

ZANU(PF) STRATEGIES IN GENERAL ELECTIONS, 1980–2000: DISCOURSE AND COERCION

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ABSTRACT

For many analysts, the general election campaign in 2000 showed a new face of the ruling party, ZANU(PF). Against the new opposition party, the Movement for Democratic Change, ZANU(PF) engaged in violence and intimidation, often relying on youth and war veterans, even as it accused its opponents of subversive violence. Moreover, ZANU(PF) appealed to its liberation war credentials, while dismissing its chief opponents as puppets of British imperialism and reactionary white settlers. After the election, President Mugabe appealed for reconciliation between winners and losers, only to permit violence against those who had voted against the ruling party. For ruling party perpetrators of violence, there was impunity and later a presidential pardon. The purpose of this article is to demonstrate how the ruling party used remarkably similar strategies in every general election since 1980, notwithstanding striking differences in the contexts, issues, and nature of the chief opposition party. Given this well established pattern of ruling party violence and intimidation and characterization of opposition parties as illegitimate, the article seeks to understand why analysts repeatedly saw in the regular multiparty elections either a democratic system or one that was amenable to democratization.

... as clear as day follows night ... ZANU-PF will rule in Zimbabwe forever. There is no other party besides ours that will rule this country. (Prime Minister Mugabe, January 1982)¹

ZIMBABWE IS SCHEDULED TO HOLD A GENERAL ELECTION IN MARCH 2005. The chief opposition party, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), has made its participation contingent on President Mugabe's ruling party, the Zimbabwe African National Union (Patriotic Front) [ZANU(PF)], removing repressive media and security laws, ending political violence, opening equal access to the media, and establishing impartial electoral

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1. William H. Shaw, 'Towards the one-party state in Zimbabwe: a study in African political thought', *Journal of Modern African Studies* 24, 3 (1986), p. 376 citing Prime Minister Mugabe as quoted in *The Herald*, 18 January 1982.

institutions. The MDC is demanding that ZANU(PF) meet the regional norms and standards for democratic elections that the Southern African Development Community (SADC) approved in August 2004. It is unlikely that ZANU(PF) will comply. At the time of writing, its draft bill to establish an independent electoral commission promises another partisan institution, and its new bill to regulate non-governmental organizations seeks to end foreign funding of human rights and governance projects, to ban foreign organizations which engage in any way in such projects, and to place civic organizations under intense government surveillance. ZANU(PF) continues to engage in political violence against its opponents and in a polarizing discourse in which it depicts itself as the democratic and revolutionary force and the MDC as British-sponsored, anti-democratic, subversive and reactionary.

This article highlights two strategies that ZANU(PF) has deployed in every general election, regardless of its context, issues and contestants, to maximize its power. Organized violence and intimidation of the opposition, albeit of varying intensity, has been a recurrent strategy of the ruling party before, during and often after elections to punish constituencies that dared oppose it. Youth has been an important instrument of ruling party violence. The perpetrators of election violence have enjoyed impunity, often buttressed by presidential pardons and amnesties. Besides coercion, ZANU(PF) has also engaged in a political discourse that demonizes its key opponents as reactionary, subversive, and often stooges of whites and/or foreigners. By missing or discounting the significance of these electoral strategies, most election studies were able to portray Zimbabwe as conforming to a democratic model of multiparty politics or to believe that the ruling party was susceptible to democratizing pressures, whether internal or external.²

It is important to clarify the argument and specify the scope of the article. The argument is not that the ruling party has won general elections solely through coercion and a discourse about the illegitimacy of its key opponents. Rather, the article makes the point that analysts of general elections have ignored or downplayed the ruling party's use of these electoral techniques, thereby missing an historical pattern and permitting misleading characterizations of, and prognoses for, the political system. Other important ruling party electoral strategies and tactics — such as the use of presidential powers, repressive laws, gerrymandering, media control, partisan electoral institutions, state financing of parties, and patronage — lie outside the purview of the article, as do the internal weaknesses of the opposition parties. Also excluded from this analysis is the role of ruling party discourse and coercion in local elections, presidential elections, primary elections, and even in general elections vis-à-vis minor opposition parties.

2. See footnotes 11–13, 60–66, 110–113, 149–156, 180–186.

The focus on ruling party discourse and coercion vis-à-vis its major party opponent in general elections is thus illustrative rather than exhaustive.

The article is organized chronologically, beginning with the first independence election in 1980 and moving through subsequent general elections, held at regular five-year intervals up to the 2000 election. For each election, there is a discussion of the general context, issues, major contestants and results, an examination of the ruling party's election discourse and coercive practices, and a critique of the assessments and prognoses in studies of the election. The objective is to highlight patterns in electoral discourse and coercive practices that analysts generally failed to recognize as core characteristics of the ruling party. Because the discourse and violence of the general election in 2000 received considerable public attention, the emphasis is on the earlier elections.

The 1980 election

The transitional election took place in February 1980 under the ongoing state of emergency and martial law. The election was provided for in the 1979 Lancaster House agreement which formally terminated the liberation war. The settlement (re)instated a British governor to preside over the interim administration and to supervise the elections, using the Rhodesian administration. Under the settlement terms, the Commonwealth Observers' Group (COG) had the authority to decide whether the elections were 'free and fair'. The new constitution reserved a disproportionate 20 out of 100 parliamentary seats for whites, while 8 African parties contested the remaining 80 seats. Africans and whites voted on different days and on separate voters' rolls, though both used party lists and proportional representation. The most important parties contesting the common roll seats were the incumbent Prime Minister Muzorewa's United African National Council (UANC) and the two liberation movements, Robert Mugabe's ZANU(PF) and its Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (ZANLA), and Joshua Nkomo's ZAPU and its Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA). Ian Smith's Rhodesian Front (RF) party won all 20 seats reserved for whites. Mugabe's ZANU(PF) won 57 out of 80 seats and 63 percent of the vote, giving him the authority to form a government. The Patriotic Front, the name by which ZAPU contested the election, won 20 seats and just over 24 percent of the vote, and the UANC, despite the South African government's financial largesse, won only 3 seats. The results were approved by the COG and the many other observer groups as a valid expression of the people's will.³

3. For an overview of the 1980 election, see Liisa Laakso, *Voting Without Choosing: State making and elections in Zimbabwe*. Acta Politica No. 11 (Department of Political Science, University of Helsinki, 1999), pp. 36–45, 47–52.

During the 1980 election, the inter-related issues of cease-fire violations and electoral violence and intimidation preoccupied all political parties, the British interim administration, and the election observers. Mugabe attributed both the failure of significant numbers of ZANLA guerrillas to assemble after the cease-fire and their intimidation of the electorate to security force aggression and intimidation.⁴ The COG endorsed Mugabe's view.⁵ In contrast, the British Observer Group (BOG) claimed that ZANU(PF)/ZANLA had violated the cease-fire by instructing many of its armed guerrillas not to go to identified assembly places but rather to stay in their operational areas, where they worked with their war-time youth collaborators to maintain the party's military and political dominance.⁶ Years later, ZANU(PF) leaders verified that the guerrillas who did not assemble had been operating on the leadership's instructions and admitted to having infiltrated most of its guerrilla forces after the ceasefire in violation of the settlement.⁷ The BOG also maintained that 'the most frequent and brutal acts of intimidation had taken place in the ZANLA-dominated areas',⁸ and found that the methods of coercion against voters

extended from brutal 'disciplining murders' as examples of the fate awaiting those who failed to conform, to generalised threats of retribution or a continuance or resumption of the war if the ZANU(PF) failed to win the election; to psychological pressures like name-taking and claims to the possession of machines which would reveal how individuals had voted; and to the physical interdiction of attendance at meetings. The universal longing for peace, and the ambience of recent violence, made the threats of general retribution or a continuance of the war a potent weapon even in the hands of unarmed activists, since it was independent of the secrecy of the ballot.⁹

4. *The Report of the Commonwealth Observer Group on Elections Leading to Independent Zimbabwe: Southern Rhodesia elections, February 1980* (Commonwealth Secretariat, London February 1980), p. 31; *Report by the Group of Independent British Observers Appointed by the United Kingdom Government: The Rhodesian election 1980, in Report of the Election Commissioner Sir John Boynton, MC: Southern Rhodesia independence elections 1980*, Cmd. 7935 (HMSO, London, 1980), p. 12.

5. *Report of Commonwealth Observer Group*, pp. 31–33, 35.

6. *Ibid.* p. 11. The ceasefire agreement provided for each guerrilla army to send its forces that were inside the country at the time of the cease-fire into 16 assembly places — four were located in the center of the country, the rest were in the rural areas. The guerrillas were to gather in these assembly places with their arms and under their commanders. For contention over the assembly process during the ceasefire negotiations, see Norma Kriger, *Guerrilla Veterans in Post-War Zimbabwe: Symbolic and violent politics, 1980–1987* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2003), pp. 43–45.

7. For the orchestrated cross-border infiltration of ZANLA guerrillas in violation of the cease-fire and the failure of large numbers of ZANLA guerrillas to assemble, see Susan Elizabeth Rice, 'Commonwealth initiative in Zimbabwe, 1979–1980: Implication for International Peacekeeping', Ph.D. thesis (Oxford University, 1990), pp. 61, 83, 161–2, 200–1; *Report of British Ministry of Defence on the Commonwealth Monitoring Force* (n.d.), pp. 25–6, 68; Josephine Nhongo-Simbanegavi, 'Zimbabwe women in the liberation struggle: ZANLA and its legacy, 1972–1985', Ph.D. Thesis (Oxford University, 1997), p. 262.

8. *Report by Group of Independent British Observers*, p. 13

9. *Ibid.*, p. 11.

In the aftermath of the election, despite the official policy of reconciliation, the ruling party's one-party mentality was evident in its political discourse and use of coercion. ZANU(PF) used the state media to promote only its war contributions and war songs, and used its party slogans and symbols at the first celebration of Heroes' Days and at the viewing of the first two national heroes' bodies. At rallies, ZANU(PF) slogans denigrated ZIPRA, ZAPU, and Joshua Nkomo and their role in the armed struggle, including denouncing them as 'oppressors'. ZAPU's vice-president complained in April 1980 that his followers in urban townships around Harare were innocent victims of ZANU(PF) who claimed that ZAPU had no right to exist after ZANU(PF) had been elected to power, or that it should exist only in Matabeleland. ZANU(PF) was accused of forcing people belonging to other parties to join it. In June 1980 Minister Enos Nkala came out in support of a one-party state and soon afterwards told a ZANU(PF) rally that the party's task was to 'crush Joshua Nkomo'. Soon after, Minister Tekere, also ZANU(PF)'s secretary-general, told a rally that he had been trying to depose Nkomo since 1961 and that the behaviour of the 'Nkomo group' tempted him to consider the desirability of the one-party state. In September 1980, Joshua Nkomo, then Minister of Home Affairs, complained that ZANU(PF)/ZANLA refused his police force access to certain areas.¹⁰

For several reasons, scholars did not take seriously ZANU(PF)/ZANLA's use of violence and intimidation to win power in the 1980 election. Firstly, they attributed ZANU(PF)'s electoral victory to its effective guerrilla mobilization and organization of popular support and to its claim that it alone could bring the peace so desperately desired by the population.¹¹ Also, they generally dismissed the British emphasis on ZANLA violence as a biased attempt to discredit Mugabe's party. Consistent with these dispositions, neither Martyn Gregory nor Lionel Cliffe and his co-authors showed any interest in the British governor's concerns about ZANLA violations of the ceasefire. Instead, they remark in passing on the relatively large numbers of guerrillas who did assemble.¹² Similarly, rather than confronting ZANLA ceasefire violations, Tony Rich justified them:

it was necessary for ZANLA cadres to stay out of the assembly points to protect their supporters, but it was also a vital part of ZANU(PF)'s strategy, given the possibility

10. Kriger, *Guerrilla Veterans in Post-War Zimbabwe*, pp. 75–7.

11. Lionel Cliffe, Joshua Mpfu, and Barry Munslow, 'Nationalist politics in Zimbabwe: The 1980 elections and beyond', *Review of African Political Economy* 18 (1980), pp. 44–67; Tony Rich, 'Legacies of the past? The results of the 1980 election in Midlands Province, Zimbabwe', *Africa* 52, 3 (1982), pp. 42–55; Martyn Gregory, 'Zimbabwe 1980: Politicisation through armed struggle and electoral mobilisation', *Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics* 19, 1 (1981), pp. 62–94; Masipula Sithole, 'The general elections 1979–1985' in Ibbo Mandaza (ed.), *Zimbabwe: The political economy of transition 1980–1986* (Codesria, Dakar, 1986), pp. 84–5.

12. Gregory, 'Zimbabwe 1980', p. 70 and Cliffe *et al.*, 'Nationalist politics', p. 58.

of an air strike against the assembly points. By keeping a guerrilla presence among the rural population ZANU(PF) ensured that the gains made over the long years of armed struggle would not be eroded; and it also allowed them the opportunity to intensify their campaigning.¹³

In short, analysts' perceptions of ZANLA's popular support during the war and of ZANU(PF) as a victim of British machinations and security force violence meant that they failed to observe ZANU(PF)/ZANLA's strategies of pre-emptive aggression to win power. The predisposition of these analysts towards ZANU(PF) is strikingly similar to the pro-ZANU(PF) proclivities of the COG. Like the numerous observer reports, studies of the 1980 election ignored post-election politics, thus limiting opportunities to understand the ruling party's agendas and strategies. Election studies, in sync with other writing at the time, paid no attention to the amnesty and pardon which Governor Soames granted for all pre-independence political criminal acts, including election violence.¹⁴

The 1985 election

For the 1985 election, the government had to prepare the common voters' roll and delimit constituencies, for which there had been no time in the 1980 election. Delays in these preparations led to the postponement of parliamentary elections from March to June–July 1985 and parties had only nineteen days to campaign. ZANU(PF) campaigned on its positive performance and promoted a one-party state; ZAPU called for multiparty politics, the rule of law, and economic liberalization.¹⁵ Zimbabwe did not invite official international observers and only one foreign team, along with several Zimbabwean groups, monitored the election.¹⁶ The continued state of emergency was justified in terms of the need to eliminate armed dissidents, chiefly ex-ZIPRA guerrillas in Matabeleland and the Midlands. The dissidents, never exceeding 400 in number, engaged in unspeakable acts of brutality, targeting ZANU(PF) officials and innocent civilians, but the government's massive counter-insurgency campaign, directed not only at the armed dissidents but at all Ndebele and ZAPU members, killed orders of magnitude more innocent civilians. In a mere six weeks in early

13. Rich, 'Legacies of the past?', p. 47.

14. *Reparation for Torture: A survey of law and practice in 30 selected countries (Zimbabwe country report)* (REDRESS, London May 2003), p. 8, footnote 37; p. 14, footnotes 76 and 77. URL: <http://www.redress.org/publications/Audit/Zimbabwe.pdf>.

15. Christine Sylvester, 'Zimbabwe's 1985 elections: A search for national mythology', *Journal of Modern African Studies* 24, 1 (1986), pp. 229, 241; Laakso, *Voting Without Choosing*, pp. 103, 105, 107–8.

16. Millard W. Arnold, Larry Garber and Brian Wrobel, *Zimbabwe: Report on the 1985 general elections. Based on a mission of the Election Observer Project of the International Human Rights Law Group* (International Human Rights Law Group, Washington, DC, February 1986), p. iv; Larry Garber, 'Zimbabwe's 1985 elections', in *Zimbabwe: Report on the 1985 general elections*, pp. 2–3.

1983, Fifth Brigade killed at least 2,000 civilians in Matabeleland North; in the entire conflict, according to government figures, the dissidents killed about 700–800 civilians.¹⁷ In the common roll elections which were held in the first four days of July, ZAPU (then called PF-ZAPU) lost 5 seats but held 15, all in Matabeleland. ZANU(PF) gained an extra 7 seats for a total of 64 and won 77 percent of the registered vote — a higher percentage than in 1980. Overall turnout — voters as a percentage of those registered — declined from about 84 percent in 1980 to between 70 and 80 percent.¹⁸ Whites voted on 27 June, and Ian Smith's Conservative Alliance of Zimbabwe (CAZ), the re-named Rhodesian Front, won 15 of the 20 reserved seats for whites, the Independent Zimbabwe Group (a 1982 break-away group from CAZ) won 4 seats, and an independent secured 1 seat.¹⁹

ZANU(PF) was determined to defeat ZAPU in the Midlands, the only province where there had been significant vote-sharing with ZAPU in 1980, and in Matabeleland, where ZAPU had won 15 of the 16 seats. The party deployed systematic violence against all Ndebele civilians, ZIPRA ex-combatants, and ZAPU officials months before the elections, ostensibly because they supported dissidents. Some of the most severe rioting against opposition supporters occurred in the last half of 1984 in the Midlands and in Matabeleland. Thousands of Ndebele civilians in these provinces were coerced to buy ZANU(PF) cards, and hundreds were forcibly taken by buses to ZANU(PF) party rallies. The sequence of events was often the death of a local ZANU(PF) official, allegedly killed by a dissident, followed by ZANU(PF) youth being bused into an area and then going on the rampage, burning houses of suspected ZAPU supporters and sometimes beating the occupants, even to death. The police were reportedly instructed not to interfere. ZANU(PF) governors of the Midlands and Matabeleland South and other senior ZANU(PF) officials often made speeches to encourage violence against ZAPU supporters.²⁰ In the first four months of 1985, violence and intimidation of suspected opposition supporters

17. *Breaking the Silence. Building True Peace. A report on the disturbances in Matabeleland and the Midlands 1980 to 1988* (Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace in Zimbabwe and Legal Resources Foundation, Harare 1997), pp. 39, 47–8.

18. Anthony Lemon, 'The Zimbabwe general election of 1985', *Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics* 26, 1 (1988), p. 7. Garber, 'Zimbabwe's 1985 elections', p. 48 estimated voter turnout to be in the 90 percent range. For early signs of an anti-ruling party urban vote, see Laakso, *Voting Without Choosing*, p. 116; Sithole, 'The general elections 1979–1985', pp. 75–97; Lemon, 'The Zimbabwe general election of 1985', p. 16.

19. Lemon, 'The Zimbabwe general election of 1985', p. 17.

20. *Zimbabwe: Wages of war. A report on human rights* (Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, New York, 1986), pp. 115–20. Mugabe also dismissed the last two ZAPU Cabinet ministers (Cephas Msipa and John Nkomo) in retaliation for what he said was ZAPU's involvement in the killing of a ZANU(PF) Senator in Beitbridge in November 1984. Four ZAPU Central Committee members (Sydney Malunga, Angelina Masuku, Molly Ndlovu, Norman Zikhali) were subsequently detained; all but one (Masuku) remained in detention without charge during the election.

continued.²¹ At least 80 ZAPU officials and ZIPRA ex-combatants were abducted and then disappeared, and scores of homes of suspected ZAPU supporters were looted and destroyed. ZANU(PF)'s Youth Brigade was reported to be actively involved in forcibly busing villagers to party rallies and ordering them to vote for the ruling party. Local ZAPU party offices were attacked, and by the time of the election, outside Bulawayo, virtually every urban and rural ZAPU office had been closed or burned out.²²

Permission for rallies by opposition parties was often denied and, if permitted, the rallies often were attacked by ZANU(PF) youth.²³ In January 1985 demonstrators, many armed with clubs, sticks, and axes, led Joshua Nkomo to abandon his campaign tours in Masvingo and Mashonaland.²⁴ In Mashonaland West, the provincial party chairperson, also the Deputy Minister of Energy and Water Resources and Development, warned Nkomo 'not to visit the province while the murder of ruling party officials by dissidents was still fresh in people's minds'.²⁵ Mugabe blamed ZAPU, reportedly saying that he 'regretted that demonstrations in the past two weeks by [his supporters] had become violent, but . . . Zapu . . . had provoked Zanu-PF members'.²⁶ In February 1985 ZAPU reportedly cancelled meetings in Harare, Hwange and Victoria Falls because of potential disruption by armed opponents or lack of police for control purposes. The same month 3,000 ZANU supporters confronted 1,000 ZAPU supporters at a ZAPU rally in Kwekwe.²⁷ Much of this violence was reportedly organized by ZANU(PF)'s Youth Brigade leaders who were ex-ZANLA combatants.²⁸ Though restrictions on permits for meetings were relaxed in early June, ZAPU continued to experience problems. For impromptu outdoor meetings of up to 20 minutes, no authorization was needed, but in June 1985 Joshua Nkomo's attempt to hold such an event was cut short when local demonstrators drove him and his entourage out of the area.²⁹

Fearing that the elections would be tainted by continuing violence, Mugabe and other top officials rebuked those who were forcing people to join the party or to attend rallies. On 16 February 1985, Prime Minister Mugabe said: 'There appear to be some groups of youths who, contrary to

21. *Zimbabwe: Wages of war*, p. 121 describes the pre-election violence in 1985.

22. David Cauter, 'Mugabe brooks no opposition', *The Nation*, 31 August 1985, p. 141.

23. Millard Arnold, Larry Garber and Brian Wrobel, 'Law group summary of findings and conclusion', in *Zimbabwe: Report on the 1985 General Elections*, p. viii.

24. Brian Wrobel, 'Intimidation, political freedom and the common roll', in *Zimbabwe: Report on the 1985 General Elections*, p. 32, footnote 16; pp. 36-7, footnote 48.

25. *Ibid.*, pp. 36-7, footnote 48.

26. *Ibid.*, p. 32, footnote 16.

27. *Ibid.*, p. 32, footnote 16.

28. *Ibid.*, p. 14. On ex-combatant leadership, see Masipula Sithole, 'Zimbabwe's eroding authoritarianism', *Journal of Democracy* 8, 1 (1997), p. 132.

29. Wrobel, 'Intimidation', pp. 18-9.

party discipline, are going about harassing innocent people. I would rather have no members of the party than members who are coerced.³⁰ Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation reported that army troops had been sent to Mutare in the first week of April 1985 to impose order on ZANU(PF) youth who were forcibly evicting opposition party supporters from their homes even after warnings from the ZANU(PF) provincial party chairman. On the same broadcast, Maurice Nyagumbo, the ZANU(PF) secretary of administration, appealed to ‘all victims of political harassment and violence to report to the police immediately’ and said: ‘No one should be forced to join Zanu(pf)[sic] or attend party meetings or rallies. It is not party policy.’³¹ In June 1985 Nyagumbo’s prepared remarks for a rally were read by the deputy secretary for welfare:

Don’t disturb the minority party supporters and don’t fight them during the election campaign because we want these elections to be free and fair and we don’t want the supporters of the minority parties and their leaders to have any excuse to call the elections unfair when they lose . . . Do not force them to join Zanu-PF because after the elections they will have no option but to join Zanu-PF as it is the majority and all their parties will have lost.³²

In April 1985 there were attempts to blame youth violence on ‘pseudo-party members’ and ‘impostors’, and, at odds with appeals for non-violence, leaders asked the youth to ‘flush them out’.³³ Official appeals for restraint led to a decline in reports of violence against ZAPU between April and June 1985.³⁴ Dissidents’ violent activities, designed to attract ZAPU votes, also declined dramatically in the two months before the election.³⁵ Nevertheless, sporadic violence against ZAPU continued right up until the election.³⁶

ZANU(PF) leaders continued to make threatening speeches in the brief campaign. Mugabe himself threatened in June those who dared vote for the opposition. In Bulawayo, he asked a rally: ‘Where will we be tomorrow? Is it war or is it peace tomorrow?’ At another Matabeleland rally, he told the crowd at Lupane that if they voted for the ZANU(PF) candidate, ‘I will come and congratulate you and thank you. If you do not vote for him, I will still come back to you and I will ask your comrades, where are you now?’³⁷ At a Tsholotsho election rally, he reportedly said: ‘If you vote for Zapu, you are voting to support dissidents. Zapu will lose, and then where

30. *Zimbabwe: Wages of war*, p. 123, citing *International Herald Tribune*, 9 March 1985.

31. *Ibid.*, p. 124; see also Wrobel, ‘Intimidation’, p. 16 who says the warnings of the provincial party chair had been ignored.

32. Wrobel, ‘Intimidation’, p. 17.

33. *Ibid.*, p. 38, footnote 52, citing *The Herald* (Harare), 15 April 1985, p. 16.

34. *Zimbabwe: Wages of War*, pp. 123–4.

35. *Ibid.*, pp. 125–6.

36. *Ibid.*, pp. 124–5.

37. *Ibid.*, p. 133; Wrobel, ‘Intimidation’, pp. 22–3.

will you be?’³⁸ In late June, Reuben Zamura, the ZANU(PF) candidate for Magedwe, Matabeleland, told his audience: ‘Voters . . . will have to choose between death and life. Voting for PF-Zapu meant the people want war . . ., voting for Zanu-PF meant the people want peace. . . . If you vote for PF-Zapu you vote for death, and if you vote for Zanu-PF you vote for life.’³⁹

Mugabe was disappointed that ZAPU had retained 15 of the 16 Matabeleland seats. Almost immediately after the polls closed, violence flared up again, spurred on by Mugabe’s advice to his supporters to ‘go and uproot the weeds from your garden’,⁴⁰ and his depiction of Nkomo and ZAPU as ‘enemies of the country’.⁴¹ At a Chitungwiza rally days after the election, Mugabe reportedly said: ‘. . . it is now time to strike the bushes in the fields with your clubs . . . Take the rotten pumpkins out of the patch.’⁴² During three days of the worst violence of 1985 in Harare’s high density suburbs,⁴³ mostly ZANU(PF) women attacked ZAPU supporters’ homes and declared them ZANU(PF) property. Two ZAPU candidates were attacked, one fatally. There were reports of police having been instructed not to interfere with the ruling party supporters. On the third day of rioting, six ZANU(PF) Central Committee members, including two ministers, went to Chitungwiza to appeal to the rioters to stop. Only then did the police intervene. Mugabe made no public appeal during the three days of violence; a week later he made his only public statement on the violence at a meeting in Highfield, calling it ‘unfortunate and out of step with party principles’ but also warning those who remained ‘unrepentant’ after his party’s election victory that ‘things will get tough’.⁴⁴ In the months after the election, at least 200 ranking ZAPU officials and supporters were detained, including five MPs, all the Bulawayo city councillors, and eight high-ranking ex-ZIPRA army officers. All but a few were held without charge, most for a few weeks, and many after being tortured. Amnesty International reported increases in torture after the 1985 election.⁴⁵

In the last week of August 1985, ZANU(PF) youth, reportedly backed up by armed officers of the Special Police Constabulary, wrought havoc in Silobela and Lower Gweru districts in the Midlands, apparently in

38. Katri Pohjolainen Yap, ‘Voices from the Matabeleland conflict: Perceptions on violence, ethnicity, and the disruption of national integration’ (Unpublished paper, St Antony’s College, Oxford University, 1996), p. 12, citing *Washington Post*, 7 July 1985.

39. Wrobel, ‘Intimidation’, p. 38, footnote 50, citing *Sunday News* (Bulawayo), 30 June 1985.

40. *Breaking the Silence*, pp. 62–3.

41. Caute, ‘Mugabe brooks no opposition’, p. 145.

42. Wrobel, ‘Intimidation’, p. 24.

43. Caute, ‘Mugabe brooks no opposition’, p. 145 indicates that rampaging occurred simultaneously in the Midlands.

44. *Zimbabwe: Wages of war*, pp. 127–8.

45. *Ibid.*, pp.126–32; *Breaking the Silence*, p. xvi.

retaliation for dissidents having killed three ZANU(PF) councillors.⁴⁶ The district's ZAPU MP had lost the election to a ZANU(PF) candidate, who at a meeting for the local leadership allegedly threatened that if he heard of the presence of dissidents in his constituency, he would eliminate anyone suspected of having anything to do with them. The next day, the dissidents killed the first of the three ZANU(PF) councillors.⁴⁷ The ZANU(PF) youth went from house to house, beating suspected ZAPU supporters, killing at least four villagers, and destroying homes, granaries, and stores.⁴⁸ Media coverage of these events was sparse.⁴⁹ Two weeks later, the official mouthpiece, *The Herald*, reported that at an election victory celebration at Tafara Grounds, Mugabe had rebuked his supporters for burning opposition members' homes, but no mention was made of Silobela and the other kinds of violence.

The burning down of homes of minority party supporters must stop because these houses are state property owned by local councils elected by the people. Any form of violence aimed at forcing people to join the ruling party was against the policies of the party. Where do you want these people you remove from their homes to go? . . . He [the Prime Minister] said children were innocents who should not be made to suffer for their parents' misdeeds and affairs.⁵⁰

Few, if any, ZANU(PF) cadres were prosecuted for the destruction of property and other forms of violence in Silobela and none of the victims were compensated for their losses.⁵¹ On 18 April 1988, Independence Day, an amnesty for all dissidents was announced. Ten days later, Clemency Order No.1 of 1988 was signed, granting a pardon to dissidents who reported to the police between 19 April and 31 May 1988, as 122 dissidents eventually did, and also to many criminals already serving jail sentences for offences including murder, rape, robbery, fraud, and bribery, but specifically excluding agents of foreign states. In July 1990 the amnesty was extended to include all members of the security forces who were serving prison sentences for crimes committed in the 1980s.⁵²

After Ian Smith's CAZ surprised the ruling party by winning 15 of the 20 reserved seats for whites, Mugabe and other ZANU(PF) leaders made threatening verbal attacks on whites. Emmerson Mnangagwa, then Minister of State for National Security, labelled the white vote for CAZ a betrayal

46. *Zimbabwe: Wages of war*, pp. 129–31.

47. *Ibid.*, p. 131.

48. *Ibid.*, p. 129.

49. *Ibid.*, p. 129.

50. *Ibid.*, p. 132.

51. *Ibid.*, p. 132.

52. *Breaking the Silence*, p. 73 gives the date of the amnesty as June 1990 but the amnesty was proclaimed by Government Notice 424A of 27 July 1990. I thank Michael Hartnack for this information.

of the government's reconciliation policy,⁵³ and alleged that 'while whites had the right to vote as they wished, they did not have the right to deceive us; their vote showed us that they desire to reassert the stupid philosophy of white supremacy which we defeated five years ago.'⁵⁴ Mugabe railed:

the vote cast by the majority of the white electorate has shown us that the trust we placed in whites and our belief that they were getting reconciled to the new political order was a trust and belief that was not deserved . . . [Whites] have spilled the blood of thousands of our people . . . The vote has proved that they have not repented in any way.⁵⁵

Mugabe also reportedly said that after the election the government would conduct a clean-up operation 'so that we remain only with the whites who want to work with the Government'.⁵⁶ He continued: 'But the rest will have to find a new home', and then said in Shona: 'We will kill those snakes among us. We will smash them completely.'⁵⁷ One analyst noted that 'the extent of the CAZ victory was, however, very much a product of the "winner takes all" electoral system . . .'.⁵⁸ A constitutional amendment in 1987 eliminated the 20 reserved seats for whites and the ZANU(PF)-dominated parliament acting as an electoral college chose 20 ZANU(PF) members.⁵⁹

Most studies of the 1985 elections either ignored or did not make much of ZANU(PF)'s orchestrated violence and threats against ZAPU. Christine Sylvester's narrow focus on political elites' ideological statements leads her to miss the horror of the events leading up to and following the 1985 election. Claims such as 'there is considerable agreement on one point: namely, that political authority should be seen to derive from "the people" through free and fair elections . . .';⁶⁰ ZAPU's goal was 'an obvious bid to control the state',⁶¹ and 'the name of Zimbabwe's game of politics is "persuasive pretense" at which ZANU(PF) excelled'⁶² underscore her failure to understand the circumstances and objectives of the rival parties

53. For an example of how ZANU(PF) complained that ZAPU, too, had rejected its offer of reconciliation, see E. P. Makambe, *Marginalising the Human Rights Campaign: The dissident factor and the politics of violence in Zimbabwe 1980-1987* (Institute of Southern African Studies, National University of Lesotho, Roma 1992), pp. 21-2.

54. Jonathan N. Moyo, *Voting for Democracy* (University of Zimbabwe Publications, Harare 1992), p. 20.

55. *Ibid.*, p. 21.

56. Garber, 'Zimbabwe's 1985 election', p. 48, footnote 97, quoting Mugabe's speech on 3 July that was reported in *The Herald*, 4 July 1985.

57. 'Robert Mugabe: Robert the brute', *The Independent* (London), 22 February 2004.

58. Lemon, 'The Zimbabwe general election of 1985', p. 18. CAZ won 55 percent of the white vote compared with IZG's 40 percent, yet CAZ won 15 compared with IZG's 4 seats.

59. *Ibid.*, p. 18.

60. Sylvester, 'Zimbabwe's 1985 elections', pp. 243, 246.

61. *Ibid.*, p. 242.

62. *Ibid.*, p. 255.

in the election. Masipula Sithole acknowledges that the government reasserted its authority, at times heavy-handedly, but blames most of the violence on ZAPU/ZIPRA's 'bad loser' syndrome, thereby adopting the government's position that ZAPU supported the dissidents.⁶³ Tevera's study of voting patterns says nothing about state-sponsored violence and attributes ZAPU's loss of seats in the Midlands to ZANU(PF) to the ruling party's reasonably positive performance and ZAPU's alleged association with bandits.⁶⁴ Anthony Lemon dramatically understates government violence when he refers to hundreds of people having suffered at the hands of the Fifth Brigade and equates dissident and army violence.⁶⁵ Also, he misses ZANU(PF)'s pursuit of exclusive power when he describes the election as 'more concerned with the generation of support than with seeking political power which was never in doubt for ZANU(PF)'.⁶⁶ In contrast to these studies, the 1986 reports of the Lawyers Committee for Human Rights and of the International Human Rights Law Group, on which I draw extensively, contain invaluable details on ruling party violence against ZAPU.⁶⁷ Both seem, however, to express uncertainty about the extent of ZANU(PF) leaders' complicity.

The 1990 election

The parliamentary and presidential elections, held from 28 to 30 March 1990, occurred in a new political context. The violence against ZAPU/ZIPRA and all Ndebele civilians ended in a Unity Accord in December 1987, merging ZAPU into ZANU(PF). The merger gave the new united party, still named ZANU(PF) though officially written as ZANU PF, 99 out of 100 parliamentary seats. Days later, having earlier approved a constitutional amendment to create an executive president with unusually wide powers, parliament voted for Mugabe to become president.⁶⁸ In February 1990, another constitutional amendment abolished the Senate, enlarged the unicameral parliament to 120 elected members, and added a further 30 members, directly or indirectly elected

63. Sithole, 'The general elections 1979–1985', p. 95.

64. D. S Tevera, 'Voting patterns in Zimbabwe's elections of 1980 and 1985', *Geography: Journal of the Geographical Association* 74 (1989), pp. 162–5.

65. Lemon, 'The Zimbabwe general election of 1985', pp. 15, 19.

66. *Ibid.*, p. 19.

67. Arnold, Garber, Wrobel, *Zimbabwe: Report on the 1985 general elections; Zimbabwe: Wages of war*.

68. Welshman Ncube and Shepherd Nzombe, 'Continuity and change in the constitutional development of Zimbabwe' (Unpublished paper presented at the workshop on Culture and Development in Southern Africa, Centre for Research in the Humanities, University of Copenhagen, Denmark 27–28 April 1988), pp. 1–13; John Mw. Makumbe and Daniel Compagnon, *Behind the Smokescreen: The politics of Zimbabwe's 1995 general elections* (University of Zimbabwe Publications, Harare, 2000), pp. 33–7.

by the president.⁶⁹ ZANU(PF) thus needed only a little more than a third of the elected members to get a simple parliamentary majority. Authoritarian trends were also evident in the continued state of emergency — an important part of the rationale being Renamo attacks across the Mozambican border in the eastern districts of Manicaland — and government repression of Harare tertiary students, the press, organized labor, and its leader, Morgan Tsvangirai. The security forces response to innocent rural civilians in Manicaland, which bore the brunt of Renamo attacks, had strong similarities to security force behaviour in Matabeleland during the 1980s.⁷⁰ Meanwhile, Edgar Tekere, himself from Manicaland, was expelled on 21 October 1988 for his criticism of the corruption and greed of the ruling party, and formed a new opposition party, the Zimbabwe Unity Movement (ZUM), on 30 April 1989.⁷¹ In a June by-election in Dzivaresekwa, Harare, ZUM won nearly one-third of the vote, despite police obstruction of rallies and detentions without charge. In July 1989 Tekere was still trying to address his first public meeting at the University of Zimbabwe when the police dispersed the students.⁷² Throughout the election, ZUM was routinely denied permission to hold public rallies under state of emergency regulations.⁷³ ZUM advocated multiparty democracy, clean government, reduced presidential powers and economic liberalization whereas ZANU(PF) hoped an electoral victory would provide it with a mandate to install a one-party state and professed its commitment to socialism. ZANU(PF) won 116 of the 120 elected seats with a 78 percent share of the vote while ZUM won only 2 seats, despite getting 17 percent of the vote. ZUM did best in the cities, where it won an average 26 percent of the vote and close to 50 percent in some urban constituencies. Only 54 percent of registered voters went to the polls.⁷⁴

ZANU(PF) disparaged ZUM and its alliance with CAZ, the descendant of Ian Smith's RF party. Its election manifesto depicted CAZ as racist and as exploiting ZUM:

69. Makumbe and Compagnon, *Behind the Smokescreen*, p. 37.

70. Richard Carver, *Zimbabwe: A Break with the past? Human rights and political unity* (Africa Watch, New York 1989), pp. 60–83; Welshman Ncube, 'Constitutionalism, democracy and political practice in Zimbabwe', in Ibbo Mandaza and Lloyd M. Sachikonye (eds), *The One Party State and Democracy: The Zimbabwe debate* (Southern Africa Political Economy Series (SAPES) Trust, Harare, 1991), pp. 167–170.

71. Moyo, *Voting for Democracy*, pp. 29–42.

72. Carver, *Zimbabwe: A break with the past?* pp. 58–9.

73. Moyo, *Voting for Democracy*, p. 37.

74. For the election results, see Lloyd Sachikonye, 'The 1990 Zimbabwe elections: A post-mortem', *Review of African Political Economy* 48 (1990), pp. 97, 99; Liisa Laakso, 'Opposition politics in independent Zimbabwe', *African Studies Quarterly* 7, 2&3 (online), URL: <http://web.africa.ufl.edu/asq/v7/v7i2a6.htm>, p. 7; Andrew Meldrum, 'The one-party debate', *Africa Report* (July–August 1990), p. 56.

The forces of reaction, racism, division and retrogression which were soundly defeated retreated into the background, but they continue to regroup with new tactics, and new faces. They seize on disgruntled elements of the ruling party who have lost positions in which they totally failed to perform, or unemployed youths, or diehard racists, and try to recover lost ground. These reactionary and inimical forces keep changing tactics but never the objectives of oppressing, exploiting, and dominating our people . . .⁷⁵

The manifesto implied that Tekere and ZUM were mercenary: a ‘hotch-potch of drunkards, embezzlers and lunatics who are seeking election only for the purpose of getting money from South African racists, or Mr. Smith’s local Conservative Alliance of Rhodesia’.⁷⁶ On Zimbabwe television, Eddison Zvobgo, a cabinet minister, persisted with an image of ZUM as the puppet of CAZ, the former white oppressors. ‘The Rhodesian Front of Ian Smith plunged us into war. When Smith realized he had lost the war he found some blacks to do his work for him. ZANU sought reconciliation after the war, but the RF did not die and so . . . there’s no such thing as ZUM, only the CAZ.’⁷⁷

The ruling party’s leaders threatened violence against ZUM and CAZ and those who dared vote for these parties. Mugabe warned whites: ‘if they want to rear their ugly terrorist and racist heads by collaborating with ZUM, we will chop that head off.’ Mugabe accused Tekere of threatening to assassinate the entire ZANU(PF) leadership and of intending to incite the armed forces to stage a coup if ZUM lost the election. He warned Tekere: ‘You are playing with fire, my boy.’ He said Tekere was aware that the ruling party was capable of punishing anyone without mercy. In Wankie, Mugabe lamented ZUM’s divisiveness: ‘We are saddened that there are others who want to see us divided. But people must not listen to small, petty little ants which we can crush.’⁷⁸ Minister Shamuyarira said that whites who voted for ZUM were ‘anti-reconciliation’ and risked ‘putting their community in danger as soft targets’, adding that it was necessary ‘to clip the[ir] wings’ before they went too far.⁷⁹ On 23 March 1990, Mugabe told a party rally at Kadoma: ‘vote for ZUM and you vote for Ian Smith — violence begets violence.’⁸⁰ ZANU(PF)’s manifesto promised ZUM-CAZ reactionaries that ‘the people shall continue to seek and identify them so

75. Christine Sylvester, ‘Unities and disunities in Zimbabwe’s 1990 election’, *Journal of Modern African Studies* 28, 3 (1990), p. 388 citing ZANU PF election manifesto 1990, p. 1.

76. *Ibid.*, p. 388 citing ZANU PF election manifesto 1990, p. 116. *Ibid.*, p. 397 says ZUM candidates financed their own campaigns and the party was desperately low on finances.

77. *Ibid.*, p. 396, citing Zimbabwe Television (ZTV), 20 March 1990. Laakso, *Voting Without Choosing*, p. 207 reports that Didymus Mutasa, the Senior Minister of Political Affairs, told her in a 1991 interview: ‘The little parties like the Magochey [sic] party [Democratic Party] and ZUM are not parties that are actually growing from within our people. They are parties which have been propped up by outside interests.’

78. ‘The promises . . . and the threats’, *Parade* (Harare, Zimbabwe), May 1990, pp. 13, 17.

79. *Ibid.*, p. 17.

80. Sylvester, ‘Unities and Disunities’, p. 396.

that they can be totally uprooted and destroyed'.⁸¹ Mashonaland Central Women's League's deputy secretary for transport and welfare, Sheba Chiyonga, urged supporters at a Shamva rally to attack ZUM, saying: '... in Bindura we beat them ... we are not afraid of the police ...' and warned that ZUM supporters would be forced 'to move' after ZANU(PF) won in Shamva.⁸² ZANU(PF) candidate for Shamva, Donald Nyamaropa, said: 'If you do not vote for ZANU(PF) it means you want us to go back to war — ZANU(PF) is prepared to go to war if it loses in the general election.'⁸³ A ZANU(PF) campaign advertisement on television claimed that a vote for ZUM, like AIDS, would lead to death, whereas voting for ZANU(PF), would lead to life.⁸⁴

ZANU(PF) also threatened to deny or withdraw patronage from opposition voters. The party implied that a vote for ZUM would mean no food relief.⁸⁵ A number of top politicians threatened to remove ZUM supporters from the civil service.⁸⁶ In Mashonaland Central, Mugabe told chiefs and party leaders: 'If you are in the Mugabe government you must serve that government and implement its policies. . . . You cannot have the luxury of serving ZUM while you are in government. That we cannot allow.'⁸⁷ Africa Watch reported that it had obtained a memo of a meeting attended by, *inter alia*, the officer-in-charge of Mbare police station and two ZANU(PF) Harare Province executive members, Chris Pasipamire and Forbes Magadu. According to the minutes, the officer-in-charge had asked police officers to give the names of ZUM members in the police force to ZANU(PF) headquarters, the CIO, or Police Internal Security and Intelligence, and said that these ZUM members would be expelled and charged under the Police Act. He and other speakers called especially on ZANU(PF) youth to enlist as special constables 'so that we have enough force for the next coming general elections'.⁸⁸ Just prior to the 1990 elections, ZANU(PF) had moved its party youth and women's organizations — its instruments of election violence — under the Ministry of Political Affairs.⁸⁹

The Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP) documented many reported incidents during March 1990 in which senior ruling party leaders and candidates made inflammatory speeches which were followed

81. *Ibid.*, p. 388 citing ZANU PF election manifesto 1990, p. 1.

82. 'The promises . . . and the threats', p. 17.

83. *Ibid.*, p. 17. Sachikonye, 'The 1990 Zimbabwe elections', p. 98 refers to ZANU(PF) threatening war as a party tactic.

84. Sachikonye, 'The 1990 Zimbabwe elections', pp. 95–6.

85. *Ibid.*, p. 98.

86. Andrew Saxon, 'Elections and "madness" go hand-in-hand', *Parade*, May 1990, p. 43.

87. *Ibid.*, p. 21.

88. 'Africa Watch outlines abuses of state power', *Parade*, May 1990, p. 10.

89. *Ibid.*, p. 10.

by violence, most often by party youth and usually without police action. Much of the violence occurred in the high density suburbs around Harare where ZUM had strong support. In Mufakose, the ZANU(PF) candidate reportedly instructed the party youth to beat up ZUM youth and then to make them join ZANU(PF). The ruling party closed the ZUM candidate's shop and organized crowds — on one occasion 400 to 500 people — to gather outside his home and chant. At a rally, the ZANU(PF) candidate allegedly said: 'That one [the ZUM candidate] should be killed.' Despite the police being given the identities of the key perpetrators and victims, they took no action.⁹⁰ The ZANU(PF) MP for Dzivaresekwa, elected in the recent by-election, and the candidate for Mbare, called a meeting of party youth to attack ZUM supporters, leading many to consider leaving for the communal areas until after the election.⁹¹ Chris Pasipamire, a ruling party Central Committee member and Margaret Dongo's election agent, reportedly led his supporters in taking and destroying the ZUM candidate's election pamphlets, and then stood by as his supporters assaulted the candidate and his supporters.⁹²

In Highfield, the ZANU(PF) candidate, a former 'radical' Cabinet minister, Herbert Ushewokunze, incited and threatened violence against his ZUM opponent. On one occasion, Ushewokunze, who had a pistol, armed bodyguards, and about 50 supporters, visited the ZUM candidate's shop, beat up an employee and damaged the shop. He threatened the employees, saying: 'When ZANU(PF) wins, you guys will disappear.' When the ZUM candidate reported the damage to his shop, the chief police inspector reportedly told him: 'You must be insane to accuse Ushewokunze of this: a man of his calibre could not do this.' The next day Ushewokunze ordered the shop to be closed and took the same employee who had been beaten the previous day to the party offices, but he escaped. No police action was taken. The ZUM candidate, fearing for his life, 'resigned'.⁹³ Outside Harare, an incident was reported in which the Chinhoyi mayor told ruling party youth to beat the ZUM candidate for Kariba, Mashonaland West province.⁹⁴

90. *Third Report to the Electoral Supervisory Commission: 22 March 1990* in Moyo, *Voting for Democracy*, Appendix 4. Documentation on the 1990 general elections by the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace in Zimbabwe, p. 207; *Report to the Electoral Supervisory Commission: 30 May 1990* in Moyo, *Voting for Democracy*, Appendix 4, p. 212. The ruling party's candidate was Mr. Marime; ZUM's candidate was Mr. Svosve. Makumbe and Compagnon, *Behind the Smokescreen*, p. 117, relate how Mr. Marime, who was defeated in the 1995 primaries, alleged widespread vote-buying by the victor.

91. *Third Report to the Electoral Supervisory Commission*, p. 207.

92. *Ibid.*, p. 208.

93. *Report to the Electoral Supervisory Commission: 30 May 1990* in Moyo, *Voting for Democracy*, Appendix 4, pp. 212–3.

94. *Second Report to the Electoral Supervisory Commission: 13 March 1990* in Moyo, *Voting for Democracy*, Appendix 4, p. 206. The ZUM candidate was Mr. Mujaranji; the Chinhoyi mayor was Mayford Mawere.

Violence in Gweru, Midlands province, grew out of competition for the Gweru Central seat between vice-president Simon Muzenda and businessman Patrick Kombayi, who had once been the ruling party's mayor for Gweru but was now the ZUM candidate. On 23 March 1990 the ZANU(PF) MP for Gweru Rural stood by as party youth stoned Kombayi's car and beat the driver and ZUM Midlands youth chairman, Paul Razika. Despite the driver identifying some of his attackers to the police, they took no action.⁹⁵ The next day ZANU(PF) and ZUM youth confronted each other at Kombayi's mini-mart. ZANU(PF) youth stoned, looted, and burned the store, and then shot and injured three ZUM youth. In the presence of police, the driver of the lorry taking the injured to hospital was shot at by CIO operatives. When Kombayi arrived on the scene, he too was shot. Meanwhile, Muzenda's CIO aides beat up and shot Kombayi's colleague.⁹⁶ The ruling party blamed the victims of violence. Mugabe warned Tekere not to court violence, and alleged that the violence was a response to ZUM's destabilizing activities.⁹⁷ The Midlands CIO chief, who was in charge of Muzenda's security, and a ZANU(PF) youth leader were subsequently convicted and sentenced to seven years in jail. In January 1994, the day after the Supreme Court rejected their appeal against conviction, they were granted a presidential pardon. They did not spend a day in prison, and one of the two men was subsequently appointed to the ZANU(PF) Central Committee.⁹⁸ The court case revealed that the deputy president had reportedly ordered the shooting so that he could remain the only Gweru candidate.⁹⁹

Immediately after the election, the ruling party mobilized youth and women, mainly in the urban areas, to 'teach a lesson' to candidates who had 'dared' oppose them.¹⁰⁰ Mugabe's call for 'winners and losers to embrace one another' was an exception.¹⁰¹ Television news reported spontaneous ZANU(PF) Women's League demonstrations in Chegutu township in

95. *Report on Election Campaign Violence in Gweru, 23–24 March 1990* in Moyo, *Voting for Democracy*, Appendix 4, p. 208; 'Africa Watch outlines abuses of state power', *Parade*, May 1990, p. 7.

96. *Ibid.*, pp. 208–11.

97. Sylvester, 'Unities and disunities', p. 396.

98. Makumbe and Compagnon, *Behind the Smokescreen*, p. 4; U.S. Department of State, *Zimbabwe Human Rights Practices*, 1994 (February 1995). URL: http://dosfan.lib.uic.edu/ERC/democracy/1994_hrp_report/94hrp_report.africa/Zimbabwe.html. Amnesty International, *Zimbabwe: The toll of impunity* (Amnesty International, London, 25 June 2002), p. 5. URL: <http://web.amnesty.org/library/print/ENGAFR460342002>. The latter report refers to the Supreme Court turning down the appeal in 1993 rather than 1994. This apparent inconsistency might be reconciled. The Supreme Court handed down its judgement on the opening day of the new Supreme Court year in 1994 but the judgement might have been produced or perhaps file-numbered in the previous year. Thanks to Michael Hartnack for this clarification.

99. David Muzhuzha, 'Voters fear violence', *Southern Africa Political & Economic Monthly* 8, 6 (March 1995), p. 10.

100. Masipula Sithole, 'Democracy in Zimbabwe', *Africa Demos* 3, 1 (1993), p. 17; Sachikonye, 'The 1990 Zimbabwe elections', p. 96.

101. *Reports of Post-Election Violence and Reprisals Made Since 5 April 1990* in Moyo, *Voting for Democracy*, Appendix 4, p. 221.

Mashonaland West province and in Zengeza, Harare, where they demanded that ZUM people be removed from their houses and jobs. According to the CCJP, however, the women were acting on senior politicians' instructions.¹⁰² The Women's League also demonstrated against ZUM members in Chitungwiza, demanding their expulsion from houses and jobs. In this constituency, ZANU(PF)'s Witness Mangwende had been re-elected but with a less than 50 percent voter turnout.¹⁰³

In Gweru, women and youth demonstrated at City Council and Regional Education offices, demanding the dismissal of named city council employees and teachers alleged to be ZUM supporters.¹⁰⁴ In Kwekwe, where Minister Mnangagwa had been elected the MP, there were reports of harassment and intimidation of ZUM supporters and some members of the Women's League claimed to have been threatened and intimidated into joining a women's demonstration against ZUM.¹⁰⁵ In Karoi, where ruling party youth were arrested for beating, among others, young boys and girls and a Chinhoyi diocesan Justice and Peace commissioner, Minister Shamuyarira instructed the police to release the arrested party youth members,¹⁰⁶ saying they had 'done a grand job in trying to keep the peace in the area . . . and the party would like to see the youth continue with its vigilance'.¹⁰⁷ The convicted youth were among those to benefit from an amnesty for political prisoners shortly after the election.¹⁰⁸ When senior government ministers spoke out against these reprisals between 10 May and 15 May, the violence stopped.¹⁰⁹

Most observers of the 1990 election, despite a new awareness of the ruling party's authoritarianism, ultimately retained an optimism about the prospects for democratic electoral change. Lloyd Sachikonye portrays post-election violence against the opposition as reflecting badly 'on the capacity of that party's leadership to promote a civic political culture', as if the leaders were not deliberately imposing a different political culture.¹¹⁰ While acknowledging flaws in the election, Patrick Quantin retains faith in elections both to solve the problem of a successor government when those in power have failed and to serve as a mechanism for open political discussion.¹¹¹ Jonathan Moyo

102. *Report to the Bishops' Conference on Post-Election Victimization 5 April 1990* in Moyo, *Voting for Democracy*, Appendix 4, pp. 214–6.

103. *Reports of Post-Election Violence and Reprisals Made Since 5 April 1990*, p. 219; Moyo, *Voting for Democracy*, Appendix 1. 1990 General Election Results, p. 176.

104. *Reports of Post-Election Violence and Reprisals Made Since 5 April 1990*, pp. 219–20.

105. *Ibid.*, p. 220.

106. *Ibid.*, p. 219.

107. Moyo, *Voting for Democracy*, p. 82 citing *The Herald*, 16 July 1990.

108. *Ibid.*; *Reparation for Torture*, p. 16, footnote 84.

109. *Reports of Post-Election Violence and Reprisals Made Since 5 April 1990*, p. 221.

110. Sachikonye, 'The 1990 Zimbabwe elections', p. 96.

111. Patrick Quantin, 'The 1990 general elections in Zimbabwe: Step towards a one-party state?' in Simon Baynham (ed.), *Zimbabwe in Transition* (Almqvist and Wiksell International, Stockholm 1992), pp. 25, 30.

enthusiasms about the significant shift in registered voters' opinions in favour of a multiparty system and focuses on institutional reforms that would promote multiparty democracy,¹¹² as if the ruling party might be persuaded. Perhaps most telling was that scholars understood the ruling party's decision not to install a *de jure* one-party state in September 1990, despite its electoral victory, as an indicator of democratic space and the limits of the state's capacity to repress democratic opposition rather than merely a tactical retreat.¹¹³

The 1995 election

The general election was held from 8 to 9 April 1995. The main opposition parties objected to the unfair playing field, including excessive presidential powers, lack of media access, and state funding for only ZANU(PF).¹¹⁴ For this reason, Tekere's ZUM, Bishop Muzorewa's United Parties (composed of the former UANC, and ZUM and FORUM break-aways), and the Democratic Party (a ZUM breakaway) decided to boycott the elections. The two major opposition parties to contest the election, ex-Chief Justice Enoch Dumbutshena's FORUM formed in March 1993, and Reverend Ndabaningi Sithole's ZANU(Ndonga), called for an all-party constitutional conference.¹¹⁵ ZANU(Ndonga) campaigned for a federal system with district parliaments, reduced government expenditure, and free health and education. FORUM also called for reduced government expenditure, firmer implementation of structural adjustment, and privatization, including of communal land. ZANU(PF) committed itself to socialism, a mixed economy, and improved economic growth and employment through structural adjustment.¹¹⁶ Prior to and during the campaign, the state and party media blamed white economic domination for economic problems and sought to deflect attention from the government's economic

112. Moyo, *Voting for Democracy*. For a critique of Moyo's claim of a shift in voters' opinions, see Richard Saunders, 'Life in space — the new politics in Zimbabwe', *Southern African Review of Books* (Cape Town, January–February 1993).

113. Ibbo Mandaza and Lloyd M. Sachikonye, 'Introduction: The Zimbabwe debate on the one-party state and democracy' in Ibbo Mandaza and Lloyd Sachikonye (eds.), *The One Party State and Democracy: The Zimbabwe debate* (Southern Africa Political Economy Series [SAPES] Trust, Harare, 1991), p. 15.

114. Only ZANU(PF) met the provision in the Political Parties (Finance) Act of 1992 that a political party has to have a minimum of 15 parliamentary seats to qualify for state funds. Staffan Darnolf, *Democratic Electioneering in Southern Africa* (Goteborg Studies in Politics, Goteborg, 1997), pp. 179–80, substantiates the opposition parties' complaints about lack of media access.

115. 'Zimbabwe: Beyond the elections', *Southern Africa Political & Economic Monthly* 8, 6 (March 1995), p. 9; Laakso, *Voting Without Choosing*, p. 167. Makumbe and Compagnon, *Behind the Smokescreen*, p. 11 note that ZANU(Ndonga) registered as ZANU.

116. Makumbe and Compagnon, *Behind the Smokescreen*, pp. 141–5 criticize the often inconsistent and ill-thought-out campaign platforms and acknowledge (p. 18) the insignificance of policy issues in the election.

mismanagement.¹¹⁷ The most serious competition occurred not between the ruling party and the opposition parties but in the ruling party's primary elections and in the general election, when official ZANU(PF) candidates competed against ZANU(PF) members running as independents. Even before the election, ZANU(PF) had won a majority because 55 out of 120 seats were uncontested and it was assured the 30 appointed seats. ZANU(PF) ultimately held 148 of the 150 seats, and increased its share of the vote to nearly 82 percent. The party claimed a 57 percent turnout, thus higher than the 1990 turnout of 54 percent; critics calculated it to be closer to 45.5 to 49 percent and at most 30 percent in Harare.¹¹⁸

The ruling party vilified the opposition, both before, during and after the election campaign. Before the campaign, the government brought trumped up charges against David Coltart, a FORUM member, and Ndabaningi Sithole, ZANU(Ndonga)'s leader.¹¹⁹ In 1992 and 1993 ZANU(PF) portrayed Enoch Dumbutshena as a 'betrayal of the armed struggle'.¹²⁰ In March 1994, senior ZANU(PF) official and defence minister, Moven Mahachi, called the opposition leaders 'the white man's whipping boys',¹²¹ implying that they were colonial stooges. The ruling party's manifesto referred to 'the motley mixture of opportunists and renegades in the opposition'¹²² and branded the opposition parties 'unpatriotic' because they criticized ZANU(PF) policies.¹²³ FORUM was labelled a European party, despite it not being true.¹²⁴ In the week before the election, the party press condemned white liberals and 'black puppets', who shied away from identifying themselves with the armed revolution and who blamed the ruling party for economic problems that were the result of their own pressures, along with the international financial institutions, to discard socialism.¹²⁵ Tirivanhu Mudariki, a Harare provincial party leader and victorious ZANU(PF) candidate in Harare East, sponsored an advertisement in the party press after the election, claiming: 'ZANU PF's victory is a clear testimony to all reactionary parties, right wing opportunists and racists among

117. 'Zimbabwe: Beyond the elections', p. 7; see also Iden Wetherell, 'Racism debate self-serving', *Financial Gazette* (Harare), 15 December 1994, p. 4, who suggests that it was inconceivable that the party did not approve of the anti-white writings in the state media.

118. On voter turnout, see Makumbe and Compagnon, *Behind the Smokescreen*, pp. 240–2.

119. *Ibid.*, pp. 4–5.

120. Tor Skalnes, *The Politics of Economic Reform in Zimbabwe: Continuity and change in development* (St. Martin's Press, New York, 1995), p. 86.

121. 'Masvingo factions dissolved', *The People's Voice* (Harare), 27 March–2 April 1994, pp. 1–2.

122. 'Zanu(PF) to fight election on its record, says manifesto', *The Herald*, 18 March 1995.

123. Makumbe and Compagnon, *Behind the Smokescreen*, p. 303.

124. *Ibid.*

125. Malachia Madimutsa, 'The opposition operating under camouflages', *The People's Voice*, 2–8 April 1995, p. 11.

our midst that the heroic masses of Zimbabwe will never-ever abandon their liberators.¹²⁶

Ruling party intimidation of ordinary people began well before the campaign. In May 1994 Mugabe told the party youth congress to embark on a door-to-door campaign in the high density suburbs to get people to register as voters. This technique of mobilization has been associated with party violence since at least the 1960s. Youth conducted the campaign from June to September 1994, initially to register voters and then to secure financial support from them.¹²⁷ During this time, it was almost impossible for the opposition parties to hold a meeting peacefully in high density suburbs like Chitungwiza. Violent clashes occurred between ZANU(PF), on the one hand, and ZANU(Ndonga) and ZUM supporters, on the other, resulting in the leaders of ZUM, ZANU(Ndonga), and FORUM calling on their supporters to arm themselves to retaliate against ZANU(PF) youth violence.¹²⁸ The results of police investigations of the violence were never made public. When Mugabe asked his followers to intensify the door-to-door campaign, he told them in June 1994: 'Remember you are The Party and you are therefore the defenders of not just the party but the revolution.'¹²⁹ In March 1995 during the election campaign, the President praised ZANU(PF) in Chitungwiza for preventing the opposition parties from coming into that political arena to challenge the ruling party, a statement many saw as an endorsement of the violence used against the opposition parties.¹³⁰

Senior party leaders, including President Mugabe, used rhetoric at party campaign rallies to instill fear and anxiety in potential opponents. Mugabe emphasized the importance of unity and asserted that political parties brought conflict, quarrels, and instability, all of which had no place in Zimbabwe.¹³¹ In Matabeleland, he urged people to preserve unity and support the ruling party if they wanted to keep the peace they had enjoyed since 1987, which many Ndebele perceived to be a veiled threat. Threats of resuming the *Chimurenga* war if the opposition won were also made in places, including Masvingo province.¹³² Mugabe compared the opposition

126. 'ZANU PF's victory is the people's victory', *The People's Voice*, 23–29 April 1995, p. 3.

127. Makumbe and Compagnon, *Behind the Smokescreen*, pp. 153, 161.

128. Laakso, *Voting Without Choosing*, p. 171; David Muzhuzha, 'Voters fear violence', *Southern Africa Political & Economic Monthly* 8, 6 (March 1995), p. 10; 'Tekere urges opposition parties to form army', *The Herald*, 25 June 1994, p. 1, p. 3; 'Calls for violence are dangerous: President', *The Herald*, 25 June 1994, p. 1. Human rights organizations and Mugabe denounced the opposition leaders' calls for violence, and Sithole and Dumbutshena rejected Tekere's idea of a united army.

129. Makumbe and Compagnon, *Behind the Smokescreen*, p. 153.

130. *Ibid.*

131. *Ibid.*, p. 305.

132. *Ibid.*, p. 168.

parties to puppies and ZANU(PF) to an elephant. ‘The puppies could bark as long as they wanted provided they were far away. But the elephant would trample them if they got too near for comfort.’¹³³ At Shamva, Mugabe said he wished to ‘silence the opposition’ with an ‘overwhelming and resounding victory’, even louder than the impact of the dynamite used in the local mines. In Highfield, he appealed to people to vote or be mistaken for opposition supporters boycotting the poll. In Chinhoyi, he told supporters that some of those who had been forgiven for atrocities against the liberation movement before independence — presumably Muzorewa, Sithole, and Smith — ‘continued to hurl abuse at the party’, as if the opposition had no right to criticize. In Filabusi, Matabeleland, he said the party did not chase whites out of the country at independence but ‘allowed’ them to stay, again implying that they had no rights. He attacked commercial farmers for refusing to sell their farms at concessionary rates, as if that were not their right. On TV, State Security Minister Sydney Sekeramayi threatened an independent candidate in Marondera who had been authorized to drop leaflets over a meeting addressed by the President, accusing the candidate of showing ‘disrespect for the president and arrogance which we cannot tolerate for long’.¹³⁴ Mugabe also appealed to the people to give the party ‘a massive 99.9 per cent vote to frighten away the fringe opposition’. Masvingo governor, Josiah Hungwe, said they would not accept the result if the opposition won the election because the ruling party had immense popularity.¹³⁵

Ruling party leaders also threatened voters that they would be denied patronage benefits or would lose their government jobs if they voted for the opposition. In April 1994 at a party meeting at Insuza resettlement scheme northwest of Bulawayo, Matabeleland North governor and senior ruling party official Welshman Mabhena alleged that the opposition parties had ‘infiltrated’ the civil service, including very senior positions, and were influencing government workers to disrupt rural development. ‘We have names of these people, some of whom we know to be members of the Forum Party of Zimbabwe.’¹³⁶ In January 1995 Kumbirai Kangai, Minister of Agriculture, speaking as Manicaland provincial party chairman, told a meeting in Honde Valley: ‘No one should say I work for the government and not for the party. If you hear any civil servant saying that in this area, please let me know so that I may approach the ministry he works for (so) that he is

133. Laakso, *Voting Without Choosing*, p. 172, citing *The Herald*, 6 April 1995.

134. ‘Democracy or demagoguery?’, *Financial Gazette*, 13 April 1995, p. 4.

135. Makumbe and Compagnon, *Behind the Smokescreen*, p. 305.

136. ‘Opposition disrupting harmony in rural areas’, *The Herald*, 15 April 1994, p. 4. Mabhena went on to say of FORUM, ‘They tell people that everything done by the Government is not the work of ZANU(PF) and that people should never talk of the ruling party.’

removed from Manicaland.¹³⁷ In Chimanimani and Lower Gweru, the ruling party told voters they would be denied food aid if they did not vote ZANU(PF), and in Buhera, ZANU(Ndonga) claimed the ruling party officials had threatened to withhold drought relief from its supporters.¹³⁸ In March 1995, before opening the Grain Marketing Board depot in Middle Sabi, Minister Kangai warned voters in Chipinge, a ZANU(Ndonga) area: 'If you do not unite and instead engage in a dance of blind people there will be no development',¹³⁹ a threat that Vice-President Muzenda repeated in Chipinge.¹⁴⁰

Ruling party leaders' campaign rhetoric influenced the discourse and activities of candidates and their supporters, especially young people and women. In Harare North ZANU(PF)'s candidate, Nyasha Chikwinya, with CIO and presidential support, stood against FORUM's Trudy Stevenson. Stevenson's helpers were repeatedly threatened by youths while distributing leaflets in shopping centres, as were domestic workers who dared attend FORUM meetings. While trying to distribute leaflets in Hatcliffe Number 1, Stevenson was harassed by the ZANU(PF) women's branch chair and called a 'dirty white pig'. The candidate and her helpers were repeatedly barred from campaigning at Hatcliffe Extension by aggressive Youth, Women's League, and ZANU(PF) district officials who said the area 'belonged to ZANU(PF)' and was 'a one-party State area'.¹⁴¹ Some threatened to beat the campaigners; others, encouraged by the local Youth chair, threw stones at the pick-up truck of the candidate. The officials ordered Stevenson to leave the camp or face 'grave consequences'.¹⁴² The local ZANU(PF) Youth chair told the opposition candidate that if the people at the transit camp did not vote for ZANU(PF), they would be expelled from the camp; they had already been transferred there from Churu Farm.¹⁴³ ZANU(PF) Youth had a free hand in harassing citizens, as police elements were reluctant to act against them even when provided with evidence of

137. 'Kangai playing God', *Financial Gazette* 19 January 1995, p. 4. On this occasion, ZANU(PF) national chair and Local Government Minister, Joseph Msika, intervened to say that civil servants were free to join the party of their choice, as did Didymus Mutasa, the ruling party's national secretary for administration and Senior Minister for National Affairs, Employment Creation and Co-operatives. See 'Civil servants free to back any party', *The Herald*, 23 January 1995, p. 1.

138. Laakso, *Voting Without Choosing*, p. 172.

139. 'Kangai warns people of Chipinge . . . Vote ZANU(PF) or there will be no development', *The Herald*, 25 March 1995, p. 5. Makumbe and Compagnon, *Behind the Smokescreen*, pp. 170-1 note that *The Herald* told Kangai to keep his mouth shut because of 'the repercussions' of such statements 'that do not portray the ruling party as a democratic institution', rather than because his remarks were anti-democratic.

140. Laakso, *Voting Without Choosing*, pp. 172-3.

141. For the quotes, see Makumbe and Compagnon, *Behind the Smokescreen*, p. 149. The preceding information in the paragraph is from *ibid.*, pp. 147-8.

142. *Ibid.*, p. 149.

143. *Ibid.*, p. 161.

harassment.¹⁴⁴ There was also police inaction when the opposition was harassed by ZANU(PF) supporters in Munyoro Business Centre and in Buhera South.¹⁴⁵ ZANU(PF) activists and party district officials in many areas also spread rumours to instill fear that voters should vote ZANU(PF) because they would be discovered if they voted for another party.¹⁴⁶ Ruling party youth and women coerced voters in Harare and Bulawayo who had stayed away from the polls on the first day into voting the next day.¹⁴⁷ Following the election, the perpetrators of political violence enjoyed an amnesty.¹⁴⁸

Studies of the 1995 elections continued to see the political system as having space for democratic change. Sylvester dwells on the ‘self-inflicted weakness of opposition parties’ and the ruling party’s effective use of symbolic and material politics,¹⁴⁹ and declares that ‘the field is level, and there are many unsophisticated pot-shots taken against one of the few constitutions in Africa that is steadfastly operative.’¹⁵⁰ She also trivializes the ruling party’s electoral violence, referring to how ‘overzealous ZANU PF Women’s and Youth Leagues endeavoured to get out the vote in ways that some found intimidating and suggesting that ZANU PF had become ‘persuasively Party.’¹⁵¹ While acknowledging flaws in the election, Laakso celebrates the new electoral role of pro-democracy local civics in voter education and election monitoring with government permission and encouragement.¹⁵² Makumbe and Compagnon focus on the ruling party’s effective manipulation of the entire electoral process to keep itself in power, and criticize local civics for participating in voter education to overcome voter apathy rather than educating voters about the party’s techniques of maintaining its political domination.¹⁵³ They do not foresee the party willingly conceding an electoral victory to the opposition.¹⁵⁴ Yet they do see democratic change emanating from an autonomous and democratic civil

144. *Ibid.*, p. 150.

145. *Ibid.*, p. 151.

146. *Ibid.*, pp. 162, 226.

147. Daniel Compagnon, ‘Electoral manipulation in a neo-authoritarian regime: The case of Zimbabwe’, *Journal of African Policy Studies* 5, 2&3 (1999), pp. 52–3.

148. *Reparation for Torture*, p. 16, footnote 84 refers to Clemency Order No. 1 of 1995.

149. Christine Sylvester, ‘Whither opposition in Zimbabwe?’, *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 33, 3 (1995), pp. 420, 423.

150. Sylvester, ‘Whither opposition in Zimbabwe’, p. 418. She contradicts her claim of a level playing field when she acknowledges numerous ruling party legal and constitutional advantages (p. 420).

151. *Ibid.*, pp. 411, 421.

152. Laakso, *Voting Without Choosing*, pp. 157, 184–5; see also L. Laakso, ‘Relationship between the state and civil society in the Zimbabwean elections 1995’, *Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics*, 34, 3 (1996), pp. 218–34.

153. Makumbe and Compagnon, *Behind the Smokescreen*, pp. 20–1, 244; also Compagnon, ‘Electoral manipulation in a neo-authoritarian regime’, p. 37.

154. Makumbe and Compagnon, *Behind the Smokescreen*, pp. 20, 318; Compagnon, ‘Electoral manipulation in a neo-authoritarian regime’, pp. 52, 56.

society pressing the ruling party to adhere to Bill of Rights principles, provided the ruling party does not interfere with the independence of the judiciary or mow down those brave enough to challenge it.¹⁵⁵ In a post-script written in the euphoria following the ruling party's first-ever defeat at the polls in the referendum on a new constitution in February 2000, they triumphantly portray the opposition's victory as the beginning of the end of authoritarianism,¹⁵⁶ thus seemingly discounting the ruling party's ruthless pursuit of exclusive power that they so powerfully documented.

The 2000 elections

The 2000 elections were held on 24 to 25 June. In February 2000, the ruling party held a referendum on its proposed draft constitution. Despite President Mugabe's last-minute amendment to provide for the confiscation of white land if the British government refused to pay compensation, voters rejected the draft constitution by 54 percent to 46 percent, with only 25 percent of registered voters participating. President Mugabe blamed the MDC, formed only in September 1999, together with an umbrella group of civic organizations, the National Constitutional Assembly, for mobilizing voters to reject the draft constitution. In the election campaign, the ruling party made black economic empowerment, especially through land redistribution, its central issue. Soon after the referendum, the party supported land invasions. Between February and the June election, some 1,500 white-owned farms were invaded. The MDC blamed Zimbabwe's economic crisis on government mismanagement, corruption, cronyism and the war in the Democratic Republic of the Congo; sought the return of the international financial institutions and foreign investors; and advocated orderly land reform. Of the registered voters, 50 percent voted. The ruling party won 62 of the 120 contested seats, the MDC 57 seats, and ZANU(Ndonga) retained its seat. With the 30 appointed seats, the ruling party had a secure majority, but the opposition had enough seats to prevent the ruling party from making constitutional changes.¹⁵⁷

Government and ruling party leaders made speeches in which they sanctioned the use of violence and intimidation against the MDC, which was

155. Makumbe and Compagnon, *Behind the Smokescreen*, pp. 213, 310–11; see also Compagnon, 'Electoral manipulation in a neo-authoritarian regime', p. 57 who believed that institutionalized procedures to elect African rulers might eventually take root as in Botswana unless predatory ruling cliques sponsored sectional violence as a survival tactic.

156. Makumbe and Compagnon, *Behind the Smokescreen*, p. 319.

157. *Report of the EU Election Observation Mission on the Parliamentary Elections which took place in Zimbabwe on the 24th and 25th June 2000* (Brussels 4 July 2000) (online). URL: [http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/human_rights/report_zimbabwe/ ch.5, p. 3](http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/human_rights/report_zimbabwe/ch.5, p. 3); *Zimbabwe: At the crossroads*. ICG Africa Report No. 22 (International Crisis Group, Harare/Brussels, 10 July 2000), p. 4 refers to a 'huge turnout' of 60 percent of eligible voters.

stigmatized as a party representing white or British interests. In March 2000 at a ceremony for the opening of a water pipeline between the Pungwe River and Mutare, President Mugabe warned: ‘Those who try to cause disunity among our people must watch out because death will befall them.’¹⁵⁸ The following month he warned the MDC leader Morgan Tsvangirai that he was playing with fire. ‘Let him not start the fire which may engulf him!’, said Mugabe to cheers of approval.¹⁵⁹ In May 2000, Sydney Sekeremayi, Minister of State Security, warned white farmers and their farm workers, who had attended a ruling party rally and given up their MDC t-shirts, of dire consequences if their appearance of support for ZANU(PF) was not genuine. ‘After the votes we will see who has been cheating us and we will deal with each other.’¹⁶⁰

The late Moven Mahachi, then Defence Minister and ZANU(PF) candidate for Makoni West, is alleged to have made a number of vicious statements at party rallies. On 2 June 2000 he reportedly told a crowd: ‘we will move door to door, killing like we did to Chiminya [Tsvangirai’s electoral agent who was brutally murdered by a CIO agent and a liberation war veteran]. I am the minister responsible for defence therefore I am capable of killing.’¹⁶¹ In court testimony, a witness described a rally on 3 June 2000. MDC members were asked to stand up, if they wanted to remain alive. Minister Mahachi then said: ‘Down with Makuwaza [the MDC candidate for Makoni West], down with Chiminya, and down with Tsvangirai.’ Those who stood up had their names written down. Mahachi told the MDC group that they were pretending to surrender, that the country was freed by blood and there would be more bloodshed if the people voted for the MDC. He warned that there would be a box in the voting booth to detect for whom people voted. Those who voted for the MDC would be killed, like Chiminya. The community was small, he said, and could be rapidly destroyed.¹⁶²

Top leaders’ intimidatory and violent statements and depictions of the MDC as a party representing white interests were transmitted down the party hierarchy by the ruling party candidates and their agents, provincial

158. *Politically Motivated Violence in Zimbabwe 2000–2001. A report on the campaign of political repression conducted by the Zimbabwean Government under the guise of carrying out land reform* (Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum, Harare, August 2001), p. 39, citing *Daily News*, 17 March 2000. URL: www.hrforumzim.com.

159. *Ibid.*

160. *Ibid.*, p. 40, citing *Daily News*, 22 May 2000.

161. *Ibid.*, p. 40, citing *Newsweek*, 11 December 2001. Zimbabwean plaintiffs cited Minister Mahachi’s statement in a complaint in a lawsuit against Mugabe in the United States.

162. *Organised Violence and Torture in the June 2000 General Election in Zimbabwe. A Report Prepared by the Mashonaland Programme of the AMANI Trust* (AMANI Trust, Harare, 28 February 2002), pp. 14–15. URL: www.oneworld.org/amani. For MDC candidate Remus Makuwaza’s court testimony on Moven Mahachi’s statements, see *How to Rig an Election: Evidence of a systematic campaign to prevent a free and fair poll* (Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum, Harare, November 2001), pp. 5–6.

and district officials, and veterans' leaders. On 15 March 2000, Andrew Ndlovu, a war veteran and ex-dissident, said that war vets would never allow the party to go back to Smith, implying that the MDC was a party to promote white interests. He threatened the violent overthrow of the MDC if it won the election and the installation of a military government. He said: 'We will get arms to defence [sic] the government of ZANU(PF). We will invade military camps just as we have gone to the farms.'¹⁶³ ZANU(PF) Mudzi candidate, Joseph Kaukonde, according to an opposition party victim, told a rally that:

by electing him to contest in the forthcoming elections they had made a mistake because he was not going to allow anyone to vote a rival party and anyone found supporting a rival party would pay. . . . He told us that Zanu(PF) had bought the police and the polling officers such that if we voted for any other party they would open the ballot boxes and see the number of votes cast for a rival party and they would know the people who cast the votes and fix them.¹⁶⁴

The late Border Gezi, ZANU(PF)'s Bindura candidate, warned the opposition parties that 'Zanu(PF) is well known for spilling blood'.¹⁶⁵ Olivia Muchena, Mutoko South's ZANU(PF) candidate and former Muzorewa supporter, allegedly told a rally that the MDC was the 'white man's party' and urged her supporters to kill any MDC supporters.¹⁶⁶

Election reports provide evidence to support the role of the ZANU(PF) hierarchy in orchestrating the widespread election violence against the opposition and those of unknown political affiliation.¹⁶⁷ The leading perpetrators of violence were 'ZANU(PF) supporters', often young men, unemployed, travelling in groups, and most often provided with money and food to meet their daily needs. Witnesses in the MDC election petitions referred to them as 'ZANU(PF) youths'.¹⁶⁸ The second most common group of perpetrators were 'war veterans' militias', which were composed of a small number of liberation war veterans and a large number of youth, often in their twenties or younger.¹⁶⁹ This group which played a central role in land invasions was also provided with money and food, and other types of support

163. *Politically Motivated Violence in Zimbabwe 2000–2001*, p. 42, citing *Daily News*, 16 March 2000. For other statements by veterans' leaders, see *ibid.*, p. 43.

164. *Who Was Responsible? Alleged perpetrators and their crimes during the 2000 Parliamentary Election period. A report by the Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum* (Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum, Harare, July 2001), p. 20.

165. *Organised Violence and Torture in the June 2000 General Election in Zimbabwe*, p. 6, citing *Daily News*, 31 March 2000.

166. *Ibid.*, p. 16, citing the testimony of a witness in an MDC election petition.

167. For example *Who Was Responsible?*, p. 3; *Report of the EU Election Observation Mission on the Parliamentary Elections; Zimbabwe. Terror Tactics in the run-up to parliamentary elections* (Amnesty International, June 2000). URL: <http://www.amnestyusa.org/countries/zimbabwe/document.do?id; Politically Motivated Violence in Zimbabwe 2000–2001>.

168. *Organised Violence and Torture in the June 2000 General Election in Zimbabwe*, p. 9.

169. *Ibid.*, p. 10; see also *Politically Motivated Violence in Zimbabwe 2000–2001*, p. 2.

from government ministers, parliamentarians, provincial governors, high- and low-ranking ZANU(PF) politicians, the army, the police, and the CIO.¹⁷⁰ Importantly, ‘ZANU(PF) supporters’ and ‘war veterans’ militias’, both composed of large numbers of youth, acted with the active or tacit support of their superiors, including ZANU(PF) candidates, who were themselves often identified by victims as key perpetrators of violence.¹⁷¹

The intense violence — one estimate is over 200,000 incidents of political violence in the first half of 2000 — forced the MDC to cease campaigning a few weeks before the election in over 20 constituencies, mainly rural ones.¹⁷² Moreover, the perpetrators of violence acted almost always with impunity. In a speech in Bindura which was shown on ZTV on 8 April 2000, President Mugabe referred to a court decision to end the land invasions: ‘We were told to arrest them (war vets) and remove them from farms. We refused because the occupations are justified. We said there would be no policemen who will go there. If the British want police to evict the war veterans then they must send their police.’¹⁷³ The police also rarely intervened in other incidents of political violence against opposition members, often claiming that they did not intervene in politics.¹⁷⁴ Victims of ruling party violence relate incidents of ZANU(PF) candidates and officials intervening to release their supporters when the police did make arrests.¹⁷⁵

The immediate post-election period began with President Mugabe’s conciliatory message to the nation but was soon undercut by more organized violence to punish MDC voters. In his address to the nation, Mugabe called for national unity ‘across race, tribe, ethnicity, across regions, across class’. He said the election results ‘bind us all, loser and winner alike’, and he expressed his willingness to work with parliament. The MDC accepted the election result but said it intended to challenge the results in constituencies where violence had affected the outcome.¹⁷⁶ Immediately after the election, the urban violence intensified. Soldiers in armoured vehicles and

170. *Politically Motivated Violence in Zimbabwe 2000–2001*, pp. 6, 15–16.

171. *Who Was Responsible?*, pp. 34–46, lists 17 ZANU(PF) candidates as having been identified as perpetrators of violence in victims’ statements to the Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum or to the courts in MDC election petitions challenging particular constituency results. The report, which excludes Bulawayo and Matabeleland North and South provinces, provides many instances of the candidates orchestrating election violence.

172. *International NGO Observer Report: ‘A Matabeleland perspective’ on the Zimbabwe parliamentary elections 24–25 June 2000* (Network of Independent Monitors (Kwazulu Natal), South Africa, Oxfam Canada, in conjunction with Amani Trust, Matabeleland, July 2000), p. 20 on off-limit constituencies; *Who Was Responsible?*, p. 1 refers to the estimate of political violence.

173. *Who Was Responsible?*, p. 3.

174. *International NGO Observer Report*, p. 19; *Who Was Responsible?*, p. 2.

175. *Who Was Responsible?*, pp. 11–12 for examples of ZANU(PF) officials securing the release of their supporters when the police did make arrests.

176. *Report of the EU Election Observation Mission on the Parliamentary Elections*, chapter 6, p. 1.

police support unit officers were deployed in the suburbs of Harare and other cities and towns, purportedly to maintain order and prevent an outbreak of post-election violence. Instead, they assaulted residents, including senior MDC party officials, as part of a strategy of reprisals for urban voters' support for the MDC. This campaign of terror by the army and police continued sporadically into 2001.¹⁷⁷ The aftermath of the elections also witnessed civil service purges and threats of purges, supported by top government leaders, to punish MDC voters.¹⁷⁸ For the mainly ZANU(PF) perpetrators of violence, there was an official reprieve. On 6 October 2000, the government gazetted an amnesty for politically motivated crimes committed between 1 January and 31 July 2000. The amnesty excluded those accused of 'murder, robbery, rape, indecent assault, statutory rape, theft, possession of arms or any offence involving fraud or dishonesty', but very few people accused of these crimes have been prosecuted. In July 2001, no one had yet stood trial for such crimes. Moreover, allegations of political crimes after the expiration of the amnesty were only rarely investigated.¹⁷⁹

The upbeat assessments of analysts and politicians seem to derive from underestimating the ruling party's strength and overestimating the MDC's ability to grow in such a hostile political environment. The European Union's Commissioner for External Relations, Chris Patten, commented: 'The outcome of the elections could mark a transformation towards a multiparty system.'¹⁸⁰ Peter Alexander thought the most likely future scenario was that Mugabe would be beaten in the 2002 presidential election and would hand over power to the MDC, provided there was a high level of working class mobilization and the MDC took the necessary steps to develop its base among the peasants.¹⁸¹ The International Crisis Group (ICG) in its post-election analysis did not find initial signs encouraging but thought 'it may be that the momentum for change with or without Mugabe — not only coming from the opposition but from within ZANU(PF) itself — proves irresistible'.¹⁸² The ICG believed that 'this election did on any view mark a dramatic shift towards real democracy in Zimbabwe'.¹⁸³ Three months later, the ICG remained hopeful that '... underneath the current despair there seems to be growing consensus that the current downward

177. *Politically Motivated Violence in Zimbabwe 2000–2001*, p. 9; for organized post-election violence in Midlands and Matabeleland, *International NGO Observer Report*, see pp. 25–6.

178. *Politically Motivated Violence in Zimbabwe 2000–2001*, pp. 33–4, p. 40.

179. *Who Was responsible?*, pp. 1–2.

180. Commissioner Chris Patten, Directorate General External Relations, press release: 'Commission congratulates the EU observation team on their final report' (Brussels, 4 July 2000). URL: http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/news/07_00/ip_00_706.htm.

181. Peter Alexander, 'Zimbabwean workers, the MDC and the 2000 Election', *Review of African Political Economy* 85 (2000), p. 399.

182. *Zimbabwe: At the Crossroads*, p. ii.

183. *Ibid.*, p. 5.

economic and political drift is unsustainable, that something will happen that will allow the country to regain its footing and get back on course.’¹⁸⁴ Masipula Sithole referred to ‘a dying authoritarianism’ manifested in urban dwellers and Ndebele peasants’ resistance to ruling party coercion and in ‘an incipient defiance’ among rural Shona-speakers. Moreover, he believed that the ruling party’s strategy of terror was ‘increasingly risky to deploy’ because of demoralization among the party’s key supporters and leaders.¹⁸⁵ A network of independent southern African monitors found that the parties’ post-election statements ‘of a desire to co-operate and move forward . . . gives [sic] hope for a more democratic Zimbabwe.’¹⁸⁶

Conclusion

Despite their profoundly different contexts, the four general elections since 1980 expose startling similarities in the ruling party’s discourse and coercive mechanisms. Opponents were cast as reactionary enemies of the state, often — in 1990, 1995, and 2000 — as mere puppets of the whites. The leaders mobilized unemployed youth, mostly males, and sometimes women, to attack opposition supporters and their property, and threatened voters with loss of jobs, houses and food relief and a return to war if they supported the opposition. The perpetrators of violence, chiefly ZANU(PF) supporters, were the beneficiaries of police inaction or party protection, either through leaders’ pressures on the police or through presidential pardons and amnesties for political crimes. The police themselves often actively participated in violence on behalf of the ruling party. Despite pleas for reconciliation after three of the four elections, the party leadership sanctioned local vendettas against constituencies that had voted for the opposition. Beyond these overarching similarities, the intensity and degree of orchestration of ruling party violence in 1985 and 2000 stand out sharply from the violence in the 1990 and 1995 elections.

Importantly, ZANU(PF)’s practices in the 1980 election show strong continuities with its subsequent strategies as the ruling party: the widespread use of organized coercion; the role of youth violence; the threats to return to war; the claims to be an innocent victim rather than perpetrator of violence; and the post-election appeal to reconciliation alongside efforts to impose a one-party state. Particularly striking is the role of veterans in party violence in both 1980 and 2000. There is further continuity in the use of pardons and amnesties, but in 1980 these were granted by Governor

184. *Zimbabwe: Three months after the elections* Africa Briefing (International Crisis Group, Harare/Brussels, 26 September 2000), p. 7.

185. Masipula Sithole, ‘Fighting authoritarianism in Zimbabwe’, *Journal of Democracy* 12, 1 (2001), pp. 167–8.

186. *International NGO Observer Report*, p. 24.

Soames. The obvious distinction is that in the 1980 election, as opposed to the subsequent general elections, ZANU(PF) was at loggerheads with the police and army.

Why, then, did election analysts at the time routinely forecast hopeful scenarios based on a model of multiparty democratic politics or external pressures for the reform of ZANU(PF)? Analysts of the 1985 elections, leaving aside the two foreign human rights organizations, bought the government propaganda, failed to consider the bias of the state media, and ignored parliamentary debates which provided ZAPU's allegations of state-sponsored atrocities against innocent civilians. In the 1990 and 2000 elections, analysts were perhaps inspired by the surprising electoral gains of recently formed opposition parties to imagine the possibilities of an alternation in rulers through the ballot box. The 1995 election against a desperately weak opposition left scholars believing there was space, either for well-organized opposition parties or for civil society to press the ruling party to reform itself. In the 1980 elections, analysts were often more interested in explaining the size of ZANU(PF)'s electoral victory than the character of the party system. Their understanding of the legacy of the war for popular participation was flawed both by their presumption of a largely non-violent guerrilla mobilization of rural people and by their too ready dismissal of British allegations of ZANU(PF)'s electoral violence and settlement violations as politically-inspired, and therefore without substance.

Given the ongoing political repression in Zimbabwe, the prospects of either the MDC coming to power through an election or of civil society pressurizing ZANU(PF) to reform itself seem remote. The MDC was allowed to do as well as it did in 2000 partly because the ruling party was surprised by its support among Matabeleland voters. The next general election, should it actually occur, will not be a tight race. The ruling party has already laid the groundwork to control the outcome and has honed its skills in terrorizing voters in by-elections.¹⁸⁷ In July 2004, Mugabe warned the youth, as in the past, that they must campaign vigorously — code for violently — to defend the nation. If Zimbabwe lost the election, they would be to blame.¹⁸⁸ Soldiers have allegedly been selectively withdrawn from the army to spearhead the campaign.¹⁸⁹ The real contest in this election, as in 1995, is likely to occur within ZANU(PF) during its primaries.¹⁹⁰

For how long will ZANU(PF) be able to maintain power? It still controls the state and continues to create patronage opportunities, despite the

187. On violence in by-elections, see 'Test for Zanu PF's sincerity on reforms', *Zimbabwe Independent* (Harare), 20 August 2004.

188. 'Electoral reforms are a smokescreen', *Zimbabwe Independent*, 16 July 2004.

189. 'Soldiers take leave to assist Zanu PF's election campaign', *Zim Online* (South Africa), 17 August 2004. URL: <http://www.zimonline.co.za>.

190. On the 1995 primaries, see Makumbe and Compagnon, *Behind the Smokescreen*, pp. 110–39.

economy shrinking faster than any other in the world. The post-2000 distribution of white-owned private land and the use of food aid to reward loyal party members are just two examples. There is no reason to believe the party would not take over the mines, industry, and residential properties as well.¹⁹¹ Major threats to the party's ability to hold the centre may come from the lower ranks in the police, army, and civil service. The struggle over who will succeed President Mugabe continues to keep factionalism alive. For aspirant power brokers, there is an ever-growing supply of unemployed and desperate youth who could be turned into dangerous ragtag armies. Mugabe and his henchmen, determined to retain power at all costs, are creating conditions that will ultimately undermine the ability of ZANU(PF), or, indeed, any other party, to rule Zimbabwe.

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191. Mugabe declared his intention to obtain a controlling interest in the mines and manufacturing, raising questions about whether he would seize or pay for shares. See 'Mugabe eyes manufacturing sector', *Business Day* (South Africa), 16 September 2004; 'Minings freeze after Mugabe statement', *Zimbabwe Standard* (Harare), 19 September 2004; 'Mawere saga threatens', *Sunday Mirror* (Harare), 12 September 2004.

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