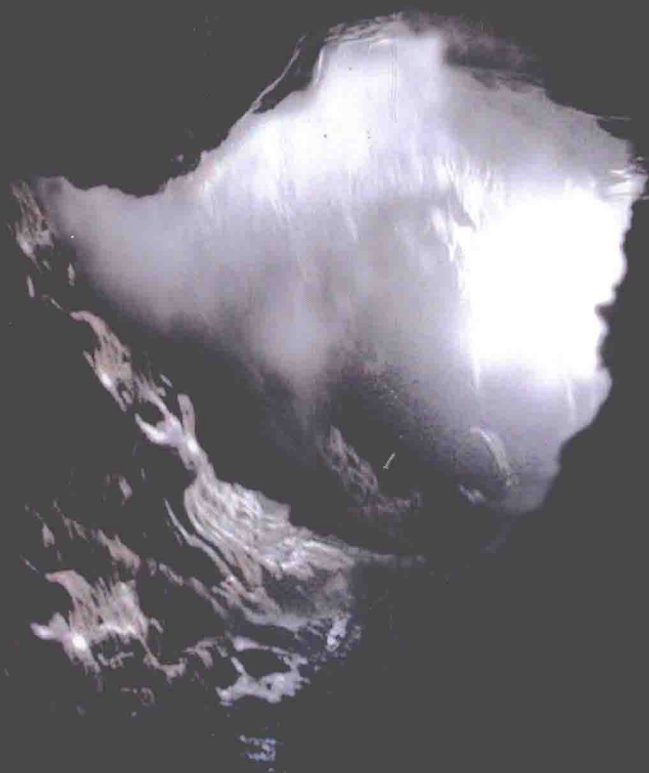


Zimbabwe's Lost Decade

Politics, Development & Society



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Weaver Press
PO Box A1922
Avondale
Harare
Zimbabwe
www.weaverpresszimbabwe.com

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Cover: Danes Design, Harare
Typeset by forzalibro designs
Printed by Mazongororo Paper Converters, Harare

The author and publishers would like to express their gratitude to the Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa for the support they have given to Weaver Press in the development of this title.

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ISBN 978-1-77922-171-1

Part I

By the same Author

The One-Party State and Democracy

The Zimbabwe Debate

(co-edited with I. Mandaza, 1991, Harare: Sapes)

Democracy, Civil Society and the State

(1995, Harare: Sapes)

Labour Markets and Migration Policy in Southern Africa

(1997, Harare: Sapes)

Labour Regimes and Liberalization

The restructuring of state–society relations in Africa

(co-edited with B. Beckman, 2001, Harare: UZ Press)

Striking Back

The Labour movement and the Post-colonial State 1980–2000

(co-edited with B. Raftopoulos, 2001, Harare: Weaver Press)

Consolidating Democratic Governance in Southern Africa

The Case of Zimbabwe

(with S. Chawatama, C. Mangongera, N. Musekiwa and C. Ndoro, 2007, Johannesburg: EISA)

Trade Unions and Party Politics

Labour Movements in Africa

(co-edited with B. Beckman and S. Buhlungu, 2010, Cape Town: HRSC)

Winner of the Book of the Year Award of 2010 of the International Labour History Association

When a State turns on its Citizens

Political culture and institutionalized violence

(2011, Johannesburg: Jacana Media)

*for John, my father,
and Anna, my wife,
for their love and generosity over the years*

List of Acronyms

ACHPR	African Council for Human and People's Rights
ACPD	African Community Publishing & Development
ANC	African National Congress
ANC	African National Council
AIPPA	Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act
AU	African Union
BACOSI	Basic Commodities Supply Side Intervention
BSAC	British South African Company
BIPPA	Bilateral Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement
CCJPZ	Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace in Zimbabwe
CSV	Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation
CIO	Central Intelligence Organisation
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
CHRA	Combined Harare Residents Association
CFU	Commercial Farmers Union
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
CAZ	Conservative Alliance of Zimbabwe
COPAC	Constitutional Parliamentary Committee
CSU	Counselling Services Unit
CZC	Crisis Zimbabwe Coalition
DP	Democratic Party
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
DFID	Department for International Development
EDF	European Development Fund
EISA	Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa
EMCOZ	Employers' Confederation of Zimbabwe
ESAP	Economic Structural Adjustment Programme
ESC	Electoral Supervisory Commission
EU	European Union
FCTZ	Farm Community Trust of Zimbabwe
FTLR	Fast Track Land Reform
FPTP	First Past the Post
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organisation

FROLIZI	Front for the Liberation of Zimbabwe
GAPWUZ	General Agricultural and Plantation Workers Union of Zimbabwe
GPA	Global Political Agreement
GNU	Government of National Unity
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IFIs	International Financial Institutions
IMF	International Monetary Fund
JAG	Justice for Agriculture
JOC	Joint Operations Council
LRF	Legal Resources Foundation
MDC	Movement for Democratic Change
MDC- T	Movement for Democratic Change-Tsvangirai
MDC-M	Movement for Democratic Change-Mutambara
MPOI	Mass Public Opinion Institute
Misa-Zimbabwe	Media Institute of Southern Africa–Zimbabwe
NAGG	National Alliance of Good Governance
NCA	National Constitutional Assembly
NDP	National Democratic Party
NANGO	National Association of Non-Governmental Organisations
NUST	National University of Science and Technology
ODA	Overseas Development Administration
OM	Operation Murambatsvina
ONRHI	Organ of National Reconciliation, Healing and Integration
PCC	People's Caretaker Council
PF	Patriotic Front
PF ZAPU	Patriotic Front Zimbabwe African Peoples Union
PR	Proportional Representation
POSA	Public Order and Security Act
RBZ	Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe
RENAMO	Mozambique Resistance Movement
SADCC	Southern African Development Coordination Conference
SADC	Southern Africa Development Community
SADC RHDR	SADC Regional Human Development Report
SALO	Southern Africa Liaison Office
SPT	Solidarity Peace Trust
SRANC	Southern Rhodesia African National Congress
TNDP	Transitional National Development Plan
UANC	United African National Council

UDI	Unilateral Declaration of Independence
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USD	United States Dollar
UZ	University of Zimbabwe
WFP	World Food Programme
WOZA	Women of Zimbabwe Arise
ZANLA	Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army
ZANU	Zimbabwe African National Union
ZANU-PF	Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front
ZAPU	Zimbabwe African People's Union
ZCTU	Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions
ZEC	Zimbabwe Electoral Commission
ZESN	Zimbabwe Election Support Network
ZFTU	Zimbabwe Federation of Trade Unions
ZHDR	Zimbabwe Human Development Report
ZHR NGO Forum	Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum
ZIDERA	Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Act
ZLHR	Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights
ZIMPREST	Zimbabwe Programme for Economic and Social Transformation
ZINASU	Zimbabwe National Students Union
ZIPRA	Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army
ZNA	Zimbabwe National Army
ZNLWVA	Zimbabwe National Liberation War Veterans Association
ZPP	Zimbabwe Peace Project
ZUD	Zimbabwe Union of Democrats
ZUM	Zimbabwe Unity Movement
ZWD	Zimbabwe Dollar

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Preface & Acknowledgements

Zimbabwe occupies a special place in African politics and international relations. Its politics and socio-economic policies have been subjects of intense national introspection as well as international debate over the years. One sign of the preoccupation was the outpouring of theses and publications in the form of books, polemical tracts, reports and journal articles over the past quarter century. It was scarcely surprising that the country hogged the headlines for many years. Zimbabwe was a major ideological issue for those who believed that it valiantly stood against imperialism and neo-colonialism, and those that pointed out that it trampled basic civil rights and values through repression of its people.

Its octogenarian leader for more than 30 years, the articulate and combative Robert Mugabe symbolised the fortunes and misfortunes, the rise and decline, of a country that was described as a 'jewel' when it attained independence in 1980. Here was a rare African leader who stood up against the powerful countries of the West, reminded them of their colonial past and railed against their imperialist machinations. But here was also a leader who plunged his country into economic decline and poverty, violence and widespread trauma. It would be fashionable but simplistic to explain the rise and decline of Zimbabwe solely in terms of the leadership and role of Robert Mugabe. Historical, structural and systemic factors should loom large in any explanation. But it would be naïve to ignore the strong imprint of Mugabe's policies, decisions and personality on the direction and fortunes of the country.

There were initially high hopes for the potential and future of Zimbabwe at independence in 1980. With one of the best infrastructures as well as impressive literacy and education levels, the country was the second most industrialised country on the continent. Endowed with a strong agrarian base and a relatively skilled and educated population, the prospects for the country's development were much better than elsewhere in Africa. There were even hopes for a possible Zimbabwean model of transition to industrialised development. Furthermore, there was a belief that Zimbabwe would learn from governance and develop-

ment mistakes made by its neighbours and peers in Africa. It did not.

In less than two decades, Zimbabwe became mired in deep political and economic crises. Towards the end of the third decade of independence, the economy has collapsed, transforming the country into a basket case. Between 2000 and 2008, Zimbabwe effectively developed into a repressive authoritarian state in which state-sanctioned violence was a major instrument of containing dissent and manipulating the electoral system.

How can we explain the country's decline during these 'lost decades'? Less endowed countries, including its neighbours, have managed their politics, economics and societies better while Zimbabwe stagnated or declined. To the west, Botswana experienced one of the longest sustained booms while to the north, Zambia steered a largely democratic transition involving changes of government. How should Zimbabwe's 'exceptionalism' be explained? It is clearly not sufficient to carve some 'conspiracy theory' in which the West and sanctions play a dominant role in Zimbabwe's slide into authoritarianism and underdevelopment.

This book seeks to explore the factors that contributed to the entrenchment of authoritarianism, underdevelopment and poverty during the lost decades. It attempts a sustained critique of the post-colonial state and its leadership but does not spare the white colonial state which laid the conditions for a fundamentalist version of African nationalism in the 1960s. It is argued that Zimbabwe's lost decades date from the 1950s when opportunities for moderate African nationalism and peaceful transfer of power were squandered. As is argued elsewhere in relation to the culture of political violence, the roots of narrow and exclusive nationalism underpinned by intolerance of diversity and opposition were laid during that period. While independence provided opportunities for notable progress in the social sector (chiefly in education and health), mismanagement in later decades made such progress unsustainable. Due to lack of coherence in policies, there was a large mismatch between education and opportunities for employment. Developments in human capital formation were cancelled out by large-scale migration in which a quarter of the country's population participation departed. Zimbabwe became a training ground for teachers, nurses, doctors, engineers, accountants and technicians for other countries including those in the West. Capacity in public and private sectors shrank. During these lost decades, Zimbabwe declined from middle- to low-income status.

Drawing from a broad political economy framework, this book explores the interplay between politics and socioeconomic policies, and wider changes in society. The first part of the book analyses the various dimensions of the national question (Chapter 1) and the composition and tendencies of the inherited state (Chapter 2) before assessing the role of political parties (Chapter 3). The pivotal position of the electoral and constitutional frameworks is then assessed (Chapter 4) while observing how their defectiveness largely contributed to the longevity of authoritarianism and dictatorship.

The second part of the book explores the effects of political decisions and management, with specific reference to the economy (Chapter 5), and its agrarian base (Chapter 6). The steep decline during the period between 2000 and 2008 is assessed in considerable detail, and explains the slow recovery in the post-2008 period. Profound developments in state–civil society relations (as surveyed in Chapter 7) reflected authoritarian politics as well as pressure for democratic reform. Values and norms in the wider Zimbabwean society could not remain unaffected by these conditions of authoritarianism and decline, corruption and violence as captured in Chapter 8. Against this broad background of mediocrity and decline, international ostracism and regional anxiety, the country's foreign policy weakened rather than strengthened, as we argue in Chapter 9.

Zimbabwe's lost decades relates to opportunities wasted during the period under review. Other countries used their opportunities wisely or prudently and have since forged ahead in their development and democratization. It will take a candid re-assessment and self-criticism for Zimbabwe to identify where it made mistakes. It will take brave and inspired leadership as well as collective renewal and action to seize opportunities to build sustainable development and democracy. This will necessarily entail a paradigm shift as the conclusion to the book indicates.

The essays constituting the present chapters were written over a period of a quarter century. They were largely based on individual research but in several instances on collective work as appropriately acknowledged in the respective part of the text. The thread that links the various chapters relates to a commitment to values and aspirations for democracy, development and peace in my country. This commitment and hope animate our critique of policies and measures designed and implemented during the lost decades. Zimbabwe will recover from the lost decades. Another Zimbabwe, one that enjoys prosperity, peace and democracy, is possible.

In a book whose component parts were written over several decades, it is almost impossible to acknowledge those to whom I am indebted. My intellectual and institutional pedigree should be acknowledged. My intellectual formation owes to early education in Zimbabwe, university education at Ahmadu Bello University in northern Nigeria in 1975–1981, and doctoral research at Leeds University in northern England in 1985–1989. Many of the friendships and intellectual interests nurtured during those years have endured a lifetime. Since 1983, my institutional home has been the Institute of Development Studies, formerly the Zimbabwe Institute of Development Studies. Many colleagues have directly and indirectly shaped my thinking on development and democracy. I am profoundly grateful to the following for their help, encouragement and solidarity over the decades:

Godfrey Kanyenze, Sakhela Buhlungu, Bjorn Beckman, Brian Raftopoulos, Godfrey Magaramombe, Steve Kibble, Peter Gibbon, Adebayo Olukoshi, Yusuf Bangura, Jibrin Ibrahim, Hashim Yahaya, Gunilla Andrae, Ibbo Mandaza, Sarah Bracking, Andries Rukobo, Eldred Masunungure, Khabele Matlosa, Said Adejumobi, Abdala Bujra, Karen Colvard, Tawana Kupe, Tony Reeler, David Moore, Lionel Cliffe, Davie Malungisa, Donald Chimanikire, Elinor Sisulu, Ray Bush and Jan Burgess.

Finally, I am sincerely thankful to the Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa (OSISA) and to the publishers, Weaver Press, for their support and editorial inputs respectively.

LMS

April 2012

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1

Colonialism, Nationalism & the National Question

Introduction

This volume wrestles with the question of why and how Zimbabwe 'lost' five decades of development and democracy. This was not a conscious decision on the part of either the settler colonial or post-colonial political elites. The wasted decades were an unintended outcome of policies and measures formulated and implemented between 1958 and 2008. These years signify the demise of a liberal colonial regime under Garfield Todd which gave way to a series of white supremacist regimes from 1958 to 1979. Significantly, the conjuncture of the late 1950s also marked a strong shift to radical African nationalism whose tendencies included dependence on violence for political mobilisation.

The struggle between settler colonialism and African nationalism reverberated well beyond 1980, its consequences including the violent land reform of 2000-03 and the deepening of state authoritarianism up to 2008. In order to develop a deeper understanding of political and social processes after Independence, their roots in colonialism and formative nationalism should be identified and their importance assessed. This is why an understanding of the significance of colonialism is indispensable. Colonialism conditioned the form and orientation of African nationalism which mobilised the mass force for independence. We therefore need to explore how and why colonialism triggered this massive social and political movement.

The Legacy of Settler Colonialism

The fashionable approach to colonialism has been to denounce it as unjust, exploitative and incorrigible. Like apartheid, it has few, if any, defenders in the contemporary world. A system imposed by imperial powers in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, colonialism came under universal condemnation especially after the Second World War. The condemnation of colonialism in general and in pre-independence Zimbabwe in particu-