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ZANU PF & the Rhodesian Front: History repeating itself?

It is a political party that describes everyone who opposes it as having colonial hang over, puppets, stooges, British, American or Western agents apart from itself. However, if one were to look into the political administration of ZANU PF, there are clear and empirical similarities between the former ruling party and its colonial predecessor, the Rhodesian Front.

The two political parties share a well defined thread of an unquenchable and dastardly use political violence that cannot be contested. In Zimbabwean politics this far, the contest is between the two and it is them who can tell Zimbabweans who among them wins the political trophy of shame.

ZANU PF and the Rhodesian Front parties show clear allergies and contempt of democratic governance. Their use of the security apparatus for covert and overt political activities to entrench illegitimate rule is legendary and as clear as a goat's behind. At the cornerstone of Rhodesian colonial rule was racial segregation in all facets of social, economic and political organization of the State from land ownership, education, media, and political participation to economic entrepreneurship.

ZANU PF managed to control and consolidates State power by making no changes to the structures and operations of the Rhodesian state apart from wresting them away from the white minority establishment and put own functionaries. There are critical continuities that defined the takeover. The theory of elite continuity can explain the transfer of State power in critical institutions in 1980 without necessarily democratizing the institutions. The political content and DNA of Rhodesian rule continued and was perfected by ZANU PF with brute force and amazing propaganda that in some instances outclass its Rhodesian predecessors.

In the media, the Rhodesian Broadcasting Corporation (RBC) was replaced by Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC) administered under the colonial Broadcasting Act until 2001 when the Broadcasting Services Act came into effect. It was just but a change of name but the spirit behind the two laws remained the same; maintaining state monopoly over broadcasting and using the public broadcaster to entrench power and vilify opponents of the regime in similar ways that the Rhodesians did.

In the print media, state run news papers such as The Herald, The Chronicle former The Rhodesian Herald and



PROPAGANDA TOOL: The Rhodesian Herald

The Rhodesian Chronicle respectively continue to do hatchet jobs for ZANU PF as they used to do for the Rhodesian Front against the very people who are now in charge. Censorships laws such as the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA), a law meant to criminalize the profession of journalism highlights how ZANU PF adores the colonial way of suppressing freedom of the press and expression. Elite continuity theory postulates that in most transitions, there are considerable continuities in both institutions and personalities between the old regime and the new establishment. In the case of the media, the institutions that emerged after the fall of a prior regime are controlled and influenced by the new political elite; ZANU PF. There is a high degree of continuity in structures and personnel, political interference into broadcasting and a partisan state-controlled press.

In these state institutions such as ZBC and state-run newspapers, ZANU PF like the Rhodesian Front staffed them with party surrogates who do hatchet and shameless work in support of a dysfunctional and illegitimate political elite singing for its political super. The party workers in these institutions and their ideologues who masquerade as commentators in newspapers, radio and television

are so shameless to the extent that they have failed to show their distinction from the operations of colonial institutions that some of them claim they fought against. At the economic level, Black entrepreneurs have to show allegiance to ZANU PF in order to benefit in a similar way the colonial governments created their own economic class against the rest of the citizens. For instance, the economic indigenization program is nothing but a euphemism for the Zanufication of the economy. Beneficiaries of the program are party supporters and its business surrogates.

The land reform program, legitimate as it is, was another glaring example of Zanunizing the whole exercise by parceling the critical resource among its structures and political surrogates in a similar way the Rhodesian parceled the land to the Pioneer Column and their friends and families. If one opposes or leaves ZANU PF, their land is invaded and occupied by hired thugs.

Race was the trump card during colonial rule, today ZANU PF membership is the vehicle through its well clienteles organized under President Mugabe, the politburo, central committee and the surrogates in the security apparatus.

Upon attaining Independence in 1980 apart from racial segregation,

ZANU PF shifted little in re-organizing the apparatus of the State to serve the interests of Zimbabwe's quest for democratic State. The organization and operations of the security apparatus is a telling example of regime and elite continuities between ZANU PF and the Rhodesian Front.

In a shameful case of history repeating itself, the Black government of Zimbabwe led by ZANU PF has followed the political thread of the former colonizers to treat its own citizens in a similar and disgraceful way that the Rhodesian colonialists did. The security apparatus serves ZANU PF and not the State and its citizens. That's why the service chiefs declare their allegiance to the party and not the State. From the incidents of the mass killings at Freedom Camp, Nyadzonza, Chomoio, Tembwe, the mass arrests and an unlawful detentions at Sikombela, Hwahwa, Goromonzi, Khami and Gonakudzingwa to oppressive laws such as the Law and Order Maintenance Act, the Official Secrecy Act, the brutal nature of the Selous Scouts, the Special Branch and the Central Intelligence organization, present Zimbabwe has its own similar incidents under ZANU PF.

In fact the CIO which is a Rhodesian creation has taken some of the roles of the Special Branch. Its activities are shadowy, no law to regulate it but answerable to the party leader, President Mugabe as a department in the President's Office.

The denials of citizens to exercise their fundamental civil and political liberties have their history in colonial rule. ZANU PF is happy and unashamed to break from that colonial past.

Until 1990, ZANU PF continued to use State of Emergency Powers mainly against its political opponents although in some legitimate few cases, emergency powers were used against Apartheid banditry activities. The use of Emergency Powers against PF ZAPU and its leaders told the abuse of law to entrench political authority by Mugabe ZANU PF also continued to use the notorious Law and Order Maintenance Act (LOMA), a law passed by the White minority government to thwart Black African nationalism in the 1960s and 1970s resulting in massive detentions and abuse of nationalist leaders and ordinary citizens crying for liberation.

LOMA was replaced in 2001 by the notorious

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Zanu PF Attempts to Stop Drafting of New Constitution Absurd

Coordinator's
Note



dewaMAVHINGA



BLIND SUPPORT?: ZANU PF loyalists have been instrumental in executing party orders to disrupt efforts to make a new Constitution.-africareview.com

The extremely slow and costly constitutional reform process, having gone through an outreach process, albeit one marred by violence and chaos, has now reached the drafting stage. Thereafter the constitutional draft will be present to parliament for debate before being subjected to a national referendum for acceptance or rejection by the electorate. For Zanu PF supporters and sections of war veterans to seek to stop the drafting of the constitution is ridiculous because, at the end, everyone will get an opportunity to decide whether they want the constitution or not through a national referendum.

There have been several attempts to stop the drafting of the constitution to the extent that the Parliamentary Constitutional Select Committee (COPAC) - comprising MPs from Zanu PF and the two MDC formations - had to move the constitutional drafters to a 'secret' location hundreds of kilometres from Harare. However, soon enough the identity of the secret location was soon disclosed and rowdy individuals threatening violence stormed the venue forcing the drafters to flee for dear life. We understand that the drafting is continuing at yet another secure location, however.

Numerous reasons put forward by Zanu PF supporters and their allies for seeking to stop the drafting process are baffling and totally perplexing. They argue that, from a 'leaked' version

to make way for fresh elections.

Firstly, the three very experienced and professional main constitutional drafters are Zanu PF nominees agreed to by the main political

article 6, unless there are ulterior motives for their actions.

In any case, the drafting is incomplete, and the document has not been presented to the public. The referendum

eration Murambatsvina and the electoral violence in the lead up to the June 2008 presidential run-off election. That fear is well-founded because any serious constitution must surely provide a framework to address past injustices and abuses. For those implicated in these abuses, they must be left with absolutely no doubt in their minds that justice will soon prevail.

Another hidden agenda in the attempt to disrupt the constitutional reform process at this stage would be to render the inclusive government totally dysfunctional so as to provide an excuse call for early elections in the absence of critical reforms that would make those elections non-violent, free and fair. This is made worse by SADC leaders who are taking their time to appoint Troika representatives to work directly with the Joint Monitoring and Implementation Committee in monitoring the full implementation of the GPA. SADC should be closely monitoring the constitutional reform process in order to expose any machinations or attempts to stop the process in favour of sham elections.

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Perhaps these ridiculous attempts to stop the drafting of the constitution are driven by fear that the Supreme Law in the making will seek justice for past egregious human rights abuses where some Zanu PF supporters maybe implicated, such as the 1980s Gukurahundi massacres in Matebeleland and Midlands provinces, the violent and chaotic farm invasions, the 2005 Operation Murambatsvina and the electoral violence in the lead up to the June 2008 presidential run-off election

of the constitutional draft - they do not agree with the contents because they do not reflect the views of the people gathered during the outreach and as such the drafters must be stopped immediately. They also argue that the drafters are coming up with their own views unrelated to the wishes of ordinary Zimbabweans. Finally they argue that views of Zanu PF supporters are not reflected and as such constitutional reform must be set aside, COPAC must be dissolved and the inclusive government ended

parties involved in the constitutional reform process. The drafters surely deserve to be left to do what they know best without undue political interference with their work. Secondly, the constitutional reform process has a clear provision for ordinary Zimbabweans to give their input regarding the new constitution - at the stage of the referendum. It boggles the mind why Zanu PF supporters and their allies would want to pre-empt a process clearly outlined in the Global Political Agreement's ar-

stage will surely come, when everyone will be able to express their view on the constitution through the ballot.

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Let's insist on politics with principles

Recently, I came across what Mohandas Gandhi called the “Seven Social Sins” and these are worship without service, science without humanity, education without character, pleasure without conscience, commerce without morality, wealth without work and politics without principle. The one single “deadly sin” that I will focus on this week is the last one – politics without principle. Have you ever wondered what happens to all the “good-hearted politicians” who, after we elect them into power and they are enjoying the fruits of our votes seem to forget about our very needs? Well, your guess may be as good as mine! They possibly let go of their principles and hold onto self fulfilment. Let us see what happens when there is politics without principle especially in regards to the Zimbabwean context.

The reason several Zimbabweans have to face the typhoid outbreak that has hit the capital city of Harare is that some politicians have chosen to neglect their duty of ensuring effective and efficient service delivery, among other reasons of course! This, coupled with the lack of commitment to delivering excellent services to the citizens of the once Sunshine City has resulted in a number of people falling ill

and some even losing their lives. It is critical that when we look at politics and what it can do, we do not forget that once politicians decide to forget their ethical principles, the people begin to suffer and lose lives. Most of what is happening around us, especially this typhoid outbreak, is as a result of politicians who have decided to ignore the proper ethical conduct and treat humanity like it does not matter at all. It actually does and life is precious and ought to be preserved... something to reflect upon if we are going to be transformed and life enjoyed!

It is appalling when I look at the quality of lives that we as the majority of Zimbabweans live. It seems the bulk of us are on survival-mode in this jungle of



Zimbabwe that seems to be defined by the laws of survival of the fittest. Recently, the civil servants presented their case by staging a series of demonstrations and are wondering how that will improve our situation. Again when we look at the situation, it is politics that has gone wrong by people choosing to abandon ethical principles that could improve the very lives of those that voted them into office. Moreover, how will the lives of ordinary Zimbabweans improve when the powers that be choose to loot what is suppose to work at improving the lives of the people for their own personal gains? Is it no a simple logic that what the government has in terms of income can also be used to care for those that work for the government? Again, this

shows how politicians can choose to trash their principles.

Finally, looking at what has been happening around the world when politics fails to abide by principles – those affected take action in an attempt to ensure that their humanity is respected. It may not be today or even now that people will stand up and express their displeasure but sooner or later, it will catch up with the politicians and the people will take appropriate action. Just take a moment and reflect on your life and the quality thereof as a result of the politics of this nation. Are the problems you are experiencing, man-made or otherwise? Can these challenges be a result of someone out there ignoring the notion of politics WITH principle? Well, as my uncle would say, let those who have ears hear and those with eyes see so that when the day of action comes, they that saw and heard are able to be motivated enough to act! To those vying for political office, do practice politics with principle lest you be found on the wrong side of humanity and justice will take its course. Be warned!

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UNRAVELLING THE ZANU PF CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM PROCESS ANTICS

Since time immemorial, from the United States of America's 1787 Constitution, the French Constitution of 1791, Zimbabwe's 1979 Lancaster Constitution, the Namibian of 1990 to the 1994 South African Supreme Law, constitutions are born out of struggles.

Constitutions are born out of lived struggles that involve egregious human rights violations, wars, mass killings as well as other social and economic injustices. At the cornerstone of a democratic constitution is to create a just and equitable society premised on the rule of law. Democratic constitutions are not written for the angels we know but for both the angels and devils we don't know. Zimbabweans are luck at this point in that the flawed constitutional reform process in that we have the devils that we know in the process; ZANU PF and its political allies and all agents of darkness associated with the regime.

In crafting this supreme law of the land, parochial party and personal interests should be fought against in order to create a democratic system that has the capacity to outlive its founders. The process should be divorced from the interests of individual leaders and their elite interests. The constitutional reform process flawed as it is in that it allowed political parties in government to lead the constitution making process under article 6 of the Global Political Agreement signed between the formations of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) and ZANU PF has been facing numerous problems since the First All Stakeholders Conference in July 2009.

But of all the problems it faced, the current ones which are aimed at stopping the whole process completely needs serious interrogation to appreciate the political game plan of ZANU PF and its surrogates who are behind the plan.

It is my postulation that ZANU PF no longer wants to continue with the constitutional reform process for the reasons that I will advance. In this regard, ZANU PF and its surrogates such as the war veterans will



do everything they can to stop the process.

My argument is that ZANU PF's idea is go for the next elections whenever they will be held under the current constitutional framework in which its candidate, President Robert Mugabe enjoys imperial powers. He wants to continue running the country like a Monarch.

In order to do this, ZANU PF and its surrogates will disrupt the process and then lobby SADC and the facilitator President Jacob Zuma of South Africa to convince them to have elections without reform, a situation that favors its undemocratic political culture.

ZANU PF intends to parrot the already tired and useless lie that the drafters of the Constitution have ignored the views of the people and they could no longer be trusted to continue their work. The idea is both to instill fear in the drafters and also use that baseless accusation to stop the exercise and lobby SADC to have elections. If ZANU PF outwits the formations of the MDC in

COPAC and the principals of the GPA at this level then SADC will have no option.

The former ruling party will take its deceptive agenda further and convince SADC that under the circumstances where people's view have allegedly been distorted and discarded by the drafters, Zimbabwe should be allowed to have elections and then a government that comes out of that election be allowed to lead the process of Constitutional reform. This is a drunken and warped thinking because it should not be the province of governments to write constitutions for the people. In December, President Mugabe hinted during the ZANU PF Annual Conference in Bulawayo that ZANU PF would not accept the Constitutional Draft if it did not capture the position of his party. I could sense that things were not going according to the plans of ZANU PF.

It could have be an unwritten resolution of ZANU PF in Bulawayo that any reforms to the current constitutional

architecture could further jeopardize its limited capacity to win future elections. This could have been informed by the realization that if ZANU PF lost the 2008 elections under the current system, an improved constitutional arrangement would surely seal the demise of the party and its octogenarian leader. The answer is therefore to stall any democratic reforms, the constitutional review process included despite its procedural shortcomings. When ZANU PF left Bulawayo, what Zimbabweans saw was leaking of parts of the Draft Constitution papers in the ZANU PF-controlled paper, The Herald. Although, one of the COPAC chairpersons Paul Mangwana denied responsibility, he did not deny the contents and he saw nothing wrong. Surely newspapers should be allowed to do their work including publishing those drafts but knowing the Herald as

Continues below

From above

I do, the purpose was political than investigative journalism for the public benefit. The paper was playing a hatchet job for ZANU PF. It also clear from the ongoing that ZANU PF has also been outwitted by the MDC formations. It is further clear that most of the data that the organized ZANU PF supporters were reading from prepared speeches by a number of ignorant political commissars were not constitutional material. The quantitative method that ZANU PF was relying on betrayed it because data from its members were monuments of useless information of no constitutional value. One could further argue that ordinary Zimbabweans , specialized institutions the MDC formations and civic society individuals who submitted their views though under heavy intimidation and violence from ZANU PF vigilante groups such as Chipangano and rogue war veterans did so qualitatively though in small numbers. The outcome shocked ZANU PF and its repressive apparatus that a process that they thought they controlled through repression did not produce the intended outcomes. The outcome also showed that ZANU PF control of the hardware part of the political process through its violent state machinery was outwitted by the software tactics of its opponents. It could also be argued that ZANU PF sent the hardware elements to the thematic

committees and they were again outwitted by the software elements of their opponents at the level of ideas, data processing and capture. After realizing that the hardware elements who represented it at all levels failed to appreciate the process of constitutional reform, the party is determined to stop it, accusing the wrong people the drafters, when in actual fact the lost the

hardware elements in the security establishment and ZANU PF give peace a chance should settle the problem. If indeed, the people’s views were tempered with, surely one expects the people to make a decision during the plebiscite To show that there is a hidden agenda by ZANU PF, the party and its political surrogates have delegated themselves to

ZANU PF’s idea is go for the next elections whenever they will be held under the current constitutional framework in which its candidate, President Robert Mugabe enjoys imperial powers. He wants to continue running the country like a Monarch

game from the beginning by emphasizing violence and quantities of useless material that have no constitutional meaning to the drafting of the Supreme law of the land. Let us suppose that the delusional accusations against the drafters were true, one would expect ZANU PF and its equally delusional and political hardware characters like Jubulani Sibanda the disputed leader of some rogue war veterans to wait for the people to judge it. A referendum organized within the premise of the rule of law, where the political

speak on behalf everyone including the people who rejected it in the past election in 2008. How can a political party that has never won a referendum, which lost the presidential, parliamentary and local government elections just recently behave as if it enjoys the support of the voting population? Is that not delusional? Zimbabweans and the regional block SADC should not allow ZANU PF to block the process and very dubious and unsubstantiated allegations against drafters. The reasons for these political shenan-

igans are clear; to have elections without reforms, with no constitution and Mugabe behaving in an imperial manner practicing native or domestic imperialism that he has been doing for the past 31 years. It is therefore critical for the political players and the democratic actors to wide open their eyes, come together in one corner and resist ZANU PF’s political method of trying to have elections under the old system of political violence organized and funded by the State with an executive arm of the government that is above the law. SADC and the AU should be lobbied and be able to appreciate the political game in town. Those who are fighting for democratic and political reforms should raise their games. The fundamental freedoms of Zimbabwean citizens will be realized when men and women stand up and raise the democratic flag up and resist attempts to entrench a political regime through a flawed and undemocratic constitutional framework; the Lancaster House Constitution and its 19 amendments. Constitutions are born out of legitimate struggles such as the ones taking place in the county. This is the times to stand refuse to be intimidated and duped by a political oligarchy that has outlived its purpose.

By Pedzisai Ruhanya (PhD Media and Democracy Candidate, University of Westminster, London)

History repeating itself in Zimbabwe

From Front Page

Public Order and Security Act (POSA) which the regime uses in equal force, purpose and manner against its political opponents as the colonial authorities. The changes were nothing but cosmetic but the spirit and use of the law remains diabolic as its predecessor. It was just change of name. The law gives enormous and undemocratic powers to the partisan security apparatus in the same way LOMA did to the notorious Special Branch of the Rhodesian police. The security apparatus such as the police arrest detain and assault suspects without the due process of the law in ways similar to the colonial administration of justice. Phantom charges against journalists and political opponents that in the majority of cases are yet to get a judicial conviction are the order of the day especially on the eve of elections. The ZANU PF government invokes laws to subvert the operations of the judiciary by denying bail to its victims. It is simply the use of law to oppress citizens; legislative oppression as was the case under the Rhodesian government. That is the essence of the Criminal Law (Codification and Reform) Act. From Gukurahundi in the 1980s, the 1985, 1990, 1995, 2000, 2002, 2005 to the 2008 elections, Zimbabwe has witnessed similar atrocities committed by a Black government against its own citizens in varying and contested degrees from the Rhodesian atrocities. But there is a common denominator that defines ZANU PF and the Rhodesian Front; a defined thread of violence organized and funded by the State. My central argument was to postulate that the transition to a free Zimbabwean society just like the pseudo transition in 1980 will be a painful one. The argument drew attention to the cited atrocities by the Rhodesian regime on the eve of Independence to similar ones that ZANU PF committed from the Mid-



lands and Matebeleland atrocities in the 1980s to the June 2008 following its loss in the general election in March 2008. The intention is to warn of even worse atrocities on the horizon as Zimbabweans consistently show that they cannot vote for ZANU PF and President Robert Mugabe in a free and fair election. Like its predecessor, the Rhodesian Front, ZANU PF through its surrogate and partisan security elements have proved that they are prepared to shed innocent blood for the sake of illegitimate power. The purpose of drawing comparisons between ZANU PF and the Rhodesian Front is an attempt to remind the former liberation party that it has totally lost the moral legitimacy to govern the State. It is also meant to remind the few in ZANU PF that still have conscience that what they are doing is simply a looting

and power struggle that has nothing to do with advancing the interests of ordinary citizens but entrenching elite interest. It also meant to warn Zimbabweans of the troubles ahead and to take measures necessary to avoid what could be a final blood bath with a potential to tear apart the State in a similar manner that the Rhodesian Front did when they bombed and killed thousands of refugees at the guerrilla camps in Zambia and Mozambique during its last days. The opinion also seeks to disabuse the ZANU PF mantra that they draw their inspiration to rule from the liberation struggle when all they have done in the last 32 years is to negate the values of a legitimate and bona fide struggle of Zimbabweans. They have embraced the barbaric tactics of the colonial administrators and epitomizes that which thousands did

not die for; a clear betrayal of the values and ethos of the struggle for Zimbabwe. In short, both the de jure and de facto methods of ZANU PF rule are similar to the Rhodesian Front ones. Faced with a situation like this, bar armed civil conflict, it is natural that the citizens will be involved in lawful and legitimate civil disobedience acts to free themselves from the Black oppressors in this 21st century. Human beings naturally respond against oppression and human rights violations and the results of the past elections in which ZANU PF lost is the beginning of a long and painful democratic struggle to free the land of the neo-colonial behavior of the former liberators. By Pedzisai Ruhanya (PhD Media and Democracy Candidate, University of Westminster, London)