

Struggles over Culture: Zimbabwean Music and Power, 1930s-2007

by

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Abstract

Historically, music has been a major vehicle for the articulation of discourses of power and identity in African societies. Thus, the music produced and performed by Africans from the early colonial period constitutes a crucial archive that can greatly enrich our understanding of how they perceived their changing lives as rural and urban workers, labour migrants, urban dwellers and cultural agents across historically cataclysmic eras, from the urbanizing 1930s through the age of decolonization to the hopes and crises of the contemporary post-colony. This dissertation argues that in spite of their disenfranchisement by colonialism and authoritarian post-colonial rule, Zimbabweans have used music to engage power and fashion their own identities beyond victimhood. It illustrates that from the 1930s-50s, many Africans conceptualized music as a tool to (re)fashion themselves in the face of challenges posed by a discordant colonial modernity that preached western civilization but practiced it as an exclusive and excluding ideology. As leading cultural mediators and indigenous intellectuals, their overarching response was to adopt aspects of western culture, including music, as symbolic capital to create new spaces and futures for themselves.

However, from the post-Second World War era, popular disappointment with the futility of the 'politics of pleading with colonialism' merged with and helped to elaborate a wave of cultural nationalism that gave rise to the militant *Chimurenga* (liberation) music by the second half of the century. The dissertation examines these interweaving cultural dispositions, including the ways in which they were variously harnessed not only to perform and legitimize power, but also to contest and subvert it. Finally, the dissertation explores how the hopes carried in *Chimurenga* music during the war quickly recoiled into the protest mode and began to interrogate the ambiguities of independence after 1980. It demonstrates that the post-colonial state did not depart significantly from its predecessor's dirigiste harnessing of music for self-legitimation. In fact, the onset of the multifaceted post-2000 socio-economic crises that have eroded the ZANU (PF) government's legitimacy has seen the state commissioning music, organizing musical galas and generally superintending musical activities to promote its own policies and stymie alternative voices. It argues that where the voices of the disenfranchised have been silenced by authorized meta-narratives (like modernity, nationalism, and independence), music has remained one of the few terrains of struggle where subalterns have had some room to project alternative outlooks and voices.

List of Abbreviations Used

AIDS	Acquired Immuno-Deficiency Syndrome
AIPPA	Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act
ANC	African National Congress
BAT	British American Tobacco
BAZ	Broadcasting Authority of Zimbabwe
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BSAP	British South Africa Police
BSCC	Bantu Social and Cultural Centre
CABS	Central Africa Broadcasting Service
CCJP	Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace
CIO	Central Intelligence Organization
CNN	Canal News Network
CSC	Cold Storage Commission
DAN	Destiny of Africa Network
DMB	Dairy Marketing Board
ESAP	Economic Structural Adjustment Programme
FBC	Federal Broadcasting Corporation
FLN	National Liberation Front
GMB	Grain Marketing Board
HICC	Harare International Conference Centre
HIFA	Harare International Festival of Arts
ICU	Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union
ITV	Independent Television
LAA	Land Apportionment Act
LMG	Light Machine Gun (Choir)
MDC	Movement for Democratic Change
MIC	Media and Information Commission
NADA	Native Affairs Department Annual
NACZ	National Arts Council of Zimbabwe
NAD	Native Affairs Department

NAF	National Arts Foundation
NAZ	National Archives of Zimbabwe
NDC	National Dance Company
NDP	National Democratic Party
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NLHA	Native Land Husbandry Act
POSA	Public Order and Security Act
PTC	Post and Telecommunication Corporation
RAR	Rhodesia African Rifles
RTP	Record and Tape Promotion
SABC	South African Broadcasting Corporation
SADCC	Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference
TM	Thomas Meikles
UANC	United African National Congress
UDI	Unilateral Declaration of Independence
VIP	Very Important Person
VOP	Voice of the People
WENELA	Witwatersrand Native Labour Association
ZANLA	Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army
ZANU (PF)	Zimbabwe African National Union (Patriotic Front)
ZAPU	Zimbabwe African People's Union
ZBC	Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation
ZBH	Zimbabwe Broadcasting Holdings
ZCM	Zimbabwe College of Music
ZESA	Zimbabwe Electricity Supply Commission
ZIPRA	Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army
ZIMA	Zimbabwe Music Awards
ZIMIA	Zimbabwe Music Industry Association
ZMC	Zimbabwe Music Corporation
ZUM	Zimbabwe Union of Musicians
ZUM	Zimbabwe Unity Movement

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University eliminated one of the greatest worries for North American students – the specter of a debt burden on graduation.

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Chapter 1 Introduction

Colonial Encounters

Colonialism destabilized African cultures, including religious systems, healing practices, and dramatic and musical traditions. All were variously maligned and often suppressed as uncivilized. Not peculiar to Zimbabwe and Africa, this ethnocentric assault was steeped in a Victorian chauvinist discourse which represented non-Western peoples generally as primitive, denied their histories and denigrated or caricatured their cultures.¹ In Zimbabwe and Southern Africa, this discourse was carried by the pseudo-scholarship of writers like Rider Haggard, which appropriated and mythologized civilizations like the *Madzimbabwe* (Great Zimbabwe) into ancient 'Phoenician' or other white relics in the 'heart of Darkest Africa'.² This racist myth denied contemporary Africans any historical and cultural identification with their impressive pasts and, more importantly, justified the 'return' of white colonialists in pursuit of the fabled 'rivers of gold'.³

Thus, while colonization was manifestly driven by economics,⁴ this thesis argues that it was waged and also challenged first and foremost at the cultural front through the dialectical processes that Jean and John Comaroff call the 'colonization of consciousness

¹ E. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon, 1978); Piet de Rooy, 'Of Monkeys, Blacks and Proles', in Jan Bremen, (ed.), *Imperial Monkey Business: Racial Supremacy in Social Darwinist Theory and Colonial Practice* (Amsterdam: VU Press, 1990); Philip Curtin, *The Image of Africa: British Ideas and Action, 1780-1850* (Madison University of Wisconsin Press, 1964).

² Rider H. Haggard, *King Solomon's Mines* (London MacDonal, 1956 [1885]); also A.J. Chennells, 'Settler Myths and the Rhodesian Novel' (D.Phil Thesis, University of Zimbabwe, 1982).

³ Preben Kaarsholm, 'The Past as a Battlefield in Rhodesia and Zimbabwe: The Struggle of Competing Nationalisms over History from Colonization to Independence', in *The Societies of Southern Africa in the 19th and 20th Centuries Vol. 17*, Collected Seminar Papers No.2, ed. Shula Marks (University of London, 1992), 157; David Chanaiwa, *The Zimbabwe Controversy: A Case of Colonial Historiography*, (Syracuse University, 1973).

⁴ V. I. Lenin, *Imperialism the Highest Stage of Capitalism: A Popular Outline* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1968); Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (Nairobi: East Africa Publishing House, 1970); Robin Palmer, *Land and Racial Domination in Rhodesia* (London: Heinemann, 1977).

and the consciousness of colonization'.⁵ This foundational myth and its counter-discourses, therefore, constitute the zeitgeist of the cultural performances and contestations of power, identity formation and nation in the conquest state, Rhodesia, and, after 1980, in postcolonial Zimbabwe. Spurred by growing communication technology and complemented by rising literacy,⁶ music has played an increasingly central role in these historical processes in a way that attests to the significance of culture in conflictual groups' articulations of their competing mores, worldviews and aspirations. This study, therefore, investigates the place of Zimbabwean music as a medium and expression of these competing ideas of identity, nation and power in colonial and post-colonial Zimbabwe from the 1930s to 2007.

To survive and legitimize itself, Rhodesia sought to impose its cultural hegemony over the indigenous populations by denigrating the latter's cultures. This self-legitimation was a continuous process, as exemplified by C. T. C. Taylor's work more than half a century after occupation. To Rhodesians, in Taylor's words, the land they colonized had:

Contained not more than a million Bantu, many of whose forebears had arrived there only 50 years before, and *the life they lived was primitive*, both in its working methods and in the nature of its *infrequent amusements*. The pioneers, by contrast, came for the most part from environments which had all the sophistications of the nineteenth century, environments which, for their relaxation, required entertainment of the standard civilized type – theatre, music, variety.⁷

This foundational, colonial myth was bolstered by the constant representation of the Zimbabwe plateau as an 'uninhabited', 'empty' and 'unexplored bush' in the barrage of

⁵ Jean and John Comaroff, 'The Colonization of Consciousness in South Africa', *Economy and Society*, 18:3 (1989); J. and J. Comaroff, 'Through the Looking-glass: Colonial Encounters of the First Kind', *Journal of Historical Sociology* 1: 1 (1988).

⁶ I shall elaborate this point later in view of Kelly Askew's critique of Benedict Anderson's influential ideas on nationalism. I disagree with Jack Goody's views – fully supported by Kwame Anthony Appiah – that illiteracy in African cultures was an ultimate weakness in the face of their colonial assault by the West: Kwame Anthony Appiah, *In My Father's House: Africa in the Philosophy of Culture*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 130.

⁷ C. T. C. Taylor, *The History of Rhodesian Entertainment 1890-1930* (Salisbury: M. O. Collins, 1968), 13. Emphasis mine.

travelogues, adventure fables, missionary diaries, landscape paintings and draft maps that variously caricatured or erased Africans out of view.⁸ The construction of the African as the self-reflexive European's 'Other' required the continued active debasement, despoliation, proscription and appropriation of crucial aspects of African beliefs, practices, signs and symbols for colonial social engineering. Thus, while the colonial system based itself on grafted 'European' cultural institutions – theatres, training schools and colleges, entertainment halls, hotels, drama clubs and ubiquitous publicly-funded symphonic orchestras – in efforts to formulate an identity that was deemed at once European and Rhodesian,⁹ state cultural policy towards Africans varied between a selective suppression and promotion of particular elements of African cultures to nurture an alter, primitive identity for the colonized. On the one hand, *mbira*-based Shona music, for example, was particularly maligned for offending settler religious and political sensibilities. The Shona used *mbira* music to commune with their departed ancestors and creator, *Musikavanhu* (the Supreme Being), in ways that invoked the umbilical connection between the land of the living, their dead and the creator – thus rendering the medium virtually indistinguishable from the message.¹⁰ On the other, the colonial state, in collusion with European anthropologists, promoted what it conceived as unthreatening 'tribal' music, apparently in line with its divide-and-rule strategy. This two-pronged cultural approach helped shape the African cultural and musical panorama for decades.

My research takes off at this crucial juncture with a view to re-evaluating what I think is an inconclusive debate on the impact of the Rhodesian ethnocentric cultural approach to indigenous music. The orthodox view is that indigenous cultures generally, and music, in particular, declined until cultural nationalists nurtured their revival in the

⁸ See Paul Landau and Deborah Kaspin (eds.), *Images and Empires: Visuality in Colonial and Postcolonial Africa* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002) for an elaboration of how these technologies were harnessed for colonization.

⁹ C. T. C. Taylor, *Rhodesian Entertainment*, p.13; Robert Cary, *The Story of Reps: The History of Salisbury Repertory Players 1931-1975* (Salisbury: Galaxie Press, 1975).

¹⁰ Again, this was not peculiar to Zimbabwe. See Veit Erlmann, *African Stars: Studies in Black South African Performance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 95, and Wole Soyinka, 'Theatre in African Traditional Cultures: Survival Patterns', in *The Twentieth Century Performance Reader*, ed. Michael Huxley and Noel Witts (New York: Routledge, 1996), 342. For Shona and Zimbabwean conceptions of God, see John S. Mbiti, *Concepts of God in Africa* (London: S.P.C.K., 1970).

1960s as a cultural base for the war of independence.¹¹ My first problem with this influential decline and re-emergence thesis is that it assumes, rather than examines, the alleged decline. This theory draws its evidence from the preeminence of 'western' music in the country by the 1950s and the inherent structural violence of Rhodesia as a colonial society. The second difficulty is that this background anticipates, rather than accounts for, the abrupt (re)emergence of revolutionary music by the 1960s/70s.¹² While the majority of existing scholarship approaches this two-dimensional debate from the meta-narrative angle of cultural imperialism and revolutionary resistance, I propose that a subaltern approach probing the particular 'western' music Africans sang; their audiences and the ideological trends that influenced their musical and cultural choices may actually yield a story worth telling beyond these meta-narratives. This dissertation argues that indigenous African performance traditions neither died nor sank, to be resuscitated by cultural nationalists in the revolutionary 1960s. Instead, these traditions transfigured themselves as they entered into particular 'conversations' with colonial power, and these 'conversations' require meticulous reading to decipher their meanings.

My approach is inspired by the work of a relatively new crop of post-colonial scholars that critiques the overestimated power of the colonial state and the theoretical utility of cultural imperialism – two notions whose perceived impacts were variously celebrated or decried by colonial administrators and uncritically embraced by early

¹¹ Alec J.C. Pongweni's *Songs that Won the Liberation War* (Harare: College Press, 1982) and Alice Dairai Kwaramba's *Popular Music and Society: The Language of Protest in Chimurenga Music: The Case of Thomas Mapfumo in Zimbabwe* (Oslo: University of Oslo, 1997) are two key books on Zimbabwean music based on this cultural nationalist stimulus premise. General works include Marion O'Callaghan, *Southern Rhodesia: the effects of a Conquest Society on Education, Culture, and Information* (New York: UNESCO, 1977) and T. Ranger's works: 'Connections between 'Primary Resistance' Movements and Modern Mass Nationalism in East and Central Africa', *JAH* 11: 3 & 4 (1968); *Are We Not Also Men? The Samkange Family and African Politics in Southern Rhodesia, 1920-1964* (London: Heinemann, 1995) and *Peasant Consciousness and Guerilla War in Zimbabwe: A Comparative Study* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985).

¹² Thomas Turino, *Nationalists, Cosmopolitans and Popular Music in Zimbabwe* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), has sought to overturn this meta-narrative, though he runs into problems of his own, partly because he ignores the existence of apparent evidence of what the orthodox school designates as cultural imperialism. These issues can not simply be ignored; they must be accounted for.

historians.¹³ This historiography demonstrates that the colonial state was violent but feeble.¹⁴ It did overwhelm early overt political resistance and strained the structures of African economies, but it was rarely able to crush the African cultural fort.¹⁵ Mary Wigman may have overstated her argument that dance and music, like language, 'are... human experiences which cannot be suppressed'.¹⁶ Nonetheless, as Wole Soyinka demonstrates with reference to Nigerian dance during the colonial period, there is much truth in the view that music and other performative arts are capable of adaptive resilience, resistance, accommodation and innovation in situations of cultural stress.¹⁷ In light of this fact, I argue that the assumed dominance of western music in Zimbabwe in the period c.1930s-50s must be closely investigated and interpreted beyond notions of cultural imperialism or unmitigated attenuation. More broadly, Soyinka also argues that it is crucial for researchers not to lose sight of the fact that these art forms are 'created and executed within a specific physical environment'.¹⁸ My research is located in the liminal space of Rhodesian racialized urbanity since the 1930s, a cataclysmic era in the

¹³ See James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*, (New Haven, 1985); Allen Isaacman, *Cotton is the Mother of Poverty: Peasants, Work and Rural Struggle in Colonial Mozambique, 1938-1961* (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 1996); Leroy Vail and Landeg White, *Power and Praise Poem: Southern African Voices in History* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1991); Jeane Penvenne, *African Workers and Colonial Racism: Mozambican Strategies and Struggles in Lourenco Margues, 1877-1962* (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1995), among others, for this new historiography that seeks to reassert African and other oppressed people's agency and voice in their history.

¹⁴ Leroy Vail, 'Mozambique's Chartered Companies: The Rule of the Feeble', *Journal of African History* 13: 3 (1976).

¹⁵ The Xhosa cattle killing crusade of the 1850s and many other accounts of millennial religious movements across the continent provide interesting examples of cultural attempts to deal with tumultuous situations spawned by new epidemics, political subjugation and economic uncertainty due to colonial incursion, See J.B. Peires, *The Dead Will Arise: Nongqabuse and the Great Xhosa Cattle-Killing Movement* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989) and Terence Ranger, 'Plagues of beasts and plagues of men: prophetic responses to epidemic in eastern and southern Africa', *Epidemics and Ideas: Essays on the historical perception of pestilence*, Ranger and Paul Slack, (eds.), (Cambridge: Past and Present Publications; CUP, 1992).

¹⁶ M. Wigman, 'The Philosophy of Modern Dance', *The Twentieth Century Performance Reader* (New York: Routledge, 1996), 364.

¹⁷ W. Soyinka, 'Theatre in African Traditional Cultures', *Twentieth Century Performance Reader*, 342.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

urbanization history of the country. The colonial cultural encounter was perhaps most productive on the urban terrain, transforming it into a site of struggle,¹⁹ where cultural mediators were open to all sorts of influences – African, western and local – often accepting no limitations in their explorations and constructions of identities and futures.

Reflecting the centrality of music in the struggle for Zimbabwean independence, Pongweni, Kwaramba and Kahari, among others, have rightly argued and illustrated that Zimbabwean music was a key weapon in the struggle.²⁰ This truth is incontrovertible; what this historiography has not done is to convincingly account for the rise of *Chimurenga* (liberation) music by 1960. In other words, the puzzle here goes back to the query about the nature of both the alleged decline and resurgence of indigenous music in the decades prior to 1960. My critique of this ‘benchmark’ view comes from at least three observations. Firstly, the view seems to emphasize the assumed omnipotence of the Rhodesian state in burying African cultural consciousness prior to the independence war. Secondly and related to this, it tends to not only romanticize nationalism but, as Kelly Askew contends, it implies that nationalism or, at least, the idea of freedom, required elite sponsorship to make sense.²¹ This then begs the double-barreled question: what ideological sentiments drove the pre-1960 music and what became of the nationalist *Chimurenga* sentiment carried in the music of the 1960s-70s after the attainment of independence in 1980? Does the continued dissension in post-colonial *Chimurenga* represent reactionary rebellion against the nation and the people’s aspirations, as the establishment and some scholars charge?²² The third point, which issues from the second,

¹⁹ B. Raftopolous and Tsuneo Yoshikuni eds., *Sites of Struggle: Essays in Zimbabwe's Urban History* (Harare: Weaver Press, 1999).

²⁰ A. J.C. Pongweni's, *Songs that Won the Liberation War*; A. D. Kwaramba, *Popular Music and Society*; George Kahari, 'The History of the Shona Protest Song: A Preliminary Study', *Zambezia* 9: 2 (1981). Also related to this is Paddy Scannell's analysis of national and musical identity formation through the independence war: 'Music, Radio and the Record Business in Zimbabwe Today', *Popular Music* 20: 1 (2001).

²¹ Kelly Askew, *Performing the Nation*.

²² See Steven Chidawanyika, 'A Reply to Professor Horace G. Campbell's Paper Entitled 'Need for Debate on Realities of Life for the Zimbabwean Peoples'', http://www.zanupfpub.co.zw/a_reply_to_professor_horace_g.htm;

is that marrying the genesis of *Chimurenga* music to the rise of mass nationalism tends to justify the absence of a more critical account of Zimbabwean music which traces its various developmental contours up to the 1960s. A corollary to this problem is the disturbing assumption that, because (critical) *Chimurenga* music was an appendage of anti-colonial nationalism, it served its purpose in opposing colonial oppression but has no place in supposedly free post-colonial Zimbabwe.²³ My thesis argues that this music was critical in the struggle for independence and remains at the centre of continuing struggles for freedom in a context where the state has maintained a tight grip on the production and consumption of culture in a bid to author and authorize only particular versions of the nation and where music remains one of the few outlets for the projection of alternative views in Zimbabwe's repressed public sphere.

Driven by the *Chimurenga* songs from home and by the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU)'s and Zimbabwe African People Union (ZAPU)'s People's Choirs in the frontline (Mozambique, Zambia and Tanzania) and other friendly states, the liberation struggle demonstrated and elevated the centrality of culture in imagining, performing and contesting conceptions of nationhood.²⁴ Alienated by the discriminatory ideologies of successive settler regimes, Africans struggled for space in the conquest state named in honour and celebration of the arch-imperialist, Cecil John Rhodes. It is this subjugation that Africans of various dispositions had to contend with culturally even before the military option became feasible again in the second half of the new century, after the failure of the 1897 military effort. For me, the central question, then, is what light does music cast on the ways Africans conceptualized their situations and outlooks in both the colonial and neo-colonial contexts? What power does music have to contest domination and construct alternative imaginings of freedom, nation, independence and/or transnationalism? And how do these broader musical imaginings refract through the lenses of ethnicity, gender, urbanity and generation?

Maurice Taonezvi Vambe, 'Thomas Mapfumo's Toi Toi in Context: Popular Music as Narrative Discourse', *African Identities* 2: 1 (April 2004): 91. See my critique of Vambe below.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ Compare Paul Almeida and Reuben Urbizagastegui, 'Cutumay Camones: Popular Music in El Salvador's National Liberation Movement', *Latin American Perspectives*, 26: 2 (March 1999): 13-42, illustrates similar roles of popular music in El Salvador.

The questions that I have raised above and elsewhere seek to bring out the historical and comparative approaches to the realities and roles of music in Zimbabwe across two significant historical epochs – before and after independence. The comparative facet problematizes and interrogates not just the marriage between music and a malleable nationalism but also the reified disjuncture between colonialism and (postcolonial) nationalism.²⁵ My research philosophy in this regard is that, in sorting out the messy past, historians ought to perforate, rather than reify, politically overdetermined historical time and identity constructs quarantined by pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial boundaries. Thus, any contemporary study of the place of music in the historical contestation of power in Zimbabwe, and the post-colonial world for that matter, tells half the story if it ends at the epic moment of the dethronement of formal colonialism. This is because the process of liberation itself moulded new power realities and hierarchies that subjugated, excluded and suppressed alternative outlooks as it wore down old ones.²⁶ From a subaltern perspective, therefore, independence from Rhodesia reconfigured the margins of exclusion about which musicians – as vocal ‘organic intellectuals’²⁷ and active ‘agents of identity construction [and deconstruction]’ – continued to variously speak.²⁸ By casting my questions in this *longue durée*, I seek to escape the tyranny of epochal time, be it the ‘high urban culture’ era of the 1930s-40s, the definitive moments of liberation or the cataclysmic dawn of independence. In accounting for the individual trees of these various periods, it is important to keep an eye on the forest for historical constants, continuities and discontinuities. To illustrate the point, a significant question would be how much did Mugabe’s Zimbabwe represent a break from colonialism – politically, economically but most importantly here, culturally?

²⁵ A non-musical exception here is Partha Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse* (London: Zed, 1986).

²⁶ Cf. Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York: Grove Press, 2004); Norma Kriger, *Zimbabwe’s Guerrilla War: Peasant Voices* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 10.

²⁷ Antonio Gramsci, quoted in Kelly Askew, *Performing the Nation*, 97.

²⁸ I derive my conceptions of subalternity from Fernando Coronil’s thoughtful critique of Gayatri Spivak: ‘Listening to the Subaltern: The Poetics of Neocolonial States’, *Poetics Today* 15:4 (1994):648.

It is with a question like this in mind that I inquire into the story of the ruling ZANU (PF) government's appropriation of music for its latter-day ultra-nationalist project in the post-2000 era. My inquiry into the post-colonial state's harnessing and resurrecting of 1970s' liberation war songs to project its own version of hard-shelled nationalism in the face of mounting socio-political problems provokes questions about the implication of music in national memory. There are two levels to this concern; first is how rulers implicate music in the (re)construction of the larger history of Zimbabwe and, secondly, how does this implication impact the music? What becomes of the liberationist meaning of *Chimurenga* music when it is co-opted by rulers to propagate a narrow and violent nationalist agenda amongst a disenfranchised populace in independent Zimbabwe? Moreover, another question arises on whether this is a ZANU (PF) invention. Similarly, how much space does popular music have to claim and maintain its autonomous voice in contexts where it is deeply implicated as a tool in struggles over power and legitimacy? Some of these questions also complicate the romanticization of music as a 'weapon of struggle' because they bring to the fore its potential use for oppressive purposes, an aspect that I will return to later on.

I have considered music as a medium of cultural power, but Zimbabwean music has also long been commoditized, beginning in the 1930s. This commercialization tied it into the regional and international web of producers and audiences, earning its performers much fame and some economic reward. I also seek to understand the choices that African musicians made as producers of a commodity that depended on international capital and broadening audience bases in the changing colonial and postcolonial contexts. This question becomes most fascinating in the final decades of the colonial era. The commercialization of revolutionary music by international capital in a quasi-apartheid state where general settler sensibilities viewed it as a pariah culture raises neglected questions about the potent interaction of social consciousness, nationalism and capitalism. With the qualified exception of Ezra Chitando – who investigates how women have successfully exploited the Christian discourse of respectability to carve out a niche for themselves in gospel music – no scholar has replicated Timothy Burke's analysis of

capitalist marketing and consumptionism in Zimbabwe.²⁹ Considering the implications of this interface not only opens up important clefs to peer into vexing questions about national and global (I prefer 'multiple' to 'double') cultural consciousnesses,³⁰ but it also further problematizes the debate about the alleged Rhodesian state or Zimbabwean nationalist sponsorship of this cultural renaissance.³¹ Also important in this regard are the notions that frame African music as an informal economic activity when, in fact, it has always been produced and marketed mostly through formal channels to serve, among other things, formal commercial purposes.³² This ill-investigated formal/informal interface is a fertile zone for the performance and contestation of power. It has enabled ruling elites to suppress music by denying it recognition as legitimate work yet, by a stroke of irony, that status has also allowed the music to escape undue control, taxation and containment. To borrow a phrase, this theme has long defined popular 'struggles for the city'³³ in urban Africa; yet, thus far, the idea has yet to influence music research in

²⁹ E. Chitando, *Singing Culture: A Study of Gospel Music in Zimbabwe* (Goteborg: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, Research Report No.121, 2002); Timothy Burke, *Lifebuoy Men, Lux Women: Commodification, Consumption and Cleanliness in Modern Zimbabwe* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996). However, Burke hardly addresses the place of the state in this matrix of consumption – an important ideological player and referee in the age of settler and African nationalism.

³⁰ Paul Gilroy does not pursue the possible implications of the Duboisian concept of 'double consciousness' – which underpins his *Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993) – in relation to the impact of commodification on culturally conscious music. A good starting point is Herbert Schiller's *Culture Inc.: the Corporate Take over of Public Expression* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), though this is confined to the USA.

³¹ See my critique of Thomas Turino, below, on the alternative view that it was the Rhodesian state, not the nationalists, who nurtured traditional African music. This debate becomes even more important in analyses of the post-colonial state's cultural policy, which I variously deal with in 'The state and music policy in post-colonial Zimbabwe, 1980-2000', *Muziki: Journal of Music Research in Africa* 4: 1 (2007) and "'Our People Father, They Haven't Learned Yet': Music and Postcolonial Identities in Zimbabwe, 1980-2000", *Journal of Southern African Studies* 34: 1 (2008) and in Chapter 4.

³² Caleb Dube, 'The Changing Context of African Music Performance in Zimbabwe', *Zambezia* 23:11 (1996).

³³ F. Cooper ed., *Struggles for the City: Migrant Labour, Capital, and the State in Urban Colonial Africa* (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1983).

Zimbabwe.³⁴ My research into the multivalent struggles over Zimbabwean music, thus, seeks to make sense of short-spiked questions as well as those that shape longer contours of change and continuity.

The State of Zimbabwean Music Research

In *Music YeZimbabwe*, Fred Zindi catalogues the popular Zimbabwean musicians of the post-independence period, while Joyce Jenje-Makwenda does the same from the early 1930s in a recently published book.³⁵ Taken together, these two works are useful introductory guides to the Zimbabwean music scene since the 1930s. Jenje-Makwenda pieces together brief profiles of otherwise ‘forgotten’ protagonists of Zimbabwean urban music in a commendable effort at popular literature, as testified in positive press reviews.³⁶ However, its wish to break into the scholarly canon is trammled by poor methodology, lack of rigour and structural disorganization; the book simply pieces together unreferenced cinematic footage and magazine material, and lacks clearly formulated organizing themes around which to weave its narratives. Furthermore, it fails to adequately meet its claim to explore the early history of Zimbabwean township music as its focus swiftly drifts through the decades to the contemporary period without so much of a hint on the politics and implications of Rhodesia’s ‘native’ cultural policies – aspects that need close analysis.³⁷ Her stories, for example about how nurses at Salisbury

³⁴ An inspiring example here is Tejumola Olaniyan’s *Arrest the Music! Fela and His Rebel Art and Politics* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994). For Zimbabwe, this struggle, or more precisely, assault on the independence of the informal sector and free expression was brought to the fore in the internationally condemned Winter 2005 government demolition of alleged urban slums where music backyard and ‘home industry’ recording studios, flea markets and venues were razed to the ground and fan bases and artists massively displaced. Cf., Moses Chikowero, ‘What Filth? Whose Filth? Exposing the Evil Hand behind Robert Mugabe’s Demolition of Poor Zimbabwean Urbanites’ Homes’ (Paper presented at the African Studies Seminar Series, Dalhousie University, 6 November 2005).

³⁵ F. Zindi, *Music YeZimbabwe: Zimbabwe Versus the World* (Harare: Mambo Press, 1997); J. Jenje-Makwenda, *Zimbabwe Township Music 1930-1960* (Harare, 2005).

³⁶ Sheuneni Kurasha, ‘Book chronicles the development of township music in Zimbabwe’, <http://www.africaonline.co.zw/mirror/stage/archive/050529/weekend3607.html>; ‘Music Book Brilliant’ *The Standard On-Line*, www.thestandard.co.zw, 16 January 2006.

³⁷ She, for instance, mentioned her failure to enroll at the Rhodesia College of Music as a youngster in my interviews with her in 2000, pointing out the discriminatory basis of

Central Hospital raised money for charity through part-time singing, would tell us more about the larger sociological context of Rhodesian apartheid, if properly located beyond the localized idiosyncrasies. They would inform a more cogent analysis of Rhodesian cultural policies and African class and gendered responses and initiatives.³⁸

I hope to fill these lacunae by firmly grounding my study in these sociological contexts, which will also position me to interrogate the often assumed but rarely substantiated division of African arts into popular, traditional and elite.³⁹ Karin Barber's designation of the urban arts in Africa as fugitive, indeterminate and unfinished appears quite enlightening because, in the same way that it would be very problematic to neatly classify urban Africans by class in early colonial Rhodesia, their music was also in continuous and unstable flux.⁴⁰ It would be necessary to go beyond sketching the singers' biographies as Jenje-Makwenda does by, for instance, retrieving and closely analyzing the songs in the contexts of their performances to better understand their historical significance.

It is also difficult to comprehend Zindi's oppositional framing of his book – *Music yeZimbabwe: Zimbabwe versus the World*, unless he meant it as a thematic sequel to his relatively better researched *Roots Rocking in Zimbabwe*, which greatly popularized

education in Rhodesia. This evidence is corroborated by Mitchell Strumpf's 'Music and education in Malawi and Zimbabwe' (A Paper prepared for the African Arts Education Conference, 26 June – 1 July, Grahamstown, 2001) and Marion O'Callaghan, *Southern Rhodesia*.

³⁸ Like their South African counterparts, notable Rhodesian ICU leaders like Charles Mzingeli were musicians and often used music to champion their cause at their occasional weekend meetings, Cf. Clement Kadali, *My Life in the ICU*; see Veit Erlmann, *African All Stars*, for the role of *ingoma* dances in labour activism in South Africa. Christopher Ballantine's 'Music and Emancipation: The Social Role of Black Jazz and Vaudaville in South Africa Between the 1920s and the Early 1940s', *JSAS* 17:1 (March 1991) contrasts working class and middle class views on the use of music to challenge discrimination. Such a dimension cannot possibly have been unique to South Africa.

³⁹ M. B. Lukhero, 'The Social Characteristics of an Emergent Elite in Harare', in *The New Elites of Tropical Africa* and Clive Kileff, 127-137 and 'Black Suburbanites: An African Elite in Salisbury, Rhodesia', both in *Urban Man in Southern Africa*, ed. Clive Kileff and Wade C. Pendleton, (eds.), (Gwelo: Mambo Press, 1975).

⁴⁰ Karin Barber, 'Popular Arts in Africa', *African Studies Review* 30:3 (1987), 6; Michael O. West, *The Rise of an African Middle Class: Colonial Zimbabwe, 1898-1965* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002).

the problematic 'decline and re-emergence' thesis.⁴¹ The latter book portrays the music scene by mid-century as deeply mired in the throes of cultural imperialism, with mass importation of western music and musical instruments which, argues Zindi, local musicians imitated and adopted to their own detriment. Both Paul Berliner and Turino support this interpretation, stating that this was an era when African society seemed so polarized between 'tradition' and 'modernity', with elites painfully trying to distance themselves from their own backgrounds and the realities facing the vast majority of the populace.⁴² The cultural tensions and dynamics brewed in this arena of ideological instability are missed in much of the scholarship that has not looked beyond the very real cultural binaries that have continued to characterize Zimbabwean cultural sensibilities; it is necessary to go beyond the chronicles and examine the rationale and significance of the choices that the various culture brokers made. A good example that speaks to the need for a historical perspective in Zimbabwean cultural history is Jonathan Zilberg's observation that contemporary 'Zimbabweans love Dolly Parton'.⁴³ It would be interesting to understand whether this phenomenon was new in postcolonial Zimbabwe that Zilberg studied. In other words, such an observation needs to be located in the country's cultural history. This would help us understand better, for instance, the meaning of symbolic tags like 'western' and 'traditional' to those people who used them over time and, overall, deconstruct the constant language of cultural imperialism.

One way to contend with the blinding glare of what seems immaculate evidence of cultural imperialism, particularly for the pre-1960s decades, is to heed Stephanie Newell's advice to closely study how cultural producers mediate cultural imports and recast them into shapes and functions of their own pre-existing and contemporary contexts.⁴⁴ This acknowledgement of subaltern appropriation resonates with Fred Cooper's observation that 'colonial states did not impart a consistent language in which

⁴¹ F. Zindi, *Roots Rocking in Zimbabwe* (Gweru: Mambo Press, 1990).

⁴² P. Berliner, *The Soul of Mbira: Music and Traditions of the Shona People of Zimbabwe* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 220, 241; T. Turino, *Nationalists, Cosmopolitans*, 124.

⁴³ J. Zilberg, 'Yes, it's true: Zimbabweans love Dolly Parton', *Journal of Popular Culture* 29:1 (Summer 1995).

⁴⁴ Stephanie Newell, *Literary Culture in Colonial Ghana: How to Play the Game of Life* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002).

to convince their subjects of their hegemony'.⁴⁵ Thus, if many Zimbabwean popular musicians sang Western musicians' songs, there is a need to go beyond the assumptions of the cultural imperialism thesis⁴⁶ and probe, for instance, what or whose messages the local performers infused into the songs and for what audiences and purposes.⁴⁷ I build on Askew and other scholars' apt observation that the power of popular art lies in both its performativity and textuality.⁴⁸ It is in this kind of situation, I propose, that David Coplan's view that popular musicians articulate the experiences, outlooks and aspirations of the 'mass of the otherwise inarticulate'⁴⁹ makes some sense. I say *some sense* because musicians are not exactly spokespersons of any particular group all the time, but feed on and project their necessarily more prominent voices on the multivalent social discourses within which they are key players. In this view, then, performance in Rhodesia cannot possibly be disengaged from Africans' decades-long negotiation of and 'conversations' with the slippery official race-inflected policies and ideologies that ranged from the founding ultra-rightist Prime Minister Godfrey Huggins' reviled 'two pyramid' development policy to Garfield Todd's benign 'partnership' in the 1950s to Ian Smith's brutal military confrontation with Africans from the mid-1960s.⁵⁰ In this context, my research tests the 'cultural brokerage' capacity of popular arts as one medium of these

⁴⁵ F. Cooper, 'Who is the Populist?', *African Studies Review* 30:3 (September 1987): 100.

⁴⁶ Ryan Dunch, 'Beyond Cultural Imperialism: Critical Theory, Christian Missions and Global Modernity', *History and Theory* 41 (2002), 301-25.

⁴⁷ Cf., Ali Mirsepassi, Amrita Basu and Frederick Weaver, eds., *Localizing Knowledge in a Globalizing World: Recasting the Area Studies Debate*, (Syracuse University Press, 2003).

⁴⁸ K. M. Askew, *Performing the Nation*, 11.

⁴⁹ David Coplan, *In Township Tonight!*, 3.

⁵⁰ Phil Zachernuk and Fred Cooper's concept of 'conversation' between the colonists and the colonized does much to open up the otherwise frozen surface of colonial reality and teases out the more intricate aspects that talk to why colonialism in Africa stayed a fact of life for so long. Nonetheless, the notion sits rather awkwardly and must be reconciled with the realities of brutal repression and resistance in Southern Africa. Cf., Phil Zachernuk, *Colonial Subjects: An African Intelligentsia and Atlantic Ideas* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2000); Fred Cooper, 'Conflict and Connection: Rethinking Colonial African History', *American Historical Review* 99 (1994).

'conversations' and efforts at social transformations.⁵¹ The interaction between municipal authorities, welfare staff, white adjudicators and African performers, for example, constitute some of these 'conversations' that demonstrate the power of culture to construct, perform and contest contextually-rooted meanings, identities and the everyday.

Moreover, if, for example, Ghanaian literary enthusiasts and Zulu mission playwrights successfully constructed and deployed counter-discourses against colonial hegemony through their reading of smuggled English literature and subversion of otherwise paternalistic missionary evangelical drama, respectively,⁵² pre-1960s Zimbabwean musicians' performance of cover versions of western music ought to be read beyond the surface of the act itself. The cultural imperialism blanket often presumes that, since the music or the musical genre was 'borrowed' or simply 'reproduced', it was not self-conscious and was irrelevant or destructive to those people who 'parroted' it. My study challenges these assumptions at various levels. For instance, how foreign was the music of the African-American Mills Brothers which advocated self-redemption through education, adopted by Rhodesia's Milton Brothers via their Sophiatown (South African) counterparts? My study seeks to read these transactions beyond their mere factuality, to probe the significance of their historical and sociological contexts. At what end of this transnational cultural network, for instance, and in what shape, would one pin down cultural imperialism? This is a crucial question because, to pick another example, August Musarurwa's 'Skokiaan' – a song that celebrated the defiant illicit beer culture in the ghettos of Rhodesia – struck echoes not only in South Africa, but also webbed through the Atlantic networks, inflecting Southern Africa's cultural idioms into the musical conventions of North America, Europe and beyond where it was translated and mistranslated in ways that can greatly enrich our understanding of the cultural and political (a)symmetries of the transatlantic and other global cultural modernities. Following Carol Muller, I adapt Dipesh Chakrabarty's idea of 'History Two' to consider how songs like 'Skokiaan' acted as a cultural undertow to disrupt and complicate the

⁵¹ Karin Barber, 'Who is a Populist?: Response', *African Studies Review* 30: 3 (1987): 107.

⁵² S. Newell, *Literary Culture in Colonial Ghana*; Bhekizizwe Peterson, *Monarchs, Missionaries and African Intellectuals: African Theatre and the Unmaking of Colonial Marginality* (Asmara: Africa World Press, 2000).

linear and totalizing thrusts of western cultural imports.⁵³ This approach builds into an emerging 'cultural networks' paradigm, which seeks to move beyond the idea of cultural imperialism.⁵⁴ A deeper analysis of songs like 'Skokiaan', which adopted universal idioms to address global concerns, would help build a better understanding of the place of Zimbabwean music in the budding, unequal, global cultural context of the mid-twentieth century.

However, one has to be aware of possible conceptual limitations of the idea of global culture or cosmopolitanism in specific historical situations. John Tomlinson defines cosmopolitanism as 'Cultural disposition which is not limited to the concerns of the immediate locality, but which recognizes global belonging, involvement and responsibility ... integrat[ing] these broader concerns into every day life practices'.⁵⁵ The questions would have to be asked, as to how and why Zimbabweans appealed to cosmopolitanism to frame their own identities and to engage with power over time. Muller plausibly argues that such a cultural disposition becomes an alternative circle, a virtual world of belonging in contexts where citizens are segregated and disenfranchised.⁵⁶ I examine how, for instance, Africans used their artistic performance to appeal to larger symbolisms to (re)assert and transcend identity claims which had been despoiled by colonialism and denied by the Atlantic Charter – which (selectively) reaffirmed the right to national self-determination for oppressed peoples.⁵⁷ The actualization of their rights-to-belong and to the rights-to-be, which were anathema to

⁵³ D. Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 68; C. B. Muller, 'American Musical Surrogacy: A View from Post-World War 11 South Africa', *Safundi* 7:3 (2006): 3.

⁵⁴ The following, non-exhaustive, list, represents this scholarship: Diane Crane et al, *Global Culture: Media, Arts, Policy and Globalization* (New York: Routledge, 2002); John Tomlinson, *Globalization and Culture* (Cambridge: Polity, 2000); Veit Erlmann, *Music, Modernity and Global Imagination: South Africa and the West* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999); Rob Nixon, *Homelands, Harlem and Hollywood: South African Culture and the World Beyond* (New York: Routledge, 1994); and Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic*.

⁵⁵ J. Tomlinson, *Globalization and Culture*, 185.

⁵⁶ C. B. Muller, 'American Musical Surrogacy', 3.

⁵⁷ Cf., Hakim Adi, 'West African Students in Britain, 1900-60: the Politics of Exile', *Immigrants & Minorities* 3 (1993):107-128.

Rhodesia, was not always necessarily a pre-condition in the conceptualization of a trans-local identity in the realm of the family of nations; claims to trans-local identities could actually imply an outranging and annulment of colonial horizons and identity ascriptions and the possibility to self-fashion themselves. With due care, this could help our reading of the activities and sensibilities of artists like Kenneth Mattaka. At the same time, this utopian ideal must have belonged in the realm of the future for many *Zimbabweans*, who invoked their nativity to tackle the realities of Rhodesian colonial violence differently.⁵⁸ In the age of decolonization, most Africans overwhelmingly grounded their self-understandings in the consuming difficulties of their own settings, for which they relied more on internal cultural tools (*mbira* music, 'traditional' dance repertoires, spiritualism) and less on, at least symbolically, external ones (Christianity, imperial citizenship, etcetera). Of course, liberationist ideologies like Garveyism and Marxism and military technology were imported and carefully calibrated into the new equations. The ambiguity with cosmopolitanism remains when one considers the 'authenticity' arguments post-independence cultural activists advanced in their incessant calls for protectionist cultural policies to shield them against what they regarded as unfair *foreign* influence and competition.⁵⁹ It is in the light of these ambiguities that I feel Turino has read too much into cosmopolitanism as the conceptual axle for his book.⁶⁰ Thus, without essentializing Zimbabwean music, my sense is that the problematic concept needs to be grounded in

⁵⁸ The term 'Zimbabwe' (and its variants) itself constituted a serious contestation of Rhodesian identity and alternative imaginaries; hence its criminalization in Rhodesia.

⁵⁹ Moses Chikowero, 'An Examination of the Zimbabwe Music Industry with Particular Reference to African Music, 1960-1985' (BA Thesis, University of Zimbabwe, May 2001); Tawana Kupe, 'The Meanings of Popular Music: Media Representations of Popular Music in Zimbabwe', *African Identities* 1:2 (October 2003):187-196.

⁶⁰ While Turino can certainly not be accused of theorizing in the absence of evidence, his interpretation of evidence suffers from the classical tyranny of pre-deterministic theory and the anthropological dangers of speaking for others, heartily criticized by Ali Mirsepassi, Amrita Basu and Frederick Weaver: 'Introduction: Knowledge, Power and Culture', *Localizing Knowledge in a Globalizing World*, 3 and Linda Alcoff, 'The Problems of Speaking for Others', *Cultural Critique* 20 (Winter 1991-1992): 5-32. I will engage Turino at some length here because his work touches the major themes of Zimbabwean music history and also because of what I see as his controversial interpretation of available evidence.

historical time and meticulous research that is sensitive to both specificity and local imaginaries of change.

The liberationist function of popular music during the independence war is beyond doubt. What is subject to debate is its evolution to this revolutionary maturity. I argue that to Kwaramba, Pongweni and others, the emergence of mass nationalism in the 1960s resonated in the cultural front and persuaded musicians to discard their alienation, rediscover 'traditional' idioms like the *mbira* and compose liberation songs. Turino agrees that the nationalists used indigenous music, in Lara Allen's words, to 'emotionalize the abstract concept of the nation' and rally mass support for the war.⁶¹ Thus, the cultural front through which imperialists penetrated and continuously justified the colonial order in Zimbabwe proved very treacherous; nationalists used the same front to dismantle that world. This seemed more than an instrumental approach to music, but a concerted performance of new possibilities – an articulation of a new nationhood, capturing what Mozambique's Samora Machel pointed out:

The dances that are performed today in the liberated regions are no longer dances of Cabo Delgado, or Tete or Niassa. The militants from other regions there bring their way of living, their dances, their songs and from the new culture, national in its form and revolutionary in content, is born [sic].⁶²

This 'dubbing'⁶³ of new conceptions of nation into the realm of the possible through theatre and song goes beyond Benedict Anderson's imagining of the nation to actually giving it form and soul through cultural performance.⁶⁴ In view of such evidence, Askew

⁶¹ Thomas Turino, *Nationalists, Cosmopolitans*; Allen Lara, Review of *Nationalists, Cosmopolitans and Popular Music in Zimbabwe*, by Thomas Turino, *Project MUSE: Scholarly Journal On-Line*, 58, 2, December 2001, 379.

⁶² David Kerr, *African Popular Theatre: From Pre-colonial Times to the Present* (London: James Currey, 1995): 210.

⁶³ I adopt this term from Philip Maysles' 'Dubbing the Nation', *Small Axe* 11 (March 2002), a scintillating study of the politics and sociology of Jamaican dub reggae.

⁶⁴ I adopt Niels Kayser Nielsen's critical appreciation of Benedict Anderson's idea of imagined communities, quoted by Elaine Lo, Fall 2000, which stresses action. Thus, in this view, nationalism was a 'lived idea, an experience' acquired through an 'articulation process, a creation' and is created, again and again, through the cognition of one's actions and physical behavior.

BenedictAndersonhttp://images.google.ca/imgres?imgurl=http://www.english.emory.edu/

is right to criticize Anderson's 'Eurocentric' privileging of the print media as the quintessential tool for the imagining of nations because, she argues, 'print media simply cannot prove as essential in situations where literacy is not widespread'.⁶⁵ I entirely agree with her proposition that greater 'attention to musical elaborations of nationalism can counteract this theoretical deafness'.⁶⁶ But I do not agree with her emphasis on illiteracy as a condition for the vibrancy of orality. In fact, that logic similarly exposes her to the charge of Eurocentricism, if that is really Anderson's flaw. How, for example, would one then explain the increasing importance of this orality in highly literate post-colonial Zimbabwe, or the complementarity of the two expressive forms in the 'musical elaboration of education' in early colonial Zimbabwe? Other, again contextual factors, such as the perishability and economics of the printed word, have to be considered.

Nonetheless, Askew's observation that this performance and contestation of nation and power is undertaken at various levels informs my own thinking. For instance, it recognizes the need to account for the roles played by the revolutionary vanguard in mobilizing people at the *pungwes* (nightly educational vigils); at the international level, the significance of moral support and broadcasting of *Chimurenga* music back into the imagined nation, as well as the role of the 'indigenous intellectuals' – musicians, poets, writers and playwrights who sang and performed *Chimurenga* music and other literary works articulating issues that affected broader and personal concerns. I use Thomas Mapfumo's and other *Chimurenga* singers' tribulation songs, for example, to illustrate how Zimbabwean music historicized the nation as a knowable reality 'yesterday, today and tomorrow', rather than being simply a projection into some abstract, utopian future.⁶⁷ A constant theme in Mapfumo's 1970s songs, like *Kuyaura Kweasina Musha* (The Lamentations of the Dispossessed Homeless), is the inclusive appeal to the ancestors, the patriarchs and matriarchs of the 'nation' – heroes of the 1896/7 war and the new leaders

Bahri/Anderson.gif; Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso, 1983), 46.

⁶⁵ K. M. Askew, *Performing the Nation*, 10

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ Pongweni analyzes many such songs in his *Songs that Won the Liberation War* and in 'The Chimurenga Songs of the Zimbabwean War of Liberation' in *Readings in African Popular Culture*, ed. Karin Barber (Bloomington: International African Institute with Indiana University Press, 1997), 67.

of the struggle – not to abandon their ‘children’. Yet even more significantly, he also called on the *mhondoro* – the guardian spirits, and the nation’s grey-heads – to wield their ritual axes for the cause. These are the signs and symbols that anchor their claims to be *vana vevhu* (children of the soil) – the same *ivhu* (soil) where their ancestors were buried and that sustained the nation. Such a nation was a complex collectivity complete with its own ‘discontents’ – sorcerers and witches whom Mapfumo also implored to put their charms and familiars to the common good.⁶⁸ This complex and potentially antinomic view of the nation no doubt subverted colonial religious and moral sensibilities but it also transcended elites’ visions of a rather sanitized nation distilled to only some components of its sum.⁶⁹ Zimbabwean musicians would also critique the post-2000 ultra-nationalist regime’s attempts to foist this latter notion of the nation on the populace. An examination of songs like this one will illuminate Cooper’s counsel to Barber that popular arts should be seen in relation to ‘people’s specific, daily experiences of power and inequality rather than against the generalized backdrop of colonialism or post-colonialism’.⁷⁰ My study will flesh out these ‘overshoots’ and multidimensional contestations of power that complicate the homogenous meta-narratives of colonialism and nationalism that have recently seen the leaders of the liberation struggle hound Thomas Mapfumo – Zimbabwe’s icon of *Chimurenga* music – out of the country. The national project as a largely shared imaginary, therefore, subsumed many other struggles beneath, within and beyond ‘the struggle’ that music can help tease out.⁷¹

I have reviewed the cultural nationalist historiography, principally the works of Pongweni, Kwaramba and Kahari, which deal with *Chimurenga* music. Where does

⁶⁸ Thomas Mapfumo and the Blacks Unlimited, *Kuyaura kweasina Musha, Singles Collection*, 1976-80, Gramma Records.

⁶⁹ The colonial regime did not only oppose the African worldview of a mutual communion of the living, their ancestors and God, but they also legislated it a punishable crime for anybody to accuse another of practicing ‘witchcraft’, a law that continues to cause uneasiness today with the former liberators – who themselves often performed public executions of people accused of witchcraft during the war.

⁷⁰ K. Barber, ‘Who is the Populist?’, 110.

⁷¹ This view de-centers analysis away from the grand narrative of nationalism, the trope within which Masipula Sithole studied internal fractions that rocked the nationalist movements. Cf., Masipula Sithole, *Zimbabwe: Struggles within the Struggle* (Harare, Rujeko Publishers, 1991).

Turino, whose celebrated book is one of the latest additions to the Zimbabwean musical historiography, fit? Turino disagrees with the orthodox cultural nationalist explanation of the 'revival' of culturally conscious music, arguing that, in the first place, it is fallacious to talk about 'resurgence' because indigenous music had never been suppressed to begin with.⁷² He advances the idea that, rather than undermine African music, the colonial state, together with liberal white audiences, actually nurtured it amidst the craze over 'western' music in the 1940s-50s. One of the pillars of his argument is that it was not until 1959 that nationalism emerged in Zimbabwe and that, by then, the state, through such institutions as the Rhodesia College of Music, had long supported indigenous music. He then concludes that cultural nationalists arrived too late on the musical scene to have played any significant role in its development.⁷³ In his view, therefore, cultural nationalists played a negligible part in nurturing the radical *Chimurenga* music that swept Zimbabwe's cultural panorama in the 1960s-70s; they simply appropriated for their own use a music that had been unwittingly promoted by their adversary – the colonial state.

I find two problems with Turino's revisionism. First, it seems ahistorical to date the rise of cultural nationalism in Zimbabwe by the formation of the first mass nationalist parties.⁷⁴ Secondly, by privileging the role of the state and mass nationalist parties for his analytical axis, Turino runs the risk of trivializing the roles that proto-nationalism played in the development of politically conscious cultural and musical performance from the 1930s.⁷⁵ Right from the 1930s, individual Africans – students, teachers, villagers and

⁷² T. Turino, *Nationalists, Cosmopolitans*, 113.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ The pre-World War II labour politics, especially their peak in the 1946 General Strike and the 1948 Railway Strike, indicated an increasing role of maturing nationalist politics in Rhodesian towns. Cf. I. Phimister and B. Raftopoulos, "Kana Sora Ratsva ngaritsve": African Nationalists and Black Workers – the 1948 General Strike in Colonial Zimbabwe', *Journal of Historical Sociology* 13:3 (August 2000).

⁷⁵ Clemence Kadalie, *My Life in the ICU: the Autobiography of a Black Trade Unionist in South Africa* (New York: Humanities Press, 1970). Apart from the labour-cum-political organizations, the first African National Congress (ANC) of Rhodesia was formed in 1934, succeeding the British Bantu Voters Association of 1920. Together with the leaders of the British African Voice Association (formed 1947 and banned by the Rhodesian state in 1952), Congress leaders claimed credit for the crippling 1948 country-wide general strike, Cf. C. Nyangoni and G. Nyandoro, *Zimbabwe Independence Movements*, xv.

professional musicians – sang a repertory that can be identified as variously nationalistic in content and scope. The problem may well be that Turino’s study privileges theoretical constructions – cosmopolitanism and nationalism – as the driving forces behind popular music, and largely shies away from its key subject matter – songs. It sacrifices musical content analysis for symbolics – which can be subjectively read – and theory. I argue that a keen study of the musical output from the 1930s can actually help to establish the ancestry of *Chimurenga* music, which is strongly anchored in the pre-colonial resistance and protest traditions. The second problem concerns Turino’s argument that African musicians received institutional support from the state. To begin with, there is hardly any evidence to substantiate the claim that the Rhodesia College of Music supported indigenous music; Kwanongoma was established in 1961. In fact, the opposite seems to be the case. His and other scholars’ works illustrate that proletarianized Africans brought various Shona regional musical performance traditions into the townships of Salisbury and other towns where they held competitions similar to those staged in South African compounds, but he fails to analyze the rationale and implications of the Rhodesian state’s *patronage* over such music, simply regarding it as support.⁷⁶ As Coplan, Erlmann and others have demonstrated for South Africa, the ubiquitous white ‘judges’ who adjudicated these competitions were often part of the state-industrial complex keen to ‘keep the natives in place’.⁷⁷ A subaltern perspective can usefully problematize these interactions, which, in Rhodesia, were informed by a dubious ‘Native Social Welfare’ policy that appealed to the notion of the ‘tribal system’ to operationalize and justify segregation and deny Africans social services. Moreover, this state-funneling of African indigenous cultures may help explain aspiring elites’ suspicions and disdain for the much hyped ‘tradition’ in an era when their hankering for upward socio-economic mobility was squashed by the same Rhodesian state’s racist policies. In fact, I argue that the ‘Native Social Welfare’ policy was a huge racist alibi for this multifaceted disenfranchisement.

⁷⁶ D. Coplan, *In Township Tonight!*, 57.

⁷⁷ T. Turino, *Nationalists*, 99; *Rhythms of Resistance*, [South African Music Video], Shanachie, 1988; D. Coplan, *In Township Tonight!*; D. Coplan, *In the Time of Cannibals: The Word Music of South Africa’s Basotho Migrants* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1994); V. Erlmann, *African Stars*, 113.

As additional evidence of what he calls institutional support for indigenous music, Turino points at the work of ethnomusicologists like Hugh Tracey whose forays around Africa in the name of preserving 'primitive' music yielded some of the earliest recordings of indigenous music in Rhodesia. Tracey's sensibilities and leading role in the *Bantustanization* ('tribalization') of South Africa's black music as a South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) Director in the tumultuous 1940s and '50s is documented.⁷⁸ In the employ of the founding fathers of the Rhodesian quasi-apartheid system, Tracey strained to convince Africans to identify with their 'tribal' music and customs, criticizing Africans' disdain for this 'Othered' and despised 'traditional' music.⁷⁹ Turino does not question Tracey's racist sensibilities and implication in an insidious social engineering project both on an individual level and as an employee or 'consultant' of the two apartheid regimes in South Africa and Rhodesia. Tracey's purportedly 'modernist' views on African culture informed Godfrey Huggins' ultra-rightist ideologies. As premier of Southern Rhodesia from the 1930s, Huggins was infamous for his unrelenting suppression of educated Africans' socio-economic aspirations, accusing them of endangering white Rhodesia by their 'rushed detribalization' and clamour for 'white' privileges.⁸⁰ The colonial science, anthropology, was always on the search for ways to put brakes on the 'rate of acculturation' to shelter 'the island of white [from erosion by the] sea of black', as Huggins himself articulated the rationale behind 'separate development' in 1938.⁸¹ Repackaging folk music and reselling it to Africans with a 'modern' stamp neatly fell into line with the promotion of the ideas of 'African authenticity' this ideological framework required to function. A careful study of songs that he collected or recorded and archived ('preserved'?) neatly in accordance with their presumed 'tribal' and functional categorizations at the (Rhodes

⁷⁸ C. Hamm, *Popular Music*, 140.

⁷⁹ Hugh Tracey, 'African Music: A Modern View', *NADA* (1946).

⁸⁰ See Lewis Gann, *Huggins of Rhodesia: The Man and His Country* (London: Unwin and Allen, 1964); Michael O. West, *The Rise of an African Middle Class*.

⁸¹ Dane Kennedy, *Islands of White: Settler Society and Culture in Kenya and Southern Rhodesia, 1890-1939* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1987), 2; Michael West, *The Rise of an African Middle Class: Colonial Zimbabwe, 1898-1965*, 20.

University) International Library of African Music substantiates this criticism.⁸² As I illustrate in this dissertation, the owners of that music did not conceive such music as frozen in time, but it was versatile and dynamic in line with their changing contexts.

Just over a decade ago, Charles Hamm wrote that the debate over ‘acculturation’ and its supposed ‘weakening’ of traditional African music ‘missed not only the power and beauty of the music, but also the ongoing struggles over its meaning’.⁸³ In fact, a closer analysis suggests that much of this anthropological tumult to ‘preserve’ African ‘authenticity’ was, in fact, not misdirected, if that is Hamm’s point; rather, it constituted part of the persistent attempts to influence, control, contain and appropriate it, mainly for social engineering purposes.⁸⁴

Writing at the apex of ZANU (PF)’s ultra-nationalistic drive in championing what Ranger calls ‘patriotic history’,⁸⁵ Turino’s work may constitute an implicit effort to retroactively (re)assert the (uneasy) claim to cultural plurality in Rhodesia. If this is part of the work’s objectives or conclusions, then it is built on quicksand. Turino’s revisionism swings the pendulum so far as to sanitize a past that can hardly be an alternative to ZANU (PF)’s contemporary ills. For instance, his arguments do not problematize, let alone enlighten us, on how regimes that casually banned political parties, literature, newspapers, music and jailed and murdered artists under a gamut of Terrorism, Subversive Materials and Censorship and Entertainment Control Acts could

⁸² The library is now run by one of his sons, Paul Tracey, while another, Andrew, helps US infant scholars to ‘discover Africa’ through his exhibitions and performances of African culture, dances and music. Cf., ‘The wandering minstrel: paul tracy’, About Africa <http://paultracey.org/africa.htm>

⁸³ C. Hamm, *Popular Music*, 140.

⁸⁴ For an assessment of this strategy, see Georgina Born and David Hesmondhalgh (eds.), *Western Music and Its Others: Difference, Representation, and Appropriation in Music* (Berkeley: California University Press, 2000). A century after his initial recordings, Tracey’s International Library of African Music has begun to master these vast works into commercially usable compact discs and MP3s for sale. His son, who inherited this largesse, hopes that one day they will be able to pay royalties to the owners of these works or their relatives. Cf., <http://ilam.ru.ac.za>

⁸⁵ T. Ranger, ‘Nationalist Historiography, Patriotic History and the History of the Nation: the Struggle over the Past in Zimbabwe’, *JSAS* 30:2 (June 2004).

have promoted genuine African cultural renaissance.⁸⁶ In light of these apparent contradictions, I disagree with Allen's assessment (echoed by others) that Turino's book offers an 'ultimately most convincing reading of the development of popular music in Zimbabwe'.⁸⁷ Like many other scholars' efforts, his work greatly helps to build a growing bibliography for a complex, multifaceted web of stories that constitute the modern history of Zimbabwean music. It is by submitting apparent contradictions as those that I noted in his work to sensitive and unapologetic interrogation that this infant bibliography can be advanced.

Turino's book stops short of grappling with the post-2000 ultra-nationalist government's appropriation of music – particularly Second *Chimurenga* repertory – to author(ize) an exclusive ZANU (PF) hagiography as the history of the nation. My closing chapters will locate me firmly in the current debates on the 'Zimbabwe Crisis', that is, the socio-political and economic difficulties that constitute both part of the cause and consequence of the Mugabe government's ultra-nationalist state project. I explore how music has helped to construct and contest power, identities and political legitimacy in this troubled dispensation.

In her study of the Nazi state's appropriation of Germanic folk music for its imperial and holocaust agendas, Brita Sweers discovered that the co-optation seriously adulterated the music's historical meaning and significance in the eyes of the ordinary German, often causing serious psychological problems for witnesses and survivors.⁸⁸ However, Sweers does not highlight whether or not some of this music was also employed by Nazi opponents to subvert those parochial agendas. By extending this framework, I seek to go beyond Martin Cloonan and Bruce Johnson's call for scholars to temper their celebration of the liberationist potential of popular music by considering

⁸⁶ Alick Nkhata, musician and broadcaster was killed by the Rhodesia Air Force on his farm in Zambia in the 1960s; and Mapfumo was jailed without trial in the 1970s for his anti-colonial music. Cf Santoro, Gene, 'The Lion of Zimbabwe - Thomas Mapfumo'. *Stir it up: musical mixes from roots to jazz* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1997), 179.

⁸⁷ L. Allen, 'Book Review of Thomas Turino's *Nationalists, Cosmopolitans and Popular Music in Zimbabwe*', *Project MUSE* (Notes 58.2, 2001):378.

⁸⁸ Brita Sweers, 'The Power to Influence Minds: German Folk Music during the Nazi Era and After', *Music, Power, and Politics*, ed. Annie J. Randall (London & NY: Routledge, 2005), 81; also Kara Wheeler, 'Melodies of a Nightmare: Music in the Holocaust', *Perspectives Student Journal* (n.d).

how music has often been used as a tool of oppression, both willingly and unwittingly.⁸⁹ The story that I seek to tell in this dissertation demonstrates that Zimbabwean music has historically been a domain for struggles over meaning, signification and power. Like nationalism, popular music is necessarily Janus-faced; it is amenable to both good and evil usage. It has the potential to both empower and disempower. While Martin and Johnson search frenetically from the ancient Roman Empire to the on-going American-led plunder of Iraq for scattered anecdotal evidence to highlight the gloomier side of popular music, my historical study of the cultural struggles over and through music in Zimbabwe provides a single specific case study to assess the multiple facets of this complex theoretical dimension.

Cloonan and Johnson's perspective meshes well with the anxieties raised not too long ago by Njabulo Ndebele and Albie Sachs in their individual critiques of the influential notion that 'culture is a weapon of struggle'. They argue that this premise, which powerfully influenced *Chimurenga* and anti-apartheid music historiography, could unwittingly privilege oppression and struggle as the key tropes and thus paralyze African cultural consciousness and creativity through fixation with the limiting dialectic of hegemony and resistance.⁹⁰ Focusing cultural research on the everyday, they counsel, helps create a fuller picture of African artistic creativity, untrapped by the struggle canon. Many post-colonial scholars have demonstrated that, despite the definitive violence, colonialism was also characterized by finer intricacies and mutual connections beneath the conflicts.⁹¹ Historically, music has facilitated these connections and

⁸⁹ M. Cloonan and B. Johnson, 'Killing me Softly with His Song: An Initial Investigation into the Use of Popular Music as a Tool of Oppression', *Popular Music* 21 (2002).

⁹⁰ Njabulo Ndebele, *South African Literature and Culture: Rediscovery of the Ordinary* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1984); Benita Parry, 'Culture Clash': Review of *Spring is Rebellious: Arguments about Cultural Freedom* by Albie Sachs and Respondents', by Albie Sachs, Ingrid de Kok, and Karen Press, *Transition* 55 (1992):125; also Maurice Vambe, 'Versions and Sub-versions: Trends in *Chimurenga* Musical Discourses in Post-Independence Zimbabwe', *African Study Monographs* 25:4 (2004):169.

⁹¹ Frederick Cooper and Ann Stoler, eds., *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World* (Berkeley: California University Press, 1997); Frederick Cooper, 'Conflict and Connection'; Philip S. Zachernuk, *Colonial Subjects*; Gaurav G. Desai, *Subject to Colonialism: African Self-Fashioning and the Colonial Library* (Durham Duke University Press, 2001).

conversations beneath and beyond the animalistic violations.⁹² The last thing that Sophiatowners needed was to sing about bombs, grenades, brimstone and fire; their sweet melodies, social harmony, hybridities and untrammelled inter-cultural socialization posed a greater challenge to the ethos of farcically purist apartheid social engineering. Thus, the monster of racial injustice and its alter – the Fanonical ‘violence of the colonized’ – did not paralyze cultural creators and scholars against imagining the everyday.⁹³

Maurice Vambe has shared Ndebele’s and Sachs’ discomfort with what he regarded as a desperate and ‘anaemic’ search for the political in Kwaramba’s study of Thomas Mapfumo’s ‘protest’ music.⁹⁴ While I also find merit in Ndebele’s and Sachs’ calls to transcend the all too familiar binaries of the oppressive state versus ‘the people’ or colonizers versus the resisting colonized framework, I disagree with their view (more specifically expressed by Sachs) that literally ‘banning’ the dictum that ‘culture is a weapon of struggle’ would improve both artistic creation and analysis. I think that trashing the virtues underlining this dictum implies a farcical ‘end of history’ notion with the fall of the last bastions of settler rule in Southern Africa, or, at least, assuming that decolonization meant a complete break with the culture of political oppression. This questionable assumption anchors Vambe’s celebration of the Zimbabwe government-commissioned music that drummed up the violent ‘fast track’ land reform since 2000 as a new form of *Chimurenga* music – a *Chimurenga* of self-actualization. This ‘paradigm shift’ leads him to echo the government’s labelling and attacking of Thomas Mapfumo as a traitor and reactionary who, by singing against post-colonial injustices, rebelled against the wishes of ‘the people’ to own land.⁹⁵ Scholars need to explore beneath the veneer of pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial historical time to interrogate the meaning of

⁹² See D. Coplan, *In Township Tonight*, for instance.

⁹³ Njabulo Ndebele, *South African Literature and Culture*, 1-4.

⁹⁴ M. T. Vambe, ‘Thomas Mapfumo’s Toi Toi in Context’, 91.

⁹⁵ M. T. Vambe, ‘Versions and Sub-versions: Trends in Chimurenga Musical Discourses of Post-independence Zimbabwe’, *African Studies Monographs* 25:4 (2004):180. One would not need to search very far to see the grim politicking and self-enrichment to which the Zimbabwe ruling elite have used the land reform exercise to question the scholarly value of Vambe’s analysis. For a concise assessment of this ‘fast-track’ land reform, see A. S. Mlambo, ‘Land Grab’ or ‘Taking Back Stolen Land’: The Fast Track Land Reform Process in Zimbabwe in Historical Perspective’, University of Pretoria (2005), http://www.blackwell-compass.com/subject/history/article_view?article_id=hico_articles_bsl150

change. Unfortunately, as Vambe seems hard-pressed to admit (despite his continuing, self-contradictory attacks on Mapfumo) the post-2000 land-centric ‘Third *Chimurenga*’ has largely exposed itself to be a huge lie.⁹⁶

By subscribing to the *dodaist* version of freedom paraded by apparently self-serving rulers,⁹⁷ Vambe wilfully blinds himself to both the wanton violence and impoverishment that executive lawlessness and kleptocracy, dressed as revolution, have inflicted on ‘the people’. Celebrating ZANU (PF)’s land-centric ‘revolution’ blurs both the internal contradictions of that project and the way the party has used it to author(ize) an exclusive claim to patriotism – a guise to legitimize its arbitrary rule, militarization of society and exclusive claims to power.⁹⁸ This dissertation argues that the national musical galas that the government has sponsored since 2001 epitomize its attempts to harness subaltern voices for self-legitimation. In practice, however, the dream has remained largely a nightmare as many musicians and other cultural agents have countered these efforts.

The dissertation is organized both thematically and chronologically. The next chapter examines Rhodesian cultural policies and African responses and initiatives. The analysis centres on the Native Affairs Department’s ‘Native Social Welfare’ policy which sought to define urban Africans’ space, activities and identities. It argues that the colonial state sought to harness African performative cultures as a conduit for defining African identities to fit a ‘traditional’ and ‘tribal’ ideal as part of a grand plan to deny them social

⁹⁶ Maurice and Beauty Vambe, ‘Musical Rhetoric and the Limits of Official Censorship in Zimbabwe’, *Muziki: Journal of Music Research in Africa* 3:1 (2006).

⁹⁷ This is Horace Campbell’s coinage from President Robert Mugabe’s admonition of his ‘war cabinet’ to be *madoda sibili* – real men, men of substance (indeed, he saw no need to clarify what the women were supposed to be!) in his spurring crusade against mounting opposition as problems overwhelmed the country in the early 2000s. As Campbell argues, ‘the leadership of Zimbabwe must be judged on the basis of the[ir] current relationship with the Zimbabwean people’, rather than claims to have liberated the country, Cf. ‘Need for Debate on Realities of Life for the Zimbabwean Working Peoples’, *www.TheBlackCommentator.com*, 51, July 31, 2003. While I largely agree with Campbell’s view of the limits of patriarchal liberationism as practiced by the contemporary Zimbabwean regime, I do not see the on-going streak of repressive politics as something new at all in neo-colonial Zimbabwe.

⁹⁸ See H. Campbell, *Reclaiming Zimbabwe: The Exhaustion of the Patriarchal Mode of Liberation* (Cape Town: Africa World Press, 2003).

services and to order urban space and relationships according to the tenets of the prevailing racial ideologies. African responses varied in line with their different and changing sensibilities.

Chapter 3 explores at some length one set of these responses, which involved the appropriation of some aspects of 'western' cultures by some educated Africans. In a context where social advancement depended on one's position vis-à-vis a modernity revolving around western cultural worldviews, sensibilities, education and Christianity, many Africans rebuffed the NAD-sponsored 'tribal' schema as paralyzing and appropriated aspects of this new canon for symbolic capital. Urbanity, for these groups, meant successfully mediating, performing and contesting their marginality through the symbolics of the new canon. To these individuals, if certain rights and privileges could be earned and marginality contested through performing the symbolics of the Christian religion, western attire, literacy and choruses, all of which could be accessed, then colonization had opened vistas for new possibilities as well. Thus, these cultural mediators and producers appealed not only to the same tools of their oppression, but also sought to transcend the artificiality of their locality by reading and representing a far off Europe and America for symbolic capital. Thus, the chapter contextualizes the adoption of western music in early colonial Zimbabwe and Southern Africa, and challenges scholarship to go beyond the intellectually over-milked concept of cultural imperialism.

If the appropriation and performance of modernity were overdetermined and circumscribed by colonialism's own premises and logic, another responsive thread was to resist it altogether. Thus, Chapter 4 examines Africans' alternative use of 'tradition'. Tapping into the vault of their own indigenous knowledges, cosmologies and worldviews but also received tools, African literati, students and teachers, villagers and cultural nationalists composed and performed songs that rejected, interrogated and mobilized against colonial rule. Developing on the protest format of the early years of colonial rule, songs with this resistance sensibility gradually elaborated to become *Chimurenga* by the 1960s, inspiring the liberation struggle and a new independence dispensation. The chapter argues that the struggle for freedom encapsulated by these songs would be harnessed by an elite nationalist leadership for the purposes of the independence struggle,

but they originated from and represented a wider search for freedom by a people aggrieved by colonialism.

Chapter 5 probes the workings of reconfigured power in the first two decades of independence. It argues that the postcolonial state followed the footsteps of its predecessor in harnessing and sponsoring popular voices for self-legitimation. This strategy was not surprising; the struggle for independence had been fired by many of the same voices. Thus, the state harnessed the popular musical voices that celebrated the attainment of independence and the hopes of a new future to inspire confidence in the new ideals of collective development work, *mushandirapamwe*, as espoused in the borrowed socialist ideology and authorized in indigenous work ethics of *nchimbe/jakwara* (work parties). At the same time, independence was popularly imagined as an era for the good life that *Chimurenga* songs and nationalist ideologues had promised when they mobilized popular participation in the struggle. Independence, however, quickly jarred against the burdens and crises of expectations and intrigues by a self-seeking elite who soon transformed into the new oppressors. The chapter demonstrates that the new power dynamics quickly smothered the fires of revolution, both culturally and economically, as reflected in a discography that recoiled from a celebratory to a protest tone by the end of the first decade of self-rule.

The final two chapters, 6 and 7, deal with the 'Zimbabwe Crisis', the socio-economic and political turmoil that engulfed the country at the turn of the new millennium. Faced with a crisis of legitimacy, the ZANU (PF) government appealed to music, more than ever before, to propagate its policies and legitimize its continued claims to power. The party invoked Second *Chimurenga* songs, a repository of liberation war memory, and commissioned new songs, to reposition itself as a popular revolutionary party advancing interests of the populace. Liberation memory and an expedient, violent land redistribution became the two templates for authoring and authorizing a 'patriotic' narrative of the nation as synonymous with ZANU (PF) in a grand self-legitimizing crusade. The two chapters demonstrate the power of music to both construct and contest identities, history and power.

Research Methodology

I approach my research from a subaltern perspective which, while acknowledging the overarching hegemony of state policy and attitudes, believes in the historic agency of ordinary Zimbabweans – as colonial subjects, actors in the struggle against colonialism and as citizens variously disposed towards independence and post-colonial executive lawlessness – to negotiate, question and inflect meaning into the realities of their everyday lives. This understanding takes full account of the voices of the ‘little’ people that government policy variously tried to control, exploit, suppress, influence or simply ignore. Indeed, music cannot possibly be studied fruitfully from a state-centric or elitist approach. This dissertation is not a subaltern monologue, however. It focuses on state policies and elite cultural dispositions that impacted the subalterns and their cognitive and expressive modes. Music is a dynamic cultural panorama which, for its dynamism to be fully appreciated, must be looked at from many directions like a dancing mask, to paraphrase the famed Nigerian author, Chinua Achebe.⁹⁹ My approach allows me to listen to the songs, stories and reminiscences of people who ‘sang their cultures’¹⁰⁰ – in the context of an unfree public sphere.¹⁰¹ My research methodology involved a high degree of selectivity, determined by the particular themes that I discuss. I utilized only a select amount of materials that variously speak to questions of power, identities and history; a totally different dissertation asking different questions could be written even from the same sources.

I accessed some of the early music that I use from the Audio-Visual Unit of the National Archives of Zimbabwe (NAZ) in Harare, the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Holdings (ZBH) station libraries and some recordings by early ethnomusicologists, some of which are available on the cyber-market. Government cultural policy documents, reports,

⁹⁹ Chinua Achebe, quoted in Jayalakshmi V. Rao, ‘Proverb and Folklore in the Novels of Chinua Achebe’, *African Post-colonial Literature in English: in the Postcolonial Web*, <http://www.thecore.nus.edu.sg/post/achebe/jvrao2.html>

¹⁰⁰ E. Chitando, *Singing Culture*.

¹⁰¹ Already, the very subject of my study, the nature of my sources – songs, texts, signs, dances and gestures – renders facile the need to deliberate the old question raised by Gayatri C. Spivak on whether or not the subaltern can speak. Cf. ‘Can the Subaltern Speak?’ *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, eds. Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg, (University of Illinois Press, 1988).

surveys, newspaper and magazine articles and reviews also exist from the 1930s, scattered in the NAZ system and the various city councils and government departments. I focused my archival research on Harare, the capital and seat of government, and Bulawayo, the second largest city and historic cultural hub and transatlantic conduit for the regional cultural networks.

Because this is a study of an oral performative culture, interviews were a crucial aspect of my methodology. I spent over one hundred hours talking to musicians, producers, music listeners and policy makers, over and above attending shows and watching performances on television and in recorded form – to learn the stories of their lives and works. Tracking these individuals and their works was aided by my prior familiarity with some of them, their own inter-personal relations as an artistic community and my shared interest in the music with many colleagues. Most of the musicians with whom I sought to converse were happy and eager to share their stories and records and to link me up with their colleagues. There were quite a number, however, who could not be drawn to sit down or to discuss some of my questions, particularly on issues concerning the intersection of culture and power. This wariness was understandable in light of Zimbabwe's polarized political environment. However, this did not affect my research in any significant way.

Chapter 2 Welfare as Hegemony: Rhodesian Cultural Policies and African Musical Performances

*It was Theoreau, I think, who said 'If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer' – Hugh Tracey.*¹

This chapter analyzes Southern Rhodesia's cultural policy towards urban Africans from the 1930s to the 1970s. That policy was encapsulated in the colonial state's vaguely defined idea of Native Social Welfare, which summed up the state's thinking and approaches to African urbanity. Culture was a front through which the colonial state sought to institute and legitimize its separate development ideology, its shorthand and alibi for unfair, race-based labour practices, spatial segregation, neglect and discrimination in the provision of social amenities. Native Social Welfare virtually meant entertainment and sports, which the Native Affairs Department (NAD) and the municipalities endeavoured to promote in conjunction with the Native Social Welfare Societies that were formed in every town and large mining settlements. While these official and quasi-official bodies ostensibly sought to provide a necessary social service – entertainment – to deprived African communities, their pronounced objective was to contain and control urban African activities and maintain their idea of order in the towns. Africans variously embraced, resisted, ignored and appropriated the various instruments of this policy for their own purposes in ways that illustrate the dialectical power of performance culture as a tool for and a weapon to subvert colonial social engineering.

Welfare as Hegemony and Social Control

The history of Zimbabwean urban entertainment is synonymous with names like Mai Musodzi and Stodart Halls in Harare, Stanley and McDonald Halls in Bulawayo, and Sakubva Hall in Mutare. Like the various beer halls and, later, soccer stadia, these were the nuclei of African urbanity. Mai Musodzi and Stanley Halls were established in 1935 and 1936, respectively, at the height of African urbanization, to provide Africans with recreational spaces to occupy their leisure time. No proper African urban policy had

¹ Hugh Tracey, 'Musical Appreciation in Central and Southern Africa', *African Music: Journal of the African Music Society*, 4:1 (1966/7): 47.

emerged at this time, as Africans were still regarded as migrant labourers temporarily in the towns to service the white capitalist economy. While this philosophy shifted in the following decade in response to increased industrial labour needs, there was no corresponding adjustment in social service provision or a radical review of their survival wages. Instead, urban African administration remained firmly anchored in continued African underdevelopment and the management of the social problems that stemmed from inequitable distribution of power and resources. Thus, 'community centres' like halls were constructed as part of what the administration called 'native social welfare'. The objective was to help 'the African' to transform 'from displaced peasant to settled townsman', as Dr. E. S. Gargett, one of Rhodesia's longstanding social engineers, explained.² Until the 1960s when the definition was widened to include the provision of municipal housing and 'self-help' projects, 'native social welfare' referred to entertainment – mostly music and sport. The main objective behind the idea was to focus African leisure life on such recreational spaces and make it easier to control them. But as this chapter shall show, African responses to this policy varied. Most welcomed the facilities as necessary for their social life; some used them for their own purposes while still others operated beyond such structures in bids to reassert their cultural autonomy.

This chapter attempts to lay out this 'native social welfare'-based cultural policy which the Southern Rhodesian colonial administrations formulated for Africans. It is only against this background that the significance of African musical life in Rhodesia, as explored in this and subsequent chapters, can be fully understood. The 'native social welfare' philosophy was a crucial aspect of the segregationist 'two pyramid' and 'separate development' ideologies propounded by Godfrey Huggins, the arch-segregationist who was Southern Rhodesia's prime minister for 20 years (1933-53). Charting the colony's development ideology on the basis of racial separation, Huggins told the Legislative Assembly in 1934: 'I shall do all I can to develop the native, if I'm

² National Archives of Zimbabwe (hereafter NAZ), GEN-P/GAR, E.S. Gargett, 'The Changing Pattern of Urban African Welfare Services' (paper presented to the Rhodesian Provincial Division of I.A.N.A., 26 April 1973), 2.

allowed to protect my own race in our own areas, if I'm not, I will not do anything'.³ By the WWII era, this ideology had firmly taken root, as he restated it in 1941:

In the white towns what might be described as the white reserves as opposed to the native reserves – the African has to conform to white requirements. It should be noted that he is not obliged to go to the white town; he can earn outside the town what for him is a good living, if he does not like the restriction in the towns.⁴

Huggins advocated the provision of African accommodation in towns only from 1945 when it had become the most pragmatic approach for promoting the development of 'his own race'.⁵ Defined within this framework, Huggins' and his successors' urban 'Native Policy' revolved around the need to control African activities to preserve internal security, minimize labour unrest and circumscribe their political thinking, all crucial for safeguarding settler privileges. With this in mind, the government created the NAD in 1929, which it mandated to oversee the 'education of natives and any other work designed primarily to further the agricultural, industrial, physical and social advancement of Africans',⁶ articulating further the state's occupational preferences for and attitudes towards Africans.

As it sought to accommodate African urbanization, 'native social welfare' was ideologically conceived as an updated version of the 'white man's burden',⁷ geared to aid what Gargett described as 'immense social change: the vast and sudden transference of people from a rural subsistence economy to an urban industrial economy, from traditional to modern living'.⁸ The 'civilizing mission' was evoked to maximum effect in this regard, as one NAD official explicitly expressed it: 'We here in Rhodesia are Trustees to

³ Legislative Assembly Debates, 1934, column 533.

⁴ Thomas D. Devittie, 'The Underdevelopment of Social Welfare Services for Urban Africans in Rhodesia, 1929-1953, with Special Reference to Social Security' (Seventh Annual Congress, ASSA, Kwaluseni, Swaziland, Henderson Seminar Paper, No.32, University of Rhodesia, History Department), 6.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁸ E. S. Gargett, 'The Changing Pattern of Urban African Welfare Services', 1.

these primitive people'.⁹ Reverend Percy Ibbotson, who was elected Organizing Secretary of the Federation of African Welfare Societies (FAWS) in 1936 and is often revered for his liberal ideas in this period, echoed this sentiment in 1944: 'The presence of substantial African [population] in the urban and semi-urban areas involving the breakdown of many tribal customs and restraints placed upon the Europeans grave responsibilities from which there can be no reasonable escape'.¹⁰ He saw this as a natural step, because 'white people [had] upset the social and economic conditions of [African] life'. It was, therefore, he reasoned, 'our duty to assist in a solution of the difficulties which have arisen'.¹¹ The solutions consisted of promoting African 'contentment' through tutoring them to adjust to white standards, to co-operate with the government and to help their mental, moral and physical improvement as well as 'ensur[ing] good feeling between European and Native races' – race relations, in official parlance.¹² Thus, 'native social welfare' was designed for social control – to protect settler privileges through palliatives for social problems stemming from colonial plunder and perpetuated inequality.

The idea of 'native social welfare' itself was developed as a stop-gap measure to manage the consequences of the unacknowledged or belatedly acknowledged realities of African urbanization. In the inter-war years, for instance, the presence of Africans in the towns spawned a major controversy between the central government and the municipalities as they squabbled over whose responsibility it was to shoulder the social and financial costs that presence entailed. As with urban housing, the construction of Mai Musodzi Hall in Harare and Stanley Hall in Bulawayo's Makokoba illustrate not only this controversy but also the significance of the emergent welfare societies as a piece-meal solution in 'native' policy. In 1935, the Bulawayo Town Clerk wrote the Internal Affairs Ministry asking for £300 to augment the £600 the Beit Railway Trust had voted for the construction of a recreation hall similar to the one built in Harare for Bulawayo Africans

⁹ T. D. Devittie, 'Underdevelopment of Social Welfare', 7.

¹⁰ NAZ, S/FE 21, Federation of African Welfare Societies of Southern Rhodesia, 11 December 1943, 11.

¹¹ Rev P. Ibbotson, 'Native Welfare Societies in Southern Rhodesia', *Race Relations*, v.9, no.2 (1942):71.

¹² *Ibid.*

at an estimated total cost of £1 200. The council was prepared to contribute a similar amount if the government played a part.¹³ Money was eventually found and the hall constructed, but the government had refused to co-operate, instructing the Chief Native Commissioner, C. L. Carbutt, to respond:

In reply to your letter of the 23rd, I'm directed to say that, while the government has every sympathy with the idea of providing a Recreation Hall for the use of Natives in the Bulawayo Location, it scarcely seems the function of the government to contribute towards the cost of such a building in a Municipal area. On the initiative of the local Native Welfare Society, a recreation hall has been constructed in the Salisbury Location, at the expense of the Salisbury Municipal Council.¹⁴

Salisbury Location's Recreation Hall was later rechristened Mai Musodzi Hall in honour of an African woman, Musodzi Ayema, a dedicated social worker who earned the Member of the British Empire (MBE) award for nursing World War I convalescent soldiers and for her pioneer work in the Red Cross and Homecraft Clubs.¹⁵ Born Musodzi Chibhaga in 1885, she survived the Shona and Ndebele Uprisings (1896-97) against the settlers in which her father's sister, Charwe (the then medium of the Mbuya Nehanda spirit), played a central role. She was baptized Elizabeth in 1907 and briefly enrolled at the Catholic Church's Chishawasha Mission outside Salisbury, before moving to town as an influential 'woman agent of Catholicism', as Leonard Chabuka, her great-grandson, described her.¹⁶ She then married Northern Rhodesian Paramount Chief Lewanika's son, Frank Kashimbo Ayema, Colonel Hartley's royal escort to Southern Rhodesia. Mai Musodzi's grandsons, Chris Chabuka and Francis Joseph Ayema, became prominent Harare musicians playing at Mai Musodzi Hall with De Black Evening Follies.¹⁷ Joseph

¹³ NAZ, S246/782, Bulawayo Native Society, Application for Assistance towards Recreation Hall for Natives in Bulawayo Location, Bulawayo Town Clerk to the Secretary, Department of Internal Affairs, 25 May 1935.

¹⁴ NAZ S246/782, CNC, Salisbury, to the Native Welfare Society of Matabeleland, 2 May 1935, Recreation Hall.

¹⁵ Joyce J. Jenje-Makwenda, *Zimbabwe Township Music 1930-1960* (Harare, 2005), 57.

¹⁶ Leonard Chabuka, quoted in Munetsi Ruzivo, 'Elizabeth Musodzi: The Catholic Woman Agent of the Gospel in Harare', <http://ir.uz.ac.zw:8080/dspace/bitstream/uzlib/348/1/Ruzivo-munetsi-Ruzivo3.pdf>, 4.

¹⁷ 'The story of De (Pitch) Black Evening Follies', *African Parade*, November 1953, 4.

Ayema is immortalized, together with his fellow musician-teacher, John Madzima, in a street name for this historic township. In the 1950s, as the African population outgrew the capacities of these two halls, Stodart and McDonald Halls were built for the two respective townships. The construction of these facilities and focusing African life thereon constituted the hallmark of 'native social welfare' for the NAD, the Municipalities and the Native Welfare Societies.

Reviewing two decades of 'native social welfare' policy in 1955, Gargett repeated the notion of the 'white man's burden'. In a rather self-contradictory way, he observed that, to the public, the municipality appeared as a source of inexhaustible facilities, with the result that 'welfare operated in an atmosphere of the 'providers' and the 'provided-for''. The former had to figure out what might be good for the latter – and 'a good deal of effort went into persuading people to use facilities which they did not comprehend and had not been conscious of needing'.¹⁸ He described this as 'inducement welfare':

Some of the inducements were quite blatant. Youth club members were rewarded with free soft drinks, or passes to film shows; women's clubs offered materials at wholesale prices on easy terms; competitions and prizes marked every activity – women sewed frantically to win pots and kettles; children ran furiously to win shirts and belts; boxers fought for 7/6d divided between the winner and the loser; tempting cheques were offered to those who improved their homes or gardens.¹⁹

The same idea was captured by Ibbotson when he wrote in 1942: 'The origin of the Social Welfare movement in Southern Rhodesia was not found in any request from Africans for help and guidance, but originated from among Europeans who had a sympathetic outlook on *Native questions*'.²⁰ These statements raise questions about the difference between 'sympathy' and hegemony or control. Commenting on the emergence of 'organized' boxing in Bulawayo, for instance, Abel Sithole noted that boxing was 'dry hands' and dangerous, and that it mostly took the form of 'faction fights' with Kalanga yard workers sparring against other ethnic groups. And these fights would often get out of control, and,

¹⁸ E.S. Gargett, 'The Changing Pattern of Urban African Welfare Services', 3.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ P. Ibbotson, 'Native Welfare Societies', 71. Emphasis mine.

Eventually, axes would start to be brought out, prompting the intervention of mounted police. That was why the Bulawayo Municipality's Mr. Taylor decided that it was a good idea to set up a boxing ring at Stanley Square, where Zezurus would fight against the Manyika and the Kalanga, etc, to cultivate inter-ethnic co-existence and respect, putting up 3 pounds 6 pence prize money for the winner.²¹

It was in the context of these 'faction fights' and the condemned 'illicit beer drink, often numbering 1 000 strong' that the state decided to establish these sanctioned spaces – boxing rings, community halls and more beer halls as 'outlet[s] for physical energy'.²²

Through these delimited spaces, the colonial state intended to nurture orderly and disciplined entertainment to keep the armies of African workers in the towns motivated and pliant to the rigorous industrial labour regimes. This is a point the municipality explicitly expressed in 1949 when it wrote that:

It has long been the policy of the council that funds from Kaffir Beer profits can be allocated to the furtherance of welfare and sport and recreation among the African population to the very limit of these resources so that decent, healthy means of occupying their leisure hours can be provided for the greatest possible number, whether as participants or spectators, especially during weekends.²³

Native Welfare Societies were founded and run by 'sympathetic' Europeans and, as Ibbotson recalled, 'some *responsible* Africans were soon brought into the movement' and in some cases, they were allowed to attend executive meetings.²⁴ In most of the cases, however, they simply discussed their problems in their own non-decision making African Committees for presentation to the societies for consideration by their European counterparts.²⁵ They did not have a voice, but relied solely on the assurance that 'the African viewpoint [would be] ascertained and [that] sympathetic attention [would be] given to every aspect of the Native question'.²⁶ Over the years, educated (and

²¹ Abel Sithole, Interview, 3 January 2007, Bulawayo, p.5.

²² E.S. Gargett, 'The Changing Pattern of Urban African Welfare Services', 2.

²³ Salisbury, Native Administration Annual Reports, 1st July 1948 - 30th June 1949, 6.

²⁴ Italics mine.

²⁵ P. Ibbotson, 'Native Welfare Societies', 71.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

'responsible') Africans like prominent musicians, Kenneth Mattaka, Moses Mpahlo and his wife, would-be nationalist leader, Joshua Nkomo and Mai Musodzi, worked as welfare assistants under white Welfare Officers who presided over a wide array of activities like sport, boy scout and girl guide training, 'house and garden' hygiene, job applications by African residents, the leasing of halls, the vetting of 'films for Africans', organizing inter-town and inter-territorial competitions and the maintenance of 'order' in the 'locations'. As Gargett noted, competitions were held in these various endeavours with Europeans acting as adjudicators, awarding prizes often supplied by the city councils, industrialists and employers. For example, Lady Kennedy, the wife of a former Governor, awarded prizes in the house and work competitions in Harare in the 1950s while the Welfare Officer maintained an omnipotent presence. The Welfare Officers' powers seemed unlimited. For instance, Harare's Welfare Officer in the late 1940s, Mr. A. C. Davis, also 'act[ed] as Father Confessor, guide and confidant to the community' shortly after his arrival from England.²⁷ An indication that the colonial administration took 'native welfare' seriously was that it recruited skilled white officers from overseas, as when it engaged five new officers, apart from Davis, from Britain in the 1940s, and mandated them 'to cheer up the African townships – to prevent or arrest the disintegrative forces of town life ... to provide decent, gay, attractive and constructive recreation as an alternative to beer-swilling and fornication'.²⁸ These were hardly matters for European 'sympathy', but social engineering to fit Africans into the colonial schema.

Through the NAD, Municipalities and the Native Welfare Societies, the state sponsored various entertainment activities, including music and dance performances in the sanctioned spaces. In 1941, the Harare Location Superintendent, Mr. Stodart, briefed the mayor about the British South Africa Police Band's concert in Harare, describing it as 'exceedingly popular and successful entertainment [which] was appreciated by an audience of over 200 Africans'.²⁹ Inspired by that success, the Native Welfare Officer

²⁷ 'Recreation for Harare Africans is being Tackled: No Problem is too Small to Give Attention', *Parade*, February 1954, 11.

²⁸ E.S. Gargett, 'The Changing Pattern of Urban African Welfare Services', 3.

²⁹ NAZ, LG 191/12/7/6, Superintendent, Stodart, to M.O.H., Band Performance by BSAP Police Band, 10 March 1941.

soon agreed with the police and the municipality to stage 12 such performances in the Salisbury Public Gardens and 12 more in the Native Location per month, with all expenses (including remuneration for the band, its trainer and instruments) coming from the ever-accessible Kaffir Beer fund.³⁰ The Bulawayo Welfare Office was simultaneously making similar arrangements, inviting tenders for instruments and a suitable band trainer.³¹ Soon after, the Bulawayo Municipality formed a 'Native' Brass Band to entertain 'location' residents, sponsoring it for a decade.³² In addition, these bodies facilitated and closely observed the activities of independent African musical bands. In 1951, the Salisbury Municipality minuted that:

Five troupes of entertainers hold regular concerts in the Recreation Hall. These are styled 'De Black Evening Follies', 'The Bantu Actors', 'King Cole', 'The Merry Makers', 'The Merry Bluebirds', and 'The Boogie Woogie Songsters'. Their shows are popular and are well attended. The Bantu Actors made two tours of Northern Rhodesia and the Congo during the year and De Black Evening Follies visited Bulawayo in December 1950.³³

The department and its partners funded some of these organizations. For instance, in its 1949 report, the Salisbury Municipality announced that it was weaning the Salisbury and District Dancing Club:

The Salisbury and District Dancing Club is one of the most flourishing and requires less assistance than any other club. Dances are held every Friday evening and a monthly competition is judged by various interested Europeans invited for

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² Annual Report of the Director of Native Administration, Salisbury, 1st July 1960- 30th June 1961, 13.

³³ Annual Report of the Director of Native Administration, Salisbury, 1st July 1950- 30th June 1951, 16.

the purpose. All dances held are attended by large numbers of African spectators who pay an admission fee.³⁴

In the same report, it also noted the formation by its Welfare Staff of the Bantu Social and Cultural Centre (BSCC), a social club which organized recreational activities for the 'better educated natives of Harare'.³⁵ As *Parade* would report in 1958, the club helped reinforce these educated Africans' sense of class identity, arguing that 'there is nothing that builds a sense of oneness more than singing'. Groups like the City Quads and De Black Evening Follies belonged to this club and performed to their best 'whenever they were called upon to help the club', it added. As an exclusive club, the BSSC provided the middle class space to 'waltz, jive and rock and roll, setting free their animal energies ... in an atmosphere free from the rough boys ... without risking their dignity'.³⁶ The club was the domain of journalists, clerks, nurses, teachers, doctors, lawyers and other professional men and women under the chairmanship of Enoch Dumbutshena, a proud BA and BEd. graduate.³⁷ But it should be noted that the club temporarily sheltered not only these men and women's dignity while they reveled, but it also provided them momentary respite from the 'location' gloom that characterized their everyday lives. One club patron told *Parade*: 'Most of us live in very squalid conditions owing to poverty and poor housing, and it is refreshing to be able, now and again, to get out of this depressing environment'.³⁸

In the Bulawayo Municipal area, all entertainment was organized by Jerry Vera and Mrs. M. Quick, the Welfare Officers for the city in the early 1950s, operating under the supervision of a Mr. J.M. Banefield. The African Welfare Society ran not only the dances and concerts taking place in the Stanley Hall, it also operated the city's library to keep African men and women busy and to prevent juveniles from 'run[ning] into

³⁴ S/SA 6175, Salisbury, Native Administration Annual Reports, 1st July 1948 - 30th June 1949, 6.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ 'Salisbury African Social Club', *Parade*, p.22.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ 'The SASCC [Salisbury African Social and Cultural Club] and the Educated African', *Parade*, April, 1954, 20.

mischievous'.³⁹ The NAD coordinated activities ranging from concerts to fashion shows, awarding prizes not only to dancing champions and the well-dressed, but also to 'the best-behaved natives' in the 'locations'. So the idea of a middle class social centre also created space where the state could help mould members of this class into models of African progress – defining the latter by co-operation with the state and adaptation to 'superior western' cultural standards. This was important in an era characterized by rising African nationalist temperatures, as we shall see in Chapter 4.

By the 1950s, articles celebrating the success of 'native social welfare', most clearly emanating from the NAD, flooded *Parade* and other state-sponsored publications. For instance, in 1954, *Parade* published one such article that hailed 'the African's' rapid change from 'tribal rural life to urbanization and modern economy': 'The African has adapted himself to the complicated western system very well and that says much about his intelligence and adaptability. Today he is a fully fledged unit in the Rhodesian industrial machine'.⁴⁰ As we shall see in greater detail in Chapter 3, this sort of African was not simply a labourer; he had also become an important consumer of industrial products. This explains the preponderance of industrialists and factory owners who sponsored and adjudicated their 'leisure' activities, as clearly illustrated in a *Parade* report on a 1954 Harare Fashion Show:

The success of the show was equally dependent on European business men and others interested in African Affairs as on other factors. Realizing the economic value of the African in business, various firms readily offered valuable prizes which included wrist watches, jewellery, trousers, hats, shoes and gramophones. Some of the firms were Messrs. Moffat Radio, Hoppy's of Charter Road, The Music Shop, Nagarji and Sons, H.N. Patel, E. Saleji and H. Hari and Son. The judges were, for the ladies Mrs. Arnold, Mrs. Griffiths and Mrs. Heally and for the men Mr. J. D. Smith, Mr. Heally and Mr. Griffiths.⁴¹

The article noted that the men ended the show with a rendition of 'Ishe Komborera Africa' (God Bless Africa) – the unofficial 'African national' anthem composed by Xhosa song writer Enoch Sontonga in 1897, ostensibly marking their progress as

³⁹ 'Recreation is their Business', *Parade*, October 1954, 42.

⁴⁰ 'Meet the Urbanized African', *Parade*, June 1954, 6.

⁴¹ 'Harare Fashion Parade', *Parade*, May 1954, 8.

'successful' Africans. These shows presented limited opportunities for inter-racial interaction, even as they were hardly patronized by ordinary white spectators. As Henry Mutyambizi observed, 'the only ones who came [to watch them at the halls] were those who wanted to invite us, and those who came to judge our competitions, dressing and ballroom'.⁴² Asked why whites judged their competitions, he explained that fellow Africans would make 'biased judgments if any of the performers were their relative. We believed that a white person had justice'.⁴³ For fashion competitions, added Henry's brother, 'the white person adjudicating would likely be a factory owner with the knowledge of the quality of the garment one would be wearing. So, in that case, he would make an informed judgment'.⁴⁴ African performers were conscious of the apparent self-promotion by some of these adjudicators. As Mutizwa Mutyambizi recalls: 'There were popular trousers called Montana trousers, and if those wearing Montanas were winning, it was likely that someone else would buy a Montana too ... because that's the trousers that wins'.⁴⁵ Thus, while 'western' dressing was hailed as 'vindicating fully the African's taste for good clothes and wisdom in choosing the right garment for the right occasion',⁴⁶ industrialists capitalized on African performances to market their merchandise. It is not surprising, then, that the music scene in this period stood out for its elegantly-dressed artists and spectators who prized their 'western' jackets and ties and dresses. But while industrialists who often partnered them were mostly concerned with marketing their merchandise, the Welfare Societies and the NAD's primary purpose was the control of African activities to maintain law and order. Thus, they were not so keen to promote 'westernization' as to help Africans come to terms with their lot as disenfranchised urban workers subordinated to colonial authority.

But apart from the official agenda, what Henry Mutyambizi said about the sort of white people who came to watch them at the halls in the 1950s is interesting and merits closer analysis. On the one hand, it illustrates partial fulfillment of official objectives and,

⁴² Henry Mutyambizi, Mutyambizi Group Interview, 4 January 2007, Bulawayo, 8.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ Mutizwa Mutyambizi, Mutyambizi Group Interview, 8.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁴⁶ 'Fashion Parade', *Parade*, 9.

on the other, it demonstrates the power of African performance culture to transcend those designs and other prejudicial social constructions. With regards to the first point, white patronage, however limited, justified one of the key objectives for 'inducement welfare' – the bridging of the gap between African communities and their white superintendents, which would form the basis of the ill-fated federal political experiment in the 1950s.⁴⁷ Thus, defending the use of prizes to lure Africans to participate in officially organized social activities, Gargett argued in 1955,

This is easy to criticize in retrospect, but it was very understandable in the circumstances of the time. In all the confusion of early urban settlement, when neither the people nor the workers really knew what was expected of them, and the population was growing by ten thousand a year, there was little realism about the theories of self-help and self-determination. The inducements may have been morally indefensible, but at least they effected an introduction; they opened up communication between 'us' and 'them' and without communication there could have been no development.⁴⁸

Thus, what amounted to bribes were used to facilitate the institutionalization of racial separation between what colonial officials viewed as different racial groups that must live and socialize in separate residential and entertainment spaces. But, to go back to the second point about Mutyambizi's statement, amongst some of those few white spectators were liberal minded individuals who were opposed to or cared little about white racial conventions. Among these was Eileen Haddon, editor of the *Central African Examiner*, a popular newspaper amongst Africans during the Federation era. Haddon and her colleagues in the Interracial Association imagined the Federation as an opportunity for genuine racial partnership, different from Huggins' 'horse-and-its-rider' formulation. Together with Pat Travers, she organized multi-racial concerts with groups like the City Quads, De Black Evening Follies and Travers' own coloured group, the Arcadia Rhythm

⁴⁷ The British government established the Central African Federation, or Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, combining Nyasaland with the two Rhodesias, in 1953 to improve the economic efficiency of the colonies. It crumbled in 1963 under increasing African opposition (mainly from Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia) to Southern Rhodesia's racial ideologies and inequitable contribution to and distribution of, federal investment and wealth.

⁴⁸ E. S. Gargett, 'The Changing Pattern', 4.

Lads.⁴⁹ As Jenje-Makwenda argues, Travers was a musician-activist who perceived music as both a way to bring people together, and as a weapon to fight the colour bar. Coloureds could 'pass' the bar easily. Thus, 'When requested to perform in hotels ... Travers invited and brought in black [fellow] artists. Because of his popularity among the white community, hoteliers compromised [and] allow[ed] him to perform alongside his black counterparts'.⁵⁰

Some white people also invited African musicians to entertain them in their homes. As Henry Mutyambizi pointed out,

Some came to our workplace [at the Cold Storage Commission in Bulawayo] to pay us or leave deposit money for us to come and play at birthday parties for their children and similar occasions. We would go there and play until 11 or 12 midnight. At night we played right inside their houses, but outside in their gardens during daytime.⁵¹

These inter-racial interactions did not owe their origins to the NAD-mediated concerts, but to organized and personal initiatives that transgressed Rhodesian racial norms and the social engineering efforts by bodies like the NAD, particularly during the federal era. Some African musicians would also venture out into white residential areas to play for pennies. For example, Mutizwa Mutyambizi pointed out that,

During Christmas holidays, we would wake up and go to their [white people's] flats to play our pennywhistles. They came out holding their glasses because they knew that 'these people are begging'. They watched and threw down money on us from their balconies, when they had got drunk and were making fun of us, because they were the people who had money. From there, some would then ask us to 'come and play for me at my place while I relax'.⁵²

Thus, there appeared to have been wider scope for more personalized and private inter-racial interactions beyond the officially-marshaled public concerts, even though these cannot be romanticized as anything nearing the 'breaking of racial barriers'. The

⁴⁹ J. Jenje-Makwenda, *Zimbabwe Township Music*, 23.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ Henry Mutyambizi, Interview, 7.

⁵² Mutizwa Mutyambizi, Interview, 7.

Mutyambizis saw such interactions in the same light as the relations in the ‘master-and-servant’ domestic service. The colonial authorities sought to maintain racial discrimination indefinitely, with bodies like the NAD mandated to ‘keep Africans in their place’ by catering to their ‘needs’ in the ‘locations’. Thus, hotels, town halls and theatres were out of bounds for Africans as a rule, unless they were there to serve white needs. African bands used to perform in these segregated hotels but such performances largely served to confirm the conventions. As former Harare Mambos and St. Paul’s Band member, Ignatius Nyamayaro, related:

We performed at Skyline Motel, among other hotels in the then Rhodesia, playing for whites. To be honest, we could not mix with them after and during the shows but they would make sure that we get our meals or refreshments at our own sections. They did not like us, but they liked the music we played – which was the greatest challenge we faced during the colonial days.⁵³

Some white people’s desire to be entertained by African musicians sometimes justified the latter’s trespassing on what was otherwise sacred ground, and that presence tended to dramatize the policing of racial segregation. Similar experiences by Abel Sithole point us to some of the fundamentals of such discrimination:

At times we performed in whites-only-venues, like Carlton Hotel [in Bulawayo]. When we were there we were segregated against and made to sit at the backyard, where they disposed of their ash. They used to do strip-tease at that hotel, and during such sessions we would be bundled out into the corridor or back to the ash-heaps so that we don’t see a nude white person. And we would be called back when the woman performer was through. They liked our music, not us. It was impossible for blacks to sit in there and eat together with whites.⁵⁴

Race and sex are two entangled organizing concepts for colonialism. And because music could powerfully sexualize racial space, it is not difficult to explain the humiliating treatment to which Sithole and colleagues were subjected. In Rhodesia and elsewhere, the

⁵³ Trust Khoza, ‘Misery Stalks Nyamayaro’, *Herald*, 21 November 2007.

⁵⁴ Abel Sithole, Interview, p.8.

convergence of those two spaces was sacrilegious.⁵⁵ Hotels and nightclubs provided a potential conduit for such sacrilege. This is one of the reasons why Rhodesian authorities so determinedly fought to keep hotels and city entertainment spaces 'white'. Thus, when debate emerged over the need to accommodate visiting Blacks and 'emancipated' local Africans in the 1950s, consensus was elusive. The agony this issue raised was captured by the Director of Native Affairs in his 1958 memo to Salisbury's Town Clerk. He wrote:

With regard to the right to use amenities in any hotel, the great practical difficulty is the identification of, and the making of distinction between classes of Africans. This is a subject that has for some time been a particular hobby horse of mine, in which connection I have advocated the introduction of a statute of emancipation which could be the means of avoiding a whole series of permits and exemptions presently required by our statute law. *One always comes back to the practical question, however, as to how to ensure that the (European) man in the street could recognize an emancipated African. I have no more ingenuity than to try to get over this hurdle by suggesting the issue of a button-hole badge for the purpose, but this is not really a reliable proposal.*⁵⁶

As is clear in the Director's memo, class had become a persistent headache for the colonial authorities and their race-based laws like the Land Apportionment Act. When difficult decisions had to be made, the Director trusted the artificial hedges that safeguarded white citizens to trump African hopes to escape these common indignities:

Economics and the ability to pay will govern the situation ... as it is in the Ridgeway Hotel, Lusaka. Undoubtedly, the *bona fides* of professed multi-racialism would be tested by Africans when a hotel was first declared to be such, but *this would not recur very often if the tariff was right.*⁵⁷

⁵⁵ See Jock McCulloch, *Black Peril, White Virtue: Sexual Crime in Southern Rhodesia, 1902-1935* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press), 2000.

⁵⁶ NAZ, LG 191/10/633, Director of Native Administration to B. J. Neale, (Town Clerk), Multi-racial Clubs & Hotels, 28 Aug 1958. Emphasis mine.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.* Emphasis mine. Federal Hotel was eventually declared a multi-racial hotel in 1965, after the Federal era, and Jameson and Queens would soon follow: NAZ, LG191/11/647, Jameson Hotel: Multi-Racial Hotel; LG 191/11/788, Federal Hotel to Provide Accommodation for Africans.

Pricing was a key policy instrument safeguarding Rhodesia's quasi-apartheid political economy.⁵⁸ Meanwhile, Bob Bardolia, an Indian businessman, defied convention by building the Bhika Brothers' Restaurant ('Karimapondo') on the fringes of Salisbury City Centre as a multi-racial entertainment space.⁵⁹ Together with the Federal Hotel, this was to be one of the few spaces outside the community halls where African musicians could perform for multi-racial crowds, including politicians and liberal-minded university students.⁶⁰ However, police harassment soon forced Karimapondo to shut down. These efforts by musicians and other well-wishers ran against the dogmatic ideals of the NAD and its allies who valorized African 'tradition' as a weapon for continued subjugation of Africans, as we shall see in the next section.

(Re)creating African 'Authenticity': Ethnomusicology and the Promotion of 'Tribal Music'

As Devittie notes, the Rhodesian state sought to use the ideology of the African 'ideal past' to justify its limited service provision and the exploitation of Africans.⁶¹ Charles van Onselen argues that in response to white miners' cultural separatism expressed through privileged and exclusive social gatherings and 'mine dances', poorly paid African mine workers resorted to 'a more popular, cheaper and more familiar pastime – traditional tribal dancing'.⁶² Similarly, in his study of labour practices at the Wankie Coal Mine, Ian Phimister observes that alongside a comprehensive system of surveillance, the colliery's management also introduced rudimentary sporting, bioscope and other entertainment facilities which proved popular amongst the 'natives'.⁶³ This was not

⁵⁸ See M. Chikowero, 'Subalternating Currents: Electrification and Power Politics in Bulawayo, Colonial Zimbabwe, 1894-1939', *Journal of Southern African Studies* 33:2 (2007):296-7.

⁵⁹ J. Jenje-Makwenda, *Zimbabwe Township Music*, 52.

⁶⁰ *African Daily News*, 'Double Storey Hotel Opened by M.P.', 17 November 1956; LG 191/11/788, Federal Hotel to Provide Accommodation for Africans.

⁶¹ T. D. Devittie, 'Underdevelopment of Social Welfare', 8.

⁶² Charles van Onselen, *Chibaro: African Mine Labour in Southern Rhodesia 1900-1933* (London: Pluto Press, 1976), 187.

⁶³ I. Phimister, *Wangi Kolia: Coal, Capital and Labour in Colonial Zimbabwe 1894-1954* (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1994), 75.

peculiar to mining compounds; it was a popular labour management formula in colonies like Rhodesia. In the towns, the NAD and its partners promoted 'tribal dancing' to strengthen what they called the 'tribal system' as a solution to the restiveness amongst urban Africans. As we have already seen, they also organized boxing with the same purpose. In 1949, the Salisbury Municipality expressed its satisfaction with 'tribal dancing', which it designated as 'very popular ... tak[ing] place at weekends in the open spaces of the townships'.⁶⁴ In 1954, it recorded that an 'estimated ... 15 000 spectators saw members of the Shangaan Tribe win the Annual Tribal Dancing competition for the Coronation Shield, in Harari ... second place came to the Makaranga and the Sena were third'.⁶⁵ What is significant about this report is the municipality's worries about the alleged lack of authenticity of most of the dances. Thus wrote its Native Administration Director: 'It is rather disappointing to note ... that many of the so-called tribal dances performed by the various groups had European characteristics. The Shangaans were the only ones with any kind of traditional dress and musical instruments'.⁶⁶ To the municipality, this was symptomatic of the grave dangers of 'westernization' (so-called 'detribalization') which was allegedly threatening to wipe African traditional customs into extinction and spawn chaos in the cities.

Such worries converged with the brief of ethnomusicologists like Hugh Tracey, Reverend A.M. Jones, Agnes Donohugh and one Dr. Winifred Hoernl, who were concerned with studying 'primitive music'.⁶⁷ Tracey not only made a career collecting and recording such music in the Rhodesias and elsewhere in Africa, but he also worked with the NAD in both Southern Rhodesia and South Africa. In the 1920s, he had recorded legends, stories and songs he heard sung by 'boys' and villagers by firelight and 'in the tobacco fields of Southern Rhodesia'.⁶⁸ In 1929, he led 14 'Karanga' musicians down to

⁶⁴ Native Administration Annual Report, July 1st 1948-June 30, 1949, 6.

⁶⁵ Native Administration Annual Report, July 1st 1953-June 30 1954, 22.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ Agnes C. L. Donohugh, 'Some Criticisms of Curtis's 'Songs from the Dark Continent'', *American Anthropologist*, New Series, 23, 2 (April-June 1921):238.

⁶⁸ Hugh Tracey, *Songs from the Kraals of Southern Rhodesia*, 1933; 'Catalogue: The Sound of Africa Series, 1 210 Long Playing Records of Music and Songs from Central,

South Africa, where he pressed their songs and his previous collections onto discs with the visiting Columbia Recording Company. Some of these recordings would be played by CBS' John Hammond at Carnegie Hall as preliminary music for his radio shows soon after. Then, from 1932-33, he recorded over 600 African 'tribal' songs in Rhodesia, thanks to a small Carnegie Fellowship grant Mr. Harold Jowitt, the Director of Native Development, had obtained for him 'to study the background of the music of Southern Rhodesia'.⁶⁹ As Tracey explained, his efforts and those of his colleagues were driven by their belief that 'far from being just quaint and savage, the musical arts of Africa provide a channel, a veritable fiord, into the hearts of African spiritualities which may yet provide a key to their distinctive character'.⁷⁰ Writing in 1954, one Greta Falk urged the editor of *Parade* to keep any publications on 'African custom or folklore and songs so that eventually they may be published in a book for the study of those who have Africa's welfare at heart'.⁷¹ Such a book:

Would be of inestimable value to future administrators and scientists in Africa; it would be an undying testimony of the ability of the African to lay aside the ancient inhibitions, a proof that the goat is no longer wild, but has learnt to give birth in the herd.⁷²

To these colonial ideologues, as the foregoing quotations make clear, the idea was not the preservation of African music for its own sake. Rather, they urged Africans to take pride in 'traditional' customs because, whether these were sold to them as 'traditional' or 'modern', they supposedly epitomized African difference. Such customs were a key to preserving and strengthening colonial notions of the African 'tribal system', and the latter was a useful alibi for colonialism to justify its neglect and exploitation of urban Africans.

A few examples will illustrate this point. In 1933, the Native Commissioner for Marandellas, Posselt, expressed concern for the growing 'necessity for the provision of

Eastern and Southern Africa', *The International Library of African Music* 1, (Transvaal, 1973):3. Reverend A. M. Jones did the same in Northern Rhodesia.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ Hugh Tracey, 'Musical Appreciation'.

⁷¹ Greta Falk, 'Preserve your Traditions: A Message to Africans', *Parade*, September 1954, 10.

⁷² *Ibid.*

waifs and strays', suggesting that government should take responsibility for their welfare.⁷³ But the Prime Minister shot down his proposal, arguing that,

Under native custom the liability for their old people is recognized and cheerfully undertaken by the natives, and in the case of children ... there are always those anxious to take them over, as whether they are boys or girls they are recognized as an asset, and not as is unfortunately the case with Europeans, as a liability.⁷⁴

Similarly, the Superintendent of Natives in Bulawayo drew the Chief Native Commissioner's attention to the need for old age relief for Africans but the latter advised him that the solution to the problem lay in strengthening the 'tribal system'.⁷⁵ Thus, to help fortify the citadel of segregation, racial inequality and African underdevelopment, the state made some effort to fund African urban entertainment, including 'traditional' music in the name of welfare and 'preserving African tribal customs'. It was in this light, therefore, that for more than three decades, Tracey and others found ready support from certain colonial offices, western foundations and international capital (for example, the mining industry in Southern Rhodesia, South Africa and the Congo) and record companies like Gallo – the latter 'looking for romantic talent which must be as good as the calypso singers of the Caribbean'⁷⁶ – to research and resuscitate African interest in 'their own' music. Record companies sought something different and of potential commercial value, and 'traditional' music seemed to promise that. For the colonial authorities, the popular performance of such music would provide an instrument to subjugate their colonial subjects. Thus, as Tracey expounded in 1961, the study of the 'African personality' was of 'first-class' importance and that could be done best through music. He is worth quoting at length here:

⁷³ T. D. Devitties, 'Underdevelopment of Social Welfare', 8.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ Hugh Tracey, 'Musical Appreciation', 53.

Good relationships between Africans and non-indigenous Africans [Europeans] will depend very largely upon the depth of our mutual understanding. One must ask 'what is personality?' Here I prefer the answer of the artist and composer, because the world knows itself largely through its artists, its composers, and writers, those who are leading in the symbolic arts. Hans Cory, the doyen of the anthropologists in Tanganyika, always maintained that the royal road to the understanding of African people was first to study their songs, because in those songs you find a reflection of the whole of their social organization, their opinion of themselves, their opinion of their womenfolk, their ideas about religion, their attitude toward children, towards social discipline and so on. It is all there. I have often had occasion to agree with Hans Cory on that.⁷⁷

In 1954, he set up the International Library of African Music at Rhodes University where he stored the works most of the 'thousands of African folk musicians, singers ... and instrumentalists' had performed for him 'without monetary reward of any kind but with genuine satisfaction at being able to hear themselves for the first time through the electronic medium of electric recording'.⁷⁸ Spurring but also impeding this movement to 'preserve' and resuscitate interest in African traditional music was the (white) public's 'little interest in African music', coupled with the view that 'recordings of tribal music, however good, [had no] commercial value'.⁷⁹ Tracey correctly attributed the submergence of interest in African traditional music to the legacy of ethnocentric missionaries, 'beginning with the Livingstone era', who, on the one hand, condemned indigenous music and religious practices as demonic and, on the other, associated greater status and participation in industry and the civil service with conversion to Christianity.⁸⁰ This, he avers, opened the door to the imitation of the foreign European – in dress, social habits, and ambitions. He further argues that,

With the intrusion of gramophone records, films and radio, imitations of imitations proliferated, largely because improvisation and strongly nodal or 'out

⁷⁷ Hugh Tracey, 'The Importance of African Music in the Present Day', *African Affairs* 60:239 (April 1961):155.

⁷⁸ H. Tracey, 'Catalogue', 5.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ H. Tracey, 'Musical Appreciation', 51.

of tune' performances were not only tolerated, but encouraged [and] imagined to be the best foreign tradition.⁸¹

Tracey saw African musicians as unreflexive mimic men and women who became trapped by social prejudice and their own 'inability to evaluate aesthetically', thus undermining their own security and the ideal society their colonial masters envisioned.⁸² This ideal society was a 'two nations' society, as Richard Gray aptly described it.⁸³ As argued in Chapter 3, some Africans appropriated 'Western' music, *inter alia*, as a useful tool to subvert and challenge a discordant modernity that exploited and disenfranchised them as colonial subjects, in order to fashion themselves beyond their ascribed identities as 'primitive natives'. But for Tracey, this epitomized the predicament of African culture, and his solution was that 'non-African music performed by Africans should be removed from protected cultural occupations and allowed to find its own level through the box office'.⁸⁴ Thankfully, as illustrated in the next chapter, the dozens of 'modern jazz' bands in the 'locations' had flourished on entirely different factors than state 'inducements' and they would not be troubled by Tracey's censorial solution, if it had any practical value.

This 'preservation' crusade did not go unchallenged, at least intellectually. For instance, while acknowledging and equally decrying the destructive impact of western commercial music on African indigenous music, Alain Danielou criticized western specialists' study of African music premised on what he called grave errors of conception, in particular on the confusion between racial and cultural questions.⁸⁵ He argued that,

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 52.

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ R. Gray, *The Two Nations: Aspects of the Development of Race Relations in the Rhodesias and Nyasaland* (London: Oxford University Press, 1960).

⁸⁴ H. Tracey, 'Musical Appreciation', 52.

⁸⁵ Alain Danielou, 'Cultural Genocide', *African Music: Journal of the African Music Society* (1969):19.

The idea that a form of expression in sound is associated with a particular species may be valid for the different genera of birds, but not for man. There is no doubt that race affects certain features of sensibility, that, for instance, a Finn will tend to create musical forms different from those of a Spaniard. But culture, by its very nature, oversteps such boundaries.⁸⁶

As the history of Southern Africa illustrates, it is this 'overstepping' of cultural fault lines that threatened the colonial project. Furthermore, Danielou observed how the term ethnomusicology itself implied a predetermined standpoint, a search, above all, for the 'primitive' in Africa. This, together with notions of 'tribe', he further argued, completely falsified the value of art and culture:

What is recorded as primitive folklore is in most cases merely a threadbare form of an antiquated song that has lost its real musical context. There is a programme of the ORTF (French Radio and Television Organization) that telephones each morning the post office workers, typists [and] butchers in the provinces and asks them to sing a song. The result is usually a song by Gilbert Beaud or Silvie Vartan indifferently mauled that in fact corresponds, in comparison with the original, to what ethnologists and folklorists too often reverently collect in the villages.

While some of his works may have had some value, many of Tracey's collections bear out Danielou's point that 'One pretends to notate forms whose system of reference one does not know, and then pretentiously teaches vague melodic outlines, as erroneous as they are mediocre, all the while imagining that one is 'saving national folklore''.⁸⁷ No doubt, Danielou must have been familiar with some of Tracey's works like the 1929 article in which he had listed some 'historical' songs sung by the 'Makalanga [sic] ... and by the people of Cherumanzu' [sic], lamenting 'the horrors perpetrated in ... tribal wars, singing as if they were an eye witness'. Tracey prefaced this article with a disclaimer that he was an amateur in the music and languages of the musicians, but that did not stop him (or his editor) from freely interpreting and translating the songs. The following is a good example of that arbitrariness:

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 21.

Chorus: *Heha heha heha, hoho, heha hereha, heha hehea, Kutsa ngoma ngore (we Joba).
Heha heha, etc, Sound all the drums (the drums of Joba).*
Solo: *Wakomana wa enda kwa Marange (the home of the rain doctor).*
Chorus: *Ndichakutengere hore (I will buy you a rain cloud).*

He explained that 'this war song is the song of the women, who are bewailing the ravages of war upon their food supplies; blaming, in that last phrase, their enemies with the cry, 'nai Marungu'.⁸⁸ None of his translations in this song appear to make sense of the 'Kalanga' version of the song, except perhaps, in a very literal, non-contextual sense, the last line. This is a defining feature of most of the songs he collected and categorized as 'historical, mystical or appertaining to witchcraft, laments, love songs, war and hunting songs, primitively humorous ones, and those sung as dance accompaniments'.⁸⁹

While Tracey seemed more directly connected with official cultural policy in South Africa than Rhodesia, his views seemed to shape Rhodesian approaches to African music as well, as is seen in the heightened official fascination with 'tribal' music and dances in the politically tumultuous 1960s-70s. It is significant, as Charles Hamm demonstrates, that as a director with the South African Broadcasting Corporation in the 1940s, Tracey was one of the architectural brains behind the 'tribalization' of African music in South Africa into finite 'tribal musics' as an intrinsic component of apartheid's 'Bantustanization' scheme.⁹⁰ Similarly, Rhodesian policies seemed indebted to his blueprint that designated 'Africans ... [as] so heterogeneous, so unlike each other from tribe to tribe, that what holds for one tribe with great musical ability may be quite the

⁸⁸ H. T. Tracey, 'Some Observations on Native Music in Southern Rhodesia' *NADA: The Southern Rhodesia Native Affairs Department Annual* (1929): 9. The unintelligible 'Nai Marungu' may actually have been 'Nhai Murungu' (Tell me white man) or 'Nhai Varungu' (Tell me white men), which, in that case, may have been a question addressed to Tracey himself in the context of on-site recording or, still, if this song was a war song at all, the singers may well have been referring to a different war altogether – possibly the then most recent one against white settlers – of which they may have been survivors, not just witnesses!

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*; 'Catalogue'.

⁹⁰ Charles Hamm, *Putting Popular Music in its Place* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), chapter 10.

reverse with their neighbouring tribe with little or no musical sense of any significance'.⁹¹ This is clear, as we shall see, with the harnessing of 'tribal dancers' and singers in programmes like Rufaro Week and Neshamwari Music Festival.

Throughout the colonial period, administrators had sought to harness what they called 'tribal' culture, including music, for political capital at significant occasions like colonial and imperial holiday celebrations and receptions. For example, during King George VI's visit to the country in 1934, W. R. Benzies, Matabeleland's Superintendent of Natives, circulated a memorandum to all District Native Commissioners asking for 'tribal dancers' to be sent to Bulawayo two days in advance for rehearsals. Arrogating to himself authority to 'invent tradition', the superintendent specifically stipulated that the dancers 'should bring their native dancing costumes, and none of the dancers should appear in tattered European costumes'.⁹² The 'native' leaders later presented the king with a leopard kaross in a symbolic performance of their loyalty to empire.

Similarly, on June 2, NAD officials and their Native Welfare colleagues sponsored a 'tribal dancing' competition 'as an adjunct to the Coronation Day celebrations' in Harare. The contest was won by 'the Shangaan tribe', which got a 'handsome shield with silver fittings as a floating trophy', and the 'Angoni' came second. This competition was deemed so successful that the officials decided to hold it annually.⁹³ Typically, royal visits to the colony toured important urban centres where they met not only Native Commissioners and other important colonial officials, but also African leaders whom the former 'presented' to the visitors amidst much singing and fanfare by African crowds who dutifully lined the roads to welcome the visitors.⁹⁴ These were carefully controlled functions. As one 'African Journalist' would write of the 1953 visit by Queen Elizabeth and Princess Margaret,

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² NAZ, S1003, Indaba at Government House: Visit of his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, circular from the Superintendent of Natives to all stations in Matabeleland, 22/01/1934.

⁹³ Salisbury, Native Administration Annual Reports for July 1st 1952-June 30th 1953, 32.

⁹⁴ 'Jubilee Celebrations in South Central Africa: Congratulations to the king (George VI) and Queen (Mary) from Southern Africa', *Native Mirror – Chiringiro – Isibuko* (A monthly newspaper dealing with news and matters of interest to Africans), vol. II, No.1, Bulawayo, October 1934, 17.

The leading Africans who were selected for presentation to the Queen Mother and Princess Margaret were mostly those whose leadership lay in what they had done or were doing to advance their people. The militant, vocal type of leader, was left in the background.⁹⁵

Official rhetoric often reinforced this power play. Addressing Africans gathered to welcome King George at Ndola (Northern Rhodesia) in 1934, M. J. L. Keith, the District Commissioner, emphasized the subjectivity of Africans:

I should like to assure [Africans] that it will not be one of the least of His Majesty's joys today that his jubilee is celebrated by millions of loyal Africans. I am glad to see that Chief Chiwala has joined us today. He lived ... in the days of slavery and barbarism and can perhaps more than any of us appreciate the benefits that the King's rule has brought to central Africa.⁹⁶

As the *Mirror* reported, after mission and other African choirs 'gave good renderings of native songs' and 'God Bless the King', the District Commissioner presented several of the gathered chiefs with silver jubilee medals, 'which they were told were a great honour'.⁹⁷ There are many examples of these symbolic performances of power that harnessed African cultural performance to emphasize their subjectivity and legitimize the colonial project, but perhaps the most important was the Rhodes Centenary Celebration held in 1953 in Bulawayo, where African performers were invited to play in the 'African Village' section of the exhibition park. What is interesting in the latter event is not only the cultural poignancy of its political symbolism, but also African contestation of its production and performance of meaning.

Festivals of Founding: Celebrating and Contesting Colonialism

As Leslie Witz's study of the Jan van Riebeeck Tercentenary Festival in South Africa in 1952 illustrates, such colonial founding festivals were often staged as performances of public history and identities depicting European civilization and its alleged benefits to

⁹⁵ African Journalist, 'I traveled with Royalty', *African Parade*, November 1953, 5.

⁹⁶ 'Jubilee Celebrations', *The Native Mirror*, 17.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

‘grateful natives’,⁹⁸ as the Ndola District Commissioner emphasized in 1934. The participation or presence of ‘Chief Chiwala’ at King George’s reception served an invaluable self-legitimizing purpose for the colonial administrators. The same was invariably true everywhere else; the participation of Africans in specially designated, subservient roles confirmed the performance of colonial power, or so the government assumed. Thus, like its South African counterpart, the NAD engaged African troupes and individual artists ‘from all over Central and Southern Africa’ to perform in the ‘African Village’ during the Rhodes Centenary Celebration. Illustrating how such staged shows of ‘unity-in-difference’ are contestable, many of the invited African performers and participants refused to attend. As the Salisbury Municipality minuted with a tinge of disappointment,

Offers were made whereupon certain of these troupes, particularly from Northern Rhodesia, proposed to visit ... if members of their tribal groups would assist by providing additional men and women to join in choruses and other subsidiary parts. In an endeavour to facilitate matters, the Department tried to obtain the cooperation of representatives of these groups but so nervous were they of the gauleiters who had put out a ‘boycott the exhibition’ order that fearing ostracism for having contributed in any way to anything connected with the exhibition, they chose instead to make lame excuses and to absolve themselves from responsibility in the matter and the opportunity was lost.⁹⁹

A Mr. Price from the department had consulted the Bulawayo African Advisory Board, which was made up of Africans, on 22 April 1953 to ask them to urge local entertainers and spectators to participate in the planned festival. As Simon Muzenda recollected, Mr. Price had told the incredulous board that the festival would be supported by ‘seventeen colonial governments south of the Sudan’ whose participation was meant to ‘show the world the progress and developments that were taking place in those countries as a result

⁹⁸ L. Witz, *Apartheid’s Festival: Contesting South Africa’s National Pasts* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2003), 129.

⁹⁹ Salisbury, Native Administration Annual Reports for July 1st 1952-June 30th 1953, 32.

of the co-operation between the two different races'.¹⁰⁰ While they voiced their reservations about participating in a festival that celebrated the plunder of Africans, the meeting had been adjourned for the next day with an agenda to determine the finer details. Subsequently, African leaders met at Stanley Hall and resolved that Africans should boycott the festival. Muzenda would boycott not only the event itself, but the crucial 23 April board meeting to finalize the arrangements; significantly, that was the only board meeting he missed during his term as a board member.¹⁰¹ The decision by the Advisory Board members did not represent anything like universal 'African' consciousness, however. Thus, not only did De Black Evening Follies participate together with South Africa's Manhattan Brothers, they also sponsored the Miss Mzilikazi Beauty contest, which was won by another performer at the festival, Dorothy Masuku.¹⁰² The association of the founding Ndebele king, Mzilikazi, with African feminine beauty evokes what Achille Mbembe described as phallic colonialism.¹⁰³ This Freudian reasoning pervaded 19th century European writing of Africa, which depicted the continent as a woman to be conquered and dominated.¹⁰⁴ Predicated on such self-understandings, these re-enactments and celebrations of conquest and occupation replayed colonial virility and African eunuchy. Thus, the twin figures of the 'pacified' or co-operative 'chief' and African performers dancing in a 'tribal' setting memorialized the crucible of conquest as a legitimating symbol of the new order. As argued in Chapter 3, the African bands performing at the Rhodes Centenary Celebration represented African 'progress' which, when convenient, colonial officials could point at as testimony of the benefits of

¹⁰⁰ N. Bhebe, *Simon Vengesai Muzenda and the Struggle for and Liberation of Zimbabwe* (Gweru: Mambo Press, 2004), 92.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰² 'Both Stage Star and Beauty Queen', *Parade*, November 1953, 16; Abel Sithole, Interview, 3. These groups were handsomely remunerated for their performances, with the Manhattan Brothers donating a large proportion of that money towards the building of Nyatsime College to further the education of Africans. As Chapter 3 argues, this gesture demonstrated one dimension of Africans' response to a discordant colonial modernity that sought to, initially, discriminate them on the basis of their 'lack of education', and, subsequently, to cripple them with inferior education.

¹⁰³ Achille Mbembe, *On the Postcolony* (London; Bekerley: University of California Press, 2001), 17.

¹⁰⁴ Edward Namisiko Waswa Kisiang'ani, 'Decolonizing Gender Studies in Africa', <http://www.codesria.org/Links/conferences/gender/KISIANGANI.pdf>, 7.

their 'civilizing mission'. Again, this collaboration justified the condemnation of people like Muzenda as 'political demagogues' who allegedly tried to undermine the fruits of such 'civilization'.¹⁰⁵ At another, more personal level, as Masuku told *Parade*, this event was a windfall: 'The African Village was a centre of attraction and I made big money during the celebrations – I was well-paid'.¹⁰⁶ This intersection of politics, power and commerce illustrates the potential paralysis that can dog the resistance-versus-collaboration paradigm as an analytic concept.

The point concerning the boycott illustrates some Africans' suspicions of the Huggins administration's idea of racial partnership that anchored the ill-fated Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, established the same year. The Federation of African Welfare Societies had supported the proposals for the Central African Federation in spite of its African members' critique that the body was acting like the S.P.C.A. by offering only palliatives to African problems in the late 1940s.¹⁰⁷ Under this pressure, 'native' welfare policy began to open up beyond mass entertainment, to include the provision of income-generating projects and municipal housing,¹⁰⁸ part of what the chairman of one of the societies patronizingly described as 'guid[ing] the African community along the right lines, to protect them from subversive elements and to make them better citizens of Rhodesia'.¹⁰⁹ As Gargett notes, the Native Social Welfare portfolio was taken over by the municipalities in 1963, which increasingly worried over growing nationalist sentiments. The local government would harness African (mostly traditional) musical performance more strenuously in apparent efforts to dowse these sentiments.

¹⁰⁵ See, for example, 'Meet the Urbanized African', *Parade*, June 1954, 6.

¹⁰⁶ 'Dorothy Masuku', *Parade*, May 1959, 17.

¹⁰⁷ T. D. Devittie, 'Underdevelopment of Social Welfare', 12.

¹⁰⁸ E.S. Gargett, 'Changing Pattern', 6.

¹⁰⁹ T. D. Devittie, 'Underdevelopment of Social Welfare', 12.

In 1974, for example, through its Rufaro Beer brand, Salisbury's Liquor Department started an annual Rufaro Show Week to promote the 'African image' through music and dancing.¹¹⁰ The maiden carnival at Harare's Rufaro Stadium featured:

Drama by the 'Makadota Family' [sic], shows by the BSAP Band, Tribal Dancing, Marimba Band, Football final, Pop music, B.A.A. Tribal dancing, Shangaan Dancers, Pop music, SA pop group, fights, money distribution, [and] final Miss Rufaro contest.¹¹¹

This programme was typical of the municipal shows generally, which featured 'tribal dancing' more prominently than any other single category of activity or performance genre. But even more importantly, Rufaro Stadium also hosted two other annual council-organized traditional music and dance festival finals, the Rufaro Tribal Dancing Festival and the Neshamwari Music Festival.¹¹² According to Basil Chidyamatamba, the Organizer and Performing Arts Coordinator of the Salisbury City Council's Community Services Department, no less than 15 'tribes' were taking part in the 'traditional tribal dancing' festivals by the late 1970s, among which were the following groups and/or genres: 'the Muganda, Angoni, Mafue-Goteka, Ngororombe, Jerusarema, Chinyambara, Karanga-Mbakumba, Nyao-Gure, Shangaan-Muchongoyo and other Traditional folks'.¹¹³ Groups performing these 'traditional' genres utilized empty spaces in African townships during weekends or paraded in the streets, sometimes eliciting complaints from residents who disliked some of the activities or the tumult they generated. This was true of some Nyau (Gule WaMkulu) dancing groups which, with an anthropological eye, the Harare Location Superintendent, J.P. Courtney, sought to control. He wrote the NAD in 1972:

You will be aware that I'm attempting to research Nyau Dancing with a view to formulating some form of control. There have been complaints from residents who do not subscribe to the spiritual beliefs of the participants. African dancing

¹¹⁰ Harare City Council, Department of Housing and Community Service (DHSC), Ha/ri/1, P. Kriel, Community Services Officer, to the Deputy Director, 5 Nov 1974.

¹¹¹ DHSC, Ha/ri/1, Report of Rufaro Stadium, 30 Nov 1974.

¹¹² DHSC, C/26/6/5, Director of African Admin, F.P.F. Sutcliffe to General Manager, Liquor Undertaking Department; DHSC, C/26/6, Salisbury Traditional African Association, Rufaro Tribal Dancing Festival.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*; 'Traditional Dancers, Folksingers Win Awards', *The Herald*, 6th Nov 1978.

and drumming has been interests of mine since I first came to Africa. One of the distressing things is that with the onset of civilization many of these dances and the old songs and drum refrains are becoming lost. I'm slowly making headway with the leaders of the Nyau cult and I hope I am building up mutual trust. At a later date I wish to attend a full scale dance. It struck me that it would be of value to record parts of the dance on film and tape.¹¹⁴

Captured in this statement is a mix of the oblique colonial fascination with supposedly 'primitive' African cultures and the administrative quest to know-so-as-to-control. The targeted groups were naturally wary of this knowledge imperialism, particularly in this liberation war era. As we shall see in Chapter 4, colonial officials suspected that such activities could be a masquerade for political organization. Modern technology could surely help 'preserve' the cultural performance genres, but cameras and audio recorders in the Location Superintendent's hands had one dominant meaning; they were powerful technological instruments of surveillance and control.

Chidyamatamba often conducted the Salisbury African Choir and 'tinker[ed] to himself at the piano' and, ironically, 'preferred classical [music] because you can listen to it over and over again without it getting boring', and such figures of 'traditional' jazz as Tommy Dawson and the Mills Brothers'.¹¹⁵ Because of his lived knowledge and institutional training or attained privileged status, Chidyamatamba emerges as one of the 'organic intellectuals' recruited by the state to capture and organize 'the people' for dirigiste purposes through the conduit of their cultures. He would continue in his role, assisting the postcolonial state to organize artists to help it to create a 'socialist state' through the arts,¹¹⁶ as we shall see in Chapter 5.

In addition to the anthropologists, the state was also closely partnered by regional industrial capital in its quest to socially engineer African life. The mine labour barons of the region, for example, the South African Witwatersrand Native Labour Association (WENELA), occasionally sent its own groups of 'tribal' dancers to Rhodesia for the

¹¹⁴ DHSC, City OF Harare, Subfile 30, J.P. Courtney, Superintendent, City of Salisbury, Harari, to the Director of African Administration, Nyau Dancing, Harari Township, 26 October 1972.

¹¹⁵ 'Music is his Job, his Passion and Life', *The Herald*, 26 January 1975.

¹¹⁶ DHSC, C36, Harare Arts Council, Report on 1st Cultural Leadership Course Held at Ranche House College, 7 April 1984.

Neshamwari Festival. In 1975, it sent a Xhosa group with a programme to tour and perform in most of the beer gardens in Salisbury's African 'locations' like Mufakose, Kambuzuma, Rugare, Mabvuku and Harare (Mbare), but strictly ordered that the troupe must avoid Highfield Township because of its volatile political atmosphere at that time.¹¹⁷ What should be noted here is that WENELA's explanation was an understatement. In fact, it was well aware and wary of African nationalists' militant opposition to what they viewed as 'the racist Rhodesian regime's ... exchange of (African) slave labour ... for foreign currency' with the South African apartheid regime¹¹⁸ – which escalated when increasing numbers of Mozambican and Malawian labour migrants started to return to their newly independent countries with the collapse of the ill-fated federation. As we shall see in Chapter 4, nationalists were at this time harnessing indigenous 'traditional' performance forms to create a collective political consciousness to underwrite their cultural nationalist thrust. By the 1970s, then, the nature of cultural performance as an ideologically contested domain had turned full circle. Thus, WENELA and its co-organizers wisely realized that their 'tribal dances' would likely cause trouble in the nationalist hub, Highfield.

As we see with the Native Welfare Societies generally, the involvement of famous African personalities in conspicuous positions lent an air of popular participation and legitimacy not only for these state-run entertainment programmes, but, more importantly, for settler political superintendence over Africans generally. This is what the Salisbury Municipality meant when, in 1949, it had tried to reassure Africans that it did not wish to control African entertainment, but to work with them in a relationship of indefinite pupilage:

The department assured the local population that far from wishing to control sport, it is anxious that their clubs and other recreational bodies should carry as great a share as possible in the organization of recreation and that every assistance will be given to those who fall in with this idea. *This is one aspect of native*

¹¹⁷ DHSC, C/26/5/13, Memo from the Manager (Rhodesia) Wenela, Salisbury, to Director of African Administration, 8 Oct 1975.

¹¹⁸ 'Export of Slave Labour from Rhodesia to South Africa', *Zimbabwe Review* (Official Organ of the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) (Patriotic Front)), Lusaka, February 8, 1975, 1.

*administration where a start can be made, without serious risk of repercussions, in giving the African a small share of responsibility for organizing his own affairs, and the readiness of the majority of those Africans concerned to accept this can be regarded as a healthy sign.*¹¹⁹

Recreation, therefore, presented one of the few openings to those Africans with ambitions for social mobility or to otherwise contribute to the development of their communities at a time when their involvement in even local administration was regarded as dangerous. This helps explain the heavy involvement of Africans in sports, music and other recreational or 'welfare' programmes in early colonial Zimbabwe.

This hegemonic schema was clear in the Rufaro Festival under which now legendary George Shaya, a 'football star', Wellington Mbofana and James Makamba, both 'radio stars', adjudicated the Miss Rufaro contest. Interestingly, they all distanced themselves from the 'tribal' dancing segments of the show.¹²⁰ Nevertheless, in spite of the apparent political and commercial intents, these activities greatly helped to boost interest in and the performance of Zimbabwean traditional music and dance genres in the towns where, for the most part, they had been previously shunned. For example, Chidyamatamba explained that when he joined the Salisbury Municipality in 1965,

Traditional dancing groups were rarely heard of. Today they number 34. The Karanga dance mabakumba, the Ndaue dance the muchongoyo, the Zezuru dance the shangara and the jerusarema and so on. Western music had a lot of influence with these [urban] kids ... But with the introduction of adult traditional groups they realized that it was part of their culture. Now they have started learning it in the schools as well as in the clubs. It's very important because some of these kids are born in the city and don't have the chance to see the music of the rural areas.¹²¹

While not entirely incorrect, Chidyamatamba's explanation for the general lack of interest in 'traditional' performances certainly overemphasizes the rural-urban divide.¹²²

¹¹⁹ Native Administration Annual Reports, Salisbury, 1st July 1948 - 30th June 1949, 6. Emphasis mine.

¹²⁰ DHCS, 1 HA/RI/1, Letter from Mrs. Jean Crooks, Advertising Promos, to Mr. P. Kriel, November 1974; Report of Rufaro Stadium, 30 Nov 1974.

¹²¹ 'Music is his Job, his passion and his life', *Rhodesia Herald*, 266 January 1975.

¹²² See Tsuneo Yoshikuni, 'Notes on the influence of town-country relations on African Urban History before 1957: Experiences of Salisbury and Bulawayo', pp.113-129, B.

Nonetheless, the resurgent interest in traditional performances remained largely an underclass phenomenon. This can be explained, in part at least, by what J. M. Burns noted as Africans' fear of being represented as 'primitive' and, as we shall see in Chapter 3, their desire to fashion themselves beyond the underclass identities colonialism ascribed them.¹²³ As Kenneth Mattaka, a mission-educated professional entertainer, noted, 'Traditional music didn't fit with the educational line and Christianity'.¹²⁴

This assessment of the state's involvement with 'traditional' music and dance provides an important counterpoint to Thomas Turino's uncritical crediting of the Rhodesian state and ethnomusicologists like Tracey for reviving Zimbabwean indigenous music.¹²⁵ There is hardly much that is 'cosmopolitan' in Tracey's imperious and ethnocentric objectification of African music as 'quaint', 'savage' and 'primitive', value-laden adjectives that are replete in his copious articles, or in some of the stated objectives for his research. That these individuals and state institutions played an important part in reviving interest in indigenous art forms – even more than African cultural nationalists from the 1950s – is beyond question. What Turino ignores or misreads are the not-so-glorious intents and purposes for so doing. As this chapter has attempted to illustrate, the idea hardly related to supposed colonial benevolence or 'European sympathy' but the need to control African political thinking and to operationalize Rhodesian apartheid. The same agendas also drove the introduction and use of radio.

Idle Minds and Mischief? Broadcasting to Africans, 1940-70s

Broadcasting to Africans began in 1940 under the auspices of the Central African Broadcasting Services (CABS) from Lusaka as a regional World War II propaganda

Raftopoulos and T. Yoshikuni, *Sites of Struggle: Essays in Zimbabwean Urban History*, ed. B. Raftopoulos and T. Yoshikuni, Harare: Weaver Press, 1999.

¹²³ J. M. Burns, *Flickering Shadows: Cinema and Identity in Colonial Zimbabwe* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2002), 145.

¹²⁴ Kenneth Mattaka, Interview 1, 19 November 2006, Bulawayo, 2.

¹²⁵ Thomas Turino, *Nationalists, Cosmopolitans*, 99-102.

experiment 'to stimulate the people's war effort'.¹²⁶ It was a segregated affair, with broadcasting targeted specifically at Europeans beginning at the end of 1949 from Salisbury. Broadcasting was established against official and settler fears that 'slow-brained' Africans would experience difficulties grasping news because radio was 'too complicated' for them.¹²⁷ Yet, as it developed, broadcasting to Africans became a wider tool to 'educate the natives' on the 'right lines' regarding 'proper' hygiene, agriculture, housing, and sanitation and to prevent independent political thinking or 'popular influence of the illiterate masses by their intelligentsia class'.¹²⁸ These anxieties were inflected with emerging Cold War rhetoric, with Franklin, an Information Officer at the Lusaka studios, arguing that,

Whether you like it or not, the African mind is awakening, is thirsty for knowledge. Let us give it the right kind of knowledge; if we don't it will surely pick up the wrong. You know the old saying about idle hands and mischief. Well, the same applies to idle minds, and there are always people, even as far afield as Moscow, looking for idle minds in Africa.¹²⁹

As official attacks on the Industrial and Commercial Workers Union (ICU) and its leaders like Clements Kadalie and Masotsha Ndlovu as well as on alleged Garveyites in earlier decades demonstrate, the 'fear of Communism' was no new political hysteria.¹³⁰ Colonial ideologues sought to shape African thinking not only through dry propaganda conveyed in news bulletins, but also through the medium's entertainment function.

¹²⁶ H. Franklin, 'The Development of Broadcasting in Central Africa: A Talk from Central African Broadcasting Station, Lusaka, 12th June, 1949', *The Outpost*, August 1949, 12. Foreshadowing the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, it changed to Federal Broadcasting Corporation in the late 1940s before the Ian Smith regime took it over as a key weapon for its fight against African nationalism after the collapse of the Federation in 1963.

¹²⁷ J. M. Burns, *Flickering Shadows*, 64.

¹²⁸ H. Franklin, 'Development of Broadcasting', 13.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

¹³⁰ NAZ, S110, Clements Kadalie (Industrial & Commercial Workers Union of SA): Circular from the Office of the Superintendent of Natives, Bulawayo, 24 March 1926; M.O. West, 'The Seeds are Sown: The Impact of Garveyism in Zimbabwe in the Interwar Years', *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 35:2-3 (2002):335-362.

Moreover, that propaganda had to be constructed into Africans' pre-existing leisure activities. Franklin is worth quoting at length on this point, as he elaborated the scheme in his 1949 speech:

We want a happy and contented African people. Now what can the native do when he has finished his work, his own or yours[?] He can get drunk if he has the money, or gamble or worse. If there is a full moon he can dance. But most nights he can only go back to his hut, with no light and generally no ability to read even if he had light. There he can talk and think. And one of the things he can talk and think about, not very happily, is how much better off you are than he is, you with so many things he hasn't got, including a radio to entertain you. The African loves music, plays, rhetoric argument – all the things that radio can put across so well. Let him have them.¹³¹

Franklin further suggested that white employers should assist by fitting cheap extension speakers to their 'boy's quarters' to keep their labour happy.¹³² By the 1950s, radio sets were becoming a more common feature of 'location' life, with *Parade* writing that,

A radio set is increasingly becoming an item of necessity in most African homes, something that a man who has some education and money and some standing ... must have for his and his family's benefit. To the African, [CABS] is a channel of education, entertainment and information, a link between men and women, tribe and tribe, Government and people, and white and black.¹³³

¹³¹ H. Franklin, 'Development of Broadcasting', 14-15. Colonial urban planning had made sure that most of them did not have light; see Moses Chikowero, 'Subalternating Currents'.

¹³² H. Franklin, 'Development of Broadcasting', 15.

¹³³ 'The Mashona Family', *Parade*, August 1954, 8. This *Parade* article reviews the radio drama, 'The Mashona Family', a play centred on the standard didactic themes of colonial radio and 'films for Africans' emphasizing moral virtue, the 'dignity of labour' and law and order, some of the core themes of 'broadcasting for Africans'.

A.S. Healing observed that, by the 1950s, broadcasting for Africans was done in 9 African languages and English, ranging from 'light entertainment ... heavy emphasis on music, to current affairs, plays, homecraft, religious services, adult education, farming hints and quiz programmes'.¹³⁴ According to the Postmaster General, by 1953, Salisbury had about 180 'natives' with radio listeners' licences, 17 of them residing in Mabvuku, 'a location of some 5 000 souls'.¹³⁵ A common radio set could be purchased for £5 in 1949.¹³⁶ By 1956, the Salisbury Municipality was already worrying about the increasing numbers of Africans possessing unlicensed radios. For instance, the Director of Native Administration wrote the Postmaster General on 13 July 1956, pointing out that, 'The numbers of radio sets reported ... were 3 364 in Harare and 168 in Mabvuku. The numbers of licences actually issued are 167 in Harare and 55 in Mabvuku, and all other sets must, therefore, be unlicensed'.¹³⁷ Twenty defaulters were prosecuted in 1959. At the same time, however, the Licensing Inspectorate had also since recognized the possibility that the £2 licence fee was unaffordable for many and decided to issue 'concessionary licences' to listeners earning less than £25 per month or £300 a year. By 1959, it had given out 234 such licences. This concession also indicated the increasing value the colonial authorities attached to radio as a central tool for African administration. Yet the government was even more determined to see the radio reaching all urban Africans in the locations.

As early as 1942, the Federation of African Welfare Societies had mulled over how it could help the Lusaka broadcasts reach all Africans in the 'locations'.¹³⁸ In 1949, the Salisbury Municipality came up with a novel idea, if not a renovation of Franklin's suggestion that white employers should fit speaker extensions to their domestic workers' quarters. It installed wireless extension speakers from its municipal offices onto the

¹³⁴ A. S. Healing, 'Africans at the Microphone', (undated), 7.

¹³⁵ Native Administration Annual Reports, Salisbury, 1st July 1952 - 30th June 1953, 32.

¹³⁶ H. Franklin, 'Development of Broadcasting', 14.

¹³⁷ NAZ, LG 191/11/526, Wireless Listener's Licences: Native Urban Areas, Postmaster (Federal Ministry of Posts, Office of the Postmaster-General) to The Town Clerk, 18 March 1957.

¹³⁸ Rev P. Ibbotson, 'Native Welfare Societies in Southern Rhodesia', *Race Relations* 9:2 (1942):72.

'location' streets, which also doubled for a one-way public address system run from the Welfare Offices. Thus noted its report for 1949,

The installation at the end of the year of a public address system in the Harare Township should prove a valuable addition to amenities. With the master receiver and microphones in the Welfare Office the installation is used to broadcast radio programmes, news, talks broadcast from Lusaka, public announcements and emergency calls. Already a concert party has broadcast a programme directly from the microphones. Although at present loudspeakers are installed in only half of the township area, it is hoped that during next year the whole native urban area will be covered by the system.¹³⁹

Because the radio was still a status symbol unaffordable to some 'location' dwellers, this communal service helped widen access to radio amongst Africans. Many of the intended beneficiaries must have appreciated some aspects of the service, as Lina Mattaka, a musician, reminisced:

One thing that was nice in Makokoba was those wireless loudspeakers for people without radios. It was fascinating. They were huge loudspeakers mounted high up – one at BMC Church and others in the location. There were 5 such speakers in the whole of Makokoba in the 1960s. Anybody who wanted to hear the news would listen to that, and also music. That was good.¹⁴⁰

Apart from making news and entertainment generally accessible, the service was also utilized by residents for contacting relatives, announcing the arrival of visitors and calling for parents whose children would have strayed from home.¹⁴¹ In this sense, the public address system helped Africans to build a sense of community in the generally alienating urban 'locations'. Yet, as with the installation of limited street and tower lights in African residential areas,¹⁴² the idea was also to control African activities in an era of rising nationalist activism. The speakers embodied the intrusive voice of the colonial

¹³⁹ Native Administration Annual Reports, Salisbury, 1st July 1948 - 30th June 1949, 6.

¹⁴⁰ Lina Mattaka, Interview 2, 7 January 2007, Bulawayo, 10.

¹⁴¹ Native Administration Annual Reports, Salisbury, 1st July 1949 - 30th June 1950, 29.

¹⁴² M. Chikowero, 'Subalternating Currents', 302. And, to illustrate how Africans put these limited resources to their own, unintended uses, many sat and studied under those public lights.

administration into semi-autonomous African spaces. As Friday Mbirimi, a semi-retired musician and educationist, recalled,

The public address system was also used to keep Africans under control, reminding them not to go to meetings: 'We have heard that there is a meeting proposed at this particular place; don't go there, you will be arrested ... Live peacefully with your neighbours ... Such things.'¹⁴³

In spite of professing political neutrality, the FBC was a political tool for the colonial government. For instance, Franklin pointed out in his self-contradictory and ironic 1949 talk that 'The FBC rule is 'no propaganda' and *this is applied strictly to the African service*. There is no slanting of news, which is exactly the same as the news broadcasts on the English service'.¹⁴⁴ Yet the bulk of his statements in his speech complement studies by scholars like Burns, Julie Frederikse and Dumisani Moyo that illustrate that Rhodesian broadcasting to Africans (and also to Europeans), much like the whole concept of 'native welfare', was established and run primarily to control independent thought.¹⁴⁵ The need to exercise such control became obsessive in the second half of the century against the backdrop of increasing urban African unrest. In 1956, for example, the Salisbury Municipality noted that,

Special broadcasts for African listeners from the Salisbury studios in the early mornings and early evenings were introduced for a period during the year following the disturbance which occurred in the Harari Township on 17th September 1956, and the short-lived strike of African Railway workers which took place the following week. Official bulletins were prepared by the Information Staff of the Government Native Affairs Department for broadcasting in English and the vernacular in which news was disseminated, concerning the progress of events as these occurred. In this way, direct contact in their homes was made not only with the owners of radios but the broadcasts were also picked

¹⁴³ Friday Mbirimi, Interview, 10 November 2006, Harare, 4.

¹⁴⁴ H. Franklin, 'Development of Broadcasting', 14. Emphasis mine.

¹⁴⁵ J. M. Burns, *Flickering Shadows*; Julie Frederikse, *None But Ourselves: Masses vs. Media in the Making of Zimbabwe*, Oral Traditions Association of Zimbabwe with Anvil Press, Harare, 1982; Dumisani Moyo, 'From Rhodesia to Zimbabwe: Change without Change? Broadcasting Policy Reform and Political Control', in *Media, Public Discourse and Political Contestation in Zimbabwe*, *African Current Affairs* 27, ed. H. Melber (Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet), 2004.

by the Welfare Staff in Harari Township and relayed to the populace through the council's PA system. This proved to be a very useful means of disseminating authentic information to the residents of the African townships.¹⁴⁶

But, as shall be illustrated throughout this dissertation, Africans were not mere victims or pawns in a game where the colonial state was both a competitor and referee. They acted both within and from outside the margins of these institutions to subvert colonial agendas and advance their own interests. An immediate example of this was how African radio presenters deployed their indigenous languages to convey subversive messages. As the Salisbury Municipality's remarks on its strategy to provide live broadcasts during the 1956 demonstrations in Harare illustrate, the colonial authorities were distressed by this potential for subversion:

One reservation must be made, however, which concerns the employment of independent African personalities to broadcast on matters in which they themselves are implicated. Strict monitoring by well qualified linguists should be ensured in such cases, for those who are not familiar with local African languages must realize that by employing extra-normal cadence and inflections in tone of voice, it is possible to produce in these languages a species of innuendo through which, while it has the appearance on paper of being perfectly harmless, a quite different meaning and intention can be conveyed.¹⁴⁷

A daring example of this is the case of Paminasi Nyamurowa, a Rhodesia Broadcasting Corporation employee who, in the 1970s, played with the Shona word for news, *nhau*, which he read as *nhema* (lies), a stunt for which he was promptly dismissed.¹⁴⁸ At this time, as we shall see in greater detail in Chapter 4, Africans took everything broadcast on the RBC with a large pinch of salt, resorting not only to the BBC and the Voice of Zimbabwe broadcasting from exile, but also to songs and word of mouth passed on at political meetings and 'tea parties'.¹⁴⁹ The important point here is that African employees

¹⁴⁶ Native Administration Annual Reports, Salisbury, 1st July 1956 - 30th June 1957.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁸ Cornelius Chifunyise, Interview, Harare, 4 July 2000; Cain Chikosha, Interview, 4 July 2000, Harare.

¹⁴⁹ Friday Mbirimi, Interview, 2. Mbirimi remembers going to a friend's home in Harare because the latter's parents owned a big radio that could tune into BBC and the Voice of America, broadcasting jazz music and less biased news than the RBC provided. For a

in colonial institutions did not, as a matter of course, necessarily collaborate to oppress their African counterparts, or become 'quislings', as Maurice Nyagumbo designated such people.¹⁵⁰ As Chapter 4 shall demonstrate, such individuals were often critical conduits for exploiting the crevices within these institutions to crack the shells of the colonial behemoth.

Yet, African passive resistance to overarching state control or their quest for cultural independence had always been an intrinsic aspect of 'location' life, be it in their musical life, boxing or the brewing, trading and consumption of alcohol as culturo-economic activities. The state's efforts to cleanse African leisure activities off the contestable streets, backyards and open spaces and focus them onto sanctioned spaces like community halls and beer halls, as we have seen above, was not an easy task. While it managed to redirect most middle class and 'traditional' performances into the halls and stadia, its efforts often baulked against popular forms of entertainment which centred on illicit alcohol brewing and consumption and music performance. One metaphor for such cultural resistance is August Musarurwa's 1940s song, 'Skokiaan', which has continued to redefine Southern Africa's musical idiom.¹⁵¹

'Skokiaan': Subaltern Defiance and Self-Narration

At the outset of my interviews with Kenneth Mattaka, I played him the Soweto String Quartet cover version of 'Skokiaan' and asked him whether he knew the song.¹⁵² He told me he did, but hastened to add that he did not meet the late Musarurwa, his contemporary:

thorough analysis of how Zimbabweans countered Rhodesian propaganda during the liberation war era, see Julie Frederikse, *None But Ourselves*.

¹⁵⁰ Maurice Nyagumbo, *With the People: An Autobiography from the Zimbabwe Struggle*, (London: Allison and Busby, 1980).

¹⁵¹ The song was adopted and re-rendered with lyrics by American musicians like Louis Armstrong after Musarurwa's original recoding with Gallo in 1949. As we shall see in Chapter 3, the lyrics gave the song an entirely new meaning that is significant in analyses of globalized, cross-cultural musical transactions.

¹⁵² Soweto String Quartet, 'Skokiaan', *Our World*, BMG, 2004.

I didn't interact with many of those guys ... I just knew them as people who played their saxophones, and that song did not augur well with me. It was played at tea parties ... where no tea was drunk. Instead, they brewed beer, and that was done in the bush. So those songs weren't played in the halls.¹⁵³

Mattaka's observation that 'Skokiaan' was not played in the halls seems an overstatement premised on the reified class distinctions amongst African communities in mid-20th century Southern Rhodesia. This is because the song's underclass social context belied its syncretic nature and general popularity. It is important, nonetheless, to analyze some of the pertinent points that Mattaka raised, namely, that 'Skokiaan' was a favourite amongst people who mimicked 'tea parties' while they were, in effect, drinking beer sometimes in inordinate places and that members of the middle class generally deemed such activities, including the music, beneath their dignity. Implicit in Mattaka's statement is an assertion that 'real tea parties' were those held by mission-educated elites, 'High Society' gatherings 'where only non-alcoholic beverages were drunk ... in many ways the antithesis of the Pioneer Street phenomenon [illicit beer brewing and consumption]', as R. Parry put it.¹⁵⁴ As *Parade* explained, 'Only those people whose monthly or weekly incomes are above the African average salary' belonged to the 'High Society' and were therefore invited to the 'real tea parties'.¹⁵⁵ Moreover, such individuals despised musical genres like *tsaba tsaba* or *masaka*, listening instead to 'high classical music and some church hymns', markers of their 'respectability'.¹⁵⁶ Mattaka's and Parry's images of the bush and the compounds [Pioneer Street], respectively, privilege the most visible and most damnable aspects of a culture that, even within the modernist frames, had a more modest variant amongst the lower classes; some of their own 'tea parties' were organized under the guise of birthday parties and conducted in a less boisterous fashion, in the townships. They were organized by one or a small number of householders who hosted a feast, selling food and drinks to invited guests. Invitation cards were sent out to screen

¹⁵³ Kenneth Mattaka, Interview 1, 1.

¹⁵⁴ R. Parry, 'Culture, Organization and Class: the African Experience in Salisbury, 1892-1935', in *Sites of Struggle: Essays in Zimbabwean Urban History*, ed. B. Raftopoulos and T. Yoshikuni (Harare: Weaver Press, 1999), 58.

¹⁵⁵ 'The Party Spirit', *Parade*, 15-16. 'High Society' depicted the African middle class accretions which were taking shape after the Second World War era.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

out possible police informers. As at all 'tea parties', music was played, with bets placed challenging patrons' dancing skills. But the key attraction at these underclass 'tea parties' was *chikokiyana* (Shona) or *skokiaan* (Ndebele), a prohibited brew which, together with illicitly obtained 'European beer', was served from tea pots. Like *shebeens*, 'tea parties' were primarily women's business, driven by the desire to make quick money – which was, 'in [part], the reason why *chikokiyana* was brewed fast and consumed fast'.¹⁵⁷ With this money, the women supplemented their meager family incomes, educated their children and started small businesses – destabilizing colonial notions of legality and illegality and definitions of employment.

As we shall see in the next chapter, Mattaka's statement betrays the acute elite resentment of underclass subversion of an institution that was 'normally' organized 'under the auspices of a white controlled body (often the Wesleyan Church), reflect[ing] the search by members of black settlers [and later aspiring middle classes generally] for respectability [and] acceptance into the colonial ruling order'.¹⁵⁸ The underclasses also appropriated and, more significantly, de-centred this institution so that it ceased to be 'essentially a colonial phenomenon (that) [unproblematically] reaffirmed the values of the administrators and missionaries', as it acquired and produced new cultural meanings.¹⁵⁹ The condemnation of underclass 'tea parties' represents an intense struggle over a culture that, as Nathaniel Chimhete aptly observes, 'for the poor majority ... became one of the many institutions through which urban Africans tried to shape their own sociability and determine how they spent their leisure time' independently of state patronage.¹⁶⁰ Underclass 'tea parties' also represented African subversion and reformulation of spatial identities, marking poorer sections of the 'locations' and urban fringes as liminal zones crucial for cultural struggles. As N. Mtisi, echoing Mattaka,

¹⁵⁷ Julia Moyo, Mutyambizi Interview, 4.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*; See also Terence Ranger, *The African Voice in Southern Rhodesia, 1898-1930*, Heinemann, London, 1970, and M. O. West, *The Rise of an African Middle Class*.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁰ N. Chimhete, 'The African Alcohol Industry in Salisbury, Southern Rhodesia, c.1945-1980 (MA Thesis, University of Zimbabwe, January 2004), 53.

pointed out, at these 'tea parties', 'everything was expected except tea'.¹⁶¹ The state and middle class Africans were variously threatened by the power of these pseudo-tea parties to appropriate, subvert and mock, hence their unrelenting condemnation and pathologization. In 1954, for instance, *Parade* depicted 'working men in Umtali [who] ... successfully fitted themselves into the Western way of life ... [earning] decency and respectability ... drinking good, clean, healthy beer made by experts' in the council beer halls,¹⁶² and contrasted them with what it described in another article a few years later as the 'sad men of Salisbury' who, live[d] a life unknown to the tourist from across the seas – brew[ing] their own concoctions ... usually that harmful liquid – SKOKIAAN – for a quick kick'.¹⁶³ These 'sad men' included the shanty-dwelling, domestic servants and shop attendants who worked in white suburbs and lived in shacks on the fringes of those suburbs, estimated by the Federal Government at 45 000, or one third of the town's population. Their dwellings were 'unauthorized, crowded and unsanitary [lacking] schools, hospitals, or [even] bare entertainment'.¹⁶⁴ To entertain themselves, they congregated in open spaces in huge numbers, drinking *skokiaan* and hawking sex in a carnivalized version of the indoor 'tea parties'.¹⁶⁵

By the 1950s, these gatherings had become popularly known as 'mahobo parties', perhaps a literal pointer to the size of the crowds, sometimes swelling up to 2 000, who spent whole weekends and sometimes almost the entire week drinking and dancing to music, defying the police liquor section's armoured vehicles, tear gas and dogs.¹⁶⁶ Metaphorically, however, *mahobo* also came to refer to the feminine bodily curves and

¹⁶¹ Quoted in J. Plastow, *African Theatre and Politics: the Evolution of Theatre in Ethiopia, Tanzania and Zimbabwe: A Comparative Study*, (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1996), 75.

¹⁶² 'Good Beer is Plenty and the Skokiaan Den is Empty', *Parade*, May 1954, 16-17;

¹⁶³ 'The Sad Men of Salisbury's Shantytowns', *Parade*, March 1961, 40-43. Clearly, the writer of this article was oblivious to the stirring imaginations of *skokiaan* by cultural tourists overseas, as we shall see in the next chapter.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 40.

¹⁶⁵ *Parade* noted that public protests led by right-wing white segregationist Europeans prevented the government from building decent 'villages' (or townships) close to the white suburbs for these workers.

¹⁶⁶ E.S. Gargett, 'Welfare Services in an African Urban Area, Bulawayo' (PhD Thesis, University of London, 1971), 48.

humps that rewrote what Maurice Vambe calls the ‘cultural semiotics’ of the colonial political economy.¹⁶⁷ Music drove these gatherings. As Sithole noted, organizers often ‘invited *omasiganda* [one-man guitar] musicians like John White to play for patrons who loved to dance those kinds of dances reminiscent of sexual courtship’.¹⁶⁸ In fact, as Maurice Vambe argues, ‘At the *mahobo* gatherings, women and men co-habited freely. *Mahobo* became a carnivalesque space where colonial values of religious puritanicalism were effectively mocked’.¹⁶⁹ A typical *mahobo* dance was vividly captured by *Parade* as consisting of ‘hot rock ‘n rolling to the music of the radiogram or gramophone, and there is a lot of *Kwela* jive to the music of the pennywhistle ... pairs jive and rock ‘n roll until dust almost completely envelopes them’.¹⁷⁰ Sexual license is not only implied; together with *chikokiyana* and music, it formed a third pillar of these gatherings. In fact, Lawrence Vambe explains that the name *Mahobo* stuck after someone had composed a hit song called ‘Aya Mahobo’:

<i>Aya, Aya, Mahobo</i>	Here, here they are, big breasts and buttocks
<i>Aya, Aya, Mahobo</i>	Here, here they are, big breasts and buttocks
<i>Andakakuchengetera</i>	That await you
<i>Kushure Mahobo</i>	On my behind are big buttocks
<i>Kumberi gaba rehuchi</i>	On my front is a tin full of honey [vagina]
<i>Aya, Aya, Mahobo</i>	Here, here they are, big breasts and buttocks. ¹⁷¹

This song struck the popular imagination in the mostly male-dominated ‘locations’ and compounds by its powerful, ‘degraded and degrading language of the lower abdomen’.¹⁷² Maurice Vambe notes that Marechera adapted the song in his novel, *The House of Hunger* as ‘Shure Kwehure Kunotambatamba’ (The Buttocks of a Whore Shakes) as an

¹⁶⁷ Maurice Taonezvi Vambe, ‘“Aya Mahobo”: Migrant Labour and the Cultural Semiotics of Harare (Mbare) African Township, 1930-1970’, *African Identities* 5:3 (2007).

¹⁶⁸ Abel Sithole, Interview, 10.

¹⁶⁹ M.T. Vambe, ‘“Aya Mahobo”’, 364.

¹⁷⁰ ‘The Party Spirit’, *Parade*, 16.

¹⁷¹ L. Vambe, *From Rhodesia to Zimbabwe* (London: Heinemann, 1976), 214.

¹⁷² M.T. Vambe, ‘“Aya Mahobo”’, 364.

index of the depraved conditions of African life in the 'locations'.¹⁷³ Like Dorothy Masuku's 'patha patha' – discussed in the next chapter – this was a women's song associated with 'hired girls' whom organizers featured as dancing and sexual partners.¹⁷⁴ The women pointed at their breasts, buttocks and vaginas as they sang this song.¹⁷⁵ To evade arrest, the parties were held on the urban fringes, extending into the public arena the more private and intimate concubinage liaisons, *mapoto*, an outgrowth of the gender imbalances of colonial labour and urbanization policies.¹⁷⁶ Thus, through these musical and corporeal performances, African women boldly defied middle class, 'traditional' African sensibilities and colonial criminalization to inflect a strong gender dynamic into both the private and the public realms of colonial urbanity.

Another, perhaps the most popular, song that similarly mapped colonial urbanity as liminal space was Musarurwa's 'Skokiaan', named after the 'demon drink' that drove those gatherings.¹⁷⁷ The egregious *chikokiyana*-drinking 'jaunts' and licentious socializing, as *Parade* labeled them, were also notorious for the fights during which men 'often [got] killed'.¹⁷⁸ Such fights were mostly spontaneous brawls – an inevitable consequence and manifestation of *skoky*'s kick, but at other times they were organized boxing matches. As we have seen, it was in this context of egregious entertainment that, much against their will and after much squabbling with the central government, the municipalities were compelled to build recreational centres as a way of both introducing their notions of order and discipline in the 'locations' and, in the process, effectively operationalizing the quasi-apartheid, 'separate development' urbanization policy.¹⁷⁹ Recreational centres were instruments of 'crowd' ordering and control.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁴ R. R. Wilcott, A Venereal Diseases Survey of the Africans in Southern Rhodesia, 1949, quoted in N. Chimhete, 'African Alcohol Industry', 56.

¹⁷⁵ M.T. Vambe, "Aya Mahobo", 214.

¹⁷⁶ E. Schmidt, *Peasants, Traders, and Wives: Shona Women in the History of Zimbabwe, 1870–1939* (London: James Currey, 1992), 93.

¹⁷⁷ Bill Saidi, pers. comm., 6 September 2007.

¹⁷⁸ 'The Sad Men of Salisbury', *Parade*, 41.

¹⁷⁹ DHCS, C/27/MB/1, Mai Musodzi Community Centre.

The municipalities sought to bring not simply *morari* (morale)¹⁸⁰ (as Kembo Ncube conceptualized urban entertainment) through these delimited spaces, but, more importantly, they intended to nurture orderly and disciplining *morari* to keep its armies of African workers engaged along what it considered ‘healthy lines’. Yet, as we have already seen, the establishment of these facilities did not imply a simple triumph of this ‘grand plan’. Many people, mainly the working classes, disliked municipal superintendence over their activities and having to pay to use the spaces. Others brought in aspects of their cultural activities to the new spaces in virtually unaltered form, considerably undermining some of the system’s ideals. Reporting a typical boxing scene in Harare, *Parade* described Africans’ capacity to define their own rules of the game:

Boxing here is unorthodox ... spectators expect not skill and good points but hard blows ... and, of course, plenty of dripping blood. Spectators are mostly domestic workers who want plenty of excitement during off hours and talk about it for the rest of the day.¹⁸¹

What must have seemed even more ominous was the use of ‘magic’ in such activities. Ncube, himself as a musician, comedian, magician, footballer and boxer, witnessed several incidents when ‘rabbits’ mysteriously appeared at critical moments during soccer matches, interfering with the game, and, more tragically, when boxers got killed by what seemed innocuous punches at Makokoba’s Stanley Square. One such incident was the killing of ‘Two Boy’ by Sande. He narrated the scene:

He received just two blows – *ga, ga, rikiti*, and he went down, *gede, gede ...* quarter to go! A giant fell down and died, and we were sorry. He was killed right

¹⁸⁰ Kembo Ncube, Interview, 3 January 2007, Bulawayo, 2.

¹⁸¹ ‘Unorthodox Boxing’, *Parade*, June 1954, 27.

here in Stanley Square. 'Two Boy' used dangerous *huni* – *chitsinga chakaipa* [charms].¹⁸²

Mattaka was among the educated Africans who worked closely with the Social Welfare Board in the 1940s. He was the Organizing Secretary for African soccer and he also ran a boxing stable, both of which he led in inter-city tours, and he bore witness to such incidents.¹⁸³ The talismanic powers of *huni* cut through the worldview of job seekers and sportspeople. Thus, sports, entertainment, work and other everyday activities were hardly culturally discreet, and they wrestled against the disciplining function of new institutions like community halls, beer halls and officialdom. *Chikokiyana*, the bastardized home brew that represented the ultimate 'location' evil in the eyes of colonial officials, just like the music that celebrated it, can be read as a metaphor of such defiance and resistance. It is in this sense that Mattaka's low regard for Musarurwa's song, 'Skokiaan,' makes sense. The song captures the sorts of discontents that blighted what, to him, as we shall see in Chapter 3, was 'beautiful Harare'. But how accurate is his reading of the song? Was the song a flaunting of the 'debauchery' that the NAD and the Native Welfare Societies condemned and strained to control?

Musarurwa and his Bulawayo Sweet Rhythms Band colleagues, including the Mutyambizi brothers and Ncube, regarded themselves as the kings of the 'tea parties' in the 1940s-50s. Ivy Mupungu, Musarurwa's daughter, does not remember anytime when her father spent a weekend at home, as he was always playing at the 'tea parties', weddings and other social functions in Bulawayo and its rural hinterlands.¹⁸⁴ These are the social circuits that produced 'Skokiaan'. As Henry Mutyambizi pointed out, 'We used to go out into the villages like Mbembesi to drink *chikokiyana* ... We saw that our love for *chikokiyana* was so great, and we composed that song, and the patrons loved the song very much. We all shared this *chikokiyana* mentality.'¹⁸⁵ In this light, therefore,

¹⁸² Kembo Ncube, Interview, 2.

¹⁸³ Kenneth Mattaka, Interview 1, 6.

¹⁸⁴ Ivy Mupungu, Interview, 10 December 2006, Norton, 1.

¹⁸⁵ Henry Mutyambizi, Mutyambizi Interview, 3.

'Skokiaan' can be read as a celebration of this defiant neo-traditional beer party culture. But how, considering the song's silent lyrical text? It is interesting that many people claimed to understand the song's meaning(s) in spite of that apparent silence. Saidi, for example, derived his understanding from the 'mood' of the song: 'There is a part where Musarurwa's saxophone almost cries out for rescue from the devil drink that is Skokiaan'.¹⁸⁶

I was told that Kembo Ncube used to perform a version that has lyrics and when I tracked him down, he played for me a pennywhistle version. When I asked him about the lyrics, he told me that 'the words are in there; I was blowing them in there', before he did an capella rendition:

<i>Baba naamai</i>	Dear father and mother
<i>Musambonwe chikokiyana</i>	Don't ever drink <i>chikokiyana</i>
<i>Chinokupedzai mapapu</i>	It destroys your lungs
<i>Musambonwe chikoki</i>	Never drink <i>chikoki</i>
<i>Nechikoki</i>	Because of <i>chikoki</i>
<i>Nechikokiyana</i>	Because of <i>chikokiyana</i>
<i>Nechikoki</i>	Because of <i>chikoki</i>
<i>Kupera kuti pfu!</i>	All of them, gone! ¹⁸⁷

The 'Skokiaan' version with these lyrics was never recorded, and it was overshadowed by its instrumental version. Could this have been because this was a subterfuge version, a decoy to beat off official sanction? This may be a plausible explanation considering the fact that Musarurwa was himself a former policeman and a champion of this 'beloved devil'. When I asked his daughter whether her father partook of *chikokiyana*, she gave an unequivocal no: 'He never touched it'. She told me, instead, that he drank 'European beer' in defiance of colonial alcohol laws that barred Africans from consuming it,

¹⁸⁶ Bill Saidi, pers. comm., 6 September 2007.

¹⁸⁷ Kembo Ncube, Interview, 4.

enduring fines until the police just left him alone, because he was adamant that he would continue to drink it because it is beer meant to be consumed, and flagrantly drove with it in his car.¹⁸⁸ This would make sense of Ncube's lyrics, which discouraged the consumption of *chikokiyana*. However, Musarurwa's colleagues, the Mutyambizis, laughed in unison when I asked them if the man drank *chikokiyana*, describing how they 'all drank ... so much that [Musarurwa] would fail to direct his sax to his mouth! But once he did, ah, he was a gun, a bomb!'¹⁸⁹ Thus, just as the brewers of this 'beloved devil' scoffed at the police by asking them whether they had ever 'opened a black man to see if he has lungs inside',¹⁹⁰ people who would at first glance pass as abolitionists actually imbibed the drink. What we see here is a story analogous to that of the Shona dance genre, *mbende*. Because missionaries had criminalized it as immoral, its practitioners reconfigured it into an apparently less 'sexualized' version, which they called by a new, scripturally more pleasant but deceptive name, *jerusarema* (Jerusalem). Thus, as Philemon Manatsa argues, Africans were not passive witnesses to the destruction of their cultures; they proactively responded to missionary ridicule and criminalization of aspects of their traditional cultures to ensure their survival.¹⁹¹ In this sense, Skokiaan's apparent silence or sanitization might very well be equated to the transfiguration of *mbende*.

But the question remains: why did people, including Musarurwa himself, drink a brew that they knew 'ate away the hands of its brewers and lips and lungs of its consumers',¹⁹² in defiance of arrests, fines, and government propaganda films that depicted the beer as a health hazard? In part, the ostracized *chikokiyana* culture thrived as a vibrant business on the crucible of a political economy that criminalized African consumption of 'European liquor' and use of city space after dusk. Relative to the municipalities' so-called Kaffir/African Beer, *chikokiyana* was a low cost beer brewed

¹⁸⁸ Ivy Mupungu, Interview, 2.

¹⁸⁹ Henry Mutyambizi, Interview, 6.

¹⁹⁰ Yvonne Vera, *Butterfly Burning*, 60.

¹⁹¹ P. Manatsa, 'The Social Meaning of *Mhande* Dance in Traditional as well as Changing Contexts', (B. Mus. (Honours) Music Education, University of Pretoria, Tshwane, 2004), 2; Kariamu Welsh-Asante, 'The *Jerusarema* Dance of Zimbabwe', *Journal of Black Studies* 15:4 (January 1985).

¹⁹² Miriam Mlambo, Interview, 3.

and consumed in the 'comforts of home'.¹⁹³ Moreover, its potency reputedly made one *kenge* (high) at very little cost.¹⁹⁴ Henry Mutyambizi, concurred, noting that on stage:

It made one sharp, so that when you start playing, you became cleverer because of the extra energy coming from *chikokiyana*. That is why they called me Hellfire or Brimstone. I really caught fire with that stuff, and I would crack the sax! Before our shows at Stanley Hall we moved around the location playing, rehearsing. You would see women leaving their pots on the open fires outside their houses, following our vehicle as we blasted the song. That song was a magnet.¹⁹⁵

The song, like the 'tea parties' and other gatherings from which it emerged, provided a common language through which the disenfranchised 'location' and compound dwellers articulated their sense of shared belonging, social intercourse, survival strategies and alternative self-identity fashioning in otherwise alienating environments. Thus, Makokoba's kitchenless women would momentarily forget their worries about cooking in the open to rally to a familiar, shared, language – 'Skokiaan'. This is the popularity that the ostracism of the culture tended to deny the song in the bifurcated and morality-legislated Rhodesian cultural environment. Expressed in the modernist language of class, such Manicheism, as we shall see in Chapter 3, tended to cripple the development of indigenous African music. Walter M.B. Nhlope, Gallo's talent scout and musical journalist observed the popularity of the street creation, *tsaba tsaba* – an idiom within which 'Skokiaan' arose – and encouraged its promotion in place of the long-running imitation of American music:

Everybody spoke of Tsaba tsaba ... There were no radios to broadcast it all over; but everybody sang it. It had the spirit of Africa in it ... Regardless of torrents of scathing abuse, it swept the country ... In bioscopes we've seen Harlem dance the

¹⁹³ See Luise White's *The Comforts of Home: Prostitution in Nairobi*, on how residential space was utilized for a subaltern economy centred on prostitution.

¹⁹⁴ K. Ncube, Interview, 5.

¹⁹⁵ Henry Mutyambizi, Interview, 5.

Big Apple, the Shag, and Africa's creation, La Conga ... and these dances have not been recipients of abuse as Tsaba-Tsaba ... Europeans measure our development and progress not by our imitative powers but by originality ... A friend or not it (Tsaba) is an indispensable part of our musical culture.¹⁹⁶

Coplan sees the composition of Musarurwa's 'Skokiaan' as a fulfillment of Nhlapo's suggestion that Africans must 'polish and give to the world [their] *tsaba tsaba* and other township styles'.¹⁹⁷ While Turino correctly positions Musarurwa within the middle class because of his colonial education and training,¹⁹⁸ Musarurwa himself did not valorize those class trappings in everyday life and social consciousness. He traveled to the *chikokiyana* parties in the quintessential bourgeois symbol, the car; and the appeal of his music respected no class boundaries. As Henry Mutyambizi pointed out, 'Skokiaan' was so popular that 'everyone who had a gramophone had that record. You would hear it played at this house and the next and the next ... people loved the song'.¹⁹⁹ Miriam Mlambo made the song her signature tune for her children's radio programmes, even as she remained ambivalent about its ambiguous message so much that she would not explain it to her young audiences.²⁰⁰ Thus, the song's reception demonstrates that, while maintaining the context of its creation, it appealed to a broad spectrum of listeners by syncretically and boldly jumbling the rather sanitized class and cultural chasm that most of its author's counterparts strained to embolden.

Thus, ideologically, 'Skokiaan' retained its deeply-coded messages. Both the beer culture and the song that celebrated it represented the creation of independent spaces beyond the officially sanctioned platforms of the recreation halls, beer halls and elite 'tea parties', and served to mediate complex dialogues within African communities. For instance, Ncube acknowledged that *chikokiyana* was illegal and unhealthy, and that he

¹⁹⁶ W.M.B. Nhlape, *Bantu World*, quoted in D. Coplan, *In Township Tonight!*, 154.

¹⁹⁷ D.B. Coplan, *In Township Tonight! South Africa's Black Music and Theatre*. London: Longman, 1985, 154.

¹⁹⁸ T. Turino, *Nationalists, Cosmopolitans and Popular Music in Zimbabwe*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000, 141.

¹⁹⁹ Henry Mutyambizi, Interview, 5.

²⁰⁰ Miriam Mlambo, Interview, 3 December 2006, Harare, 2.

usually preferred ‘seven days’ (another criminalized malt beer fermented naturally over seven days) or, begrudgingly, the municipality’s so-called ‘Kaffir Beer’:

But I personally didn’t like the idea of buying that [municipal] beer and have the money used to build houses for which we again paid rents! But what could we do? We were a Y-E-S people, just like today. I’ve said it, Y-E-S! There is no way out; you are powerless. All you do is Y-E-S!²⁰¹

This discursive performance demonstrates that Ncube was by no means a hapless dupe of the colonial system, in James Scott’s weapons-of-the-weak formulation, if his boycotting of this quintessential symbol of colonial underdevelopment is any measure.²⁰² Similarly, African members of the Federation of African Welfare Societies – usually despised as a lapdog of colonial hegemony²⁰³ – also campaigned against the logic behind building beer halls ahead of houses and other amenities in the African ‘locations’ as immoral in a way that foreshadowed physical attacks on such structures by the Salisbury Youth Leaguers from the 1950s.²⁰⁴ Their argument was that by patronizing these beer halls, Africans were sponsoring their own subjugation and disenfranchisement. This is a critical point that captures a deep consciousness in people who are often branded as powerless victims or collaborators in their own oppression. Africans correctly understood the state’s major bone of contention with home brews like *chikokiyana* as primarily economic. Their illicit brewing undermined the state’s monopoly on alcohol – its sole source of funds for African sports, recreational and other facilities. As the contests over this defiant leisure culture demonstrate, Africans defined colonial cities as terrains of struggle, creating powerful moral discourses through alternative institutions and performance media to

²⁰¹ K. Ncube, Interview, 5.

²⁰² J. C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985

²⁰³ J. B. Mnyanda, Secretary of the Matabeleland Native Welfare Society, *Native Mirror*, October 1934, 25.

²⁰⁴ NAZ, S/FE 21, Federation of African Welfare Societies of Southern Rhodesia, 11 December 1943; and also T. Matshakayile-Ndlovu, ‘The Role of Folktale in Ndebele Literature: the Case for *Inhlamvu Zasengodlweni*’, *Zambezia* XX1:1, (1994):5.

contest the state's legitimacy and authority over their lives. This is the sense in which Sithole understands 'Skokiaan':

'Skokiaan' was political; it talked about the suffering of Africans – to the extent of drinking *chikokiyana* and living on their feet – always pursued by police on horseback. That was because they were an impoverished people who were also not allowed to drink 'European beer'.²⁰⁵

In this light, therefore, 'Skokiaan' can be read as a discursive contestation of discordant modernity and social engineering through the lens of pleasure and leisure. This is a more complex reading that rejects its American misreading and misrepresentation as mere bawdy merry-making (see Chapter 3). Also, as we have seen in the case of radio, Africans often subverted some of the colonial state's instruments of control for their own purposes. In the case of 'Skokiaan', they appropriated 'tea party' culture as a powerful cultural institution and infused it with their own meanings for independent expression and self-fashioning beyond the confining recreation halls.

Summary

Overall, Rhodesia's gamut of legal and extra-legal control mechanisms, spawned by the 'Native Social Welfare' ideological hegemon, failed to entirely control African self-expression, creative resistance and the imagination of cultural and political alternatives. Many chose their own physical and cultural leisure spaces beyond the colonially sanctioned margins. We shall discuss in greater detail, in the next chapter, why others, particularly those who had passed through the schooling system, chose to 'hear a different drum' other than the 'tribal' one championed by the colonial state and its anthropologist-associates. Many distrusted a colonial modernity that seemed keen on consigning and fossilizing them into a vaunted 'tribal', primitive 'Other' and thus

²⁰⁵ A. Sithole, Interview, 10.

appropriated 'western' music for its cultural symbolism. Moreover, as Chapter 4 shall show, even the 'neo-traditional' songs and dances the state sponsored in the name of 'strengthening the tribal system' began to give it nightmares as such activities were increasingly 'turning political' in the 1960s-70s.

Chapter 3 Performing and Contesting Modernity: Zimbabwean Urban Musicians and Cultural Self-Constructions, 1930s-70s

European colonial modernity justified the despoliation of Africans on the basis of cultural difference – that they were illiterate, pre-capitalist and ‘heathens’. Africans responded in many ways, including ignoring, resisting or selectively appropriating this colonizing discourse. This chapter analyzes how urban Africans appropriated western cultural capital, especially music, to refashion alternative identities for themselves and claim their own space in colonial Zimbabwe since the 1930s. As eager scholars in the few available mission schools, many Africans learned not only to read and write, but also to sing classical western hymns that constituted a crucial cultural symbolique of western modernity. A crucial point here is that the penetration of such music into Zimbabwe was not random; it systematically entered the African world largely through mission schools and churches where students and converts encountered it as a significant component of cultural modernity. The students graduated as teacher-musicians and became deeply entrenched in the world of not only education, but also commerce and Christianity – three key pillars of western modernity. Thus, their mediation of western ‘civilization’ produced a rich dialogue of self-fashioning that tended to both problematically reaffirm, and simultaneously disrupt, the *raison d’être* of the colonizing discourse.

In a recent paper, Carol Muller employs Dipesh Chakrabarty’s idea of the two histories of economic capital to analyze the dispersion of American music to post-Second World War South Africa, positing History One as ‘the universalizing narrative of the production, circulation and distribution of American music’.¹ Her History Two remains ‘a category charged with the function of constantly interrupting the totalizing thrusts of History One’² in an often interactive, non-dialectical fashion. She argues that this music is conceived by South African consumers as ‘Diasporic’ and ‘surrogate’, bearing the personal and collective histories of its American makers with whom they share similar social positions, thus enabling the music to convey feelings of intimacy, immediacy and

¹ C. B. Muller, ‘American Musical Surrogacy: A View from Post-World War 11 South Africa’, *Safundi* 7:3 (2006):3.

² *Ibid.*; D. Chakrabarty, Chakrabarty, Dipesh. *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000, 68.

even personal presence in its distant destinations.³ Muller theorizes a well-trodden terrain in the larger cultural performance panorama that Paul Gilroy labels in somewhat limiting terms as ‘the Black Atlantic’.⁴ While her ideas are quite useful, I see her American music ‘Diaspora’ in South Africa as neither belated – it did not wait for the advent of the radio (during the Second World War) to be articulated – nor a discreet, American-South African soundscape. My study of popular music performance in colonial urban Zimbabwe shows that such musical exchanges were not only wider and larger than implied by this America – South Africa axis, but it also pre-dated the 20th century; South Africa was part of a larger, highly interactive and creative Southern African cultural commonwealth, and not a closed market for unidirectional American musical imports.

The 1930s cataclysmic African urbanization epoch heightened these regional interconnections, with South Africa becoming a crucial refractory lens for wider cultural transactions beyond the continent. Recognizing these interconnections directs our attention to the idea of ‘transactions’, whose epistemological value remains somewhat stunted by the impression of the ‘Black Atlantic’ as a unidirectional channel for the export of American music. To appreciate fully the cultural meanings of these interactions, we need to consider the broader, reciprocal musical networks that tied together such urban performance spaces as Harare (Mbare) and Makokoba in Southern Rhodesia, the Northern Rhodesian Copperbelt towns and South Africa’s Sophiatown into a cultural continuum with connections beyond the continent. Also not to be overlooked is the ‘postcolonial’ context of these cultural transactions which were shaped by African anxiety about the future in the aftermath of colonial conquest. It was thus that condition that principally shaped their political consciousness. Nonetheless, in their search for alternative futures, Africans did not necessarily limit themselves to the ‘Black’ of the

³ C.B. Muller, ‘American Musical Surrogacy’, 2-3.

⁴ P. Gilroy, *Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993. Rob Nixon’s *Homelands, Harlem and Hollywood: South African Culture and the World Beyond*, Routledge, New York, 1994, is one example of an application of this theory to the African leg of the Atlantic. See Paul Zeleza, ‘Banishing the Silences: Towards the Globalization of African History’, http://www.codesria.org/Links/conferences/general_assembly11/papers/zeleza.pdf, (accessed 27 August 2007), on the Black Atlantic’s privileging of the Anglophone, American and Atlantic Diasporic branch of the African experience over all else.

Atlantic; they also engaged with generally 'western' cultural capital and technology to re-fashion themselves and, on that basis, lay their claims for inclusion into a colonial modernity that insisted on treating them as 'not yet' modern.⁵ Many western educated Africans struggled to perform modernity in order to 'prove' their worth and capacity for advancement, while others contested the ethnocentric aspects of western modernity, producing important subcultural discourses of alternative self-fashioning in doing so. These endeavours would be greatly served by the 'progressive' *African Parade* magazine, launched in 1953 to project the Federation's idea of Africans benefiting from racial partnership. In its maiden issue, the publication pronounced its full support for '[the African's] choice to graft himself into the western political, economic and social system'. In the publication, 'the progressive African' had the 'fullest opportunity to express himself in every way'.⁶ Its staple themes, therefore, included Africans' 'modern' musical performances, organized sports and quest for education. But media like the *Parade* and the radio only helped to advance a cultural imagination that had long been gathering steam.

The Mission School as a Cultural Village

Significantly, while reminiscing how she first came into contact with foreign music as a student at Nyadiri Mission (now Nyadire Teachers' College) in the 1930s, Miriam Mlambo 'vividly remember[s] that there was no radio those days'.⁷ That did not limit her conceptualization of the music that was imported on acetate records and played on the gramophone. Moreover, as active listeners and creators, youngsters like Kenneth Mattaka and Abel Sithole also bought the accompanying musical scores for their own practice. Demonstrating the refractory function of South Africa in this cultural commonwealth is the fact that these students not only encountered American and 'western' secular music at the missions, but were also taught Zulu and Xhosa chorals and Christian hymns there by

⁵ D. Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe*, 8.

⁶ 'The African's Rapid Progress', *The African Parade*, November 1953, 1. Successively calling itself *Parade and Photo Action*, *African Parade* and later just *The Parade*, the magazine presented itself as non-political. It folded in the politically-poisoned media environment in post-2000 Zimbabwe.

⁷ Miriam Mlambo, Interview, 1. Mlambo became one of the pioneer female radio announcers in the 1960s, and remains on the job in her ripe age.

highly educated South African teachers – people they often related to very intimately. More importantly, much of the music they learned resonated with their own lived experiences in early colonial Zimbabwe, articulating and contextualizing pertinent issues, like the burning desire for education among black people, as both historical and global concerns. Their embrace of certain imported musical genres like jazz, rock ‘n roll and madrigals also reflected the prevailing, transplanted ‘modernist’ attitudes, styles, aspirations and struggles at the local level. In their ‘desires to be modern’,⁸ the musicians drew inspiration from the apparent success and sophistication of African-American lifestyles, printed orchestrations, recordings and films, and struggled to shed traces of ethnic parochialism, traditionalism and ruralism that they saw as contrary to the modernity to which they aspired. They also strove for western high fashions in their dress and adopted western organizational forms. For instance, like many burial societies, sporting and other social clubs, bands like the 24-member De Black Evening Follies of Harare drew up constitutions to regulate issues of corporate governance, such as types of membership (full or honorary) and members’ rights and obligations.⁹ At the same time, their own compositions, imaginations and travels increasingly fed into the transnational musical dialogue in ways that both disrupted the universalizing tendencies of western music and emphasized music’s power to fashion and contest ascribed identities.

The conquest of African societies was rationalized in a wide-ranging discourse of western civilization, centering on a sense of mission to the conquered. European missionary backing of the use of brute force to break African political and cultural resistance to colonization at the turn of the 20th century should be seen in this light. Military conquest enabled them to expand their presence. Mission centres functioned not only as evangelizing sites, but also as Christian villages counteracting the African village as a cultural institution.¹⁰ After years of African resistance, missionaries celebrated the

⁸ D. Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe*, 36.

⁹ ‘The Story of De (Pitch) Black Evening Follies’, *Parade*, November 1953, 4.

¹⁰ The literature on the missionary enterprise in Zimbabwe illustrates how difficult it was for missionaries to convince unconquered Africans to convert from their religious worldviews to Christianity, the centerpiece of what it meant to be ‘civilized’. Thus, exasperated missionaries supported and justified military force as the only ‘road to Christian civilization’, as the London Missionary Society priest, David Carnegie, put it in 1893, quoted by C. J. M. Zvobgo, *A History of Christian Missions, 1890-1939* (Gweru:

eventual trickling of Africans into the missions as a triumph of Christian civilization over 'heathenism'. Beyond conquest, one of the methods missionaries employed to steal the hearts and minds of the colonized was the provision of education, 'the handmaiden to Christianity ... [which] enabled converts to independently read the bible and other religious literature'.¹¹ But to Africans, Western education was one crucial tool that inadvertently equipped them to challenge their marginality in the new social dispensation. Africans who graduated from these institutions – vilified as 'mission boys'¹² by a settler establishment opposed to African education – became central players in the new power dynamics that colonialism entailed. An important part of that negotiation was cultural; in the aftermath of their military defeat, Africans sought to come to terms with the socio-cultural constructions of the new order and to fashion their own self-understandings and self-representations accordingly.

Presented in two sections, this chapter builds on the growing scholarly research on African cultural responses to colonialism, demonstrating how these educated pathfinders used music to narrate responses, self-understandings, outlooks and aspirations as a colonized people in an age that characterized Africans as successfully 'pacified'. The first section primarily explores the life experiences of three African musicians – Kenneth Mattaka; his wife, Lina; and Abel Sinamesi Sithole, all of whom utilized their mission experiences to position themselves as significant cultural agents in colonial Zimbabwe's emergent urban popular musical scene since the 1930s. It would be uncritical to simply dismiss these individuals as 'mimic men and women', as L.B. Lukhero does, on account of the western culture that they seemed to enthusiastically embrace.¹³ Jean-Francois Bayart has compellingly argued that this performance of modernity in the moment of the colonial encounter 'was one of the ways in which the European occupation was

Mambo Press, 1996), 9. See also D. Chanaiwa, *The Occupation of Southern Rhodesia* (Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1981) and E. A. Ayandele, *The Missionary Impact on Modern Nigeria 1842-1914: a Political and Social Analysis* (London: Longmans, 1966) on this unholy alliance between missionaries and the inchoate colonial administrations.

¹¹ M. O. West, *The Rise of an African Middle Class*, 36.

¹² *Ibid.*, 16. 'Mission girls' were fewer.

¹³ M. B. Lukhero, 'The Social Characteristics of an Emergent Elite'.

legitimized'.¹⁴ I pursue the flipside of that argument here; that these individuals variously appropriated the civilizing mission discourse itself to engage the realities of their time, to (re-)discover their footing and to open up horizons of possibilities in their otherwise uncertain situations. Their stories demonstrate that by the 1930s the full-fledged mediation of foreign cultures, particularly music (American, western and also South African) was neither fortuitous nor an act driven entirely by the capitalist logic of those cultural imports. Locals appropriated them as a symbolique of, and a tool to narrow the margins of, a contradictory modernity – 'civilization', differently evoked to justify their disenfranchisement as colonial subjects.

I have selected these individuals as roughly representative: Kenneth Mattaka represents the first tier of Africans who seized on the Christian hymns, European and American music and musical styles funneled through mission schools, imported sheet music, and the gramophone and, later on, the radio, as tools to articulate the many issues that characterized changing African realities and desires. As cultural deacons, this first tier helped to propagate the 'modernizing' influence of the mission school beyond its gates in often uncritical ways. Thus, Sithole was able to steep himself in the mission culture via his two brothers, who were enrolled in the teacher-training programme at Mt. Selinda in Chirinda. Like the other 'Who is Who' legion of Zimbabwean musicians before the 1960s, Sithole greatly benefited from the fatherly and 'professorial' role of Kenneth Mattaka. A pastor's daughter, Lina Mattaka personifies the few African female musicians who strived to attain status and express themselves through both education and fortuitous connections with people who were better placed than themselves. But the flip side of this polite womanhood was a more complex terrain of women like Dorothy Masuku, who both capitalized on and defied the Victorian and traditional African gender conventions under which they were brought up to boldly venture into the perilous but often rewarding world of music. Together with August Musarurwa, Masuku also represents a different thread of cultural mediators who refracted the western cultural symbolique through their syncretic underclass musical wellsprings, thus destabilizing a narrowly-defined colonial modernity their precursors (like Mattaka) had hardly

¹⁴ Jean-Francois Bayart, *The Illusion of Cultural Identity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 216.

questioned. A common tie for the 1930s-1960s Zimbabwean musical community is that they were a very intricately connected network of entertainers who learned from, shared with and taught each other their craft over their lifetimes, marking a classifiably distinct, if loose, 'township' era in the history of Zimbabwean music.¹⁵ Their individual and collective endeavours to sing, dance, teach each other and to use music to promote ideas about education and 'self-help' not only gave voice to pertinent issues about African life in the dunghills of colonial modernity – the 'locations' – but also represented Africans' capability to 'create cracks within which to live'. Put another way, the power of music to champion social causes helped Africans to (re)constitute families and to establish viable communities on the difficult urban terrain.

The Family Idiom: (Re)constituting Communities

Kenneth Mattaka was born in colonial Malawi in 1915, 'a short period from 1890',¹⁶ as he put it, did some primary schooling at village schools and as a boarder at the Church of Scotland Mission, then migrated with his family to colonial Zimbabwe in the early-1920s. In Southern Rhodesia, young Mattaka enrolled into St. Paul Musami School in Murehwa, about 50 km southeast of Salisbury, then moved to the newly opened Domboshawa Government School,¹⁷ which offered literary, in addition to the characteristic industrial, instruction.¹⁸ While he had been taught by an all-white missionary faculty at the boarding mission in Nyasaland, the cast took an inspiring turn for Mattaka; most of his Domboshawa teachers were highly qualified Blacks from South Africa, who held BAs and MAs. It was under the instruction of these teachers that he honed his literacy and musical skills, reading scripture and singing English and Zulu songs, mainly choral ballads, church hymns and 'Negro Spirituals' during the school term.¹⁹ He also featured in the school choir that performed during prize-giving and term

¹⁵ J. Jenje-Makwenda, *Zimbabwe Township Music* (Harare, 2005).

¹⁶ K. and L. Mattaka, Interview 2, 7 January 2007, Bulawayo, 7. The reference is to the coming of the colonial era.

¹⁷ K. and L. Mattaka, Interview 2, 1; J. Jenje-Makwenda, *Zimbabwe Township Music*, 85.

¹⁸ C. J. M. Zvobgo, *A History*, 184.

¹⁹ K. and L. Mattaka, Interview 2, 1.

closing days.²⁰ On the side, together with S. Dzviti, Pamisa, Sibitso, and E. Kawadza, Mattaka formed the Domboshawa Old Boys' Choir, performing at night and on weekends before eventually venturing into the community by the late 1920s.²¹ Most significantly, the students' mission experience was put to the test when they returned home on school holidays. There, they sang for their parents, siblings and communities 'to show ... that we are coming from school; we are changing; we are being taught. We sang at weddings ... those songs that we were taught at school'.²² Upon graduating, Mattaka's colleagues in the Domboshawa Old Boys' Choir joined the British South Africa Police (BSAP), one of the few available job options for educated Africans,²³ while he joined the *Herald* newspaper in Salisbury as a messenger/office orderly. Mattaka filled the gaps in his group with another coterie of like-minded lads, who included one Masere, Ernest Gwaze, Samuel Gatora and Elisha 'Chabata' Kasim, all graduates of Waddilove Institute,²⁴ another industrial boarding school that had opened a few years before Domboshawa, and continued as an independent performer. He toured and performed for his workmates on holidays like Christmas.

It was from these mission school training grounds that Mattaka and friends launched themselves as 'the first professional entertainers' in Zimbabwe in the mid-1930s, accepting a new name, Expensive Bantus, courtesy of their Mhangura fans who deemed their act 'expensive'. On the surface, the name derived from the shilling that they charged, but it metaphorically justified their charge 'because we had that badge that we were coming from college ... doing tap-dancing and other gestures that matched the songs, and better organized than the many general acts'.²⁵ Rather than a taunt, the name was therefore a compliment from their fans who kept demanding that they substitute for their less appreciated co-performers on the stage.²⁶ Mattaka's group would again change

²⁰ K. and L. Mattaka, Interview 1, 19 November 2006, Bulawayo, 3.

²¹ S.W. Saidi, 'The Jazz Heroes: We Shall Treasure their Efforts', *The African Parade*, May 1959, 26.

²² K. Mattaka, Interview 1, 3.

²³ G. A. Chaza, *Bhurakuwacha: the Story of a Black Policeman in Southern Rhodesia* (Harare: College Press, 1998).

²⁴ W.S. Saidi, 'The Jazz Heroes', 26.

²⁵ K. Mattaka, Interview 1, 9-10.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

their name, three times, first to Bantu Actors, then briefly to Expensive Brothers before maturing into the Mattaka Family. As we shall see shortly, each of these changes marked important moments in Mattaka's musical career and Africans' cultural self-consciousness. The identity Bantu Actors reflected, in part, a more complex repertory of stage works that included singing, drama, sketches, and 'magic' stunts like 'swallowing' razor blades, which, by the 1950s, saw them staging television films for Africans (like *Mattaka and Son* and *Mattaka Buys a Car*, propaganda films sponsored by the NAD).²⁷ While it was quickly displaced by 'Mattaka Family', the moniker 'Expensive Brothers' marked the consuming desire for modernity characteristic of the 1950s – as aptly captured by band names like the Modern African Stars. Reflecting on how this desire had become a collective consciousness, William (Bill) Saidi recalls how they 'chided [the Expensive Bantus] for the 'Bantus' and they changed their name to 'The Expensive Brothers', even though they sang songs in Shona and English'.²⁸

It was while he made his rounds with his ever-changing band cast that Mattaka met his future wife, Lina, the 'Queen of Soprano' and daughter of Northern Rhodesian-born hotel worker-turned pastor, Reverend Marumo, at Stanley Hall in Bulawayo's oldest African location, Makokoba, in 1944.²⁹ Together with Mai Musodzi and later Stodart Hall in Salisbury's main African location, Harare, Stanley Hall was opened in the mid-1930s and run by the municipality's Social Welfare Department as recreational space where Africans could spend their leisure time, performing music, watching films and engaging in various indoor sports. For women, it furnished opportunities to learn home-craft skills like sewing and cooking in preparation for their futures as respectable housewives.

Lina was born in 1922 and educated up to Standard 4 at the Wesleyan Church's Nyamandlovu and the American Methodist Episcopal School in Makokoba. But having traveled to Northern Rhodesia, she failed to raise 8 shillings return train fare in time to take up her place at Bulawayo's Tegwane Mission for post-primary education, dashing her dream of getting a higher education to qualify her for nursing school. Like many

²⁷ K. Mattaka, Interview 1, 16.

²⁸ Bill Saidi, pers. comm., 29 June 2007.

²⁹ L. Mattaka, Interview 2, 8.

other young women and men at the time, Lina then decided to work as a domestic servant in Bulawayo's white homes while tending to her younger siblings after their mother's untimely death. Blessed to be a reverend's daughter, Lina grew up singing in church and Sunday school, and she often accompanied her father on his evangelizing missions around the country and to South Africa, Northern Rhodesia and other territories in the region, opening horizons for herself as a future professional entertainer. In the late 1930s, she started working at Stanley Hall, together with Rona Mthetwa and one Sipambaniso, cooking for patrons and sewing curtains and costumes for Scout Rovers under the direction of a Mrs. Lewis. Like Mai Musodzi in Harare and the Bantu Social and Cultural Centre in Durban, Stanley Hall constituted an early nerve centre for African community life in Bulawayo, a centripetal force that drew all manner of aspiring cultural performers, sportspeople and social workers for performances. Two other women singing pioneers who moved between Stanley Hall and Mai Musodzi were Christine Dube and Julia (Juliet) Moyo. Julia sang with the Home Lillies and the Shanty City Kids in the 1940s, the latter group organized by her brothers, Henry Muchemwa and Alexander Mutizwa Mutyambizi.³⁰ Similarly, Lina and her colleagues formed their own women-only choral group, the Bantu Glee Singers, which groomed her into the 'Soprano Queen' who instantaneously stole the touring Kenneth's heart in 1944. That marriage metamorphosed the Mattakas into a family band – the Mattaka Family – but it also became a metaphor that shaped the history of the country's music for the next generation.

The Mattakas began to sing as a family – incorporating their son and piano wizard, Edison, and daughter, Bertha a few years later – and, like Reverend Thompson and Mrs. Grace Samkange (who provided shelter, tuition and guidance to multitudes of education-starved African children in Bulawayo at this time),³¹ they set up home and stood in as surrogate parents and tutors to virtually every aspiring young musician in the country who could travel to Salisbury, Gwelo and Bulawayo, where the Mattakas successively settled. For most Africans at this time, colonial towns were only a different kind of *marimuka* – wildernesses infested with all sorts of new dangers not dissimilar

³⁰ Julia Moyo (Mutyambizi), Mutyambizi Interview, 4 January 2007, Bulawayo, 16.

³¹ T. O. Ranger, *Are We Not Also Men? The Samkange Family and African Politics in Southern Rhodesia, 1920-1964* (London: Heinemann), 1995.

from those they had contended with while they hunted wild game; multitudes of young men and women who now deserted the impoverished 'native reserves' had to wrestle with the influx-control dragnet, homelessness and gratuitous urban violence to try their luck in the towns. This urban imagery has been folklorized in songs like Mbira dzeNharira's *Zvowoenda Harare* (Now that you are going to Harare) and Thomas Mapfumo's *Nyarara Mukadzi Wangu* (Don't Cry my Wife).³² It was in this context, therefore, that the Mattaka home, like the Samkange home, assumed the African clan model to provide mentorship and comfort to many young men and women who came into the city from various parts of the country. Thus, over the years, the Mattaka Family sheltered and groomed Moses 'Fancy' Mpahlo Mafusire and his colleagues, who later formed De Black Evening Follies and the Epworth Theatrical Strutters, Safirio 'Mukodata' Madzikatire, Susan Chenjerai, Dorothy Masuku and Kembo Ncube. Even though the Mattakas mostly performed Christian hymns and western classics, they encouraged youngsters pursuing other genres. That is how young Thomas Mapfumo and his Black Dots Band, 'who were so involved with these traditional things',³³ were able to:

Come to demonstrate some of their acts, dancing *Jerusarema*, etc; asking for ideas about how to organize himself as the leader. He also came (from Highfield) to stay and we toured all the Salisbury area farms with him, so that he could get ideas on how to organize. And we performed with him at the Art Gallery, in [Salisbury], when it had just opened, around 1951. We taught him how to approach people, etc, and when he was satisfied, he left and organized a new group for himself.³⁴

In a very practical way, the Mattakas (re)constituted home and family as key platforms for engaging a disruptive modernity, and helped to build careers for multitudes of youngsters. As Lina further explains:

³² Thomas Mapfumo, 'Nyarara Mukadzi Wangu', *Chimurenga Forever*, Blue Note Records, 1996; Mbira DzeNharira, 'Zvowoenda Harare', *Toita Zverudo*, Gramma Records, 2000. In the latter song, a grandfather warns his grandson about the ills of the big city, while in Mapfumo's song, a lonely wife bemoans the uncertain futures such migrations created.

³³ L. Mattaka, Interview 2, 17.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

There was no time that anybody came to Harare and did not pass through our house. We looked after many of the groups, free of charge. Those who went to form their own groups came back whenever they faced any problems, and rejoined us.³⁵

It is to this brood that Abel Sithole of the Bulawayo Golden Rhythm Crooners (now the Cool Crooners) belonged. Born in 1934, Sithole came from a typical African urban family – which could educate only some of its children. Abel was among the less fortunate of his siblings, having to vend newspapers to help his domestic servant mother put food on the table. He was fortunate, however, for having two brothers who were doing their teacher training courses at Mt. Selinda Mission. When his brothers came home on school breaks, as we saw in Mattaka's case, 'they had us sing the songs they had learned at school, as a family'.³⁶ Thus, actively socialized in the Christian school environment, Africans like Mattaka and Abel Sithole's brothers acted as lay educators of their own families and communities. This is a crucial point that helps explain the cultural context of education in early colonial Zimbabwe. Literacy was a useful compass for navigating the larger socio-political issues at the intersection of African and wider worldviews, and music was instrumental in propagating the gospel of education.

Taking the Gospel of Education to the Stage

These mission-educated musicians used the stage as a classroom-without-walls for immediate and practical purposes, demonstrating and imparting education in a very conspicuous manner to their sometimes multi-racial audiences and colleagues. As Mattaka pointed out, 'When I took that book and read and practiced it, whites saw us as capable. You would see them clapping their hands ... admiring that'.³⁷ Like his model, Griffiths Monseale, who had ironically abandoned teaching for full-time music performance,³⁸ Mattaka fully appreciated the power and significance of 'singing to the white man' for approval in a society circumscribed by racial legislation and

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 10.

³⁶ Abel Sinamesi Sithole, Interview, 3 January 2007, Bulawayo, 1.

³⁷ K. Mattaka, Interview 1, 3.

³⁸ C. Ballantine, 'Music and Emancipation: The Social Role of Black Jazz and Vaudaville in South Africa between the 1920s and the Early 1940s', *Journal of Southern African Studies* 17:1 (1991):131.

discriminatory social norms. According to Musica, a South African music columnist, Monseale's Darktown Strutters were 'the only Bantu [musical group] who filled the Durban and Maritzburg town halls with an appreciative audience of Europeans' in South Africa.³⁹ The Darktown Strutters' tour of Southern Rhodesia in 1936 deeply impacted the country's popular cultural imagination, leading the *Bantu Mirror* to opine that:

Bulawayo people, viz., Europeans, Natives and Asiatics, have been extremely fortunate of late in having had a unique visit from a troupe of almost peerless singing and actors from Johannesburg under the celebrated elocutionist Mr. G. Matsiela [sic]. They performed remarkably well at several platforms in Bulawayo ... The Bulawayo Community has, hitherto, seen nothing so pleasant and so entertaining as they saw being performed by these 'strutters'. So ... it would not be wrong to advise some of the active members of the teaching profession at Bulawayo who were privileged to see them perform, to take a cue from them and train a few boys to sing and act in the same fashion. Is such a beautiful thing not worth attempting 'Matitja-ako-Bulawayo (sic) [boys of Bulawayo]?'⁴⁰

The Darktown Strutters' Bulawayo performances were facilitated by a Mr. Bradford Mnyanda of the NAD, to whom the *Mirror* expressed gratitude. This group's influence was contagious. According to contemporary journalist and musician, Saidi, the name Bantu Actors reflected the new emphasis on stage gestures, or 'styles', especially after the tour of the country by the Darktown Strutters, whose tap-dancing moves 'Mattaka did not hesitate to mimic'.⁴¹ This homage to South Africa – a node in the longer cultural rhizome of the larger 'Black Atlantic' self-understanding – remained a constant wellspring of the country's creativity until its displacement by more nativist-rooted forms of cultural nationalism in the 1960s. Saidi recalls how deeply immersed they were in this global cultural imagination:

The most well-known singing group of our time were the Mills Brothers, [an] African-American quartet composed of brothers, although after one of them died,

³⁹ Musica, quoted by Ballantine, 'Music and Emancipation', 131.

⁴⁰ 'Dark Town Strutters visit Bulawayo', *Bantu Mirror*, March 14, 1936. Published by the NAD, the *Bantu Mirror* flaunted its supposed 'African identity' in typical knowledge colonialism of the era. In fact, most of its stories were contributed by whites who claimed to be 'experts' on African issues. Emphasis mine.

⁴¹ B. Saidi, 'The Jazz Heroes', p.26; B. Saidi, pers. comm., 6 June 2007.

the father took his place. This group made hundreds of records, including 'Paper Doll', 'Across the Alley from the Alamo', [and] 'You'll Never Miss the Water'. De Black Evening Follies sang these songs without changing anything – the language or the notes. Before that, the Bantu Actors had done the same. But the influence of South Africa's Manhattan Brothers was the most dominant on us all. They sang what they called 'jive', which we copied.⁴²

Closely watching the American scene, Zimbabwean bands copied not only the music, as already seen, but, like their more immediate South African models, they also fashioned their names accordingly – a key symbol of their place in the imagined global modernity. Thus, the Brown Darkies, Epworth Theatrical Strutters and Dark City Sisters were clearly inspired by South Africa's Darktown Strutters after 1936. Similarly, adopting the 'styles' and songs popularized by Mattaka's group, Saidi teamed up with his cousins, Faith and Reuben Dauti and their uncle, Chase Mhango. Despite the presence of Faith, their other uncle, Canisius Mhango, dubbed them the Milton Brothers, 'almost a copycat of the Mills Brothers'.⁴³ Such names, like the language in which they sang, inscribed the musicians' conception of and faith in a Euro-American modernity. Shona, Ndebele or other African names would not adequately capture this Black Atlantic modern cultural *imaginaire* because, as Saidi explained, 'We did not specialize in songs in those languages, at least initially. Only later did we do songs in the mother tongues'.⁴⁴ For many, 'later' was not until the 1960s when cultural nationalism re-inspired pride in indigenous languages and 'traditional' musical idioms.

While Mattaka believed that Africans were still 'primitive ... wearing *nhembe* [animal skins] while others did not even bath' in 1890,⁴⁵ he helped and lived to witness what he saw as, in Bhekizizwe Peterson's words, 'the evolutionary trajectory from the primitive to the modern, the oral to the written, the traditional to the progressive'.⁴⁶ He took it as the duty of people like himself, who occupied the 'intermediary spaces'

⁴² B. Saidi, pers. comm., 6 June 2007. The Manhattan Brothers' popularity was reinforced after their performance at the Rhodes Centenary Celebration in 1953 together with Dorothy Masuku.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ K. Mattaka, Interview 1, 16.

⁴⁶ B. Peterson, *Monarchs, Missionaries & African Intellectuals: African Theatre and the Unmaking of Colonial Marginality* (Asmara: Africa World Press, 2000), 11.

between these binaries to avail a broadly-defined education to their less fortunate fellows for greater redemption from the thralldom of 'ignorance'. A faithful convert, Mattaka maintains that 'it was education that opened people to change' and that 'it was in the schools that we saw vast differences between modern life and our own ways of life'.⁴⁷ Their efforts to 'bring the school to the people' were complemented by many white moderates, missionaries, self-proclaimed cultural agents and philanthropists. As Mattaka pointed out, 'Most of the whites whom we knew were very happy to see Africans developing. They gave us good support'.⁴⁸ One of these was Harare Social Welfare Officer, a Mr. Finkle, who was also the Secretary for Native Education in the 1940s – ironically one of the authors of the 'masters-and-servants education' for Africans as spelt out under the discriminatory Education Ordinance of 1899.⁴⁹ Exemplifying the operations of the hegemonic ethos of the country's Native Social Welfare ideology – the policy framework through which the state supported African entertainment⁵⁰ – Mattaka and colleagues took well-placed officials like Finkle as important friends who could potentially open doors for small concessions in a racist bureaucracy.

Mission literati like Mattaka devoted their education to the building of strong, literate African communities. As he put it, 'we came with that knowledge to also teach others,'⁵¹ like

Some uneducated youngsters who joined us in Harare and stayed with us ... Over time, no one could point out that they had not been to school. We combined everything in music. When we instructed them in reading music, the brain followed that progression of the song and became alert and intelligent. Music made them appreciate education. And they could converse with educated people. When we relaxed as a group, we talked about education – and read stories from all sorts of books ... They learned that way.⁵²

⁴⁷ K. Mattaka, Interview 1, 4.

⁴⁸ K. Mattaka, Interview 2, 3.

⁴⁹ N. Bhebe, *Simon Vengesai Muzenda and the Struggle for and Liberation of Zimbabwe* (Gweru: Mambo Press, 2004), 10-11.

⁵⁰ See Chapter 2.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 12, 13.

In this way, the musicians were able to construct orality and literature as complementary expressive forms – one helping to foster the other in a mutual process of identity self-fashioning. Such acts went beyond Benedict Anderson’s idea of imagining an abstract ‘nation’; these continuous personal contacts and tutelage through musical elaborations and literature both on stage and in a welcoming home actually gave form and soul – through ‘experiencing’, not just imagining – to the African community that these musicians desired.⁵³ Technologically savvy, Mattaka drew on his printing experience gleaned at the *Herald* to further champion literacy amongst Africans. His group acquired a typewriter and duplicator which they used to write down all their songs for the band’s practice sessions. Moreover, they produced and duplicated their own advertisement posters, pamphlets and flyers, which they distributed when they toured. In the twilight of their long entertainment career, the Mattakas’ curriculum vitae read impressively, as one poster in their memorabilia chest proclaimed:

Variety Show: by ‘Professor’ K. M. Mattaka, a professional entertainer and film actor. A member of the International Brotherhood of Magicians; assisted by his wife, a dynamic old singer, film/stage actress. Programme: tap-dancing, singing and stage comedy, educational and historical – by the backbone of the once famous Harare Bantu Actors; will swallow razors.⁵⁴

Close to retirement, Mattaka had accepted the highest titular accolade, ‘professor’, from his audiences and legion of apprentices, whom he had ‘given brighter scopes ... not only through singing, but also through typing and printing’.⁵⁵ Although she largely resided in her husband’s ‘professorial’ shadow, Lina would help everybody who came looking for assistance in her husband’s absence, even leading their coterie of apprentices on tours around the country on her own. Over the years, together with groups like De Black

⁵³ I adopt Niels Kayser Nielsen’s critical appreciation of Benedict Anderson’s idea of imagined communities, quoted by Elaine Lo, Fall 2000, which stresses performance: BenedictAnderson <http://images.google.ca/imgres?imgurl=http://www.english.emory.edu/Bahri/Anderson.gif>; Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (Verso: New York, 1983), 46. See also K. M. Askew, *Performing the Nation: Swahili Music and Cultural Politics in Tanzania* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2002), 10, for a similar view.

⁵⁴ A 1970s’ Mattaka poster in the retired musician’s collection.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 13.

Evening Follies, they dominated the entertainment charts, 'always appearing on TV as the country's best entertainers, especially at Christmas,'⁵⁶ a fact corroborated by the NAD's annual 'social welfare' reports. To quote one example at length, in 1952, the department reported that,

The two groups most worthy of mention are De Black Evening Follies and the Bantu Actors. During the year, both have given many excellent performances. As a result of arrangements made by Miss. B. Tredgold, of St. Michael's Mission, Runyararo, these parties combined to give performances for European audiences in the Cathedral Hall, *in aid of the Runyararo Nursery School*. The Black Evening Follies also took part in a film produced by Films of Africa Ltd, Gatooma. The Bantu Actors, under contract with Lever Brothers for 14 weeks, toured Southern and Northern Rhodesia. Although this was an advertising campaign from which Lever Brothers will undoubtedly derive some material benefit, the actual shows, consisting of English and African songs, a Quiz and film show – were enjoyed immensely by all who saw them. 14 shows were given in Salisbury, 10 in the Recreational Hall.⁵⁷

The promotion of literacy through music was a popular strategy amongst Africans. In fact, as the NAD's report on the Darktown Strutters' 1926 visit to Rhodesia hinted, teachers were at the forefront of this musical elaboration of 'education'. They not only conducted choirs at schools; many of them also formed or worked with popular bands in their communities. Examples of such teachers include the Chitsere School (Harare) trio of legendary footballers, John Madzima and Jonathan Chieza and 'perhaps the best pianist of the time', Samuel Mhlanga, who, as one of the many Mattaka protégés, mentored young Edison Mattaka to muster the instrument at the tender age of six.⁵⁸ A.B.C. Rusike, who taught at Bulawayo's Mzilikazi School and St. Columbus' 'Teacher' Zikhali, formed and led the Boogey Woogey Songsters and the Brown Darkies, respectively.⁵⁹ These and other teachers frequently attached themselves and their students to the Mattaka Family for tours throughout Southern Rhodesia and the region.

⁵⁶ K. Mattaka, Interview 1, 9.

⁵⁷ City of Salisbury, Annual Report of the Director of Native Administration for the Mayoral year 1st July 1951 to 30th June 1952, 6. We shall look at the use of music for commercial promotional purposes shortly.

⁵⁸ K. Mattaka, Interview 2, 12. Edison also played piano for many groups, including Sithole's Sweet Rhythm Crooners and the touring South Africans, the Theodora Sisters.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 2.

Successively fashioning themselves as the Shelton Brothers, the Crazy Kids and the Broadway Quartet, Friday Mbirimi and his colleagues (Simangaliso Tutani, William Chigoma and others) grew up listening to and imitating groups like the Waverly Brothers at Chitsere School and his father's and uncle's De Black Evening Follies from the 1950s. While his father was a policeman, Friday followed his uncle (Jonah Mbirimi) into teaching, and he would become the founder-headmaster of Epworth Mission in the 1970s.⁶⁰ This musician-teacher tradition was hailed in songs like *Kudzidza Kwakanaka* (Education is Good), a 1950s' release by the Epworth Theatrical Strutters,⁶¹ another of the groups that boasted teachers in its membership. But these are just a few illustrative examples because 'every school had a teacher or two who taught and/or performed music' in those years.⁶²

Most of these teachers, like their pupils, sang with the luminous Mattaka Family at one time or the other, and Kenneth and colleagues 'taught them music, not only because it helped them in their teaching work, but when they could do those songs, they looked brighter at their work'.⁶³ These efforts were complemented by touring artists from both South Africa and America. For instance, the South African group, Manhattan Brothers and Louis Armstrong, the American godfather of jazz, staged shows in 1954 and 1960, respectively, and donated most of the proceeds to help build Nyatsime College, an African-initiated boarding school outside Salisbury.⁶⁴ The Manhattan Brothers were led on their countrywide tour for this purpose by J. Z. Savanhu, one of the few African members of the Federal Parliament. His parliamentary colleague, Schotting Chingate, led the Gamma Sigma Club that promoted musicians and hosted Christmas parties for educated Africans. Chingate also promoted his musician-wife, Victoria, by inviting his middle class colleagues to watch her performances – which helped to dispel the stereotypical 'cheap lady' labels often attached to female entertainers. In the same spirit

⁶⁰ Friday Mbirimi, Interview, 10 November 2006, Harare, 5. Mbirimi would later become a co-Chairman of the Zimbabwe Union of Musicians after independence. Currently he sings with the Mbare Trio, and is the Registrar at the Zimbabwe College of Music in Harare.

⁶¹ J. Jenje-Makwenda, *Zimbabwe Township Music*, 104.

⁶² K. Mattaka, Interview 2, 4.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 12.

⁶⁴ A.S. Sithole, Interview, 3 January 2007, Bulawayo, 3.

of community development, Harare's City Quads built a nursery school in the 1950s.⁶⁵ De Black Evening Follies led this spirit of community development, as *Parade* noted in 1953:

In 1952, an invitation came to them from certain Europeans to stage a show in aid of St. Nicholas African Nursery School, under the Anglican Church in Harare. The entertainment was a joint effort of the Follies, the King Cole Brothers and the Modern African Stars, all of Salisbury. Since then they have given entertainments in aid of charitable institutions and sporting and other organizations throughout the Colony. Nothing succeeds [like] success. The Follies also promoted beauty contests at the main centres of the country at which youth and beauty of Mashonaland demonstrated their charms. This was in 1952. For the first time beauty contests were introduced in Southern Rhodesia and since then several have been sponsored by the same company in Salisbury, Gwelo, Bulawayo and Umtali. The most exciting competition, however, will be that in which 'Miss Southern Rhodesia' will be selected.⁶⁶

Education was thus only the most important among other self-help development endeavours musicians promoted in their efforts to help build functional communities.

For many, education represented both a crucial avenue for opening possibilities of escape from the severe limitations and hardships that colonialism saddled them with, and a canon for measuring themselves up to the new modern standards. This explains why Africans generally emphasized literary subjects and especially the English language in their fight for schools.⁶⁷ Many Africans educated in these early decades became teachers, interpreters, nurses and, in the case of Mattaka, first a messenger at the *Herald* and then a salesman with various manufacturing companies. These educated Africans constituted a small but influential class of colonial subjects with elite aspirations and strong desires for upward mobility. Education equipped them to engage colonial society as partners but also

⁶⁵ J. Jenje-Makwenda, *Zimbabwe Township Music*, 51.

⁶⁶ 'The Story of De Black Evening Follies', *Parade*, November 1953, 5.

⁶⁷ Carol Summers, 'Demanding Schools: The Umchingwe Project and African Men's Struggles for Education in Southern Rhodesia, 1928-1934' *African Studies Review* 40: 2 (1997); *From Civilization to Segregation: Social Ideals and Social Change in Southern Rhodesia, 1890-1934* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1994). For a comparative dimension in French/Belgian colonial Africa, see E. Ndura, 'Western Education and African Cultural Identity in the Great Lakes Region of Africa: A Case of Failed Globalization', *Peace and Change* 31:1 (January 2006).

as critics to varying degrees, as shall be illustrated later, while they fashioned their own destinies within the otherwise circumscribed colonial settings. The trap, however, was that colonial education and culture came steeped in Eurocentric prejudices, which, because of their intermediary roles and aspirations, many of these musicians internalized or failed to adequately interrogate. What seemed important for Mattaka, for instance, was the ability to interpret and represent the new world through musical literacy and the ability to converse in English as performance of both progress and symbolic claims on an exclusionary modernity. This is why, as Saidi wrote in 1959, Mattaka's songs centred largely on education, morals and tradition.⁶⁸ It did not tackle injustice, the essence of colonialism.

But what 'tradition' did Mattaka sing?⁶⁹ One would safely assume that this meant African tradition. However, his own reminiscences gave a clearer hint:

We took any song that when we rendered it in our own voices, people would admire us, that as people who were coming from schools, we were being taught; songs like '*Good Morning my Lady ... come over the brook, come kiss me ...*' These were songs sung at picnics when one is admiring the beauty of the world, looking at the fluttering and singing birds; and also *ngoma dzana* Caluza.⁷⁰

To reiterate, Mattaka's explanation sums up what Chakrabarty describes as 'the desire to be modern' – imagining and representing a mythologized European world through cultural symbolism. He identified the first category of songs as madrigals – Renaissance-influenced European secular chorals dating back to the 13th century;⁷¹ Mattaka and colleagues performed these in plain voice, on mouth organs and then, after the 1940s, on piano, concertina and other Western-type instruments. What he called *ngoma dzana* Caluza are songs by late 19th - early 20th century South African singers whom Loren Kruger designates as 'new Africans': R.V. Selope, Madie Hall Xuma and her husband, Dr. A.B. Xuma (the African National Congress president in the 1940s), the Dhlomo brothers, Herbert and Rolfes, and Reuben T. Caluza himself, whom Coplan

⁶⁸ W.S. Saidi, 'The Jazz Heroes', 26.

⁶⁹ I shall return to the theme of morality in later sections.

⁷⁰ K. Mattaka, Interview 2, 2.

⁷¹ [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Madrigal_\(music\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Madrigal_(music))

regarded as the most important composer of Zulu choral music.⁷² These were educated men and women who, following their African-American brothers and sisters, vigorously pursued the cultural route to 'civilization', which consisted of appropriating and parading European music as cultural capital for self-redemption in the eyes of European audiences.⁷³ These influential politico-cultural leaders composed songs clamouring for schools so that they could also reach the same levels of development as their African-American 'brothers' like Paul Robson, Florence Mills, Layton, Johnstone and other 'descendants of a race that has been under worse oppression', but, in spite of that, still rose to become models of what Black people could achieve when granted the chance.⁷⁴ This American iconography was bolstered amongst South Africans, particularly after the tour of the country by the popularly acclaimed Orpheus McAdoo's Virginia Jubilee Singers in 1890 – hailed as another epitome of Black self-redemption.⁷⁵

These were some of the ideas and songs that South African teachers imparted to their Southern Rhodesian students at the missions and urban schools, and were later reinforced through records and tours by groups like the Jubilee Singers-inspired Darktown Strutters in the 1930s. It is not surprising, therefore, that Mattaka and his colleagues adopted songs by Caluza and his contemporaries portraying themselves and their countrymen as people who were 'still living in the dark' from which they could only be redeemed through education.⁷⁶ This was certainly a very selective reading of Caluza, whose more politically caustic compositions Mattaka and colleagues steered away from. Nonetheless, this emergent, shared quest for education prompted many Zimbabweans, including would-be prominent nationalists Simon Muzenda and Joshua Nkomo, to trek

⁷² L. Kruger, 'Placing 'New Africans' in the 'Old' South Africa: Drama, Modernity and Racial Identities in Johannesburg, circa 1935', *Modernity/Modernism* 1:2 (1994): 113-131; D. B. Coplan, *In Township Tonight!*, 70.

⁷³ Ideologically, this sprang from the philosophy of African-American leaders like Booker T. Washington who aspired for white patronage in the quest for black redemption through his Tuskegee Institute, an idea that was condemned by more radical elements, both in America and elsewhere (including Mattaka's Domboshawa and Tjolutjo in Southern Rhodesia) where it was transplanted.

⁷⁴ C. Ballantine, 'Music and Emancipation', 131.

⁷⁵ V. Erlmann, 'Africa Civilized, Africa Uncivilized': Local Culture, World System and South African Music', *JSAS* 20: 2 (1994), 65.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 5; K. Mattaka, Interview 1, 2.

across the Limpopo to enroll at Adams College and Marianhill and other schools due to more limited opportunities in their own country.⁷⁷ For instance, Nkomo recalled how, as a 25-year-old truck driver in 1942, he felt dissatisfied and embarked on 'the journey to see the world': 'I wanted to qualify as a carpentry instructor ... and there was no imaginable way for a Southern Rhodesian African to get such a qualification in his own country ... I set my heart on going to Adams College in South Africa'.⁷⁸ The educational avenue to social mobility propagated by these songs had thus become common cause. However, the musicians' position as mediators who mostly took and (re)rendered pre-existing songs helped to take away their urge for both independent composition and commercial recording, which was compounded by an absence of a recording industry at the time.

But even when some record companies in South Africa began to pay royalties by the 1950s, Mattaka recorded only a few of his own compositions, and only for the radio. Explaining the rationale behind recording, Turino argues that by the 1960s, musicians recorded their works to accomplish a transformative objectification and legitimation of themselves and their songs to their followers.⁷⁹ Yet Mattaka's case cautions us against both a generic application of this capitalist truism and the possible assumption that these musicians had yet to fully grasp the logic; Zimbabwean music had appreciably started to be commercialized by the 1960s. Therefore, as Mattaka himself explains, his position was a well-calculated strategic decision with its own logic:

When we started performing, we gave ourselves a rule that 'We are live show performers, therefore, if we have our songs recorded and bought on the street, they will become common and familiar and no one will come to the shows'. So we said, 'No one will have our songs in their house; they must come to see us on stage'. For as long as we lived, we didn't want to be dispensable. People must be keen to see us, rather than say, 'Ah, I have their songs in my house, I bought their songs'. That is why we chose to be permanent live entertainers, though some people thought we could make more money [if we recorded].⁸⁰

⁷⁷ See J. Nkomo, *The Story of My Life* (London: Methuen, 1984) and N. Bhebe, *Muzenda*.

⁷⁸ J. Nkomo, *The Story of My Life*, 29.

⁷⁹ T. Turino, *Nationalists, Cosmopolitans*, 129.

⁸⁰ K. Mattaka, Interview 1, 8.

At the time, this choice widened their appeal because 'entertainment' not only captured a wide array of stage works and musical genres, but it also subsumed their advocacy dimension. Entertainment meant staying at the forefront in mediating new musical material to fans as soon as it became available on the market. As he pointed out,

Whenever we heard a beautiful song, we would sing it, following the original as much as possible, after buying the record and a copy of the sheet music (sometimes ordering it from London or elsewhere overseas), and we would fit in the gestures so that people would see that we are expressing the mood of the song: tap-dancing, moving up and down, using our hands, body posture and facial expression.⁸¹

This mediation of 'foreign' music was general, and not limited to Black musicians. For instance, calling a policy meeting with its departments in 1955, the Ministry of Internal Affairs circulated a memorandum expressing the worry that,

In this country we have inevitably brought with us the musical traditions and tastes of Western Europe and Western civilization, of which the musician has always been a recognized and essential element of society. In Rhodesia we have as it were started at the wrong end. The gramophone and later the radio were in existence before it was possible to give thought to the claims of the musician, but there is every reason to fear that the system of importing and relaying recorded music, and the paradox of music without the musician, will be perpetuated. It appears to us that so long as our Radio authority continues the policy of purchasing the recorded products of musicians living elsewhere, so long will the musical life of the community be retarded and possibly stifled.⁸²

Unconcerned with questions of 'national identity', manufacturers and retailers found the modernist mould within which the musicians cast themselves useful for the promotion of commodity consumption amongst Africans. Thus, they recruited popular artists like Kembo Ncube, De Black Evening Follies, Dorothy Masuku, August Musarurwa and Mattaka to advertise industrial commodities to Africans in the 'locations' and villages – a crusade that neatly dove-tailed with the Christian work ethic.

⁸¹ K. Mattaka, Interview 2, 2.

⁸² NAZ, LG 191/11/414, The development of Music in the Rhodesians, its significance as a social and national attribute: a plea for collaboration and cooperative action, and proposals to that end.

Christian Progress Fighting Ignorance: Harnessing Music for Commerce

Industrial goods were tangible symbols of the modernity that singers like Mattaka had long desired.⁸³ In this light, it is not surprising that in their service to commercial capital, some musicians composed some songs that denounced what they saw as ignorance afflicting Africa and other songs that extolled Christianity and commerce as liberation. In one such song, 'Maroro', Mattaka denounced belief in the power of charms as retrogressive:

<i>Ndakaenda kuMaroro</i>	I went to Maroro
<i>Kunotora muti</i>	To get a charm
<i>Muti wemaraki</i>	A lucky charm
<i>Unopa urombe</i>	Which causes bad luck
<i>Zango remuchiuno</i>	A charm in the waist
<i>Rimwe zango remuruoko</i>	Another charm on the arm

In Shona lore, Maroro is a mythical place in eastern Zimbabwe (in)famous for its charms. Mattaka mostly played this song when he was invited by missionaries and pastors to perform for parishioners, usually coupling it with another that celebrated the power of Jesus Christ's name. He denounced what he saw as Africans' belief in the power of charms, to 'save many people [who] were being conned by bogus healers in towns', and encouraged them to turn to Christianity:

<i>Ririko zita raTenzi</i>	There is the Lord's name
<i>Rakanaka kwazvo</i>	Which is a good name
<i>Rinonyaradza maKristu</i>	Which comforts Christians
<i>Rinodzinga kutya</i>	Which banishes all fear. ⁸⁴

The theological construction in these two dialectical songs emphasize the power of Jesus' name in defeating such fears and superstitions that Christianity posited as the defining features of African cosmology, which 'caused them untoward poverty and misfortune' – *urombe*. Thus represented, Christian civilization entailed education and freedom from

⁸³ See J. and J. Comaroff, 'Through the Looking-glass: Colonial Encounters of the First Kind', *Journal of Historical Sociology* 1:1 (1988).

⁸⁴ K. Mattaka, Interview 2, 12.

superstition and, by extension, increased opportunities for material progress. Africans, the logic went, could only find wealth through enlightened Christian beliefs, not 'heathen' charms adorned on their persons. This formulation blended well with the discourse of the 'dignity of labour' that infused colonial education and labour policies. In an era of limited recording, radio and television culture, this music had to be performed live to its targeted audiences.

In this light, then, leading musicians like Mattaka had to work on a very tight schedule, touring farming and mining compounds and small towns to provide live entertainment for workers and fans. Major companies like the cotton ginners, David Whitehead, Linton Tobacco Company, Lever Brothers and his former employers, the *Herald*, invited Mattaka's band for special occasions like Christmas parties to perform for their workers over the years. In the 1950s, they visited the Kariba Dam project on two occasions at the invitation of one of the contractors, Richard Costain, spending days there entertaining the thousands of workers building the dam. Farmers and miners ferried them to their compounds in open trucks for £5 10d for shows – 'not a great amount', a fact that compelled Mattaka to trim his troupe for these short-distance tours to his immediate family members only.⁸⁵ Contracts kept flowing from major employers of labour, attesting to Mattaka's stature in the country's music community. This point refutes Turino's idea that artists had to record to objectify themselves as popular and serious to their fans. Live shows in the community halls (even before the era of bioscopes and television), the farms and mines, did the trick. Moreover, like Musarurwa and Henry Mutyambizi, who accepted jobs with the meat parastatal, the Cold Storage Commission (CSC) in Bulawayo, Mattaka was happy to come under the employ of these companies as a full-time worker again after his years at the *Herald*; though, in retrospect, he regrets that this decision cost him a more fruitful music career at his most mature age.

Thus, in 1966, when the Bata Shoe Company, headquartered in the Midlands town of Gwelo, forwarded a job advert to the radio looking for a salesman with a musical background, Mattaka, who had done a course in salesmanship, grabbed the opportunity and left Salisbury. At Bata, Mattaka used his popular image as an entertainer to market shoes all over the country, retracing his old itineraries but this time carrying the gospel of

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 11.

healthy feet, hygiene, and good animal husbandry – a corporate agenda carefully grafted onto the popular culture symbols his name evoked. In the 1960s-70s, therefore, Mattaka and his band visited schools and villages as Bata Shoe Company Sales promoters, ‘lecturing and showing people what we could compose’ and what Bata could make.⁸⁶ In the villages, they especially targeted agricultural shows and field days, demonstrating the various processes of shoe-making – from tanning to designing. The idea was ‘to show them that shoes come from cowhides, and to make them appreciate the importance of looking after their cattle properly, with healthy skins’. While Mattaka mostly worked in the rural areas, many of his counterparts worked in urban ‘locations’. As Ncube reminisced:

Cars used to come here – shop owners coming to pick me up to promote their merchandise or to open new outlets. I worked for BAT for 19 years, and opened TM shops, doing pick-a-box. They knew I was a sharp comedian. We traveled everywhere – Nyanga, Bindura, Serowe, Gaborone, Francistown, etc, over in Botswana.⁸⁷

Born in 1923 in Bulawayo, Ncube belongs to the Sophiatown community of artists, having worked as a waiter at Johannesburg’s Sea Point Hotel and as a musician and comedian with groups like the Manhattan Brothers at the Bantu Social Centre before the 1940s. He returned home to work not only at the frontline of pioneer commercial capital – with Lever Brothers, British American Tobacco (BAT), Thomas Meikles (TM) and other companies – but, like Mattaka, he helped define the wider social scene revolving around music, boxing and soccer, acquiring the sort of social qualifications that business found useful.⁸⁸ Ncube staked his claim as an ‘indigenous intellectual’ in such circles with songs like ‘Bulawayo Guy’, in which he sang:

I am a Bulawayo guy
Who sings to entertain people

⁸⁶ K. Mattaka, Interview 2, 14.

⁸⁷ K. Ncube, Interview, 3 January 2007, Bulawayo, 2.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

So that Bulawayo may have *morari* [morale].⁸⁹

African 'locations' were poorly provided for in social amenities, a fact that raised the premium on entertainment or, as Ncube implied, the need to raise people's morale from a sense of helplessness spawned by their privations and hardships. This was aptly captured in *Parade's* description of the formation of De Black Evening Follies: 'It is ten years since a small band of young people formed a troupe of artistes, their object being *to bring a ray of happiness and cheer into the often dull lives of our people* as well as boost African music in the colony'.⁹⁰ In that regard, musicians were key agents of self-fashioning, a standing that, as already argued, commercial capital found useful. In the 1950s, thus, the state-owned milk monopoly, the Dairy Marketing Board (DMB), commissioned Masuku – 'Africa's leading recording star' – and the Follies to compose the famous 'milk song' to remind audiences that 'after you have been 'jiving' and 'rocking and rolling' you need refreshment' from their flavoured fresh milk. Moreover, after that refreshment, fans could 'take six empty milk bottles to any DMB depot in the Townships' and get 'free records'.⁹¹ In this way, the corporation sought to cleverly marry the consumption of milk and the enjoyment of music into a reciprocally perpetuating relationship. Similarly, the beef venture, the CSC, employed Musarurwa as a worker and resident entertainer in its workers' compound in Bulawayo, where he formed the Cold Storage Band together with Henry Mutyambizi in the 1940s.⁹² More intriguingly, in the 1960s, Musarurwa's picture also graced the popular media, especially *Parade*, partaking of a Castle Lager, a 'European beer' whose consumption by Africans had only been partially de-criminalized for the benefit of the 'certified' professional Africans in the late 1950s. Africans must have found this a very powerful image, because Musarurwa himself had not only been deeply implicated in the battles for such de-criminalization, he had also composed the hugely popular song, 'Skokiaan', which narrated larger state versus

⁸⁹ *Ibid.* This is one of the many songs that he says, in his typical comedy-speak, are in 'top gear' – his head; he signed away many to Gallo for nothing during his time in South Africa.

⁹⁰ 'Story of De Black Evening', *Parade*, 4.

⁹¹ *The African Parade*, August 1959, 61.

⁹² Ivy Mupungu, Interview, 10 December 2006, Norton, 1; Henry Mutyambizi, 4 January 2007, 2.

African struggles over alcohol.⁹³ Many other entertainers, like Dauti, Masuku, Bertha Mattaka (the Mattakas' daughter), and the teacher/nurse-turned-radio-presenter, Miriam Mlambo, were roped into the commodification crusade, advertising a range of commodities that included body lotions and skin lighteners like Bu-Tone and Ambi on radio, popular magazines and African newspapers – simultaneously constructing their own iconic images as fashionable beauties and entertainers while also popularizing these commodities and imported aesthetic ideals amongst their African fans. In Timothy Burke's formulation, then, these were the model 'lifebuoy men and lux women' who helped drive the high commodity culture that hit colonial Zimbabwe by the 1950s.⁹⁴ Financially, that often meant more than one salary – the singers earned wages as ordinary workers but also as musicians entertaining fellow workers in the compounds after hours; 'bush allowances' when they toured promoting merchandise, and advertising royalties.⁹⁵ Indeed, these roles helped many of them ameliorate their ironic 'messengers-and-nannies-during-the-day-and-celebrities-by-night' tag, as Jimmy Matyu put it.⁹⁶

When Mattaka's band toured schools on these promotion campaigns, their format usually started off with a 'lecture', then singing, conjuring tricks and 'twisting minds', that is, performing 'magic sketches' – which consisted mostly of 'swallowing' razor blades.⁹⁷ Commerce marketed him as a star-studded performer, as one poster in his personal collection proclaimed in 1971: 'Magic, magic, magic, by Mattaka, the oldest entertainer, from 1936-71, non-stop. See him live in the Bata Shoes for Healthy Feet. Stage entertainer, actor, magician, tap-dancer and TV star!' To initiate the school children into the shoe culture and bolster his message, Mattaka posed quizzes, awarding

⁹³ 'Lion Export Ale for Manpower' adverts in *Parade*, November 1960, and 'Ban the Ban on Liquor to Africans', *Parade*, January 1961, 40, 41, 56.

⁹⁴ Timothy Burke, *Lifebuoy Men, Lux Women: Commodification, Consumption and Cleanliness in Modern Zimbabwe* (Durham: Duke University Press), 1996.

⁹⁵ K. Ncube, Interview, 1.

⁹⁶ Jimmy Matyu, 'Music fans from all parts of city loved revue', <http://www.theherald.co.za/colarc/town/mj22022006.htm>. 'Ironic' because, as West makes clear, many of them were 'middle class' only by virtue of their common 'educated' status and aspirations, which did not correspond with their economic realities – *The Rise of an African Middle Class: Colonial Zimbabwe, 1898-1965* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002), 2.

⁹⁷ K. Mattaka, Interview 2, 14.

shoes to those who gave correct answers. In this way, the companies harnessed entertainers as popular figures (contrast with, say, the hated agricultural demonstrators), appropriating their music, drama and other localized performance idioms, to reach out into the communities in an apparently less intrusive (but very effective) manner, to capture wide audiences, keep them entertained, laughing and happy, while patiently nurturing them into reliable markets. But these markets had to be understood well to be nurtured properly. This is why Africans like Mattaka, who had been educated in the quarantined mission settings before moving to town, found themselves carrying the modernizing gospel of healthy feet into rural schools and villages. Such people were models of modernity, readily available to go out to preach modernity to people whom the new commodity culture constructed as 'primitive' and unhygienic.⁹⁸ The industrial products were tangible symbols of modernity or 'amenities of civilization'⁹⁹ and, to the architects of that discourse and their agents, the absence of such products in their target communities confirmed the undesirable state of African lifestyles they sought to change. Illustrating how mission centres were deeply implicated in this capitalist cultural logic, Noah Muchabaiwa Marapara reminisced how, as a 10-year-old boy in 1899, he and his cattle-herder friends were lured into the mission grounds at Kwenda Mission. He recalled:

On getting to the mission, we joined many people already gathered; we were organized into teams and instructed to run ... I almost ran away with joy at the feat; I was given a prize of a soft white cloth to wear – the first time for me to wear that soft cloth. We went home to proudly show my parents the great prize from 'Mufundisi' [the missionary]. It was my first day to know Christmas Day, too.¹⁰⁰

As already argued, some mission-educated Africans internalized this capitalist commodity culture together with its prejudices, as Mattaka's argument, below, illustrates:

⁹⁸ T. Burke, *Lifebuoy Men, Lux Women*, 54.

⁹⁹ 'The Rural African and his Wife', *Parade*, June 1954, 9.

¹⁰⁰ Noah Muchabaiwa Marapara, 'From Old to New Ways', *Parade and Photo Action*, December 1953, 19.

I will tell you something: those whites came with high western standards, when we still wore *nhembe*, and others didn't even bath ... And there were big shops, some which served whites only ... Decent; you see? Some people were reckless ... in those days. I tell you, at Domboshawa there, some people who later became MPs; they were walking naked, wearing tattered shorts. Some had only one item of clothing, or two, relying on the uniform. And even that uniform, for some, was filthy.¹⁰¹

It is interesting that his wife viewed these 'truths' differently, regarding that 'African condition' as 'a result of want' which did not denote lack of 'dignity' amongst Africans.¹⁰² Nonetheless, some three decades later, Mattaka-the-salesman would seek to complete the change:

I used to move around places like Masvingo when I was working for Bata, school children wore no shoes. And we used to give them free pairs, and had them do quizzes, and those who got them correct we would give shoes, and teach them the importance of shoes, which they learned, gradually.¹⁰³

Popular music had long abstracted these industrial products as the signs and symbols of modernity, so these commodification crusades objectified and reinforced those conceptions. In a Chakrabartian sense, therefore, the history of popular music and that of commercial capital are mutually reinforcing. For one thing, neither observes territorial boundaries. In the same way that Ncube traveled to and from Botswana and South Africa in the service of commercial capital, Zimbabwean popular musicians moved back and forth within the region and beyond in pursuit of their musical careers in ways that demonstrate the deterritorializing nature of music (and commercial capital). By the 1950s, the increasing interaction among the region's musicians emphasized this sense of shared cultures – brought into sharper relief by the WENELA (Witwatersrand Native Labour Association) (labour recruitment) train, that inanimate symbol of the region's common fate, as narrated in Masekela's song, 'Stimela'.¹⁰⁴ Thus, whetted by his brothers' mission aura as a youngster, Abel Sithole's music career began to unfold in practice with

¹⁰¹ K. Mattaka, Interview 1, 16-17

¹⁰² L. Mattaka, Interview 1, 17.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 17.

¹⁰⁴ Hugh Masekela, 'Stimela', *Hope*, 1993.

his brief excursion to South Africa in the 1950s, following the footprints of Masuku, Ncube and other early fortune-hunters. A full appreciation of Zimbabwean township music cannot be attained without analyzing in some detail how it operated within this regional cultural matrix that revolved around Sophiatown by the 1940s.

Sophiatown, Musical Films and the Southern African Cultural Commonwealth

Born in Bulawayo to a Tswana mother and Ndaou father in 1934, Sithole attained a respectable Standard 6 education – as far as his mother’s income from washing white people’s clothes and his father’s proceeds from carpentry could take him. We have already seen how he, together with his family, enthusiastically sang the mission songs brought home by his brothers. But perhaps the most forceful pull setting him off on his musical journey were a gramophone record player and records one of his graduate-brothers brought home in the early 1940s. The records were mainly from South Africa, pressed and/or traded by Gallo, Troubadour and His Master’s Voice.¹⁰⁵ Like Salisbury, Bulawayo was an important cultural centre;¹⁰⁶ but it was also a key crossroads for regional and international musical transactions through South Africa. Both factors shaped the town’s musical development, as exemplified by Sithole’s life story.

Sithole’s early exposure to the world of music spurred him into further adventure. Risking severe punishment by his mostly-absentee mother, he would habitually slip away from home in the afternoon to join swelling crowds which chased after bands and sang along to their popular tunes as they did advertizing rounds in Makokoba for their evening shows at Stanley Hall. Whenever he could evade the guards screening out juveniles, Sithole would sneak into the hall to watch the performances from the back benches with his friend, Naison Nkhata. He also participated in youth talent night contests, winning £5 at one time, which he used to buy his mother a set of enamel tea cups to replace her mugs, earning her tacit approval for his career aspiration. Growing up in this setting, Sithole was able to watch various one-man box guitar performers (*Omasiganda*) like Sabelo Mathe, Josaya Hadebe, Kanda Mandela, saxophone players like the City Esquires,

¹⁰⁵ A.S. Sithole, Interview, 3 January 2007, Bulawayo, 1-2.

¹⁰⁶ P. Kaarsholm, ‘Si Ye Pambili: Which Way Forward?: Urban Development, Culture and Politics in Bulawayo’, *Journal of Southern African Studies* 21:2 (June 1995).

the Black and White Band, as well as 'that old man, Mattaka and his Bantu Actors', who both inspired him so much and, later on, welcomed him into the comfort of his home together with many other youngsters. Moreover, like many of his age-mates, Sithole spent the largest proportion of his income buying the latest record releases by foreign artists from local record bars, building collections over time, which he 'listened to intently and imitated'.¹⁰⁷ For many Zimbabwean aspiring musicians, the audio world they had been constructing around these collections of foreign records, sheet music and their own performances assumed an objectified visual allure with the advent and popularization of musical films in the mid- to late-1940s.

These films gave form to, and further solidified, the imagery of African modernity many had long started constructing about their virtual acoustic world – culturally inspired by the far away America and South Africa. One such film that captivated Southern Africans' imaginations was the rather politically naïve and paternalistic 'Jim Comes to Town', produced in 1949 by Eric Rutherford.¹⁰⁸ Sithole remembers this film as narrating the story of Jim, a rural job seeker in Jo'burg (Johannesburg). Jim found a cleaning job at a nightclub, where Dolly Rathebe, a contemporary of Masuku, was performing. Listening to the seductive music as he mopped floors, Jim becomes captivated by the singing, slips away from his duties with his broom in hand and joins in the fun, immediately hitting gold both musically and romantically with Dolly.¹⁰⁹ For people who were already hooked on South Africa, the story of Jim confirmed not only that Jo'burg was 'where it is' (as Dollar Brand conceptualized it in his 1974 song, 'Mannenburg'),¹¹⁰ but also that anybody could hit its golden streets running. The images of Jo'burg as a place of wealth and opportunity that films like this presented lured many young men and women across the Limpopo. Sithole, his musician-brother, sister, and (rather oddly) his father, were amongst these. Masuku and Ncube were already basking in the glow and tumble of

¹⁰⁷ A.S. Sithole, Interview, 2.

¹⁰⁸ G. Baines, 'On Location: Narratives of the South African City in Film and Literature of the Late 1940s and 1950s',

<http://web.uct.ac.za/conferences/filmhistorynow/papers/gbaines.rtf>;
J. Maingard, 'South African Cinema in the 1940s: Reviewing Black Identities', <http://www.queensu.ca/sarc/Conferences/1940s/Maingard.htm>

¹⁰⁹ A.S. Sithole, Interview, 2.

¹¹⁰ Mannenburg was originally recorded in 1960 by Zacks Nkosi.

Sophiatown, the former making it her third home, after Northern and Southern Rhodesia. But films like 'Jim Comes to Town' came in a context where South Africa had historically been constructed as a land of gold – *eGoli*, already drawing migrant labourers from the region to dig gold and diamonds over the decades. Sithole had witnessed the spectacle of many 'had-been-tos changing money and throwing it at people' during their occasional home visits. Thus, because of these popular constructions, South Africa was already culturally familiar when Sithole eventually went there in the 1950s. There, he regrouped not only with his own brother, who was singing with Masekela, but also with many Zimbabweans, especially Ndaus from his father's Chipinge home area, who worked mostly as carpenters.¹¹¹ It was devastating, however, when after only a short stay there, on the verge of actualizing his dream, his father asked Sithole to take his pregnant sister back home, never to return. He would only reconnect with his Sophiatown colleagues as exiles and combatants, vocalizing the raging fires of the liberation wars that were soon to engulf the region. But this unfortunate incident that cut short Sithole's tenure metaphorically represented one important dimension of Sophiatown that unsettled many parents – *eGoli* as 'sin city', where the young and the bold discovered 'independence and freedom'. We will see how this construction boosted but also frustrated some dreams.

The Allure of *eGoli*: Morality, Generational and Gendered Struggles

As already noted, one Zimbabwean who rose to prominence in the Sophiatown show business was Dorothy Masuku, a cosmopolitan woman whose life (even more than that of fellow *Zambian*-descended Champion Banda whose Bulawayo Golden Rhythm Crooners backed her solos when in Southern Rhodesia) embodies the deterritorialized nature of the region's cultural commonwealth. Masuku was born in the late 1930s in Bulawayo to a *Zambian* father, went to school in her city of birth – which straddles both the economic and cultural links connecting Zimbabwe to Zambia, Botswana and South Africa – and then moved to Harare, before some nuns sponsored her further education in South Africa,

¹¹¹ Maurice Nyagumbo, who would be a foremost nationalist leader back in Rhodesia from the 1950s, also fitted into this Ndaus diaspora: Maurice Nyagumbo, *With the People*.

where she graduated with a Form 2 certificate.¹¹² She hit the Jo'burg music scene in 1950 after an assignment to work on cadavers unnerved her out of nursing school. Stylistically, Masuku represents an indigenous turn in the 'jazz' wave; she composed most of her songs, as would many who modeled themselves on her. While Lina Mattaka (like Yvonne Vera's fictional character, Phephelaphi) had aspired to a nursing career as a gateway into the colonial city's modernity,¹¹³ Masuku had clearly transcended colonial modernity's constrictive definition of African subjectivity by fashioning herself into a symbol of subcultural counter-modernity through music. She managed this by both fighting, and co-opting into her service, Sophiatown's masochist gangster circles, in order to get to the top of what Chitauro, Dube and Gunner aptly describe as:

A community of women singers [forming] the vibrant black urban culture of the 50s which had Sophiatown as its hub but [which] spread [farther] afield ...link[ing] through record sales, radio and concert tours urban centres such as Salisbury and Bulawayo and other towns of the Northern Rhodesian Copperbelt.¹¹⁴

Masuku's 'sisters' in this musical sorority included Dauti, Susan Chenjerai, Miriam Makeba, Rathebe – the singing queen of 'Jim Comes to Town', Letta Mbulu, Thoko Thomo, Susan Gabashane, Thandi Klaasen and Sophie Mgcina, many of whom rose to fame partly by doing renditions of Masuku's various compositions. As Coplan observed, Masuku helped mark the 1950s as something of a golden age for female singers: 'By the end of the 1940s Sophiatown's Dolly Rathebe and Bulawayo's Dorothy Masuku were more popular than most male vocal quartets'.¹¹⁵ But she had to surmount the tough tests

¹¹² 'Dorothy Masuka: Story of Africa's Greatest Recording Star', *The African Parade*, April 1959, 18.

¹¹³ Y. Vera, *Butterfly Burning*, 60; Meg Samuelson, 'Yvonne Vera's Bulawayo: Modernity, (Im)mobility, Music and Memory', *Research in African Literatures* 38:2 (Summer 2007): 26.

¹¹⁴ M. Chitauro, C. Dube and L. Gunner, 'Song, Story and Nation: Women as Singers and Actresses in Zimbabwe', *Politics and Performance: Theatre, Poetry and Song in Southern Africa*, ed. Liz Gunner (Witwatersrand University Press, 1994), 119.

¹¹⁵ D. B. Coplan, *In Township Tonight!*, 146. While her name appears mostly as Masuka over the years, she recently pointed out that her correct surname is Masuku, and that the former came about as a result of some Zambians' incorrect pronunciation: *The Herald*, 'I

of *eGoli's* entertainment circles first. Narrating her debut at the King's Theatre in Alexandra Township, Masuku narrates out how she was inhospitably received:

When I got on to the stage, the house was nice and fat, but as soon as it was learned that I was a Rhodesian, there were some booes and shouts of Kilimane! – a derogatory term by which our black brethren in the Union sometimes call us we who come from across the Limpopo River.¹¹⁶

Masuku refused to be intimidated, claiming her space in *eGoli* and her audiences' hearts by enchanting the assembled 'eminent stars of jazz' who had thought it 'funny when they heard that Dorothy is going to sing tonight' with her 'Ndizulazula eGoli'. As she later told *Parade*, 'that song was to be heard whistled, hummed and sung in the streets by people as they returned to their homes that night'.¹¹⁷

From that bold beginning, Dorothy toured extensively with the African Inkspots, the Manhattan Brothers, Masekela and the Harlem Swingsters and others, 'leaving audiences spell-bound' and propelling herself to the 'highest [rung] on the steps of the music ladder in Africa' through her own compositions that weaved African traditional expressive styles into the then fashionable jazz idioms like 'jive'. As a result, she was soon overwhelmed by requests to feature in every troupe. This instant success not only courted her admirers; it also plunged her into the perilous world of zoot-suited and slang-speaking *tsotsis* (gangsters), some of whom attempted to 'assassinate' her at a party in Sophiatown, intriguingly accusing her of being a proud 'English lady' who despised 'Afrikaans'¹¹⁸ – a possible reference to the (Afrikaans-inflected) *tsotsitaal* language of Jo'burg's working-class culture.¹¹⁹ Fortunately, she had anticipated such trouble and moved with her own 'boys', who sternly assured the troublemakers that 'if Dotty was born to sing, she'll sing throughout the length and breadth of this country and eventually abroad'.¹²⁰ This attention testifies to Masuku's impact in that, as Coplan notes,

belong to Africa: Masuku', 19 November 2007. I refer to her as Masuku and maintain the variant in the original sources that I use.

¹¹⁶ 'Dorothy Masuka', *Parade*, April 1959, 79.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁹ D. B. Coplan, *In Township Tonight!*, 162.

¹²⁰ *Parade*, April 1979, 79.

Gangs that supported one band often tried to suppress others, and many shows turned into violent confrontations as *tsotsis* attacking the musicians were met with others rising to their defence. Gangsters often pressed their friendship on popular musicians as a means of enhancing their own prestige. Female vocalists were particularly vulnerable.¹²¹

Masuku's colleagues, including Makeba, Rathebe, Thomo, and Gabashane, all fell victim to kidnappings, stabbings and assaults by *tsotsis* who 'protected' South Africa's black townships.¹²²

What must have increased Masuku's vulnerability as a female musician was that she featured for various groups, including the African Inkspots and the Manhattan Brothers, which were arch-rivals. Blessed with good looks that saw her win the 'Miss Mzilikazi' title in De Black Evening Follies-sponsored 'Miss Mzilikazi' beauty pageant in 1953 (discussed below), Dorothy was a prized star on the 1950s entertainment scene. On her maiden Cape Town tour with the Harlem Swingsters, she caused a furor by snatching what she described as 'the man to talk about in town' from under the noses of his 'three score and five other girlfriends'. This incident partly inspired her 'Phata phata' hit (literally, 'touch touch'), which in turn spurred a new pennywhistle jazz craze, *kwela*, led by Spokes Mashiyane and others.¹²³ Later popularized by Makeba, the song also captured the commotion Masuku and other women of style stirred as they swayed on the pavements of Johannesburg with men admiringly calling out at them and extending their 'admiring hands' to 'phata-phata' them.¹²⁴ This is how Coplan describes the *kwela* craze emerging from this street scenario:

This was an individualized, sexually suggestive form of jive dancing for young people in which partners alternately touched each other all over the body with their hands, in time with the rhythm. The dancers often shouted the word *kwela* (Zulu: 'climb on', get up') as an inducement for others to join in.¹²⁵

¹²¹ D. B. Coplan, *In Township Tonight*, 163.

¹²² *Ibid.*

¹²³ *Ibid.*

¹²⁴ M. Chitauro *et al*, 'Song, Story and Nation', 123.

¹²⁵ D. B. Coplan, *In Township Tonight!*, 158.

However, what Coplan portrays here seems a rather literal reading of a performance genre that was infused with a more complex, if gendered, power politics revolving around the illicit *shebeen* (alcohol) subculture. Like Musarurwa's composition, 'Skokiaan' and the Salisbury urban folk, 'Aya Mahobo' (These Humps), *kwela* was a deeply encoded metaphor for African engagement with brutal colonial modernity that criminalized African presence and activities like beer brewing and selling in the towns. As Vera writes, 'Kwela [Shona: *Kwira*] means *to climb into* the waiting police jeeps', though it could be subverted to purvey a quite different message in the licentious 'bush party' atmosphere. But Africans did not simply climb into the anti-alcohol patrol jeeps; they refused to let the word go, infusing it with powerful creative currency in the ensuing contests with colonial law enforcers – with the 'touching all over the body' a possible mimicry of the intrusive body searches. Their use of the word as a creative genre, then, represents 'their ability to pull a word 'back from the police jeep'.¹²⁶ It is this ability to use everyday tropes to spin critical counter discourses that defined people like Masuku as 'dangerous', even more than their seductive femininity or lack of respect for matrimonial puritanicalism, as Chitauro and colleagues argue.¹²⁷ However, this is not the place to discuss the *Chimurenga* (resistance) trope, the theme of the next chapter.

Unlike Mattaka's conformist approach to modernity, Masuku's creativity was informed more by this defiant subculture. Her 1958 anti-apartheid song, 'UDr. Malan unomteth' onzima' (Dr. Malan has made a terrible law) got her ejected from South Africa and she spent the next two years in Southern Rhodesia. By 1960, she was headed for London, reportedly to take the place of Miriam Makeba as the *Shebeen* Queen in King Kong, 'the sensational all-African cast Jazz Opera'.¹²⁸ Written by Todd Matshikiza, it was a musical narrative of the tragic story of boxing champion, Ezekiel 'King Kong' Dhlamini, who committed suicide after he was jailed for murdering his girlfriend, but with a subtext that captured the dynamics of African triumphs and tribulations in

¹²⁶ Y. Vera, *Butterfly*, 6; Meg Samuelson, 'Yvonne Vera's Bulawayo: Modernity, (Im)mobility, Music, and Memory', *Research in African Literatures* 38:2 (Summer 2007): 26. Nonetheless, this was no world of clinical formulas; as Vera observes, 'Kwela include[d] the harmonies one can name, and misname', *Butterfly*, 8.

¹²⁷ See, M. Chitauro *et al*, *Song, Story and Nation*, 118.

¹²⁸ 'First 'Lady of Song' Hits the Big-Time in Show Business', *Parade*, January 1961, 67.

apartheid South Africa. By this time, Masuku's songs were being 'sold [at home] and [in London] with a speed that defie[d] all past African records', leading *Parade* to proclaim her Southern Rhodesia's 'ambassador, just like Louis 'Satchmo' Armstrong [was] for the Americans'.¹²⁹ And, in the modernity frame within which most of the country's popular singers had cast themselves, nothing could be more symbolic of success than performing for the BBC and ITV in London, and touring North America. Thus, in 1965, she told a visiting journalist, Calfinos:

I have done shows on Channel 2 of the BBC and have appeared in some night clubs in the West End of London ... In a few weeks' time I shall appear on 'Ready, Steady, Go!' the big show produced by ITV, and that's the day – the crowning moment of showbiz for me! Everyone who matters goes on to 'RSG'. The Beatles, Rolling Stones, everybody who matters.¹³⁰

Dorothy *now* mattered. She could delicately balance her desire for success with her boldness as a young female entertainer to independently author her own identity. Thus she told Calfinos: 'I have turned down some offers because I don't want to appear in shows where there are strip-teasers'.¹³¹ This was her own choice, unaffected by her bourgeois domestic background that tended to conspire with African conservative gender conventions to censure youngsters, especially women, over gendered public moral (mis)demeanors. Reflecting this tension, for instance, one Pendlindaba had written to *Parade* in 1959 decrying what s/he saw as a negative progression in the country's music with the increasing popularity of the 'sensational *tsaba tsaba*, with its shoulder quivers, hip jerks and all manner of corporeal shakes and twists', which displeased older people accustomed to the 1930s' 'morality songs and songs in praise of teachers, chiefs and other important leaders in the community'.¹³² Pendlindaba noted that 'things were fine then, and adults went to listen to choirs with pleasure because music was very helpful in the teaching of good morals'. By the 1950s, the increasing popularity of 'the Elvis Presleys, Tommy Steeles and the rest of them', had replaced the spiritual and intellectual

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 70.

¹³⁰ Calfinos, 'Dolly in the Big Time!' *Parade*, March 1965, 58.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*

¹³² Pendlindaba, *Parade*, May 1959, 12.

themes with the sensual, with a good dose of mischief – ‘which is what the younger generation wants’. The conception of modernity, like African customary views, was clearly troubled by this inflection of new generational and gendered fashions, leading Pendlindaba to appeal for something to be done ‘to curb the jazz of the rock ’n roll, kwela and jive type otherwise our children will lose not only character but brains as well’.¹³³

Masuku could wade through these tensions that troubled purists like Mattaka. For instance, while he toured the region and countries as far as the Congo, Mattaka never included South Africa on his itinerary because he was not happy with that country’s ‘sin city’ image. He explained:

You know what used to happen? People offered us their children and we didn’t accept them unless they were of good moral standing. And especially girls ... we never accepted girls, particularly those who were independent. But for those who were staying with their parents, we’d require the parents’ permission – to instill discipline. Discipline – that’s very important.¹³⁴

In this construction, ‘independence’ implied naughtiness: ‘We didn’t accept children who were naughty in the group; we worked with very decent children, like Susan Chenjerai. The naughty ones ... went to the ‘tea parties’, or *mahobo* parties, to dance, where people sold beer to make money’.¹³⁵ Sophiatown, like Mbare, Highfield, Makokoba and other African ‘locations’, was (in)famous for its ‘tea party’ and *shebeen* cultures. The star of this subculture was the *Shebeen* Queen, who personified defiance of colonial urban authority and scorned middle class ideas of respectability. Her place was where class, race and gender could be scrambled. Similarly, the *shebeens* and ‘tea parties’ were places where music with a protest sensibility, such as ‘Skokiaan’, tended to emerge, as patrons partook of both the criminalized ‘European’ beer and their own brews. Significantly, Masuku not only ‘echoed the urban woman’s struggle to continue beer-brewing operations in times of harsh legal restrictions and fierce police harassment’ in her song,

¹³³ *Ibid.*

¹³⁴ K. Mattaka, Interview 1, 11.

¹³⁵ K. Mattaka, Interview 2, 14.

'Khauleza!' (Move Fast!)',¹³⁶ but she took up the lead role of the *Shebeen* Queen, King Kong's girlfriend in the jazz opera's European tour in 1960.

Thus, the often ambiguous lines between performing colonial modernity and contesting it were more discernible between Mattaka and Masuku. Mattaka saw 'tea parties' as a dangerous mixture of decadent westernization and ghetto culture: 'We did not go where people would dance touching each other – that was another line, ballroom, etc; we entertained educated people and church people'.¹³⁷ As Saidi argued, Mattaka's repertory was deeply embedded in the prevailing Victorian ideals of respectability – defined by education, Christian morality and matrimony. On the stage itself, such notions were emphasized through the adoption of European classical performance ideals which distinguished audiences from performers, such that Mattaka's smartly-dressed 'boys would stand up to do their mesmerizing steps, clapping their hands and tap-dancing to produce enchanting sounds' while the audiences sat and watched in dead-silence, applauding appreciatively at the end of each act during the mixed repertoire 'variety concert shows'.¹³⁸ Such moral discipline as performed on stage by the Mattakas required parental supervision to enforce. It was for this reason, for instance, that Julia Moyo watched her dream of making it big in South Africa wilt after her mother refused her permission to go, vowing that 'If you go, I will smash this calabash on the ground; you will not get there alive'.¹³⁹

Julia had made her mark after an invitation by the Bulawayo Municipality to sing at the Large City Hall. Smartly dressed in hired clothes and make-up provided by the municipality for the occasion, she had sung so beautifully that 'many people thought she was from South Africa, only realizing that she was from Mzilikazi's 'V' Square after reading the story in the newspapers the next morning'. To her, that misidentification was a stamp of approval, a badge that she, too, fitted into the glitter of *eGoli*, but she found her mother uncompromising, cowing her with what she considers, in retrospect, a culturally symbolic but possibly innocuous threat. Julia's misidentification emanated from the then widely-held perception of South Africa and 'overseas' as the abodes of

¹³⁶ M. Chitauro *et al*, *Song, Story and Nation*, 24.

¹³⁷ K. Mattaka, Interview 2, 13.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 4.

¹³⁹ Julia Moyo, Interview, 17.

higher cultural standards to which Africans in Southern Rhodesia always aspired. Reporting on Masuku's crowning as 'Miss Mzilikazi' at the Rhodes Centenary Celebration in Bulawayo, *Parade* pointed out that,

Miss Dorothy Masuka is better known for her lovely voice and music in which she has no equal in all Central Africa. Miss Masuka is such a polished singer that *many find it hard to believe that she has not had overseas training. Her crooning has the American touch* and she has always created terrific sensations wherever she has appeared on stage.¹⁴⁰

We have already seen that much of the music that Africans performed in early 20th century Southern Rhodesia was built within this rich repertoire of imaginations of 'overseas'; shortly, I will look at how these popular imaginations of 'overseas' helped the musicians construct their own identities.

The point has to be made, however, that South Africa was hardly unique in inducing these sorts of gender specific morality panics; similar attitudes were also prevalent at home. As Julia noted, 'the mere fact that we sang in front of people, mingling with boys, made people to conclude that we were bad girls'.¹⁴¹ A common strategy many women adopted to survive this negative spotlight was to sing in all-girl-troupes like Julia's Bantu Glee Singers, featuring singing girls in the front row and instrument-playing-boys in the back row. Nonetheless, the fact that 'boys filled the hall' whenever the girls' troupes performed tended to exacerbate the stigmatizing tag, as much as it helped bring them some popularity.¹⁴² In the traditional Zimbabwean set-up, women did not assume roles as professional entertainers; they confined their performances to funerals, family and community ceremonies and rituals. It is for this reason that Makwenda writes glowingly about Lina Mattaka, Evelyn Juba and Victoria Chingate as women who pioneered the 'liberation' of African women-musicians against these race, class and gender prejudices, 'interestingly [with] the support of their husbands, with whom they shared the stage'.¹⁴³ While male musicians tended to support their own

¹⁴⁰ *Parade*, November 1953, 29. Emphasis mine.

¹⁴¹ Julia Moyo, Interview, 17.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*

¹⁴³ J. Jenje-Makwenda, *Zimbabwe Township Music*, 23.

musician-wives who, as we saw in the case of Lina, virtually resided under their wings, the same level of support rarely came from non-musician-husbands. Thus, no sooner had Julia (like many other women) married in 1968 than she decided to 'settle down'.¹⁴⁴ Significantly, the accepted language equates marriage to turning away from a stigmatizing space in search of dignity and self-respect.

The point that should be emphasized here is that Julia's predicament exemplifies wider gender and generational struggles, marking African life in colonial Africa beyond Edward Kisiang'ani's notion that such struggles reflected solely transplanted Darwinist/Victorian prejudices that were domesticated and perpetuated by some Africans who were socialized to disrespect women.¹⁴⁵ Such struggles have to be read more in context rather than into some generic formula. This is partly because, for instance, people like Julia's mother believed that their gender views were perfectly well meaning and good for their children and society as determined by their own particular environment. But gender and generation were only two aspects of 'modern' identity that were played out through music in this period. One effect of 'globalized' musical transactions is that music also helped artists to imagine themselves and others and the ways they belonged and related. I look at this dimension through Musarurwa's song, 'Skokiaan', in this final section.

'Skokiaan': International Sensibilities and Cross-Cultural Misreadings

We have seen how Zimbabwean singers generally modeled themselves on American, European and South African musicians in the three decades 1930s-60s. These models assisted them in building their own images as entertainers and composers and to insert themselves into a largely pre-existing world of music that colonialism opened to them. How they framed themselves within that acoustic world often helped them to articulate many issues that shaped their own societies. Musicians were in the forefront thinking and vocalizing their own identities as members of particular collectivities and larger communities. One central motif that enabled these intellectuals to articulate their ideas

¹⁴⁴ Julia Moyo, Interview, 16.

¹⁴⁵ E. N.W. Kisiang'ani, 'Decolonizing Gender Studies in Africa', <http://www.codesria.org/Links/conferences/gender/KISIANGANI.pdf>, 4.

was the travel motif – in the sense of their own tours to other countries and the distribution of their own compositions beyond the ‘home’ market. Following James Clifford, I see movement as ‘constitutive of cultural meanings’¹⁴⁶ in ways that complement, rather than displace the significance of location. Travels by Mattaka and Masuku, musicians whose lives we have already partially followed outside their territories of birth, were invested with so much meaning that it helped them and their countrymen and women to think about themselves in relation to others. Their compositions, as we shall see in the case of Musarurwa’s ‘Skokiaan’, provided their foreign counterparts with symbols and lenses to imagine and represent their African counterparts.

Mattaka claims that, up to the 1960s, he was one of the most traveled Southern Rhodesians within the country and in Africa. Performance life – entertaining his fans or promoting Bata’s shoes – demanded a life on the road. His regional itinerary included Northern Rhodesia, Bechuanaland, the Belgian Congo and his country of birth, Nyasaland, with his band, family and larger entourages that included attaché teachers and their students. Inter-territorial travel in the early colonial period required no passports, but simply clearance from the District Administrator’s office, which, together with the parents of his student-attachés, Mattaka always found supportive.¹⁴⁷ They were also usually very well received by their hosts; for example, the Congo in the 1950s, Mattaka remembers, represented ‘the best reception that we got from anywhere in the region. They invited people and hosted a big dinner for us after our performance. There were huge crowds there’.¹⁴⁸ Among Mattaka’s compositions were two travel ‘signature’ songs, which his group performed to announce their impending departure from and return home when they toured abroad. These compositions help us analyze the significance of travel in the articulation and self-fashioning of identities. Bidding farewell to their home fans, Mattaka and his colleagues would sing,

Sarai isu toenda

Good-bye we are going

¹⁴⁶ J. Clifford, quoted in J. Tomlinson, *Globalization and Culture* (Cambridge: Polity, 1992), 28-9.

¹⁴⁷ K. Mattaka, Interview 2, 14.

¹⁴⁸ K. Mattaka, Interview1, 11.

Toenda toenda
Toenda mhiri kwenyanza

We are going, we are going
We are going overseas.

And, concluding their foreign tours and preparing to embark on their return journey, they would sing:

Tichafara tasvika
Tichafara tasvika muHarare

Harare iguta rakanaka.

We will rejoice when we arrive
We will rejoice when we arrive in
Harare
Harare is a beautiful city.¹⁴⁹

For the singers, these songs constructed special moments to imagine both their foreign destinations and their own countries, as captured in the sense of anticipated rejoicing once they returned home. Geographical travel temporarily detached them from a place they may have taken for granted, and enabled them to see and talk about themselves as belonging to a 'beautiful' home – Harare, the place which supported them and bid them farewell when they left. Like the special reception they received as visitors in far away places, returning to this place they called home, and the subsequent rejoicing that entailed, confirmed not only their sense of belonging, but also a process of identity self-construction as a relational process between 'home' and an 'away' or an 'elsewhere'. Everybody rejoiced upon their return, fulfilling the suspended joy and anticipation in 'Tichafara Tasvika'.

But why did Mattaka and his colleagues construct their destination in the 'farewell song' as 'overseas' when they were not traveling, and in fact never traveled, beyond the continent? This was their conceptualization of the indeterminate distance that their music could take them: 'because we were going to far away places like the Congo'.¹⁵⁰ In everyday usage, 'overseas' denotes far off places, travel to which usually called for much ceremony, anxiety and well-wishing by relatives and friends marking that important event and also performing the great expectations that it evoked. Overseas travel is ordinarily seen as the ultimate travel, symbolizing not only conquest of great distances and cultural differences, but also a creative transfiguration of 'roots in routes' in

¹⁴⁹ K. Mattaka, Interview 2, 3.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

the production of new cultural meanings. Masuku's tour of London represented this ultimate achievement in culturally significant ways. Her popular acclaim, in London's *Daily News*, for example – fulfilled *Parade's* earlier hopes, demonstrating that, indeed, 'she could withstand the strain of the London stage', where she was expected, as a matter of course, 'to be our ambassador'.¹⁵¹ *Parade* went on to write that 'everyone is hoping she won't return without laurels to show she's what the old-timers like to call THE REAL THING'.¹⁵² The latter could have referred to the stamina to conquer the culture shock of England as the 'cultural metropolis of the empire'.¹⁵³ Mattaka's 'departure song' captured this multidimensional conquest actualized in Masuku's tour and performance in the heart of the metropole. On another level, the Mattaka Family song represented their own widening travel horizons, and they must have seen themselves one day getting to the real 'overseas – hence the anticipatory sense of the song. Meanwhile, however, in light of the mesmerizing tap-dancing accompanying that song, it may also have represented not only mental journeys extending beyond what the singers could physically reach at that time, but, equally significantly, a 'cultural arrival'. Mattaka and colleagues had appropriated and mediated 'overseas' music and dance styles like tap-dancing over the years; they traveled outside of their own territories performing those songs to other people, who received them as accomplished modern musicians. Their performances in places like the Congo gave them the same accolades Zimbabweans anticipated upon Masuku's return, thus certifying their status as having 'reached', if only culturally by the aspired to standards of the Congo's *évolue* or Southern Rhodesia's middle classes.¹⁵⁴

But these narratives, especially in the Mattakas' second song, raise questions about how Africans belonged in colonial Rhodesia. Even more significant for him than most other Africans, Mattaka and his family's ascribed identities were objectified in the

¹⁵¹ 'First Lady of Song', *Parade*, January 1961, 70.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*

¹⁵³ See Carl Abbot for evolving perceptions of global cities, 'The International City Hypothesis: An Approach to the Recent History of U.S. Cities', *Journal of Urban History* 24:1 (1997).

¹⁵⁴ See G. Mianda, 'Colonialism, Education and Gender Relations in the Belgian Congo: The *Évolue* Case', in *Women in African Colonial Histories*, eds. J. Allman, S. Geiger and N. Musisi (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003) and also Laura Fair, *Pastimes and Politics: Culture, Community and Identity in Post-Abolition Urban Zanzibar, 1890-1945* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2001).

blue metal identity cards that they were forced to carry at all times, doubly 'Othering' them as 'alien natives'. They lived in Harare Township (Mbare), the scrap-heap of colonial underdevelopment which was the sanctioned space for Africans in the racially segregated colonial city. However, to the degree that circumstances permitted, Africans struggled to fashion themselves beyond victimhood through various means, including cooperation with, resistance to or collaborative resistance against colonial authority. Nonetheless, this analysis does not eliminate the question: what was colonial Harare good for? Mattaka avers that,

It was good and it was good for everything. We used to move around the country and outside; we had all the support and we didn't witness that 'people could be chased from certain places', no. There were Welfare Societies in all towns, which helped with the halls, etc.¹⁵⁵

Mattaka's statement can be read as a denial of a basic meaning of settler colonialism – the violence of sequestration, segregation and criminalization of space. But as someone who utterly believed in and preached the civilizing mission, how else could Mattaka have assimilated subordination except by refusing to represent it to himself, to borrow Amitav Gosh's incisive reflection on Indian literary self-representation under colonial rule?¹⁵⁶ To most Africans, however limited and limiting, the support from some sections of colonial society was crucial for (re)building their own communities, promoting literacy through such modes as self-help and social welfare. Such endeavours enabled them to pride themselves as agents of their own collective destinies in spite of colonial injustice. In that sense, then, Mattaka and colleagues' exaltation of Harare as their 'beautiful city' may have been part of the larger processes of refusal to bow to, nay, claiming their space in an otherwise forbidding city. This makes sense if we consider his place, which he shared with many other 'educated' Africans, in the inner circles of colonial marginality – as Secretary for African Football and a boxing promoter. Moreover, he may have subconsciously compensated his rather crippling inscription as an 'alien native' with his rather cooperative self-positioning to minimize this double marginality. As Vera writes of

¹⁵⁵ K. Mattaka, Interview 2, 4.

¹⁵⁶ Amitav Gosh and Dipesh Chakrabarty, 'Reflections: A Correspondence on Provincializing Europe', *Radical History Review* 83 (Spring 2002):16.

Bulawayo, to ameliorate the harshness of the surprise that the colonial city always had for Africans, one had to lean ‘against some masking reality ... on walls, on lies, on music’.¹⁵⁷ One could conclude that for Mattaka, this masking reality was not only music, but a fiction created and lived through that music. It is critical to understand this context to avoid reading Mattaka’s denial too literally. This is vital because it is not as if Mattaka did not see the often gratuitous evils of colonialism. He did, and he strained to transcend those difficulties while celebrating small victories. As he argued: ‘Racial segregation – that’s a natural thing. It was hot here in the 1930s and 40s, but when people started to upgrade themselves, bit by bit, that started to subside’.¹⁵⁸ As a believer in the civilizing mission, to him, the onus was on Africans to ‘upgrade’ themselves, never mind the dogged official obstruction of such endeavours. These non-revolutionary beliefs also shaped his perception of the Zimbabwean liberation war, as we shall see in Chapter 4.

But it is such compromising engagement with historical time that often spun crucial misunderstandings in the knowledge transactions that music mediated in space. I will use one example to illustrate this point. Mattaka’s construction of ‘beautiful Harare’ devalued and may potentially have miscommunicated the struggles Africans faced on a daily basis in colonial Zimbabwe. It resonated with a more raucous, romanticized image of ‘happy Africa’ coming from ‘overseas’ musicians’ adoption and representation of another supposedly ‘happy’ song, Musarurwa’s ‘Skokiaan’, which fed western stereotypical perceptions of Africa in this period. Musarurwa composed and recorded ‘Skokiaan’ in 1949 as a saxophone *tsaba tsaba* instrumental.¹⁵⁹ Armstrong and over 40 other, mostly American, musicians recorded it the same year as ‘Skokiaan: South African song’, topping the American Hit Parade as ‘Happy Africa’. By 1976, it had been published as sheet music in 17 countries.¹⁶⁰ These transactions and translations reinforced some of the messages implicit in the original composition, which we saw in the previous chapter, but they also re-inscribed new meanings and images into it in ways that helped enrich conversations about and conceptions of Africa in America. And, while Samuelson rightly argues for the reading of ‘Skokiaan’ as an instantiation of African influence on

¹⁵⁷ Y. Vera, *Butterfly*, 6.

¹⁵⁸ K. Mattaka, Interview 1, 18.

¹⁵⁹ August Musururgwa [sic], Gallo GB11 52.T.

¹⁶⁰ D. B. Coplan, *In Township Tonight!*, 154.

African-American modernity (rather than vice versa),¹⁶¹ it is important to analyze the manner of the transactions, particularly how they tended to reproduce global modernity's 'othering' of Africa. As already mentioned, it was the instrumental version of the song that Musarurwa recorded, and this fact meant the song remained open to musical (re-)imagination and representation.

The dominant effect constructed in Armstrong and his colleagues' rendition is the effacement of the song's urban social context of relentless struggles, foregrounding instead the image of 'carefree Africans' celebrating life in the 'jungle', merrymaking and partaking of the 'pineapple beer', as Brave Combo mistranslated *skokiaan*, the beer.¹⁶² While not entirely absent in the construction of the original, this understanding is firmly located within an imperial imagination of Africa. This is the Armstrong/Tom Glazer version of the song:

Skokiaan
Ooooooh, far away in Africa
Happy, happy Africa
They sing a-bing-a-bang-a-bingo
They have a ball and really go
Skokiaan, Skokiaan, Skokiaan

Ooooooh, Take a trip to Africa
Take any ship to Africa
Come on along and learn the lingo
Beside a jungle bungalow
Skokiaan, Skokiaan, Skokiaan
Hot drums are drumming, the
Hot strings are strumming, and
Warm lips are blissful, they're
Kissful of Skokiaan

Ooooooh, when you go to Africa
Happy, happy, Africa
You live along like a king-o
Right in the jungle bungalow
Hokey-Skoki, Skoki-oki-aan
Okey-Dokey, anybody can

¹⁶¹ M. Samuelson, 'Yvonne Vera's Bulawayo', 31.

¹⁶² <http://www.brave.com/bo/profile>

(Skoki-Skoki) man, oh man, oh man
You sing a-bing-a-bang-a-bingo
In hokey-pokey Skokiaan
Skoi-aa-aa-aa--ann

Oh-hoooo, far away in Africa
Happy, happy Africa
They sing a-bing-a-bang-a-bingo
They have a ball and really go, go, go
Oh-hoooo, take a trip to Africa
Any ship to Africa
Come on along and learn the lingo
Beside a jungle bungalow

Hot drums are drumming, the
Hot strings are strumming, and
Warm lips are blissful, they're
Kissful of Skokiaan

Oooooh, if you go to Africa
Happy, happy Africa
You live along like a king-o
Right in a jungle bungalow
Skokiaan, Skokiaan, Skokiaan, Skokiaan
Oooooooh, right in a jungle bungalow
Skokiaan.¹⁶³

Implicit in this song is the construction of Africa for western audiences not only in an inverted Mattaka model – as a geographically far off, nostalgically happy and welcoming place, whose language and lifestyle is *skokiaan* – drinking and merry-making. Larger than life, if rather anachronistic in an era when colonial comfort had already been shaken, this is an image that has persevered in the American and western popular psyche.¹⁶⁴ It subverts the critical modernist frame within which its subcultural composers imagined it.

¹⁶³ Louis Armstrong, All-Time Greatest Hits, 1949-09-06, MCA;
<http://www.lyricszoo.com/louis-armstrong/skokiaan/>; <http://www.africa-usa.com/movies.htm>

¹⁶⁴ See the controversies on the on-going Seattle 'African Village' exhibitions, which closely mirror the one at the Augsburg Zoo in Germany in 2005:
<http://www.africaresource.com/content/view/421/68> ;
<http://antropologi.info/blog/anthropology/index.php?p=1061&more=1&c=1&tb=1&pb=1>

The inscription of the idea of 'jungle' into the song's text was one cause but also consequence of this subversion. In 1953, the song was adopted as the theme song for Florida's Africa U.S.A. park, which was opened in March 1953 as a unique 'zoo with no cages where visitors could safely interact with the animals'.¹⁶⁵ The imagery this song evoked inspired Jack and Lillian Pedersen to bring into life their thoughts about 'what Africa might look like' on the Boca Raton scrubland they had deemed the 'deadest town' they had ever seen. They accomplished this by importing a great variety of wild animals, together with 'Machakas, the Masai [sic] warrior', from East Africa. With an African replica 'jungle' thus created, the Pedersens opened the park to visitors who listened to 'Skokiaan' pumped from the safari train in a way that reinforced the impact of the visual images as they did their rounds on the 350 acre veldt of 'Florida at its best'.¹⁶⁶ This impression of Africa, like the many other Africa-inspired exhibitions since, was built on, and buttressed the idea of Africa as knowable and appropriable exotica where humans interacted freely 'face to face' with wild animals, drinking and making music. Hot Butter's version, one of the few instrumental renditions, powerfully brings the jungle alive by subsuming the sounds of chattering monkeys, gibbering primates, chuckling leopards and other noises of the wilderness in the song's background, in a way that bolstered the double appropriation of both the intellectual property and wild-and-not-so-'wild' life. In this case, the construction of Africa is achieved by keeping the song's tropes intact and (mis)reading them freely for cultural meaning, as seen in the even wider representation and usage of the song in films and concertos, ranging from Carlings' spirited and powerful dances to Eric Rasmussen's erotica, 'Scrabble Rousers'.¹⁶⁷ As already argued, this rendition misrepresents Musarurwa's song, which is a multi-layered text through which many dynamics of 'location' life – including struggles over the brewing, sale and consumption of alcohol and municipal control of African leisure activities, discussed in Chapter 2.

Yet it is tempting to argue that this representation was no more than a culturally ignorant and ahistorical fantasia overdetermined by contemporary Western images of

¹⁶⁵ <http://www.africa-usa.com/history.htm>, (accessed 19 August 2007).

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁷ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iQZqWM9Hcas>;
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2XdG5RH-3zM>

Africa. Another way is to read it with Erlmann as part of a ‘massive project of global resemanticizing that sought to [re]inscribe ... difference into the very syntax ... of metropolitan discourse’ in an age of knowledge imperialism.¹⁶⁸ However, such processes do not always aim at total ‘obliterat[ion] [of] local forms of practice and knowledge with supposedly universal forms of knowledge’.¹⁶⁹ Rather, they find value in debasing and caricaturing, then re-inserting, them into the pre-conceived compartments of the colonizing discourse, as we have seen in the case of the state-sponsored ‘tribal dances’. Thus, the ‘hot drums, hot strings and warm, blissful lips ... kissful of Skokiaan’ have a certain grounding in the original song’s artistic devices, paratext and images as represented by intoxicated Henry Mutyambizi ‘cracking the sax’ and revelers dancing ‘those kinds of dances that mimicked sexual courtship’ at *mahobo* parties.¹⁷⁰ However, the poetic overplay in the American re-renderings tends to de-contextualize and distort the significance of the local meanings of these admittedly powerful idioms. Turino’s reading of this misinterpretation as fitting the ‘romantic, exotic imagery found in many popular songs drawn ‘from the margins’ into the cosmopolitan circles’ – influenced by the ‘savannas, forests, high plateaus, mountains and deserts [that] characterize [S]outhern African topography’ is rather polite to these imperious processes.¹⁷¹ It is important to observe that ‘misreading’ is active creation, as witnessed in the fertile imaginations that invented ‘Africa’ in Florida in 1954.

This analysis of ‘Skokiaan’ is important at the theoretical level. The discourse it generated, (together with songs like Solomon Linda’s 1939 hit, ‘Mbube’ (The Lion Sleeps Tonight¹⁷²) demonstrates not only the reciprocity but also the complexity of global musical transactions beyond any notion of unidirectional transmission that underlies Muller’s formulation of American musical ‘diasporas’. ‘Local’ musicians did not simply mediate products from America; they also created musical commodities that powerfully impacted the imaginations of their American counterparts, allowing them to adopt the

¹⁶⁸ V. Erlmann, *Music, Modernity and Global Imagination: South Africa and the Wests* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 60.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁰ H. Mutyambizi, Interview, 9; A. S. Sithole, Interview, 2007, Bulawayo, 10.

¹⁷¹ T. Turino, *Nationalists*, 141, 142.

¹⁷² Solomon Linda and the Evening Birds, ‘Mbube’, Gallo, 1939.

songs and represent them in crucial ways that tell us more about the impact of not only the mediated songs in America but also provide us with insight into the workings of the 'deterritorialized', consummated acoustic world. Thus, it was not only Mattaka and his colleagues in Southern Rhodesia who yearned to travel to America to meet the makers of the songs that had such an impact on them in person, but American musicians and audiences who similarly desired to trace songs like 'Skokiaan' back to their makers in their quest to develop what Penny M. Von Eschen calls 'international sensibilities',¹⁷³ or to appropriate them to better visualize and create their own imaginations of Africa.

This quest to nurture relationships with other musicians enabled Armstrong to present his tour to Southern Rhodesia in 1961 as a trip 'to see the famous composer of 'Skokiaan''¹⁷⁴ in a way that illustrated the contestability of his appointed role as a 'Goodwill Ambassador' for America.¹⁷⁵ But he was only one among many who had taken the pilgrimage to pay homage to Musarurwa after the release of 'Skokiaan'; others, including the doyen of *kwela*, South Africa's Spokes Mashiyane, had visited him for saxophone lessons.¹⁷⁶ Armstrong's meeting with Musarurwa was doubly symbolic; on the one hand, it bespoke an eventual consummation of a long imagined trans-Atlantic cultural communion – a point De Black Evening Follies conveyed in their gift to him – a huge *ngoma* (drum), culturally reinforcing *Parade's* 'welcome home BROTHER' messages.¹⁷⁷ Similarly, his presence in this part of Africa brought into sharp relief the strings that tied the American, South African and Rhodesian ends of the Black Atlantic cultural networks together, as Musarurwa, South Africa's Merry Black Birds leader Peter Rezant and Armstrong himself personified in their famous 'three greats' photograph and in Sambo's cover-page artistic impression of the man towering over Salisbury, blowing his huge sax 'into the world'.¹⁷⁸ On the other hand, for Armstrong specifically, his tour

¹⁷³ P. M. Von Eschen, 'Satchmo Blows Up the World: Jazz, Race and Empire during the Cold War', *Here, There and Everywhere: the Foreign Politics of American Popular Culture*, ed. R. Wagnleitner and E. Tyler (Hanover: University Press of New England, 2000), 170.

¹⁷⁴ I. Mupungu, Interview, 2.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 163.

¹⁷⁶ I. Mupungu, Interview, 4.

¹⁷⁷ 'Satch 'the Great' Meets our 'Greats'', *Parade*, January 1961, 28.

¹⁷⁸ 'Driving in 'State'', *Parade*, January 1961, 29; November 1960, front cover image.

meant the ultimate authentication of a great piece of music beyond the misreading he had helped to spur in America. This is because, right on the plane's podium, 'Armstrong performed [*the instrumental version of*] the song, then he asked the owner to 'play it yourself', after which he shook his head – dumb-struck by the way the man blew his saxophone – then they shook hands'.¹⁷⁹ Thus satisfied, Armstrong handed Musarurwa a crème jacket with black stripes written 'August Musarurwa, the famous composer of Skokiaan' at the back in an even more powerful gesture that instantly etched lasting impressions.¹⁸⁰ They went on to share the stage in both Salisbury and Bulawayo, drawing their songs from a common basket. Anticipating his tour, *Parade* had run features on him for more than three months, opening these not only with the larger than life artistic impression by Sambo, but also with an editorial that reminded its readers that 'half the proceeds of his shows will be given to the furtherance of our educational facilities' and urging them that, 'with this in mind, PARADE feels everyone will make an effort to attend at least one of the shows'.¹⁸¹ Armstrong's identification with Musarurwa also helped to stem the class and especially race fissures that had stymied the wider embrace of *tsaba tsaba* in Southern Africa. Elites, the poor and – to the huge relief of Armstrong's US embassy marshals who had been consumed by worries about whether Armstrong would break or follow 'local custom' and perform before segregated audiences¹⁸² – whites traveled miles to see Armstrong sharing the stage with Musarurwa. It was only the untimely death of Musarurwa's wife the following year that forestalled his accepting his colleague's invitation to follow him to the USA.

Summary

Music, as we have seen in this chapter, provided colonized urban Africans a critical vehicle to differently re-imagine alternative identities for themselves, as part of larger processes of unmaking themselves out of the marginality that discordant colonial

¹⁷⁹ I. Mupungu, Interview, 2.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁸¹ 'Between You and Me', *Parade*, 3.

¹⁸² Mark B. Lewis (Former Director of the US Information Service), 'My Brush with History', http://www.americanheritage.com/articles/magazine/ah/1996/3/1996_3_36.shtml, *An American Heritage Magazine*, vol. 47, issue 3, May/June 1996.

modernity had consigned them. In a context where social advancement and the boundaries of inclusion and exclusion all depended on one's position vis-à-vis a modernity revolving around western cultural sensibilities, education and Christianity, many Africans rebuffed the NAD-sponsored 'tribal' schema examined in Chapter 2 as paralyzing and appropriated aspects of the modernity canon for symbolic capital. As demonstrated in the analysis of the appropriation of Musarurwa's 'skokiaan', the global cultural sensibilities into which some of these musicians constructed their own identities were replete with ethnocentricisms, asymmetries and contradictions which often transformed their conversations into exercises in crucial misreadings and aporic discourses.

Chapter 4 'A Culture of Resistance': Protest and *Chimurenga* Songs of Zimbabwe, 1930s-80.

'It's a truth forever that where the speech of men stops short, there, music's reign begins'
– A.J.C. Pongweni.¹

The last two chapters have presented a story of music as a potent tool in the construction and contestation of identities and power in colonial Zimbabwe. While indigenous musical traditions were mostly suppressed as 'heathen' by missionaries, the state attempted to appropriate and promote them as an important tool to imagine, create or reinforce its notion of disenfranchised colonial subjects as a motley of 'tribal' collectivities which could be socially engineered and controlled by appeals to an idealized past. This agenda ran against the fashionable modernizing craze that most educated urbanites conceptualized through 'western' music, particularly between the 1930s and 1950s. Because the cultural terrain was such a site of struggles, these various cultural approaches did not always produce the intended or predicted outcomes, as the foregoing chapters show. This chapter seeks to trace a different thread through this cultural tapestry – namely, a protest sensibility that both rejected the dirigiste '(re)tribalization' agenda and also critiqued the discordant modernist ideology. Feeding largely on pre-existing traditions, but also on newer contemporary idioms like jazz, secular and even gospel hymns, this music matured into a genre identified by the 1960s as *Chimurenga* (liberation) music for its articulation of anti-colonial and nationalist politics.

Zimbabwean protest or *Chimurenga* music has attracted scholarly attention more than any other aspect of the country's music. This is not surprising given the genre's imbrication with the 1960s-70s war of liberation that ended ninety years of white settler colonialism in 1980. As A.J.C. Pongweni aptly characterizes it, it is 'the music that won the liberation war'.² In spite of its acknowledged long tradition, most scholars locate their analysis of protest music in the age of mass nationalism, wittingly or unwitting giving credence to the view that the pre-1960s were essentially an age of high cultural imperialism for Africans, evidenced by the latter's 'mimicry' of 'western' music in that

¹ A.J.C. Pongweni, *The Songs that Won the Liberation War* (College Press, Harare, 1982), 1.

² *Ibid.*

era.³ No doubt, the combined effects of the ‘modernity’ craze and the stifling of African performative cultures as ‘repugnant’ by missionaries lend some credence to this view. Ironically, this notion actually justified Hugh Tracey’s and other ethnomusicologists’ crusades to ostensibly ‘preserve’ African indigenous music from ‘imminent extinction’, as seen in Chapter 2. Such crusades gave rise, in part, to state-sponsored ‘tribal performances’ that promoted ‘tribal’ polarity, rivaling nationalists’ endeavours to explode such myths, as we shall see in greater detail in this chapter. This chapter argues that while the colonial suppression of and patronage over African music were significant, the importance of both has been overstated. It also avers that Africans did not conceptualize traditional performance cultures and their meanings as fixed in time; these constantly changed to reflect their equally changing situations and needs. In Chakrabarty’s words, they were ‘traditional only in so far as [their] roots could be traced back to the pre-colonial times, but [they were] by no means archaic in the sense of being outmoded’.⁴ One consequence of the failure to recognize this versatility of African ‘traditional’ music is seen in Tracey’s confused taxonomies, a consequence of his attempts to fossilize the music in time to suit and serve preconceived ends. The emergence of this music as *Chimurenga* in the 1960s illustrated the emboldening of a pre-existing, ‘unconquerable site of ... on-going battles’, to borrow Chakrabarty’s phrase.⁵ Protest songs had taken many guises in the decades before the 1960s, assuming both covert and overt forms in different contexts. Thus, this chapter traces this culture of resistance from the 1930s to the 1970s, illustrating how individuals, musicians, nationalist parties and communities utilized music to critique colonial oppression, articulate their ideologies of independence and to fight for their freedom.⁶

³ Fred Zindi, *Roots Rocking in Zimbabwe*. Gweru: Mambo Press, 1990; Cont Mhlanga, Interview, 2 January 2007, Bulawayo.

⁴ D. Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 15.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 65.

⁶ Maurice Vambe attempts a broader redefinition of *Chimurenga* music to include songs that articulated gender struggles and a whole host of others that celebrate the postcolonial government’s contentious policies: ‘Thomas Mapfumo’s ‘Toi Toi’ in Context: Popular Music as Narrative Discourse’, *African Identities*, 2:1 (2004). Indeed, as I illustrate in Chapter 3, a diverse repertoire of songs, ranging from carnivalesque ballads like ‘Aya Mahobo’ to beer-party signature tunes like ‘Skokiaan’ were variously utilized to

Protest Song in the Early Colonial Period

The 1930s-40s was a cataclysmic era that redefined African urbanization. Increasingly large numbers of people were leaving the impoverished 'native reserves' to seek work in the fledgling industries. Far from being a natural process, this rural-urban movement was a dialectical response to the mounting land hunger, taxation, forced labour and unrelenting settler plunder of African economies, and the resulting insustainability of rural life.⁷ This was the essence of rural Africans' loss of independence. This multifaceted assault spawned widespread outcry and opposition, and much of it was articulated in protest songs – a traditionally effective channel of expression in these societies. Africans had used music in all aspects of their everyday lives – *jikinyira* (celebratory songs and poetry) marked the bonding of new relationships and complimented good deeds; *imbongi* (court poets) exalted and critiqued royalty; through *ngano* (folklore) adults instructed youngsters in societal values; *nhimbe* (work parties) were driven by work songs, as was hunting; *bembera* (undirected public admonition) denounced injustice; and war songs inspired battles, to list only a few examples.

These traditions continued in altered and unaltered forms in the colonial and postcolonial dispensations. Noting the cultural impact of colonialism on education, A.D. Kwaramba argues that 'the traditional role of music was replaced by the introduction of a formal education system which was closely linked to the Christian religion'.⁸ This seems to be an overstatement. In reality, song was never totally supplanted, but continued to play a subordinate and, more importantly, subversive role in the formal education system.

articulate class, gender and other concerns 'internal' to African communities but to also engage 'colonial' questions. But, as argued in Chapter 2, to read such music as *Chimurenga* as Vambe's redefinition attempts is to make the *Chimurenga* genre obtuse and virtually meaningless. Etymologically, *Chimurenga* derives from a Shona legendary pre-colonial fighter, Murenga Sororenzou, who is thought to have mysteriously disappeared before his spirit re-emerged through Kaguvi, one of the inspirational leaders of the 1896-97 Uprising against white colonial rule – a war that was fought 'the Murenga way', hence it was dubbed the First *Chimurenga*. In this construction, then, *Chimurenga* is not any struggle, but armed struggle against 'national' injustice.

⁷ R. Palmer and N. Parsons, eds., *Roots of Rural Poverty in Central and Southern Africa* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977).

⁸ A.D. Kwaramba, *Popular Music and Society: The Language of Protest in Chimurenga Music: The Case of Thomas Mapfumo in Zimbabwe* (Oslo: University of Oslo, 1997), 2.

Protest songs were able to capture this crucial space to contest colonial power. Away from the mission stations, much cultural independence existed to nurture protest music. These dissident voices found boldness in the specter of urban riots and demonstrations that marked the dying decades of empire in Africa and, in colonial Zimbabwe, inspired popular confrontation with an intransigent colonial system.

‘Our Children Mourn’: A Dirge for Africa

Lina Mattaka loved music from a tender age. She sang in the school choir in the early 1930s at Nyamandlovu School in western Zimbabwe. The wide repertory she and her classmates sang included a hymn that ‘mourned the death of Africa’. They repeatedly chorused ‘Africa’ to their teacher’s funerary lamentation:

Lead: <i>Vana vedu vanochema</i>	Our children mourn
Chorus: <i>Africa</i>	Africa
<i>Vanochema nyika yeAfrica</i>	They mourn their country, Africa
<i>Africa</i>	Africa
<i>Vanochemera nyika yeAfrica</i>	They mourn (for) their African country
<i>Africa</i>	Africa
<i>Isu tose tinochema</i>	We all mourn
<i>Africa</i>	Africa
<i>Tinochema nyika yeAfrica</i>	We mourn Africa, our country.
<i>Africa</i>	Africa. ⁹

Death in most African cultures is solemnized – just as happier occasions are celebrated – in song. For many Africans, colonialism meant the death of ‘Africa’ as they had variously known, constructed or remembered it, hence this dirge. Miriam Mlambo recalls marching to similar songs during pre-class morning physical education sessions conducted by her African teacher at Nyadiri Mission in eastern colonial Zimbabwe in the same period. One of the students’ favourite tunes was sung in Shona, and the missionaries too enjoyed the tune and applauded the spirited marching:

<i>Urombo hwemadzibaba</i>	The poverty of our fathers,
<i>Urombo hwemadzibaba</i>	The poverty of our fathers,

⁹ Lina Mattaka, Interview, 7 January 2007, Bulawayo, 9.

Kutorerwa nyika nevasina mabvi To have their country confiscated by the people-
without-knees,
Urombo hwemadzibaba The poverty of our fathers.¹⁰

Inevitably, the teacher was promptly fired once the missionaries belatedly discovered that he had been using a very unlikely opportunity to drill a subversive message into the children's minds.¹¹ As we shall see later, indigenous metaphors and culturally rooted figures of speech – like 'people-without-knees' to refer to whites in this case – was one of the strategies these vernacular intellectuals employed to subvert a system of censorship that relied on African interpreters. Doing her nursing village visits, Mlambo also observed children singing similar songs during *jenaguru* (moonlight) festivities. She recalls one which said:

<i>Tinofarirepi?</i>	Where can we live happily and freely?
<i>Nyika yedu yarasika</i>	Our country has been lost.
<i>Tinofarirepi munyika yedu?</i>	Where can we be happy and free in our country?
<i>Kuti zvibharo,</i>	There is rampant forced labour,
<i>Zvimadhibhi nepapa,</i>	Damnably dips here,
<i>Uku zvimapurazeni?</i>	And wretched farms there?

Exacted through head, dog, dip and other taxes and legislative instruments, *chibharo* (forced labour) was one of the pillars of the colonial political economy.¹² Throughout the colonial period, many Africans were compelled to work as labour tenants for white farmers who had seized their lands. They also performed *chibharo* on public works, which included the building of roads, dams, drainage works and contour ridges in despised soil conservation and other 'development' projects. Mines also requisitioned *chibharo*, as did the manufacturing industry.¹³ Forced labour demands mounted progressively with growing population pressure on available land and as more land was seized to accommodate white immigrants after the Second World War. This land

¹⁰ Miriam Mlambo, Interview, 4. 'People-without-knees' was an early Shona parlance for white people, who wore long trousers to give a visual impression of 'kneelessness'.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² G. Arrighi, 'Labour Supplies in Historical Perspective: A Study of the Proletarianization of the African Peasantry in Rhodesia', *Journal of Development Studies*, (1970): 197-234.

¹³ D. Johnson, *World War II and the Scramble for Labour*; C. van Onselen, *Chibharo*.

'alienation' was underpinned by the Land Apportionment Act (LAA (1930)), the Native Land Husbandry Act (NLHA (1951)) and the Land Tenure Act (1969). The NLHA reduced African 'reserve' acreage (into which they had been driven by the LAA) to 8 and cattle ownership to 4 beasts, then compelled Africans to do 'soil conservation' work to stem the rampant erosion that resulted from the enforced overcrowding on marginal lands.¹⁴

Describing how the cattle seizures started in his home area of Chivi after it had been 'declared overstocked', Simon Muzenda recalled:

In 1938 in Masvingo Province, there came a white man [whom we] called Matigimu, who was responsible for de-stocking. He would move around with white paint ... and every beast he touched with his white paint he regarded as de-stocked. He did that for a long time and those cattle that had been de-stocked would be sold (to white farmers) for a song, for one pound, two pounds or two pounds one shilling and two pence ... All those cattle that had been de-stocked found their way to those [settlers] who had opened butcheries.¹⁵

Native Commissioners would take advantage of the requirement for Africans to regularly dip their livestock to conduct these forced cullings and seizures. This is one reason why dip tanks were sabotaged from the 1960s; they were a hated symbol of legislated theft that dismantled the pillars of African economic independence.

With the persistence of this plunder, many protest songs went beyond merely pleading for humane treatment to advocating militant resistance in those early years. Thus, among the songs that Mlambo heard in the villages in the 1940s was one that said:

<i>Tinorwa</i>	We fight
<i>Tinorwira nyika yakatorwa nemabhunu</i>	We fight for the country that was taken by the Boers
<i>Tinorwira nyika yedu</i>	We fight for our country
<i>Yakatorwa nemakiwa</i>	Which was taken by the whites. ¹⁶

¹⁴ V.E.M. Machingaidze, 'Agrarian Change from above: The Southern Rhodesia Native Land Husbandry Act and African Response', *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 24: 3 (1991): 557-588.

¹⁵ N. Bhebe, *Simon Vengesai Muzenda and the Struggle for and Liberation of Zimbabwe*. (Gweru: Mambo Press, 2004), 33.

¹⁶ M. Mlambo, Interview, 4.

This illustrates that protest music, including that with a militant edge, blossomed early against colonial plunder and continued subjugation. This argument can be summarized in Mlambo's words:

[Protest songs] started many years before [the nationalist era]. That is because politics were always there, and people knew that they were oppressed, right from the beginning. If I really sit down I can recollect many more of these songs which were sung in different tunes from the ones that you hear today. I know them. They never got into the libraries, nor were they ever recorded.¹⁷

Popularly sung on the missions, in the villages and urban centres, these critical songs closely mirrored the South African political discography which was a large component of what Mattaka called *ngoma dzanaCaluza* [songs by Herbert Caluza and colleagues], but were never recorded in this early period in colonial Zimbabwe. Neither the mobile Federal Broadcasting Corporation and the Central African Broadcasting Service, nor the roving ethnomusicologists hunting for so-called 'primitive' songs, captured this subversive genre. Professional musicians like Mattaka, who were immersed in the 'civilizing mission', also steered clear of it. They selectively read their models, like Caluza, ignoring those songs that denounced colonial plunder of African land, livestock and labour, such as his (Caluza's) first recording – 'Silusapho lwase Africa' (We are the children of Africa), which was adopted by the South African Native National Congress (ANC) as its anthem:

<i>Silusapho lwase Africa</i>	We are the children of Africa.
<i>Sikhalela izwe lakhithi</i>	We are crying for our land.
<i>Zulu nomXhosa noMsuthu</i>	Zulus, Xhosas, Sothos
<i>Hlanganani sikala ngeLand Act.</i>	Unite over the Land Act. ¹⁸

As we have already seen in chapter 3, African teachers, students and children in colonial Zimbabwe composed their songs from their own lived experiences not as ideosyncrasies,

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ V. Erlmann, *African Stars*, 119-120. The (Native) Land Act was promulgated in 1912 to proletarianize South Africans and, like a host of other legislation, it was replicated in colonial Zimbabwe as the LAA.

but as narratives that tied into broader conversations within and beyond the region. The thematic and formulaic commonalities with Caluza's compositions is clear in the songs discussed above. All the songs share a common sense of collective loss and others challenged the 'children of Africa' to fight for the restoration of their plundered heritage. This sense of shared loss and subordination built and bonded African identities as subalterns in ways that helped to articulate political ideologies beyond localized taxonomies. The prayerfully subversive 'Ishe Komborera Africa' (God bless Africa) grew to become the 'African national anthem' beyond South Africa and the region, reinforcing the idea of African common destiny under the pervasive oppressive dispensation. With the formation of the mass nationalist parties – the African National Congress and the City Youth League and their successors from the 1950s – the song captivated crowds and disturbed settler comfort predicated on self-deluding notions like 'all what the natives really have is rhythm'.¹⁹ Most of these parties were formed in the community halls – Mai Musodzi and Stanley Hall - where processions of party supporters, women and children escorted their leaders singing this 'anthem' and other songs while waving banners demanding 'democratic rule'.²⁰ As illustrated in Chapter 2, the NAD had established these halls as vistas of surveillance, control and domestication. Thus, by using these spaces for their own, illegal purposes, Africans undermined the NAD's power and authority over the definition and use of space. Africans performed music in these halls not simply as entertainment or as an outlet for 'excess energies', but rather for organizational and mobilizational purposes, to give voice to festering grievances.

The upshot of this subversion was that, by the late 1950s, the NAD was startled out of its traditional stance of avoiding comment on (African) 'politics'. In what can be read as confessional acknowledgement of the power of song, the NAD denounced the then prevalent processions and 'protest marches' as 'strange developments not previously seen in this colony in which the maintenance of order was put into jeopardy'.²¹ It observed that:

¹⁹ A.J.C. Pongweni, 'The Chimurenga Songs', 70.

²⁰ Maurice Nyagumbo, *With the People*, 117.

²¹ Native Affairs Department, Annual Report, Salisbury, 1st July 1957-30 June 1958, 4.

Demonstrators were organized into processions on four occasions during the year, twice by the Southern Rhodesian African National Congress ... and twice by so-called African Trade Union Organizations which aimed their agitation at the City Council and the Federal Government. An interesting characteristic of these processions has been the universal adoption of the hymn 'Mwari Komborera Africa' – 'God Bless Africa' – which many Africans postulate as their National Anthem – which demonstrators now persistently chant as they go. Sophisticated Africans who like this piece of music are already becoming embarrassed at the manner in which it is thus being prostituted, however, and deprecate its use as a mob madrigal.²²

As its language betrays, the department now acknowledged the futility of its attempts to suppress Africans into a homogenous entity, if only as a political strategy. As argued in Chapter 2, this was one reason why it created and ran the BSCC for what it called 'the better educated natives' or 'sophisticated Africans'. It sought to exploit and accentuate class fissures to stymie nationalist organization. Thus, in the same report, the NAD recalled that 'in the department's annual report last year and in the article published in the Native Affairs Department Annual [NADA], an attempt was made to present to readers a picture of the various strata into which the urban African community is presently dividing and to distinguish the classes which are forming from this'.²³ The colonial state was clearly struggling to define and manipulate the direction of socio-political change.

Class had always been a threat to the colonial project, with aspiring African middle class claims to equal rights on the basis of their education threatening to render redundant colonialism's racial underpinnings.²⁴ By the 1950s, it had become an equally troubling specter for the nationalist movement. While many educated Africans did not seek to set themselves apart from the 'masses' and actually took up leadership positions in the nationalist movement, many others had difficulties identifying with the manner in which this 'nationalism' was being practiced. Mouthpiece for the 'progressive' sections of African society, the *Parade* magazine frequently denounced these urban disturbances.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ *Ibid.*, 4.

²⁴ Michael West, 'Equal Rights for all Civilized Men': Elite Africans and the Quest for 'European' Liquor in Colonial Zimbabwe, 1924-1961', *International Review of Social History* 37 (1992):376-397.

Its November 1960 editorial reiterated these rebukes on 'looters', 'rioters' and 'senseless plunderers':

Men who don't know what is actually good for them masquerade as 'Freedom' fighters and perform the most abhorable (sic) atrocities known to us through sheer ignorance and near insanity. Riots have become all too prevalent in our townships for anybody to shrug them off as 'just one of those things'. The people and the Government (in this country the two are NOT synonymous) are worried ... the cause of African 'Freedom' is fast losing the confidence of the more reasonable Europeans in this country.²⁵

The colonial state made no effort to conceal its preference for dealing with the so-called 'sophisticated Africans' to those it denounced as 'spivs, hooligans and demagogues', and accused of inciting street 'rampages'. The message was not lost on the former, either, as the Chairman of the BSCC, Enoch Dumbutshena, illustrated in a 1954 *Parade* article describing the 'advancement' of Africans in South Africa:

The education and opportunities which have been given to the African by the white man have borne much fruit. There are highly educated Africans, among whom are teachers, lawyers, University lecturers and doctors ... It is on this type of African that the urban black community largely depends for leadership. Their number is not sufficiently large, however, to influence the masses and provide that leadership which goes into the making of a nation and winning for the race the respect it deserves from other races.²⁶

The memoirs of Maurice Nyagumbo, one of the more radical nationalist leaders, provides some insight into how much class had become a problem, especially in the manipulative hands of the NAD – a department he described as anti-African. Nyagumbo saw most 'educated Africans' as politically retrogressive:

Apart from the Native Affairs Department, there was also the problem of the so-called African intellectuals. These people condemned the behaviour of the rioters, and some went as far as to call for the ban of the [City Youth League]. We later

²⁵ 'These Riots', *Parade*, 4-6.

²⁶ Enoch Dumbutshena, 'The African in the Union through the Eyes of a Southern Rhodesian: Three Hundred Years of Contact with Europeans have Left their Imprint', *Parade*, February 1954, 17.

knew these people as ‘stooges and quislings’ [who spoke] with their masters’ voices, and the fact that their masters were hurt by the [1956 Salisbury bus boycott] rioters caused them terrible embarrassment.²⁷

In the ‘fever pitch’ political atmosphere of the late 1950s, as the NAD described it, Dumbutshena unsurprisingly ‘refused to assume the chairmanship of the ANC because he was afraid of jeopardizing his job as a journalist after being approached by Nyagumbo and other nationalists scouting for a graduate to lead the new party after its predecessors had been banned.’²⁸ To Nyagumbo, Dumbutshena was a ‘quisling’.²⁹ Similarly, Nyagumbo and other nationalists would refuse to patronize Jerry Vera’s Happy Valley Hotel. The latter was a Bulawayo Welfare Officer working to implement the municipality’s Native Social Welfare Policy, discussed in Chapter 2.

Nyagumbo’s frustration with political moderation is understandable; he was a newly converted radical himself. A former hotel worker and ballroom champion in South Africa, Nyagumbo had reacted in similar fashion to invitations to political functions, preferring ballroom dancing to nationalist politics. During a stint in Cape Town in the 1950s, he had then welcomed the banning of the (South African) Communist Party with a sigh of relief:

In the May [1953] elections, the Nationalist Party was returned to power; and, as predicted, the Communist Party was banned. It was a bad thing for my friends, but to me it was a great relief as it was now possible to go into dancing in a big way without interference. The party had been banned just at the right time. We were preparing for a very big ballroom competition which was to be held in August the same year and was adjudicated by Victor Sylvester of England.³⁰

His friends had incessantly pressurized him to partake in the Communist Party and ANC activities. But he had preferred ballroom dancing to politics:

I used to argue that the situation in South Africa did not affect Rhodesian Africans who, I believed, were suffering more hardships than those faced by

²⁷ M. Nyagumbo, *With the People*, 105.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 107.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 80.

Africans in South Africa. This argument I used as a means to stop anyone who tried to persuade me to join the ANC. I did not want anything that could detract me from ballroom dancing.³¹

Now a politically born again returnee 'patriot', Nyagumbo had no time for those Africans he saw as politically moderate, or as 'quislings'. Those so labeled were often targeted for beatings, looting and vandalism during violent street protests as happened during the *Zhii* riots in July 1960. This presaged the wartime polarization of politics into 'supporters' and 'sell-outs', leaving no space for neutrality.

Zhii was one of the boldest displays of public disobedience by urban Africans in Rhodesia in the post-Second World War period. African workers harnessed protest songs to mobilize popular participation in riots centred mainly in Salisbury and Bulawayo after police had attempted to ban popular processions by workers.³² *Zhii* is a Shona idiophonic neologism denoting the force of a huge falling rock or other object that rioting Africans chanted to enact their concerted desires to crush the colonial state.³³ The Mutyambizis, Abel Sithole and Nehwati all participated in this 'war' as members of the Bulawayo African community, and they all describe how protesters sang 'zhii' as they attacked beerhalls, government buildings, vehicles, and everything that represented the state. They also looted businesses owned by Africans they saw as consorting with the state.³⁴ In Nehwati's words, this was concerted action by urban African communities in Bulawayo and elsewhere, inspired by 'common interests [that] superseded sectional ones ... such as tribalism, culture and class' to fight against colonial oppression.³⁵ A revisionist T. Ranger, on the other hand, reads these riots as 'a war between the [Bulawayo] township poor and the newly prosperous traders and rentiers.'³⁶ These two opposing interpretations

³¹ *Ibid.*, 82.

³² Julie Frederikse, *None But Ourselves: Masses vs. Media in the Making of Zimbabwe*. (Harare: Oral Traditions Association of Zimbabwe with Anvil Press, 1982), 37.

³³ Francis Nehwati, 'The Social and Communal Background to 'Zhii': The African Riots in Bulawayo, Southern Rhodesia in 1960', *African Affairs* 69: 276 (1970): 250-266.

³⁴ Mutyambizi Interview, 10. Nehwati was a member of the powerless Bulawayo African Advisory Board and the President of the Southern Rhodesia Municipal Workers' Union at this time.

³⁵ F. Nehwati, 'Zhii', 250.

³⁶ T. Ranger, 'Urban Violence and the Colonial Experience: Bulawayo, Rhodesia, 1893 to 1960', *Cultural and Social History* 3: 2 (2006).

raise the important methodological question: who is the historian – the trained professional interpreter relying on (colonial) documentary records or the participants who threw the rocks, sang the songs that drove this event and (later) wrote down their experiences? This is not the place to fully grapple with this question; it is clear, nonetheless, that class was read differently here. In the popular African imagination, it seemed to have been weighed in terms of its political significance more than as a simple aspect of socio-economic stratification, as we have seen in Nyagumbo's sentiments.

This is also the reading that we get from the song, 'Zhii', as subsequently recorded by Sithole's Bulawayo Rhythm Crooners. It is a narrative of these confrontations, set to a tune from another popular song about the everyday contests on the urban terrain – 'Ukati Nzve', by Faith Dauti.³⁷ In the song, the Crooners chronicle Africans' bravery and the brutality they endured as they fought running battles with the colonial police and soldiers – all for the sake of 'Africa':

Our fellow men, you don't know the tribulations
That befell us here in Africa
When we blacks confronted whites
Fighting for freedom here in Africa
We had to hide our children back in the villages
Mothers wiped away tears
They had to run to dodge whistling bullets
Most of us were wielding knobkerries
There was fierce fighting and death those troubled days
People died, and others were arrested.³⁸

Sithole has a strong sense of song as historical narrative. As he explains, 'What we were saying is that we fought against whites, throwing rocks and other projectiles during such risings ... and this song eventually led to our exiling'.³⁹ The casting of these local narratives as 'struggles for Africa', where they eventually went into self-exile, suggests a broader sense of common identity and destiny with fellow colonized or newly

³⁷ The original tune for 'Ukati Nzve' was an old Latin American song, expunged of its lyrics, which Dauti and colleagues did not understand: Henry Mutyambizi, Interview, 14.

³⁸ Cool Crooners, *Zhii*, *Blue Sky*, 2006. (Original in Ndebele; translation mine, with the help of Monwabisi Sobantu).

³⁹ Abel Sithole, Interview, 8.

independent Africans on the continent. There is no sense that this song, or the event that it chronicles, was a 'war' against newly-rich traders and rentiers as Ranger suggests.

As already noted, the Bulawayo Rhythm Crooners superimposed their 'Zhii' song on a popular tune that articulated struggles over urban space – Dauti's 'Ukati Nzve'. The latter song captured not only African versus colonial state struggles over urban space, but also African production and inflection of meanings from and into the voids of the urban built environment. The idiophone *nzve* describes the quick, dashing movements Africans made around street corners to avoid being seen but also to see in an antinomic and spectacularly transitory usage of criminalized space. Criminalized by urban by-laws as 'loiterers', 'vagrants' and 'spivs' (thieves), Africans appropriated the street corner to re-imagine and contest that criminalization while also animating a rich sub-cultural urban discourse. Barred by signs that proclaimed: 'No Africans and Dogs' from pavements and public parks, they claimed street corners, empty commonage spaces and shopping centres like Amato and subverted them into transient rendezvous for diverse purposes like dating, soliciting, clandestine vending and political mobilization, transforming the cityscape into a site of intense cultural and political contestations. For Africans, the corner became both an unlikely physical meeting space and a metaphor for subversive lifestyles as they both literally and figuratively 'cut corners' to make a living in such harsh environments. Moreover, this re-imagination of the street corner subverted its use by the colonial state, whose gridiron town planning facilitated easy surveillance and control, as symbolized by the legendary ruthlessness of the *Bhurak(u)wacha* (Black Watchman).⁴⁰ The *Bhurak(u)wacha* was the urban personification of the state's omnipresence in African life. So, Dauti's song carried dual meanings:

Ukati nzve, pachikona ndakuona

When you dash around the corner, I
see you

Ukati nzve, paAmato ndakuona

When you make the customary
stopover at Amato (Supermarket), I
see you!

⁴⁰ See G.A. Chaza, *Bhurakuwacha: The Story of a Black Policeman in Colonial Southern Rhodesia* (Harare: College Press, 1998).

The song celebrates Africans' streetwise maneuvering around mechanisms of state control while simultaneously performing a particularly urban sub-cultural lifestyle necessitated by that environment. Such performances represented a more fleeting contestation of space than the more carnivalesque *mahobo* parties of the 'location' and commonage. The variations of form were, of course, largely determined by the different concentrations of state power in the different urban zones. Overall, what we see here is an interesting fusion of elements of two songs from two slightly different moments of urban struggle to carve a complex narrative of oppression and its dialectic, the imperative of resistance. As the most recent re-rendering of 'Ukati Nzve' as 'Mwana Wenyu/Ndoitenga Mota (Your Daughter has Spurned Me/So I will surely Buy a Car to Win her) by young Willom Tight,⁴¹ each moment and turn in urban techno-culture draws from the same vault of idioms while emphasizing a particular nuance to generate its own specific conversations.

Narratives that decried Black people's oppression and exalted their bravery articulated the agenda of the political and labour movement in the post-Second World War era. For instance, Nyagumbo nostalgically recalled the all-night singing and dancing of ANC youths at Joshua Nkomo's house in Bulawayo's Mpopoma – the 'State House' – and during processions to and from Stanley Hall, Mai Musodzi Hall and marches between Highfield and the city centre in Salisbury. Some of the songs were short, repetitive ballads that lionized popular leaders like Nkomo and James Chikerema, whom supporters often hoisted up on their shoulders at rallies. An example of such songs is 'Mukono Unobaya Dzose' (The Champion Bull) – an adapted herding song:

<i>Tewera mukono unobaya dzose</i>	Follow the sharp-horned bull
<i>Tewera, baya wabaya.</i>	Who gores anyone who dares challenge him. ⁴²

Representing the party leaders as the champion bulls produced a subversive counter-narrative against the self-portrayal of the colonial state as the all-powerful authority. It

⁴¹ Willom Tight, *Mwana Wenyu/Ndoitenga Mota*, Hodzeka, Bantu Entertainment, 'Real Music', 2006.

⁴² Maurice Nyagumbo, *With the People*, 105.

performatively dislocated the centre of power and reinforced African claims to it. Nyagumbo had a special fondness for the Southern African political ‘madrigal’, ‘Ishe Komborera Africa’:

*Mwari komborera Africa
Ngaitunhidzwe zita rayo
Inzwai munamoto wedu,
Mwari komborera
Isu mhuri yayo,
Hu-uya mwiya
Huya mwiya*

God bless Africa
Hallowed be her name
Hear our prayer,
God bless us,
Its family
Come down, Holy Spirit
Come down, Holy Spirit.⁴³

Through spontaneous improvisation, traditional and folk songs such as ‘Mukono Unobaya Dzose’ were revolutionized and given a political slant to serve the contemporary political purposes at rallies and *pungwes*.

The power politics played out at such occasions, and in the liberation struggle generally, simulteneously stirred much gendered and generational tension but also tended to suppress it. For example, while most parents dutifully supported the struggle, they silently resented the attendant high-handed and amoral abuses that came with the war. The sexual exploitation of girls by ‘the boys’ was one example. As Agness Ziyatsha, a local ZANU treasurer in Zvishavane, pointed out, ‘It was very distressing: we parents provided blankets for the boys and then they slept with our children in our blankets while we spent the night singing’.⁴⁴ The fact that there was not much scope for the ‘masses’ to sing songs critiquing such abuses tells us much about the ideological functions of political song. As Josephine Nhongo-Simbanegavi argues, such ‘little’ concerns were simply ignored because ‘fighting colonialism’ was a more immediate issue – a matter of life and death.⁴⁵ In this sense, political songs, like slogans, whose commands were often backed by rifle butts and logs,⁴⁶ demanded and produced conformity, not dialogue.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 162. Translations mine.

⁴⁴ Agness Ziyatsha, in I. Staunton, ed. *Mothers of the Revolution*, 173.

⁴⁵ J. Nhongo-Simbanegavi, *For Better or Worse?: Women and ZANLA in Zimbabwe’s Liberation Struggle* (Harare: Weaver Press, 2000).

⁴⁶ Such facts have led N.J. Krieger to contentiously foreground coercion as the principal factor for peasant participation in the liberation war, as opposed to T. Ranger’s celebrated idea of the peasantry’s revolutionary consciousness; T. Ranger, *Peasant Consciousness*

Leading the nationalist movement was a risky undertaking demanding courage and a level of conformity. The image of the champion bull, which came to signify Joshua Nkomo and was later adopted for the party's emblem, reflected the former's ability not only to face the enemy, but also to command obedience within ZAPU. Thus, while Ziyatsha's example illustrates that nationalist leaders could become loose bulls in a very literal sense, the war climate had eroded the traditional space where a daughter-in-law, for example, could sing invectives against a troublesome mother-in-law while grinding corn at the mill.⁴⁷ Another example of the appropriation of popular symbolism to convey political messages was the adoption of 'Sarura Wako' (Pick Your Own), an adolescent-courtship folk song popularized by Dorothy Masuku as a signature tune endorsing Nkomo's leadership of the nationalist movement:

<i>Sarura wako, kadeya deya</i>	Choose yours, <i>kadeya deya</i>
<i>Wangu mutema, kadeya deya</i>	Mine is dark-complexioned, <i>kadeya deya</i>
<i>Wangu mutsvuku, kadeya deya</i>	Mine is light-complexioned, <i>kadeya deya</i> .

Similarly, through spontaneous improvisation during participatory performances, 'Wangu ndiNkomo (Mine is Nkomo) was substituted for 'Wangu mutema (Mine is dark-complexioned) or 'Wangu mutsvuku' (Mine is light-complexioned).⁴⁸ 'Apolitical', catchy tunes like this one remained open-ended and amenable to political spinning. In the backdrop of the colonial state's demonization of these leaders as 'demagogues' and

and Guerilla War in Zimbabwe (Harare: ZPH, 1985). Kriger bolsters her thesis by arguing that 'conflicts internal to peasant communities' were not only the compelling motives for their participation, but that 'these conflicts undermined the guerrillas' efforts to organize and unite support': N.J. Kriger, 'Popular Struggles in Zimbabwe's War of National Liberation', *Cultural Struggles & Development in Southern Africa*, ed. P. Kaarsholm (Harare: Baobab Books, 1991), 126; N.J. Kriger, *Zimbabwe's Guerrilla War: Peasant Voices* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992). As K.D. Manungo points out, in spite of the gender and generational tensions common to any society, guerillas were not strangers, but returnee peasant children (*vana/vakomana*) who shared the same long-running colonial burdens and hopes for the future with their parents, hence the sacrifices the latter made for the 'people's war': K.D. Manungo, 'The Peasantry of Zimbabwe: A vehicle for Change', in *Cultural Struggle & Development*, 117.

⁴⁷ G. Kahari, 'The History of the Shona Protest Song: A Preliminary Study', *Zambezia* 9:2 (1981):3.

⁴⁸ Julia Moyo, 4 January 2007, Bulawayo, 12.

'*magandanga*' (savage murderers), nationalist constituents used these songs to reaffirm their confidence in their chosen leaders. The performance of professional musicians like Masuku and Sithole at these rallies bolstered such public approval:

For years, many had sung praising African leaders. For example, in the 1950s, some sang praising Mr. B.B. Burombo – a trade unionist who organized many labour and political rallies – for conscientizing Black people to liberate themselves. When these political parties were formed, ZAPU, etc, we started raising funds for them, all over.⁴⁹

They did not always have to compose political songs in line with the doctrines of the parties, but sang any songs popular with audiences, which could be manipulated as we have seen with songs like 'Sarura Wako.'⁵⁰ Moreover, few musicians were able to record songs with overt political connotations due to limited recording opportunities, censorship and persecution, particularly after the fall of the federation and the coming of the UDI regime.

Increasing Repression, the Protest Sensibility and its Discontents

Among the few recorded but subsequently censored compositions was one 'Negro Spiritual' by the Sam Matambo-led City Quads, 'Lizofika nini Ilanga?' (When will the day of Freedom Come?), which was recorded by the German company, Polydor, in 1961.⁵¹ Like those songs performed by mission teachers and students at Nyadiri, Nyamandlovu and in the villages, the message in this song was direct and unambiguous:

Lizofika nini ilanga lenkululeko?
Lizofika nini ilanga lenjabulo?
Abantu abansundu bayahlupheka
Kudhala, kudhala, kudhala

When will the day of freedom come?
When will the day of happiness come?
Black people are suffering
It's been too long, it's been too long.⁵²

Matambo worked for the Federal Broadcasting Corporation (FBC)'s African Service in Salisbury. Before he could play his composition on radio, he was asked by his white

⁴⁹ A. Sithole, Interview, 8.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ Joyce Jenje-Makwenda, *Zimbabwe Township Music*, 22.

⁵² *Ibid.*

supervisor to explain his lyrics, which were disproved and subsequently sanitised into an appeal to God to help the suffering *abantu abansundu* (Black people).⁵³ Bill Saidi and his Milton Brothers' colleagues, Andrew Chakanyuka and others, faced the same predicament. They had composed a song lamenting the hardships faced by Africans, critiquing the so-called partnership between whites and Africans under the Federation as a sham:

<i>Honai rudzi rwevatema runongochema</i>	Witness how Africans continue to cry
<i>Nokuti takagara nevachena</i>	Because of whites' presence here
<i>Honai vatema vanongotambudzika</i>	See how Africans continue to suffer
<i>Ngatichemeyi kunababa wedu-wo!</i>	Let us all cry to our father! ⁵⁴

The FBC's producer, Dominic Mandizha, who was also a regular sessionist with the Milton Brothers, asked them to change the lyrics, which they eventually did under protest after some heated debate. Again, the final product was a totally different message suggesting that Africans happily supported what the whites were doing.⁵⁵ While African producers and broadcasters could sometimes work to subvert the system from within, they could be hardpressed to account for any indiscretions they allowed while serving in such gatekeeping positions. Thus, Saidi and his colleagues actually sympathized with Mandizha:

He was an experienced broadcaster, one of the best, a man who had helped promote us as a group. [He] was so keen to promote African music; I know that it pained him deeply to ask us to change the lyrics. Mandizha was apologetic about [it]. I felt for him, we all did; he would have lost his job. But he wasn't a stooge. He promoted our music to such an extent [that] he [and] Andrew Chakanyuka, the Milton Brothers' regular guitarist, and myself, record[ed] a number of duets which remain in the ZBC library to this day – Andrew on guitar and me on vocals. Most of our songs were not political. But all three of us put a lot into them and when I listen to them (now) my eyes become wet.⁵⁶

⁵³ Bill Saidi, 'Africans Still Singing to be Freed from Persecution', *www.sowetan.co.za*, 23 November 2007.

⁵⁴ B. Saidi, pers. comm., 29 November 2007.

⁵⁵ B. Saidi, 'Africans still Singing'; *Ibid*.

⁵⁶ B. Saidi, pers. comm., 29 November 2007.

Saidi and his colleagues quickly 'forgot' the contrived lyrics as soon as they recorded them, reverting to their original song during live shows.⁵⁷ Thus, the power of radio as a technological instrument of both transmission and control was clearly limited. The stage provided artists some room to contest the censorship they suffered in the studio and on radio, even though that was also fraught with dangers, particularly during the repressive UDI era after 1965. During a concert at Skyline Motel (outside Salisbury) in the early 1960s, for instance, Sam Banana performed a song whose lyrics asserted that 'We will surely rule this country one day'. As soon as he was through, the feared Rhodesian Front's Special Police Branch detectives – African police agents in civilian clothes – seized him, and that was the end of his dare-devil bravery.⁵⁸

This harsh repression limited the open expression of protest songs for sometime, with the emerging trend of singing songs in indigenous languages closely scrutinized. The practical effect of this, as Mbirimi noted, was a prolonged refuge in the fading western cover versions because,

If you had to sing African songs, they had to be very innocuous – like [our] 'Chipo mwana wababa wakagara pasi pemuti.' There is no message in there, nothing. Chipo is sitting under a tree; so what? That, yes, you could sing, but anything deeper, no!⁵⁹

Few of these musicians may have considered themselves 'politicians', but, like anybody else subjected to everyday acts of indignity and humiliation, they felt compelled to vent their frustration and anger in ways that were politically significant. Their condition shaped those songs because, as Mi Hlatshwayo averred, it would be unreasonable to 'deprive or take away a person's land and at the same time expect him to draw and sing about the landscape'.⁶⁰ But political repression tended to asphyxiate protest songs. As a result, such music thrived better in the relatively safe haven of the political crowd where the police could not easily target individuals as they did professional musicians.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ Friday Mbirimi, Interview, 10 November 2006, Harare, 3.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ Quoted in V. Erlmann, *African Stars*, V.

Other musicians, of course, steered away from 'politics' of their own accord and, in Hlatshwayo's language, sang the landscape. In Chapter 3, we have seen that many musicians conceptualized the singing of cover versions of foreign music as the 'modern thing to do'. By the 1950s-60s, many of them were composing their own songs even though some of these compositions continued to follow the same 'western' styles. Mattaka's ideological convictions and his discography, for example, remained unaffected by the rising nationalist sentiment. Up to the time he retired in the early 1970s, he still pursued the 'civilizing mission'. Mattaka avoided themes like land and freedom that were the staple of most protest songs at this time, arguing that, 'No, that's your own concern ... you Zimbabweans. I didn't get involved with that. Whites didn't snatch (land); they came to develop. I can't get involved with that because I am not Zimbabwean, but I came from Malawi'.⁶¹ His political disengagement caused him problems with nationalists, who seized on his ethnicity to undermine him:

Youngsters like Moses Mpahlo and Samson Gatora – those were youngmen whom we had trained so that they could go anywhere in the world and do wonders, because they were respectful and obedient. It was only after some politicians came and asked them: 'Why should you be led by a foreigner?' You are shaming us; do you mean there are no educated locals to lead you? That old man comes from Malawi! Then they didn't feel happy to be led by me, a foreigner. That was in Harare in the 1940s. Whenever we trained someone and they saw that they were now capable, they would come and snatch them away from the group. That is how people like Safirio [Madzikatire] left us.⁶²

Mattaka saw his ethnic identity as the reason for his persecution, which drove him into deeper political aloofness: 'We foreigners are always despised ... that is why we didn't want to concern ourselves too much with what other groups were doing. So our programme was different from those of others'.⁶³

Thus, asked if his discography reflected the rising nationalist temperatures as was commonly the case, his response was an unequivocal:

⁶¹ Kenneth Mattaka, Interview 2, 6.

⁶² Kenneth Mattaka, Interview 2, 11.

⁶³ Kenneth Mattaka, Interview 2, 11.

No! We didn't intervene into that. That spirit never got hold of us; we could give them support, financially, if they wanted that ... People are different, you see? There are church people, those who form different political parties, etc; using force was a different matter altogether ... we just stayed here and looked after ourselves.⁶⁴

While his discography defied the change, the space to pursue his work unmolested did not – a fact he rued:

That's when we lost our freedom to continue. Where could you go freely? Even at Bata (Gwelo) where I worked, it was OK for sometime, but when we got to the late 60s, things changed. It became difficult to move ... You could meet anything. You could be harassed because there were no *tsika* (manners) any longer – there was no respect. You could call it war, but you know this system of *kubira-bira* (criminality) – politics. They could just get into schools – at Tegwani, etc, thus we heard – 'they have taken the children and teachers and loaded them into lorries at night without them knowing where they were going; closing down schools and murdering missionaries and other people!' That is why Smith ... eventually decided to bomb them at their headquarters, at Chimoio, because they were terrorists who ate people's cows and destroyed industries and fuel depots. Otherwise there were no battlefronts in Rhodesia (unlike in Hitler's war); who saw them? It was only an excuse for plunder.⁶⁵

There is no questioning where Mattaka's sympathies lay. Until the colonial land and taxation policies took a heavy toll on the African economy in the post-Second World War era, most Africans tended to regard 'location' life unfavourably, leaving homeownership there to the so-called 'native aliens'. On the other hand, the latter's 'urban loyalty' gave them a greater stake in the urban economy and made them preferred employees to industrialists and other employers. Thus, Mattaka is correct to an extent in his observation that:

Zezeurus had a habit of not wanting to work; all they wanted was to buy a plough and a span of oxen. During the farming season, you didn't see a Zezeuru – annoy him and you won't see him tomorrow. They were a proud people who had their own wealth in cattle, land and rural homes. They took pride in their rural homes

⁶⁴ Kenneth Mattaka, Interview 1, 6.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

and despised depraved location life because it was antithetical to *chivanhu* (Shona cultural ethos).⁶⁶

Mattaka is suggesting here that the Zezuru (Shona) disliked 'location' life not only for what Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch calls the 'crowded daily cohabitation inevitable in the city',⁶⁷ but also because of their rural-centred economic autonomy – *qua* Arrighi's labour supply thesis.⁶⁸ What Mattaka sees as 'pride in homes, cattle and land' was an expression of the Shona's full confidence in their economic self-determination, which was boosted by early colonial urbanization, rather than some anti-modern instinct. As Elizabeth Schmidt and other scholars have shown, such temporary waged labour engagements many Africans preferred were intended to bolster their comparative rural economic advantage,⁶⁹ hence the investment in the equipment Mattaka mentions. With the deepening colonial assault, however, it became harder for them to escape the exploitative industrial prism, which in turn fuelled urban anger and struggles that foregrounded the city's power to (re)invent ethnicity.⁷⁰ The ill-treatment that Mattaka suffered was symptomatic of the changing times; 'location' dwellers who steered away from nationalist political activism became easy targets for attacks by nationalist youth activists. Similarly, his 'civilizing discourse' had clearly fallen out of sync with the politics of the day. This was an era for a different kind of musical idiom.

As Mattaka observed, the coming of mass nationalism disrupted the colonial notions of *tsika* – manners and etiquette that had structured and ordered Rhodesian

⁶⁶ Kenneth Mattaka, Interview 1, 14.

⁶⁷ C. Coquery-Vidrovitch, 'Urban Cultures: Relevance and Context', in *Urbanization and African Cultures*, ed. Toyin Falola and Steven J. Salm (Durham: Carolina Academic Press, 2005), 18.

⁶⁸ G. Arrighi, 'Labour Supplies in Historical Perspective'.

⁶⁹ Elizabeth Schmidt, *Peasants, Traders and Wives: Shona Women and the History of Zimbabwe, 1870-1939* (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 1992). Compare Belinda Bozzoli (with Mmantho Nkotsoe), *Women of Phokeng: Consciousness, Life Strategy and Migrancy in South Africa, 1900-1983* (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 1991) and Colin Bundy, *The Rise and Fall of the South African Peasantry* (Berkeley: California University Press, 1979), on South Africa.

⁷⁰ T. Falola, 'Urban Cultures: The Setting and the Situational', in *Urbanization and African Cultures*, 9.

society and screened politics from the community halls.⁷¹ While at the same time they often stirred ethnic polarities and tensions into violent confrontations, the bold street demonstrations of the 1960s were a different proposition altogether from the NAD's beloved 'tribal faction fights' of earlier decades. Political murders and brutal repression tended to deepen popular consciousnesses and anger against the state and pile pressure on politically uncommitted Africans. One example of the former was the assassination of ZAPU's Vice-President, Dr. Samuel Parirenyatwa, by state agents in 1962. Julia Moyo explains how that incident impacted her:

For me, my mindset and perception of white people changed totally after they murdered Dr. Samuel Parirenyatwa. I attended the inquest at the courts here and listened to the testimony of his driver, Danger [Edward Sibanda], with whom I had gone to school. I then became convinced that these people are evil and will never treat us well; thus I got so involved in the nationalist cause – for which I was jailed, as was my brother here, Mutizwa. We became very bold and defiant so that when we got into town, whites expected us to stand aside while they passed on the sidewalks, but we no longer accepted that. Either they had to give way for me or we collided as if we didn't see each other. When we grew up, we didn't know that whites could be disrespected.⁷²

Parirenyatwa had trained in South Africa, becoming the country's first qualified African medical practitioner in 1956. Thus, his assassination had equally national significance to Africans; as Nkomo wrote, it 'stiffened our determination to fight'.⁷³ 1962 was itself a cataclysmic year for the country: it had seen the formation and banning of ZAPU, and by the turn of the year, the party was engaged in 'armed confrontation with [the] new and even more frankly racist government of [Ian Smith]'.⁷⁴ While the nationalist parties intensified their strategies for armed confrontation by fanning into the rural areas and neighbouring countries, urban dwellers made more daring moves to reject and jettison the

⁷¹ See Allison Shutt, 'The Natives Are Getting Out of Hand': Legislating Manners, Insolence and Contemptuous Behaviour in Southern Rhodesia, c. 1910–1963', *JSAS* 33: 3 (2007).

⁷² Julia Moyo, Interview, 12. Julia was one of the two Bulawayo female youth representatives chosen by ZAPU to accompany the party leadership to bury Parirenyatwa in Murehwa.

⁷³ Joshua Nkomo, *The Story of my Life*, 101.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

state's paternalistic superintendence over their lives, as the Salisbury Municipality moanfully acknowledged in the same year:

There has been a pronounced upsurge of politics to an unprecedented scale. Methods have been practiced on a mass basis where the image of the ruling African Nationalist party and its political beliefs and dogmas ha[ve] been insinuated into almost every facet of township administration ... permeat[ing] into the lives of the whole community. Advisory boards, sport and recreation, youth club organizations, education, were all affected in one way or another and this was achieved by establishing unauthorized civic and tenants' associations and parents' associations. Trade unions were similarly clouded with politics and it is a sad admission that even religious organizations were also subjected to political pressures.⁷⁵

An important aspect of this challenge was on the colonial state's hegemonic harnessing of African cultural activities. In 1963, for instance, ZAPU Youth Leaguers banned the screening of Federal films in Harare's hostels.⁷⁶ The Salisbury Municipality's celebration of the 'continued popularity' of what it called 'dignified forms of entertainment' (particularly ballroom dancing) betrayed the colonial state's loosening grip on more popular forms of entertainment. Thus, since 1958, the Salisbury Municipality noted the flagging of interest in community hall concerts – *makonzati* – attributing this to the 'grip of *mahobo* parties on the township populations'. Not even the reduction of admission charges 'from 2/6d to 1/6d in an attempt to attract audiences [worked] as only 3 concerts were held in each of the months of April, May and June, 1958'.⁷⁷ This was a far cry from the usual problems of over-booked community halls in previous years. This may explain the colonial state and capital's new interest in sponsoring what the so-called 'tribal dancing' through the festivals like Neshamwari and Rufaro Week from this period, as we saw in Chapter 2. The local governments' stated policy of commenting as little as possible on the nationalist movement's activities in a bid to avoid giving them 'undue publicity' was increasingly undermined by these activities.⁷⁸ Yet, what information its reports contain must be read as a mix of understatement, half truth and propaganda. As noted in Chapter 2, 'tea parties' and

⁷⁵ Native Administration Annual Report, Salisbury, 1st July 1961-30 June 1962, 3.

⁷⁶ Native Administration Annual Report, Salisbury, 1st July 1962 – 30 June 1963, 30.

⁷⁷ Native Administration Report, Salisbury, 1st July 1957-30 June 1958, 92.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 1.

'mahobo parties' were grey spaces that accommodated and spawned alternative cultural expression independent of white patronage. At a time when Africans boldly challenged the local authorities by 'invading' community halls to launch their parties and hold political meetings and congresses, the importance of these alternative cultural spaces became even more critical as strategic rear bases.⁷⁹

To these challenges, the Southern Rhodesian regime responded with a raft of security laws tightening its gag on Africans' freedom of expression, association, and movement, particularly after the election of Ian Smith as the president of the ultra-right wing Rhodesian Front in 1962. Smith was the answer to the NAD Director (E.S. Morris)' relentless criticism of the state for treating 'spivs and demagogues with kid gloves'.⁸⁰ As Nyagumbo observed, for a man to keep the premiership in Rhodesia, he had to 'act tough on the Africans'.⁸¹ A white supremacist, Smith tightened the Law and Order (Maintenance) Act (LOMA) and the Unlawful Organizations Act – under which the ANC, NDP and ZAPU had been successively banned. He also promulgated the Emergency Powers Act and the Censorship and Entertainment Control Act to underpin his rebellion from Britain through the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI). The latter was a pre-emptive move against impending Zimbabwean independence.⁸² Police powers became unlimited to complement the frequent 'peaceful' troop incursions into the 'locations'.⁸³ These laws introduced and tightened a tough regime of political repression and media censorship, which banned African nationalist parties, books, songs, newspapers, magazines and other materials the state deemed subversive, representative of or sympathetic to the African cause and critical of the status quo. Moreover, the

⁷⁹ The Salisbury City Youth League, the ANC and their successors were formed and held their congresses and periodic meetings in Mai Musodzi, Stanley and other 'location' halls, in spite of the state's efforts to bar such use of its property. See M. Nyagumbo, *With the People*, 101, 117, and also Joshua Nkomo, *the Story of my Life*.

⁸⁰ M. Nyagumbo, *With the People*, 104.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² Britain and eventually many other countries around the world imposed economic sanctions on Rhodesia (now no longer 'Southern Rhodesia' because its 'Northern' twin had become independent as Zambia in 1964). The sanctions spawned a tough shortages economy which made life unbearable, particularly for the disenfranchised Africans, as we shall see later.

⁸³ Native Administration Report, Salisbury, 1st July 1961-30 June 1962, 4.

Rhodesian Front coupled repression with massive propaganda. As one of its legislators, Mr. Aiken-Cade, put it:

The time for doing a little aggressive propaganda is at hand. As a matter of fact, our propaganda in this country has been far too gentlemanly. We have put out information. We have done it in the nicest possible way, but I think the times are changing and that we too, in Southern Rhodesia, have got to fight propaganda and lies with propaganda – [Dr. Burrows: And truth.] – Mr. McLean: And lies.⁸⁴

While the regime arbitrarily arrested, detained and restricted the leaders of the nationalist parties, it transformed its radio, television and newspapers to churn out a propaganda blitz depicting nationalists as savages trying to reverse western civilization.⁸⁵ In addition to the major media outlets, the government also utilized thousands of pamphlets, broadsheets, fact papers, notices and picture posters which were often dispersed by aircraft, '[coming] from the skies like rain'.⁸⁶ As Julie Frederikse notes, for the regime, a perfect example of the 'barbarism' it was fighting were the *Zhii* riots of 1960, which 'terrified whites [saw as] wanton destruction of property by savage natives'.⁸⁷ To the African workers and nationalist activists concerned, of course, *Zhii* was an act of popular heroism and thus a significant fillip to a full-out guerilla war against an illegitimate state. Like the fur hats and other banned nationalist regalia, by the 1960s, *zhii* soon became not only ZAPU's slogan, but part of the diction of resistance, chanted even from the banishment camps of Gonakudzingwa Game Reserve to captivate the imagination of villagers in remote corners of the country to the dismay of colonial officials.⁸⁸

But how did this heightened repression affect African artistic expression? Makwenda points out that Zimbabwean recordings soon disappeared from both the radio and the live entertainment stage, replaced by a flood of South African and Congolese

⁸⁴ Mr. Aitken-Cade, Legislative Assembly member for Hatfield, *Hansard* [parliamentary Debates], 18 July 1962.

⁸⁵ Legislative Assembly Debates – Propaganda: Native Reserves, *Hansard*, 4 July 1962, 358.

⁸⁶ Allan Wright, *Valley of the Ironwoods (A personal record of ten years as District Commissioner in Rhodesia's largest administrative area, Nuanetsi, in the south-eastern lowveld)* (Cape Town: T.V. Dulpin, 1972), 385.

⁸⁷ J. Frederikse, *None But Ourselves*, 38.

⁸⁸ A. Wright, *Valley of the Ironwoods*, 373.

music, both of which the state perceived as apolitical.⁸⁹ A cursory perusal of the *Parade* corroborates this argument. From this period, the magazine reads like a reproduction of South Africa's *Drum*, splashing colourful photos and feature articles of South African, scantily-dressed female *smanje-manje* (modern) artists on its covers and centre spreads. Dozens of female groups that included the Mahotella Queens, Izintombi Zesimanje-manje, Mtunzini Girls, Dark City Sisters, California Queens, Space Queens, the Dima Queens, the Happy Queens and Swaziland's Izitombe ZaMangwane thus set new musical trends in the 1960s-70s. A radio presenter, Miriam Mlambo, observed that 'many South African musicians started coming to this country; I hear Ndebele/Zulu, and I never heard a single one of their songs suggesting that people should fight for their country – I guess the apartheid regime wouldn't countenance that'.⁹⁰ Mlambo is quite correct because, as argued in Chapter 2, South Africa was the model for the 'tribalization' or 'Bantustanization' of African music that Rhodesia tried to replicate.

Moreover, both touring artists and their local counterparts now had to endure a new regime of stringent vetting and surveillance under Rhodesia's security laws. Each time artists intended to stage a performance, they had to seek a Censorship and Entertainment Control Act Certificate 'C' by presenting themselves and their works two weeks beforehand to the Censorship Board, furnishing the names of band members and their roles in the band as well as the songs, lyrics and dances to be performed and costumes to be worn. Upon approval, none of these were to be 'materially altered ... [from] the way and manner exhibited to the Board, or approved by the Board'. The BSAP provided 'security' for every performance at the promoter's expense.⁹¹

Moreover, even the cozy paternalistic relationship between the NAD and the various 'tribal' performance groups which participated in its Neshamwari, Rufaro and other periodic performances was shaken. For example, in October 1968, Chidyamatamba, the Chairman of the 51-member Salisbury African Choral Society, submitted his group's constitution to Morris, the NAD Director, for approval as then required under the security

⁸⁹ J. Jenje-Makwenda, *Zimbabwe Township Music*, 82-83.

⁹⁰ Miriam Mlambo, Interview, 4.

⁹¹ City of Harare, DHSC, File C/29, Censorship and Entertainment Control Act, 1967, certificate 'C', Public Entertainment; Rhodesia Statute Law, Vol. 2, Censorship and Entertainment Control Act (Chapter 78), 1967.

laws, and he took the opportunity to communicate to him his group's 'unanimous decision' to request that he be their patron.⁹² The Director declined the honour, heeding the Townships Officer's advice that:

This may cause considerable embarrassment in the future should this society start drifting into the political field, which is always a possibility. Besides this, I think it is bad, in principle, that you, as the Director of African Administration, should seek out one particular Society, upon which to bestow your blessing by becoming its patron, when there are others possibly offering a better service to the community, who may resent this.⁹³

This was the closest the state came to admitting the limits or failure of its 'tribalization' project, perhaps because it had, a decade earlier, cast away its self-delusion that it could wish away African 'politicization' by pretending that it did not exist. Chidyamatamba was also the Municipality's Performing Arts Organizer and Coordinator and, thus, the public African face of the city's cultural programmes. The NAD Director's patronage would likely have provided his group a greater sense of security in an atmosphere characterized by escalating harassment from both sides of the political divide. His insecurity must have been compounded by emerging struggles to harness the power of not just music, but particularly 'traditional' performative culture, including that which he presided over, for contending political ends. While the colonial state had employed the notion of African 'authenticity' to justify its apartheid policies, nationalists appealed to the same idea, cleansed or underplayed its 'tribal' connotations, then re-evaluated and revalued it into a forceful, historicizing counter-discourse to mobilize mass participation for self-liberation. If the colonial state should be credited for 'promoting indigenous' music, as Turino claims,⁹⁴ then the idea had clearly overshot its intended purposes, as we shall see shortly. The pioneer *Chimurenga* historiography by Pongweni, Kwaramba and Kahari presumes that this 'traditional' repertory was simply 'there', lurking somewhere 'underground' where it had been driven by ethnocentric missionaries, to be

⁹² Salisbury Municipality, DHCS, File 11, Basil Chidyamatamba (For African Choral Society), to the Director of African Admin, October 1968.

⁹³ Salisbury Municipality, DHCS, File 11A, Townships Officer (Martin), to the Director of African Administration, 17 October 1968.

⁹⁴ T. Turino, *Nationalists, Cosmopolitans*, 99.

‘rediscovered’ by cultural nationalists and artists at the opportune moment. I have argued in this and preceding chapters that such musical and dance traditions were quite visible and in a constant state of flux, both in content and in nuance and public function. It was a domain of struggles over meaning, control, power and legitimacy, as we saw in the performances on the missions and villages and in the NAD-sponsored festivals.

However, while the NAD seemed to have woken up to the potentially subversive nature of the so-called ‘tribal’ performances, one of its erstwhile social scientist-partners, Tracey, perpetuated the ‘tribal’ self-delusion in a clear demonstration of both the limits of knowledge imperialism and display of cultural illiteracy. To illustrate the point, among the songs that Tracey recorded at the end of the 1950s and classified under his arbitrary categories were many that clearly enunciated anti-colonialist protest. To give one example, ‘Shangara PaChikaranga’ by Stephen Runeso [sic] Gumbo, which Tracey classified under ‘Humorous songs from the Karanga people’, opens with the following preamble:

<i>Eh, karesa,</i>	Eh, a long time ago,
<i>Ta[ka]nga tichiimba dzimbo dzedu</i>	We used to sing our songs
<i>Dzimbo idzi dzaitifadza chose</i>	We really enjoyed those songs
<i>Kana tichifara zvedu tiri toga</i>	While we relaxed on our own
<i>Kusati kwauya ivoka</i>	Before these misfortune-bearing
<i>vakomana vatsvuku ava</i>	light-skinned people came here
<i>Asi iye zvino tinoimba tichidai ...</i>	But now we sing like this ... (strums mbira). ⁹⁵

Tracey’s crusade, as already discussed, sought to reify the colonial notion of Africans as ‘tribes’ under the guise of ‘preserving tribal songs’ that were threatened by westernization. In that sense, then, this preamble was likely a response to a formulaic question about what songs Africans sang before the colonial era. Tracey’s objectives and methodology likely overdetermined the responses he got from his hosts. And, to reiterate a point made in Chapter 2 and amply demonstrated by Paul Berliner, his hosts took their

⁹⁵ <http://www.globalsound.org/listen2.aspx?type=preview&trackid=40538>, ILAMTR080_102. Typically, many of the musicians’ names and other words are badly misspelt. In this case, ‘Runeso’ should be Runesu.

interviews and recording sessions with strangers as performative discourses.⁹⁶ Thus, much more than a performance of ancient songs, such moments often spawned critical commentary on themselves in the context of wider histories of power contestation. Thus, it is likely that Gumbo and colleagues literally scorned Tracey's presumed question for its weak sense of perspective. Culturally semi-literate, Tracey proceeded to record the performance as a very humorous *Shangara* song oblivious to its inter-textual production of meaning. In other words, the musicians seem to be telling Tracey that 'colonialism took away our happiness together with the musical idiom that bore it; we are very cross about it, hence our musical heritage is a protest idiom'. *Now* they were singing quite different or the same but layered repertoires reflecting their unhappy condition; happiness belonged to 'a long time ago' when they could afford to 'relax amongst themselves before the winds of misfortune blew on them'. As the Bhundu Boys' would sing in 'Tsvimbo Dzemoto' (Fiery Knobkerries), colonialists' fire-spitting weapons took away their ancestors' happiness and swept away adolescents' moonlight traditional dances, turning villagers into urban refugees.⁹⁷ This thematic contrasting of the idyllic pre-colonial African world with its despoiled, undesirable colonial realities framed anti-colonial protest and the nationalist ideology of liberation. Migrants and displaced refugees performed the dramaturgy of their displacement in the new spaces, often interrogating and exploiting the new conventions, rather than simply withering in self-pity and mourning. It is in this sense that Gumbo's song can be read as an exemplar of the subaltern interrogation of the colonial archive and episteme.

⁹⁶ Africans employed various strategies to safeguard their knowledges from outsiders, as Paul Berliner belatedly learnt when he only managed to secure information about certain mbira playing techniques from the legendary Bandambira of Mhondoro after more than a 6-year-effort and numerous visits to ask the same question: *The Soul of Mbira: Music and Traditions of the Shona People of Zimbabwe* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 3-7.

⁹⁷ Bhundu Boys, 'Tsvimbo Dzemoto', *Early Hits of the Bhundu Boys*, Gramma Records, CDRUG1007, 1998.

Re-valuing Tradition: Cultural Nationalism and the Rise of *Chimurenga*, 1960s-70s

Colonial ideologues deluded themselves by believing that 'we know our Africans'.⁹⁸ Part of that 'knowledge' came through harnessing African culture to mould their imagined African into a living reality. Yet, as Bhebe argues in relation to the experiences of the first generations of Africans in mission schools, 'one of the most intriguing paradoxes concerning [the colonized Africans] was their ability to become different from what they were intended to be [through] the (masters-and-servants) education they were given'.⁹⁹ Where missionaries did not ban traditional African expressive cultures, they, in line with state objectives, incorporated them into the education curricula in attempts to produce 'educated Africans firmly bound to tribal life'.¹⁰⁰ This is what happened in Muzenda's home area, where:

Each village had its own *ngororombe* dance group. Our parents and the surrounding communities would be invited to come to our school to see us dance. We would take up different points in the school yard and start dancing. In order to be considered winners, a dancing group had to have all the spectators or the largest group of spectators gathered around them ... Away from school, such competitions happened during beer-working parties.¹⁰¹

In such settings, Africans felt at home and must have cared little about the intentions of their colonial masters, whose encouragement may simply have enhanced cultural pride in youngsters like Muzenda.

From the 1960s, nationalists drew on this vault of unconquered but often caricatured traditions to generate a discourse of cultural nationalism and popular participation in the struggle to dismantle the colonial project. As R. Denselow observed, music is a weapon in all wars, used to bolster the fighters or heap scorn on the enemy. As fighting intensified in Rhodesia, the radio in Salisbury broadcast messages of support to the 'troopies' fighting the 'terrorists' out in the bush, interspersing greetings with home-

⁹⁸ H. Franklin, 'The Development of Broadcasting', 12; J. Frederikse, *None But Ourselves*, 18.

⁹⁹ N. Bhebe, *Simon Muzenda*, 8.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 9.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 10.

made war songs.¹⁰² Denselow is referring to such musicians as Rex Tarr and John Edmonds, who adapted their racist ‘Chilapalapa’ comedies and songs denigrating Africans and their languages to the production of Rhodesian ‘troopie’ songs.¹⁰³ Likewise, Kwaramba argues, those African musicians who had been singing cover versions of foreign music came ‘under pressure from the tough social, political and economic conditions and the nationalists to contribute to the struggle’.¹⁰⁴ A twist in this struggle is what Cont Mhlanga calls the ‘struggle over tunes’: Christian missionaries had not only demonized African culture; they had also appropriated African songs and tunes, often with the help of African deacons, replacing the lyrics with liturgical ones to facilitate their evangelical work.¹⁰⁵ Thus, the worship of the Christian god in familiar idioms and indigenous symbols helped the church to gain popularity when it eventually took root. Kwaramba’s observation that ‘church hymns were changed and the lyrics substituted with revolutionary ones ... in the new context’ seems to imply that this was a novel practice. Similarly, her argument that nationalists ‘pressured’ musicians to sing revolutionary songs may be read to mean that African music had hitherto been divorced from popular struggles and only re-oriented at the behest of nationalists. As shown throughout this chapter, musical engagement and articulation of popular discourses have a long genealogy that can be traced back before the colonial era.

What seemed to have happened, then, was a wider process of revolutionization and radicalization of popular, folk, traditional, church and hunting songs as well as milder protest music into forms that more robustly engaged the contemporary situation. Traditional war songs were readily suited to the new war to which they were quickly adapted. In the wake of their lack of formal representation in the mainstream media, this ‘people’s music’ was rejuvenated as a useful tool for mass conscientization and mobilization. As Frederikse illustrates, *Chimurenga* music became not only a morale-booster for the guerillas and the terrorized population, but also a weapon to fight state propaganda. Broadly, there were two categories of *Chimurenga* music: that sung by non-combatant, popular musicians at home and that produced on the warfront. A caveat is

¹⁰² R. Denselow, quoted in D.A. Kwaramba, *Popular Music and Society*, 30.

¹⁰³ Julie Frederikse, *None But Ourselves*, 20-21.

¹⁰⁴ A.D. Kwaramba, *Popular Music and Society*, 31.

¹⁰⁵ Cont Mhlanga, Interview, 2 January, Bulawayo, 2007, 2.

important, however: many popular musicians blur this neat division. This is the case with Abel Sithole and Dorothy Masuku, as we shall see in greater detail later. The strength of *Chimurenga* music, particularly that produced at home, lay in its reliance on the revalued cultural camouflage of symbolisms and metaphors to communicate ideas to particular audiences and to deliberately mislead those coming from 'outside the [cultural] contexts that produced them'.¹⁰⁶ Shona idioms, similes and proverbs (*tsumo*) erected an impenetrable language barrier even to those whites who spoke Shona,¹⁰⁷ allowing messages to be communicated with impunity in a context where 'Shona was never taught in [white] schools' – which chose to 'teach French, even Latin, but not Shona [and Ndebele]'.¹⁰⁸ *Chimurenga* music was a product of this revaluing of African traditions and cultures, which was simultaneously carried out by the nationalist parties and individual musicians. This understanding is implied in existing literature. Here I use case studies to demonstrate how the twin processes of re-evaluation and revaluation worked.

Zimbabwe Day: Claiming a Usable Past, Forging a New Future

Turino has traced the development of Zimbabwean cultural nationalism from 1960 with the return of Robert Mugabe from Ghana to assume the publicity secretary post in the NDP.¹⁰⁹ Mugabe had gone to teach in Ghana as part of a cluster of African apprentices invited by Kwame Nkrumah to learn more about Pan-Africanism in practice. Among the revolutionary insights he came to appreciate more than before was not only how the colonizers manipulated class to keep Africans divided but, even more importantly, the value of cultivating cultural emotionalism to bridge these fissures if effective mass nationalist movements were to be built.¹¹⁰ A fellow nationalist, Nathan Shamuyarira, describes Mugabe's investment of emotion into the nationalist movement:

From the position of publicity secretary, Mugabe proceeded to organize a semi-militant youth wing ... [which] started influencing and controlling some party

¹⁰⁶ A.D. Kwaramba, *Popular Music and Society*, 53-54.

¹⁰⁷ Aaron Hodza, quoted in Frederikse, *None But Ourselves*, 23.

¹⁰⁸ Bob North (a Rhodesian Intelligence Corps) quoted in Frederikse, *None But Ourselves*, 22.

¹⁰⁹ T. Turino, *Nationalists, Cosmopolitans*, 169.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

activities. Thudding drums, ululation by women dressed in national costumes, and ancestral prayers began to feature at meetings more prominently than before. A public meeting became a massive rally of residents of a given township. The Youth Wing, with a small executive taking charge of units of fifty houses in each township, knocked at every door on Saturday evening to remind residents about meetings. Next Sunday morning, thudding drums, and singing groups again reminded the residents, until the meeting started ... At the hall, Youth Leaguers ordered attendants to remove their shoes, ties and jackets, as one of the signs in rejection of European civilization. Water served in traditional water-pots replaced Coca-Cola kiosks. By the time the first speaker, a European in bare feet, took the platform, the whole square was a sea of some 15 000 to 20 000 cheering and cheerful black faces. The emotional impact of such gatherings went far beyond claiming to rule the country – it was an ordinary man's participation in creating something new, a new nation.¹¹¹

Bhebe makes similar observations concerning the use of cultural symbolism to generate popular enthusiasm at political rallies and as acts of performance not only of liberation, but also of the nation:

On a cultural level the [NDP] party, on Robert Mugabe's initiative, tried to inspire the spirit of 'self sacrifice', which was marked by a rejection of European luxuries and habits and by emphasis of African culture in attire, music, diet, drinks, and religion. This was supposed to inspire pride in African culture and was calculated to cultivate a spirit of self-discipline and to reduce unnecessary dependence on the white man ... In that context the NDP can be credited with having started to build a liberation culture and language, which was to culminate in the famous songs of liberation.¹¹²

This cultural mobilization was legitimated on shared historical memory, particularly recollections of the first war of resistance against colonial invasion. Many in the nationalist leadership and the populace were the progeny of prominent leaders of that era. This is true of the ZANLA *Chimurenga* music composer, Cde Chinx, whom we shall look at in greater detail.¹¹³ Another was George Bodzo Nyandoro, one of the nationalist leaders and grandson of a martyred First *Chimurenga* leader in 1897 and nephew of Chief

¹¹¹ N. Shamuyarira, *Crisis in Rhodesia* (London: A. Deustch, 1965), 67-68.

¹¹² N. Bhebe, quoted in T. Turino, *Cosmopolitans*, 173.

¹¹³ ZANLA, the Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army, was ZANU's armed wing. ZANU was formed in 1963 by a faction of nationalist leaders who left ZAPU. ZAPU's own military wing was called ZIPRA, the Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army.

Nyandoro who was deposed for opposing oppressive colonial laws. These leaders self-consciously appealed to these historical connections to build emotional capital for the Second *Chimurenga*. As Shamuyarira noted, Nyandoro ‘appealed in his speeches to the memory of the great prophet Chaminuka round whom the Shona rallied in the nineteenth century’. And in a ritualized performance of not just the connections, but also of the generational and spiritual transference of the duty to continue the fight, ‘Mr. Nkomo, returning home in 1962, was met at the airport by a survivor of the rebellions of 1896-97, who presented him with a spirit axe as a symbol of the apostolic succession of resistance’.¹¹⁴

Party leaders and supporters adopted other symbolic or ritualistic emblems – the *gano* (ritual axe), *ngundu* (feather headgear), fur hats, walking sticks, and *nhembe* (skin skirts) worn with or replacing western clothing. They also started sniffing *bute* (tobacco snuff). These ceremonial regalia had been conventionally identifiable with traditional ritual performances and warfare. Their banning in the 1960s, just as militant *Chimurenga* songs, rendered them even more powerful.¹¹⁵ Now, such traditional music and dances like *muchongoyo*, *nqguzu*, *mbakumba*, *mhande* and *mbira* were incorporated to further ritualize and dramatize political rallies and meetings, all consecrated to *Musikavanhu*, the all-powerful African creator-being through prayers. Appeals and prayers to the ancestor ‘martyrs’ and heroes of the First *Chimurenga* and before, like Nehanda, Kaguvi, Mgandani, Chaminuka, Mukwati Ncube and those recently passed on, such as Parirenyatwa, evoked a sense of self-sacrifice and duty to the nation.

The struggle for liberation was also an intellectual movement in practice, concerned with teaching Africans their ‘correct’ history expunged of colonialist distortions. The aim was to instill a sense of national pride and confidence, both of which had been eroded by the colonial assault. Reasserting and claiming this history as a usable past meant contesting the settler claims to the right to rule. It should be noted, however,

¹¹⁴ N. Shamuyarira, *Crisis in Rhodesia*, 68-9. T. Ranger’s two articles, ‘Connections Between ‘Primary Resistance’ Movements and Modern Mass Nationalism in East and Central Africa: I’, *Journal of African History* 11:3 (1968) and ‘Connections Between ‘Primary Resistance’ Movements and Modern Mass Nationalism in East and Central Africa: II’, *JAH* 9:4 (1968), discuss these connections.

¹¹⁵ A. Wright, *Valley of the Ironwoods*, 351.

that beyond the usable rhetorics, this 'rediscovering' of 'African culture' remained anything but radical; it was selective and incomplete and even cosmopolitan. Appeals to African culture were, to a large extent, made for rhetorical effect within certain limits in the towns so that, for instance, the *ngundu*, snuff and ceremonial axe were sufficient. Mission-educated Mugabe himself apparently never wore the *ngundu* or bore any of these insignia, at least judging from the surviving wealth of accessible visual evidence! As both ZAPU and ZANU later confided to researchers, in as much as these appeals worked, they hesitated to push them too much because 'such a policy would have alienated the organization[s'] strong representation of 'young, urban, literate people'.¹¹⁶ This ambivalence is also demonstrated in the ZANU high command's uneasy relationship with their spiritual advisers – the spirit mediums in the party's executive circle.¹¹⁷ Nonetheless, it was the party leaders' ability to recognize this tension and manage it that underpinned their selective invocation of a usable 'tradition' in particular contexts and to apply it effectively.

All festivals of founding seek to (selectively) unite, commemorate past legacies and claim and legitimate the present and future on the basis of those legacies. That was the essence of the Rhodes Tri-centenary Celebration in 1953, already referred to. As Robert Winder conceptualizes 'Englishness' in *Bloody Foreigner*, a study of immigration to Britain, 'national identity is often a statement of opposition to outside forces; a form of protest'.¹¹⁸ Similarly, African nationalists encapsulated their contestation of the Rhodesian colonizing discourse in one word: 'Zimbabwe' – the identity derived from the ancient Shona kingdoms' stone castles settlers had tried to deny them in the so-called Zimbabwe controversy.¹¹⁹ Nationalists' defiant use of this name for the country, for their own parties and their cultures symbolized their search for unity in challenging colonial

¹¹⁶ P. Kaarsholm, 'Mental Colonization or Catharsis? Theatre, Democracy and Cultural Struggle from Rhodesia to Zimbabwe', *Journal of Southern African Studies* 16: 2 (1990):255.

¹¹⁷ See Fay Chung, *Re-living the Second Chimurenga: Memories from Zimbabwe's Liberation Struggle* (Nordic Africa Institute, 2003).

¹¹⁸ Quoted in Sarfraz Manzoor, 'Black Britain's Darkest Hour', <http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2008/feb/24/race>

¹¹⁹ D. Chanaiwa, *The Zimbabwe Controversy: A Case of Colonial Historiography* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1973).

subjugation and a reassertion of their right to fashion their own identities and future. It was in this light that ZAPU proclaimed the 17th of March 'Zimbabwe Day' at a conference of the Afro-Asian Peoples' Solidarity Organisation held in Moshi, Tanzania, in 1963.¹²⁰ This was a very significant date which ZAPU invoked to symbolically reject Africans' ascribed identities and to refashion themselves on a re-reading of a maligned historical template:

Colonialist historians have frequently characterized the military measures taken by our ancestor rulers against settler intrusion as a rebellion of tribes scattered, unorganized and without common purpose. This lie is dealt in a single stroke by the early morning attack on Fort Mhondoro on the 17th of March, 1896, by a single military force put together by the gallant fighters Mashayamombe and Mukwati Ncube. These two generals, one from the northern part of the country and the other from the southern part, demonstrate the single-purposeness [sic] of the entire people of Zimbabwe in opposing settler attempts to impose their rule.¹²¹

In his 1974 Zimbabwe Day message, Chikerema made clear that the essence of the day transcended a theoretical challenge to colonial historiography; that it was for practical purposes:

The significance of Zimbabwe Day in our liberation is that on this day, we reaffirm our dedication and determination and firmness to continue the fight against the white settler minority regime in Zimbabwe. On this day, we continue to admire our forefathers who started the confrontation with the white imperialists 79 years ago. Our ancestors never surrendered to Rhodes and his pirating fellow-settlers. Our generation has picked up the fight to free Zimbabwe from where it was left by our forefathers in 1897.¹²²

Zimbabwe Day also symbolized membership in and solidarity with the free, non-imperial world in pursuit of freedom. Moreover, that freedom would entail the restoration of the 'Zimbabwe culture' – 'the entirety of the ways of life' of the Zimbabwean people which had been assaulted by colonialism. As ZAPU's Lazarus Mpofo explained at length in a presentation to the Pan-African Symposium in Algiers in 1969, 'Zimbabwe culture'

¹²⁰ *The Zimbabwe Review* 1 (1969): 2.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

¹²² *Ibid.*, 3.

consisted of specific, purposeful indigenous spirituality and worldviews, marriage and family institutions, as well as corresponding economic and political structures that underpinned that way of life. Every aspect of the culture was time-tested and evolving to serve the continuously changing needs of the people.¹²³ Most importantly, Mpfu averred that the 'Zimbabwe culture' was a performative culture:

Whether in curing the sick or in interceding for rain, or in festivities, Zimbabwe culture expresses itself ultimately in the form of song. Song is the colour of our culture. We sing and dance variations of Shangara, Jeru Kusarima, Mbakumba, Isitshikitsha, Inqguzu, Umgido and many other forms. The [essence] of Zimbabwe song and dance is that, whilst the melody might remain constant, wording is left to the song leader who, in the word construction, must issue a number of social correctives.¹²⁴

Colonial oppression and the struggle for liberation placed a huge challenge on African ways of life, and the expressive elements of those ways of life had to articulate the prevailing challenges, visions and aspirations. Thus argued Mpfu:

We have already said culture is a dynamic expression. It does become a way of expressing appreciation or rejection of a national event. In the circumstances of Zimbabwe, our songs now contain abhorrence of oppression and a good many raise the spirit of war against the oppressors. When culture takes this form, it becomes the culture of resistance.¹²⁵

Elements of this culture of resistance were on public display at the Pan-African Symposium in Algiers. The ZAPU delegates, who presented themselves in the 'national' image as the 'Zimbabwe delegation', included a fully-costumed traditional dance troupe, which was received as 'an emissary of the oppressed but fighting people of Zimbabwe to Africa'.¹²⁶ At the end of proceedings, the troupe was presented with 'a cup of popularity' by the hosts, the National Liberation Front (FLN). Apparently critiquing the Rhodesian

¹²³ L. Mpfu, 'Pan-African Symposium: Zimbabwe Culture and the Liberation Struggle, Algiers, July 21st – 1st August, 1969', *The Zimbabwe Review* 3 (1969):14-15.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 15.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

¹²⁶ L. Mpfu, Cephase Maseko and Coleman Majaya, 'ZAPU in the Pan-African Cultural Festival', *The Zimbabwe Review* 1:4 (1969): 14.

state's caricaturing of African culture through its 'tribal dance' competitions, Mpofo and his colleagues argued that 'Our troupe did not go to Algiers to compete [because] it is difficult to make of a culture an object for competition. Culture is not like Olympic games where one can determine those who run faster or jump higher than others within a given space of time or height'.¹²⁷ Instead, as their hosts pointed out,

This trophy to the ZAPU troupe has not so much been determined by the artistic performance of ZIMBABWE, rather it has been determined by the ... Algerian [people's recognition] of the fact that ZAPU, faced with a ferocious enemy, has not surrendered to the enemy.¹²⁸

The troupe reportedly brought some women to tears with their militant *mbakumba*, *muchongoyo*, *nqguzu* and other dances underpinned by the beat of 'talking drums [which] represented a call to our people to continue the armed struggle against the British imperialists'.¹²⁹ Unlike the NAD-sponsored 'tribal dances' in which Africans were objectified as 'tribes' who won prizes by adhering to supposed attributes of each group in costumes and dancing styles, ZAPU's 'Zimbabwe troupe' transcended such essentialisms by performing the various 'Zimbabwe' styles in ways that demonstrated their awareness of the need for unity beyond ethnic cliques. The delegation seemed acutely aware of this need, particularly in the aftermath of the 1963 split that had led to the formation of ZANU, which had a Shona majority in its leadership. Thus, while lower level ZAPU leaders like Julia Moyo and her brothers sometimes felt estranged by 'tribal' tendencies of their local party branch in Bulawayo, they remained steadfast party activists throughout the years because of the confidence-inspiring policies propagated at the national level.¹³⁰

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 15.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

¹³⁰ Julia Moyo, Mutyambizi Interview, 9. Julia served as Party Secretary for the Mzilikazi Branch in the 1970s, while her brother, Alexander, was a youth leader. The very election of the Mutyambizis and other 'non-Ndebeles' as leaders in Bulawayo's ZAPU structures demonstrate the common endeavours to transcend ethnic division, as does the latter's preference for an ethnically-neutral name, Moyo, in place of Mutyambizi.

This endeavour to transcend ethnicity was also reflected in the party's news releases, opinion pieces, slogans, *Chimurenga* poetry and policy statements which were presented in all the three major languages of the country: Shona, Ndebele and English on Radio Zambia, Radio Tanzania, Radio Cairo and Radio Moscow and in the *Zimbabwe Review*. As Kaarsholm observes, there were no appreciable differences in approaches and goals between ZAPU and ZANU in cultural political aims.¹³¹ To underscore this new approach, ZAPU attacked as racist the notion promoted by the Rhodesian and South African states that:

A nation should acknowledge ethnic, cultural and colour differences in its community and base state policies on differentiating accordingly, [a] principle [based on] the *herrenvolk* theory that ethnic groups are created with a different human status and have accordingly achieved different levels of civilization.¹³²

Thus, the nationalist parties' use of tradition was in effect modernizing, purveying a progressive, revolutionary message:

Even while all the songs and dances that the Zimbabwe troupe performed in Algiers had a traditional touch, the present war situation demanded a response and found it in such songs as 'Soja raNkomo tuma runhare kana ndozofa sara utore nhaka' [which] literally ... means 'Nkomo's soldier send a telegraph, that when I die take the heritage'.¹³³

In the context of oppression and war, argued Mpofu, 'the heritage' was not land or other possessions of wealth, but the weapons of war and the spirit to continue the struggle.¹³⁴

The liberation movement was consciously built on an awareness of the imposed state of

¹³¹ P. Kaarsholm, 'From Decadence to Authenticity and Beyond: Fantasies and Mythologies of War in Rhodesia and Zimbabwe, 1965-1985', *Cultural Struggles & Development in Southern Africa*, 39.

¹³² Lazarus Mpofu, 'Identity and Fascist Redefinition', *The Zimbabwe Review* 1:4 (1969):5.

¹³³ L. Mpofu *et al*, 'ZAPU in the Pan-African Cultural Festival', 15. This Shona song, like Chibwechitedza and other Shona praise names for Nkomo, further demonstrate the fact that 'tribalism' was not an organizing principle for these two parties. Needless to say, his deputy, Chikerema, was a Shona. The demographics obtained in ZANU, which was formed in Enos Nkala (a Ndebele)'s house in Harare.

¹³⁴ *Ibid*.

privation their ancestors had died fighting to resist. Thus, their quintessential heritage was the spirit to fight on, as popularly evoked in recitals of Mbuya Nehanda's promise before she was hanged during the First *Chimurenga*, that 'my bones shall rise again'. The freedom fighters perceived themselves to be the fulfillment of that prophecy.¹³⁵

ZAPU employed culture and history to illustrate the point that the difficult situation Africans were facing during the war was nothing new, but a consistent reaffirmation of colonial dehumanization they had endured all along. That defining feature of colonial presence devalued even the importance of the wealth that had hitherto survived colonial primitive accumulation. Thus, in one of its regular broadcasts and analyses in the *Zimbabwe Review*, ZAPU appealed to popular history, pointing out that 'Old people may remember how three decades ago Zimbabweans used to sing a song' called 'Ngombe dzedu Dzatorwa' (Our Cattle have been Seized):

Kwakatange chibharo,
Kukauya mambure,
Kukauya nemigwagwa,
Ngombe dzedu dzatorwa.

It all started with *chibharo*,
Then came the nets,
And then the roads
Now our cattle have been seized.¹³⁶

This song decried the pre-Second World War de-stocking waves already discussed. But even those crusades were not new then; they had their origins in the BSA Company Government's Loot Committee's plunder of well over 80 percent of Africans' (mainly Ndebele) cattle after the sacking of the Ndebele kingdom in 1893.¹³⁷ As ZAPU recalled, 'People sang this song in tears, being conscripted into *chibharo* and looking on as their cattle were confiscated'.¹³⁸ As protest song transformed into militant *Chimurenga* song by the 1960s, such lamentations transcended pleas for mercy to articulate national grievances as crimes that could only be cleansed by sacrificial blood. This theme was the centerpiece of *Chimurenga* songs. I analyze a few examples in the remaining sections of this chapter.

¹³⁵ See Chenjerai Hove's historical novel, *Bones* (Oxford: Heinemann, 1990); Cde Chinx, Interview, 12 December 2006, Chitungwiza, 6.

¹³⁶ *The Zimbabwe Review*, 'Ngombe dzedu Dzatorwa', 23 February 1974, 7.

¹³⁷ Canaan C. Banana, Introduction, *Turmoil and Tenacity: Zimbabwe 1890-1990*, C.S. Banana (Harare: College Press, 1989), 3.

¹³⁸ *The Zimbabwe Review*, 'Ngombe dzedu Dzatorwa'.

From Protest to Confrontation

As already pointed out, *Chimurenga* songs generally fell into two categories: those sung by ZAPU and ZANU combatants on the front and those sung by home-based artists. Pongweni and Kwaramba have popularized a convenient analytic formula for studying these songs as texts, observing that those songs produced on the warfront were often direct and unambiguous while those sung at home tended to epitomize the poetic depth and semantic complexity and ambiguity deriving from the need to guard information against the enemy.¹³⁹ This is the wisdom in Mapfumo's 'Shumba' (Lion):

<i>Mbudzi haivhiirwe</i>	You do not slaughter a goat
<i>pane vamwe vateereri</i>	in the presence of strangers
<i>Vanotora mafuta vozora maoko</i>	Because some will smear the fat on their hands. ¹⁴⁰

Read literally, this reflects the Shona people's use of the goat or certain of its entrails for ritual purposes – privileged performances conducted within inner family circles lest strangers expose family secrets and pose danger to the family. The point, then, is that similar discretion was necessary in handling information pertaining to the liberation struggle if it were to succeed. But this circumspection was unnecessary for villagers who sang a vast number of unrecorded songs at *pungwes* among fellow villagers where nobody was considered a stranger. The conformity demanded in such performances of the nation had no room for strangers, hence the violence visited on those labeled as 'sellouts'.

We have seen how musicians like Julia Moyo and Abel Sithole sang at *morari* (nationalist rallies) to boost public enthusiasm and raise funds. Many thus involved in the nationalist movement, including Sithole and Dorothy Masuku, ran afoul of the colonial regimes, the latter both in South Africa and Zimbabwe, and they joined the fighting forces in exile.¹⁴¹ Sithole and Masuku went into exile to Tanzania at the invitation of

¹³⁹ A.J.C. Pongweni, 'Chimurenga Songs', 64; A.D. Kwaramba, *Popular Songs and Society*, 33.

¹⁴⁰ Thomas Mapfumo, 'Shumba', re-issued in *Chimurenga Forever: the Best of Thomas Mapfumo*, 1995.

¹⁴¹ Abel Sithole, Interview, 4.

President Nyerere, where they continued to hold fund-raising performances for ZAPU. They also toured Uganda, Algeria, Malawi, Zambia and Eastern Europe for the same purpose. Their work was crucial, as Masuku reminisced,

Southern Africa owes me a glass of water. I never held a gun but my voice was as powerful as a gun. It took me a matter of seconds to send my revolutionary messages home to millions of people. When I sang Tinogara Musango and Dr Malan, it was like being with the people. I ate and stayed with this region's greatest – Kenneth Kaunda, the late Julius Nyerere and Kamuzu Banda. It was not fun then.¹⁴²

As we shall see later, Sithole continued to sing *Chimurenga* songs as a political prisoner back in Rhodesia in the 1970s. In the same ways that travel helped early urban musicians like Kenneth Mattaka to re-imagine home, exile was a particular form of creative displacement necessary to actualize alternative ideals. It was necessary to leave in order to return. This strategy is articulated in *Chimurenga* songs produced during the 1970s, by both combatants and professional artists at home. They appealed to a long gone but knowable past to historicize the struggle and re-imagine a new Zimbabwe. I use a few examples to illustrate this point.

'Maruza Vapambepfumi' (You have Lost the War, You Marauders)

<i>Hondo maiwona imi vapembepfumi</i>	You have experienced the war now, you marauders
<i>Hondo yeZANUka, Chimurenga</i>	ZANU's revolutionary war
<i>Vakauya muZimbabwe</i>	They came to Zimbabwe
<i>Vachibva Bhiriteni</i>	Coming from Britain,
<i>Vachibva kuAmerica</i>	From America,
<i>Vachibva kuFrance</i>	France,
<i>KuGermany kwavakatandani swa nenzara</i>	And Germany, fleeing hunger and suffering
<i>Vati nanga-nanga neZimbabwe</i>	They made for Zimbabwe
<i>Havazivi kuti inyika yavatema</i>	But this country belongs to the Blacks
<i>Izere uchi nemukaka</i>	It's full of honey and milk
<i>Ndezveduka isu vatema</i>	Yes, but it's ours, us Blacks
<i>Vakapinda muZimbabwe vaine digi</i>	They brought their guns to Zimbabwe
<i>Kekutanga vachiti vanovhima</i>	They came to hunt, they said,

¹⁴² Wonder Guchu, 'Auntie Dot to Celebrate Birthday in Style', *The Herald*, 9 November 2005.

Vodzokera, iko kuri kunyepa

Vapambepfumi

*Huwe huwe uwere here vapambepfumi
Vavhimi vodzoka vanaSelous*

*Vawongorora mugariro weZimbabwe
Nenzira dzekupinda nadzo mangwana*

*Twuhama twake twaitevera
Vodaidza mupambepfumi
Ndizvo here here kani?*

*Nenguva isipi
Takazoono zimudungwe
Richibuda nekumaodzanyemba*

*Iko Selous kari pamberi
Ndivo vapambepfumi
Tande kuFort Tuli,
Tande kuFort Victoria,
Dzamarara muSalisbury,
Vapambepfumi vatopamba
nyika yevatema*

*Ona vachangosvika muHarare
Ndokudzika mureza wavo,
Kupangidza kuti vatopamba nyika*

*Yainzi iyo the Union Jack
Here here woye
Ndivo vava maPioneer mugore ra1890
Mumwedzi waGunyana
Zuva rechiguminamaviri
Vapambepfumi vapamba nyika yavatema*

*Vapambepfumi here here woye
Asi ivo vose maPioneer*

*dzaiva nhunzvatunzva
Nharadada vanhu vasina mabvi
Vakanganwa imi veZimbabwe
Varidzi venhaka here here woye*

Takatangaka veZimbabwe kumuudza

And would return to their homes – the liars!

Despoilers,
Oh you marauding hordes.
You see, their hunters, Selous and others
were reconnoiters
They were studying our way of life
And charting ways for their invading ilk
Whom they soon invited
Hard on their heels
What trickery!

In no time at all,
We saw a big procession
Appearing from the south of eZimbabwe
Zimbabwe
Guess who was leading the way,
None other than Selous, the hunter!
Here they came: Fort Tuli,
Then Fort Victoria,
Then Fort Charter,
And finally Salisbury,
Thus the despoilers had already laid claim to
the Black man's country
As soon as they reached Harare,
They hoisted their flag,
An indication of their colonial claim to
Zimbabwe,
The flag they called the Union Jack,
How unbelievable!
They were the Pioneer Column of 1890,
Who arrived in the month of September
On the 12th day
Their rape of our country had become a fact
of life
Hey despoilers!
And these Pioneers were real irresponsible
self-seekers,
Pursuing self-aggrandizement
In total disregard of your interests,
You the heirs to your ancestor's legacy
How can this be so?

We Zimbabweans took the initiative to

<i>Ngatigarisane zvakanaka</i>	invite them
<i>Mupambepfumi wotoramba,</i>	To be good neighbours
	But the colonizers would have none of it.
<i>Votodzika mitemo yavo</i>	Instead they proceeded to enact laws to govern us
<i>Imbwa, huku, nemombe, madhongi</i>	Levying taxes on dogs, chickens, cattle, donkeys,
<i>Vanhu, dzimba,</i>	people, houses
<i>Zvose zvotereswa naivo vapambepfumi</i>	All were taxed by the colonizers
<i>Vanababa vodaidzwa</i>	All the men-folk were summoned
<i>Huyai huyai kuchibharo</i>	And press-ganged into <i>chibharo</i> labour
<i>musimudzire nyika</i>	Ostensibly to develop our country
<i>Naivo vapambepfumi</i>	At the behest of the despoilers
<i>Migwagwa yogadzirwa</i>	They built roads,
<i>Mabhiriji ogadzirwa</i>	They built bridges,
<i>Idzo njanjika dzogadzirwa</i>	And railway lines were constructed
<i>Zvichibva kunze kwenyika</i>	All coming from outside
<i>Hupfumi hwenyika hwoyeredzwa</i>	Then they started to drain our riches out of the country
<i>navo vapambepfumi</i>	All by these plunderers
<i>ndizvo here here kani?</i>	Tell me this is right?

'Maruza Vapambepfumi' was composed by Comrade Chinx (Dickson Chingaira) in Mozambique.¹⁴³ Cde Chinx was the leader of the 304-member (203 women and 101 men) strong Leopold Takawira Choir in the 1970s. As Pongweni has argued, the song celebrates the war with the revolutionary forces at the top of the situation,¹⁴⁴ an expression of the popular hope to restore Africans' dignity. Above all, it was a conscientization piece that presented an alternative interpretation of Zimbabwean history.

Cde Chinx is a great grandson of Chief Chingaira, a prominent leader of the 1896-97 uprising in eastern Zimbabwe who was beheaded by the BSAC government. Chinx developed a deep, personalized interest in his own troubled history from an early age. He learned most of this history at home because the Eurocentric school history disparaged his ancestor, Chief Chingaira, together with Nehanda, Kaguvi and others as 'wicked rebels who were rightly punished for opposing civilization'.¹⁴⁵ Chinx had also awed his

¹⁴³ Cde Chinx, Interview, 12 December 2006, Chitungwiza, 6.

¹⁴⁴ A.J.C. Pongweni, 'The Chimurenga Songs', 68.

¹⁴⁵ Cde Chinx, Interview, 2.

workmates at a Salisbury engineering firm by engaging the owner of that company, one Nichodemus Jacobus Schumann, in heated debates about the country's recent history. As he recalls, 'I debated with him a lot, because I was able to stand my ground very much. He would just call people 'You terrorist, you terrorist!' And I would retort, 'You are the terrorist; you came here and colonized us, killing our forefathers'. Thus, Chinx welcomed the guerilla movement's emphasis on history in the political education programmes in the camps as an opportunity to further interrogate colonialism and its impact on African society. Like Thomas Mapfumo's 'Tumirai Vana Kuhondo' (Send the Youths to the War), Chinx credits 'Maruza Vapambepfumi' with boosting guerilla recruitment:

I taught the choir the song, during the *pungwes*, and we kept polishing it, hitting it until people went crazy over it, and we then sent it over to Maputo, where every one of my new compositions was requested for recording and radio play. And man, what recruitment that song inspired here [in Zimbabwe]!

'Maruza Vapambepfumi' and other *Chimurenga* songs resonated with Africans at home. They critiqued and put into historical perspective common problems that emanated from the 'plunder, greed and mendacity of the settlers whom [Rhodesian] history books extolled for their courage, self-sacrifice and patriotism'.¹⁴⁶ This portrayal of the settlers made sense of the causes of the Africans' poverty and their resolve to take up arms to demand justice. It also exploded the popular colonial myth of the great white civilization preached to Africans in Rhodesia by arguing that the settlers had, in fact, fled hunger and poverty from their own lands to come and plunder Zimbabwe.

Coupled with political lectures at the *pungwes*, songs like this one effectively indoctrinated fighters and educated the masses. Because such educational sessions were co-operative, participatory efforts, the songs were often embellished at such occasions. Central to such performances was the fact that every member of the assembly participated in the call and response style and could thereby help to mould the narratives. Thus, Cde Mherayarira MuZimbabwe, who had helped Chinx to build the Takawira Choir before he was transferred to Beira as a political commissar, felt that the song's plot

¹⁴⁶ A.J.C. Pongweni, '*Chimurenga Songs*', 69.

omitted a crucial aspect of the popular understanding of the history of colonialism and African resistance – its prediction by the great Shona prophet who also inspired the ongoing struggle, Chaminuka. Cde Mhere thus added a three-minute prelude to the 9 minute song:

*Paivapo nemumwe murume
Zita rake Chaminuka
Waigara muChitungwiza
Munyika yedu yeZimbabwe
Wakataura achiti
Kuchauya vamwe vanhu*

*Vanenge vasina mabvi
Munyika yedu yeZimbabwe.*

There was a man once upon a time
His name was Chaminuka
Who lived in Chitungwiza
In our country Zimbabwe
He prophesied that
There shall come a people without
knees

Into our country Zimbabwe.¹⁴⁷

Through the spirit mediums (*vanasekuru*) in its circle of elders, the ZANU guerillas consulted the guardian spirits (*vadzimu*) for direction on the prosecution of the war.¹⁴⁸ Coping with extreme war-induced hardships, suffering and anxieties required extra-human wisdom, hence the constant supplication to the ancestors in prayers and songs like ‘Titarireyi’ (Watch over us), sung by the ZANLA forces. In that song, the singers beseeched Nehanda, the supreme matriarchal spirit, leaders recently passed on into the ancestral realm like Parirenyatwa, Leopold Takawira and Chitepo, as well as current leaders, to lead the war with diligence so that they could return to a free Zimbabwe.

It was only through rigorous training and total dedication to the war that Zimbabwe could be ‘taken’ back. Thus, the discipline inculcated through rigorous training and political education had to be guarded through a strict code of rules and regulations lest the armies degenerated into brigands. This was the essence of songs like ‘Nzira dzemasoja’ (Soldiers’ code of conduct) which, among other things, prohibited the looting of enemy property, the plundering of people’s belongings and promiscuity. Such discipline was a painful means to a noble end. Similarly, slogans reinforced these

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.* Chaminuka is believed to have thus prophesied the invasion of the land before he was captured and murdered by the Ndebele in the 19th century.

¹⁴⁸ D. Lan, *Guns and Rain*; Fay Chung, *Re-Living the Second Chimurenga*.

precepts and helped to keep morale high in the face of hardships. Thus observed Cde Chinx:

Oblivious to the hunger and other troubles, we would ask, 'Tinogutirepiko?' (Where do we eat to our hearts' content?). And, in unison, we would call back: 'Back home!' – where there was the war, but that is where the food was, where we had to fight the enemy first! So that was a process of hardening the fighters, who had to carry the heavy weaponry to confront the enemy, crossing the enemy-patrolled borders because the enemy doesn't want you to go where the food is, home. At the same time, our mothers were being harassed there! And we saw that those hardships had to be exploited to produce common unity and understanding between the fighters and the *povo* [people] back home; those were instances where we needed *karwiyo* [a little song] to create those bonds between the people and their army. The army had been 'cooked' in lectures, and that feeling had to be inculcated into the people as well, to formulate national grievances.¹⁴⁹

Unlike the pre-1960s' protest songs which generally lacked a clear visualization of an end to Africans' suffering, hope and a sense of imminent freedom pervaded Chimurenga songs. As ZAPU captured it, the availability of modern military technology to Africans had transformed independence from an abstract ideal into the realm of the possible. It was in light of this military parity, for instance, that Chikerema repeatedly promised 'white settler enemies rivers of tears ... blood and estates of graves' in his impassioned propaganda in the 1960s.¹⁵⁰ Similarly, *Chimurenga* songs articulated Africans' continued suffering as festering grievances crying out for urgent redress, which could only come through the barrel of the gun. Moreover, as already argued, this was conceived of as a historic duty started by the matriarchs and patriarchs of the 'nation' whose names and statements emblemized Chimurenga songs. One example is the Takawira Choir's 'Mbuya Nehanda Kufa Vachitaura' (Mbuya Nehanda's Promise):

Mbuya Nehanda kufa vachitaura shuwa

Kuti ndonofire nyika
Shoko guru ravakatiudza

Mbuya Nehanda died with these words:

That I am dying for my country
The one important message she told us:

¹⁴⁹ Cde Chinx, Interview, 7.

¹⁵⁰ James Dambaza Chikerema, 'Opening Note to Readers', *The Zimbabwe Review*, 1, 1969, 3.

Tora gidi uzvitonge
Wawuya kuhondo here
Vakamhanya-mhanya nemasango
Vakabata anti-air
Kuti ruzhinji ruzvitonge

Take up the gun and rule yourself
Welcome to the war
They jogged through the bushes
Holding the anti-air (missiles)
So the majority can rule themselves

VaChitepo kufa vachitaura shuwa
Kuti tonotore nyika
Shoko guru ravakatiudza
Tora gidi uzvitonge

Mr. Chitepo died with these words
We are going to liberate this country
The one important message he left us:
Take the gun and rule yourself.

This was the stuff of the *pungwes*, reinforcing not only the bonds between the fighters and the people, as Cde Chinx put it, but also consecrating the task as national, intergenerational responsibility handed over from the ancestors, the pioneer fighters against colonialism. As already argued, such action is based on memory. Tafataona Mahoso rightly identifies 'Mbuya Nehanda' as a memory song which demonstrates the overcoming of the tyranny of time through spirit possession as a process of building intergenerational solidarity.¹⁵¹ He further explains:

Before colonialism Africans overcame the tyranny of time by using the body as a medium. The ancestors refused to be obsolete and irrelevant by entering the bodies of young people, especially young women, and speaking to the future, for the future ... The first Nehanda is said to have lived more than 2000 years ago. The Nehanda whom the British executed in the late 1890s was actually Charwe, a medium of Nehanda. In the 1970s the same Nehanda spirit returned to possess more women who rallied youths in hundreds of thousands to join the liberation war.¹⁵²

Thus, Nehanda's last words that 'my bones shall rise *again*' were not Charwe's, but those of an intimate intergenerational African 'bonding cell' that the Nehanda spirit represents in Zimbabwean indigenous cosmology. The colonial state's attempts to co-opt chiefs, spirit mediums and other cultural leaders represent a largely unsuccessful endeavour to break this African collective refusal to die. Even suspicions that the 1975 assassination of

¹⁵¹ T. Mahoso, 'Visualizing African Memory: the Future of Zimbabwean Sculpture', *Journal of Social Change and Development* 42/43 (August 1997):17.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*

Herbert Chitepo,¹⁵³ the ZANU leader, was spawned by internal power struggles could not tamper the heroic significance of his name or its canonization amongst the martyrs and ancestral guardian spirits, hence his juxtaposition alongside Nehanda in ZANU lore.

This historical memory and indigenous cosmology informed many Africans' everyday lives, particularly in the war years. For instance, Lisa Teya narrates how she and other villagers in Hwedza were caught up in a battle between the Rhodesian soldiers and the guerillas as they took food to the latter:

One day we returned home from a *pungwe* and quickly prepared food ... and took it to the base. Suddenly, we were surrounded by Dakotas and there were helicopters and jets everywhere. *Vakomana* ['the boys'] ran in all directions, dodging the planes and disappearing. They were like people possessed by their *vadzimu* [ancestral spirits]. We, the onlookers, started singing traditional songs such as *Tatora nyika taramukai* [We have taken back our country; disperse!] and *Mikono inorwa* [The fierce fighter bulls]. And so it was a battle of the fittest. There was heavy gunfire all around us. We sang the praises of our ancestors and urged them to give courage to our young fighters. So we sent our praises to Mbuya Nehanda and Sekuru Chaminuka and then went back home.¹⁵⁴

Teya's portrayal of these songs as 'traditional' demonstrates how deep a bonding force this repertoire had become between villagers and the guerillas, with the former addressing the latter as *vakomana* or *vanaMukoma* (the boys or our brothers). Staunton *et al* write of Teya and other 'mothers of the revolution':

These women, the mothers, were both victims and actors. Throughout the war, over and over again, they fed and protected the freedom fighters and they risked their lives to do so. This they know and it is a fact of which they are proud ... They regarded ... *vakomana* as their children, with needs which they as women, as mothers, had a responsibility to meet'.¹⁵⁵

They rightly conclude that 'Without these women, the war could not have been won'.¹⁵⁶ Not only did 'the mothers of the revolution' gladly assume enormous risks to feed,

¹⁵³ Luise White, *The Assassination of Herbert Chitepo: texts and politics in Zimbabwe* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003).

¹⁵⁴ Lisa Teya, in Irene Staunton, *Mothers of the Revolution*, 99-100.

¹⁵⁵ I. Staunton, *Mothers of the Revolution*, xii.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid*, xiii.

clothe, shelter and purvey information to and on behalf of the guerillas while straining to deny the same to *masoja* (government soldiers), they also expressed gratitude to their ancestors whose bones had 'arisen' in their children.¹⁵⁷ As the ZANU choir sang in 'Mbuya Nehanda', the ZANLA forces were Nehanda's reincarnation.¹⁵⁸ Teya also recalled singing 'traditional' songs like 'Mudzimu Woye' (Our Dear Ancestors) to thank ancestors for their guidance through the difficult war:

Mudzimu woye mudzimu woye
Makaita basa
Oh here mudzimu woye
Makaita basa.

Oh dear our ancestral spirits
 We are grateful for your great work
 Oh dear guardian spirits
 Thank you for the job well done.¹⁵⁹

The blood of martyrs of the First *Chimurenga* like Mbuya Nehanda nurtured both the spirit of resistance and an immortal public memory that drove the Second *Chimurenga* as a historical mission. This sense suffused the songs produced and sung both on the warfront and in the villages. The same was also true of the songs produced by popular, urban-based musicians.

Thomas Mapfumo and the Hallelujah Chicken Run Band's late 1960s - early 1970s Osibisa-inspired singles, compiled into an LP, 'Murembo' (Trouble), marked the 'return to tradition' as the basis of *Chimurenga* music. Most of the songs on this 18 track album, including 'Chaminuka Mukuru' (Chaminuka is Great), 'Mudzimu Ndiringe' (Watch over me, Ancestral Guardian) and 'Shumba Inobva Mugomo' (The Mountain Lion), appealed for ancestral protection in this time of trouble and entreated Africans to revalue their traditions as the only platform for self-liberation.¹⁶⁰ As we saw in Chapter 3, Mapfumo had always liked indigenous music and, by this time, he had finally abandoned performing cover versions of western songs. Indigenous traditional symbolism permeated his performances. The *ngoma* (drum), *hosho* (gourd shakers) and *mbira* rhythm now firmly underlined his beat. He started appearing on stage clad in multi-coloured

¹⁵⁷ See Geoffrey Nyarota, *Against the Grain: Memoirs of a Zimbabwean Newsmen* (Cape Town: Zebra Press, 2006), Chapter 1.

¹⁵⁸ A.J.C. Pongweni, *Songs that Won the Liberation War*, 54.

¹⁵⁹ Lisa Teya, *Mothers of the Revolution*, 100. Translation mine.

¹⁶⁰ Hallelujah Chicken Run Band, *Murembo*, Teal Records, Afro-Soul, AS 105, 1974 (Reissued as Take One, a compilation album, Gramma Records, 2006).

'traditional gowns' commonly worn by spirit mediums and warriors, and sporting *mhotsi* (dreadlocks). In this way, he personified the symbolic revolution taking place in the country's and African music generally.¹⁶¹ As Ghanaian Kwadwo Danso-Manu wrote to *Parade* from Britain, this cultural renaissance was testimony that 'Black Africa too has got a cultural heritage to bequeath to the world treasury of cultures'.¹⁶² This Pan-African consciousness was born of necessity, transcending the illusion of the NAD's 'tribal' inventions.

As Mapfumo declared in 'Murembo', the time had come to take up 'his weapons to prosecute the historic war that is upon us' to restore his people's dignity.¹⁶³ 'Musawo[r]e Moyo' (Don't Lose Heart) carries this message of restoration most eloquently:

<i>Musawore moyo musawore</i>	Don't lose heart, never
<i>Musawore moyo muchazofara</i>	Don't lose heart, you shall surely rejoice
<i>Musha ndewenyu musawore</i>	The home [country] is yours, don't lose heart
<i>Musawore moyo muchazofara</i>	Don't lose heart, you shall surely enjoy
<i>Upfumi ndehwenyu musawore</i>	The wealth is all yours, take heart
<i>Musawore moyo muchazofara</i>	Don't lose heart, you shall surely rejoice.

To reassure his listeners, Mapfumo ends the song by chanting: '*Musawore moyo hama; muchazofara – muchazodya noliver* (No, do not lose heart because of this wretched life; you shall surely eat liver for relish!)'.¹⁶⁴ Eating liver for relish was a sign of unimaginable luxury to people who had been reduced to eating 'soya meat' for lack of beef after international sanctions against Rhodesia spawned critical shortages of foodstuffs 'for Africans'.¹⁶⁵ Settler primitive accumulation and the ravages of war had subjected Africans to unprecedented suffering and desperation, after their loss of livestock, land and freedom. In this song, therefore, Mapfumo laid claim to the expropriated farms,

¹⁶¹ Webster Shamhu, '1973 Revolution', *Radio Post*, vol.1, No.1, January 1974.

¹⁶² Kwadwo Danso-Manu, 'Ghanaian in Britain Writes: Parade is Projecting African Culture', *Parade*, July 1959, 35.

¹⁶³ Hallelujah Chicken Run Band, 'Murembo'.

¹⁶⁴ Hallelujah Chicken Run Band, 'Musawore Moyo', *Murembo*.

¹⁶⁵ *The Zimbabwe Review*, 'No Meat for the Africans in Racist Rhodesia', November 2, 1974, 1; Phil Nandu, 'Soya Meat in Taste Test', *The Rhodesia Herald*, (undated cutting appended to the above-cited *Zimbabwe Review*) article.

wealth and homes as belonging to Africans. These would be returned so that Africans could 'eat liver' once more. Liver is a powerful metaphor for a new life of abundance Africans imagined with the overthrow of the colonial system. It was in the context of the more than a century of uprootment that Mapfumo's reassurance made sense.

Lamentations of the Homeless

Mapfumo, Oliver Mtukudzi, Zexie Manatsa, Jordan Chataika and dozens of others reinforced the *Chimurenga* voices from the liberation choirs, steeping their songs in the artistic subtlety of indigenous languages and expressive modes to articulate grievances and drum up support for the war. The massive rural displacement spawned by land expropriation, other forms of colonial plunder and the herding of villagers into 'protected villages' to sever peasant support for the war all fed guerilla recruitment. At the same time, these forms of violence created desperation and suffering for the less able-bodied, who often became refugees. Chataika captured these harrowing experiences in his song, 'Ndipo Patigere Pano' (This is Where We Live Now):

Chorus:	<i>Ndopatigere pano</i> <i>Ndopatigere pano</i>	This is where we live, This is where we now live
	<i>Uyai muone pamakatiisa baba</i>	Father, come and see where you dumped us
	<i>Netuhupfu twedu turi</i>	We and our miserly sacks
	<i>mumasaga baba</i>	of mealie-meal
	<i>Tumapoto twedu turi</i>	Our pots are under those
	<i>pasi pemitu iyo baba</i>	trees over there dear Lord
	<i>Madzimai edu achidzungudzika</i>	Our wives are utterly distressed
	<i>Baba</i>	Oh father
	<i>Tine vana vedu vachitambudzika</i>	We've our children out here, destitute
	<i>Uyai muone zvamakatiita</i>	Come and see what you did to us
	<i>Chokwadi makatikanganwa baba</i>	You surely forsook us father
	<i>Zuva rikauya rinongotipisa</i>	The scorching sun comes and bakes us
	<i>Mvura ikauya inongotinaya</i>	Come the torrential rains and drench us
	<i>Mhepo ikauya</i>	Wind storms come
	<i>Inongotivhuvhuta</i>	and toss us about like dry leaves
	<i>Chando chikauya</i>	The chilling cold
	<i>chinongotitonhora baba</i>	comes and freezes us numb

*Takanga takavakawo
misha yedu baba*

Yet we lived in
homes built by our own hands

*Takanga takarima
minda yedu baba
Takanga takarima
chibage chedu baba
Takanga tichifudzawo
mombe dzedu baba
Isu ndopatigere pano.*

We had cultivated our own fields
our dear Lord
We had grown our maize fields
as usual
We used to graze our own cattle
on open plains
Yet we live here now.¹⁶⁶

Pongweni argues that the problems that Chataika narrates are decidedly those of a communal group suddenly having to come to grips with the cash nexus ... of the [hostile] urban situation as refugees.¹⁶⁷ They have difficulty coming to terms with their new situation, which is characterized by destitution, exposure to the elements and depression – a poignant contrast to their communal security and wealth in homes, land, crops and livestock. However, there is nothing peculiarly urban about the shock in Chataika's song. Uprootment and displacement were cardinal tenets of colonialism. As ZAPU aptly put it, this dumping of people was a common experience whenever any piece of land attracted the attention of a passing settler. The typical scenario, in ZAPU's words, was that:

Police jeeps and trucks drive into the villages ... accompanied by troops and Africans are unceremoniously thrown into trucks irrespective of whether any of their property remains or not. Of course in defense of their rights and in resentment to this crude settler behaviour the Africans resist to the best of their means. Unarmed, how far can the resistance go? Tractors are brought in to mow down the African houses ... Some remote spot, of course, an infertile one, is the destination where the Africans are dumped like a city rubbish van disposing of its load. No houses, no fields, no food and the population is threatened with armed hellfire if it attempts to settle out of the earmarked area ... This is the British settler exercising power over the Africans. They drive back to hotels and suburbs to feed and feast leaving starving Africans on the bare.¹⁶⁸

This is how 'reserves' were created and operationalized. When he sang 'Pfumvu Paruzevha' (Trouble in the Reserves), Mapfumo uses these common images – the wanton

¹⁶⁶ A.J.C. Pongweni, 'Chimurenga Songs', 70.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 71.

¹⁶⁸ *The Zimbabwe Review*, 'Life under Fascist Rule', 1, 4, 1969, 5.

death of his relatives, livestock seizures, land expropriation and disappearances – to mobilize people for armed struggle without directly naming the culprits. He merely asks: ‘Father has seen trouble at home’; ‘Have you heard that grandmother died?’ ‘Have you heard that there is no more land?’ ‘Have you heard that cattle have vanished?’ ‘Have you heard the rains no longer fall?’ To somebody who has no firsthand knowledge of Shona, this is a general narrative that neither explains the manner of the ‘death’ of his grandmother, the ‘vanishing’ of the cattle, the ‘finishing’ of the farmland, the cause for the ‘stopping’ of the rains, nor accuses anybody for these ill-fortunes. To Africans constantly evicted from their land, as symbolized by the defiant Tangwena people in Nyanga, losing cattle in de-stocking exercises, being killed daily by soldiers, the song needed no elaboration. Because of harsh colonial policies, Africans cut a very sorry sight, which Mapfumo contrasts with the ‘blessed’ ‘Others’ who ‘live in towns’, who ‘move about by car’, ‘have money in their pockets’, ‘are in good health’, ‘eat hot meals’ and ‘live in electrified houses’.¹⁶⁹ As Kwaramba observes, most of Mapfumo’s songs in this period are over-lexicalized with suffering, death, destitution and trouble which were a very strong indictment of the settlers and their government.¹⁷⁰ As a communication technique, the rhetorical questions here are intended to jolt compatriots to action, chiding them for folding their hands in the face of such utter desecration. Thus, lamenting these colonial evils was tantamount to calling for popular resistance.¹⁷¹

In ‘Kuyaura’ (Suffering), Mapfumo similarly articulates the popular grievances – the arbitrary killings, the wanton destruction of homes and the impoverishment – then makes impassioned pleas for advice, wisdom, sacred weapons and charms from the nation’s grey heads, ancestors, martyred leaders (Takawira, Chitepo and Parirenyatwa), the herbalists and medicine men and women and, even antinomically, from local witches too! As Mtukudzi put it in ‘Ndiri Bofu’ (I am Blind), the country was trudging in desperate spiritual blindness that required divine intervention from ‘Jehovha’ (God). In a harsh environment bereft of freedom of expression, Mtukudzi cleverly cloaked his pleas for support in the struggle in a ‘gospel’ tune, as if praying for personal help from the

¹⁶⁹ Thomas Mapfumo, *Pfumvu Paruzevha*, re-issued on *Live at El Rey*, Anonymous Records, 1999.

¹⁷⁰ A.D. Kwaramba, *Popular Music and Society*, 42.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*

Christian God. But those literate in traditional performance styles like *bembera* would easily get the privileged message. The individual in these songs was often a metaphor for the nation. Even amidst the lamentation, a common thread running through these *Chimurenga* songs was the unfaltering confidence and reassertion of the common vision of victory born of that extreme suffering, as represented in Mapfumo's 'Pamuromo Chete' (Mere Big Mouthing), his rebuke of Ian Smith's declaration that Africans would never rule the country. 'The song was sung directly', Mapfumo later explained. 'I was telling Smith that there are people in such trouble that all this talking was mere words – talk without substance. The people understood. They knew what I was talking about'.¹⁷² If they did not, songs like 'Rusununguko MuZimbabwe' (Freedom in Zimbabwe) by Cde Chinx were a ready translation:

<i>Rusununguko muZimbabwe</i>	Freedom in Zimbabwe
<i>Ruchauya manje manje</i>	Is coming very soon
<i>Kana tave kuzvitonga</i>	Then we shall rule ourselves.

This was one of Cde Chinx's first compositions and, as he explains, it typifies the versatility of African popular music: 'What I was doing there was that I was taking those gospel tunes which I used to sing back here while I went to church with my mother, empty them of all the words about God and filling them with *Chimurenga* words!'¹⁷³ This was nothing novel; missionaries had invested the Christian God into indigenous religious and secular tunes earlier in the century.

(Traditional) hunting songs were also recast in *Chimurenga* mould. In this category fall such songs as Mapfumo's 'Shumba' (Lion), 'Nyama Yekugocha' (Meat for Braaing) and 'Nyoka Musango' (Snake in the Forest), and Zexie Manatsa's 'Musango Mune Hangaiwa' (There is a Guinea Fowl in the Forest) and 'Nyoka Yendara' (The Ominous Snake). In 'Shumba', Mapfumo sings about *gwindingwi* (the dark forest) in which lurks a predatory lion, a message that had to be communicated with utmost discretion lest the predator be forewarned. As George Kahari notes, in the new urban context, 'the thick black forest ... refers to the ... city and the killer lion is the oppressive

¹⁷² Thomas Mapfumo, quoted in J. Frederikse, *None But Ourselves*, 108.

¹⁷³ Cde Chinx, Interview, 12 December, Chitungwiza, 5.

police force and the government agents'.¹⁷⁴ Similarly, Manatsa's 'ominous snake' or 'guinea fowls' swarming the forest referred to the settler forces and, in Mapfumo's reformulated hunting song, 'Nyama Yekugocha', these creatures had become *braai* meat or, alternatively, venomous snakes to be squashed on the head. Most of these songs could be sung with impunity as traditional or Christian ballads while effectively communicating the liberation message. Yet, as shall be seen later, their ambiguity also made them amenable to appropriation and subversion by the enemy. The guerillas harnessed modern broadcasting technology to create a virtual Zimbabwe in the shared imaginations of not only the fighters and African listeners and letter writers, but also their adversaries. Broadcasting reconnected the exile with the intimate spaces behind closed doors and under the blankets from which listeners at home tuned into Radio Mozambique, Tanzania and others, rendering such communication special.

***Chimurenga* Requests: Creating a Virtual Zimbabwe**

As already noted, these *Chimurenga* songs, news briefs and greetings found their way into the constricted listening spaces via ZANU's 'Voice of the People' and ZAPU broadcasts, both hosted by frontline states' medium-wave channels. The songs and messages broadcast over such 'pirate' radio stations became valued sources of alternative information for a people wearied by alienating state propaganda. News, greetings and battle briefings were interspaced with *Chimurenga* songs to captivate the imaginations of listeners. David Brooks, a Rhodesian Air Force operative, summed up the power of such broadcasts:

That '*Chimurenga* Requests' programme! It was very effective propaganda, because of the songs and emotion put into it. I felt, hell, this was it; damn Rhodesia, up Zimbabwe, after some broadcasts. It was totally different from our 'Forces Requests' programme. That was just morale-boosting whereas '*Chimurenga* Requests' gave a really rousing, spiritual feeling. It had everyone singing. I've come across Africans in the bush, sitting around the radio, singing.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷⁴ G.P. Kahari, 'The History of the Shona Protest Song', 82.

¹⁷⁵ David Brooks, quoted by J. Frederikse, *None But Ourselves*, 105.

The power of such broadcasts derived in part from the popular conviction in the struggle, but also from its clear articulation in locally generated and shared idioms. Popular *Chimurenga* artists had risen to stardom doing western cover versions of rock and roll, soul and other genres. But in the changing political atmosphere, they had gradually discarded those forms in quest of relevance to their own communities. As Mapfumo explained, 'I realized ... that I must use my own African language to send a message to my own people'.¹⁷⁶ This was the rich language that they could play with skillfully to 'conceal what I was saying ... but our people understood the language that the whites didn't understand'.¹⁷⁷

Brooks' contrasting of *Chimurenga* with the Rhodesian Forces' morale-boosting songs is instructive. An example of the latter is 'Sweet Banana', a composition by John Edmond which the RAR forces adopted as a regimental song:

A, B, C, D, E Headquarters I will buy you a sweet banana
 A, B, C, D, E Headquarters I will buy you a sweet banana
 Banana, Banana, Banana, I will buy you a sweet banana
 Shield, spear and knobkerrie, soldiers in war and peace
 In war she fights with bravery, I will buy you a sweet banana
 Rhodesia, Burma, Egypt neMalaya *takarwa tika kunda* (... we fought and won)
 Rhodesia, Burma, Egypt neMalaya *takarwa tika kunda*
 A, B, C, D Support Headquarters *ndidzo ndichapedza hondo dzoze* (... shall end all wars)
 A, B, C, D Support Headquarters *ndidzo ndichapedza hondo dzoze*
 Banana, Banana, Banana *ndichakutengera sweet banana* (I will buy you a sweet banana).

This is an ideologically bankrupt song indicating that the combatants were fighting for a 'sweet banana', a metaphorical indictment of the mercenary underbelly of colonial wars. Rhodesia's pride in military technology that this song exalted failed to 'end all wars', specifically the Zimbabwean war of independence. This was because the spirit of independence was underwritten by festering grievances and deep ideological convictions that rejected colonial materialism. As Chinx argued, guerillas fought on the basis of their

¹⁷⁶ Thomas Mapfumo, quoted in J. Frederikse, *None But Ourselves.*, 106.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

convictions, not because they were conscripted into the army or because they were simply doing paid jobs.¹⁷⁸ Such convictions were the wellspring of *Chimurenga* songs.

Naturally, as W. Bender observed, 'On suspicions of subversion, Shona songs that were ... popular with the people and the guerillas were excluded from the [RBC's] system', which, in an ironic twist, tended to fuel their sales.¹⁷⁹ The Rhodesian regime had struggled to control information, subsidizing trade in and scrapping license fees for FM radio sets that tuned into its propaganda spewing RBC service alone. But this was no easy endeavour, as evidenced by its bitter complaints against the BBC's persistent coverage of nationalist activities, which the regime condemned as 'murder by radio'.¹⁸⁰ The state's bid to suppress *Chimurenga* voices also extended to the record companies, prompting them to compel musicians to tone down their lyrics. Noted Tony Rivet of Teal Records:

Thomas' music! Phew! If you only knew what the words were before – we'd to change some of the words ... to a certain extent, and let the meaning be understood through innuendo though everybody knew what was going on. We had to change the words so that the songs could be acceptable to the government. I remember they came along to me and said, 'The terrors are getting all the tribes-people to sing gook songs. The one they really didn't like was 'Tumira Vana Kuhondo ... I told them it was a bloody RAR [Rhodesia African Rifles] marching song, an old military marching song.'¹⁸¹

Because the state agents mostly depended on secondhand translations, the musicians made maximum use of innuendo and other complex figures of speech to avoid prosecution. 'Tumirai Vana Kuhondo' (Send the Children to the War) encouraged parents to send their children to join the guerilla training camps outside the country. But as Kwaramba observes, it is a request directed at no one in particular,¹⁸² a fact that not only fooled the state agents to buy Rivet's story, but it also led the Rhodesian soldiers to adopt the song as a 'bloody RAR marching song':

¹⁷⁸ Cde Chinx, Interview, 10.

¹⁷⁹ W. Bender, *Sweet Mother: Modern African Music*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1991, 158.

¹⁸⁰ Ministry of Information, Immigration and Tourism, 'Murder by Radio', Government Printer, Salisbury, July 1966.

¹⁸¹ T. Rivet, quoted in J. Frederikse, *None But Ourselves*, 108.

¹⁸² A.D. Kwaramba, *Popular Music and Society*, 46.

You see, the RF [Rhodesian Front] soldiers thought the song was meant to support them – that was the whole trick. They used to sing this very same number, only meaning it the other way round. We pulled their leg, at the same time encourag[ing] our people to fight.¹⁸³

But this point also illustrates that, because of their very qualities, *Chimurenga* songs were not immune to contestation and appropriation. In fact, such struggles over *Chimurenga* songs affected the musicians and threatened their careers. For example, in 1978, Zexie Manatsa and his Green Arrows band were beaten up on stage and detained for two nights for insistently playing their revolutionary songs like ‘Madzangaradzimu’ and ‘Nyoka Yendara’. They had already suffered similar treatment 3 years earlier.¹⁸⁴ Similarly, the regime arrested and detained Mapfumo on several occasions in the same period accusing him of ‘aiding terrorists’ through his songs, but the charges never stuck because the lyrics were slippery. In 1979, he was detained for three months and then allegedly blackmailed into performing for Bishop Abel Muzorewa, the Prime Minister of the discredited and short-lived Zimbabwe-Rhodesia regime. As Mapfumo told *Parade* two decades later,

I was detained continuously on the pretext that I was working [with] and aiding ‘terrorists’. They had detained me before but did not lay charges, and released me without any explanation. They again detained me in 1979 for about three months. ... A condition for my release was that I should accompany Bishop Muzorewa for a rally in Bulawayo. I was told to support him to avoid harassment. I sang at his rally, and the next day I was splashed on the front page of *The Herald*, with Muzorewa.¹⁸⁵

Back in Harare, Mapfumo met angry fans who denounced him as a sell-out, and he lost the big crowds that had characterized his shows. Mapfumo luckily survived this labeling

¹⁸³ Thomas Mapfumo, quoted in J. Frederikse, *None But Ourselves*, 109.

¹⁸⁴ O. Muza, ‘Zimbabwe: A Case of Music Censorship before and after Independence’, *Six Articles on Music Censorship in Zimbabwe*, (prepared in connection with a seminar on music censorship in Zimbabwe held Thursday 28th, April 2005 at Mannenberg Jazz Club), Harare, 16.

¹⁸⁵ Thomas Mapfumo, quoted in Lloyd Mutungamiri, ‘I was not a Sell-out, Says Chimurenga Guru’, *Parade*, January 2000, 54.

probably because of the relatively more protective city environment. As Nyarota writes, in the rural areas,

Villagers labeled as sell-outs were liable for instant execution ... The worst tragedy that could befall a peasant family during Zimbabwe's war of liberation was to have a member marked as a sell-out. The stigma lingered long after the victim's remains were buried.¹⁸⁶

Thus, Mapfumo was rightly worried. He claims the Smith regime had set him up to discredit him and to confuse the people who regarded his songs as the voice of the voiceless. But he survived the subterfuge because,

Those that came to that show can tell you that I never sold out, I was singing the same *Chimurenga* beat, the same critical lyrics and the same protest ... I continued producing heavy *Chimurenga* music and then people started asking themselves, if I had sold out, how come I was still playing the same revolutionary songs. It was one incident that disturbed me in those days but people soon found out that I was not a sellout.¹⁸⁷

Moreover, reminiscent of the colonial regime's bizarre pamphlets and 'flying-corpse' shows, Muzorewa's United African National Congress (UANC) party went further to '[hijack] Mapfumo's songs ... blasting them from helicopters in the countryside accompanied by messages that the singer had deserted ZANU and now backed Muzorewa.'¹⁸⁸ Muzorewa's party thought this would bolster its call for a ceasefire after its Internal Settlement deal with Ian Smith's Rhodesian Front. But Mapfumo did not worry too much 'because the people knew who the real liberators were'.¹⁸⁹ In fact, the

¹⁸⁶ G. Nyarota, *Against the Grain*, 17.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.* In fact, this incident affected Mapfumo more than he admitted here. Apparently, the new independence government remained unconvinced and held this incident against him, begrudgingly allowing him to perform during the independence celebration at Rufaro Stadium only the next morning after other musicians, including less prominent ones, had performed on the eve of the event.

¹⁸⁸ Chris Stapleton and Chris May, *African All-Stars* (New York: Quartet Books, 1987), 218. In a gruesome show of power, the colonial regime dangled dead 'terrorists' from helicopters or dragged them behind moving jeeps to dissuade peasants from supporting the liberation war.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

only people who responded to this call to return home were Muzorewa's own Auxiliary Forces – *Madzakutsaku*, whom Mapfumo mocked in 'Bhutsu Mutandarika' (Oversize, Disfigured Boot). This was a comic side to the state's attempts to purge *Chimurenga* songs from the radio; listeners must certainly have found it amusing that the music they had only accessed through 'pirate' radio and acquired clandestinely from record bars was now being desecrated like the dead bodies Smith's forces dangled from the air.

Prison Bands: *Chimurenga* in the Stocks

But not even imprisonment could silence *Chimurenga* songs. Mapfumo was defiant, arguing that it was easier to kill him than to force him to stop 'singing *Chimurenga* songs – our own African traditional music'.¹⁹⁰ That defiance demonstrated how deeply the songs were steeped in Africans' desire for freedom and in their cosmologies. It was for the same reasons that the songs provided an antidote to the harsh treatment and uncertainty political prisoners suffered in jail. During his fund-raising tours of Zambia from Tanzania, Sithole had endured taunts by some uncharitable hosts who told him to 'go back to your country and fight Smith'.¹⁹¹ He eventually did, in 1969, as part of a ZIPRA reconnaissance and recruitment unit after training for one year at Morogoro in Tanzania. In the same way, a belligerent young Chinx would eventually take up his employer's challenge to 'go join the terrorists if you think you can take back your country' in the 1970s.¹⁹² Unfortunately for Sithole, he was captured in a battle and sentenced to death as a 'terrorist'. However, his sentence was later commuted to life, and he was interned at Khami Maximum Security Prison in Bulawayo.¹⁹³

Prison conditions were harsh for 'politicals' like Sithole, who had to sleep on bare cement floors and undertake 'make-work' tasks like breaking rocks. To ease the psychological toll, Sithole and his fellow inmates decided to form prison bands:

I formed a band called Down Beat, with K. Shumba and Zizi – the three of us. Another 5 colleagues formed a separate group, Merry Makers. So we took turns to

¹⁹⁰ Thomas Mapfumo, quoted by J. Frederikse, *None But Ourselves*, 110.

¹⁹¹ Abel Sithole, Interview, 7.

¹⁹² Cde Chinx, Interview, 2.

¹⁹³ Abel Sithole, Interview, 6.

entertain prisoners, encouraging them not to think too much, because death was always hanging over our heads and also because of the ill-treatment. That helped the inmates not to lose their heads, though 5 or 6 did ... We grouped together as ZIPRA and ZANLA to sing *Chimurenga* songs until it was time to sleep.¹⁹⁴

The prison songs did not diverge thematically from the *Chimurenga* genre. In fact, like the more common prison writings, the songs helped reinforce the inmates' political beliefs and to propagate shared visions of the nation. Such power is demonstrated in the video *Amandla!* which shows South African political prisoners pounding the hard ground with the soles of their feet in spirited group performances as they awaited the apartheid noose.¹⁹⁵ Prison did not represent spiritual death for hard-boiled cadres of the struggle; like exile, it was another special space to (re)imagine the nation. It allowed Sithole to compose, learn and share songs and experiences with his colleagues from different parts of the country, and he would sing some of the songs upon his release at independence:

I composed some of the songs, and also learned a lot of new ones from my fellow inmates like Mbengeranwa, who taught me *mbira* songs. The prisons held many inmates from different parts of the country: Mt Darwin, Masvingo, Matabeleland, etc, so there was much scope for exchanging these songs and also to share thoughts and experiences.¹⁹⁶

One of the *mbira* songs he learned from Mbengeranwa was 'Tsenzi' (Honey-bird):

Gogogoi tasvika isu nherera
Musango dema rinochema tsenzi
Mhondoro dzesango dzinozarura
Musango dema rinochema tsenzi
Vakadzi musarase dota mariri
Musango dema rinochema tsenzi.

We have arrived, we the orphans
In the dark forest of the roving honey-bird
The guardian spirits will open the way
In the dark forest of the roaming honey-bird
Women don't dispose ash in it
In the dark forest of the chirping honey-bird.

Tsenzi is a chirping honey-bird beloved by hunters for escorting them to bee colonies

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 6-7.

¹⁹⁵ Lee Hirsch, *Amandla! Revolution in Four-Part Harmony*, 2002.

¹⁹⁶ Abel Sithole, Interview, 7.

or other prey so that it may also enjoy the frills. The Shona traditionally revere and avoid harming this bird, as they do the *mhondoro*, the sacred lion, often interpreting the sighting of these creatures as epiphanic. Harming them would desecrate the forests and upset the ancestral guardians of the land. As in Mapfumo's '(Gwindingwi Rine) Shumba' (Gwindingwi Mountain has a Predator Lion) and 'Nyoka Musango' (Snake in the Forest), this song metaphorically represents the dark forest as confusion and uncertainty that had struck the woe-betided Africans. But at another level and unlike the former, the dark forest is also a holy abode for the ancestors who maintain the balance of nature and manifest themselves through *tсени* to guide people through such confusion and uncertainty as long as they obey ancestral precepts. No one ordinarily ventures into the dark forest unless they are desperately seeking refuge from a life-threatening invasion of their home, when they are hunting or when they have got lost. In all such circumstances, they would supplicate their ancestors for guidance, and observe the precepts of the sacred forests. As Mahoso puts it, the ancestral spirits were the ultimate guardian of the land and protectors of African space and ecology.¹⁹⁷ The independence struggle that Zimbabweans had embarked on was a desperate bid to drive out obstinate invaders who had thrown their very existence into peril, hence their literal and psychological refuge in the dark forests.

This meaning is shared by another piece, 'Haisi Mhosva yaChinamano' (It's not Chinamano's Fault), by Lot Nyathi, Dennis Dhlamini and Ken Ndhlovu, ZIPRA combatants also detained at Khami Prison, who may well have been Sithole's fellow inmates:

It is not the fault of Chinamano,
It is not the fault of Musarurwa
That the children of Zimbabwe must carry guns to fight in Zimbabwe

Truly we have suffered;
Our relatives are in the wire,
Others are orphans,
Their riches have vanished.

Let's fight in Zimbabwe,

¹⁹⁷ T. Mahoso, 'Visualizing African Memory', 17.

Let's be brave and fight the war of our ancestors,
The war of *chindunduma*;
Let's be brave – we, the Africans – to finish the war of liberation in Zimbabwe.¹⁹⁸

This singing helped to set the detainees' minds off the pain and anxiety of imprisonment, but its primary function remained; it continued to inspire even those shackled in the stocks to fight on for liberation. Thus, as Nyathi and colleagues told Frederikse, 'Those who were released earlier had to convey the message to the people outside. They had to sing those songs and let the people get to know them. We knew that they were going to be sung and that we, too, were going to sing them outside one day'.¹⁹⁹ Prison songs, therefore, perpetuated the fight which Nyathi and colleagues conceptualized as the continuing historical fight their ancestors started as *hondo yechindunduma* (war of resistance) in the 1890s.

Summary

Nyathi and colleagues' view of the 1970s war of independence as a continuation of *hondo yechindunduma* historicized the multiplex contours of resistance, manifesting in protest and *Chimurenga* songs, demonstrations and armed struggles as a traceable, self-legitimizing endeavour for freedom by Africans. It is this resistance thread that the colonial state had worked to stymie over the decades, but it progressively radicalized instead as the liberation imperative became more urgent and feasible. It is also important to note that opposition to colonial oppression and fighting in the war had called for popular participation, and songs captured and articulated these subaltern voices. The war would be etched in public memory as a lesson of how a people can draw on the power of their culture to fight to liberate themselves. This cultural power had emphasized restoration, popular co-operative participation and justice as shared ideals for a better future. These ideals characterize the long repertory of protest and *Chimurenga* songs sung by teachers and students on the missions, villagers and, lastly, professional musicians and combatant choirs in the 1960s and 70s. This repertory was not unaffected

¹⁹⁸ J. Frederikse, *None But Ourselves*, 110. Josiah Chinamano and Willie Musarurwa were prominent ZAPU founders and leaders. 'Wire' refers to the so-called 'protected villages' or 'keeps', already discussed.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

by various subterfuge efforts by the colonial state and its agents. Indeed, the resistance voice had to struggle to maintain its currency, and upstage the subterfuges to survive.

Chapter 5 Singing Socialism? Music, Work and the Politics of Culture: Zimbabwe in the 1980s-late 90s*

We are alarmed and concerned at the growing number of cases of corruption, scandals, negligence of duty and betrayal of Zimbabwe's socialist goals – Edgar N. Mbwembwe.¹

Commending Pongweni's publication, *Songs that Won the Liberation War*, Zimbabwe's first President, Canaan Banana, averred that these revolutionary songs 'were the raison d'état (sic) of our revolution [that] provid[ed] the necessary anchor sheet for the successful prosecution of our struggle for freedom and independence'.² In independent Zimbabwe, *Chimurenga* songs became inseparable from the new nation's public memory and imagination of the future. They would remain an important platform of national expression. The same can also be said of the producers of this music, as the president hastened to add:

Now that the war is over, I hope that the artists who composed 'the songs that won the liberation war' will not go to waste. There is need for new songs that will help to reinforce our socialist thrust. Such songs should be instrumental in the continuous struggle for economic independence and the transformation of our society. Our new social order demands that we should mobilize all our existing resources and talents. Our artists should join the bandwagon of concerted action to build a truly independent, united, equal and prosperous society.³

Banana's statement was premised on ZANU's claims that it was leading a national transition from capitalism to a new socialist dispensation – a fulfillment of the popular

* Two early versions of this chapter have been published: 'The State and Music Policy in Post-Colonial Zimbabwe, 1980-2000', *Muziki: Journal of Music Research in Africa* 4:1 (2007); 'Our People Father, They Haven't Learned Yet': Music and Postcolonial Identities in Zimbabwe, 1980-2000', *Journal of Southern African Studies* 34:1 (2008).

¹ Quoted in *Turmoil and Tenacity*, backcover blurb. Mbwembwe was the University of Zimbabwe Students' Representative Council president in 1989. He led students in anti-corruption demonstrations in 1989 at the height of the Willowgate Scandal.

² A.J.C. Pongweni, *The Songs that Won the Liberation War* (College Press, Harare, 1982), Foreword.

³ *Ibid.*

wartime expectations and hopes of change and justice.⁴ This vision was encapsulated in the borrowed language of socialism, which was translated into and resonated with the indigenous notion of *gutsaruzhinji*, which literally means 'satisfying the masses'. It represented the conceptual binary opposite of *umbimbindoga* – selfish capitalist individualism. Throughout the first two decades of independence, but more unambiguously in the 1980s, socialism remained the correct language of politics, work and cultural expression. However, underneath this surface of socialist platitudes simmered growing scepticism by a populace enduring the ambiguities of persisting neo-colonial economic structures underpinned by settler and international capital, widening class chasms with their apparently corrupt, *compradorial* elite rulers and state repression. R. Davies and P. Bond, among others, successfully illustrate that there was nothing socialist about Zimbabwe under ZANU, either at the theoretical or practical level.⁵ In fact, as Bond writes, 'many of the policies adopted by the new government in the field of economic development represented continuity from the worst of Rhodesian state capitalism ... with the key sectors still controlled by whites and foreign companies'.⁶ So, why did the party continue to churn out the socialist rhetoric in spite of this reality? Both Davies and Bond believe this was a strategy to suppress a ZANU left wing who took the rhetoric seriously and genuinely strove for a socialist transformation from within the party. The ground for such elements was very fertile, as witnessed in the epidemic of over 150 incidents of worker strikes that ground mines, tea estates and industries to a halt just prior to and after independence in what may be read as attempts by proletarians to smash capitalist structures, whether for revolutionary purposes or not. The same can also be said of the waves of peasants and urban dwellers whom the government chased off commercial farms as 'squatters' over the first two decades of independence.⁷ Thus, whatever the cunning calculations of the elite ideologues who sustained the fiction of socialism, hopes of a radical transformation remained alive throughout particularly the

⁴ R. Davies, 'The Transition to Socialism in Zimbabwe: Some Areas for Debate', *Zimbabwe's Propects: Issues of Race, Class, State and Capital in Southern Africa*, ed. Colin Stoneman (London: Macmillan Publishers), 1988, 18.

⁵ *Ibid.*; P. Bond, *Uneven Zimbabwe: A Study of Finance, Development and Underdevelopment* (Asmara and Trenton: Africa World Press, Inc., 1998), 151.

⁶ P. Bond, *Uneven Zimbabwe*, 150.

⁷ *Ibid.*

first decade of independence. But perhaps more significantly, as Themba Nkabinde observed of Thomas Mapfumo and Lovemore Majaivana, many artists continued to occupy the frontline of the struggle for such a revolution as they had done during the war of liberation.⁸ President Banana's hope may have derived from the desire to harness and control this unbridled activism. Artistic performance may have been a good way for the new rulers not only to maintain and control the rhetoric of socialism, but also to institutionalize their new power relations with the governed, especially if the artists could be told what to sing, as Banana proposed. As we shall see, this new state patronage had its limits, even though it still crippled the music industry.

Democratic Socialism or New Hegemony?

President Banana's musings were not a mere wish. In fact, through the National Arts Foundation – soon to be restructured and rechristened the National Arts Council of Zimbabwe (NACZ) – the government was already actively seeking to enlist musicians to sing its 'socialist' vision and development ideals. On April 7, 1984, for instance, the Harare Arts Council hosted a training workshop at Ranche House College for 46 leaders of cultural groups from Harare's high-density areas affiliated to the Harare African Choirs and Traditional Associations, and registered with the council. The workshop was chaired by the principal of the college and Vice-Chairman of the Harare Arts Council, one Comrade Mudariki. It was also attended by officials from the Ministry of Youth, Sport and Culture, and was officially opened by the Ministry's Chief Cultural Officer, Stephen Chifunyise. This was the NACZ's maiden workshop to facilitate the 'cultural re-orientation' of community cultural groups towards 'socialism'. According to Chifunyise, the workshop was premised on the need to 'improve the quality of community arts leadership because [he] believed that [the] cultural entertainment needs of the vast majority of the people in our residential areas cannot be satisfied by community arts groups which have no imaginative leaders'.⁹ The previous year, the Harare Arts Council

⁸ T. Nkabinde, Lovemore Majaivana and the Township Music of Zimbabwe (Uncompleted chapter towards an MA thesis, University of Natal, 2005, <http://www.inkundla.net/indaba/2005/Nkwenkwezi/Majaiwana1.php>).

⁹ DHCS, File C36, Speech by Cde Stephen Chifunyise, Chief Cultural Officer in the Ministry of Youth, Sport and Culture at the Opening of the Harare Arts Councils'

had commissioned a survey on cultural organizations in Harare with a bias towards groups operating in the low income, densely populated townships – the ‘high density’ areas. The survey showed a preponderance of ‘traditional’ performance groups there, which contrasted with what the survey described as more elitist forms of entertainment in the former white suburbs, now also the abode of upper class Africans.¹⁰ As Chifunyise pointed out, the state targeted the former, ‘the masses of our people ... the workers in the low income bracket ... enslaved to beer by exploitative colonial capitalism’, for its ideological re-education.¹¹ The role of the NACZ, as the Secretary of the Harare Arts Council, P.T. Muginyi, pointed out, would be to train and fund artists through its provincial and district offices. But most importantly, it would also ensure that:

The composition of dances, songs, or design of artistic work, etc, ... reflect[ed] the social, economic and political aspirations and problems of our community bearing the fundamental and ultimate goal of the people of Zimbabwe in the establishment and development of a democratic, egalitarian and socialist society.¹²

While these pronouncements did not elaborate the notions of ‘democratic socialism’ and ‘imaginative leadership’, the approach was clearly one of tutelage of supposedly ignorant artists by knowledgeable government officials. The government pledged to support regular community-designed cultural entertainment programmes during weekends and evenings.¹³ District and Provincial Arts council officers and the government’s cultural officers would monitor these activities. The Chief Cultural Officer announced that ‘the government expect[ed] all non-governmental organizations and the private business sector’ to fund the activities.¹⁴ Apparently, no non-governmental organizations or private business representatives attended the workshop.

Training Course for Leaders of Community Arts Groups at the Ranche House College, 7 April 1984.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² DHCS, File C36, P.T. Muginyi, Report on First Cultural Leadership Course held at Ranche House College, 7 April 1984.

¹³ Stephen Chifunyise, Speech.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

We have seen in Chapter 2 how Rhodesian urban policies strained to construct and police racially demarcated spaces. That racial separation and policing constituted what novelist Dambudzo Marechera called the ‘visual absurdities of the colonial era’ which ‘departed’ with independence.¹⁵ Marechera certainly overstated his case by arguing that race, as an organizational concept, ‘departed’ with the coming of independence. It is more plausible, to argue with Chifunyise, that class interests actually subsumed race.¹⁶ This chapter argues that the agenda and structures of Rhodesian cultural policy largely survived independence, as evidenced by the recreated corps of overseers and institutions of control, if only in reconfigured forms. The state itself, as most Africans knew it, survived independence with its coercive and hegemonic instruments intact. Indeed, the exploitation of performative cultures for self-legitimation remained a key lever of statecraft. Some of the maiden Harare Arts Council resolutions suggest the continuity of a cultural policy that sought to buttress the power of the elite, the *shefs*, over the majority, whom the former condescendingly referred to as the *povo*.¹⁷ In effect, this seemed to have been the rationale behind the Ranche House College workshop. The assumption was that the *povo* were ignorant and willing followers who needed to be ideologically re-educated. Thus, argued Chifunyise, ‘Unless the leaders of the community arts groups acquire a proper socialist ideological reorientation, their artistic work will remain irrelevant to the social and cultural needs of the people of Zimbabwe’. It was the function of the NACZ to help the government to ‘upgrade the quality and reorientation of [these] community arts leaders’.¹⁸ Therefore, the NACZ emerged as a state instrument for ideological indoctrination and control, rather than a quasi-independent institution for nurturing the arts as per its founding principle in 1971.¹⁹

¹⁵ D. Marechera, quoted in David Caute, ‘Marechera in Black and White’, *Cultural Struggles & Development*, 101.

¹⁶ S. Chifunyise, Speech.

¹⁷ These terms were part of Portuguese legacy that ZANU picked up during the war in Mozambique. The first was used interchangeably with ‘comrade’ to refer to the party and government leaders, and *povo* referred to ‘the people’ in ZANU’s unwitting cultivation of a class chasm that ironically counterpoised its socialist rhetoric.

¹⁸ S. Chifunyise, Speech.

¹⁹ NAZ, S, National Arts Foundation of Rhodesia; George Maxwell Jackson, *The Land is Bright: A Special Report to the National Arts Foundation on the state of the arts in Rhodesia 1973, with some proposals for their development*, The National Arts

A fuller sense of this agenda can be seen from the Ranche House College Workshop's recommendations, which programmatically defined the role of artists in light of the state's 'socialist' framework as adumbrated by President Banana. These included:

- The need to hold at least three major festivals and competitions every year, which could include the National Breweries-sponsored Neshamwari Festival, with winners proceeding to compete for an annual independence trophy against all SADCC countries;
- the holding of weekly performances in the Harare Gardens and in low density areas for the benefit of residents and visitors;
- the need to reflect the country's ideological line through songs, dances, etc;
- that members of cultural organizations should portray their 'true image' wherever they are through dress;
- the establishment of a pool of experts to be readily available as instructors and judges;
- that ceremonies at the Heroes Acre should reflect our traditional culture rather than the church;
- the enlargement of the National Dance Company to showcase more songs and dances;
- that the Ministry of Youth, Sport and Culture should ensure that all cultural groups within Harare are afforded equal opportunities to perform at important functions such as welcoming visiting dignitaries at the airport, state house, etc, and that;
- Groups should invite the Ministry's Cultural Promotion Officers to their practice sessions to assess the worth of their performances for the purposes of the latter.²⁰

While Chifunyise and his colleagues elaborated these ideas as constitutive of the 'democratization of culture', the intricate bureaucratization and official superintendence suggested not only a top-down approach to culture, but also dirigiste tutelage already familiar from the pre-independence era. Moreover, while Chifunyise expressed the need to unite the low and high class suburbs through cultural performance to prevent the 'formation of cultural ghettos', some of the methods proposed seemed premised on the reification of the delimitation of politics and culture as two discrete but mutually

Foundation of Rhodesia, Salisbury, 1974. Indeed, on the one hand, the foundation became a key institution for funding 'white' artistic endeavours. On the other, by the late 1970s, its reports indicated that it was still 'researching' 'native' arts for possible sponsorship, notwithstanding the existence of dozens of 'tribal' artistic groups, some of which were under the patronage of the municipalities.

²⁰ P.T. Muginyi, Report on First Cultural Leadership Course.

reinforcing domains, the former for the elite and latter for the masses. In fact, musicians had already started performing for ‘dignitaries’ at airports and at state occasions, so that this recommendation only sought to further entrench pre-existing roles by enabling the participation of more performers, as Chifunyise illustrated:

Cde Chairman, only last month community arts groups put up a special arts performing show for our minister, Cde Simba Makoni at the National Sports Centre here in Harare. After that performance many were convinced then that what we needed most urgently are well-planned weekend mini-cultural activities in every township in Harare. These mini-festivals, if well-coordinated, would become the backbone of a regular people’s cultural entertainment programme.²¹

This was clearly a relationship between two unequal parties where the less powerful, the *povo*, were required to prostrate themselves to the *shefs* or ‘comrades’. It was a relationship based on the praising of power – ‘sheldom’ – rather than its critique. Chifunyise described what he called ‘truly socialist culture’ as an ‘inexpensive, easily accessible and meaningful entertainment ... created by the community and consumed by the community in their own free, familiar and comfortable environment’.²² This was hardly a revolutionary agenda; the environment that was familiar to the under-classes were the beer halls and recreation halls in the ‘locations’, now rechristened ‘high density areas’, an ironic reference to the overcrowding that continued to set these areas apart from the upper class ‘low density areas’. Furthermore, while the NACZ would equip ‘cultural cadres’ with modern and relevant skills to animate their fellow artists to mould such culture, the Ministry’s Cultural Officers would then ‘mobilize the people to consume the artistic entertainment’ so created.²³ The discourse of ‘cultural cadres’ echoed the recent war of independence which had pitted African military cadres against Rhodesian forces. As such, the language of this post-independence cultural (re)orientation program suggests the Zimbabwean struggle as continuous. As Lloyd Sachikonye explains, ‘The assumption of the petty-bourgeois leaders of the liberation movement was that socialist cadres and party members were largely moulded through

²¹ S. Chifunyise, Speech.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ *Ibid.*

ideological education'.²⁴ It is in this light, then, that ZANU believed that it was facilitating the devolution of this militaristic ethos to the communities in formulae that implied that the latter had been ideologically and militarily untouched by the independence war. The Zimbabwe government inherited the key institutional mechanisms for these purposes from its predecessor, as the case of the National Arts Council and broadcasting (discussed later) demonstrate.

The ZANU government had already modeled its cultural and ideological ideals through the National Dance Company of Zimbabwe (NDC), formed by the Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture in 1980. As its founding Director and Artistic Manager Sheasby Matiure noted, the NDC was ZANU's ideological mouthpiece:

During the early years of Zimbabwe's independence, the country used to be visited by various presidents of other nations. So many programs were going on at that time and these were punctuated by receptions and state banquets. They used to hire dance groups from the townships of Harare to perform at these state functions. It became part of the objective of the National Dance Company to perform at these functions.²⁵

Matiure was a graduate of Kwanongoma College, which was established in 1961 as a music teacher training school for Africans, specializing in indigenous music.²⁶ In addition to performing and teaching school children the various traditional dances from different parts of the country, the NDC functioned as the party's ideological mouthpiece, performing *Chimurenga* choral songs composed by ZANU's Cde Chinx. Matiure explained this rather odd mix thus: 'Choral music was essentially the ZANU (PF) kind of ideological music that freedom fighters were singing. We had to have that component to propagate the political ideology of the time', that is, socialism.²⁷ Apart from performing for the party and its guests at home, the company also 'attend[ed] cultural festivals ...

²⁴ L. Sachikonye, 'From Equity and Participation to Structural Adjustment: State and Social Forces in Zimbabwe', in *Debating Development Discourses: Institutional and Popular Perspectives*, eds. D. Moore and G. Schmitz, (London: St. Martin's Press, 1995), 180.

²⁵ S. Matiure, Email Communication, February 3, 2008, 2.

²⁶ *Ibid.*; G. M. Jackson, *The Land is Bright*, 74.

²⁷ S. Matiure, pers. comm., February 3, 2008, 2.

overseas, thereby serving [as] the cultural ambassadors [for] the nation'.²⁸ Community groups, but also popular musicians, complemented the NDC in performing at state and party occasions. As we shall see, this patronage shaped the country's artistic life in significant ways. The treatment of artists as ideological instruments of the party extended beyond the NDC to include popular musicians, as the Ranche House recommendations proposed.

While novel in some ways, the government's approach to music constituted the need to shape and institutionalize a normative relationship already obtaining on the ground. We have seen, in the preceding chapter, how popular musicians gallantly complemented the ZANLA and ZIPRA choirs to inspire the struggle for independence. Their music had constituted an important cultural arsenal for the struggle, igniting the spirit of perseverance, unity and hopes for a new, egalitarian order expressed in the communalistic notion of *gutsaruzhinji* – whereby a people's government would govern in the interests of all citizens. This was the popular platform that had rallied peasants and workers behind the liberation effort. It was in that light, then, that the attainment of independence in 1980 was greeted with much musical fanfare and self-adulation. The musicians who had expressed the message of hope now sang about self-actualization and fulfillment. But as they soon discovered, they may have celebrated too early or for too long.

'Natty Dub it in a-Zimbabwe': Independence and Musical Explosion

Capping their role in the liberation war, Zimbabwean musicians welcomed the new nation on 18 April 1980 with song and dance in a grand *pungwe* (overnight celebration) that featured the doyen of liberation music, Bob Marley, in Harare's Rufaro Stadium. Marley's tribute to the new nation, 'Zimbabwe', off his *Survival* album, extolled the virtues of African self-liberation and pan-African unity.²⁹ As Paddy Scannell rightly notes, this concert was a very public and reciprocal performance of national identity that also marked the political legitimization of Zimbabwean music after close to a century of

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ Bob Marley, 'Zimbabwe', *Survival*, Polygram, 1979.

cultural subjugation.³⁰ The prominent place given to music at this significant event, according to Chifunyise, indicated the new government's recognition of, and goodwill towards, music as an important aspect of the new nation's consciousness.³¹

With the fetters on free expression and association loosened, many musicians took their vocation more seriously as a profession. Joining veterans like Mapfumo, Mtukudzi and Manatsa, Cde Chinx added guitar instrumentation to reweave some of his 1970s *Chimurenga* chorals and re-launched his career as a popular performer. So too did other ex-combatants, including Solomon Skuza, Lovemore Majaivana, Ketai Muchawaya and Abel Sithole. The Marxist Brothers, Sungura Boys, Barura Express, the Four Brothers and Bhundu Boys, to name only a few, emerged to produce an unprecedented 'singles boom' that became synonymous with the early 1980s,³² with the latter retracing Dorothy Masuku's steps to export Zimbabwean popular music to Europe. In recognition of this hectic activity, *Rough Guide* magazine declared Harare Africa's most vibrant live music centre for the decade.³³ A product of this era, Jonah Moyo's Devera Ngwenja Jazz Band rode the crest with their early record-setting platinum singles, 'Zhimozhi' and 'Ruva Remwoyo Wangu' (The Flower of my Heart).³⁴ Independence thus spurred a new era of music expression, production and consumption. Happy times were on the roll. In their immensely popular hit, 'Makorokoto' (Congratulations), the Four Brothers, led by Marshall Munhumumwe, celebrated the new era and the promises that came with Zimbabwe:

<i>Hama takatambura</i>	Fellow countrymen, we suffered
<i>Kwemakore mazhinji</i>	for many years
<i>Hona rugare rwauya</i>	Look now the good life has finally come
<i>Inga nhasi topembera</i>	Oh yes, so today we celebrate
<i>Gwenyambira svika pedyo</i>	Come closer, dear music-maker

³⁰ P. Scannell, 'Music, Radio and the Record Business in Zimbabwe Today', (Seminar Paper, University of Natal, 28 April 2000), 8.

³¹ S. Chifunyise (then Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture), interview, 4 July 2000, Harare.

³² D. Ndebele (Record Producer), interview, 16 July 2000, Harare.

³³ D. Metcalfe, interview, 25 July 2000, Harare.

³⁴ J. Moyo, interview, 4 October 2000, Harare; *Gamma*, 1981 and 1982.

Tiitewo makorokoto So we can convey our congratulations
Amaihwe kani ndofara Oh dear mother, I now rejoice.³⁵

The champion of *Chimurenga*, Mapfumo, added his own iconic voice with songs like ‘Kwayedza MuZimbabwe’ (It’s Dawn in Zimbabwe), ‘Pemberai’ (Celebrate), ‘Chauya Chirizevha’ (Our Rural Life has Returned) and ‘Nyarai’ (Be Ashamed of Yourselves), the latter applauding, inter alia, the ‘cockerel’ Robert Mugabe for leading the liberation war while also shaming unidentified sore losers opposed to the new order.³⁶ Like Munhumumwe, in the up-tempo ‘Pemberai’, Mapfumo called on fellow citizens to celebrate the actualization of a shared vision of independence, prosperity and unbounded freedom, which he projected many generations into the future:

<i>Pemberai pemberai tayambuka isu</i>	Oh celebrate; we have crossed
<i>Pemberai pemberai</i>	Celebrate; all celebrate
<i>Pemberai pemberai zvanhasi ndezvedu</i>	Celebrate; today it’s our turn
<i>Pemberai pemberai</i>	Celebrate; all celebrate
<i>Pemberai pemberai bikai mabiko</i>	Celebrate; make a feast
<i>Hona tayambuka</i>	Look, we have triumphed
<i>Mhuri yawanda</i>	Our family is now bigger
<i>Tichingozvitonga</i>	Ruling over ourselves
<i>Nevachatevera</i>	So will the future generations
<i>Vachangozvitonga</i>	They will rule over themselves
<i>Inhaka yababa</i>	It’s our father’s heritage. ³⁷

A new era of promise had dawned, wrapping up the tribulations and suffering colonial rule had visited upon them for a century. Where Mapfumo had lamented the rampant colonial plunder of communal life in ‘Pfumvu Paruzevha’, ‘Kuyaura’ and ‘Serevende’ (Suffering without End) and rallied boys, girls, mothers and men for national liberation, he now celebrated the return of ‘normalcy’ in ‘Chirizevha Chadzoka’ (Communal Life has Returned) – without disturbing the irony that these ‘communal’ homes were the very same desolate ‘reserves’ into which Africans had been herded by settler rule. Villagers

³⁵ Marshall Munhumumwe and the Four Brothers, Makorokoto, 1980.

³⁶ Thomas Mapfumo and the Blacks Unlimited, *Singles Collection, 1976–80* (LP, Gramma, 1984).

³⁷ Thomas Mapfumo, *Pemberai*, Singles Collection, 1977-86, Gramma Records.

who had been scattered by the raging hostilities found their way back to resume their peaceful lives in the 'reserves', portrayed in women cooking their favourite dishes while men crafted agricultural implements and looked after livestock in the veldt, carrying the pain of war only as a mere memory.³⁸ The barrel of the gun had liberated the country from colonial bondage; and now Cde Chinx urged reconstruction through the 'Barrel of Peace' – a double metaphor for the guitar and also the name of his band. The nation could now multiply and work together as a family. As Mapfumo sang in 'Mabasa' (Work), it was only through co-operative dedication to work that the nation could prosper:

<i>Vanoshanda, vanoshandira mhuri</i>	They work, they work for their families
<i>Hona mangwana mabasa ho ndeha</i>	Look, tomorrow it's work
<i>Hona mangwana mabasa muZimba</i>	Tomorrow it's work in Zimba
<i>Hona mangwana mabasa muZimbabwe</i>	Tomorrow it's work in Zimbabwe
<i>Vanoshanda, vanoshandira mhuri</i>	They work, working for the family
<i>Hona mangwana kwayedza ndeha</i>	Tomorrow after dawn
<i>Vanoshanda vachishandira veruzhinji</i>	They work for common good
<i>Vanoshanda muZimbabwe vanoshanda</i>	They work in Zimbabwe, they work
<i>Vanoshanda mukurima, vanoshanda</i>	They work in farming, they work
<i>Vanoshanda mukuvaka, vanoshanda</i>	They work as builders, they work
<i>Vanoshanda kumafekitori, vanoshanda</i>	They work in factories, they work
<i>Vanoshanda mukusona, vanoshanda</i>	They work sewing clothes, they work
<i>Vanoshanda kutyaira, vanoshanda</i>	They work driving, they work
<i>Vanoshanda muzvikoro, vanoshanda</i>	They work in schools, they work
<i>Vanoshanda mukudzidzisa vanoshanda</i>	They work in teaching, they work
<i>Vanoshanda kumigodhi, vanoshanda,</i>	They work in the mines, they work
<i>Vanoshanda kuchiuto, vanoshanda,</i>	They work in the army, they work
<i>Vanoshanda kuchipurisa, vanoshanda,</i>	They work in the police force, they work
<i>Vanoshanda muZimbabwe, vanoshanda,</i>	They work in Zimbabwe, they work
<i>Vanoshandira hurumende, vanoshanda</i>	They work for the government, they work
<i>Ichishandira veruzhinji, vanoshanda</i>	Which works for the public, they work
<i>Vanoshanda veZimbabwe, vanoshanda,</i>	They work Zimbabweans, they work
<i>Vanoshanda mumabasa, vanoshanda</i>	They work their jobs, they work. ³⁹

³⁸ Thomas Mapfumo, *Chirizevha Chadzoka*; 'Serevende' was re-issued on Chimurenga Forever: The Best of Thomas Mapfumo, 1995.

³⁹ Thomas Mapfumo, *Mabasa*, Gramma, 1985.

This depiction of regimental dedication to work echoed the new government's encouragement for people to engage in *mushandirapamwe*, co-operative work for the development of the country. The government invested heavily in education (including adult education), health, public amenities and other social infrastructure to develop a functional human resource base and to serve the needs of the formerly disenfranchised majority under the *gutsaruzhinji* concept. It facilitated villagers to start irrigated small scale horticultural and other collective ventures. Similarly, at the macroeconomic level, it gave the impression of a planned approach to meeting people's expectations through its periodic Five Year Plans.

This image of an ordered, purposive approach to public welfare and commitment to work by both the people and the government represented a common vision for a better future, and it is that vision that Mapfumo captures in 'Mabasa'. Similarly, in 'Kunjere Kunjere', the fiercely pan-African Simon Chimbetu and his Marxist Brothers visualized the country as a train that required dedicated conductors with the capacity to overcome obstructions on the long-awaited journey of development:

Hona mwana wababa
Haiwa kunjere kunjere
Chaira chitima
Haiwa kunjere kunjere
Toda kuenda

Kuenda mberi
Pane makomo,
Haiwa kunjere kunjere
Kwira tiende
Haiwa pane nzizi
Haiwa kunjere kunjere
Shambira tiende
Hona pane minzwa
Haiwa kunjere kunjere
Svetuka tiende
Haiwa kunjere kunjere.

My father's son
Kunjere kunjere
 Drive the train
Kunjere kunjere
 We are impatiently waiting to move
 on
 To move forward
 Where there are mountains
Kunjere kunjere
 Climb over and let's move ahead
 Where there are flooded rivers
Kunjere kunjere
 Swim across and let's move ahead
 Where there are prickly thorns
Kunjere kunjere
 Jump over and let's move ahead
*Kunjere kunjere.*⁴⁰

⁴⁰ Simon Chimbetu, 'Kunjere Kunjere', (re-issued on Greatest Hits of Early Music), 2001.

The train had long been a powerful metaphor that conceptualized movement in a region whose history was shaped by displacement and labour migration. Like the ship in Paul Gilroy's Black Atlantic imagination, the train had historically represented the pull of South Africa's gold and diamond mines on Southern Africans since the turn of the 20th century. Thus, for over a century, the powerful force of the Johannesburg migrant labour train had spawned much social evil in Southern and Central African societies, as graphically captured by Hugh Masekela in 'Stimela'; yet it also symbolized personal escape from oppressive local situations and the pursuit of better fortunes in distant lands, as Mapfumo sings in 'Shumba'. Recast in the euphoria of independence, as in Mapfumo's 'Chitima Cherusungunguko' (Freedom Train) and Chimbetu's 'Kunjere Kunjere', the train becomes both emotion and motion – representing overjoyed citizens celebrating the dawn of a new era and also the unquantifiable motions of nation-builders: dedicated workers inspired by and agitating for equitable remuneration and fairness in a non-racial society. The onomatopoeic *kunjere kunjere* captures both the rhythms of the motions and emotions of nation-building. In the singers' imagination, the train's movement – also simulated in 'train dances' like *kongonya* in which artists and revelers danced around the stage in human 'convoys' – epitomized the desired momentum of post-independence development across Africa. Formerly scattered by a system that depended on their proletarianized labour and by war, the nation could now be performed as one big, re-united family, as Mapfumo sings in 'Pemberai', and it is guided by a common vision under the stewardship of a responsible elder brother or sister – *mwana wababa* – in place of the colonist. This return is both an occasion for celebration and an opportune moment to define the future. In this sense, therefore, issues like the dissidence and subsequent atrocities in western Zimbabwe (see below) may simply have constituted inconvenient obstructions which, like rivers in flood, mountains and thorns, Chimbetu impatiently called on 'big brother' to surmount.

In their *mbira* piece, 'Chiuya Kumusha' (Come Back Home Now), Mhuri yekwaNyamazana romanticizes this 'restoration' of communal life as progress. In the song, a mother exhorts her son, Edmore, who is still suffering the indignities of joblessness, wondering if he sleeps in trenches in the 'white man's town', Harare, to come back home so they may farm the land together in *mushandirapamwe* and reap the

benefits of the new, fair(er) produce marketing systems under the Grain Marketing Board (GMB):

*Mwanangu Edmore chiuya kuno
Basa rakapera, chiuya kuno
Hondo yakapera, chiuya kuno*

My son, Edmore, come back
You are now unemployed, come back
The war has ended, come back here

Narration:

*Murombo haarove chine nguwo chokwadi
Zvakandirwadza pandakanzwa
Kuti Edmore abudazve basa
Ndakatumira nhume nenhume
Kuti mwana wangu ngaadzoke
Ko zvino ari kubatana nei Harare ikoko?
Manje haasi kurara mugoronga?
Anofanira kudzoka
Hona iye zvino yava nguva yerusununguko
Chero chawangobata,
Chero chawashanda, unowana mari*

This is insult to injury!
It pained me when I heard that Edmore
was retrenched again
I sent messenger after messenger
That my son should come back
What does he live on there in Harare?
Is he not sleeping in a gorge?
He should come back
Now that the country is independent
Whatever you do,
Whatever you work, you get money

*Honai vasikana
Ndibatsirei kupururudza
Shoko riya randakatumira rakasvika
Mwana wangu Edmore adzoka*

My dear women friends,
Help me ululate
The message arrived,
And Edmore, my son, is back

*Tarisá uone zvino mwanangu Edmore
Hondo yakapera kare kare
Tangove nematanga emombe
Wakadii zvako kudzoka kare?
Chii chawaizvitambudzira muvachena?
Haiwa ndatenda nekuuya kwawaita
Chiuya zvako tiite mushandirapamwe
Tichiita zvekurima, zvinotipa mari
Zvemacheki zvinotipa mari
Chiona ini muchembere
Ndinongotekaira pano pamusha
Ndiri kutambudzika ndichiwana mari
Ndinongove nemari
Rega kuswerozvitambudza muvachena*

Look here Edmore, my son
The war has since ended
Now we have kraals full of cattle
Why didn't you come back earlier?
Why did you have to suffer amongst whites?
I am gratified by your coming back
Come now, let's work together
Tilling the land – it gives us money
We will receive cheques
Look at me, an old woman
I'm striving here at home,
I'm earning money
I always have some money on me
Don't trouble yourself amongst whites

The war had been fought on the principle of restorative justice, to restore African political, cultural and economic self-determination. Restoration included the revaluing

and rehabilitation of useful indigenous institutions and forms of socio-economic organization like *nhimbe* and *jakwara* (work parties) that made work lighter and enjoyable. Unlike the individualistic lifestyles wrought by the factory system, communal life and work were co-operative. The new government rearticulated these familiar ideals in the socialist developmental language of *mushandirapamwe*, which resonated with indigenous idioms of self-organization and work ethics. With the settler agent-buyers of 'native grain' and other layers of colonial exploitation gone,⁴¹ peasants were buoyed by new subsidies to till the land with new enthusiasm, delivering their produce directly to the GMB for government cheques. The language of co-operation was thus echoed jubilantly by a peasant population formerly ravaged by a century of colonial exploitation and decades of brutal warfare in songs like Mapfumo's 'Mabasa' and Mhuri yekwaNyamazana's 'Chiuya Kumusha'. Unlike Tanzania's *ujamaa* experiment which spawned some resistance for its coercive tendencies, Zimbabwe's peasant population enthusiastically returned to the land with popular approbation; they saw it as restoration of their lost autonomy, albeit piecemeal.⁴² By the mid-1980s, however, many had become heart-broken by elite repression and betrayal of this vision and, as Mapfumo sang in 'Chitima Nditakure' (Train, Carry Me) and 'Ndogura Masango' (I Traverse the Forests), the train had reverted to being a trope for personal flight from disappointment, as we shall see in greater detail below. For the faithful, like Cde Chinx, the nation becomes fragmented like a series of disjointed rail carriages straining to reconnect and pull together;⁴³ there is still much hope in the future of the young nation.

⁴¹ See C. Keyter, 'Maize Control in Southern Rhodesia, 1931-1939: The African Contribution to White Survival', Central African Historical Association Pamphlet (Local Series), 34, 1974 and V. E. M. Machingaidze, 'The Development of Settler Capitalist Agriculture in Southern Rhodesia with particular reference to the role of the State, 1908-1939', PhD Thesis, University of London, 1980, on the exploitative 'White Agricultural Policy'.

⁴² The 2000 'invasions' of white-held farms were a culmination of a two-decade-struggle during which the government resisted African farmers' demands for a radical land redistribution, ejecting them from forest reserves, game parks, peri-urban areas and commercial farms as 'squatters'. For seeming to betray the major reason why Zimbabweans went to war, the leaders became early targets of Mapfumo's protest undertow in 'Maiti Kurima Hamubviri' (You Used to Say you are Champion Farmers), *Hondo*, Gramma Records, 1994.

⁴³ Cde Chinx, 'Gedye', Gramma Records, 1996.

Ideologically, these emotive voices and motive images fitted in very well with but also strained the new government's fiction of 'socialist' development in the first decade of independence. And they hardly disturbed the blind faith in the nation's chosen stewards. Even more tragically, this blind faith even allowed an ominous imbrication of some of these celebratory voices in the government's evil schemes like the *Gukurahundi* massacres in the western provinces of Matabeleland and Midlands from 1982-87. For instance, in his song, 'Gukurahundi', (The Storm that Sweeps away the Chaff), Elijah Madzikatire had praised returning guerillas as heroes who had not only liberated the country, but were ready to defend it against continued threats:

*Vasingandizive regai nditange
Nezita rangu,
Zita rangu ndini Gukurahundi
Moyo wangu hauna kumboipa
Ndaiti muzvitonge muZimbabwe*

For those who do not know me,
Let me introduce myself,
My name is *Gukurahundi*
My heart is not full of evil
I fought to ensure self-rule in
Zimbabwe

*Gukurahundi yazouya
Ndakambotadzisa vamwe kufamba
Ndakambotadzisa vamwe kufamba
Hona ndofema mhepo yakasununguka*

Gukurahundi has now come
I once laid siege to this land
Rendering it treacherous,
Now I can breathe fresh air.⁴⁴

Pongweni argues that Madzikatire's song 'is a very successful exploration of the mind of the guerilla who returns home after many years of [heroic] fighting in the bush', who first has to reintroduce and explain himself/herself to his/her often ambivalent fellow citizens.⁴⁵ Boasting about how s/he heroically swept the country like the autumn storm, 'Gukurahundi' was part of a larger process of reclaiming and asserting shifting identities and re-imagining new futures. It was a message of change – the larger wave of change that would define independence as such, congruent with ZANU's thematization of the year 1979 as *Gore reGukurahundi* (The Year for Radical Change). As Pongweni further explains, this was because 'the whole party machinery was geared to hit the opposition hard and sweep away all the 'chaff' within the Rhodesian society to make way for the new dispensation, just as the first rains do to the chaff that remains after the harvest has

⁴⁴ A.J.C. Pongweni, *Songs that won the liberation war*, 55-6.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 156.

been collected'.⁴⁶ *Gukura* means to sweep away, and *hundi* is chaff from the field or threshing floor. Literally, this is a Shona term for the first autumn rains after the harvest, which enables enterprising farmers to plant winter crops or to plough early for the main cropping season the following summer. For Madzikatire, the agricultural analogy was apt: Zimbabweans had to deliver a *coup de grace* against vestiges of the *status quo*, sweeping away much trash from the oppressive colonial dispensation and the bad memories of the warring years to rehabilitate their nation.

In military terms, however, the London Lancaster House Conference in 1979 made sure that there was not much 'chaff' to be swept away because independence eventually came through a negotiated settlement, rather than the guerillas shooting their way into Salisbury (Harare). But, as the then Botswana President, Ketumile Masire, wrote, '[Prime Minister] Mugabe was unhappy with the results, since he believed that if the war had continued, he would have been victorious over both the Smith regime and ZAPU'.⁴⁷ In fact, to the pleasant surprise of panicking whites, most of whom had already started fleeing to South Africa and elsewhere in anticipation of a Mozambique-style ejection or vengeance by a hated 'Marxist', Mugabe's new government quickly extended a hand of forgiveness, announcing a policy of 'national reconciliation'. Mugabe's conciliatory approach was hailed as a progressive gesture by most western leaders, whose dread of a communist ZANU victory in Zimbabwe suddenly mellowed into showers of honorary degrees, knighthoods, and invitations for banquets around the world. Arnold Sibanda argues that this was an early betrayal of the much preached about national revolution:

The reconciliation with whites, together with some fundamental aspects of their colonial rule and patterns of ownership of the means of production, constitutes nothing beyond an institutionalization of class alliances as a condition for an orderly transfer of power from a settler-colonial state to nationalist militants without disruption of the reproduction of capitalism.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ Q.K.J. Masire, *Very Brave or Very Foolish? Memoirs of an African Democrat* (Gaborone: Macmillan, 2006), 283.

⁴⁸ A. Sibanda, quoted in P. Bond, *Uneven Zimbabwe*, 153.

The duplicity in this show of statesmanship becomes clearer if viewed against his unleashing of the specially trained 5th Brigade battalion, also called *Gukurahundi*, against Joshua Nkomo's suspected ZAPU supporters ostensibly to quell dissident destabilization of Matabeleland and the Midlands Provinces at the same time that he was being feted on his race policy. The atrocities ended only after an estimated 20 000 mainly Ndebele citizens had perished and ZAPU had merged with ZANU to form ZANU (PF) in the 1987 Unity Accord – a victory for ZANU's socialistic one-party-state project.⁴⁹ To the populace, this 'moment of madness', as Mugabe described it over two decades later, was a shocking but not entirely unexpected outcome of a festering power struggle between ZAPU and ZANU since their split in 1963. In fact, notes Masire, both parties had been making contingency plans to stage a *coup* in case the other won the independence election in 1980: 'When the elections were over and ZANU had won, we received reports that several thousand soldiers were training in Angola with Russian equipment ... they were planning to go into Zimbabwe through Botswana'.⁵⁰ Whether these reports and ZANU's intelligence were true is debatable, but the stage was set to create and/or clear *hundi* in any case. In a tightly controlled media environment, even the usually politically alert students at the University of Zimbabwe fell prey to what seemed a government ploy to portray whole villages of ZAPU supporters as barbarians. As poet-musician, Chirikure Chirikure, recalled,

We were still students at the university and we were ... convinced that Joshua Nkomo wanted to overthrow the government. Almost every student at the university and other colleges demonstrated: 'We want peace in this country, blah blah blah...', then a few months down the line we began to realize that there are

⁴⁹ This remains an unwritten chapter of independent Zimbabwe's history. See The Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP) and Legal Resources Foundation joint survey, 'Breaking the Silence, Building True Peace: A Report on the Disturbances in Matabeleland and the Midlands, 1980-1988, February 1997', <http://www.zwnews.com/issuefull.cfm?ArticleID=14699>. Compare the CCJP estimate with the government's 618 civilian deaths: E.D. Mwangagwa, 'Post-independence Zimbabwe: 1980-1987', in *Turmoil and Tenacity*, 241. Mwangagwa was one of the key government ministers deeply implicated in the massacres and, needless to say, his figure of casualties is absurd.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.* The Botswana government was intimately involved in the negotiations for a peace settlement between ZANU and ZAPU.

some games being played here, and we are being used. The average artist would have suffered from the same fate. Information was tightly controlled, as was movement in and out of the Midlands and Matabeleland Provinces.⁵¹

In light of these atrocities, Madzikatire's praise of the returnee soldiers as *Gukurahundi* who boasted of having once laid siege to the country and for making life unlivable unwittingly captured the dread of a whole section of the population who horribly found themselves the target of a *Gukurahundi* in new Zimbabwe. To the ears of the victims of the new terror, the song's message belonged to a terrifying present, not a celebrated past. It was not a song of freedom, but part of a nightmarish sub-script of the extended struggles over Zimbabwe. Contrary to Dorothy Masuku and colleagues' shrewdness in 'pulling back the word *kwela* from the colonial police jeep' and recasting it as a creative and resistance trope (Chapter 3), ZANU's appropriation of a culturally rich Shona concept, *gukurahundi* (as they would with *murambatsvina* (clear out trash) in the 2005 urban demolition campaign⁵²) rendered the word politically problematic and linguistically dormant. The frenzied government soldiers and security agents who slit pregnant women's bellies and pulled out fetuses in remote villages in western Zimbabwe horribly inverted Madzikatire's imagery of victorious heroes triumphantly re-entering their country after years in the bush to reassert their authority and ensure stability and peace for citizens. Today, the word *gukurahundi* is virtually synonymous with those atrocities.

In the face of the new politics of violence and disruption – *jambanja* – most artists felt intimidated about making direct comments. Many musicians preached the message of unity and love, and a few others had to delve deeper into their vault of artistic ingenuity to address the situation in this very tense environment. Thus, Mapfumo appropriated ZANU's idea of 'congress' and the 'socialist' language of conformity – *kunzwisisa* – to address a crisis that even foreign news agents, particularly Mugabe's friends in Lonrho's

⁵¹ Chirikure Chirikure, Interview, 13 January, 2007, Harare, 4.

⁵² M. Chikowero, 'What Filth, Whose Filth? Exposing the Evil Hand behind Robert Mugabe's Demolition of Poor Zimbabwean Urbanites' Homes', Paper presented at the African Studies Seminar Series, Dalhousie University, 6 November 2006.

media stable, treated as sacred.⁵³ While ZANU's annual congress was a largely exclusive party extravaganza complete with popular music, Mapfumo artistically destabilized it by inviting 'even baboon, rabbit, monkey, wild bird, serpent and person' – in other words, everybody including rank outsiders, to come together in love, unity and togetherness not in ZANU, but in Zimbabwe.⁵⁴ In his 1970s 'Kuyaura', Mapfumo had appealed to ancestors, faith healers, nationalist leaders but also to 'witches' to invest their various powers and esoteric knowledges towards dislodging entrenched colonial rule in a message that destabilized the sanitized nationalist vision of a Zimbabwe cleansed of 'discontents' like 'witches'.⁵⁵ Similarly, Mapfumo's 'Congress' challenged the narrowing boundaries of the nation as defined by the new rulers. Thus, he wooed government ministers onto the dance floor by appearing to pander to their party when he, in fact, subtly hit at their growing insularity and elitism.⁵⁶ However, in the euphoric miasma of independence, the line between praise-singing and censure remained very tenuous in ways that allowed the new government to serve its one-party-state agenda by appropriating the euphoric musical voices to nurture a monologic cult of song that was averse to criticism. In this way and also because of the shared popular ideals, the independence regime effectively replicated and tightened its predecessor's feeble control over popular performance. It is partly in light of this and in view of the government's policies towards music as an industry that we must assess Stephen Chifunyise's view that the ZANU government was positively disposed towards music. While artists hardly interrogated the government over the *Gukurahundi* atrocities, they became increasingly bolder on other socio-political matters affecting their societies, ranging from rampant corruption to costly economic misadventures with neo-liberal economic policies after 1990.

⁵³ Donald Trelford, 'Journalist who first exposed Matabeleland atrocities', <http://www.newzimbabwe.com/pages/trelford.html>.

⁵⁴ Thomas Mapfumo, 'Congress', *Mabasa*.

⁵⁵ Villagers accused of witchcraft were executed during the war.

⁵⁶ Thomas Mapfumo, Interview, Zimnetradio, 16 August 2005.

'Varombo Kuvarambo': Class and a Kleptocratic 'Socialist' Leadership

ZANU had hinged its 'socialist' development philosophy on its 'Leadership Code', whose precepts, *inter alia*, prohibited leaders from involvement in business, including property ownership, for profit. The code also declared corruption 'an evil disease destructive of society'.⁵⁷ The party argued that the strict code, which also prescribed personal discipline and loyalty to the party, was necessary to ensure the 'advent of socialism in Zimbabwe' and to make leaders exemplary in the eyes of citizens.⁵⁸ Until government ministers started flouting their own rules and corruptly amassing property, the code had given an impression of a leadership committed to the vision of an egalitarian society.

Barely a year after ZANU adopted the code, the country was rocked by a series of corruption scandals. The most prominent of these was the underhanded acquisition and resale at exorbitant profits of scarce new vehicles from Willowvale Motor Industries, a government assembly plant, by ministers and party leaders up to 1989.⁵⁹ Except for Maurice Nyagumbo, who is suspected to have subsequently committed suicide after conviction by the government-appointed Justice Wilson Sandura Commission, more than half a dozen others convicted or proved to have been culpably associated were simply pardoned by the president and later rehabilitated into government in a show of 'comradeship' that would soon become all too common. This growing epidemic of corruption mocked the 'Leadership Code' and broke citizens' faith in the rhetoric of socialism. Third-ranking ZANU official and foremost exponent of the socialist ideology, Nyagumbo had maintained his anti-elite language of the 1960s in the early 1980s, declaring that 'no monster called the black elite will jeopardize the revolution'.⁶⁰ At the height of the 'Willowgate' scandal in 1989, he genuinely felt compelled to call 'an emergency congress (to) tell the people that we are unable to fulfill one of our important resolutions ... mainly that of scientific socialism, because the leaders acquired property

⁵⁷ <http://www.insiderzim.com/Zanu-Pf%20Leadership%20Code.html>, Adopted at the second People' Congress, August 8th-13th, 1984.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ G. Nyarota, *Against the Grain: Memoirs of a Zimbabwean Newsmen* (Cape Town: Zebra Press), 2006, Chapters 8 and 9. The case was called the 'Willowgate Scandal'.

⁶⁰ P. Bond, *Uneven Zimbabwe*, 155.

...[they] appear to have adopted capitalism, become property owners and appear to be deceiving our people'.⁶¹

The most eloquent condemnation of this growing culture of sleaze and conspicuous consumption was Mapfumo's 1989 hit, 'Corruption'. The cassette sleeve graphically features three portraits of over-dressed and over-fed, balding gentlemen with eyes blacked out to mask their easy identification with certain prominent 'socialist' ideologues who graced calendars as part of the country's venerated cabinet line-ups and whose names and portfolios every student was expected to memorize in primary school. The portraits are artistically anchored above the famous three-spike Benz logo and some banknotes on one side of a chasm that appears to be a highway. Slumped on the ground on the opposite side is a barely-clothed, emaciated individual grimly clutching a begging bowl by the road. Then, connecting these 'two worlds' is the title of the album – 'CORRUPTION' – boldly stamped diagonally across the face of the artwork in red ink. The message in the song is equally bold:

Life is so hard, if you can't give away
You can't get something, without giving something
In the streets, there is corruption,
Everywhere, there is corruption
Something for something, nothing for nothing
Corruption, corruption, corruption
Corruption in the society

You can't get away, from justice
Watch out my friend, they are gonna get you
I work so hard, to make a living
Everyday, for a little
Everyday, like a slave,
Every morning, for my family
Come what may, they are gonna get you

The big fish, are corrupt
Some women, strip for a job
Everyone, is corrupt
Everywhere, there is corruption
Something for something,
Nothing for nothing

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

Corruption, corruption
Corruption in the society.⁶²

As Mavis Makuni wrote,

The cancer of corruption and graft seems to have set in as soon as the euphoria of ... independence in 1980 had worn off and the reality of governing a country populated by people with aspirations and high expectations dawned. By 1984, corruption had already become such a serious problem that judges and magistrates were regularly warning public servants and those in positions of trust in the private sector against trying to enrich themselves fraudulently. While opening the 1985 legal year, then judge president Justice Wilson Sandura called for more severe deterrent sentences for dishonest and greedy officials found guilty of fraud and theft of public funds ... adding that, 'regrettably, it does not appear that this warning by judges and magistrates had the desired effect'.⁶³

Public and judicial outcry against corruption had gone largely unheeded and the Sandura Commission seemed to confirm both the depth and executive impunity in dealing with the evil. Corruption quickly ate into every facet of the young nation in the face of this impunity, forcing citizens to pass bribes for everyday public services. As the suppressed Sandura Commission Report confirmed, the 'big fish' who drove the glittering Benzes and Toyota Cressidas were the root of this problem. This was a blatant betrayal of the common belief in equality, frustrating workers into questioning why they alone should 'work like slaves' for others to enjoy their sweat. Skeptical citizens soon dubbed the emerging system 'mercedes-benz socialism'. In fact, as Mapfumo sings in the second track, 'Varombo Kuvarombo' (The Poor to the Poor), the elite had not done enough to improve the lot of the workers who had inherited the inter-generational poverty generated by Rhodesia's policies. Instead, many of these elites betrayed the spirit of *mushandirapamwe* to steal money and live luxuriously in the manner of the former rulers of that colonial past.⁶⁴ This betrayal was very painful for the expectant workers who had long anticipated the 'revolution' in vain, as captured in the statement by the University of Zimbabwe student leader, Egdar Mbwembwe (in the epigram), during a student anti-

⁶² Thomas Mapfumo and the Blacks Unlimited, *Corruption*, 1989.

⁶³ Mavis Makuni, *Financial Gazette*, 30 September 2004:

<http://www.transparency.no/article.php?id=166&p>

⁶⁴ Thomas Mapfumo, 'Varombo Kuvarombo', *Corruption*.

corruption demonstration in 1989. As Chimbetu reminded the country's leadership, the train had been derailed far off from the destination:

<i>Ndikanzi chera, ndocheraka</i>	When instructed to dig, I but dig
<i>Nhai amaihwe</i> <i>Ndikanzi rima, ndorimaka</i>	Oh dearest mother. When told to plough, I just plough
<i>Yuwi amaihwe</i> <i>Ndikanzi tema, ndotemaka,</i>	How painful, oh dear mother When asked to chop, all I do is chop
<i>Nhai amaihwe</i> <i>Ndichingodaro kwemakore,</i>	oh dearest mother So I do for years,
<i>makore nemakore</i>	years and years
<i>Ndashanda pamurungu</i> <i>kwemakore nemakore</i>	I have worked for the white man for years and years
<i>Achizvitengera mombe,</i> <i>motokari nematarakita</i>	while he buys himself cattle, vehicles and tractors. ⁶⁵

The on-line encyclopaedia, Wikipedia, summarizes 'Kuipa Chete' very well: '[It] ... bemoans a situation whereby 'free' Zimbabweans continued to be exploited by largely unrepentant white farmers [*varungu*, plural for *murungu*] who virtually continued to live in Rhodesia, spurning the hand of reconciliation'.⁶⁶ In the 1980s, class still was quite synonymous with race in Zimbabwe. Beyond race, however, *murungu* had become the colloquial equivalent of any employer, in metaphorical terms. The leadership had betrayed the majority by failing to resolve the structural causes of poverty partly because they had been co-opted into a *compradorial* relationship with residual settler and international capital. The turbulent 1990s saw the abandonment of all pretence to conceal this reality after the government cast off the veil of socialism by adopting the IMF and

⁶⁵ Simon Chimbetu and the Marxist Brothers, *Kuipa Chete*, Gramma Records, 1988.

⁶⁶ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Simon_Chimbetu; A.S. Mlambo, 'Land Grab' or 'Taking Back Stolen Land': The Fast Track Land Reform Process in Zimbabwe in Historical Perspective', http://www.blackwell-compass.com/subject/history/article_view?article_id=hico_articles_bs1150, July 2005.

World Bank-sponsored neo-liberal Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP).⁶⁷ ESAP ushered in a honey-moon for the rich and employers, which eroded workers' rights with impunity. Class chasms worsened with massive worker retrenchment as industries either collapsed or downsized and subsidies on basic commodities were stripped. The worker's lament was captured by Leonard Zhakata in the 'ESAP song', 'Mugove' (Reward), which decried the new conditions that allowed employers to 'exploit and discard workers like tattered rags'.⁶⁸

By the late 1990s, the country had gone through the cycle of neo-liberal 'structural adjustment', reversing the social benefits (free health, functioning schools and affordable food) that had constituted the tangible fruits of the limited 'revolution'. There had been no revolutionary structural adjustment in the ownership of the means of production. Workers were disenchanted and demonstrations against the privatization of catering had become the political culture on university campuses. For Chimbetu, it was time for some home truths; the revolutionary zeal had petered into a struggle for mere survival, as the title of his 1997 album suggested. Thus, in 'Vana Vaye' (Those Children), off this album, he pleaded with the country's leaders not to forget 'the children':

<i>Kana moenda mukoma kana moenda</i>	When you go brother, when you go
<i>Kana moenda kure kure kana moenda</i>	When travel to distant places
<i>Kana moenda kumabiko kana moenda</i>	When you go for feasts
<i>Mundisiyire hupfu hwevana vangu</i>	Leave me mealie-meal for my children
<i>Kana vokwidza mitengo yetunonaka</i>	When they raise the prices of luxuries

⁶⁷ A.S. Mlambo, *Structural Adjustment Programme: The Case of Zimbabwe, 1990–1995* (Harare: University of Zimbabwe Publications, 1997).

⁶⁸ Leonard K. Zhakata, 'Mugove', *Maruva eNyika*, 1994. ESAP gnawed at the national psyche to the extent that dogs and other pets were named after it.

<i>Vandisiyire chingwa chevana vangu</i>	Let them exempt bread for my children
<i>Vanochema vana ava vanochema</i>	They cry these children, they cry
<i>Vanoyaura chavanoda kusevhaivha</i>	They suffer, what they want is to survive
<i>Chawawana mukoma udye nehama</i>	Whatever you get, brother, eat with relatives
<i>Vanokanganwa VaNyamande Vanokanganwaka ava</i>	Mr. Nyamande quickly forgets he forgets quickly
<i>Kana moenda mukoma muchinopinda musangano Muitaure yeupfu hwevana vaye</i>	When you go brother for those meetings Talk about the issue of the children's mealie-meal.

With the dream of a socialist revolution decimated, the party faithful were now concerned with appealing for minimal safeguards for the nation's swelling ranks of the vulnerable ('the children'). The protagonist is cognizant of the widening class chasms, hence the anguished plea to 'brother' to 'eat with relatives' rather than with the fair-weather friends or Johnny-come-too-latelys (VaNyamande) who now surround him. In 'Simba neDerere' (Survive on Okra) on the same album, Chimbetu assumes the voice of a neglected comrade to interrogate a leader for betraying the ideals and promises of the liberation struggle: 'Did you not say that in trouble we are together; in war we stand together; we are together in this (socialist) ideology? So why have you looked back? Why have you abandoned me in these difficult times? 'Simba nederere' allegorically captures the suffering of the war veterans and other vulnerable citizens who have to eke out a miserly livelihood – surviving on *derere*.⁶⁹ The thread that okra – *derere* – the 'poor man's relish', makes on its journey from the plate to the mouth is too slender and transient for

⁶⁹ During the war, guerillas sang: *gandanga haridye derere mukoma* (the guerilla does not eat okra), because it would jelly their knees and 'effeminate' them. Of course, villagers listened to that song as propaganda by people who wanted to justify eating their livestock!

anybody to hang onto! By the close of the 1980s and into the 1990s, then, Chimbetu's meditative discourse revolves around a nostalgic belief in the ideals of the revolution and reluctant acknowledgement of their dissipation on the altar of neo-colonial expediency by elite political opportunists who had forgotten even the majority of former fighters.

Mapfumo had shared the same disappointment, berating the leadership in 'Maiti Kurima Hamubviri' (You used to say you are master farmers) for what increasingly appeared empty promises on land redistribution,⁷⁰ asking if they were merely dreaming when they used to say 'they are master farmers'. Mapfumo had quickly shifted from the early independence euphoria by indicting a corrupt leadership in his 1989 release, 'Corruption', to delivering a vote of no confidence in a blunt 'Amai Vemwana' (Mother of Child) by the early 1990s: *vakuru vepano hamuchadiwa; sabhuku vepano matadza kutonga* (the elders of this place you are no longer wanted; dear village head, you have failed to govern).⁷¹ By the close of the decade, the unwanted leaders had destroyed the home altogether, as he rhetorically charged in 'Ndiyani waparadza musha?' (Who has destroyed our home?):

Ndianiko waparadza musha ho-oh? Who has destroyed our home?
Ndianiko waparadza nyika yedu? Who has destroyed our country?
Ndianiko waparadza upfumi hwedu? Who has destroyed our wealth?
Ndiani aparadza rudzi rwedu? Who has destroyed our race?⁷²

No answers were necessary to these searching questions in post-ESAP Zimbabwe where the leaders were busy blaming the Breton Woods Institutes for selling them bottled smoke and urban dwellers engaging them in running battles for the first time since the days of Edgar Tekere's violently-suppressed opposition party, the Zimbabwe Unity Movement (ZUM). Of course, nobody expected to hear any of this music on radio or television.

⁷⁰ Thomas Mapfumo and the Blacks Unlimited, 'Maiti Kurima Hamubviri', *Hondo*, Gramma Records, 1994.

⁷¹ Thomas Mapfumo and the Blacks Unlimited, 'Amai Vemwana', *Vanhu Vatema*, 1994.

⁷² Thomas Mapfumo, 'Ndiani waparadza musha', *Chimurenga '98*, Gramma Records, 1998.

Musicians were not the only critics of executive graft and the betrayal of popular dreams. Community theatre groups were also vociferous. Amakhosi Performing Arts' 'Workshop Negative' and 'The Members' and Gonzo H. Musengezi's 'Honourable MP' (originally titled 'I will become a socialist when I want'), among other productions, candidly interrogated the government's betrayal of people's hopes on the altar of self-aggrandizement and corruption even before the independence decade was out. Some of these productions attracted big audiences and elicited heated debates, as when they were performed at the University of Zimbabwe in 1987.⁷³ Contributing to public debate after staging his plays at the university in February 1987, Mhlanga, the Artistic Director of Amakhosi, framed his role as a community artist in the following terms:

If I am researching, I am saying, what is it that people are hiding from? What are they afraid of? ... What is it that people are inhibited from? Suppressed thoughts. What is it that people want to say that they cannot say? If I look into your eyes and see that you want to say 'this man is cheating you', I will say it for you: 'That man is cheating you'.⁷⁴

These performances met with both critical public approval and official censure. For example, the ubiquitous Chifunyise, who was then the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Education and Culture, attacked Amakhosi's and Musengezi's productions for being uncomplimentary to socialism and for criticizing the government. He argued that community arts groups should focus their criticism on their own communities first:

If [community-based theatre] is critical of the establishment, it starts with being critical of its own establishment, of the local community, the local councillor, the village headman and chief – how is he articulating his political powers for the betterment of his community – before it starts accusing or criticizing the central administration or the parliament, because that would be false consciousness.⁷⁵

⁷³ Preben Kaarsholm, 'Mental Colonization or Catharsis: Theatre, Democracy and Cultural Struggle from Rhodesia to Zimbabwe', *Journal of Southern African Studies* 16:2 (1990): 267.

⁷⁴ Cont Mhlanga, 'The Need for Enterprising Theatre', *The Journal of Social Change & Development*, no.42/43 (August 1997): 6.

⁷⁵ S. Chifunyise quoted by P. Kaarsholm, 'Mental Colonization or Catharsis?', 268-9.

As Kaarsholm argues, the top-down cultural formula that Chifunyise proposed sought to fetter the expression of grievances through the demand that communities should be self-critical first, focused on 'local' issues and informed by a correct ideology and a 'true' consciousness.⁷⁶ Nevertheless, artists remained largely undaunted by these familiar attempts to quash their disapproval of elite violence and exploitation of the underclasses. As Marechera told Caute:

Certain people now think that a writer like myself is irrelevant ... They say to me, 'Comrade, we have won the struggle, what are you disturbed about[?]' The writer becomes a problem. To criticize this or that becomes unpatriotic. My writings were considered subversive by Ian Smith, and they still are.⁷⁷

In a double move, the ruling elite sought to 'localize' artists' critical voices while harnessing them to praise politicians at rallies and other 'official' receptions. Their objective was not only to exploit 'culture' for their own political ends, but also, in the words of Mhlanga, to suppress thoughts and inhibit the free expression of public opinion.⁷⁸ At another level, as we shall see shortly, many musicians had hoped to influence policy and/or derive direct material benefits through their association with or service to the state and its ruling elite. This exploitative-dependency relationship failed to deliver the social revolution that musicians and Zimbabwean society had hoped for with independence. Thus, in terms of policy, the musicians were hugely disappointed because the government, in its economic policies, continued to regard music as a luxury commodity throughout the two decades. This threw a promising industry into crisis by the turn of the independence decade, as neatly captured in a common cliché that the Zimbabwe music industry is 'very vibrant yet frustrating'. Until after the year 2000 (for reasons that are discussed in the next chapter), music was not recognized as a legitimate economic occupation in spite of its potential to create employment for the country's teeming jobless.

⁷⁶ P. Kaarsholm, 'Mental Colonization or Catharsis', 269.

⁷⁷ D. Caute, 'Marechera in Black and White', 101.

⁷⁸ Cont Mhlanga, 'The Need for Enterprising Theatre', 6.

'What is a Luxury?' A Beleaguered Music Industry

Western cultural influences penetrated Africa and other colonial outposts through institutions like schools, churches and manufacturing industries, as argued in Chapter 3. These institutions provided conduits for the diffusion of 'western' musical aesthetics, instruments and practices. Multinational manufacturers and retailers like Bata and Olivine recruited artists like Kenneth Mattaka, August Musarurwa and Kembo Ncube, and Dorothy Masuku providing them instruments to advertise their commodities, while hoteliers hired them as resident entertainers to attract clients.⁷⁹ While good for the musicians' short-term survival and (re)articulation of their musical idiom in a changing cultural environment,⁸⁰ F. Zindi argues that these imported instruments supplanted many indigenous inventions.⁸¹ While the cultural impact of this process is certainly open to debate, the switch over from *ngoma*, *mbira*, *chipendani* and other indigenous instruments to guitars and pianos brought with it new worries about the latter's high cost, mainly because these were not manufactured locally, but imported.

In the context of the perceived foreign currency scarcity that plagued post-independence Zimbabwe, the government classified musical instruments as luxury items, and taxed them beyond the affordability of musicians.⁸² Thus, many musicians continued to depend on hoteliers, industrialists and individual entrepreneurs into the postcolonial era, spawning widespread charges about exploitation. For instance, many musicians complained about an emergent class of non-musicians who owned bands by virtue of possessing instruments. As the government admitted in 1987, the unavailability and high cost of instruments were some of the most severe disincentives crippling the growth of

⁷⁹ See also C. Dube, 'The Changing Context of African Music Performance in Zimbabwe', *Zambezia*, xxiii, 11, 1996, 100.

⁸⁰ See, for example, D. Coplan, *In Township Tonight! South Africa's Black Music and Theatre* (London: Longman, 1985).

⁸¹ F. Zindi, 'Thomas Mapfumo: A Cultural Ambassador?' *SAPEM*, December 1992–January 1993, 11.

⁸² Ministry of Youth, Sport and Culture, 'The Critical Situation in the Zimbabwe Music Industry', Harare, 1987, 3.

the music industry.⁸³ It was not until 2005 that duty on musical equipment was scrapped.⁸⁴

But as late as 2000, Mechanic Manyeruke moaned that: ‘We are charged exorbitant import duty – as high as 100 per cent for importing instruments, even for guitar strings’.⁸⁵ Similarly, bureaucratic importation bottlenecks forced Debbie Metcalfe and Philip Roberts to sell off their antiquated Frontline Studios in the mid-1980s, which subsequently collapsed.⁸⁶ As Metcalfe explained, ‘Even to import a half-inch tape for basic studio recording, I had to apply to the ministry [of trade] and wait for ages for an import permit; and then [I was] rationed on foreign currency. By the time the tape arrived, everybody has grown grey hair’.⁸⁷ The new government restricted imports, reportedly allocating the little foreign currency to promote local industrial production. Recurrent droughts – the worst in 1982/83 – helped to worsen the situation as it became necessary to make unbudgeted food imports to avert famines.⁸⁸ Thus, preoccupied with such pressing basic needs, music hardly came into the equation at all.

Regarding music as a luxury, however, deeply affected the industry, excluding it from the government or donor loans and aid that benefitted ‘mainstream’ activities. One indication of the government’s indifference (and testimony to the disorganised nature of the musicians themselves) is that no data existed concerning the size of the industry and its contribution to economic development. No doubt, music provided significant, if largely non-formal, employment. Yet, without any figures to prove its value to national income, the industry could not seriously lobby for reclassification. Arguments by its stakeholders remained largely metaphorical. At one workshop, for instance, music retailer, David Smith (owner of Music Express), struggled with this dilemma, arguing rather sardonically:

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ As argued in the next two chapters, this ostensibly proactive move seemed to have been prompted by the state’s need to cultivate a tighter client-patron relationship with musicians.

⁸⁵ M. Manyeruke, Interview, 12 July 2000, Chitungwiza.

⁸⁶ Metcalfe became band manager for Mtukudzi and Steve Dyer’s groups.

⁸⁷ Metcalfe, Interview, 25 July 2000, Harare.

⁸⁸ A.S. Mlambo, *Economic Structural Adjustment Programme*, 42–44.

Is sugar a luxury? Yes, sugar. It is pleasant. It makes young and old happy and it is sweet to the tongue. Music does all of this. It makes us move and records our history and culture ... Like the sugar industry, music provides a living for many thousands of people. So what is a luxury?⁸⁹

The situation was desperate, as Nkabinde wrote in 1992:

Thomas [Mapfumo] does not own the kit he uses, he hires it from Frontline Studios, so also do Ilanga and Love[more Majaivana] and Mtukudzi. When Zexie [Manatsa] had his kit damaged in a car accident he was like a workman without tools, thrown out of showbiz. He went to beg, reminding the powers that be that he had in fact sung to boost the morale and chances of ZANU victory on the long campaigns. He is destitute.⁹⁰

Plagued by organizational wrangles and vilified by politicians, the Zimbabwe Union of Musicians lacked voice on issues that affected its members, and it fell dormant by 2001.⁹¹ Members deserted it for dismally failing to fulfil its key objective – ‘to bring musicians to speak with one voice’ on issues that affected them.⁹²

Yet in spite of their deafness to musicians’ calls for help, state officials continued to enlist them for performances at state functions, campaign rallies, private parties and airport receptions, often for very little compensation. The same was true with government-initiated international cultural exchanges and tours.⁹³ The late *mbira* maestro, Thomas Wadharwa (Sekuru Gora) bitterly recounted his experience with the NDC:

We went on cultural exchange tours to Europe, America and across Africa ...but they pocketed the money. We played at state functions, but the money was too little. Those people are crooks. That is why, old as I am today, I have neither

⁸⁹ D. Smith, ‘Music Development in Retrospect: The Point of View of an End User’, *ZIMIA*, (n.d.), 59.

⁹⁰ T. Nkabinde, Lovemore Majaivana.

⁹¹ Friday Mbirimi (Former ZUM Chairman), Interview, 22 November 2006, Harare.

⁹² A. Chipaika, Interview, 30 September 2000, Harare.

⁹³ E. Mujuru, Interview, 18 July 2000, Harare; D. Masuku, quoted by M. Chitauru, C. Dube and L. Gunner, ‘Song, Story and Nation: Women as Singers and Actresses in Zimbabwe’, in ‘Song, Story and Nation: Women as Singers and Actresses in Zimbabwe’, in *Politics and Performance: Theatre, Poetry and Song in Southern Africa*, ed. L. Gunner *et al.*, (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1994), 126.

group nor instruments. And as a lodger, I have nowhere to keep the instruments even if donors were to give me some.⁹⁴

Tawana Kupe argues that Zimbabwean popular musicians took their neglect by the government as a grave betrayal because they perceived themselves as producers of an authentically Zimbabwean music, a central aspect of national identity.⁹⁵ However, like their colonial predecessors, most postcolonial states' approaches to cultural policy did not favour sponsoring commercialized, urban popular music. On the contrary, postcolonial elites specifically were self-arrogated cultural nationalists; they not only funded, but also created 'national' cultural ensembles through the rather conflicting twin processes of 'preservation' and 'nationalization' of folkloric cultural expressions and their (re)packaging for non-commercial exhibition as 'true' symbols of national identity,⁹⁶ as we saw in the case of the NDC. Turino correctly reads the formation of the NDC as an expression of 'cultural nationalism in the moment of arrival', creating a nationalist canon of indigenous (Shona) music and dance.⁹⁷ In a way that illustrates the continued need for cultural legitimation, ZANU fashioned its postcolonial cultural regime on what appeared a combined blueprint of ZAPU's 1960s cultural programs and pre-existing performers and traditions that were readily available through the dance and burial associations in Harare townships. In a bizarre twist that, according to Turino, demonstrated the showcasing of ZANU's Shona-centric cultural nationalism, the NDC jettisoned Ndebele components from its early programs.⁹⁸ However, as we saw in the case of the early colonial state, cultural subjugation did not rest with total exclusion, but co-optation. As Matiure pointed out, these 'Ndebele components' were later (re)introduced: 'With time, we expanded to include dances from Matabeleland such as *Um'gido wamabhiza* and *Chinyambera* from Zaka'.⁹⁹ This tactic demonstrates Sarah Dorman *et al's* observation

⁹⁴ S. Wadharwa, 25 August 2000, Chitungwiza.

⁹⁵ T. Kupe, 'The Meanings of Music: Media Representations of Popular Music in Zimbabwe', *African Identities* 1:2 (2003), 188.

⁹⁶ K.M. Askew, *Performing the Nation: Swahili Music and Cultural Politics in Tanzania* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 170.

⁹⁷ T. Turino, *Nationalists, Cosmopolitans and Popular Music in Zimbabwe* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 321.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 323.

⁹⁹ S. Matiure, Pers. Comm., 2.

that 'nation-building comprise[s] a vocabulary, and sometimes a practice, of inclusion ... [which] also carrie[s] within it exclusionary tendencies, which become more pronounced at times of political or economic crisis'.¹⁰⁰ Such processes also illustrate the contradictory intersections and struggles between national and ethnic sensibilities that tended to inform relations between ZANU and ZAPU even before independence. The belated (re)incorporation of Ndebele cultural elements represented cultural subordination consistent with the political neutralization of ZAPU with the Unity Accord in 1987. Heretofore, the NDC had performed ZANU's ideological *Chimurenga* chorals, which were also consistently institutionalized into the national psyche through radio while the government systematically destroyed an entire archive of similar music and documentation belonging to ZAPU. A former ZBC presenter, Musavengana Nyasha, pointed out:

The issue of supporting the government in power ... was a big deal after 1980 when it came to liberation music from former ZAPU choirs ... I am told that most of this music was actually destroyed. After the [U]nity [A]ccord frantic efforts were then made to find this material from whoever had managed to keep it.¹⁰¹

By 1987, it can be argued, ZAPU and Ndebele culture were sufficiently emasculated and tamed for subordinate re-incorporation into the national project.

Kupe's assessment of popular musicians' claims fails to capture these deeper dynamics. Traditional music could mark and market Zimbabwe's national identities as historically rooted, traceable and distinct, which the supposedly 'bastardised' popular guitar music could not do perfectly.¹⁰² But more than this, the government's approach to music was framed within particular, competing identity politics. Thus, through the NDC

¹⁰⁰ Sara Dorman, Daniel Hammett and Paul Nugent, Introduction, *Citizenship and its Casualties in Africa, Making Nations, Creating Strangers: States and Citizenship in Africa*, eds. S. Dorman, D. Hammett and P. Nugent (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 8.

¹⁰¹ M. Nyasha, 'Zimbabwe Broadcasting Holdings' Policies on Censorship of Music', Six Articles on Music Censorship in Zimbabwe (Seminar on Music Censorship in Zimbabwe, Mannenberg Jazz Club, Harare, 28 April 2005), 6.

¹⁰² See R. Martorella, 'Cultural Policy as Marketing Strategy: the Economic Consequences of Cultural Tourism', in *Global Culture: Media, Arts, Policy, and Globalization*, eds. D. Crane, N. Kawashima and K. Kawasaki (New York: Routledge, 2002), 118-31.

and other groups, the state selectively propped up particular types, not just any 'traditional' music, in ways that seemed consistent with the prevailing political conditions. As we have seen in Chapters 2 and 4, this was a deliberate political choice to seek legitimacy in the 'traditional', supposedly pre-colonial forms of cultural expression. As Matiure pointed out, apart from working as ZANU (PF)'s ideological mouthpiece, 'the main objective of the [NDC] was to stand as the cultural ambassador for the nation ... reviv[ing] and and revitaliz[ing] the cultural identity of the nation through music and dance', which it showcased to foreigners and propagated amongst young Zimbabweans.¹⁰³

But keen on earning their keep, most of the musicians often got caught up in the muddled patron-client-employee matrix that also tended to entrap their artistic expression. These relations often operate outside clear, legally enforceable contracts, giving their usually more powerful patrons enough room to dictate and manipulate the unwritten terms. Moreover, as we have seen, members of the national cultural ensembles were regarded not as workers, but as 'cultural ambassadors' obligated to raise the nation's flag in foreign lands. As Jennifer Lindsay observes for Southeast Asia, in such contexts, performers rely on the government's goodwill for call-ups in the first place. And because such call-ups can be perceived as favours, they limit the musicians' scope to negotiate as workers.¹⁰⁴ Furthermore, musicians' work also tends to be de-individuated and their behaviour judged in terms of loyalty to the nation, however defined by their elite handlers. However, such relations can also be mutually beneficial or, at least, exploitable by musicians to claim special privileges. This was precisely Zexie Manatsa's point when he appealed to ZANU (PF)'s Vice-President, Simon Muzenda for a new musical kit, arguing that, after all, he had played a part in the party's election victories.¹⁰⁵ Similarly, in 2000, one of the founders of the NDC, Enos Simango, sought the backing of the National Arts Council to support his application for a house or land from the Harare City Council. Thus wrote the former:

¹⁰³ S. Matiure, Pers. Comm., 2.

¹⁰⁴ J. Lindsay, 'A Drama of Change: Cultural Policy and the Performing Arts in Southeast Asia', in *Global Culture*, 91.

¹⁰⁵ T. Nkabinde, Lovemore Majaivana.

The National Arts Council of Zimbabwe supports the application for a piece of land or house by Mr. Enos Simango, the Director of Chihoo Music and Dance Troupe. Mr. E. Simango is one of the people who formed the former National Dance Company of Zimbabwe after independence in 1980. His group performed at many state functions. He became an instructor of the former National Dance Co. of Zimbabwe which was under the Ministry of Education and Culture which was dissolved in 1991. He and his group are still teaching traditional music and dance in schools.¹⁰⁶

At a time when council housing wait lists were ballooning, 'loyalty' could be worn like an insignia of honour for personal benefit. In this case, Simango invoked his work in the party's ideological dance ensemble as 'national duty' to win favours. Moreover, Simango was able to utilize such connections to further his own career beyond propagating the government's ideas about the nation and its ideological self-representation through 'traditional' dances. According to the *Herald*: 'During the 1980s, [Simango] toured several countries in the sub-region as well as Australia with the help of the late Minister of Youth, Sport and Recreation, Cde Ernest Kadungure'.¹⁰⁷

Manatsa's case, like Kupe's argument, illustrates the ambiguities that characterized ZANU's appropriation of music in the name of building a socialist nation. Thus, the government's paternal hand, through the NACZ and the ministry of culture, transcended its hold on strictly neo-traditional music, as explicitly spelt out at the Ranche House Workshop in 1984.¹⁰⁸ While its officers claimed that the NACZ was formed to nurture local talent and to improve artists' working conditions,¹⁰⁹ most musicians held the opposite view. They alleged that, like a tax collector, it preoccupied itself with levying and collecting performance fees from visiting and local musicians. Jamaican-born Ras Jabu (Trevor Hall) illustrated this:

We are not supported by the government. Instead, every government department concerned, the National Arts Council, the City Council, and even the police, charge us something from the projected income that they think we are going to

¹⁰⁶ DHCS, File C26, The Director, National Arts Council, to the Director, Community Services and Housing, City of Harare, 29 February, 2000.

¹⁰⁷ 'Dance Instructor Seeks Funding', www.theherald.co.zw, 21 January 2008.

¹⁰⁸ Since the 1970s, Manatsa's popular, commercialized music closely championed Zimbabwe's liberation.

¹⁰⁹ T. Mbaya (NACZ Music Officer), interview, 28 June 2000, Harare.

earn from staging live shows. And remember most musicians survive on live performances.¹¹⁰

Many musicians ascribed their poverty partly to these extractive tendencies by both the state and, as we shall see shortly, the allegedly rapacious record companies. The result was that, according to Zindi, perhaps the country's foremost music icon, Mapfumo, was still living in a Harare bed-sitter by 1985.¹¹¹ Similarly, at the time of his death in 2003, NDC 'cultural ambassador' and Zimbabwe College of Music instructor, Sekuru Gora, was lodging in a tiny mud and pole shack in the slums of Chitungwiza's Unit 'H'. Perhaps nothing reflects the exploitative disregard for cultural workers more than the uncharitable humour in Zimbabwean music circles that referred to Sekuru Gora, then seventy-plus years old, as 'an old man with a bright future'. In spite of his engagement as a performer and teacher, Sekuru Gora struggled to supplement his income by making and selling *mbira* and engaging in subsistence farming in his rural Wedza. Similarly, Manyeruke preferred to call himself a peasant farmer who sang gospel music only to minister the Word of God. He had nothing to show for his star-studded name.

This common image of impoverishment reinforced the Shona traditional name for performers – *marombe* – 'tramps' who literally sang for their supper at the royal court.¹¹² Economically dependent on the ruling elite, many of these musicians did not need to understand 'scientific socialism' before they could sing the president's name. As we shall see in the next chapter, music retains its political potency partly because of its continued amenability to manipulation by the powerful, which works well when the artists are economically impoverished. These unflattering realities have prompted Zimbabweans to allow their children to take on music for careers only reluctantly. In schools, music is taken as an extra-mural rather than a core subject.¹¹³ The school system and popular perceptions still perpetuate in youngsters the belief that a music career is economically

¹¹⁰ T. Hall, interview, 30 September 2000, Harare.

¹¹¹ F. Zindi, *Roots Rocking*, 58.

¹¹² S.I.G. Mudenge, *A Political History of the Munhumutapa c. 1400 – 1902* (Harare: Zimbabwe Publishing House, 1988), 100–101.

¹¹³ M. Strumpf, 'Music Education in Malawi and Zimbabwe' (Paper prepared for the African Arts Education Conference, Grahamstown, 26 June –1 July 2001); R. Ziso, 'Music Education in Primary Schools in Post Independence Zimbabwe', in *The Musician in New and Changing Contexts*, 111.

unrewarding and socially despicable, best left to school drop-outs. Musicians have also sought state intervention to regulate their dealings with record companies. The government's responses or lack thereof, illustrate further both the ideological contradictions and ambivalent relationships between commercial artists and the state.

Record Companies: The Sloppy Contract and the Contradictions of State Patronage

Hall's observation that most musicians survive on live performances raises fundamental questions about the relationships between artists and record companies. In the capitalist peripheries like Zimbabwe, multinational record companies have pursued profits without concerning themselves with artists' welfare. Yet, for this unequal but interdependent relationship to be sustainable, some mutual balance has to be struck. In the period under study, Zimbabwean musicians did not produce or market their own works; they relied on record companies for that. In line with international copyright law,¹¹⁴ recording artists are defined as licensors, conceding exclusive mechanical and other rights to record companies – the licensees – to produce and market their works for agreed royalty percentages.

Zimbabwean recording artists complained that the oligopolistic record companies – Gramma, Zimbabwe Music Corporation (ZMC) and Record and Tape Promotions (RTP) – paid them pitiful royalties. Over the years, this has forced some to hang up their guitars or pack away their *mbira*; but many have persevered in the hope of making it one fine day. Rising to professionalism in the early 1980s as a member of the Job's Combination (led by Job Mashanda and operating from Jobs' Nightclub, Harare) before fronting the Zulu Band, Majaivana has quit music a number of times, first in 1987 and more recently after releasing a successful offering in 2001, *Isono Sami*.¹¹⁵ Upon his departure from the Jobs' Combination in 1987, he related a common story, that he 'had nothing to show for all the years of national acclaim', having lived from hand to mouth. He explained, 'I just received my wages; no pension, nothing more. Imagine if I had

¹¹⁴ ZIMRA, 'Music, Copyright and You!', (undated). Zimbabwe is a Berne Convention (1971) copyright legislation signatory, which, at this point, was viewed as ineffective in adequately safeguarding the interests of the country's artists.

¹¹⁵ Lovemore Majaivana, *Isono Sami*, CD, ZMC, 2001.

stayed there for 20 years and at the end of it all, walked out with nothing!’¹¹⁶ Majaivana was enraged by what he saw as exploitation on two fronts, by the owners of the nightclub and band, but also by the record companies that ‘benefit themselves [while] ignoring the musicians’.¹¹⁷ After being fired from the Job’s Combination, Majaivana released the song ‘Uzalixotsha’, insinuating that the remaining members of the group like Fanyana Dube would also wake up to the same reality when it would be too late.¹¹⁸ Heart-broken, he subsequently tracked into the diaspora and he now furiously distances himself from ‘anything to do with that past’, his music included.¹¹⁹ Jonah Moyo, a top selling artist who has relocated to South Africa, told me that he got only 3 per cent for his chartbusters in the early 1980s, and that the figures had barely reached 10 per cent by 2000.¹²⁰ Justifying their keeping of the 90 per cent plus, the production houses argue that: ‘We produce for them, we sell for them, and we promote them’.¹²¹ In many cases, top sellers like John Chibadura and Leonard Dembo would be thrown lump sums or small luxury cars when their records soared, and even one-off cash payments to the tune of a few thousand dollars and they seemed content.¹²² In this way, their producers circumvented inconvenient contracts. In 1996 a number of artists, including Mapfumo and Chimbetu, complained bitterly in a live TV discussion that record companies were producing Compact Discs of their albums without their knowledge. Their contracts apparently made no reference to CDs. At that time, most music was produced on cassette and vinyl disc, but the rich were already buying it on CD. There were also no transparent accounting systems to indicate the number of albums produced and sold. Famed co-pioneer of the *sungura* genre,¹²³ Chibadura mortgaged pieces of his property one by one to pay off hospital bills when he was taken ill in the late 1990s, before getting a virtual pauper’s

¹¹⁶ W. Guchu, ‘Family comes first for Majaivana’, www.zimbabweherald.com, 3 September 2005.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁸ T. Nkabinde, Lovemore Majaivana.

¹¹⁹ Lovemore Majaivana, Telephone Interview, 12 October 2004.

¹²⁰ Jonah Moyo, Interview, 4 October 2000, Harare.

¹²¹ R.S., Interview, 3 August 2000, Harare.

¹²² B. Eyre, ‘Playing with Fire: Fear and Self-Censorship in Zimbabwean Music’, *Freemuse* (World Forum on Music and Censorship), Report 03 (2001): 39.

¹²³ *Sungura* is a typically fast, guitar-based beat that is closely identifiable with Congolese rumba.

burial. According to Banning Eyre, when his star dimmed, Chibadura spent hours languishing in the sun outside the record company premises in Msasa as everybody ignored him.¹²⁴

Mapfumo summed up the predicament: 'Most of our musicians in Zimbabwe are struggling to make ends meet [because] they are being ripped off by the record companies. Most artists do not take time to read or understand the terms of a contract'.¹²⁵ Mitchell Jambo argued that the companies encrypt the treacherous contracts – which they unilaterally draft – in difficult legalese: 'The language of the contracts is not straight forward; it needs lawyers to interpret and we have no money for that. All we do, therefore, is sign'.¹²⁶ The underlying issue here, as Mtukudzi admitted, is (il)literacy; because many musicians are illiterate or semi-literate, signing the contract is often a simple formality to them.¹²⁷ But as Clive Malunga has argued, the issue centres on musicians' failure to unionize to protect their rights and benefit from their intellectual labour:

Artists don't know their rights ... It is the union that must see what kind of contract an artist is signing; is it not oppressing him/her? Before an artist signs, the union must have a lawyer who sees that 'this is good, and that is bad'. Right now it's you who has the gold, and you go and give it to an agent, who will tell you that, 'OK, I am going to give you 20 cents, and I get 80'. Ah, I have dug for this gold and you say you want to give me 20 cents while you get 80! That is why we have hungry artists in Zimbabwe; and we don't want that hunger!¹²⁸

Thus, Zimbabwean musicians have been undoubtedly aware of the causes of their proverbial hunger, but because of their ineffectual unionization and often non-expert management, they failed to redress their situation and called in vain for government intervention to regulate what they saw as a lopsided relationship. Thus, in 1987,

¹²⁴ B. Eyre, 'Playing with Fire', 39.

¹²⁵ T. Mapfumo, quoted by T. Deve, 'Promoting Zimbabwean Culture through Chimurenga Music', *SAPEM*, December–January, 1993, 3.

¹²⁶ M. Jambo, Interview, 30 September 2000.

¹²⁷ O. Mtukudzi, quoted in *The Sunday Mail*, 22 October 2000.

¹²⁸ Clive Malunga, Interview, 16 December, 2006, Harare, 9.

Majaivana argued that even wild animals look after the welfare of their kind, and that, 'by the same token, we musicians call upon the government to look after us'.¹²⁹

According to cultural worker Cont Mhlanga, artists' cries about exploitation and their approach to solve it are too familiar and unconvincing. In 1997, he wondered why artists fail to handle the business aspect of art, given the fact that art sells very well:

If seven musicians go to ZMC and they make an album and go to the top of the charts the record company also goes to the bank smiling with a turnover of seven million [dollars]. [The musicians] can make their own top albums and take the first million to the bank. They can buy their own studio and do business for themselves ... I don't know why, but artists have this tendency of not becoming business people and there is this concept that someone is ripping you off. And they cry and can write ten songs about someone ripping them off and you think: 'My friend, why are you letting them rip you off when it's your song?'¹³⁰

Mhlanga cannot be accused of armchair criticism. He tried out his own ideas through Amakhosi Theatre Organization, for which he built Township Square in Bulawayo's Mzilikazi suburb in the early 1980s:

This is the small inspiration starting at Township Square. I can't go to ZBC and say 'Can I make a drama?' and they say, 'Okay, we will pay you \$100'. My friend, wait a minute: you pay me \$100 then the next time I'll own my own television station! Straight business. I can't allow someone to rip me off again and again, while I just stand and complain. It does not make sense.¹³¹

Mhlanga's criticism would make some sense in an 'equal, democratic society' that President Banana and his colleagues preached during the war and at independence. But as he soon found out, independent broadcasting, like performative art generally, is too powerful, if not expensive, to thrive as popular business in neo-colonial Zimbabwe, as we shall see in greater detail in the next section. Mhlanga still relies on ZBC to broadcast his

¹²⁹ L. Majaivana, quoted by Guchu, 'Family Comes First', *www.zimbabweherald.com*, 3 September 2005.

¹³⁰ C. Mhlanga, 'The need for enterprising theatre', 6.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*

dramas, and needless to say, the state broadcaster often renders the various plays meaningless through censoring aspects of their content!¹³²

Meanwhile, Mhlanga's musician-colleagues did compose songs around these complaints, such as Majaivana's *Angila Mali* (I have no money) and Dembo's *Chinyemu*, which castigate perceived tax injustices and worker exploitation.¹³³ However, such songs transcend their composers' personal woes to resonate sympathetically with the general grievances of their fan base – the workers. Thus, by subsuming their own concerns in the larger questions of workers' rights and social justice, these musicians have managed to lay claim to the role of spokespersons for the voiceless who suffered under the same oppressive structures as the musicians. If, as Turino claims, in the 1960s musicians recorded their works to accomplish a transformative objectification and legitimation of themselves and their songs to their followers,¹³⁴ there is no question that, in independent Zimbabwe, the same musicians expected just returns for their sweat like any other worker. And, as Sizwe Thuthuka observed, 'Issues of culture are linked to human rights and governance. A malfunctioning part affects the whole, which is why there is government apathy even when [there were] opportunities that could be exploited to benefit the country'.¹³⁵ The musicians' projection of common, shared grievances and condemnation of official corruption and rights abuses, unfortunately, did not help endear them to the government which they called upon to address their concerns as musicians.

Owned by the same individual(s) and operating under the same roof, Gramma and ZMC were in all but name one company employing a double identity apparently to beat the state's dead letter anti-monopolies legislation. This arrangement also accommodated their off-shoot, RTP, which used some of the latter's record production equipment in a stratagem that gave artists false options. This lack of competition, in turn, conspired against the interests of the artists because, in their quest for high sales, the companies tended to discourage artistic experimentation. This situation threatened to virtually homogenise Zimbabwean popular music. Thus, while it has become fashionable to scorn

¹³² C. Mhlanga, Interview, 7 January 2007, Bulawayo, 22.

¹³³ Leonard Dembo and the Barura Express, *Chitekete*, Gramma, LP L4 KSALP132, 1992; Majaivana, *Isono Sami*.

¹³⁴ T. Turino, *Nationalists, Cosmopolitans*, 129.

¹³⁵ S. Thuthuka, www.theindependent.co.zw, 27 April 2006.

the notion that globalization homogenizes aspects of world cultures, it is worthwhile to consider the impact of capital in this way – at this more local, national level. Twisting the paradigm in this manner, firstly, acknowledges the continued saliency of nation-state-delimited boundaries in cultural production. Secondly, it reaffirms the multiplicity of actors (including international capital, if only by default) in fashioning ‘national identity’.

Tendencies towards this kind of homogenization are clearly observable in Zimbabwe’s mainstream guitar-based musical genre, *sungura*. By the mid-1980s, in Tendai Mupfurutso’s words, Zimbabwe had been reduced to only three musicians, Dembo, Mapfumo and Mtukudzi, with the rest reduced to shadows of these ‘big three’.¹³⁶ This rather brusque classification acknowledges the *murondatsimba* (copycat) phenomenon that has lately brewed serious ill-feelings amongst Zimbabwean musicians as everybody scrambles to imitate those at the top. As Martin Mapaso, a ZCM teacher, elaborated, ‘Here [in Zimbabwe] there is what we call *museve* [*sungura*]. If you do *museve*, you are a good musician; if you don’t do *museve*, you are doomed. That does not make music grow’.¹³⁷ Deriving its name from the Shona word for an arrow, this music’s prickly guitar wizardry ‘shoots straight at the heart’. *Sungura* is Kiswahili for hare and, etymologically, it was modelled on east African *kanindo* and, like the latter, its early version was a typically fast, highly danceable beat that urged on to reproduce a hare’s fast motion on the dance floor! Many of Chimbetu’s, Ketai Muchawaya’s and Solomon Skuza’s recordings exemplify this link. The latter musicians and a few more had trained as guerrilla fighters in east Africa, where they sampled beats like *kanindo*. Often despised by many with elitist persuasions as the music of the lower classes, *museve* or *sungura* is the music that dominates Zimbabwe’s rural entertainment centres and sprawling urbanity. Those who pioneered, or creatively negotiated, *museve*, shot the stars. Yet many younger artists have felt stifled by the record companies’ ‘encouragement’ to play ‘music that sells’ – their euphemism for *museve*.

Nonetheless, even as the companies’ preferences tended to sacrifice diversity and creativity on the altar of the familiar and commercially marketable, some artists, like Mupfurutso, managed to defy that pressure to experiment with a variety of styles.

¹³⁶ T. Mupfurutso, Interview, 11 September 2000.

¹³⁷ M. Mapaso, Interview, 19 July 2000.

Through his recording studio and publishing company, Hi-Density Records, Mupfurutsa introduced an innovative brand of Zimbabwean *jiti*, which he called ‘barbed wire’ music. He made effective use of electric guitars, keyboards and other conventional instruments, but also pioneered digitally-engineered sound recording to perfect his sound. Unlike the majority, Mupfurutsa could afford to freely experiment. First, he owned a studio and thus recorded his own music and that of other youngsters casually brushed aside by profit-seeking record companies, even though he still relied on the latter to mass produce the recordings. Second, as a Chartered Accountant, he felt financially secure so that he ‘played music for fun, at [his] spare time and not primarily for the money’.¹³⁸ Dizzy Gillespie – that Godfather of bebop – put it nicely when he pointed out that, ‘When you have money and can afford to play just for yourself, you can play and act any way you want, but if you plan to make a living at music [sic], you’ve got to sell it’.¹³⁹ Thus, Mupfurutsa could play what he wanted, even if that meant scorning the market by refusing to ‘sing sales’, to borrow the language of the ‘rude boy’ of Jamaican *ragga* consciousness, Bounty Killer.¹⁴⁰

For many, however, the fact that the companies also marketed the music further limited their options. Every week, ZMC presented its 20-or-so-minute ‘Top 20’ sellers on Radio 2. The significance of such marketing programmes can be appreciated better when one considers the fact that there was only one commercial radio channel committed to playing music by local artists. Thus, analyzing how the radio worked in this period sheds further insight into the institutional structures that Zimbabwean musicians grappled with. Together with its predecessor, the Rhodesia Broadcasting Corporation (RBC), the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC) shares the credit for propagating a wide range of musical tastes in Zimbabwe. By the same token, it also shares the burden of accusations by Zimbabwean musicians that it undermined their music by favouring their South African, Congolese and western counterparts. These discourses ran deeper than issues of competition would suggest, bearing on music as a key aspect of identity. As we

¹³⁸ T. Mupfurutsa, Interview.

¹³⁹ D. Gillespie with A. Fraser, *To Be or Not to Bop: Memoirs* (A Da Capo Paperback, 1985), 359–60.

¹⁴⁰ Bounty Killer, Interview, www.muzikmedia.com, (accessed 25 December 2005).

have seen in preceding chapters, radio was a critical mechanism for propagating and controlling ideas; nothing changed after independence.

Broadcasting Policy: The 'Local' versus 'Foreign' Controversy

As Simon During noted, the extraordinary power of the media to shape culture cannot be overemphasised.¹⁴¹ Similarly, Busi Chindove observed that 'very often, people will buy a record after hearing it on radio, seeing it on television or reading about it in the papers or in the magazines'.¹⁴² Or, as Gillespie explained the fading of the bebop craze by the 1950s in the USA, 'the bebop fad ended because the press could kill anything it created'.¹⁴³ There is abundant evidence that, to varying extents, Zimbabwean radio and television not only influenced, nurtured and moulded musical tastes, identities and ideological orientations, but they also significantly helped determine the popularity and commercial viability of certain musical genres. Zimbabwe has no history of private or communal broadcasting. Introduced during the Second World War as a propaganda tool, broadcasting has remained a monopoly under the Ministry of Information, operating as a *political* tool and mouthpiece of successive governments.¹⁴⁴ This has adversely affected the development of the arts not only as expressions of public consciousness and purveyors of critical thought but also as a source of livelihood.

Zimbabwe inherited Rhodesia's radio together with much of the cultural baggage of that dispensation. RBC had played overwhelmingly 'western' music, reserving a separate 'African Service' on which local and mostly South African and Zaïrian music commanded prominent airtime in and outside featured programmes like '[Sounds from] Across the Limpopo', 'Kwela neJive', and 'Mutinhimira weJazz'.¹⁴⁵ Most of this music –

¹⁴¹ S. During, *Cultural Studies: A Critical Introduction* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 109.

¹⁴² B. Chindove, 'Music Promotion in the Radio Media', *ZIMIA*, 40.

¹⁴³ D. Gillespie, *To Be*, 359.

¹⁴⁴ H. Franklin, 'The Development of Broadcasting in Central Africa: A Talk from Central African Broadcasting Station, Lusaka, 12th June, 1949', *The Outpost*, August 1949, 12; D. Moyo, 'From Rhodesia to Zimbabwe: Change without Change? Broadcasting Policy Reform and Political Control', *Media, Public Discourse and Political Contestation in Zimbabwe*, ed. H. Melber (African Current Affairs 27, Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitut, 2004), 12.

¹⁴⁵ *Look and Listen*, 1, An RBC Publication, Salisbury, March 12–18 March 1966.

mostly jazz and *rhumba*, in the RBC authorities' view, was apolitical, pure entertainment stuff suitable for broadcasting to 'their African' audiences. ZBC's radio programmes show that this spirit largely survived independence until the controversial 2003 75 percent 'local content' quota on broadcasting. Until then, local musicians were incensed that their works continued to compete for airplay with artists from other countries on local radio. The latter policy intervention was therefore a culmination of a dichotomously framed 'local' versus 'foreign' music controversy that had dogged the struggle over airplay since independence. Suffice to say here that many Zimbabweans perceive the new policy as a government *coupe de grace* against critical voices.¹⁴⁶ That debate belongs to the next chapter. ZBC's music policy prior to that intervention can be summarised thus:

- Radio 1: English language; 90 per cent international music; 10 per cent local; targeted mature white audiences.
- Radio 2: Shona and Ndebele languages; 30 per cent international music; 70 per cent local; targeted majority adult African audiences.
- Radio 3: English language; 70 per cent international music; 30 per cent local; targeted youth.
- Radio 4: Educational; minority dialects; 30 per cent international music; 70 per cent local.¹⁴⁷

Consistent with its independence idea of national reconciliation, the government seemed keen to strike a balance to accommodate the country's cultural particularities as defined by race, class, ethnicity, language and age. Symbolically enough, these four channels, modelled on the BBC, were the brainchild of British consultants hired to 'rationalize' the new nation's radio. This new structure accommodated much of the broadcasting practices at RBC, including elaborate programmes for such genres as country and western, the music whose popularity Zilberg explained in terms of its significance in Zimbabweans' social imaginations and daily lived realities.¹⁴⁸ The whole subject must be viewed within a larger context of the political functions of state-controlled radio in unfree environments. To reiterate, a lot of 'foreign' music's popularity

¹⁴⁶ M. Sibanda, Complete control: Music and propaganda in Zimbabwe, 30 September 2004, <http://www.freemuse.org/sw7086.asp>

¹⁴⁷ Data provided by Sam Sibanda, Interview, 11 September 2000.

¹⁴⁸ J. Zilberg, 'Yes, it's True', 121.

in postcolonial Zimbabwe is deeply implicated in controversies surrounding monopoly broadcasting as a tool primarily serving the interests of political elites in both Rhodesia and Zimbabwe. Such a framework allows for an interrogation of the role of monopoly, propaganda and commercially-driven radio and television in the creation of notions of the popular.

Commenting on the afore-mentioned 'rationalisation', Leo Hatugari accused the British consultants of deliberately seeking to perpetuate 'cultural imperialism' and to nurture a market for 'western' music by recreating channels that continued to play predominantly 'western' music.¹⁴⁹ Significantly, he blames the 'usual suspects' – Zimbabwe's former colonizers – without querying why the 'revolutionary' government implemented such a skewed broadcasting policy that was apparently detrimental to Zimbabwean musicians. The answer, I think, harks back to the broadcasting monopoly the government so sinisterly continued to guard. As Dumisani Moyo explains, the government's overriding concern was political: to shut out the discussion of serious matters of social and political significance by citizens¹⁵⁰ – the staple of local song. This helps explain the overdose of 'entertainment' and patronizing programming ZBC has continued to feed its listeners. The 'I love you, I love you, I love you'¹⁵¹ stuff of country and western music and similar, carefully selected local ballads would naturally provide the right nutrition for the propaganda machinery over some of the poignant socio-political commentary emanating from an increasingly disenchanting populace. This was ZBC's parody of the 'art for art's sake' doctrine. Yet, coupled with the regurgitation of self-glorifying *Chimurenga* memory, it clearly betrayed a strategy to suppress more urgent, contemporary concerns. In the estimation of the ruling elites, the imported and locally replicated pop fantasies of the mass media would perform a limited political function.

¹⁴⁹ L. Hatugari, *Daily News*, 10 March 2000.

¹⁵⁰ D. Moyo, 'From Rhodesia', 17.

¹⁵¹ This is, ironically, President Mugabe's own scornful commentary on the 'shallow' social imagination in a lot of the country's music: Robert Mugabe, ZTV 1 interview, 21 February 1996.

Radio and Struggles over the 'Popular'

Marechera recalled the glossy images of western pop culture in which he and his childhood friends were immersed in the 1960s: the Rolling Stones, Cliff Richard and Elvis Presley, the cowboy, the WW2 Commando, Tarzan, James Bond and Ronald Reagan.¹⁵² This was hardly a transient phase. Miriam Mlambo, one of the first African women to break into broadcasting at RBC,¹⁵³ also noted how, 'Most people, including my own children, would go to Mai Musodzi and Stodart Halls in the 1970s where they watched rock 'n roll music on video film clips. That music made lasting impressions. My children grew up in this sort of music'.¹⁵⁴ These influences flowered as these children grew up to operate the microphones at ZBC. One of Miriam's sons, Salani, spoke for Radio 1 when he told me: 'You can not play John Chibadura on a dinner programme; he is too noisy. We play quiet music'.¹⁵⁵ Dinner or no dinner, however defined in Zimbabwe, Radio 1 (and 3) seldom played Chibadura's *museve* and most other local beats as the DJs mostly ignored even the 'window dressing' 10 per cent local music quota. This section seeks to analyze the impact of this blatantly neo-colonial hegemony and why the 'socialist' government allowed it.

While debate on postcolonial cultural dispositions has grown quite complex today, Walter Rodney had one word for the condition described above: underdevelopment. He wrote: 'Any diagnosis of underdevelopment in Africa will reveal not just low per capita income and protein deficiencies, but also the gentlemen who dance in Abidjan, Accra and Kinshasa when music is played in Paris, London and New York'.¹⁵⁶ Antipathetic attitudes towards African music were prevalent amongst the African elite of Rodney's time. In 1962, for instance, one Charlie, an *African Parade* music columnist, wrote:

Each time somebody talks to me about African traditional music, I get the sickening [feeling] that some of our musicians have got really screwed up ideas

¹⁵² D. Marechera, quoted by Zilberg, 'Yes, It's True', 112.

¹⁵³ Angela Manyangara, 'Gender in Zimbabwe's Electronic Broadcasting Media' (BA Hons. Thesis, University of Zimbabwe, May 2001).

¹⁵⁴ M. Mlambo, Interview, 25 August 2000.

¹⁵⁵ S. Mlambo, Interview, 25 August 2000.

¹⁵⁶ W. Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, 26.

... 'That traditional music!' one of my quaint acquaintances told me the other day. 'It's just beastly. Why, I wouldn't like to be *seen or heard* singing that music which sounds like a buffalo-stampede. Man, we've got to move with the time.'¹⁵⁷

Many local musicians and their audiences played South African *smanje-manje* ('modern') music, American and other western 'cover versions' to 'move with the times'. But, as Charlie further wrote, the bedrock of indigenous music was far from totally eroded by the staple of imported cultures: 'The music of my grandpa is something I am very proud of. In fact, whether they bring the can-can dance, cha-cha-cha or just old-fashioned rock 'n roll, there's nothing to beat my old grandpa's music'.¹⁵⁸ As noted in the preceding chapter, by the 1960s and '70s, most musicians had begun to compose their own music, experimenting with original styles and fusing them with 'traditional' styles like the *ngoma*-based *chikende*, *muchongoyo* and *jerusarema*¹⁵⁹ – giving birth to modern Zimbabwean beats like *sungura* and *mbira*-based *Chimurenga* cast within wider African creative idioms. However, to the ire of the musicians, this renaissance was not broadly reflected on radio after 1980. Thus, it is appropriate to end this chapter by exploring how Zimbabweans viewed the radio and its place in the construction of identities in postcolonial Zimbabwe.

To many Zimbabwean cultural critics, the radio has been a constant conduit for 'cultural imperialism'. For instance, the late musician Jethro Shasha echoed Rodney when he argued at a Harare music workshop: 'If you live in London, you sleep your night there. The following day you fly over to Zimbabwe and you sleep here. In the morning you switch on the radio. You feel like you are still in London – the music is the same'.¹⁶⁰ Shasha was worried by the apparently obstinate umbilical cord of British colonialism, whose architectural imprints the pioneer nationalist, Joshua Nkomo, also noted in 1983: 'You can go around the City of London and go around Harare now ... you might as well

¹⁵⁷ Charlie, quoted in Turino, *Nationalists*, 152. Emphasis mine.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁹ Zilberg uncritically quotes Chinodya who recalled his generation's childhood enthrallment with western music, declaring that traditional dances and music were 'dead before we knew them': Zilberg, 'Yes, it's True', 112.

¹⁶⁰ J. Shasha, 'Local Music for the Home Market', *ZIMIA*, 44.

have stayed in the one place'.¹⁶¹ But perhaps the sharpest critique of this 'crisis of national identity' is expressed musically by Thomas Mapfumo in songs like 'Vanotsenga Mukanwa' (They Stammer and Stutter),¹⁶² 'Magariro' (Way of Life), 'Chako Ndechako' (What is Yours is Yours), and 'Vanhu Vekwedu' (Our People), off his 1994 album, *Hondo* (War). He sings in 'Vanhu Vekwedu':

<i>Tine urombo baba</i>	We are sorry father
<i>Vanhu vekwedu baba</i>	Our people father
<i>Havasati vaziva</i>	They haven't learned yet
<i>Tsviri tsviri paradio</i>	Tsviri tsviri on radio
<i>Chirudzii vakomana?</i>	What (language) is that?
<i>Kukanganisa vana musoro</i>	Confusing the children's mentality
<i>Zvakaipa vabereki</i>	It's wrong parents
<i>Nanga nanga nezvisiri zvedu</i>	Pursuing what is not ours
<i>Zvinonyadza veduwee</i>	Oh it's so shameful
<i>Kukanganisa vana pfungwa</i>	Confusing the children's mentality
<i>Nezvinhu zvisiri zvedu</i>	With things that are not ours
<i>Hello hello paradio</i>	Hello hello on radio
<i>Hatisi America</i>	We are not America
<i>Tiri muno muZimbabwe</i>	We are here in Zimbabwe
<i>Nyika yemuAfrica</i>	An African country
<i>Chirungu ndecheiko</i>	What is English for
<i>Paradio yeruzhinji?</i>	On public radio?
<i>Kune vanhu vamwe vedu</i>	There are some among us,
<i>Vakagara vakarasika</i>	Who have always been lost
<i>Fundisai vana</i>	Teach the children
<i>Tsika dzedu dzeZimbabwe</i>	Our own Zimbabwean customs
<i>Magariro nehunhu</i>	Ways of life and good manners
<i>Vanamai chengetedzai</i>	Mothers – jealously guard
<i>Kune vanhu vamwe vedu</i>	There are some of us
<i>Vachiri muRudhizha</i>	Who are still in Rhodesia
<i>Radio Jacaranda</i>	Radio Jacaranda
<i>Yakapera hama dzedu</i>	Is no more folks.

Mapfumo assails his fellow countrymen for their love of things foreign – including music and the English language, which he contemptuously represents in 'tsviri tsviri', or as

¹⁶¹ J. Nkomo, *The Story of my Life*, 76.

¹⁶² Thomas Mapfumo and the Blacks Unlimited, 'Vanotsenga Mukanwa', *Chimurenga Movement*, 1997.

kutsenga mukwanwa, in the song of the same title. The consumption of western music and use of English – employed as race and class barricades throughout the colonial era – continued as symbols of social status and ‘education’ in the popular culture that Mapfumo condemns in this song. This is only one symptom of African enculturation that has turned their cosmology up-side-down, Mapfumo sings in ‘Magariro’. He avers that urban life led many Africans astray, for example, to think that ‘supplicating their ancestors is something for the rural people to do’. Because these are borrowed, alien and parochially urban ideas, they cannot mediate the inter-generational transmission of indigenous knowledges or deliver solutions to age-old problems like recurrent droughts which Africans averted through supplication to their ancestors in rain-making ceremonies.¹⁶³ In fact, they epitomize colonialism’s violent interference with African intergenerational transmission of collective historical memory and knowledge. As Mhlanga argues, this cultural alienation is at the centre of development challenges in Africa:

We know that we live in a land where there shall always be droughts to a point where even our religion accepted that and created rain dance ceremonies, that’s because the droughts shall always be with us and the people who lived here before us knew that. They knew that our environment, our geography is drought prone and created these rain ceremonies; so why do we seem to think that droughts will all of a sudden go away? I doubt it that you can go to the Amazon and find rain dance ceremonies. It’s common sense! Why are we not aware of that? Why can’t we just learn from that? Once we know that we would then shift our priorities and make our chiefs more important because then it would be through them that we can organize to hold these rain dance festivals, rather than to make our chiefs the ones to write the *stupa* [pass book], like the colonial authorities [used them]!¹⁶⁴

The argument here is that the postcolonial crisis is not only cultural, but is a development crisis as well. Cultural crises as exhibited in the music privileged on a nation’s radio and language preferences can translate into or represent development crises. Cultural extroversion cannot be separated from extroverted (under)development. As Mhlanga pointed out in a measured attack at the government’s peripatetic fumbling with socialism and various strains of capitalism, ‘As long as we do not stop to evaluate ourselves and the

¹⁶³ Thomas Mapfumo, ‘Magariro’.

¹⁶⁴ Cont Mhlanga, Interview, 13.

importance of resources surrounding us, we end up running around the world and leaving all answers to our problems next door'.¹⁶⁵ Zimbabwean broadcasting media had always been outward looking.

To reiterate During's point, the ideas propagated through a society's dominant media often powerfully shape that society's self-perceptions. In Rhodesia, such media included RBC's propagandist Radio Jacaranda, whose spectre Mapfumo saw in ZBC's Radio 3. Thus, the channel's continued obeisance to western musical programmes like the *UK Top 100* and *Music USA* earned it the pejorative nickname 'Radio Anglo-America' from embittered musicians like Ephat Mujuru, whose *mbira* music was anathema to the station.¹⁶⁶ To Mujuru, the station was 'a waste of public money'. This view was shared by one Albert Gwede, who claimed to represent a group calling itself the Zimbabwe Youth in Politics:

Listen[ing] to Radio 3 when Peter (Johns) Jonhera is behind the microphone makes you wonder whether it is a British or American radio station. What does [he] think he is doing pumping out British and American chart busters between 1700 and 2100hrs? Who likes to hear what's topping New York and London when we do not know what is fresh in Harare?¹⁶⁷

Moreover, Radio 3's own self-compiled 'Hitsville' catalogued more of the non-local 'hits' based on 'phone-ins' by its mostly affluent, and, to Mapfumo, 'confused', young audiences. Youths defined their space in the city centre night clubs and upper class suburbs with such imported music, purveyed mostly by the same radio anchormen and women. Nkabinde describes the typical scene:

Most DJs at ZBC suffered, at least intensively in the 6 or 7 years of independence, from addiction to Western culture as indeed they still do ... Black Zimbabwean music was subordinated to foreign music. The country's leading DJs – the most prominent of whom were ZBC announcers – nightly spread the craze for foreign music; these were the days of Wham, Shalamer, Diana Ross, Lionel Richie, etc. The night-clubs of Bulawayo and Harare sought the number one spot by playing

¹⁶⁵ C. Mhlanga, 'The Need for Enterprizing Culture', 6.

¹⁶⁶ E. Mujuru, Interview.

¹⁶⁷ A.M. Gwede, 'DJs must Play More Local Music', www.samara.co.zw/mirror/index.cfm?id=17&pubdate=1999-04-08.

as outrageously as possible the disco-funk that poured from EMI, RPM, Warner relentlessly, and the fame (or notoriety) of such DJs as Josh Makawa, John Matinde, Peter Johns, Caleb Thodhlana spread strongly.¹⁶⁸

It may be tempting to see Mapfumo and his colleagues as bitter gatekeepers fighting too hard to ward off open competition. Yet one point clearly illustrates the substance in their argument while also teasing out the limits of 'cultural imperialism' and bringing out the poignancy of the postcolonial cultural battles waged through radio. This is the fact that the radio playlists and listenership patterns in this period did not reflect record purchases. For instance, after a survey, Smith was dismayed to discover what a fraud these so-called 'hit parades' were:

I find it very sad and distressing each time I listen to Radio Three to hear the kind of Hit Parade that they claim are the top sellers of Zimbabwe. On a survey we did on four Saturdays in a row, we found out that there were three non-selling records in one day only, and on the other three weeks there was none at all, of all the ones that were allegedly on the Hit Parade.¹⁶⁹

Accusations that DJs solicited bribes from local as well as international musicians or their sales representatives abound. In 2000, the *Daily News* carried a report that,

A popular Radio 2 DJ was accused of being in the forefront of soliciting for bribes from musicians in return for airplay and good ratings in chart shows. The DJs are said to blackmail musicians by asking them to play at their own private concerts free of charge. If they refuse, the DJs are said to connive to keep their music off the air ... New groups were most affected because they did not have the money to pay the bribes.¹⁷⁰

As Gwede noted, questions lingered over the selection criteria for these parades:

How does one take to the fact that Oliver Mtukudzi's album 'Tuku Music' [1998] is currently topping the charts but it is not in the so-called Hitsville? Is it a true

¹⁶⁸ T. Nkabinde, *The Music of Lovemore Majaivana*.

¹⁶⁹ D. Smith, 'Music Development in Retrospect', 58.

¹⁷⁰ Lloyd Mudiwa, 'ZBC DJs accused of asking for bribes', *The Daily News*, 12 December 2000, 3. Throughout the 1990s, many Zimbabwean radio and TV DJs were accused of actively sabotaging local music by taking bribes from South African musicians whose music they played incessantly on radio and TV.

reflection of what Zimbabweans are buying or [is the radio] promoting an extension of Anglo-American domination?¹⁷¹

The rationale may be difficult to determine, but the effect approximated Anglo-American domination, which built into the *déjà vu* of colonial race-class dynamics that Zimbabwe inherited in 1980. A veteran broadcaster, John Phiri, explained this reality as only a symptom of a larger structural problem with the country's colonial inheritance:

Yes, Lions Maid Hit Parade, Coca Cola on the Beat, etc; you will appreciate that all these programmes were white-driven. There are times when we don't have to run away from the politics – who your master is and where your bread is buttered. Such programmes were serving a certain following and so the content had to comply with what the master wanted. But I was also bound to complain about it because, take for instance that Thomas Mapfumo may have been the best selling artist at that time but he wouldn't be there on the hit parade. What does that mean? Would you subscribe to that?¹⁷²

Zimbabweans were indeed beholden to neo-colonial commercial interests; but these were exacerbated by the inescapable vicissitudes of monopoly broadcasting. Thus observed Phiri,

Were there many radio stations, we wouldn't be clamouring for the airtime. I will give one example: when I used to present *Mutinhimira* [a once a week TV show featuring local music], all the presenters were crying to come and present the same show. Why? Because there is only one channel; where else can they showcase their talent? Nowhere! Monopoly thus retards development, culturally and [economically].¹⁷³

Thus, media sponsorship influenced fake hit parades by a radio and television service that served African ruling class interests while depending on white capital to survive. This classically neo-colonial reality not only contributed to the underdevelopment of Zimbabwean music, but it also rubbished ZANU's notions of a democratic socialist culture. These popular programmes were sponsored by companies like Coca-Cola and Lever Brothers, whose adverts – reflecting what Herbert Schiller characterised as

¹⁷¹ A.M. Gwede, 'DJs Must Play More Local Music'.

¹⁷² John Phiri, Interview, 1 February 2007, Harare, 7-8.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, 1.

'Culture, Inc.'¹⁷⁴ – stiflingly competed with the featured songs for audiences' attention. Allocated newer, powerful stereophonic FM transmission equipment, Radios 1 and 3 prided themselves in their superb sound quality. This contrasted negatively with the old monophonic shortwave equipment used by Radios 2 and 4 – the stations playing predominantly Zimbabwean music.¹⁷⁵ This technological disparity affected the relative sound quality of local music. Viewed from the receiving end, – that of Rodney, Shasha, Nkomo, Smith, Gwede and Mapfumo – this largely unidirectional flow of 'western' music via Radios 1 and 3 points to a critical awareness of a cultural onslaught perpetuated through a neo-colonial media. One conclusion that can be drawn from this reality is that the fashionable disdain for the concept of cultural imperialism is ill-informed.¹⁷⁶

Dissociating itself from its controversy-ridden counterparts, Radio 2 regarded itself as the 'patriotic station, based on the music it decided to play at independence'.¹⁷⁷ Patriotic music, in this context, meant emphasis on music by Zimbabwean artists, and, needless to say, that excluded songs that critiqued the 'socialist' leaders.¹⁷⁸ This attempt at self-definition by Radio 2 is neither entirely surprising nor convincing because, firstly, the station was run by many ZANU war veterans, including Cde Chinx, who helped memorialize the war through the party's *Chimurenga* songs to the exclusion of ZAPU's own. Secondly, its patriotic gate-keeping antagonized many musicians and listeners, particularly those from outside Harare who felt their musical cultures were under-represented. In the RBC African Service logic, it was better to import entertainment than to 'pollute' the airwaves with 'false consciousness', as Chifunyise would put it. This may in part account for the continued flood of Congolese and other foreign musics that Mapfumo complained about:

¹⁷⁴ H. Schiller, *Culture, Inc.: the Corporate Take over of Public Expression* (New York: Oxford University, 1989).

¹⁷⁵ M. Sibanda, *The Zimbabwe Independent*, 12 June 1998.

¹⁷⁶ See D. Crane, 'Culture and Globalization: Theoretical Models and Emerging Trends', *Global Culture*. see H. Arntsen and K. Lundby, 'The 'Electronic' Church in a Zimbabwean Communication Environment', in *Culture in Africa*, p. 46.

¹⁷⁷ S. Sibanda, interview, 11 September 2000.

¹⁷⁸ After 2000, this brand of patriotism would become the ZANU PF government's whip for anybody who dared criticise it, as we shall see in the next chapter.

You hear a lot of *rhumba* music being played on the radio at the expense of ... local music. *Rhumba* is also African, but Zimbabwe is not Zaire. We would like the radio and television to support local musicians, not to treat them as ... inferior.¹⁷⁹

At a time when worries about censorship were rising, Mapfumo's stammered 'inferior' may well have been a quick second thought substituting 'politically incorrect', especially for someone usually given to straight talk. Cephas Mashakada added his voice, noting that his music would be played, on average, 'only once in a fortnight because the radio favoured South African music'.¹⁸⁰ The question of airplay was also, very directly, a matter of money. Not only did many musicians rely on radio for marketing, but ZBC was also, in theory at least, their greatest source of public performance royalties. Disproportionately high percentages of 'foreign' music on playlists meant that the stations would pay greater proportions of their disbursements to foreign artists.¹⁸¹ But the cultural implications were even more unfortunate.

Scholars have observed how missionaries subjugated African cultures.¹⁸² And as Eyre has noted, some consequences of that assault survived the end of colonial rule in the minds of some black Zimbabweans.¹⁸³ Among other ways, this colonial hangover manifested itself in the twin evils of stigmatization and self-doubt that also played out through music and public radio. The splitting of ZBC's radio channels along language and race-class lines only helped to further polarise Zimbabwean society along the Manichean 'tradition' versus 'modernity' schema; the music conformed to, and in some ways confirmed, those general *public* cultural dispositions, of course, in spite of some deep-seated contradictions and complexities. Thus, in this *public* cultural scheme, Radios 1 and 3 sought to cater for those with refined, 'modern' and 'Western' tastes – sharply

¹⁷⁹ Mapfumo, quoted by Thomas Deve, 'Promoting Zimbabwean Culture', 9.

¹⁸⁰ C. Mushinga, 'Mashakada Speaks of his Muddy Face', *Sunday Mail*, 22 April 2006.

¹⁸¹ Up to 2000, ZBC still rejected its obligation to pay royalties and, in an argument that shows the interconnection between media/'cultural imperialism' and international capital, ZBC justified its predominantly western media content by arguing that it got most of the material for free.

¹⁸² P. Chabal, *Amilcar Cabral: Revolutionary Leadership and People's War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 183.

¹⁸³ B. Eyre, 'Playing with Fire', 34

pitted against Radios 2 and 4, the more conservative indigenous language stations.¹⁸⁴ The discourse of ‘civilization’, usefully learned from the colonial masters, was internalized and deployed to good effect in the symbolic stigmatization of Radio 2, which was ridiculed as ‘weird’, ‘not modern’, ‘country stuff’ and ‘African’,¹⁸⁵ a regurgitation of colonial sensibilities that tended to regard things African as primitive and repugnant. The logic is clear. As Turino argues, the modernist assumption that indigenous culture is passé becomes self-fulfilling when repeatedly taught to indigenous young people. Indeed, ‘What teenager wants to be passé?’¹⁸⁶ Radio 1 and 3 DJs, with ‘westernized’ *noms de guerre*, and speaking in equally contrived ‘western’ accents (‘nosing’) played deacon to this cultural neo-mission.

Evidence of stigmatization abounds. Some people switched off Radio 2 before visitors or neighbours called, lest they be found listening to the station.¹⁸⁷ Radio 2, the station popular with the adult population because of its preference for indigenous music and programmes, was equated with retrogression.¹⁸⁸ ‘Africanness’ depicted negativity and backwardness in these alienating colonial and neo-colonial settings; a symbol of despicable identity to be ashamed of. In ways that further complicate notions of the ‘popular’, Radio 1 and 3 DJs, on their part, defended their playlists as responses to popular demand – an assertion supported by one youth, who wrote:

Indeed, the youths have adopted Western norms and values, but then what did you expect? And what did you raise us to be? Our own culture remains a mystery to us ... The parents go to work everyday, and the children go to school, and the rest of the day is spent watching Western-type television and/or listening to Western-

¹⁸⁴ Notwithstanding grey zones, these dichotomies permeate wider society: rural versus urban; high vs. low density dwellers. At the University of Zimbabwe, the ‘moderns’ were dubbed ‘nose brigades’, and the ‘traditionals’ ‘SRBs’ – those with a ‘strong rural background’.

¹⁸⁵ P. Scannell, ‘Music, Radio and Record Business’, 9.

¹⁸⁶ T. Turino, *Nationalists*, 155.

¹⁸⁷ P. Scannell, ‘Music, Radio and Record Business’, 9.

¹⁸⁸ This evokes the neo-Marxian cultural vision championed by scholars like A. Maja-Pearce who, in their search for African development, advocate the abandonment of African indigenous language usage: ‘In Search of Achebe’s Dignity; or, The Cauliflower Episode’, in *Culture in Africa*.

type radio. Can I blame the disc jockeys? I don't think so. After all, they're only giving listeners (not only youths) what they want.¹⁸⁹

In spite of its poor conceptualization and conflation of causes with consequences, this argument neatly acknowledges the historical role played by radio and related instruments in nurturing cultural persuasions, choices and preferences in postcolonial Zimbabwe. African culture has never been dead even in the urban areas. How one approached and negotiated it was mostly a question of choice at various levels – individual, family and institutional. This is one sense of Neil Postman's observation that 'the media of communication available to a culture are a dominant influence on the formation of the culture's intellectual and social preoccupations'.¹⁹⁰ By unwittingly facilitating what Nkabinde called an 'unmitigated consumption of foreign culture', Zimbabwean neo-colonial broadcasting both overtly and covertly performed important political functions and generated critical cultural questions that can inform new debates on the political economy of broadcasting.

Summary

This chapter has analyzed attempts by Zimbabwe's rulers to harness music to fashion new socio-political relations between themselves and the ruled in the name of nurturing and reorienting the musicians who had sung 'the songs that won the liberation war'. Their voices would help the rulers to construct a socialist society. Such official interventions failed because structural relations between the elites and the 'povo' remained unchanged. If anything, such official interventions merely highlighted the widening gulf between the emerging tiny class of privileged blacks and the huge mass of the poverty-smitten majority. Dreams of socialist equality evaporated with growing evidence of conspicuous consumption and rampant corruption among the black *nouveau riche* hence the emergence of dissenting voices by socially-conscious musicians. It has also been argued that ill-conceived music policy seriously affected the development of indigenous music in Zimbabwe. The chapter has foreshadowed some of the key themes to be dealt with in

¹⁸⁹ M. Jaya, *Sunday Mail*, quoted by Zilberg, 'Yes, It's True', 114.

¹⁹⁰ N. Postman, *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business* (New York: Viking, 1985), 9.

greater detail in the next chapter. The post-2000 era represents an ostensibly more proactive music policy regime marked by the reorganisation of radio, the promulgation of a new local content broadcasting policy, the government commissioning of music to promote its policies and state organization of musical galas. It is an era that brings into very sharp relief some of the battles that have historically been fought through and over music in Zimbabwe.

Chapter 6 The 'Third Chimurenga': Nurturing a Cult of Song

'Party propaganda is very good because it is there to tell you that you are powerless' – Cont Mhlanga.¹

One October evening in 1892, there was a musical performance at a Salisbury hotel. The performer was one Madame Blanche, who gave her celebrated rendering of the English classic, 'Ta-ra-ra-boom-deay'.² A few settler families which were passing through the town attended the show by chance and were so enchanted that after settling near Marondera, they gave three of their newly-acquired farms the names 'Tarara', 'Boom' and 'Deay'. Marking this power of song, an Umtali road signpost, 9 miles outside Marondera, pointed travelers to Tarara Road more than half a century later.³ In a moment that illustrated the early signs of what Brian Raftopolous rightly observed as a (re)definition of the nation into 'insiders' and 'outsiders',⁴ Dr. Vimbai Gukwe Chivaura, a University of Zimbabwe lecturer, recounted this story in early 2000 during a TV discussion of a draft new constitution. Chivaura was appealing to history to argue against the compensation of white farmers who would soon be evicted from the commercial farms they held in the impending 'fast track' land redistribution exercise. His point was that there was no reason to compensate people who had 'expropriated Africans' land for a song!'⁵

This anecdote had become a powerful historical archive in its retelling, and was utilized to whip up a virulent revived nationalist discourse that centered on land dispossession/repossession. It also demonstrated the implication of performative culture in the production of powerful symbolic meanings and identities, both in the past as documented by Taylor and in the moment of subsequent retrospective reconstruction, as

¹ Cont Mhlanga, 'Cont Mhlanga, 'The Need for Enterprising Theatre', *The Journal of Social Change & Development*, no.42/43 (August 1997).

² C.T.C. Taylor, *The History of Rhodesian Entertainment 1890-1930*, (Salisbury: M. O. Collins, 1968), 23.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ B. Raftopolous, 'Nation, Race and History in Zimbabwean Politics', *Making Nations, Creating Strangers: States and Citizenship in Africa*, eds. S. Dorman, D. Hammett and P. Nugent, Leiden: Brill, 2007, 181.

⁵ Vimbai G. Chivaura, ZTV Constitutional Commission Discussion, January 2000.

in Chivaura's retelling. To the government, the rejection of the draft new constitution in February 2000 symbolized a first-ever vote of no confidence and a signal of unprecedented drifting of public sympathy towards the newly formed, Morgan Tsvangirai-led, opposition party, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC). The MDC had emerged from the groundswell of anti-ESAP labour and student unrest that climaxed in the violent 1998 urban food riots. It attracted financial support from various sections of Zimbabwean society, but most conspicuously from the white commercial farmers who sought to protect their landholdings against compulsory acquisition for black resettlement as proposed in the draft constitution. Thus, the government presented this translation of white farmers' economic power into political activism as a threat to the nation by 'outsiders' with the help of black puppets, justifying its *jambanja* (campaign of violence) as a 'Third *Chimurenga* or *hondo yeminda* (war for land) to both uproot these elements and deliver land to landless blacks. The government drew on the deep historical antipathy to (neo)colonial and racial subjugation in the country, region and beyond to privilege land as a trope for these struggles over the nation.⁶ This way, the government was able to cast the 'Zimbabwe Crisis' (the socio-political and economic problems engulfing the country since 2000) within the discourse of anti-imperialist liberation and economic redemption.

But while scholars have studied various aspects of the so-called 'Third *Chimurenga*', no significant attention has been paid to the intellectual processes through which it was framed and articulated beyond its obvious reliance on the state media monopoly.⁷ This chapter argues that music was the central tool that the government used to articulate this 'Third *Chimurenga*' discourse. Similarly, musicians were at the forefront in producing a counter-narrative that fractured the state's idea of a monolithic, land-centric national project, exposing it as parochial. The chapter will end by assessing how this implication in the 'Third *Chimurenga*' discourse affected the musicians and their work.

⁶ B. Raftopolous, 'Nation, Race and History'.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 182.

'Patriotic' Songs as Local Content

Writing in late 2001, Leo Hatugari struggled to understand the logic behind the recent reorganization of radio and television by fierce government critic turned Minister of Information and Publicity in the President's Office – Professor Jonathan Moyo. Hatugari pointed out that he had felt angry with the government when, at independence, it had followed British consultants' recommendations to restructure the country's radio in ways that preserved Rhodesia's racial and cultural prejudices. Where he had anticipated thorough-going transformation, the government had done no more than rename the General Service station Radio 1, the African Service, Radio 2 and the all-music station, Radio Jacaranda, Radio 3. He wrote:

[I was] angry because it was clear that the racial element in our colonial broadcasting service was not only being left but was even being reinforced. ... The whole set up was to entrench white privileges and perpetuate western cultural values through the electronic media. They did not bother themselves with television because it was an all-Western affair already anyway. Just as was the case with the music on Radio 3 which was almost exclusively foreign, it was as if nothing had changed; that the country was still merrily a British colony.⁸

We have seen the pervasive frustration with this skewed broadcasting policy in the first two decades of Zimbabwe's independence in Chapter 5. Thus, cultural critics like Hatugari and musicians who had complained bitterly about this neo-colonial broadcasting policy warmly received the promulgation of the Broadcasting Act of Zimbabwe in October 2001, which stipulated that Zimbabwean broadcasters devote 75 percent (subsequently stretched to 100 percent by some stations) of their airtime to locally produced material. And indeed, as we shall see, the policy boosted the production of music by some Zimbabwean artists.

Yet much of the initial enthusiasm quickly evaporated as, in a horrible turn of events, the musicians in whose name this policy was enacted still felt nothing had changed. This was because, instead of affording their music better access to radio and television, the new policy turned to be no more than a thin guise for political interference and manipulation of broadcasting by the minister and his ruling party. As Hatugari noted:

⁸ Leo Hatugari, 'This blind hatred is self-defeating', *Daily News*, 23 November 2001, 10.

As a direct result of his direct interference in the managerial, organizational and operational affairs of both Zimpapers and the ZBC [both institutions] have completely abandoned all pretens[e] at professional journalism ... Television has become completely unwatchable, with the main news having become pure torture as it has been turned into a hate campaign against all perceived 'enemies' and opponents of the government and the ruling party.⁹

Moyo had re-organized radio, rechristening Radio 2 Radio Zimbabwe; Radio 4, National FM while Radio 1 was renamed Spot FM and relocated to Bulawayo and Radio 3 was renamed Power FM and dispatched to Gweru in an apparent decentralization gesture, literally 'taking radio to the people'. Zimbabweans in outlying provinces had always complained about poor radio and television reception from Harare and the intermittent broadcasts from Bulawayo.

The birth of Spot FM represents the crisis of this bureaucratic interference: it had initially been named 'Sport FM' and dedicated solely to reporting and 'talking' sports in what Hatugari saw as a probable 'hate-driven move to inflict pain on the white community which the government seem[ed] determined to punish with relish'¹⁰ for allegedly sponsoring the 'no' vote in the 2000 referendum and for funding the MDC. Professor Moyo did not care that this particular station, which had been identified with white interests and cultural idiosyncrasies, had largely transformed itself into a more cosmopolitan channel by the early 1990s. However, it soon dropped its 'r' when, together with all the other channels (including TV), it had run out of sufficient 'local content' material to broadcast after banishing 'foreign' music. For 'Sport FM', there simply was no 'sports' to talk about all week. In a move that represented the literal death of radio, all the stations started to play the same songs over and over again. This 'shortage' of material would be surprising for a broadcaster whose record libraries overflowed with recordings, particularly at its Mbare studios had it not been for the fact that the DJs did not just pick any songs from the shelves. Instead, they played material meticulously picked and vetted for 'political correctness' in line with the new nationalist agenda. Tight

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ L. Hatugari, 'Blind Hatred'. The change over from laid-back, classical music to live, full-throated soccer commentary and dry sports discussion would likely drive away the channel's traditional listeners.

copyright of music was not new at the broadcaster; what is peculiar to the post-2000 era is that songs (and their producers) had to appear either self-avowedly 'apolitical' or blatantly supportive of the ruling party and its policies to get any airplay. The reservoir for such a musical repertoire was not sufficiently large; it had to be created. Thus, a new era of unprecedented music censorship converged with the nationalist propaganda crusade, gagging many songs that had somehow escaped close scrutiny or that which the new canon deemed potentially 'dissident' or 'unpatriotic'. Such music disappeared from the airwaves to be replaced by state-commissioned or approved 'patriotic' songs that encouraged and applauded government policies, particularly the *hondo yeminda* campaign to 'regain the lost ancestral lands' and entrench ZANU (PF)'s political supremacy.¹¹

Thus, Moyo cannot be accused of lack of foresight or, as Hatugari charged, of 'stumbl[ing] from one policy blunder after another'.¹² What he initiated was a well calculated strategy that involved purging critical songs and independent live discussion forums from the electronic media before flooding them with a particular, monologic state-sponsored musical discourse that applauded land repossession, exalted the self-sacrificing heroes of the nation for it, exhorted the populace to remain resilient in the face of 'externally-induced economic challenges' by alleged imperialist opponents of the land reform exercise, and tarnished the opposition MDC party as *zvimbwasungata* (running dogs) of a resurgent imperialist conspiracy to re-colonize the nation. In the government's estimation, these messages could only make some impact on audiences if they were completely insulated from interrogation or competition by alternative narratives. ZANU (PF) had historically used music and other aspects of 'African culture' for its political ends – to mobilize for the Second *Chimurenga* in the 1960s-70s and in its 'socialist' masquerade of the 1980s, as discussed in the last two chapters. In 2000, a rather piecemeal use of songs failed to buoy its draft constitution. The rejection of the latter and the party's near defeat by the MDC in the 2000 parliamentary and 2002 presidential elections convinced it to turn to its wartime musical strategy with full force in a massive propaganda blitzkrieg that must have turned the former Rhodesian leaders green with

¹¹ E. Chitando, 'Land in Zimbabwe', 223.

¹² L. Hatugari, 'Blind hatred'.

envy. For older Zimbabweans like Everjoice Win, turning on the radio became akin to 'turning back the clock because the broadcaster [had become] as biased as it was during the colonial era'.¹³ The campaign centred land repossession as a multi-dimensional motif of sovereignty, ultimate liberation from the allegedly scheming former colonizers and restoration of despoiled African culture and dignity.

The chief cadre of this musical crusade, the independence war veteran, Cde Chinx, recalled how they launched it:

With that referendum, we were asking: 'What are your thoughts, boys, concerning taking back *mavhu* [soil]? Should we or should we not? That 'no vote' triggered me. My objective was to show people that 'you have gone astray by rejecting the land'. They just said 'no' because white people told them to say 'no' to the land; that is what we fought for! And I told them [the government] that *ndoshaura ini* (I am singing again), and they told me to 'do your thing again'. In 18 months, I had finished recording the double (*Hondo yeMinda*) album, with 18 songs ... We were already set on taking the land regardless, because we couldn't even buy it. They had inflated the prices, yet they couldn't show us their agreements with our forefathers, so we wanted our land back.¹⁴

Chinx placed the 'fast track' land reform at the historical continuum of Zimbabwe's incomplete liberation. Towards the end of the independence war, he had composed songs revolving around the need to liberate Zimbabweans economically after the political independence of 1980, but many such songs had not found much space in the euphoric celebration of the 'political kingdom'. 'Hondo Yakura MuZimbabwe' (the War has intensified in Zimbabwe) was one such song. With logistical support from the government and the backing of the Police Band, Chinx re-recorded the song and made it the title track for his *Hondo yeMinda Volume 1*, after 'spicing it here and there to make it speak more powerfully to the new situation, focusing primarily on land'.¹⁵ He re-worked many other Second *Chimurenga* songs, composed some new ones, inviting surviving members of ZAPU's LMG (Light Machine Gun) Choir to add its own tracks to give the project a 'national scope'. Apart from coordinating the project in the bureaucratic sense;

¹³ Everjoice J. Win, 'Lost in Jingle-land as ZBC echoes Rhodesia', *The Independent*, 16 April 2004.

¹⁴ Cde Chinx, Interview, 12 December 2006, Chitungwiza, 12.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 19.

Professor Moyo also had a more direct input. He suddenly discovered the musician in himself and contributed two tracks – ‘Zimbabwe at 21’ and ‘Proud African Youth’ – to Chinx’s albums, and then asked several other musicians to further embellish the songs. The latter added their own input, but balked when asked to star for TV videos,¹⁶ leaving that to Chinx and his wife. As was to become the custom, Chinx launched his *Hondo yeMinda* albums at a party hosted by government ministers, top police, army, war veterans and secret police agency officials at a Harare hotel, betraying how, like the biblical Jonah, he ‘sang from within the belly of the political whale’, as Maurice and Beauty Vambe would say.¹⁷ Chinx presented his ‘Hondo Yakura MuZimbabwe’ as a searching call for national consensus on the best way to ‘resume’ what many saw as a long overdue economic revolution:

<i>Iyo iyo hondo yakura ndodiniko?</i>	Behold the bitter war has intensified; what shall I do?
<i>Hondo yakura muZimbabwe</i>	The war has intensified in Zimbabwe
<i>Hondo yeminda</i>	The land war.

The song then narrates and explains the ‘land war’ in historical context – how it started with the ancestors, Nehanda, Kaguvi and the protagonist’s brothers and sisters. *Hondo yeMinda* reinforced the revived nationalist project’s portrayal of land reform as *the* ‘national question’ at the beginning of the new millennium.

Chinx was not alone in articulating the *hondo yeminda*/‘Third Chimurenga’ musical discourse. Fellow war veterans, Marko Sibanda and Simon Chimbetu, popular musicians like Andy Brown, sculptor-singer Taurai Mteki and upstart Tambaoga (Last Chiangwa), together or separately received government assistance and rewards to contribute to the series of albums, singles, audio and video jingles. The Air Force of Zimbabwe Band’s ‘Nhaka Yedu’ (Our Heritage) and Peter Majoni’s ‘Rangarirai’ (Remember) were some of the albums commissioned by the government. The prominent role of war veterans and the armed forces bands demonstrates how *hondo yeminda* was militarized in a very literal sense. The rewards and airplay enjoyed by these artists and

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ Maurice and Beauty Vambe, ‘Musical Rhetoric and the Limits of Official Censorship in Zimbabwe’. *Muziki: Journal of Music Research in Africa* 3:1 (2006), 68.

their works inspired many other artists to follow suit and independently produce pro-government songs.¹⁸ In this regard, Moyo's blockade of international (mainly American) music on the youth station, Power FM, prompted youngsters to 'indigenize' American hip-hop into an emergent, local sub-cultural genre, 'Urban Grooves'. They utilized the same rap style but delivered it largely in local languages, Shona and Ndebele. While this sub-culture did not fit squarely the government's agenda to 'patriotize' musical voices, it still represents the state's ability to appease multitudes of unemployed, restless armies of school leavers disparaged by the government as politically-illiterate 'born-frees' (youths born after independence). The bone of contention was the latter's talking back to the nationalists' privatization of the liberation war memory as a self-legitimizing claim to power with a cynical request to 'please go back and tie the country where you untied it from so that we may also liberate it'.¹⁹ Thus, Jonathan Moyo's reservation of an entire radio station and encouragement of their type of music apparently produced some grateful 'urban grooves' stars and fans overnight. Many of these youthful stars would constitute the bulk of the professor's Pax-Afro project (discussed later), the model musical metaphor for supposedly patriotic African youth voices, as Moyo imagined them in his 'Proud African Youth' on *Hondo yeMinda*. Yet, in spite of the emphasis on young musicians, the drivers of the musical propaganda machine remained the converted, older musicians who had personally fought and experienced the independence war.

The late Simon 'Chopper' Chimbetu, the only musician accorded hero status after his death in 2006 (he was declared a Provincial Hero), had fronted the Marxist Brothers in the 1980s and was the founder-leader of the Orchestra Dendera Kings from the 1990s, which included his brothers, Briam and Allan. The multi-lingual Chimbetu had been deeply influenced by the Marxist-Leninist ideology and a lot of his songs duly condemned the evils of social inequality.²⁰ Chimbetu's politics were infused with the championing of underclass aspirations, a preoccupation metaphorically etched in 'Dendera', the Mozambican refugee camp he once called home in the 1970s and in

¹⁸ M. Sibanda, 'Complete Control', 2.

¹⁹ This is the literal sense in which the message is delivered: *kusungirirwa* = to bind/tie, as under colonial bondage; *kusunungura* = to untie/to free. The literal translation demonstrates the youths' cynicism in an oversold and bankrupt liberation narrative.

²⁰ Chimbetu sang in at least 5 languages: Shona, Ndebele, KiSwahili, Chewa and English.

whose memory he subsequently named his band and farm. Artistically, however, the name intricately connects his music to the natural world, particularly to the giant sub-tropical African crested bird (*dendera*) whose deep, reverberatory singing heralds the dawn of a new day, simulated by the singer's distinctive bass guitar. Dubbed the 'Master of Song', Chimbetu was so popular by the 1990s that fans swamped him and often lifted his car at show venues until he released 'Hoko' (Land Peg) in 2002. Now a proud owner of a new farm himself, he had to contend with desertion by estranged urban fans, many of whom also boycotted his releases for the next four years. Even though he remained undaunted, he was nonetheless startled by the backlash, querying what may be regarded as selective listening of his previous works by those fans. But 'Hoko' should be understood in a larger historical and political trajectory of the singer's discography. This is because it did not espouse new ideas, but reaffirmed the musician's longstanding beliefs, advocacy and activism.

'Hoko' warned opponents of the land reform of violence if they dared resist the programme: '*Hoko mucherechedzo; hoko yechirangano; isiye iripo; hoko ine ropa* (The peg is a sign; the peg is sacred; leave it there; it is the peg of blood). The deeper message, which underpinned the nationalist project, was that Zimbabwe, which was symbolized by the land, was liberated and sanctified by the blood of its sons and daughters. Chimbetu's fans located 'Hoko's' message within the politics of intolerance against alternative opinions that underwrote the government's ultra-nationalist discourse. Stung by critics, Chimbetu defended himself by pointing out that many of his previous albums had agitated for land reform as part of a larger revolutionary process.²¹ Therefore, in that regard, 'Hoko' was hardly novel and should be understood in this longer trajectory for which, to Chimbetu's incredulity, he was never attacked. Over the years, Chimbetu had constantly urged Zimbabwe's rulers to redistribute land urgently and diligently to resolve the economic inequalities inherited from Rhodesia. While the government used the Lancaster House Constitution's 'willing-seller-willing-buyer' clause as some sort of alibi for its slowness in redistributing land in the 1980s, Chimbetu had disagreed with this approach, warning that the white farmers' entrenched monopoly of the country's prime

²¹ Chimbetu: 'I am a critic of foolish politics', <http://www.newzimbabwe.com/pages/mzeks5.11423.html>

farming land portended ill for both their and the country's future. As A.S. Mlambo argues, the specter of *jambanja* over land had always loomed large so that it is actually surprising that it only took place 20 years after independence, and not earlier.²²

Chimbetu's popular songs had vocalized that tension while the government played along with the Lancaster House Constitution's neo-colonial denialism.

In the early 1980s, when it was becoming apparent that the vested interests over land had become entrenched, Chimbetu intervened with his song, 'Africa'. In the song, Chimbetu condemned 'Hendriki', a white farmer, and John Vorster, a prominent patriarch of the region's apartheid system, for failing to teach their 'grandchildren' that 'We grabbed this country; it belongs to blacks; you should give it back to them when they demand it, lest our race gets decimated'.²³ In 1997, Chimbetu released 'Ndima' on the politically charged *Survival* album. When the Shona speak of *ndima*, they are speaking about earmarked land that has not yet been fully worked, or any piece of work-in-progress. Thus, in a double sense, at the national level, the land issue was unfinished business. While in 'Africa' Chimbetu had appealed for an historically informed resolution of the country's land problems, 'Ndima' represents his disappointment with the pretentious policy of 'national reconciliation' announced at independence because, he argued, the intended beneficiaries of the policy had clearly spurned it:

*Zvamaiti vachachinja haa, zvaramba
Havashanduki ava
Kushanda tose kuya kwaramba zvino
Kuregererana kuya kwaramba
Kugarisana navo kwaramba
Ndima iyi ichigere kupera
Chidzorera mweya wegamba mundima
Mutipewo simba tirwe nengarwe*

*Wedzerai simba Jehovha wehondo
Dunhu rechipikirwa Zimbabwe*

You suggested they would change but
These people will not change, no!
That co-operation has now failed
Forgiving each other has failed
Good neighbourliness has not worked
This project remains unfinished
Put back the spirit of heroism
Give us the strength to fight these
enemies
Give us more power, God of War
Zimbabwe, our sacred heritage.

²² A.S. Mlambo, 'Mlambo, Alois S. 'Land Grab or Taking Back Stolen Land: The Fast Track Land Reform Process in Zimbabwe in Historical Perspective', <http://www.history-compass.com> (2005).

²³ Simon Chimbetu and the Marxist Brothers, 'Africa', *Greatest Hits of Early Music*, Gramma Records, 2000. He re-recorded the piece as 'Southern Africa' for his highly acclaimed *2000 Blend* album at the turn of the millennium.

Evidence of white Zimbabweans' alleged splendid isolation included farms with symbolic names like 'Little England' where Rhodesian flags and Union Jacks allegedly fluttered; attempts to maintain white residential, schooling and sporting islands; refusal to attend public national holiday gatherings (like Independence) and unwarranted criticisms of the government.²⁴ Thus, in 'Ndima', Chimbetu appealed to *Jehovha wehondo* to 'breathe the spirit of heroism back into *ndima*' – an explicit call to fellow war veterans to move onto the 'unliberated' farms once and for all. He renewed the call in another production the same year, 'Zuva Raenda': *Mukoma zuva raenda; mukoma nhongai nyama, takuvara nemuto; govai minda* (Brother, the sun (time) has moved; brother, pick the meat, we have patiently waited for too long, feeding on soup; share the land now). Meat is generally a delicacy in the poverty-stricken reserves and it is thus a locus for the performance and observation of certain ritualized protocols and registers of seniority and social relations during slaughter, preparation and at the table. Children sharing a meal of *sadza* and meat from a common set of bowls eat soup first, usually well into the meal before the eldest makes his/her pick of the meat, a signal that the younger siblings may do likewise. Meanwhile, s/he makes sure each of the latter gets a fair share. Chimbetu adopted this metaphor to respectfully remind 'big brother' that, like the patient younger siblings, Zimbabweans had waited for too long for the real independence treat, land. When the government finally conceded to peasants and war veterans who invaded the farms in 2000, Chimbetu naturally celebrated what he saw as a long delayed revolution with 'Hoko', chiding skeptics for playing the 'politics of foolishness' with their

²⁴ As a *Daily Mirror* columnist wrote in 2001, 'the white citizenry in general has regarded Independence Day – and any other day of political significance – as something alien, otherwise no more than a convenient holiday. In the early 1980s, I overheard many a white citizen declare quite arrogantly that such days ... were the sole concern of black Zimbabweans: 'Let them keep the politics, we will keep the economy': The Scrutator, 'Race, representation and independence celebrations', *The Zimbabwe Mirror*, 20-26 April 2001, 8. This prior aloofness is what gave their participation in the 2000 Constitutional Referendum and parliamentary elections (after the formation of the MDC) marked conspicuousness and symbolic meaning. From the late 1990s, the state media had upped its ante, occasionally publishing feature articles that detailed farmers' acts of cruelty and exploitation of their workers and other unflattering insinuations marking them out as a despicable section of the nation.

birthright. Land, in Chimbetu's pan-African discourse, was a key political issue that would define the country's future as it did its past. He argued: 'We are correcting a part of history which for many years our younger generation did not learn maybe due to the education system, or they were simply not allowed to learn'.²⁵

It is not surprising that land was inexorably stuck with the political controversies of the day; and Chimbetu did not hesitate to engage its sore points. What perhaps drew him deep into the epicenter of the controversies was his bold warning to presidential aspirants like Tsvangirai (who censured resettled peasants for 'just sprouting all over like mushrooms') in 'Kure-Kachana' (It's Far), that 'the road to the State House is long and tough'. One of the MDC's most difficult ideological quandaries seemed its inability to strike a balance between disavowing race-oriented and partisan *jambanja* and justifying why some of its top officials benefited from it. In effect, the party leaders' alternate disavowal of land reform and recanting of that disavowal²⁶ presented them as historical amnesiacs and ideological flop-floppers while unwittingly surrendering to ZANU (PF) one powerful tool around which to frame its exclusivist nationalism. This allowed ZANU (PF) to sharpen its electioneering armour by forcefully foregrounding land reform, as we shall see in the next section. To Chimbetu's legion of fans, many of whom were targeted by the government for their alternative views and subjected to the waves of violence, *hondo yeminda*-induced hunger and displacement from the farm compounds, 'Hoko' was an eloquent statement on how much the 'Master of Song' had become complicit with a vicious and intolerant party. Rightly or wrongly, he shared space in the dock of public opinion with Andy Brown, Tambaoga and Brian Mteki, all of whom were roped into party electioneering under the guise of the 'Third Chimurenga'.

In 2001 and 2002, Brown released two albums, *Tongogara* and *More Fire*, respectively, which contained songs that legitimized the government and urged it not to relent on the land reform. Brown's title track in the first album, 'Tongogara', counseled

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ In a 2002 interview on BBC's HARDTalk programme, the MDC's secretary for education, Fidels Mhashu, told his interviewer that the MDC would return land to white farmers if elected to power. Tsvangirai subsequently scorned resettled blacks as 'mushrooms which sprout everywhere', in reference to the 'haphazard' manner of the resettlement.

‘the children of Zimbabwe’ to stop murdering each other over the ‘sacred king’s stool’, a message many perceived to imply that Tsvangirai should not challenge Mugabe for a throne sanctified by Tongogara’s and other fallen heroes’ blood.²⁷ Tongogara, the ZANLA commander, was widely seen as a preferred leader to carry the country through the espoused revolutionary path, before he met an untimely demise in a suspicious accident on 25 December, four months away from independence. While the launch of ‘Tongogara’ was hosted by the same cabal of officialdom, giving an indication of where Brown stood on the contentious land issue,²⁸ his invocation of the ‘no-nonsense’ Tongogara constituted unflattering commentary on the leaders involved in the contemporary murderous political squabbles. But more than that, it also played into the rumours that some of the party’s top leaders may actually have murdered the ZANLA commander. Brown was aware of that possible reading; hence he substituted ‘Nehanda’ for ‘Tongogara’ when he performed it at the Heroes Gala in Masvingo in August 2006, ‘lest [he] offended someone from Zvimba’.²⁹ The private press and Brown’s fans were not for such finer readings of these power politics; they bashed him, sometimes literally, with rocks during shows and attempted to burn down his house.³⁰

An artistic novice, Tambaoga went an extra mile in celebrating the ‘Third *Chimurenga*’, showering praises on Mugabe in his two songs, ‘Agrimende’ (Agreement) and ‘Osama bin Laden’. In ‘Agrimende’, he sang:

<i>Patakavhota takasainirana agrimende</i>	When we voted we signed an agreement
<i>Kuti mutungamiri weZimbabwe ndiGabhuriero</i>	That the leader of Zimbabwe is Gabriel [Mugabe]
<i>Patakavhota takasainirana agrimende</i>	When we voted we signed an agreement
<i>Kuti mutungamiri weZimbabwe ndiBhobho</i>	That the leader of Zimbabwe is Bob

²⁷ ‘Brown, war vets alliance shock music fraternity’, *The Daily News*, 4 June 2001, 8.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ Andy Brown, Interview, 4 December 2006, Harare, 8. Zvimba is Mugabe’s rural home.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 5.

To Tambaoga, Mugabe was Zimbabwe's natural leader who should not be opposed. He went on to reproduce the president's anti-west rhetoric:

Musatinetse musatishupe maBhirishiti

Do not irritate us, do not harass us,
you 'Brishit'

*Ende land takangoitora chete muchida
musingade*

We took away the land, whether you
like it or it not

The *Bhureya* that I know is a *toireti*

The Blair that I know is a toilet.

The 'Blair toilet' is the Blair Institute's famous sanitary contribution to the world. Tambaoga thought the similarity of names artistic in the poisoned context of bilateral wrangling between Mugabe's government and the British Labour Party Government of Tony Blair. In 'Osama bin Laden', he weighed in on the Mugabe-George Bush war of words, charging that leaders of western countries like Britain and America are the real international terrorists using Osama bin Laden's name as a scapegoat. Barely schooled and without access to international media in Zimbabwe's closed up information environment,³¹ Tambaoga was simply regurgitating somebody else's political invective.

Together with other musicians, Tambaoga also featured in a state-sponsored series of short audio and video jingles that promoted *hondo yeminda* while exhorting Zimbabweans to remain resilient in the face of the programme's economic repercussions like food and fuel shortages and ballooning inflation. The jingles preached that these difficulties were short-term challenges spawned by enemies of the land reform, and that they would be surmounted by longer-term benefits accruing from the process because, explained state ideologues, 'Our land is our economy and our economy is our land'. These jingles included a series of 'Chave *Chimurenga*' (It's now War) pieces, a cannibalization of Stella Chiweshe's *Chimurenga* hit; 'Kwedu Kumachembere' (Back to our Olden Wisdom), 'Sisonke' (We are Together), 'Our Future', 'Siyalima' (We are Going to Farm), 'Mombe Mbiri neMadhongi Mashanu' (Two Oxen and Five Donkeys), 'Uya Uone Kutapira Kunoita Kurima' (Come and See how Sweet Farming is), 'Rambai Makashinga' (Be Resilient) and 'Sendekera Mwana Wevhu' (Keep Pushing Child of the Soil), which were all successively produced and incessantly played on the radio and

³¹ Tambaoga, Interview, 10 February 2007, Harare, 3.

television. Another one, 'ZESA Yauya zvine Power' (ZESA has Come with Power) promoted the crumbling monopoly power utility's rural electrification programme and its envisioned boost for irrigated farming. Urbanites whom the government taxed heavily to fund this initiative understood it as ZANU (PF)'s rural electioneering carrot targeting the influential chiefs, whose 'traditional powers' the government had quickly 'restored' once it started losing control of urban areas to MDC Members of Parliament, mayors and councilors after 2000. In fact, urbanites knew ZESA (Zimbabwe Electricity Supply Authority) more for power outages and huge bills than for reliable power supply (hence they rechristened it 'Zimbabwe Electricity Sometimes Available'). Most of these jingles, together with a number of *hondo yeminda* songs, allegedly originated directly from Jonathan Moyo's own office, if not his prolific pen.

One survey observed that the 'Rambai Makashinga' jingle alone was played 228 times a day, 2 016 times a week and 8 064 times a month on the four radio stations; and 120 times a day, 840 times a week and 3 360 times per month on television, incurring a huge bill of \$2 billion on the two electronic media.³² This huge bill did not include production and marketing costs, which were all covered by the public purse. In 2003, the government restructured the state-owned book seller, Kingstons Ltd, adding 'an entertainment arm', Kingstons Entertainment. Its mandate was to produce and market the government-sponsored 'Third *Chimurenga*' music. According to its head, former Education Permanent Secretary Stephen Chifunyise, this move was necessitated by the realization that the profit-oriented 'record companies and retail outlets were unwilling to produce and market these patriotic voices and national icons'.³³ The best way to sell propaganda as art, then, was to fund its production and marketing entirely from the national fiscus.

Among Kingstons Entertainment's key releases were a two-series-compilation in 2003 and 2005, titled *Zimbabwe's Best Music Volume I* and *Volume II*, combining Power FM-promoted 'Urban Grooves' and 'Third *Chimurenga*' pieces. As expected, the state press obligingly gave it a high rating in its reviews:

³² M. Sibanda, 'History will certainly judge them harshly', *The Daily News*, 16 June 2003, 24.

³³ Stephen Chifunyise, Interview, 14 February 2007, Harare, 2.

Th[e] album opens with Aripo by Shame & Nathan, followed by Score Warriors, and then Roy & Royce's Handirege, Come to Victoria Falls down in Zimbabwe by Ruvhuvhuto Sisters; Rambai Makashinga, from the popular jingle in support of the land reforms ... The full version has Tambaoga on lead vocals. Other hits to enjoy are Seiko by Leonard Mapfumo and Rocqui, Innocent Utsiwegota's In My Dreams, Nakai by Decibel, Chirangano by Dino Mudondo and Major Playaz['s] Umzimba Wakho ... The album is a must-have considering that the 14 tracks were produced by different producers and record stables, including the Department of Information and Publicity in the Office of the President and Cabinet.³⁴

These compilations were supposed to represent the first fruits of the local content policy and demonstrate that the government had Zimbabwean musicians' concerns at heart, as a blurb on *Volume I* makes clear:

Zimbabwe's Best Music epitomises the dynamic growth of music in the country from 2000 to the present. It represents the explosion of new unheralded talent that was formally denied an opportunity for expression until the Government of Zimbabwe, through its Department of Information and Publicity launched the 75 percent local content programming.³⁵

Zimbabwe's Best Music Volume II consists of a similar number of urban grooves pickings and one track from Professor Moyo's *Pax-Afro* project. It was 'released to mark the Silver Jubilee celebrations' in 2005.³⁶ As Professor Moyo told the country's parliament in 2004, these recordings were part of his department's effort to 'rally the nation around its over-arching objectives and pursuits', which included the 'mobili[zation of] the nation for agrarian reforms [and the] celebrat[ion of] its natural endowments and beauty'.³⁷ Kingstons Entertainment also produced a wide variety of 'Third *Chimurenga*' and nationalistic merchandise, including t-shirts, flags and caps emblazoned with images of the country's leaders and slogans lauding the 'fast track' land reform exercise. No bill was too heavy when it came to celebrating land repossession or the country's 'beauty'.

³⁴ Jonathan Mbiriyamveka, 'Kingstons launches album', *The Herald*, 24 December 2003.

³⁵ *Zimbabwe's Best Music, Volume I*, Kingstons Entertainment, 2003.

³⁶ Entertainment Reporter, 'Kingstons launches another volume of Zim's best music', *The Herald*, 21 February 2005.

³⁷ Herald Reporter, 'Jingle seeks to build public awareness: Moyo', *The Herald*, 21 October 2004.

The irony of this, however, was that most of the ‘new farmers’ the songs exalted were already chorusing discordant appeals for government assistance with inputs, and many were already being forcibly ejected for allegedly underutilizing the land or to make way for the politically connected. After all, a function of propaganda is to mask unpalatable reality and stave off criticism.

As late as 2006, Mickias Toindepi Musiyiwa, a University of Zimbabwe lecturer, released an 8 track album, ‘Kubatana’ (Unity), which celebrated the ‘return’ of land into *vana vevhu*’s hands in the track ‘VaMugabe’ (Mr. Mugabe). In the song, Musiyiwa credits and profusely thanks Mugabe for ‘giving us back our land’:

<i>VaMugabe makaita basa</i>	Well done Mr. Mugabe
<i>tinofarira zuva ranhasi rataungana</i>	We rejoice in this day that we have gathered
<i>Imi VaMugabe makaita basa</i>	You Mr. Mugabe, you did a great job
<i>tinofarira ivhu redu ramatipa</i>	We rejoice for our soil that you have given us

<i>Chorus : Tinofarira zuva ranhasi;</i>	We rejoice in this day
<i>Tinofarira ivhu redu</i>	We rejoice for our soil

<i>Zuva ranhasi izuva guru</i>	Today is a big day
<i>tinofarira ivhu redu ramatipa</i>	We rejoice for our soil which you have given us.

Musiyiwa then narrates ‘the history of Zimbabwe’, arguing that ‘the history of Zimbabwe is the history of struggles over land’, and ends the narrative by repeating Mugabe’s ‘Blair, keep your England and let me keep my Zimbabwe’ speech at the Earth Summit in Johannesburg in 2002. Musiyiwa reduces and reifies Zimbabwean history and contemporary concerns into *the* ‘land question’ and ignores a vast array of competing and complementary religious, gender, equity, class, sustainability, productivity and other concerns that complicate (continuing) struggles over land.³⁸ He also abetted the

³⁸ See, for instance, T. Ranger, *Voices from the rocks: nature, culture & history in the Matopos Hills of Zimbabwe* (Oxford: James Currey, 1999); J.M. Manjengwa, ‘Problems Reconciling Sustainable Development Rhetoric with Reality in Zimbabwe’, *JSAS* 3: 2 (2007); Jocelyn Alexander, ‘The Historiography of Land in Zimbabwe: Strengths, Silences, and Questions’, *Safundi: The Journal of South African and American Studies* 8: 2 (2007); J. Muzondidya, ‘*Jambanja*: Ideological Ambiguities in the Politics of Land and Resource Ownership in Zimbabwe’, *JSAS* 33: 2 (2007) and Alison Goebel, ‘Zimbabwe’s

government's use of the land discourse to silence other pertinent concerns like responsible governance by presenting such concerns as a trivial agenda of neo-colonialists: 'Blair blared about human rights abuses in Zimbabwe; but all that was in vain'. Similarly, he reifies Mugabe's claim to be the initiator of the social dissidence he had actually violently suppressed for two decades.

Musiyiwa exemplifies the co-optation of intellectuals at the University of Zimbabwe and elsewhere to market what increasingly appeared like Mugabe's political blackmail as economic nationalism. Some of the country's intellectual grey-heads, including Professors Claude Mararike, Sheunesu Mupeperekwi, Drs. Chivaura, Tafataona Mahoso, and Kenyan exile Ngugi waMirii regularly featured in TV round-tables like 'National Agenda', 'National Ethos' and 'Talking Farming', which sought to redefine 'Zimbabweanness' around the new 'national agenda' of land reform and farming. Thus, Mugabe successfully enlisted intellectuals, organized religion and musicians to re-articulate the complex land movement as a monolithic nationalist initiative popularly backed by all patriotic blacks. For Mugabe, this self-positioning as the champion of a highly emotive issue constituted an opportunity to legitimize continued claims to power. He had run every election since 1990 on this platform and chose to act out the promise when it had become politically most expedient, in 2000.

Ministerial Guitars: the 'Third *Chimurenga*' as Political Legitimation

In light of Minister Moyo's direct and indirect contribution to the *hondo yeminda* songs and jingles, one can argue that Maurice and Beauty Vambe's observation that some of these musicians 'sang from within the belly of the political whale' is actually an understatement. In fact, the whale often conducted the singing and joined in the chorus too. Moreover, when 'political Jonah' failed to sing with sufficient zeal, the whale took over the podium. Zimbabwe may actually be unique for producing two ministers who directly got involved in producing music and singing, Professor Moyo and Elliot Manyika, the Minister of Gender, Youth and Employment Creation and latterly Minister without Portfolio and ZANU (PF) Commissar. But both may have developed the idea

Fast Track Land Reform: What About Women?', *Gender, Place and Culture* 12: 2 (2005).

from the heftily built, omnipresent and ruthless Minister Border Gezi, who enchanted the party's following with his trademark *kongonya* dance at ZANU (PF)'s campaign rallies before his sudden demise in a suspicious car crash in 2001. This ministerial discography advanced the new national ideology through two antinomic but complimentary threads, one threatening to cleanse Zimbabwe of 'outsiders' and their local lackeys while the other echoed the long-running mantra that Zimbabwe was a sovereign but safe and tourist-friendly place. The objective was to create a culture of political consensus and deference to authority as admirable national attributes. Where the government was losing ground to opposition candidates in polarized party politics, government ministers could pontificate as national unifiers and nation-builders through patronizing popular pastimes like soccer and music. Such opportunities became precious after 2000.

In mid-2003 Moyo penned 'Go Warriors', a ballad supporting the country's national soccer team in its Africa Cup of Nations and World Cup campaigns. Moyo's artistic skills earned him praise from his protégés at the state daily, the *Herald*:

Like a fantasy turned into reality, football has become a part of every Zimbabwean with a passion for seeing their country making a huge impact on the international circuit. Well, the Department of Information and Publicity decided to answer that [call] with this track, and the result was astounding. It has an easy to follow chorus and sing along tune that go with the words 'Score Warriors, Go go Warriors Oh Yeh!' Yes, it was the time of reckoning as the nation burst into Score Warriors frenzy. Predictably you have heard the anthem entitled Score Warriors. The song composed by the Minister of State for Information and Publicity, Professor Jonathan Moyo, created as much excitement as football itself.³⁹

In fact, many subconsciously hummed along this 'anthem' as they did some of the tuneful *hondo yeminda* jingles; what option did they have when the composer was the minister of broadcasting? Moyo coordinated other projects that sought to 'sell the country's positive image internationally', including an album by the Ruvhuvhuto Sisters (consisting of Plaxedes Wenyika and Ivy Kombo, among others), 'Come to the Victoria Falls Down in Zimbabwe', which, together with a host of beauty pageants that he

³⁹ Jonathan Mbiriyamveka, 'Musicians rally behind Warriors' cause', <http://www.herald.co.zw/index.php?id=28235&pubdate=2004-01-17>.

involved himself with, sought to market the country's dwindling tourism industry in the wake of a free-falling economy and gratuitous violence. More recently, this campaign has seen the government inviting foreign musicians, like Jamaica's reggae star Luciano and the USA's Joe Thomas at huge costs to a country that perennially invokes foreign currency shortages to explain long queues at dry fuel depots, empty shop shelves and drugless hospital dispensaries.⁴⁰ Similarly, some local 'urban groovers' felt duty-bound to defend 'the country' against international criticism in what appears like repayment for the unlimited airplay on Power FM. In 2006, Bob Marley's son, Damien, had teamed up with Nas to denounce Mugabe for 'holding guns to innocent buddies in Zimbabwe' in his song, 'Road to Zion'.⁴¹ In a blistering response, Mad Bwoy Khaki and Chuck Ayisha, together with one-time Wailer, Trevor Hall, took issue with the late reggae icon's son in a single 'Inna Zimbabwe'. They urged the younger Marley to follow his father's footsteps and come to see the 'real Zimbabwe', rather than to rely on rumours that tarnished the country's image from the international media.⁴² The government's hope was that Luciano and Joe Thomas would act as Zimbabwe's international ambassadors to counter the negative publicity with wonderful stories of their own experiences in a strife-free Zimbabwe. Needless to say, their elite hosts chauffeur-drove them straight to five-star hotels and holiday resorts, not to the high density suburbs to meet their admirers.

Moyo's musical propaganda acme came in 2004 when he formed a supposedly pan-African musical group, Pax-Afro, which dominated television with their rather vulgar *kongonya* dance choreography. As one viewer wrote to *The Standard*:

Watching television on Friday night, I saw for myself who is in charge at ZTV ... Surely how can they cut short our dear boring Newshour and bring us the Pax

⁴⁰ <http://www.zimdaily.com/news/122/ARTICLE/2364/2008-02-11.html>, 'Joe Thomas earns himself US\$55 000 for Zimbabwe gig'.

⁴¹ Damian 'Junior Gong' Marley, 'Road to Zion' (featuring Nas), *Welcome to Jamrock*, 2006.

⁴² Matthew Kachona, 'Urban Groovers attack international stars', *Trends*, October 2006, 19.

Afro show? Was it because our honourable minister is the composer of Pax-Afro songs - in any case he is Pax-Afro himself?⁴³

Moyo's Pax-Afro supposedly showcased 'African pride', culture and identity as models for the youth his government persistently lambasted for adopting alien cultural tastes and ideas. The group was fronted by some veteran musicians who had featured in the 'Go Warriors' single, including Isaac Chirwa, but it largely consisted of youths. Professor Moyo penned 26 songs and recorded them on a double, self-titled album (Pax-Afro), again using public funds, as he admitted in parliament. He launched the album in style, in a boat at the resort town of Victoria Falls with high ranking government and other state officials in attendance.⁴⁴ However, Pax-Afro – the group and its music – basked in the unlimited airplay and state patronage for as long as the sun shone on Moyo. Once he quarreled with and was kicked out of ZANU (PF) and government in 2005, Pax-Afro's obituary was out.

Manyika, who assumed the late Gezi's party and government posts, is a far better artist but cruder propagandist, musically. Just before the March 2002 presidential elections, Manyika ganged up with young *mbira/jiti* player, Taurai Mteki, to produce the album 'Mwana Wevhu' (Child of the Soil). The album featured the plug track 'Nora', a Second *Chimurenga* piece now buoyed by piercing *mbira* and guitar wizardry, reminding Zimbabweans of the suffering and death the liberation fighters braved to defeat the Rhodesians and hence the need to rally behind Mugabe, the 'super-patriot' and champion defender of the country's sovereignty against the allegedly foreign-sponsored 'illegal regime change agenda' of the MDC.⁴⁵ Manyika reinforced these themes in his follow-up, 8-track album, *Zimbabwe 2005*, released to coincide with the campaign for the March 2005 parliamentary elections. To reiterate, the common attributes defining 'Third *Chimurenga*' music include its use and privatization of First and Second *Chimurenga* memory as the legacy of ZANU (PF) for contemporary political purposes, the marking of

⁴³ Busani Masiri, quoted by Stewart Chabwinja, 'What's on air?', 7 November 2004, http://www.thestandard.co.zw/read.php?st_id=964

⁴⁴ M. Sibanda, 'Complete Control: Music and propaganda in Zimbabwe, 3.

⁴⁵ Guthrie Munyuki, 'Manyika's propaganda album debuts at No. 8', *Daily News*, 25 March 2002, 13.

political opponents as traitors to justify the incitement and legitimation of violence against them, and, above all, the celebration of the 'fast track' land reform as popular fulfillment of Zimbabweans' ultimate aspirations. Manyika's 'Nora' constitutes an epitome of this grand agenda:

*Nora Nora Nora vakomana
Mhururu kuenda nekudzoka mhururu*

Nora Nora Nora oh dear boys
Mhururu kuenda nekudzoka mhururu

*Zvinoda vakashinga moyo zvinoda
vakashinga
Mhururu kuenda nekudzoka mhururu
Zvinoda vakashinga moyo saVaMugabe*

It needs the brave hearted

It needs the brave-hearted like Mr.
Mugabe

Mhuru kuenda nekudzoka mhururu

*Kune vamwe vakapanduka
Mhururu kuenda nekudzoka mhururu
Nepamusana pekusafunga
Mhururu kuenda nekudzoka mhururu*

There are some who defected

Because of ignorance

*Kune vamwe vakapanduka
Mhururu kuenda nekudzoka mhururu
Nepamusana pekuda mari
Mhururu kuenda nekudzoka mhururu*

There are some who defected

Because of love for money

*Toraika vanhu vakadai
Dzidzisi gwara reZANU
Mhururu kuenda nekudzoka mhururu*

Take such people
Teach them the ZANU ideology

Viva ZANU ZANU ndeyeropa

Long live ZANU, ZANU is a party
of blood

*Mhuru kuenda nekudzoka mhururu
Viva ZANU ZANU ndeyekushupika*

Long live ZANU, ZANU is a party
for suffering

*Mhururu kuenda nekudzoka mhururu
Viva ZANU kugara musango taneta*

Long live ZANU, we are tired of
living in the bush

*Dharuweni kune magamba
Mhururu kuenda nekudzoka mhururu
Akafira iyoyi Zimbabwe
Mhururu kuenda nekudzoka mhururu
kuGwanda kune magamba*

There are heroes in Mt Darwin

Who died for this Zimbabwe

In Gwanda there are heroes

*akafaira iyoyi Zimbabwe
mhururu kuenda nekudzoka mhururu
KwaMutare kune magamba*

Who died for this Zimbabwe
In Mutare there are heroes ...

Manyika's 'Nora' and subsequent compositions lionize ZANU (PF) leaders, particularly Mugabe, as personifications of nationalists' self-sacrificing bravery and heroism. Manyika's musical rhetoric presents Zimbabwean history as ZANU (PF) history. It credits the party with liberating the whole country, including those parts of the country, like western Zimbabwe, where ZAPU played a more prominent role. Similarly, it also papers over the unrelenting unpopularity of ZANU (PF) in those parts of the country. The idea is to sell ZANU (PF) as the only political organization with Zimbabwe's interests at heart. As he sings in 'Mbiri Yechigandanga' (Guerilla Legacy) on the *Zimbabwe 2005* album, every patriotic Zimbabwean must respect and vote for ZANU (PF) because of its heroic legacy and shun those he labels as despicable stooges who 'betrayed the revolution' because of ignorance and for the love of money. ZANU (PF) ideologues relentlessly taunted Tsvangirai for allegedly running away from the war. The logic, then, is that Tsvangirai has a long history of alleged cowardice and betrayal of Zimbabwe's aspirations and that that damning history automatically disqualifies him from contesting for national political office. He cannot be patriotic, because he is even too quick to forget that 'ZANU reared him' despite his cowardice, as Manyika sings in 'Usazokanganwa' (Don't Ever forget): 'Morgan, *usatengesa nyika kumabhunu*, (Morgan, don't sell the country to the Boers); *Usazokanganwa, ZANU yakakurera ukakura*, (Don't forget, ZANU reared you until you grew up)'.

Tsvangirai's alleged lack of patriotism is evidenced by his consorting with *mabhunu* (whites), Tony Blair and George Bush to 'effect illegal regime change' in betrayal of the 'multitudes whom we buried because of their love for our country which had been colonized', sings Manyika in 'Vazhinji Navazhinji'. The treatment for people thus labeled, as Tsvangirai and many of his sympathizers (as Joshua Nkomo before him) learned since the food riots of 1998, was 'ideological re-orientation', which included head 'bashing', torture, petrol bombing and torching of houses. As ZANU (PF) ideologues resuscitated the liberation war tactics and rhetoric, violence became approved as 'manna' for *mabhunu* and their alleged lackeys, as Manyika conceptualized it in

‘Sheera Mabhunu Manna’ (Share manna to the Boers) and ‘Musha Une Mabhunu’ (The Home Harboursing Boers). Homes that harboured whites must be bombed, threatened
Manyika:

<i>Musha une mabhunu ndewani?</i>	Whose home is harbouring Boers?
<i>Tibhombe</i>	So that we may bomb them
<i>Musha une mabhunu ndewani?</i>	Whose home is harbouring Boers?
<i>KuChiweshe</i>	In Chiweshe
<i>Musha une mabhunu ndewani?</i>	Whose home is harbouring Boers?
<i>Tibhombe</i>	So we may bomb them
<i>Musha une mabhunu ndewani?</i>	Whose home is harbouring Boers?
<i>Tibhombe</i>	So that we may bomb them
<i>KwaMutoko</i>	In Mutoko
<i>Musha une mabhunu ndewani?</i>	Whose home is harboring Boers?
<i>Timbombe</i>	So that we may bomb them
<i>Musha une mabhunu ndewani?</i>	Whose home is harbouring Boers?
<i>KuMangwe ...</i>	In Mangwe ...
<i>Musha une mabhunu ndewani</i>	Whose home is harbouring Boers?
Tony Blair	Tony Blair
<i>Tibhombe</i>	So that we can bomb them
<i>George Bush</i>	George Bush
<i>Tivabhombe</i>	So that we may bomb them

This musical rhetoric created much more than strangers of white Zimbabweans in Dorman *et al*'s formulation; it further redefined them as enemies, colonial demons who must be bombed to cleanse Zimbabwe (*musha*) and re-affirm its threatened sovereignty. Yet, even as this revived nationalist discourse clearly utilized race as a key trope,⁴⁶ the concept of *bhunu* (despicable white person) had transcended the empirical reality of white people's physical presence or absence to denote undesirable political 'behaviour'. Whiteness had become a 'cultural' pollutant manifesting in 'strange' and 'unpatriotic' behaviour, as articulated in Cde Chinx's 'Hondo Yakura muZimbabwe':

<i>Zvana zvidiki zveZimbabwe</i>	As little Zimbabwean children
<i>Pavaiswera vose vachitamba</i>	Spent their days playing games,
<i>Mumwe wavo akaramba zvaida</i>	

⁴⁶ B. Raftopolous, 'Nation, Race and History', 181.

vamwe

*Mubvunzo wavaiwana wairwadza,
ainzi:*

'Haudiwo zvatinoda,

Uri murungu here – iwe gara pasi'!

*Chana cheZimbabwe chorangarira
Kusanzwisisa kunoita bhunu,
Kusafanana kwarakaita nesu
Utsinye huya hwarinoita*

When one of them refused to co-operate, they would ask him

a searching question:

'Why do you refuse to play well with others?

Are you playing white? Sit down and conform!

Then the little one would sit down and recall with revulsion the Boer's selfishness, strange character and particularly the Boer's cruelty.⁴⁷

The (re)presentation and rebuke of dissent as foreign in this vignette naturalize and justify the song's threats of violence against *mabhunu*, 'born-frees' and members of the political opposition. In the real life adult games of politics, dissent and hard-headedness were defined as opposition to the 'natural' order, which was synonymous with loyalty to ZANU (PF). At the heart of this idea is the insulting assumption that black Zimbabweans can only oppose the ruling party for and at the behest of whites – the epitome of political puppetism according to the reconfigured national project. Edward Kissi described this process nicely when he pointed out that,

Once political enemies are put outside of a nation's universe of moral obligation; [o]nce [they] are no longer seen as belonging to the nation and, therefore, worth protecting; once they are seen as agents of outside forces, to be suspected of devious intent; [they] are immediately considered 'expendable'. Patriotism then comes to mean the destruction of the enemies of the state.⁴⁸

This logic explains why ZANU (PF)'s militias (the 'Green Bombers' or 'Border Gezi' and the 'Taliban') ordered their victims to 'vomit *bhunu*' if they wanted reprieve from merciless beatings that have accompanied the land occupations and elections since 2000. 'Vomiting *bhunu*' meant denouncing the MDC, confessing one's political 'sins' and 'returning' to ZANU (PF). This process was even ritualized many times on national

⁴⁷ A.J.C. Pongweni, *Songs that Won the Liberation War* (Gweru: Mambo Press, 1982), 24.

⁴⁸ Edward Kissi, 'Attacks on Zimbabwe Opposition', <http://groups.google.com/group/USAAfricaDialogue>, 28 April 2008.

television, where small groups of alleged ‘MDC defectors’ who had ‘seen the light’ were haplessly paraded by ZANU (PF) officials, surrendering MDC membership cards, t-shirts, campaign posters and other tools of their ‘witchcraft’ and sometimes ‘exposing’ schemes to commit heinous acts of ‘sabotage’ against the country. The intention here, as in the vitriolic songs, was to erode MDC credibility and cultivate an impression of consensus around ZANU (PF) – the party that held a claim on every citizen ‘because it liberated the country’. The anti-colonial disposition towards an already vanquished colonial order forfeits the pressing contemporary agenda of political accountability.

One way in which consensus around ZANU (PF) was manufactured and foisted was through the propagation of a quasi-religious personality cult around Mugabe as Zimbabwe’s ‘chosen’ leader, as Tambaoga sang in ‘Agrimende’. Ezra Chitando demonstrates how ZANU (PF)’s propaganda machinery successfully appropriated religious motifs to construct Mugabe as a messianic super-patriot who was chosen by both the ancestors and God to restore Africans’ dignity and self-worth through the transfer of land from minority white hands to black ownership.⁴⁹ Amongst a highly religious population, no one, then, could conceivably oppose Mugabe without committing apostasy against the politically constructed divine order of things. Manyika’s rendition of the *Chimurenga* folk song, ‘Mudzimu Woye’, helped to propagate this notion:

Chaminuka woye
Oye mudzimu woye (chorus repeated)
Mudzimu weZimbabwe
Mbuya Nehanda oyere
Mudzimu weZimbabwe

Dear Chaminuka
 Our dear guardian spirit
 Zimbabwe’s guardian spirit
 Dear Mbuya Nehanda
 Zimbabwe’s guardian spirit

Titungamirire
Mudzimu weZimbabwe
Titungamirire, tave kunovhota
Mbuya Nehanda chiuya
Vana totambura
Titungamirire,
Titonge Zimbabwe

Lead us
 Zimbabwe’s spiritual guardian
 We are going to vote
 Come Now Mbuya Nehanda
 We, your children, are now suffering
 Please lead us
 So we may rule Zimbabwe

⁴⁹ E. Chitando, ‘‘In the beginning was the Land’’: The Appropriation of Religious Themes in Political Discourses in Zimbabwe’, *Africa* 75: 2 (2005): 223.

VaMugabe woye
Mutungamiri wedu
Vatungamirirei
Titonge Zimbabwe
Kana uchida kugarika,
Vhotera ZANU (PF)
Vamwe vedu mambo
Vachauya riniko?
Titonge Zimbabwe

Dear Mr. Mugabe
Our leader
Lead him
So we may rule Zimbabwe
If you want to live well
Vote for ZANU (PF)
Our (fallen) colleagues
When shall they come (back)?
So we may rule Zimbabwe (together)

Manyika makes the ancestors complicit in his imposition of Mugabe as ‘the only leader’ ZANU (PF) and Zimbabweans deserve. It is common practice for ZANU (PF) officials to invoke liberation war memory to appeal to or intimidate the electorate into voting for them. Cliff Riva described one such instance during the 2005 parliamentary campaigns in Gavhunga, Mhondoro:

Bright Maton’ga [the ZANU (PF) incumbent MP], came with this war veteran, Cde Bvumazvipere, who had operated here during the war. And people were singing this popular song that was liked so much during the war: *mudzimu woye mudzimu; mudzimu woye vana tatambura* (Dear ancestors, your children have suffered now). After a while, all the gathered parents were no longer singing; they were crying! Then the war veteran was introduced to speak to them, and he asked them: ‘Parents, do you remember me, Cde Bvumazvipere? Do you remember the battle of so and so? Do you remember how many comrades fell there?’⁵⁰

This performance was designed to convince voters that the MDC was a puppet of the same evil white colonists whom their children had died fighting in such battles, now set to re-colonize Zimbabwe hiding behind the black MDC masks.

ZANU (PF)’s intention in harnessing such historically powerful songs as ‘Mudzimu Woye’ suggests attempts not only to appeal to the liberation war memory as privileged memory, but also to co-opt Shona religion that such songs evoked as partisan religion to insulate its policies from public reproach. Its ideologues attributed partisan decisions and their outcomes to the realm of divinities. For example, in their choral piece, ‘Midzimu YeZimbabwe’ (Zimbabwe’s Guardian Spirits), the Isaac Chimbadzo-led

⁵⁰ C. Riva, 25 December 2006, Interview, Gavhunga, 8.

Chitungwiza ZANU (PF) Choir portrayed Gideon Gono's appointment as the new Central Bank Governor as an ancestral epiphany to solve the country's ills:

<i>Midzimu yeZimbabwe</i>	Zimbabwe's guardian spirits
<i>Yakabatana neyekwaGushungo</i>	Conferred with those of the Gushungo clan
<i>Ndookutuma baba vedu VaMugabe</i>	Then instructed our father Mugabe thus:
<i>Zvikanzi enda unотора mwana uyo</i>	Go and take that child
<i>Zita rake anonzi Gideon Gono</i>	His name is Gideon Gono
<i>Ndiye achakuchengeterai mari mumabhanga</i>	He will look after your money in the banks
<i>Tikatarisa nhasi mumabhanga</i>	Look at the banks today
<i>Hamuchina achaita zvehuori</i>	No one practices corruption anymore
<i>Kutaridza kuti makasungwa nehutare</i>	Showing how the system has been tightened
<i>Vaiba mari vakapera kusungwa</i>	Those who used to steal money were all arrested
<i>Hupfumi hwenyika hwave kutosimukira.</i>	And the country's economy is already on the mend.

Similarly, controversial decisions by such 'inspired' rulers, such as the subversion of the party's constitution to appoint Joyce Mujuru as Vice-President (to fill the late Simon Muzenda's post) ahead of more popular rivals, cannot be questioned, but applauded.

Thus the choir sings:

<i>Makorokoto Amai Mujuru</i>	Congratulations Mrs. Mujuru
<i>Kutungamira chipo chenyu</i>	Leadership is your gift
<i>Kuhondo makanga muri komanda</i>	You were a commander during the war
<i>Ruzhinji tiri kunzwa kufara</i>	The masses are happy
<i>Amai Mujuru tongai zvenyu musambotya</i>	Rule, Mrs. Mujuru, without any fear!

While Mugabe sold himself as a champion of gender equality, it is public knowledge that the gesture had more to do with entrenching his superiority at the top by thwarting the ambitions of less loyal male presidential hopefuls or, as Jonathan Moyo argues, 'to

institutionalize tribal and village politics'.⁵¹ Attempts to avert this self-aggrandizement resulted in the 2004 Tsholotsho debacle, that is, the sacking or suspension of several provincial party chairmen on allegations that they, together with a number of ministers and governors, led by Moyo, had secretly planned a *coup* plot against the party leaders at Tsholotsho.⁵² Clearly, then, songs like the one above sought to use the religious shroud to stymie debate over certain contestable truths within the party and the nation.

Such songs could be relied on to drown all debate within the party. Moreover, the vociferous singing often came with other forms of political performance, as when Gender and Women's Affairs Minister Oppah Muchinguri foreclosed the debate on Mugabe's presidential candidature in 2007 by declaring on behalf of her singing and dancing Women's League comrades: 'If anyone in Zanu-PF or elsewhere tries to remove Mugabe from power I and the Women's League will march in the streets of Harare naked ... We are prepared to remove our clothes in support of his candidature'.⁵³ After these threats, this grouping, together with the Youth League, disrupted the party Politburo's discussion of the matter through their rowdy singing outside the party headquarters.

ZANU (PF) also co-opted gospel artists and church leaders to 'sanctify' its Mugabe personality cult and his revived nationalist crusade. Many gospel musicians, including Fungisai Zvakavapano, Elias Musakwa, Charles and Olivier Charamba, the Mahendere Brothers, Ivy Kombo, Mercy Mutsvene, Ruth Wutawunashe and church ministers like Reverends Noah Pashapa, Elijah Guti, Victor Kunonga and Andrew Wutawunashe, 'Madzibaba' Godfrey Nzira and Lawrence Katsiru as well as founder and leader of Destiny of Africa Network (DAN) Obadiah Musindo, all variously helped to portray Mugabe as Africa's Moses – or as Jesus, as some of his cabinet ministers preferred.⁵⁴ Many of the gospel artists became regular guest performers at State House and state functions while Msindo officiated at the Heroes Acre and other party occasions. Similarly, Msindo's DAN and Madzibaba Nzira's apostolic followers constituted a dependable support base, if not a *de facto* ZANU (PF) spiritual wing. They joined the

⁵¹ Jonathan Moyo blog, http://www.prof-jonathan-moyo.com/mp143/Tsholotsho_saga_the_untold_story.php

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ <http://www.zimbabwetoday.co.uk/2007/11/girls-lets-get-.html>

⁵⁴ E. Chitando, 'Land in Zimbabwe', 230.

party's Women's and Youth Leagues at the airport to welcome Mugabe on his many arrivals from foreign trips.

These (un)holy liaisons partly constitute ZANU (PF)'s complex strategy to implicate influential religious personalities and institutions in its kleptocratic rule and emasculate them from criticizing the party's misgovernance. Apart from opening for them access to material gain, the party's patronage system has also amply sheltered many pseudo-religious leaders (like Msindo, Nzira and Katsiru) from prosecution for personal crimes.⁵⁵ Many of these artists and preachers have produced a broad, pro-government corpus of 'patriotic theology' in songs, sermons and writings presenting Mugabe as a leader specially chosen by God to redeem black Zimbabweans from the indignity of colonial and neo-colonial exploitation. As Chitando rightly argues, ZANU (PF)'s co-optation of religious motifs into its propaganda blitz gave it 'sacred power' and religious legitimacy to govern.⁵⁶ At the same time, this relationship helps explain the preponderance of gospel music on radio, television and the galas or, as Chitando puts it, its emergence from 'the narrow confines of the church into the public arena'.⁵⁷ However, despite the tight gag on radio, ZANU (PF)'s land-centric nationalist project and self-legitimation did not escape interrogation by other musicians.

'You Have Farmed the Tongue': Contesting the 'Third *Chimurenga*'

Together with Simon Chimbetu, Mapfumo had been one of the first musicians to advocate land reform after independence. In 'Maiti Kurima Hamubviri' (You used to say you are champion farmers), released in 1994, he chided the government for failing to redistribute land expeditiously in line with the popular expectations and promises during the war years. He repeated the call four years later, in 'Set the People Free', *Chimurenga*

⁵⁵ While Msindo continues to 'bless' ZANU (PF)'s occasions with an unprosecuted rape charge hanging over his head, Nzira and Katsiru were eventually convicted of similar charges and jailed after prolonged civil society campaigns.

⁵⁶ E. Chitando, 'Land in Zimbabwe', 231. Justifying ZANU (PF)'s violent reprisal campaign against voters' election of the MDC in the 2008 elections, its Deputy Information Minister, Bright Matong'a, told Blessing Zulu that 'Zimbabwe came after blood had been spilled and it does not go with an X' and that 'that even *midzimu* would not be amused', www.voanews.com, 27 March 2008.

⁵⁷ E. Chitando, *Singing Culture*, 11.

'98. In this light, it came as a shock to some listeners of his music that he denounced the government for its 'fast track' land reform programme in his releases after 2000. In this section I look at how musicians like Mapfumo, Chiwoniso Maraire and Chris Musonza helped to animate, de-center and push national debate beyond the government's narrowly defined 'land question'. I will follow some of the key elements of the debate, particularly the theme of patriotism, in the next and final chapter of this dissertation.

Mapfumo saw the government's neo-nationalist project in 2000 as 'disastrous', as one of his songs on *Chimurenga Explosion* boldly proclaimed. He denounced *hondo yeminda* as driven more by corruption and greed than the need to honour a popular national goal. With characteristic foresight, he warned Zimbabweans of the disastrous consequences of *hondo yeminda*:

<i>Mai vemwana muno mune</i> corruption	Mother of child, there is corruption in this country
<i>Mumba menyu muno mune</i> disaster	There is disaster in your house
<i>Vakomana muno mune</i> disaster	Boys there is disaster in this country
<i>Munyika medu muno mune</i> disaster	There is disaster in this country of ours
<i>Vakomana muno maita</i> corruption	Boys, corruption has compounded in this country
<i>Tapera nematsotsi</i>	We have all been finished by thieves
<i>Tapera neAIDS</i>	We have been consumed by AIDS
<i>Yowere matsotsi</i>	Oh, thieves!
<i>Vakomana muchamhanya</i>	Boys, you shall surely run! ⁵⁸

Similarly, in 'Mamvemve' (Tatters), on the same album, Mapfumo indicted the kleptocrats – *matsotsi* – for ravaging the country into rags like the merciless AIDS pandemic, also colloquially referred to as *matsotsi* (muggers) in street parlance. In addition to the customary censorship, Mapfumo was soon hounded out into exile under the fabricated charges that he had bought a fleet of stolen luxury BMW vehicles.⁵⁹ He fled to the US, from where he delivered even stronger condemnations of the government,

⁵⁸ Thomas Mapfumo and the Blacks Unlimited, 'Disaster', *Chimurenga Explosion*, Gramma Records, 2000.

⁵⁹ Garikai Mazara, 'Mukanya clears the air', *Sunday Leisure*, 13 January 2002. Mukanya is Mapfumo's totemic cognomen. Nothing was ever heard about this case after the police confiscated the vehicles.

though he returned home annually for highly anticipated Christmas *biras*.⁶⁰ Mapfumo argued that while Mugabe had conceived the land redistribution exercise to salvage his imperiled popularity, the costs of the poorly conceived and violently executed programme would actually speed his departure from office. As he sang in ‘Marima Nzara’ (You have farmed hunger), off his 2001 album, *Chimurenga Rebel*, Mugabe’s beating up and chasing away of ‘those who farmed and substituting them with talking’ would soon return to haunt him.⁶¹ Where many of his colleagues praised the government for repossessing the land, Mapfumo saw ‘nightmares of famine’ (‘Dande’, *Toi Toi*) as undercapitalized ‘new farmers’ awaited erratic rains on the bigger pieces of land. Clearly, Mugabe’s government had not learned the lessons of Rhodesia’s ‘White agricultural policy’, which had provided funding, training, inputs and other subsidies to nurture the white farmers into competent commercial producers over several decades.⁶² As we shall see shortly, this is the gist of the protests against *hondo yeminda* by Mapfumo, Musonza, Maraire and others. Dismantling such a system and replacing it with unplanned and unsupported rain-fed farming while making thousands of farm workers into refugees could only spell starvation or, as he sings in ‘Ndateterera’ (I have pleaded) and ‘Tatsvukira’ (We are roasting), ‘hell on earth’.⁶³ Mapfumo elaborates this ‘hell on earth’ in ‘Musha Wenyu’ (Your Home), in which he queries what kind of a home Zimbabwe had become, characterized as it was by constant crying, unprecedented fleeing of citizens into foreign lands and unchecked death:

Musha wenyu varume musha rudziiko?
Musha wenyu varume hauna kudyawo
Vanochema vanhu vose vanochema chiiko?
Vanochema vanamai, vanochema chiiko?
Havana kudya iwe, ndokusaka vachichema

What kind of a home is yours?
 Your home, men, lacks food
 All the people are crying, why?
 Mothers are crying, why?
 They don’t have food that is
 why they are crying

⁶⁰ A *bira* is a Shona religious performance where people play *mbira* music to consult the ancestors. Dubbing his shows *mapira* (plural) denoted the ritualistic power and mystique that his music carries, particularly in times when people require self-assurance.

⁶¹ Thomas Mapfumo, ‘Marima Nzara’, *Chimurenga Rebel*, 2002

⁶² V.E.M. Machingaidze, ‘The Development of Settler Capitalist Agriculture in Southern Rhodesia with Particular Reference to the Role of the State’ (PhD Thesis, SOAS, 1980).

⁶³ Thomas Mapfumo and the Blacks Unlimited, ‘Ndateterera’, *Toi Toi*, 2002.

<i>Hapana akarima, ndokusaka vachichema</i>	Nobody farmed, that's why they are crying
<i>Hapana mari iwe, ndosaka vachichema</i>	There's no money, that's why they are all crying
<i>Vanotiza musha uyo, vanotiza chiiko?</i>	They run away from the home; what are they running away from?
<i>Vakai musha uyo, kuti tigare zvakanaka</i>	(Re)build that home, so we could live well
<i>Tengai mishinga iyo, kuti tirarame.</i>	Buy those drugs so that we could live.

It was the height of irony, charged Mapfumo, that, rather than deliver the promised economic deliverance to the poor black majority, Mugabe had waited for 20 years to realize that land needed redistributing, and then carried it out chaotically for political expediency, 'farming hunger' as a result.⁶⁴

For these bold opinions that directly collided with the *hondo yeminda* praises, Mapfumo was branded a 'terrorist' who rebelled against the people by Professor Moyo, who directed radio DJs to blacklist the album.⁶⁵ ZANU (PF)'s Deputy Director of Information, Steven Chidawanyika expanded the Mapfumo charge sheet:

The people of Zimbabwe, Africa and all Blacks in the Diaspora should know that throughout the struggle for the liberation of Zimbabwe, Thomas Mapfumo had been working with the Rhodesian colonial government. It was his music that was played in helicopter gunships urging freedom fighters to abandon the evolutionary struggle ... It does not surprise me at the least bit to hear Thomas Mapfumo, Oliver Mtukudzi and Hugh Masekela of South Africa castigating and denigrating President Mugabe. The two Zimbabwean singers Mtukudzi and Mapfumo could not say anything good about the ZANU PF Party as they were nowhere near the fighting that took place. The same can be said of Masekela of South Africa who was singing about the struggle of the people against Apartheid from the comfort of USA streets and hotels.⁶⁶

⁶⁴ Thomas Mapfumo and the Blacks Unlimited, 'Mamvemve', *Chimurenga Explosion*, 1999.

⁶⁵ Thomas Mapfumo, Interview with Banning Eyre, Eugene, 2002, <http://www.afropop.org/multi/interview/ID/18/Thomas+Mapfumo:+February,+2002>
Steven Chidawanyika, 'A reply to Professor Horace G. Campbell's paper entitled: 'Need for debate on realities of life for the Zimbabwean'', http://www.zanupfpub.co.zw/a_reply_to_professor_horace_g.htm

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

These attacks would soon become a full-fledged campaign, carried on by the state media and some academics. Maurice Vambe, a University of Zimbabwe lecturer, reproduced Moyo's language, writing that '[Mapfumo]'s volume, *Chimurenga Rebel*, shows that [he] has rebelled from the real aspiration of the people, which is land'. Furthermore, Vambe attacked Mapfumo for allegedly believing that 'whites are God's chosen farmers' and that Africans are condemned to farm labour.⁶⁷ Vambe shared Chidawanyika's bid to both minimize Mapfumo's outstanding contribution to the liberation struggle and present the latter as a continuing ZANU (PF) project. He quotes Mapfumo's words in a 2002 interview with Conrad Nyamutata where the singer states: 'I have never been one of them. I am a man of the people, of the poor people in particular, the people who are being beaten up today'. Vambe reads Mapfumo's rejection of suggestions that he was never a ZANU (PF) member as a 'startling confession' from a man who sang encouraging youths to join the liberation forces and to celebrate independence in the early 1980s as if ZANU (PF) membership is a virtuous insignia of revolutionaries.⁶⁸ To lend force to his point, he sinisterly juxtaposed Mapfumo's photograph with that of Bishop Abel Muzorewa at the head of his *Sunday Mail* article, which he captioned: 'His links with Bishop Muzorewa ... have been conveniently forgotten by critics who exaggerate the significance of Mapfumo in Zimbabwe's musical history'. The logic, as both Chidawanyika and Vambe argue, is that Mapfumo's moral standing should be judged together with that of Muzorewa, 'the then prime minister of Zimbabwe-Rhodesia who sanctioned the bombing of Chimoio where thousands of Africans fighting for independence in Zimbabwe were based'.⁶⁹ Vambe goes on to misread Mapfumo's 2002 TV interview on the 1979 Bulawayo incident in which he was whisked out of prison to perform at a Muzorewa rally in exchange for freedom from a three-month detention to argue that 'Mapfumo conceded on national television that he sang in praise of ... Muzorewa'.⁷⁰ In fact, nobody has credibly challenged Mapfumo's account of this incident or his role during the liberation struggle.

⁶⁷ Maurice Vambe, 'Mapfumo becomes reactionary', *The Sunday Mail*, 2 March 2003, 11.

⁶⁸ M. Vambe, 'Versions', 177.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 181.

⁷⁰ M. Vambe, 'Mapfumo becomes reactionary'.

Mapfumo has maintained in several interviews (as explained in Chapter 4 above) that he sang the same *Chimurenga* songs that encouraged the liberation war at the Bulawayo rally. While most of Mapfumo's songs during this time (like others') are deeply encoded in Shona proverbs and other cultural and linguistic camouflage to circumvent the censor, none can be honestly identified as praising Muzorewa, as Chidawanyika and Vambe claim of 'Bhutsu Mutandarika' (Big, disfigured boot). Zimbabweans understand this song as a critique of Muzorewa's *madzakutsaku* who hobbled into assembly points in response to the bishop's ill-fated Zimbabwe-Rhodesia ceasefire call in 1979.

Vambe then fast-forwards from Zimbabwe-Rhodesia to post-2000 for another example of Mapfumo's alleged 'rebellion against the people'. He writes:

According to Thomas Turino in his book 'Nationalist [sic], Cosmopolitans and Popular Music' (2000) the mbira bit [sic] on Mapfumo songs [sic] has become influenced more by the tastes of his North American audience. This suggests that the singer's version of Chimurenga has increasingly come under the influence of people whose lives have little to do with suffering from neo-liberal imperialism.⁷¹

In fact, none of Mapfumo's contemporary music has been more relevant to the struggles of Zimbabweans than his exile albums in spite of Vambe's claim that 'Mapfumo's work is becoming reactionary [because] he is no longer in constant touch' with the concrete problems and aspirations of ordinary Zimbabweans due to his 'self-exile'. The tenet seems to be that one has to be intellectually one-eyed and sing against 'neo-liberal imperialism' only and absolve the black government from any shortcomings and, indeed, their abetting of and benefiting from the same neo-liberal forces. It becomes convenient, therefore, that Vambe should reject Mapfumo's alleged 'privileging of the genre of Chimurenga that is openly political and identify[ing] the axis of struggle as that between the state and the masses'⁷² and, in effect, redefine the *Chimurenga* genre itself. Rather comically, this anti-Mapfumo campaign even saw the state media mourning the 'death of Chimurenga' and a peripatetic search for and 'crowning' of 'new Chimurenga kings' like government propagandist and failed ZANU (PF) parliamentary hopeful Taurai Mteki,

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² *Ibid.*

and *jiti* singer Clive Malunga, as if *Chimurenga* is synonymous with *mbira*.⁷³ But, as illustrated below, Mapfumo is only the most prominent, but by no means the only, dissenting musician whom the government has sought to silence. Leonard Zhakata complained of this sinister campaign at a Harare workshop in 2005:

The last five years have been my worst in as far as my artistic career is concerned. Since ... I released *Hodho* [Shotgun], which has several blacklisted songs, I have had negative articles in the state media who [sic] have gone all the way to show that I am a spent force. The independent print media has tried to give me coverage, but now with the absence of the *Daily News* which was shut down in 2003, my print coverage has been limited.⁷⁴

Once silenced on radio and labeled a 'spent force', it became unlikely that a musician would be nominated for the various arts merit awards run by the quasi-government bodies like the NACZ, which consider not only sales, but also frequency of airplay and positive press reviews as key criteria for judging a musical product's popularity. In effect, a close analysis of the history of the arts merit awards generally suggests that the idea may be more about rewarding 'political correctness' than acknowledging artistic ingenuity.⁷⁵ What we see here is a case of a state that is actively engaged in author(izi)ng

⁷³ Godwin Muzari, 'Who will bear the Chimurenga torch?', *The Herald*, 21 February 2006. Clive Malunga, Interview. Malunga could not understand why the Zimbabwe Music Awards (ZIMA), crowned him the best 'Chimurenga singer' for the year 2006 when he, in fact, played *jiti* and not *Chimurenga*. If that award was part of the anti-Mapfumo campaign, then it did not help the campaigners that Malunga followed Mapfumo's example in the 1990s by refusing to accept the 'worthless piece of rock' given as the award. It is no wonder also that the country's panel of music awards adjudicators picked a rather olden love ditty, 'Madhebhura', out of all the gems that constitute Mapfumo's huge discography, to compete for the 'Silver Jubilee Song' during the occasion to mark the country's Silver Jubilee in 2005.

⁷⁴ Leonard Zhakata, 'Six Articles on Music Censorship in Zimbabwe: Personal Experience', 12.

⁷⁵ The case of Mapfumo is illustrative. After his critical *Chimurenga '98* album, Mapfumo was honoured with a Master of Arts honorary degree by the University of Zimbabwe in 1999, and was capped by Mugabe, the chancellor for all universities in the country amid some murmurs that he deserved nothing less than the highest accolade the university could give in line with his national profile. However, if that piecemeal accolade was an attempt to ingratiate him, it failed. A few months after that event and his crowning as the 'Person of the Century' by *Parade* magazine ('Thomas Mapfumo awarded a degree,' *Parade, New Millennium Edition*, January 2000, 54), he released the

a parochial narrative. It set the canon, provided the model, rewarded faithful students and punished bad ones. It then goes back to the faithful ones for self-legitimation and to further delegitimize divergent voices.

Vambe's critique of Mapfumo demonstrates this logic. Thus, he further supports his labeling of Mapfumo as a reactionary musician rebelling against the people's aspirations by arguing that 'because [Mapfumo's music] was produced and circulates in a cultural context where other Zimbabwean singers imagine the nation in different ways', therefore 'the position of Mapfumo's [music] is ironically interrogated and sometimes openly assailable'.⁷⁶ By 'other singers', Vambe is referring to the pro-government musicians who drove the *hondo yeminda* project; who do not (or no longer) sing *Chimurenga* against a violent and unjust state, because such a state supposedly died at independence in 1980. The post-independence state has supposedly become synonymous with 'the people', steadfastly serving their aspirations. Thus, in this schema, politically conscious musicians become those who sing the 'Third Chimurenga', celebrating 'accomplishment' or those who wage *Chimurenga* against domestic violence.⁷⁷ Apparently responding to the government's alleged 'western imperialist detractors', Vambe avers that 'currently, anyone can go to Zimbabwe and see that thousands of Africans have benefited from th[e] land reform'.⁷⁸ Certainly, they did, and Mapfumo neither denied nor opposed that. He refused to be an uncritical praise-singer. He explained his position in response to a state-media journalist's questioning of his 'patriotism' in 2002: 'I have always said I am concerned about the proper redistribution of land ... in a fair, equitable and trouble-free manner. The issue is not a partisan thing, it is supposed to be a national issue – I am not for party politics, but believe in progressive

political bomb, *Chimurenga Explosion* and went into exile to the USA, where he was given an honorary doctorate by Ohio University. The honorary degrees committee at the University of Zimbabwe dropped Oliver Mtukudzi's name from a list of nominees the same year after his 2000 song, 'Wasakara' (You are worn out), was construed as a direct attack on the aged, recalcitrant president. Mtukudzi maintains the song is about a wife, his own wife, urging him to accept old age with grace.

⁷⁶ M. Vambe, 'Thomas Mapfumo's 'Toi Toi' in context: popular music as narrative discourse', *African Identities*, 2, 1, 2004, 92.

⁷⁷ M. Vambe, 'Versions', 176.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 180-181.

engagements'.⁷⁹ From this analysis, then, it becomes clear what Mapfumo rebelled against – the political blackmail that encapsulated the government's 'fast track' land reform programme. The pro-government, celebratory mode ignores even the government's own land audits, including the Buka and Utete Land Audits, which admitted chaos, gross abuses, inequalities, poor planning and low productivity on the acquired land.⁸⁰ Lloyd Sachikonye summarizes this critique well by pointing out that the celebratory mode ignores new contradictions and lacunae between 'land' and 'agrarian' reform.⁸¹

Vambe excuses and reduces the gratuitous violence accompanying the 'Third *Chimurenga*' to a necessary 'political revolution' or 'showdown' to dismantle white privilege.⁸² He ignores ZANU (PF)'s complicity in the entrenchment of that neo-colonial hegemony over two decades and the political expediency behind the violent 'revolution' against 4 500-odd farmers 20 years into independence. Similarly, the contingent disenfranchisement of thousands of farm workers displaced, stripped of their citizenship and redefined into stateless 'aliens' because their parents had come from Malawi or Mozambique generations ago does not disturb his definition of a 'political revolution'. Suffice it to say here that the concerted attack on Mapfumo emanated from a combination of misrepresentation, selective reading of his music and personal history. Perhaps all this is to be expected, if not excused, if we follow Jean-Francois Bayart's observation that 'every cultural representation, every ideological discourse, every literary text, every symbol can be read in a different or contradictory manner by individuals or groups who refer to it'.⁸³ This is particularly true in politically polarized contexts like post-2000 Zimbabwe. However, contextualizing such readings in time can help to at least analyze the possible agendas and ends behind such contradictory readings. The contradictory

⁷⁹ G. Mazara, 'Mukanya clears the air'.

⁸⁰ Report of the Presidential Land Review Committee on the Implementation of the Fast Track Land Reform Programme, 2000-2002 (Utete Report), 2003.

⁸¹ L. Sachikonye, 'The Land is the Economy: Revisiting the Land Question', *African Security Review* 14: 3 (2005). See also James Muzondidya, 'Jambanja'.

⁸² Maurice Vambe, 'Mapfumo becomes reactionary'; 'Versions', 180.

⁸³ Jean-Francois Bayart, *The Illusion of Cultural Identity*, Transl. Steven Rendall, Janet Roitman, Cynthia Schoch, and Jonathan Derrick (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 97-98.

reading of Mapfumo by ZANU (PF) and its intellectual sympathizers was intended to construct him as a cunning 'sellout' and deflect his blistering criticism of the government. To make the 'rebel', 'terrorist' or 'sellout' tag stick, his detractors needed to suppress not just his music, but also the wider repertoire of dissenting voices that critique the government's land-centric discourse of fulfillment and cast national debate in wider terms. The calculation was that Mapfumo's more-difficult-to-suppress voice would appear idiosyncratic. Such a strategy is an official admission that Mapfumo's voice neither emanates from some political wilderness, nor are his sentiments eccentric, but quite the opposite. His boldness has inspired a growing legion of singers and fans across the generations.⁸⁴

Chiwoniso Maraire's voice stood out prominently in the *Chave Chimurenga* jingles. However, she is one of those musicians who refused to feature in the TV advertisements or videos, and, by 2004, she had distanced herself from the 'Third *Chimurenga*' project altogether. Cde Chinx believed that those musicians who refused to star in the *hondo yeminda* videos possibly feared victimization by a new government in case ZANU (PF) lost the 2000 and 2002 elections.⁸⁵ Such a calculation would constitute perfect strategic thinking by artists who wished to retain a broad appeal in the increasingly polarized political environment. Chiwoniso's ex-husband, Andy Brown, would rue his overt support for the government, because it did not seem to emanate from conviction. He later argued that he only did it for the money: 'I am not a politician but a producer. I earn my living from my job. I could not have refused payment because my family survives on that'. He claimed that he was a consultant, ready to serve any party: 'Even if the MDC comes today and pays me, I will do a good job for them ... There is no need for people to label me a Zanu PF musician'.⁸⁶ Because he was a prominent purveyor of ZANU (PF)'s propaganda, people did label him, together with Chimbetu, Tambaoga,

⁸⁴ Until 2004, Mapfumo returned home every December for the Christmas *biras*, which were greatly awaited by his fans. His 2001 Boka Tobacco Auction Floors show attracted at least 10 000 fans, who transformed the show into a virtual MDC show by their unison open-hand waving dancing antics. He stopped the annual pilgrimages in 2004 after what he perceived as increased threats on his life.

⁸⁵ Cde Chinx, Interview, 21.

⁸⁶ Guthrie Munyuki, 'Andy Brown sees the light: musician cuts ties with Zanu PF', *The Daily News*, 25 May 2003, 16.

Mteki and others, and with disastrous consequences. Their careers plummeted overnight, and some of them, including Brown and Tambaoga, suffered the dangers and indignity of assaults by estranged fans. As CM argued, Government payouts could be a windfall, but not a dependable source of income for a musician:

I don't sing what [the Minister of Information] tells me to sing, that 'Tambaoga, can you come and sing that Tony Blair is a toilet?' Don't get in there! Simon Chimbetu got in there; he was given money and he fell. Andy Brown got in there; he was given money and he fell. Brian Mteki got in there; he was given money and he fell. Tambaoga got in there; he was given money and he fell. If you get into such situations while your fans – your paymasters – are watching or reading in the papers, they kick you out of employment. After one week, the whole of Zimbabwe will have known and rendered you jobless. Why should you be dragged by politicians to toe their line? Politicians lie. The difference between politicians and artists is that politicians come and go; artists live forever.⁸⁷

Brown duly discovered that 'politicians lie' when the studio Jonathan Moyo had promised him did not materialize: 'I discovered through him that politicians are liars because he kept promising me that I will get money to build a studio but he never gave me the cash'.⁸⁸ The problem, according to CM, is not that Chimbetu, for instance, sang 'Hoko', but that he kowtowed to politicians who claimed him as one of their own, 'asking him to sing for money'. The cardinal rule for a musician, as Chiwoniso judiciously learned, was to remain non-partisan, 'because once you get involved with a party, you are then judged by what that party does'.⁸⁹ When Zimbabweans say 'ZANU *chiororo*', they are acknowledging ZANU (PF)'s public image as a violent and cunning party that can exploit and destroy even its own overzealous supporters.

Chiwoniso claims that she distanced herself from *hondo yeminda* when she realized that the government had claimed the people's revolution as its own, together

⁸⁷ CM, Interview, 16 December 2006, Harare, 15.

⁸⁸ John Mokwetsi, 'Moyo a liar: Andy Brown', www.thestandard.co.zw/read.php?st_id=2064, 3 April 2005

⁸⁹ Chiwoniso Maraire, Interview, 27 September 2006, Harare, 6.

with the voices that drove that revolution and was demanding gratitude from everybody even as it derailed that revolution:

When the land reform started, I was 100 percent behind it, and I am still 100 percent behind it, because I know ... many people who were forcibly moved off their land by the colonial regime by force, by the gun, by the bible, by the whip ... and that's a very painful part of our history. I remain a black Zimbabwean woman who still sings that land must be given back to its owners. But there were better ways to do it, so my focus has begun to change as an artist and a Zimbabwean. There was forgetting that people need to eat ... and you have ministers being given farms, etc. I was personally offered a farm: 'Chiwoniso, take this farm'; four or five times, and I said, 'I am not a farmer; what am I going to do with the farm?'⁹⁰

Many who sang praises to the government, including church ministers, gratefully took such offers as rewards for their loyalty. Chiwoniso disapproved of that as corruption and patronage. Perhaps the single biggest factor abetting the 'Zimbabwe Crisis' has been the use of land as a powerful patronage tool to corrupt individuals and institutions. Like Mapfumo, Chiwoniso also disagreed with the haphazard manner in which the 'new farmers' were allocated the farms:

You take all the people and put them on the land and they don't have tractors and you say 'It's not my fault that you don't have tractors, so you must get off the land'. That is what started happening two years ago and that got my focus shifting. There is a difference between doing something for the people and appearing to do something for them so that they keep you in power – and it's a fine difference. I am one of the artists who fully supported the programme, but after 2 or 3 years, you say, 'Oh Lord, it's playing on people's beliefs! So my focus has changed; my belief hasn't.'⁹¹

For Chiwoniso, changing focus means consciously balancing the message that 'the people must be given land' and 'we are dying in a country of thieves' and 'Be a proud African person' with 'But how come we cannot govern ourselves well as Africans?' Her shift is observable in her second album, *Timeless*, released in 2007, in which she appeals

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 7.

to the same repertoire of sources and cosmological myths that ZANU (PF) seeks to monopolize as legitimating tropes, but to express opposing ideals. In the song 'In This Life', she expresses her weariness with the government's deceptive and land-centric monotone:

In this life
The true history escapes from our children
In this life
Illusion reigns
In this life
We continue seeking answers from the lying leaders
In this life
We live for food and food alone
See now!
I am so tired
Of witnessing children filled with grief
I am so tired
My spirit cries out against the injustices committed upon my people
I am so tired.⁹²

Chiwoniso rejects ZANU (PF)'s attempts to invoke the ancestors to legitimize its rule as if they were card-carrying party members. She appeals to Nehanda, Tovera, Kaguvi and others to 'come back and intervene because *vana vanogwara* (the children are sick)'.⁹³ The nation has become sick, as militant trade unionist-musician, Raymond Majongwe sings, when 'freedom fighters' now fight freedom.⁹⁴ In this light, then there is no contradiction in Mapfumo's message; he rejected the government's vision of land reform as a *cul-de sac*. In fact, we can take his 1998 piece, 'Set the People Free' as a statement of his conception of freedom, which centred, without being reducible to, land. Land was only one component in a bundle of factors that make a nation:

Oh my Lord

⁹² Chiwoniso Maraire, 'In This Life', *Timeless*, 2007.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 'Vana Vanogwara'.

⁹⁴ Raymond Majongwe, 'Freedom Fighters', *Bandas of this World*, Progressive Music, 2003. A trained teacher, Majongwe leads the militant Progressive Teachers Union of Zimbabwe, PTUZ and has fearlessly led many public demonstrations against the government, suffering beatings, abductions, torture and illegal detentions.

Give the people land
 What do we do?
 People cry for shelter
 What do we do?
 Give the people shelter
 What do we do?
 Set the people free
 What do we do?
 The cost of living is high
 Mighty Lord
 The cost of food is rising
 What do we do?
 The value of the dollar is falling
 What do we do?
 Complicating our lives
 You tell people to get lost.⁹⁵

In ZANU (PF)'s one-eyed focus on land, Zimbabweans have to forego or defer other basic human needs and rights, including food itself, to some future 'when the rain has fallen and people start reaping bumper harvests', as its griots chanted in the *Chave Chimurenga* jingles.

But, as Chris Musonza sang in 'Marima Rurimi' (You have farmed the tongue), such populist propaganda was deceptive and bounteous in words only, not wisdom or food:

<i>Marima rurimi vanaamai</i>	You have farmed the tongue mothers
<i>Marima rurimi vanababa</i>	You have farmed the tongue fathers
<i>Rurimi urwo harwuzarirwe nerwizi</i>	The tongue cannot be inhibited by a flooded river
<i>Mapururudza vanaamai musati mapihwa</i>	You have ululated before you are given, mothers
<i>Mauchireko vanababa musati mapihwa?</i>	You have clapped your hands before you are given, dear fathers
<i>Tendai chamaona imi veduwe</i>	Be grateful for what you have been given
<i>Uchirai chamapihwa imi veduwee!</i>	Clap for what you have been given
<i>Chinhu chakanaka kuzadzisa vimbiso vatongi</i>	It's virtuous to fulfill promises rulers. ⁹⁶

⁹⁵ Thomas Mapfumo, 'Set the People Free', *Chimurenga* '98.

⁹⁶ Chris Musonza, 'Marima Rurimi', *Ndavaviwa*, Gramma Records, 2003.

Musonza castigates his suborned colleagues for purveying the government-sponsored discourse of fulfillment in the *hondo yeminda* songs, jingles and television and radio programmes, glossing the stark reality of mass suffering and popular discontent with an unaccountable government. The somber spectacle of ‘new farmers’ queuing up to receive donated foreign food handouts, unending queues at empty urban grocery stores, police ‘operations’ to force retailers to ‘slash down’ prices and world record inflation rates have all been rather unpalatable reminders of the folly of ‘farming the tongue’ since 2000. Ironically, ZANU (PF) has systematically used food handouts (including that sourced abroad by international non-governmental organizations) as a political weapon to lure voters and punish opposition party supporters. Nonetheless, as Musonza sings in ‘Zvawaida’ (Your Scheming), Zimbabweans have refused to be held to ransom, rejecting the party and its rhetoric as regressive:

<i>KuShurugwi ndakakutevera Zvawaida iwe</i>	In Shurugwi, I followed you Zvawaida
<i>KuHarare ndakakutevera Zvawaida iwe</i>	In Harare, I followed you Zvawaida
<i>KwaMutare ndakakutevera Zvawaida iwe</i>	In Mutare, I followed you Zvawaida
<i>KuKarozi ndakaenda newe Zvawaida</i>	In Karoi, I followed you Zvawaida
<i>Zvawaida Zvawaida shamwari</i>	Zvawaida my dear friend
<i>Zvawaida Zvawaida mudiwa wangu iwe</i>	Zvawaida my dear love
<i>Zvawaida Zvawaida ini handichadi</i>	Zvawaida, now I can’t follow your wishes
<i>Gundamusaira gundamusaira</i>	I refuse to kowtow
<i>ndaramba ini</i>	
<i>Hwembwa popi inotevera tenzi nebhandi</i>	I now refuse to just follow like a pet puppy
	on a leash
<i>Handichadi</i>	
<i>Aiwa ndaramba ndave nemaitiro angu ini</i>	I refuse, I now have my own ways of doing things
<i>Ndasvinura ini, ndave kuona zvawaida</i>	I have now woken up to see your scheming
<i>Ndave chigwaya chine matambiro acho mudziva macho.</i>	Now I am a bream that follows its own whims in its own pond.

Musonza’s song is steeped in the wisdom of Shona denunciatory *bembera*, which broadcasts a complaint to shame the culprit without necessarily identifying him/her by name. He simply cobbles up the derogatory ‘Zvawaida’ for him/her from the subject’s character – a perennial, habitual con who cheated in Shurugwi, Harare, Mutare, Karoi, and, indeed, across Zimbabwe.

Similarly, Taurai Pekiwe chronicles the commonplace manifestation of this character's deceit in 'Zinyamujajaja':

<i>Hanzi vekwaMutoko munochemei?</i>	Those in Mutoko, why are you crying?
<i>Hanzi vari Kariba munochemei?</i>	Those in Kariba, why are you crying?
<i>Vari Karoi Munochemei?</i>	Those in Karoi, why are you crying?
<i>KwaMutare munochemei?</i>	Those in Mutare, why are you crying?
<i>KoBulawayo likhalelani?</i>	Those in Bulawayo, why are you crying?
<i>KoNkayi likhalelani?</i>	Those you in Nkayi, why are you crying?
<i>Bulilimangwe likhalelani?</i>	Bulilimangwe, why are you crying?
<i>Gonawapotera waipa uyo iye iye</i>	The refuge has turned the devourer
<i>Zinyamujajaja nhasi raipa iro iye iye</i>	The murderer is on rampage
<i>Hanzi ambuya vangu vakafirei?</i>	Is this what my grandmother died for?
<i>Hona amai vangu vakafirei?</i>	Is this what my mother died for?
<i>Hona sekuru vangu vakafirei?</i>	Why did my grandfather sacrifice his life?
<i>Hona ndozvireva ndotukwa iwe</i>	They scold me if I dare say this
<i>Hona ndozvireva ndorohwa</i>	They beat me up if I say this
<i>Hona ndozvireva ndopondwa</i>	They murder me if I dare say this
<i>Zinyamujajaja nhasi raipa iro iye iye</i>	The murderer has now shown his true colours.

While Minister Manyika and his fellow ZANU (PF) court entertainers evoked the blood of Zimbabwean martyrs who fell in the struggle for independence for political legitimacy, Pekiwe, like Chiwoniso, contends that his grandfather, grandmother and parents who perished on the lines of national duty did not sacrifice their lives to license ZANU (PF) to reproduce the same injustices against which they were fighting. He queries the virtues of ZANU (PF)'s omnipresence so flaunted as a symbol of strength and popularity by the party's propagandists. As touring musicians, these young musicians witness the objective reality of the ZANU (PF) political culture in the country's sprawling provinces and record it in their songs. In its exhausted form, to follow Horace Campbell, ZANU (PF)'s patriarchal liberationist ideology symbolizes arbitrary violence and perpetual misrepresentation of liberation war memory for political capital.⁹⁷ During the liberation struggle, people would turn to ZANU (and ZAPU) for refuge against the depredations of

⁹⁷ H. Campbell, *Reclaiming Zimbabwe*.

a white supremacist settler system; now they cannot escape the tentacles of a rogue black government – *zinyamujajaja* – devourer of its own children. Short of a popular uprising, as Mapfumo urges in ‘Kuvarira Mukati’ (Suffering Silently), the great price Zimbabweans paid in the struggle against colonialism would be in vain.⁹⁸ Similarly, he holds the rulers to account in ‘Musanyepere’ (Don’t Lie): *zvataibva kuhondo; inga wani maiti mairwira vanhu* (When we were coming from the war, didn’t you say you were fighting for the people?) and warns of the specter of a new war. If the rulers were fighting for the people, is the rampant poverty, lawlessness and violence the new order they preached?⁹⁹ Sadly, as Tongai ‘Dhewa’ Moyo observes in ‘Marengeny’a’ (Rags), the legacy of the over-stayed rulers could be read off the faces and backs of both the nation’s elderly citizens and youngsters:

<i>Tarira baba vangu vakasuwa avo</i>	Look, my father is very sad
<i>Tarira amai vangu vasuruvara</i>	Look at my mother, she is very depressed
<i>Tarira baba vangu vanochema</i>	Look at my father, he is crying
<i>Chembere kumusha dzasuruvara</i>	Old people are crying in the rural areas
<i>Majaya nemhandara</i>	Adolescent boys and girls
<i>Vapera zano shungu havachina</i>	They are now clueless and apathetic
<i>Chikonzero chacho vanoda rugare</i>	The reason is that they want a good life
<i>Chikonzero chacho vanoda kupfeka</i>	The reason is that they lack good clothes
<i>Tarirai muone vakapfeka marengeny’a</i>	Look, they are wearing rags
<i>Nyika yenyu ishe yave mamvemve</i>	Your nation, dear Lord, is now tattered
<i>Nyika yenyu Mwari yave marengeny’a</i>	Your nation, God, is now all rags
<i>Ndiyaniko watora rugare?</i>	Who has taken our good life?
<i>Ndianiko aviga rugare?</i>	Who has hidden the good life?
<i>Ndiyaniko atipa kutambura?</i>	Who has caused us all this suffering? ¹⁰⁰

Dhewa echoes Mapfumo’s *mamvemve* idiom to characterize the nation as a tattered rag that has confounded even the youths of the once proud nation. The suffering is deep-seated and widespread. Similarly, when the time to denounce and reject the con comes, that act reverberates across the nation’s outlying provinces.

ZANU (PF)’s false revolution disheartened many who, born into Rhodesia’s legislated poverty, had entrusted in it their hopes for a new future. Singing from Germany

⁹⁸ Thomas Mapfumo, ‘Kuvarira Mukati’, *Rise Up*, 2005.

⁹⁹ Thomas Mapfumo and the Blacks Unlimited, ‘Musanyepere’, *Chimurenga Explosion*.

¹⁰⁰ Tongai Moyo and Utakataka Express, ‘Marengeny’a’, *Chingwa*, 2005.

where she emigrated in the 1990s, the country's first celebrated female *mbira* star, Stella Chiweshe, lamented the horrifying metamorphosis of hope back into 'slavery' in her powerful three-sentence song, 'Vana Vangu' (My Children): *Vana vanguwe; ndanga ndichiti magarika; ndimi munahwo huranda* (My children; I thought you had now attained the good life at last; alas, my heart-felt sympathies for the slavery!'¹⁰¹ This critique of the meaning of independence was characterized not just by the recoiling of the protest voice, but even more ominously, the re-recording or re-releasing of the same songs Mapfumo and others had sung to condemn the racist white regime in the 1970s. Partly for this reason, the state broadcaster could not always play those songs as 'safe' Second *Chimurenga* memory and escape the ironies of history repeating itself.

But because the ZANU (PF) government 'would rather be ruined by praise' than built by unpleasant criticism, none of these voices ever saw the light of day at ZBH or Zimpapers, the broadcaster's print counterpart. The government's tight control of the media, particularly radio and television, was perhaps the most critical factor in the construction and propagation of this virtual 'cult of song' praising the status quo. I analyze how this worked since Professor Moyo's local content policy.

Total Control of Radio: Nurturing Patriotic Music, 'Fumigating Weevils'

It would be a challenge for any government to abruptly switch its whole media workforce from an open view of the world to a narrow, inward-looking mode and make them operate on an entirely unreflexive, mechanical level purveying a massive propaganda operation on the post-2000 Zimbabwe scale. Indeed, the Zimbabwean government had to contend with some resistance from broadcasters who had worked under relatively freer conditions. Many chose to leave rather than to be forced to operate the state's propaganda machinery; over a hundred others were forcibly dispatched.¹⁰² Writing about the retrenchments in June 2002, Maxwell Sibanda, then the entertainment editor of the sole private daily newspaper, *The Daily News*, asked in exasperation:

¹⁰¹ Stella Chiweshe, 'Vana Vangu', *Shungu*, 1994.

¹⁰² Shepherd Mutamba, 'Changes at Radio 1 worrisome', *The Herald*, 26 January 2001.

In retrenching quality radio presenters like Eric Night, Ezra Sibanda, Sam Sibanda, Brenda Moyo, and Simon Pashoma, among others, ZBC is being insensitive to the sentiments of its listeners and licence holders ... Why get rid of the most capable employees from a radio station [Radio Zimbabwe] that has just introduced 24-hour broadcasting? Are these presenters so useless that they don't deserve a slot on a round-the-clock station? Or could it be that they are 'politically incorrect'?¹⁰³

Sibanda rightly argued that these names would be an instant hit with Zimbabwean listeners and advertisers were a new broadcaster to hire them. Unfortunately, Zimbabwe was still stuck with one state broadcaster. Sibanda went on to advocate that Zimbabweans should fight the state broadcaster's monopoly that prevented the existence of such alternative broadcasters.¹⁰⁴ Prospective private broadcasters (including Cont Mhlanga's Amakhosi Theatre Company) eventually did, but as was becoming customary, the government simply ignored court orders to liberalize the airwaves and license them. Where they went ahead to set up broadcasting stations on the basis of court judgments, they endured very short lifespans, as Voice of the People (VOP) discovered when its radio station was bombed in August 2002.¹⁰⁵ Afterwards, Professor Moyo claimed that VOP 'bombed itself so that it could blame the government'.¹⁰⁶ This was not a peculiar incident. The offices of the privately-owned *Daily News* and *Daily News on Sunday* were also bombed in June 2000. In January 2001, the publisher's printing press was shattered into a heap of scrap metal. Tellingly, the latter incident took place two days after Professor Moyo, the Minister of Information and architect of the draconian Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA) under which the government banned newspapers and private radio stations, had appeared on TV to openly point out that 'The *Daily News* has become a threat to national security and must be silenced once and for

¹⁰³ M. Sibanda, 'It's time we demand freeing of airwaves', *The Daily News*, 10 June 2002, 10.

¹⁰⁴ Sibanda pointed at the case of the wireless telephone provider, ECONET, which had successfully fought the state telephone company, Post and Telecommunication Corporation, PTC, in the courts and got a license (though this reportedly succeeded only after the intervention of the Vice-President, Joshua Nkomo).

¹⁰⁵ John Masuku, 'Surviving in a Risky Operating Environment – The Radio VOP Story', <http://www.kubatana.net/html/archive/media/070205jm.asp?sector=MEDIA>.

¹⁰⁶ John Masuku, 'Surviving in a Risky Operating Environment'.

all'.¹⁰⁷ He was also personally involved in dismantling and confiscating another company's equipment (Capital Radio) in 2000 while the police arrested its directors. Thus, the government defended its media monopoly by force and Sibanda's argument about the popularity of the DJs and listeners' interests was irrelevant. In effect, Moyo had vowed that foreign-funded stations like VOP would be licensed 'over my dead body'.¹⁰⁸ Effectively, it was not only the experienced media workers that the government dispatched, but also the entire advertising business that had both sponsored most of the radio and TV programming and whose revenue had made the channels commercial entities. All the vacated advertising slots, plus the new airtime created by the introduction of 24-hour broadcasting in mid-2002, were filled with *hondo yeminda* music, *Chave Chimurenga* jingles and 'talking farming' shows.

The government required these broadcasters to churn out its propaganda, and those who refused were labeled opposition party sympathizers and thus enemies of the state.¹⁰⁹ In the poisoned new nationalist atmosphere, such a tag was a sure sign that one's life was disposable. In fact, Eric Knight claims that he quietly slipped out to the UK after learning that he had thus been labeled:

I started receiving anonymous calls, death threats ... My only sin at ZBC was refusing to be a yes man. I and other colleagues who also left ZBC were labeled *vanhu veMDC* (MDC supporters). I [had] personally refused to play *Hondo yeMinda* on air. As a DJ I make or break my shows, so why should I be forced to play what is not my compilation? ... There was lots of rubbish that we were required to broadcast and I resisted. I am a professional broadcaster who thrives on creativity and not an announcer who is told what to say on radio.¹¹⁰

To impose his government's new function for radio and television, Moyo replaced hundreds who held onto such claims of professionalism with younger, inexperienced and apparently more pliant recruits mainly graduating from the Harare Polytechnic's

¹⁰⁷ G. Nyarota, *Against the Grain*, 262.

¹⁰⁸ John Masuku, 'Surviving in a Risky Operating Environment'. Indeed, the radio stations were foreign-funded, as is often the case with ZBH.

¹⁰⁹ M. Sibanda, 'It's time'.

¹¹⁰ Eric Knight, 'I left ZBC because I could not afford to broadcast lies', *The Daily News*, 26 April 2003, 11.

journalism school, headed by Tafataona Mahoso.¹¹¹ Some of these new recruits, at the electronic and print media, actually celebrated the new policies, if not their new jobs created by the displacement of their colleagues. Thus wrote one Sister Winnie in the government's Manicaland provincial mouthpiece:

The 75 percent local content requirement ... will fumigate and smoke out any weevils that may invade the granaries of the nation ... The erosion, corrosion and downplaying of Zimbabwean and African viewpoints, values and paradigms will be kept at a bare minimum ... Western consumerism glamourised in American movies has taken African youths out of their context to try at all costs to identify with standards set elsewhere. This is done using the same techniques as used in adverts.¹¹²

This opinion piece suggests that the 'local content' policy had very little, if anything, to do with promoting Zimbabwean music but the advancement of a particular political perspective.¹¹³ But audiences were not fooled, as illustrated by one Joe Sibanda who wrote to the *Daily News* castigating Andy Brown for being lured into the propaganda crusade with promises of a recording studio, apparently to boost the recording of 'local content':

¹¹¹ Mahoso personifies some sort of enigma of the Zimbabwe Crisis; as one newspaper columnist put it, he is probably the only person in the world who trains people so that they could remain unemployed! As Zimbabwe's chief press hangman heading the Media and Information Commission (MIC), he presided over the banning of 5 independent newspapers and Capital Radio from 2000-2005. The MIC was AIPPA's media guillotine. By 2004, the country's mediascape had been reduced to the government-suborned sorority of 3 provincial dailies flag-shipped by the *Herald* and two weeklies, the *Sunday Mail* and the *Sunday News*. Together with the weekly *Financial Gazette*, the *Daily Mirror* and *Sunday Mirror* were infiltrated by the Central Intelligence Organization (CIO), with the latter two going bankrupt as a result. This left the country with only two terrorized weekly independents, the *Standard* and the *Zimbabwe Independent*, run by Trevor Ncube, who also publishes South Africa's *Mail and Guardian*.

¹¹² Sister Winnie, 'ZBC's re-launch a laudable move', *The Manica Post*, 7-13 December 2001, 6. Contrast this celebration with a bleaker view from the *The Daily News*: 'ZBC's so-called new vision is a poor imitation of CNN, SABC', (letter to the editor by KTM, Harare) and Peter Moyo, 'ZBC's Vision 30 train crashes', *Standardplus*, 2 June 2002, 8.

¹¹³ Government ideologues like Jonathan Moyo (before he was fired in 2005), his Permanent Secretary and Presidential Spokesman, George Charamba and Tafataona Mahoso, had/have a habit of, wittingly or unwittingly, divulging the real thinking behind particular state policies and actions through their well-known columns in government newspapers, often authored under pseudonyms.

Could it be that these artistes are too dumb to realize the real motive behind this cheap piece of legislation? This has nothing to do with fighting cultural imperialism ... but a sinister ploy to stop the emergence of independent broadcasters such as Capital Radio. The removal of Mutumwa Mawere's *Talk to the Nation* programme [from the radio] and the government's newly declared war against foreign correspondents by tightening accreditation requirements, are clear warning signs that unless our musicians sing for their supper in tones that are soothing to ZANU PF, they will face a rude awakening.¹¹⁴

The ZBH developed a new, intricate system of 'fumigating and smoking out' musical 'weevils', to borrow Sister Winnie's suggestive agricultural analogy. Particularly since 2000, DJs could no longer just pick songs at random and play them on air. They became mechanical record pushers and announcers, as Knight put it, playing the music selected and supplied to them on 'compilation sheets' by programme compilers under the superintendence of supervisors. One such supervisor, TK, showed me how the system works:

Do you see this compilation sheet? I have gone through it, checking, and I have approved it. So it can now be forwarded to be put on radio. [Programme compilers] compile the records and bring them here, so we can check through them, sifting to make sure there is no bad song there. Suppose I OK it when there is a bad song on there, I will be answerable, not the compiler or presenter. My superiors would want to know why I approved such a song, you see.¹¹⁵

The programme sheets are then submitted to the Broadcasting Authority of Zimbabwe (BAZ), which ensures that radio and television stations are 'adhering to the local content stipulations'. 'If we veer off', TK pointed out, 'they will want to know why'.¹¹⁶ The patronage system demands unquestioning loyalty:

This is a government institution; its mouthpiece. If the government wants to say something to the nation, they come here. So, we must abide by ... OK! We must abide by the laws of the country. The only person who can work here is the one who has vowed under oath that 'I am going to abide by ...!' We must follow what

¹¹⁴ Joe Sibanda, 'Brown, Mhlanga gone astray', *The Daily News*, 4 July 2001, 7.

¹¹⁵ TK, Interview, 15 February 2007, Harare, 6.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

vakuru (the leaders) want – the owners of the institution. That is what we do. So it shouldn't be surprising to hear me say that 'what is happening is OK'. I cannot say it's wrong. Whatever policies are set, I must support them. I have done my job well; I have earned credit.¹¹⁷

Government loyalists no longer even regard the state broadcaster as a public institution which should accommodate a variety of ideas expressed through songs. Thus, TK was adamant that:

We just don't play songs that talk about things that we don't want. If I play them, it would be me who would have criticized, because I would have collected the song from the library, not the singer. It's you who have gone to the library to get the record and played it on air, so that it may be heard! The singer did not come here armed with an axe or a gun to force you to play it.¹¹⁸

Clearly, the ZANU (PF) government takes the radio very seriously. It screens the people it hires to work at ZBH through a tight political sieve to get and retain only those who appear religiously loyal. A station manager, Cliff Riva, describes how this works:

The Chief Executive Officer does not appoint people for any key posts without the approval of the Ministry of Information and the [ZANU (PF)] Central Committee. In a parastatal, you have to be taking instructions from elsewhere, otherwise you won't last. You have to be unquestioning. In a parastatal, there are political and business interests ... in that order! And that's not negotiable ... We implement political decisions and worry about the business interests later. What they do is that they pick somebody who knows that they are not [professionally] suitable for the job. When you know that yourself, that I'm inadequate for the job, naturally, you owe your job to those people. You then want to preserve the status quo, and the top guy also appoints his lieutenants and it becomes a chain of appointees who are grateful to other people for their jobs.¹¹⁹

At state-run companies like the Zimbabwe Electricity Supply Authority (ZESA), National Railways of Zimbabwe (NRZ) and ZBH, political 'correctness' is institutionalized and reigns supreme. In fact, as another broadcaster, Rudo Moyo,

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 3.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁹ C. Riva, Interview, 25 December 2006, Gavhunga, 5.

explains, those who choose to work for the corporation hardly need any induction in the political culture. She is worth quoting at length:

When you get employed as a broadcaster within the national stations, you know that you are there to represent national interests ... you censor yourself: you know what to say, what not to say, what songs to play, what songs not to play. [For instance] if it's a song that talks about how the economy is going down, definitely you can't play it on national radio, according to the policies that are there ... At the beginning of every quarter, we are required to submit a list to our broadcasting authority ... [of] all the songs that you are going to be playing within that period. So the songs are already there with BAZ and you will just be mixing those songs ... and you play nothing outside that list.¹²⁰

It is unlikely that songs with undesirable messages can filter through because, Rudo adds:

It's mandatory that we have a selection committee in our stations whereby when an artist comes with a CD, we sit down as a committee [and] listen to it. If it's politically correct (laughs), then it can find its way onto the airwaves. And within an album ... like Albert Nyati's [compositions], you will find that there will be tracks that are hard cores politics, and then perhaps one song that is social commentary, you can play that song but the rest, forget about them!¹²¹

Like Mobutu Sese Seko's Popular Movement of the Revolution in Zaire and Kamuzu Banda's Malawi Congress Party, ZANU (PF) equated its quest for political survival with 'national interests' in whose name it so painstakingly controls the airwaves. In this formulation, *hondo yeminda* constituted a 'national' project which the monopoly broadcaster was forced not only to broadcast, but also to defend. Thus, argued the corporation's Chief Executive Officer Munyaradzi Hwengwere without blushing at the irony: 'ZBC will play the pro-land reform *Chave Chimurenga* [It's now war] advertisements because government is paying for them. It would be criminal for the national broadcaster to limit people's freedom, ideas and creativity'.¹²²

However, all this straitjacketing does not mean total consensus; individual workers often undermined some of the excesses that impinged on their own personal

¹²⁰ Rudo Moyo, Interview with Zenzele Ndebele,
<http://freemuse.webhotel.net/stream/2007/audio/zimbabwe/07.mp3>

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

¹²² Munyaradzi Hwengwere, quoted by M. Sibanda, 'History will certainly judge them'.

standing. Thus, copies of some 'Third *Chimurenga*' recordings, like the 'Hondo yeMinda' albums and Manyika's 'Nora', often simply disappeared from radio stations. As Riva explained,

These songs and jingles were so incessantly played because there are people who pretended to like [them], but at the slightest opportunity, they pinch [them] and they disappear. It was sickening to be playing those things over and over again ... some people did it because they had to, not because they liked it. They were totally opposed to it. You see, it was quite an acceptable excuse to say 'I didn't play 'Hondo yeMinda' because I looked everywhere in the transmission suite and I couldn't see it'. It was sickening to be playing it; it was sickening to think that I may be talking to myself ... But there are people who think we were enjoying it. You get hated personally and fail to associate with others in society. And remember we are very poorly paid, so the sort of backlash when I go out to interact with society is not worth it. That made many top presenters quit.¹²³

When one visits ZBH's Radio Zimbabwe in Mbare, one is instantly struck by the bold proclamation on its front walls claiming to be *Nhepfenyuro yevanhu* (the People's Radio Station) and how that claim sharply contrasts against the tense atmosphere created by armed soldier-receptionists who habitually harass and beat up both visitors and passers-by for being 'MDC supporters'.¹²⁴ This image and the propaganda exacerbated not only public disaffection, but they also 'chased away all adverts'. As Maxwell Sibanda asks, 'who in their right senses can advertize on radio and television stations where there is a glut of propaganda'?¹²⁵ The commercial sector had wised up and the costs to the broadcaster were significant:

Apart from the public resources poured into the propaganda music and jingles, a lot of money was lost to the national broadcaster – lost business ... spot logs (indicating that after 30 minutes or so, you slot a Bohlinger's or Castle Lager advert here) began to go empty. There was a trend, as soon as the *taane minda murambe makashinga* [we now have land, so be resilient] jingle was played, the spot log is empty. Advertisers knew that people resented those jingles with many switching off their radios, so that if you advertise to nobody, you're wasting money, so they pulled out and [the radio] would collect nothing at the end of the

¹²³ C. Riva. Interview, 7.

¹²⁴ Cephas Chimhete, 'Soldiers harass pedestrians', *The Standard*, 15 April 2007.

¹²⁵ M. Sibanda, 'History will certainly judge them'.

month. There came a time when there were no adverts at all on the radio and TV.¹²⁶

Business or commercial sustainability did not seem to worry the government, so that poorly-paid ZBH workers continuously pumped expensive *hondo yeminda* jingles ‘top of the hour, on the half hour, bottom of the hour, top of the hour’¹²⁷ on the radio, exhorting an impoverished populace to patriotically tighten their belts while driving away advertizing revenue in the process. In ZANU (PF)’s neo-liberationist rhetoric ‘resilience’ against – rather than national dialogue on or interrogation of – deepening impoverishment, rising repression and coercion separated ‘patriots’ from ‘sellouts’. ZANU (PF) wanted citizens to unquestioningly accept its explanation that all their problems were engineered by neo-imperialist forces.

Thus, musicians like Thomas Mapfumo, Leonard Zhakata, Hosea Chipanga and Raymond Majongwe, who critiqued the government’s parochial nationalist revivalism were silenced on the public radio the ruling party monopolized and regarded as its own. But as Zhakata noted, banning them from the airwaves could actually fuel sales for those who could interact with their fans through live shows and on the market: ‘The banning of my songs on the airwaves prompted ... my fans to go for the[m]. In fact I realized that criticism and victimization are some of the best factors [for creativity] which artists should be prepared to face’.¹²⁸ This is an option open for those, like Zhakata, with a wide fan base or other means of survival and passionate about fighting such injustice. Zhakata had walked away from his clerical job both physically and figuratively with his blockbuster, *Mugove*, which critiqued worker exploitation during the tough days of ESAP. He never mellowed in his attack on injustice. Actually, he refused to be silenced, as he boldly declared in his song, ‘Sakunatsa’:

Kaitiroyi kana tiri kwedu?

How do we do things in our
country?

¹²⁶ C. Riva, Interview, 6.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 4.

¹²⁸ Trust Khosa and Ruzvidzo Mupfudza, ‘Finally Leonard Zhakata speaks out’, *Daily Mirror*, 13 May 2004.

Kuti sakunatsa ndiye sakubayiwa
Mutemo wekwedu uyu wakanyangara
Wakarerekera divi rimwe
Mhaka imwe inosiyaniwa

Zvichifamba nekuti wabuda mumba maani

Vakasunuka vana vevamwe

Miromo yavo yakatandavara
Uri mutemo unoda kutwasanudzwa
Simba rehomwe rinoda kuenzaniswa

Kunyararira zvose vodzana madiro

Ukada kunyunyuta zvonzi pisai muromo

Ukatungamira vanotsvinga ndare

Ukasaririra vogonyomba

Kuvateerera nekuvaremekedza
Zvonzi takaruwana runongogutsurira zvose

Vanoda kundiita mubikira

Havana chakanaka ava
Ndonyararira kusvika rinhi?

Kufa senyoka ndichipondwa

Vanoda kundiita mubikira

Ndinyerere
Kusvika rinhi?
Moyo yavo yakaoma
Vakakuridzira tsamwa unochiona

Ndofirei ndisina mhaka?

Misha yavo vanotonga
Misha yevamwe voda kutonga

The good person is the one
 persecuted
 Our law is bad
 It is one-sided
 The same crime is treated
 differently
 depending on whose house you
 hail from
 Other people's children are
 free
 Their mouths speak freely
 This law must be changed
 Economic empowerment must
 be equitable
 If you keep quiet they become
 over-excited
 If you complain, they say burn
 his mouth
 If you lead in protest, they trip
 you
 If you follow quietly, they
 insult you
 If you respect them
 They say we have found an
 ignoramus

 They want to make me a
 zombie
 These people are no good
 Until when must we keep
 quiet?
 When they murder me like a
 snake
 They want to make me a
 zombie
 While I keep quiet
 Till when?
 Their hearts are wicked
 Once they curse you, you are
 finished
 Why am I dying for no crime
 at all?
 They rule in their homes
 Then they want to rule in
 others' homes too

Bvuma kufira kodzero yako

Mwana weropa anoda simbiso

Ndonyararira kusvika rinhi

Ndichibatwa huyanga munyika yababa?

Makamboona panorwa nzou?

Nyatwa yehuswa kutsokodzerwa.

Take the challenge, die for
your rights

Child of war, be courageous
Until when must I keep quiet
While I am being abused in my
father's country?

Have you seen two elephants
fighting?

It is the grass that suffers.¹²⁹

Zhakata unequivocally denounces the rampant lawlessness and politically compromised justice system that abets the persecution of those who demand fairness while protecting the politically connected. Like Mapfumo, Majongwe and a few others, Zhakata braved death threats to urge Zimbabweans to stand up and defend their rights because meekness only worsens their fate:

What I have said to myself since my music began to be censored is that I would continue to record music in the format I have been [doing] all along. I will not change my style, I will not tone down my lyrics and I will continue to sing about issues affecting the people of Zimbabwe.¹³⁰

In politically poisoned Zimbabwe, Zhakata has been labeled an MDC supporter. As such, he has had to choose his audiences carefully: 'I have had to cancel a number of live shows in areas dominated by the ruling party as they threatened my person'.¹³¹

Zhakata could play in some urban centres, which have rejected ZANU (PF) since the 2000 parliamentary elections; others, like Majongwe, could not. Personally told by the minister of information and his permanent secretary that his music will never receive airplay, Majongwe unsuccessfully tried the live shows route:

I have never been able to hold live shows. The only time when I tried to hold a live show was in 2003 at the Book Café [in Harare]. The venue owners had agreed to let me play there, but when I went there to make my booking, they dillydallied. I also tried many other beerhalls and nightclubs, but they always told

¹²⁹ L. Karikoga Zhakata, 'Sakunatsa', *Mubikira*, ZMC, 2000.

¹³⁰ L. Zhakata, 'Personal Experience', 12.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 13.

me, 'Aah, your music is dangerous; we would not survive. So I decided that I will not be holding any live shows.'¹³²

The government successfully cultivated a culture of fear not only among musicians, but also among those who facilitated their work. Some of the methods were very unsettling. Many musicians have been taken to police stations for interrogation; many have consistently received threatening phone calls from suspected state agents; some have been trailed and threatened in toilets during show breaks and in public places; and others have had their school-going children used as messengers to pass hideous messages to them.¹³³ Majongwe has been detained and tortured numerous times; in May 2007, he had to fight his abductors to free himself from a moving vehicle.¹³⁴

Music fans have not been spared this violence. In early 2000 in Mutare, for instance, men in army uniform disrupted Mtukudzi's show and assaulted his fans who appeared to enjoy 'Wasakara' too suggestively; the song is popularly perceived as urging Mugabe to retire because he is too old and worn out to continue leading the country.¹³⁵ In December the same year, Phillip Schadendor, Mtukudzi's lighting engineer, was arrested and charged with inciting hostility against Mugabe after aiming a spotlight on the president's portrait hanging on the wall during the performance of the song at the Harare International Conference Centre during the performance of 'Wasakara'. He was charged with violating the Law and Order Maintenance Act, enacted by the settler state to stem rising African nationalism in the late 1950s.¹³⁶ The comparatively parochial ultra-nationalist regime would tighten the same law in January 2002, rechristening it Public

¹³² Raymond Majongwe, Interview, 15 June 2007, Harare, 8.

¹³³ Trust Khosa and Ruzvidzo Mupfudza, 'Zhakata speaks out'; 'Musician Zhakata quizzed', www.standard.co.zw 1 January 2006.

¹³⁴ Lance Guma, 'Majongwe fights his way to freedom after abduction at gunpoint', <http://www.swradioafrica.com/news050407/majongwe050407.htm>

¹³⁵ Banning Eyre, 'Playing with fire: Fear and self-censorship in Zimbabwean music', http://www.kubatana.net/html/archive/artcul/011001be.asp?sector=ARTCUL&year=2001&range_start=1. In the current context of post-2008 election violence, many musicians and other artists have been assaulted, forcing some to cross illegally into neighbouring South Africa: John Mokwetsi, 'Political Violence Targets Artists, Musicians', *The Standard*, 3 May 2008.

¹³⁶ Omen Muza, 'Zimbabwe: A Case of Music Censorship Before and After Independence', <http://www.freemuse.org/sw9326.asp>, 12 May 2005.

Order and Security Act (POSA) to criminalize, among other things, any 'public gathering of more than two people without police clearance; the publication or communication of false statements that undermine or prejudice state security or insult the president'.¹³⁷ Together with AIPPA and the Broadcasting Act of Zimbabwe, POSA has formed the bedrock of the government's repressive and selectively applied legislative machinery which Zhakata denounced in 'Sakunatsa' and again in 'Tasvika' (We have been pushed to the limits).¹³⁸

Apart from threats and assaults, the government has also tried to prevent the recording of dissenting songs, especially after leading party functionaries, including Retired General Josiah Tungamirai and gospel musician Elias Musakwa, reportedly forcibly bought majority shareholding in the quasi-monopoly record manufacturer, Gramma/ZMC in 2003.¹³⁹ The proliferation of recording studios in the new millennium has enabled artists to independently record their works for radio and public performances, but not to mass produce them for the market. In any case, the omnipresent secret police agency has also interfered with the independent studios. In 2004, for example, Thomas Mapfumo, who went independent in 1989 after rejecting Gramma's moves to censor his lyrics on 'Corruption',¹⁴⁰ was forced to re-record his *Chaputika* album twice after Shed Studios erased it. In the first instance, Shed Studios attributed the suspicious 'mishap' to failure by an engineer to save it properly on a computer. In the second instance, they deliberately did it 'because Mapfumo had allegedly failed to pay a bill of \$2 million dollars'.¹⁴¹ Mapfumo's marketing manager, Cuthbert Chiromo, laughed off this suggestion because, in Zimbabwe's hyperinflationary environment, this was indeed a very insignificant amount; he attributed the debacle to sabotage by the state. *Chaputika* is street parlance for 'it has exploded!' 'It' refers to a public, violent demonstration of

¹³⁷ Public Order and Security Act, 2002, (Published as General Notice 644 of 2001 in the Zimbabwean Government Gazette of 14 December 2001).

¹³⁸ L. Zhakata, 'Tasvika', *Udza Vamwe* (Spread the Message), Gramma Records, 2005.

¹³⁹ Hama Saburi, 'Liberation war veterans engage in new struggle', <http://www.fingaz.co.zw/fingaz/2003/October/October2/1362.shtml>

¹⁴⁰ Emmanuel Vori (Gramma Records Marketing Director), 'Censorship of Locally Recorded Music in Zimbabwe', *Six Articles*, 10.

¹⁴¹ Trevor Muhonde, 'Thomas Mapfumo's album goes missing - again!' *The Standard*, 30 May 2004.

swelling anger. Thus, the album's plug track, 'Masoja neMapurisa' (Soldiers and Police), reminds the dictator that he would one day flee for dear life in the manner of Mobutu, Amin and other dictators when the soldiers and police he uses to violently put down dissent refuse to take his orders and choose to stand with the people, who are their relatives after all. Mapfumo's works, including hard-hitting albums *Chimurenga Explosion*, *Chimurenga Rebel*, *Chaputika* and *Rise Up*, as well as Oliver Mtukudzi's 2000 release, *Bvuma/Tolerance*, have been mopped off shop shelves and flea market stalls in violent police and ZANU (PF) raids since 2000.¹⁴² Some of them have been forced to vend their own wares on the street, dodging the police to do so.

Summary

It is not surprising that the government censored these voices; they critique the very basis of its foundation and existence – its self-identification as a liberation movement. It is that identity that the government resuscitated to try to salvage its waning political fortunes in 2000, utilizing the emotive issue of land. But because its agenda was very thinly veiled, it required a massive propaganda drive underwritten by *jambanja* – gratuitous violence and patronage. The long history of its engagement with power and political articulation made music an unsurprising vehicle for the government's project. To co-opt it effectively, the government tried to control its production and consumption, paralyzing its ability to critique power and rewarding its ability to praise it. However, because music belongs to the dynamic public sphere, the government was not content with gagging it on radio and intimidating its makers. As illustrated in the final chapter of this dissertation, it extended this bid to the national musical galas which it sponsored. That effort was equally contested by both musicians and audiences.

¹⁴² Lance Guma, 'State security sabotage the sale of Mapfumo's Rise Up album', www.swradioafrica.com, 09 January 2006; 'Zanu PF youths storm flea market, seize Mapfumo's CDs,' <http://www.newzimbabwe.com/pages/mukanya9.11890.html>

Chapter 7 National Musical Galas, 2001-2007: Parochial Dramas, Patriotic Voices

You have a country that is in a crisis with some of the most docile artists ever because the galas have been used to tame them – C. Mhlanga.¹

The state's effort to control free expression extended beyond the radio to encompass public spaces where music is performed live. The most prominent way in which 'politics got into music' in this way, as Chiwoniso puts it,² was through state sponsorship of national musical galas, which were started in 2001. They were run by the Ministry of Information and broadcast live on all four ZBH radio channels and sole TV station as a modern version of the *pungwes* of the 1970s. They revolved around three related nationalist principles: sovereignty, unity and patriotism, the key tenets of ZANU (PF)'s revived nationalist project. In fact, it can be argued that the galas epitomized the public construction and carnivalization of that nationalist project, utilizing the iconography of the country's departed and living patriarchs, matriarchs and heroes as well as the symbolisms of the 1987 Unity Accord and the achievement of independence in 1980.

In a 2004 mid-week issue of the state-run daily, *The Herald*, a 'Leisure' Reporter excitedly reminded readers to attend the *Mzee Bira* the following weekend:

All roads lead to Masvingo this weekend where the cream of Zimbabwe's musicians will perform at the music and cultural gala at Mucheke Stadium. The musical show, dubbed MzeeBira, is being held in honour of the late Vice-President Dr. Simon Vengesai Muzenda. The Bira, which starts on Saturday evening, will spill into the early hours of Sunday. It marks the first anniversary of the death of the veteran nationalist, described as the 'Soul of the Nation' whose legacy as a dedicated nationalist and patriot lives on. More than 30 groups are expected to perform at the stadium in what promises to be a memorable night.³

The *Mzee Bira* became an annual fair. However, it was neither the first nor the only such public *bira* commemorating a notable Zimbabwean personality's life, event or idea. Since 2001, the government had organized and sponsored overnight musical performances (variously called 'galas', '*biras*', 'bashes' or 'splashes') as a significant aspect of its

¹ Interview, 2 January 2007, Bulawayo, 20.

² Chiwoniso Maraire, Interview, 27 September 2006, Harare, 7.

³ Leisure Reporter, 'All set for MzeeBira, *The Herald*, 16 September 2004.

nationalist propaganda blitzkrieg. The first such annual show was the *Umdala Wethu* (literally, 'Our Dear Old Man') Gala, held every July since 2001 to celebrate the life and contributions of the late co-Vice-President, Dr. Joshua Nkomo, who died on 1 July 1999, which was followed by a longer string: the Heroes Splash, held every Heroes Day in August to honour the fallen and living heroes who fought the Rhodesian regime in the 1970s; the Independence Gala in April; and the Unity Gala, staged each Unity Day, December 22, to mark the merging of ZANU and ZAPU in 1987 to end the dissidence and *Gukurahundi* atrocities that had plagued western Zimbabwe shortly after independence. All these galas were foundational festivals that commemorated some of the 'founding fathers and mothers' of Zimbabwe and their sacrifices and memorialized certain key historical events in the building of the nation. The galas, therefore, constituted acts of collective (re)membering, identifying with and celebrating these significant historical memories, moments and personages deemed to define the nation and its desired future.

The government expected musicians to demonstrate their 'patriotism' to the nation by accepting invitations from the Ministry of Information and Publicity to come and perform. Many musicians welcomed the galas as an opportunity to showcase their artistic talents before thousands of Zimbabweans and to build bigger fan bases. For relatively unknown groups or those seeking to resuscitate their flagging public profiles, the galas were an excellent opportunity. This was because the performances were broadcast live on the country's sole television and all the four radio stations. Moreover, prior to the performances, many got free publicity in the promotional television appearances, interviews and features in the government-run newspapers for weeks before and even after the performances. Furthermore, for some, the appearance fee constituted a welcome income free of the attendant costs and hassles of promoting shows and hiring venues at a time when the majority of struggling Zimbabweans could not afford the luxury of live entertainment. Similarly, for ardent fans, the galas were an opportunity to enjoy a banquet of fun from the country's musical stars on one platform for free or for a nominal fee. The government, which organized all this fun, derived much political capital. The crowds that cheered and gyrated the nights away and that talked about the memorable experiences for weeks thereafter, and debated which artists should win the

year's different arts merit awards for their splendid performances while they waited for the next gala, constituted happy and patriotic Zimbabweans to fill its newspapers, electronic media and, above all, captive fodder with which to beat back the bad press about a suffering people under a misgoverning leadership.

The introduction of the galas re-organized the country's musical calendar with the state media marketing them as the most important musical shows one could ever dream of attending. This marketing strategy is clearly observable, for instance, in the *Herald* article quoted above, which attempted to set the destination and agenda for every weekend traveler. The state media generated much hype around the Mzee Bira for weeks prior, and presented it as the apogee of the entertainment calendar across the country. The importance of all other events (including beauty pageants in far away Kadoma earlier that week), were reduced and presented as minor shows to 'warm up the fans for the Mzeebira'.⁴ The musicians lined up for the galas, including relative unknowns, were marketed as 'the cream of Zimbabwe's musicians', apart from earning a liberal scattering of other flattering epithets such as 'seasoned', 'top', 'multiple-award-winning' and 'high-riding'. Through such marketing language, the state media created the impression that the performance would be one to 'remember forever', like the purported virtues of the late Muzenda.

In Shona religious practice, a *bira* is a thanksgiving ceremony acknowledging and celebrating 'those who went away in order to come back' as ancestors guiding and guarding their progeny.⁵ The nationalist revivalists appropriated this private religious ritual and carnivalized it into a public affair, canonizing the late Muzenda and, by implication, his fellow nationalists as personifiers of the country's history and envisioned future. Moreover, as instantiated in the Unity Gala, the image created here is not only of generational continuity, but also of national consensus and unity. Muzenda's posthumously popularized cognomen, 'Soul of the Nation', seeks to translate the late Vice-President's mystified artistic and cultural wisdom into a fountain at which the troubled nation could quench its thirst for knowledge. Such a quest would be inward-

⁴ *The Herald*, 'All set for the Mzee Bira'.

⁵ T. Mahoso, 'Mabira Rituals of space and place', <http://www.zimbabwemail.com/index.php?id=12732&pubdate=2005-10-02>.

looking, necessarily directing one to search their own ancestral, historical roots as archived in the ZANU (PF) canon, rather than resorting to some 'alien' solutions or individual escape from the nation's challenges. This was the same logic that informed the liberation struggle.

The galas used not only historical memory to author the nation's history as a narrative of ZANU (PF) and its departed and living heroes; it also read the perceived enchantment of the revelers at the galas as a reflection of public consent and participation in such authorization. Like Chairman Mao's manual, the government press framed fans' receptivity of the galas, telling them how any forthcoming gala promised to be memorable and, afterwards, dutifully following up to confirm that 'self-fulfilling prophecy'. In the government's logic, public 'approval' of the galas legitimated the underlying ideas and intentions. This implication of music audiences in the state's agenda is exemplified in the *Sunday Mail's* review of the 2002 Heroes' Gala held in Chinhoyi:

A week has passed since the ZBC-organized Heroesplash Gala was held at Chinhoyi Stadium, but the talk about this musical extravaganza has refused to die. It's as if the gala was the only thing that was happening on the evening of August 10 2002 ... The musicians put up a polished act and the about 15 000 crowd just loved every minute of it. Surely, who would begrudge anyone who keeps talking about such a memorable night? ... There was heated debate after the gala as to who was the better performer of the night between [Simon] Chimbetu and Tongai Moyo. Up to today, this debate is still raging on ... The Heroesplash gala will remain in the memory of many people for a very long time. It was really a show not to miss. Thanks to ZBC!⁶

Ordinarily, nobody casually thanks the ZBC (or ZBH, as it was then known). Propaganda is hardly necessary when a society is at peace with itself. The timing for the national musical galas is noteworthy. They were introduced when the economy was crumbling and the ruling party's political fortunes waning. All the galas were staged in urban areas, where ZANU (PF) had lost all parliamentary and mayoral seats to the opposition MDC from 2000. In this light, it is plausible to argue that the galas were a political scheme to distract or lure the electorate using a popular pastime, music. As Riva rightly put it,

⁶ 'Heroes' bash a roaring success', *Sunday Mail*, August 18 2002, L4.

Galas have the effect of occupying people's minds, at least for a time, so that [they] won't focus on problems that are affecting them. See how much they are advertized on the radio, TV and newspapers! That hype steals all the attention for a while. That also explains why there are so many of [these galas]. ZANU [PF] naturally knows that its lifespan has run out ... so what do they do to make sure the situation does not explode? They feed you on these funny ideas every two or so months while they think of other tricks to excite you ... as they did with those forgotten 'Housing for All by the Year 2000', 'Vision 2020' ... and other such funny things. For the whole period, prior to the gala, during the gala and after the gala – 'oh the gala was exciting ... blah blah blah', you see.⁷

As we shall see, musicians, audiences and other Zimbabweans saw through this logic.

Raftopolous has observed that a key tactic of ZANU (PF)'s revived nationalist ideology is that 'it attempts to naturalize the unity of the nation by concealing the internal ethnic tensions within the polity and the reality of Shona political dominance'.⁸ This seemed to have been the underlying rationale behind the *Umdala Wethu* and Unity Galas. Thus, the significance of these two galas was their invocation of Joshua Nkomo as the symbolic personification of the 'Ndebele' – a proportionally and politically significant, but also conspicuously marginalized – 'ethnic' component of the nation. One cultural activist, MC, claims to be the brains behind the galas. He intimated that he suggested to Professor Jonathan Moyo that it was possible to foster the country's faltering unity and avert outcries about regional marginalization without threatening the existing power structure. This, he argued, could be done through musical and cultural galas. The *raison d'être* was that, he argued:

Nobody [was] prepared to give up power for unity; that never happens, except for Joshua Nkomo, who was committed to the ideal of unity right from the beginning. Even our president here has to die to relinquish it. It is only amongst the highest caliber of our leadership that such a rare thing could possibly happen. And I said: 'Now here is one such individual who did that kind of thing ... Let's pick on that man and promote the idea of unity in a *Mdala wethu* gala; let's put it live on TV, reflecting the same ideals that he had always stood for. And let's stage this in a way that benefits every artist who takes part, coming from all the regions of the country, so they can buy musical instruments and be able to say, I got these from

⁷ C. Riva, Interview, 10.

⁸ B. Raftopolous, 'Nation, Race and History', in *Making Nations, Creating Strangers: States and Citizenship in Africa*. eds. S. Dorman, D. Hammett and P. Nugent, (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 182.

the *Mdala wethu* Gala'. And what do you have? All these galas where nobody knows how the artists are invited, what tax-payers' money is used for and nobody is accountable to anyone! And what do you hear? 'I am a hero. I was there in the beginning ... you were not there!' ... Using the music exactly the same way our colonizers used it when they subjugated us!⁹

The professor went on to constitute an Advisory Board of cultural experts that included Clive Malunga, the organizer of the defunct annual *Jenaguru* music festival, Rhoda Mandaza, novelist-film maker Tsitsi Dangarembga, film maker Olly Maruma, football administrator Vincent Pamire and one Doctor Samkange, headed by the Presidential Spokesman and Permanent Secretary of Information and Publicity, George Charamba.¹⁰ That was the origins of the *Umdala Wethu* Gala, first staged at the Harare International Conference Centre (HICC), in July 2001. Joshua Nkomo's widow, MaFuyana, and virtually the whole cabinet, including President Mugabe, attended the gala. The idea of political unity was already tenuously etched into the national psyche and commemorated on December 22 as Unity Day Holiday, marking the 1987 Unity Accord. What MC suggested to Professor Moyo was that the idea be brought down from the ivory tower of political agreements amongst the country's leadership into the everyday language and cultural repertoire of the people who had always respected Joshua Nkomo, one of the country's founding nationalists, as Chibwechitedza ('the rock that never shifts'), Mqabuko and 'Father Zimbabwe' – markers of his ethnic blindness and heroic leadership qualities. Even after Mugabe had hounded him out of the country on charges of treason, he quickly returned home for the sake of the country and signed the Unity Accord and, with it, the (for many, very painful) end of ZAPU.¹¹ Mugabe prevented the old man from retiring in his early 80s, forcing him to die in office for the sake of that unity. Nkomo was now even more useful dead and safely buried as a national hero in Harare.

But the idea of 'Shona' could also be deconstructed. What Nkomo is to the Ndebele, Muzenda might also be to the Karanga, and ZANU (PF) similarly ritualized his 'ethnicity' with a *Mzee Bira* for the same purpose. Significantly, in ZANU (PF)'s ethnic balancing act, Zezuru is an 'ethnicity' that does not need to speak its own name; it has

⁹ MC, Interview, 19.

¹⁰ Clive Malunga, Interview, 16 December 2006, Harare, 6.

¹¹ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5WG8k7jZ2tA>

been the central block of the party since independence. What seems important is that such ethnicities must be ritualistically appeased and subsumed into the national edifice at the same time. For the latter purpose, the Unity Gala would complete the strategy. If ZANU (PF) successfully used the two nationalists in its politics of ethnic appeasement, the same could be achieved even more powerfully around their memories as the departed godfathers of their respective 'ethnicities'. This is how Riva presented what could be ZANU (PF)'s logic behind these particular galas:

Ndebeles: we are together and united. This country is for us all. How then do we make you happy? We are honouring your godfather [Nkomo] and so we are honouring you. We signed the Unity Accord in 1987 and you can see that we are sharing power. There is peace and stability. We have a vice-president coming from your area to represent your interests. We are in this together; so stop complaining. Karangas: we are honouring your godfather [Muzenda]. We cherish our unity and we want it to flourish; so we are in this together. We are very serious when we talk about unity. We are together fighting against imperialism!¹²

Riva may well have been reading a *Sunday News* snapshot of a scene during the 2006 Unity Gala at Chinotimba Stadium in Victoria Falls town. The newspaper opened its report with the formulaic assurance that 'Revelers who made it to Chinotimba Stadium ... will have a music and dance spectacle to remember forever'.¹³ No doubt, a key part of the memory would be the unusual spectacle of a group of ministers strutting on the dance floor, as captured in an accompanying photo. Groups are usually allowed 10-20 minutes on the stage, but, as TK observed, Allan Chimbetu was 'left to play and play and then, the old man, the Chairman of the party and Speaker of Parliament, John Nkomo, stood up to jive to the music'.¹⁴ He was soon joined by a number of ministers and deputy ministers in a careful choreography of 'inter-ethnic' performativity, with the Acting Minister of Information and Publicity, Paul Munyaradzi Mangwana, the Deputy Minister of Higher and Tertiary Education, Sikhanyiso Ndlovu, Deputy Minister of Environment and Tourism, Andrew Langa and the Deputy Minister of Information and Publicity, Bright

¹² C. Riva, Interview, 10.

¹³ Reason Mpfu, 'Pomp, fanfare at Zim Unity Gala', *Sunday News*, 24 December 2006, 9.

¹⁴ TK, Interview, 15 February 2007, Harare, 7.

Maton'ga, accompanying John Nkomo.¹⁵ This cast, part of a larger contingent of 'dignitaries', was dominated by 'Ndebele' political leaders very self-consciously dancing to the music of a 'Shona' musician in ways that graphically demonstrates a rather literal performance of 'national' unity. As TK mused,

We are talking about John Nkomo, who is Ndebele, and Allan is a Shona who doesn't speak two Ndebele words, and there the old man was, dancing to Shona tunes ... Shona beat, *museve!* To anybody who saw him dance to the music, the message was very clear – unity! He was demonstrating to his brothers and sisters in his home area [Matabeleland], that 'You can also dance to the music of your brother'.¹⁶

Perhaps this public symbolism demonstrated ZANU (PF)'s successful management of conflict that often dogged even the preparations for these events. For example, in a case that manifested the tension between the conceptualization of nationhood and regionalism or, very loosely, ethnic identities, deputy ministers Ndlovu and Maton'ga had seriously quarreled over the line up of artists to perform at the *Umdala Wethu Gala*, held 5 months earlier in Bulawayo.¹⁷ As *The Standard* reported, Ndlovu felt there was 'blatant exclusion' of artists from the Matabeleland region, while Maton'ga felt the gala was a national event that could not be 'regionalised'.¹⁸ Ndlovu's claims gave rise to, or were evidenced by, moves by some Bulawayo artists, including Albert Nyathi, to simultaneously stage a separate *Umdala Wethu Gala*, only relenting after the organizers agreed to add more names from Bulawayo.¹⁹ More important to note, however, is the fact

¹⁵ Reason Mpfu, 'Pomp, fanfare at Zim Unity Gala'.

¹⁶ TK, Interview, 7. TK obviously overstates his case to illustrate a point. The Chimbetus' discography boasts a number of songs in the Ndebele language. Moreover, Allan identifies himself as Chewa, not Shona. Similarly, John Nkomo, like Joshua Nkomo, is Kalan'ga, a Shona sub-dialect, but, since the colonial era, he publicly carried the 'Ndebele' tag largely because it was a politically profitable identity. See T. Ranger, *Voices from the Rocks: Nature, Culture and History in the Matopos Hills of Zimbabwe* (Oxford: James Currey, 1999).

¹⁷ Ndlovu comes from Matabeleland and Maton'ga from Mashonaland, which make them Ndebele and Shona, according to the dominant ethno-political identities.

¹⁸ *The Standard*, 'Ministers clash over *Umdala Wethu Gala*', 16 July 2006.

¹⁹ Vusumuzi Sifile, 'Byo artistes threaten *Umdala gala* boycott', *The Standard*, 18 June 2006. Of the 30 groups billed to perform, only 5 on the initial list came from Bulawayo; Harare had 15, and the remainder came from other provinces.

that such squabbles represented something beyond music; they symbolized deeper tensions over questions of national identity and development and parodied the 'national unity' the state functionaries would publicly flaunt on the platforms.

While some observers, like TK, could read the politicians' silent drama, the actors were not convinced about the audiences' literacy or literary methodologies. There were no guarantees that the latter would not misread the signs, or read them in contrary ways. Thus, the ZANU (PF) Chairman went on to explain his own parable:

At 18, a child is said to be old enough to stand alone, old enough to vote. Today we have our 22nd Unity Day celebrations. This day and the unity we enjoy in the country w[ere] made possible by two men who had a vision. They made an agreement that we be united and to date that unity has been held. Let us remain united, let us stay united and defend our unity.²⁰

Yet, as if afraid to look the ghost in the house in the face, the politicians envisaged this unity not as a solution to internal problems, but as directed 'against imperialism', as bold inscriptions on the huge banner at the back of the stage, t-shirts, caps and other gala paraphernalia, proclaimed. In light of civic and human rights organizations' hushed calls for compensation for those affected by and the prosecution of those responsible for post-independence atrocities since the 1980s, it is striking that government ministers who speechified at the Unity and *Umdala Wethu* galas steered clear of the unmentionable word *gukurahundi* – the real explanation for the 1987 Unity Accord and signifier of the late Joshua Nkomo's selflessness. Similarly, in their efforts to stress national unity, government ideologues danced around outcries about the unrelenting punishment of the 'dissident region' hosting this gala, Matabeleland, through continued marginalization and underdevelopment.²¹ Similarly, what John Nkomo omitted in his story of an imaginary 18-year-old voter is how that young adult, and indeed most other adults in the region, had

²⁰ John Nkomo, quoted by Reason Mpofo, 'Pomp, fanfare'.

²¹ The epitome of this 'punishment' is the government's continued sitting on the proposed Zambezi-Matabeleland Water Project, that is, the construction of a pipeline to draw Zambezi River water to Bulawayo and other towns in the dry region: See Muchaparara Musemwa, 'Disciplining a 'Dissident' City: Hydropolitics in the City of Bulawayo, Matabeleland, Zimbabwe, 1980-1994', *Journal of Southern African Studies* 32: 2 (2006).

consistently voted against his united party and that that was one of the reasons why ZANU (PF) leaders were out in full force on the public platform that night. Yet the issues they danced around would likely convince that particular audience to continue voting for any other party but ZANU (PF) in any election.

In fact, the Victoria Falls Unity Gala represents a key instance of authori(zi)ng 'patriotic history' through retrospective re-narration and re-membering of the meaning of independence, performed chiefly through the silencing of not-so-heroic episodes that threatened the prevailing political configuration. In his own speech, Mangwana was blunter in this renegotiation of history:

It is critical that we are having Unity Day celebrations. Dr. [Joshua] Nkomo said unity among Zimbabweans dates back to the time of the liberation struggle. The two liberation movements, Zapu (Zipra) and Zanu (Zanla) in 1976 agreed to come up with a Patriotic Front. Came up with an intensive diplomatic offensive where we shared zones [sic]. *Amabhunu abona ilanga litshona lingakatshoni* (The white supremacists were in trouble). To liberate this country was not easy at all. Some of us were arrested and detained at various prisons around the country. ... We now have the freedom and ultimately the unity we are celebrating today. Together we fought for it, together we won and together we should defend all that we won. Our national anthem itself spells it out.²²

The signing of the Unity Accord, after seven years of carnage of civilians in independent Zimbabwe, had very little, if anything, to do with fighting *amabhunu* (white colonists). Thus, ZANU (PF)'s construction of public history consisted of authoring and authorizing truncated memory that was, in R.A. Petersen's words, 'systematically unfaithful to the past in order to serve the needs of the present'.²³ The vanquished ghosts of white colonialism could be exhumed safely and profitably for occasional ritualistic chastisement to appease the potentially vengeful, more obstinate 'tribal' ghosts who refused to be buried.

But the ministers were quite aware that the version of freedom they rallied Zimbabweans to defend was contestable, hence the overemphasis and enduring contradictions. Government officials used the galas as platforms to foist their own

²² Reason Mpfu, 'Pomp, fanfare'.

²³ R.A. Petersen, quoted by Jean-Francois Bayart, *The Illusion of Cultural Identity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 83.

parochial version of the nation on Zimbabweans, rather than to engage in national dialogue. For example, speaking on the 8th anniversary of the death of Joshua Nkomo, the Minister of State for National Security, Lands, Land Reform and Resettlement in the President's Office, Didymus Mutasa, noted that the late Vice-President 'fought for democracy, which is what *we* are currently enjoying and *those* who are demanding democratic dispensation do not know what they are talking about'.²⁴ Mutasa may well have been speaking with a characteristic forked tongue. Guy Clutton-Brock, the Welsh-born champion of black freedom who became Zimbabwe's first and only official white hero interred at Harare's National Heroes Acre in 1996 once praised Mutasa as 'a man of high integrity and Christian character ... a sensitive leader and man of vision, an optimist with a profound belief in his fellow man regardless of race, colour [or] creed'. In the post-2000 era, Mutasa became a key driver of the ultra-nationalist project. Asked by NGOs in 2002 for the government's position on the prevailing severe drought that, coupled with the AIDS scourge felling thousands a week and a mass exodus of citizens, threatened to halve Zimbabwe's 12 million people, Mutasa responded casually: 'We would be better off with only six million people ... our own people who supported the liberation struggle. We don't want all these extra people'.²⁵ It is through such a warped lens, then, that ZANU (PF) viewed and talked about issues of freedom, justice and human rights.

The performances at the galas also constituted ritualizations of power directed at political rivals. Opposition politicians, whom the government portrayed as the reincarnation of colonialism, rarely attended these rituals. They were a 'noxious weed' which deserved no other treatment but to be uprooted and 'carted right to the edge of the maize field', as George Charamba (aka Nathaniel Manheru) warned.²⁶ When they did attend, however, they became ready fodder for the government's propaganda machinery. For example, the *Sunday News* reported the presence of some local MDC municipal

²⁴ Darlington Musarurwa, 'Dr Nkomo: A beacon of hope for the future', *Sunday Mail*, 1 July 2007. Italics mine.

²⁵ Didymus Mutasa, quoted by Trevor Grundy, 'Whatever Happened to Didymus Mutasa?', October 02, 2006,

<http://www.kubatana.net/html/archive/opin/061002iwpr.asp?sector=OPIN>

²⁶ Nathaniel Manheru blog, 'IMF: when fetid stench groups fishmongers', <http://zimbabwe-image.blogspot.com/2007/06/imf-when-fetid-stench-groups.html#main>.

councillors at the 2006 Victoria Falls Unity Gala, and went on to interpret their actions: 'As if to underscore the importance of unity, the MDC officials took to the dance floor alongside ZANU-PF members when the song *Unity is Ever Important* by Black Umfolosi was played'.²⁷ In the government's arbitrary verdict, the low ranking opposition officials' presence and actions represented an endorsement of the government's narrative of the nation, and thus the opposition party's confession of its own unpatriotic agenda. And if the government officials were genuinely interested in their top-down notion of unity, the latter was never an end in itself. The end was electoral victory for ZANU (PF), as the unnegotiable 'forward with ZANU (PF)' slogans punctuating the galas constantly reminded attendees. To reiterate, it is not coincidental that all the galas were staged in the opposition-dominated urban areas and none in rural areas. ZANU (PF) regarded the rural areas as the abode of the converted – the supposed grateful beneficiaries of the land reform.²⁸ Thus, many observers viewed the musical shows as political campaign fora with some in the defunct ZAPU regarding the *Umdala Wethu* gala that targeted the elusive Matabeleland vote as a sad reminder of how the late Nkomo had 'sold out'.²⁹ Nkomo's son, Sibangilizwe, refused to patronize the galas, as did his sister, Thandiwe, describing them as a waste of national resources. He also accused the government of exploiting his late father's name in the same way they abused him when he was alive.³⁰ Agrippa Madlela, a former ZAPU official, regarded the government's strategy as futile: 'Zanu PF will not pull ... wool over our eyes through the Nkomo galas that attempt to reconcile its dirty past with the future through the back door'.³¹

²⁷ Reason Mpofu, 'Pomp, fanfare'.

²⁸ This myth held until the March 2008 elections, which shocked Mugabe's party into waves of violent reprisals against those who voted 'incorrectly', code-named 'Operation Wakavhotera Papi? (Operation Whom did you Vote for?) and 'Operation Munhu Aripa? (Operation where is the Sellout?). To ZANU (PF), unlike urban dwellers, 'unsophisticated' rural dwellers do not require any battles for hearts and minds, but big sticks when they engage in political 'mischief'.

²⁹ Charles Rukuni, 'Nkomo gala and the elections', *The Financial Gazette*, 07 January 2004: <http://www.fingaz.co.zw/fingaz/2004/July/July1/5855.shtml>

³⁰ Ngobani Ndlovu and Pindai Dube, 'Zanu PF abusing Umdala's name, says son', *The Standard*, 24 June 2007.

³¹ A. Mandlela, quoted by N. Ndlovu and P. Dube, 'Zanu abusing Umdala'.

Many Zimbabweans regarded the galas as fetid political stratagems. As TK, a DJ with ZBH, pointed out,

Whenever there is a gala, you see *vakuru* [party leaders] addressing people. That is a chance for [them] to reach out to the public who would have gathered with the aim of attending musical shows. They had seen that it is no longer possible for them to gather as many people when they called for rallies. So that's a tactic to gather people and then tell them what they want them to know.³²

The majority of the over 45 musicians that I interviewed were cognizant of this fact. As Hosea Chipanga pointed out, 'They [the government] use musicians to gather people because they know that on their own, they can not mobilize that many people for a rally, even if the president went door to door inviting everybody'.³³ Actually, the strategy was much more than simply taking advantage of musical shows; the government itself organized and funded them, staking the line-up with its 'Third *Chimurenga*' singers. While many played 'apolitical' songs, most in the former category (including Cde Chinx, Sister Flame, Cde Yondo, Andy Brown and Tambaoga) played clearly partisan songs or overtly campaigned for the government on stage. Perhaps the most blatant example of the latter was displayed during the 2002 Heroes Day gala at the HICC, which was broadcast live on TV like all others. In a spirited performance of 'Agrimende', which valorizes Mugabe and castigates Tony Blair, Tambaoga repeatedly bent against his audiences lewdly pointing at his backside in a demonstration of 'the Blair that he knows'. For that performance, Tambaoga instantly earned himself a then princely sum of \$200 000 from Saviour Kasukuwere, the Deputy Minister of Gender, Youth and Employment Creation, who hilariously emerged from the 'VIP' stand to personally hand him the money. On the one hand, for Kasukuwere and his government colleagues, Tambaoga was a model patriotic youth projecting the 'true Zimbabwean voice' and gratefully utilizing opportunities created through the 'local content' policy for gainful employment. But as Tambaoga soon discovered, that money was to be his proverbial thirty pieces of silver and ultimate ticket to the country's musical Golgotha, as pointed out in the preceding

³² TK, Interview, 7.

³³ Hosea Chipanga, Interview, 11 December 2006, Chitungwiza, 14.

chapter. On the other hand, Tambaoga's 'unpatriotic' counterparts would have to be 're-educated'.

Chimoio Gala: 'Re-educating' the Youths

Naturally, youths constituted the principal patrons for these nocturnal dances, a fact the originator of the galas must have realized. The Zimbabwean government viewed youths with suspicion, and with good reason. The MDC did not only boast a strong contingent of youthful membership, but it also had several young recent college graduates in their 20s and 30s amongst its founding Members of Parliament. In contrast, ZANU (PF) was a geriatric party, with a Youth League chairman well past 50. This generational divergence was accentuated by the government's failure to solve the growing problem of unemployment in the aftermath of ESAP. As Bill Saidi wrote, young Zimbabweans had lost all fascination with the Zimbabwean present, charging that the rulers had eaten all the independence cake and there was nothing left for them.³⁴ The government thus construed youths' flocking to the allegedly white-funded MDC as rebellion against the liberation party, the height of political apostasy. This generational and political schism persuaded the government to target youths for political 're-education' or ideological 're-orientation'. In 'Hondo Yakura MuZimbabwe', Chinx had chastised the youths:

<i>Chimbovataurirai vapfana ava</i>	Tell these youngsters
<i>Vapfanha ava hapana chavakaona ava</i>	These youngsters never saw anything
<i>Regai ndimbovaudza vapfanha vechidiki ava</i>	Let me tell them, these youngsters
<i>Vanhu vavanofunga kuti vanovada havavade ava</i>	The people whom they think like them do not in fact like them
<i>Mhandu chaidzo, Satani weRoma</i>	They are devious enemies, Satan of the Roman Catholic Church!

The government quickly moved beyond 'giving them a little spank', as Chinx advised in the song, to implementing programmes to 'groom' them into 'patriotic' citizens, chief among them being the National Youth Service Training programme founded by minister

³⁴ B. Saidi, 'What the young are looking forward to', *The Daily News*, 6 June 2001, 6.

Border Gezi in 2000.³⁵ It also strongly co-opted them into the galas – the theme of this discussion, introducing a separate series that specifically targeted them.

Examples of the latter included the Freedom Youth Hangout Bash held in March 2005 at Harare's up-market Avondale Shopping Centre and the Chimoio Solidarity Bash held in Mozambique in October 2004. As the *Herald* reported, the purpose of the Avondale gala – which featured more than 30 mainly youthful groups and individual musicians, including Africa Revenge, Mafriq, Chamhembe, Betty Makaya, IYASA, Chigutiro, Kudzai Sevenzo, Plaxedes Wenyika and Maskiri (Alishias Musimbe) – was to 'promote patriotism, nationalism and pan-Africanism amongst young Zimbabweans'.³⁶ However, as reports on the gala indicate, the youthful fans refused to be bought with song, responding to slogans by Kasukuwere and Florence Chideya (the ZANU (PF) parliamentary candidate for the area) with contending political symbolisms:

Youths of all ages converged at the shopping centre to catch a glimpse of their favourite urban grooves musicians ... but had to contend with [fist-] waving Zanu PF officials ... But the youths had a few surprises for the ruling party mandarins. Kasukuwere was booed when he tried to force his party slogans on the impatient youths. The more he chanted party slogans, the more the defiant crowd waved the open palm, an MDC campaign symbol.³⁷

To the officials, such a reception merely confirmed what they had known all along – the deep-seated generational apathy the country's youth had toward the ruling party. Kasukuwere and Professor Moyo soon changed tactics, leading the youths into 'exile'.

The scene of a horrendous bombing of about 2 000 Zimbabwean refugees and some guerillas by Rhodesian warplanes on 23 November 1977, the undying memory that Chimoio represents could be utilized to buttress ZANU (PF)'s message to the youths. Despite talk of reinforcing the historical solidarity with Mozambique, the Chimoio gala was specifically, in the words of Joseph Katete, 'an opportunity to rekindle the memories of the brutal war against the colonial powers ... Britain and Portugal that colonized

³⁵ <http://www.mydgc.gov.zw/archives.htm>

³⁶ *The Herald*, 'Youth organisation to hold music bash', 14 March 2005.

³⁷ John Mokwetsi, 'Musical gigs merely campaign platforms', *The Standard*, 27 March 2005.

Zimbabwe and Mozambique, respectively'.³⁸ Rekindling memories of colonial brutality was a central strategy of ZANU (PF)'s revived nationalist project, which required enemies. The new patriotic identity the government sought to foster required enemies with such trajectories of horrible acts. What better venue to hammer the point into 'born-free' heads than Chimoio? As Katete's *Daily Mirror* colleague added, 'Zimbabwean history would be incomplete without the gory details of the story of treachery and tragedy that [characterize] the sad chapter of Chimoio'.³⁹ 'Zimbabwean history' was not oblivious to this incident, but the new, 'patriotic history' that ZANU (PF) was sponsoring had to hinge on such moments of the colonial past in order to strengthen their own reconstructed narrative of heroism and super-patriotism. Thus, the Chimoio tour was appropriately fronted by former guerillas – Cde Chinx, Simon Chimbetu and Clive Malunga for the benefit of the youthful contingent of 'Urban Groovers': Rocqui, Maskiri, Leonard Mapfumo, Extra Large, Amagangsters, Nonsikelelo and Sku, led by the 'dancing queen' Sandra Ndebele, whom the *Daily Mirror* writer expected to 'leave Mozambican men drooling after she has left [the] stage, as has been the case locally'.⁴⁰ Before the performance, the contingent toured the mass graves and bombing sites in what Malunga described as a 'very emotional' exercise and a huge lesson for the youths:

We took a tour of the mass graves and that's when the 'Urban Groovers' saw that it was not about wearing hanging trousers, or about those oversized shoes. No; it was a real war that killed people. And everybody was so quiet when we went there. There had been a massacre there!⁴¹

The youth ministry occasionally led hundreds of 'Border Gezi' recruits on pilgrimages to Chimoio, Nyadzonya and other places where independence war fighters and refugees

³⁸ Joseph Katete, 'Chimoio musical bash on course', *The Daily Mirror*, 16 September 2004. By then already independent, Mozambique does not have special war memories linked to the Chimoio incident. The absence of any official representatives of the Mozambique government suggests that the 'Mozambique versus Portugal' was, if not a diplomatic after-thought to mask the partisan nature of ZANU (PF)'s carnival on its soil, then a lame bid to internationalize and win friends in its bilateral quarrel with Britain.

³⁹ Trust Khosa, 'Rekindling ZimMoza solidarity', *The Daily Mirror*, 08 October 2004.

⁴⁰ J. Katete, 'Chimoio musical gala'.

⁴¹ C. Malunga, Interview, 16 December 2006, Harare, 13.

were killed and buried in mass graves during the independence war.⁴² These were suitably timed re-orientation trips to important historic sites meant to make the youngsters ‘appreciate how the country was liberated’ and to cultivate loyalty to the party’s leadership – ‘the untiring defenders of Zimbabwe’s independence against recolonization by Britain and its western allies’.⁴³ Some Power FM DJs, those ministering to the tastes of the country’s urban youths, also joined these tours.⁴⁴ The lessons learned from this re-enacted ‘exile’, supported by occasional ‘patriotic’ musical tours of Border Gezi camps by singers like Andy Brown,⁴⁵ would help reinforce the ‘patriotic’ curricula for the youths.

The Limits of Hegemony: Public and Musicians’ Responses to the Galas

While some musicians supported some of the more parochial ideals propagated at the galas, such as youth ‘re-education’, others, including Thomas Mapfumo and Leonard Zhakata, condemned these exercises as indoctrination of youths into misfits and violent mobs.⁴⁶ This is a sentiment shared by many Zimbabweans.⁴⁷ Zhakata’s ‘Ndereka’ (Zombies) is an overt attack of this indoctrination:

<i>Kuraya rudzii kwomoita vana ava?</i>	What kind of teaching are you giving these children?
<i>Chikoro rudzii chomopa vana ava?</i>	What kind of schooling are you giving these children?
<i>Vana ava voita ndereka dzepfungwa</i>	The children are becoming zombies
<i>Ndiyaniko nhungamiri pakadai?</i>	Who is the leader of all this?
<i>Ari kuponda rudzi rwedu vakomana</i>	Who is murdering our race
<i>Isu tichingonyararira</i>	While we quietly look on
<i>Ari kuponda hunhu hwedu ndiyani?</i>	Who is murdering our mores?

Is it global culture?

⁴² The latest such trip was in April 2008: ‘Youths to visit shrines in Chimoio and Nyadzonya’, <http://www.newsnet.co.zw/index.php?nID=12382&pollid=1>

⁴³ ‘Reaffirm Support for President, Kasukuwere urges youths’, *The Herald*, 22 April 2008.

⁴⁴ Trust Khosa, ‘Rekindling ZimMoza solidarity’.

⁴⁵ Andy Brown, Interview, 8.

⁴⁶ Leonard Zhakata, ‘Ndereka’, *Udza Vamwe*, 2005.

⁴⁷ Pius Wakatama, ‘Zanu PF government grooming youths into misfits’, *The Standard*, 15 August 2004.

Is it one common culture?
Militarizing children
Preaching the message of hate
Somebody tell me the destiny

When ZANU (PF) officials talked about the place of youths in the country's politics, they always referred to them as 'leaders of tomorrow'. This justified both excluding them from leadership positions in the present and enrolling them into its ideological schools presumably to prepare them for that distant 'tomorrow'. But as Wakatama wrote, ZANU (PF)'s youth policies were locking youths in retrogressive worldviews, sowing the seeds of a grim future. This is because such youths were conspicuous in their present roles as party militias buttressing ZANU (PF)'s image as a violent party:

Instead of [the government] opening doors to new global vistas of experience, they are busy closing them. In their *laager*, they seek to indoctrinate our children with tales of all manner of enemies who are out to destroy them and their beautiful country ... [They are] rearing a generation of narrow-minded, ethnocentric and hate-filled beings who will be misfits in today's and tomorrow's multi-cultural and multi-ethnic globalised world ... As leaders, they will lead their countries in the only way they were taught – the way of violence. They will lead the country [into] confusion, corruption, civil wars and poverty as is happening in many parts of Africa today.⁴⁸

Zhakata laments such a destiny in 'Ndereka', which would mean the end of Zimbabwe as many have known it. Instead of building 'tomorrow's leaders', he argues, ZANU (PF) is transforming them into a generation of paranoid zombies. He refuses to keep quiet and be accused of complicity. Similarly, in 'Vechidiki' (Youths), Mapfumo advises youngsters to refuse being recruited as foot soldiers for politicians.⁴⁹ Kasukuwere's ministry trained youths into 'Green Bombers', or 'Border Gezis', which maimed, killed and raped on the orders of the geriatric party leaders.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ Thomas Mapfumo, 'Vechidiki', *Rise Up*, 2005.

⁵⁰ See Solidarity Peace Trust, "'Shaping youths in a truly Zimbabwean manner': An overview of youth militia training and activities in Zimbabwe, October 2000 – August 2003, 5 September, 2003: http://www.swradioafrica.com/pages/youth_militia_report.htm

The dominant reportage portraying the galas as very popular sought to silence the glaring reality that many musicians and audiences refused to patronize them, mainly because they viewed them as ‘political’ – a euphemism for ZANU (PF) partisan propaganda platforms. Thus, the real ‘cream of Zimbabwean music’, the likes of Mtukudzi, Zhakata and Mapfumo, gave these galas a wide berth. Others pulled back when they noticed the parochial nature of the functions, while some continued to patronize them under duress or to achieve their own ends – like launching or resuscitating flagging careers. While the galas were never explicitly advertized as ZANU (PF) political functions, such identification was eloquently implied in the people who organized them, the artists who dominated them and their featured repertory, the ‘VIPs’ or ‘dignitaries’ who officiated at them and a host of other signs, poetics and symbolisms. Their identification with the Minister of Information and Publicity, Professor Moyo – arguably the most hated public official until he was sacked in 2005 – did not help their image either. He reinforced the perception that the galas were an extension of the *hondo yeminda* musical project and blatant propaganda that he coordinated. The same artists who featured in the latter projects – Cde Chinx, Simon Chimbetu, Sister Flame, Cde Yondo, Tambaoga and others – dominated the galas. Many observers opined that the galas were no more than a public platform for the exaltation of government policies. However, as we shall see later, some musicians contested those intended purposes and subverted the organizers’ ideals, making the galas an exercise in political futility.

Writing in the aftermath of the 2005 Heroes Splash in Kwekwe, Laura Chiweshe asked why the country’s ‘music gurus shun[ned] these pl[a]shes and bashes’. Since the galas were introduced at the turn of the millennium, she observed, the country’s most ‘famous artists [were] always conspicuous by their absence’.⁵¹ She directed the query to Mtukudzi’s manager, Debbie Metcalfe, who told her that ‘Whenever they invite for the galas, we always have something planned. The invitations are extended to us a bit late every time’. But, as one of the organizers of the galas told Chiweshe, ‘The galas are regarded as a tool by the ruling party to re-affirm its power base and not as a national

⁵¹Laura Chiweshe, ‘Why do big names shun musical galas?’
<http://www.africaonline.co.zw/mirror/stage/archive/050807/weekend10744.html>

event that anyone can freely participate in without being labelled [sic] [a] Zanu PF supporter' because the artists who gave excuses for not attending the galas freely participated in other 'non-politically aligned music festivals such as [t]he *Jenaguru*' [sic].⁵²

Chiweshe does not refer to the uproar that Mtukudzi triggered when, in March the same year, two weeks before the general election, he accepted an invitation to perform at a 'Mai Mujuru Congratulatory Bash', held to congratulate the appointment of Joyce Mujuru as Zimbabwe's first female Vice-President. The incident enraged his legion of fans, forcing Mtukudzi to defend his action by arguing that he had graced the occasion to 'celebrate the rise of a daughter from our clan', his 'home girl'.⁵³ Mujuru and Mtukudzi both come from Dande, northern Zimbabwe. But his fans would have none of it, with Zimbabweans in the Diaspora utilizing their ready access to communication technology to raise the criticism to a crescendo. The sharp backlash, particularly from the UK, where he was scheduled to perform a few days thereafter, threatened his resurgent career.⁵⁴ New Zimbabwe.com, a UK-based news website, trashed Mtukudzi's defence, telling him that 'dictators and thugs the world over are sons and daughters of certain clans'. The website inflamed its readers:

The timing of his flirtation with Zanu PF is also quite extra-ordinary, given that later this week he is in the UK hoping to attract thousands of Zimbabweans driven into exile by Mugabe and Mujuru's policies. He is picking up a fat cheque of over £9 000 for three shows in the UK, all paid in advance by promoters who now have to mop-up after a bungling lunatic from Dande. Now this is fraud!⁵⁵

The larger proportion of Zimbabweans who sustained Mtukudzi's and other musicians' foreign tours since 2000 constituted a new, disenfranchised Diaspora scattered by some

⁵² *Ibid.* In fact, the introduction of the galas in 2001 put paid to Malunga's efforts to continue with his annual *Jenaguru* festivals. Other, independent musical festivals, like the Harare International Festival of the Arts (HIFA) and the Victoria Falls Jazz Festival, remained vibrant.

⁵³ www.newzimbabwe.com, 'Oliver Mtukudzi sings for Zanu PF', (accessed 21 March 2005).

⁵⁴ 'The bungling lunatic from Dande', www.newzimbabwe.com/pages/tuku14.12408.html

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

of the economic and political policies the government celebrated at the galas.⁵⁶ Expressed through the same radio stations and newspapers that the government violently crushed and denied operating licences, now mostly web-based or 'pirating' access to Zimbabweans on shortwave, Mtukudzi found this Diaspora community unequivocal and largely unwilling to concede to him the same 'democratic right to associate' they had been denied at home. One fan, UK-based 'Mhaha waka Mhiha', for instance, wrote: 'I could not help myself so much that, stupid as it may sound, I have thrown away anything that is Oliver Mutukudzi's - I had a collection of 10 of his works. This has made me feel better'.⁵⁷ Others threatened to make his music available for free downloading on the internet. In a joint Shortwave Radio Africa interview with Mtukudzi prompted by the unexpected death of Simon Chimbetu, US-based Mapfumo condemned Mtukudzi as 'double-faced' for his ambiguous disposition towards a government that flagrantly violated citizens' rights: 'Oliver is two-faced ... He doesn't come out in the open and say where he stands'.⁵⁸ Mapfumo criticized musicians who make money by singing about the people's suffering while equivocating on the causes of that suffering.

Stung by the criticism, Mtukudzi was quick with damage control, changing his story to allege that he had been duped over the nature of the 'Mujuru Congratulation Bash': 'Various subterfuges have been used. A request to sing a few solo songs at what I understood would be a private gathering of relatives was turned into a ZANU PF event

⁵⁶ Thus, the stronger voice from the Diaspora does not suggest two separate 'publics' or groups of Mtukudzi fans, but testifies to the disparity in access to information and communication technologies in the context of the deteriorating economic conditions and constrained democratic space in Zimbabwe. The Mtukudzi story was, in fact, first published in a Zimbabwean weekly, *The Standard*, accessible on the internet but hardly affordable or accessible to the majority within the country. As seen in the preceding chapter, the government harassed those holding alternative views, closed private newspapers and radio stations and sharply poisoned the political atmosphere through the state media.

⁵⁷ John Mokwetsi, 'Tuku story attracts strong reaction', http://www.thestandard.co.zw/read.php?st_id=2032, 27 march 2005.

⁵⁸ Violet Gonda, 'Hot Seat with Mukanya and Tuku', www.swradioafrica.com, 16 August 2005.

and, without warning or permission, filmed and broadcast'.⁵⁹ He then dissociated himself from ZANU (PF), and took the opportunity to blast it for other 'sins':

Following recent press reports, I wish to place [it] on record and make [it] absolutely clear that I am not a ZANU PF supporter. I am a loyal Zimbabwean who believes in a true and tolerant democracy ... As a musician, I have been appalled that the government has used its monopoly of the airwaves to restrict airplay of artists who they see as unsupportive of its policies. People who do not promote government's image are often seen as being enemies of the government and attempts are made to silence them or undermine their careers.⁶⁰

Mtukudzi ordered that ZANU (PF) cease using his song, 'Totutuma' (We are overjoyed), which it had appropriated to thematize its celebration of Mujuru's political ascendancy in TV jingles.⁶¹ Clearly out to rescue the estranged Diaspora dollar at a time the country's own currency was increasingly becoming worthless, Mtukudzi also condemned the government for denying non-resident Zimbabweans the right to vote.

If Mtukudzi acted pragmatically to avert a career-denting fall-out with his fans, Andy Brown refused to give in, but he soon learned how strongly Zimbabweans felt about musicians who wished to have it both ways. He received his fans' reservations over his participation in the government propaganda crusade uncharitably, claiming that he had found a new fan base in the Diaspora. He told a *Standard* reporter in 2005: 'Can you honestly compare a 20 000 [Zimbabwean] bearer cheque to a 20 South African Rand[?] I am making a living out there and I do not care a hoot about what you journalists say or those so-called local fans'.⁶² However, as he soon found out, his boast was ill-considered. The Diaspora was fully attentive to the politics at home and could not be taken for granted. On his maiden US tour 5 months later, Brown was hosted by Zimnet Radio,

⁵⁹ Rangarirai Mberi, 'Tuku takes a dig at govt', <http://www.fingaz.co.zw/fingaz/2005/March/March24/8049.shtml>

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ Oliver Mtukudzi, 'Totutuma', *Tsivo-Revenge*, Tuku Music Company, 2004. The song celebrates an achievement by a family member.

⁶² John Mokwetsi, '[Jonathan] Moyo a liar: Andy Brown', www.thestandard.co.zw/read.php?st_id=2064, 3 April 2005.

broadcasting from Toronto, Canada, for an open interview with listeners.⁶³ To initiate the interview, the radio station played a version of his song, 'Shungu' (Desire), a folkish ballad about a drunkard who does not leave a village beer drink until the last beer pot has been emptied. But the particular version had Mugabe's 2002 Earth Summit speech telling Tony Blair to 'keep your England and I keep my Zimbabwe' appended as a 30-second preamble. Brown was stunned when asked about the song, pointing out, after a hearty laugh: 'Whoever came up with that is very clever ... I actually like that! It's my first time to hear that'.⁶⁴ Brown has maintained that he never recorded such a version of the song: 'I never did anything like that – it's not very cool when somebody does something like that to your song. But people do some of these things on the internet ... anyone can do anything on the internet'.⁶⁵ Quizzed by the conveners of the radio interview over his participation in the galas, he shot back: 'Am I the only one who sings at the galas? We are many. If you have problems with ZANU, go and solve them with ZANU itself. I'm too busy to think about that. I'm not a ZANU card carrier; I stand for Zimbabwe'.⁶⁶ Needless to say, the interview helped to ruin his US tour, which flopped. Brown is regarded as one of Zimbabwe's best guitarists and he was very popular until he estranged many of his fans by purveying the 'Third *Chimurenga*' gospel together with Tambaoga, Chimbetu and others. His continued propagation of the same gospel at the galas further drove them away. Thus, music audiences were not blind to the government's thinly-veiled strategies involving musicians and musical performances.

Yet performing at or attending the galas was not synonymous with sharing the government's ideals. Music fans frequently demonstrated this by humiliating *vakuru*, as we have seen with regards to the Avondale gala. Similarly, at the 2004 *Umdala Wethu* Gala in Gweru, revelers booed Midlands Governor Cephaz Msipa and Emmerson Mnangagwa, the Minister of Rural Housing and touted Mugabe-heir apparent, after they had repeatedly interrupted music to exhort the land reform and to introduce party

⁶³ Zimnet Radio broadcast from the UK, US and Canada. It subsequently expanded to Australia and South Africa.

⁶⁴ Andy Brown, Interview with Zimnetradio.com, 5 September 2005.

⁶⁵ Andy Brown, Interview, 4 December 2006, Harare, 5.

⁶⁶ Andy Brown, Interview with Zimnetradio.com.

'dignitaries'. Rather quick-witted, Mnangagwa then drew cheers from the revelers, with some 'waving the MDC's open palm symbol', when he swiftly substituted '*Pamberi naMacheso, pamberi nekufara*' (Forward with Macheso, forward with joy!) for 'Forward with ZANU (PF)'.⁶⁷ This was an eloquent demonstration that, as Andy Brown put it, 'the politicians no longer had any power on their own; so they leaned on music'.⁶⁸ Macheso is one of the country's most popular performers who thrive on an apolitical repertoire. His live shows draw large crowds. Thus, the free or lowly-priced galas where many such musicians shared the stage would be especially attractive. Moments like these reminded *vakuru* that big crowds baited through popular musicians did not necessarily translate into political coups.

Many listeners and viewers who did not go to the galas could still follow them on TV and radio because the ZBH broadcast nothing else for the duration of the shows. However, many felt offended and resented this saturation of the airwaves with what they considered government propaganda. In a newspaper letter directed at Jonathan Moyo, one 'Silent Tayaura' suggested that 'the poor are rich in patience because they can't afford dual decoders', indicating that, as his pseudonym suggested, it is the poor who mostly endured the propaganda dished at the galas.⁶⁹ Those with satellite TV or other options could escape it. A Harare teacher, Bridget Madombwe, expressed this option for the better off:

Some of us switch to our satellite channels, rather than be subjected to that continuous politicking. We watch SABC [South African Broadcasting Corporation] because ZBH people are always talking and singing about farming to people who are non-farmers ... Too much propaganda, we are tired of too much propaganda when we know the truth. They butter the lies and pass them for truth. Just like during the liberation struggle when there was so much propaganda, people still knew the truth, which they lived in their everyday lives.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ *The Standard*, 'Mnangagwa booed at Nkomo gala', 6 July 2004.

⁶⁸ Andy Brown, Interview, 4 December 2006, 5.

⁶⁹ Silent Tayaura, 'Spare us the propaganda', *The Independent*, 12 December 2003. 'Tayaura' means 'we have suffered beyond measure', and the first name reminds the authorities that '(enforced) silence does not mean ignorance'.

⁷⁰ Bridget Madombwe, Interview, 28 November 2006, Harare, 3.

However, sitting up to watch the nocturnal performances on TV did not imply that one was thereby locked into the state's political propaganda, either. Davison Nyanga, like millions other citizens, usually watched the galas on TV fully aware that 'this is a partisan, ZANU (PF) creature', but he wanted to watch his favourite musicians:

I wanted to see particularly one gospel group, Mahendere Brothers, because I am a Christian myself and I feel blessed whenever I hear them sing. I also wanted to see one jazz artist whose music and words are so polished, Bob Nyabinde. If it means going to the galas, I would be going for such musicians. If I hear that they are not coming, I wouldn't go to that gala. When those *hondo yeminda* musicians get onto the stage, I say to myself, 'Ah, let their time pass then I will watch my favourite musicians, taking a nap if necessary. Thus, we can choose to switch off our TV and play cassettes like the *sendekera mwana wevhu* jingles forced us to do, or watch only certain segments or artists.⁷¹

Thus, propaganda disseminated through electronic gadgets that audiences bought and controlled had no unassailable power over them. Nonetheless, gala organizers and broadcasters were privy to some of these listening and viewing habits and to the fact that different fans were drawn to the galas by particular musicians. Thus, they often kept audiences guessing which musicians were, in fact, participating or which would perform when, often forcing those who wanted to watch only certain musicians to put up with everything else. The organizers also often resorted to blackmailing certain musicians who were reluctant to patronize the galas, or misinforming their fans, who would discover that they had been misinformed after their stars did not play. For example, ZBH advertized for weeks that Willom Tight (Wilbroad Muponda) and Dino Mudondo were going to perform at the 2004 *Umdala Wethu* Gala when the duo had, in fact, indicated they were not going to attend.⁷² Speaking on behalf of Rooftop Promotions, the duo's promoters, Shepherd Mutamba pointed out that,

Th[e organizers] knew that Dino and Willom were not going to perform as we did not enter into a contractual agreement with the[m] but what is funny is that they did not correct that. ... They decided to misinform the fans of the duo who would

⁷¹ Davison Nyanga, Interview, Bulawayo, 29 December 2006, 4.

⁷² Willom Tight, Interview, 20 December 2006, Harare.

definitely not have gone there if they knew in advance that they weren't going to perform. This also created confusion as the artistes had a show in Mutare.⁷³

By 2000, it had become obvious that ZANU (PF) had failed to fulfill public expectations and was fighting for legitimacy. It is for this reason that many popular musicians refused to publicly identify with the government, particularly with the knowledge that the party sought to harness them for political ends as it had done in the previous two decades. In light of that, the consequences of overtly associating oneself with the party were also quite predictable for musicians, as the cases of Chimbetu, Brown and others would testify. Thus, Chirikure Chirikure, a *mbira* poet, declined the Permanent Secretary of Information's invitation to participate in the very first gala in 2001, for which he was quickly labeled unpatriotic. He stood his ground, arguing that 'No one can tell me how to respect my elders; no one can tell me how to respect Joshua Nkomo'.⁷⁴ He refused because he believed the galas were organized 'on a party politics level, not on a national level, but using state resources to prop up the image of a party'. Apart from the gross abuse of national resources, he also felt that the functions did not promote artistic freedom; instead, they suppressed it:

If you are using state resources, then allow me to come in with my own voice and speak my own issues. You can't handpick people who are sympathetic to the ruling party and have them sing praises to the party. I begin to feel there is a serious agenda behind the gatherings. ... And actually I don't believe the state has any business running these shows. If they were being run by some other body, say the National Arts Council, yes, but you can't have a whole ministry, with full time ministry officers assigned to this ... there are more important issues honestly!⁷⁵

Moreover, he felt the galas did not promote musicians, but rather exploited them for political purposes:

Are they doing anything to develop the artist in the first place? No, no workshops, no facilities for artists, nothing ... It's trying to keep the electorate happy and smiling, yah, they can do that, put up a show, spend the night dancing and smiling. It's stupid! There was actually a time when all the artists on that line up

⁷³ Joseph Katete, 'Willom and Dino snub Umdala gala', *The Sunday Mirror*, 4 July 2004.

⁷⁴ Chirikure Chirikure, Interview, 31 January 2007, Harare, 6.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

were those dependent on that for their bread; they put up their own shows, there is no patronage, not at all. So, people are not stupid; fellow artists are not stupid as well.⁷⁶

Those who shared such alternative views were ‘fumigated’ out. That included Malunga, who believed that:

[The galas] should be taken as an opportunity to rally people of various political opinions ... to unite them, and all those people who don’t like ZANU (PF); they should also come in. We must invite even our enemies into our house so that they can see for themselves that they are getting lost, and how clean we are.⁷⁷

Malunga discovered how ‘clean’ ZANU (PF) is when it eased him out of the advisory board: ‘Once people know where to hire the PA systems, your role as advisor is finished. You don’t receive a letter to terminate your role, but you are cleanly eased out. You find yourself no longer invited, and you know you are out’.⁷⁸ The galas were meant to propagate particular ideological outlooks, not political pluralism and free expression, yet cases like this one demonstrate that the façade of internal unity within ZANU (PF) was fragile.

Artists who attended these galas were supposed to sing ‘patriotic’ songs and, in any case, the omnipresent gaze of the state often successfully compelled them to toe the line. Singing patriotically entailed celebrating independence, freedom from colonialism and the return of *mavhu* (the soil) and total blindness to police and militia brutality, corruption and a collapsing economy. Like the hapless broadcasters at ZBH, the ‘Queen of Mbira’, Chiwoniso ‘Chi’ Maraire, knew that very well:

I sang the right songs ... right in the sense that I was not going to piss off the people organizing the galas. I am not going to piss them off because they have soldiers. There is one song, ‘Nyika yeMatsotsi’ (A Nation of Thieves), which I performed at one of the galas, and by the time I left the stage, there were a couple of ‘Black Boots’ guys (soldiers from the Presidential Support Unit) coming to me and asking me: ‘Why are you singing those songs?’ We want your ‘Nhemamusasa’, ‘Mai’ ... And I told them, ‘Those are songs that I composed

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ C. Malunga, Interview, 7.

seven years ago!' But there are many who go to the galas for economic reasons ... and the big stage. Remember we are living in very difficult times for artists and if someone says come we will give you \$150 000 dollars, of course you run!⁷⁹

Because her market transcends Zimbabwe,⁸⁰ Chi refused to be swallowed by the political whale like biblical Jonah; she stopped patronizing the galas:

I performed at the galas for two or three times when they had just started, before my focus shifted; not anymore. Because you come out of that gala and two or three people are being beaten up and police are told on television that 'you can beat up people as you feel'; I can't! It's the same people doing the galas who are beating up people.⁸¹

Many prominent musicians who liked to sing their own minds, like Chiwoniso, Mtukudzi, Mapfumo and others, thrived on independent or alternative platforms, like the annual Harare International Festival of the Arts (HIFA) or at the popular Book Café in Harare's Avenues area. But there are many who discovered that they could not escape ZANU (PF)'s tentacles, particularly those types of bees that carry honey in the mouth but lack the sting in the tail, like Macheso. Together with Tongai 'Dhewa' Moyo, Hosea Chipanga, the Chimbetus and Cephas Mashakada, Macheso has been one of the lynchpins of the galas, celebrated by the state media as 'the King of *Sungura*'.⁸² Their public profiles and success heavily depended on the (state-controlled) media. Whenever some of these 'crowd pullers' failed to participate in state functions, the state-suborned press quickly questioned their patriotism and popularity, as Dhewa and Macheso may have learned from the *Sunday News* after the 2006 Unity Gala.⁸³ But like a money-making goblin, the state media expected its occasional sacrificial offerings from those to whom it gave ample positive coverage (or grooming).

⁷⁹ Chiwoniso Maraire, Interview, 8.

⁸⁰ Chiwoniso moved to the USA with her father, the legendary mbira educator and ethnomusicologist, Dumisani Maraire, as a toddler, coming back to Zimbabwe as an enigmatic *mbira* player in her teens. She currently tours all over the world.

⁸¹ Chiwoniso Maraire, Interview, 8.

⁸² 'Heroes Bash', *The Sunday Mail*, 18 August 2002.

⁸³ R. Mpofu, 'Pomp, fanfare'.

According to Riva, Macheso once resorted to the Mtukudzi strategy, lining up shows well into the year so that he could escape 'national duty' at the galas. But, as Riva explains, it only needed a threat from [one prominent deputy minister], saying 'Do you know what POSA [the Public Order and Security Act] says? It says if you intend to gather more than 3 people, you have got to seek police clearance. And the boy had no choice but to perform at the galas'.⁸⁴ But worse still, there were suspicions that state agents also sabotaged several of his shows, cutting off the power supply mid-way through his performances.⁸⁵

But possibly the worst punishment an artist could suffer for being 'unpatriotic' came from the radio. As Riva pointed out, if an artist became a 'problem', the DJs could be ordered to blacklist him/her: 'He is unpatriotic ... Finish!'⁸⁶ Thus, many musicians were haplessly forced to play along the patriotic tune because of ZANU (PF)'s institutionalized partisanship. Malunga learned the lesson the hard way when his music was banned 'forever' on radio and TV for assaulting Shepherd Mutamba in 2001, then a News Editor-in-Chief at ZBH.⁸⁷ Thus, unlike big artists like Mtukudzi and Mapfumo, smaller names often felt obligated to go to the galas with the radio in mind. As TK put it:

If Zhakata, Tuku [Mtukudzi] and Mapfumo don't show up for a gala for 10 years, they don't care because they are already established. But the younger, upcoming artists must go to the galas, passing through there to be seen and to say 'How are you?' so that they may be seen and played on radio. They must forget about this story that 'there is no space for alternative views'. Only when they have money should they start talking about alternative voice. They cannot act like Mtukudzi who has made his money already. When I meet him, Mtukudzi does not so much

⁸⁴ C. Riva, Interview, 11. Apparently, POSA is silent on whether artists should seek police clearance. But it is such ambiguities as much as its provisions that this law has proved so draconian.

⁸⁵ 'Power cut mars Macheso's show', <http://www.zimbabweherald.com/index.php?id=38727&pubdate=2004-12-12>; C. Riva, Interview, 11.

⁸⁶ C. Riva, Interview, 11.

⁸⁷ Luke Tamborinyoka, 'They would rather be ruined by praise', *The Daily News*, 3 June 2002, 10; C. Malunga, Interview, 12. Mutamba had allegedly erased a news clip covering Malunga's charity donation to a children's home. According to Malunga, Mutamba intended to blackout the latter for refusing to pay kickbacks for having his annual *Jenaguru* Music Festival (whose concept was taken and eclipsed by the frequent galas) promoted on radio and television.

as look at me, but I play his music [on the radio] the whole day, and he eats his money!⁸⁸

For this and other reasons, many, not just ‘upcoming’ youngsters but some established names as well, patronized the galas. Thus, the impact of monopoly radio has continued to shape musicians’ options in complex ways.

Galas as Contested Platforms, Performing Alternative Na(rra)tions

However, if the political whale could swallow some little Jonahs, it could not always guarantee that the latter would behave as it expected in its belly. Many musicians who patronized the galas defied political domestication, as Mhlanga put it, with a number capitalizing on the limited poetic licence accorded by their proximity to power to hit at the state’s underbelly. They did this by generating a very critical counter-discourse to the state’s patriotic monologue. I will draw on the works of primarily four musicians, Dhewa Moyo, Willom Tight, Hosea Chipanga and ‘Urban Groover’ Maskiri, to illustrate this point.

‘Ndinde Makorokoza’: Interrogating Official Discourses

State media marketed the Kwekwe based *sungura* musician, Tongai ‘Dhewa’ Moyo, as ‘the Man of the Moment’ for the galas.⁸⁹ Since the mid-2000s, Moyo has fiercely competed for supremacy on the *sungura* market mainly against Macheso, who has branded him a *murondatsimba* (copycat) for brewing his repertory from blatant pickings from the calabashes of others who included Leonard Dembo, the Congolese rumba maestro, Kofi Olomide and Macheso himself. Nonetheless, unlike most of his counterparts, Macheso included, Dhewa has not shied away from the politics of his day in his compositions, as epitomized by his 2005 album, *Chingwa* (Bread). Talking to Bertha Madhomu, Dhewa intimated that *Chingwa* is one of his most commercially unsuccessful productions. It was a casualty of the radio: ‘*Chingwa* didn’t do quite well as DJs thought it had political connotations. In fact, they thought I [was] [singing] about the high price

⁸⁸ TK, Interview, 9.

⁸⁹ All set for the Mzeebira.

of bread'.⁹⁰ Indeed, Dhewa could well have been singing about the high price, but also the shortage, of bread – both irrepressible consequences of a land reform defined by *jambanja*. Bread is a breakfast staple and a quick snack for urbanites. But, more generally, because it is a culinary constant, *chingwa* has become a metaphor for urban welfare. Thus, one cannot sustain an urban lifestyle without money to buy bread, even when the bread is there in the shops. Similarly, like bread, money defines urban lifestyles. Thus, in Zimbabwean urban doublespeak, when someone mentions *chingwa*, half the time they may actually be referring to money. Therefore, an album that suggests this potent discourse in its very title could hardly be expected to pass through ZBH's 'selection committees' at a time when the country is suffering the ravages of six-figure hyperinflation.

After the censorship on radio, Dhewa has retreated somewhat, concentrating more on general social commentary on subsequent albums – love, common jealousies and their contingent perils in the era of AIDS, among other usually mundane themes. However, he did not entirely concede to the muffling of *Chingwa*. Instead, he has consistently performed songs off the album, including at the galas, particularly the 11-minute opening track, 'Ndinge Makorokoza' (Hail my Hustlers), from which the album title derives. *Makorokoza* denotes people who squeeze a livelihood out of a desperate situation through extra-legal, perilous means, particularly the panning of precious minerals but also running foreign currency on the street. Alluvial gold panning has been particularly rampant in Dhewa's home town, Kwekwe, a city founded on the back of gold mining in the early decades of the last century. 'Ndinge Makorokoza' combines the art of what the Shona call *kurova imbwa wakaviga mupinyi* – literally, thrashing a dog while one is hiding the stick – and candid political commentary. As eloquently executed during his performance at the 2005 Heroes Gala in Kwekwe, hiding the stick involved flaunting the symbolisms of and considered deferences to the national ideals being celebrated while at the same time tagging his particular audiences in unison call-and-response 'conversations', familiar sing-alongs, chants and electrifying dance routines to produce a deeply resonant and hard-to-pin-down counter-discourse to authorized narratives.

⁹⁰ Bertha Madhomu, 'I am a just a simple guy', *Trends*, December 2006.

Thus, on the crest of a piquant instrumental introductory segment to one of his popular songs, Dhewa opened his 2005 Heroes Gala act by greeting ‘everybody who has visited us in our city, *headquarter yemakorokoza* (makorokoza’s headquarters)’, followed by a 30-second tumultuous pass out parade by ‘the children of Kwekwe’, marching and waving banners to a fast-paced drumming staccato. The kids snake out in an arch across the stage from behind the podium, quickly exiting on the other end after a moment’s detour to display their message, borne on the placards, flags and t-shirts: ‘Our Heroes, Your Bullets have Flowered’, betraying the hand of officialdom, or deference thereto. Dhewa abruptly cuts the highly danceable guitar works in mid-beat, ‘so that mothers may wake up the children at home, because Dhewa *ndivo vave panyanga* (Dhewa is now holding the horns (steering wheel))’ – raising a chorus of disapproval from worked up fans. Having artfully reaffirmed his loyalty to the heroes being commemorated and hospitably delineated everybody’s place, including that of ‘visitors’ who are but passing through *our* city, Dhewa chants out to his hometowners: ‘*Makorokoza* are you there?’ and, to rapturous responses, he churns out a discourse that is at once *makorokoza*’s but also that of Zimbabweans: ‘because this one is yours’:

<i>Ndinde ndinde pamusoroyi changamire</i>	<i>Ndinde ndinde</i> , excuse me your lordship
<i>Ndinde ndinde ndisvikewo changamire</i>	Excuse my intrusion, your highness
<i>Ndinokumbira chingwa tarirai changamire</i>	I am asking for bread, my lord
<i>Kana ndine nzara, mufaro mushoma</i>	When I am hungry, my happiness is curtailed
<i>Ndinokumbira mari tarirai changamire</i>	I am asking for money, my lord
<i>Kana ndine nzara, simba ndiro shoma</i>	When I am hungry, my strength is sapped
<i>Chisiri chako masimba mashoma</i>	One cannot valiantly hold on to something that is not theirs
<i>Kana chiri chako, chipfuva unorova</i>	When it’s yours, you beat your own chest
<i>Ini, ichi ndicho changu</i>	Boasting: this is mine!
<i>Kana chiri chako zenze rinomira</i>	When it’s yours, you proudly show off
<i>Ini, ichi ndicho changu</i>	Me, this is mine!
<i>Mumusha mangu, mufaro unowanda</i>	In my home, I am full of happiness
<i>Kana ndashanya muswe ndinopeta</i>	But when I visit, I humble myself
<i>Mumusha mangu, ini ndinobhon’a</i>	In my home, I boldy voice my displeasure

<i>Kana ndashanya, muswe ndinopeta</i>	When I visit, I fold my tail (between my legs)
<i>Mhiri kwemakungwa mufaro mushoma</i>	Overseas, my happiness is limited
<i>Kana ndiri muno umu mufaro unowanda</i>	When I am here, my happiness is bountiful
<i>Nekuti ndiyoyika nyika yangu changamire</i>	Because, by the way, this is my country, my lord
<i>Ndiyoyika nyika yangu mambo</i>	This, indeed, is my country your lordship
<i>Ndinoda kufara nyika yangu changamire</i>	I want to be happy in my country, my lord
<i>Madzimai edu tarirai anofara</i>	Look at our wives, they are happy
<i>Mucherechedzo, misha ndeyavo</i>	That's a sign the homes are theirs
<i>Mumababy shower tarirai vanofara</i>	At babyshowers, look how joyful they are
<i>Mucherechedzo misha ndeyavoka</i>	That's an indication the homes are theirs
<i>Kana vanababa kunitambo vanofara</i>	Even fathers enjoy themselves at games
<i>Vachingodaidzira 'Yave nyama yekugocha'</i>	Urging on: 'It's now meat for the braai!'
<i>Kana kwaDhewa, munhu wose anoenda</i>	To Dhewa's (shows), everybody goes
<i>Mucherechedzo, Dhewa ndevemuno</i>	That's an indication Dhewa belongs here
<i>Vana tarirai vanofara,</i>	Look at the children, they are very happy
<i>Kana votamba tumitambo tunonaka:</i>	When they play their sweet little games:
<i>'Amina, amina kadeya, simoreya, amina kadeya ...'</i>	<i>'Amina, amina kadeya, simoreya, amina kadeya ...'</i>
<i>Ndiyoyika nyika yavo changamire</i>	This, indeed, is their country, my lord
<i>Ndiyoyika nyika yedu changamire</i>	This, indeed, is our country, my lord
<i>Tinoda rugare munyika yedu changamire</i>	We want to live well in our country, my lord
<i>Marudzi ose tarirai varimo</i>	All races/ethnicities are there
<i>Vanoda kutambanuka, munyika yavo mambo</i>	They want freedom, in their country lord
<i>Pindai mudariro varume titambe!</i>	Get onto the stage, men, so we can dance!
<i>Ndinde ndinde ndinde</i>	<i>Ndinde ndinde ndinde</i>
<i>Ndinde-e ndinde</i>	<i>ndinde-e ndine</i>
<i>Ndinde ndinde Gurundoro varimo</i>	Gurundoro is there
<i>Kana muNdevere, nayewo arimo</i>	Even a Ndebele, s/he too is here
<i>SaManyika, kwaMutare variko</i>	A Manyika, s/he is there in Mutare
<i>Kana VaMupfumi, kwaMutare variko</i>	Mr. (Esau) Mupfumi, he is there in Mutare

Kana MuHarare, Kolela arimo
VaMutomba, navowo varimo
VaMaNcube navowo varimo
VaMagumbo, navowo varimo
Murozvi Mukuru, nayewo arimo
Mhofu yeMukono, nayowo irimo
Kana Vachimwene, navowo arimo
Makorokoza, navowo varimo
Kana mahwindi, navowo varimo
Vanoda kutambamuka

munyika yavo mambo
Nekuti, ndiyoyika nyika yavo mambo
Ndirorika basa ravo changamire
Ndiyoyika nyika yedu changamire
Tingaipe ani nyika yedu changamire?
Iwe, iwe, iwe, iwe, unokuvara iwe!
Yahwe ndakuona!

In Harare, (William) Kolela is there
 Mr. Mutomba, he is there
 Ms Ncube, even she is here
 Ms Magumbo, she too is here
 The Great Rozvi, he too is here
 Mhofu yeMukono, he is here as well
 Even Achimwene, he too is here
 Gold panners, they too are here
 Even touts, too, are here
 They want to be free in their country,
 lord

Because this, indeed, is their country
 Those are their jobs, my lord
 This, indeed, is our country, my lord
 To whom can we give it, my lord?
 Hey, hey, hey, you get hurt!
 Yahweh, I have seen you!⁹¹

This song is a web of neatly inter-woven sub-scripts that at once combine responses to the exclusivist, ultra-nationalist official narrative of the nation and a subaltern counter-narration, self-definition and understanding of self-fashioned citizenship. First, Dhewa's song intervenes into, rejects and critiques the bankrupt 'Third Chimurenga' exhortation for poor Zimbabweans to continue to 'be resilient', *rambai makashinga*. The protagonist does not waste time to remind the leaders that people are hungry and it is the leaders' duty to ensure their welfare: 'I am asking for bread, my lord; When I am hungry, I cannot be happy; I am asking for money, my lord'. People do not ask for something that is available and affordable; *chingwa*, in both senses defined above, has neither been readily available nor affordable since the commencement of the 'Third Chimurenga'. The same is true of freedom. The message is a confirmation of how, through recklessness and mismanagement of the economy, the leaders have 'farmed hunger'. Sponsoring free galas to exalt the land reform was not different from what Musonza called 'farming tongues'. But these would unlikely placate the population because, as Moyo sang, 'when I am hungry my happiness is curtailed; when I am hungry, my strength is sapped'. Yes, they could dance, but both happiness and war could be choreographed in dance. The beckoning: *Ndinde ndinde* choreographed anything but

⁹¹<http://youtube.com/watch?v=4xEpVwPUEg>

happiness. The audiences repeated it as an index of shared public opinion and unanimity in the critiques and vision espoused in the song right under the noses of power.

Dhewa's recorded version of 'Ninde Makorokoza' also specifies that, besides buying food, he needs money to buy '4-Corner', a suit and car so that he could be presentable among his colleagues and to ease his transportation blues, respectively. '4-Corner' is a colloquial reference to an appropriately shaped type of footwear that redefined the local masculine fashion world in the early 2000s. He edited out these references in the same way that many young men had done in the increasingly desperate hand-to-mouth economy of the mid-2000s; those items now constituted luxuries that many, particularly his *makorokoza* audiences from the ghettos of Kwekwe, had since dispensed with. Surviving through burrowing and tearing the bowels of the earth for small gold nuggets and dust – which they often sold to corrupt politician-middlemen to assure their freedom to continue their environmentally destructive trade – *Makorokoza* epitomized the wretched of the earth, the same people whose backs and faces provided Dhewa's script for 'Marengeny'a' (Rags), on the same album (see Chapter 6).

As Chiwoniso sings in 'In this life', Zimbabweans were at this time 'living for food and food alone'. In this context, then, Dhewa's images of children playing sweet little games, fathers singing 'It's now meat for braai' and mothers enjoying themselves at babyshowers were fast receding into the realm of nostalgia. Moreover, culling such nostalgic images of happiness and 'nomalcy' from a fading past could constitute critical commentary on a degenerative present characterized by all-pervading want. With basic necessities assured, children used to enjoy their games carefreely on pavements and open spaces with their mothers indulging themselves at babyshowers while their fathers whiled away time at soccer matches, egging their respective teams in friendly battle with the 'anthem' 'Yave Nyama Yekugocha'. These varied engagements constituted not only self-defined leisure, but also performances of self-conceived belonging, identities and citizenship. Such self-fashioned and spontaneous engagements are signs, sings Dhewa, that the homes and the country are, indeed, theirs. It is this 'civic pride' that ordinary Zimbabweans found themselves wanting in the new millennium, when, as Zhakata had

sung in 'Todya Tose' (Let's Eat Together), they had expected to celebrate the new era with a new ethos of equality and sharing.⁹²

But who is the *changamire* that Dhewa is addressing here? In its strictest sense, *changamire* refers to a ruler or authority figure. It would be redundant and dangerous for Dhewa to name *changamire*, because it means the same thing as president. At a Bindura campaign rally for the 2000 general elections, Mugabe castigated residents of Mbare, Harare's oldest suburb, as 'totemless', implying that they were not Zimbabweans because of their alleged alien extraction and 'unpatriotic' behaviour. Once labeled, Mbare residents and other underclass urbanites became constant targets of state violence, epitomized by Operation *Murambatsvina* in the winter of 2005, which mowed down their houses, trading stalls and informal industrial structures ostensibly to rid the towns of unsightly structures and alleged havens of criminality.⁹³ However, the victims themselves and observers believed that the real objective was to exact political revenge on and dissipate concentrations of perceived MDC supporters. In fact, the predominant way the government has governed the towns since 2000 has been through a series of these quasi-military 'operations' by the police, soldiers and party militia to enforce arbitrary directives, be it to lower commodity prices ('Operation Dzikisa Mitengo/Slash Down Prices'), to force young women off the streets at night ('Operation Chipo Chiroorwa/Chipo Get Married Now'), to suppress alluvial gold panning ('Operation Chikorokoza Chapera'/Snuff out Gold Panning), to imposing early evening political curfews ('Operation Chirara/Go to Sleep') and instituting ill-fated schemes to rehouse victims of *Murambatsvina* ('Operation Garikai/Live Well').⁹⁴ These campaigns initiated

⁹² L. Zhakata, 'Todya Tose', *Pakuyambuka*, ZMC, 1999.

⁹³ M. Chikowero, *Murambatsvina*, 'What Filth? Whose Filth? Exposing the Evil Hand behind Robert Mugabe's Demolition of Poor Zimbabwean Urbanites' Homes', Paper presented at the African Studies Seminar Series, Dalhousie University, 6 November 2005.

⁹⁴ In fact, no public endeavour seemed to have survived these 'operations', as even the disaster created by *hondo yeminda* spawned its own 'Operation Maguta'/Be Sated. The central bank's monetary and economic policies mostly rode on dead-duck operations like 'Sunrise 1 and Sunrise II, which sought to 'slash off' embarrassing zeroes from the free-falling currency and introduce new notes in August 2006. The latter 'operation', like all others, failed to achieve its set objectives, so that the central bank has been introducing larger currency denominations as the 'zeros hit back'; the latest arrival is a 500 million

cycles of wanton violence, coercion and destruction of property, displacement and disenfranchisement of thousands, including those born of parents who originally came from Malawi and Mozambique in the colonial era, who lost their citizenship. Thus, the same government that ‘farmed hunger’ for the nation also habitually and arbitrarily defined and redefined citizenship, withdrew freedoms and meted out unrelenting punishments on those it deemed ‘unpatriotic’. It is this self-arrogated authority and ‘rule by the pliers’ that Dhewa is interrogating in ‘Ndinge Makorokoza’.

Thus, in contrast to the government’s ideal of a nation sanitized of so-called ‘totemless’ people, Dhewa elaborates a counter-narrative of a nation made up of *marudzi ose* (all types of people) – those with and others possibly without (and still others who cared nothing about) totems. Shonas with prominent totems like *Mhofu yeMukono*, *Magumbo*, *Gurundoro*; Ndebeles like the *MaNcubes*; ‘SaManyikas’ from Mutare and the *Achimwenes* from Malawi are all *here* and are therefore Zimbabweans. These exemplars also include prominent ‘SaManyikas’ like Esau Mupfumi, a leading ZANU (PF) financier and official based in Mutare, ‘Achimwene’ William Kolela, a Harare businessman ranking together with their ‘Shona’ counterparts like Mutomba. These famous names cutting across ethnicities, together with *makorokoza* and *mahwindi* – those reduced to surviving on quick wit, are all *here*, despite ‘Operation *Murambatsvina*’ and ‘Operation *Chikorokoza Chapera*’. They are the *makorokoza* that Dhewa conversed with in the occasional chants and familiar dance routines at the Heroes Gala. Dhewa’s ‘Ndinge Makorokoza’ reasserts the humanity of people the government de-humanized as ‘maggots’ and ‘economic saboteurs’, stripping them of their humanity in order to crush and sweep them away in the frequent ‘operations’. He shares their everyday diction, which authorizes his music and authors a subaltern engagement in national dialogue with some domineering ‘visitors’ who often called them names and hunted them like rabbits whenever they independently exercised their vote. Like the ‘children of Kwekwe’ whose little innocent bodies the wily state turned into vectors for its messages, *Makorokoza* are also amongst the flowers nurtured by the bullets of the nation’s heroes. In fact, they are fathers and mothers of those little children. They share in and hold dear the foundational

bill. Similarly, the currency is not money, but ‘bearer cheques’ coming off the government printer.

identity of the country's struggle for self-determination. They seek equitable economic empowerment and *kutambanuka*, freedom – the levers of that goal. Reminding leaders to fulfill these common goals or lamenting their betrayal, then, can only be an expression of patriotism, rather than its negation. In fact, as a South African parliamentarian observed, Zimbabweans and those who supported their cause 'consider it a scandal that [these values] are now being undermined by the movement that struggled to achieve them'.⁹⁵ Mapfumo elaborated the argument candidly from across the oceans:

I didn't commit any crime. I am only telling ... people the truth about what is happening to their lives and ... their country. And this is no sin at all [yet] somebody call[s] people like us sell-outs, because I am not a member of Zanu PF. If I am a sell-out, what have you done yourself to improve the situation of the country? There [is] no investment; the economy ... is down. There is nothing [else] that people can talk about. Our money is just nothing today and yet people go on to say that those people who criticize the government are sell-outs. Who is a sell-out? You are destroying the country [so] you must be the sell-out!⁹⁶

The Shona proverb that Dhewa employs in 'Ndinge Makorokoza', *chisiri chako masimba mashoma*, is an ancient definition of patriotism. Loosely translated, it states the obvious, that one cannot possibly muster sufficient vigour to hold on to something that does not belong to them. Dhewa is arguing that patriotism requires no indoctrination camps; it is visceral, instinctive and self-defined, 'like that of a cockerel in its run, a dog's in its kennel or a bull's in its kraal'. It is manifested in how one comports and how s/he defers to time. Children enjoying sweet little games and parents gathered for communal pastimes are at ease both in space and time; they do not unduly rush and worry in the manner of a sojourner in a foreign land. It is a betrayal of some hideous scheme when whole government ministries pre-occupy themselves with teaching people how to express their belonging. When he beckons: '*pindai mudariro varume titambe*', Dhewa is performing patriotism, an inclusive patriotism that need not say its name, but expresses itself in the everyday idioms of leisure and registers of social interaction. He enacts that

⁹⁵ Zweledinga Pallo Jordan, 'Anti-imperialism no reason to subvert people's will', www.thezimbabwetimes.com, 20 April 2008.

⁹⁶ Thomas Mapfumo, Interview with Violet Gonda, *Short Wave Radio Africa*, 16 August 2005.

patriotism by inviting *marudzi ose* (all races and ethnicities) and classes (named and unnamed prominent citizens, nameless *mahwindi* and *makorokoza*) onto the stage, *dariro*, to dance. Through powerful rhetoric and ‘conversations’ with the audiences, Dhewa remoulds the *dariro* of the gala into a mosaic microcosm of the nation that at once competes with and rejects the state’s ideal of a monolithic and monologic entity.

Thus, Zimbabweans identify themselves in multiple threads that simultaneously encompass and defy compartmentalization into ethnicities, races, classes and generations. They can and do identify themselves in a variety of ways for various purposes, including politics. Contrary to Mugabe’s unreformed one-party-statist mentality, they did not see choosing a political party other than ZANU (PF) as ‘selling the country’. In a daring retort to such a careless charge, Dhewa declares that, ‘This, indeed, is our country; whom could we possibly give it to, my lord?’ Dhewa explained that he was asked by his late father in a dream to name his band *Utakataka*, which he subsequently found quite meaningful, ‘I sometimes take it from *kutakataka*, which means hitting something until it breaks into pieces or *ubuthakathaka*, from Ndebele, which means soft. I think both words do work for my music’.⁹⁷ They do, and very well as illustrated by this analysis of ‘Ndinge Makorokoza’. There can be no more candid and composed trashing of the state-sponsored exclusivist national imaginary than this blow-by-blow *kutakataka* – deconstruction – by the leader of an aptly named *sungura* band.

It is even more interesting that the song is quite self-conscious. It gives sufficient warning of what it can do to a canterkerous *changamire* who thinks wisdom resides in his head alone in the double-layered incantations: ‘*Iwe, iwe, iwe, unokuvara iwe!* (Hey, hey, watchout, you get hurt!), and ‘*Yahweh, ndakuona!* (Homeboy, I have seen you!). These are familiar trademark chants borrowed from Mtukudzi, one of his mentors, and Mapfumo, the grand old man of *Chimurenga* music, respectively. Together, the latter musicians virtually personify the trajectory of Zimbabwean music since the second half of the last century, having helped to rescue and redefine it from its early enchantment with western cover versions up to the 1960s, remoulding it into a potent weapon to liberate the country from the clutches of colonialism and inspiring its flourishing multiple idioms after independence. Openly disappointed with a lost revolution, they, particularly

⁹⁷ Tongai Moyo, quoted by Bertha Madhomu, ‘I am just a simple guy’.

the latter, bluntly refused to entertain autocracy, as many of their younger counterparts may be accused of doing. By invoking these torch bearers in his song, then, Dhewa is not confirming the *murondatsimba* taunt; he is leaning on voices bigger than his, to pay homage for the mentorship, legitimate his own voice and express solidarity with those whom the rulers have demonized and hounded beyond the borders for their different versions of patriotism.

While 'Ndinde Makorokoza' tackles the reigning state ideology's ethnic parochialism, it largely leaves the question of race to 'Zimbabwe', on the same album:

<i>Hazvina mhosva ini ndine ganda dema</i>	It doesn't matter that I have a black skin
<i>Hazvina mhaka iwe une ganda jena</i>	It doesn't matter that you have a white skin
<i>Hazvina mhosva iwe uri mupfumi</i>	It doesn't matter that you are rich
<i>Hazvina mhosva ini ndiri murombo</i>	It doesn't matter that I am poor
<i>Hazvina mhosva ndiri muranda wako</i>	It doesn't matter that I am your servant
<i>Chikuru chete tiri vedunhu rimwe</i>	The important thing is that we come from the same place
<i>Chikuru chacho tiri venyika imwe.</i>	The only important thing is that we belong to the same country.

Unlike in 'Makorokoza', 'Zimbabwe' clearly articulates the point in simpler language. Mugabe's attempts to distil the nation into some of its components cannot work.

Nevertheless, 'Makorokoza' itself revolves around the concept of *rudzi*, which encompasses ethnicity and race. Musicians do not always privilege the published text in live performances; they alter lines, words, whole stanzas and reconstitute them to deploy messages according to occasions, publics and changing contexts. As already pointed out, Dhewa did the same with 'Makorokoza' at this particular gala. Similarly, there is no reason to suppose that he could not vary his emphasis on the two levels of *rudzi* when he chose. Moreover, as a platform with its own particular dynamics, the galas were exploitable for making an argument, not to overstate it, particularly since they were presided over by certain audiences so obsessed with race that the idea sufficed as an alibi for every imaginable shortcoming. Besides, common wisdom on such platforms dictated the need to retain the artistic veil and some level of doublespeak, however thin, if only to allow sufficient room to outmanoeuvre the omnipresent thought police. In any case, the

time allocation at the galas allowed individual groups room sufficient only to sample their best hits to keep the audiences on their feet all night long. For Dhewa, allocated only about twenty minutes (against his politically disengaged rival, Macheso, who was given an hour at this gala),⁹⁸ 'Makorokoza' served his purposes well, so that he wrapped up his act with a gospel piece, 'Zakeyo', possibly to massage jangled nerves. It may be confirmation of this that the state press reported that Moyo wowed revelers with the latter song, but were mum on the former, which was equally, if not more resonant with the crowds.⁹⁹

'Tight Vibes': Denouncing Foolish Power

A rising star who grew up in Harare's low income suburb of Tafara, Willom Tight is one of the few young artists who have boldly sung their minds at a time when such independence has meant constant harassment and the risk of bankruptcy. Hailed as 'the Oliver Mtukudzi' of his generation, Willom has not just sung his mind, but he did so at the state galas, too, where most of his age-mates eulogized the authorities or steered clear of political engagement. His two songs, 'Piyo Piyo/Pijoti' (Peugot) and 'Babylon' make a critical intervention in the crises that have characterized the Zimbabwean political and economic terrain since 2000. As with his 'tight music' generally, 'Piyo Piyo' is characteristically located at the crossroads of idyllic communal life and versatile urban cultural idioms, deriving power from both templates to critique morbid contemporary political cultures characterized by avarice, exclusion and violence:

<i>Mumwe murume</i>	A certain man
<i>Ndokurohwa nemota</i>	Got hit by a car
<i>Mota yacho</i>	The car,
<i>Piyo piyo pijoti</i>	A piyo piyo piyo pijot (peugot)
<i>Piyo piyo piyo ...</i>	Piyo piyo piyo ...
<i>Piyo piyo piyo ...</i>	Piyo piyo piyo ...
<i>Mota yacho</i>	The car
<i>Piyo piyo pijoti</i>	A piyo piyo pijoti

⁹⁸ Trust Khoza, 'Heroesplush musical gala: a sizzling affair', *The Daily Mirror*, 8 August 2005.

⁹⁹ <http://youtube.com/watch?v=4xEpVwPUEg>

<i>Kumabvazuva enyika ino</i>	The eastern part of this country
<i>Ndokwandinobva</i>	Is where I come from
<i>Ndiri mwana wemuno</i>	I am a child of this country
<i>Mwana weZimbabwe</i>	A child of Zimbabwe
<i>Ngatisarovane</i>	Let's not beat each other up
<i>Ngatisakane</i>	Let's not fight each other
<i>Ngatisadzipane</i>	Let's not grab each other by the throat
<i>Vana vanyamunhu</i>	Children of the same person
<i>Zviri nani kutsikwa nemota</i>	It's better to be run over by a car
Accident!	Accident!
<i>Pane kurovana</i>	Than to beat each other up
<i>Nekukanana</i>	Or to assault each other
<i>Nekupondana</i>	And to murder each other
Murderer!	Murderer! ¹⁰⁰

The peugot is one car model that etched itself deeply into the humus of urban cultural symbolism in 20th century urban Zimbabwe to the extent that it became a metaphor for both the enchantments of urban modernity and its perils. Unexpected death under the wheels of the peugot could befall those who ventured into the 'concrete jungle' in search of its new attractions, but these were infrequent and a shock to bereaved communities as to be told and retold in stories to the point of getting canonized into folk elegies. Thus, young Zimbabweans grew up singing one such dirge to an anonymous man who suffered this unfortunate death: 'A certain man went to Salisbury to buy a bell bottom. On his way back, he was hit by a car, the car – a piyo piyo pijoti'. Such a song could also be sung as an ordinary ballad because, usually, nobody could personally relate to the death, making it a distant, bitter-sweet ballad.

Recalled and recast in the post-2000 context, the song makes a poignant political critique of the new condition whereby the specter of death has been summoned from its remote abyss of apersonal unpredictability into a banal political weapon directed against those stripped of the protections of citizenship by a once-upon-a-time icon of political

¹⁰⁰ Willom Tight and the Tight Family, 'Piyo Piyo' (Pijoti), *Hodzeko*, Bantu Entertainment, 2002. Willom dubs his music 'tight music', a mirror of Mtukudzi's label, 'Tuku music'. It is a potpourri of multiple stylistic strands, including *mbira*, jazz, ragga and other styles buoying both contemporary themes and pickings from the 'great family traditions' like The Mattaka Family, Mukadota and Family, the old generation to whom he pays much homage.

modernity, ZANU (PF). Writing on the xenophobic violence in contemporary South Africa, Suren Pillay noted that the colonial state distributed rewards and punishment along similar lines – one’s indigeneity or foreignness.¹⁰¹ As Mugabe’s post-2000 Zimbabwe (whose policies exposed citizens to such attacks) demonstrates, the post-colonial successor-state learned the lessons well and mimicks them, forcing some citizens to seek refuge in the same indigeneity caves, as Willom does in this song: ‘The eastern part of this country is where I come from’. His nativity claims become a shield that exposes the immorality of state violence against him simply because he lives in the abode of the ‘totemless’, the vulnerable ghettos. At the same time, however, by accepting the state’s codes for rewarding or punishing differently, the song fails to provide refuge to those who do not ‘come from’ some corner of ‘this country’. Nonetheless, its judgment is clear – a death caused by a *pijoti* is elegized and excused precisely because it is an accident, the price of modernity; that willed for political reasons cannot be elegized, but must be condemned as murder. Ironically, it is such wanton murders and politically engineered hardships that have driven citizens into ‘Babylon’, some to face xenophobic infernos directed at *makwerekwere* (foreigners), as Pillay observes in South Africa. The road to ‘Babylon’ beckons those who have been stripped of their birthright, as Willom sings, echoing Leonard Zhakata in ‘Rwendo Rwembiri’ (Troubled Journey) and ‘Warrior’ and Mapfumo’s wider exile repertory.¹⁰² As Zhakata sings in ‘Warrior’, the millions of Zimbabweans Mugabe frequently insults for opting to wash ‘old people’s bottoms’ in England and elsewhere chose to do so not because they love ‘Babylon’, but because they are escaping a derailed ‘revolution’ that is now devouring its children:

Anodiwa sekuru kure kwamuri uko

Ndinobvunza upenyu zvese nemabasa

Kubvira chiendero chenyu muchitiza kuurawa

Dear uncle in those far away
lands

I inquire after your health and
work

Since the time you fled from
threats on your life

¹⁰¹ S. Pillay, ‘A Picture of things to come?’ *The Cape Times*, 19 May 2008.

¹⁰² L. Zhakata, ‘Rwendo Rwembiri’, *Mubikira*; ‘Warrior’, *Hodho*. Mapfumo’s frustration with the betrayed dreams of independence have manifested in not just his own immigration, but also in several compositions that narrativize the mass exodus that has hit Zimbabwe, as pointed out in Chapters 4 and 5.

Kuno sekuru zviro zvakandiomera

*Dai zvaibvira maindirongera kabasa
Ndogouya ndoshandira ikoko*

*Kuno vakandisona
Vanoda ndiputike mwoyo neshungu*

*Vakandisunga mbiradzakondo
Vochinditi ngaamhanye navavo*

Akangokundwa chete shambadzai shoko

*Chave chikweya, zuru rakapinda nyoka
Akangokundwa chete ngatimurikite
Aimbozviti anorova samare.*

Things have been tough for me
here

If possible, secure me a job
So that I may come to work
there too

They persecute me daily here
They want to kill me with
frustration

They have gagged me
Then they say I must compete
with this one

If he loses the race, spread the
word:

'He is now a spent force'
If he is defeated, let's flog him
He used to boast that he is a
champion fighter.

Willom's 'Piyo Piyo' and 'Babylon', which thematically belong to a wider repertory, critique and contest not only the ultra-nationalist regime's version of patriotism, but also illustrate the fragility of a national project that flaunts sovereignty while driving away millions of its sons and daughters into the wilderness, only to prey on their 'remittances' for sustenance through shady government-run money transfer and investment schemes (or scams, such as Homelink).¹⁰³ But in a situation where institutions have become compromised, populations resort to the public sphere, be it to source or exchange foreign currency, or to author(ize) their voices. Thus, Willom did not worry that 'Piyo Piyo' 'will never be played' on radio:

¹⁰³ <http://www.homelinkzimbabwe.com>. Estimates put the figure for the Zimbabwean 'new' Diaspora since 2000 at 4 million. They are believed to send an estimated US\$100 million a month back home to keep their relatives alive. In a country boasting over 80 percent unemployment, about half the population now depend on the Diaspora dollar for survival. The remittances constitute 50 percent of the country's foreign currency earnings. See Geoffrey Nyarota, 'Exiled Zimbabweans can vote wherever they are', <http://www.nehandaradio.com/zimbabwe/nyarota/exilevote230108.html>. Initiated by the central bank, Homelink sought to harness these remittances with promises that Diasporans could access government loans to build homes underwritten by such remittances. In a hyperinflationary environment where the government also suppressed the exchange rate, many who bought into the schemes felt prejudiced as prices of building materials skyrocketed and the government loans lost value.

Because it belongs to live shows ... I unleash it at live shows, including at the four galas where I have performed. Once I start it, I usually don't even finish the first verse because people quickly snatch it: '... *mota yacho ... Piyo Piyo Piyo!* It is a good song; it's their song. It drives audiences mad! I sing all my songs at any platform without any worries at all'.¹⁰⁴

Like Dhewa, Willom has been able to project popular sentiments and expose ideological contradictions and the moral bankruptcy of a state that preaches sovereignty and a parochial patriotism to underwrite violence and drive dialogue underground. Such voices managed to come out at the galas because hegemony masks its violent aspects behind public perceptions of freedom of expression and mutual consent. That was the price the government paid for the continued patronage of popular and subtly politically-engaged artists.

'Gushungo is Innocent': Fooling and Disarming Power

Hosea Chipanga is perhaps the best example of a musician who has seized the state's apparatus, particularly the galas, to interrogate unjust power and parochial official monologues while authoring an independent artistic profile for himself. A self-proclaimed 'messenger of God' who regards music as primarily an avenue for discharging his mission, Chipanga delivers caustic critiques of power clothed in irony, analogy and metaphorical language buoyed by a repetitive, hypnotizing *sungura* beat. While his popularity soared by the 2000s with his regular performances at the galas, his 'political incorrectness' was also beginning to backfire as shady characters allegedly started to tail and threaten him.¹⁰⁵ If his music had always thrived on elements of socio-political 'incorrectness' and philosophical complexity, crises-smitten Zimbabweans had begun to listen to him with a keener ear by the time he released *Musikavanhu* (The Creator), his 15th album, in 2005. Laden with songs like 'Sodoma neGomorra' (Sodom and Gomorra), 'Mutorwa' (Foreigner) and 'Hutano Hwedu' (Our Health System), which decried 'Operation *Murambatsvina*', partisan and vindictive economic policies like *hondo yeminda* and collapsed health and other public infrastructures, respectively, this album brought Chipanga more squarely into the orbit of the state's repressive machinery.

¹⁰⁴ Willom Tight, Interview.

¹⁰⁵ Hosea Chipanga, Interview, 14.

In 'Sodoma neGomorrah', Chipanga employed the biblical analogy of Noah to argue that when God decided to destroy the world, he gave his people both sufficient warning and time to build themselves an ark. As the Vambes argue, 'analogy uses a different context to comment on the present condition ... It Extends the frontiers of meaning by sometimes refusing to name the source of social discord in open ways'.¹⁰⁶ In highly Christianized Zimbabwe, such analogies form a common moral reference. Thus, Chipanga did not need to mention either the flood, 'Operation Murambatsvina', or the ark, 'Operation Garikai' (Live Well) that, for some, arrived too late and, for most, was simply sucked away by the undertow:

Noah akavaka ngarava
Mvura isati yanaya
Yakazosara yonaya
Noah apinda mungarava

Mati nditange ndanyura
Mozovaka ngarava
Sarai zvenyu mugarike
Zvandanyura ndaenda ini
There is no return. ...

Noah built the ark
 Before the flood rain came
 By the time it rained
 Noah had already taken refuge in the
 ark
 But you want me to drown first
 Then you build me an ark
 Live in peace
 I have drowned, gone
 There is no return. ...

According to a UN report, the government destroyed shelter for at least 700 000 families across the country, and deprived at least a million others of their livelihood through 'Operation *Murambatsvina*'.¹⁰⁷ Many of those swept by Mugabe's *tsunami*, as Zimbabweans referred to the tragedy, have not yet recovered. As Chipanga sings, they drowned and burned together with what the government portrayed as Sodoma neGomorrah. Six months after *Murambatsvina*, Chipanga was amongst the 'cream of Zimbabwean musicians' invited to perform at the Unity Gala in the resort town of Victoria Falls, now cleansed of its once bustling curio tourist markets that had sustained thousands of self-employed locals. Narrating how he composed 'Sodoma neGomorrah' in

¹⁰⁶ Maurice and Beauty Vambe, 'Limits of Official Censorship', 68.

¹⁰⁷ Anna Kajumulo Tibaijuka, 'Report of the Fact-Finding Mission to Zimbabwe to assess the Scope and Impact of Operation Murambatsvina by the UN Special Envoy on Human Settlements Issues in Zimbabwe', United Nations, July 2005; M. Chikowero, *Murambatsvina*, 'What Filth?'

his hotel room on the eve of that 22nd commemoration of the nation's 'unity', Chipanga relived the emotion that he had battled:

'Sodoma neGomorra' came to me in a sort of a vision. I was able to relate the vision to an incident in Marondera (cries)... where a man had his house smashed and was left in the open, with his wife and children. Then the wife went to look for alternative shelter to rent while he remained behind with the children. When the wife came back (sobs emotionally), she found her husband gone; only the children remained. She looked around for him, and found him dead. He had committed suicide ... because he had decided that it was better to die than to be deprived of his family's shelter. That incident came back and spiritually engulfed me, prodding me for my point of view.¹⁰⁸

Chipanga confidently performed the song as a common bible story, yet, to the perceptive, the message could not be missed: 'how do they build us an ark ('Operation Garikai') when we have already drowned?'¹⁰⁹ In fact, as he observed, months after the people were displaced, all that remained were unsightly heaps of rubble and dilapidated structures, suggesting that the people, and not the structures, had been the 'filth'.¹¹⁰ This makes sense of the widely-held perception that, like *Gukurahundi* in the 1980s, *Operation Murambatsvina* was politically motivated. In both cases, the victims were constructed as 'chaff', 'dirt' or 'maggots' to justify the punitive action.

Similarly, in 'Mutorwa' (Foreigner), Chipanga takes a jab at the same hypocritical leadership that unleashed their insatiable palate for luxurious life-styles in ill-planned *hondo yeminda*, leading to the destruction of the productive sectors of the economy in the name of self-serving sovereignty:

Zvamati munoda mazai
Motodaka nehuku
Mazai ihuku, huku inokandira mazai
Zvamati munoda mukaka
Motodawo nemombe
Zvamati munoda huchi
Motodawo nenyuchi
Huchi inyuchi, nyuchi ndihwo huchi

You say you want eggs
So you have to love the hen also
Eggs are the hen, the hen lays the eggs
You said you love milk
You then have to love the cow too
You have said you love honey
So you have to love the bee as well
Honey is the bee, the bee is the honey

¹⁰⁸ Hosea Chipanga, Interview, 18.

¹⁰⁹ Hosea Chipanga, Interview, 18.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

When you need foreign currency
You need foreigners
No foreigner no foreign currency
Zvimwe zvinoda mutorwa

Some of these things need a foreigner

Zvawati unoda kuwana
Wototora wokunze

You said you want to marry
You have to marry from outside the
family

Haungatori wemumba
Ndomakunakuna aya

You cannot marry your sister
Otherwise it would be incestuous
taboo

Zvimwe zvinoda mutorwa

Some things require a stranger.¹¹¹

For twenty years, the ‘revolutionaries’ had failed to utilize the knowledge produced in the country’s agricultural schools to plan a meaningful and equitable agrarian reform.

Because the white farmers finally chose to deliver not just the honey but the sting as well – backing the MDC – the government was startled into a zero sum land reform and ultra-nationalist stance that not only smashed the nation’s food and foreign currency sources, but also steered the nation onto an isolationist path. The consequences were nightmarish.

The same knowledge even informs the country’s cultural mores – nobody marries within their clan, hence the historically indispensable place of the stranger (*mutorwa*) in the

Zimbabwean family institution. Otherwise, in the Vambes’ words, the Zimbabwean

leaders’ self-isolationist path is tantamount to ‘an incestuous relation with the self

[which] is deplored in African lore as taboo’.¹¹² As Chipanga sings in ‘Hutano Hwedu’

(Our Health System), it is the poor who die in hospital queues while the few remaining

health workers are out for tea, or because of the lack of common drugs. They also bear

the pain of the myopic ‘rule by operations’, betraying a clueless leadership that has

‘failed to end poverty and is now bent on finishing off the poor instead’.¹¹³

Chipanga satirically illustrates another indication of the leaders’ cluelessness in ‘Kutendeuka’ (Turning Around):

Hapachisina munhu ari kutendeuka

Nobody is converting now

¹¹¹ Hosea Chipanga, ‘Mutorwa’, *Musikavanhu*, RTP, 2005.

¹¹² M. and B. Vambe, ‘Limits’, 70.

¹¹³ Hosea Chipanga, ‘Hutano Hwedu’, *Musikavanhu*.

<i>Asi kuti tave kutenderera</i>	Otherwise we are making an about-face
<i>Ukambotendeuka, wozotendeuka, Wakambotendeuka Wava kutenderera</i>	When you turn, and turn around again When you once turned around You are making an about-face
<i>Hapachisina munhu ari kubhabhatidzwa Asi kuti tave kubhabhadzirwa</i>	Nobody is being baptized now In reality, we are being patted (on the back)
<i>Ukambobhabhatidzwa, wozobhabhatidzwa</i>	If you were once baptized, then you get baptized
<i>Wakambobhabhatidzwa Wave kubhabhadzirwa</i>	When you were once baptized You are now being patted. ¹¹⁴

Chipanga pairs the idioms of Christian salvation, *kutendeuka* and *kubhabhatidzwa*, conversion and baptism, respectively, with their semantic relatives, *kutenderera* and *kubhabhadzirwa*, making an about-turn and being patted on the back, to demonstrate the evaporation of faith in the liberatory power of such ideological ritualism. The gospel of liberation through political independence and economic empowerment delivered from above has been caught up and ritualized into a constantly repeated falsehood by electioneering politicians. The result of this parody, as the Vambes put it, is that ‘what is left is that sterile formalism that borders on cheating, patronage, and the delusion about the sweetness of freedom as the masses are silenced or patted on the back ([ku]bhabhadzirwa).¹¹⁵ Politically, the ritualization seeks to disempower the ruled, to make them eunuchs who cannot help themselves but look up to the messianic leaders for deliverance. Economically, this circumambulation characterized the central bank governors’ dizzyingly unending monetary statements and economic ‘turn around’ programmes, which yielded nothing but ballooning inflation and threats to ‘economic saboteurs’ because they were based on ‘political promissory and bearer notes’, rather than genuine planning.¹¹⁶ The result, as Chipanga sings in another piece, ‘Zvipfukuto’ (Weevils), Zimbabweans lost confidence in the banks, the lifeblood of the modern economy. One could no longer bank their hard-earned money because the next time they

¹¹⁴ Hosea Chipanga, ‘Kutendeuka’, *Musikavanhu*.

¹¹⁵ M. and B. Vambe, ‘Limits’, 69.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

returned to withdraw it, they would find it 'chewed up' or even 'vanished' altogether as inflation and service charges soared.¹¹⁷

Meanwhile, the government had sought to perfect the art of *kubhabhadzira* the nation into a slumber through the music carnivals. But as we see in these examples, it was not every musician who meekly aided the government in massaging the nation with lies. In fact, Chipanga approached the galas from a different perspective altogether:

I understand those galas better than their organizers. Those galas don't belong to the state, but they are influenced by the spirits of the departed, otherwise how does a government that has abandoned critical development work like unfinished dam projects really have a heart for this? They may be seeing these functions in their own way, but *ishamhu yavari kuzvisetera iyi* (it is a whip they are setting themselves up for); the dead continue to live. Rather than minister to the organizers, when I sing at such functions, I am ministering to the late heroes whom they are purportedly commemorating; they have forgotten why they died.¹¹⁸

With his esoteric third eye, Chipanga saw this *shamhu* (whip) drawing nearer each day for ZANU (PF); he believes *Murambatsvina* made it irrevocable: 'The day of *Murambatsvina* was the day people bid ZANU farewell. What is left is only for them to pack and go, but the time is up. There is no government of the people that destroys people's shelter; that's impossible!'¹¹⁹

Chipanga has been so bold in his critique of ZANU (PF) that he even sang a funerary dirge for the president at the 2005 Heroes Gala in Kwekwe. The song, which he has not recorded, declared: *ndarota mambo vafira pachigaro* (I dreamt the king had died on the throne). This implied either one of two things, that the president would only relinquish power to death (as Mugabe himself would subsequently declare in the aftermath of his post-March 2008 presidential election defeat by Morgan Tsvangirai), or that a geriatric who claimed to have the 'bones of a 30-year old' had, in fact, died in the dream.¹²⁰ Chipanga had clearly crossed the line, prompting the ruthless Central Intelligence Organization (CIO) officers to drag him backstage after his performance for

¹¹⁷ Hosea Chipanga, 'Zvipfukuto', *Vapange Chipanga*, Video, 2006.

¹¹⁸ Hosea Chipanga, Interview, 17.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹²⁰ ZimOnline, 'Secret agents quiz musician over Mugabe jibe', 12 August 2005

stern warnings that he should stop his ‘frivolous lyrics’ and anti-Mugabe songs or else both he and his songs would disappear.¹²¹ These warnings were repeated and followed up with visits at home and phone calls and demands that he submit song lists for performances at the government-sponsored galas.¹²² The musician remained unperturbed, sticking to the common line that ‘I am not a politician, but an entertainer’ whose works are subject to misinterpretation by listeners. At the same time, he was also convinced that his music was making the right impact:

People were beginning to regard me as anti-government and many were thinking I was an MDC supporter. I also know that the CIO were beginning to trail me to see if what I was singing was related or influenced by opposition (MDC) ideas, but they saw that I never attended their meetings; I was a gong that was playing its own independent tunes. They have all my records; and they censor them – that much I know. And even the radio DJs; there are some tracks that they never get to play, and others which they cut off before they play out the critical sections.¹²³

Chipanga’s test of resilience would come when he was invited to perform at a 2006 May Day function organized by the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) in Harare. He was threatened and forced to withdraw. He told the South Africa-based *ZimOnline*:

I was supposed to perform at Gwanzura today ... but I will not be able to do so due to threats I have been receiving through my phone. I’m not quite sure who is phoning me but I have been phoned by three different voices warning me not to perform or lose my life ... Though I know I would be safe during the performance, my life would be at stake afterwards.¹²⁴

The ZCTU Secretary General, Wellington Chibhebhe, condemned this ‘abuse of power by Mugabe’, arguing that ‘Chipanga is an artist who speaks for the voiceless’.¹²⁵ The state does not gain much more than a bad name by simply gagging creative popular voices. Thus, historically, abuse of power has also manifested in efforts to co-opt popular

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

¹²² *Ibid.*; Hosea Chipanga, Interview, 16.

¹²³ Hosea Chipanga, Interview, 16.

¹²⁴ ‘Musician pulls out of May Day function after death threats’, *ZimOnline*, 2 May 2006.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

civic voices into the service of the state. For professional artists and those who regard themselves as fighters for freedom, such co-optation can spell the end, as it almost did for Mapfumo in the Zimbabwe-Rhodesia episode (Chapter 4), or in the way the *hondo yeminda* music project virtually destroyed Simon Chimbetu, Andy Brown, Taurai Mteki and Tambaoga, among others. Chipanga has had to deal with similar pressures.

In February 2006, the 21st February Movement, a group that organizes Mugabe's birthday celebrations, approached the then Mutare-based Chipanga with a request for a special composition for the president's 82nd birthday function to be held in the border town. He agreed, even at the very short notice. He composed 'Gushungo Havana Mhosva' (Gushungo is Innocent), which he performed for the president and his courtiers on 21 February:

*VaMugabe vane munyama
Kupihwa mhosva isiri yavo*

*Zvinhu zvaoma
Mukati Gushungo matirasa*

*VaMugabe vanopa njere ndodzatisina
Zvawaiba mari kubhangi
Wakange watumwa nani?
Upfu uchiendesa kuMoza
Wakange watumwa nani?
Chibage uchiendesa Zambia
Wakange watumwa nani?
Shuga uchiendesa kuZambia
Wakange watumwa nani?
Dhiziri kupihwa wotengesa
Wakange watumwa nani?
Fetereza kupihwa wotengesa*

*Wakange watumwa nani?
Mapurazi mashanu mashanu
Wakange watumwa nani?
Zvinhu zvaoma
Mukati Gushungo matirasa*

Gushungo vanopa

Mr. Mugabe has bad luck
To be charged with a crime that is not
his
Things have become tough
And you say Gushungo you have
neglected us
Mr. Mugabe gives, but we lack brains
When you stole money in the banks
Who had sent you?
Taking mealie-meal to Moza[mbique]
Who had sent you?
Taking maize to Zambia
Who had sent you?
Smuggling sugar to Zambia
Who had sent you?
You were given diesel, which you sold
Who had sent you?
You were given fertilizer, which you
sold
Who had sent you?
Five farms each
Who had sent you?
Things are now tough
And you charge that Gushungo has
neglected us
Gushungo gives

Zimbabwe was mired in a crippling scourge of corruption that included the hoarding of farms, illegal export of scarce essential foodstuffs, looting and resale of subsidized fuel meant for the resettled farmers and abuse of depositors' money in speculative activities, all perpetrated by the 'big fish' and the politically connected. On the surface, Chipanga's song absolved Mugabe of the rot afflicting the nation, blaming it on his lieutenants instead. One observer noted that this 'presidential birthday gift' shocked ministers, members of parliament and other high ranking party functionaries when Chipanga first performed it, forcing them to 'cast down their eyes in shame'.¹²⁷ A newspaper columnist, CZ, made similar observations when Chipanga took the stage during the closed door 2006 Independence Gala at the HICC:

Although CZ is a patriot, it is surprising that he didn't get a ministerial invite to the Independence Musical Concert at the HICC, so, like other nobodies in this country, he had to sit in front of his TV set the whole night. There was one incident CZ didn't understand. Was it by coincidence that when maverick *Sungura* musician Hosaya Chipanga started his song 'Gushungo' whose message revolves around corruption of all forms . . . multiple farm ownership, fuel abuse, bank lootings etc, some of the overzealous deputy ministers who had been on the dance floor quickly returned to their seats? Was it mere coincidence? We ask this because behind some of these junior ministers are collapsed banks, kick-back scandals, and nepotic appointments!¹²⁸

CZ's question was, of course, rhetorical. In fact, after the president's birthday function, Chipanga was assaulted by one prominent Mutare businessman and ZANU (PF) financier who was amongst those briefly 'arrested' but quietly released for the government fuel abuse. The harassment, in addition to his expanding fan base, forced Chipanga to relocate to Harare.¹²⁹ Chipanga had anticipated this backlash, but he was glad to have breached the hedges and take a direct shot at power. Like others who had suffered censorship, he

¹²⁶ Hosea Chipanga, 'Gushungo Havana Mhosva', *Gushungo*, RTP, 2006. Gushungo is the Mugabe family's totemic praise name.

¹²⁷ Tazzan Mandizvidza, personal communication, 12 November 2006, Harare.

¹²⁸ CZ, 'CZ's Notebook', *Financial Gazette*, 27 April 2006.

¹²⁹ Hosea Chipanga, Interview, 15; C. Riva, Interview, 9.

believed that *kukaba datya kuriyambutsa* – if you kick a frog, you have helped it to move faster:

I first performed it there in front of the president. Had I tried to release it in the usual way, before I had played it for the president, I am sure even the recording companies would have refused to record it. It wouldn't have seen the light of day, but because I first sang it there in front of the president and his courtiers, they were bamboozled speechless! I just dropped the bomb there in front of the president, and it was no longer possible to shut it out; the message had already been conveyed. Otherwise that song would have suffered a still-birth and the president wouldn't have heard it. That is how a lot of things don't get to him; they are shut out by his lieutenants. They screen out what they feel is undesirable ... and so, after some reflection, I took the invitation as an opportunity to deliver that sort of message.¹³⁰

For good measure, Chipanga also delivered copies to the president's office after recording the song as part of a new CD. In return, he received the president's publicly expressed compliments for the 'thought-provoking' music.¹³¹

Observing these unusual consortments, many people were baffled by 'how quickly Chipanga had joined the gravy train'. For instance, after marveling at how 'Gushungo Havana Mhosva' had very publicly stung some politicians off the dance floor at the HICC, CZ ended his observations with some good advice for Chipanga:

CZ would like to warn Chipanga that if he wants to remain the good musician that he is, he should be careful about his choice of people to sing praises to . . . otherwise in no time he could be listening to his own music alone . . . he should ask Tambaoga, Dickson Chingaira, Andy Brown, the late Simon Chimbetu and such other musicians who got carried away. He should not say he was not warned!¹³²

But had Chipanga become a 'praise singer' overnight, as CZ and also Elizabeth Dhliwayo, charge?¹³³ Such an argument betrays a superficial reading of Chipanga's text and the kinds of power plays that underlay it. Firstly, 'Gushungo Havana Mhosva' is a

¹³⁰ Hosea Chipanga, Interview, 10.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*

¹³² CZ, 'Notebook'.

¹³³ Elizabeth Dhliwayo, A Critical Study of the Praise Singer Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow, MA Dissertation, University of South Africa, 2007, 21-22.

very slippery slope; it is doubtful Gushungo would be too happy to play it even for himself in his own house. The song celebrates Gushungo's heroism – exhibited through free-for-all farms, fuel and open contracts to access grain and other essential commodities – all of which went one way, to his lieutenants, who proceeded to abuse them. Thus, when Chipanga says 'we lack brains', he is using the collective identifier 'we' no more than as an artistic device that gives him special licence to criticize as an insider like salt which would otherwise be too bitter to savour separately from the relish. It is a rhetorical withdrawal from the moral high ground so that, like the *sahwira wenyika* (courtly jester) that he proclaims himself to be, he could temporarily adorn and parade the lice-ridden garb of his friend to shame him publicly and force him to clean up his act. It does not mean he holds every Zimbabwean, including himself, accountable for the despicable actions of certain public culprits exacerbating their hardships.

Secondly – as Chipanga himself also wondered after accusations that he had sold out – how could anybody climb a pedestal to proclaim the heroism of a father and chastise the latter's children as a gang of villains in the same breath? This is the irony of *kurova imbwa wakaviga mupinyi*, the art of beating with one hand and caressing with the other that Chipanga's critics fail to appreciate:

That's where the 'children' were hoping that they would see their father jumping for my throat. But that's God's work; he had seen that the barrel was on my head and he gave me 'Gushungo'. But if you listen closely, it's only that song that held the wolves at bay; otherwise most of the tracks there show no shift. After *Musikavanhu*, those people had been waiting for my next release with a gun cocked at my head. One young man told me: 'Surely, God helps you. A gun had been pointed at your forehead because of *Musikavanhu*'. He actually sympathized with the old man, saying, 'Ah, even the president himself got cheated; can't he see this is a smokescreen? This person has been singing the naked truth all this while, and is only patting him on the back [*kumubhabhadzira*] to blind him?' You managed to outwit the old fox. And some were saying 'Chipanga was given a house and a car by Mugabe, but that did not happen. Perhaps he had such intentions but later realized and said, 'Ah, *skelemu!* (Traacherous!).'¹³⁴

If 'Gushungo Havana Mhosva' massaged the president into blindness against the song's doublespeak, 'VaFarisi' (Pharisees), 'Njere Shoma' (Lame Minds) and

¹³⁴ Hosea Chipanga, Interview, 14.

'Chokwadi' (Truth) gave him a reality check, betraying Chipanga to be the same unreformed *skelemu*. 'VaFarisi' castigates politicians for their open deception – 'their donating of fishing kits to mountain dwellers so they may eat fish', promising people 'bridges where there are no rivers' and 'trains where there are no railway lines'. The people had grown weary of sweet words by this particularly common tribe, sings Chipanga. Many Zimbabweans remember a little ritual broadcast on TV in the early 1990s, when the late Minister of Transport, Enos Chikowore, ceremoniously 'broke the ground' to commission the construction of the 'Chitungwiza Railway Line'. Together with the phantom Tokwe-Murkosi Dam and the Matabeleland Zambezi Water Project, the Chitungwiza train would occasionally creep out of cupboards at each election. 'Njere Shoma' takes a bird's-eye-view of the 'Zimbabwe Crisis', rhetorically probing whether 'it was willed by the Heavens' like some natural disaster or it emanates from 'lame minds'. Lame minds were on display in mid-2007 when ZANU (PF)'s highest decision-making body, the Politburo, commissioned a 'high powered delegation' comprising ministers Didymus Mutasa, Sydney Sekeramayi and Kembo Mohadi, police and air force commissioners, governors, chiefs and other 'experts' to ascertain claims by a 34-year-old bogus female traditional healer, Rotina Mavhunga, that she had discovered pure diesel oozing from a rock in Chinhoyi, purportedly a gift from the country's ancestors. The Chinhoyi University of Science and Technology certified the 'find' and government vehicles duly fueled from the rock amid much pomp and vociferous jubilation in state media and government circles, which saw a panacea for all the country's woes.¹³⁵

The introspective 'Chokwadi' demonstrates the musician's thought processes, namely, an artist quietly reflecting on the events before, during and after the composition and public performance of 'Gushungo Havana Mhosva'. Where *Musikavanhu* had set him on a life-threatening collision course with the thought police, the cleverly packaged *Gushungo* earned him a spot under the protective wing of the highest office. One of the spy agents informed him that the president had told them that, 'If it's Chipanga, let him

¹³⁵ *The Herald*, 'Ministerial Task Force to Probe Chinhoyi 'Diesel' Find', 1 June 2007; New Zimbabwe.com, 'How ministers fell for a hoax', 8 January 2008. The cunning woman had drilled some pipes through the rock into a fuel tank placed in a cave, a stunt that won her a farm, billions of dollars and other favours from the government and individual ministers.

sing what he wants because he sings the truth'.¹³⁶ It is likely, however, that Gushungo had chosen to read the song conveniently, in line with its composer's superficial scheme, to deflect blame from himself to those around him. In any case, the outcome was favourable for Chipanga, and it emboldened him, as he declares in 'Chokwadi':

<i>Pandinoimba vamwe vanofara</i>	When I sing some get entertained
<i>Pandinoimba vamwe vanosuwa</i>	When I sing others get depressed
<i>Nokuti chokwadi, ndozvoita chokwadi</i>	That's what truth does
<i>Pandinoimba vamwe vanotamba</i>	When I sing some dance
<i>Pandinoimba vamwe vanogaya</i>	When I sing others think deeply
<i>Nokuti chokwadi</i>	That's the truth
<i>Vamwe chinovatambisa</i>	It makes one dance
<i>Vamwe chovagaisa</i>	And another ponder
<i>Ndozvinoita chokwadi</i>	That's what truth does
<i>Pandinoimba vamwe vanopembera</i>	When I sing some rejoice
<i>Pandinoimba vamwe vanosungika</i>	When I sing others feel aggrieved
<i>Nokuti chokwadi</i>	That's the nature of truth
<i>Mumwe anopembera</i>	It makes one marvel
<i>Mumwe zvomusungira</i>	While another grieves
<i>Ndozvinoita chokwadi</i>	That's what the truth does.

Chipanga passes as somebody who closely observes his audiences, those who find his music edifying; those who marvel at his dare-devil frankness; those who are offended by it and seek revenge and those he pities – like the drunken crowds who get carried away by the bewitching guitar works and lose the message at the frenzied galas.¹³⁷ A closer analysis of 'Gushungo Havana Mhosva' illustrates that, far from 'selling out', the song and album epitomize the musician deeply engaging power in a very artistic and candid way, successfully managing conflict in ways that saved his career and possibly his life as well.

¹³⁶ Hosea Chipanga, Interview, 16.

¹³⁷ Chipanga, Interview, 18.

'UMaskili Wethu Gala': Parodying Power

Some observers condemned the galas as domains of immorality and debauchery, patronized by people who lack self-respect. Cont Mhlanga spoke for many in this regard when he emphatically argued that, 'It costs \$60 million now to put out a gala, one gala that is going to have young people drinking, spreading HIV/AIDS; and you are saying we are building our youth. Everyone who comes to that venue is one night of a wasted life!¹³⁸ Reporting on the aftermath of the March 2005 'Youth Hangout Bash' at Avondale Shopping Centre, the *Standard* observed that:

Long after everybody had left the show, the trendy shopping centre sadly looked like the Mbare market place, with used condoms littered all over and the unmistakable pungent smell of urine hanging in the air. The unfortunate prevalent habits at all such shows of fighting, marijuana smoking and debauchery happened in full view of passive security officials.¹³⁹

Needless to say, such debauchery – and reported cases of looting during the gala – was, of course, unrelated, if not contrary, to the 'cultivation of a culture of patriotism in young people, the preservation of the country's independence, its sovereignty and territorial integrity'. As already noted, the youthful crowd also booed sloganeering ministers and ruling party functionaries. Thus, as those officials and others elsewhere discovered to their horror, crowds gyrating high on alcohol and drugs often constitute an enigma for authority. The carnivalesque space and mood created by the galas were conducive, in varying degrees, for celebrating, disregarding, interrogating or satirizing power. Some of the youthful artists who performed at the galas, such as Maskiri, personified, more than anything else, disdain for authority. An 'Urban Groover' (in)famous for his bawdy rapping, Maskiri has had most of his works rejected by both record companies and the radio. Not unlike many of his colleagues who fell victim to the censor for their political abrasiveness, Maskiri has thrived on controversy, taking advantage of the galas to showcase the 'skills' implied by his name. For example, he performed songs like 'Madam Mombeshora', which eulogizes the feminine anatomy of his 'sugar mummy' at the 2005 Heroes Gala in Kwekwe. One newspaper reported: 'Controversial rapper,

¹³⁸ C. Mhlanga, Interview, 20.

¹³⁹ John Mokwetsi, 'Musical gigs merely campaign platforms'.

Alishias Musimbe a.k.a Maskiri or Skilaz limbed on stage on clutches [sic] and did the humorous piece *Madam Mombeshora* that was well received by the young generation present'.¹⁴⁰ The Harare rapper had picked up the injuries from a near fatal fall several storeys from an apartment in an altercation, reportedly over a married woman; he went on to eulogize the mishap in his songs.

Maskiri's repertory is steeped in the generational pre-occupations of youthfulness, subverting the moralizing discourses of the older generations. But more importantly, it also often lampoons the official construction of the galas as platforms for eulogizing power. Thus, his 44-second piece, 'UMaskili Wethu Gala', which mimicks the TV promos advertizing the galas, represents both a parodying and an uncharitable view of the galas as a celebration of moral bankruptcy and debauchery, promising revelers a good time with 'Comrade Jerry Mujibha', 'Chimbwido Diana' 'Gidiguru' (Big gun) and others, plus lots of *mbanje* (marijuana), beer and *kachasu* (an intoxicating illegal home brew) at 'Zvekukiyakiya' Stadium. The 'promo' fades into a '*Chimurenga*' jingle: '*kugara musango ini ndaneta; ini ndaneta maiwe ini ndaneta*' (I am tired of life in the bush; dear mother, I am really tired).¹⁴¹ By 'lining up' his own imaginary 'gala' with marijuana-smoking and *kachasu*-drinking 'comrades', *mujibhas* and *chimbwidos* (young male and female reconnoiters and information purveyers during the liberation war) and invoking long gone memories of the liberation war, Maskiri caricatures the men and women who climb a pedestal to trumpet their heroic acts and therefore their exclusive right to rule the country. His portrayal of 'heroes' and 'heroines' re-enacting their heroism at the fictitious 'Zvekukiyakiya' Stadium paints a nation that has lost direction because a comedy of errors, *kukiyakiya* – scrounging – has replaced well-defined socio-economic policies. It has become a nation of *kachasu* and *mbanje*-drugged *makorokoza* masquerading as heroes. The rulers are morally worse than Kwekwe's *makorokoza* because they have caused the mess; they are now monopolizing the remaining rich veins of the nation's lifeblood. The irony of their invocation of liberation war memory, then, is that the leaders are setting themselves up for public judgement against the ideals of the

¹⁴⁰ Trust Khosa, 'Heroesplush musical gala: a sizzling affair', *Sunday Mirror*, 8 August 2005.

¹⁴¹ Maskiri, 'UMaskili Wethu Gala', *Mad Maskiri*, 2006.

liberation struggle, which their rule has undermined and prostituted. Thus, in some ways, Maskiri represents the Zimbabwean youth who has escaped ZANU (PF)'s ideological 're-education', clothing his interrogation of power in rather subtle satire.

Summary

Coterminous with their 'Third *Chimurenga*', the ZANU (PF) nationalist revivalists introduced the national musical galas to counter an increasing disaffection with their governance in the new millennium. The galas sought to ritualize and carnivalize the nation's Second *Chimurenga* memory as ZANU (PF) memory and legitimize their exclusive right to rule. Thus, ZANU (PF) sought to use the galas as an avenue to physically and emotionally reach an estranged electorate through a popular medium, music, to author and authorize a partisan monologue through music and political speechifying. In practice, however, the galas illustrated the limits of the power of the state to command and commandeer musicians, their works, iconography and crowds to perform nationalist monologues and political conformity. First, its intentions were contested and fractured by the power of music, musicians and audiences who held different outlooks and political persuasions and therefore either refused to attend the galas or attended but generated a counter-discourse that destabilized the patriotic monologue author(iz)ed by the state. In practice, therefore, the galas may be seen as contested platforms, a microcosm of the nation where competing, rather than monolithic narratives were performed, demonstrating the limits of the power of the state to author and authorize its own versions and visions of national memory, history and the future.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

This dissertation has illustrated how Zimbabwean music has served as a potent force in the construction and contestation of identities, power and political legitimacy in both the colonial and post-colonial periods. It explores how a European colonizing discourse that constructed and (re)presented Africans as primitive tribes due for 'civilization' informed urban colonial policies towards Africans. It demonstrates that, unlike white missionaries who had largely sought to ban African musical performances because of the competing religious and moral symbolisms they exhibited, colonial administrators and early ethnomusicologists valued and sought to nurture it along 'tribal' lines. To the state and its agents, 'tribal dances' confirmed African primitivity and thus worked to legitimize its separate development ideology, its shorthand and alibi for unfair, race-based labour practices, spatial segregation, neglect, discrimination in the provision of social amenities and political disenfranchisement. Thus, Chapter 2 argues that Rhodesia's African cultural policy revolved around the Native Social Welfare scheme, which was geared to promote urban African social life centred on community halls as segregated, sanctioned and controllable spaces. The policy's privileging and instrumentalization of entertainment and sport summed up the state's thinking and approaches to African urbanity. This analysis concurs with Turino's argument that missionaries' assault on African culture did not exterminate indigenous musical traditions. However, it argues that his conclusion, based on this evidence, that the Rhodesian state supported indigenous music is analytically superficial. The colonial state sponsored only particular strains of African performance with specific agendas in mind, and those agendas determined the methods used. Of course, as in most colonial situations, such policies often produced unintended and even contrary outcomes.

The study further problematizes the notion of state support by demonstrating the variety of ways in which Africans responded to the Native Social Welfare policy and new cultural modernity. They variously embraced, resisted, ignored and appropriated aspects of both for their own purposes in ways that illustrate the dialectical power of performance culture as an instrument of and weapon against oppression. It cannot be overemphasized that Rhodesia's gamut of legal and extra-legal control mechanisms, including the

hegemon of 'Native Social Welfare', failed to entirely control African self-expression, creative resistance and the imagination of cultural and political alternatives. As Chapter 3 has demonstrated, many chose their own physical and cultural leisure templates beyond both the community centres and the 'tribal' schema that sought to confine or fossilize them into a vaunted 'tribal', primitive 'Other'. It is through this logic that the study transcends the designation of those Africans who adopted 'western' modes of expression and cultural symbolism as mentally colonized, as some cultural scholars insist. The dissertation argues that those Africans who appropriated western cultural symbols and tools did so to re-imagine alternative identities for themselves, unmake themselves out of the marginality of a discordant colonial modernity and explore new futures in a cataclysmic historical moment during which they dealt with new problems with no ready solutions. It is not surprising, then, that quite often their chosen tools for breaching the socially constructed boundaries of inclusion and exclusion entrapped them in ethnocentricisms, power asymmetries and ambiguities with which they were not always sufficiently equipped to deal.

Apart from appropriation, resistance was a third broad cultural disposition open to Africans. Musically, threads of cultural resistance against colonialism and colonial hegemony manifested in early protest and *Chimurenga* songs. My study makes an attempt to trace this oppositional and resistance sensibility from the underclass entertainment lifestyles and leisure activities revolving around the criminalized 'tea parties', *mahobho* carnivals to protest and *Chimurenga* songs sung by teachers, students and villagers in the early colonial decades and by professional musicians and guerilla choirs by the 1960s-70s. It was particularly this thread that the colonial state had variously worked to stymie and control over the decades, especially as cultural nationalism progressively became a more dominant influence in African cultural performance. As a radicalizing sensibility, cultural resistance inspired the liberation effort that would dislodge white minority rule in 1980. Contrary to some arguments in existing scholarship, anti-colonial resistance as a musical theme has a traceable ancestry predating the rise of mass nationalism, which this dissertation has attempted to illustrate. A deeper analysis of this particular theme requires a separate study. The dissertation shows that because performative culture is a domain of continuous struggles over the production

and articulation of meaning, power and legitimacy, the colonial state remained wary even of the 'tribal dances' that it sponsored, fearful of their ability and potential to propagate subversive or oppositional meanings. Thus, the study questions both the idea that the resistance idiom in pre-independence Zimbabwean music is attributable to elite sponsorship after the formation of mass nationalist political parties and the too common reification of the collaboration-versus-resistance binary. One reason for the obstinate tension between the two culturo-political dispositions is that their margins tend to be fluid.

The study also demonstrates that *Chimurenga* and resistance music helped to re-imagine and re-fashion African identities beyond colonial representations and to anticipate an alternative socio-political order. This musical engagement with power and society did not end with independence in 1980. If anything, the dialectical relationship between power and culture persisted as power asymmetries reconfigured or new fault lines emerged. The study demonstrates that, at independence, Zimbabwe's rulers followed their colonial predecessors by co-opting music to fashion new socio-political relations between themselves and the ruled in the name of championing a 'socialist' culture and a popular, participatory development ideology, *gutsaruzhinji*. But far from instituting a 'democratic socialist culture', as state functionaries claimed, this study argues that the government sought to legitimize new hegemonic relations between the rulers and the ruled based on the reification and often deification of power, not its critique. Nonetheless, as had been the case before independence, in practice, such hegemony never denoted complete control. Popular musicians struggled to reclaim their autonomy and hold rulers to account for abuses and betrayal of the popular dreams of independence. Symptomatic of such betrayal was the persistence of a neo-colonial economic structure which, for instance, ensured the gross exploitation of musicians by multinational recording companies and exposure to broadcasting policies that favoured foreign musicians over locals.

Moreover, the dissertation demonstrates that since its establishment primarily for propaganda purposes during the Second World War, electronic broadcasting has not shed that principal function. The radio has been perhaps the single most important technological instrument shaping musical construction and propagation of meaning.

Thus, the two closing chapters illustrate how the ZANU (PF) government harnessed music and tightened its media monopoly to cultivate an ultra-nationalist identity that uncannily mirrored the vanquished Rhodesian dream of perpetual minority rule. The study argues that policies that were passed ostensibly to promote the country's musicians, such as the local content policy and the decentralization of radio stations, were exploited for overtly political ends by the ruling party. Such use of the broadcasting services polarized the country's music along broadly two political lines, those seen as sympathetic to the government and those who dissented. The broadcasting authority promoted the former, which was approved as patriotic, and suppressed the latter as unpatriotic. Thus, for the first time in independent Zimbabwe, music became a powerful tool for the propagation of partisan definitions of citizenship. The government's ultra-nationalist musical rhetoric utilized the trope of land dispossession-repossession to define indigeneity and entitlement, creating strangers and enemies to be dispossessed and scapegoated.

The study further argues that it was for the purposes of promoting this parochial view of the nation that the government started the national musical galas in 2001, invoking the names and memories of some of the nation's liberation heroes and national sites for symbolic capital. Government functionaries and mostly commissioned singers publicly propagated the 'Third *Chimurenga*' as ZANU (PF)'s ultimate fulfillment of the dream of independence at the galas. However, demonstrating the power of song, many musicians subverted those purposes and transformed the galas from monologic spaces into a domain of struggles over competing narratives of the nation. They successfully used these platforms to project their own subaltern voices, even as they had to constantly struggle to maintain their autonomy against subterfuges by the state. It is in this light that the study has argued that the galas cannot be reduced to their intended purposes or dismissed as government functions, as some writers have done. In practice, the galas were contested platforms, akin to a microcosm of the nation itself where competing, rather than monolithic, narratives were performed, demonstrating the limits of the power of the state to author and authorize its own versions and visions of national memory, history and the future over those of other players.

In a context of technological advances that have simultaneously rendered national borders culturally irrelevant and symbolically powerful, Zimbabweans have deployed music to defeat both the tyranny of time and distance in ways that have stretched the state's mechanisms of control to the limit. Thus, while the ultra-nationalist project disenfranchised millions of Zimbabweans and scattered many beyond its borders, many regrouped into a vocal diaspora which – thanks to advanced communication technologies – has provided important outlets for otherwise suppressed musical voices, opinions and social activism, all of which have variously impacted developments within the country. Songs and opinions that are suppressed within the country are broadcast on Zimbabwean web-based radio stations and internet discussion fora around the globe. The theoretical frame adopted in this study, subalternity, captures these historical, continuing and multivalent struggles over identities, meaning and power constructed and contested through music and other performative cultures.

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