

FAST-TRACK LAND REFORM  
AND THE DECLINE OF ZIMBABWE'S  
POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC STABILITY

by

RYAN DALE GROVES  
B.A. West Virginia University, 2006

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of Master of Arts  
in the Department of History  
in the College of Arts and Humanities  
at the University of Central Florida  
Orlando, Florida

Summer Term  
2009

Major Professor: Ezekiel Walker

©2009 Ryan D. Groves

## **ABSTRACT**

Once the breadbasket of Southern Africa, Zimbabwe has undergone a radical transformation presently characterized by ever increasing rates of HIV and AIDS, low population growth, acute food shortages, radically decreasing life expectancy, hyperinflation, and insecurity of life and property. Additionally, the growing brutality of political and electoral oppression has engendered significant domestic, regional, and international condemnation of the Zimbabwean government. News media, human rights organizations, and foreign governments have all voiced their concern for the rapid deterioration of Zimbabwe.

This thesis analyzes the course of Zimbabwe's economic, political, and social decline between its independence in 1980 and 2005. While popular interpretations place blame predominantly upon President Robert Mugabe and the Zimbabwe African Union-Patriotic Front, this thesis offers a more nuanced explanation for Zimbabwe's current crisis. This view contends that the structural adjustment policies of the Bretton Woods institutions, in concert with the breakdown of democratic institutions and the implementation of radical land reform policies led to Zimbabwe's current economic, political, and social decline.

For my parents

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

First and foremost, I would like to thank my advisor, Professor Ezekiel Walker, for his guidance in this endeavor. Without his insight, enthusiasm, humor, and unwavering support this thesis would not have been possible.

I would also like to thank the members of my committee, Professor Luis Martínez-Fernández and Professor Hong Zhang for their tutelage and criticisms from which this thesis benefited greatly.

My gratitude also goes to my fellow graduate students in the History Department. We are all in this together. To Andrew and Dan, thank you for being a constant source of support and encouragement throughout this process.

Finally, I would like to thank my family for their love and encouragement throughout the past three years. Without you this goal would not have been realized.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES .....	vii
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS.....	viii
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND HISTORIOGRAPHICAL ANALYSIS .....	1
Historiographical Analysis.....	3
CHAPTER TWO: ZIMBABWE BEFORE INDEPENDENCE.....	14
European Colonization, 1885-1900 .....	14
Colonial Land Policies, 1890-1969.....	16
The Rising Tide of Nationalism.....	18
The Rise of Robert Mugabe and the Second <i>Chimurenga</i> .....	24
CHAPTER THREE: ZIMBABWE’S FIRST DECADE OF INDEPENDENCE .....	31
Post-Independence Land Reform, 1980-1989 .....	32
Economic Realities of Independence and the Rise of International Financial Institutions.....	39
The One-Party State and Civil Society Watchdogs .....	43
CHAPTER FOUR: ZIMBABWE’S SECOND DECADE OF INDEPENDENCE .....	49
Economic Decline and Land Reform Under Structural Adjustment .....	50
Civil Society Challenges to State Power .....	56
War Veterans and Shifting Power Dynamics .....	61
Opposition, Invasion, and Fast-Track Land Reform .....	63
CHAPTER FIVE: MURAMBATSVINA AND THE AFTERMATH OF FAST-TRACK LAND REFORM .....	70
Conclusion .....	73
LIST OF REFERENCES .....	77

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 2.1. Results of Common Roll Elections, 1980.....	28
Table 3.1. Principle Land Categories under the Land Tenure Act of 1969.....	32
Table 3.2. Distribution of Irrigation-Based Farming by Agricultural Subsector, 1981... 36	
Table 3.3. Zimbabwe's Foreign Trade 1979-1985 (\$ Million).....	42
Table 4.1. Percentage Distribution of Gross Domestic Income, 1985-1990 .....	52
Table 4.2. Trade Liberalization and Economic Performance .....	55
Table 4.3. Strikes from 1991 to 2000 .....	57
Table 4.4. 2000 National Assembly Election Results.....	67
Table 4.5. Land Settlement Patterns Before and After Fast-Track Resettlement .....	68
Table 5.1. 2005 House of Assembly Election Results.....	71

## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

ANC	African National Congress
BSAC	British South Africa Company
CCJP	Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace
CFU	Commercial Farmers Union
CIO	Central Intelligence Organization
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CYL	City Youth League
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
ESAP	Economic Structural Adjustment Program
GAPWUZ	General Agriculture and Plantation Workers Union of Zimbabwe
IBDC	Indigenous Business Development Center
ICFU	Indigenous Commercial Farmers Union
IFI	International Financial Institution
IMF	International Monetary Fund
LRF	Legal Resources Foundation
MDC	Movement for Democratic Change
NCA	National Constitutional Assembly
NDC	National Democratic Party
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NIMBAR	No Majority Before Majority African Rule



NLWVA	National Liberation War Veterans' Association
SADC	South Africa Development Community
SAPRI	Structural Adjustment Performance Review Institute
SRANC	Southern Rhodesia African National Congress
UDI	Unilateral Declaration of Independence
WVA	War Veterans Association
ZANLA	Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army
ZANU	Zimbabwean African National Union
ZANU-PF	Zimbabwean African National Union-Patriotic Front
ZAPU	Zimbabwe African People's Union
ZAR	South African Republic
ZCTU	Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions
ZFU	Zimbabwe Farmers Union
ZIMPREST	Zimbabwe Program for Economic and Social Transition
ZIPRA	Zimbabwe People's Liberation Army
ZRP	Zimbabwe Republican Poli

## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND HISTORIOGRAPHICAL ANALYSIS**

Zimbabwe achieved independence from white minority rule in 1980 after a hard-fought liberation struggle. However, the challenges for the newly independent state were many. The Zimbabwean economy was still dominated by the minority white commercial farmers who numbered about four thousand, but controlled one-third of the land. The black population, on the other hand, was relegated to areas that had poor soil, inadequate rainfall and weak infrastructure. Consequently, the options for the black population were limited to working on white farms for low wages. The Mugabe government, which came to power in 1980 with a radical socialist agenda, was faced with a dilemma. The economy was driven largely by the export-oriented large tobacco and maize farms of white-owned commercial farms. Additionally, white farmers also produced a broad range of crops for the domestic market. This settler-dominated economic system had to be balanced against a broad range of conflicting interests in Zimbabwe's black population, the most important one being land redistribution.

Throughout the first decade of independence, Robert Mugabe adopted a gradual approach to this controversial issue. This policy was shaped by two important factors. First, Zimbabwe's economy at independence was relatively prosperous and there was the real danger that radical reforms could jeopardize economic stability. Second, prior to 1990, the government was constrained by the stipulations of the Lancaster Accords which

prohibited seizing white farms without compensation. In spite of these constraints, the government made great strides in improving the living conditions of the majority black population and also providing skilled Africans opportunities in the white-dominated private sector.

In the past fifteen years, however, Zimbabwe's economy has experienced a significant downward spiral. This has led to two important developments. First, the Zimbabwe African Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) has abandoned its gradual policy of land redistribution in favor of a radical, Fast-Track approach. Second, there has been a dramatic shift from Mugabe's socialist ideology to a policy of economic liberalization. In addition to economic destabilization, corrupt policies favoring colonial institutions and severe governmental mismanagement have eroded Zimbabwe's democratic institutions. One-partyism, electoral fraud, intimidation tactics, and complete disregard for judicial authority and human rights have left Mugabe and ZANU-PF isolated from international support and facing intense opposition from civil society organizations.

A majority of the interpretations of Zimbabwe's economic, political, and social decline place the blame primarily on either the Zimbabwean government or the World Bank and International Monetary Fund's Economic Structural Adjustment Policy (ESAP). This thesis goes beyond the conventional scholarship of the past three decades to offer a more nuanced analysis of Zimbabwe's current economic, political, and social crisis and argues that the Fast-Track land reforms instituted in February 2000 are the culmination of structural and institutional deficiencies that have existed in Zimbabwe

since before independence. These reforms, which have been hurriedly orchestrated, are the results of the failure of ZANU-PF to properly resolve the weaknesses of the Zimbabwean economy at independence. They are also attempts at creating political legitimacy in the face of rising social disillusionment, spirited political opposition by Morgan Tsvangirai and the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), and economic paralysis engendered by the liberalization policies of the World Bank and IMF.

### Historiographical Analysis

Post-independence Zimbabwean studies have undergone multiple transformations in the three decades following the transfer to majority rule. Since 1980, the literature has been divided into three primary phases: the transition to majority rule and the consolidation of power, democratization, and the rise of authoritarianism. Each phase is indicative of scholarly opinion of Zimbabwe and its leadership; specifically regarding the hope and promise of a racially harmonious and democratically constructed state.

Studies conducted during the transition period (1980-1988) were conceived in a sweeping wave of euphoria and international goodwill. As a result, scholars were often moderate in their criticisms; maintaining a reserved optimism and focusing primarily on the integration of old guard Zimbabwean Nationalists into the new majority government, Mugabe's Socialist rhetoric and its potential conflicts with private capital, and the shift

from radical guerilla warfare to democratic governance. Additionally, limited knowledge resulted in only superficial scrutiny of ZANU-PF's shortcomings, notably economic development and human rights policies, during what Martin Meredith calls the Zimbabwean "Honeymoon" period of 1980-1981.<sup>1</sup> In the words of historian Terence Ranger, "Any attempt to assess at this moment the prospects for radical change in Zimbabwe confronts a crippling imbalance of knowledge."<sup>2</sup>

Throughout the 1980s, the continued repression of civil liberties and violent government reactions to opposition supporters were becoming commonplace. Still, these events were either completely ignored by Western scholars, or rationalized as after effects of Zimbabwe's repressive colonial legacy and the need for strong government intervention to assure regional stability.<sup>3</sup> Recent literature interprets the absence of watchdogs within the academic community as a form of self-censorship. Many believed that drawing attention to human rights violations would only exacerbate already virulent tensions in the region, and limited scrutiny constituted an assurance of continued stability in Zimbabwe and Southern Africa.<sup>4</sup>

However, by the early 1990s, the optimism of the first decade of independence had dissipated at the hands of mounting economic concerns and growing

---

<sup>1</sup> Meredith, *Mugabe: Power and Plunder*, 41-57.

<sup>2</sup> Terence Ranger, "The Changing of the Old Guard: Robert Mugabe and the revival of ZANU," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 7, no. 1 (October 1980), 71.

<sup>3</sup> Ronald Weitzer, "In Search of Regime Security: Zimbabwe Since Independence," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 22, no. 4 (1984): 529-557.

<sup>4</sup> Liisa Laakso, "Research Debates in Zimbabwe: From Analysis to Practice," in *Twenty Years of Independence in Zimbabwe: From Liberation to Authoritarianism*, eds. Staffan Darnolf and Liisa Laakso (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2003), 4.

authoritarianism. Consequently, scholarly interpretations of Zimbabwe assumed a much more historical approach based on empirical data. Revisionist literature began to challenge the existing nationalist narrative of Zimbabwe's liberation struggle. Also, the incorporation of gender studies allowed for the inclusion of previously unheard voices of the liberation struggle. More than anything, this period saw a transformation in the academic community's perception of Zimbabwe from a possible beacon of democracy and racial tolerance in Southern Africa to an increasingly pragmatic and interest-based state, particularly with regards to economic liberalization and privatization.<sup>5</sup>

With a decade of governance to analyze, researchers began to probe deeper into Zimbabwe's political process, stressing the need for multi-party politics and criticizing the one-party state that had existed since the merger of ZANU-PF and ZAPU-PF in 1987. Transition-era literature had created a façade of pragmatism, reconciliation, and relative governmental strength steeped in socialist ideals. Initially, Zimbabwe was seen as a hybrid state, a combination of neopatrimonialism and competitive multi-party politics.<sup>6</sup> However, beginning in the late 1980s scholars began to question both Zimbabwe's governmental stability and its legitimacy as a Socialist state.

Criticism stemmed from two primary factors. First, the growth of multi-party states throughout Eastern Europe and the rest of Africa raised significant questions about the democratic legitimacy of Zimbabwe's one-party system. Second, the liberalization of

---

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>6</sup> Bratton, Michael and Nicholas Van De Walle, *Democratic Experiments in Africa: Regime Transitions in Comparative Perspectives* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 79, 82.

the economy along the model pushed by the World Bank and IMF signaled an end of the Socialist revolution at the heart of Zimbabwe's independence movement. Institution of the Economic Structural Adjustment Program (ESAP) in 1991 significantly damaged the reputation and authority of Mugabe and ZANU-PF due to their inability to rely on the rhetoric of the previous decade.<sup>7</sup>

Structural adjustment caused many to question the advantages of economic liberalization on Zimbabwe's economic standing. According to Jørn Rattsø and Ragnar Torvik, the advantages of trade liberalization affected only the export of raw materials (minerals, agricultural produce, and horticulture) instead of manufactured goods. This dependency model stressed what most researchers have held true for the past decade of Zimbabwean studies; that the ESAP instituted in cooperation with the World Bank and IMF has significantly disrupted and retarded the growth and diversification of Zimbabwe's economy by placing greater emphasis on the privatization of industry and incorporation into the world market. According to Alfred Nhema:

“[S]cholars recognized that the revolutionary zeal that had characterized ZANU-PF's liberation struggle had dissipated after independence. A common theme pervading these analyses is the notion, steeped in dependency theory, which views the ruling elites as too weak and reliant on foreign capital. As such they were merely a neo-colonial governing African petit-bourgeoisie pliantly serving the goals of their colonial masters.”<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>7</sup> Laakso, 9.

<sup>8</sup> Alfred Nhema, *Democracy in Zimbabwe: From Liberation to Liberalization* (Harare: University of Zimbabwe Press, 2002), 107.

In addition to its economic stability, the democratic institutions in Zimbabwe were also called into question. Scholars like Masipula Sithole analyzed the shift from a nation and government born in guerilla warfare to a centralized state fearful of opposition and political instability.<sup>9</sup> Since the mid 1980s, various Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) had been reporting of human rights violations perpetrated under governmental authority. Notably, the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP) and the Legal Resources Foundation's (LRF) report on atrocities in the Matabeleland and Midlands provinces between 1980 and 1988 was instrumental in increased international pressure on the Zimbabwean government for the preservation of multi-party democracy and human rights.<sup>10</sup>

By the mid-to-late 1990s, response to the CCJP/LRF report, declining economic stability, and new international pressure spearheaded by Great Britain, Zimbabwean civil society, and international lenders resulted in widespread criticism of ZANU-PF and Robert Mugabe. As a result, Zimbabwean studies underwent yet another thematic transformation focused on the state's growing authoritarianism and socio-economic crisis that has since divided the academic community. Beginning in the mid-1990s, a number of books, including Martin Meredith's *Mugabe: Power, Plunder, and the Struggle for Zimbabwe* and Stephen Chan's *Robert Mugabe: A Life of Power and Violence*, have established corrupt governance by Robert Mugabe and ZANU-PF as the primary causes

---

<sup>9</sup> Masipula Sithole, *Democracy and the One-Party State Debate in Africa: The Case of Zimbabwe* (Harare: Sapes Books, 1992).

<sup>10</sup> Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace and Legal Resources Foundation, *Breaking the Silence, Building True Peace: A Report on the Disturbances in Matabeleland and the Midlands, 1980-1988* (Harare: Legal Resources Foundation Legal Publications Unit, 1999).



in Zimbabwe's economic and social collapse. However, there are those who question such a simplistic analysis, and instead interpret Mugabe's policies within a broader international context. John L. Moore posits that the Western interpretation of the crisis is misguided and myopic, and that the effects of the World Bank and IMF structural adjustment policies are primarily responsible for the deterioration of Zimbabwe's economy and social stability.<sup>11</sup>

Structural adjustment as an institution has come under fire in recent debates about the validity of economic liberalization in developing nations. Those like Sarah Bracking claim that while unnecessary:

“[S]tructural adjustment did work: it closes a brief historical chapter when political independence partially disrupted the dependent economic linkage between the countries of Africa and the core creditor states of global capitalism. It did work because it represents a conjuncture where holders of international money and those of domestic political power were reunited and consolidated in the governance structures of the indebted states.”<sup>12</sup>

However, scholars like Moore, L. M. Sachikonye<sup>13</sup> and William Brown<sup>14</sup> severely question the effectiveness of structural adjustment and criticize oversight on the part of Bretton Woods institutions, the EU, and other Western lenders in the disbursement of needed economic stimulus in the early 1990s.

---

<sup>11</sup> Moore, *Zimbabwe's Fight to the Finish*.

<sup>12</sup> Sarah Bracking, “Structural Adjustment: Why It Wasn't Necessary & Why It Did Work,” *Review of African Political Economy* 26, no. 80 (June 1999), 208.

<sup>13</sup> L. M. Sachikonye, “Zimbabwe: Drought, Food, and Adjustment,” *Review of African Political Economy*, no. 53 (March 1992), 92.

<sup>14</sup> William Brown, “The EU & Structural Adjustment: The Case of Lomé IV & Zimbabwe,” *Review of African Political Economy* 26, no. 79 (March 1999),

Beyond structural adjustment, recent scholarship has branched off to study the various actors in Zimbabwe's ongoing crisis, their contemporary relevance, and how the past three decades have altered their roles within society and government. Alfred Nhema's book titled *Democracy in Zimbabwe: From Liberation to Liberalization* emphasizes the impact of civil society groups (business interests, labor, women's movements, professional associations, social and religious organizations, and the media) on the power and authority of the Zimbabwean government. Nhema maintains that the decision by the post-independence Zimbabwean government to maintain aspects of the exclusionary UDI framework to forward their explicit goal of a one-party state caused clashes with civil society organizations who were attempting to cement their own authority as watchdogs.

Perhaps the most important of these civil society groups are the war veterans of the Second *Chimurenga*. The Zimbabwe National Liberation War Veterans Association (ZNLWVA) became an instrumental force in pressuring Mugabe and ZANU-PF in allocating compensation for veterans and their families. As a result of their 1997 demonstrations, the Mugabe regime was thoroughly shaken and forced to pay a significant lump sum (Z\$ 50,000), monthly pensions (Z\$ 2,000), free education, and reevaluate its land redistribution policies.<sup>15</sup> After the failed constitutional referendum three years later, war veterans' direct involvement in precipitating and enacting the land seizures of 2000 caused scholars to begin dissecting the material and ideological

---

<sup>15</sup> Nhema, *Democracy in Zimbabwe*, 144.

motivations of this group as well as their relationship with the Zimbabwean government. Norma Krieger's chapter titled "Zimbabwe's War Veterans and the Ruling Party: Continuities in Political Dynamics" analyzes this relationship in detail. Specifically, she notes the failures of ZANU-PF in providing adequate compensation for liberation fighters and the ability of these individuals to challenge state power through a united front.<sup>16</sup> Jocelyn Alexander reiterates this claim. She emphasizes the economic hardships throughout the early-to-mid 1990s as a primary reason for the rise in veteran movements against the government.<sup>17</sup>

Building on her studies of the war veteran movement, Alexander has also contributed one of the seminal works on Zimbabwe's relationship to its land and the government's use of the issue for appeasement and mass mobilization. *The Unsettled Land: State-Making and the Politics of Land in Zimbabwe, 1893-2003* explores the multi-faceted impetus of the war veteran-spurred land seizures through a mix of historical analysis and contemporary case studies. Alexander effectively shows how shifting policy dynamics in the wake of structural adjustment have caused land to be the primary political currency in the failing Mugabe regime.

While most scholars argue that literature concerning Zimbabwe is divided into three distinct periods: the transition to majority rule and the consolidation of power,

---

<sup>16</sup> Norma Krieger, "Zimbabwe's War Veterans and the Ruling Party: Continuities in Political Dynamics," in *Twenty Years of Independence in Zimbabwe: From Liberation to Authoritarianism* eds. Staffan Darnold and Liisa Laakso (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2003),

<sup>17</sup> Jocelyn Alexander, "'Squatters', Veterans and the State in Zimbabwe," in *Zimbabwe's Unfinished Business: Rethinking Land, State and Nation in the Context of Crisis*, eds. Amanda Hammar, Brian Raftopoulos, and Stig Jensen (Harare: Weaver Press, 2003),

democratization, and the rise of authoritarianism, I maintain that recent events demand a fourth installment into the nation's historiography. Following the failed constitutional referendum of 2000 and the subsequent land seizures by "war veterans," new dynamics emerged which have further exacerbated the already virulent tensions brewing from the previous decade. The current "crisis literature" that had emerged is reflective of increased scholarly interest and criticism. In Jocelyn Alexander's words:

"It suddenly seem[s] possible to write about politics in Zimbabwe, and specifically about land, without reference to the high modernism or customary projects of previous decades. Analysis [has] shifted to a focus on the partisan violence of veterans, youth militias and security forces, to ZANU-PF's manipulations of nationalist history, and the struggles of civic organizations, trade unions and the political opposition...Zimbabwe seemed to be entering the world described by political scientists of Africa elsewhere – the 'politics of disorder', the 'politics of the belly'."<sup>18</sup>

My own thesis falls squarely within the realm of crisis literature. I contend that fundamental structural problems within the state that have existed since before independence have resulted in the limited economic sovereignty and collapse of Zimbabwe. This poor governance, rooted in the shortsighted economic policies and ideological goals of a one-party state, created an environment which exacerbated the structural adjustment policies pushed by the Bretton Woods institutions. Additionally, the rise of civil society in the form of trade unions, human rights organizations, and multi-national advocacy groups placed further stress on an already limited toleration of opposition by the Zimbabwean government.

---

<sup>18</sup> Jocelyn Alexander, *The Unsettled Land: State-Making & the Politics of Land in Zimbabwe, 1893-2003* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2006), 180.

The following chapters analyze the course of post-independence Zimbabwe from its roots in Marxist-Leninist ideology through its decline as result of economic liberalization, governmental mismanagement, rampant corruption, and the failure of democratic institutions. Chapter two analyzes the historical background of Zimbabwe's current crisis. Beginning with the unchecked wave of European colonialism in the late nineteenth century, it discusses the British push into Southern Africa, the subsequent subjugation of native populations, and the issue of land in the colonial context. Additionally, it chronicles the rise of nationalism in Southern Rhodesia and the racial impetus for the Unilateral Declaration of Independence in 1965. Finally, chapter two analyzes the rise of Robert Mugabe to national and international prominence during Zimbabwe's liberation war and transition to majority rule.

Chapter three analyzes the first decade of independence, spanning from the Lancaster House Agreements to the beginnings of land redistribution and the onset of economic liberalization. Specifically, it focuses on ZANU-PF's attempts to cultivate a Socialist state through one-partyism and Mugabe's penchant for violent repression of opposition forces. Finally, chapter three will highlight the evolving role of civil society organizations and their often contentious relationship with the Mugabe government.

Chapter four analyzes the domestic and international factors that contributed to the economic, political, and social decline of Zimbabwe in the second decade of independence. Beginning with structural adjustment and economic liberalization by the World Bank and IMF, this chapter discusses the tumultuous relationship between Robert

Mugabe and the West. In addition, chapter four analyzes the economic and political destabilization of Zimbabwe through military intervention in the Democratic Republic of Congo, rising tensions between the government and civil society organizations, dissension by war veteran groups, and the rise of the Movement for Democratic Change. Finally, the aforementioned factors are shown to cause the breakdown of democratic institutions and necessitate the implementation of Fast-Track land resettlement for the sake of political expediency.

Chapter five analyzes the aftermath of Fast-Track land reform and the continued deterioration of Zimbabwe's political, economic, and social stability. Specifically, it details the devastation wrought by Mugabe's attempts to quell opposition support through violence, intimidation, and electoral fraud in the 2002 presidential elections and 2005 House of Assembly elections. In addition, this chapter discusses Operation *Murambatsvina*, during which Mugabe ordered the clearing of city centers under the pretense of urban renewal, leaving hundreds of thousands homeless and drawing the condemnation of the international community. Finally, chapter five places Zimbabwe's current crisis in the larger historical context and draws correlations between recent events and themes prevalent throughout Africa's colonial and post-colonial history.

## CHAPTER TWO: ZIMBABWE BEFORE INDEPENDENCE

In order to properly understand the historical context land reform, it is necessary to first explore the colonial period in Southern Africa. By understanding Zimbabwe's early colonial legacy, and later the nationalist struggle for independence which culminated in the Second *Chimurenga*, the importance of land in Zimbabwean society will have greater clarity in the post-colonial context. Additionally, causes of Zimbabwe's political, economic, and social paralysis will begin to take on a broader focus to include international economic interests.

### European Colonization, 1885-1900

By the 1880s, European incursions into Africa began to escalate into a scramble for territory aimed at expanding traditional spheres of influence. At the urging of Portugal, German Chancellor Otto von Bismarck called an international conference in Berlin to which he invited representatives from the Netherlands, Belgium, Spain, Portugal, Austria-Hungary, Great Britain, France, Denmark, Russia, Italy, Sweden-Norway, the Ottoman Empire, and the United States. From November 1884 to February 1885, the Berlin Conference established rules for the colonization of Africa by European

powers. Consequently, Africa was partitioned into regions, or spheres, dominated by Germany, France, Great Britain, and Portugal. France gained control of the majority of West Africa, Belgium maintained their control of Central Africa, the British East and South Africa, Portugal gained small areas in West and South Africa, and Germany controlled areas in all four geographical regions.

British incursions into Southern Africa began almost a decade before with their annexation of the South African Republic (ZAR) in 1877. After the First Boer War (1880-1881) returned independence to the Boers, Britain declared its own protectorate in the region by intervening in Bechuanaland (Botswana) in 1885. Discovery of gold in the ZAR a year later prompted Britain to charter Cecil B. Rhodes's British South African Company (BSAC) in 1899 after the diamond magnate was able to secure mineral rights from King Lobengula of the Ndebele. Hoping that gold found north of the Transvaal could counter ZAR domination in the region, Rhodes led his settler columns into the region between the Limpopo River and Lake Tanganyika in 1890.<sup>19</sup> While gold prospects proved to be disappointing, settlers were able to occupy nearly one-sixth of the chartered territory during the 1890s, primarily on the rich central highveld, constituting nearly the entire Ndebele kingdom.<sup>20</sup>

The area known initially as South Zambezi -- and after 1901 Southern Rhodesia -- was the center of much conflict in the mid 1890s. Between 1893 and 1894, the First Matabele War pitted King Lobengula and the Ndebele against BSAC settler forces. While

---

<sup>19</sup> John Iliffe, *Africans: The History of a Continent* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 191.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 205.



severely outnumbered, the superior firepower of the British proved overwhelming for the Ndebele. After the suspicious death of Lobegula in 1894, the Ndebele submitted to BSAC authority and Matabeleland was brought under settler control.

However, the BSAC's newfound authority was short-lived. In response to the aggressive white seizure of land, drought, cattle plague, and locust invasion, the Ndebele of Matabeleland, followed by the Shona of Mashonaland, rebelled in 1896 in a series of continuous, well organized, and intensely violent acts of dissent against colonial forces. What would later become known as the Second Matabele War, or First *Chimurenga*<sup>21</sup>, would constitute the official end of native control in the region and leave a bitter memory of defeat and subjugation in the hearts and minds of the native population.

### Colonial Land Policies, 1890-1969

Zimbabwean political discourse has been dominated by the issue of land since the first pioneer columns of the BSAC arrived in Mashonaland in 1890. Initial speculation consisted of two hundred free farms amounting to fifteen hundred morgen (3,175 acres) each. However, the continued arrival of speculators, military personnel, missionaries, and pseudo-aristocrats in following years caused land holdings by the meager white

---

<sup>21</sup> *Chimurenga* is a Shona word meaning "struggle."

population to expand to include some sixteen million acres, or nearly one-sixth of all available land, by the turn of the century.

Exacerbating the already virulent tension over white consumption of land was the institution of a reserve system in the first decade of the twentieth century which placed nearly two-thirds of the Shona population within reserves totaling 37 percent of available land in Mashonaland. Similar systems were put into place for the Ndebele in which one-third of the population lived on just 16 percent of previously held lands. At roughly 750,000, the black population was initially capable of surviving within the constraints of the reserve system. However, with the rapid population growth of the following decades, overcrowding became a severe problem. Additionally, despite the possibility that blacks would be able to purchase lands outside of the reservations, few could realistically afford relocation.

With the formalized division between black and white land holdings in Zimbabwe through the 1931 Land Appointment Act, explicitly exclusive and racially biased division lines were drawn in Southern Rhodesia. White held lands continued to consume black territory not only quantitatively, but also qualitatively. White settlers -- as of 1931 numbering less than fifty thousand, with only eleven thousand settled on farms -- now possessed nearly half of available land and unquestionably the richest and most fertile soil. The one million strong black population was relegated to roughly twenty million acres of sub-standard, often barren territory.

Rapid agricultural expansion following the end of the Second World War and subsequent immigration from Europe between 1945 and 1960 created the continual need for increasing amounts of land for white settlers. As a result, greater numbers of blacks were forced onto reservations that were already severely overcrowded by a population of between two and three million. Mounting hardships both inside and outside the reserves led to rapidly increasing levels of discontent among the black population. Consequently, the post-war years saw the emergence of a swelling tide of nationalism and a call for majority rule. The resulting backlash would result in thirty years of continuously repressive legislation by the Southern Rhodesian government and increasingly violent responses from the black majority.

### The Rising Tide of Nationalism

Early attempts at social reform in Southern Rhodesia were a direct response to the overwhelming poverty of their constituents. The foundation of multiracial societies, such as the African Capricorn Society, in the early 1950s were not calls for open rebellion, but instead championed the end to exclusionary policies instituted by the Southern Rhodesian government. However, with the settler regime's continued unwillingness to grant Africans equal rights under the law, the scope and focus of social movements in the mid-1950s became far more politicized. By the end of the decade, Africans in Southern

Rhodesia were represented by three political organizations: the City Youth League (CYL), the African Voice Association, and the African National Congress (ANC). To further their goals of raising African political consciousness, regardless of education or background, the three parties combined to create a unified national party. The Southern Rhodesia African National Congress (SRANC) was launched on September 12, 1957 with ANC President Joshua Nkomo retaining his position and former CYL party chair James Chickerema as Vice-President.<sup>22</sup>

As the new party increased its influence and spurred rural resistance, the Southern Rhodesian government -- despite resignations of influential members such as Federal Chief Justice Sir Robert Tredgold -- responded by passing even more restrictive legislation including the Unlawful Organizations Act, the Law and Order (Maintenance) Act, the Native Affairs Amendment Act, the Preventative Detention Act, and the Emergency Powers Act. Finally, in February 1959, over five hundred members of the SRANC were arrested and detained and the party declared unlawful.<sup>23</sup>

Despite the banning of the SRANC, nationalists were not deterred in their efforts and formed the National Democratic Party (NDP) on January 1, 1960. Soon afterwards, with Nkomo reclaiming his position as President, the NDC petitioned the British government to hold a constitutional conference that allowed equal representation for all parties. In 1961, Britain acquiesced and an agreement was reached in which Africans

---

<sup>22</sup> Nhema, *Democracy in Zimbabwe*, 79-80.

<sup>23</sup> SRANC President Joshua Nkomo was able to escape and spent the next eighteen months self-exiled in England.

were allotted fifteen out of a possible sixty-five seats in the legislature. Widespread discontent swept through nationalist camps, particularly regarding the weakness of Nkomo in handling the situation. As a result, several leading members of the NDP publically criticized Nkomo and refused to recognize the new constitution. Violent tactics were employed to prevent Africans from participating in the following year's elections, and by the time relative peace was restored in December 1961 the NDP was banned and its leadership – with the exception of Nkomo – was arrested.<sup>24</sup>

Eight days after the banning of the NDP, Nkomo formed the Zimbabwe African Peoples' Union (ZAPU). While a direct heritor of the nationalist cause, ZAPU broadened its objectives to include:

---

<sup>24</sup> Nhema, *Democracy in Zimbabwe*, 80-82.

- the institution of a policy of one man, one vote as the basis of government;
- to maintain the spirit of democracy and love of liberty among the people of Zimbabwe;
- to fight for the total liquidation of imperialism and colonialism, direct and indirect and to cooperate with any international forces supporting this struggle;
- to create conditions for the economic prosperity of the people under a government based on the principle of one man, one vote;
- to foster the spirit of Pan-Africanism and work cooperatively with other movements in Africa and elsewhere supporting the spirit of Pan-Africanism;
- to promote the development of the best values in African culture and traditions with a view to establishing a desirable order<sup>25</sup>

ZAPU represented Nkomo's attempt to bring Zimbabwean independence, and the end of colonialism in Southern Africa, to the international stage. While Nkomo was able to garner support in the United Nations Assembly and achieve a resolution calling for a new constitution, the Rhodesian government responded with increasingly restrictive legislation designed to further hamper nationalist insurrection. ZAPU was banned on September 20, 1962, and responding to pressures by Julius Nyerere and other African leaders, Nkomo returned to Southern Rhodesia to join his fellow nationalists in

---

<sup>25</sup> Nathan M. Shamuyarira, *Crisis in Rhodesia* (London: A. Deutsch, 1965), 71.

confinement. By 1963 ZAPU had yet to set into place a clear and decisive course for Zimbabwe's independence beyond petitioning the United Nations and Great Britain.

Compounding problems, a new settler regime lead by the right-wing Rhodesian Front gained power in 1962 with promises to quell African nationalism and maintain white rule. The death penalty was introduced and the powers of the Law and Order (Maintenance) Act were increased. In response to this new threat, divisions arose within ZAPU and resulted in the formation of two rival nationalist organizations, the People's Caretaker Council (PCC) -- a front for Nkomo's ZAPU -- and the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU), lead by the Methodist clergyman Reverend Ndabaningi Sithole in August 1963. Discord between the two groups soon resulted in violent conflicts characterized by pitched battles, gang warfare, petrol bombings, arson, stoning, and assaults.<sup>26</sup>

As the infighting between the PCC and ZANU spread into the white community, the Rhodesian Front government feared that Great Britain would give into nationalist pressures for majority rule. Rhodesian Front leaders saw such an action as an irreversible end to their privileged status and the prosperity of Southern Rhodesia. In response to Prime Minister Winston Fields' unwillingness to enact plans for white independence, he was replaced by his deputy Ian Smith. Smith played on the fears of the white community and effectively quelled any voice of dissent by banning all African political parties, detaining over two thousand Africans without trial, and banning all national newspapers

---

<sup>26</sup> Meredith, *Mugabe: Power and Plunder*, 33.

such as *The African Daily News*, *Zimbabwe Sun*, and *Chapupu*, which championed African viewpoints. Finally, when all negotiations with Great Britain failed to resolve the issue of majority rule, Smith announced the unlawful Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) on November 11, 1965.

The UDI was initially met with acts of domestic terrorism such as sabotage and crop destruction, and organized protests in urban areas. In total, eighty incidents of sabotage occurred between November 1965 and July 1966. Smith's racist and exceedingly restrictive policies under the Law and Order (Maintenance) Act would foster more militant attitudes from the PCC and ZANU. The abolition of African political parties, the institution of the Land Tenure Act<sup>27</sup>, and new Rhodesian Constitution in 1969<sup>28</sup> further cemented Smith's desire to "[sound] the death knell of the notion of majority rule."

The final straw in the increasingly tense state of Rhodesian race relations came in response to the November 1971 Anglo-Rhodesian constitutional proposals granting Africans limited franchise and allowing for a gradual increase of Africans in the legislature. The increase would follow a formula which would maintain a white majority in the legislature and a *de facto* one-party state until 2035, resulting in a backlash of what Bishop Abel Muzorewa called "the repressed fear, restless silence, forced tolerance and hidden hatred" within the African population. As a result of continued repression by

---

<sup>27</sup> The Land Tenure Act to permanently infixed racially-based land divisions with a quantitatively balanced bisection of territory (forty five million acres each). However, the most agriculturally prosperous areas were retained by the white minority.

<sup>28</sup> The 1969 Land Tenure Act increased the proportion of land designated for white occupation.



Smith and the Rhodesian Front, and contemptible attempts in granting African franchise, escalated guerilla war broke out in December 1972, beginning almost seven years of continued warfare and the end of minority rule in Rhodesia.

Attitudes of suppression and the resulting powerlessness of the black population would result in a crusade to recover lost lands. The Second *Chimurenga* of the 1970s would be the violent articulation of these attitudes. More importantly, Robert Mugabe, by 1975 one of the two prominent voices of the war for majority rule<sup>29</sup>, first used the promise of land to lend mass support to his movement. This would not be the last instance of Mugabe using land reform as a tool of mass mobilization.

### The Rise of Robert Mugabe and the Second *Chimurenga*

Robert Mugabe's story is a common one in African nationalism. Born Robert Gabriel Mugabe on February 21, 1924 to a carpenter father and catechism-teaching mother, he was an exceptional student and model example of the Catholic mission system. After receiving his teaching diploma in 1945, Mugabe held multiple positions throughout Southern Rhodesia, and in 1949 won a scholarship to Fort Hare University College in South Africa. It was at Fort Hare that Mugabe was first exposed to Marxist thought and the nationalist movement. By the time of his return to Southern Rhodesia in

---

<sup>29</sup> Joshua Nkomo was the second major leader in the war for independence. His Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) party constituted the second half in the divided and often contentious resistance movement.

1952 -- and throughout his time in Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia) in the following years -- Mugabe had become disenchanted with the system and yet remained distant to the calls for independence and resistance.

Not until his move to Ghana in 1958 did Mugabe become enamored with the prospect of an independent and unified Africa. As the continent's first independent nation in 1957, Ghana represented the hope and possibility that was unimaginable in neighboring colonies. However, it was on a visit to Southern Rhodesia in May 1960 to introduce his fiancée to his parents when Mugabe became a fully awakened nationalist by protesting the arrest of friends belonging to the NDP and taking part in what has become known as the March of the Seven Thousand. This transformative experience prompted Muagbe to resign his post in Ghana and become a full-time activist.

For the greater part of the 1960s, Mugabe, along with the majority of high-ranking Zimbabwean nationalists, was held in indefinite detention. Between his arrest in 1963, and his release in 1974, Mugabe underwent intense personal and ideological evolutions brought on by the death of his son and his continued academic studies.<sup>30</sup> Emerging from his eleven years of imprisonment, Mugabe was dedicated to the cause of revolutionary struggle and the freedom of Zimbabwe from the tyranny of minority rule.<sup>31</sup>

---

<sup>30</sup> Mugabe has earned a total of seven degrees from various academic institutions. These include a Bachelor of Arts in Education from the University of Fort Hare, a Bachelor of Science in Economics from the University of London, a Master of Science in Economics from the University of South Africa, as well as a Bachelor of Law, Master of Laws, Bachelor of Administration, and Bachelor of Education from the University of South Africa. He also holds thirteen honorary degrees.

<sup>31</sup> Meredith, *Mugabe: Power and Plunder*, 37.

His soft-spoken nature, brilliant intellect, and single-minded ambition served as a both a source of admiration and caution amongst his fellow nationalists.

Upon his release, Mugabe was determined to reconstitute the liberation struggle under the ZANU banner. However, several prominent African statesmen -- notably Julius Nyerere of Tanzania and Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia -- saw Mugabe's ambitions as counterproductive to their goal of a unified front between ZAPU and ZANU. When, in November 1974, ZANU elected Mugabe to replace Ndabaningi Sithole as President, Kaunda threatened sanctions against the Zimbabwe African Liberation Army (ZANLA), based in Zambia. Additionally, conflict between the Shona-based ZANLA and the Ndebele-dominated Zimbabwe People's Liberation Army (ZIPRA)<sup>32</sup> resulted in open conflict between the rival organizations. However, by 1977, primarily due to his efforts in organizing guerillas in Mozambique, the assassination of popular ZANLA commander Herbert Chipeto, and his ability to discredit Sithole, Mugabe was able to gain the support of guerilla leaders and bring ZANU fully under his control, forcing his immediate recognition as the primary leader of armed resistance in Rhodesia.

By 1976, the pressures of constant warfare had exacerbated the decade-old embargos of the UDI and forced the Rhodesian government to adjust their stance on majority rule. As of 1978, the war accounted for 40 percent of government spending, and 15 percent of the GDP.<sup>33</sup> Additionally, in 1979 Smith announced that the cost of the war

---

<sup>32</sup> ZANLA was the military wing of ZANU, while ZIPRA was the military wing of ZAPU, both conducted military operations from bases in Zambia and Mozambique.

<sup>33</sup> EIU, *Quarterly Economic Review*, first quarter 1978, 3.

had quadrupled over its five years.<sup>34</sup> In the 1979-1980 budget, defense and security accounted for 37 percent of projected expenditures and the national deficit had grown to \$Rh 460,000,000.<sup>35</sup>

After being rejected in their earlier advances by nationalist still residing in Salisbury, the Smith regime finally submitted to a settlement that would grant majority rule while protecting white interests, much to the distaste of ZANU and ZAPU. However, when it became clear in mid-1979 that the British government would not recognize the new Zimbabwe Rhodesia government under Bishop Abel Muzorewa all nationalist organizations joined in new negotiations at Lancaster House in London.<sup>36</sup> After three months of intense debate and bargaining, an agreement was reached that established a new constitution and procedures for a transfer of power. In mid-December British authority was temporarily reinstated and a cease-fire effected, and United Nations sanctions lifted.

From February 27-29, 1980, closely supervised elections were held that included nine political parties. The Zimbabwe African Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) won an overwhelming majority, fifty-seven seats and 63 percent of the vote. Mugabe was asked to form the new government as Prime Minister while Canaan Banana, a Methodist minister and long-time advocate for racial justice, was named President.<sup>37</sup>

---

<sup>34</sup> *Financial Times*, July 27, 1979.

<sup>35</sup> Robert Fraser, ed., *Keesing's Contemporary Archives* (London: Keesing's Ltd., 1979)

<sup>36</sup> Under the initial agreement, Rhodesia was renamed Zimbabwe Rhodesia.

<sup>37</sup> Harold D. Nelson, ed., *Zimbabwe: A Country Study* (Washington, D.C.: Foreign Area Studies, The American University, 1983), xxxi-xxxii.

**Table 2.1. Results of Common Roll Elections, 1980**

Party	Total Valid Votes Cast	Percent of Valid Votes	Seats
NDU	15,056	0.568	0
NFZ	18,794	0.709	0
PF	638,879	24.113	20
UANC	219,307	8.277	3
UNFP	5,796	0.219	0
UPAM	1,181	0.045	0
ZANU	53,343	2.013	0
ZANU (PF)	1,668,992	62.992	57
ZDP	28,181	1.064	0

*Source:* House of Representatives, Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on Africa, 96<sup>th</sup> Cong., 2d sess.

Few thought the election of Mugabe, a noted Marxist and radical guerilla organizer, as Prime Minister to be plausible. However, according to Richard M. Moose, former Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, Mugabe's candidacy was strengthened when viewed in the African context as well as from several factors including:

- his image as a nationalist who organized the principal and most successful fighting force;
- his identification with the majority Shona tribal group;
- his ability to project himself as a winner;
- Muzorewa's relatively lackluster performance during his period in office and his close identification with the whites and with South Africa.<sup>38</sup>

For Nkomo, who believed himself to be the “Father of Zimbabwe,” the loss to ZANU-PF was a bitter pill to swallow. His victory in the Matabeleland Province had granted his Patriotic Front twenty seats, but relegated Nkomo to nothing more than a regional leader of the Ndebele and Kalanga people. Initially offered the ceremonial post of President, Nkomo declined and instead accepted the position of Minister of Home Affairs, which controlled the police. However, the distrust and political humiliation suffered at the hands of Mugabe would foreshadow the continued feud between the two prominent figures of Zimbabwean independence.

Zimbabwe's independence marked the end of seventy years of economic, political, and social oppression at the hands of settler society. Under the socialist vision of Robert Mugabe, Zimbabwe attempted to rectify the injustices of the colonial period while simultaneously seeking reconciliation with long-time enemies. However, the

---

<sup>38</sup> Congress, House, Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on Africa, *Results of the Recent Elections in Zimbabwe*, 96<sup>th</sup> Cong., 2d sess., 8.

divided nature of Zimbabwean society -- punctuated by decades of land stratification and subjugation by the minority white population -- remained despite the transfer to majority rule. Additionally, competition between Mugabe and Nkomo fostered deep distrust among their respective political parties, placing strain on democratic principles. As Zimbabwe entered its first decade of independence, it faced significant questions about the integration of colonial institutions into the new majority government, the redistribution of land to the dispossessed masses, the impact of international donor aid on Zimbabwe's economic performance, and potential conflict between Mugabe's socialist vision and Western democratic principles. The following chapter will analyze these issues as well as how Mugabe and Zimbabwe's fledgling government strove to define themselves as an independent people free from the chains of colonialism.

## **CHAPTER THREE: ZIMBABWE'S FIRST DECADE OF INDEPENDENCE**

This chapter analyzes the first decade of Zimbabwe's independence under majority rule and the political developments that contributed to economic, social, and political crises in the following decades. It traces the evolution of ZANU-PF from an organization born in the midst of radical guerilla warfare and intense political oppression to one attempting political consolidation and ideological revolution. Specifically, this chapter illustrates three key factors that shaped the first decade of Zimbabwean development. First, the virulent issue of land reform and the unwillingness of the new majority government to abolish policies that strengthened colonial institutions and forged unhealthy relationships between private enterprise and government interests. Second, the changing global market and international lenders' impact on Zimbabwe's economy, and third, the rise of a *de facto* one-party state following the Matabeleland Massacres and rising unrest among civil society groups.



### Post-Independence Land Reform, 1980-1989

Zimbabwe's independence and the introduction of a multi-racial democratic society marked the end of seventy years of oppressive political, economic, and social controls. Despite its newfound sovereignty, one of the major obstacles facing the fledgling government was the unequal allocation of quality land and the inability of small-scale commercial farmers to procure arable tracts. Under the Land Tenure Act of 1969, land was quantitatively equal, but was qualitatively poor for black Zimbabweans.

**Table 3.1. Principle Land Categories under the Land Tenure Act of 1969**

Land Category	Area (Hectares)	Percent of Total
<b>European Land</b>		
General Farming Land	15,337,096	39.4
Other Land – Parks, Forests, etc.	2,768,020	7.1
Total	18,145,116	46.5
<b>African Land</b>		
Tribal Trust Land (Communal)	16,291,670	41.7
APL (SSCF)	1,415,921	3.6
Other Land – Parks, Forests, etc.	494,617	1.6
Total	18,202,084	46.6
National Land	2,727,617	6.9
Total Zimbabwean Land	39,074,817	100.0

*Source:* Sam Moyo, "The Land Question," *Zimbabwe: The Political Economy of Transition, 1980-1986*, ed. Ibbo Mandaza (Dakar, Senegal: Codesria, 1986), 168.

The impetus of resettlement was derived from a historical precedent of landlessness at the hands of white settlers, and represented a vehicle of mass mobilization utilized

extensively during the liberation war. After independence, the landless majority sought reparations for the seven decades of injustice imposed upon them by settlers. However, under the terms of the Lancaster House Agreements foreign aid was dependent upon the reallocation of land on a willing buyer-willing seller basis. This practice would result in divisions between the socialist goals of Mugabe and the complexities of Zimbabwe's inherited economic system, entrench of the white minority for years to come, and create a festering desire for radical resettlement in the following decades.

While the majority of the African population believed that the new majority government would bring about radical social, political, and economic changes, Mugabe declared shortly after ZANU-PF's victory that:

“We will ensure that there is a place for everyone in this country. We want to ensure a sense of security for both the winners and the losers. There will be no sweeping nationalization; the pensions and jobs of civil servants are guaranteed; farmers will keep their land. Let us forgive and forget. Let us join hands in a new amity.”<sup>39</sup>

Therefore, rather than dismantling the old guard, Mugabe instead curbed the socialist ambitions of his constituency and maintained the long-held *status quo*, continuing the statist economy that had strictly regulated foreign exchange, imports, and prices for the past fifteen years. According to Alfred Nhema:

---

<sup>39</sup> David Cauter, *Under the Skin: The Death of White Rhodesia* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1983), quoted in Ibbo Mandaza, ed., *Zimbabwe: The Political Economy of Transition, 1980-1986* (Dakar, Senegal: Codesria, 1986), 42.

“While Mugabe extolled the virtues of socialism to his own African supporters, no exhortations of that nature were preached to white capitalists. To their pleasant surprise the whites discovered that hegemonic control they had attained through military and political means could still be retained via the forces of economics.”<sup>40</sup>

With the overwhelming majority of Zimbabwe’s GDP coming from white owned industry, mining, and business, it was imperative for the economic stability of Zimbabwe that the white community be allowed to maintain their holdings after independence. In the prophetic words of Ian Smith, “They [whites] have the skills and the capital. I’m not a racist, but it’s the story of Africa: Every black country that forces its whites to leave has become a tragedy.”<sup>41</sup> The aforementioned provisions in the Lancaster House Agreements made foreign aid contingent on the protection of property, specifically land, thus making ZANU-PF’s goal of radical redistribution unfeasible. While some see Lancaster House as a continuation of unequal land policies and a direct bridge from imperialism to neo-colonialism, the fact remains that after witnessing the chaotic destabilization that occurred after the white exodus from Mozambique, Mugabe and ZANU-PF recognized the pragmatism behind maintaining large-scale agricultural production and a white cornerstone of the economy. In 1981, agricultural exports accounted for 46 percent of Zimbabwe’s total domestic export value.<sup>42</sup> Therefore, with the appointment of Dennis Norman of the Commercial Farmers Union (CFU) as Agriculture Minister, the cooperation between settler strongholds and the new Zimbabwean government began.

---

<sup>40</sup> Nhema, *Democracy in Zimbabwe* (Harare, Zimbabwe: University of Zimbabwe Publications, 2002), 104.

<sup>41</sup> Ian Smith, interview in *Newsweek*, March 9, 1981, 13, quoted in Alan F. Pater, *What They Said in 1981* (Beverly Hills, CA: Monitor Books Co., 1982).

<sup>42</sup> Sam Moyo, “The Land Question,” in *Zimbabwe: The Political Economy of Transition, 1980-1986*, ed. Ibbo Mandaza (Dakar, Senegal: Codesria, 1986), 191.

Despite the early limitations placed on ZANU-PF, the government began implementing limited land reform through the policy of “moderation and reconciliation” in 1981. A White Paper on economic policy entitled “Growth with Equity,” published in February 1981, stated that one of the government’s main objectives was “to end imperialist exploitation and achieve a greater and more equitable degree of ownership of natural resources, including land, and to promote participation in, and ownership of, a significant portion of the economy by nationals and the state.”<sup>43</sup> However, the plan also stressed the importance of the white community in maintaining Zimbabwe’s economy, thus making white farmers “something of a protected species.”<sup>44</sup>

Under “moderation and reconciliation” the majority of Rhodesia’s state bureaucracy and officials retained their positions. While Mugabe’s Africanization policy assured that the majority of Zimbabwe’s civil servants were black<sup>45</sup>, whites still comprised the upper echelons of power. In a blatant contradiction of their liberation war promises of land redistribution on the people’s terms, ZANU-PF offered land not as the historical right of the dispossessed, but instead under the banner of production and state regulation.<sup>46</sup> Throughout the early 1980s, resettlement goals grew at substantial rates. 1980 target goals were eighteen thousand families, based primarily on need and effectively managing the communal reserves. By 1981, the number was tripled to fifty-

---

<sup>43</sup> Government of Zimbabwe, *Growth With Equity: An Economic Policy Statement* (Harare: Government Printer, 1981).

<sup>44</sup> Robin Palmer, “Land Reform in Zimbabwe, 1980-1990,” *African Affairs* 89, no. 355 (April 1990), 167.

<sup>45</sup> Fraser, *Keesings*, 1981, 33129.

<sup>46</sup> Alexander, *The Unsettled Land*, 106.

four thousand families, and in 1982 tripled again to 162,000 families.<sup>47</sup> While the 1981-1982 and 1982-1983 financial years accounted for seventy percent of land purchases through 1989, by 1985, only thirty-five thousand families had been resettled on the less-desired tracts of former “European” land.

Therefore, the fundamental question surrounding land redistribution in the first decade of independence was the comprehensive value of settled lands. Quantity, natural quality, and access to water for irrigation were all of significant consequence for those seeking tracts for private and small-scale commercial use. More so, at the outset of independence, the distribution of arable land still reflected the qualitative inequality of land settlement.<sup>48</sup>

**Table 3.2. Distribution of Irrigation-Based Farming by Agricultural Subsector, 1981**

Agricultural Subsector	Area in Hectares	Percentage
Large Company Estates	30,400	23.4
Commercial Settler Farms	10,500	8.1
Commercial Farm Units	80,000	61.5
ARDA (Tilcor) Estates and Settlers	5,900	4.5
Small-Scale Irrigation in Communal Areas	2,800	2.2
Small Community Irrigation Schemes	400	0.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>130,000</b>	<b>100.0</b>

*Source:* Whitsun Foundation, 1981

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 113.

<sup>48</sup> Sam Moyo, “The Land Question,” in *Zimbabwe: The Political Economy of Transition, 1980-1986*, ed. Ibbo Mandaza (Dakar, Senegal: Codesria, 1986), 180.

However, a lack of international funding for the purchase of new lands, coupled with a new emphasis on production, caused a significant shift in land reform during the mid-1980s. The rising black middle class feared that the reallocation of land to a relatively unskilled black peasantry would inevitably harm Zimbabwe's economic prosperity. With the publication of the *Communal Lands Development Plan* in 1985 and the *First Five-Year Plan* in 1986, agrarian reform expanded its definition to include "translocation settlement" (what had traditionally been known as merely "resettlement") and "internal resettlement" (a reorganization of the reserves where the majority of the population lived). Under internal resettlement twenty thousand families were to be moved annually into planned villages located in each district while arable land was divided into blocks with rotational grazing and irrigation programs. As a result, the redistribution of land became of secondary importance, and a technocratic policy centered on maintaining pre-independence production levels superseded the traditional communal social hierarchies. The choice of villagisation over resettlement proceeded slowly and caused misgivings from both those scheduled for resettlement as well as from the district councils. Additionally, the lack of cooperation, coordination, and education on the part of the councils caused many of the pilot villages to remain unoccupied as late as 1988.<sup>49</sup>

By the end of the 1980s, land reform came to represent the contradictory policies of first decade of independence. While public policy advocated social welfarism and the

---

<sup>49</sup> Alexander, *The Unsettled Land*, 118-122.

resettlement of underutilized land on a willing buyer-willing seller basis, the lack of international financial support, resistance by the CFU, and the emergence of a technocratic policy of villigisation and internal resettlement overtook the socialist ideals of the liberation war. In the words of Hevina Dashwood:

“While some saw justice [redistribution of wealth] as based on the concept of scientific socialism, others saw justice as the right to take part in and profit from the existing capitalist structure, a right which had been largely denied them under the previous racist regimes.”<sup>50</sup>

Additionally, the aforementioned rise of the new black middle class drastically altered the political and economic composition of Zimbabwe in the first decade of independence. With the emergence of black entrepreneurs as owners of large scale commercial farms and the embourgeoisement of the new ruling elite, significant divisions arose within the state that pressed for a market-based economy and minimal land redistribution instead of socialism. However, decreased production as a result of drought, changes in international politics following the end of the Cold War, increased corruption within the Zimbabwean government, and clashes with civil society resulted in drastic changes in Zimbabwe’s economic and political collateral. These issues will be addressed with greater detail in the next chapter. First, it is necessary to examine Zimbabwe’s economy in the first decade of independence and the impacts it had on the political stability of the country.

---

<sup>50</sup> Hevina S. Dashwood, *Zimbabwe: The Political Economy of Transformation* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 32.

## Economic Realities of Independence and the Rise of International Financial Institutions

Zimbabwe's post-independence economy has been the subject of much scholarly debate since the institution of structural adjustment and economic liberalization in 1991. Scholars have focused on the government's preservation of power superseding the implementation of its war-time promises of wealth redistribution. While early policy emphasized rural development, increased access to public services, employment opportunities, and reconciliation with the white community, Mugabe quickly recognized the necessity of co-opting white business interests over socialist reform. Despite early dissent and mistrust by both sides, by the time of Mugabe's reelection in 1985 and the consolidation of ZANU-PF power following the 1987 Unity Accords, white business interests also realized the necessity of cooperation and national unity for economic stability.

Throughout the early 1980s, Zimbabwe's statist economy maintained strong oversight on foreign exchange, imports, and prices. Industry was protected from foreign competition, and state-owned businesses monopolized the domestic market. A large portion of commodities (beef, dairy, grain, etc.) were heavily regulated, and ZANU-PF took control over industry and financial institutions.<sup>51</sup> Maintaining Ian Smith's isolationist mindset, Zimbabwe's ideological stance existed in opposition to conservative governments in the United States and Western Europe who were in favor of

---

<sup>51</sup> Laasko, Liisa, "Research Debates in Zimbabwe: From Analysis to Practice," in *Twenty Years of Independence in Zimbabwe: From Liberation to Authoritarianism* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2003), 19.



privatization.<sup>52</sup> The country's *First Five-Year National Development Plan* laid out the groundwork through which Zimbabwe would attempt to achieve sustained economic expansion through state investment and cooperation with private enterprise. According to the plan, growth would be achieved through:

---

<sup>52</sup> Nhema, *Democracy in Zimbabwe* (Harare: University of Zimbabwe Publications, 2002), 105.

- (I) establishment by the state of new enterprises in strategic industries;
- (II) state participation in existing strategic enterprises with the role of the state gradually increasing until majority or full ownership by the state;
- (III) joint ventures between the state and private capital on terms which allow for eventual ownership by the state;
- (IV) establishment of co-operative ventures in industry, commerce, trade and agriculture as well as participation of local authorities in the economy;
- (V) workers' education in management, technical skills and ideology in order to increase the efficiency of workers and their ability to participate in the running of enterprises as well as increase their ideological consciousness;  
and
- (VI) encouragement and acceptance of private local investment and foreign investment on terms conducive to, or consistent with socialist transformation<sup>53</sup>

Between 1980 and 1982 Zimbabwe's economy saw booms resulting from renewed international investment, the lifting of UDI sanctions, and favorable harvests. However, by 1982 the growth of the previous two years was overtaken by sharp global economic decline and regional drought. While the IMF and World Bank were able to curtail the slump in 1983, Zimbabwe's economy never returned to its previous levels. Heavy

---

<sup>53</sup> Republic of Zimbabwe, *First Five-Year National Development Plan, 1986-1990* (Harare, Zimbabwe: Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Development, 1986), 10.

emphasis on social welfare programs only exacerbated spending and forced the government to radically shift its development goals. Unlike many African countries, Zimbabwe was able to effectively manage this debt; however, it was ultimately forced to curb heavy spending on healthcare, education, and land reform in order to maintain production levels for debt repayment.

**Table 3.3. Zimbabwe's Foreign Trade 1979-1985 (\$ Million)**

	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985
Export FOB	1080	1446	1451	1312	1154	1174	1243
Import FOB	875	1339	1534	1472	1070	989	1003

*Source:* Republic of Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe's continued economic deterioration was a result of failure by ZANU-PF to reform the statist economic structures inherited from the UDI and international factors including drastically rising interest rates, oil costs, and a drop in the price of commodities.<sup>54</sup> While the drop in commodity prices in the 1980s was offset by increased volume, it was unavoidable for Zimbabwe and many Sub-Saharan African countries to borrow heavily from International Financial Institutions (IFIs) to counter trade deficits and balance of payments. Even though Zimbabwe had strong international support in the early 1980s, donor aide and income levels were not substantial enough to curtail rising foreign debt. Additionally, increased cooperation between IFIs and major donor countries such as the United States and Great Britain only cemented the relationship between the Bretton Woods institutions and international aid to Africa. By the beginning

<sup>54</sup> Dashwood, *Zimbabwe: The Political Economy*, 58.

of the 1990s, this relationship would be central in the push for structural adjustment and Zimbabwe's eminent crisis.

However, by the end of the decade, the ineptitude of Zimbabwe's state-business nexus became obvious. Excess and graft overran the bureaucracy, causing it to swell to monumental proportions. As a result, budget deficits and public debt skyrocketed, the country became increasingly dependent on external markets, and foreign investment rapidly decreased. As a result of fiscal ineptitude and the necessity of economic liberalization, civil society groups that had once been the source of strength for Mugabe and ZANU-PF began to exercise their roles as watchdogs with ever-increasing prejudice.

### The One-Party State and Civil Society Watchdogs

While the 1980s are generally considered a period of relative stability and progress in Zimbabwe, the fear of counter-revolution supported by ZAPU was a constant source of concern for ZANU-PF. Between 1980 and 1988, the Matabeleland Provinces of western and southern Zimbabwe were inundated with dissident attacks and government reprisals. Even though scholars have dismissed the popular belief that these insurrections were the result of ethnic rivalries between ZANU and ZAPU; facts substantiate that ethnic affiliations played a major role in dissident activities. While the

majority of those considered dissidents came from ex-ZIPRA units, Mugabe and ZANU-PF relied heavily on a Shona-centric Task Force to assure regional stability.

The most blatant example of ethnic favoritism was the formation of the North Korean trained Five Brigade in October 1981. Their existence outside of the normal army command structure, Shona background, and direct control by the Prime Minister's office assured a rapid and direct response to any perceived threat. Despite limited acts of insurrection in the first two years of independence, when arms caches were discovered on land owned by ZAPU in 1982, Mugabe immediately expelled Nkomo and three of his senior advisors from the cabinet. Less than a year later, in January 1983, Five Brigade was dispatched to Matabeleland North, murdering over two thousand civilians, beating countless more, and burning hundreds of homesteads. By January 1984, Five Brigade had moved into Matabeleland South and implemented strict curfews and transportation restrictions.<sup>55</sup> Official reasoning for such heavy-handed tactics was that without Five Brigade, dissidents would have overwhelmed the provinces, allowing South Africa to gain a foothold in the region.

In retrospect, the motivations of Operation *Gukurahundi*<sup>56</sup> were purely political. Removal of Joshua Nkomo's ZAPU opposition, whose support was based in the Ndebele population of the Matabelelands, was of paramount importance to Mugabe heading into the 1985 general elections. When votes were tallied, Mugabe was once again victorious,

---

<sup>55</sup> Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace and Legal Resources Foundation, *Breaking the Silence, Building True Peace: A Report on the Disturbances in Matabeleland and the Midlands, 1980-1988* (Harare: Legal Resources Foundation Legal Publications Unit, 1999), 15.

<sup>56</sup> *Gukurahundi* is a Shona word meaning "the rain which washes away the chaff before the spring rains."

gaining 76 percent of the vote (a 12 percent increase). While ZAPU was able to gain fifteen seats in the legislature (a five seat loss), the party was no longer able to function as a stable political entity due to its imprisoned and displaced leadership and absence from Muagbe's cabinet.

Beginning in late 1985, ZANU-PF began negotiating the integration of ZAPU into ZANU-PF with little success. In response to Nkomo's refusal of integration and demands for a coalition government, and claiming that ZAPU actively supported dissident movements, Cain Nkala, Minister of Public Affairs, banned ZAPU public meetings, closed its offices nationwide, and dissolved six ZAPU-dominated local governments.<sup>57</sup> As a result of their newfound political impotency and increased harassment at the hands of ZANU-PF, Nkomo reluctantly agreed to resume talks. On December 22, 1987 the Unity Accord Agreement was signed, officially integrating ZAPU in ZANU-PF, cementing Mugabe as head of both parties, and beginning a *de facto* one-party state in Zimbabwe.<sup>58</sup>

Ultimately, the Unity Accords were a political contradiction. While the power of the executive had been significantly increased, the senate was abolished and thirty non-constituency seats were added in Parliament, including twelve presidential appointees.<sup>59</sup> In response to stagnant economic policies and the unchecked power of the one-party state, civil society organizations grew in militancy and took on an ever-increasing role as

---

<sup>57</sup> Eliakim M. Sibanda, *The Zimbabwe African People's Union, 1961-87: A Political History of Insurgency in Southern Rhodesia* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, Inc., 2005), 272.

<sup>58</sup> Government of Zimbabwe, *Unity Accord Agreement*, December 22, 1987.

<sup>59</sup> Liisa Laasko, "Opposition Politics in Independent Zimbabwe," *African Studies Quarterly* 7, no.2 & 3 (Spring 2003).

government watchdogs. Through media outlets, trade and labor unions, NGOs, churches, and student movements, ZANU-PF found themselves under an increasing cloud of scrutiny. This trend would reach its zenith in the mid-to-late 1990s.

The primary concern for civil society groups was the need for democratization and pluralism following the Unity Accords. Mugabe's unabashed call for a one-party state and ZANU-PF's increasing involvement in corruption scandals led student organizations to publically protest the state of affairs. Government overreaction in the form of riot police, arrests, and closing of the University of Zimbabwe harkened back to the oppressive tactics employed under the Smith regime. Consequently, union leaders such as Morgan Tsvangirai, secretary-general of the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU), publically supported student protests. He was afterwards detained for six weeks without trial.<sup>60</sup>

However, no amount of political pressure or fear tactics could prevent the graft and cronyism of ZANU-PF from eventually coming out. Scandals such as Willowgate, in which businessmen, politicians, and civil servants attempted to sell automobiles on the black market at inflated prices, revealed how the new elite were attempting to use their positions of power and influence for personal financial gains, a direct affront to the Marxist-Leninist principles they publically subscribed to. Additionally, discrepancies in the salaries and standards of living for ministers and many dispossessed ex-combatants

---

<sup>60</sup> Nhema, *Democracy in Zimbabwe*, 130.

lead to deep disillusionment and frustration compounded by Zimbabwe's declining economy.

Defense of multipartyism in the 1980s culminated with the formation of the Zimbabwe United Movement (ZUM) by former ZANU-PF Secretary-General Edgar Tekere in 1989. ZUM represented the pervasive cynicism in Zimbabwean society and the desire for an end to the corruption that had begun to cripple its government and economy. Unfortunately, due to harassment, financial limitations, and a lack of media access, Tekere and ZUM won only two out of a possible 120 seats and achieved no lasting political change in the 1990 general elections. However, by gaining 18 percent of the vote in parliamentary elections and 17 percent for Tekere, ZUM laid the foundation for a society where discourse and pluralism superseded repression and one-partyism.

As the 1980s drew to a close, Zimbabwe had undergone a transformation from an isolationist nation dominated by the vestiges of colonialism and minority rule to the great hope of Sub-Saharan Africa. However, as the second decade of independence began, Zimbabwe faced increasing pressures to abide by the mandates of a neo-liberal Western economy in the post-Cold War era. In addition to mounting debts and falling commodities, the ideological revolution that had defined the independence movement for fifteen years failed to inspire a critical citizenry. With this new era came mounting obstacles and increasingly vocal opponents who threatened ZANU-PF's stranglehold on power. The following chapter will analyze Mugabe's reactions to these challengers, as



well as how Zimbabwe declined into a nation defined by authoritarianism and reactionary politics.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: ZIMBABWE'S SECOND DECADE OF INDEPENDENCE**

This chapter analyzes the international and domestic issues which defined Zimbabwe's second decade under majority rule, beginning with the onset of economic, political, and social problems at the end of the 1980s and leading to radical land redistribution by the end of the decade. Specifically, it examines three primary issues central to the rise of authoritarianism and the eventual dissolution of democratic institutions. First, World Bank and IMF sponsored economic liberalization and its impact on Zimbabwe's economy and land redistribution schemes; second, the rising tension between civil society organizations (CSOs) and the Zimbabwean government over a breakdown in democratic institutions, intervention in the Democratic Republic of Congo and the lack of compensation for long-forgotten veterans of the Second *Chimurenga*; and third, widespread land seizures by war veterans following the failed constitutional referendum of 2000 and ZANU-PF's implementation of Fast-Track land reform.

### Economic Decline and Land Reform Under Structural Adjustment

Zimbabwe's economic deterioration at the end of the 1980s was primarily due to wasteful state expenditure and policies that favored colonial institutions deemed necessary for economic viability. Widespread corruption and cronyism, failed management of parastatals, dependence on external markets, and the loss of private investment led to increasing public debt. By 1990, continued development along the lines of Mugabe's socialist vision was unfeasible and conflicted with the realities of neo-liberal Western economics. Therefore, under pressure from the World Bank and IMF, the Ministry of Finance announced in 1991 the adoption of an Economic Structural Adjustment Program (ESAP) package. The ESAP package mandated the following conditions: economic liberalization, currency devaluation, and removal of government subsidies.

ESAP was derived from neo-liberal economic theory, which believes companies grow best through trade liberalization and access to new production methods. Competition through importation encourages specialization and diversification and weeds out inefficient producers through a form of economic natural selection. Furthermore, open trade improves welfare conditions due to increased opportunity and decreased poverty. A more concise definition describes neo-liberalism as "a means towards

enhancing human development, social welfare, and sustainable growth and development.”<sup>61</sup>

Despite previous failures where structural adjustment caused “misery, increased hardships, deterioration of human development, destruction of poor peoples’ livelihoods, [destruction of the] environment, high rates of inequality, [and the] marginalization of poor countries and their communities,”<sup>62</sup> Zimbabwe was forced to accept ESAP in order to receive additional loans from Bretton Woods institutions. To combat critics of ESAP, officials emphasized the program’s “homegrown” nature, claiming that unlike previous attempts to introduce neo-liberal economic reforms in the developing world, Zimbabwe would protect its citizenry from the pitfalls of liberalization. However, critics of ESAP have recently posited that ZANU-PF’s true motivation for introducing economic liberalization was that after a decade of independence the state was no longer a viable medium for wealth acquisition.<sup>63</sup> Regardless, structural adjustment effectively ended the decades-old state interventionism that had resulted in a bloated bureaucracy a little room for capital investment.

---

<sup>61</sup> Moses Tekere, “Trade Liberalization Under Structural Economic Adjustment-Impact on Social Welfare in Zimbabwe,” (paper presented at the Poverty Reduction Forum for the Structural Adjustment Program Review Initiative, Harare, Zimbabwe, April 9-10, 2001), 4.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>63</sup> Rob Davies, “Memories of Underdevelopment: A Personal Experience of Zimbabwe’s Economic Decline,” in *Zimbabwe: Injustice and Political Reconciliation*, eds. Brian Raftopoulos and Tyrone Savage (Harare: Weaver Press, 2004), 29.

**Table 4.1. Percentage Distribution of Gross Domestic Income, 1985-1990**

	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990
Wages & Salaries	47.7	49.1	53.7	49.1	47.2	47.0
Surplus	52.9	51.4	46.7	50.8	52.4	52.9
Rent	1.9	2.0	2.4	2.5	2.6	2.3

*Source:* Calculated from *Quarterly Digest of Statistics*, CSO December 1999 in Godfrey Kanyenze, "Performance of the Zimbabwean Economy, 1980-2000," in *Twenty Years of Independence in Zimbabwe*.

Key goals of the ESAP were:

- Achieve GDP growth of 5 percent between 1991-1995;
- Raise savings to 25 percent of the GDP;
- Raise investment to 25 percent of the GDP;
- Achieve and export growth of 9 percent per annum;
- Reduce the budget deficit from over 10 percent of the GDP to five percent by 1995;
- Reduce inflation from 17.7 percent to 10 percent by 1995<sup>64</sup>

While the primary reasoning for structural adjustment was to help countries prevent crippling debt, currency devaluation and higher interest rates made repayment more expensive, further increasing budget deficits. In order to achieve their adjustment goals, the Zimbabwean government suspended its statist measures of price controls and

<sup>64</sup> Godfrey Kanyenze, "Performance of the Zimbabwean Economy, 1980-2000," in *Twenty Years of Independence in Zimbabwe: From Liberation to Authoritarianism*, eds. Staffan Darnold and Liisa Laakso (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2003), 56.

subsidies, and set specific goals that included the removal of export incentives, phasing out import licensing, eliminating foreign currency controls, reducing tariffs, removing surtaxes, raising the minimum duty to 10 percent, and achieving an export growth rate of 9 percent from 1991 to 1995. Unfortunately, core stakeholder groups such as small scale commercial farmers, labor, and small businesses were not thoroughly consulted before the policy was implemented resulting in a lack of national ownership. However, big business groups, and especially the black bourgeoisie, were well informed and represented by the government-sponsored Indigenous Business Development Center (IBDC).

Central to Zimbabwe's structural adjustment was the effect of liberalization on land redistribution and the conflict between white and black capital. Due to sweeping indigenization programs of the late 1980s and early 1990s many indigenous elites sought to become large scale commercial farmers.<sup>65</sup> While the indigenization lobby pressed for deracilization and land ownership reclassification, reforms continued to benefit white-owned large scale farms, further retarding rural development and deepening racial divides. While the IBDC's initial mission was to aid small and medium-sized black entrepreneurs, as the decade progressed the organization became further aligned with the international donor community, shifting their focus towards acquiring equity in large corporations rather than supporting the development of new ones.

---

<sup>65</sup> Sam Moyo, "Land Reform and Zimbabwe's Troubled Transition to Democratic Governance," in *Political Liberalization and Democratization in Africa: Lessons from Country Experiences*, eds. Julius Omozuanvbo Ihonvbere and John Mukum Mbaku (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2003), 324.

ESAP represented a fundamental shift in the priorities of land redistribution. Policies in the 1980s sought to rectify unequal allocation by affording property rights to a wide spectrum of the population. The government hoped that by appropriating land for the landless, war veterans, commercial farm workers, and refugees, that economic growth and a heightened level of political stability would be reached through promoting national self-sufficiency and agricultural development.<sup>66</sup> Under structural adjustment and its emphasis on diversification, large-scale farmers were able to erode the land rights of the peasant majority by promising economic growth. Therefore, land policies shifted from an emphasis on wealth realignment and indigenization to capitalizing on the most profitable export-based commodities.

By failing to adhere to a strict fiscal policy and succumbing to the destabilizing affects of structural adjustment, Zimbabwe's economy began a half-decade of serious decline and increased indebtedness. Real economic growth decreased from a rate of 4 percent from 1985-1990 to a paltry 0.9 percent during ESAP. Employment grew at only 0.8 percent, compared to 2.4 percent in the previous five years, and inflation skyrocketed from an annual average of 11.6 percent to 27.6 percent. Reduction of government subsidies severely degraded public enterprises, amounting to \$3.8 billion in losses from 1992 to 1994. Consequently, the government had to borrow heavily causing outstanding

---

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 326.

debt to rise from 42.5 percent of the GDP in 1990 to 82.6 percent in 1993 before dropping to 66.9 percent in 1995.<sup>67</sup>

**Table 4.2. Trade Liberalization and Economic Performance**

Economic Sector	Before ESAP (1985-1991)	After ESAP (1992-1997)
Real GDP Growth	5.3%	3.2%
Agriculture	6.6%	10.0%
Manufacturing	8.9%	-0.7%
Mining	4.5%	2.3%

*Source:* Moses Tekere, “Trade Liberalization Under Structural Economic Adjustment-Impact on Social Welfare in Zimbabwe,” (paper presented at the Poverty Reduction Forum for the Structural Adjustment Program Review Initiative, April 2001), 7.

By 1995, NGO poverty analysts concluded that the negative impacts of structural adjustment on the economy and poverty alleviation far outweighed any positives. World Bank assessments concurred with independent studies and conceded that:

“The concerns...go beyond the issues of pace and design: the comprehensiveness of the program seems a fundamental issue, especially given the objective of reducing poverty. Given the highly dualistic nature of Zimbabwe’s economy (where the white minority dominates formal sector economic activity and owns two-thirds of high potential land, and the black majority is concentrated in rural, communal areas and the urban informal sector), it would appear that some basic questions were not explicitly addressed at the outset. First, would ESAP, predicated on the formal sector acting as an engine of growth create sufficient jobs, quickly enough, to address the serious problems of employment?...Even realization of the most optimistic scenarios for formal sector growth will not provide a quick solution to the unemployment problem.”<sup>68</sup>

Regardless of ESAP’s flawed design, the IMF’s suspension of loans in 1995 had little to do with their own shortcomings and everything to do with Zimbabwe’s inability to curb their budget deficit and manage their balance of payments. Ultimately, “[L]iberalization

<sup>67</sup> Kanyenze, “The Zimbabwean Economy 1980-2003,” 124.

<sup>68</sup> World Bank, *Performance Audit Report: Zimbabwe Structural Adjustment Program*, Report no. 14751, June 30, 1995, 23.



proceed[ed] ahead of deficit control, leading to declining growth and insurmountable obstacles to debt reduction.”<sup>69</sup>

### Civil Society Challenges to State Power

ESAP’s failure and the Zimbabwe’s deteriorating economic climate caused the government to look for alternative means of economic revitalization. However, the widespread unpopularity of ESAP resulted in two years of indecision on the part of economic policy makers. It was not until 1998 that the government launched the Zimbabwe Program for Economic and Social Transformation (ZIMPREST). Under ZIMPREST Zimbabwe sought an annual GDP growth of 6 percent, the addition of 42,200 new jobs per annum, a per capita income growth of 3.4 percent, and a 4.4 percent growth in consumption. To achieve these goals, Zimbabwe needed to decrease their budget from 10 to 5 percent of their GDP, reduce inflation from 20 percent to single digits by the year 2000, increase levels of saving and investment, and increase export growth by a minimum of 9 percent.<sup>70</sup>

ZIMPREST emphasized the need for strict fiscal responsibility, civil service and parastatals reform, and stakeholder participation in policy decisions. However, these changes were never implemented. Additional calls for democratization reform, good

---

<sup>69</sup> Brown, “The EU and Structural Adjustment,” 80.

<sup>70</sup> Godfrey Kanyenze, “The Zimbabwean Economy 1980-2003,” 129.

governance, and the elimination of corruption were ignored.<sup>71</sup> In response to rising unemployment, record inflation and interest rates, ever-increasing deficits, continued corruption, and mismanagement within the government, civil society organizations (CSOs) -- notably trade unions and veterans' organizations -- began pressing for more transparent representation from their elected officials and demanding a greater voice in the political process.<sup>72</sup> 1996 saw the beginnings of mass strikes throughout the public sector culminating in 232 strikes in 1997, more than in any year since independence. Additionally, stay-aways and public protests showed the ability of organizations like the ZCTU and their Secretary General Morgan Tsvangirai to mobilize large groups against government policy and action.

**Table 4.3. Strikes from 1991 to 2000**

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
1991	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	5
1992	1	2	2	0	1	3	1	0	1	0	0	3	14
1993	5	2	3	3	3	0	1	0	3	3	0	0	23
1994	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
1995	2	2	1	6	4	4	6	12	8	9	11	0	65
1996	0	0	0	12	9	6	8	3	4	12	7	0	62
1997	3	3	6	7	19	18	28	16	22	98	5	7	232
1998	6	9	21	9	0	0	3	3	16	10	5	17	119
1999	6	28	5	14	8	4	11	6	13	19	17	17	148
2000	5	12	14	8	16	12	10	22	10	9	12	0	130

*Source:* Government of Zimbabwe, Ministry of Public Service, Labor and Social Welfare, 2001.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 129.

<sup>72</sup> "Zimbabwe on the brink of anarchy: civic groups," *Zimbabwe Independent*, January 23, 1998.

To protest their absence from political involvement and the rising authoritarianism of ZANU-PF, labor movements, student and youth groups, women's organizations, churches, business and lawyers' groups, and NGOs formed the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA) in May 1997. Launched in January 1998<sup>73</sup>, the NCA's goal of "[S]triv[ing] to protect, promote, deepen and broaden the concepts and practice of democracy, transparency, good governance, justice and tolerance in the Republic of Zimbabwe"<sup>74</sup> was part of a broader effort to forge an alternative political voice which stressed counter-hegemonic ideologies that incorporated a wide spectrum of business and social interests. In addition to consolidating domestic support, the NCA also sought the support of international civil society organizations.<sup>75</sup>

Additional criticism came from independent human rights organizations, most notably the Catholic Church. In March 1997, the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP) published their damning *Report on the Disturbances in Matabeleland & Midlands*. The report detailed the regional context behind ZANU-PF's fear of subversion and the methods by which they quelled perceived resistance during their consolidation of power in the first decade of independence.

In addition to human rights, militarism continued to play a central role in criticism over Mugabe's intervention in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in 1998.

---

<sup>73</sup> "Zimbabwe: National constitutional assembly to be launched," *Zimbabwe Independent*, January 30, 1998.

<sup>74</sup> Constitution of the National Constitutional Assembly, 1997.

<sup>75</sup> L.M. Sachikonye, "The Institutional Development of Unions in Zimbabwe," in *Striking Back: The Labor Movement and the Post Colonial State in Zimbabwe, 1980-2000*, eds. Brian Raftopoulos & Lloyd Sachikonye (Harare: Weaver Press, 2001), 101.

Following the Rwandan genocide in 1994, the new Tutsi-dominated government, aided by Uganda and Eritrea, decided to attack the Hutu army residing in the Congolese borderlands. Zimbabwe, along with fellow South African states Namibia and Angola, sent troops to help support the Kabila regime due to the vast amount of mineral wealth possessed by the DRC and its potential membership in a Southern Africa economic consortium.<sup>76</sup>

Intervention in the DRC facilitated two key desires of Mugabe and Zimbabwe's ruling elite. First, the conflict led to high levels of profiteering by military and government officials through mining concessions, preferential trade, and the supply of arms, food, and goods. Second, since the end of Apartheid, Mugabe desperately sought to regain the international prominence he once held as leader of Front Line States. Upon gaining control of the defense arm of the South African Development Community (SADC) in 1996, Mugabe set out to assert his influence in regional conflict mediation.

Zimbabwe's initial involvement in the DRC consisted of three thousand troops, combat aircraft, and armored vehicles. This number would eventually reach eleven thousand with a daily operating cost of U.S. \$1 million in 1998. It is estimated that in all, Zimbabwe spent nearly U.S. \$263 million in the DRC, with some claiming significantly higher totals. As casualties and costs mounted, severe criticisms arose from the news media<sup>77</sup> and CSOs and caused the IMF and Western lenders to question future investments. Additionally, the Zimbabwean military itself was beginning to question

---

<sup>76</sup> Chan, *Robert Mugabe*, 136.

<sup>77</sup> Editorial, "A nation crying out for leadership," *Zimbabwe Independent*, October 25, 1998.

their presence in the DRC. A report by the *Standard* in January 1999 claimed that twenty-three officers had been arrested in December 1998 for planning a coup against the government.<sup>78</sup> Mugabe's enraged reaction and the Central Intelligence Organization's (CIO) prolonged detention and abusive interrogation of *Standard* editor Mark Chavunduka demonstrated the desperation of the government to quell any perceived dissent as well as their complete disregard for civil rights, the private media, and judicial process.<sup>79</sup>

By the end of the decade, Zimbabwe had successfully alienated itself from the majority of the international community. Continued concerns over human rights and pervasive corruption lost Mugabe the support of Western governments while his blatant refusal to adhere to World Bank and IMF conditions demanding a reduction in government payroll, relaxation of import controls, and streamlined regulations aiding the start-up of small and medium-sized businesses resulted in the loss of support from both organizations.<sup>80</sup> However, it would not be the cessation of international aid which would cause disastrous upheaval in Zimbabwe's next decade of independence, but the dissention of war veterans of the Second *Chimurenga*, the men and women who Mugabe had built his support upon twenty-five years prior.

---

<sup>78</sup> "Senior Army Officers Arrested," *Zimbabwe Standard*, January 10, 1999.

<sup>79</sup> Meredith, *Mugabe: Power and Violence*, 147-149.

<sup>80</sup> Geoff Hill, *The Battle for Zimbabwe: The Final Countdown* (Cape Town: Zebra Press, 2003), 89.

## War Veterans and Shifting Power Dynamics

No group reflected the deep disillusionment of Zimbabwe, or would have a more lasting impact on the relationship between the state and the governed, than the war veterans of the Second *Chimurenga*. By the late 1990s veterans became central actors in the escalation of Zimbabwe's economic and political deterioration due to their ability to transcend the constraints of authoritarianism and successfully challenge state power.

By late 1997, veterans of Zimbabwe's liberation war had become exceedingly frustrated over unfulfilled wartime promises for land and wealth redistribution. Ironically, the liberation war remained ZANU-PF's primary source of political legitimacy, with veterans representing a key constituency. However, due to a lack of organization, veterans found themselves marginalized for over a decade and a half while Mugabe extolled revolutionary rhetoric for his own political gains.

Beginning in March 1997, tensions reached a boiling point when the Zimbabwean government was forced to suspend payments from the War Victims' Compensation Fund due to excessive corruption and theft. After Mugabe continually dismissed their grievances, war veterans altered their tactics from negotiation to outright confrontation. Protestors harassed party officials and organized rallies in major cities, culminating on August 11th with a mass demonstration against ZANU-PF during Mugabe's Heroes' Day Speech. To prevent a violent escalation, Mugabe agreed to resume payments and award gratuities to each of the fifty thousand veterans claiming compensation. The estimated

total cost was an unbudgeted Z\$4 billion that tripled currency devaluation to U.S. \$30 and brought about an economic crisis from which the country has yet to recover.

In addition to the economic fallout, Mugabe's capitulation left the state vulnerable to a further devolution of authority. Desire for a politically expedient resolution had significantly weakened Mugabe's hold on power. Specifically, the dynamic between the state and the governed had been inverted with the government finding itself at the mercy of those who had been longstanding instruments of ZANU-PF's political machine. Now organized and motivated by success, the War Veterans' Association (WVA) and their leader Chenjerai "Hitler" Hunzvi sought greater political gains by articulating the landlessness of many disenfranchised Zimbabweans.

As part of its agreement with the WVA a \$50,000 gratuity, \$2,000 tax-free monthly pension, and free healthcare and education would be provided to veterans and their families.<sup>81</sup> Additionally, 20 percent of all those selected for resettlement were to be ex-combatants.<sup>82</sup> Since land was one of the few commodities that could still effect mass political mobilization, in late 1997 ZANU-PF selected 1,471 commercial farms for compulsory acquisition and resettlement. However, the careless nature in which lands were seized caused open contention within the courts. Of the farms designated for resettlement, 625 were undesignated. Land hungry veterans, incited by ZANU-PF's false promises, began occupying rural areas between June and August 1998.<sup>83</sup> In addition to

---

<sup>81</sup> Cyril Zenda, "War vets now shameless mercenaries," *Zimbabwe Independent*, June, 12 1998.

<sup>82</sup> Dashwood, *Zimbabwe: The Political Economy*, 103.

<sup>83</sup> Editorial, "Rural anarchy looms as government sits by," *Zimbabwe Independent*, June 26, 1998.

actual veterans, the WVA's ranks began to grow with an influx of unemployed youths who found the veteran movement to be the only effective vehicle of advancement free from state intervention. It was this contingent that carried out the majority of violent seizures in the following years.

However, while war veterans represented the most aggressive threat to Mugabe's power, it was the rise of the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) which constituted the greatest long term threat to ZANU-PF's political hegemony. Mugabe's overriding fear of his waning popularity and MDC support would become the impetus for the final chapter in Zimbabwe's decline into economic, social, and political chaos marked by violent land seizures and economic ruin.

### Opposition, Invasion, and Fast-Track Land Reform

By the late 1990s, Mugabe found himself at the center of an international storm due to Zimbabwe's failing economy, questions over human rights, and their continued intervention in the DRC. Additionally, threats from war veterans and CSOs, and strikes and demonstrations by organized labor confirmed that a large portion of Zimbabwe's citizenry no longer supported ZANU-PF with the same fervor that had existed in the 1980s. Unfortunately, the lack of a viable opposition party left the majority of the population with a pessimistic apathy towards the future of political pluralism. However,



in February 1999, in the wake of a withering economy and unchecked land seizures by war veterans and their supporters, the ZCTU approved the formation of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC).

The MDC's primary objective was to be a viable political party that could successfully contest elections and give the public an alternative option to ZANU-PF. Officially launched in September of 1999 under the leadership of ex-ZCTU secretary general Morgan Tsvangirai, the MDC entered the Zimbabwean political arena during a period of severe national discontent. Much like the NCA, the MDC harnessed a broad spectrum of CSOs into a coalition with the overarching purpose of removing ZANU-PF and Mugabe from power.

Formation of the MDC coincided with another major turning point in the political and social transformation of Zimbabwe. Beginning in early 1999, Mugabe appointed a constitutional reform commission aimed at replacing the 1979 Lancaster House Constitution and quelling pressure from the NCA for democratic reform. After over five thousand meetings, the four hundred person commission delivered a draft constitution to Mugabe in November 1999 that addressed many of the criticisms that had plagued the government since independence, notably human rights and freedom of the press.<sup>84</sup> Additionally, it provided for a Prime Minister and removed the President's power to appoint his thirty members to Parliament. However, the constitution's final draft was not a unanimous decision as twenty commission members found it a poor reflection of the

---

<sup>84</sup> Amnesty International, "Zimbabwe-Constitutional Reform – An Opportunity to Strengthen Human Rights Protection," AI Index AFR46/01/00, January 2000, 2

peoples' will. Notably, it allowed Mugabe to continue as President for an additional two terms.

At its core, Zimbabwe's constitutional referendum represented an open forum for post-independence grievances concerning abuses of power and the failing economy. NCA and MDC opposition sought to limit presidential and state power, and campaigned vigorously to thwart any attempt by ZANU-PF to prolong their reign by focusing on the country's mass unemployment, increasing poverty, fuel shortages, corruption scandals, and intervention in the DRC.<sup>85</sup> In a last-minute bid for votes, Mugabe added a clause allowing land seizures by the government without compensation, and demanded that Great Britain, as the former colonial power, provide compensation for seized land.

However, in the face of NCA, MDC, and CSO opposition, the referendum failed in February 2000 57.4 percent to 45.3 percent, cementing the first political defeat for ZANU-PF and the first popular victory for the MDC.<sup>86</sup> In the words of Jocelyn Alexander:

“The constitutional referendum of February 2000 marked a watershed in Zimbabwean politics...The referendum defeat marked the moment when it became clear that the ruling party faced a major electoral challenge in the shape of the Movement for Democratic Change...It forced an immediate and dramatic shift in the strategies of ZANU-PF in which veterans and the land took center stage.”<sup>87</sup>

As a result of the referendum's failure, the political and social rhetoric of Mugabe and ZANU-PF took on a far more racially charged tone. This new message cast white

---

<sup>85</sup> Meredith, Mugabe, 164.

<sup>86</sup>Report of the Commonwealth Observer Group, *The Parliamentary Elections in Zimbabwe, 24-25 June 2000*, (London: Commonwealth Secretariat, 2000), 7.

<sup>87</sup> Alexander, *The Unsettled Land*, 184-185

Zimbabweans as unrepentant racists who represented the last vestiges of colonial occupation. Veterans, once severe critics of the government, were recast as heroes of Zimbabwe's liberation struggle who now existed to re-exert ZANU-PF's influence in the rural regions it once dominated.

Beginning in late February 2000, veterans began what has been frequently called *jambanja*, a period of chaos and lawlessness. A series of well-coordinated government-sponsored invasions of white-owned farms left over thirty people dead (mostly MDC supporters) and countless more injured. Known as the Third *Chimurenga*, the invasions represented a desperate attempt to reclaim the revolutionary essence that had defined Mugabe's early successes. Despite rulings that found the seizures to be illegal, the end of constitutional restrictions on acquisition payments left many without a legal leg to stand on. Further eroding the court's authority was the overt aid of government bodies like the CIO, who directed veteran operations and selected specific farms for invasion.

Ultimately, land occupations were designed to set the stage for a political campaign that played to ZANU-PF's large constituency of communal farmers and simultaneously punished supporters of the opposition, namely white farmers and their labor force.<sup>88</sup> As the parliamentary election of 2000 began, veterans became the militant wing of ZANU-PF, waging a campaign of intimidation and violence against the MDC and its supporters while Mugabe and ZANU-PF leaders vilified white farmers, painting

---

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., 186.

them as imperialist cronies.<sup>89</sup> Despite its best efforts, the judiciary was openly undermined and state-owned television and print media were utilized solely by ZANU-PF. In the end, ZANU-PF's violent campaign resulted in a marginal victory that hinged primarily on the terror of rural populations.

**Table 4.4. 2000 National Assembly Election Results**

Party	Votes	% Votes	Seats	% Seats
ZANU-PF	1,205,844	48.10	62	51.7
MDC	1,171,167	46.72	57	47.5
ZANU-Ndonga	15,766	0.63	1	0.8
Other	114,186	4.55	0	0.0
Total	2,506,973	100.0	120	100.0

*Source:* Electoral Institute of Southern Africa, <http://www.eisa.org.za/WEP/zimresults2000p.htm> (accessed June 1, 2009)

Following ZANU-PF's slim victory, the party intensified its use of *jambanja* to stamp out opposition support before the presidential elections in 2002. In an effort to make the land a focal point over a woeful economy and human rights, veteran groups began a new phase of occupations commonly referred to as "Fast-Track" resettlement that employed two models, A1 and A2. A1 resettlement focused on small-scale farms and villigisation similar to that which took place in the late 1980s. A2 was intended for medium and large scale farms, specifically those which possessed the greatest resources. While ZANU-PF claimed that Fast-Track resettlement would allow for personal self-sufficiency, a cadre of indigenous farmers, and black entrepreneurs, the truth remained that land facilitated little more than ZANU-PF's retention of power. Ultimately, Fast-Track resettlement's greatest

<sup>89</sup> Report of the Commonwealth Observer Group, 16-17.

flaw was that it paid little or no attention to infrastructure development and instead sought to resettle as many individuals as possible.<sup>90</sup>

**Table 4.5. Land Settlement Patterns Before and After Fast-Track Resettlement**

Date Type	November 1997		November 2003	
	Area (Millions Ha)	Percentage	Area (Millions Ha)	Percentage
A1	N/A	N/A	4.2	10.6
A2	N/A	N/A	2.2	5.6
Old Resettlement (1980-1997)	3.6	9.1	3.7	9.3
Communal	16.4	41.4	16.4	41.4
Large Scale Commercial	12.4	30.5	2.6	6.6
National Parks and Urban	1.4	3.5	1.4	3.5
State Land	6.0	15.2	6.0	15.2
Other	N/A	N/A	2.8	7.1
Total	39.6	100.0	39.6	100.0

*Source:* The Herald, October 26, 2003 and Medicine Massiwa, *Land Reform Program in Zimbabwe: Disparity Between Policy Design and Implementation*, Institute for Development Studies, University of Zimbabwe

As white farmers and the CFU attempted to challenge the seizures in court, ZANU-PF and war veteran leaders chastised their attempts and threatened those civil servants who attempted to defend white clients. Fast-Track reform's chaotic nature led to a steep escalation of claims and complaints from organizations ranging from the MDC and CFU to the Indigenous Commercial Farmers Union (ICFU), General Agriculture and Plantation Workers Union of Zimbabwe (GAPWUZ), and the Zimbabwe Farmers Union (ZFU). However, little could stop Fast-Track reform, as it had ceased to be about wealth

<sup>90</sup> Alexander, *The Unsettled Land*, 188.

redistribution and correcting the injustices of colonialism and instead facilitated little more than ZANU-PF's political survival and land grabs among the elite.

While Mugabe claimed that Fast-Track resettlement had ended as of August 2002, police seizures continued into the next year. Damage caused to Zimbabwe's infrastructure and economy was incalculable. Underutilization of farms, unqualified personnel, mass unemployment, shortages of foreign currency, and severe food shortages compounded the international isolation, drought, and political upheaval that had defined the past five years. Mining and manufacturing fell sharply and agricultural production crashed. Ultimately, unchecked land redistribution was the final nail in Zimbabwe's coffin, plunging the country into utter destitution.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: MURAMBATSVINA AND THE AFTERMATH OF FAST-TRACK LAND REFORM**

Mugabe's improbable victory in the 2002 presidential election over MDC leader Morgan Tsvangirai only cemented the belief among international lenders that Zimbabwe had fallen into autocracy and further investment constituted a wasted expenditure.<sup>91</sup> Refusal to permit international observers, gerrymandering of polling stations, and intimidation by the Zimbabwe Republican Police (ZRP)<sup>92</sup> and youth militias caused the European Union, the United States, and the British Commonwealth to declare the elections unfair.<sup>93</sup> Mugabe simply responded with obstinance, and opposition supporters across the country were imprisoned, beaten, and murdered. Tsvangirai himself was briefly imprisoned and charged with treason. By 2003, Zimbabwe had ceased to have any defining characteristics of a transparent and stable democracy, instead reverting to tyrannical rule.

By 2004, over three million Zimbabweans (roughly one-quarter of the population) had fled to neighboring countries resulting in regional tensions and border disputes. Unemployment had reached 80 percent, 68 percent of the population lived below the

---

<sup>91</sup> Electoral Institute of Southern Africa, <http://www.eisa.org.za/WEP/zimresults2002.htm> (accessed June 1, 2009).

<sup>92</sup> Amnesty International Press Release, "Zimbabwe: Local Elections Marred By State-Sponsored Violence," October 1, 2002.

<sup>93</sup> Meredith, *Mugabe: Power and Plunder*, 226.

poverty line, and food was being used as a political tool.<sup>94</sup> With the 2005 parliamentary elections approaching, few believed that the results would end in anything less than a victory for ZANU-PF. However, in contrast to their previous electoral practices, ZANU-PF utilized mass electoral fraud instead of widespread violence and intimidation. Once the results had been tallied, predictions held true, but likely did not reflect the true voice of Zimbabwe's citizenry.

**Table 5.1. 2005 House of Assembly Election Results**

Party	Votes	% Vote	Seats	% Seats
ZANU-PF	1,569,867	59.59	78	65.0
MDC	1,041, 292	39.52	41	34.2
Independents	16,878	0.64	1	0.8
ZANU-Ndonga	6,608	0.25	0	0.0
Total	2,634, 645	100.0	120	100.0

*Source:* Electoral Institute of Southern Africa, <http://www.eisa.org.za/WEP/zimresults2005.htm> (accessed June 1, 2009).

Despite a solid “victory” for ZANU-PF, an examination of regional election results shows that ZANU-PF’s support base still resided primarily within rural sectors, while MDC supporters came from urban centers. In an act of retribution against MDC supporters, and under the pretense of urban renewal and crime prevention, Mugabe

<sup>94</sup> Central Intelligence Agency, “Zimbabwe,” CIA World Factbook, <http://www.credoreference.com/entry.do?id=7913467> (accessed June 9, 2009).



instituted the program of *Murambatsvina*<sup>95</sup> on May 18, 2005. While official reasons claimed a need for the “eradication of chaos that currently prevails in the City,”<sup>96</sup> The operation quickly escalated into “a deliberate nationwide campaign, destroying what the Government termed illegal vending sites, structures, other informal business premises and homes, literally displacing hundreds of thousands of people.”<sup>97</sup> Consequently, an estimated five hundred thousand individuals were left homeless while nearly one hundred thousand were left without any source of income. A lack of food, water, shelter, sanitation facilities, and medical care created a humanitarian emergency while church organizations, humanitarian aid agencies, and neighboring governments were overwhelmed by the flood of refugees flocking across Zimbabwe’s borders.

In addition to the human toll, *Murambatsvina* caused further deterioration of Zimbabwe’s informal sector and continued harm to a country already facing severe budget deficits, triple-digit inflation, a chronic shortage of foreign currency, and desperate need for food and fuel.<sup>98</sup> In the words of the United Nations Special Envoy, “Operation Restore Order [*Murambatsvina*], while purporting to target illegal dwellings and structures and to clamp down on alleged illicit activities, was carried out in an indiscriminate and unjustified manner, with indifference to human suffering, and, in repeated cases, with disregard to several provisions of national and international legal frameworks.”

---

<sup>95</sup> *Murambatsvina* is a Shona word meaning “drive out the rubbish.”

<sup>96</sup> “Transcript of Speech by the Chairperson of Harare Commission Cde Sekesai Makwavarara on the occasion of the official launch of “Operation Murambatsvina” at the Town House on 19th May, 2005 at 12 noon,” *The Herald*, May 28, 2005.

<sup>97</sup> Anna Kajumulo Tibaijuka, United Nations Special Envoy on Human Settlements Issues in Zimbabwe, “Report of the Fact-Finding Mission to Zimbabwe to Assess the Scope and Impact of Operation Murambatsvina,” 2005, 12.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

Simply put, *Murambatsvina* represented the desperation of Robert Mugabe and ZANU-PF to maintain power, and was the final measure for their complete disregard for democratic institutions, rule of law, and human life.

### Conclusion

This thesis has analyzed the political, economic, and social factors which directly led to Zimbabwe's implementation of Fast-Track land reform and its consequent destruction of peace and prosperity. Specifically, it maintains that while Fast-Track land reform was the significant catalyst propelling Zimbabwe's decline to unforeseen levels, it was not the sole cause. Throughout majority rule, Robert Mugabe and ZANU-PF have steered a ship sinking under the weight of its colonial legacy, the ideals of Mugabe's socialist vision, mismanagement and corruption at every level of government, and the crushing effects of economic liberalization. Desire for political consolidation and one-partyism resulted in the violent repression of human rights and condemnation by an international community that once held Mugabe in the highest regard. Finally, the ever-present specter of land has haunted Zimbabwe since its earliest colonial memories, been the deepest desire of the dispossessed masses, and the most powerful political tool available to a ruling elite facing severe questions of legitimacy.

Central to Zimbabwe's decline was the loss of political pluralism after only seven years of majority rule. ZANU-PF's consolidation of power marked the end of a democratic culture necessary for political tolerance and the preservation of peace. Additionally, the methods by which Shona-centric ZANU-PF exerted its authority over Ndebele opposition supporters only deepened claims of ethnic favoritism and alienated important constituencies. Finally, the contradictory nature of the resulting Unity Accords, which cemented power in the executive and weakened legislative oversight, only resulted in further divisiveness between the Zimbabwean government and civil society.

Additional strain came from worsening economic conditions. While not comparable to the crippling levels of the following decade, by the late 1980s, Zimbabwe's excessive spending on social programs, coupled with corruption and global economic decline, resulted in rising levels of indebtedness to international financial institutions (IFI's). Increased dependency on IFI's and the need for additional loans necessitated Zimbabwe's acceptance of the IMF and World Bank Economic Structural Adjustment Program in 1991. While economic liberalization was intended to open doors for new business ventures while simultaneously weeding out poorly performing enterprises, ESAP instead resulted in rising unemployment, increased poverty, declining industrial output, and new opportunities for corrupt governance.

As a consequence of increased corruption by government officials, the failure of ESAP, a marginalization of civil society organizations, unrealized promises of land

resettlement, and their costly military intervention in the Democratic Republic of Congo, ZANU-PF and Robert Mugabe had lost legitimacy with the Zimbabwean people. Successful strikes and demonstrations by labor unions and land seizures by veterans groups only emphasized the rising opposition against the government. With the failure of Mugabe's constitutional referendum -- a final attempt to prolong his term and once again popularize himself with the masses through revolutionary and racist rhetoric -- he was forced to utilize politically expedient methods to shift the national focus to a re-emergent land issue, the only piece of political currency available to him. Land invasions by veteran groups and the consequent expulsion of white farmers led to a period of widespread violence and fear which allowed for ZANU-PF to maintain a slim majority in the National Assembly above the powerful opposition coalition Movement for Democratic Change.

Institution of Fast-Track resettlement the that same year represented the death knell of Zimbabwe's social, economic, and political security. Division and poor management of once prosperous farms left the agrarian base of Zimbabwe's economy shattered and ruined. Additionally, the complete lack of democratic stability, disregard for judicial authority, mass human rights violations, and economic destitution left IFI's reluctant to offer any aid to the one-time breadbasket of Africa.

At present, Zimbabwe is in the throes of a major humanitarian crisis. It has been beleaguered by ever increasing rates of HIV and AIDS, low population growth, acute food shortages, radically decreasing life expectancy, hyperinflation, and insecurity of life

and property. Additionally, the growing brutality of political and electoral oppression has engendered significant domestic, regional, and international condemnation. News media, human rights organizations, and foreign governments have all called for the end of Zimbabwe unchecked deterioration at the hands of Robert Mugabe and ZANU-PF.

While it has been less than thirty years since Zimbabwe gained its independence through a prolonged and bloody conflict, it stands as an example of how a nation's colonial legacy, in concert with the realities of the international economic system, can result in the deterioration of peace and prosperity. However, Zimbabwe's unfulfilled promise speaks to not only to its own colonial legacy, but also the aftereffects of colonialism in Sub-Saharan Africa. Racial tensions, in conjunction with the ever-present specter of land, created deep seeded distrust between the new majority government and colonial institutions necessary for economic, political, and social stability. Additionally, the ideological conflict between Mugabe's socialist vision and Western democratic principles resulted in a strained relationship between Zimbabwe and international lenders. Finally, IMF and World Bank structural adjustment represented the continued imposition of Western institutions on the developing world. Ultimately, Zimbabwe illustrates the ability of failed governance, when left unchecked, to be intensified by international intervention, leading to the breakdown of social harmony.

## LIST OF REFERENCES

### Secondary Sources

- Alexander, Jocelyn. "Squatters", Veterans and the State in Zimbabwe." In Zimbabwe's *Unfinished Business: Rethinking Land, State and Nation in the Context of Crisis*, edited by Amanda Hammar, Brian Raftopoulos, and Stig Jensen, 83-119. Harare, Zimbabwe: Weaver Press, 2003.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Unsettled Land: State-Making & the Politics of Land in Zimbabwe, 1893-2003*. Athens: Ohio University Press, 2006.
- Bracking, Sarah. "Structural Adjustment: Why It Wasn't Necessary & Why It Did Work," *Review of African Political Economy* 26, no. 80 (June 1999): 207-226.
- Bratton, Michael and Nicholas Van De Walle. *Democratic Experiments in Africa: Regime Transitions in Comparative Perspectives*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997.
- Brown, William. "The EU & Structural Adjustment: The Case of Lomé IV & Zimbabwe." *Review of African Political Economy* 26, no. 79 (March 1999).
- Caute, David. *Under the Skin: The Death of White Rhodesia*. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1983. Quoted in Ibbo Mandaza, ed. *Zimbabwe: The Political Economy of Transition*. Dakar, Senegal: Codesria, 1986.
- Chan, Stephen. *Robert Mugabe: A Life of Power and Violence*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2003.
- Chikuhwa, Jacob. *A Crisis of Governance: Zimbabwe*. New York: Algora Publishing, 2004.

- Dashwood, Hevina S. *Zimbabwe: The Political Economy of Transformation*. Toronto: The University of Toronto Press, 2000.
- Davies, Rob. "Memories of Underdevelopment: A Personal Experience of Zimbabwe's Economic Decline," In *Zimbabwe: Injustice and Political Reconciliation*, edited by Brian Raftopoulos and Tyrone Savage, 19-42. Harare: Weaver Press, 2004.
- Fraser, Robert, ed., *Keesing's Contemporary Archives*. London: Keesing's Ltd., 1979.
- Hill, Geoff. *The Battle for Zimbabwe: The Final Countdown*. Cape Town: Zebra Press, 2003.
- Iiffe, John. *Africans: The History of a Continent*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.
- Kanyenze, Godfrey. "Performance of the Zimbabwean Economy, 1980-2000." In *Twenty Years of Independence in Zimbabwe: From Liberation to Authoritarianism*, edited by Staffan Darnold and Liisa Laakso, 34-77. New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2003.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Zimbabwe Economy 1980-2003: A ZCTU Perspective." In *Zimbabwe: The Past is the Future*, edited by David Harold-Barry, 107-146. Harare, Zimbabwe: Weaver Press, 2004.
- Krieger, Norma. "Zimbabwe's War Veterans and the Ruling Party: Continuities in Political Dynamics." In *Twenty Years of Independence in Zimbabwe: From Liberation to Authoritarianism*, edited by Staffan Darnold and Liisa Laakso, 104-121. New York: Pelgrave MacMillan, 2001.
- Laasko, Liisa. "Opposition Politics in Independent Zimbabwe." *African Studies Quarterly* 7, no.2 & 3 (Spring 2003).

- \_\_\_\_\_. "Research Debates in Zimbabwe: From Analysis to Practice." In *Twenty Years of Independence in Zimbabwe: From Liberation to Authoritarianism*, edited by Staffan Darnold and Liisa Laakso, 1-14. New York: Pelgrave MacMillan, 2001.
- Mandaza, Ibbo, and Lloyd Sachikonye, eds. *The One Party State and Democracy: the Zimbabwe Debate*. Harare, Zimbabwe: SAPES Trust, 1991.
- Meredith, Martin. *Mugabe: Power, Plunder, and the Struggle for Zimbabwe*. New York: PublicAffairs, 2007.
- Moore, John L. *Zimbabwe's Fight to the Finish: The Catalyst of the Free Market*. London: Kegan Paul, 2003.
- Moyo, Sam. "The Land Question." In *Zimbabwe: The Political Economy of Transition, 1980-1986*, edited by Ibbo Mandaza, yy-yy. Dakar, Senegal: Codesria, 1986.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Land Reform and Zimbabwe's Troubled Transition to Democratic Governance." In *Political Liberalization and Democratization in Africa: Lessons from Country Experiences*, edited by Julius Omozuanvbo Ihonvbere and John Mukum Mbaku, 319-344. Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2003.
- Nelson, Harold D., ed. *Zimbabwe: A Country Study*. Washington, D.C.: Foreign Area Studies, The American University, 1983.
- Nhema, Alfred. *Democracy in Zimbabwe: From Liberation to Liberalization*. Harare, Zimbabwe: University of Zimbabwe Publications, 2002.
- Palmer, Robin. "Land Reform in Zimbabwe, 1980-1990." *African Affairs* 89, no. 355 (April 1990).



- Pater, Alan F. *What They Said in 1981*. Beverly Hills, CA: Monitor Books Co., 1982.
- Ranger, Terence. "The Changing of the Old Guard: Robert Mugabe and the Revival of ZANU." *Journal of Southern African Studies* 7, no. 1 (October 1980): 71-90.
- Sachikonye, L.M. "The Institutional Development of Unions in Zimbabwe." In *Striking Back: The Labor Movement and the Post Colonial State in Zimbabwe, 1980-2000*, edited by Brian Raftopoulos & Lloyd Sachikonye, 89-103. Harare: Weaver Press, 2001.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Zimbabwe: Drought, Food, and Adjustment." *Review of African Political Economy* no. 53 (March 1992): 88-94.
- Shamuyarira, Nathan M. *Crisis in Rhodesia*. London: A. Deutsch, 1965.
- Sibanda, Eliakim M. *The Zimbabwe African People's Union, 1961-87: A Political History of Insurgency in Southern Rhodesia*. Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, Inc., 2005.
- Sithole, Masipula. *Democracy and the One-Party State Debate in Africa: The Case of Zimbabwe*. Harare, Zimbabwe: SAPES Trust, 1992.
- Stiles, Marit. "Zimbabwe land reform: What's goin' on?" *Southern Africa Report* 9, no. 5/10, no. 1 (July 1994).
- Tekere, Moses. "Trade Liberalization Under Economic Structural Adjustment – Impact on Social Welfare in Zimbabwe." Paper presented at the Poverty Reduction Forum for the Structural Adjustment Program Review Initiative, Harare, Zimbabwe, April 9-10, 2001.
- Weiner, Dan, Sam Moyo, Barry Munslow, and Phil O'Keefe. "Land Use and Agricultural Productivity in Zimbabwe." *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 23, no. 2 (June 1985): 251-285.

Weitzer, Ronald. "In Search of Regime Security: Zimbabwe Since Independence." *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 22, no. 4 (December 1984): 529-557.

### **Primary Resources**

Amnesty International. *Zimbabwe-Constitutional Reform – An Opportunity to Strengthen Human Rights Protection*. AI Index AFR46/01/00. January 2000.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Zimbabwe: Local Elections Marred By State-Sponsored Violence*. AI Index AFR 46/046/2002. October 1, 2002

Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace, Legal Resources Foundation. *Breaking the Silence, Building True Peace: A Report on the Disturbances in Matabeleland and the Midlands, 1980-1988*. Harare, Zimbabwe: CCJP/LRF, 1999.

Central Intelligence Agency. "Zimbabwe." CIA World Factbook.

<http://www.credoreference.com/entry.do?id=7913467> (accessed June 9, 2009).

Commonwealth Observer Group. *The Parliamentary Elections in Zimbabwe, 24-25 June 2000*. London: Commonwealth Secretariat, 2000.

Economist Intelligence Unit. *Quarterly Economic Review*. First Quarter. London, 1978.

Electoral Institute of Southern Africa. "Zimbabwe: 2000 House of Assembly National Election Results." <http://www.eisa.org.za/WEP/zimresults2000p.htm> (accessed June 1, 2009).

\_\_\_\_\_. "Zimbabwe: 2002 Presidential Election Results."

<http://www.eisa.org.za/WEP/zimresults2002.htm> (accessed June 1, 2009).

- \_\_\_\_\_. "Zimbabwe: 2005 House of Assembly Results By Party."  
<http://www.eisa.org.za/WEP/zimresults2005.htm> (accessed June 1, 2009).
- Government of Zimbabwe. *Growth With Equity: An Economic Policy Statement*. Harare, Zimbabwe: Government Printer, 1981.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Ministry of Public Service, Labor and Social Welfare. 2001.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Unity Accord Agreement*. December 22, 1987.
- National Constitutional Assembly. *Constitution of the National Constitutional Assembly*. 1997.
- Republic of Zimbabwe. *First Five-Year National Development Plan, 1986-1990*. Harare, Zimbabwe: Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Development, 1986.
- Tibaijuka, Anna Kajumulo. *Report of the Fact-Finding Mission to Zimbabwe to Assess the Scope and Impact of Operation Murambatsvina*. United Nations Special Envoy on Human Settlements Issues in Zimbabwe. July 18, 2005.
- U.S. Congress. House. Committee on Foreign Relations. *Results of the Recent Elections in Zimbabwe*. 96<sup>th</sup> Cong., 2d sess., 1980.
- The Whitsun Foundation. *Project 3.23 Land Reform in Zimbabwe*. Harare, Zimbabwe: The Whitsun Foundation, 1983.
- World Bank. *Performance Audit Report: Zimbabwe Structural Adjustment Program*. Report no. 14751. June 30, 1995.

## **Newspapers and Periodicals**

*Financial Times*

*The Herald*

*Zimbabwe Independent*

*Zimbabwe Standard*