimbabwean political analyst based in Harare, has called for their repeal.

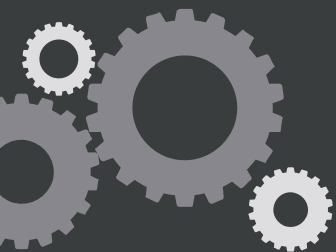
54 Knox Chitiyo to Sue Onslow, 6 December 2010.

55 Mike Hough, Institute for Strategic Studies, quoted in *The Johannesburg Sunday Times*, 28 July 2008.

56 Onslow, Sue. 'We must gain Time.' South Africa, Rhodesia and the Kissing Initiative'. *South African Historical Journal*, 56, 2006; and 'Noises Off': South Africa and the Lancaster House settlement 1979-1980'. *JSAS Special Issue: Liberation Struggles, Exile and International Solidarity, Journal of Southern African Studies*, 35, 2 (2009).

## Glossary

CID	Criminal Investigation Department
CIO	Central Intelligence Organisation
GNU	Government of National Unity
GPA	Global Political Agreement
JOC	Joint Operations Command
MDC-M	Movement for Democratic Change - Mutumbara
MDC-T	Movement for Democratic Change - Tsvangirai
MKD	Muvambo Kusile Dawn
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SANDF	South African National Defence Force
WOZA	Women of Zimbabwe Association
ZANLA	Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army
ZANU	Zimbabwe African National Union
ZAPU	Zimbabwe African People's Union
ZBC	Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation
ZCTU	Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions
ZIPA	Zimbabwe Independent People's Army
ZIPRA	Zimbabwe Independent People's Revolutionary Army
ZRNA	Zimbabwe Rhodesia National Army
ZNA	Zimbabwe National Army
ZRP	Zimbabwe Republic Police
ZTV	Zimbabwe Television



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