

**The Educational Front:
The Instrumentalisation of Education during the Zimbabwean
Liberation Struggle (1964-1980).**

This Document is Submitted to the Committee
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Declaration

I declare that this thesis is entirely my own work, except where otherwise stated.

Dedication

To the individuals who trusted me with their narratives.

Abstract

This thesis is a historical study of the role of education in the Zimbabwean Liberation War, also known as the Rhodesian Bush war, from 1964 to 1980. It argues that formal education was instrumentalised by both the Rhodesian Front—the ruling party, and the Zimbabwean African People’s Union (ZAPU)—one of the two foremost nationalist movements, as an ideological, political, and military tool. For ZAPU, a socialist-influenced education was deployed to attempt to build the citizenry and industries of a future state, while for the Rhodesian Front, education was a means of maintaining the status quo of the White minority-governed settler state and buttressing its economy.

In outlining an original narrative of the “educational front” of the war, this research contributes to the educational history of the period, provides insights into the role of education in conflict, and more generally contributes to the history of the liberation war—including the understudied ideological dimensions of these African liberation movements and the transnational networks in which they participated in the context of the Cold War.

Through interviews with 41 ZAPU veterans, over 2000 pages of ZAPU publications, school yearbooks, interviews and surveys with Rhodesian students and veterans, this study traces the various functions of formal and political education across the “educational front” of the war. During the conflict, formal schools were used as sites for recruitment and violence, education was used as both an international diplomatic and local bargaining tool, and formal educational knowledge became indispensable to both ZAPU and the Rhodesian Front’s military operations. Arguing that a continuum existed between the classroom and the barracks, this thesis explores the overlap between Rhodesian educational and state censorship and propaganda campaigns, and the political educational curriculum embedded within

ZAPU's refugee camps and military armed wing, the Zimbabwean People's Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA). The "educational front" therefore cuts across and reveals the important influences and connections amongst propaganda, politics and education during the liberation war.

The impacts of the war on formal education are also explored, offering original insights into the way the war's effects were mediated by race and class: schools for White students were proactively protected, while African schools widely closed due to attacks by guerrilla fighters, but also as punishment by the Rhodesian government, particularly in rural areas suspected of aiding these fighters. Finally, within the context of the Cold War, this research provides the first academic study of ZAPU's main institution of political education: the Political Commissariat. I argue that as "organic intellectuals," ZAPU commissars synthesized divergent socialist, nationalist, and religious ideals in a dynamic, ideologically capacious political education for soldiers and civilians to counter the ideology of the Rhodesian educational system. This study draws upon multiple bodies of literature and primary source material to raise questions about revolution and state building during the Rhodesian War and about the pedagogical and political bases of systems of education, both formal and informal.

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List of Abbreviations

RF: Rhodesian Front

BSAC: British South African Company

OAU: Organisation of African Unity

ZANU: Zimbabwe African National Union

ZAPU: Zimbabwe African People's Union

ZANLA: Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army

ZIPRA: Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army

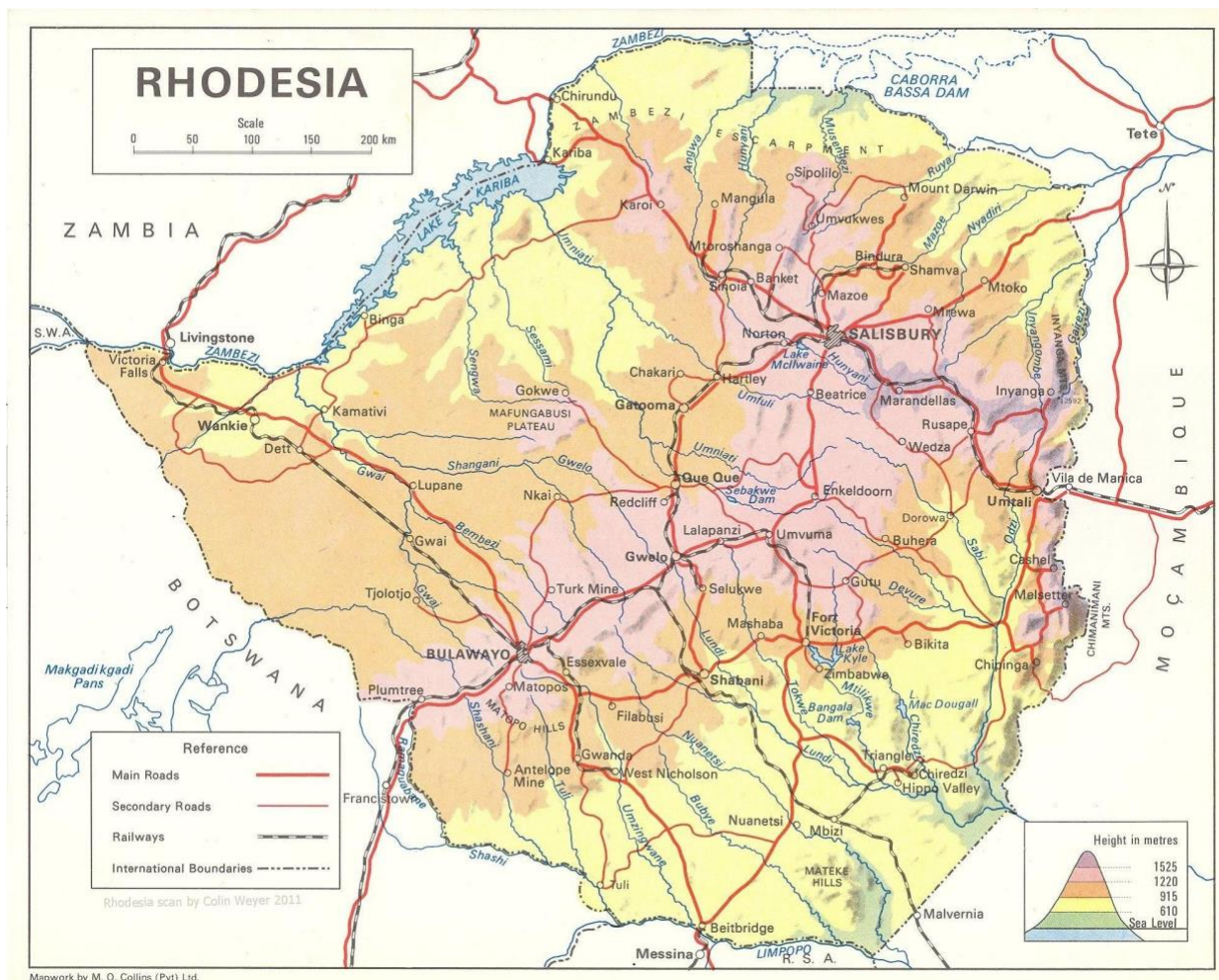
RLB: Rhodesia Literature Bureau

RBC: Rhodesia Broadcasting Corporation

FRELIMO: Portuguese Frente de Libertação de Moçambique

ANC: African National Congress

POU: Psychological Operations Unit



Chapter 1: Introduction

For decolonial liberation movements across the African continent, the struggle for education was inextricably linked to the fight for freedom. Conversely, education was used by colonial governments as an instrument to justify and maintain the status quo. This was particularly true in the case of Rhodesia. On November 11, 1965, the right-wing Rhodesian Front party, wary that the British government would grant Rhodesia independence as an African-majority ruled country in response to calls for democratic rule by African nationalist parties, as had recently occurred in neighboring Zambia (formerly Northern Rhodesia), announced a Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) from Britain, creating a White-minority ruled settler state. Meanwhile, the nationalist movements, led by Rhodesian-educated African intellectuals and union leaders with the aid of socialist and newly-independent African states, initiated an armed struggle for the country's independence from colonial rule. Education, one of the few avenues for African economic and social advancement, became a key focus of the liberation struggle. Limited access to education for the African majority population served both as an instrument of colonialism and state control and in time, it became a focal point as an instrument of the liberation struggle.

While much has been written on educational inequalities in Rhodesia, no study has examined its use as an instrument of struggle from the viewpoint of the liberation movement. Similarly, despite the centrality of education to the rise and demands of the liberation movements, relatively few studies have explored the role of education during the liberation struggle and the impacts of the Liberation War on the Rhodesian educational system.

Rationale

This study aims to address this lacuna by analysing the role and instrumentalisation of formal and political education by the Rhodesian Front (RF) and the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU), one of two foremost nationalist movements, during the Zimbabwe Liberation War (~1964-1980). The initial research plan limited the scope of this study to the impacts of the war on Rhodesian high schools. However, in interviewing veterans from the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) about schools they may have come into contact with during the war, their own educational histories of being abducted from Rhodesian schools by the Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA), the military arm of ZAPU, studying in the Soviet Union, writing socialist manifestos for ZAPU and teaching in ZAPU school camps, highlighted the ways in which education was instrumental to the nationalist movement in its fight against the Rhodesian Front. I therefore shifted my focus to examine the role that education played in the liberation struggle more broadly.

Without an initial hypothesis, I took a grounded-theory methodological approach and gathered as much primary documentation and as many oral histories as I could relating to education and the war. The research I conducted, based on two research trips to my home city of Bulawayo, Zimbabwe and archival trips to the US and the UK, amounted to 41 interviews with ZAPU veterans, group discussions with Rhodesian military veterans and two Facebook surveys, one with Rhodesian Army veterans and another with former Rhodesian school pupils.

In following the documentary trail during my research, I expanded the scope of the study beyond formal schools to include public information broadcasting or propaganda and political education as part of the "educational front." This was owing to the repeated

appearance of evidence indicating a continuum between the school yard and the battlefield. For example, the ideological bent of the Rhodesian curriculum and policies of school censorship were closely related, both politically and bureaucratically, to public censorship and broader political messaging; school educational broadcasts were aired on the same channels as anti-nationalist propaganda, and the Rhodesian Literacy Bureau which drafted the list of publicly banned books also oversaw the Rhodesian school curriculum. Moreover, training in ZAPU's military branch mirrored aspects of formal schooling: ZIPRA guerrilla fighters systematically studied history, economics and socialism, taught by their political commissars as part of their daily routine.

Based on my analysis, I argue and document how formal and political education served as a political, ideological and military weapon for the two opposing forces during the war. The various uses of education by the Rhodesian Front and ZAPU, which included the use of formal Rhodesian schools as sites of recruitment, censorship and violence, and the instrumentalisation of education more broadly for international diplomacy and ideological warfare and propaganda, reveal the extent of the “educational front”, which cuts across the other major fronts (diplomatic, political, economic, ideological, military, etc.) of the war.

Given the vast scope of the “educational front”, this research offers merely a cross-section of that front; most notably absent from this study, owing to temporal and other limitations, is a robust analysis of the various missions which ran schools, as well as other nationalist movements, particularly the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU), the political party which eventually won the majority vote at Zimbabwean independence. Also absent from the analysis is the Zimbabwe People's Army (ZIPA) which was a joint operation comprising members of the military wings of ZAPU and ZANU- the unifying movement

started in 1975 was short-lived, as its leadership was jailed in Mozambique in 1977 until Zimbabwe's independence in 1980.¹ In documenting the Liberation War through the lens of educational history, this study simultaneously offers a study of education through the lens of conflict. This analysis of the “educational front” as a whole, as well as the new historical perspectives derived from first-hand accounts, combine to make this research novel.

Education and Zimbabwe's Liberation War

The relatively broad scope of the study across multiple fronts of the war, required it to draw upon a diverse body of literature on Rhodesian history, politics, education, and media leading up to and during the war. As such, with the exception of Frederikse and Biddy's work, each of the chapters was informed by disparate subsets of academic literature.

Frederikse and Biddy's source book, *None but ourselves: masses vs media in the making of Zimbabwe*,² is a collection of education, propaganda and media scans from Rhodesian textbooks, state ordinances, pamphlets and verbatim interviews with war veterans. Although this work does not address education in detail, the curated collection of primary sources served as an important reference in three of the four chapters of this thesis.³

To better outline the scope of the study, I provide here a brief summary of the most important studies referenced within each chapter. After the outlining the study's methodology in Chapter 1, Chapter 2, an exploration of the instrumentalisation of education by the Rhodesian state and missionary groups from the foundation of the colony in the 1860s

¹ For more on ZIPA see David Moore (2014) The Zimbabwean People's Army moment in Zimbabwean history, 1975–1977: Mugabe's rise and democracy's demise, *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, 32:3, 302–318, DOI: [10.1080/02589001.2014.956499](https://doi.org/10.1080/02589001.2014.956499)

² Julie Frederikse and Biddy Partridge, *None But Ourselves: Masses vs. Media in the Making of Zimbabwe* (London: Heinemann, 1983).

³ I categorise the media flyers and government clippings Frederiske presents as primary source-evidence given that many are presented without any scholarly narrative framework and are scanned official documents.

up to the liberation struggle, is buttressed by the works of C.F. Hallencreutz,⁴ and Paul Gundani,⁵ J.R.D. Cobbing,⁶ Ngwabi Bhebe.⁷ Jocelyn Alexander et al.,⁸ Terrence Ranger,⁹ and Sabelo Gatsheni-Ndlovu.¹⁰ Each of these studies speaks to the educational contestation among the population, missionary churches, and the state in the creation of the colony. Furthermore, documenting the state's relationship to education, Michael West's *The Rise of an African Middle Class*¹¹ provides a rich contextual analysis of the uses and meaning of education for the burgeoning African middle class leading up to the war, ultimately providing evidence for the importance of education for individual, social, and group mobility. Relatedly, Dickson Mungazi's work highlights the Rhodesian government's efforts to control the education system through legislative ordinances, underscoring the value of education for the political economy of the state and making the case that the Rhodesian government sought to limit African educational development.¹² These secondary sources on the Rhodesian state,

⁴ Carl F. Hallencreutz and Ambrose Moyo, eds., *Church and State in Zimbabwe* (Gweru: Mambo Press, 1988).

⁵ Paul Gundani, "The Mission School as Locus of Evangelisation of Children in Zimbabwean Historiography (1859-1969)," *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae* 22, no. 1 (2006): 69-84.

⁶ Julian Raymond Dennis Cobbing, "The Ndebele Under the Khumalos, 1820-1896," (PhD diss., University of Lancaster, 1976).

⁷ Ngwabi Bhebe, *Christianity and Traditional Religion in Western Zimbabwe, 1859-1923* (New York: Longman Publishing Group, 1979).

⁸ Jocelyn Alexander, Joan McGregor, and Terence O. Ranger, *Violence and Memory: One Hundred Years in the 'Dark Forests' of Matabeleland, Zimbabwe* (Portsmouth: Heinemann; Oxford: James Currey, 2000).

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Sabelo J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni, "Re-Thinking the Colonial Encounter in Zimbabwe in the Early Twentieth Century," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 33, no. 1 (March 2007): 173-91. See also Brian Raftopoulos and Alois Mlambo, *Becoming Zimbabwe: A History From the Pre-Colonial Period to 2008* (Harare: Weaver Press; Johannesburg: Jacana Media, 2009).

¹¹ Michael O. West, *The Rise of an African Middle Class: Colonial Zimbabwe, 1898-1965* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2002).

¹² Dickson A Mungazi, "To Bind Ties Between the School and Tribal Life: Educational Policy for Africans Under George Stark in Zimbabwe," *The Journal of Negro Education* 58, no. 4 (1989): 468-77. Mungazi,

missions, and schools allowed me to analyse the ways in which the colonial government and missions used education as a tool to restructure and monetize the colony's economy, to coerce "native" Africans into the colonial workforce, to "civilize" or assimilate Africans into the Western, Christian religious and cultural fold, and to justify the colonial state through White and Western supremacist ideologies embedded throughout the formal curriculum.

The literature referenced for the third and fourth chapters on the Rhodesian Front and ZAPU's instrumentalisation of education respectively, were much more disparate, as both chapters relied on my original research contextualised within literature on multiple fronts of the war. On the Rhodesian Front and education, scholarship by Luise White provided detailed accounts of the Rhodesian Front's draft of White and Coloured soldiers in "Civic Virtue, Young Men, and the Family: Conscription in Rhodesia"¹³ and its resulting effects on the soldiers' education. My interviews built on White's narrative in further revealing how schools facilitated the draft. J.J. Zaffiro's "Political Change and Broadcasting in Zimbabwe 1931-1984",¹⁴ documenting the Rhodesian Front's use of broadcasting for political education, provided historical context and important references for my analysis of the educational broadcasts detailed in the government's Annual Educational Reports. Finally, the third chapter built on works on the military history of the Rhodesian Front, including a website run by Sergeant Major Freidman which contained original documentation and

Education and Government Control in Zimbabwe: A Study of the Commissions of Inquiry, 1908-1974 (New York and London: Praeger, 1990). Mungazi, "A Strategy for Power: Commissions of Inquiry Into Education and Government Control in Colonial Zimbabwe," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 22, no. 2 (1989): 267-85.

¹³ Luise White, "Civic Virtue, Young Men, and the Family: Conscription in Rhodesia, 1974-1980," *International journal of African historical studies* 37, no. 1 (2004): 103-21.

¹⁴ J.J. Zaffiro, "Political Change and Broadcasting in Zimbabwe: 1931-1984," (PhD diss., University of Wisconsin, Madison, 1984).

pictures from the Psychological Operations Unit, to which, my interviews informed me, teachers were assigned during the draft.¹⁵ Much of the literature on the Rhodesian Front is focused on the military organization and actions of the Rhodesian Army, and no studies—to my knowledge—have been carried out on the Rhodesian state’s responses to the impacts of the war on schools.

The literature pertaining to the fourth chapter on ZAPU’s use of education includes background literature on the history, military, prison education, and international diplomacy in light of the Cold War. Ngwabi Bhebe’s book on the *Guerrilla Warfare and the Evangelical Lutheran Church* provided important historical context and references on the international relationships between the nationalist government-in-exile and the international community (especially church groups) as well as a detailed account of ZAPU’s abduction of students from schools.¹⁶ Two studies which reference ZAPU’s camp schools, including Paulo Nare’s first-hand account of setting up camp schools in “Education and the War”¹⁷ and *Through Zenzo Nkobi’s Lens*,¹⁸ which provided brief overviews of ZAPU camp schools, helped fill in the historical gaps and better contextualise my interviews with veterans and former residents of these camps. The fourth chapter also references educational exchanges under the umbrella of Cold War politics: Constantin Katsakioris’ “Burden or Allies? Third

¹⁵Also see Herb Friedman, “RHODESIA PSYOP 1965-1980,” Accessed August 20th, 2020, <http://www.psywarrior.com/RhodesiaPSYOP.html>; Jakkie Cilliers, *Counter-Insurgency in Rhodesia (RLE: Terrorism and Insurgency)* (New York: Routledge, 2015).

¹⁶ Ngwabi Bhebe, *The ZAPU and ZANU Guerrilla warfare and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe* (Gweru: Mambo Press, 1999).

¹⁷ Paulos Matjaka Nare, “Education and the War,” in *Society in Zimbabwe’s Liberation War* vol. ii, ed. Terrence Ranger and Ngwabi Bhebe (London: James Currey, 1995): 130-38.

¹⁸ South African Historical Archive, *Zapu Through Zenzo Nkobi’s Lens*, (Braamfontein: The South African Historical Archive, 2017).

World Students and Internationalist Duty Through Soviet Eyes”¹⁹ and Dennis et al.’s *The Hot ‘Cold War’: The USSR in Southern Africa*²⁰ both discuss Soviet-African alliances which included the provision of significant numbers of scholarships to African students for military and diplomatic reasons. Mlambo’s *Rhodesia, the Struggle for a Birthright*,²¹ discusses the scholarships offered to Rhodesian refugees for diplomatic purposes by both sides in the Cold War. An unpublished dissertation by Vincent Vera, titled “Zimbabwe Refugees and Exiles in the United States: A Study in the Contradictions within U.S. Foreign Policy, 1965-1974”²² discusses the educational opportunities offered to Zimbabwean refugees in the context of the ideologically fraught Cold War. When discussing prison education, this chapter relied on Jocelyn Alexander’s “Nationalism and Self-Government in Rhodesian Detention: Gonakudzingwa, 1964–1974.”²³ Alexander’s work explored the ways in which detainee education “offered access to knowledge denied and a means of self-improvement” and was “conceived of as an essential qualification for both political leadership and mastery of the bureaucratic state.”²⁴ My findings built upon Alexander’s work in that even the interviewees

¹⁹ Constantin Katsakioris, “Burden or Allies?: Third World Students and Internationalist Duty Through Soviet Eyes,” *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 18, no. 3 (2017): 539-67. See also Constantin Katsakioris, “The Soviet-South Encounter: Tensions in the Friendship With Afro-Asian Partners, 1945-1965,” in *Cold War Crossings: International Travel and Exchange across the Soviet Bloc, 1940s–1960s*, ed. Patryk Babiracki and Kenyon Zimmer (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2014), 134-65.

²⁰ Dennis Laumann and Vladimir Shubin, “The Hot ‘Cold War’: The USSR in Southern Africa,” *Journal of African History* 52, no. 3 (2011): 414.

²¹ Eshmael Ephial Mtshumayeli Mlambo, *Rhodesia, the Struggle for a Birthright* (London: C. Hurst, 1972).

²² Vincent Vera, “Zimbabwe Refugees and Exiles in the U.S.: A Study in the Contradictions Within U.S. Foreign Policy, 1965-1974,” (PhD diss., Union Institute and University, 1974).

²³ Jocelyn Alexander, “Nationalism and Self-Government in Rhodesian Detention: Gonakudzingwa, 1964–1974,” *Journal of Southern African Studies* 37, no. 3 (2011): 551-69. See also Munyaradzi B Munochiveyi, *Prisoners of Rhodesia: Inmates and Detainees in the Struggle for Zimbabwean Liberation, 1960-1980* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

²⁴ Alexander, “Nationalism and Self-Government,” 562

who were not imprisoned discussed the role of education as a means of self-, state- and citizenship-building, revealing an overall framework within which the culture and importance of education was deeply espoused.

In summary, while the background literature on aspects of education and ZAPU were embedded within siloed case studies on the war, each of these academic sources helped to contextualize and supplement the oral histories and ZAPU documentation, highlighting the various ways in which ZAPU both used and responded to the use of education during the war.

The academic literature buttressing the final chapter on ZAPU's Political Commissariat was much sparser than that of any of the other sections. As the first study on the structure of the Commissariat, the chapter pushed back against narratives negating the existence of formal political education in ZAPU and draws primarily from the oral narratives of political commissars and primary documents to understand the history, teachings, and the effects of the commissariat curriculum.²⁵ Histories on ZAPU and its political ideologies, such as Moore's work on "The Zimbabwean 'Organic Intellectuals' in Transition"²⁶ provided insights into the sometimes-competing nationalist and socialist perspectives within the party. Given the context of the Cold War, Alexander and McGregor's²⁷ article on the experiences of military veterans studying and training in the Soviet Union highlighted the diverse experiences that influenced veterans' varied engagements with socialism.

²⁵ Researchers such as Clive Harber deny ZAPU's extensive political education C Harber - *Journal of Curriculum Studies* and 1985, "Weapon of War: Political Education in Zimbabwe," *Taylor & Francis*.

²⁶ David Moore, "The Zimbabwean 'Organic Intellectuals' in Transition," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 15, no. 1 (1988): 96-105.

²⁷ Jocelyn Alexander and JoAnn McGregor, "African soldiers in the USSR: oral histories of ZAPU intelligence cadres' Soviet training, 1964–1979." *Journal of Southern African Studies* 43, no. 1 (2017): 49-66.

On the question of the curriculum of the commissariat and its influence on the political and religious beliefs of veterans, Ranger and Bhebe's second edited volume of essays, *Society in Zimbabwe's Liberation War* ²⁸ offered complementary evidence of the diverse ways in which guerrilla fighters selected and blended traditional religious beliefs and socialist thought. Their chapter, which explores how *amadlozi*, the ancestral spirits and the Mwali shrines in the Matopos hills were consulted by ZAPU and ZIPRA fighters, refutes the previous literature suggesting that "there was little if any interaction between ZIPRA and any form of religion." ²⁹ Building on this work, the oral histories presented in this thesis reveal how the commissariat's structured curriculum influenced veterans who, as intellectuals, interpreted and negotiated divergent ideologies in diverse ways. The study of the commissariat fills a considerable dearth of literature regarding ZAPU's political education and the socialist ideologies within the movement.

This lacuna is compounded by the fact that having lost the general independence election to their rival ZANU, led by Robert Mugabe, whose government confiscated ZAPU archives and led a ruthless crusade against all ZAPU veterans, presentist bias has meant that, until very recently, ZAPU's history has been largely understudied and marginalized in historical accounts of the conflict, especially when compared to ZANU's.³⁰ For this reason, the oral narratives of the 41 veterans were indispensable to filling a small part of this considerable historical gap.

²⁸ Ngwabi Bhebe and Terrence Ranger, eds., *Soldiers in Zimbabwe's Liberation War* (London: Currey, 1995).

²⁹ Ibid., 7, 50.

³⁰ Ibid.

Contribution of Study

This study primarily contributes to the literature on education and conflict in Zimbabwe. It provides the first historical overview of the instrumentalisation of education during the Zimbabwean liberation war that documents the ways in which ZAPU and the Rhodesian Front used education as political, military and ideological instruments of war. Second, the study more broadly contributes to the educational history of Rhodesia. It illuminates the ways in which the war impacted schools in Rhodesia, most notably the Rhodesian government's racially discriminatory responses to school insecurities. Third, this thesis is also the first study dedicated to the analysis of ZAPU's formal and political educational strategies during the war, which included using formal educational exchanges as a tool for international diplomacy, forcefully conscripting students from schools, and the teaching of a political curricula within schools, refugee, and military camps that explicitly challenged the ideological and political propaganda inherent in the Rhodesian educational curriculum. Finally, the most significant contribution of this work to the literature on ZAPU and the War of Liberation is that the study provides the first in-depth case study of the history, curriculum and ideological influence of the party's Political Commissariat, the main institution through which ZAPU conducted its political education.

Thesis Overview

Having provided an overview of the thesis within this introductory chapter, Chapter 2 describes the study's methodology. Chapter 3, 'The Rote and the Rope: The Instrumentalisation of Education in the Foundation of the Colony of Rhodesia' establishes the historical background and basic theoretical foundations of the study. Using examples highlighting the political and ideological nature of the curriculum, the militant discipline

under which the schools were run, and the use of educational institutions to monetize the new economy and coerce Africans into the colonial workforce, this chapter underscores the importance of the continuum between the barracks and the schoolyard in colonial Rhodesia. I demonstrate the ways that formal education was imbricated in the colonial enterprise and the manner in which it became an instrument for the colonial administration and missionary institutions to reshape the social, political, economic, and religious landscape of the new colony.

Having explored the historical relationship between the Rhodesian educational system and the state, Chapter 4, 'The Educational Front: The Rhodesian Front's Instrumentalisation of Formal and Political Education' examines the Rhodesian Front's use of education as a means of maintaining political control of the state and defeating the nationalist movements. This chapter examines the use of schools as vehicles of state censorship and propaganda, the leveraging of school yearbooks for conscription and recruitment, and the assignment of schoolteachers to the Psychological Operations Unit which produced and disseminated pro-Rhodesian Front propaganda. Furthermore, the chapter highlights how education was used as an incentive to convince guerrilla fighters to defect from the nationalists, and was withheld as a punitive measure from communities suspected of aiding nationalist forces. The chapter also examines the impacts of the war on the educational system, arguing that African schools bore the brunt of the conflict as the government proactively protected White schools and retroactively responded to the guerrilla attacks on African schools by closing them.

Chapter 5, "The Educational Front: ZAPU's Instrumentalisation of Education" analyses ZAPU's use of education as a means of undermining the Rhodesian state and waging war. I argue that the use of education for political, ideological and military control is exemplified in ZAPU's use of schools as sites of military recruitment through abductions, scholarships as tools of

international diplomacy in garnering support for the movement locally and internationally, and educational attainment as prerequisites for assuming leadership and military positions in the movement. Finally, the chapter discusses ZAPU's self-image as a 'government in exile' and its resulting conception of its educational activities as cultivating the citizenry of a future state.

Chapter 6 presents a detailed case-study of ZAPU's political education through the Political Commissariat, an institution of political education integrated into the military training of ZIPRA cadres and both the military and political hierarchy of the party. In addition to documenting the history, curriculum and structure of the Commissariat, this chapter presents veterans' accounts of their personal syntheses of the diverse ideological influences current among ZAPU, including the socialist political education of the commissariat.

The concluding chapter summarises the arguments presented in the thesis and underscores the importance of historical studies such as these not only for understanding the past but for a more robust understanding of the present role of education in the state. It also reiterates this study's contributions to both the field of history and that of education as a historical narrative which uncovers details about the war and education, but also one which highlights the possibility of reframing the very concept of education in relation to conflict. Finally, the conclusion also discusses the limitations of the study and highlights future lines of inquiry, including the much-needed inclusion of more female narratives in the study of the Liberation War as well as the transnational relationships and exchanges under the umbrella of the Cold War.

During the war for Zimbabwe's independence, both the Rhodesian Front and ZAPU invested significant resources and manpower into education as a part of the war effort. The RF sought to use education in various ways to maintain the status quo, while ZAPU attempted to use various forms of education in order to challenge the settler state and create a new state and political order. By exploring the history of the liberation struggle through the

lens of education, and Rhodesian education through the history of this anti-colonial struggle, this study develops new perspectives on the history of the war, and new perspectives on the relationships between education and conflict, particularly highlighting the political and ideological dimensions inherent in all educational systems, especially in colonial and postcolonial African contexts. In focusing on the “educational front” of this conflict, this study necessarily touches on many other fronts of the war and underscores the interconnections amongst them as well as the multi-dimensional nature of both education and conflict. Examining the competing educational ideologies and practices of the Rhodesian Front and ZAPU allows us to see how different political positions influence the conceptualization and instrumentalization of education, even as these educational programs shape these political positions and ideologies.

Chapter 2: Epistemological and Methodological Considerations

This thesis examines the role of education in the liberation struggle and more specifically, its instrumentalisation by the Rhodesian Front and ZAPU. It employs a historical methodology of grounded theory: the arguments and narratives are drawn from the study's sources: oral histories of ZAPU veterans, Rhodesian Front veterans, students, surveys of Rhodesian school students and veterans as well as documentary analysis of over 2000 pages of ZAPU's publications and Rhodesian government records and school yearbooks.

The overarching research question asks what purposes were assigned to education and how was it employed during the liberation struggle. This research question is built on two premises: first, the contested nature of the purposes of education, defined by differing ideologies in the context of struggles for power, and second, the various ways in which education was used in the political struggle for control of the state. The first premise and part of the research question is ideological and explores the different ways in which education and its purposes were conceived by different groups, and the second premise and part of the research question is functional and deals with the practical ways in which education was actually used by these different groups. The ideological and the functional perspectives are fused in the exploration of how the formal system of education was employed by the Rhodesian Front as an ideological tool in its quest to maintain control of the state and in how various educational institutions, such as the Political Commissariat and camp schools, were employed by ZAPU in its quest to defeat the Rhodesian state and replace it with a new political one.

Grounded-theory, Methodology, and Scope of research

The reasons for the breadth of the overarching research question is the direct result of

the grounded-theory approach³¹ with which the research was conducted. Grounded theory here names a general approach to qualitative research (pioneered by figures such as the sociologists Strauss and Glaser)³² which seeks to continually develop and refine theories, categories, and research questions from the collection of qualitative data—combining both inductive and deductive reasoning so that new theoretical perspectives and questions emerge in response to new data.³³

The initial research plan merely aimed to investigate how schools in Matabeleland were affected by the liberation struggle under the hypothesis that the liberation struggle significantly affected the quality and access to formal education, particularly for African and rural students. However, over the course of my interviews with ZAPU veterans whom I asked about schools which they came across during the struggle, their own educational histories, including their Marxist and Socialist educations in ZAPU camps and their experiences studying abroad revealed the limited scope with which I had approached the question of education during the liberation struggle.

What became clear over the course of my interviews was that education had not merely been limited by the war, but was both a site of contestation and a political and ideological tool of warfare wielded by both the Rhodesian Front and ZAPU. Without an overarching theory or hypothesis in mind, I gathered my interviews and any documentation (archival documents, secondary resources) I could find that related even tangentially to the

³¹ Methodological assumptions are therefore notions made about the correct ‘tools’ to gain access to that specific knowledge. What can be known, and how one can come to know it, is at the heart of epistemological and methodological debates within the social sciences.

³² For example, see Juliet Corbin and Anselm Strauss, *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory* (Newbury Park: Sage Publications, 2014); Barney G. Glaser and Anselm L. Strauss, *Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research* (New York: Routledge, 2017).

ways in which formal education (schools) and political education, or propaganda related to the war. The data I collected included:

- 41 interviews with ZAPU veterans averaging between 1 and 2 hours each.
- Rhodesian Government Annual Education Reports from 1941- 1979
- ZAPU publications, including *The Zimbabwe Review* (1964-1976)
- High school yearbooks from three schools of different races, ranging from 1970-1979
- Surveys with Rhodesian Front soldiers on a Rhodesian Facebook group, “Rhodesia Military”
- Surveys with former Rhodesian students on a Rhodesian School Facebook group, “Rhodesian Schools”.
- In person discussions with Rhodesian Front war veterans at their clubhouse in Bulawayo.

It was only after I had collected the data and transcribed both rounds of interviews that I began to piece together the themes and argument that have become central to this thesis. The choice of a grounded theory methodology which is inductive, rather than a more hypothesis or deductive based approach to the data reduced the number of assumptions with which I approached the data and contributed to the originality of the interrogation and overall narrative.

Moreover, as a historical study, I aimed to foreground the description of events and interviews rather than to prove or disprove particular theories; it is for this reason that the theories I do introduce, namely those by Foucault and Gramsci, are mentioned minimally in chapters in which I believe the theories unveil or illuminate particular aspects of the

narrative. For example, I use Gramsci's discussion of "organic intellectuals" in order to underscore the intellectual rigour of ZAPU's political commissariat and Foucault's theories on power to foreground and contextualise the coercive nature of the colonial state, and by extension, the education system. Overall I believe the grounded method allowed me to ask questions and piece together histories which have yet to be explored by other researchers.

However, this methodology did have limitations, most notably in the fact that in gathering the data without a clearly defined hypothesis, I was unsure of how much data I would need, and which sources would be most relevant. As a reflexive researcher, I would be remiss not to mention my own proclivities and interests in pursuing certain types of data collection over others. For example, while I carried out considerable archival work, I chose to spend the majority of my two trips to Zimbabwe interviewing ZAPU veterans and one afternoon with Rhodesian Front veterans. This was not only due to the fact that ZAPU narratives are relatively under-represented in the literature on the Liberation War, but also because I personally found them to be the most interesting aspect of my research. The question of researcher positionality therefore played a considerable role in determining the types of data I collected relating to education during the war.

My resulting data collection included over 2000 pages of archival documents, over 485 single-spaced pages of transcriptions of interviews with veterans, and two Facebook surveys/threads with over 100 comments each. As the primary themes of education as a tool for political, ideological, and structural warfare emerged from my data, my uneven data collection— due not only to my choice of grounded methodology, but also to limitations of time, finances, and access, affected the depth to which I was able to pursue certain facets of the research. For example, since I interviewed more ZAPU veterans and collected

more data on ZAPU than on the Rhodesian Front, I present many more themes and arguments about ZAPU than I do about the Rhodesian Front. It is for this reason that the sub questions presented above were not researched exhaustively or equally, as each question alone could be a thesis unto itself. However, I was able to provide a detailed historical sketch of the ways in which formal and political education was weaponized and politicized during the war; this being, to my knowledge, the first study of its kind on the war, I hope the original arguments will be a significant contribution to the study of Rhodesia and the field of education.

Epistemological framework:

Having discussed the general research methodology, a word about the epistemological assumptions of this study are in order.³⁴ Following Cohen et al., these assumptions about the acquisition, bases, and transmission of knowledge in this study can be categorized as both normative and interpretive.³⁵ Normative or descriptive paradigms view human behaviour as “rule-governed” and therefore capable of investigation by “natural science methods.”³⁶ Ideally, historians who subscribe to the normative paradigms tend to be positivist and focus on facts, figures and data to determine causality of events. They tend to posit an objective reality that can be partially accessed through particular methods that can yield a more or less accurate description of that reality. Interpretive paradigms on the other hand, focus on the individual interpretations of events and tend to view the researcher and

³⁴ Louis Cohen, Lawrence Manion, and Keith Morrison, *Research Methods in Education* (London: Routledge, 2002), 7. Epistemological assumptions are those made about “the very bases of knowledge – its nature and forms, how it can be acquired, and how communicated to other human beings.”³⁴

³⁵ While numerous nomenclatures have been conjured to organise various theories. Cohen et. al. note that one way of expediently organising the overarching assumptions is by separating them within two overarching categories - normative and interpretive paradigms.

³⁶ Cohen et al., *Research Methods in Education*, 9.

participant as co-creators of interpretation. In these paradigms, “theory is emergent and must arise from particular situations; it should be ‘grounded’ in data generated by the research act.”³⁷ Accordingly, interpretive paradigms in the field of history would likely focus on meaning-making and would be less inclined to focus on approximating a normative, “objective” reality.

As in many such distinctions, the paradigms described above are idealised, and the broad scope of the study, much like stitching together a patchwork quilt, demands that certain parts of this thesis take a more normative stance, whereas others take a more interpretive approach. Questions regarding events which occurred in schools, the funding and closures of schools during the war, ZAPU’s international alliances and funding sources, the materials used in ZAPU’s political curriculum, and the activities of the political commissariat lend themselves to more normative approaches and written documentation, whereas questions about the influence of political education and propaganda, school and camp cultures, impressions and the climate of schools and camps, and individual motivations for enlisting and understandings of the purpose of the war lend themselves more to interpretive approaches and oral histories.

While oral histories are prized for their phenomenological qualities, that is, the reflexivity and interpretive nature of interviewee responses, they also contain factual information that can be cross-checked with, and fill in gaps of the written record. In this study, I used the oral sources to help me better understand the written sources, and vice-versa. For example, oral histories were key to understanding the history of the creation of ZAPU’s political commissariat and the security measures taken to protect White schools

37 Ibid., 22.

during the conflict, filling in gaps in the written record, and further illuminating existing documentation and clarifying timelines of events.

Of course, one of the methodological challenges involved in using oral sources in historical work is the fact that memories can fade and change with time. As Perks and Thompson note, “The memory recovered through oral history is not always 100 percent reliable in objective or measurable terms, though it has a truth value for the person remembering.”³⁸ Yet, written documents have their own issues (mistakes, misrepresentations, false dating, etc.) that also require critical analysis, and oral accounts can be cross-checked and compared with those of others as well as written documents and other evidence from the period in question. The seasoned historian must therefore attempt to triangulate information with other sources and question the positionality, biases, and authority of the interviewee just as those of primary written sources are scrutinized. I have followed this logic throughout my analysis, and where appropriate, have noted where I was unable to track down other sources or alternative accounts to corroborate or challenge the narratives of interviewees.

Oral history is particularly important in historical studies such as this one, since by their nature, dominant political, social, racial, and even epistemological hegemonies tend to underrepresent the histories and experiences of marginalized individual and groups. The broad acceptance of oral histories as valued primary sources in modern historiography dates back to the testimonies of Holocaust survivors.³⁹ Since then, interviews have been used in studies of education during the civil rights and desegregation movements in the United

38 Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson, *The Oral History Reader* (New York: Routledge, 1998), 29.

39 Ibid., 54.

States. For example, studies by Shircliffe (2001)⁴⁰, Manning (1990),⁴¹ and Walker (1996)⁴² offered insights into the experiences of African Americans in school during the civil rights movements, and into the resulting state of the education system within desegregated areas. Caroline Elkins 2005 study *Britain's Gulag: The Brutal End of Empire in Kenya*,⁴³ which used oral histories to record the atrocities committed in British torture camps during the Mau Mau uprising in Kenya rewrote the history of the rebellion and called into question the means by which the British Empire acquired and maintained their domination. Elkins' research also questioned the inherent epistemological and historiographical biases engrained in the field that have led to the neglect of the oral histories and perspectives of entire ethnic groups in vast swaths of the world.

In addition to a “human archive,” of events unrecorded elsewhere, oral narratives also provide invaluable insights into the lived experiences of individuals and the meanings that they ascribe to past events. Because of the phenomenological nature of oral histories, that is, the fluid nature of the interpretations of events, they cannot be approached merely as “facts” or stand alone “accounts” of events; they are ways in which individuals “interpret their lives and re-design the conditions of possibility that account for what they once were, what they have since become, and what they still hope to be.”⁴⁴ These qualities of oral histories are

40 Barbara Shircliffe, “‘We Got the Best of That World’: A Case for the Study of Nostalgia in the Oral History of School Segregation,” *The Oral History Review* 28, no. 2 (2001): 59-84.

41 Diane Manning, *Hill Country Teacher: Oral Histories from the One-Room School and Beyond*. Twayne's Oral History Series, No. 3. (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1990).

42 Vanessa Siddle Walker, *Their Highest Potential: An African American School Community in the Segregated South* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996).

43 Caroline Elkins, *Britain's Gulag: The Brutal End of Empire in Kenya* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2005).

44 Lynn Abrams, *Oral History Theory* (New York: Routledge, 2010), 81.

foundational to the contributions my thesis attempts to make by highlighting the ways in which individual veterans reconciled the differing political and religious ideologies to which they were exposed. In this regard, my analysis of the oral histories falls squarely within the idealized realm of the “descriptive paradigm.”

My study of ZAPU's instrumentalization of education thus combines both descriptive and interpretive approaches. On one hand, I am attempting to accurately record ZAPU's educational policies and practices and the history of their evolution over time in part, due to shifting internal and international politics and alliances. Such enquiry calls for a normative/descriptive approach.

However, these assumptions were not presupposed before the research took place, the hypothesis of ZAPU's shifting alliances influencing its educational policies was drawn from individual interviewees who offered their personal opinions on the ways in which their own and their comrades' ideologies changed over the course of their involvement in the war. In this case, I began with a grounded interpretive paradigm which led to a broader theory about ZAPU's international alliances and their influence on the party's internal politics and educational policies. In order to investigate this hypothesis, I had to adopt a more “normative/descriptive” approach, analyzing years of ZAPU's printed materials and comparing them to timelines of the party's shifting political alliances and changes in party leadership to see if there were any correlations between changes in the ideologies and topics discussed in the literature and changes in political leadership and alliances.

The dialectic described above is but one example of the ways in which this study is both descriptive and interpretive. The methodologies adopted to construct this narrative, as described below, are as varied as the kinds of data collected. In accepting this ambiguity, I

have attempted to describe, with as much detail as possible, the methods I employed in order to recount the events which took place, as well as the individual and group interpretations of those events.

Research Setting and Researcher Positionality

The data collection for this thesis occurred in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, over two main periods: June -September 2017, and December of 2018. The southern city of Bulawayo is the second largest in the country, and the largest among what were ZAPU's recruitment areas during the liberation war. It is also the largest city close to the country's border with Botswana, where the majority of ZAPU recruits travelled before being dispatched to and trained in Zambia. The city also boasts of an impressive government archive where I was able to access old school yearbooks, newspapers, and the yearly high-school magazines of some of the schools which I hypothesised were most affected by the war.

Researcher Positionality

Most importantly, I chose the location because I was raised in Bulawayo, and it was there that I would have likely access to interviews. As a Coloured woman from the area who studies and lives abroad, it was to my advantage that many interviewees considered me both an outsider as well as a local. The majority of the interviewees knew my grandfather, or at least his bus company, "Super Godlhwayo," which was the only company that connected rural areas to Bulawayo for many years. As Cohen and Manion note,⁴⁵ one of the biases inherent in oral histories, including life-histories, stems from the nature of the relationship between the researcher and interviewee. I believe that I was better able to connect with my

45 Cohen et al., *Research Methods in Education*, 49.

interviewees because they both trusted me as a local but also felt safe confiding in me because I live abroad.

I believe that my family's multiracial background, being descended from both native African, East Asian and European settlers, was one of the reasons for my interest in veteran narratives. Despite the fact that both my father and uncle were conscripted and served in the Rhodesian Forces (my uncle served as a Commander), they rarely mention the war and refused to be interviewed or even tell me about their experiences. The only war story my father related to me was about how he and other Coloured (mixed-race) RF soldiers would meet their friends and relatives who had joined ZAPU to play soccer, "in the bush". The absence of their own stories piqued my curiosity to learn more about the War of Liberation.

Finally, I would be remiss not to mention or at least place my interest in the relationship between education and conflict within my own background. Education was a site of personal conflict for me growing up in Zimbabwe. After attending a government primary school which was multiracial and socioeconomically diverse, I attended a private high school which was predominantly White, wealthy, and racially stratified. As the only Coloured girl in the top-ranked "first class," I experienced racial prejudice from some of my White peers as and a few of my teachers. I also became acutely aware of the difference in curriculum between my two schools; my government school curriculum centred African history, whereas the private school not only spotlighted European history, since we were to write the Cambridge examination, but any coursework related to "Africa" or "Black" topics, such as African language courses, were bemoaned by my classmates as "useless." It was during this high school experience that I began to question the neutrality of schooling, though it took many years for me to intellectually analyse and articulate the unease I had felt in school.

While an undergraduate at Harvard University, I studied African Studies and Social Studies, and became more aware of the history of education in Zimbabwe. When I began this research project, I was therefore already aware of historical racial stratification in Zimbabwe as well as the epistemological biases inherent in education systems in general. All of these experiences, both academic and personal, stimulated my interest in understanding the interactive relationships among education, race, and politics during the war.

Participant Selection and Rationale

The snowball method of recruitment was used for all interviews, beginning with one contact shared with me by a family friend. Owing to the politically and personally sensitive nature of questions for the veterans, I only interviewed individuals recommended to me by previous interviewees. As an additional safety precaution all interviews were conducted in the homes of individuals or in discreet but public places such as open-air restaurants. The one exception I made were the interviews I conducted at a ZANU-PF political rally in Bulawayo where I interviewed three veterans. Due to safety concerns, however, I was careful not to ask politically sensitive questions and asked more open-ended questions about their individual and educational experiences during the war.

Data Sources and Analysis

Interviews

Each interview was recorded, and began with introductions, after which I presented a brief summary of my research aims along with the CUREC participant form and prompted a verbal confirmation of acknowledgment of rights. I chose a verbal, rather than a written confirmation of rights primarily for the safety of the interviewees, in order that their

participation would not be implicated by their signatures. Moreover, I was aware that the interviewees may have been more reluctant to speak openly with me if they had signed a document. In the Zimbabwean context, especially given this politically sensitive history, documents are often viewed with suspicion—as legally binding agreements rather than as positive, legal protections. I wanted to be sure that the interviewees did not conflate signing the interview form with feeling bound to answering all of my questions.

The length of interviews with individuals ranged from between 15 minutes to 2 hours, though the majority of the interviews lasted between 1.5 to 2 hours, and two group interviews lasted 3 hours each. I used a basic outline of questions to guide the interview but was careful not to limit the interview to the pre-prepared questions, or even to the order in which I had written the questions, as this might impede the flow of conversation and inhibit associative memory recall for the interviewees.

Aware of the limited time afforded to me, in my attempts to narrow the area of inquiry and delve more deeply into the political and educational histories of my interviewees, I made the decision to pick particular individuals whom I had interviewed during the first round of interviews for a second round. The individuals I chose had either been political commissars, had studied in the USSR or had been keen to discuss politics based on their own educational backgrounds. There were a few new interviewees, and they were of particular importance because they were able to fill previous gaps in my knowledge from the first set of interviews. These individuals included a female veteran who was one of the students abducted from Manama High School as well as the late Dr. Dumiso Dabengwa, who had served as ZAPU Chief of Intelligence.

While the full interview guide may be viewed in Appendix A, the interview questions

fall into six broad categories, listed below:

1. Demographic questions including the age, education and professional history of each interviewee.
2. For soldiers, reasons for joining the armed struggle or Rhodesian defense forces, recruitment history, rank, and area of expertise during the war.
3. Educational experiences during and after the liberation war, including personal stories and knowledge of the effects of the war on the formal education system such as the names of schools or individuals affected by the war. Interviewee views on education including juxtaposing the Rhodesian to the post-independence government educational provisions.
4. Informal or political educational experiences during the War of Liberation, including political education in the ZIPRA training camps, prison education of combatants, and studying abroad on scholarships provided by the Soviet Union and other countries.
5. Personal opinions of interviewees on the overall effectiveness of the Liberation War and their imagined ideal state.
6. Personal ideological and religious convictions during and after the war including religious affiliation and opinions of ZAPU's ideology.

As noted in the introduction, my research areas of inquiry expanded considerably from the initial proposed project; while interviewing war veterans about their educational experiences, I quickly learned that their extensive political and ideological education as ZAPU cadres constituted a significant part of their educational formation, and as such, shaped, and continues to shape their religious, social and political ideals. Therefore, the sixth group of

questions, regarding the religious affiliation and personal ideology, which was only tangentially explored during the first round of data collection, became a major focus of the second round of interviews conducted in December 2018.

In line with the aims of this study to construct a broad history of education in the struggle for independence as well as to explore the meanings interviewees ascribed to their own education and education-related events, the interview questions drafted above could be categorized as either interpretive or descriptive. The latter category forms the foundation of this historical thesis, as the oral histories are indispensable in filling in the gaps in the written record of the events that took place during and after war of independence. The former, interpretive category of questions shed light on the meanings that the interviewees ascribe to the events; these questions are essential to understanding their past and present motivations, actions and ideologies which may have shaped or been shaped by certain events.

While the interpretive and descriptive categories are theoretically distinct, in carrying out the analysis of the interviews, they are much more difficult to distinguish. One might argue that all oral historiography is interpretive—that people are inherently biased in recalling events that are personally meaningful, which means that by the very act of remembering, an interviewee has superimposed personal meaning onto a seemingly objective sequence of events. While there has been research on the unreliability of general memories, other research on significant periods in the lives of people point to the opposite - that details of periods of import in the lives of individuals are remembered very accurately. For example, some interviewees recounted vivid scenes of significant moments during the war such as the dates and times they were bombed, or the day of their release from prison. As part of my historical method, I relied heavily on the oral narratives of my interviewees and have also

attempted, where possible, to corroborate these accounts with other sources, whether written or oral. Given the broad gaps in writings on the period, however, I frequently verified information received from one interview with others in subsequent interviews. This was, for example, the case of how I came to know about ZAPU's publication, *The Ideological Concept*,⁴⁶ which was not widely distributed or cited within the existing literature, but was mentioned by a number of interviewees and led me to Harvard's library which happens to contain a copy donated by the late historian Terence Ranger.

In answering descriptive questions, interviewees often give their interpretive opinions on the events that they recount, which means that the two categories, while conceptually distinct, are often inseparable in real-time interviews, especially given the fact that maintaining the flow of conversation is vital to building trust and encouraging associative memory recall. For example, the questions I ask in the beginning of interviews were purposefully broad and I encouraged the interviewees to speak for as long as necessary with minimal interruptions before asking more-narrow follow-up questions. The result of this interview technique is that their narratives often weave between and combine the description and the interpretation of the past.

Interview Analysis

The interview analysis was significantly shaped by the “grounded” methodology of inquiry, which both strengthened and limited the scope of this work. As previously mentioned, of the two rounds of interviews, many of the first focused on ZIPRA access to and thoughts about formal education. The shift in focus and broadening of the scope of the

46 Issuing body Zimbabwe African People's Union, *Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU): Ideological Concept* (Lusaka: Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU), 1970).

questions of interest midway through the first round of data collection meant that certain questions were not explored as fully as I would have hoped, due to the time constraints under which I was operating. However, it became clear to me during my first round of interviews that the interplay between formal and political education meant that the inevitable sacrifice of depth for this broader scope was an acceptable cost to pay for the more profound insights such an adjustment made possible.

I initially hired someone to transcribe drafts of each of the interviews. I refer to the transcriptions as drafts because the individual was not a native Zimbabwean and was therefore not able to accurately transcribe names and colloquial phrases, which added considerable meaning within each interview. I therefore reviewed and edited all of the transcripts after these initial drafts. An unfortunate computer accident led to the loss of the edited transcripts, which afforded me another opportunity to reedit and review the transcripts a second time. It was therefore on my third thorough reading of transcripts that I began coding the documents. While frustrating initially, I believe that re-transcribing and reviewing the interviews helped shape the themes which became central to the thesis. This was evident from my “analytic memos,” which consisted of a word document in which I wrote down questions that seemed most pressing to me based on the interviews, including future lines of inquiry. While reading the interviews, I tracked what surprised, intrigued, and disturbed me, or felt incongruent with the internal narrative that had emerged about the period and the individuals involved based on my research and the existing literature.⁴⁷

It was only after conducting both sets of interviews, over a year apart, that I began the

⁴⁷ For more on writing analytic memos, see Margaret Anzul et al., *Doing Qualitative Research: Circles Within Circles* (London: Routledge, 2003).

process of coding. I coded the transcripts using Dedoose, an electronic coding software that allows for multiple layers of coding and unlimited groupings and configurations of themes. With over 400 pages of single-spaced transcripts to code, before beginning my interview analysis, I carefully researched and selected methods of coding. I am grateful for the insights offered by a well-regarded textbook on coding by Saldana,⁴⁸ from which I chose 3 out of 32 well-described methods of coding.

Saldana distinguishes between descriptive “encoding,” in which the researcher chooses how to label information and interpretive “decoding,” in which the researcher reflects on the meaning of the information. The transcripts were first encoded using attributive coding, assigning individual attributes to interviewees: including name, age, education level, gender, when they joined the struggle, and rank and specialty within the army. The software allowed me to treat these “attributes” of the individuals as dependent variables in relation others in later analysis. After coding, for example, with a few clicks, I was able to select the transcriptions of all individuals who had gone to the war after 1975, and then within that subset, compare their answers to questions about political education to understand how their political education might differ from that of the pre-1975 recruits. My own experience with the usefulness of using attribute coding is in agreement with Rubin and Rubin's assertion that coding by attributes can help uncover possible hierarchical relationships, chronologies, and differing perspectives which might otherwise have gone unnoticed.⁴⁹

48 Johnny Saldaña, *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers* (London: Sage, 2015).

49 See Herbert J. Rubin and Irene S. Rubin, *Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing Data* (London: Sage, 2011).

Given the broad number of questions I hoped my interviewees could answer, subsequent coding was more specialised. I chose a series of coding methods, beginning with “in vivo” coding, followed by a second cycle of coding methods which organized the first cycle codes into broader themes. “In Vivo” coding, used extensively in ethnographies, is a name given to a method which begins by creating “verbatim” codes from the actual words or phrases individuals use in their interviews.⁵⁰ In my first cycle of analysis, I created hundreds of codes as summaries of individual responses. For example, in an interview in which I had asked the interviewee why he had joined the war, he told me a story about how badly he was treated at his place of employment and how his employer threw his wages at him each payday. I coded the answer verbatim as “employer threw money, like I was nothing.” In another interview, an interviewee recounted how his teacher had exposed him to politics, I coded, “Teacher Ncube politicised me.” In Vivo coding ensured that while there was still an interpretive aspect or bias inevitable in choosing which information to code, the codes were at the very least capturing the “emotional” and “interpretive” aspects of the answers and were true to the voices of interviewees. In Vivo coding, for this reason, is part of the cannon of methods used for grounded theory studies, a category under which this thesis falls.⁵¹ Saldana summarizes grounded theory as being regarded as one of the first methodologically systematic approaches to qualitative inquiry. The process usually involves meticulous analytic attention by applying specific types of codes to data through a series of cumulative

50 Ibid. 93

51 “In this coding manual, six particular methods are considered part of grounded theory’s coding canon (though they can all be used in other non-grounded-theory studies): In Vivo, Process, Initial, Focused, Axial, and Theoretical Coding. (In earlier publications, Initial Coding was referred to as “Open” Coding, and Theoretical Coding was referred to as ‘Selective’ Coding.)” Saldaña, *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*, 51.

coding cycles that ultimately lead to the development of a theory – a theory “grounded” or rooted in the original data themselves.⁵² As previously noted, given that the dearth of intellectual and historical perspectives from ZAPU veterans was the impetus for this study, grounded theory seemed the most appropriate methodology in advancing this research.

After “In Vivo” coding of all of the interviews, I used what Saldana refers to as “second cycle” coding methods in which the very detailed passages of transcripts and codes were organised into broader themes based on various research questions. Developing the themes was part of the decoding process, the outcome of which required greater analytic reflection.⁵³ I noted all of the questions my thesis was attempting to answer and organised the “In Vivo” codes into broader categories based on these questions. The two examples of initial codes, “employer threw money, like I was nothing” and “Mr. Mkandla politicised me” were further coded under multiple categories. Both examples were coded under the broad theme of “reasons for going to the war.” The answer referring to Mr. Mkandla was also relevant to the theme of “political activities of Rhodesian teachers” and was coded under that theme as well. Coding in vivo excerpts under multiple broader categories highlighted interactions between categories and questions and allowed for easier cross-referencing between narratives.

While pursuing my first and secondary coding cycles, I kept in mind another coding category mentioned by Saldana, that is, values coding. Saldana described a value as “the importance we attribute to oneself, another person, thing, or idea,” an attitude as, “the way we think and feel about ourselves, another person, thing, or idea” and beliefs as “part of a

52 Ibid., 51.

53 Saldaña, *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*, 14.

system that includes our values and attitudes, plus our personal knowledge, experiences, opinions, prejudices, morals, and other interpretive perceptions of the social world.”⁵⁴ Given that a major question this thesis attempts to explore is the way the in which individual veterans reconciled various political and religious ideologies to which they were exposed, I paid attention to interviewee phrasing which included insights into their value systems. Phrases such as “I felt,” “I believed,” “It’s important,” and a number of others highlighted by Saldana⁵⁵ primed my initial value coding during the first “In Vivo” cycle in which I coded the phrases.

In the second cycle of value coding, I organized these value-laden statements around common themes and categories such as “belief in Christianity,” “Ideal Education,” and “Notions of Success.” However, Augusto Boal’s “social change theory” argues that individuals rarely form strong values with “abstract concepts” such as religion.⁵⁶ The values they form are more often based on interactions with other people, material objects, and contexts which serve as a personal “proxy” and come to symbolise these abstract concepts. While wholesale acceptance of Boal’s proposition would raise a number of epistemological questions which are beyond the scope of this thesis, suffice it to say that his theory highlights important issues for the study of individual values. In my coding, I was wary of subscribing broad ideological themes without analysing interviews for phrases and symbols which might point to, or best encapsulate interviewee beliefs, values, and attitudes better than abstract categories.

54 Ibid., 110.

55 Ibid., 113.

56 See Augusto Boal, *The Rainbow of Desire: The Boal Method of Theatre and Therapy* (London: Routledge, 2013).

The third phase of coding was manual. Having separated hundreds of the In Vivo codes under broader themes, I printed out the separate themes and their corresponding excerpts, cut each of the excerpts and further grouped them under the themes. For example, I took the “Reasons for going to war” excerpts and grouped them into multiple categories, including “experienced or witnessed unfair racial treatment and sought to rectify the system,” “was forcefully recruited and decided to stay,” “was politicised by teachers to join the war,” “was a refugee and in Zambia decided to join the struggle,” and “was unable to get a job and decided to join the struggle.” Having made these groupings, I was able to manually move the pieces of paper around in order to create a coherent narrative.

Manually coding the excerpts offered the flexibility of moving certain pieces of evidence around and allowed for a more visual organisation of the documents. Like pieces of a puzzle, I could begin to visualise how different narratives were related and began to infer correlations and causal relationships within the data. After completion of this final coding step, I was ready to compare and contextualise parts of the oral narratives with the written primary sources gathered for this project.

The analysis and coding of the interviews occurred in tandem with the analysis of primary documents outlined below. While the oral interviews remained central to the themes and development of the work, the different types of data informed, supported or otherwise challenged the interviews. One important example includes my analysis of the ways in which ZAPU’s political ideology shaped their writings on education in *The Zimbabwe Review*, an analysis which, put into conversation with the views of the veterans on ideology in ZAPU, revealed ideological fractures within the party and the resulting mixed views on scholarships from Western nations.

After completion of this final coding step, I was ready to compare and contextualise parts of the oral narratives with the written primary sources gathered for this project.

Primary Documents

The written primary sources which I used as historical evidence can be separated into five main categories:

1. Rhodesian and ZAPU newspaper publications, including the *Rhodesian Herald* and the *Zimbabwe Review*.
2. ZAPU published political material including interviews with senior members and special issues on the organization's ideology, activities and appeals.
3. Ministry of Education Annual Education Reports, spanning 1940-1985.
4. School yearbook magazines spanning 1970-1979.
5. A social media survey posted on two Facebook groups, the "Rhodesian Military" History group, and the "Rhodesian Schools" group, both predominantly made up of White ex- Rhodesian Forces conscripts and students who had attended schools in Rhodesia.

I also analysed the propaganda posters and interview transcripts collected in Julie Frederikse's, *None But Ourselves: Media and the Making of Zimbabwe*⁵⁷, and posters of Soviet education propaganda from an online archive as primary source material.

Broadly, my analysis of the written materials began by determining whether they

57 Frederikse and Partridge, *None but Ourselves*.

would provide reliable data which could count as historical evidence. I attempted to determine both the authenticity, or external validity, as well as the accuracy, or internal validity of the written sources through triangulation and the use of secondary sources. I also researched the authors of articles in order to understand their political opinions, knowledge of, and personal investment in the war. I read, and subsequently coded each article with the three basic categories of persuasion in mind; that is, ethos, pathos and logos. Ethos refers to the character and personal biases of the author; pathos - the emotions the author aims to elicit in readers through vignettes, adjectives and adverbs within the article, and logos - the logic and accuracy of the article itself.

When selecting, and subsequently coding or categorising written sources for this project, I made my selections based on Travers' recommendations for selecting materials.⁵⁸ The five key aspects he urges historians to make note of regarding primary sources are:

- a) The training and competency of the observers of the events.
- b) The relationship between the observers and the events, including underlying fears or biases that might have pressured them to omit or distort fact.
- c) The intentions of the writers of the documents.
- d) The amount of time elapsed between the event and the recording.
- e) The accuracy of memories and memoirs.

With these questions in mind, throughout the thesis, I mention explicitly whether I was able to triangulate or verify the information gathered from the written sources. However, the scarcity of available data meant that I invariably had to carry out my analysis and develop a

58 See R.M.W. Travers, *An Introduction to Educational Research* (London: Collier-Macmillan, 1969).

narrative in some instances with information received from a single source. In light of this limitation, I include notes on triangulation, or the impossibility thereof, in the footnotes of each chapter.

The analysis of written primary sources was similar to the second and third coding cycles of the interviews. I first electronically scanned all of the newspaper, magazine and other primary source material, and uploaded them onto an iPad. I was then able to take screen shots and copy relevant text into a Word document while I was reading the documents. Once I had selected pertinent primary and secondary source excerpts, I printed them out, cut them up and organised them into piles.

What was referred to as "in vivo" coding for oral interviews is nearly equivalent to "content analysis" for written documents. Primarily noted as a quantitative method, the initial phase of coding involved selecting excerpts that contained a specific word or phrase. While I did not initially assign a label to particular passages, I had a list of terms and topics to which I referred before reading the documents. Some of the broad themes included were "tensions within ZAPU" and special issues on social theory such as the condemnation of capitalism. As I read the sources, I selected passages with the codes in mind. For example, I chose excerpts of all articles containing the words, "education," "ideology," "political education," and "scholarships," without questioning how they would be further categorised. I also copied anything I felt could be remotely relevant to the overall questions or themes of the study. It was only after I printed the excerpts and separated the individual passages that I grouped them into more narrow themes.

Newspaper Reports

Among the most important primary sources used in this thesis were ZAPU

publications, which included their weekly publication, *Zimbabwe Review*. This publication allowed me to trace the party's ideological shifts; for example, the ways in which socialism and communism were discussed at important political junctures within the party, as well as official party stances on formal education and their references to schools. I analysed all of the editions of the *Zimbabwe Review* from 1964 through the beginning of 1976.

In order to explore popular pro-Rhodesian and state opinions on the impacts of the war on schools, for example, the kidnapping of students and debates about the segregation of the educational system, I scanned newspaper articles related to the war and schools for part of 1976 and for the entire year of 1977 from two prominent Rhodesian newspapers, the *Rhodesian Herald* and the *Sunday Mail*. I chose 1976-77 because these were the years that ZAPU was most active in its recruitment-by-abduction from schools such as Manama, Dombodema and Tekwani High School which are located close to the Botswana border.

Ministry of Education Reports:

I also scanned and analysed reports from the Rhodesian Ministry of Education ranging from years 1940 to 1985 to provide historical context and official records of how the war affected education and state educational laws and policies. The analysis of these records provided statistics of school closures and guerrilla operations in various areas and described policy shifts during the war, such as the mandated use of radio broadcasts of official government programming. While nearly impossible to verify these government statistics to ensure the accuracy of the reports through triangulation using secondary sources, these sources did allow me to better understand the significance and context of the facts and figures in the reports. For example, having read a thesis by James Zaffiro on the history of broadcasting in

Rhodesia,⁵⁹ I noticed that John Parry, who had worked directly under the minister of information when the Rhodesian Front came to power, was also mentioned in a Rhodesian Education Report as a representative to the educational broadcasting wing, illustrating the connections between the state's information, media, and educational operations. The seemingly benign facts and figures of the reports bristled with meaningful significance once they were contextualized within the broader history described in other sources. For example, the reports, which were quite meticulous and detailed before the war, sometimes failed to mention the massive school closings that were widely reported in other sources. This discrepancy can be interpreted as an attempt by the government to project the image of "having the situation under control" in order to prevent White flight from the country after the UDI. Finally, when analysing the reports, I was careful to note any mention of contestation, opposition to government policies, and anti-guerrilla sentiments and opinions which might have been aimed at drawing international alliances.

School Yearbooks and Magazines

To explore the impact of the war on schools in the region, I read through school yearbooks in the Bulawayo archives. I examined the school magazines and yearbooks from one co-educational Coloured (mixed-race and Asian: Founders High School), one premier African boys school (Mzilikazi High School) and one male (Plumtree High School) and one female (Eveline High School) White-only schools. Interestingly, my study of the magazines revealed government military advertisements to recruit students, a topic which I cover in Chapter 4.

⁵⁹ J.J. Zaffiro, "Political Change and Broadcasting in Zimbabwe: 1931–1984," (PhD diss., University of Wisconsin, Madison, 1984)

Online Surveys

I posted two questions to two online social media groups. The first group is the Rhodesian Military History Group, made up of predominantly White veterans of the war who had served within the Rhodesian military. To this group I posed the following questions:

1. How were Rhodesian schools affected during the war?
2. If the school you attended was affected, which school did you attend and when were you enrolled in this school?

Initially, I asked the group informally about their schools to get a general sense of the period. However, their responses revealed details about schools which I had not come across in the literature—details such as bomb drills and certain school politics, as well as schools being used by the Rhodesian military as bases. A number of individuals also requested to know more about me and the study. Based on this feedback, I updated the post with full-disclosure about myself and the study, and noted that the information they gave me would not be personally identifiable within my thesis. See Appendix B for a detailed description of my questionnaire and posts to the group.

The second group to which I submitted questions was the Rhodesian History Military Group, made up of Rhodesian war veterans. To them I posed the following two questions;

1. Did you come across any schools that were affected by during the War of Liberation?
2. Could you tell me about the Rhodesian Psychological Operations Unit?

This unit had launched a propaganda campaign to which, I discovered through the survey, a number of teachers who had been conscripted were assigned.

Ethics, Limitations, and Challenges

Triangulation

Pulling together these disparate sets of data to construct a single narrative is not without limitations and difficulties. One of the most crucial aspects of historical research is the question of validity; Cohen and Manion note that historical criticism must determine both the authenticity of the source and the evaluation of the accuracy and worth of the data.⁶⁰ While my selection of primary sources and interviewees takes the authenticity of the data into account, where possible, I have used methodological triangulation—using multiple methods and sources on the same object of study—in order to improve the accuracy and value of my data. For example, in attempting to determine the effects of the war on schools, I compared the findings from the interviews, government educational reports, and newspaper articles. As will be discussed in later chapters, the strength of my triangulation for this study has been limited by the relative scarcity of written records. As noted in the beginning of the thesis, Mugabe's party, ZANU-PF, effectively silenced narratives and buried evidence that challenge the government's self-promoting account of the liberation struggle and post-independence history. I was able to obtain more ZAPU publications from archives at Harvard and Oxford than I was from the Zimbabwe National Archives. While this fact strengthens the argument for the importance of oral histories, it also places a heavier burden on me as researcher to be a meticulous oral historiographer. Unfortunately, there were numerous instances in which I could not verify the oral histories I received due to the fact that individuals who might corroborate them had passed away. This was the case, for example, with the organization of the schools that ZAPU set up in Zambia, in which two of the principal architects had passed away within the past five years. I have therefore been careful to note oral accounts and responses to online questionnaires for which I was unable to

⁶⁰ See Cohen et al., *Research Methods in Education*, 52.

triangulate information.

Language Barriers

Although I am from Zimbabwe, my Ndebele is proficient, but not fluent. This may not seem as important of a concern given that all the interviews were conducted in English - and that the eloquence of many interviewees might easily rival that of any Oxbridge graduate.

However, there were instances in which interviewees would use Ndebele or other phrases in their mother tongues, or would pause in places in the conversation to translate a phrase which might otherwise have had different evocative and symbolic meanings if the interviews were conducted in Ndebele or other languages. Recent studies on implicit bias have shown the remarkable effects of shifting implicit cultural associations/biases in bilingual speakers depending on the language they are speaking.⁶¹ I do not mention this to argue that interviews in Ndebele might have elicited stronger racial or ethnic biases, but rather to acknowledge the significant fact that linguistic context of English may have influenced the content of these interviews, which, had they been conducted in other languages, might have allowed interviewees to better express their opinions in more meaningful ways.

Ethical Considerations

Given the political sensitivity of this study, as well as the deeply personal and painful memories which interviewees shared with me, the study had many ethical challenges, including preserving the privacy, and in some cases, the anonymity and confidentiality of my interviewees, as well as, to the best of my ability, being transparent about my study. I used

61 See Oludamini Ogunnaike, Yarrow Dunham, and Mahzarin R. Banaji, "The Language of Implicit Preferences.," *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* 46, no. 6 (2010): 999-1003; Shai Danziger and Robert Ward, "Language Changes Implicit Associations between Ethnic Groups and Evaluation in Bilinguals," *Psychological Science* 21, no. 6 (2010): 799.

what anthropologist Kovats-Bernat refers to as “localized ethics” as a framework. He argues that instead of guiding “fieldwork with hegemonic assumptions about uneven power relationships between ethnographer [interviewer in my case] and informants, [he] relied on the good advice and recommendations of the local population in deciding what conversations (and silences) were acceptable.”⁶² I believe that my use of the snowball method to sample interviewees and my familiarity with the area were useful in this regard.

All interviewees gave consent to the interviews, and given the politically sensitive nature of the study, particularly in the first round of interviews when I asked about their possible persecution by the post-independence Mugabe regime ⁶³ I noted that the interviews would not be published and that I would maintain their anonymity within the study. In the second round of interviews, given the narrower focus of my questions on the less controversial pre-independence period, a few interviewees agreed to have their names and their stories published in their entirety. Despite their prior approval, for their protection, as well as an ethical obligation, I only published the names of interviewees from whom I explicitly requested consent after writing a draft of this work. Data protection was also a significant concern to ensure that their interviews remained safe. They were uploaded to a password-encrypted storage site and have not been shared with any individual with the exception of the transcriber who agreed to a non-disclosure of any information, and deleted the interviews as well as the transcripts after transcription.

⁶² J. Christopher Kovats-Bernat, “Negotiating Dangerous Fields: Pragmatic Strategies for Fieldwork Amid Violence and Terror,” *American Anthropologist* 104, no. 1 (2002): 24.

⁶³ See Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace in Zimbabwe, and the Legal Resources Foundation in Zimbabwe. *Gukurahundi in Zimbabwe: A Report on the Disturbances in Matabeleland and the Midlands, 1980-1988*. Jacana Media, 2007.

Broader Limitations

In addition to the shifts in research question, limited funding and time to conduct further research was a limiting factor in this thesis. Moreover, the lack of written information on individuals who have since passed away but who played a major role in the educational aspect of ZAPU camps limited the amount of information I could glean about the camp schools.

The final limitation is one of scope. Notwithstanding the financial, temporal and manuscript length limits, the study would have been strengthened by the additional analysis of the educational strategies pursued by rival nationalist groups as well as church missions, as well as the inclusion of female voices within the study.

Chapter 3: Educational Contestation and the Formation of the Rhodesian Colony 1890-1964

The Educational History of the Rhodesian Colony, 1890-1964

The Rhodesian education system, predicated on conflicts between settlers, missionaries, and native Africans, has been the site of religious, political and ideological contestation from its inception. The fact that formal education was so foundational to the colonial and missionary formation of Southern Rhodesia provides historians with equal measures of challenge and opportunity. Education missions were so central to the foundation of the colony that they became powerful instruments for broad social transformation: they were used as tools for propaganda and diplomacy and were spaces of ideological and political contestation.

Between 1859, when the first Rhodesian school was founded at Inyathi, and 1980, when independence ushered in Black majority rule, the educational battlefield for ideological, political and economic domination among individuals, government departments, missionary organizations, and various African groups and polities meant that the education system shaped, and was, in turn, was shaped by an ever-changing society.

Far from being the result of a monolithic, hegemonic state ideology, the most notable studies of this period⁶⁴ reveal how missionaries, settlers, the BSAC, government departments, and Africans themselves shaped different aspects of the educational system

⁶⁴ See Carol Summers, *Colonial Lessons: Africans' Education in Southern Rhodesia, 1918-1940* (Oxford: James Currey, 2002); Ngwabi Bhebe and Terence O. Ranger, eds., *Society in Zimbabwe's Liberation War* (London: J. Curry, 1996); Bhebe Ngwabi, *The Zapu and Zanu Guerrilla Warfare and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe* (Gweru: Mambo Press, 1999); Norman Joseph Atkinson, *Teaching Rhodesians: A History of Educational Policy in Rhodesia* (London: Longman, 1972); Sabelo J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni, *The Ndebele Nation* (Amsterdam: Rozenberg Publishers, 2009); Norman H. Murdoch, *Christian Warfare in Rhodesia-Zimbabwe* (Eugene: Pickwick Publications, 2015).

based on disparate and changing ideologies, which I define as normative assumptions of the nature and relationship between the lived experiences of individuals and groups and the structure of societies as a whole.⁶⁵

Before exploring the ways in which the education system was instrumentalised by opposing groups during the liberation war in the following chapters, this chapter begins with a brief overview of the history of the establishment of European education in what was to become Rhodesia and the importance it played in the formation of the colony of Southern Rhodesia. Then, on the basis of this history, the following section of the chapter analyses this history to argue that the Rhodesian educational system effectively buttressed the colonial settler regime through the epistemological, political and cultural stances of the system's structures and curricula. As a corollary, this section will also argue against the hard distinction between education and propaganda that is often assumed in education literature, arguing that case studies such as Rhodesia clearly illustrate the non-neutral political, ideological, and disciplinary functions of educational institutions in general.

The Advent of European Education in Rhodesia

The establishment of the Rhodesian education system was the result of two historical events. The first, which began 50 years prior to the founding of the colony, was the incursion into the area of missionaries, traders, and abolitionists who argued that the only way to end slavery was to bring African societies into Western, Christian cultural and capitalist folds. The second event was the violent establishment of the colony by the British South Africa

⁶⁵ “The Comaroffs provide a useful definition of ideology as a conception of the world that is implicitly manifest in art, in law, in economics and in all manifestations of individual and collective life. Ideology is the dominant conception in a society, an orthodoxy that has established itself as ‘historically true’ and ‘concretely universal.’” Quoted from Sabelo J Ndlovu-Gatsheni, “Re-Thinking the Colonial Encounter in Zimbabwe in the Early Twentieth Century,” *Journal of Southern African Studies* 33, no. 1 (2007): 33.

Company, which destabilized the economic, political and cultural structures of African societies in the region, creating an institutional vacuum within which education became the foundation for the new colonial order.

Abolitionists believed that creating profitable trade relationships with African territories, in addition to spreading Christianity, was the only sure way to abolish slavery. Despite the passage of the Slavery Abolition Act in 1807, which made ownership of slaves illegal in the United Kingdom, trade in human beings flourished in East India Company territories,⁶⁶ as well as in the United States and in the Americas. In his book, *The African Slave Trade and Its Remedy*,⁶⁷ Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton, a British MP who succeeded William Wilberforce as the head of the Society for the Extinction of the Slave Trade, called for an end of slavery by spreading Christianity and legitimizing agricultural and mineral trade with the colonies to replace the profits of the slave trade in those regions. His book contributed to the passing of the Abolition Act in 1833,⁶⁸ and inspired the abolitionist movement to pick up the mantle of evangelization and trade with imperialistic fervour. As Carnoy (1974), notes, “It must be understood that Buxton and his contemporaries in the antislavery societies, layman and missionary alike, regarded the civilizing mission in imperialistic terms, even though they believed the mission could be accomplished without force.”⁶⁹ It was in this spirit that David Livingston, an avid abolitionist and celebrated explorer made his way through what would become Rhodesia in an attempt to evangelize and

⁶⁶ Which included Ceylon and Saint Helena and were the territories of the East India Company overseen by the British.

⁶⁷ Thomas Fowell Buxton, *The African Slave Trade and Its Remedy* (London: J. Murray, 1840).

⁶⁸ For more on the Act, See: Izhak Gross, “The Abolition of Negro Slavery and British Parliamentary Politics 1832–3,” *The Historical Journal* 23, no. 1 (1980): 63-85.

⁶⁹ Martin Carnoy, *Education as Cultural Imperialism* (New York: D. McKay, 1974), 129.

attract more missionaries to do the same. He also touted the potential of agricultural and mineral wealth within the region, illustrating the ways in which the causes of the civilizing mission, abolitionism, evangelization, and colonial trade and profit were closely intertwined during this period.

However, the missionaries and abolitionists had relatively little success in the region until the British South Africa Company's violent takeover of the King Lobengula's territories, which drastically changed the political and social landscape. Before the region became a colony, the existing religious, social and political structures proved difficult for missionaries to penetrate. Both King Mzilikazi and his son, King Lobengula, who governed the Ndebele people and oversaw what would become the Rhodesian territories, had given missionaries as well as tradesmen permission to live and work amongst their people. Yet neither of them sent their children to school, a fact which Bhebe notes impeded missionary work.⁷⁰ While allowing for the presence of missionary influence, the cultural and spiritual foundations of the Ndebele state were in many ways impenetrable.⁷¹ Chiefs and diviners who wielded considerable authority over their people understandably felt threatened by the touted spiritual authority of the missionaries. The negative views of African societies and religious traditions held by the missionaries which formed the basis of their sermons and mission undoubtedly did little to ameliorate these fears. Individuals who showed keen interest in European education were sometimes punished by their communities. Moreover, the youth

⁷⁰ See Ngwabi Bhebe, *Christianity and Traditional Religion in Western Zimbabwe, 1859-1923* (London: Longman Publishing Group, 1979).

⁷¹ Ibid. The history of the early Church-missionary interactions in this thesis has largely been taken from the works of Hallencreutz and Gundani. See Hallencreutz and Moyo, *Church and State in Zimbabwe*; Carl F. Hallencreutz, *Religion and Politics in Southern Africa* (Uppsala: Scandinavian Institute of African Studies, 1991); Paul Gundani, *Changing Patterns of Authority and Leadership: Developments in the Roman Catholic Church in Zimbabwe After Vatican II (1965-1985)* (Harare: University of Zimbabwe Publications, 2001); Gundani, "The Mission School," 69-84.

played an important role in agricultural production and were trained and sent for military expeditions, and, therefore, could not regularly attend schools.

The lack of missionary success in converting the African population to Christianity and setting up schools dispels two myths that have pervaded the history of the period. The first was perpetuated by the missionaries themselves—that the Ndebele society was overly militarized and too hierarchical to accept Christianity and to allow school attendance. Notable historians of the period, Bhebe and Hallencreutz⁷² have dispelled this myth by analysing historical records and personal notes from missionaries and tradesmen that suggest that African societies actively and intentionally chose not to accept foreign ideologies in place of their own. The second myth, which seems contrary to the first, at least in assumption, is that early missionaries *were* successful in their evangelisation, which in turn prepared the way for the colonization of territory. However, in the case of Southern Rhodesia, it was violent conquest and the creation of new colonial political and economic structures that paved the way for evangelisation and the construction of mission stations and schools, not the other way around.

The BSAC's Conquest

The British South Africa Company (BSAC), under the guidance and auspices of Cecil John Rhodes, ousted King Lobengula in 1890 and offered land and financial support to draw missionaries and pioneers to the territory. Rhodes, the South African Oxford-educated statesman and diamond magnate, aimed to acquire exclusive mining rights in the region and planned to annex the kingdom on behalf of Britain and achieve his life-long dream of building a railroad from the Cape to Cairo. On October 30, 1888, three of Rhodes' agents

⁷² See Bhebe, *Christianity and Traditional Religion*; Hallencreutz, *Religion and Politics in Southern Africa*.

succeeded in getting Lobengula to sign the Rudd Concession, a document which Lobengula thought only granted the BSAC exclusive mining rights to a small portion of his land – one large hole big enough for 10 men to fit in. Unable to read or write, after signing the document, Lobengula was warned by tradesmen that what he had signed actually gave exclusive land and mining rights to vast swaths of his territory. Lobengula promptly sent word to the British Colonial Office in Botswana that he unequivocally rejected the document he had signed. However, the British Colonial office, which had once advised Lobengula to refuse mining rights to any single group, this time allied with Rhodes and rejected Lobengula's request to void the concession. Cobbing argues that this refusal was based on the office's financial constraints and concerns about the Boer treks impeding British trade and profits in the region.⁷³ The Queen of England accepted the document and drew up a Royal Charter in October 1889. Shortly thereafter, the Queen sent Lobengula a letter informing him that Cecil John Rhodes was the Queen's representative within the region. In September 1890, a British pioneer column founded Fort Salisbury and began prospecting in what remained of Ndebele territory.

Rhodes and his associate Jameson were still unsatisfied with charter they were granted. In 1891, they duped Lobengula once again into signing yet another document, the Lippert concession, by sending men to pose as anti-BSAC traders keen to trade in Mashonaland. Once the concession was granted, Jameson took control of that portion of the region. Then, between 1892 and 1893, Jameson and the British South African company agents undertook a "propaganda campaign" against the Ndebele, alleging that they threatened the peaceful "commercial exploitation of Mashonaland." This propaganda campaign was

⁷³ Julian Raymond Dennis Cobbing, "The Ndebele Under the Khumalos, 1820-1896.," (PhD diss., University of Lancaster, 1976).

successful in part because it fed into the myth perpetuated by missionaries and settlers that the Ndebele were “profoundly undemocratic and oblivious of human rights.”⁷⁴ This myth served to justify not only military action for occupation by the Company, but to justify the missionaries’ largely unsuccessful attempts to convert Africans to Christianity.

In addition to the two land concessions which Lobengula signed under false pretences, the Company increasingly sought to provoke a war with Lobengula by convincing various Shona chieftaincies to cease paying tribute to Lobengula.⁷⁵ The BSAC needed Lobengula to attack them to use the incident as justification for full military takeover of the kingdom. The pretext for the Anglo-Ndebele war, Cobbing shows, was the result of this strategy.⁷⁶ The Mhari of Bere had, according to Lobengula’s sources, stolen Ndebele cattle. Lobengula sent a punitive force to retrieve the cattle and punish the clan, and had sent word to Jameson that the White settlers would not be harmed.⁷⁷ Jameson, who had been building up an army, ordered Captain Lendy to then attack the Ndebele at their weakest position en route, and after defeating them, moved on to every significant Ndebele residential area and decimated the structures and population.⁷⁸ Lobengula burned down his settlement of

⁷⁴ Ndlovu-Gatsheni, “Re-Thinking the Colonial Encounter in Zimbabwe in the Early Twentieth Century,” 76.

⁷⁵ Sabelo Gatsheni notes that the raids between 1890-1893, were not offensive but defensive on the part of Lobengula to maintain the status quo. He disagrees with D.N Beach, in *The Rising in South-Western Mashonaland*’s argument that the Anglo-Ndebele war was caused by Ndebele -Shona raids in that the antagonisms were orchestrated by Rhode’s imperial design.

⁷⁶ Sabelo-Gatsheni notes that in recognizing the Companies underhanded political manoeuvring, rather than focusing on the Ndebele Mbere war, which reveals the extent of political manipulation on the part of the company and challenges the myth of the Ndebele as a bloodthirsty warring tribe which has long been used by colonial apologist historians.

⁷⁷ Cobbing, “The Ndebele Under the Khumalos, 1820-1896.”

⁷⁸ Ndlovu-Gatsheni, “Re-Thinking the Colonial Encounter in Zimbabwe in the Early Twentieth Century,” 146.

Bulawayo, fled north and disappeared. After the battle of 1893, Lobengula's sons were taken as captives to South Africa, and the BSAC opened-up both Matabeleland and Mashonaland to European prospectors and pioneers who joined in cattle raids and overall looting.

Having gained full control of the region under the charter, the British South Africa Company invited missionaries to open schools for pioneer children and to teach the African population rudimentary reading and writing skills, in order to make them useful to the new monetized, colonial economy.

In 1894, a Native Department was established, which placed Ndebele chiefs at the bottom of the bureaucratic ladder as minor civil servants. Although not all the Ndebele had been driven off their land,⁷⁹ much of it was parcelled out to missions, settlers, and traders by the Company so that by 1895, one thousand and seventy farms, over ten thousand square miles, were marked for White ownership. The BSAC then instituted a hut tax, along with the promotion of tax-collectors to “native policemen” to force Africans into the colonial economy. This tax forced Africans to sell their possessions and work on the lands they had previously cultivated⁸⁰ in order to raise the money to pay the taxes. Gatsheni-Ndlovu argues that through a “last desperate attempt to recover lost land and sovereignty,”⁸¹ both Ndebele and Shona violently rose up in 1896. The second war, which is well-described by Julius Cobbing in his unpublished dissertation, failed and the Rhodesian state was firmly

⁷⁹ See Alexander et al., *Violence and Memory*, 25, in which Alexander notes that the Shangani reserves had been areas of hunting for the Ndebele, who had not considered it a suitable place to live.

⁸⁰ The Ndebele did not have a notion of “ownership” of land. The king was viewed as a steward of land and would parcel out land to anyone in need.

⁸¹ Ndlovu-Gatsheni, “Re-Thinking the Colonial Encounter in Zimbabwe in the Early Twentieth Century.”, 156

established, with its reins in the hands of the BSAC.⁸²

Although not all missionary societies backed the violent annexation of Lobengula's kingdom, they were among the primary beneficiaries of the kingdom's demise. Not only did they receive land and financial support from the BSAC, but the violent conquest of the Shona and Ndebele kingdoms crippled traditional social and religious institutions that the mission societies viewed as their competitors. Weller noted, "Chimurenga I [the 1896 uprising against colonialism] had been presented to the Shona as a war of religion by their leaders who had promised supernatural immunity against bullets and the support of the Mwari [their God] with all the tribal spirits or *mhondoro*. Not only had the Shona been defeated, but with them their dead chiefs and their God."⁸³ Gundani notes once the BSAC annexed Mashonaland, Rhodes contracted Anglicans, Methodists, Catholics and Jesuits to offer chaplaincy services to the burgeoning pioneer column and settlers. The Jesuits, under Rhodes' patronage, "catered for the needs of the settler's children and the Shona."⁸⁴ Meanwhile, the Dominican Sisters under Mother Patricia became the primary health provider in the colony,⁸⁵ while The Salvation Army, which had been stationed in South Africa, established operations at Fort Salisbury in Mashonaland in 1891.⁸⁶

⁸² Sabelo-Gatsheni and Cobbing disagree on whether the 1869 rising was evidence that Lobengula's military structures withstood the first war. Cobbing seems to think that in some rudimentary form they did, which was what led to the bloody revolt. Sabelo-Gatsheni argues that Cobbing underestimates the extent of destruction of the kingdom in the first war and instead argues that the revolt demonstrated the extent of African hardship and desperation inherent in their attempt. Whatever the case, it is important to note that after this war, the old structures that had for so long held together a kingdom had been fractured beyond repair.

⁸³ John Weller and Jane Linden, "Mainstream Christianity to 1980 Malawi," in *Zambia and Zimbabwe*, ed. John C. Weller (Gweru: Mambo Press, 1984), 55.

⁸⁴ Gundani, "The Mission School," 5.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Murdoch, *Christian Warfare in Rhodesia-Zimbabwe*, 4.

The BSAC attracted missionaries to help establish the new colonial society by offering them large tracks of land and subsidies for churches, clinics and schools.⁸⁷ By 1923, the BSAC had awarded churches 325,000 acres of land, which indicates the perceived mutual dependence and shared interests of the missionary societies and the BSAC. Given the latter's strong profit-motives; it would not cede potentially profitable lands without getting some kind of benefit for such land grants.⁸⁸

Education for Money and Power: Schools in the New Colony

One of the main services the mission societies offered the BSAC was education. For the missionaries, education, that is teaching Africans how to read and write and become “disciplined” and “civilized,” was a means of converting Africans and saving their souls. While Rhodes and the BSAC justified their takeover of Rhodesia as a “civilizing mission”, their primary goal was profit, and they tended to view educational institutions as a means of enhancing the productivity and profitability of the colony. While both the BSAC and the mission societies shared the rhetoric of the “civilizing mission,” their divergent views of the purpose of education sometimes led to disputes over the control and nature of education in the colony.

Schools were integral to the economic success of the state. One of the foremost challenges for the BSAC was creating incentives for Africans to work on the lands that had been taken from them and to integrate them into the new currency and economy of the colony. The BSAC therefore imposed several taxes on Africans which could only be paid in coin. To pay the taxes, Africans were forced to sell their livestock and belongings and work

⁸⁷ Weller and Linden, “Mainstream Christianity to 1980 Malawi.”

⁸⁸ Gundani, “The Mission School,” 5.

for the European settlers in order to acquire the currency needed to pay the tax. Reading and writing were important skills in this new economy which was regulated by written records and contracts. As more Africans were forced into this colonial economy, demand for European education and schools increased in African communities. Bhebe notes that between 1897 and 1923, Kalanga chiefs actually requested that schools be opened in their regions.⁸⁹

The annexation and subsequent taxation of Africans in turn supported the growth of schools. Hallencruz notes that the missionaries initially had difficulty attracting students to attend and remain in school.⁹⁰ One of the primary incentives the missionaries used to attract African students was allowing African families to live and work on the annexed land on the condition that their children would attend the missionary school and that families would attend church on Sundays. The mass seizures of land, widespread looting, state collapse, violence, and taxation and annexation laws created thousands of refugees who were driven to the missions seeking safety, land, money, and better prospects in the new colony.

This symbiotic relationship between the state and the missionaries was not without conflict. The BSAC's functionalist view of education as a means to increase profit and the foundation of capitalist industry led to disputes over the type of education missionaries provided. As will be discussed in detail below, the BSAC's functionalist view of education meant limiting the emphasis placed on literacy and numeracy in favour of promoting trade skills. The missionaries, with some variation depending on their mission/denomination, primarily aimed to use education to convert people to Christianity and build the human and social capital of their churches.

⁸⁹ Bhebe, *Christianity and Traditional Religion*.

⁹⁰ See Hallencreutz and Moyo, *Church and State in Zimbabwe*

In order to control the educational system, the BSAC passed a number of ordinances which would give the state control over what would be taught in schools. The first of these ordinances was issued in 1899, granting a stipend per student for African missions, provided that students attended no fewer than four hours of school per day, and that at least two hours were devoted to “industrial training,” which would provide Africans with the bare minimum literacy levels needed to create a workforce capable of supporting the expanding colonial economy.⁹¹ Moreover, the ordinance also required that teachers and their training be approved by the colonial government. In 1910, the Company further invested in education by offering “grant-in-aid” programs to support mission schools in remote areas. Weller argues that these aid programs promoted a shift from adult education in these areas to focus on younger children.⁹² The shift proved difficult for the missionaries, who struggled to persuade parents to allow their children to attend school regularly. Hiring families to work on missionary land thus became a way to create an internal working economy in more rural areas which could sustain the missions and aid them in meeting the demands of the state.

The contest between the Rhodesian state and the Christian missionary groups for control of the education system continued from the 1899 Ordinance until 1965 when the Rhodesian state declared itself independent from Britain. As an institutional cornerstone of the Rhodesian state since its inception and due to their international associations, churches wielded considerable political power. Until independence in 1980, missionaries ran the majority of schools in the country and held substantial social and political capital as Christianity became the dominant religion in the country. Despite the profound and

⁹¹ Atkinson, *Teaching Rhodesians*, 89.

⁹² Weller and Linden, “Mainstream Christianity to 1980 Malawi,” 71.

continuing power and influence of Christian churches in Rhodesian education, the state seems to have been even more influential in shaping the educational system.

The primary means through which the colonial state established control over of the educational system was through educational ordinances that increasingly delimited and dictated missionary involvement in education. Table 1 below contains a list of a few of the most significant ordinances which shaped the educational system until the war of independence.

Ordinance Date	Description
1899 Education Ordinance	The colonial government under the BSAC gained control over all schools in Rhodesia, particularly what was taught in missionary schools. Provided small subsidies to African schools.
1903 Education Ordinance	Created <i>a de jure</i> separation of schools on the basis of race which consisted of Black, Coloured/Asian schools, and White schools. Funding favoured White, then Black, and then Coloured schools respectively.
1907 Education Ordinance	Limited the education that Black Africans received (only enough to make individual and religious education possible). At this time, there were no Africans enrolled in secondary schools and 24, 930 Black students attended 329 missionary primary schools. Year that the first Coloured school was opened with the assistance of the government.
1930 Compulsory Education Act	Provided free education to White students and made attendance compulsory. Coloured and Asian young people were required to attend if they lived within 5 km of a school, although there were no secondary schools. African young people were never required to attend school and had to pay for both government and missionary day schools. There were still no Africans in secondary schools, a situation that persisted until the 1940s.
1959 African Education Act	A general purpose fund was established for government schools educating African students. However, by 1959, the government had only established 5 secondary and 46 primary schools for African students, all located in urban areas, despite the fact that the majority of African students lived in rural areas.
1973	Development of special schools for White handicapped children and those (White) students who had been expelled from government schools.
1979	Divided schools into five categories: Group A Schools (former White and Coloured Schools); Group B Schools (former African schools in urban areas); Group C Schools (African schools in Tribal trust lands); Community Schools (formerly reserved for European, Asian, and Coloured communities); and Private Schools (including mission schools). The act also provided for the establishment of national, regional, and school advisory councils to oversee schools. Richards and Govere (2003) argue that the purpose of this act was to secure funding for Group A schools, which catered predominantly to White students.

Table 1: Sources: Data from Rugano Jonas. Zvobgo, *Colonialism and Education in Zimbabwe*. (Harare: SAPES Books, 1994).

The 1903 ordinance is of particular significance in that it was part of a law that separated schools by race.⁹³ The lack of education for African students is also notable—in 1907, not a single secondary school was open to African students.⁹⁴ Two government-sponsored African schools were opened in the 1940s and 1957 respectively.⁹⁵

1959 is equally notable in that the general fund which was established was done in large part owing to the liberal policies of Sir Garfield Todd who was Prime Minister of Southern Rhodesia from 1953 to 1958. He not only fought for expansion of African Education and voting rights of Africans but advocated for majority rule and an end to the settler minority government during the Liberation War.⁹⁶ He had been a missionary and a teacher, and his cabinet rebelled against him in 1958, no doubt in large part owing to his liberal advocacy for the expanded rights of Africans.⁹⁷ Nonetheless, his brief but poignant role is one that implies a much more complex narrative than the one presented here, which takes a more historical and structural overview rather than documenting, at least for the sake of background, the intricacies and minutiae of political contestation within the colonial regime.

⁹³ See CJM Zvobgo, "African education in Zimbabwe: the colonial inheritance of the new state, 1899-1979." *Issue: A Journal of Opinion* (1981): 13-16 ;Atkinson, *Teaching Rhodesians*.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ As noted in The Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, "Annual Report on Education for Year Ended 1957," (1957).

⁹⁶ See Dickson A Mungazi,. *The Last British Liberals in Africa: Michael Blundell and Garfield Todd*. Greenwood Publishing Group, 1999.

⁹⁷ For more on his life, see Susan Paul & Trevor Grundy (2011) *The Dadaya Years: The Challenge of Understanding Garfield Todd*, *The Round Table*, 100:417, 629-638,

The complicated history of contestation between missionaries and the Rhodesian government over education before the 1965 declaration of independence therefore could be crudely summarized as the missionaries demanding more financial support from the government, more academic/religious emphasis in curricula, as well as more autonomy and control over their own educational institutions. For its part, the Rhodesian government increasingly sought to expand education without bearing the full costs of the endeavour, and in general wished to limit the higher education of Africans in order focus on technical training and to limit the lobbying potential of an African middle class.

In summary, European education in what became Rhodesia was predominantly established and spread in the wake of the BSAC's violent conquest of the region, which paved the way for White settler families and coerced many African families to attend and/or send their children to the mission schools. While the educational objectives of the BSAC/Rhodesian government and the mission societies often aligned, they differed in other cases—the BSAC and then the colonial government sought to use education to integrate Africans into the colonial economy and create a more productive and profitable colony, and thus emphasized “industrial training” and limited African higher education, which it deemed economically useless and potentially politically dangerous, whereas the mission schools, by and large saw education as a way of converting and training good catechists, and thus emphasized religious education and literacy. Through a series of educational ordinances, the colonial government established its control over the schools in the colony, creating a racially stratified system in which African and Coloured and Asian education emphasized basic literacy and trade skills, whereas White schools sought to replicate the curricula and culture

of British boarding schools.⁹⁸

While this section of the chapter focused on the history of the establishment of European education in Rhodesia, the next section will theoretically analyse and interpret this history in order to demonstrate the ideologically and politically-charged nature of education in Rhodesia from its inception, and to provide important historical context for the roles which education played during the liberation struggle that are explored in the following chapters. Education has always been a site of political and ideological contestation in Rhodesia and understanding the history of that contestation and its import in founding the colony is essential for understanding its import in the struggle to create an independent Zimbabwe.

Education and the Foundation of Rhodesia

The above history outlines the symbiotic relationship between the missionaries and the BSAC, but tells us little more about the nature of the educational system. After the destabilization of the traditional Ndebele states, the social and political vacuum was filled, in part, by the missionary institutions of education. Yet a number of questions remain: what made the educational institutions such effective tools for economic and societal transformation? Why would the British South Africa Company readily give away so much land to missionaries for education? Why not attract more tradesmen, or miners to make quick profits as the Belgians did in the Congo? This section will examine the political and ideological functions of the colonial education system, particularly the ways in which it served to assimilate Africans into the colonial state and workforce in order to justify, reproduce, and reinforce the state's racial hierarchy and socio-economic structures, to rewrite

⁹⁸ For more on the racially stratified society, see Ibbo Mandaza, "Education in Zimbabwe: The Colonial Framework and the Response on the National Liberation Movement," *Zimbabwe, Towards a New Order*, vol. ii (Harare: UNCTAD, 1980), 341-400.

the history of the region, valorising the colonial state and its founders a White saviours, and to accustom the bodies and minds of students into the cultural, temporal and physical regimes of the colonial state.

Education and the “Civilising Mission”

To understand the role of education in the construction of the Rhodesian colony, it is essential to define and contextualise the British system of education which made inroads into Rhodesia in the 1860s. As Carnoy argues in *Education as Cultural Imperialism* (1974), schools were conceived as institutional sites of the transmission of knowledge, culture, and “civilisation,” not only from one generation to another, but, at this time, from European societies to those they had conquered. He argues,

Nations have come to believe that to be accepted as civilised, they must be educated; and to be educated, they must be schooled. The corollary of this proposition is that schooling is in itself a liberating (civilising) force and that it is a necessary prerequisite for nations to participate with the developed countries in the world project of material advancement...⁹⁹

Carnoy further explains that in this model, “the concept of individual material and moral improvement combined with social mobility—all purportedly due to schooling, is generalised into national economic growth and improvement.... The legitimization of schooling in this way is particularly important because it is a link between the economic and social structure and the minds of children—the future world forces and political participants.”¹⁰⁰ In this way, schools were an integral part and even the primary vector of the imperial “civilising mission,” which was often coupled with Christian and capitalist visions

⁹⁹ Martin Carnoy, *Education as Cultural Imperialism*, 2.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 2.

of global salvation from damnation and unprofitability.

These 19th and 20th-century European ideologies conceptualised schooling as an enlightening global force, as in Czech philosopher and “father of modern education” John Amos Comenius' description of education as an alchemical art that transforms the "base elements" of unschooled children into gold, or enlightened beings.¹⁰¹ Indeed, in his *Magna Didactica*, Comenius described schools as “devices to 'teach everybody everything’” and outlined a blueprint for the assembly-line production of knowledge, which according to this method, would make education cheaper and better and make growth into full humanity possible for all.”¹⁰² It was this general paradigm that animated the early educational efforts of European missions and the British South Africa Company in the nascent state of Rhodesia.

Both Cecil John Rhodes as well as the missionary groups operating in Rhodesia ideologically framed the colonial mission as one of civilising or improving the lives of native Africans by altering their religions, norms, and their social structures to become as similar to that of Europeans as possible. Given that this definition of “civilised” was not based on “objective”/transcendent criteria, but on relationships between the subject group and the dominant definer of the term—what being “civilised” meant changed over time and varied between different European groups operating in the region.

Missionaries, Summers argues, had by 1896 developed a paternalistic ideology of civilizing Africans, a definition which had expanded from their earlier goals of evangelism and teaching literacy.¹⁰³ “Civilising” meant teaching Africans the norms and practices of

¹⁰¹ Quoted in Henry A. Giroux, *Theory and Resistance in Education* (Westport: Bergin & Gravey, 2001), 5.

¹⁰² Ibid., 5.

¹⁰³ See Carol Summers, *Colonial Lessons*, 96-97.

European culture, from literacy to labour, which in some cases, meant removing children from their homes in order to better inculcate in them European cultural norms and intense labour practices.

For example, the Rhodesian government's 1903 educational ordinance underscored the necessity to teach Africans “the habits of discipline and cleanliness,” which was viewed as a tenet of creating, what Burke refers to as Christian, “civilised” African communities.”¹⁰⁴ According to Burke, the British Colonial office in 1903 requested reports on hygiene and cleanliness education from their colonies across the globe. Burke's chapter on cleanliness and education and the eventual adoption of the Jean's Teachers Programme¹⁰⁵ in 1925 reveals the extent of the perceived need to “clean up” Africans, physically, culturally, and religiously.

Disagreements about what Africans needed to become civilised, as well as the assumptions about the degree to which they could become civilised were common between and even within different missionary groups. Missionary groups held differing ideologies in relation to what Burke refers to as the “man-brother” theory, in which Africans were viewed as essentially equal to White men, and, therefore, could become “brothers” once assimilated into the Christian and cultural fold. In light of prevailing theories on human development of that age, the idea of Africans being equal to other races was hotly contested.¹⁰⁶ Various

¹⁰⁴ See Timothy Burke, *Lifebuoy Men, Lux Women* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1996).

¹⁰⁵ Jean's teachers were community “housekeeping” and hygiene exemplars who would host community teaching sessions about keeping hygiene and general house cleanliness. The teachers were part of a broad communal education drive. Syllabi also stressed hygiene and cleanliness in schools. For more on Jean's teachers, see Carol Summers, *Colonial Lessons*.

¹⁰⁶ It was in this age that Samuel Morton (1799-1851) gained fame from a fraudulent study on the correlation between intelligence and skull circumference. He linked the study to race and “packed” White skulls in order to claim White racial superiority. For more on his work, see Stephen Jay Gould, *The Mismeasure of Man* (New York: Norton, 1996), 85-100. He also famously claimed that Egyptians could not be African but were racially White. In Rhodesia, studies such as his, which focused on race and environmental factors is highlighted in early education reports on Rhodesia which question the possible adverse intellectual outcomes of European children being exposed to warmer climates. For more on the debates, see Jason E. Lewis et al., “The

missionary groups held different beliefs regarding the ability of Africans to assimilate and become fully integrated into White society, while others questioned whether, assimilated or not, Africans could ever be considered equal to White men. For example, Michael West, in *The Making of the Rhodesian Middle Class*,¹⁰⁷ describes how the American Methodist Episcopal Church believed that Africans could fully integrate into Western society. He quotes one missionary from of the American Board of Commissioners, who, in 1900 asserted that, “The way to refashion Africans and make them ready for integration into settler-dominated society..., was to ‘denationalize’ the people - change their whole ideas and purposes of life, by teaching them a ‘Christian civilization.’”¹⁰⁸ In contrast, one member of the Dutch Reformed Church noted that, ‘The African is not equal to us [Whites] and we cannot make him so.’¹⁰⁹ There was, therefore, a continuum of opinion on which missionary groups and state actors viewed Africans as being more or less capable of becoming equal to their White counterparts, but all held that Africans, whether by their nature, culture or religion, were morally, intellectually, and culturally, if not biologically, deficient and inferior.

These normative or ideological differences led to fundamental disagreements about the role of African education in the colony. From the nascent stages of the education system, the BSAC and missionaries disagreed on the structure of the curriculum for schools, the former focusing on the need for technical education to support the colony's economy, and the

Mismeasure of Science: Stephen Jay Gould Versus Samuel George Morton on Skulls and Bias,” *PLoS biology* 9, no. 6 (2011): 1-6.

¹⁰⁷ West, *The Rise of an African Middle Class*.

¹⁰⁸ Ian Phimister, *An Economic and Social History of Zimbabwe, 1890–1948: Capital Accumulation and Class Struggle* (London: Longman, 1988), 38.

¹⁰⁹ Mungazi, *Education and Government Control in Zimbabwe*, 37.

latter, on literary education as a means of evangelisation and civilisation. Although the Church missions were eager to accept large tracts of land and funding from the BSAC in order to build their missions, they were mostly not-for-profit institutions.

The business of the missionaries was unequivocally that of saving souls. This is not to say that Rhodes and the British South Africa Company did not think that African souls needed to be saved. The BSAC's profit depended on their alliance with the missionaries, but it also is clear from Rhodes' letters, that he genuinely believed that he was part of a "master race" and that Africa would benefit by its conquest. In 1877, in what he dubbed "his confession of faith," Rhodes wrote:

Africa is still lying ready for us; it is our duty to take it. It is our duty to seize every opportunity of acquiring more territory, and we should keep this one idea steadily before our eyes that more territory simply means more of the Anglo-Saxon race more of the best, the most human, most honourable race the world possesses...Let us form the same kind of society a Church for the extension of the British Empire. A society which should have members in every part of the British Empire working with one object and one idea we should have its members placed at our universities and our schools...¹¹⁰

For both the BSAC and the missionaries, schools were a primary means for bringing Africans into the "civilised" Christian/British imperial fold.

Epistemological Contestation: Curricula as Propaganda

What then were the mechanisms which made the formal education system effective in acculturating Africans? In addition to facilitating the economic restructuring of the colony, schools were and are an effective conduit for political coercion and propaganda. The instrumentality of the schools, and education in general, for mass communication and persuasion is crucial to understanding the historical evolution of the Rhodesian education

¹¹⁰ Cecil Rhodes, "Confession of Faith," qtd. in John Flint, *Cecil Rhodes* (Boston: Little Brown, 1974), 252.

system before and during the liberation war. In analysing the uses of education during colonial state formation, certain aspects of the relationship between the education system and the state come into sharper focus. In order to understand the school structures as inherently susceptible to, if not inextricably imbricated in political coercion and propaganda, we must define our terms.

The notion of propaganda, particularly in the 20th Century, has often been defined in opposition to education. David Welch, in his critically acclaimed 2013 book, *Propaganda: Power and Persuasion*, defines propaganda as “the dissemination of ideas intended to convince people to think and act in a particular way for a particular persuasive purpose.”¹¹¹ He stresses the deliberate and conscious effort of persuasion in describing propaganda, contrasting it with education: “whereas education, at least in the liberal tradition, teaches people how to think and how to make up their minds, propaganda normally tries to tell people what to think.”¹¹²

My fundamental disagreement with Welch, is not in his definition of propaganda, but in his assumption that education, and schools by extension, can be so neatly separated from propaganda. That is, this thesis argues that, as can be seen in the historical example of education in Rhodesia, the "how" or processes of thinking cannot be neatly separated from the "what" or knowledge taught, especially given the facts that: a) factual objects of knowledge (the "what") only acquire meaning and relevance in the context of a system or process of thought; b) there are multiple modes of thinking and systems of thought; and c) not all modes of thought are taught together at the same level.

¹¹¹ David Welch, *Propaganda, Power and Persuasion* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2013), 2.

¹¹² Ibid.

These dynamics are perhaps most clearly seen in the formative years of mission/colonial education, where the teaching of English, Mathematics, and basic reasoning would, according to Welch, be non-propagandist; however, this is obviously not the case given that these subjects replaced other forms of language and reasoning which were deemed inferior. The supposedly bare facts of where Mt. Nyangani is located or the history of Bantu migration into Southern Africa have vastly different significances when considered within the context of 19th-century Christian, British imperialist, or Ndebele mythological, or Marxist revolutionary traditions of thinking. The early years of European education in Rhodesia offers one of the starkest examples of the inherent propaganda of what Giroux terms the “hidden” and the “non-hidden” curricula.¹¹³

In terms of curricula, for example, historical accounts note how there was little separation between the religious and the secular training which the missions offered students. In addition to reading, writing and arithmetic, Bhebe notes that “the church was at the same time the school”¹¹⁴ and students were expected to learn the catechism and read the Bible alongside technical education which included bricklaying, farming, sewing, carpentry, printing, blacksmithing and gardening. The curriculum was mostly gendered within late 19th-century British Christian norms so that for women, the ideal notion of education was one which would prepare them for Christian marriage and child-rearing.¹¹⁵

Even if one were to allow for the possibility of a distinction between the process of

¹¹³ Giroux, *Theory and Resistance in Education*. Giroux terms the implicit hegemonic perceptions as “hidden” versus the “non-hidden” curriculum the ideologies embedded in educational curricula.

¹¹⁴ Bhebe, *Christianity and Traditional Religion*, 35.

¹¹⁵ Bhebe makes this argument, and so does Sean Morrow, who studied education of women in Northern Rhodesia, which was also a protectorate. See Sean Morrow, “‘No Girl Leaves the School Unmarried’: Mabel Shaw and the Education of Girls at Mbereshi, Northern Rhodesia, 1915-1940,” *The International journal of African historical studies* 19, no. 4 (1986): 601-35.

thinking and the content of thought, it still must be granted that the analytical framework (“how one thinks”) shapes or even determines the possibilities, interpretations, and ultimately the conclusions reached (“what one thinks”). It is one thing to be trained in Marxist material dialectics, it is another to learn medieval scholastic theology, and it is quite another thing to be trained in white-supremacist, imperial apologetics. Faced with the “same” set of data, these different trainings would lead to different procedures of analysis and thus to different sets of conclusions. Moreover, these traditions or methods of thinking can themselves be studied as objects of analysis. In reality, the separation between the “how” and the “what” to think is purely heuristic; in reality, the “how” is itself a “what.”

Moreover, education is never contentless. Even in the case of highly abstract mathematical-logical training, it is one form of thought amongst others, and training in it requires the content of examples, which is profoundly influenced by culture, history, and economics, among other aspects. And perhaps more importantly, this training takes place in a social and political context, which influences the way in which abstract mathematics is related to other bodies of knowledge (e.g. students in Rhodesia were taught that Africans had not developed mathematics and logic, which in history classes were portrayed as discoveries of Western civilization) and the way in which this body of knowledge is deployed (e.g. calculating mining profits in the colonial economy). The facile distinction between education and propaganda does not exist in the real world, and the insistence on this distinction is itself politically and ideologically motivated (propaganda is most effective when it presents itself as neutral fact), as is particularly obvious in cases such as Southern Rhodesia.

In establishing the history of educational institutions, it is crucial not to assume a top-down approach that negates the agency of individual teachers and pupils and the complicated

interactions between propaganda, ideology, and education. Politics includes the concrete actions individuals or groups take in response to their historical, material, and global contexts, and is therefore the confluence of ideology and reality. Even as an ideology can shape and guide politics, politics can shape and guide ideology, they, therefore, overlap and mutually influence each other. Politics, therefore, influences propaganda, and propaganda influences politics; ideology influences propaganda, but once mass-communicated, the ideology can be either reinforced or shifted in response to the propaganda. Given the overlap and mutual influence of ideology, politics and propaganda, the separation of these concepts is, therefore, heuristic—useful merely to help analyse their deployment in the creation and reproduction of the educational system in the context of other institutions and systems in the society at large. In the case of Rhodesia, such abstractions become more concrete and clearer when considering the curricula and disciplinary procedures of schools.

The Education Curriculum: ‘Implicit’ Propaganda and White Supremacy

While this thesis attempts to trouble the distinction between propaganda and education as a way to understand the instrumentalization of education during a period of war, it is important to recognize just how overtly propagandistic Rhodesian curricula and history textbooks were in order to justify the settler state. The three examples, illustrated in figures 2, 3, and 4 taken from *None but Ourselves*,¹¹⁶ include the government's suppression of the knowledge that Great Zimbabwe had been built by Africans. Archaeologists at the site were forbidden to speak about carbon dating, and instead, were told to perpetuate the story that Egyptians or the Queen of Sheba (who were raced as White) had built the city. History books, magazine quizzes and guidebooks censored any information that Africans had built

¹¹⁶ Frederiske and Partridge, *None but Ourselves*.

the structure. ¹¹⁷

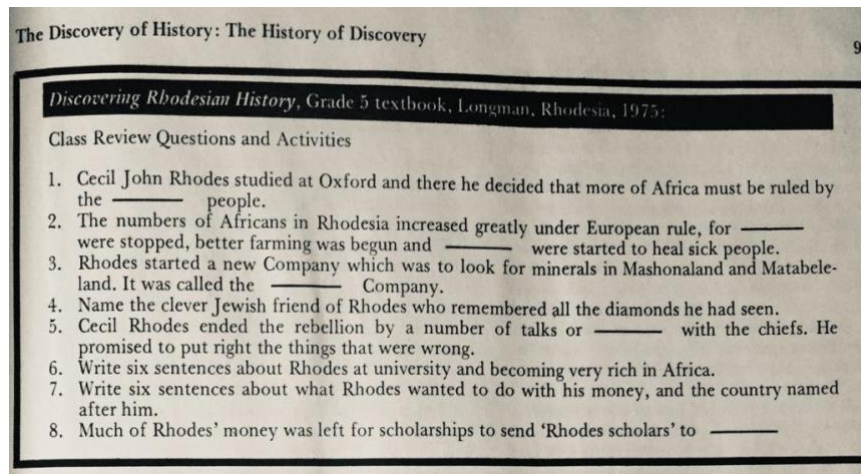


Figure 2. Quiz from Grade 5 Textbook. Frederiske and Partridge, *None but Ourselves*, 9

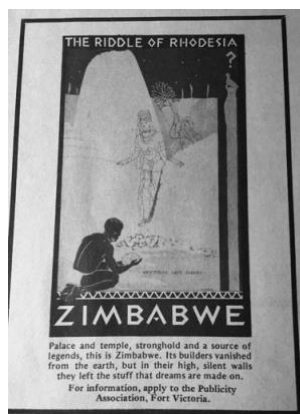


Figure 4: Tourism magazine clipping from the 1970's. Taken from Frederiske and Partridge, *None but Ourselves*, 8.

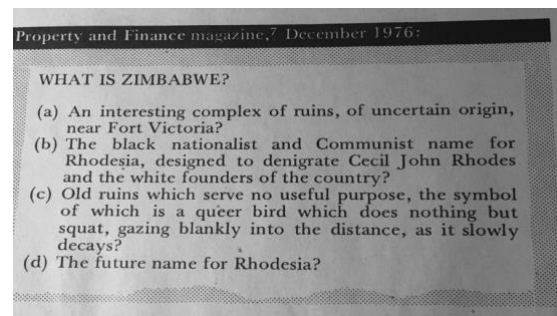


Figure 3: 1976 Property and Finance Magazine quiz, taken from Frederiske and Partridge, *None but Ourselves*, 12.

The second example of propaganda which Frederiske expertly captures are the history

¹¹⁷ Interview with Paul Sinclair curator of archaeology and Winni Paradza, a mission hospital nurse. Ibid, 12-13.

textbooks which glorified the settlers and missionaries and vilified and portrayed Africans as backward “savages.” Figure 6 below illustrates some of these history textbooks published in Rhodesia.

Winnie Paradza, interviewed by Fredresike, noted “The Europeans said that they discovered the ruins, that it wasn’t African people who built them. But our old grannies, they’re the ones who know better. I just didn’t believe all the things I was taught in school.”¹¹⁸ One of the Zimbabwe Ruins museum curators explained how the government censored the history of the site, “I was told that the museum service was in a difficult situation, that the government was pressurizing them to withhold the correct information. Censorship of guidebooks, museum displays, school textbooks, radio programs, newspapers and films was a daily occurrence... I wasn’t allowed to mention radiocarbon dates... For the Queen of Sheba myth to have any basis, it would require far older dates.”¹¹⁹

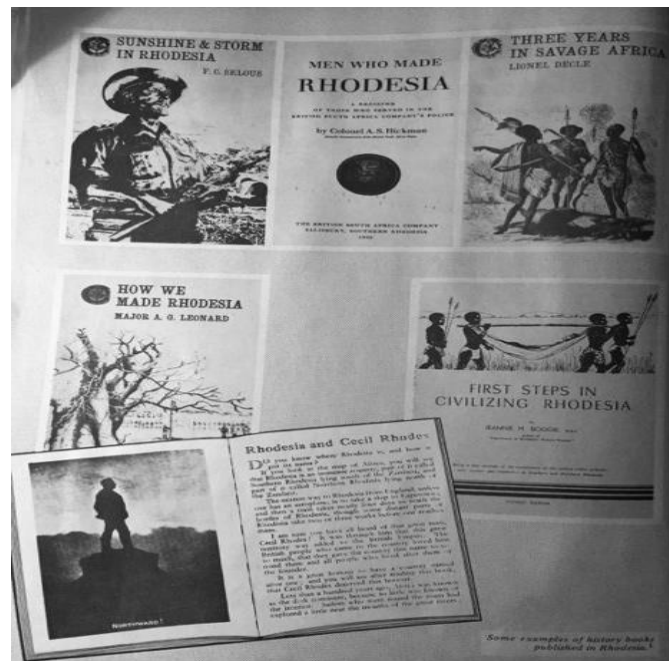


Figure 5: History books used in the curriculum, taken from Frederiske and Partridge, *None but Ourselves*, 8.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 13.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 10.

The history book in figure 5 above includes the titles *Three Years in Savage Africa*, *First Steps in Civilizing Rhodesia* and *How We Made Rhodesia*. These titles coupled with the images of Rhodes silhouetted atop a hill and the portrayal of Africans carrying a White man in a gurney on their shoulders make clear the inherent white-supremacist overtones in this schoolbook. The fact that these books were part of a purportedly “apolitical” history curriculum underscores the profoundly political ideologies and propaganda that were part and parcel of the Rhodesian education system. Therefore, the curricula of Rhodesian schools functioned to propagate and reproduce a narrative that justified the existence and racial hierarchy of the colonial state and society, and an important feature of this state-sponsored political propaganda was its presentation as “apolitical” education.

It is again important to note that African students did not simply passively accept this portrayal of themselves and their traditions as “uncivilised” and “backwards.”¹²⁰ The following chapter, which outlines the history of the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU), briefly addresses their pre-liberation responses to the Rhodesian educational system. For this chapter, however, this broad overview of the functions of the educational system at the state level will have to suffice.

Education as a Militarisation Tool: Discipline and Punishment

In addition to the curricula, whether espousing the ideals of Western Christianity and/or White supremacy, the school's regime of discipline is just as crucial for understanding

¹²⁰ The individual and public demands for education shaped the education system, and society as a whole in a myriad of ways. For example, one might look at community demands for more schools and the political advocacy carried out by educated individuals and missionaries who demanded more rights for Africans.

the political impact of the educational system. Michel Foucault's *Discipline and Punish*¹²¹ argues that the “gentler” forms of modern criminal punishment in Europe (as opposed to the violent spectacles of retributive punishment that characterized public justice before the 18th century) were part of newer and more effective means of control based on newer understandings of authority, the state, the human subject, and the law. Foucault also notes how this paradigm shift led to these features of modern power as disciplinary control being adopted throughout many institutions in the modern state and society, such as factories, hospitals, and schools. Instead of the older system of retributive punishment which focused on performatively violent responses to criminal acts, the modern system of disciplinary power exerts control through the observation and normalization of human subjects, geared towards the “reform” of the abnormal, criminal/unhealthy individual to a normal, healthy one.

In schools, this process of this normalization took place through the daily rituals of school life: the assemblies, the uniforms, the examinations, and punishments, which were not only meant to punish the students for infractions, but to elicit confessions and compliance—in effect, to “break” and make students conform to the mould of a “normal” citizen who would be both easier to control and more useful to the state. While these techniques of disciplinary power were widespread throughout modern European schools, they took on a particular intensity in the colonial context of Rhodesia (and elsewhere), in which specific populations were deemed “less civilised,” in greater need of correction, and assumed not be

¹²¹ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Random House, 1995).

able to feel pain as intensely as Europeans.¹²² Thus the process of ‘disciplining’ African students and making them conform to a ‘useful’ European norm was more fraught and violent than that of their White peers. While Foucault characterized the shift from the pre-modern to the modern forms of punishment as moving from mere retribution through pain, to punishment and correction, one should not mistake this for a switch in the focus of punishment from the body to the mind—bodily practices and disciplines were and are still vital in the modern system of discipline, although they are imbued with a different meaning and purpose: correction instead of retribution. The prominence of corporal punishment in Rhodesian schools and the emphasis on hygiene in African schools, in particular, can be understood in this light, especially given the widespread stereotype that the “savage” and “uncivilised” African responded best to brute force.¹²³

The management and control of time and space is also central to Foucault’s theories on discipline and of particular relevance to analyses of the Rhodesian education system. Foucault describes the shift in the conceptualization of infractions from the pre-modern “crimes against the sovereign” to crimes against generally-held social norms. These social norms not only become the governing structures of society, but particular sites, such as schools and military camps behaviourally condition individuals to adhere to and uphold these social norms. For example, these norms are inculcated by making individuals conform to strict schedules, limiting their bodily movements at certain times of the day, and creating hierarchies that govern much of their daily lives. In addition to the corporal punishments

¹²² Jocelyn Alexander and Gary Kynoch, “Introduction: Histories and Legacies of Punishment in Southern Africa,” *Journal of Southern African Studies* 37, no. 3 (2011): 395-413; Allison Kim Shutt, *Manners Make a Nation: Racial Etiquette in Southern Rhodesia, 1910-1963* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2015).

¹²³ Ibid.

which children received in school, Africans (and all children for that matter), were severely limited in their movements in school settings, their daily schedules were rigid and similar to those employed by the military and factories, and school assemblies and uniforms organized the bodies of students in formations in patterns similar to those in military, industrial, and carceral settings. It is important to note that while a similar argument could be made for White students (for the very nature of schooling even today remains little changed), the government's overt campaign of “civilising” Africans placed a greater emphasis on these disciplinary features in African schools, where the cultures and disciplinary regimes of the students’ home environments were assumed to be “savage” and in opposition to that of the school.¹²⁴

For Coloured (racially-mixed) and Asian schoolchildren, anecdotes I received from three sources mentioned that the ordinance acts which made school mandatory meant that children were forcefully separated from their families. The fact that there were so few Coloured schools also meant that most students had to board, and would have been unable to live with their families for much of the year.¹²⁵

Moreover, the racially-segregated education systems, which were unequally funded, further reinforced the lower status of Africans. Not only were there fewer schools with more limited funding for African and Coloured students, but the social structures of these schools promoted White supremacy. An example from one of the school yearbooks can be seen in

¹²⁴ For more on the how new conceptions of time, discipline and culture were imposed on Africans, see John Comaroff and Jean Comaroff, “Policing Culture, Cultural Policing: Law and Social Order in Postcolonial South Africa,” *Law & Social Inquiry* 29, no. 3 (2004): 513-45.

¹²⁵ While unable to corroborate these anecdotes with documentary evidence, three Coloured individuals gave similar accounts of their parents being separated from their families in order to be sent to the Coloured schools. Despite the lack of robust evidence, I chose to mention their anecdotes them as I believe that they may lead to important areas of future research, and at the very least point to perceptions of the educational system.

figure 6: a picture of girls playing field hockey dressed as African domestic workers, with blackface. In addition to the curriculum, the political discourse of the day and the overall structure of the system was explicitly designed to educate Africans to become a more efficient servant class; it is only natural that a group of White students felt justified partaking in such racial theatrics in this context.

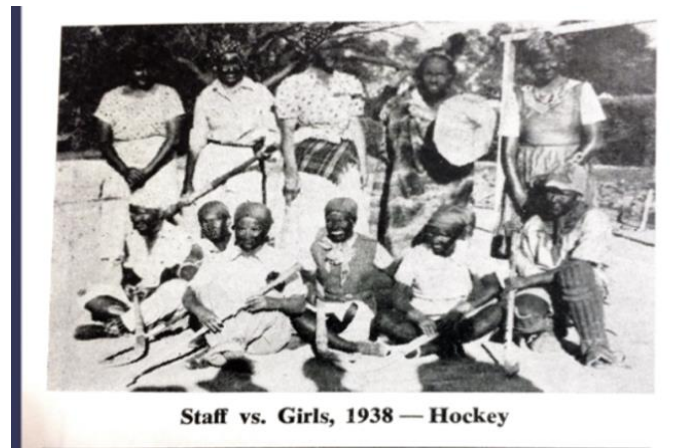


Figure 6: A 1938 picture of the girl's hockey team featured in the yearbook of Eveline School's 60th anniversary, "Annual of the Eveline High School 1961," (1961), 11.

In the case of Rhodesia, in which the settler government was perpetually in a state of war to maintain an unequal state, the boundaries between the barracks, schoolyard, and the general society were not so clearly demarcated. The society and schools were militarized, the racial hierarchy of the general society extended into and was reinforced by the structures of the school and military, and the school's disciplinary procedures, racial hierarchy and White-supremacist curriculum justified for the operations of the military and social norms governing broader society.

Conclusion

This brief overview of the Rhodesian educational system, from its inception through the election of the Rhodesian Front in 1962, explored how the missionaries, as well as the

BSAC used educational structures to further their own ideological and political interests. It was through the violent annexation of what became Rhodesia by Rhodes and the BSAC that the establishment of missionary and colonial education in the region became possible.

Schools, then foreign institutions, became the primary tools to culturally and economically assimilate Africans into the British and capitalist fold. They were used as tools of diplomacy by the BSAC in order to cater to and attract White settlers and missionaries, and as evangelical vehicles for the missionaries for whom reading and writing were preconditions for reading the Bible and becoming Christian. Above all, for both the BSAC and missionaries, schools were conceived of as the primary ‘civilizing’ tool which would ameliorate what they viewed as the “backwardness” of Africans. Moreover, schools became sites for political and social agency for Africans who were determined to make the most of the opportunities, however limited, allotted to them within the new system.

In order to fulfil these ideological objectives, schools had to be more than mere places where students learned to read and write. The curricula, which consisted of both religious education as well as practical training in order to bolster the economy, was thoroughly infused with political ideologies which justified the colonial settlement through the glorification of the colonial government and denigration of pre-colonial African cultures, states, institutions, traditions, and people.

In addition to the blatantly white-supremacist politics of the curriculum, the focus on the discipline of the African body (physically and hygienically) by submitting students to new regimes of time, posture, authority, etc. also served as a subtler, but no less influential tool of propaganda that simultaneously denigrated those outside of the school system’s regime of discipline, while elevating the masters of this system. Through rote memorization

of a curriculum that justified British imperial conquest and the racial hierarchy of the colony as well as the “rope” of disciplinary technologies, the education system of Rhodesia functioned to promote citizens who might “prop up” the state and become catechists of the Church. However, as we will explore in the next chapter, African students and teachers were not passively shaped by these processes, but rather actively shaped their societies and educational institutions in various ways.

Theoretically, this chapter demonstrates, through the historical example of Rhodesia, that education systems are not politically or ideologically neutral. In fact, it argues that the very assertion or assumption of the neutrality of education in such settings is itself a powerful political technique. ‘The best trick the devil ever pulled was convincing the world he doesn't exist,’ and the best trick an ideology can pull is to convince its adherents that it is plain fact, without coercive intent or effect.

Chapter 4: The Rhodesian Front's Instrumentalisation of Education during the Liberation Struggle



Figure 7: Rhodesian army recruitment poster from Plumtree High School. Appeared in page 6 of the 'The Puritan' in 1975. Accessed in the Bulawayo Archives in July 2017.

The Rhodesian Front (RF) party was elected in 1962 on a platform of maintaining White minority rule against the rising tide of decolonization. In 1965, the party fulfilled its promises to its constituents by unilaterally declaring independence from Great Britain in order to preserve the racial hierarchy and culture of the state. As a result, the RF-led Rhodesian state

fought a brutal war against nationalist forces seeking majority rule until 1979, when the Lancaster House Agreements officially ended the conflict, paving the way for open elections and independence. Having made historical and theoretical arguments demonstrating how the Rhodesian education system was neither epistemologically nor politically neutral in the previous chapter, this chapter focuses on the ways in which the Rhodesian state instrumentalised both formal and political education in its attempts to defeat the nationalist movements and gain international recognition as a legitimate sovereign state.

In brief, this chapter argues that the RF employed a number of strategies to press education into the service of protecting the State, including:

- International Diplomacy
- Censorship and gagging
- Propaganda
- Recruitment
- Direct Warfare

Moreover, it explores the consequences of the politicisation and militarisation of education on schools and communities.

Background on the Rhodesian Bush War

Even before the UDI of 1965, the Rhodesian Front government faced significant opposition to its attempts to maintain White-minority rule, both locally and internationally. After 1965, it had to simultaneously quell guerrilla attacks by African nationalist parties who had built formidable armed units with the help of international allies, as well as limit “White flight” from the country by placating portions of the White population who were opposed to the right-wing government’s policies and those who feared the guerrilla attacks. The Rhodesian state also faced international opposition in the form of political pressure and

economic sanctions from Britain and other Western-allied countries. When Ian Smith, Prime Minister of Rhodesia unilaterally declared Rhodesia's independence on the 11th of November 1965, Britain, as well as other Western powers (with the exception of Portugal, which was trying to hold onto its bordering colony of Mozambique) rejected Smith's declaration, making Rhodesia an international pariah for the next 15 years.

In the context of the Cold War, the local and international fronts often overlapped. As Eastern Bloc countries allied with guerrilla movements across the continent, both the Rhodesian government and Britain and its Western allies became wary of nationalist parties gaining power and aligning Rhodesia with Socialist and Communist states. This chapter begins with a detailed historical overview of the making of the "international" and "local" fronts, respectively, to provide context for the more original analysis of the resulting instrumentalization of education by the Rhodesian settler state.

The "Local" Front: The Lead-Up to the Guerrilla War

A settler state is, from its inception, inherently in a state of war. From the 1890s onwards, the British South Africa Company (BSAC), as a settler colony, had to first fight its war militarily to win control of land and resources. After this initial period of conquest, the BSAC used education, amongst other administrative and bureaucratic institutions, to cement and legitimate its rule by gaining control and integrating the local populace into the institutions of governance and commerce that sustained the colony. Over time however, Africans came to constitute a burgeoning middle class, and as industry became essential to the colony, Africans formed strong workers' unions, carried out demonstrations for higher pay, equal rights and an end to the colonial regime along with its unjust tax laws. Nationalists "organised boycotts and demonstrations for the fight against brutal economic exploitation

particularly in the mines; and sometimes also resorted to religious protests which were expressed through independent churches and watchtower movements.”¹²⁶ By the 1950s, these protest movements were replaced by better-organised nationalist political parties which “sought to achieve independence by constitutional means, and these served to prepare the ground for the armed struggle.”¹²⁷ In addition to these internal pressures for reform, the economic pressures of the two world wars had also slowed the economic growth of the colony. Moreover, the external pressures of liberation movements sweeping across the continent, with Ghana achieving independence in 1957 in the context of the Cold War, increased the fears that the colony might be the next to fall to socialist revolutionaries.

The first African nationalist political party in Rhodesia, the Southern Rhodesia African National Congress, was constituted in September 1957.¹²⁸ By the time it was banned in 1959, the ANC had between 6000 and 7000 members, and 40 branches across the country.¹²⁹ A year after it was banned, the ANC was succeeded by a militant National Democratic Party in January 1960. This party pressured Britain to decolonize Southern Rhodesia, and while a constitutional conference was arranged in Britain in 1961, the NDP rejected the constitution and turned to militant means to put pressure on the state. The Party was banned in September 1961, and was later reconstituted under the Zimbabwe African

¹²⁶ Ngwabi Bhebe, *The ZAPU and ZANU Guerrilla Warfare and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe* (Gweru: Mambo Press, 1999), 9.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ According to Bhebe, it drew members by organising them around the grievances and injustices resulting from the Land Apportionment Act (which drove Africans to the infertile reserve areas), the Land Husbandry Act (which limited the amount of land and cattle allowed per household), and complaints against the Native Department (which buttressed the colonial regime) Moreover, the party was heavily supported by trade unions, which demanded more bargaining power and higher wages. Ibid., 10.

¹²⁹ The work of these branches supported rural peoples in fighting against the Land Husbandry act. Ibid, 10.

People's Union (ZAPU), which was banned in September 1962.¹³⁰

This chapter focuses on the period of confluence of these internal nationalist movements and the external international politics that eventually forced the Rhodesian government to war (1963-1980). When the Rhodesian Front government declared its independence, Britain refused to recognize the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) and imposed sanctions on Rhodesia, but ignored calls from the Rhodesian African nationalist parties, independent African countries and the newly-formed Organization of African Unity, to intervene militarily. The liberation movements increased their activities in a bid to pressure the Rhodesian government to concede to their demands for democratic elections and a representative government and in the hopes that through destabilising the country, Britain would be obligated to intervene.

In 1963, the foremost nationalist party, the Zimbabwe African People's Union, led by Joshua Nkomo, split into two groups which would dominate the liberation struggle. In August 1963, members of ZAPU who opposed Nkomo's leadership formed the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU). For the first decade of the struggle, from 1963 through 1970, both ZANU and ZAPU primarily used guerrilla tactics to pressure the Rhodesian state and implored the international community to aid in the liberation movement. They sabotaged government equipment and property, planted bombs, staged mass demonstrations, and quickly made international alliances which afforded them financial and military support. Initially, both ZANU and ZAPU received support from the Organisation of African Union (OAU) and some missionary groups, as well as training support from China, Algeria,

¹³⁰ In justifying the ban, the Rhodesian government noted the violence carried out by the activists, including “33 petrol bombs, 18 school and ten churches burnt, and 27 attacks on communication lines.” Ibid.

Tanzania, Egypt, and Cuba. By 1970, however, the animosity between ZAPU and ZANU fractured the alliances so that ZANU predominantly became allied with Mozambique's FRELIMO (Frente de Libertação de Moçambique) and China, and ZAPU with Zambia and the USSR.

The long border with Mozambique afforded ZANU an abundance of recruits—their military wing, the Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (ZANLA), dominated the north-eastern border in the late 1960s to early 1970s. By 1973, the mandatory military service in the Rhodesian military for White and Coloured and Asian¹³¹ men was extended to one year to deal with the consistent attacks. ZAPU's peak military offensive occurred in the mid to late 1970s as they recruited from the influx of refugees and aspiring fighters crossing the Botswana border, who were then flown to training and refugee camps in Zambia. By the 1970s, the armed wings of both parties, ZANLA and ZIPRA, were receiving substantial military support from China and the USSR, as well as other socialist countries, and began training their own cadres and acquiring sophisticated weaponry. Thus, local nationalist groups increasingly threatened the security and sovereignty of the Rhodesian state, already under pressure from international sanctions.¹³²

The Rhodesian Front's Educational Ideology

¹³¹ Rhodesia's racialised social and educational system designated individuals of mixed-race as "Coloured" and those of Indian or Middle Eastern heritage as "Asian". Due to the relatively small White population, Coloured and Asian men were also drafted into the Rhodesian army during the war. For more on the draft, see Luise White, "Civic Virtue, Young Men, and the Family: Conscription in Rhodesia, 1974-1980," *The International journal of African historical studies* 37, no. 1 (2004): 103-21.

¹³² Luise White, *Unpopular Sovereignty: Rhodesian Independence and African Decolonization* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), 105-148.

The Rhodesian Front's strategic use of the formal education system to mitigate both local and international threats was reflective of its educational ideology. In as much as an ideology is comprised of normative assumptions of the nature and relationship between the lived experiences of individuals and groups and the structure of societies as a whole, I argue that for the Rhodesian Front, schools served two purposes: the maintenance and protection of the status quo of the White minority-ruled Rhodesian state and maintenance the Rhodesian economy. The former purpose is evidenced in their attempts to limit the expansion of secondary academic, or liberal arts-type education and the latter ideology is evidenced in their expansion of vocational education for Africans in order to create long-term economic stability in light of the sanctions imposed by their former Western trade partners.

These two aspects of the Rhodesian Front's educational ideology came to the fore during the war in its responses to African education. As the economy struggled, the Rhodesian government eliminated the majority of its funding for African schools,¹³³ while building technical colleges for Africans, recognizing that the state needed to train enough workers to maintain the closed economy in perpetuity.

By the time of the UDI, the three separate schooling systems, one for Africans, one for Coloured and Asian students, and one for White students, formed the basis of the structure of the society.¹³⁴ Over the next decade and a half, vocational training schools would increase fifty-fold while few advancements would be made in primary and secondary education for African students, as evidenced in table 2 below.

¹³³ In 1964 African parents were required to pay additional fees which, in turn, spurred rioting in African schools. Ministry of Education, "Annual Report of the Secretary for African Education for the Year Ended 31st December 1964," (1964), 3.

¹³⁴ White, Coloured and Asian schools were under one ministry and African education was under a separate ministry. Both ministries were overseen by a single minister of education. Ibid.

SUMMARIES

TABLE 28.—NUMBER OF PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS FOR THE TEN YEARS ENDED 1977
(GOVERNMENT AND AIDED)

Type of School and Authority	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977
<i>Primary Schools</i>										
Government	79	80	83	85	84	87	93	97	95	100
Non-Government	3 092	3 137	3 141	3 148	3 135	3 175	3 174	3 160	3 180	3 226
Totals	3 171	3 217	3 224	3 233	3 219	3 262	3 267	3 257	3 275	3 326
<i>Secondary Schools offering academic courses</i>										
Government	15	15	17	17	16	16	16	14	14	15
Non-Government	75	82	83	83	82	80	78	74	70	67
Totals	90	97	100	100	98	96	94	88	84	82
<i>Secondary Schools offering technical courses</i>										
Government	1	1	4	6	8	9	10	11	11	10
Non-Government	4	10	17	25	33	36	39	38	46	51
Totals	5	11	21	31	41	45	49	49	57	61
<i>Secondary Schools offering both courses</i>										
Government	—	—	—	—	1	1	1	2	2	3
Non-Government	—	—	—	—	—	2	2	4	6	7
Totals	—	—	—	—	1	3	3	6	8	10

Table 2: *Sources: Data Ministry, of Education. “Annual Report of the Secretary for African Education for the year ended 31st December 1977” (Rhodesia: 1977), 46.*

Table 2 illustrates the significant increase in technical schools for Africans over the decade period reported above. Whereas in 1968 there were a national total of 5 technical schools for Africans, by 1977 the government had built 10 more and aided in the establishment of 51 technical schools. It is important to note that the report does not detail how much aid was given to schools. However, over the same period the total numbers of secondary schools offering academic courses decreased from 90 to 82. Additionally of the 3,326 primary schools for African students, only 100 schools were fully government funded—the rest were minimally by government and run, though not controlled, by Provincial Authorities, African Councils, Community Boards and various denominations of Christian Missions.¹³⁵ Not only

¹³⁵ African Councils paid for by Africans funded the most number of schools. In 1977, 2,096 out of 3,326 schools were run by African councils. See of Ministry of Education, “Annual Report of the Secretary for African Education for the Year Ended 31st December 1977,” (1977), 40.

did the government limit aid for new schools, which were desperately needed to serve an exponentially increasing population, but in 1964, the government made local district councils, and thereby communities, responsible for the maintenance of all school structures.¹³⁶ School fees were instituted as early as 1964, which burdened parents to such an extent that riots in 1964 explicitly targeted schools and called for school boycotts in protest.¹³⁷ Protections for White artisans were also adopted during the period, as many feared that the recent African graduates of vocational schools would create competition for White tradesmen.¹³⁸ Moreover, designated schools and opportunities for apprenticeships for Coloured students would contribute to the creation of a class of Coloured managers between the White supervisors and Black employees.¹³⁹ This, based on the documentary evidence, appears to have been the Rhodesian government's vision and policy for the structure of education and society, at least in theory.

Moreover, opening of new technical schools touted within the educational reports reveals only a portion of the state of education during the 1970s. While the government built technical schools to improve industry production in light of sanctions, it simultaneously faced wide-spread school closures outside of the cities in the late 1970s due to the insecurity created by conflict.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁶ In 1964 African parents were required to pay additional fees which, in turn, spurred rioting in African schools. Ministry of Education, "Annual Report of the Secretary for African Education for the Year Ended 31st December 1964," (1964), 3.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Dickson A Mungazi, *Education and Government Control in Zimbabwe: A Study of the Commissions of Inquiry, 1908-1974* (New York London: Praeger, 1990).

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Ministry of Education, "Annual Report of the Secretary for African Education for the Year Ended 31st December 1979," (1979), 2.

Overall, the RF's financing of technical schools while limiting the funding and expansion of secondary academic courses was necessary to maintain the economic system under sanctions, but simultaneously served to limit the economic and political power of Africans—by limiting their educational opportunities, and therefore their avenues for social, and more worrying to the state, political advancement. Dickson Mungazi argues that this was the reason for the government's cutbacks in spending on African schools, which began even before the “austerity measures” prompted by the sanctions.¹⁴¹ Through these educational policies and structures, the Rhodesian government strove to protect and maintain both its racially-stratified society and the economy that supported it in the face of economic and political pressures both internal and external.

The motives of Rhodesian Front in undermining African education need not only be inferred from actions described above; members of the Rhodesian government often stated them explicitly. For example, in a parliamentary debate, Andrew Skeen rose to declare that: “We in the Rhodesian Front government are determined to control the rate of African political advancement till time and education make it a safe possibility... Moreover, we wish to have the power to retard the educational development of Africans to slow down their political ambitions.”¹⁴² While parliamentary rhetoric and policy outcomes do not always go hand-in-hand, in the case of Rhodesia's educational system, there is a marked continuity between the rhetoric surrounding education and how it was deployed during the war to strengthen the Rhodesian state and weaken its internal opponents.

¹⁴¹ See Mungazi, *Education and Government Control*. Mungazi, “A Strategy for Power: Commissions of Inquiry Into Education and Government Control in Colonial Zimbabwe,” *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 22, no. 2 (1989): 267-85.

¹⁴² Andrew Skeen, *Rhodesia: Parliamentary Debates, a Speech on the Motion on African Education, September 2, 1969* qtd. in Mungazi, *Education and Government Control*, 38.

Education as a Diplomatic Tool: The Pearce Commission

To the international community, however, the Rhodesian Front publicized its African education programmes and schools as an example of its munificence towards Africans in the country in order to legitimate its rule and dispel international media characterizations of the Rhodesian state as racist and oppressive. It was also an important diplomatic and rhetorical tool in its fight on the “international front.” Secondary sources highlight the ways in which both the Rhodesian Front and its Western opponents used education as a tool of diplomacy (the Soviet bloc’s use of educational diplomacy will be discussed in Chapter 5).

For example, in 1972, the Pearce Commission was instituted as an attempt to come to a “sensible solution” to the “Rhodesian crisis” prompted by the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI). Under the terms of a 1971 “Settlement Proposal” agreed upon by the heads of the British and Rhodesian governments, Rhodesia would be granted independence after certain amendments to the Rhodesian constitution, providing for the limited and very gradual enfranchisement of Africans (who would be granted democratic, majority rule in the year 2040) and the establishment of a commission to study racial discrimination, amongst other things. The Pearce Commission came to Rhodesia in 1972 to gauge public opinion regarding this proposal and the feasibility of its implementation.¹⁴³

While Ian Smith, one of the signatories of the agreement, and his government were largely in favour of the agreement, ZANU and ZAPU, the primary nationalist parties, fiercely

¹⁴³ For more on the Pearce Commission, see White, *Unpopular Sovereignty*, 206-232; Nathan M. Shamuyarira, “Rhodesia After the Pearce Commission Report, 1972,” *African Review* 2, no. 4 (1972): 467-98; Chengetai J. Zvobgo, “Church and State in Rhodesia: From the Unilateral Declaration of Independence to the Pearce Commission, 1965–72,” *Journal of Southern African Studies* 31, no. 2 (2005): 381-402.

opposed it. In handwritten statements, several imprisoned political leaders cited racial educational disparities¹⁴⁴ opposing the settlement proposal, the legitimacy of the Rhodesian Front government, and the possibility of ever achieving racial equality and justice under Rhodesian rule.

While examples such as these show the potential of educational programs to undermine Rhodesian rule (these African leaders used their education to argue eloquently against the settlement proposals), the settlement proposals and the Pearce Commission also demonstrate how the education of Africans was used as a means of legitimizing the Rhodesian rule. In demonstrating their “care” for their African subjects, and the “civilizing” benefits afforded them through education, the Rhodesian government portrayed itself as a legitimate and beneficent regime to both to its own citizens and to foreign powers such as Britain.¹⁴⁵ This aspect of the educational system’s instrumentalization can clearly be discerned in virtually all of the annual reports of the Secretary of Education, which extol the successes of the civilizing mission of the educational system, all the while recording inequalities of this system.

The Educational Front: Schools as Instruments for Censorship and Propaganda

A similar paradox can also be discerned in the Rhodesian government’s approach to censorship and propaganda about the war in schools and the broader society. On both the

¹⁴⁴ Such as the fact that in 1970 there were 5.2 million Black Africans and 249,000 White citizens in Rhodesia, but only 2,545 Black secondary school graduates compared with nearly 5,000 White graduates. Rugano Jonas Zvobgo, *The State, Ideology, and Education* (Gweru: Mambo Press, 1997).

¹⁴⁵ Alan Cousins, “State, Ideology, and Power in Rhodesia, 1958-1972,” *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 24, no. 1 (1991): 35-64.

local and international fronts, the Rhodesian Front had to toe a fine line between outlawing and demonising the nationalist and guerrilla groups, emphasizing the threat they posed to the state and its citizenry, without making the Rhodesian state seem too vulnerable or unstable or scaring its White citizens so much that they would leave the country. Essentially, the Rhodesian Front had to control the narrative of the war: the “rebels” were vicious and dangerous, and so to question the RF and its policies was to put the citizenry and society in danger, but the “rebels” were not so dangerous that they could ever win or even seriously threaten the lives or livelihoods of loyal Rhodesian subjects. The war had to appear to be deadly and dangerous, but also completely under control.

In their attempts to control the war narrative, schools, as institutions under direct government control which housed and educated a large population of the state, became an important vehicle for government campaign. In its extension of the censorship bans to politically “gag” teachers and students, while simultaneously airing anti-nationalist radio broadcasts on the education radio channels played in schools, the Rhodesian Front instrumentalized these places of learning to spread its narrative and limit dissenting views. Schools, as systematic vehicles of knowledge dissemination, became powerful tools for the political and historical erasure of all anti-state sentiments.

To gag teachers in schools and broader society, the RF reinstated and extended previous censorship laws that limited the reach of nationalist literature, including the Law and Order (Maintenance) Act of 1960, which “made it an offence to print any 'subversive' statement or information 'likely to cause alarm, fear, or despondency'.”¹⁴⁶ In 1977,

¹⁴⁶ Julie Frederikse, and Biddy Partridge, *None but Ourselves: Masses vs. Media in the Making of Zimbabwe* (London: Heinemann, 1983), 138.

Parliament amended the law to include even spoken personal communication, extending censorship from broadcast media directly into the once-“private” lives of its citizens. In June 1977, the *Government Gazette* published in an announcement that “it is also now an offence to 'communicate to any other person any rumour or report which is likely to cause alarm or despondency.'”¹⁴⁷ In line with these laws, in 1967 and 1974 the government instituted two censorship campaigns, the former entitled the “Guard Against Gossip” and the latter, the “Think about National Security Campaign.”¹⁴⁸ Pictures from this campaign are depicted on the following page figures 8 and 9, all of which connected political discourse and “gossip” to dangerous outcomes in a society presumed to be under double-surveillance: by its government and by the government’s enemies:

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 352.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.



Figure 8: Guard Against Gossip Campaign (Frederikse, *None but Ourselves*, 32)

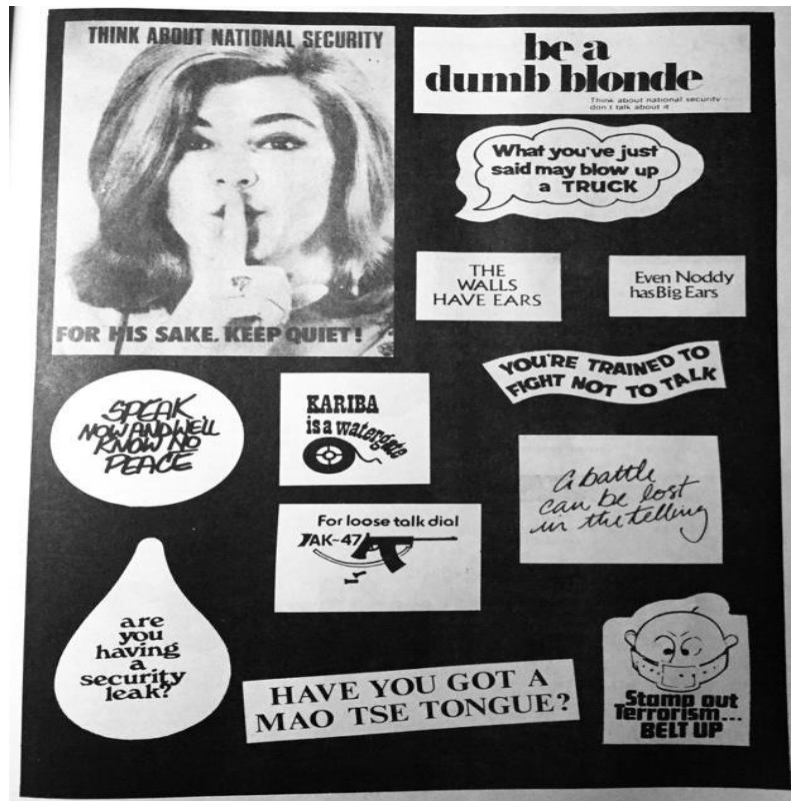


Figure 9: Guard Against Gossip Campaign (Frederikse, *None but Ourselves*, 32)

These encompassing censorship bans¹⁴⁹ meant that classrooms were highly politicised—students, teachers, administrators and missionary groups either complied with the censorship bans or were labelled and punished as political dissenters under these laws.¹⁵⁰

¹⁵⁰ See Elaine Windrich, “Rhodesian Censorship: The Role of the Media in the Making of a One-Party State.” *African Affairs* 78, no. 313 (1979): 523-534. It is important to note that the techniques of censorship were not introduced by the Rhodesian Front government, but rather had a long history in the region—dating back to the colony's founding. Opposition to the colony's founding was quelled with great efficiency—first militarily, and then through bureaucracies, economic policies, and schools which limited the agency of the new subjects of the colony of Rhodesia. From its inception, the settler state was in a perpetual state of war to maintain its existence and minority rule over a majority population it feared could overrun them if not constantly “checked and maintained.” One of the ways the Rhodesian state maintained this precariously unequal status quo was through limiting, closely monitoring, and even controlling the ideas and perspectives its subjects could access. Early on, Cecil Rhodes had invested in the Argus Company which oversaw the Rhodesian Printing & Publishing Company, effectively monopolizing the media industry through independence. As trade unions and nationalist organisations gained strength in the late 1950s, the seemingly more moderate precursor to the Rhodesian Front government

School Gagging and Curriculum Censorship

The Rhodesian government strategically singled out teachers and banned them from any political affiliation in 1964, following the re-election of the Rhodesian Front and the ensuing arrest and incarceration of the leaders of the nationalist party and protests against school fee hikes. Under the first introductory paragraph, the 1964 Annual Educational report noted:

Whereas in the past teachers were permitted to join political parties, but “not to take an active part in political matters,” steps have now been taken to prevent them from joining political parties at all and they will have a reasonable answer to the former demanding threats which required them to disclose their party affiliation or compelled them to join a political party.¹⁵¹

While the banning of any political affiliation for teachers is unsurprising given that in the same year all political parties were banned and the nationalist leaders were jailed, the singling out of teachers is telling. Teachers, as community and thought leaders were a major focus of the RF’s censorship policy, which sought to quell dissent in the broader society through laws, threats of violence, and political propaganda to redefine the sphere of the “political” to exclude dissent in an attempt to maintain control.

Like their colleagues in print and broadcast media, teachers, particularly in African schools, were also heavily censored. The political allegiances of teachers were also quickly called into question, as was the case for one of my interviewees who was a teacher at Inyathi High School—a premier school for African boys. He recalled that teachers had to be very careful of what they said and to whom they spoke about the state of the country and racial

passed The Law and Order (Maintenance) Act of 1960, which “made it an offence to print any ‘subversive’ statement or information ‘likely to cause alarm, fear, or despondency.’” This culture of censorship and secrecy in the name of security permeated the government, military, public society, and schools.

¹⁵¹ Ministry of Education, “Annual Report of the Secretary for Education for the Year Ended 31st December 1981,” (1982), 3.

inequality. He recalls how in 1974 or 75 he was investigated alongside a group of teachers for asking the Secretary of Education why the new F2 industrial schools were only built for Africans:

I remember one day when the Secretary of Education, it was a Smith gentleman, came to the school to talk to us. We asked a simple question, “Why is it that we have these F2 schools that are for the Blacks and not for the Whites?” He took an issue with that, then there was a commission of inquiry but he sent Pierce Mahlangu, he was already in this region, to come and investigate. He was investigating me, he was investigating me. We asked simple questions during the staff meeting, then he took that to be rather political. Well, once you start doing that to people, even people who were not very active or aware of what is happening, they start to raise their eyes. What is happening, having asked a simple question, that the Whites don’t have this F2, F2 comes to the Blacks. Why? Then people start to realize, no, you are Black.¹⁵²

The interviewee’s reference to being acknowledged as being “Black,” likely refers to the fact that despite the presence of some White, Coloured, and Asian people in the nationalist movements, it was viewed by the government as primarily a movement by Africans for African suffrage: therefore, to be “Black” not only meant being on the bottom rung of the racial hierarchy, but by virtue of this fact, that one’s loyalty to the state was under closer scrutiny than others. Given the leadership role that most teachers played in their community, their censorship is of particular significance when considering the uses of education in this period of war. The attempted silencing of teachers, authoritative voices in communities, much like the jailing of nationalist leaders, was aimed at quelling any dissent among those who looked up to these leaders.

However, just as jailing nationalist leaders did little to eliminate opposition to the RF government, so did these ordinances fail to make all teachers “fall in line.” As the most educated members of society, from whose ranks many of the leaders of the nationalist parties came, teachers responded to these new restrictions in various ways. While not representative

¹⁵² IT, interview with the author, August 2017.

of the entire teaching force and the spectrum of responses from teachers, the anecdotes presented in my interviews with veterans and teachers from the period provided insights into the diverse ways in which teachers dealt with classroom censorship and the crackdown on their political activities and expression.

Interviewees discussed three overarching ways in which teachers dealt with the censorship within their classroom: some genuinely embraced the separation of politics from their teaching duties and refused to discuss political matters with their students. Others discussed political matters clandestinely with students when “necessary,” in an effort to persuade and protect them from the racism of the regime, while others actively worked with the guerrilla forces in recruiting and politicizing students.

All five of teachers interviewed noted that as teachers, they were aware of the political significance of the liberation struggle and would discuss these political matters with their trusted colleagues in private.

For example, JTM, a graduate of Inyathi High school, began teaching Mathematics and Physics at St. Bernard’s School in 1970. He stated that, despite his own interest in politics, as a civil servant, he did not feel that it was his place to politicise students:

Those who felt aggrieved so seriously crossed the border and joined [ZAPU], and left the country, but the majority of us lived here, remained here. It is true, we were all tied by the political situation then, but the Smith regime, as cruel as it was, was perhaps not as cruel as the current regime. Eh, I was a civil servant as a teacher. The civil servants, I can’t say they were loyal to whatever regime, but the civil servants then were very professional; they stuck to their jobs when it was job time and if they had any co-curricular activity, they did it strictly out of school. I was very politically conscious myself, but that politics I practiced out of school, not in school. I want to believe that a lot of us civil service were like that, then.¹⁵³

However, some teachers did try to discuss political matters with students, and the political affiliations with nationalist parties of others led to criminal convictions. The 1976 Annual Report of the Secretary for Education recorded 31 disciplinary cases, 13 of which “resulted

¹⁵³ JTM interview with the author, August 2017.

from convictions under the Law and Order Maintenance Act”.¹⁵⁴ By 1977, at the height of the war, the Rhodesian Education Report was much more explicit about some teachers’ outright support of the fighters:

Other reasons may be found to account for the decrease in the number of teachers, among them being arrest, resignation, and defection of trained teachers. It is in fact, a sad commentary on loyalty and professional dedication that some teachers, who should think first of their pupils have been arrested and subsequently imprisoned, detained or restricted for aiding terrorists or acting as recruiting agents for them; and that others have defected either to join the ranks of terrorism or to take up offers, some of them illusory of opportunities for further study or training overseas.¹⁵⁵

The reports indicate, and my interviews confirmed, that both teachers and students were under strict surveillance. One interviewee, ZT, recalled the high level of surveillance that resulted in him almost being expelled from his school in Bulawayo for writing pro-ZAPU statements in his history book:

Really, when I was doing my standard six, I was nearly expelled because I had written certain statements about ZAPU in my history textbook, hoping that nobody would see it. Then, some day, I left my textbooks on the desk then my teacher, I think... I don't know why he perused that textbook, then he found something written, you know, about ZAPU. He told the head of the school and the head of the school was very bitter about it. I was compelled to go and buy a new textbook to replace that one. You see? So, those were the little things which got me into understanding some of these things.¹⁵⁶

While ZT was lucky to not be expelled, one of my interviewees recalled how a teacher intervened, protected, and guided him in his political writing in order to avoid detection from the state. JM, whose family had been involved in the revolutionary movement, had written a composition defending the nationalist cause to submit to a national competition. He explained that his teacher, Tradesman Moyo, had to intervene to protect him and his entire family from the ramifications of writing such an essay.

I was very young, around 11. So I started getting conscious. So when I wrote this

¹⁵⁴ Ministry of Education, “Annual Report of the Secretary for Education for the Year Ended 31st December 1976,” (1976), 11.

¹⁵⁵ Ministry of Education, “Annual Report of the Secretary for African Education for the Year Ended 31st December 1977,” 17. See Chapter 5 for a discussion of the ways, mentioned here in the report, in which ZAPU used educational opportunities as an incentive for joining their party.

¹⁵⁶ ZT, interview with the author, July 2017.

composition, I was very truthful. I was not aware of the hazard I was putting my life into. So my teacher, Tradesman Moyo, after reading the composition called me, coached me to write from a White man's perspective, rather than write from a revolutionary perspective, because straight away I was to get the whole family, because our family was moved deeply in the liberation struggle...so it was going to be [the case that the] entire family will be arrested. So, I had to change it. In that composition, I think I'd been the best in the country; it came out in *The African Times*. I was given a prize for that. Then after the talk with Tradesman, my consciousness rose so greatly that I didn't become a normal child from that day. I was now really deeply involved in the consciousness of the liberation struggle, conscious of colonialism and so forth.¹⁵⁷

In this way, Tradesman Moyo not only coached his pupil how to “write from the White man's perspective” for formal assignments, but simultaneously discussed the forbidden topics of colonialism and the liberation struggle in private—teaching JM both revolutionary politics and how and why it was necessary to dissimulate in public settings. Interestingly, JM became a teacher himself and head of a school after independence in 1980.

As exemplified by JM and Tradesman Moyo's relationship, despite the danger and potentially severe consequences of their actions, some teachers continued to discuss nationalist politics with their students. These lessons, some interviewees recalled, inculcated in them a political defiance that ultimately inspired them to join the struggle. For example, one interviewee noted:

So, 1969, I then went to Harare, after my Standard 6. I went to a school called Highfield Community School, and Highfield Community School was regarded in the Rhodesian system as a school of delinquency because... because while there was a... headmaster called Mr. Batanza. But Mr. Batanza and most of the lecturers, or teachers, were politically conscious, very politically conscious. The first part of the mornings, I remember we would talk politics in the class with the teacher before we did lessons. So I did Form 1 to Form 2 and I couldn't proceed with Form 2 because of [what] my extramural activities outside demanded of me; I was very, very active politically, drawing from my previous background.¹⁵⁸

It is also important to note that teachers did not teach in a political vacuum. The degree of leeway granted teachers seems to have been related to the political affiliations of the

¹⁵⁷ JM interview with the author, December 2018.

¹⁵⁸ HT interview with the author, June 2017.

missionary groups that ran the schools. Some mission societies, such as the Catholics and the Lutherans, supported the liberation struggle. For example, Figure 9 below depicts a Catholic publication critical of the Rhodesian Propaganda. and one would expect that their teachers would have faced greater in classroom and greater government scrutiny as opposed to those missionary groups more politically aligned with the RF.¹⁵⁹

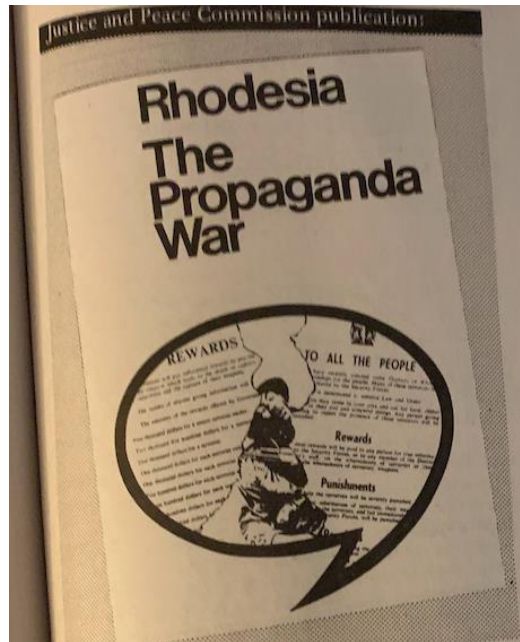


Figure 9: The Catholic Church published articles and pamphlets as vehicle of protest. (Frederikse, *None but Ourselves*, 195).¹⁶⁰

While outside the purview of this research, understanding how missionary allyship affected teaching and classroom interactions could be an important area of research or future study. While teachers were restricted in their capacity to join and speak about politics to students, virtually all of the teachers whom I interviewed recalled that they spoke about the political situation with their trusted colleagues in private at the time. This was true amongst students

¹⁵⁹ See Bhebe, *The ZAPU and ZANU Guerrilla Warfare*.

¹⁶⁰ According to Frederikse, “The church’s vehicle of protest was the ‘Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace in Rhodesia’ - so named after Pope Paul VI’s advice: ‘if you want peace, work for justice,’ ‘J’ and P,’ as it was known, criticized the regimes’ politics through public statements, pamphlets and books. (Frederikse and Partridge, *None but Ourselves*, 195).

as well.

Students and teachers at White schools were also prohibited from discussing politics and the war, but while the necessity of “discretion” among virtually all African interviewees was described as being due to the threat of imprisonment by the state, White interviewees described the need for “discretion” as necessary to protect the state—public discussions of political or military matters could potentially reach British agents or guerrilla fighters. In my Facebook survey of White ex-Rhodesian students, one female correspondent recalled that when she was writing her O-Level Cambridge examinations during the war, students were told to be very careful of what they wrote in their essays so as not to give away “state secrets.” She noted:

Looking back, we were all very good at not passing on information. Not talking about things that were affecting our daily lives even just outside city limits. That actually worked to the advantage of the government because the less we knew about what was going on, the more likely we would be to carry on as normal.... it makes a lot of sense not to talk about what is going on in the war. Loose talk does cost lives. But reading now about all that was going at the time that I didn't know I am amazed. Maybe we would all have left earlier. So those clampdowns and censoring of the news helped the government to keep the civilians doing their call ups and keeping the country going.¹⁶¹

These censorship campaigns were portrayed as separating “politics” from education and broadcast media, but in essence, they functioned to portray the Rhodesian Front agenda as neutral and apolitical, and all other dissenting viewpoints as “political” and “subversive” and therefore worthy of censorship. The Rhodesian Front aimed to make its messaging and viewpoints “silent” and “invisible” through their ubiquity and hegemony, while rendering dissenting messaging and viewpoints “silent” and “invisible” through their absence and obscurity. Figure 3 below depicts an “Emergency Powers Act” published in the government gazette prohibiting the “printing or publication or the possession or the sale or distribution” a

¹⁶¹ KR1, Face book correspondence, August 2019.

publication by the Catholic Institute for International Relations.¹⁶²

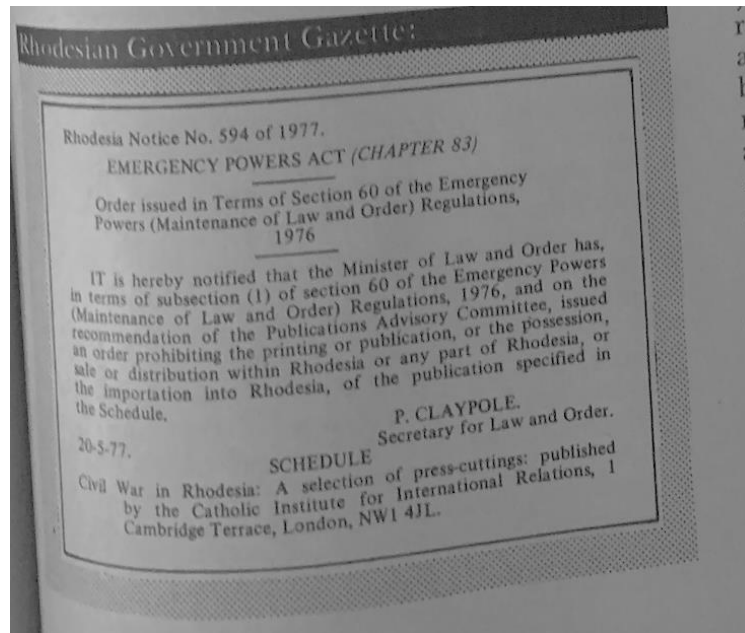


Figure 10: Emergency Powers Act 1977 (Chapter 83), (Frederikse, *None but Ourselves*, 195)

Similar to the ways in which state censorship laws were applied to classrooms, my research revealed that school curriculums were vetted by the Rhodesian Literacy Bureau, a government department which also controlled the national list of banned books. The 1968 African Schools Education report describes the functions of the Bureau to “1. Encourage assist and advise local authors in Shona, Ndebele and English. 2. To sponsor for publication suitable material for local needs. 3. To establish a market for the books produced. 4. To promote the reading habit”.¹⁶³

The bureau’s mandate was to control the “literature of the masses” as well as the formal literature in schools. Under censorship laws, and beginning in 1959, the RLB issued

¹⁶² Frederikse, *None but Ourselves*, 195.

¹⁶³ Ministry of Education, “Annual Report of the Secretary for African Education for the Year Ended 31st December 1977,” (1977), 15.

an ever-increasing list of banned books which were illegal to import, own, sell, or read.¹⁶⁴

Figure 6 below depicts the long list of literature considered banned:

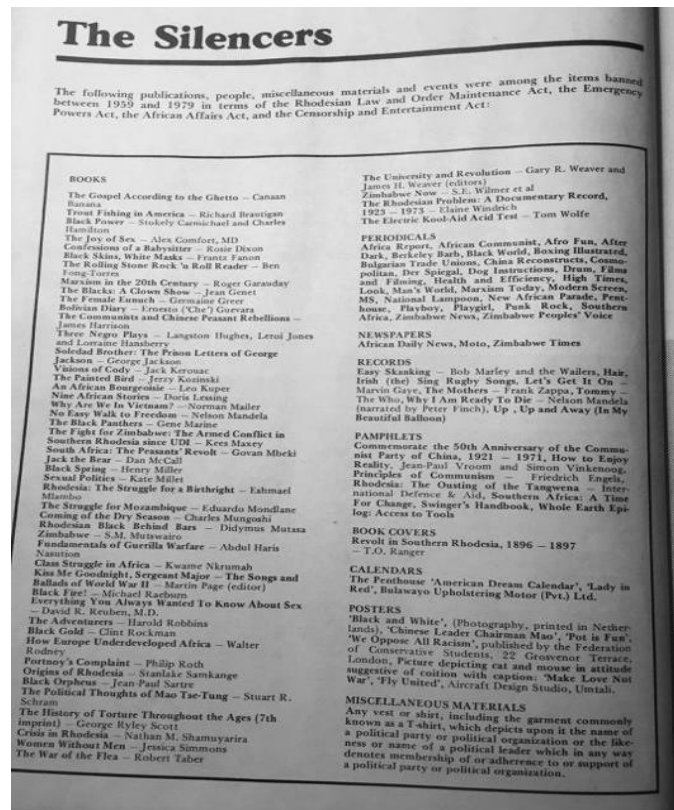


Figure 6: List of banned books in Rhodesia- scanned from Frederikse, *None but Ourselves*, 24.

In the 1977 African Education Report, the Ministry of Education explicitly addressed complaints against the Rhodesia Literature Bureau and its censorship of literature in schools:

The generally favourable image established by the Bureau over the years continued to manifest itself in the African areas, despite some criticism of its traditional policy of rejecting material of a political nature. In this connection, I wish to stress that the function of the Bureau is to provide popular reading material, as an adjunct to education, not to propagate political views. Proponents of the latter type of material have ready access to international publishers.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶⁴ Frederikse and Partridge, *None but Ourselves*, 24. Frederikse documents the list of banned books in Rhodesia, as well as government education reports, and the fact that the Rhodesian Literature Bureau selected and published books for schools as well as censored books within the state.

¹⁶⁵ Ministry of Education, "Annual Report of the Secretary for African Education for the Year Ended 31st December 1977," 35.

These regulations and statements defending the Bureau reveal the creation of the sphere of the “apolitical,” in which all-government-sanctioned material, including propaganda, existed beyond the category of the “political,” to which all dissenting or supposedly subversive views and material were relegated.

The fact that schools were so heavily censored reveals how, as institutions of the state, they were expected to enforce state narratives as well as silences. Secondly, the dual mandate of the Literature Bureau to censor literature nationally as well as to regulate formal educational materials highlights the politicized continuum between the public, private, and “educational” spheres within the state. Given that the Rhodesian government formally addressed the complaints against the RLB’s censorship in an Annual Educational report indicates, at the very least, that the Ministry of Education faced growing opposition to the censorship campaign.

Educational Radio Broadcasting as a Political Tool

The silencing of censorship was complemented by the narrative of propaganda or targeted media campaigns, which were meant to fill the “vacuum” created by censorship in the social, political and educational spheres. The use of the new media of radio and television broadcasting as political propaganda and educational tools in the region is well established in the literature on World Wars and the post-WWII period.¹⁶⁶ The development of broadcasting in Rhodesia was part of Britain's post-WWII strategy to both assimilate Africans into the

¹⁶⁶ For the history of broadcasting in Southern Africa, see J.J. Zaffiro, “Political Change and Broadcasting in Zimbabwe: 1931–1984,” (*unpublished manuscript*, PhD diss. University of Wisconsin, Madison, 1984). Elaine Windrich, “Controlling the Media: Rhodesian Style,” *Journal of Southern African Affairs* 5, no. 1 (1980): 89–100.

British cultural fold and combat Communist ideologies.

What my research uncovered while attempting to understand the relationship between education and the war were the significant overlaps between educational broadcasting and the RF's information campaign. Anti-nationalist broadcasts were aired on the same FM channel as school broadcasts and educational programming, as depicted in an advertisements in the Rhodesian run *African Times* newspaper for a radio programme in Figures 7 and 8 below. Moreover, school broadcasts were politically censored, as leaders of the Rhodesian Broadcasting Corporation, which fell under the Ministry of Information, also sat on the school broadcasting educational boards.

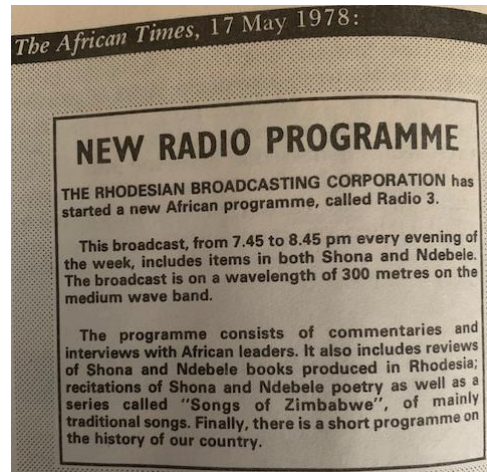


Figure 7: Advertisement in *The African Times* for an "African programme" on the RBC.

(Frederikse, *None but Ourselves*, 254)

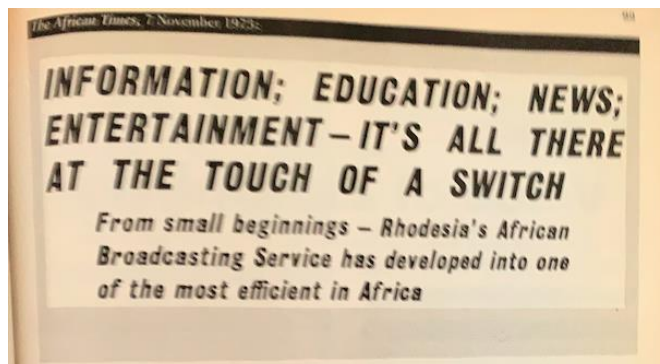


Figure 8: An advertisement in the *The African Times* for the African Broadcasting Service (Frederikse, *None but Ourselves*, 99).

In the 1940s and 50s, when radio was one of the primary outlets for news and education, these aforementioned relationships highlight the significant ways in which the “educational front” cut across one of the most significant fronts of the war: the media. It also underscores the continuum between education and political programming, and calls into question the ways in which seemingly neutral state apparati, such as publicly-funded education systems and educational programming on radio and television, can be used for political ends.

Before television, radio reigned supreme as the tool for mass communication and education in Rhodesia. Although radio broadcasting services such as the BBC had long been viewed as important disseminators of anti-communist messaging, it was not until the Rhodesian Front came to power that the state began to pay significant attention to the airwaves. The AM-only service, which was introduced in 1953, quickly expanded to include FM stations when the Rhodesian Front took office in 1962. In order to limit anti-Rhodesian Front sentiment, the government promoted and subsidized FM receivers to compete with British and Zambian-nationalist radio stations, which broadcast on AM. The Rhodesian Broadcasting Corporation relied heavily on South African adult educational programs and limited the BBC programming that it had previously broadcast. According to a 1963 statement released by the Council for Further Education, the RBC aimed to:

...disseminate truthful and factual information to the masses: To bring home to people the part that they are playing in the development of the Federation and Southern Rhodesia; to inculcate pride and endeavour and to show that Government policy is carefully considered in the best interest of the community, no matter how unpopular it may sometimes be. The Department also provides worldwide education and cultural information and stimulates reasoning and discussion in an endeavour to fill the intellectual vacuum which exists among the new and under-developed people [Black Africans].¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁷ Ibid, 127. Quoting John Gasson, *Further Education in Southern Rhodesia with Special Reference to Bulawayo and Matabeleland* (Bulawayo: Council for Further Education, 1963), 32.

A week before the UDI declaration, the RBC ceased all BBC programming.¹⁶⁸ After the UDI declaration in November 1965, the RF jammed signals from the BBC relay station in the Bechuanaland Protectorate.¹⁶⁹ The government then began developing the FM transmission system so that by the early 1970s, “the government was subsidizing the cost of FM-only receivers. In addition, it placed a regional prohibition on listening to anything but the Rhodesian Broadcasting Corporation.”¹⁷⁰ The government even regulated battery sales for non-FM receivers in an attempt to further control access to non-RF broadcasts.¹⁷¹ As will be explored in the following chapter on ZAPU, the ban did not prevent Africans and others from listening to nationalist programs broadcast from Zambia. As the war dragged on, the RF primarily directed their radio broadcasts towards a local, White audience, attempting to convince them to stay and join the struggle to keep the Rhodesian state going and to win over White Rhodesians who opposed the UDI and RF policies. Figure 11 below depicts a confidential order to the Rhodesian Broadcasting Corporation banning the use of the names of any of the liberation movements and key figures, including the Patriotic Front, ZAPU, ZANU, ZIPRA and ZANLA.

¹⁶⁸ Gerard Mansell, *Let Truth be Told: 50 Years of BBC External Broadcasting* (London: Widenfel and Nicholson, 1982), 250.

¹⁶⁹ Ministry of Education, Annual Report of the Secretary for African Education for the year ended 31st December 1966, (1966), 31.

¹⁷⁰ Zaffiro, “Broadcasting and Political Change in Zimbabwe 1931-84,” 65.

¹⁷¹ Ibid, 64.

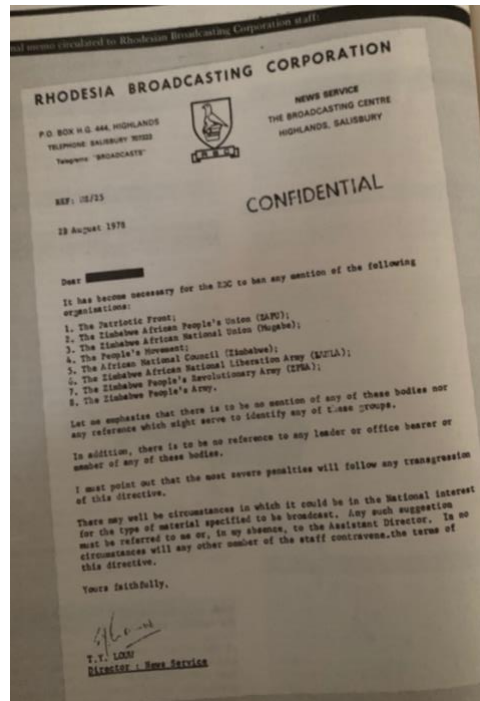


Figure 11: Internal Memo Circulated to Rhodesian Broadcasting Staff banning mention of nationalist organizations and forces (Frederikse, *None but Ourselves*, 266).

How, then, did these radio censorship policies affect schools? In line with its “endeavour to fill the intellectual vacuum which exists among the new and under-developed people [Black Africans]”¹⁷² the RBC Africa service promoted pro-Rhodesian, anti-nationalist political messaging on the same channels on which it introduced extensive educational programming for African teachers and schools.

Schools and educational programming were therefore vehicles for government messaging. Throughout the late 1960s and the 70s, the Rhodesian government developed considerable audio and later, video, educational resources for African schools, broadcast on the African Service channel, which also hosted pro-Rhodesian Front programming. The numbers of schools reached though the broadcasts multiplied during the RF’s tenure. Daily

¹⁷² Gasson, *Further Education*, 32.

broadcasts to schools began in 1964, when the Annual Secretary Reports note that gramophones had been distributed to some of the schools, and teachers had radios.¹⁷³ In 1965, two lessons a day were broadcast for English, History, and Geography or nature study lessons. Particular emphasis was placed on exposing students in village schools to “good spoken English” and English-language lessons. In 1966, 39 African schools received the Educational Television Service.¹⁷⁴ By 1967, in addition to the broadcasts, printed material was also sent to teachers in African schools, free of charge.¹⁷⁵ In 1968, according to the education reports, 2,400 schools received broadcasts from the African Schools Broadcasting Service.¹⁷⁶ By 1976, with the new government-subsidized FM receivers, the broadcasts reached most of the country, at least in theory.¹⁷⁷

The ostensibly “non-educational” or political programming that was broadcast on the same channel as the school lessons highlights the porosity of Rhodesia’s educational structures to political programming and control; it demonstrates how the “educational front” cut across the media front of the war. During their “non-educational” hours, the RBC simultaneously highlighted the atrocities committed by “communist terrorists,” while downplaying the effects of the war on everyday life. In fact, Zaffiro, in *Broadcasting and*

¹⁷³ Ministry of Education, “Annual Report of the Secretary for Education for the Year Ended 31st December 1964,” (1964).

¹⁷⁴ Ministry of Education, “Annual Report of the Secretary for Education for the Year Ended 31st December 1966,” (1966).

¹⁷⁵ Ministry of Education, “Annual Report of the Secretary for Education for the Year Ended 31st December 1983,” (1983).

¹⁷⁶ Ministry of Education Ministry, “Annual Report of the Secretary for Education for the Year Ended 31st December 1968,” (1966), 16.

¹⁷⁷ Ministry of Education, “Annual Report of the Secretary for Education for the Year Ended 31st December 1976,” (1976).

Political Change in Zimbabwe notes, “after the visit of the US Secretary of State Kissinger to the area in 1976, RBC output and management underwent a major shift; the government mounted a massive information campaign to convince the population that the war was over.”¹⁷⁸ According to Zaffiro, the RBC also attempted to kindle tribal animosity between Ndebele and Shona, and between ZAPU and ZANU, frequently mentioning ZIPRA and ZANLA clashes on its African broadcast service.¹⁷⁹

Of particular relevance to this study is the extent to which these information campaigns, while produced on the same channel as school broadcasts, were related to the educational programming.

Although difficult to answer without an analysis of the recordings, my cross-referencing of Education Reports and the RF political hierarchy revealed that RF party leadership was highly influential within the Ministry of Education, and likely vetted and politically censored all educational content on the broadcasting channels. For example, John Parry, who was the Director-General of the RBC from 1962 to 1964, also oversaw the African Schools Broadcasting board from 1971 through 1976. Without much knowledge of why he resigned, or why he held the post of Director-General for such a short period, the close relationship and shared personnel between different arms of state surveillance and censorship and that of educational programming establishes yet another way in which schools were politically influenced and influential during the war.

¹⁷⁸ Zaffiro, *Broadcasting and Political Change in Zimbabwe: 1931–1984*,” 26.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

Figure 3-3
Rhodesian Front Party Control of Broadcasting (RBC):

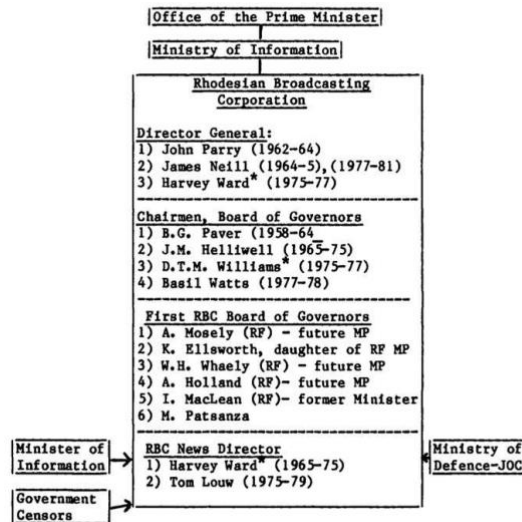


Figure 10: Zaffiro's Diagram of the Organizational Hierarchy of the RBC (Zaffiro, "Broadcasting and Political Change in Zimbabwe: 1931-1984," 58).

The fact that the Broadcasting Corporation for which Parry worked was placed directly under the Ministry of Information, which oversaw school programming, reveals the confluence of education and propaganda not only in theory, but also in practice. Therefore, the airwaves became a small, but important part of the "educational front," a contested site in which the Rhodesian Front used schools as vehicles to quell dissent and promote anti-nationalist rhetoric to maintain the status quo.

Education for Warfare: Military Conscription & Recruitment

Having documented the ways in which the Rhodesian Literature Bureau and the Rhodesian Broadcasting Corporation served to disseminate pro-Rhodesian programming and censorship through schools, we now explore the ways in which schools supported direct warfare. As part of the state structure, my research revealed that schools were used to coordinate and track the drafting of White and Asian/Coloured students and as recruitment

grounds for full-time security/military personnel.

National military service in Rhodesia had been mandatory for White, Coloured, and Asian men after the age of 16 in the early 1960s when Rhodesia sent troops to support the Central African Federation in the newly established Congo state.¹⁸⁰ However, it was not until the liberation struggle that national service and outright conscription became closely-monitored and the government met considerable difficulties recruiting and funding troops for the war. As such, conscription laws changed, becoming more stringent into the late 70s when the war intensified. Given the nature of conscription, that is, drafting civilians into military service, there were few sectors of White and Coloured society, and later African society that were not affected. Draft-dodgers were incarcerated for the period of their required military service, and schools, as the government institutions with the most accurate records of young White, Coloured, and Asian men (due to high levels of school attendance) became an important site for the monitoring and conscription of these students.¹⁸¹

In an online survey I carried out on the Rhodesian Military Facebook group, I found that with the exception of two foreign soldiers who had to sign up for the draft upon entering the country, all of the veterans recalled signing up for the draft through forms distributed by their schools. Some recalled receiving their official call-up notices in the post a few weeks after graduating from school. While unconfirmed by other sources, these accounts suggest that Department of Defense used schools to determine when students had completed their high school education and at the very least, schools distributed and collected draft and call-up

¹⁸⁰ White, "Civic Virtue," 103-21.

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

forms on behalf of the government.

Studying the school as part of the state apparatus highlights the important, even if subtle, roles that the racially- segregated school system played during the war. The fact that draft forms were only sent through White and Coloured schools, while African schools were excluded is unsurprising given that the Rhodesian state was explicitly going to war to exclude Africans from positions of leadership in the government, and feared arming and training a population that outnumbered the White minority.¹⁸²

The RF did however, recruit Africans through village elders and through promises of education and monetary support, but their recruitment strategy was by no means as structured as the draft.¹⁸³ Overall, the Rhodesian government's policy attempted to deter African students from joining guerrilla movements while simultaneously enticing African guerrilla fighters that already had military training to switch sides by promising them and their family education, housing, and food.¹⁸⁴

The importance of replenishing and supporting the security forces by grooming young men to become leaders in state security was also evidenced by the wide variety of advertisements placed in the yearbooks of White boarding schools. Figures 11, 12 and 13 below are example of the advertisements which were featured in *The Puritan*, the school yearbook of the Plumtree High School a premier boarding school for White students and the alma mater of Rhodesian Army Major-General Peter Walls.

¹⁸² African men were deployed as soldiers by the RF government during the war, but did not hold high-ranking positions.

¹⁸³ For more about African recruitment, see White, *Unpopular Sovereignty*, 177-205.

¹⁸⁴ David Martin and Phyllis Johnson, *The Struggle for Zimbabwe: The Chimurenga War*, (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1981), 106-107.



Figure 12: Advertisement placed in the “The Puritan,” the yearbook of the elite, all-White Plumtree High School yearbook (1977, 54).



Figure 13: Advertisement placed in “The Puritan,” 1975, 27.



Figure 11: Rhodesian Air Force Recruitment Poster from Plumtree High School. Appeared in “The Puritan” in 1975. Accessed in the Bulawayo Archives in July 2017.

The British South Africa Police, the Rhodesian Air Forces, the Armed Forces and several other military branches sponsored pages of advertisements in this school yearbook and other White school yearbooks—they did not appear in African school yearbooks.

That the advertisements appeared in White yearbooks and not in African school

yearbooks highlights the importance of the race politics during the war. My informal interviews with White and Coloured Rhodesian war veterans at the MOTH (Men of the Tin Hats) Club also suggested at strong racial differences in the reasons the men gave for joining the army.¹⁸⁵ While some of White interviewees recalled that they had joined the army because their friends had done the same, virtually all the Coloured interviewees said that they had joined the army because of the draft and/or because they might otherwise not be able to gain employment, as proof of national service was required for employment. Granted, this sample size of interviewees was small, and interviewees' recall of their motivations may be influenced by current politics, but the clear difference in responses between veterans of different racial categories is striking, and consistent with the economic history of the period, in which White Rhodesians generally had more family wealth and employment opportunities than their non-White counterparts.

The draft also affected the education system directly, in that White and Coloured/Asian teachers were expected to carry out their national service and then were called-up for duty. The call-up caused major disruptions, particularly in Universities, with some colleges having to cancel programs due to the conscription of faculty members. Students were also unable to attend university before completing their national service. At the beginning of the war, some exemptions were made, but these became fewer during the latter part of the war. White explains that in order to avoid the draft many White students left the country to study abroad, eventually settling outside of Rhodesia.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁵ The MOTH club was originally set up as a club for WWII veterans, but has since been used as a club for Rhodesian army veterans. My interviews with the majority of the Rhodesian Force veterans were not recorded since many felt afraid to go on record, due to the current political climate, I therefore noted their responses on paper.

¹⁸⁶ White, *Unpopular Sovereignty*, 177-185.

Education for Propaganda: Teachers in the Psychological Operations Unit

Teachers and students who were drafted were placed in positions determined, to a large extent, by their educational attainment levels. For example, according to my survey of ex-Rhodesian service men in the Facebook “Rhodesian Military History” group many teacher were assigned to the Psychological Operations Unit (POU), an elite unit within the army charged with carrying out “psychological warfare” to win the hearts and minds of the African populace. For example, the POU unit produced and disseminated anti-communist, anti-guerrilla pamphlets from their inception in 1976—showing in figure 12 below to the end of the war in 1980.

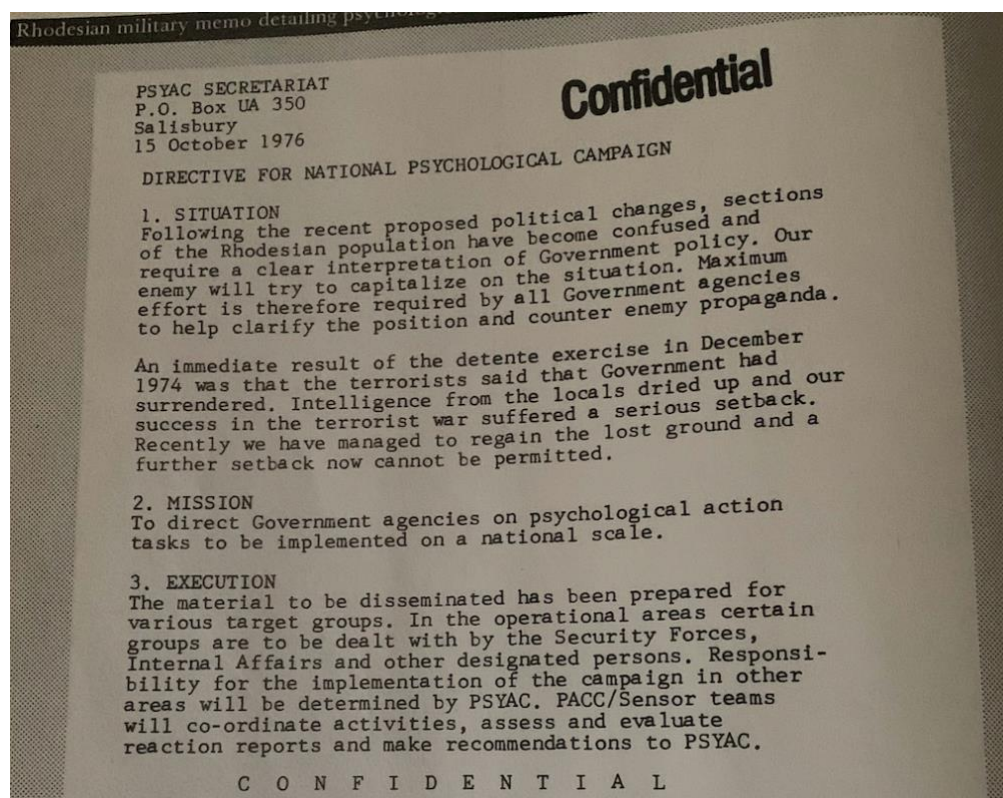


Figure 12: Rhodesian Military Memo from the Psychological Operations Secretariat detailing the launch of the Psychological Warfare Campaign. (Frederikse, *None but Ourselves*, 116).

I first heard of the Psychological Operations Unit when interviewing the former Minister of Education, Dr. Dzingai Mutumbuka, who took office at independence in 1980.¹⁸⁷ He recalled that shortly after his appointment, in March 1980, an-ex Rhodesian Education Ministry official died of a heart attack. Amidst the papers found in his office in the Ministry of Education, Dr. Mutumbuka claimed to have found a folder, marked to be destroyed, which included papers describing the activities of the Psychological Operations Unit. The POU was founded in 1977 as a part of the Infantry Corps. Internal documents state that the:

main emphases of POU operations against the terrorists structured toward psychological confusion of the enemy with the objective of so undermining his morale that he becomes unwilling to fight and is encouraged to defect from the forces of communism. POU's establishment indicates timely recognition of the fact that conflict in Africa is primarily a battle for men's minds.¹⁸⁸

In short, the POU was closely associated with the Ministry of Education and was in charge of propaganda and disinformation campaigns designed to undermine support for nationalist parties and associated guerrilla forces, and gain support for the Rhodesian Front and the Rhodesian government both at home and abroad.¹⁸⁹ Figure 13 below, which was printed on their brochures, depicts teaching Africans about the dangers of Communism.

¹⁸⁷ Dr. Mutumbuka, interview with author, August 2017.

¹⁸⁸ Frederikse, and Partridge, *None but Ourselves*, 117.

¹⁸⁹ For more information on the POU see Ibid., 157, 244, 277.



Figure 13: POU publicity brochure which was dropped from planes depicting soldiers teaching Africans about the dangers of Communism. (Frederikse, *None but Ourselves*, 117).

According to ex-soldiers in the POU unit with whom I have corresponded via Facebook, in addition to conscripted teachers, conscripts with experience in marketing and media were also often assigned to the POU unit.¹⁹⁰

Beyond these scattered bits of anecdotal evidence from the correspondents and Dr. Mutumbuka, the official relationship between the POU and the Ministry of Education is unclear; however, it is clear that the POU was engaged in a campaign of public “education”: producing literature, video, audio, and posters about the brutal atrocities committed by guerrilla forces, informing the public about the dangers of communist guerrillas and nationalist parties and the benefits of Rhodesian Front rule as outlined in figure 14 below.

The POU printed a series of flyers that were dropped from planes throughout the country contrasting the munificence of the Rhodesian government, which provided education and opportunities to African students, to the barbarity of the “communist terrorists” who deprived children of education by taking them from schools and forcing them to kill and die. Figures 18 and 19 below are scans of two such leaflets.

¹⁹⁰ Personal (Facebook) correspondence with the author, August 2019.

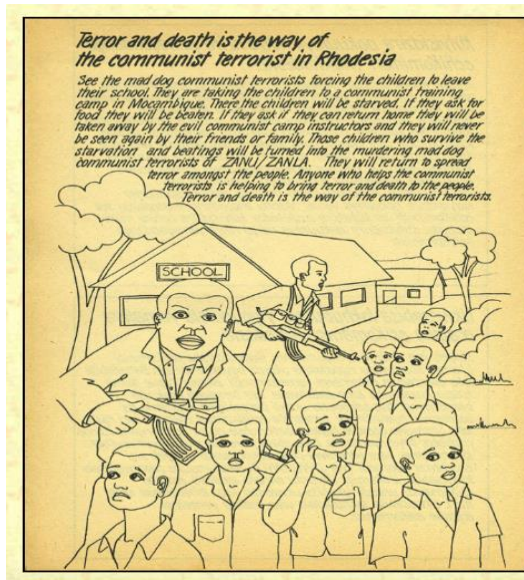


Figure 14 A POU leaflet, printed and distributed after April 1977, depicts two armed terrorists kidnapping seven young children from their school. Herb Friedman, “RHODESIA PSYOP 1965-1980,” <http://www.psywarrior.com/RhodesiaPSYOP.html>. Accessed August, 20th, 2018. cf. Jakkie Cilliers, *Counter-Insurgency in Rhodesia (Rle: Terrorism and Insurgency)*, (London: Routledge, 2015).

The text reads:

Terror and death is the way of the communist terrorist in Rhodesia

*See the mad dog communist terrorists forcing the children to leave their school. They are taking the children to a communist training camp in Mozambique. There the children will be starved. If they ask for food, they will be beaten. If they ask if they can return home, they will be taken away by the evil camp instructors, and they will never be seen again by their friends or family. Those children who survive the starvation and beatings will be turned into the murderous mad dog communist terrorists of ZANU/ZANLA. They will return to spread terror amongst the people. Anyone who helps the communist terrorists is helping to bring terror and death to the people. Terror and death is the way of the communist terrorist.*¹⁹¹

¹⁹¹ Herb Friedman, “RHODESIA PSYOP 1965-1980,” <http://www.psywarrior.com/RhodesiaPSYOP.html>. Accessed August, 20th, 2018. cf. Jakkie Cilliers, *Counter-Insurgency in Rhodesia (Rle: Terrorism and Insurgency)*, (London: Routledge, 2015).

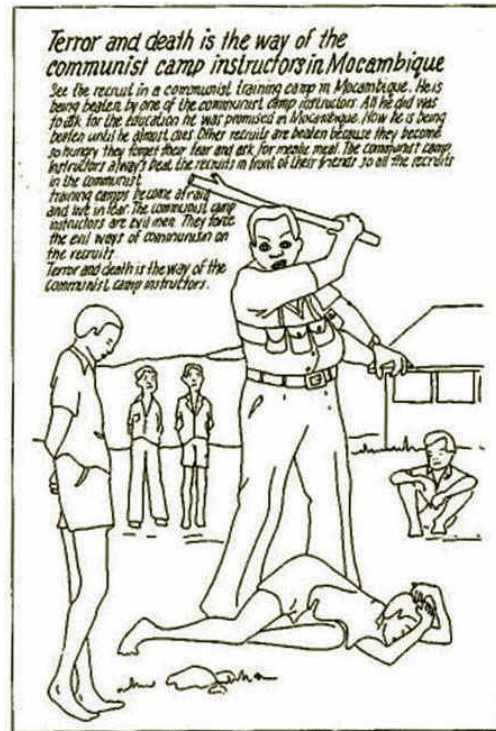


Figure 15: A POU leaflet depicting brutality in the ZANLA camps in Mozambique. Herb Friedman, "RHODESIA PSYOP 1965-1980," <http://www.psywarrior.com/RhodesiaPSYOP.html>. Accessed August, 20th, 2018. cf. Jakkie Cilliers, *Counter-Insurgency in Rhodesia (Rle: Terrorism and Insurgency)*, (London: Routledge, 2015).

The figure reads: *Terror and death is the way of the communist camp instructors in Mocambique.*

*See the recruit in a communist training camp in Mocambique. He is being beaten by one of the communist camp instructors. All he did was to ask for the education he was promised in Mocambique. Now he is being beaten until he almost dies. Other recruits are beaten because they become so hungry they forget their fear and ask for mealie meal...*¹⁹²

The above flyers, the first illustrating the abductions of students and the second disparaging the camp schools and nationalist promises of education in Mozambique, reflect the degree to which education was used as an incentive by both the Rhodesian Front and the nationalists during the liberation war to gain support. Both flyers reveal how the Rhodesian Front promoted the notion that the nationalists were limiting the education of students while simultaneously revealing how the nationalist parties were actively recruiting fighters through promises of education.

The confidential POU memo reproduced in Figure 20 below outlines the different

¹⁹² Ibid.

messaging designed for different segments of the African populace (civil service employees and teachers, businessmen and professionals, and domestic servants), and the different ways in which these messages were to be communicated in order to ensure the loyalty of these different segments of the population.

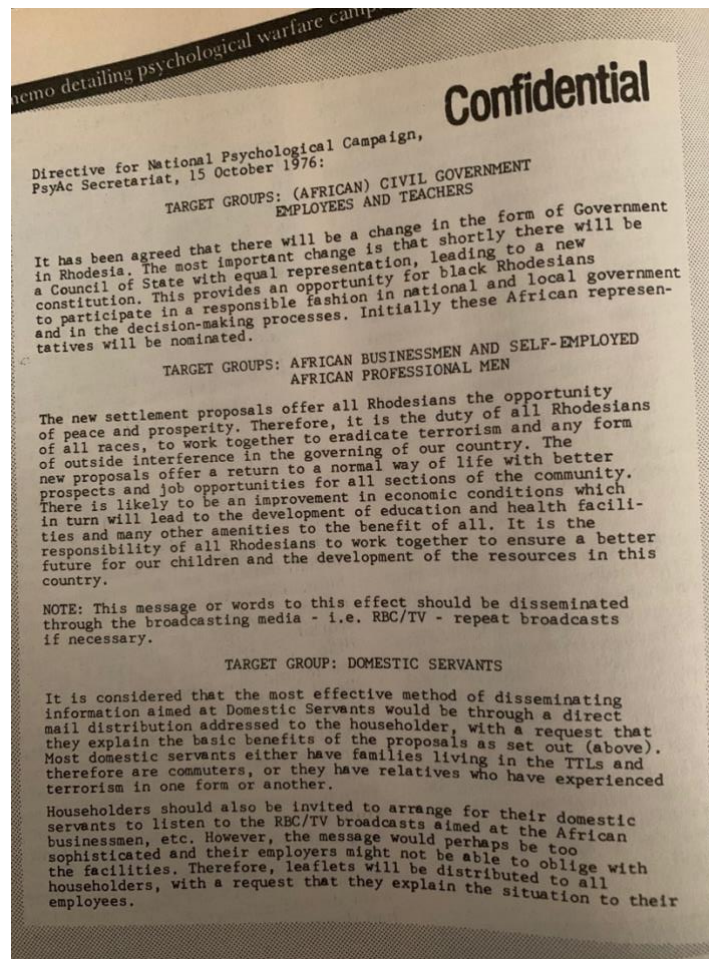


Figure 20: Rhodesian Govt. Memo on Psychological Warfare Campaigns (Frederikse, *None but Ourselves*, 244)

The fact that the POU carried out “public education” campaigns and was staffed by teachers and media/marketing specialists, once again underscores the close relationships among education, mass media/propaganda, and the war front. The choice of teachers to staff this unit is unsurprising, given the framing of the campaign as “providing a clear interpretation of

Government policy” to a “confused” public (see Figure 17)—essentially an educational mission to “teach” the public about the threat the nationalists posed to the state and the well-being of its citizens. For both the Rhodesian Front and ZAPU (explored in the following two chapters), education was therefore a powerful tool of psychological and ideological warfare in addition to being prerequisite for certain positions in the armed forces.

Schools as Casualties of War: Physical Sites of Politics, Contestation, Violence

But education was not only employed as a tool of war, educational institutions were also profoundly affected by the conflict. For thousands of students and their teachers, some of the most pronounced effects of the war occurred within their school grounds in Rhodesia. Schools became physical sites of warfare; while nationalist guerrilla fighters kidnapped students and closed schools, the Rhodesian Front retaliated against villages who hid or helped guerrilla fighters by closing additional schools and using some as bases.

According to the Rhodesian Education Reports, between the years of 1977 and 1978 close to 270,000 students and 512 teachers had been displaced with 1,094 schools closed across the country.¹⁹³ The majority of schools closed were African and overall, they bore the brunt of the war.

The reasons for the closures were two-fold. On one hand, Rhodesian education reports list nationalist guerrilla forces attacking some African missionary-run schools and abducting students and teachers, ostensibly in order to pressure the Rhodesian government and recruit guerrilla fighters.¹⁹⁴ On the other hand, the majority of schools were closed by the Rhodesian

¹⁹³ Education Planning Division Ministry, “An Evaluation Report on Primary School Dropouts in Zimbabwe (1978-1984),” (1985), 11.

¹⁹⁴ The first mention of the impact of the guerrilla war on schools is in the introduction of the Annual Report of the Secretary of Education for 1975, “I would be well satisfied with the progress being made...were it not for the incredible, if not unprecedented difficulties and hazards facing so many schools from day to day. These range from the forcible abduction of pupils and teachers, and the maiming or murder of teachers to the voluntary abscondences of pupils and teachers either to join the ranks of the terrorists or to seek education in other countries. Ministry of Education, “Annual Report of the Secretary for African Education for the Year

Front (which is not explicitly mentioned in the reports), ostensibly in order to protect students from areas with active guerrilla forces. Oral testimonies, however, indicate that school closures were also used punitively against uncooperative villages which refused to identify or handover guerrilla fighters.¹⁹⁵

The closure of schools due to abductions and attacks by the nationalist militias, which is discussed in greater detail in the following chapter on ZAPU's instrumentalisation of education, featured prominently in both Rhodesian education reports and newspaper articles between 1974 and 1979. Particularly prominent were a string of high-profile abductions in which entire schools of children along the border areas of Botswana and Mozambique were marched across the border to refugee and training camps. For example, ZAPU's military wing, ZIPRA began abducting students and teachers from schools along the Botswana border in 1976 in order to build up their fighting forces. Students over 16 were sent for militarily training while those younger than 16 remained in the refugee camps or were sent to camp schools set up for younger conflict refugees.

The fact that some missionaries were killed and students were abducted at the height of the war highlights the use of schools by the nationalists not only for recruitment purposes, but also in order to draw international attention to the Rhodesian situation and convince audiences both domestic and international that the Rhodesian government was no longer in control of its own territory and could not protect its citizens. These sensationalist attacks were meant to pressure the Rhodesian government and Britain to come to the bargaining

Ended 31st December 1976," (1976), 1. The 1976 report lists 16 teachers and one education officer killed by guerrilla fighters.

¹⁹⁵ Bhebe, *The ZAPU and ZANU Guerrilla Warfare*, 42.

table and agree to a new Constitution granting Africans the franchise, ushering in a new, majority-rule state. Secondary literature suggests that ZAPU believed that Britain and the international community would be more likely to intervene in the Rhodesian war and support majority-rule if the Smith government could be seen as having lost control of the country.¹⁹⁶

This theory is corroborated by the fact that Rhodesian educational reports downplayed the effect of the war, especially the extent of the school closures and insecurities. While the official education reports of the Rhodesian government described how some of the schools had been sites of “terrorist activity,” these same reports were careful not to list the number of schools closed during the period of the war. The first mention of guerrilla activity was not until the 1976 year-end report, and some school closures were not listed until the 1979 report, the year the war ended. A full investigation on the number of schools closures was not carried out until 1984, four years post-independence.¹⁹⁷ The delays in reporting school closures highlights the government’s policy of censorship in its attempts to project an image of being in control of the increasingly precarious war situation.

An important additional reason for the government’s non-disclosure of school closures was likely because not all schools were closed due to terrorism. Oral testimonies and secondary sources¹⁹⁸ note that many of schools that were closed were not threatened of violence or abductions. Some schools and entire villages were closed because the Rhodesian security forces moved entire communities to “protected villages.” Ostensibly created to

¹⁹⁶ Eliakim Sibanda, *The Zimbabwe African People's Union, 1961-87: A Political History of Insurgency in Southern Rhodesia* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2005), 76.

¹⁹⁷ Ministry of Education Planning Division, *An Evaluation Report on Primary School Dropouts in Zimbabwe (1978-1984)*, (Harare: Ministry of Education & UNICEF, 1985).

¹⁹⁸ Bhebe, *The ZAPU and ZANU Guerrilla Warfare*, 42.

protect rural communities from the attacks of guerrilla forces, in reality, these “protected villages” were little more than internment camps, and the children and adults held therein were cut off from access to government services such as schools. The residents of these “protected villages” argued that these enclosures were used to punish communities suspected of assisting guerrilla forces, and these residents also frequently complained of torture and violence committed against them by the soldiers who “guarded” these crowded enclosures.¹⁹⁹

For example, in February 1973 in Chiweshe region, Rhodesian soldiers shut down all “schools, clinics, churches, grain mills, shops and businesses in the communal areas, in the farms and the Chesa Purchase Area were shut down at the same time....aircraft dropped thousands of leaflets displaying close-up pictures of corpses of recently killed guerrillas and offering rewards for information.”²⁰⁰ Villagers were also told that their closed institutions and facilities would be opened as soon as they provided information leading to the apprehension or killing of guerrillas. In these ways, access to education and other social services were instrumentalised; in some areas, schools were closed punitively in response to suspicion of support for nationalist parties and associated forces, while in others, access to schools was contingent upon active co-operation with Rhodesian forces.

For those rural students who were not moved into protected villages, the widespread school closures meant that many students whose parents had the means to do so, moved to urban areas to attend schools. Urban schools were generally much safer from attacks than schools in the rural areas. The waves of conflict-related urban migration led to overcrowding within the school system and to policies such as “hot seating,” in which schools shortened

¹⁹⁹ See Cilliers, *Counter-Insurgency in Rhodesia*.

²⁰⁰ Bhebe, *The ZAPU and ZANU Guerrilla Warfare*, 42.

their school days to create multiple “shifts”: one cohort of students and teachers would use the facilities in the morning, allowing a separate cohort of teachers and students to come in and use the schools in the afternoon.²⁰¹

Some closed schools, particularly White schools, were subsequently used as army bases, presenting another example of the nexus between the military and education in the ongoing war. The photograph below depicts a Rhodesian soldier after his “interrogation” of Moffat Ncube, a guerrilla fighter, at an abandoned school.

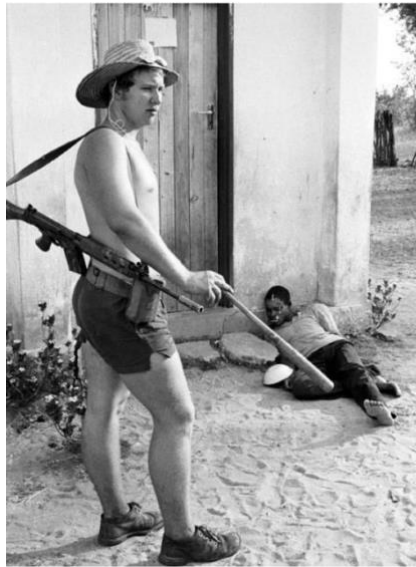


Figure 16: Photo by J. Baughman of a Rhodesian lieutenant holding a bat he used to “interrogate” politician Moffat Ncube outside an abandoned school. The photo was one of three which won him the Pulitzer Prize. (“[The 1978 Pulitzer Prize Winner in Feature Photography](#),” *The Pulitzer Prizes*, <https://www.pulitzer.org/winners/j-ross-baughman>. Accessed August 2019.)

Schools for White students-turned-bases included Guinea Fowl, and St. Stephan’s College, which was closed once the neighbouring border with Zambia was closed. The school then

²⁰¹ Ministry of Education, “Annual Reports of the Secretary for African Education,” (1976-1979).

became a Rhodesian African Rifles barrack named “Shaw Barracks.” The same was true for Marymount College school in Umtali near the Mozambique border, where ZANLA was most active. According to one respondent who had attended the school, before its closure in 1976 due to attacks on the town, students were bused to and from the school each day. After its closure, the school became Adams Barracks, and housed soldiers in 5th Independent Company in 1977 and 1978. The soldiers slept in the female dormitories. Carmel College Umtali was also closed and taken over by the army, becoming military barracks. The Education Reports portrayed these schools as being closed due to White emigration from Rhodesia, described as, “declining enrollments and the departure of qualified teachers,”²⁰² rather than terrorist activity.

In fact, my online correspondence with former Rhodesian students revealed that not only did African schools bear the brunt of the educational closures and insecurities, but that the structural and racial disparities between African, Coloured, and White schools profoundly shaped the Rhodesian government’s response to school security during the war. The government went to considerable lengths to keep White schools open, highlighting racial disparities in the government’s response to the insecurities within schools. White schools were proactively protected while African and mixed schools received “retroactive” responses to attacks, consisting almost exclusively of school closures. Moreover, the choice of which White schools were closed due to falling enrollments highlights possible class-based disparities among Rhodesian military and political figures who had attended the schools.

Unlike African schools, relatively few White schools were directly affected during the

²⁰² Ministry of Education, “Annual Report of the Secretary for Education for the Year Ended 31st December 1976,” (1976, 4).

war. Even schools such as Plumtree High School, which were within a few kilometers of the infamous school abductions near the border of Botswana saw relatively little disruption in their operations other than an increased security presence and protocols to protect students.

In the absence of documentation on the impacts of the war on education, I surveyed two Facebook Groups dedicated to the History of Rhodesia, the *Rhodesian Schools* group and the *Rhodesian Military* groups. These groups were predominantly made up of White Rhodesians who had gone to school in Rhodesia, and/or joined the armed forces, many of whom had left the country during or immediately after the war.²⁰³

According to the correspondents, the Rhodesian government poured considerable resources into the protection of White schools, from armed personnel to structural barriers, to flying boarding students to and from schools in remote areas due to safety concerns. With the exceptions of the dangers of travelling to and from schools and the relatively few school closures and “terrorist drills,” the respondents were in overall agreement that for much of the war, teaching and learning continued unimpeded, especially in comparison to the widespread closures and security risks faced by African schools.²⁰⁴

The relative safety of White schools, even those within active fighting zones, was due to the heavy security proactively provided by the state to protect these schools from attack. For example, in 1978, at the height of the conflict, the published yearbook from Plumtree boys high school, which borders Botswana, barely mentions the security situation affecting

²⁰³ See Appendix B for the questions posed to and responses from these groups.

²⁰⁴ In describing the effects of the war on schools, many of the White correspondents referred to areas in which ZANLA operated, for example along the borders of Mozambique. This is likely possible due to ZANLA’s domination of large swaths of the eastern front of the country along Mozambique, as well as the fact that ZAPU’s zenith of activity occurred in the late 1970s.

the boys' education.²⁰⁵ The only mention in the magazine is that the Boy Scouts school group were unable to venture outside of school grounds for wilderness activities and that some of their sports games had to be cancelled for security reasons.²⁰⁶ Some records make mention of the guards, which one correspondent referred to as "Brightlights," and noted that many were "ex-army, police reservists who stayed in or schools on rotation for security."²⁰⁷ The correspondent recalled the presence of these guards at all of the schools she attended, including Chipinga Primary, Selukwe Primary, Sinoia High, Thornhill High, Melsetter and Mabelreign High school.

Teachers and students were armed in some schools. Teachers, both male and female, as well as some prefects, carried rifles in both Rhodes Estate Preparatory School (REPS) and Marula school, and Plumtree High school allowed teachers and prefects (senior classmates) to carry guns. In addition to armed guards and personnel, physical barriers were put in place to protect students. After a mortar attack in the town of Fort Victoria, all boarding hostels in Fort Victoria were fenced off. At Chiredzi High School, the army surrounded classrooms with bunkers in case of attacks, and at Darwendale primary, each of the dormitories had grenade screens on windows in 1978.

In addition to the physical and personnel safeguards, White schooling communities participated in extensive emergency drills which one correspondent referred to as "terrorist drills, like fire drills."²⁰⁸ Many correspondents also recalled participating in mortar attack and

²⁰⁵ "The Puritain Magazine," (1978).

²⁰⁶ Ibid, 12.

²⁰⁷ Personal communication (Facebook) with the author, August 2019.

²⁰⁸ Personal communication (Facebook) with the author, August 2019.

active-shooter drills. One correspondent, who attended Girl's High School of Salisbury (GHSS) through 1982 described the types and procedures of the conducted drills:

We had three school drills, the fire was: leave your bags, close the windows and get out quickly. Bomb drill was: open the windows, to prevent flying glass in an explosion, take your bag, which was clearly labelled in large White writing with your name. This was assuming that you had no bomb in your bag meant the unmarked bag could be traced. Riot drill: close windows and doors and get under your desk.²⁰⁹

Given these proactive safety measures, many correspondents noted that the most imminent danger they faced was travelling to and from schools. The government, school administrators, and parents organized armed convoys to take children to school in convoys with armed guards, and sometimes transported students to boarding schools by plane.

A few correspondents mentioned having faced attacks on the way to school, and all but one had personally felt in imminent danger during journeys to and from school. One student from the University of Life High school, near the Zimbabwe ruins which was an active military area for guerrillas, claimed that students driving to and from her school were attacked 39 times over the course of the war. Given the attacks, some students flew to and from their boarding schools. For example, correspondents mentioned flying between Melsetter school in 1975/76 and Chisumbanje Tilcor, and to Umtali schools. Even then, some parents still feared for their children's safety. One correspondent noted that some students flew from "Buffalo Range and Fort Victoria, which must have been agony for the parents after the Viscounts were shot down."²¹⁰

²⁰⁹ Personal communication (Facebook) with the author, August 2019.

²¹⁰ Personal communication (Facebook) with the author, August 2019. The Viscount plane the correspondent referred to was a Rhodesian Air Force bomber that had bombed ZIPRA training camps (along with the schools and refugee areas) in Zambia. Its shooting was considered a major victory for ZIPRA and an important symbolic demonstration of military prowess.

Buses with armed soldiers, car convoys with guards, and later armoured vehicles nicknamed “crocodiles” transported students over shorter distances. One correspondent and his boarding colleagues travelled in convoys to and from school in the Shabani (now Zvishavane), a guerrilla operational area.

Figures 18 and 19 below depict the military envoys, while figure 17 depicts an envoy of armed travellers.



Figure 17: Young Rhodesian children being transported in a military vehicle. Picture obtained from a social media correspondent from his private collection. (August 2019)

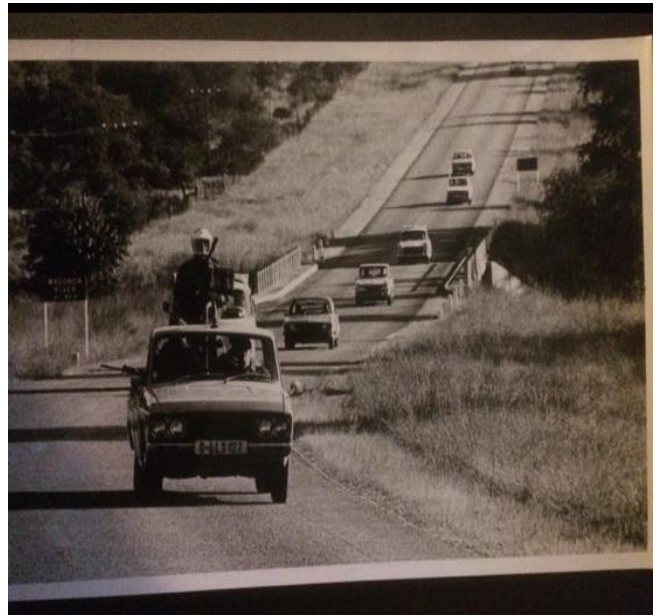


Figure 18: Civillian envoy of cars with mounted guns on top. Picture obtained from a social media correspondent from his private collection. (August 2019)



Figure 19: The back of the “crocodile” tanker which transported children to school. Picture obtained from a social media correspondent from his private collection. (August 2019)

It is important to consider why White schools remained open given the severity of threats and the lengths to which the government had to go to in order to keep them open during a period in which thousands of African schools were shut down. While not explicitly noted in government reports, a comment on the entire education system in the African Education Secretary reports points to a plausible reason. As previously noted, the 1978 report states that two White schools were closed down, owing to the “declining enrolments and the departure of qualified teachers.”²¹¹ Therefore, like the censorship campaign, the government may have tried to keep the schools open to project an image of being in total control of the country after the UDI and to downplay the threat that the sanctions and nationalist movements posed to their rule.

A number of sources noted the RF government needed the country to be perceived as stable in order to maintain power and limit “white flight.”²¹² Many White Rhodesians had

²¹¹ Ministry of Education, “Annual Report of the Secretary for African Education for the Year Ended 31st December 1978,” (1978), 4.

²¹² White, *Unpopular Sovereignty*, 35.

left the country due to their opposition to the UDI, the increasingly violent guerrilla attacks against White businesses and sometimes people, and particularly in the case of young men, in order to avoid the draft—often some combination of the three.²¹³ As described above, the Rhodesian government therefore had to balance vilifying the “savagery” of the “terrorists” to legitimate its use of force and broad conscription of Rhodesian men, while simultaneously allaying the population’s fears. It had to keep the public scared enough of the threat of the “terrorists” to justify their political and military tactics, but not so afraid that they felt that the RF could no longer guarantee their safety.

Operational White schools therefore were used as symbols of government control and functionality in the midst of the war. Resultingly, the decisions to close the White schools were not made without controversy. Correspondent comments revealed entrenched identity and class schisms amongst the White Rhodesians. This was particularly true in the case of two premier schools, Guinea Fowl School and Plumtree High school. According to Mr. KM,²¹⁴ who worked with the Ministry of Education at the time, one of the two schools had to be closed. With White families fleeing the country, the Ministry did not have enough money or pupils to keep the second school open with the mandated pupil to teacher ratio of 22:1.

Plumtree High was more affluent and a number of its alumni were in government.²¹⁵ The “politics” of the decision were not public, but KM claims that it was the “old boy network's influence” that ultimately determined that Plumtree should remain open, and that

²¹³ See Ibid.

²¹⁴ KM, personal communication (Facebook) with the author, August 2019.

²¹⁵ Personal communication (Facebook) with the author, August 2019.

students from Guinea Fowl school would attend Plumtree.²¹⁶ Another correspondent speculated that Plumtree remained open because Lt. General George Peter Walls, the acting Head of the Armed Forces, had attended the school. Whatever the reasons for the closure of the schools, the example of the closure of Guinea Fowl School demonstrates the complex political decision-making process that became a part of running an education system during a war.

Moreover, the lively debate about the closing of Guinea Fowl or Plumtree on the Rhodesian Facebook page illustrates the close relationships and significant overlaps between the political, military, and educational spheres in Rhodesia; not only did the political and military establishment have a profound influence on the funding, status, and even existence and uses of schools, but the schools, through their alumni networks (“old boys’ clubs”) also exerted a powerful influence on the government and military. One correspondent joked, “Plumtree was protected because so many government ministers had learned to wash dishes there and dress properly.”²¹⁷

Despite the protections and privileges afforded to White students in comparison with their Coloured/Asian or African counterparts, it is important to keep in mind that such war environments can have deleterious mental health effects and cause trauma in children, including those in privileged groups. A few correspondents highlighted this fact, such as one correspondent who recounted the grief he felt when the headmaster regularly read out the names of other students who had been killed in the war. Another former student described how between 1975 and 1980, 13 students and one deputy headmaster from Marandellas High

²¹⁶ KM, personal communication (Facebook) with author, August 2019.

²¹⁷ Personal communication (Facebook) with the author, August 2019.

School lost their lives in attacks outside of school. The fact that this correspondent remembers the exact numbers of fatalities after 40 years illustrates of the profound psychological effect of war on children. That said, in terms of physical safety as well as the quality of teaching and learning that occurred in schools, the White schools were certainly privileged by the government, and therefore remained far safer than their African and Coloured counterparts.

Discussion

Far from being a phenomenon unique to the Zimbabwean war of independence, wartime violence in schools is part of a much larger trend observed in armed conflicts around the world. Because they house some of society's most vulnerable members and because they are often seen as extensions of the state, schools are often targeted in conflicts.²¹⁸ A UN's Secretary-General's report defines terrorism as any activity "intended to cause death or serious bodily harm to civilians or noncombatants, when the purpose of such an act, by its nature or context, is to intimidate a population, or to compel a government or an international organization to do or to abstain from doing any act."²¹⁹ Given this definition, it is easy to see why, given their unique demographics and close relationship with the state, schools are often sites of "terrorist" activity, or more generally, violence and contestation in times of conflict.

Moreover, schools are also places of communal gathering; like hospitals, movie

²¹⁸ One of the more extreme recent examples is the erasure of old models of education and the reestablishment of new models by ISIS in their controlled territories. See Oliver Arvisais and Mathieu Guidère, "Education in Conflict: How Islamic State Established Its Curriculum," *Journal of Curriculum Studies* 52, no. 4 (2020): 1-18.

²¹⁹ Kofi Atta Annan, *A More Secure World: Our Shared Responsibility: Report of the High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges, and Change* (New York: United Nations Publications, 2004), 51.

theatres and crowded places which are often targets of terrorism, schools have a publicly-known regular schedule and house large groups of people. In addition to their population, the architectural structures of schools also make them targets; this is particularly true in low-income and rural communities in which school buildings often serve as general meeting halls, makeshift hospitals, community centres, and even markets. Schools are also often centrally placed, near clinics, water pumps, transportation centres, and markets in order to increase accessibility for families. Finally, schools can be used for information gathering, and teachers, who are often respected leaders in the communities, are targeted because of their considerable social and political capital. Given the opportunities that the attacks on teachers, students, and schools offer to terrorists, cases of school interference are well-represented in the literature on education and conflict.²²⁰

The majority of studies on education and conflict focus on the instrumentalization of education by non-state actors in attempts to undermine the state and rarely examines the uses and impacts of education in war outside of the schoolyard.²²¹ The historical educational lens of this study offers insight into the subtle but important role of schools and education within other major “fronts” during the war, including the military, censorship and propaganda, and racial stratification during the period of war.

As an extension of the state, this research examined the uses of schools as symbols of state control, instruments for draft tracking and recruitment, vehicles of censorship and propaganda, and physical sites of war. Given the striking but broad relationships between education and each of these different aspects of the war, the question of how we might

²²⁰ Lynn Davies, *Education and Conflict: Complexity and Chaos* (New York: Routledge, 2003).

²²¹ Ibid.

understand the nature of education and its relationship to the state comes to the fore.

In answer to this question, I argue that Foucault's theoretical framework presented in *Discipline and Punish*²²² offers a useful lens to understand the instrumentalization of schools as state structures for surveillance and power. His work reveals how the modern European state's techniques of surveillance and control were shared amongst schools, prisons, military, and government bureaucracies, and this was certainly the case in Rhodesia.

Not only were the schools sites of recruitment that also facilitated conscription, but the continuity between disciplinary techniques of the school and those of the security services (corporal punishment, hierarchies and "chains of command," regimented schedules, uniforms, etc.), meant that the schools were an important early training ground for young soldiers. Through their curriculum, pedagogical and disciplinary methods, and hosting of recruitment and conscription efforts, Rhodesian schools trained students for service in, and facilitated their entrance into the military. This fact was as true for the Rhodesian army recruits as it was for the guerrilla fighters, the foremost examples being that the school camps and political education set up by the guerrilla fighters, explored in the following two chapters, closely mirrored the structures, schedules and disciplines of the Rhodesian state schools.

Conclusion

Foucault's exploration of the ubiquity of the modern state's techniques of surveillance and control offer a framework within which one might consider the continuum of censorship and propaganda between the schoolyard and the battlefield. Censorship was an

²²² Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* (New York: Vintage, 1995).

important nexus between state politics and education. The Rhodesian state's regime of silence functioned to create and maintain a narrative of the state as a benevolent, civilizing force, a "city on a hill," which clung to the values and practices which had made the British Empire great, but which had since been abandoned by the British, who had been weakened by the "rising tides" of colour and communism. This narrative was maintained through censorship and propaganda in media, public life, and particularly, schools. While these censorship campaigns were portrayed as separating "politics" from education, in reality, they elevated the approved political propaganda of the Rhodesian Front to the sphere of the "apolitical," relegating all other perspectives to the sphere of "subversive political propaganda" deserving of censorship and/or punishment.

Complementary to the censorship of teachers and students, the use of schools and teachers for the States' propaganda/ information war against the nationalists offers another example of the extension of government surveillance and control mechanisms. The Rhodesian Broadcasting Network's integration of political messaging on the same channel as educational lessons illustrates the ways in which schools, catering to thousands of students and teachers were used as vehicles to receive and promote the Rhodesian Front agenda.

Finally, the drafting of teachers to the Psychological Operations Unit provides yet another example of the "educational front" in which teachers were employed in a "public education" campaign to warn the public of the dangers of the communist and nationalist movements and the benevolence of the Rhodesian government. The disseminated pamphlets included images of guerrilla fighters kidnapping children from schools and disparaging guerrilla promises of education underscores the desirability of education to the general population; the pamphlet messaging attempted to highlight the Rhodesian government as the

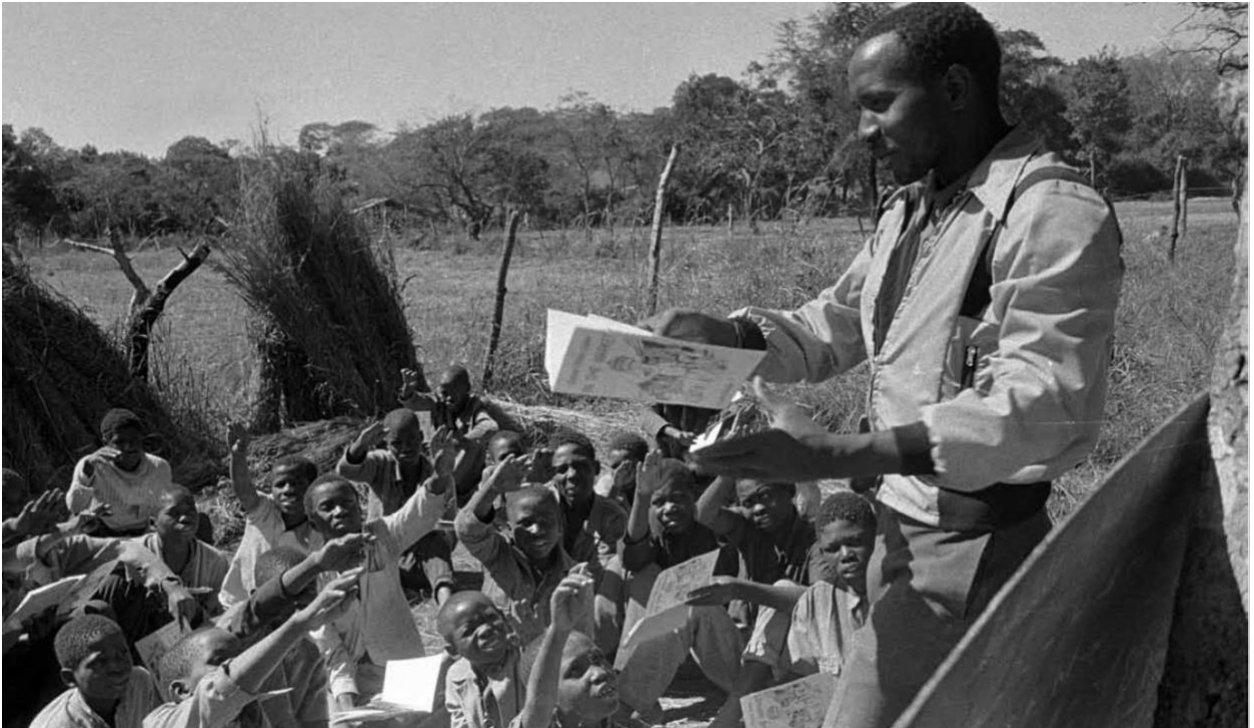
only legitimate provider of education, a state-controlled provision which could be taken away as easily as granted.

The Rhodesian government offered education, along with cash, rations, housing, and medical care to “insurgents” to entice them to defect and join the Selous Scouts,²²³ an elite Rhodesian Special Forces unit, while placing villages in seemingly “protected areas,” devoid of government services, including education, as punishment for aiding the nationalists. Moreover, given the racial hierarchy of Rhodesia, it is unsurprising that the state responses to school insecurities were also racially differentiated. African schools, which were often more targeted were closed after guerrilla attacks while White schools received round-the-clock protection and students received response training and drills in the event of an attack.

In summary, during the war, schools were used as sites of violence, symbols of government control and benevolence, vehicles for silencing oppositional views and promoting government propaganda, and an important state structure for army recruitment. However, it was not only the Rhodesian Front that employed schools and education in these ways during the conflict—the following chapters will explore the various ways in which ZAPU responded to the Rhodesian government in this “educational front.”

²²³Martin and Johnson, *The Struggle for Zimbabwe*, 106-107.

Chapter 5: ZAPU's Instrumentalisation of Education



Schoolteacher teaching class in the open at JZ Moyo camp, Zambia
from *Through Zenzo Nkobi's Lens*²²⁴

²²⁴ South African Historical Archive, *Zapu Through Zenzo Nkobi's Lens*, (Braamfontein: South African Historical Archive, 2017), 74.

Introduction

On Sunday, January 30th, 1977 at 7 pm, soldiers from ZIPRA (ZAPU's military wing) abducted 400 pupils from the Manana Mission High School. Five soldiers walked into the assembly hall where 170 girls and 230 boys were preparing for their evening prayers. According to one student who escaped and was interviewed by the Rhodesian Chronicle Newspaper, “We were all in the assembly hall when the terrorists came in; they said we would not get a proper education at the mission—only theory. They said we would only get a proper education if we went away with them. They told us we were going to Botswana.”²²⁵ The Manama mission was not to be the only such “recruitment drive” for ZAPU; ZIPRA soldiers abducted students and teachers from Tekwane and Dombodema schools as well as other schools close to the Botswanan border. The Rhodesian media portrayed ZIPRA's abductions as anti-educational terrorism, a label which the Rhodesian government embraced and promoted through a detailed political campaign, as can be seen in the cartoon in Figure 1 below.²²⁶

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²²⁵ Chronicle reporter, “Terrs abduct 400 from Manama Mission,” *The Rhodesian Chronicle Newspaper*, February 1, 1977, 1.

²²⁶ See Chapter four for propaganda war flyers.



Figure 1: Cartoon in *The Rhodesian Chronicle* newspaper six days after the abduction. (from the Bulawayo National Archive)

However, in 1977, the same year as this abduction, ZAPU also built its first schools in Zambia to educate refugees and children younger than 16 years old. Two main schools were established, one at J.Z. Moyo camp in Zambia for boys, and later in the same year, the girls' school was established at Victory Camp in Zambia. Some of the younger abductees from the school raids, in addition to refugee children, attended the schools. Paulos Nare, charged with establishing the schools, recalled that he and the other ZAPU educational board members, having had no educational experience outside Rhodesia, were to a degree imaginatively constrained in creating a formal school system outside of their experience.²²⁷ As such, the established schools were organized based on the Rhodesian system, complete with Rhodesian syllabi and textbooks,²²⁸ a Rhodesian timetable and the seven-grade system

²²⁷ Paulos Nare, "Education and the War." in *Society in Zimbabwe's Liberation War* vol. ii, ed. T. Ranger and N. Bhebe (London: James Currey, 1995), 133.

²²⁸ He notes that the curriculum was "not revolutionary enough" and therefore supplemented the textbooks with written pamphlets and notes for the teachers. This addition was only introduced at the end of the year, however. (Ibid)

which mirrored Rhodesia's. Nare explained, "Owing to similar constraints, we ultimately copied the Rhodesian system of having seven grades in our primary education. Thus, in practice, a complete departure from the enemy's system proved impossible. Even our timetables were based on our Rhodesian example and experiences."²²⁹

The seeming contradictions between these two anecdotes, of ZIPRA soldiers abducting students yet establishing schools, of being critical of the Rhodesian education system and yet replicating it, lie at the heart of this chapter. They underscore the fact that schools were a site of contestation, and that ZAPU's educational strategies and its uses of education as an instrument of war must be understood as both a product of and a reaction against the Rhodesian state—a dialectical dynamic which one might argue is intrinsic to all revolutionary movements that pit themselves against dominant structures of power. This dynamic is further complicated by the context of the Cold War, during which ZAPU shifted from nationalist to socialist ideologies and rhetoric, developing international alliances through which they might politically, ideologically, and educationally challenge the Rhodesian capitalist state.

After explaining the educational history of ZAPU, this chapter defines ZAPU's educational ideology and its resulting instrumentalisation of education. I argue that ZAPU's self-image as "a government in exile" shaped their educational strategies which cut across multiple fronts of the war. Education was an indispensable political, ideological and military tool which ZAPU wielded in order to recruit soldiers, forge international diplomatic ties and undermine the capitalist and white-supremacist ideologies of the Rhodesian state.

Additionally, educational competencies were considered prerequisites for military positions

²²⁹ Ibid., 133

and handling sophisticated weaponry. For refugees and guerrilla fighters, ZAPU's extensive investment in education ironically offered opportunities for continued or advanced studies which might otherwise not have been available in Rhodesia due to the racially bottlenecked and expensive offerings by the Rhodesian state.

The Educational History of ZAPU to the UDI

To begin to understand ZAPU's educational ideology and strategy, it is crucial to understand the historical importance of education to the liberation movement more broadly, and to the liberation leaders themselves. The liberation struggle, which this thesis analyses from the year the first nationalist parties were banned by the Rhodesian Front in 1964, was preceded by movements for equality and rights for Africans, not least of which was the right to access to education.

From the very foundations of the state, as described in the first chapter, education was a crucial means of social, political, and economic mobility and empowerment for individuals and social groups in Rhodesia. In the early 1900s, tribal chiefs had already begun requesting schools be opened in their constituencies. By the 1950s, the Rhodesian government had purposely limited African education in order to limit the burgeoning educated, Black middle class. Subsequently, higher education for Africans was severely restricted, and technical schools opened in order to boost the Rhodesian economy. This was achieved, in part, by placing the education system under the Native Development Department, which received little funding and tended to view literary or non-technical education as a danger to the status quo.

After WWI, political associations, in addition to church denominations, began advocating for the expansion of education, which encompassed primary education and a

gradual introduction of secondary schools.²³⁰ One of the primary groups pushing for educational expansion and English-language courses was the Rhodesia Bantu Voters Association, since English literacy was a requirement for voting. In 1925, the Bantu Voters Association called for “free and compulsory public education for African youngsters up to the primary-school level.”²³¹ As described by Michael West, in *The Rise of an African Middle Class*, the proposal was rejected by the Rhodesian prime minister on the grounds that it would be too costly. West narrates several proposals from groups that attempted to expand education. These included a 1930’s commission on living conditions in which Masotsha Ndhlovu, head of the “populist-leaning Industrial and Commercial Works Union of Africa (ICU)”, requested “an undenominational school with professional teachers of high educational qualifications. We would welcome the introduction of compulsory education amongst the children of the Location. We favour primary education being in English.”²³² World War II saw the rise of the African Teachers Association (ATA), which was made-up of well-educated, middle-class African teachers who pressured the government to expand education and to increase teacher’s rights. According to West, they organized strikes, which were welcomed by the general African populace who were becoming restless due to the economic strains of the war and their general lack of rights. In 1948, the ATA “called for a

²³⁰ See West, *The Rise of an African Middle Class*, 52-53. West also points out that many Christian denominations strove to expand education in the belief that it would make Africans better Christians and therefore gain equality within society. He also notes that interdenominational fighting had begun to occur in among missionary groups which were resented by the African "elite" who viewed the fighting "retarding" educational progress as well as harmony among converts.

²³¹ Ibid.

²³² West, *The Rise of an African Middle Class*, 135-139. For more on the ICU, the Voter's Association and the pre-1964 union movements and lobby groups, See T. O. Ranger, *Bulawayo Burning* (Suffolk: Boydell & Brewer, 2010); Timothy Scarnecchia, *The Urban Roots of Democracy and Political Violence in Zimbabwe* (Rochester: University Rochester Press, 2008).

commission on African education,” as well as an “expanded list of educational claims” by urging the government to build kindergartens for Black preschoolers and establish a university to which Africans would be admitted as “full members.”²³³

Joshua Nkomo, a trade unionist, and one of the founding leaders of the liberation movement, had a personal and professional affinity for education. His father had been both a teacher and a lay preacher, working for the London Missionary Society. After completing his primary education in Bulilima reserve,²³⁴ Nkomo studied carpentry at one of the few government industrial schools, Tsholotsho School, and then became a carpentry schoolteacher at Manyame school. In 1942, at the age of 25, he planned to further his education in carpentry in South Africa but changed his course when he arrived in the country, and instead earned a B.A. in Social Science from the Jan H. Hofmeyr School of Social Work. It was in South Africa that he met the South African ANC leaders at the University, including a young Nelson Mandela, and became involved in politics. Other ZAPU leaders also met at universities in Zambia and forged friendships which would later become political alliances within ZAPU, including T.G. Silundika and Edward Ndlovu.²³⁵ Upon his return to Bulawayo in 1947, Nkomo became a trade unionist and eventually led the Rail Workers Union. In 1952, he led the Southern Rhodesia African National Congress, and when that party was banned, he became president of the National Democratic Party, which was then banned in 1964. Nkomo, like many of the leaders of the liberation movement, continued to

²³³ West, *The Rise of an African Middle Class*, 55.

²³⁴ See Nkomo’s autobiography: *Nkomo: The Story of My Life* (London: Methuen, 1984). Reserves were areas of land designated for Africans after their more fertile lands had been annexed by the colonial government. See Jocelyn Alexander, Joan McGregor, and Terence O. Ranger, *Violence and Memory: One Hundred Years in the ‘Dark Forests’ of Matabeleland, Zimbabwe* (London: James Currey, 2000).

²³⁵ *Through Zenzo Nkobi’s Lens*, 62.

study during his imprisonment by the Rhodesian regime; a fact that reveals the significance of education to their personal and political ideals.

Formal education was therefore not only “courted” by individuals who aimed to enhance and exercise their agency, but also by the middle class as a means of increasing their political power, by trade unionists, such as Nkomo, who galvanized the population to the liberation struggle, as well as by ordinary Africans for whom education had become a vital part of personal and social transformation. It is worth noting that missionary churches also pressured the government to expand educational opportunities and advocated for increased funding for the majority of schools which they operated.

Given this long history of educational advocacy, it is therefore unsurprising that the leaders of the nationalist struggles identified education as a major battlefield which remained central to the rhetoric and political and military action of liberation struggle from its origins until its end. Despite this fact, few studies have explored the role of education, either formal or political, in the Rhodesian liberation struggle. This chapter aims to contribute to the history of education and the history of the liberation movement by examining the role of education in ZAPU’s liberatory efforts.

ZAPU’s Educational Ideology and Strategy

Before discussing the details of ZAPU’s ideological, political and structural deployment of education during the war, this section presents original research on the evolution of ZAPU’s overall educational ideology. ZAPU’s demands for educational access and expansion for Africans were constant throughout the struggle; however, ZAPU’s educational ideology, that is the party’s normative views of the nature and purpose of education, shifted over the course of the war. ZAPU’s educational demands and ensuing

actions extended beyond issues of equity, to include questions of curricula and educational philosophy and the role of students in activism over the war.

The extent of ZAPU's engagement with education can be quickly surmised by their published writings on the subject. In the 50 *Zimbabwe Review* journals and special editions between October 1964 and August 1976 analysed for this thesis, education was mentioned in 42 separate articles, written by various authors. For ease of reference and analysis, I categorized these references into seven broad categories:

- * Calls for increased educational access for Africans, including equity issues of fees and funding and two articles on the role of literacy and education.
- * Calls for and discussions of professional opportunities for school graduates and economic/employment equity based on educational attainment.
- * Definitions and discussions of student activism and revolutionary education from a socialist perspective.
- * Appeals to the international community for increased welfare support, including for education.
- * Discussion of the politicization of the Rhodesian educational strategies as pertaining to the war, including limiting the voting franchise to "educated" Africans, such as teachers (under the assumption that their education would lead them to the "enlightened" stance of supporting the Rhodesian state) and the mandatory military drafts of White, Coloured and Asian students.
- * Discussions of the relationship between capitalism and formal education, particularly as it pertained to the Rhodesian government increasing technical (F2) schools for Africans as a means of becoming industrially self-reliant.

The sheer number and breadth of the publications which refer to education and link it to multiple facets of the liberation struggle reveal the multiple important roles of education for ZAPU.

That said, the question remains as to whether ZAPU had an intentional, overarching educational ideology or set of principles which governed the ways in which the party conceptualized and instrumentalized formal and political education. To answer this question, I analysed ZAPU's publications chronologically and compared these written public records with interviews with senior party members and with secondary sources on the history of evolution of the party.

What I discovered is that while ZAPU's calls for educational access, scholarships and attainment remained consistent throughout the struggle, ZAPU's educational planning and rhetoric shifted to reflect their more socialist ideologies and to reflect their alliances with the USSR and the Communist block of countries. Beyond mere rhetoric, this shift in ZAPU's ideology was exemplified in the myriad ways it instrumentalized education during the struggle.

ZAPU's socialist shift is exemplified in its definition of "revolutionary education". Between the late 1960s and mid-1970s, the articles in the *Zimbabwe Review* which referred to "revolutionary education," quoting Che Guevara and Frantz Fanon, predominantly focused on convincing young educated people to join the military struggle. For example, the June and December 1969 issues of the *Zimbabwe Review* were the first to address students and differentiate regular "education" from "revolutionary education." Revolutionary education was initially defined within these articles as political, socialist and anti-capitalist, and

involved educating students about the origins, justifications, motives, means, and eventual goals of the liberation struggle. A June 1969 article, entitled “The Student and the Revolution,” outlines the role that students play in the revolution, and begs students to question “Am I revolutionary or not?” It outlines the important roles of students in the revolution by joining the front lines and not merely becoming bureaucrats or remaining in countries in which they had studied:

The students are the intelligentsia of the revolution and we need them. But we need them only if they become revolutionary intellectuals. The current thinking of students tends to regard education as the all-embracing panacea of all financial and social ills. In it they see themselves being pulled out of the common fate of ordinary men and assuming the role of directing the affairs of these ordinary men from above. True as it might be that the educated people may be more capable of leadership positions, we should be aware that leadership is a position of responsibility rather than a place of privilege. The correct leadership position is from in front and not from above.²³⁶

Quoting Che Guevara and Fanon, the article requests students to join the front lines, even if it means risking their lives:

only then (out there when you suffer all deprivations), can we begin to understand Che: when loving life so much that you are ready to die for it; or what Franz Fanon means by preferring victory to life.

There has been a growing tendency amongst our students to seek employment in some Independent African countries or abroad on the pretext of gaining some experience for a later date when their skills will be in demand in Zimbabwe. ...²³⁷

These sentiments and calls for students to join the struggle were echoed in the editorial on December 30, 1969 on “Education and the Struggle” which appealed to students abroad not to separate education from the liberation struggle and to join the liberation movement after their studies. It again denounced those who planned to:

wait in the comfortable shadows and corridors of colleges and universities or in the armchairs of foreign government offices in order to step into the administration offices.” It calls to “all those who have been given productive and creative education will find it necessary to join actively the armed forces of the people to help free their country.... The badly educated and

²³⁶ “The Student and Revolution,” *The Zimbabwe Review* 1, no. 2 (June 1969): 11.

²³⁷ “The Student and Revolution,” 11.

thus ignorant intellectuals will quote Lenin, Voltaire and other revolutionary leaders but fail to realise that quotations are not applied physically by those who quote them are signs of moral weakness and cowardice. Zimbabwe needs men and women who are anxiously awaiting to participate violently against the settler minority fascists but not to carve for themselves comfortable lives in foreign countries after their studies.”²³⁸

In these and other writings, ZAPU began to define revolutionary education in terms of joining the front lines of the liberation movement. These calls to students also reveal ZAPU’s perceptions of the attitudes which students had towards education; ZAPU recognized that the youth, or students were generally in favor of pursuing education, and therefore their appeals were for students to direct that education towards the struggle. It is perhaps these prevailing positive social attitudes towards education (which one may argue were inseparable from the Christian mores which framed missionary education from the beginning of the colony), that ZAPU was so successful in integrating their political education (explored at length in the following chapter) as well as refugee education into their party platform and activities.

Contextually, ZAPU’s leadership assumption of students’ positive disposition towards education differ significantly from the records of other guerrilla pan-African movements that indicate that many of their members viewed education as elitist and anti-revolutionary. For instance, FRELIMO leader Samora Machel’s speech in a widely-distributed pamphlet entitled “Producers and Students” illustrates the difference in assumed attitudes towards education:

We are revolutionaries, our activities always have political meaning and content. Therefore, our production, besides having an economic meaning and content, must have also political content...There are comrades who look down on study because they do not know its value. Study is like a lamp in the night which shows us the way. To work without studying is to advance in the dark. Because our starting point is a fairly weak one, we advise that in this first phase every effort should be made to raise the level of basic knowledge, especially by wiping out illiteracy in the units and among the cadres. The Political Commissar, in co-operations with the Department of Education and Culture and working closely with the Provincial organisations, must organize the programme of fighting illiteracy and ignorance in such a way

²³⁸ “Editorial,” *The Zimbabwe Review* 1, no. 3, (December 1969): 15.

that each FRELIMO base becomes a base of fighting against obscurantism. To produce is to learn. Learn in order to produce and struggle better.²³⁹

The fact that ZAPU's records and publications contain no justification of the importance of education or accounts of members "looking down on study" is indicative of different general attitudes towards education.

Despite quoting socialist revolutionaries such as Che Guevara and Fanon in these earlier calls from 1969 for students to join the revolution, it was not until August 30th, 1974 that the *Zimbabwe Review* explicitly defined "revolutionary education" and tied it to the broader anti-capitalist and anti-colonial socialist ideologies of the party. A 1974 article entitled "Revolutionary Youth" states:

The case of an ideology has to crop up in this crucial stage of our armed struggle. After a thorough review of the Zimbabwe way of life and government in the days of yore, one answer was gleaned: We must have a socialist way of life in Zimbabwe. It fits in with a lot of our hereditary, cultural and social way of running the country our grandfathers implemented. There is no room for capitalism in Zimbabwe. For it will never be tolerated. We cannot make this supreme human sacrifice only to bondage ourselves to "black faces with white masks" as Franz Fanon aptly puts it.

It is also important to note that, like in all revolutionary struggles raging in different parts of the world, the Zimbabwe youth are on for the crucial and decisive factors in its pursuance and its lynchpin.²⁴⁰

By 1976, in a Special Issue of the *Zimbabwe Review*, the article, "The Student's Role in the Liberation Struggle" firmly establishes the difference between a revolutionary and counter-revolutionary student within a socialist conception of education:

A student must, therefore be ready to be a servant of the masses rather than their masters as it is the case in the capitalist society....armed with a socialist definition of a student, we can now tackle his or her diversified duties in the liberation struggle and indeed in a free Zimbabwe". The student is usually a youth as most fall within the age-limit of those comprising the youth wing. We have such a youth wing in the African national council of Zimbabwe.²⁴¹

²³⁹ qtd. in Aquino de Braganpa and Immanuel Wallerstein (eds.), *The African Liberation Reader* (London: ZED press, 1982), 116-117.

²⁴⁰ "Revolutionary Youth," *The Zimbabwe Review*, August 1974, 4.

²⁴¹ "Student's Role in the Liberation Struggle," *The Zimbabwe Review*, August 1974, 17.

The article again reiterates the

“tendency among some Zimbabwean students who are assigned to fields of study other than the military one to think that they are a privileged lot whose qualifications will be superior to and more useful than those of a military nature. Such students do not realise that a military career is meant to develop Zimbabwe just as another career or profession. A military profession does not bar one from participating fully and effectively in the development of one’s country. It is because of such an erroneous attitude towards education that some students have developed a superiority complex. This must be destroyed forthwith.”²⁴²

The most detailed discussion of revolutionary education in the *Zimbabwean Review* appeared in an article entitled, “Education for Revolution,” in the September 1976 issue. In this publication, ZAPU challenged the epistemological bases of the Rhodesian curriculum, and argued that the curriculum and structure of missionary education was instrumental in imperialist and capitalist exploitation of Africans:

Education is one of the subtlest weapons that oppressors have used against us. With education they have colonized even the inner recesses of our minds: with education they have tried to weld us forever into obedient servants of their own malicious purposes. Yes, we want education. But we want an education which liberates... We want a revolutionary education. ... But this must be done with a sound understanding of basic educational principles and a clear analysis of how education and schools have been used among our people as a tool of capitalist imperialism.²⁴³

The above quote highlights a significant epistemological critique of the Rhodesian education system, and a simultaneous normative call for “liberatory education,” echoing the writings of Paulo Freire (who is mentioned in later editions of the *Zimbabwe Review*). The entire article reads as a decolonial critique of missionary education. It begins with theories and definitions of the basic principles of any education system including pedagogies as well as ideologies, social attitudes and customary behavior and overall socialization, followed by “how people learn” and then the history of education in Zimbabwean context, arguing that it followed the

²⁴² Ibid.

²⁴³ “Education for Revolution,” *The Zimbabwe Review*, September 1976, 35.

colonial conquest and was established to further the capitalist ambitions of the colonial oppressors. Most importantly, the article described three categories which ZAPU aimed to focus on in order to “create a new type of educational process which will liberate people from their mental oppression and will help build a new type of society,” these included “skills, political economic and social theory, and behavior.”²⁴⁴

But how much of ZAPU’s publications were mere rhetoric? Since these articles were written primarily to gain international support for the movement, the question arises as to what degree these stated educational ideologies and goals were reflected in actual policy and practice. Through the evidence presented in this and the following chapter on the political commissariat, I argue that ZAPU’s international writings about its educational ideologies and stances actually reflected the considerable resources they poured into the formal and political educational programs and opportunities they developed for their youth and party members during the war. For example, by 1976, when the above article which outlined ZAPU’s three educational foci was written, ZAPU founded its first schools in Zambia as a part of its refugee and welfare program, had established the Political Commissariat to teach political and economic subjects to cadres, and was already using Rhodesian schools and teachers as part of their recruitment strategies for the war.

It is also important to note that these articles, written for an international audience, require some interpretation as historical records. As an international publication, the *Zimbabwe Review* became one of the main ways ZAPU represented itself to an international audience; it is therefore both an exceptionally accurate reflection of the party’s outward ideological policies, but is equally limited in revealing party factions, inner turmoil, and other

²⁴⁴ “Education for Revolution,” 35.

aspects the party did not want made public. In light of this fact, I also interviewed party officials, one of whom, Saul Gwakuba Ndlovu, edited the *Zimbabwe Review*, in order to understand ZAPU's educational ideology in greater detail.

ZAPU's Ideological Rifts:

The interviews revealed that ZAPU's ideological landscape was far more varied and contested than the generally solidly socialist pages of the *Zimbabwe Review* suggested. The 1976 special issue on education calls for "every student to be conversant with the party's ideological concept and the objectives of the party for a free Zimbabwe."²⁴⁵ The reference to the "ideological concept" was not merely to a general ideology but a particular document written by T.G. Silundika that clearly defined ZAPU's socialist ideology. However, upon release from a decade in detention, Joshua Nkomo in 1974 unilaterally decided to disregard the document.

Nkomo and the nationalists in ZAPU's leadership pushed against the increasingly socialist ideology ZAPU's had adopted by the 1970's. The ideological differences between the older nationalists and the socialists within the party was reflected in the party's split approach towards education programs, and particular, scholarship programs. Interviews with ZAPU veterans, including the editor of the *Zimbabwe Review* indicated that the older nationalists, such as Nkomo, were eager for students to accept scholarships from both Eastern and Western bloc countries, whereas ZAPU's more socialist-leaning cadres viewed Western education as a form of capitalist indoctrination and were wary of Western education. These views are represented in the *Zimbabwe Review*'s criticism of Western scholarships and

²⁴⁵ *The Zimbabwe Review*, September 1976, 17.

education as politically indoctrinating. In an article in the *Zimbabwe Review* by Maclay Kanyangarara on “Class Struggle in Zimbabwe”, the author argues that western education, including scholarships to Western countries fosters the class struggle in Zimbabwe. He states,

“an African intelligentsia educated in western ideology exists and provides the vital link between the capitalist exploiters and the masses of Zimbabwe... people selected for scholarships or sponsored education abroad generally come from well-to-do families or if not they had to be promising young people- in the eyes of the Capitalists of course”.²⁴⁶

Despite views such as Maclay’s, both the more socialist as well as the nationalist cadres seemed to view higher education as an important good to be secured for their party members and refugees, and as an important instrument for the creation of a motivated and skilled party membership, a future citizenry, and diplomatic alliances with foreign powers. This is evidenced by the fact that despite ZAPU’s increasing critiques of Western education, there is no evidence that the party ever refused a scholarship offered to them.

A Government in Exile: Education for a Future State and Diplomacy

Why did ZAPU make such a substantial investment of their scarce resources in educational programs? Quite simply, because both the nationalist and socialist wings of the party saw education as the foundation of the future state of Zimbabwe. Both the articles in the *Zimbabwe Review* and interviews with party veterans indicate that ZAPU’s willingness to engage with anyone offering them scholarships was in line with their self-perception as a “government in exile”—and as such, viewed education as an essential instrument for

²⁴⁶ *The Zimbabwe Review*, February 2, 1978, 13.

planning for the future state and moulding the ideal citizen. The phrase, “government in exile” appeared verbatim in multiple interviews with veterans who described the necessity of education for shaping the future state and citizen.

ZAPU’s vision of a future state buttressed by an educated citizenry was made clear from their early appeals to students in the *Zimbabwe Review*. An article from 1969 explained, “When the foreigners go, we have to make sure that people shall be the masters of their own destiny and no chance should be left for the rise of another exploiting class.”²⁴⁷ And another article from the same year similarly noted,

“It is the ardent wish of ZAPU that all Zimbabwean students studying all over the world must not lose sight of this important fact about what role their country expects them to play after their studies. A truly educated and well orientated person always puts his or her country’s needs first and his or her personal comfort after.”²⁴⁸

These themes, of ZAPU as a government in exile training a new citizenry for a new state, were echoed in nearly all of the interviews with ZAPU veterans highlighting ZAPU’s long-term liberation strategy, at the heart of which lay education. In Mrs. M.’s words:

Maybe the other thing we can mention is that you see, with our party, ZAPU, it was a government in exile. Everyone was put in place. All departments were there, government departments and people were trained in those departments that were there. The army, the police, the civil servants. All departments were there, so everyone was being put, ready so that when we come back home there is no time for learning, to train people. All was put in place. That’s what happened, but when we came back it was a different story.²⁴⁹

These sentiments were echoed in an interview with JM:

ZAPU itself was an entity which believed that this holistic education they wanted to give uniquely to its people and prepare [them]. And it was like a government in exile. They were like a state of a kind. A state in a state. So, they wanted to give what was truly theirs. If our students had gone into the Zambian system openly like that, they will not have the commitment that was so required. They will not have the orientation that was so required by ZAPU. But

²⁴⁷ “Editorial,” *The Zimbabwe Review*, June 1969, 11.

²⁴⁸ “The Student and the Revolution,” *The Zimbabwe Review*, December 1969, 11.

²⁴⁹ Mrs. M., interview with the author, December, 2018.

from a certain level, some will go into those schools and some would even go abroad to go and do education. But first they'll be taught the basic that the party wanted.²⁵⁰

Another veteran recalled:

In fact, what was happening was, ZAPU was a government in exile, and ZIPRA was just another department, but ZAPU had its own program, and the program admitted people that were going to fit. Some were coming straight from home, straight into the scholarships in the UK, Canada, America, and other places. It's not just the Eastern country blocks that used to train our people, for further training, especially civil training. But people could come even from home, recruited straight from home and sent straight to the colleges. But some were being recruited from the camps as well, because you will find that at least some guys who had completed their O-levels and A-levels or even degrees, were being taken for further training in civil or in other technical situations in the military or in the civil. And these people were being earmarked for once we had a liberated zone, these people were going to come back and operate in the liberated zone. Like the doctors and agriculturalists; they came back and they actually were practicing here on the Zambian side, so at least what they were practicing was going to be implemented when we come back home.²⁵¹

While another veteran said:

I need to point out that at the time we got to the war, we had some doctors. So, education was inseparable from the struggle itself because we were struggling with the aim that one day, we were going to rule ourselves. ZAPU had grown up to a government in exile, a real government in exile, with proper administration, proper, even if people did not have the relevant certificates, but he has got a degree in this, that, and that. But some of it in the bush there, people were being taught; they would go to the schools until the Rhodesian government realized that these youngsters that are being sent to school, the so-called refugee camp, in fact, was a qualified school; some of them built ZIPRA into a sophisticated weapon. Until they [the Rhodesians] were forced to bomb the [ZAPU] schools as they were.²⁵²

The above quotes are significant not only in that each reference to ZAPU as a “government in exile,” but that each of them describes education as central to ZAPU’s goal of winning the war and creating a new citizenry for a new nation. JM stated that ZAPU was abducting/recruiting students from schools to offer a “holistic” education”, and the last interviewee’s quote points to ZAPU’s camp schools for refugees and recruits which, in his words, were shaping “youngsters” into a “sophisticated weapon.”

While discussion of the exact number of personnel ZAPU had trained or planned to

²⁵⁰ JM, interview with the author, December 2018.

²⁵¹ Interview with the author, December 2018.

²⁵² interview with the author, December 2018.

have trained for this future “government in exile” would be impossible to determine, what is clear from the above quotes is that ZAPU not only had an educational strategy which organized their various activities in tandem with their guerrilla and military tactics, but that their normative goals were well known and taught to their cadres during the struggle.

Having briefly described ZAPU’s educational ideology, the rest of the chapter will be dedicated to the various activities ZAPU carried out in accordance with this strategy. ZAPU instrumentalized education in these five ways:

1. ZAPU organized prison education as a means to educate freedom fighters and future statesmen.
2. It requested and negotiated for scholarships and educational assistance from any country or entity willing to aid its efforts.
3. ZAPU set up formal schools in refugee camps in Zambia.
4. It set up a political commissariat to politically educate soldiers and community members at all ranks.
5. Through mass media, ZAPU used what some might term “propaganda” to educate and seek assistance in its fight against the Rhodesian state.

Education for Political Organisation: Prison Education

Before exploring ZAPU’s diplomatic and political educational strategies, brief mention must be made of party members’ experiences with prison education—one of the earliest and most important sites of educational activity and organization for ZAPU leaders and members (as well as other political prisoners in Rhodesia and the region at large). As early as 1965, ZAPU published reports that “60 Gonakudzingwa students had registered to

write GCE exams in June at Vila Salazar Police Camp.”²⁵³ Gonakudzingwa was a political detention camp set up for political detainees along the Mozambiquan border. The Gonakudzingwa Educational Program began in September 1964, the year the first group of ZAPU’s leadership was imprisoned. According to reports in the *Zimbabwe Review*, Mr. Chinamano was the coordinator and Mr. Ngebetsha as principal, of the educational program in this prison camp in which “classes range from adult education, primary and post-primary education, Junior Certificate and General Certificate of Education, O and A Levels, Journalism, Bachelor of Bachelor of Laws and Constitutional Law, Bachelor of Arts Economic and Bachelor of Arts in Sociology etc. The teaching staff comprises restricted qualified teachers, graduates and under-graduates.”²⁵⁴ It was in this detention camp that ZAPU leadership, including Joshua Nkomo, obtained educational degrees through correspondence.

In this section, I examine the experiences of five interviewees who were detained or imprisoned by the Rhodesian government in order to highlight the importance of prison education for ZAPU. Of these five, three had studied in prison, one had intended to study, and the final interviewee mentioned he had no interest in studying during his imprisonment. Four of the interviewees were not only enthusiastic to study during their detainment but viewed education during their imprisonment as a means of fighting in the war. Through prison education, they felt they were grooming themselves for future leadership in ZAPU and the new state.

One such interviewee was GU, who was first admitted to Khami maximum security

²⁵³ “Educational Progress in Gonakudzingwa,” *The Zimbabwe Review*, May 1965, 7.

²⁵⁴ Ibid.

prison as a class D felon:

In fact, I was given a 10-year sentence. At Khami prison, the regime had created what they called “D-Class.” D-Class was sort of a name given to hard-core criminals because they did not say we were politicians; they were calling us hard-core criminals. Now then, we were considered as very dangerous and those who can use arms of war or weapons or whatever. So, we never had an opportunity now to try and spread the gospel [of revolution] with what, with the other people or other prisoners. That was until 1971... When Pearce Commission was meeting, it gave us now the chance to lobby the Christian Council to intervene on our behalf and try to organize.... The prisoners, the political prisoners that had come are having abnormal conditions. That is the time when things started to change and we could be released and put in bigger cells: in 5s, in 10s....²⁵⁵

After being allowed to study through correspondence, GU completed his Standard 6, after which he wrote his Junior certificate and began his O Levels through correspondence at London University. He explained the structure of the educational system in Khami:

We were doing correspondence and we used to teach each other, making classes. Those for instance, those who doing Ordinary level, could teach Standard 6 and Junior Certificates, and those who were doing A level could teach form 4s, and some of the Junior Certificates. So that’s how we managed to teach each other, and we had lecturers which were paid for by the Christian Council. That is from... it was paid to Central African Correspondence College. Can you see... Central African Correspondence College. We could not do with ICC, International Correspondence schools, but we were confined to Africa.²⁵⁶

In stark contrast to when he was first imprisoned and was only allowed to read the Bible, he explained that after 1970 he was allowed books from the National Free Library, which included a considerable number of political theory and history books:

Then when we started to do correspondence, we were now being allowed to have some books from the National Free library, so we could make some choices: history books that had to do with Winston Churchill, books that had to do with the Paris commune. History that had to do with Bismarck and to us now it gave us a chance to study now politics. We could see that, so the Europeans sometimes had around a hundred years of war. Why? And we go up to the stage where we could understand that in 1844 was the beginning of the Europeans to see that the industry was no longer sufficient to give the European workers. That is why they started to migrate to African countries. So, this history was beginning to broaden our political thinking. And 1844, this is the time, in fact there were just small scripts that quoted people like Karl Marx, Engels, Lenin was not quoted.²⁵⁷

²⁵⁵ GU, interview with author, July 2017.

²⁵⁶ Ibid.

²⁵⁷ Ibid.

GU also described this prison education as grooming him for “political leadership,” further highlighting the significance of education to the guerrilla movement as a tool for personal and communal political advancement.

GU’s account also highlights the mutual learning that happened in prisons in which older prisoners, or those who had a more advanced education or had studied overseas, would teach other prisoners, as GU further explained:

Karl Marx was quoted especially when they were talking about the start of philosophy and how philosophy was understood by them then... that is, when we began to understand that with the help by those who were captured and [had been] sent to the Soviet Union. So, they would help to interpret what socialism was all about as compared to capitalism. So, those who were doing law like Mnangagwa, the former Moffat Ndlovu and others, you know we could now share the knowledge, the law, how the British Constitution was wrote and why it is said that the British Constitution is different from the American Constitution. Different because it is a monarchy. The American Constitution is a republic. Then studying all those started to give us a broader appreciation for political leadership. In fact, it was also, it was now grooming us for political leadership.²⁵⁸

The notion of prison education as “grooming for political leadership”, within a hierarchy of leadership developed within the prison system echoes the findings of previous studies of education in Rhodesian prisons that prison education played an important role in the intellectual and political formation of the revolutionary leadership class. The alliances, friendships, and rifts amongst them that have influenced Zimbabwean politics down to the present day. Prisons such as Gonakudzingwa in which political prisoners were held were loosely guarded, which meant that prisoners were able to organise themselves—they had freedom of movement and gathering within its confines, they even published their own newspaper.²⁵⁹

²⁵⁸ Ibid. GU would later be captured and while a guerrilla fighter and imprisoned until the end of the war in 1979, active guerrilla fighters were not allowed to study in prison, but he looks back favorably to his education.

²⁵⁹ See Jocelyn Alexander, “Nationalism and Self-government in Rhodesian detention: Gonakudzingwa, 1964–1974.” *Journal of Southern African Studies* 37, no. 3 (2011): 551-569 and Munyaradzi Munochiveyi, *Prisoners of Rhodesia: Inmates and Detainees in the Struggle for Zimbabwean Liberation, 1960-1980*. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

Like GU, MM was imprisoned multiple times during the war, and referred to prison as a place “where I advanced myself.” He studied in two different detention centers, first at Wawa and then at Gonakudzingwa:

Now at Wawa, it [education] was automatic because we started from Gonakudzingwa through facilitation by the foreign countries, especially... the World Church Council. They were the people assisting us and it was good. We used to enjoy it... [I corresponded] with a South African college, up to JC, that’s a Junior Certificate at Form 2. When I was released, I continued doing a general certificate of education O level. That’s when I started with commerce, economics, religious studies, and economic history. I studied economics, commerce, British constitution, all levels, economic history, O level, [and then] I advanced to religious studies, British constitution and economics.²⁶⁰

When asked why he wanted to study in prison, MM replied, “We were expecting to be in the government. We knew it because we were prepared in that. To fight for the government and we knew that destination was going to be arrived.”²⁶¹

Not all political prisoners were allowed to study, however. Two of my interviewees, including former Commander Moffat Hadebe, a well-known veteran and one of the earliest guerrilla fighters, were imprisoned at Khami maximum security prison year for terrorist activities and were prevented from studying. Mr. Hadebe noted, “Had we been given the chance like the detainees, we would be doctors today because we would be learned. We would have started in prison, but that chance was refused.”²⁶²

Of the 41 interviews I carried out with veterans, only two noted that they had no interest in furthering their education. Those who were prevented from studying in prison, like Mr. Hadebe, recalled not being afforded the opportunity with a pang of regret. One

²⁶⁰ MM interview with the author, August 2017. During the day, from 6am to 4pm, the prisoners were able to exercise and walk around and they did conduct some classes, but he notes that the main opportunity time for them to study was at night, after 4pm when they were brought into the barracks. The prison guards not only allowed them to study, but even brought in books and blackboards for the prisoners.

²⁶¹ Ibid.

²⁶² Permission from interviewee was granted to print his name in full. Moffat Hadebe, interview with author, July, 2017.

interviewee, JG, whose family was well-educated, refused a scholarship to study abroad and instead, chose to travel to the Soviet Union via Dar es Salam in order to study military tactics. What the interviewees who had studied in prison emphasized was that their educational aspirations were not merely economic, but that the notion of using their time in prison to groom themselves for political leadership pervaded the political culture of ZAPU detainees in both the detention camps and prisons.

Beyond exemplifying of ZAPU's conception of education as an instrument for personal and political gain, what is significant about the prison education program is that it ironically afforded individuals such as GG an opportunity to attain an advanced education, which he might not have had outside of prison in the Rhodesian educational system for Africans. This is also true of the ZAPU's camp education policies and their scholarship programs which are detailed below. The bottlenecked Rhodesian education system limited the number of places for Africans in higher education, and the already limited funding for African education became even scarcer for the handful of schools that offered Junior and O-level certificates to Africans. Thus, for many, Rhodesian prisons and ZAPU refugee camps offered greater access to higher education than the formal Rhodesian educational system.

Education as a Tool for Future State-Building and Citizenry

While both an example of ZAPU's educational ideology and an instrument for educating the leaders for a future state, the prison education program also reveals the relationship between education and international diplomacy during the war. The interviewees who studied in detention could not have done so without the diplomatic interventions of the World Council of Churches, the Pearce Commission and international donors who were

convinced by ZAPU's head of education, Sikhanyiso Ndlovu, to support the education of political prisoners.

ZAPU leader, Joshua Nkomo, who himself studied in prison, understood the political implications of acquiring humanitarian aid for education, and, taking the long view of the importance of an educated populace for building a new nation as well as fighting the liberation war, frequently requested scholarships from every country and non-governmental organization with which he corresponded.

Publicity director of ZAPU and editor of *The Zimbabwe Review*, Saul Gwakuba Ndlovu, noted that ZAPU had a strict policy of recruiting as many educated individuals and requesting as many scholarships as possible:

When we went abroad, we were looking at the possibility of recruiting as many people as possible for armed struggle, yeah, but we were at the same time asking those who were willing to assist us to give us scholarships. Most of the countries that were willing to give us scholarships were in the Warsaw Pact block—that is the Soviet Union, the then German Democratic Republic, Yugoslavia, and....of course, our old friend India, yeah, and it was then under Nehru. And also, scholarships from the United States, yeah. But the numbers were not as large as those from the countries in the socialist block. However, we got scholarships too here from the United Kingdom through the commonwealth.²⁶³

Despite the ongoing war and military personnel requirements, ZAPU leadership actively convinced recruits with the highest levels of education to accept the scholarships and return to aid ZAPU and the future state. One such individual was JG, an interviewee who despite his family being well educated, declined offers from ZAPU and ANC leaders to study abroad:

No, we're going deeper and integrating with other movements and as far as education is concerned, they dangled it to me in Dar-es-Salaam there were scholarships to Jamaica, scholarships to wherever in the world, even to western countries and to Russia and to this and that... So, you know, they dangled that, and I said no, my family is covered as far as education is concerned. I want my family to be covered on the military side. I'm there. I'll fight and that's it, you know, so it was a matter of choice, I was not coerced into the military. I chose, and I remember it was the then chief of ZIPRA, Archie Ndlovu, and the late Joe Modise who said,

²⁶³ Permission received from interviewee to publish his full name. Saul Gwakuba Ndlovu, interview with author, December, 2018.

hey, this is not a picnic, what you are choosing, we would rather you go to school. It's another form of fighting. We want people from our side, from our organization, educated people, who will take over, it won't be an eternal arms struggle. You know, who will take over in industry, you know, this and that, you now. And I said, fine, no, my family members can equally represent, you know, that part of it. As for me, I opt for the military option.²⁶⁴

What is striking in JG's quote is how involvement of ANC and ZAPU leadership in recruiting and sending cadres overseas for educational training and how they presented it as "another way of fighting." Akim Ndlovu was Commander of ZIPRA²⁶⁵ and Joe Modise was one of the founders of Umkhonto we Sizwe, the military wing of ANC.²⁶⁶ Further examples of ZAPU's eagerness to send and accept degree holders in all fields include the recruitment of Zenzo Nkobi, the official ZAPU photographer. Zenzo Nkobi received a scholarship to study photography in Berlin and after his studies, returned to capture thousands of images which have since been an important source for the history of ZAPU after ZANU-PF won the independence elections and confiscated most ZAPU documents.²⁶⁷ Interviewees mentioned other ZAPU members who studied engineering in various countries throughout the world, such as Mr. Charles Mdonko, who studied locomotive engineering in Hungary.²⁶⁸

Whether these scholarship recipients were explicitly expected to return to the

²⁶⁴ JG interview with the author, December 2018.

²⁶⁵ In 1965, Akim Ndlovu was chosen to be the commander of ZIPRA with Robson Manyika as the deputy commander. Dumiso Dabengwa was made Chief of Intelligence and Reconnaissance. ZIPRA was under the command of the Vice-President of the party, James Chikerema.

²⁶⁶ Johannes "Joe" Modise (23 May 1929 – 26 November 2001) was one of the founders and Commander-in-Chief of Umkhonto we Sizwe, the ANC's military wing.

²⁶⁷ *Through Zenzo Nkobi's Lens*, 58.

²⁶⁸ CM, interview with the author, June, 2017.

military or to serve the imagined future nation-state, ZAPU's official policy was that it willingly accepted international educational aid from international bodies and communist and capitalist countries alike. Both Western and Eastern Bloc countries and NGOs offered these scholarships to establish diplomatic relations with ZAPU (and other African independence movements), attempting to influence the party's ideology and alliances in the context of the Cold War, and to provide non-military support for the nationalist movement. Despite ZAPU publications' ambivalence towards education in the UK and US, interviews with individuals close to Nkomo note that he was not opposed to accepting scholarships from Western nations, unlike some of the more leftist leaders in the party, which highlights the ideological rifts which existed within ZAPU between the nationalists who were jailed for a decade during the early 1970's, which were the crucial years of the party's established political and ideological ties with the Soviet Union. ZAPU's political ideology was therefore reflected in their overall educational strategies and engagement with international educational aid.

Education as an Instrument of International Diplomacy:

ZAPU's success in procuring a great number of scholarships was in large part due to the broader global political context within which they were fighting. ZAPU had to be diplomatic in order to get scholarships and other support from both Soviet and Western allied nations in the Cold War context, and these nations in turn used education as a diplomatic and political tool to compete for influence in the shifting political landscape of the African continent.

As early as 1966, when Britain imposed sanctions on Rhodesia while continuing to

push for a peaceful resolution through negotiations and various constitutional proposals²⁶⁹, the colonial powers also implemented a “soft power” policy in which humanitarian assistance, and particularly educational assistance, was used as a token of support for the liberation movements amidst the international outcry against the Smith government.²⁷⁰ Canada and the U.S. followed suit. In 1966 as the U.N. Security Council Committee condemned Rhodesia's UDI and called for stricter measures than the sanctions Britain had imposed, education was waved as a token of diplomacy. Mlambo notes that “in order to relieve tension at the conference, Lester Pearson, the Canadian prime minister, recommended that countries of the Commonwealth should take over the responsibility of helping the Rhodesian African to obtain an education. Consequently, a scholarship scheme was set up.”

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The use of education as a diplomatic tool was appealing for several reasons. First and foremost, if their support of the oppressed Africans in Rhodesia was called into question, as

²⁶⁹ Smith's Universal Declaration of Independence from Britain, which aimed at creating a white-supremacist, minority-ruled state at a time when Britain was granting majority rule in many African countries, caused an international outcry. The majority-rule African countries, including Ghana, Algeria and Egypt, as well as the Organization for African Unity, which was established in 1963, called for immediate military intervention and believed that Britain would be in support of forcibly overthrowing the Rhodesian Front. Britain however, not wanting to upset important economic relationships with South Africa, limited its actions to sanctions and even made sure that these sanctions avoided disrupting South Africa's economy. Britain, as well as the U.S. and Canada, were caught in a political quandary. On the one hand, they wished to maintain their economic relationships with South Africa and knew that if they actively pushed for majority rule in Rhodesia, it would ruin their diplomatic relationship with South Africa. South Africa was wary of the budding calls for majority rule and did not want to risk having a hostile neighbor. On the other hand, not interfering in Rhodesia increased the chances that the Soviet Union, Cuba and other socialist countries would come to the aid of the nationalist movements as they had done in Egypt and Algeria. In the midst of the Cold War, with active fighting in Vietnam, the Western powers did not want Rhodesia to become a communist nation like so many other newly-independent countries.

²⁷⁰To understand the full context of Britain's dilemma, see Mlambo, *Rhodesia: The Struggle for a Birthright*, 249.

²⁷¹ Mlambo, *Rhodesia: The Struggle for a Birthright*, 180. For more on sanctions and the role that the UDI played etc. see Ibid, 179-18.

it continued to be throughout the war, Britain and other countries could claim solidarity with the independence movements by pointing to their educational scholarship and other humanitarian assistance while seeming to take the moral high ground and refusing to “condone” violence while purporting to promote a “peaceable agreement.” The second reason education was appealing was that it supported the myth—which the Rhodesian government often touted—that Africans were not “civilised” or “educated” enough to successfully run a country, and that education abroad would help prepare them to take up self-governance. As Mlambo aptly notes, the sincere call for scholarships from Canada's Prime minister, “was made in ignorance of the situation. The Africans in Rhodesia are better educated than they are in several independent African countries, and the number of educated Africans outnumbers the White population. The scholarship scheme had emanated from the belief that the Rhodesian whites were sincerely prepared to accept majority rule based on a system of meritocracy.”²⁷²

As White's study, *Unpopular Sovereignty*, demonstrates, the Rhodesian Front and its support base could not possibly recognize Africans as ever deserving sovereignty. The Rhodesian Front viewed Rhodesia as the last stronghold of the British Empire and Western civilization itself. In order to maintain this myth, and the racial and civilisational hierarchy upon which it was founded, White Rhodesians had to believe Africans undeserving and “not ready” for majority rule and in perpetual need of their civilising influence and governance.

The third reason offering educational scholarships was appealing to Britain and the U.S., particularly as ZAPU and ZANU began to increasingly rely on Soviet and Chinese support, was that they aimed to counter what Western countries viewed as Socialist political

²⁷²

Ibid.

indoctrination. The fears of a “communist behind every bush” was so ingrained that the U.S. and Britain radically shaped their educational systems within their own countries during the Cold War in response to the perceived communist threat.²⁷³ Given the fact that the U.S. had been fighting in Vietnam for nine years when the Rhodesian government announced its U.D.I., there is little doubt that the threat of the spread of Communism and the opportunity to thwart it by educating Africans was at the forefront of the American foreign agenda.

The US did, in fact, have an educational program which took political and economic ideology seriously, so much so that the CIA closely monitored Rhodesian refugee students and their scholarship programs in the USA. A 1974 study by Vincent Vera, “Zimbabwe Refugees and Exiles in the U.S” noted that when the US government established a scholarship program for Black Rhodesian refugees in Lincoln University and Rochester University that enrolled 200 students as of January 21, 1965, the program was officially described as “provide[ing] an alternative to study in Communist countries. The education the students receive here will help prepare them to make a responsible, constructive contribution to the development of Africa and to provide intelligent democratic leadership to their people.”²⁷⁴ The funding for most of these Rhodesian refugee scholars was administered by

²⁷³ While outside of the scope of this thesis, it is worth noting that it was in the context of the Cold War, particularly the Soviet launch of Sputnik, that prompted Dwight Eisenhower to increase funding for higher education and to sponsor math and science teaching programmes throughout the country. The US government also sponsored numerous educational conferences which discussed countering Communist ideology. These conferences, which included teachers, actively ensured that the abhorrence of Communist ideologies were clearly highlighted within US curricula.

²⁷⁴ Vincent Vera, “Zimbabwe Refugees and Exiles in the United States: A Study in the Contradictions within U.S. Foreign Policy, 1965-1974, (Phd Diss., Union Institute and University, 1974), . An interesting note, which provides a window into the educational views of refugees is that SASP students chose to study the social sciences and accounting. The Lincoln directors attributed this primarily to a “deficiency in natural science preparation” and the fact that many were “politically conscious/reform/revolutionary-minded and drawn to what they conceived as ‘leadership’ education.” While the immediacy of the choice of political studies seems natural in the case of politically-minded refugees, an important aspect to note is that for much of Rhodesian history, the social sciences and humanities were largely limited to White schools. As will be discussed later in this chapter, the denial of what one might term a “liberal arts education” likely spurred individuals to study the social

the US State Department's Southern African Student Scholars program.²⁷⁵ International bodies, including USAID and OXFAM, also funded and sourced scholarships for refugees in the war, particularly in the mid to late 1970s when large numbers of refugees crossed into Zambia and Botswana.²⁷⁶

The CIA closely monitored these established "humanitarian" programs which also included scholarships from the "African Student Programs for American Universities (ASPAU) administered by Agency for International Development (USAID) of the U.S. State Department."²⁷⁷

The US had, in fact, much to be afraid of given the Soviet Union's generous educational support for African students which has been well documented by historians.²⁷⁸ By the end of the 1960s, over 5,000 Africans were studying academic courses in the USSR, and that number would reach 30,000 or a quarter of the total body of foreign students, by the collapse of the Soviet Union.²⁷⁹ The Soviet Union's educational exchange was unequivocally

sciences when provided with an opportunity. It also sheds important light on the way in which certain kinds of education served as signifiers of class and status in Rhodesia.

²⁷⁵ Ibid, 179. It was set up in 1961 by the Department of State as part of the Fulbright-Hays Educational Exchange Program "in the belief that sweep of independence would soon arrive in Southern Africa." (Ibid). For more on how the scholarships were run and on the experience of Rhodesian African refugees see Ibid, 85.

²⁷⁶ *Through Zenzo Nkobi's Lens*, 62.

²⁷⁷ Ibid.

²⁷⁸ See Dennis Laumann and Vladimir Shubin, "The Hot 'Cold War': The USSR in Southern Africa," *Journal of African History* 52, no. 3 (2011): 414; Constantin Katsakioris, "Burden or Allies?: Third World Students and Internationalist Duty Through Soviet Eyes," *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 18, no. 3 (2017), Katsakioris, "Creating a Socialist Intelligentsia. Soviet Educational Aid and its Impact on Africa (1960-1991)." *Cahiers d'études africaines* 226 (2017): 259-288; Marcia Schenck, "Negotiating the German Democratic Republic: Angolan student migration during the Cold War, 1976-90." *Africa* 89, no. 1 (2019): 144-166; Mariya Ivancheva, "Paternalistic internationalism and (de) colonial practices of Cold War higher education exchange: Bulgaria's connections with Cuba and Angola." *Journal of Labor and Society* 22, no. 4 (2019): 733-748.

²⁷⁹ Constantin Katsakioris, "Burden or Allies?: Third World Students and Internationalist Duty Through Soviet Eyes," *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 18, no. 3 (2017), 355.

part of the USSR's policy to establish diplomatic ties with African nations within the context of the Cold War. Through posters and political material, the USSR portrayed themselves as a multi-racial, egalitarian society in contrast to racialized and unequal societies of capitalist countries, as can be seen in Figure 2 below, for example:.



Figure 2: 1964 Soviet poster. The text reads, "I'll never forget a friend, if I befriended him in Moscow!" Photograph: Wayland Rudd Archive/Yevgeniy Fiks/Flint²⁸⁰

But the international diplomacy and support of ZAPU through educational scholarships also extended beyond the ideological tug of war between the Western nations and the Communist East. International organizations, and particularly missionary groups that had heavily invested in the history of education development in Rhodesia offered scholarships and later, during the influx of refugees into Zambia and Botswana, humanitarian and educational assistance. Gwabi Bhebe describes the significant role of the missionaries in

²⁸⁰ Reproduced in Steve Rose, "Racial harmony in a Marxist utopia: how the Soviet Union capitalised on US discrimination" *The Guardian*, 24 January 2016. <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/shortcuts/2016/jan/24/racial-harmony-in-a-marxist-utopia-how-the-soviet-union-capitalised-on-us-discrimination-in-pictures>. Accessed October 6, 2019.

his book *The Southern Lutheran Church* and the various humanitarian and sometimes military assistance which they afforded the liberation movements, including ZAPU. He recounts how, for both ZANU and ZAPU, different missionary organizations appealed to their host bodies for aid for the guerrilla movements.

Since many churches in the country were overseen by international bodies, many were sympathetic to the liberation cause and were keen to support what to them were non-violent humanitarian programs. For example, when ZANU (ZAPU's rival guerrilla movement) had appealed to the Swedish government for military aid, the government instead offered them a scholarship.²⁸¹ Bhebe describes how missionary groups, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in particular, with ties in Lesotho, Botswana and Swaziland as early as 1966, sponsored Rhodesian African students, and provided various forms of humanitarian and even military aid.²⁸² Suffice to say that missionary support for education and the liberation movements extended beyond North-South and East-South relationships.

Higher education institutions from around the world also supported ZAPU and refugee scholarships. Saul Gwakuba Ndlovu for example, noted having once toured Canada “under the auspices of the Canadian University services courses, CUSO.”²⁸³ Academics who

²⁸¹ Bhebe, *The Zapu and Zanu Guerrilla Warfare and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe*, 165 Bhebe notes that the reasons for missionary support for the ZAPU and ZANU guerrillas were justified given that “Besides the majority of the local Church leaders—the pastors, evangelists, elders, teachers, headmaster, nurses, doctors, etc.—were educated or trained at the height of the mass nationalist movement and therefore did not require much persuasion to sympathize with the guerrillas. Moreover the majority of them had radios, which they tuned in the evenings to Radio Lusaka (Zambia) and Radio Maputo (Mozambique) to listen to the liberation messages, exhortations and propaganda, which purported to give the progress of the struggle in terms of how far the forces had penetrated into the country, so that when freedom fighters announced their arrival in the Mberengwa-Gwanda Beit Bridge areas Church authorities were not surprised. Finally, the Church was situated in one of the worst-hit areas by colonialism, to the extent that the people hardly raised enough food for subsistence, while a lot of their livestock was dying away because of lack of pastures and surface water. Land hunger was turning the people into ready supporters of the liberation struggle.” (Ibid).

²⁸² Ibid, 155.

²⁸³ Saul Gwakuba Ndlovu, Interview with author, December 2018.

traveled abroad on scholarships often became ambassadors for the guerrilla movements. For example, in his book, Gwabi Bhebe notes how the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs appointed Dr. Phinias Makhurane, “then a Research Fellow at the University of Uppsala, as its acting Representative to Sweden” in addition to depositing money into the Zimbabwe African People’s Welfare Trust account in Lusaka, Zambia.²⁸⁴ As noted above, while vehemently opposed to the “soft-power” response of the Western nations to the RF’s UDI declaration, and while questioning the capitalist ideologies of these nations, ZAPU still accepted and requested scholarships from any country for as many students as possible throughout the war in order to educate a large class of people who could serve as civil servants in the new state. As Saul Gwakuba Ndlovu, ZAPU’s publicity director, recalled, his travels requesting scholarships for ZAPU students took him all around the world, seeking educational opportunities in socialist, capitalist, and non-aligned countries:

I spent 16-17 years abroad, not only in Zambia. I was also sent to countries like Egypt, Algeria, the Soviet Union, Britain, Tanzania, quite a long time in Tanzania, quite a long time in Egypt, quite some time in Algeria. But, off and on, many, many, times in the Soviet Union. Once in a while in the US. Once, only once, for a protracted tour of Canada, under the auspices of the Canadian University services courses, CUSO. That is in Canada, but elsewhere several times, India. So, I think the educational policy of ZAPU was commendable, yeah, it was commendable because by the time of attainment of independence, we had, not enough, but we had a nucleus of personnel who could actually form a good civil service system. Yes, we had, we had it for transport, the railway transport, for airways we had pilots, for medical services we had a number of doctors and nurses, and for education, we had quite a number of people who could have schools.²⁸⁵

Education for Direct Warfare

Although ZAPU invested heavily in the higher education of its members for the future state, foremost as a liberation movement ZAPU had to prioritize its military campaigns

²⁸⁴ Bhebe, *The Zapu and Zanu Guerrilla Warfare and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe*, 27.

²⁸⁵ Saul Gwakuba Ndlovu, Interview with author, December 2018.

in order to ensure said imagined future state. As such, practical knowledge became an important prerequisite for military technical competency needed to fight the war. Throughout the 1970s, ZAPU developed its army for a protracted armed struggle and with the support of the Soviet Union, deployed sophisticated weaponry. As will be discussed in the following chapter, ZAPU sent thousands of fighters abroad to be trained militarily. The soldiers therefore needed not only language skills, but also mathematical and technical knowledge to use sophisticated weaponry, in addition to the tactical training they received. As former ZIPRA commander CRN recalled:

ZIPRA, it demanded people with mathematics, because as the war developed it was not just some small arms, but even the arms that needed somebody academic, some knowledge of calculating, using even planes, fighting planes. Even the heavy artillery that we need to calculate the distance, we need to calculate the [slope of the] ground and other things. So, we needed to educate those guys so that at least they could take over the level of the war.²⁸⁶

He also remarked that several other academic disciplines, such as engineering, and even political science were important on the battlefield:

Let me talk about my own experience... when we were selected, we were 90 in number. We had battalion commanders, somebody who can command more than 500 men. We had commissars; a commissar is a political student and instructor, a person who analyses news, analyses information, he interprets it to meet your political requirements. We needed that greatly because that had an influence into how our soldiers operated and understood the development of the war. We had engineers; Engineers are people who deal with explosives. They use explosives and they can remove explosives where they are meant to damage or to interfere with our operations. We had communications people intercepting messages. That is not a joke and if you find a guerrilla organization having interception equipment, you must know that they are developed to a conventional level. Simple things like military binoculars; they're not binoculars that you can use at a football match, they are meant to calculate distance. Some can even determine how the weather is going to be in the next hour or two. So, you need someone who has got an understanding of things like rainfall... wind speed, because all those will influence your battlefield performance.²⁸⁷

MP, who had been trained in Angola, describes his selection for mortar because he had received a secondary education.

When we got to Angola, they were now categorized in respective groups because the training was in different sectors, with training in infantry, training in communications, training in

²⁸⁶ RN, interview with the author, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, July 2017.

²⁸⁷ Ibid.

artillery, training in engineering. So, there was a requirement that ruled if you were going to be trained in engineering, communication and artillery, you had to have a certain basic education, like secondary education. Then, those who were less, then they'd be involved in infantry. So, since I had secondary education, I was selected to be in artillery. Involved in mortars... So, that's the particular aspect in which I was to train in the mortar company. There were 12 companies which were selected, so having these specialist companies of communication, engineering, artillery involving mortars and anti-tankers.²⁸⁸

As detailed by CRN and MP above, ZAPU leadership often assigned soldiers based on their education, training and personal attributes to leadership and technical military positions within ZAPU and ZIPRA. Trainees who were sent overseas to study guerrilla and conventional warfare tactics sometimes needed prerequisite skills in order to qualify for these scholarships. One of the most common skills was the ability to speak English, which was foremostly taught in Rhodesian schools. English was, for the most part, the language of instruction and warfare. Mr. Mpofu, who was trained in Angola, recalls:

Generally, everyone considered education as a requirement. Like, when we got to Angola, when we were now being selected on educational basis, you could realize that if the opportunity was there, people would go into school. Definitely, they would do so because our medium of instruction was English, even though we used our vernacular language. But you see, some of the weapons, most of the stuff especially when it comes to artillery, you really needed to use English. And even the manuals for the weapons were written in English. And even a simple weapon like the AK, the parts were in English.²⁸⁹

While it is difficult to quantify the ZAPU's armament, CIA documents indicate that "2,000 ZAPU guerrillas were in the USSR last year [1977] for military instruction, and about 1,000 in Cuba"²⁹⁰ and that the Soviets had supplied ZIPRA with considerable quantities of arms and ammunition, some of which, like the Strela-2 surface to air missile system used to shoot down Rhodesian Air Flights 827 and 825 required significant technical skill to repair and

²⁸⁸ MP, interview with author, July 2017.

²⁸⁹ Ibid.

²⁹⁰ Central Intelligence Agency, 'Communist Military Support for the Rhodesian Insurgency' (ER-78-10190), dated April 1978 (declassified as of 20 April 2008, NLC-31-75-5-7-3), ii. <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/DOC_0000121413.pdf>, Accessed August 10, 2019.

operate effectively. Through military training programs abroad and in refugee camps, as well as scholarships to study engineering and other disciplines directly relevant to combat, ZAPU educated many of its members directly for the battlefield.

Rhodesian Schools as Areas of Recruitment

After the downing of the Rhodesian Air flights, ZAPU's most notorious actions in the Rhodesian press were the abductions of school children and teachers from schools near the border with Botswana. Given the historical importance of education to ZAPU's leadership, how should these abductions be understood? Why would an organization so committed to education and educational training for its members abduct children from schools? The Manama case, with which this chapter opened, and which made international headlines, was one of many schools targeted by ZAPU. What were the reasons for these seemingly contradictory actions by ZAPU, and were they in fact in opposition to ZAPU's overall views on education?

The key ZAPU figures whom I interviewed, as well as documentary evidence surrounding the abductions, suggest three main reasons motivating the abductions: first, they were recruitment drives for the guerrilla forces, conscripting students over the age of 16 and some teachers. Secondly, the abductions were a response to the RF's conscription of young White, Coloured, and even some African men from schools and a retaliation for the government's "conscripting" of Africans into the Rhodesian workforce through the bottlenecking of African higher education and funding of trade schools for Africans. Rather than view the student abductions as singular, I argue that the abductions are better understood in the context of and as responses to Smith's own policies regarding African students.

Finally, by the time ZAPU began their recruitment drives, their ideological stance was firmly socialist which included trenchant critiques of the capitalist and white-supremacist orientation of the Rhodesian education the students received. As evidenced by the soldier at Manamna who is reported to have said that the students would “not get a proper education at the mission—only theory. They said we would only get a proper education if we went away with them.” The cadres seemed to have viewed themselves as abducting students from an education system that had abducted and indoctrinated African students, transferring them to an alternative, revolutionary system where they could receive a “proper education.” Multiple interviewees informed me that according to ZAPU’s official policy, only children above the age of 16 were trained to be sent to the front lines for the war and that children younger than 16 were sent to refugee camps in Zambia where schools were established for their education. The school abductions were also used to recruit teachers, who were highly valued as educated and respected community leaders, to serve in the liberation struggle. Mr. Gwakuba Ndlovu explained, “Because wherever the ZIPRA combatants rounded up school children, they did so together with their teachers. So, we had the teachers, some of whom had left the country *en masse* with their children.”²⁹¹

The question of whether it was ZAPU’s policy to involuntarily abduct students from schools drew little consensus among the interviewed veterans. Many of the veterans who had not been involved with the school abductions, including Dr. Dumiso Dabengwa who served as ZIPRA Head of Intelligence during the abductions, argued that ZAPU had not forcibly taken any students and that all students were given the choice to return home and had voluntarily chosen to join ZAPU. However, publicity director, Saul Gwakuba Ndlovu,

²⁹¹ Saul Gwakuba, interview with author, December 2018

who was familiar with ZAPU operations, argued that ZAPU's recruitment of students was not always voluntary and that ZAPU abducted students not only to bolster the army but stop the Rhodesian Front from recruiting them first. He explained:

Yes, so education was a very important aspect of the struggle, but we had to prioritize recruitment for military purposes, yeah, because what was needed most were military personnel, to confront the regime. I think if we had not done so, the regime would have pounced on various schools in the country, Black schools, and would have recruited en masse from those schools, you see, conscripting Black people into its armed forces. That would have put us at a disadvantage, so it was because of that they we decided to launch a campaign, in which, or by which, or through which, those in the field would go to a school and say "right, everybody pick up, let's go!" and that's how schools like Manama and Thekwani.Mtshabezi, Dombodema, Inyathi, Empandeni (South of Plumtree).Well, quite a large number. Saint Maevis in the Hwange area, Zinyangeni in Nkayi, Embakwe, South of Plumtree, Hingwe, west of Plumtree. Madlambudzi, north of Plum Tree. Massendu. Matinge...A number of other schools in the Bulilima district. Mangwe disctrict, Nyamandlovu district. Hwange district. Nkayi district. Lupane district, Bubi district, Matopo district (Kezi), Gwanda district, Beitbridge, Filabusi district, and other districts in the midlands. Particularly in the lower Gweru region. Schools there were affected by the campaign and many of them closed down as a result.²⁹²

As Mr. Ndlovu remarked, Manama was not an isolated case. ZIPRA used abductions to recruit fighters from within their operational areas from multiple schools—particularly those close to the Botswana border. In addition to school abductions, schools had little choice but to close owing to ZIPRA operations around the missionary-run areas. The abductions and forced closures, along with the Rhodesian government's persecution and subsequent internment of communities resulted in the closure of thousands of schools by the war's end in 1979.

It was not possible to find records of the number of schools that were closed due to ZIPRA's abductions and operations. As mentioned in the previous chapter, some interviewees argued that many schools were closed by the Rhodesian Front to punish communities who were unable to help the RF identify guerrilla fighters. Moreover, the annual Rhodesian educational reports, while they mention that schools were closed, do not

²⁹² Dumiso Dabengwa, interview with author, December 2018.

indicate how many African schools were targeted. Their lack of transparency regarding the number of schools affected by ZIPRA abductions may stem from not wanting to reveal the extent of the threat that ZAPU posed in order to prevent “white flight” and to show the international community that their state apparatus was working well. However, the annual educational reports did mention instances in which missionaries were killed by ZIPRA soldiers and high-profile abductions that made the papers, such as Manama. The 1977 Annual Report for the Secretary for African Education, for example, refers to the “strains and stresses imposed by the ‘terrorist war,’ which “... has taken its toll in loss of life, torture, abduction, abscondence and the destruction of schools.”²⁹³

It was not until after independence, in 1982, that the government of the newly independent nation conducted a survey and published a report on the school closures through independence. Table 3 reveals the extent of the school closures from abductions and government closures. Note that the report did not disaggregate the closures by the military wings of the various guerrilla forces operating in the country. According to the report, by 1978, inspectors were unable to visit schools frequently and 29 teachers were killed and by the end of the year, 451 teachers had left their teaching posts.²⁹⁴ These attacks on schools meant that over 250,000 students had to drop out of school and subsequently lost years of education.

Table 3: Number of Schools Forcibly Closed by ZANLA and ZIPRA, 1977-78²⁹⁵

	Up to Dec. 1977	Up to Dec. 1978	Total
Primary schools closed	477	617	1094

²⁹³ Secretary for Education 1977, *Annual Report*, 2.

²⁹⁴ Ibid, 10.

²⁹⁵ Ministry of Education Planning Division, *An Evaluation Report on Primary School Dropouts in Zimbabwe (1978-1984)*. Harare: Zimbabwe Ministry of Education & UNICEF, 1985.,17

Primary pupils displaced	92, 654	173, 021	265,675
Primary teachers displaced	2, 652	3, 406	6,058
Secondary schools closed	8	30	38
Secondary pupils displaced	1,553	8,604	10,157
Secondary teachers displaced	61	451	512

While Mr. Ndlovu explained that in most cases students did not have the option to return to Rhodesia after being abducted for recruitment, the case of Manama was an exception to this rule. Due to the international outcry, parents of the students abducted from Manama were ferried across the border and were allowed to bring their children home, but on the condition that the children wanted to return. Mrs. M. recalled that many of the children did not want to return home, particularly the older students whom she remembers (her cousin being one of them), being excited when marching towards the Francistown border to join the struggle.²⁹⁶ In Francistown, before the parents received permission to collect their children, ZIPRA cadres gave the students political lessons about the war and reasons to stay and fight. When the parents arrived, the children who wanted to go home were allowed to leave. However, some students, like Mrs. M, who wanted to return home but whose parents had not come to sign them out, were flown from the Francistown camp to Zambia and separated by age. Those older than 16 were sent for a physical test and military training, and she and the other students were sent to Victory Camp, where she eventually attended the school for girls which ZAPU established.

²⁹⁶ Mrs. M, interview with the author, December 2018.

Most of the schools targeted for these abduction recruitment drives were primary schools since these were the most numerous and populous schools. What was agreed upon by all interviewees was that ZAPU's policy maintained that only children above the age of 16 were sent to train for combat on the front lines, and those underage were at least in theory, sent to schools which ZAPU had set up within the camps. As ZAPU veteran and former Head of Intelligence, Dr. Dabengwa recalled:

ZAPU had two streams of training. First, to make sure that there were people who were fit enough to for military training. And all young people below 16 who are not allowed to fight did not qualify to go for military training. Then there was a deliberate process to recruit students from inside the country that will be sent to universities, for special academic training in various fields. ZAPU's idea was when they come into the country, we must be fully equipped to run the country and have technocrats who will be able to fit into every field.²⁹⁷

As mentioned above, ZAPU's "recruitment drives" at Rhodesian schools were also motivated by the widespread belief that the Rhodesian government was conscripting African high school students to fight on Rhodesian side, and the fact that the government did conscript African men from chiefs in rural areas. As Saul Gwakuba Ndlovu recalled:

Yeah, they [RF] just went to the chiefs and told the chiefs that we wanted soldiers and we wanted the chiefs to tell their subjects in the rural areas to go to point A in urban centers from where those who wanted to join the armed forces were taken by the regime by car, by lorry, by trucks to wherever for training. So, the chiefs were part of the recruitment system.²⁹⁸

It is worth mentioning that the fact that the majority of ZIPRA veteran interviewees believed that students went to war voluntarily rather than by coercion. That soldiers did not know or want to admit that ZIPRA forcibly abducted students from schools underscores the reverence with which the soldiers viewed education and ZIPRA's relationship to schooling. The "mythologization" of what happened during and after the abductions tended to not only

²⁹⁷ Interview with the author, December 2018.

²⁹⁸ Saul Gwakuba Ndlovu, interview with the author, July 2017.

portray ZAPU in a positive light, but argued that the students themselves voluntarily and excitedly joined the cause and that they were given educational opportunities.

Education in ZAPU Camps

ZAPU refugee and training camps were the front lines and institutional sites of what I term ZAPU's "educational front." To better understand schooling in these camps, I interviewed 3 ZAPU veterans who were administrators in various camps, one of whom oversaw the camp schools, as well as a female student who was one of the abductees and taken to what would become known as Victory Camp, the site of ZAPU's school for girls. Students who were abducted, as well as those seeking scholarships abroad were first taken to ZAPU's transitional camp in Francistown, Botswana, and from there, were flown to ZAPU's camps in Zambia. The educational programs in both camps are examples of ZAPU's dedication to education as well as their instrumentalization of education to promote their ideology.

Students who were able to acquire scholarships through ZAPU were unable to leave from Rhodesia. Like most military recruits and refugees, in order to travel internationally, they first had to cross over into Botswana, where they were flown either directly to their destination country, or to Zambia from whence they left for their scholarship studies.

Unlike ZANU whose eventual alliance with FRELIMO in Mozambique afforded them the entire Eastern border region for recruitment, ZAPU was limited to their bases in Zambia. Therefore, the natural barriers between Rhodesia and Zambia meant that many of their recruits and refugees had to travel to Botswana first. As a result, the first transitional camps were set up in Francistown, near the Rhodesia-Botswana border.²⁹⁹ Once in

²⁹⁹ As the war intensified, more and more refugees poured into Botswana from Rhodesia and the officials in Botswana opened up Dukwi camp in 1978- for more see UN Refugee article. Located in the plains of eastern

Francistown, planes would carry some of the refugees and soldiers to Nampundwe camp in Zambia.

GU, who had previously been detained in Rhodesia and studied in detention, was one of four ZAPU members who set up the Francistown refugee camp in Botswana in 1976, a year before ZAPU began actively abducting/recruiting children from schools such as Manama. As an administrator who stayed at the camp until 1977, he oversaw the assignment of camp residents, the population of which, he recalled, fluctuated between 2,000 and 5,000 people. At the camp, they screened out individuals who were too young to fight and those who were too old, exempting them from military service. GU described how people at the Francistown camp were separated into those who would receive military training and those who would be “civilian” residents at ZAPU refugee camps in Zambia: “Those who looked fit, we were able to put them in companies ready to be picked up for military training. Those who were unable, would just remain behind so that when a place is cleared in Zambia, then they would follow.”³⁰⁰ He also explained the official age restrictions for those that were sent for military training, and how this became more strictly enforced once schools were set up in the camps in Zambia:

Yeah, those that were too young: first we were looking at 18/19, we were not questioning too much, but 16 years and below. Because we started thinking that—ZAPU ended up thinking that—these young people need to be given the opportunities to go for education. Once school is made available, so they had to put them aside and let them remain [in the camps].³⁰¹

Botswana, two hours’ drive from the provincial capital of Francistown, Dukwi camp was established by the Lutheran World Federation in 1978 to cope with a massive influx of refugees from what was then known as Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe). At its peak, the camp hosted more than 45,000 people, mostly fleeing oppression and racism in Zimbabwe and apartheid South Africa. See Melita Sunjic, “Feature: Botswana Camp Captures History of Southern Africa,” *UNHCR.org*, 6 February 2004. <https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/news/latest/2004/2/403107e84/feature-botswana-camp-captures-history-southern-africa.html>, Last Accessed October 14, 2019.

³⁰⁰ GU interview with author, June 2017.

³⁰¹ Ibid.

Those young men, and some women, who were deemed fit for military service were given a fitness test and assigned to battalions in which they were trained and sometimes deployed. While there were no formal schools established in the Francistown transitional camp, all refugees received an “informal” political education at the camp. ZIPRA officers, or political commissars taught political lessons to the refugees and potential fighters daily. According to GU, the lessons, separate from military lessons, would take place at various times of the day, depending on the battalion. He described the lessons as history lessons and political lessons, which even had handouts from ZAPU’s headquarters in Lusaka that were given to students to read:

The lessons that we could give, the history of Zimbabwe, the history of our arms struggle, how we had started and the history of the political party. That is ZAPU, started from the ANC, to NDP, ZAPU and NPCC, and going back to ZAPU and how the split came about between ZAPU and ZANU. Then we started going ahead to talk about how the mobilization was made to try and destroy the Rhodesian regime after UDI. And what was the thing which was called UDI. The Unilateral Declaration of Independence, what did it mean to the African people? It meant that the African people were no longer subjects of the British government. They are now subjects of the Rhodesian government and if they are subjects of the Rhodesian government, which is a cist government, it could not be easy for anyone who has taken the Rhodesian government as its government to take a British passport. And internationally, such people were not accepted and that is why there was this, there were sanctions to deter Rhodesians from going out of the country seeking for support and co-operation and the like. So, all that was explained to the pupils so that they actually understand at this period why does this thing happen, at this period why does that thing happen and now that it was the time again to give them short lessons on socialism: What is it? Why is it different to capitalism? There were some manuscripts that were brought from the headquarters in Lusaka that could be handouts to be given to these students so that they start to read.³⁰²

As an important part of the “educational front,” ZAPU dedicated considerable resources to the political education of refugees in the camps. In this way, ZAPU used education, as an ideological instrument to gain support and recruits during the war. The following chapter

³⁰² GU interview with author June 2017.

provides an in-depth case study of the political education conducted by the political commissariat.

The political education of refugees, along with their military training, continued in the ZAPU camps in Angola (for military recruits)³⁰³ and in Zambia, where most refugees and military recruits were flown. Nampundwe camp, the main transit camp in Zambia, could hold up to 10,000 people and is where ZAPU primarily sorted refugees into recruits, school children, promising students who were candidates for scholarships to study abroad, and elderly or incapacitated individuals. Age (16 years or older) and physical fitness were determining factors for sorting recruits into the training camps.³⁰⁴ Every individual in the camp was sorted into a “Company” and the Companies ranged from A through E, with Company A comprising the youngest of children, non-combatants under the age of 16, and Company E made up of the oldest. Those receiving military training predominantly made up companies B, C and D.

Prior to 1977, ZAPU negotiated student absorption in Zambia’s primary schools, high schools and Universities. However, in late 1977, when the war escalated and refugee numbers rose, camp schools were established, the first of which was just outside J.Z. Moyo camp. J.Z. camp was also where older individuals or those not fit enough for active duty were sent to aid in camp administration and logistics. In 1977, ZAPU built Mkushi Camp in central Zambia which was the site of a women’s brigade.³⁰⁵ In addition, Comrade Amon

³⁰³ For more on ZIPRA camp training in Angola, see Jocelyn Alexander and JoAnn McGregor. "Adelante! Military imaginaries, the Cold War and southern Africa’s liberation armies." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* (2020).

³⁰⁴ *Through Zenzo Nkobi’s Lens*, 14.

³⁰⁵ The first cohort of instructors at Mkushi were men, and subsequent female instructors were added. *Ibid.*

Jirira ran a small agricultural institute out of Freedom Camp, which also served as a camp for learning “life-skills” for older or injured combatants including rearing poultry and farming. A school at Victory Camp was later added for women and girls. By the time the school at Victory Camp was established, women were sorted at that camp; they could either go to school at the camp, join the military brigade, or, if they had finished their secondary education, some were selected to be sent overseas for their tertiary education.³⁰⁶

The schools set up at J.Z. Moyo and Victory Camp were materially rudimentary, with students typically attending classes under trees, although students learned a great deal given these circumstances. According to my interviewees, most students of the camp schools wrote their examinations in Zambian schools and passed or returned to Rhodesia after the war and were able to pick up where they had left off in the camps. An overseer of the J.Z. Moyo camp, SM, recalled that he was in charge of organizing thousands of students within the camp and that although the aid of UN agencies and missionary societies provided food, a few buildings and tents for the camps,^d students predominantly studied and attended classes under trees. Their teachers had either been recruited/abducted along with students by ZIPRA, were refugees themselves who had fled from the war, or, were fellow students who had attended school and were asked to teach students in lower grades. The syllabus used was essentially the Rhodesian syllabus, teachers had copies of the Rhodesian books, as well as Zambian textbooks, as the curriculum was similar. The timetable roughly mirrored that of Rhodesian schools, although the camp schools incorporated military drills and political lessons by political commissars throughout the school day.³⁰⁷

³⁰⁶ *Through Zenzo Nkobi's Lens*, 19.

³⁰⁷ See Paulos Nare, “Education and the War.”

Mrs. M, who had been abducted from Manama and first taken along with her group to Mkushi camp in Zambia which was a women's brigade camp, where she estimates that her non-military brigade was made up of approximately a thousand women. A few months later, her group was the first to arrive at Victory Camp; she recalled how the camp slowly incorporated a school when the numbers swelled. When she first arrived at the Camp, the school was not as organized, however she noted that materially, the group was well-equipped. She described arriving at the camp at a time when the fruit trees were filled with ripe fruit, that they were given warm blankets and air mattresses to sleep on. However, as more girls joined the group, within a few months the air mattresses had been deflated and there were no longer enough blankets for everyone.

Academically, Mrs. M, who after the war, became a headmistress of a school, describes the academics of Victory Camp as "education with production" which emphasized "handiwork, things like sewing, cooking carpentry...and farming was also emphasized. We were very much into being self-reliant."³⁰⁸ They were taught by fellow refugees and teachers who were abducted along with them, and she confirmed that there were no expatriates teaching at either Victory Camp or Mkushi. As will be explored in the next chapter, political commissars also taught them about history and communism, and introduced them to socialist ideology and philosophy.

Politics and Education in the Camps

Although each of the camps served a different purpose, from transition camps, to agricultural centers, to schools and training bases, political education permeated each of these individual camps and was a foundational part of military training. Camp education blended

³⁰⁸ Interview with author, December 2018.

the formal educational structures of the Rhodesian education system, with more revolutionary ideologies and military drills. Alongside their formal lessons, students studied history, socialism, capitalism and nation-building with political commissars. It was within these schools, as well as the movement itself (ZAPU's political commissariat) that I argue the "imagined community" of the nation of Zimbabwe began to take shape.

Several studies have documented the physical rigours and harsh daily realities of life in the refugee and training camps, and all my interviewees have confirmed the intense physical and material challenges faced by all camp residents. In many ways, they could be described as places of lack: places of scant resources and without the comforts one might expect to find in a home. Interviewees, however, also described them as places of personal growth and discipline, and moreover, places which offered high quality formal education and political education.

One interviewee noted:

For those young kids who had left this country without education, we in the camps started establishing schools for kids, not schools as such, but I can say reading groups or something like that because it was all done in the bush, there was no facilities, reading material was not enough. But the idea to improve the standard of education was there. And even some were taken from those camp schools and sent abroad to acquire degrees, and so for me to say education wasn't there would be an exaggeration. Education was there, just only that it was facilitated, you couldn't sit for a grade 7 exam in camp. But the assumption was that at least you understood, you could continue to formal [education]. And some of our prominent businessmen and scholars today, and I think you can even go to Bulawayo or Harare and find some of them, came through those schools. And after independence, it was surprising to find that a person who had left this country on his mother's back, did grade 1 up to grade 5 in a camp school. And when they came back from war, they started off formal education in grade 6 onwards. And so, the kind of education that was happening in those camp schools was quite good, considering the kind of environment that we lived in...³⁰⁹

In addition to following the Rhodesian syllabus, school administrators organized scholarships for those in the schools to attend schools and universities overseas. Mrs. M

³⁰⁹ Interview with author, June 2017.

recalled how she was twice offered scholarships and told she would be leaving the camp, but unfortunately those offers fell through. She remembered learning a great deal in the camp and was able to return to Zimbabwe, complete her studies and eventually became a headmistress of a school.

Unfortunately, not all school children made it back to Zimbabwe. In 1978 the Rhodesian Front bombed the military camps and their nearby schools. While Victory Camp remained intact, J.Z. Moyo school was bombed.³¹⁰ On October 18th, 1978, Mkushi and Freedom Refugee and Military Camps were bombed. On September 12th, 1978 Farmers' Camp, which was near J.Z. Moyo was also bombed. The school was moved to another camp, J.Z. Moyo 2. Six months later the camp administrators got wind of another attack and moved the camp and school to its final destination, J.Z. Moyo 3.³¹¹ These attacks by the Rhodesian air force on refugee camp schools in Zambia that led to school closures and ZIPRA and ZANLA attacks and abductions at Rhodesian schools that also caused school closures exemplify the ways in which education was not only a site of ideological contestation, instrumentalised by all sides in the conflict, but as a result, educational institutions sometimes became the literal sites of violence. The resulting disruptions and school closures made education not only an instrument of war, but also one of its victims, alongside the many students and teachers who died or suffered in the conflict.

Conclusion

While it was not ZAPU's initial intention to oversee refugee camps in Zambia and Francistown, the party's conception of itself as a "government in exile" is reflected in the

³¹⁰ See *Through Zenzo Nkobi's Lens*, 41-46.

³¹¹ *Ibid*, 68.

ways in which ZAPU and its military wing, ZIPRA, took organizational control of the refugee camps and schools and attempted to provide services, particularly, education for their “citizens.” GM, who oversaw the transition camp at Francistown, had been an active guerrilla and prior to his administrative duties, had been imprisoned in Rhodesia for 10 years as a class-D felon, where he received an extensive education. His example, along with the political commissars who taught at the camps and in the ZAPU schools, highlights the ways in which education and the military war were intertwined for ZAPU. ZAPU structured the camps so that virtually all residents participated in military-style drills and exercises and virtually everyone received some form of political education, while the students received more specialized academic instruction and the military recruits received more and specialized tactical training. Education was, for ZAPU another means of fighting and not only winning this war but creating a future state.

The instrumentalization of education as a tool of war in order to establish diplomatic ties with Church groups, countries, and NGO’s, as well as to educate the of citizens of the country-to-be highlights the importance of the “educational front” of the liberation struggle which has yet to be extensively explored within the literature. Many of the students who studied internationally were absorbed back into ZAPU, and whether writing party ideologies as Mr. Dube did, channeling their military tactics learned in the Soviet Union to use sophisticated weapons, or carrying out their administrative duties, the educated cadres of ZAPU were expected to aid in the war effort and become the cornerstone of the future state.

It is important to mention that the state which ZAPU envisioned, based on their ideological writings, was a fully decolonial one, both in structure and ideology. How ZAPU defined decolonization is described in detail the following chapter, which explores the

political commissariat, but in short, it consisted of Black majority rule, the elimination of white supremacy, and a shift to a more equitable distribution of wealth and land, which would mean altering, to varying degrees based on ideological rifts within the party, the capitalist means of production and organization. While ZAPU's imagined ideal state never came to be, it is important to understand what the cadres believed they were fighting for, and how this vision developed as a response to the realities and ideology of Rhodesian Front rule.

ZAPU pitted itself against the Rhodesian Front, and in relation to the "educational front," it mirrored the Rhodesian Front's instrumentalisation of formal and informal education in an attempt to subvert and ultimately, dismantle, the Rhodesian state. Recalling the history of the Rhodesian Front's instrumentalization of education in the previous chapter, the similarities and differences of tactics of the two opposition parties become apparent. Both the Rhodesian Front and ZAPU used the radio as a primary means of propaganda, or what I term informal or public education. However, Rhodesia used FM-only radios in schools and in country and offered educational material on the same channel as it did anti-nationalist rhetoric. In addition to the anti-nationalist rhetoric which pervaded the country through radio, the porous boundaries between the educational and public spheres was also evident in the censorship of curricula, teachers, general citizens and of printed material nationwide—the latter overseen by the same literacy bureau which approved texts for schools and banned any books the state deemed a threat.

In response to these public information campaigns on the informal educational front, ZAPU also used radio programming to recruit soldiers and educate the public. Veterans interviewed for this study recalled hearing Jane Ngwenya, a ZAPU leader and guerrilla

fighter on the radio calling to citizens to “Come pick up your gun and free your country.”³¹²

ZAPU also published a significant body of news articles, socialist ideology pamphlets (to be discussed in the following chapter) and anti-Rhodesian essays through the *Zimbabwe Review* and other publications.

This mirroring dynamic can also be observed with respect to the use of formal schools as areas of recruitment; both ZAPU and the Rhodesian Front coerced students to join the war, albeit in different ways. While not at gunpoint, the Rhodesian Front conscripted soldiers by threatening them with jail time equivalent to the time of their service. Economic pressures also forced many into military service, as few employers were willing to accept draft dodgers lest the government penalized the company making them pay full wages while the employees carried out their service. In response, ZAPU began abducting students and teachers and taking them across the Botswanan border.

Given the public desire for education, both forces offered it to individuals as a recruitment strategy. The bottlenecked Rhodesian education system meant that a small fraction of the African population had the luxury of a secondary education. Ironically, by joining ZAPU, some young people had greater access to higher education (via international scholarships and/or correspondence courses in camps or prisons) than they did in Rhodesian schools. ZAPU’s ability to leverage scholarships and educational programming as a means of international diplomacy meant that even individuals who had initially joined ZIPRA to fight in the war were offered opportunities to further their education. In answer to ZAPU, the Rhodesian Front highlighted the forceful abductions to promote an image of ZAPU as anti-

³¹² The phrase was recounted by at least three interviewees. For more on Jane Ngwenya’s story see Jane Ngwenya, “Women and liberation in Zimbabwe” in *Third World Second Sex: Women's Struggles and National Liberation*, ed. Miranda Davies (London: Zed Press, 1983): 77-100.

education and offered educational opportunities as rewards to individuals who defected from ZIPRA to become informants and/or soldiers for the Rhodesian Front.

This dialectical relationship between ZAPU and the RF's use of education can be viewed in greater detail in the organization of the camp schools, which generally mirrored the Rhodesian education system. In attempting what nowadays might be referred to as a process of "decolonizing" the curriculum and educational institutions, ZAPU was imaginatively constrained by the education which those who lead the movement had received. This is most clearly seen within the set-up of the camp education, which reproduced the structures of Rhodesian institutions as well as their pedagogy. Camp schools used Rhodesian teachers, syllabi, timetables and the general pedagogical practices of the Rhodesian state—with some adaptations to the realities of camp life.

Where the ZAPU camp schools differed significantly from the Rhodesian schools was in the "extracurricular" military exercises and the accompanying educational activities of the political commissariat. The commissariat's political education programme could be seen as a somewhat attempt to establish a form of decolonial education *avant la lettre*. The dedication of significant resources (especially given their scarcity) to the commissariat, which had representatives at each organizational level of ZIPRA, marks it as an important case study of ZAPU's instrumentalisation of education. As such, the next chapter is devoted to exploring this institution, its history, organization, and most importantly, the ways in which it shaped the personal, political and even religious worldviews of the veterans themselves. After all, the goal of education is transformation.

From the veteran fighters to the leadership, in ZAPU there was little question of the importance of education for the war and the future state. The fact that ZAPU poured

considerable resources into the political commissariat, into scholarships for students to become present fighters and future citizens underscores the importance of education as an instrument of war and liberation. ZAPU's educational strategies are important to understand not only for their historical significance, but for the study of education and conflict more generally. Moreover, they raise important and significant questions for the current movements of educational decolonization. It is hoped that contemporary efforts to "decolonize" education on the African continent and elsewhere can learn from these efforts and those of related radical African liberation movements (such as the ANC, etc.).

Chapter 6. The Ideological Front: A Case Study of the Political Commissariat

Commissars Chart the Way!

*Yes, the Commissar is the source of golden discovery
He probes into the darkness impervious
To deliver the people
From horrors of oppression...*

*You Commissars! Chart the key!
You are the advance guard of the revolution
You are the chosen spokesmen of the revolution
Spark of life, flame of conscience, run, shine on the roads
And everywhere! ...*

*Forward Commissars!
Into the school that turns out skilled labourers [sic] of exploitation.
Teach them the freedom and break the walls of ignorance
And give them an ideology,
Cursed be the fog that still clouds the student:
Forward man of steel!*

-A. Nikita, *Zimbabwe Review*, 1975³¹³

Alfred Nikita Magena, who became the commander of the Zimbabwe People's Revolution Army, (ZIPRA), the military branch of the Zimbabwe African People's Union, (ZAPU) published the above poem praising political commissars in February 1975 in *The Zimbabwe Review*, the official publication of ZAPU. As captured in the lines of the poem, "Teach them...give them an ideology," the official function of the commissariat was to teach ZAPU's political ideology throughout the ranks of ZIPRA's military structures and within communities. From the establishment of the commissariat in 1971,³¹⁴ all deputy military-

³¹³ A. Nikita, "Commissars Chart the Way" in *The Zimbabwe Review: Official Mouthpiece of the Zimbabwe African People's Union*. February 22nd, 1975, 8-9.

³¹⁴ While difficult to determine a specific date of the establishment of the commissariat, I have noted that the dates fall between the establishment of the Revolutionary Council in 1971 and the first mention of the commissariat in a published interview of G.T. Silundika in 1972. The interview was conducted by Ole Gerstalt in 1972 and George Silundika edited the interview and added information in 1973. See George Silundika,

ranked officers became political commissars and taught political ideology lessons which were built into the daily training schedules of soldiers and other camp residents.

The political commissariat was also a separate organ within the party; cadres held dual titles of military officers and commissars, and commissariat representatives sat on the Revolutionary Council as well as the People's Council³¹⁵, the two highest policy-making bodies in ZAPU's military and political party structures, respectively.

Given the prominence of the political commissariat within ZAPU, there has been a surprising lack of research on its structure, activities, and ideology. Moreover, relatively little has been written about political education during the war, and this chapter aims to address this lacuna through an examination of the commissariat's program of political education.

While previous chapters of this work offered broad examples of the Rhodesian Front and ZAPU's instrumentalisation of education, this study of the political commissariat presents an in-depth case study of the role of political education in ZAPU. As politically-educated military leaders in an ideological as well as military war, the four political commissars and thirty-seven veterans interviewed for this study were able to offer insight into the ideological underpinnings, political and military strategies, and future aspirations of ZAPU. In summary, this chapter:

"Interviews in Depth; Zimbabwe ZAPU '2'. George Silundika," (Lusaka: n.p., 1974), 4, 2. Placed within an historical context, the commissariat appears to have been established as a part of J.Z. Moyo's restructuring of ZAPU and ZIPRA in 1971-1972 following internal disputes and debates such as the March 11 movement, which led to a rethinking and re-articulation of ZAPU's goals and methods. See Eliakim Sibanda, *The Zimbabwe African People's Union, 1961-87: A Political History of Insurgency in Southern Rhodesia* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2005), 147-158 and Owen Tshabangu, *The March 11 Movement in ZAPU: Revolution Within the Revolution* (Heslington, 1979).

³¹⁵ For more on the history of ZAPU structures and the People's Council, see Sibanda, *The Zimbabwe African People's Union* and Timothy Scarnecchia, *The Urban Roots of Democracy and Political Violence in Zimbabwe* (Rochester, NY: University Rochester Press, 2008).

- Contextualises ZAPU's political education within broader African liberation movements and Cold War political alliances.
- Traces the history, form and function of the commissariat within ZIPRA's military ranks, including the relationship between ZAPU and the Soviet Union, the political curriculum, and the function of commissars as military officials and pastoral-caregivers in the absence of religious structures.
- Examines the history of political and ideological tensions within ZAPU between the nationalists and the more left-leaning, anti-capitalist commissars which, but for brief mention in the literature, have yet to be explored.
- Argues that commissars and veterans are Gramscian organic intellectuals who not only understand the intricacies of socialist ideology, but synthesized differing socialist, nationalist, and religious ideologies in a in a dynamic, ideologically capacious political education for soldiers and some civilians.
- Examines the narratives of individual veterans about their ideological evolution over the course of the war.

Overall, this chapter provides an in-depth case study of the hitherto-underexplored importance of the “ideological front” of political education during the war, and is the first study of the ZAPU's commissariat.

Historiography of Political Education in ZAPU

Relatively few studies have discussed ZAPU's political and ideological education, while others have outright denied its existence. For example, Clive Harber's article, “Weapon of War, Political Education in Zimbabwe”, (1985), offers a broad overview of political education content during the liberation war, which he strictly limits to an

examination of ZANU/ZANLA, and outright dismisses its existence in ZAPU. Quoting Rex Nhongo (the nom de guerre of Solomon Mujuru, prominent ZANLA commander),³¹⁶ he argues that the Soviet Union- backed ZAPU believed that the “decisive factor of the war is weapons” while Chinese backed ZANU considered the decisive factor to be “the people”,³¹⁷ implying that ZAPU did not have any political education beyond its military training.³¹⁸ After this dismissal, he broadly describes ZANU’s political education strategy, including hosting *pungwes* or community gatherings, infiltrating and lecturing in formal schools, and ZANU’s development of a Marxist/Leninist curriculum within their refugee schools. His paper provides a useful outline of the importance of political education during the pre-, war, and post-independence periods, but does little to explain the inner workings of ZANU’s political educational machinery, let alone examine the similarities and differences in the content and pedagogy of political education in ZANU and ZAPU. Given that the immediate post-independence period in which his paper was written, 1985, at the height of ZAPU veteran persecution,³¹⁹ one could reasonably assume that few ZAPU veterans would have been willing to speak with him and that fewer, if any, records of ZAPU would have been available to the public, having been sequestered by the newly elected ZANU-PF government.

Other researchers, while not denying ZAPU’s political education, outright deny its Socialist/Marxist leanings. Foley Griff’s 1993 study on political education in the

³¹⁶ Clive Harber, “Weapon of war: Political education in Zimbabwe.” *Journal of Curriculum Studies* 17, no. 2 (1985), 166.

³¹⁷ Ibid.

³¹⁸ Interestingly, similar accusations have been levelled at ZANU/ZANLA, see Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni, “Rethinking Chimurenga and Gukurahundi in Zimbabwe: A critique of partisan national history.” *African studies review* 55, no. 3 (2012): 1-26.

³¹⁹ Ibid.

Zimbabwean liberation struggle, “Progressive but not Socialist: Education in the Zimbabwean Liberation War”, claims that “the only training a recruit who joined ZIPRA in 1977 received was orientation over three weeks,” which included political education for one hour a day.³²⁰ The remainder of his study provides a broad overview of ZANLA’s political education and concludes:

this impressionistic evidence...that the political education received by the majority of guerrillas equipped them with some historical materialist concepts but was insufficient to develop in them a coherent Marxist theory and practice. It also seems that, in both ZANU and ZAPU, cadres who wanted to develop a more deeply Marxist theory and practice were purged, both parties remained firmly in the hands of petit bourgeois leaders orientated to a much more conventional practice, and that the hegemony of these leaders did much to determine the trajectory of post-independence politics and economic policy.³²¹

However, both Foley and Harber’s articles are limited on many accounts; they not only overlook ZIPRA’s extensive political education, which was built into military training for more than an hour a day, and the ideological layers therein, but even in discussing ZANLA, their overviews do not examine the mechanisms of political education, and make no mention of the commissariat outside of a few brief references to refugee schools and *pungwes*.³²² Both studies discuss what Kriger, in *Zimbabwe’s Guerrilla War*, (2008) terms the “mythology of the war”—based on the outcome of the independence elections; “that ZANU won the independence elections in 1980 owing to its successful strategy of politicizing the rural population.”³²³ Kriger is critical of this claim, offering party structure, tribal and cultural

³²⁰ Griff Foley, “Progressive But Not Socialist: Political Education in the Zimbabwe Liberation War,” *Convergence* 26, no. 4 (1993), 10.

³²¹ *Ibid.*, 10.

³²² *Ibid.*, 10, 16.

³²³ Norma J. Kriger, *Zimbabwe’s Guerrilla War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 45. Kriger offers a possible explanation of ZAPU’s comparatively limited political mobilization based on cultural and historical differences between the predominantly Ndebele and Shona rural populations each force oversaw in their designated areas.

alternative explanations for differences in ZAPU and ZANU's strategies in mass politicization. In addition to ZANU-PF's presentist influence on the historiography of the liberation struggle,³²⁴ perhaps it is this theory—that ZAPU was ineffectual in mass politicization, whether true or not, that has contributed to the dearth of research on ZAPU's political education.³²⁵

However, Griff's overall argument, which assumes a radical "Marxist" contingent within both parties that were marginalized by the nationalist "hegemonic leaders," hints at underlying ideological tensions between commissars (though he does not associate the Marxist contingent with the commissariat) and the nationalist leadership that was confirmed by my own research. However, beyond these statements, Griff offers no detailed account of this "purging" by the "petit bourgeoisie" leadership.

This conflict, or "purging" is outlined by David Moore's 1991 study, "The Ideological Formation of the Zimbabwean Ruling Class,"³²⁶ which discusses the political crises and ensuing rifts in ZAPU from 1969-1971 and the short-lived unity of ZAPU and ZANU in the armed wing of ZIPA of 1975, the Zimbabwe People's Army, as stemming from ideological rifts between the young Marxist revolutionaries and the "populist", "elitist" and hegemonic "old guard." Through his analysis of these crises, Moore highlights the

³²⁴ See Ngwabi Bhebe and Terence O. Ranger, *Society in Zimbabwe's Liberation War* (London: James Currey, 1996), 3

³²⁵ Kriger's *Zimbabwe's Guerrilla War* draws largely upon the history of ZANU in answering her overall research question of the nature of peasant support for ZANU/ZANLA. When she does mention political education, she agrees with Ibo Mandaza's assessment that the ideologies of socialism were of little value to the peasantry and to the petit bourgeoisie of the nationalist movement—*pungwes* dwelt primarily with peasant grievances. (Ibid., 96).

³²⁶ David Moore, "The Ideological Formation of the Zimbabwean Ruling Class," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 17, no. 3 (1991): 472-495. . Also see David Moore. "The Zimbabwe People's Army: Strategic Innovation or More of the Same?" in Ngwabi Bhebe and Terrence Ranger (eds.), *Soldiers in Zimbabwe's Liberation War* (London: James Currey, 1995): 73-86.

importance of the ideological layers within ZANU, and the lengths to which the educated younger cadres went in order build a democratic socialist movement. Most notable is his description of the ZIPA leaders as “self-taught Marxist scholars” who insisted on revolutionary language and their construction of an ideology college, Wampoa College, which aimed to “develop a coherent ideological grounding for the political commissars who would be ‘in the bush’ and to further the construction of a ‘line’ that would unite soldiers from ZANLA and ZIPRA.”³²⁷ He argues that the overall ideology of the younger, leftist intellectuals who “placed great faith in the ability of education and the ‘correct theory’ to transform a social and political movement” had “*some*” impact on the “minimal hegemony within ZAPU—its traces remain in the party...[close to post-independence].”³²⁸ He concludes, however, that it did not ultimately shift the dominance of the “old-style populists” from the early years of the nationalist movement.³²⁹ While providing a useful analysis of the ideological importance and layers within the parties through two cleavages or case studies, Moore offers little description or analysis of the context, function and operation of the commissariat and other left-wing elements within ZAPU.

A number of historical narratives highlight but do provide an in-depth analysis of the ZAPU's political education. Nonetheless, they provide important historical and socio-political context for this research. Two important volumes of essays which evolved from the proceedings of a 1995 conference that brought together scholars and veterans of ZAPU,

³²⁷ Moore, “The Ideological Formation of the Zimbabwean Ruling Class,” 493. According to Moore, the college “was to teach one hundred selected candidates the basics of Marxism-Leninism in an intensive four month course, and to operate the school on the most democratic lines possible.” (Ibid).

³²⁸ Ibid., 494.

³²⁹ Ibid., 490.

ZANU and the Rhodesian Forces. Ranger and Bhebe's resulting edited volumes on *Soldiers in Zimbabwe's Liberation War* and *Society in Zimbabwe's Liberation Struggle*³³⁰ provide rich historical context for the events examined in this chapter. More specifically, the former group of essays on ZIPRA speak indirectly to political education and ideological layers within ZAPU.

Two such essays in the first volume dealing with ZAPU's military strategy—one by Dumiso Dabengwa and the other by Jeremy Brickhill,³³¹ make little mention of the ideological or political education either in recruiting or retaining or training soldiers, as if, “[military planning] of a national war of liberation was divorced from issues of politics and ideology.”³³² For Dumiso Dabengwa, who was head of ZAPU's intelligence services, ideological orientation seemed of little consequence in determining the outcome of the war, though he admits that ZAPU adopted a socialist ideology and that he received political education during his own training. His autobiographical paper, “Relations between ZAPU and the USSR, 1960s-1970s: A Personal View,” in which he describes his training in the 1964 in the Soviet Union, focuses on the military training which the guerrilla army desperately needed to begin acts of sabotage within Rhodesia.³³³ He recalls the political lessons they received, “based on the theory of socialism and history of the USSR, especially Russia's role in the Second World War and the tactics it had used,” and notes his view of

³³⁰ See Bhebe and Ranger (eds.), *Soldiers in Zimbabwe's Liberation War* . and Bhebe and Ranger (eds.), *Society in Zimbabwe's Liberation War*.

³³¹ Jeremy Brickhill, “Daring to Storm the Heavens: The Military Strategy of Zapu, 1976-79,” in Bhebe and Ranger (eds.), *Soldiers in Zimbabwe's liberation war*: 48-72.

³³² Moore, “The Zimbabwe People's Army,” 73.

³³³ Dumiso Dabengwa, “Relations Between Zapu and the USSR, 1960s-1970s: A Personal View,” *Journal of Southern African Studies* 43, no. 1 (2017): 215-223.

socialism as “akin to the way most African communities set up their social structures and mores, and therefore in keeping with our traditions and customs.”³³⁴ Dabengwa’s narrative quickly shifts to the “the most instructive” portion of the training which was military. Given the nationalist foundations of the party in the 1960’s, and his own position militarily as head of intelligence, it is understandable that in the earlier iterations of the movement that adopting an ideology came second to being able to effectively disrupt the Rhodesian state. That said, his comment on the similarities of socialism with the structures of traditional African societies was echoed in a few of my forty-one interviews, even by cadres who joined ZAPU much later and had been exposed to lectures on scientific socialism.³³⁵ There are two ways of interpreting veterans’ views on socialism and traditional African social values: one might interpret them as outright dismissals or misunderstandings of “scientific socialism,” as a few academic accounts have done;³³⁶ or one could interpret them as intentional and creative adaptations and reconciliations of diverse socio-political discourses.³³⁷ This difference of interpretation is an important one, as the former runs the risk of undermining individual

³³⁴ Ibid, 217. “So, virtually, ZAPU then was a nationalist party one would say, we are nationalist. But after our training, in Soviet Union, in Cuba and number of other socialist countries, we came back and had an improvement in our ideology. And we felt we were more inclined towards a socialist type of ideology. And well we felt people must as much as possible be equal according to the human rights bill. Where we advocated for equal rights, education, and work opportunities and everything else. And of course, the advancement of the people as well. So, we were thinking along socialist lines then. And although we did not fully welcome the communism as communism, but at least we said we are a socialist party that cares for the welfare of people more than anything else. So, the people became the focus in the development of the country.” (Dumiso Dabengwa, interview by author, December, 2018)

³³⁵ Later in the chapter I offer a more robust definition of scientific socialism. This chapter defines “Marxist-Leninist” ideology, or scientific socialism as the theory of historical materialism which encompassed the social, economic, philosophical and political aspects of human existence and posited that material dialectics, especially class struggle over the means of production, drove the evolution of human societies towards an egalitarian communism.

³³⁶ See Harber, “Weapon of war” and and Foley, “Progressive But Not Socialist”.

³³⁷ My own interviews provided evidence supporting the latter interpretation in several cases.

agency and underestimating ideology as a motivational force, while the latter opens avenues for further questions into the individual belief systems and motivations for fighting within a revolution.

The question of individual belief systems, religion, ideology and education, has also been explored in Ranger and Bhebe's second edited volume of essays, *Society in Zimbabwe's Liberation War*.³³⁸ Their opening chapter on the Mwali shrines of Matopos in ZIPRA-controlled Southwestern Zimbabwe offers evidence contradicting the view that "there was little if any interaction between ZIPRA and any form of religion. There were no *mhondoro* mediums in Matabeleland and nothing has been written about ZIPRA's use of any other sort of African religion."³³⁹ Ranger and Bhebe's evidence refutes the view of ZAPU as "secular" in showing how *amadlozi*, the ancestral spirits and the Mwali shrines in the Matopos were consulted by ZAPU and ZIPRA fighters.

My own research confirms that ZAPU fighters did hold firm religious and ideological convictions, and despite the profound variety and diversity amongst them, and the political and ideological differences between the commissars and the nationalists, none of these interviewees were "purged" as Moore's study suggests. This highlights the importance of oral histories in uncovering individual and group interactions with religious ideologies and groups, and the reconciliations of these ideologies' guerrilla fighters made during and after the war. For example, one interviewee, BM, who was a colonel and commissar and embraced and taught "scientific socialism" and understood its atheistic tenets, saw no contradiction between his socialist ideology and consulting a traditional shrine for protection during the

³³⁸ Bhebe and. Ranger (eds.), *Soldiers in Zimbabwe's Liberation War*

³³⁹ Ibid,7,50.

war.³⁴⁰

My interview with one commissar on his participation in traditional African religious ceremonies highlights the overlooked multiplicity of religious experiences of ZIPRA cadres which Ranger and Ncube draw out in “Religion in the Guerrilla War: The Case of Southern Matabeleland.”³⁴¹ In their chapter on the interactions between guerrilla fighters in Matabeleland and the Njelele shrine, they make mention of a political commissar who visited the Pupu Mwali kraal shrine and ordered other guerrillas not to visit the shrine in order to protect it.³⁴² My research builds on this work by examining how guerrillas consciously chose to reconcile these differing ideologies.

A more recent article by Jocelyn Alexander and Joann McGregor³⁴³ on the experiences of military veterans studying and training in the Soviet Union highlights the diverse experiences that influenced veterans’ varied engagements with socialism. Considering that many soldiers became political commissars or trained with members of the commissariat, Alexander and McGregor’s research offers a rich exploration into the possible influences of the political teachings of the commissars. While their article highlights the impressions of socialism which fighters gained through visiting cooperatives and interacting with citizens in the USSR, this chapter considers the veterans’ adoption, adaptation, and teaching of socialist ideology, and at the end of the chapter, their own syntheses of socialist

³⁴⁰ BM, interview with author, December, 2018.

³⁴¹ Terence Ranger and Mark Ncube, “Religion in the Guerrilla War: The Case of Southern Matabeleland” in Bhebe and Ranger, *Society and the Liberation War*.

³⁴² Ibid., 51.

³⁴³ Jocelyn Alexander and JoAnn McGregor, “African soldiers in the USSR: oral histories of ZAPU intelligence cadres’ Soviet training, 1964–1979.” *Journal of Southern African Studies* 43, no. 1 (2017): 49-66.

ideology with other ideologies and discourses to which they had been exposed. With an estimated 2000 ZAPU guerrillas receiving military training in the Soviet Union in 1977 alone, it is reasonable to assume that the final years of the conflict, in which ZAPU-Soviet relationships were strongest, was a period of robust political education and ideological exchange.³⁴⁴

An important work on the history of ZAPU, based largely on oral interviews, *Through the Eyes of Zenzo Nkobi*,³⁴⁵ does make brief mention of political education within ZAPU camps. However, perhaps owing to the broad scope of the volume, it merely hints at the movement's political education, focusing more on ZAPU's military feats in an attempt to re-inscribe the party's place in the ZANU-dominated historiography of the liberation struggle.³⁴⁶ Eliakim Sibanda's, book, *The Zimbabwean African People's Union, 1961-1987* is the first full book-length attempt at producing a coherent history of the political party and movement. Sibanda does not describe the structure or workings of the commissariat, or ZAPU's political education more generally, in anything more than a passing reference.³⁴⁷

A number of reasons account for this relative lack of research and literature on ZAPU's political ideology and education. In the case of ZAPU's role in the Rhodesian

³⁴⁴ Central Intelligence Agency, 'Communist Military Support for the Rhodesian Insurgency' (ER-78-10190), dated April 1978 (declassified as of 20 April 2008, NLC-31-75-5-7-3), ii.

³⁴⁵ South African Historical Archive, "ZAPU Through Zenzo Nkobi's Lens," http://www.saha.org.za/publications/zapu_through_zenzo_nkobis_lens.htm Accessed November 8, 2019

³⁴⁶ In his thesis, on which the book is based, Sibanda mentions the "concientization process" but once, noting that a political commissar, Nyati, had garnered support in the Uhungwe, Mt. Darwin region in the northeast of the country owing to his ability to hold meetings with locals. The only other significant reference to political education is: "ZIPRA...though bands of its heavy artillery and its budding but robust propaganda and political commissariat system had managed to lay a solid foundation for its major incursions and mass recruitment of the 1970s." Sibanda, *The Zimbabwe African People's Union*, 74, 86.

³⁴⁷ Sibanda, *The Zimbabwe African People's Union*, 74, 86.

guerrilla war more broadly, many of the most critical studies have had to rely on oral histories and documents in international collections since many of ZAPU's documents were, and remain, sequestered by the post-independence ZANU-PF government.³⁴⁸ Moreover, significant studies on ZAPU have had to rely on recent interviews with ZAPU veterans over the past decade following the post-independent government's violent persecution of ZAPU veterans. This period of silence and political climate skewed narratives about the war—valorising ZANU while underplaying the role of ZAPU in the struggle.³⁴⁹ Over time, as oral histories and historians addressed this imbalance, they did so in ways that had to re-establish ZAPU's importance as a military fighting force. Another possible reason for the dearth of information about the commissars is that the success of their purported function, which was to disseminate ZAPU's socialist ideology, has been historically overlooked given the fact that many of ZAPU's prominent leaders, such as Nkomo, were nationalist; with the exception of the political cleavages within ZAPU described in Moore's previously-cited article, researchers have largely left unexplored the ideological layers and tensions within the party. It is also possible that researchers overlooked the strands of socialist thought within the party due to the outcomes of the war: the Soviet Union collapsed and the post-independence government maintained the capitalist economy, albeit with a robust social welfare system prior to the era of structural adjustment. Finally, it is also plausible that in attempts to avoid Cold War ideological binaries, historians have dismissed the notion of ZAPU as socialist,

³⁴⁸ Those documents which are accessible are outside of Zimbabwe, for example, the majority of documents accessed for this research were deposited in US and UK university archives.

³⁴⁹ An oft-quoted example is David Martin and Johnson, Phyllis' work, *The Struggle for Zimbabwe: The Chimurenga War* (London: Faber & Faber, 1981) which was, for the first decade, viewed as the "official account" of the war and was distributed to educational institutions by the government. The book almost wholly attributes the successes of the revolution and independence to ZANU.

which may have limited research interest in ZAPU's socialist political education, and the tensions therein.

As this chapter argues, ZAPU was not entirely socialist, and much of the socialism taught by the commissars was filtered through their own understandings and experiences, and with their audience in mind. Yet, the ways in which some of the veterans, and particularly the commissars, negotiated these ideologies demonstrates a deep understanding of and engagement with scientific socialism. That fact alone underscores the importance of ideology and education, particularly during periods of war. While impossible to pinpoint any one reason for the relative lack of research on political education in ZAPU, many of aspects of the liberation struggle remain understudied.³⁵⁰ There is most certainly a race against time to engage veterans before their stories and knowledge are lost.

My own interviews with the veterans—particularly the former commissars—confirm these understudied ideological and political divisions with ZAPU, and the rest of this chapter explores the structure, educational curriculum, and pedagogies of the political commissariat in an attempt to understand these ideological struggles from the veterans' perspective.

Political Education within African Liberation Movements

Before exploring ZAPU's political education, it is important to understand the anti-colonial political context within which ZAPU operated. ZAPU was not the only revolutionary movement in Southern Africa that prioritized political education. In fact, as one of the later independence movements in the region, ZAPU's political education, like its military and political strategies, emerged in and was influenced by (and influenced) the

³⁵⁰ See Ranger and Bhebe's discussion of future avenues of research, including gender and intergenerational tensions in *Soldiers in the Zimbabwean Liberation Struggle*, 4-5.

context of the efforts and institutions of other movements in the region, such as the ANC and the South African Communist Party (SACP) of South Africa, the Front for the Liberation of Mozambique (FRELIMO), the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA), the National Liberation Front of Angola (FNLA), and the South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO) of Namibia, and of course, the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU). As Hilary Sapire writes, "The sprawling transnational spread of the liberation movements from the 1960s, and the border-crossing peripatetic lifestyles of liberation and solidarity activists make it appropriate to consider the histories of liberation movements and international solidarity in a single frame, since it was in the situation of exile that they interacted with, and influenced, one another."³⁵¹ The overlaps and mutual influence of these movements can perhaps be most easily discerned in Zambia in the late 1960's and 70's, where ZAPU, ZANU, MPLA, FRELIMO, and SWAPO all operated.³⁵²

The Political Commissariat was a well-established and important institution in nearly all of these movements, adopted and adapted from the training their leaders and cadres received in the Soviet Union, China, Egypt, Algeria, and in Tanzania, Mozambique, Angola, Zambia, and Botswana, often with advisors from Cuba, China, the Soviet Union, as well as local political and military leaders from Southern Africa. While the history of alliances and

³⁵¹ Hilary Sapire, "Liberation Movements, Exile, and International Solidarity: An Introduction." *Journal of Southern African Studies* 35, no. 2 (2009): 273.

³⁵² The South African Pan-African Congress (PAC) also operated in Zambia until 1968, when it was expelled for imprisoning and threatening to execute some of its dissident members—Zambian president Kaunda did not tolerate liberation movements "taking the law into their own hands" in Zambia. See Hugh Macmillan, "The African National Congress of South Africa in Zambia: The Culture of Exile and the Changing Relationship with Home, 1964-1990," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 35, no. 2 (2009), 310; and Hugh Macmillan, *The Lusaka Years: The ANC in Exile in Zambia, 1963–1994* (Auckland Park, Jacana Media, 2013).

antagonisms amongst and between these liberation movements (and their foreign and local backers and antagonists) is dynamic and complex,³⁵³ they shared political and military education classes (both locally, and in Tanzania, the Soviet Union, and China), literature, training camps and tactics, and even military equipment and supplies and radio broadcasts with each other.³⁵⁴ Due to its standing as the oldest liberation movement with the most extensive extant records and institutional support, the ANC's political commissariat is the best-represented in the current academic literature, with many of the canonized heroes of the ANC, such as Joe Slovo, Chris Hani, and Andrew Masekela having served as political commissars.³⁵⁵ The political commissariats of the Angolan MPLA/FAPLA³⁵⁶ and the

³⁵³ In addition to the previously-cited works, see Lena Dallywater, Chris Saunders, and Helder Fonseca, eds., *Southern African Liberation Movements and the Global Cold War 'East': Transnational Activism 1960–1990*. Vol. 4. (Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2019) and Luise White and Miles Larmer. "Introduction: mobile soldiers and the un-national liberation of Southern Africa," *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 40, no. 6 (2014): 1271-1274.

³⁵⁴ See *Ibid.*; Hilary Sapire and Chris Saunders (eds.), *Southern African Liberation Struggles: New Local, Regional and Global Perspectives*. (Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press, 2012); and Jocelyn Alexander, JoAnn McGregor, and Blessing-Miles Tendi, "The transnational histories of Southern African liberation movements: an introduction," *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 43, no. 1 (2017): 1-12; and on international education see, Eric Burton, "Decolonization, the Cold War, and Africans' routes to higher education overseas, 1957–65," *Journal of Global History* 15, no. 1 (2020): 169-191. Steve Davis' chapter, "The ANC: From Freedom Radio to Radio Freedom" in Hilary Sapire and Chris Saunders (eds.), *Southern African Liberation Struggles*, 117-141, vividly illustrates the importance the ANC and other regional liberation movements placed on the radio as a means of public political education—a theme that will be further explored in this chapter and thesis through the analysis of ZAPU's print (*Zimbabwe Review*) and radio productions.

³⁵⁵ See Stephen Davis, *The ANC's War Against Apartheid: Umkhonto We Sizwe and the Liberation of South Africa*. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2018); Stephen Davis, "Training and Deployment at Novo Catengue and the Diaries of Jack Simons, 1977–1979," *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 40, 6 (2014): 1325–42; Stephen Ellis and Tsepo Sechaba. *Comrades against apartheid: the ANC & the South African Communist Party in exile* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992); and T. Simpson, *Umkhonto we Sizwe: The ANC's Armed Struggle* (Cape Town: Penguin Books, 2016).

³⁵⁶ For example, see Margarita Dobert, "Government and Politics" and Eugene Keefe, "National Security" in Irving Kaplan, ed., *Angola, A Country Study*, (Washington, D.C.: American University Press 1979): 117-164; 165-200. Of the MPLA's commissariat Keefe writes, "The congress emphasized the role of FAPLA as the military arm of the party and directed that political training be enhanced in order to work toward the goal of having every member of the armed forces be a party activist. An indication of the importance given political indoctrination and political control in the armed forces was the appearance of President Neto at the closing session of the Second National Seminar of the National Political commissariat of the FAPLA.... The chain of political control has a commissar at battalions, brigade, and military region headquarters, at each school, at each major support unit—communications, supply, and maintenance—and at the headquarters of the army, navy, and

Mozambican FRELIMO have also attracted some academic attention, especially due the political importance of the commissariat in the post-independence Lusophone states and FRELIMO's influence on ZAPU/ZANLA.³⁵⁷ These sources depict the political commissariats of these various liberation movements as playing a particularly important role in the camps: educating and training soldiers, cultivating group solidarity and a new national/political consciousness and cultures, as well as serving as an important link between the military, political, and the (local) auxiliary civilian and international supporters of these liberation movements.³⁵⁸

Of particular relevance to this study is the political education conducted at the MK/ANC camp in Novo Catengue, Angola, dubbed the "University of the South."³⁵⁹ While Cuban commanders were in charge of much of the military training in the camp, the ANC was solely responsible for political education, unique accounts of which are recorded in the diaries of Jack Simons (aka "Comrade Jack"), an eminent South African professor, leader of the South African Communist Party, and the camp's head of political education from

air force. There are also political officers below battalion level in the platoons and companies. Party members and members of the youth group are brought together in cells at the lowest levels, in committees at company level, and in assemblies at battalion and above. Similar chains and structures were recommended for the militia, police, and security forces." (Ibid.: 190-191).

³⁵⁷ For example, see Clinarete Victoria Luis Munguambe, "Nationalism and exile in an age of solidarity: Frelimo-ZANU relations in Mozambique (1975-1980)," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 43, no. 1 (2017): 161-178.

³⁵⁸ Christian Williams, *National Liberation in Post-Colonial Southern Africa: A Historical Ethnography of SWAPO's Exile Camps* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015); Dallywater et al., *Southern African Liberation Movements and the Global Cold War 'East'*; Sapiro, "Liberation Movements, Exile, and International Solidarity: An Introduction"; Macmillan, "The African National Congress of South Africa in Zambia."

³⁵⁹ Davis explains that the name was "a parody of the University of the North at Turfloop, well known for being a hotbed of Black Consciousness protest during the 1970s." Davis, "Training and Deployment at Novo Catengue," 1330.

September 1977 to January 1978, and from September 1978 to March 1979.³⁶⁰ Mark Shope, a veteran trade unionist, also served as a political commissar and instructor at the camp, which was bombed by the South African Air Force in 1979. Stephen Davis' work on the Novo Catengue camp and Simons' diaries is more focused on the political history and day-to-day life of the camp, but he does make some important observations about the nature and importance of political education and ideological contestation therein, writing:

the debate among scholars paralleled the arguments going on in political education classes in Novo Catengue. Political education was meant to be the finishing school...albeit rendered in the SACP's interpretation of Marxist theory and praxis. The degree to which students accepted the premise that Black Consciousness was incomplete without Marxist-Leninist theories of revolution determined the tenor of relations between students and the camp administration³⁶¹

As a part of the alliance and joint-operations between the ANC/MK and ZAPU/ZIPRA in the 1960's and 70's, MK cadres shared camps with ZAPU in Zambia.³⁶² These MK cadres often contrasted the training they received in these "survival camps" to that which they received in Novo Catengue under Mark Shope and Jack Simons. Macmillan writes:

Conditions in MK's camps in Angola were generally poor, but MK members who had trained in Angola thought that the conditions in ZIPRA's camps in Zambia in the late 1970s were much worse. They complained of the serious food shortages, the inhumane punishments, and what they saw as the lack of political education and the discouragement of political debate. There was a widely held belief in MK, dating back to the Wankie and Sipolilo campaigns, that ZAPU's army was an army of conscripts while MK was an army of volunteers.³⁶³

On the basis of memoirs MK veterans, such as Stanley Manong's *If We Must Die* and Wonga Welile Bottoman's *The Making of an MK Cadre*, Macmillan describes the cultural and

³⁶⁰ Ibid and M. Sparg, J. Schreiner and G. Ansell, *Comrade Jack: The Political Lectures and Diaries of Jack Simons, Novo Catengue* (Johannesburg: STE Publishers, 2001).

³⁶¹ Davis, *The ANC's War Against Apartheid*, 106.

³⁶² Hugh MacMillan, "Morogoro and After: the Continuing Crisis in the African National Congress in Zambia," in Sapiro and Saunders, eds., *Southern African Liberation Struggles*, 93.

³⁶³ Hugh MacMillan, "'Past History Has Not Been Forgotten': The ANC/ZAPU Alliance—the Second Phase, 1978–1980." *Journal of Southern African Studies* 43, no. 1 (2017), 187.

political influence of ZAPU/ZIPRA on the MK and the broader South African movement as a “*Toyi-Toyisation*”—a shift emphasizing performative militancy and racialized violence (as embodied in the *toyi-toyi* dance and chants of ZAPU origin) over intellectualism and political ideology.³⁶⁴ For example, Manong writes:

[w]hat became clear to us from the beginning is that no politics were taught among the ranks of ZIPRA. Anybody trying to discuss politics, especially ANC politics, in particular the Freedom Charter, wherein it is stated that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, Black and White, and that no government can justly claim authority unless it based on the will of all the people, was viewed as an ‘intellectual’ – *intelekusha*. According to some ZIPRA guerrilla fighters, the ANC was intellectualising the National Liberation Struggle.³⁶⁵

Manong describes how one MK cadre, sick of the *toyi-toyi* drills and chants, protested to the ZAPU instructors, “that the ZIPRA survival course was meant for mercenaries and not for revolutionaries otherwise how does one explain the slogan of killing everybody. This is not what the ANC had taught us in the camps in Angola.”³⁶⁶ Macmillan notes that this “reference to mercenaries may have reflected the catch-phrase of Mark Shope, their political commissar in Angola: ‘a soldier without politics is a mercenary’.”³⁶⁷

However, my own research among ZAPU’s political commissars complicates this depiction, with many former ZAPU cadres and commissars quoting the exact same maxim

³⁶⁴ Macmillan notes, “Ronnie Kasrils made a similar point in the first edition of his memoir, *Armed and Dangerous*, in 1993, where, referring to his first experience of the *toyi-toyi* in Maputo in 1980, he describes it, as ‘a new style war-dance, learnt in the ZAPU camps, which was soon to become a craze among activists in South Africa’. In the fourth edition of the book, he recalled that there was ‘a general deterioration in the running of our camps from 1980 I had heard, with regret, that a macho tendency had reappeared in the training. We had adopted many ZIPRA practices, which glorified lengthy *toyi-toying*’ It also reported, on the basis of interviews carried out in the camps in February/March 1984, that ‘many comrades feel that from the time we adopted the ZAPU methods (*toyi toyi*), the role of politics was consciously downgraded’.” (Ibid, 190).

³⁶⁵ Stanley Manong, *If We Must Die: An Autobiography of a Former Commander of uMkhontowe Sizwe* (SouthAfrica: Nkululeko Publishers, 2015), 128, qtd. in Macmillan, “Past History Has Not Been Forgotten,” 187-188.

³⁶⁶ Macmillan, “Past History Has Not Been Forgotten,” 189.

³⁶⁷ Ibid.

about the difference between a soldier and a mercenary as defining the role of the commissariat. As Macmillan notes, “Manong was wrong to think that there was no political education in ZIPRA. It was a regular feature of training, though perhaps not on survival courses, and included an emphasis on non-racialism, or anti-racialism. But he was not alone in thinking that, by comparison with ZANU, for example, there was an anti-intellectual strain in ZAPU.”³⁶⁸ While recent work on political education in ZIPRA camps has begun to challenge this conception and better describe the nature and role of political education in ZAPU camps,³⁶⁹ such studies are preliminary and deal with political education only tangentially, as Macmillan concludes: “It has to be reiterated that this is an ANC perspective, which may appear to be unduly critical of ZAPU and ZIPRA, but there appear to be no countervailing memoirs from their perspective.”³⁷⁰ The present study of ZAPU’s political commissariat and political education in the camps attempts to address this lacuna by providing such countervailing narratives.

³⁶⁸ Ibid, for example, see Sibanda, *The Zimbabwe African People’s Union*, 139.

³⁶⁹ For example, Jocelyn Alexander, JoAnn McGregor, and Terence Ranger, *Violence and Memory: One Hundred Years in the ‘Dark Forests’ of Matabeleland, Zimbabwe* (Oxford, James Currey, 2000), 142; Jocelyn Alexander and JoAnn McGregor, “War Stories: Guerrilla Narratives of Zimbabwe’s Liberation War,” *History Workshop Journal*, no. 57 (2004), 88; Paulo Matjaka Nare, “Education and the War,” in Ngwabi Bhebe and Terence Ranger (eds), *Society in Zimbabwe’s Liberation War*, 135–6.

³⁷⁰ Macmillan, “Past History Has Not Been Forgotten,” 187.

History and Structure of the Political Commissariat

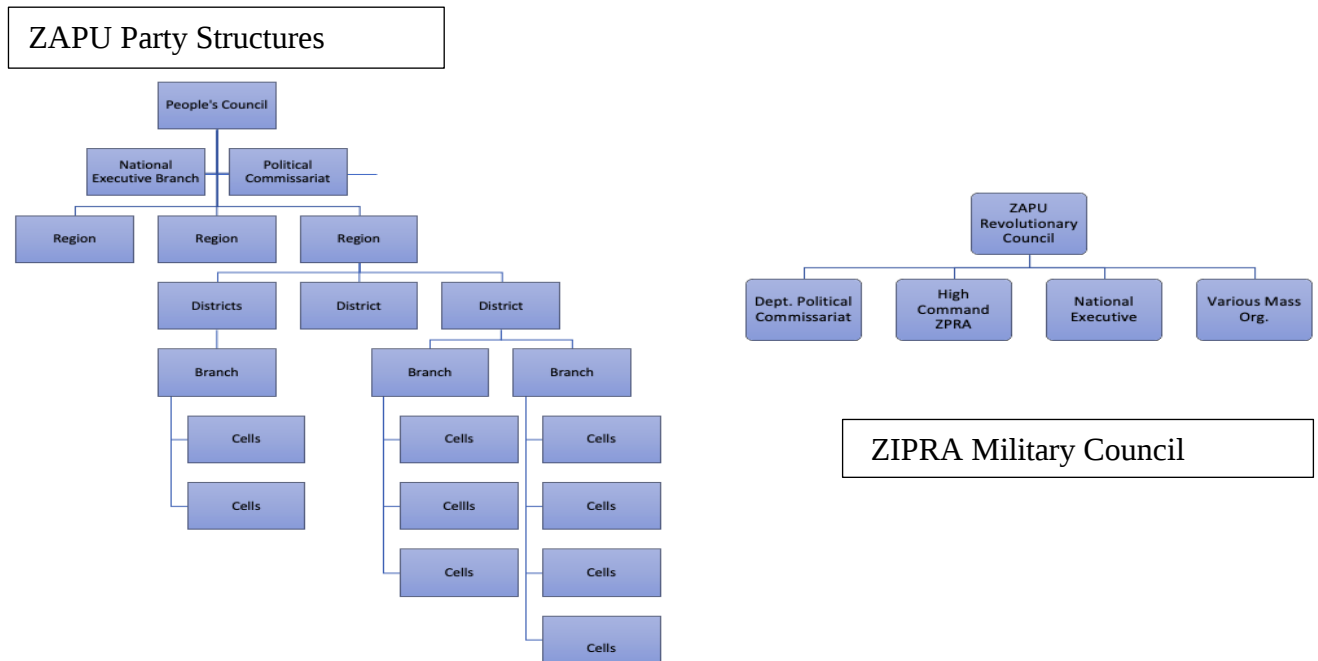


Figure 20. Illustration of ZAPU Party and Military Council

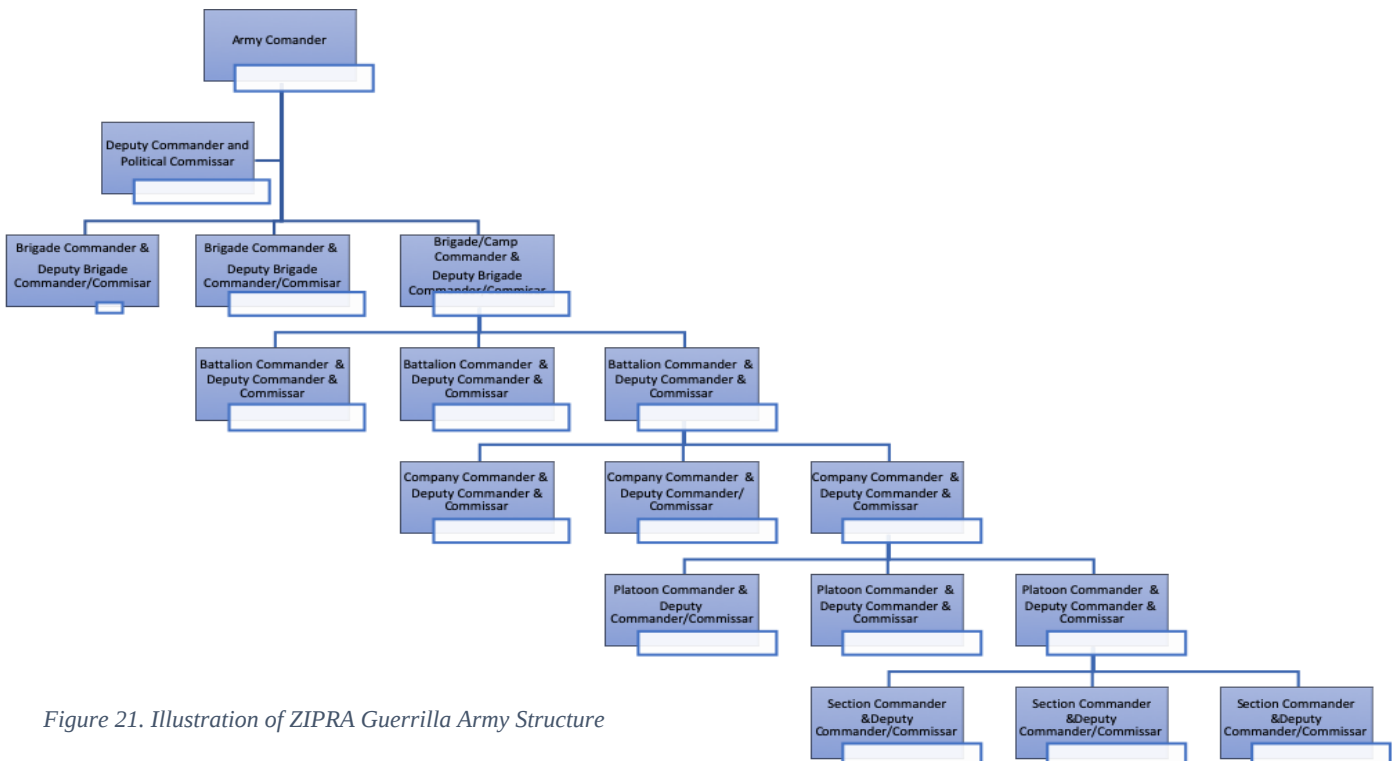


Figure 21. Illustration of ZIPRA Guerrilla Army Structure

Structure of the Political Commissariat

The above figures, 20 and 21, depict the non-military and military structures of ZAPU. The top leftmost picture in figure 20 illustrates ZAPU's organization as a political party, which was headed by the People's Council. The diagram to the right in figure 21 depicts the decision-making body of ZAPU's military force, ZIPRA. The diagrams illustrate that the political commissariat was represented within both the military and political branches of ZAPU. The commissariat fell under directly under the People's Council, which was the overarching policy-making body within ZAPU. The People's Council executives were selected by the national congress of delegates from each of the districts. The People's Council then selected the National Executive Branch. Both the National Executive Body, which in the late 1960s and early 1970s comprised the national leadership that had been jailed by the Rhodesian government, as well as the Political Commissariat, are both represented in the Revolutionary Council, the governing body of the military arm of ZAPU. The Revolutionary Council, instituted in 1971,³⁷¹ in addition to the Commissariat and National Executive branch, was made up of the Military High Command, which had 6 members and regional commanders.³⁷² The political commissariat therefore held important positions within both the non-military and military bodies of ZAPU at the highest level of decision making.

As illustrated in the image below the two (Figure C), within ZIPRA, the commissariat permeated every level of the chain of command. As outlined in the graph above, at each rank within the army, the commissar was second-in-command to the highest-ranking officer. For

³⁷¹. George Nyondoro, "Interviews in Depth; ZAPU-Zimbabwe '1'. George Nyondoro," (Lusaka: n.p., 1973.)

³⁷² Ibid., 15.

example, the lowest-ranking commissar was a section commissar, who was second to the platoon commander. A brigade or camp commissar oversaw the entire camp and would have subordinate commissars in charge of companies within the camp. Above the brigade commissar was the Army Commissar who was second-in-command to the ZIPRA commander, who was in charge of the entire army. My interviewees often cited the example of the Army Commissar, Lookout Masuku, who was second in command to the ZIPRA Commander, Alfred Nikita Mangena, the author of the poem in praise of the commissar which opened this chapter. When Commander Mangena was killed in June 1978,³⁷³ the Army Commissar Lookout Masuku, who had been trained militarily as well as politically, assumed the role of Army Commander until independence in 1980.

As noted above, a number of African nationalist movements had a political commissariat within their ranks, including the African National Congress in South Africa, with which ZAPU had been closely allied since the 1960s. The Commissariat structure was either adopted from the other African movements or directly from the Soviet Union, from which all Commissariats originated. The institution of ZAPU's Commissariat in 1971, along with the Revolutionary Council, coincided with ZAPU's increasing reliance on Soviet training and interchanges which supported the movement.³⁷⁴ Moreover, a veteran ZAPU

³⁷³ See Press, Associated, "Rhodesian Guerrilla Leader Dies as Land Mine Blows Up a Vehicle." *The New York Times*, 1978. <https://www.nytimes.com/1978/06/29/archives/rhodesian-guerrilla-leader-dies-as-land-mine-blows-up-a-vehicle.html>. (Accessed, November 2, 2019).

³⁷⁴ In 1971, internal conflicts within ZAPU created a split within the party, at which point they lost the major support of Mozambique's FRELIMO movement, which would throw its support behind ZANU. ZAPU had to then use Zambia as a primary base for their training and offensives. After the split, ZAPU had to re-recruit as well as restructure its military strategy. This re-constitution of the party was held at an external conference at "Chikwenga Military Camp" and resolved to set up a Zimbabwe Peoples Revolutionary Council and a Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army." See: Ngwabi Bhebe, *The Zapu and Zanu Guerrilla Warfare and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe* (Gweru, Zimbabwe: Mambo Press, 1999), 26. It is important to note that Bhebe traces the date of the Commissariat structure to 1971 based on a written transcript of an interview with T.G. Silundika. I was unable to find T.G.'s statement of the specific date within the interview. That said, given the dates of the institution of the Revolutionary Council, 1971 is probable.

commander, who joined the struggle in 1973 and had twice been trained in Russia, described the institution of the commissariat as an adoption of the Soviet commissariat structure.³⁷⁵ Ideologically, the type of Marxist socialism officially adopted by ZAPU was similar to the official ideology of the Soviet Union. The USSR adopted the “scientific socialism” of Marxist-Leninist thought, in the late nineteenth century after the Bolshevik revolution.³⁷⁶ While the policies associated with Soviet socialism shifted depending on state policy, the “scientific socialist” philosophy of Marx and Engels upon it was founded heled a Hegelian and Darwinian evolutionary view of history in which the material, social, economic, political, and philosophical conditions of human groups evolve in predictable ways towards an ideal state. This historical evolution is the result of changes in material conditions (historical materialism), through a dialectic of oppositions (thesis->anti-thesis->synthesis (or anti-anti-thesis)), which unlike the ideal nature of Hegelian dialectics, was material (dialectical materialism). The dialectic of opposites which most concerned Marxist thought was the struggle of different classes over means of production through violent revolution to bring about the new social, political, and economic structures of an egalitarian or communist society. Marxist-Leninist thought emphasized the imperialist nature of global capitalism, and took a pragmatic approach to the creation and revolution of a “vanguard party” of communists, recruited form the working-class, who could establish a socialist government leading to a “dictatorship of the proletariat”—in which the workers, not the bourgeoisie,

³⁷⁵ JG, interview with author, July 2017.

³⁷⁶ See Amir Weiner, *Making Sense of War: The Second World War and the Fate of the Bolshevik Revolution* (Princeton University Press, 2002); Dave Ude Ugwu and Finian Igbede Moko, “Marxism and the Theoretical Underpinnings of the Bolshevik Revolution and Other Global Communist Revolutions,” *Lwati: A Journal of Contemporary Research* 14, no. 2 (2017).

controlled the means of production.³⁷⁷

There were, however, key structural differences between the political commissariat in the Soviet Union and ZAPU's adaptation of that structure to the Rhodesian war. The history of the political commissariat in the Soviet Union is complex and dynamic, as the institution evolved throughout the 20th century. Since 1917, the Soviet Main Political Administration (MPA) formed the administrative bridge between the Communist Party and the military forces. From the 1950's, at the highest military and party levels, political officers representing the Communist party sat on revolutionary councils and held equal status to military commanders.³⁷⁸ At lower levels within the party, political officers, or *zampolit*, were assigned to subunits of the military at company (*podrazelenie*), battalion (*podrazdelenie*), regiment (*chast*), division (*soedinenie*), and army levels.³⁷⁹ The official titles of these officers changed over time, predominantly shifting between political instructor, commissar and "officer" over various periods. Notably, during the 1960s, at the time when the first ZAPU guerrillas were trained in the Soviet Union, the title of "commissar" had been replaced in all lower level units by that of *zampolit*. At each of the lower levels the *zampolits*, or political officers, held only a political officer title, usually commander or deputy commander of political affairs, and were subordinate to the military unit commander.³⁸⁰ In the Soviet

³⁷⁷ For more on Marxism-Leninism, see Immanuel Wallerstein, "Marx, Marxism-Leninism, and Socialist Experiences in the Modern World-System," *Thesis Eleven* 27, no. 1 (1990); Rachel Walker, "Marxism-Leninism as Discourse: The Politics of the Empty Signifier and the Double Bind," *British Journal of Political Science* 19, no. 2 (1989); Robert V. Daniels, *A Documentary History of Communism in Russia : From Lenin to Gorbachev* (Hanover; London: University Press of New England, 1993).

³⁷⁸ Timothy Colton, *Commissars, Commanders, and Civilian Authority: The Structure of Soviet Military Politics* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979).

³⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 14

Union, as in ZAPU, a political officer also represented the Communist party on the military council, also named the Revolutionary Council.

While the similarities in structure are evident, the differences from the Soviet model in ZAPU's adaptation of the commissariat structure are arguably more meaningful in the analysis of ZAPU's commissars. Commissars were seamlessly integrated into the military units by receiving the same military training as commanders and occupying the position of second-in-command, thereby avoiding many of the power struggles between the military and political commissariat sections which beleaguered the Soviet military structure.³⁸¹ Unlike ZIPRA, which was simultaneously building an army and introducing a new ideology, Soviet political officers did not necessarily receive military training. The sheer size and complexity of the Communist Party and military could accommodate specialised roles within the military units. Political officers were a small part of a vast network of avenues of ideological education open to military officers. Military academies, and the *Kosomol* (Young Communist League) network were important auxiliary organizations in the political education of military officers.³⁸² In 1977, Eighty-three percent of all Soviet soldiers and sailors were *Kosomol* members—over 2 million officers.³⁸³

The Analysis of the Origins and Shape of Political Education in ZAPU

It is important to note that while ZAPU's political commissariat became the foremost political educational structure in ZAPU, it was not the first. Political education existed prior to the commissariat and was crucial to ZAPU's gaining momentum as a nationalist, and then

³⁸¹ Ibid.

³⁸² Ibid., 18.

³⁸³ Ibid., 21.

guerrilla movement. The more formalized structure of the commissariat was built on the foundation of the political education that all members received when they joined ZAPU from the early founding of the party in 1961.

ZAPU's early nationalist political education was not as structured as it would become under the commissariat. It was centred upon equality in voting rights, land acquisition for Africans, and wealth distribution.³⁸⁴ ZAPU was part of the pan-Africanist and anti-colonial independence movements across the African continent which demanded majority voting rights and "one man, one vote". Moffat Hadebe, who joined the struggle in the early 1960s, notes that the political lessons he received primarily dealt with the grievances of the masses.³⁸⁵ At the outset of the revolution, Pan-African nationalist leaders were the inspiration for the political discourse of the fighters. He notes:

The speeches that have been given by the prominent figures of the politics. Kwame Nkrumah in Ghana, Du Bois, Patrice Lumumba, Gandhi from India and some early cadres of the ANC of SA, particularly the ANC of SA inspired all Southern African liberation movements to think likewise. Speeches that were being delivered really energized a lot of people.... The reflections of anything fair, democratic deals, must replicate what we see happening in the ANC in SA. This is how we shaped our politics, we shaped them based on revolutionary movements. We were nationalist-thinking and [later] we transformed our thinking from nationalist to revolutionary. We need to discover our revolutionary activities, divorced from the nationalistic.

What mattered to us was now the language which was used mostly. You had to know what you were fighting for, not to go blindly that you are going to fight—why fight? We had to know that your land was taken by force from you. We wanted to correct that one...As a commander, when I gave orders, each man in my command must know his mission, he must not just say, "I've got a gun, I'm going to go shoot." Shoot who? For what?³⁸⁶

Mr. Hadebe also characterized his training in a ZIPRA camp as "communist":

I think I've given you a broad idea that you can understand the broad idea why were said we are communist. As I said, I stayed in a communist camp, we were being fed by the South African

³⁸⁴ For more on land as the basis of ZAPU nationalist movement, see: Scarnecchia, *The Urban Roots of Democracy and Political Violence in Zimbabwe*; Alexander, McGregor, and Ranger, *Violence and Memory*; Joshua. Nkomo, *Nkomo: The Story of My Life* (London: Methuen, 1984); and Sibanda, *The Zimbabwe African People's Union*, 9-29.

³⁸⁵ Moffat Hadebe, interview with the author, June, 2017. Note, the interviewee agreed for his name to be used within the thesis.

³⁸⁶ Ibid.

communist party. By that time, old JB Marks³⁸⁷ was alive, they used to come and lecture in the camps....to come and politicize to the people that death is something that people must not fear, because it is natural if you have gone to war, you are shot dead, you have died. You die a natural death, you have died. I was there by that time, in Kongwa, that was 1966 and 1967. So, our being communist comes through this version that we really are now closely attached to the ANC which had allied with the communist party, working together.³⁸⁸

Hadebe notes that they did have political training materials which were housed in Lusaka. On account of not having permanent military bases however, the soldiers carried and kept few items with them. He notes that “we used to talk, using what we had learned and then we knew that what we had learned was proper”.³⁸⁹ This “nationalist rhetoric” was maintained within the teachings of the commissariat—as highlighted further in this chapter, it was folded into the historical narrative of imperialism and the disenfranchisement of generations of Africans.

The Influence of the Soviet Union on the Shape of Political Education in ZAPU

What then made the political commissariat unique as an institution of political education in ZAPU? Foremost, Soviet, as well as Cuban instructors trained the political officers to teach a socialist curriculum to soldiers, and this political education was routinized within the schedule of military training. Just how many soldiers were trained and studied political education in the Soviet Union is difficult to determine due to the embargo of ZAPU documents post-independence. However, declassified CIA reports from 1978 note that “roughly 2,000 ZAPU guerrillas were in the USSR last year [1977] for military instruction, and about 1,000 in Cuba.”³⁹⁰ The reports also estimate that, “150 Communist advisers and

³⁸⁷ J.B. Marks (1903-1972) was a prominent South African Communist. He studied in Moscow and became chairman of the South African Communist party in 1962, he also served as the treasurer of the ANC in 1968.

³⁸⁸ Ibid.

³⁸⁹ Ibid.

³⁹⁰ Central Intelligence Agency, ‘Communist Military Support for the Rhodesian Insurgency’

military instructors (mostly Cubans) are training ZAPU and ZANU, an increase of one-third over 1976.”³⁹¹ Commissars trained in the Soviet Union returned to train younger commissars in refugee camps and military encampments.

By the time that the commissariat was formed, ZAPU had not only come to rely on the Soviet Union for military training, but the organisation had become decidedly socialist, that is, until the nationalist leaders, including Joshua Nkomo, were released from prison in 1974. By the time the nationalists were released, the political education conducted by the commissars and the international publications produced by ZAPU had defined the movement as anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist and ideologically socialist.

The release of Nkomo and other members of ZAPU’s “old guard” of nationalist leadership changed the political tenor and official ideology of the party, but he did not stop the commissariat and political writers from teaching and labelling ZAPU as socialist. Essentially, the nationalists’ release increased the ideological tensions and factions within ZAPU. In spite of the ideological differences between the nationalists and the left-leaning commissars and political educators within ZAPU, explored further within this chapter, the commissariat remained one of the primary institutions of ideological education within ZAPU and maintained its socialist teachings until the country’s independence.

The first groups of commissars were trained in the Soviet Union. JG, a former a deputy commander and commissar who trained twice in the Soviet Union, noted that groups of cadres would receive military training in Tanzania and Zambia before traveling for additional training in the Soviet Union. His group of twenty cadres, who were sent to the

(ER-78-10190), dated April 1978 (declassified as of 20 April 2008, NLC-31-75-5-7-3), ii. (Accessed

³⁹¹ Ibid.

Soviet Union in 1974, were the first motorized infantry battalion commanders in ZAPU. Half of the group was trained militarily as unit commanders, while the other half received military and political training for the commissariat. His group trained at the Vistra Academy in what is now Ukraine, and at the end of 1975, was subsequently deployed to every ZAPU camp in Zambia.

Trainings were conducted primarily in Russian with English-language interpreters for the fighters, who simultaneously learned Russian. As JG notes:

We had interpreters. We had to do basic Russian for a few weeks, 3 or so, learning how to read and write Russian. Because everything there is in Russian, and at that time there was no Black man in Russia, not in the streets, not even a single one. And so, we had to understand basic things like: “Good morning;” “Do you have a pencil?” “Can I have a cigarette?” “This is an AK-47”; “This is a hand-held machine gun”; “This is a tank”; “The tank commander’s position is here”; “The reconnaissance man is there”; “Field artillery.” You know, we had to understand that. And when we came back from training, with all those pamphlets [and] notebooks, we were given the task, a task to train reconnaissance men. Imagine having to, not only interpret some pamphlets from Russian to English, but also interpret them into Ndebele and Shona, so that we could train our own men, and we did that successfully.³⁹²

JG describes his training in the Soviet Union as ideologically robust:

We did Marxist philosophy, Marxist-Leninist philosophy and we did political-economical socialism, you know, we covered all those things. Dialectics, you know, dialectical materialism and this and that. We basically were supposed to be political soldiers. Not just to absorb military science without the political science. So, we did that as subjects at the military academy alongside the artillery. I did rocket artillery.³⁹³

The political lessons were made up of both lectures and class discussions. JG describes one

“Abu Cheyen,” his Russian political officer at Vistra Military academy as a teacher who,

would be like, giving you like, extra lessons, he would interact with us at our officer’s mess, interact with us, you know during our field training and whatever. And then we’d have the lessons as well in class where they teach you all the scientific principles of socialism, you know. And that was the guy who knew who we were, what we were fighting for, and what we had been through, what you know—that’s a very crucial role.³⁹⁴

³⁹² JG, interview with the author, December, 2018. For accuracy, I point out that records show that there were other Africans in Russia during the period. See footnote 388.

³⁹³ Ibid.

³⁹⁴ Ibid.

JG's experience differed markedly from the exclusively military training of the unit commanders. For example, in contrast to JG's training, which was steeped in Marxist-Leninist ideology, MP's training, which began in Tanzania before he was sent to the Soviet Union in 1974 for 10 months, had much more limited political education. He remarked, "No, in Russia we were not really training in political education because I think they understood that we had our own ideas, our own concepts and what...mostly I was training as a military combatant, specializing in that."³⁹⁵ When MP returned at the end of 1974, he actively fought along the Zambezi and within Matabeleland.

Despite not receiving formal ideological lessons in the Soviet Union, MP was exposed to them in the field under his political commissar. He notes that his instructor was Enoch Sebele, who had trained in Moscow.

So naturally, political commissars were there who happened to fall under Comrade Enoch Sebele, who was our instructor. He had trained in Moscow, a very brilliant student who had been expelled from Goromonza High School. A young brother to T.G. Silundika. Very good, very brilliant, he was my instructor.³⁹⁶

There were undoubtedly distinctions between the training guerrilla fighters received in the Soviet Union and in the camps.³⁹⁷ However, according to my interviewees, the continuities between these two sites of political education reveal the robust educational program of the political commissariat and its importance. When asked what the distinctions were between the political commissars trained in the Soviet Union and those trained by other commissars in Zambia, for instance, JG notes that there was little distinction.

³⁹⁵ MP, interview with the author, July, 2017.

³⁹⁶ Ibid

³⁹⁷ My interview questions did not concentrate not these distinctions, which, I believe would be an important avenue of future research.

There wasn't much difference really, [even in depth]. Yeah, because we brought materials, we brought the books, we brought whatever was involved. So, it wasn't really such a monumental difference. We had to train our commissars in Tanzania, in Zambia, with the material that we had. So, it's really like saying, What's the difference between the Catholic Priest who's trained here and the one who's trained in Vatican? Fine, you can go to the Vatican, they no longer train as such, but they've spread them out. So, once you spread out, you can train your own people locally.³⁹⁸

The experiences of living with a political officer such as Abu Cheyen, witnessing “socialism in action”, especially in Soviet cooperatives, as well as encountering anti-racist ideologies being taught in a predominantly-white country undoubtedly influenced the soldiers’ conceptions of a socialist state. This is made clear in Alexander and McGregor’s article, which notes that the site visits to the cooperatives and interactions with foreigners were significant in shaping ZAPU soldiers’ perceptions of socialism.³⁹⁹

That said, the four commissars who had travelled to the Soviet Union argued that there was little difference in the ideological curriculum they were taught in the Soviet Union and the socialist ideas they taught and witnessed being taught in the field by fellow commissars. As will be demonstrated within this chapter, interviews I conducted with commissars on socialist ideology demonstrated the rigorous education they received in spite of never having been trained in the Soviet Union. That being said, while the commissars argued that Soviet and ZAPU ideologies were similar, each commissar interviewed had evidently adapted and interpreted certain aspects of socialist ideology within the context of the local liberation struggle and their own personal experiences, with one commissar explicitly discussing how he adapted his ideological instruction based on the communities he was teaching. What is important to note here, however, is that the socialist ideologies taught in the Soviet Union were not ideologically “watered down” for ZAPU cadres. All camps, including the transition

³⁹⁸ JG, interview with the author, December, 2018.

³⁹⁹ Alexander and McGregor, “African soldiers in the USSR.”

camp in Francistown,⁴⁰⁰ had copies of the works of Marx and Engels, and other socialist materials to which veterans had access. Moreover, all of the commissars interviewed noted that the ideological lessons were discussions, rather than one-way lectures about socialist ideology.

The Functions of the Commissariat

Political Education for the Masses

Given the commissar's primary function to teach ZAPU's philosophy "right down to branch levels",⁴⁰¹ mention should be made of how ZIPRA engaged with communities within its zones of operation. Few commissars discussed their roles outside of the military training camps, likely because during the mid-to-late 1970's when the majority of recruits joined the guerrilla forces, ZIPRA was building up its army. Recruits by the late 70's were readily available from the refugees pouring into Zambia, and the military units were training as many fighters as possible to carry out operation "Turning Point."⁴⁰²

However, one commissar who was an operative in Bulawayo did describe his interactions with local communities. He first described how he would travel between different groups of five ZIPRA operatives which made up a "cell" or "stick" and meet clandestinely with community leaders to discuss community and ZIPRA alliances as well as

⁴⁰⁰ Refugees and guerrilla recruits alike crossed the Botswana border to the Francistown transition camp before being flown out to ZAPU refugee camps and bases in Zambia. See previous chapter for more information on the Francistown transition camps.

⁴⁰¹ Dumiso Dabengwa, interview with the author, December, 2018.

⁴⁰² The military strategy, dubbed the "Turning Point strategy" was a full ground assault -strategy of conventional warfare in which ZAPU would "capture" areas and create "semi-liberated" zones from which to launch their war within the country. The increase of Soviet and Cuban support in training and weaponry, along with the influx of new recruits had put ZIPRA in a formidable position. For more on the amount of Soviet support and a summary of their overall position, see Ellert, *The Rhodesian Front War : Counter-Insurgency and Guerrilla War in Rhodesia: 1962-1980*, (Gweru: Mambo Press, 1989), 47-53.

share political pamphlets and documents. He mentions “workshopping” the information with the community leaders in order for them to “own it,” stressing that despite inevitable “distortions” of ideologies which might result from this method of “snowball” knowledge-sharing, ZIPRA operated in this clandestine way in order to ensure the relative safety of the local population, and to give the community a degree of “ownership” and “control” in the process.⁴⁰³

As a detachment commissar, BM, describes how he distributed pamphlets and books to the community:

So, how would our masses know what we were fighting for? Because we did not have the time to sit down with them in a formal gathering because, it was in the bush, risky for their lives, and also that gathering was not the norm of ZIPRA. It’s not like ZANLA who would make bases for politicizing the masses in the mountain.... In our case, it was not safe, and we would run, so the best way to educate the masses, if you have the opportunity, bring 4 or 5 leaders to your secluded area. Or you visit them, and you find a safe space. Then you read to them the information that you have got, you study it together with them, then they ask questions they don’t understand and then you give them the opportunity to own this information so that they can take it to their own people.

In communities, yes, and in schools, and shops, and so forth. You know, community shopping areas in the bushes. You would go there and leave the pamphlets. They would go there and pick them up. In some cases, where we know we were going there for Mr. Muhammad, who is our local contact person in his area. We would learn together and read together with Mr. Muhammad, and then leave them with the pamphlets. Then he would call his confidants and then also pass to them, after some workshopping of these people. So, it was a cascaded kind of thing. Then of course in the process there would be some distortions, but what I want to believe is that it was a lot safer for the people because they were not killed, they were not caught in the process of learning or reading the political information. At one stage I was the political commissar of the group. So, I would also seek audience with the local community if it was safe to do so... So, it was very difficult for us. Yes, it was difficult to propagate this political philosophy, but it was, we found it eventually beneficial in working in the interest of the community because then they owned the information. They literally owned it. The context of ownership, of when they were found with material, it was not from [ZAPU], it was theirs. Not because we wanted to leave them in problems, but then there was no contact with the guerrillas. Simply, particularly the ZIPRA military strategy was not to endanger the population we went to liberate.⁴⁰⁴

In this way, the commissariat carried out an extensive campaign of political education

⁴⁰³ BM, interview with the author, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, December, 2018.

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid.

amongst the civilian population.

While the commissars I interviewed did not discuss in detail their relationships and negotiations with communities, Alexander and McGregor note that “Civilian accounts of the war stressed ZAPU’s lengthy and uninterrupted political history, and the authority that this gave to unarmed civilians in their relationships with ZIPRA’s young, AK-wielding soldiers”⁴⁰⁵—highlighting the political partnerships and the ways in which the civilian communities (upon which guerrilla soldiers relied for food, shelter, recruits, and information) held ZIPRA fighters accountable. So, the dynamic was not just one of the ZIPRA commissariat radicalizing local communities, but a kind of partnership in which civilian communities and ZIPRA fighters influenced each other. However, the dearth of research on ZAPU’s political education within communities’ points to an important future line of research.

Beyond the mere dissemination of this ideology, in order to understand the efficacy and purpose of these political lessons, one must explore the overall function of the political commissariat.

Political Education for the Cadres

The interviews I conducted reflected the viewpoints of some commissars who were trained in the Soviet Union, as well as others chosen from Nampundwe, the first refugee, or reception, camp in Zambia, as junior commissars and trained through to commander level. 406 Commissars were chosen based on their education and political acumen. For example,

⁴⁰⁵ Alexander and McGregor, “War stories,” 83.

⁴⁰⁶ None of the commissars held political office post-independence, and two of the commissars interviewed were integrated into the Zimbabwe National Army post-independence.

one interviewee, MP, became a political commissar at Nampundwe camp,⁴⁰⁷ while, JM, who became a commissar in the Francistown reception camp in Botswana,⁴⁰⁸ recalled that education as well as political acumen were primary criteria for qualifying for the commissariat. He recounted that even in Francistown, the commissars trained him on how to listen to the news, and spoke to him about “socialist things, egalitarianism, people dynamics and all those things like that, so that you have an idea. And then they would train you for the job that you’ll do in that particular point in time.”⁴⁰⁹

Interviewees who had been commissars described the hierarchy in the commissariat as being based on the level and calibre of information commissars were expected to disseminate. At the lowest level, MP described junior commissars listening to and analysing the news for recently recruited ZIPRA fighters.

Some of them, the [younger] commissars were still raw in the political sense, they don’t really understand what is happening but as you move up, you find the politics would become deeper and a bit sophisticated. You can now look at philosophies, ideologies and concepts. Yes, that’s the difference.⁴¹⁰

MP eventually became a camp commissar in Angola’s Boma camp, and after Boma was bombed in 1979, he became camp commissar at Malanje, also in Angola.⁴¹¹ As camp commissar, his duties included giving and helping his company commissars prepare for political lessons.

In Francistown, Botswana, the primary port of guerrilla recruitment and refugee

⁴⁰⁷ Nampundwe was a ZAPU reception camp for refugees who came through Selibe-Pikwe and Francistown – the ZAPU transit points along the Botswana-Zambia border.

⁴⁰⁸ He did not mention which camp in particular, though I suspect it was at Nampundwe since there were so few camps in Botswana.

⁴⁰⁹ JM, interview with the author, December, 2018.

⁴¹⁰ MP, interview with the author, July, 2017.

⁴¹¹ Ibid.

influx, political lessons were built into the daily routine within the transit camp, although interviewees noted that the lessons were not as frequent as they would later become in ZAPU's training camps. In Francistown, JM mentioned that he and other recruits attended political lessons once a week, which were taught by two political commissars.

However, in various training camps in Zambia, these “political ideology lessons,” as the veterans referred to them, were built into the daily military schedule and would span one to three hours. JM, who was a junior commissar at Nampundwe camp, notes that the soldiers would listen to various radio news stations from approximately 7pm to 8pm each night. Thereafter, they would return to their tents in batches to discuss and analyse these broadcasts. They would then sleep, and wake up at 3am for morning exercises, before eating breakfast and attending “lessons in these commissariat things, consciousness raising and ideological things before combat exercises.”⁴¹² According to JM, on most days, these political lessons ranged from one to three hours in total.

It is important to note that the schedule in Nampundwe was similar for cadres in combat training and for students who were considered too young to fight. As more people entered the camps, GU, who was one of four people to open a refugee camp in Botswana in 1976 noticed that the training schedule had to rotate among companies in order not to overwhelm military trainers.⁴¹³ Therefore some companies had morning political lessons and trained in the afternoon, while others trained in the morning and received political lessons in the afternoon. For example, one interviewee stationed in Freedom Camp, mentions that his platoon (made up of 3 sections of 9 people) studied political lessons in the afternoon,

⁴¹² Ibid.

⁴¹³ GU, interview with the author, June, 2017.

whereas other platoons did their political training in the morning.⁴¹⁴

Mrs. M, who was one of the students abducted from Manama school, was only 15 years old when she arrived at Nampundwe camp in 1977 year.⁴¹⁵ Victory camp, the camp which was to house female trainees as well as a school for girls, had not yet been built.⁴¹⁶ Mrs. M describes being woken up to parade, roll call, and then exercising at Nampundwe. The exercises they received were military in nature and nomenclature. She remembers being told to carry out exercise “number nine” without understanding what it meant. After a breakfast of porridge, like the military cadres, she and her group received political lessons.⁴¹⁷

In these ways, political education was integrated into military training of soldiers in ZAPU camps, while military disciplines and political education were integrated into the lives and education of students in the camps, constituting an important and widespread instrumentalisation of education by ZAPU in the war effort.

The Curriculum: Marxist Education, Political Economic History, Land & Religion

The curriculum which formed the political lessons can be broadly characterized as history lessons about the country, colonialism, and the development of global capitalism

⁴¹⁴ RN, interview with the author, June, 2017.

⁴¹⁵ I refer to the Manama abductions in the previous chapter on ZAPU’s formal educational ideologies. The case was one of the most prominent as ZIPRA cadres marched over 400 students and their teachers from Manama school across the border to Botswana. A number of the students returned to their parent after negotiations between Rhodesia and the Botswana government, but many were taken to Zambia for further training. Those old enough were trained to fight and the younger students were sent to schools set up for them in Zambian camps.

⁴¹⁶ See Chapter three on ZAPU’s formal educational strategy for more on the camp schools, including Victory Camp.

⁴¹⁷ Mrs. M, interview with the author, December, 2018.

within a Marxist-Leninist framework. Through this curriculum, political commissars and other “educators” (i.e., those who wrote ideological/political pamphlets, articles, and lectures), critically engaged with, and synthesized a diverse set of discourses to articulate a counter-hegemonic ideology that could serve as the blueprint for a new nation, society, and human being.

As noted in the historiographical review above, one of the least acknowledged areas of political education in ZAPU has been that of Marxist-Leninist ideology. This section therefore begins by exploring commissars’ understandings of this ideology.

In addition to the socialist political education commissars received in training camps and in the Soviet Union, socialist material was readily available to fighters both within and outside of the camps. The texts these interviewees—both commissars and non-commissars—reported having in camps included Marx’s *Das Kapital*, and other works by Marx and Engels, as well as works on Lenin, Mao, and scientific socialism more broadly. One interviewee, Mr. Charles Makuya, who was neither a commissar nor a commander, had kept some of these books from his training in Angola and Zambia, all of which dealt with socialism and Marxism-Leninism, translated into English from Russian.⁴¹⁸

As the example of Mr. Charles Makuya reveals, these socialist texts were accessible to a broad range of fighters, including branches outside the camps. For example, when JM and his friend made their way to Botswana, they were accosted by Rhodesian forces and JM’s friend was killed. In order to seek vengeance, he decided not to cross the border for training, but instead to remain with a group of eight trained guerrilla fighters operating along

⁴¹⁸ Mr. Charles Makuya, interview with the author, June, 2017. Interviewee agreed for me to use his name in this work. Mr. Makuya showed the books to me and I took copies of them which were unfortunately lost in a computer malfunction.

the border of Zambia. He lived and trained with them for a few months and spent much of his time reading revolutionary-socialist texts while they carried out missions outside of their camp. He recalled:

I was trained in the situation, trained in front by these 8 guerrillas, and their education, to the masses, was the same that I got, but on a specialized platform, where then I was part of them. So then they could inculcate in me their own values, the Marxist ideology they had learned themselves...They taught me that there was a thing called capitalism, socialism, Marxism and that there was Karl Marx, that there was Friedrich Engels and there was Lenin, these people who were principle in developing the communist philosophy. And then they had books: *Das Kapital*, *Dialectical Materialism*, and I started reading in my free time.⁴¹⁹

JM's interest in ideology and learning did not go unnoticed within ZIPRA; after a few months, ZIPRA offered him a scholarship to continue his high school education in Zambia, and after at the University of Zambia. After independence he became a teacher.

While it is impossible to determine how many books were available, or how many fighters actually read these books, due to the varying levels of education and interest in such material, what became clear over the course of my interviews with commissars is that through their political education classes (which were built into their training sessions), fighters became deeply acquainted with Marxist and socialist vocabulary, concepts, and ideologies. In my interviews with veterans, they displayed a range of understanding of dialectical materialism—not all commissars and certainly not all veterans were adept at explaining what was meant by material dialectics, though all were versed in, at the very least, the language of socialist political and economic theories, anti-capitalist arguments, and the basics of Marxism. Commissars were eager to speak with me on the topic, and I personally witnessed two veterans, who were not commissars, exchange books by Marx in front of me

⁴¹⁹ JM, interview with the author, December, 2018.

at the beginning of my research.⁴²⁰ Neither of these veterans had studied in the Soviet Union, yet forty years later they were reading dense political and philosophical texts.

My interviews with veterans, especially former commissars, were replete with examples of deep engagement with various strands of Marxist ideology. For example, when asked about challenging nationalist ideology with socialism, PN dove into the notion of dialectical political oppositions in any organization:

Here we thought if we had a chance to manoeuvre it [socialism] in[to] this nationalist [agenda]... because in any organization you can find, there is a struggle of opposites, there is a lot of unity and struggle with the opposite. Meaning in everything, even in you, in your body, there is this discarding and putting in ... that is dialectical materialism, now I'm going to dialectical materialism....⁴²¹

Although not a commissar, Josiah Dube's role as an author of political lectures presents a unique example of scientific socialism within the ranks of ZAPU, and the development of a stridently Marxist-leftist element within the structure of ZAPU. He was sent to the Soviet Union to specifically study material dialectics, and after completing his studies in 1977, he returned to compose political ideology lectures. Mr. Dube was one of three writers, along with Shadrach Sibanda and Thompson Nkobi, stationed at Works camp in Zambia.⁴²² In 1978 he wrote lectures on scientific socialism for the party, replete with Marxist views of history and the material dialectics of scientific socialism. He described his role:

We were given the responsibility of writing up, compiling notes for the party. What was known as "Workers' education". That was cadres' education, all cadres, including army cadres and all-party cadres, workers education. We were writing about the communist approach, the whole communist approach to a war, to a liberation war, like what we were doing. Basing all of it on what, we had actually learnt like in the history of dialectical materialism, theory of communism,

⁴²⁰ Unfortunately, at the beginning of my research I was not focused on the ideologies of the party and therefore made no note of the exact titles of the books.

⁴²¹ PN, interview with the author, December, 2018.

⁴²² For more on Works camp bombing, see Nkomo, Zephania, "Zapu Through Zenzo Nkobi's Lens," South African Historical Archive. http://www.saha.org.za/zapu/rhodesian_attacks.htm (accessed November, 8, 2019).

and you know—the whole thing, now, applying it our situation in the war.⁴²³

When asked in more detail about the theories of communism which he was writing about, he recounted:

Dialectics, they could start with you from the beginning, how things were then, you know. So, in [dialectical] materialism, well, that for instance, [they'd ask] “what came first, is it your soul or your being?” Ah, well, they were good! The lecturers were good! They analysed everything. You see in the Western world we read these things in books most of the time, but in the Soviet Union they actually teach you, they stay with you, they go through everything, explain everything! And eh, they were convincing!

Dialectical and social materialism they were convincing because really, first in the first place, you have got to prove scientifically that there is no empty space in the universe, there's matter everywhere, it's all matter, and therefore, if heaven, if there is a heaven, where is it exactly? You'll find that you can't locate it. Well, they come up with you slowly, and eh, you appreciate it. Then the theory of communism of course, they start by saying, well, socialism is the lowest stage of communism. Now you move from socialism to communism, when you move to communism, you must be a new man. A new man is a very responsible person all right round.⁴²⁴

From the cadre/civilian recruit perspective, NS eloquently explained the appeal of pamphlets like those produced by Mr. Dube and other socialist literature:

[Socialist books are] even worth reading today... they, will inform you of what concept these [USSR/Socialists] people had come up with in support of liberation movements, because they declared themselves an empire, or sort of a semi-colonial power in that block, and then we had a colonial power also from the West. So, these were always opposite forces. And fortunately, in their teachings, their pamphlets, books, touched us right at the bottom of our hearts because they dwelled on the plight of the suffering, the plight of the oppressed, the plight of the segregated. So, it was easy to win us on that note and those pamphlets were very applicable to our situation down here. It was easy to teach and also to learn by reading those pamphlets: very influential and very basic to the extent that even a person who had done grade 7 could understand exactly what the philosophy was all about.⁴²⁵

PN, who described ideology as “a way of being followed by a certain class,”⁴²⁶ described the different classes involved in the revolutionary struggle:

From a Marxist, Leninist point of view, revolutionaries are composed of two groups ... two classes...they've got something in common. That's the workers and the peasants. They form

⁴²³ Josiah Dube, interview with the author, June 2017.

⁴²⁴ Ibid.

⁴²⁵ NS, interview with the author, June, 2017.

⁴²⁶ PN, interview with the author, December, 2017.

something which is called a proletariat. Those are the ... you can say that they are revolutionaries. With a few starters of well-intentioned people who support the cause of the workers, because you know the demands of the workers and peasants are more or less the same...The worker is the one who is under capital, that's why you say capital is the relationship between somebody who works for you and the one who has got money. That thing, we call it capital...So the worker depends solely on making good work back. A peasant is the one who stays in the rural areas, who depends on the economic subsistence way of life, that is the farming. Those are the difference. But in common, you find that in most cases, all of them, they are being exploited by this capital.⁴²⁷

PN's break-down of socialist principles governing the revolutionary movements of groups was echoed by Mr. Dube, who explained the differences between Chinese and Soviet socialism as rooted in the foundations of the groups leading the struggle.

...the Chinese revolution was based on peasantry. That is, the revolution would be led by the peasants. But the Russian socialism says the proletariats, the workers, in factories, are going to lead the revolution because they have nothing to lose. But if you can see the peasantry, the peasants must lead, therefore they have property, their clothes to protect, there's still a form of capitalism. But if you take an ordinary man a worker in a factory, he has nothing to lose except his chains. He's only working for his salary, for this is nothing.⁴²⁸

MP described socialism in terms of a class struggle:

Right. The socialist ideology mainly is anchored on, I can say, the livelihood of the common man. In that, at least, we have to utilize the resources in a manner which will benefit all at any given time. Actually, it eliminates this class struggle whereby people look at each other from a class point of view. Then, mainly, it fights against the bourgeoisie who are the exploiters of the poor people. And then, mainly, it is more of a classist struggle between the proletariats and the bourgeoisie. Those are the most prominent classes. The peasants, while they are what we might term the quasi-bourgeoisie, but they sympathize with the proletariats... Because the proletariats have nothing else besides their labour, whilst the peasants, they are owners to a given degree. So, the advantage which we realized about this particular ideology or socialist ideology was that it liberates the workers. They do work, they're employed but the remuneration which they get is not equivalent to their labour. They're being exploited. At the same time, coming down to the peasantry class, you find that they work as a homogenous group. They understand, they've got mutual understanding. That's the difference which we had about this socialist ideology.⁴²⁹

The above quotes demonstrate the fluency of the guerrilla fighters in Marxist concepts and vocabulary and illustrate how the commissars viewed themselves as constituting and cultivating a counter-hegemony in opposition to the racist, imperialist and capitalist ideologies of the Rhodesian state. The Marxist conceptual vocabulary and

⁴²⁷ Ibid.

⁴²⁸ Ibid.

⁴²⁹ MP, interview with author, June, 2017.

ideological frameworks they deployed demonstrate how many in ZAPU conceptualized the liberation struggle as a part of a broader class struggle of the proletariat and peasants against the capitalist bourgeoisie. But this was not the only way in which the members of ZAPU conceptualized the war. The *Zimbabwe Review* and the contemporary accounts of commissars are also marked by strong pan-Africanist and anti-colonial rhetoric and concepts, synthesized with these more Marxist elements in articulating the motivations, means, and goals of their struggle.

Foremost among these concepts linking the liberation movements across the continent was that of anti-colonialism and land grievances. This was particularly true in Rhodesia due to the Land Apportionment Act of 1930, which divided the colony into racially segregated regions, forcing Africans into Tribal Trust Lands, or a few small areas where Black Africans were allowed to purchase land. This created mass dispossession of ancestral lands, and led to mass migrations into cities, and over-cultivation and soil depletion in the Tribal Trust Lands. The Land Apportionment Act was superseded by the post-UDI government's Land Tenure Act of 1969, which, on paper, created parity in the size of the regions where Black and White Rhodesians could own land, but in practice led to further dispossessions and evictions of Africans from lands and settlements. These land grievances had been a perennial complaint of Black Rhodesians since the establishment of the colony, and featured prominently in ZANU and ZAPU literature, veteran narratives, and the curriculum of ZAPU's political commissariat.⁴³⁰

The history of Rhodesia was central to the commissariat's teaching curriculum and ZAPU's articulation of the reasons for taking up arms. Mrs. M., at Victory camp, described

⁴³⁰ See Jocelyn Alexander, JoAnn McGregor, and Terence Ranger, *Violence and Memory: One Hundred Years in the 'Dark Forests' of Matabeleland, Zimbabwe* (Oxford, James Currey, 2000), 46-72 and 125-129.

how the commissars had taught her about “various economic models including feudalism, capitalism, socialism and communism and had discussions about the future economy of an independent Rhodesia, called Zimbabwe.”⁴³¹ The lessons, too, were taught in a dialectical pedagogical style in which the commissar would explain the different economic systems and then ask students to discuss the pros and cons of each system.⁴³²

GM described the lessons in the following way:

.... the background of our country, Zimbabwe. That is the pre-colonial period of Zimbabwe. Then, we had education on the colonial aspect of it; how Zimbabwe was colonized, why it was colonized, under what circumstances, the struggles which were perpetrated by our grandfathers during the colonial era. Then, we had education on what exactly was transpiring at the given time in Rhodesia. And then, we had education on the formation of political parties, from the beginning when the Southern Rhodesia African National Congress was formed, and why. Because there were some labour groups first which had come up as trade unions until such a time when political parties were formed. Those were the lessons people covered. Then, having covered that, we’d have what we termed regional politics which covered our general area. Zimbabwe being the area of concern, then other countries around us being areas of interest. Do you remember at that given time, we still had apartheid South Africa close by? So, we needed our cadres to know exactly the interaction of Rhodesia and apartheid South Africa. And how these other countries, again, got their independence. Countries like Zambia, Tanzania and so on. And again, referring to countries like Algeria where there were protracted struggles in order to attain their independence. We had all that education. Then, we would have international politics covering the wider aspect. Like, if we were looking at the organizations of community, looking at the United Nations, their role in the global aspect. We’d give all that information.⁴³³

The significance of soldiers studying precolonial history and the history of colonisation from commissars should not be underestimated. As discussed in chapter two, the Rhodesian education system was non-neutral; by its very nature it was an imported institution which had to justify its own existence and that of the Rhodesian society and its racial hierarchy. All Black Rhodesians who went to school studied their own history, and therefore, themselves, from books written by and from the perspective of their colonisers.

⁴³¹ Mrs. M., interview with the author, December 2018

⁴³² JM, interview with the author, December, 2018.

⁴³³ GM, interview with the author, December, 2018.

They had to learn about their history and culture in books which justified the need for their education by portraying their history and culture as inferior at best, and at worst

“unenlightened, and unhistorical.”⁴³⁴

The history lessons of the commissariat effectively taught soldiers about their own pasts and contextualised their personal and family grievances within the broader narrative of the struggle for independence, and often, the global struggle of the proletariat. As GM remarked:

Like I said, they came from a politicized situation, first when we were to understand who we were, meaning that there was some cultural education in there. We were Africans, Blacks, who lost what belonged to them, which was land. And therefore, you touch on those things, and who had taken those lands, we would understand who had taken that land. What is the relation currently, it is, the relation is not good because one is an exploiter, the other an exploitee. So, you start from there, then the literature obviously would come.⁴³⁵

Mr. Charles Makuya recalled:

Our land was being partitioned and taken over. Our fathers and forefathers had been pushed to remote areas where the diseases affected the livestock, where there is not much produced by the land. This other fertile land was occupied by the settlers, colonizers. So that motivated us much. You know, we should grab back our lands. Then we were taught that the land is the answer to everything. Once we have the land, we have got money. We can take from the land; we can produce a lot from the land. We can build, we can farm, we can do everything else, so that motivated us much. And the other issue which motivated us more was that when you come back home, you know I thought quite a big way which encouraged us was that if we go back home, we will enjoy it. We're going to have socialism. We're going to do away with tribalism, do away with all the “-isms” which I mentioned.⁴³⁶

In teaching soldiers about the historical injustices committed not only against their ancestors but all over the world through the “imperialist capitalist system,” the commissars provided moral justifications for fighting in the war. Their goal was to facilitate belief in the objectives and righteousness of their war to the extent that soldiers would be willing to

⁴³⁴ MS, interview with the author, June, 2017.

⁴³⁵ GM, interview with the author, December, 2018.

⁴³⁶ Mr. Charles Makuya, interview with the author, June, 2017.

sacrifice their lives. As JG put it:

You have to have the reason why, the motivation; why are we doing this? It creates the aim. Unlike our Rhodesian or our ZANLAs who were doing it all, you know, physically. You are forcing people to toe the line because of fear. Which fear, I had learned in the Soviet Union that fear created God. So, I could see the manipulation of fear on people and we didn't want that in ZAPU, or in this case ZIPRA. We did not want to use fear as an element of convincing someone, to open his hand, patronize or support you. But people should have come with free volition, free mindset that I am doing the right thing, that I understand.⁴³⁷

As noted in GM's quotes above, land was a significant topic of discussion for the commissars, as it had been even prior to Soviet support under ZAPU's nationalist flag. Aside from the economic devastation that resulted from these land seizures, for Africans of all local ethnolinguistic groups, ancestral burial sites were sacred to families; former living ancestors were, and still are regarded as intercessors between the living and the divine. One of my interviewees mentioned how, "Nkomo called the soldiers, 'Mwana Wevu' the sons of the soil, because everybody was the son of the soil."⁴³⁸ The importance of ancestral lands to the veterans is still evident in the fact that when asked for demographic information at the beginning of our interviews, many told me not only where they were born, but where their ancestral homes lay, an indicator that land remains a significant spiritual, cultural and political topic of significance.

Foregrounding the common grievance of land seizures was not the only way in which the commissars supplemented and modified the Marxist framework to suit their local contexts and their own personal beliefs. One of the areas in which this creative intellectual activity was most evident was in their approach to religion. As a number of cadres noted,

⁴³⁷ JG, interview with the author, July, 2017. It is interesting to note here that JG levels the same charge against ZANLA that some veterans of the ANC and ZAPU have levelled against ZIPRA/ZAPU: that they were "physical/military" and not intellectual/ideological. Such allegations, while useful for understanding different groups' perceptions and stereotypes of one another, should not be taken at face value.

⁴³⁸ Dube, interview with the author

religion was a particularly challenging subject to broach and reconcile owing to the different denominations and beliefs within their camps, and the well-known anti-theism/anti-religious elements of scientific socialism. As JG noted, “Now, with the commissars, they acted together with their front-line commanders so as to what understand what politics prevailed in a given area and what could be done to educate the civilians in the operational areas. It wasn’t very easy because you had to strike a balance between the Christianity prevailing here, and the Marxism we were introducing.”⁴³⁹

Editor of the *Zimbabwe Review*, Saul Gwakuba Ndlovu recognized the political challenges of potentially alienating Christian missionary institutions that provided much of the education for Africans in the region:

[Question]: How did you deal with the issue of religion and socialism?

Well, we realized the importance of religion because of historical background of the country and that if we alienated ourselves from the church, we would create a problem. So, we discussed it as little as possible, but we also highlighted the fact that, in our free Zimbabwe, people would be free to choose their own religion, including traditional religion. That’s what we did. We did not want to alienate the missionaries. And in any case, you are aware that most of us had actually received our education at missionary supported, missionary-based schools. So, hence, they were, unlike the Soviet Union, not effaced.⁴⁴⁰

Not all political educators were as measured in the ways in which they dealt with religion.

Mr. Josiah Dube, who was a writer of political lectures was decidedly atheist and anti-religious when writing his lectures and wrote about religion from a Marxist perspective as a counter-revolutionary holdover of a lower stage of socio-economic development. That said, even he, who had adopted scientific socialism wholesale, creatively viewed the teleology of that socialism as similar to that of Christianity. In his own words:

Of course, they start by saying, well, socialism is the lowest stage of communism. Now you move from socialism to communism, when you move to communism, you must be a new man.

⁴³⁹ JG, interview with the author, July, 2017.

⁴⁴⁰ Saul Gwakuba Ndlovu, interview with the author, December, 2018.

A new man is a very responsible person all right round...you give him a job he does it perfectly, completes it alone. He's not corrupt, he's fit, physically fit. You know, that's where, when I analyse, that's where Christianity and communism gets closest together. Because the new man they are taking about is somebody who is perfect, like what we are preaching here, that we must be perfect before God. So, they say that new man will be so responsible, and that people will be so responsible they'll be communist; production will be so high, there will not be greedy; they'll be plenty. To the extent that, well, you go to the shop, take what you need you are not greedy. There'll be plenty, and eventually there would be no money in use, money would be abolished [because] there is no need for it. You go to the shop, you take what you need, you're a responsible person and so on, you know. And, those were interesting lectures! And so of course, political economy, as you may well know, there, they come up with the question of surplus value, which exists in the capitalist world. Surplus value. That's the issue Nkomo was alluding to when he said people must not exploit others. People must not make super-profits. In the Soviet Union they were talking about surplus value where, where, in capitalism, people are exploiting, exploiting other people. In order for themselves to get rich. A combination of them all was very interesting to me, to the extent that actually, [*Laughs*], I actually got convinced that it was the right way to go....

I actually, there's a stage when I believed in Communism. That is was the right course of all. So, it got to me to that extent. Until I had a very severe experience in Lusaka, where, you know. I was actually believing in it. I was more or less, agreeing with it, with communist theory.⁴⁴¹

Comparisons between socialism and African traditional religions and customs were also a fairly common refrain in my interviews. I argue that this was not in so much a misunderstanding of socialism, but a part of a strategy of active integration and domestication of a “foreign” ideology within the historical and religio-cultural belief-systems of the veterans. According to them, traditional African societies and socialism shared an anti-capitalist stance, and most importantly an anti-classist foundation. As one veteran remarked:

Extremely. So much. I believed in the socialistic system, as much as I do even today. Whilst it cannot prosper due to the resisting forces, but I still do believe in the socialist ideology because it's almost like our tradition, the way we live in the rural areas. We live almost in a socialistic way. Those similarities are that, as villagers, if you don't have implements for ploughing and I have implements for ploughing, I would give you maybe two or so animals to assist you to go and plough your fields. If ever, maybe, you have got some work to be done, you invite some villagers, “On such and such a day, come and assist me maybe fencing my fields,” and what have you. You prepare some food, they come, they help you, we eat, then we move away. That homogenous type of community. Its core, yes. So, in the socialist ideology, there was that mutual understanding between people, not on a class basis. As I said earlier on, that it was to eliminate the class difference. So, there was that mutual understanding as human beings.⁴⁴²

⁴⁴¹ Josiah Batiswayi Dube, interview with the author, December, 2018.

⁴⁴² MP, interview with the author, July, 2017.

The commissars and veterans, however, recalled teaching and being taught that Christianity was a counter-revolutionary force.⁴⁴³ The commissars generally viewed and portrayed Christianity as part of the dominant hegemony and a tool for pacifying the masses. Moffat-Hadebe, who had joined ZAPU in its early nationalist years explained that once exposed to Marxist-Leninist thought, he reconsidered his Christian education.

Yes. How so? Sure, I saw it that way at one stage because I'd been bombarded by a Christian education. Christianity at home, and I'd been pacified, I must not be violent, even if I'm wronged. I'm being oppressed, I'm submitting to oppression. But when it dawned on us, when we were being exposed to Marxist/Lenin theory and ideology and got a deeper understanding of dialectical materialism, I started challenging that kind of education. To say, no, this is the wrong path, there is no growth in this path. Some kind of transformation must come. We'd adopted the concept of transforming a thinking, the perception of our people not to kill people; We were fighting the system, not people.⁴⁴⁴

RM believed that Christianity was a passive religion and therefore unhelpful in the context of a liberation struggle:

You see, as I have said, we had our own backgrounds. Definitely Rhodesia was a Christian state, and the bulk of us were Christians, but we did not encourage that aspect. It remained latent; I can say. It was something which was much more personal...you would not go about propounding your Christian beliefs in the struggle. The situation demanded toughness, you see. So, if we'd really start bringing out our Christian beliefs, if they are quite contrary with the atmosphere in which we were because with Christianity, you need that soft approach, that love, that mutual understanding and so on. But in the battle theatre, that would not work. Really it will be costly to men's lives. So, it was like we dissuaded our men from having so much faith in the Christian aspect, whilst we knew that most of them, they had a Christian background. It was under the circumstances and at the same time, we understood our uniqueness. Whilst the socialistic aspect was mainly from the east, we understood our uniqueness as people from Africa and especially from Rhodesia. Our own background. But really, the Christian philosophy could not be brought up.⁴⁴⁵

Others, such as BM, described Christianity as a "myth":⁴⁴⁶

I'd like to believe I've turned Christian, but I think it's also a myth. How so? Christianity is a myth. It's a business for con artists... things that are in the Bible: you like to tell parables; the

⁴⁴³ This view is not unique to the fighters, nationalists too, had varied opinions about Christianity, having studied the relationship between the Christian churches and the founding of the colony.

⁴⁴⁴ Moffat Hadebe, interview with the author, June, 2017.

⁴⁴⁵ RM, interview with the author, December, 2018.

⁴⁴⁶ BM, interview with the author, December, 2018.

Bible says, the Bible says, the Bible says. He said, she said, it's all an antecedent and is that not a story? Is that not an historical narration that has been philosophized so that they can cool down or soothe their hearts? So that all your desires, all your inquisitiveness could be atoned and then don't worry too much because God does not allow this, God does not do this. God will punish you on that. Fine, when you are bringing young children, yeah, [that's appropriate]. But when you are bringing people who are adolescent and mature and can think for themselves, it will not be correct. You need to pick out evidence to prove it's not a myth. You need to build on evidence.⁴⁴⁷

BM argued that unlike “theoretical” Christianity, African traditional religions came from the community, like communism, and therefore draws a spiritual connection between the shared communal aspect among African traditional religions, society, and communism. When asked how African traditional religions related to Christianity and communism, he described his own experience with indigenous African spiritual traditions during the war. As commissar and a colonel, he had been in placed in charge of a semi-liberated zone in the late 1970's. BM recounted that during this period he climbed a mountain to perform a ritual and fell asleep. With no memory of where he had been, he awoke and descended down the mountain followed by a herd of cattle. Villagers awaited him in ceremonial dress in jubilation and told him that he had been gone for almost 3 weeks and performed a ritual to bring him back to the physical world from his spiritual state.

And until today, I am revered in that area. But I do not know how to use it [my status]. I am scared because my father is Christian, and my wife is Christian, and you know, these cattle are still there and they have multiplied and people have made use of them, I still cannot take them to my father's kraal. So that's why I believe that there was a spiritual alignment and that spiritual alignment probably is the one that protected me during the struggle, and I sincerely believe that it did because then it was based on the community...African traditional religions and communism is almost the same because it bases from the community. African traditional religion is also based on community perspectives. The translation of ATR is almost spiritual, isn't it? Whereas Christianity is theoretical.

BM's narrative was particularly illuminating given his family is Christian, and while and arguing that he has since been “softened by Christianity” he was strongly affected by his traditional spiritual experience, and still considers himself a communist, despite recognising its atheistic tenets.

The British have got the Stonehenge where they go and converge, it's ritual. But then, every community with their spiritual bonding, as long as they work as a community, for the benefit of the community, it becomes communal in approach, isn't it? So, if we can share the wealth that we have got as a community, then I think we then can alleviate the problems from each one's shoulder. We can help each other, and we can also grow by consensus. So, spiritualism and community are one in the same.

⁴⁴⁷ Ibid.

When I went into the Soviet Union, really, I thought God was very unfair to the Blacks; why could he let the Blacks be shot dead and be killed by the Whites when he was giving the Whites the cars and all the benefits? So, God was unfair to the Blacks. So, when I went into the Soviet Union, that emotion was strengthened because they were atheists in the Soviet Union. Communism is not a Christian movement. It's an atheist movement. I enjoyed communism, and to this day I still enjoy communism, although I have been softened by my wife to be a little bit Christian. But I'm communist I believe, because that's what I read. I read *Dialectical Materialism*, the *Development of Nature*, I read a number of books.⁴⁴⁸

BM's broad range of experiences and ideological views, while deeply personal, reflect more broadly on the complex curriculum of the commissariat and those of the cadres. In addressing religion, land grievances, and colonial history within a more broadly Marxist framework, the commissariat's curriculum provided more than a mere moral justification for fighting the war; it also sought to inculcate values in cadres which would aid in the establishment of a future state. The commissars sought to cultivate a new kind of political consciousness and morality in order to create a new kind of person: critical, committed, disciplined, politically astute, and willing to sacrifice for the new, egalitarian society and nation, of which they would be the ideal citizens.

Commissars as Pastors: Individual and Group Identity Formation

As military officers, but also teachers, the extended time and ongoing interactions with their fighters naturally expanded the role and function of the commissariat beyond merely creating an ideological counter-hegemony. The interviews with veterans and commissars pointed to other roles, which I heuristically separate into three categories: individual and group identity formation and pastoral care. I argue that one of two foremost functions of the commissariat was to facilitate the "identity formation" of individuals and groups of soldiers. Commissars described their role as cultivating politically conscious individual soldiers who were cognisant not only of their own moral values, but also about the

⁴⁴⁸ Ibid.

history and causes of war in general and their role within it. In aiding soldiers' understanding of the historic reasons for going to war, and the future economy and state for which ZAPU was fighting, the commissars aimed to instil self-discipline, loyalty, and the soldiers' willingness to sacrifice their lives for the cause. Given the self-directed nature of each of these qualities the commissars aimed to instil in their soldiers, I argue that these activities constituted "identity" formation, which Bosma and Kunnen have described as, "the problem-solving behaviour aimed at eliciting information about oneself or environment in order to make a decision about an important life choice."⁴⁴⁹

The commissars also aided in "group identity" formation and cohesion. Through their systematic teaching of the history of Matabeleland, Rhodesia, and future Zimbabwe, the commissars created a group narrative which was shared by all soldiers. The identical language used by veterans, forty years after the war, to describe their roles in the war and their fight against "the system, not a race" demonstrates the degree to which the curriculum was standardised and the resulting group narrative it formed.

Not unrelated to both individual and group identity formation, is the final function of the commissariat, which I describe as the "pastoral care"⁴⁵⁰ of individuals and groups of soldiers within the camp. In the absence of normative religious structures in ZAPU, commissars became confidants, and conflict managers; and through their curriculum, they

⁴⁴⁹ Bosma, H. A., & Kunnen, E. S. (2001). "Determinants and mechanisms in ego identity development: A review and synthesis". *Developmental Review*, 21, 52.

⁴⁵⁰ The Episcopal Dictionary defines pastoral care as "The ministry of caring at the heart of the church's life. It may include hospital visitation, counseling, and ministries of shared presence, listening, and support. Pastoral care can refer to the ministries of hospital chaplains, pastoral counselors and therapists, social workers, and other professionals who serve in the name of the church. It also includes parish ministries of clergy and laity who respond to human need." (Don Armentrout and Robert Boak Slocum (eds.), *An Episcopal Dictionary of the Church* (New York: Church Publishers, 2000), 389.

provided moral justifications for going to war. While it may be useful to separate these different facets of the commissariat's functions for the purposes of analysis, each of these functions overlap significantly, as will be shown in the discussions below.

In describing the role and purpose of the commissariat, almost all interviewees began by describing the commissar as a leader whose purpose it was to guide recruits through self-discovery and identification of the enemy. They believed that by making recruits, “conscious,” that is, able to understand who they were, and for what they were fighting, they would create more disciplined and loyal soldiers who would be willing to sacrifice their lives. The following quotes exemplify these responses:

So the commissariat was that department, which would conscious-raise or to make people aware of what, who they were, what they stood for, what ZAPU's wishes and dreams in the ultimacy were, so that when they get in to any field of ZAPU, they'll know exactly who they are and what they stood for.⁴⁵¹

He [the commissar] is a motivator, a teacher, a leader, an advisor, but more importantly, he creates a broader awareness of what we are in and how it is to be done. And prepare you and your mindset on the task ahead....⁴⁵²

I [as a commissar], was an armed politician. Not a politician. An armed politician is a trained-somebody who goes and fights but knowing what he is fighting for. The politicians were there, the leaders. Yes. Everybody was supposed to undergo that [those?] political lessons. So that they don't become mercenaries.⁴⁵³

PN's comment that commissars ensure that soldiers do not become mercenaries, lies at the heart of the commissar's function in individual identity formation. As a former commissar himself, his comment implies that the commissars endeavoured to ensure that soldiers could not be “bought” like mercenaries; that is, that they fight for and are committed to a cause and not just money, particularly as they would experience hardships and

⁴⁵¹ JM, interview with the author, December, 2018.

⁴⁵² BM, interview with the author, December, 2018.

⁴⁵³ GM, interview with author, December, 2018.

deprivation as guerrilla fighters. The commissars argued that self-motivated loyalty and discipline were important results of political education. JM, a commissar, who became a teacher after the war and became headmaster of a school, noted:

They [politically educated soldiers] will not be those people who keep on wanting to be driven, they'll be people who are conscious and committed. When you are really committed you are ready to die for it. A matter of principle. So ZAPU's education system was developing principles in people, in empowering them and making them brave to face whatever situation. So, this political commissariat department would teach about ideology.⁴⁵⁴

Having clearly articulated the intended effects of the political education, the question arises as to the mechanisms by which the commissars created “conscious,” “loyal,” and “disciplined” soldiers. From interviews with the commissars, three overarching themes stood out as contributing to individual identity formation. These themes are not separate from those contributing to group identity formation, but they are separated here in order to analyse how different aspects of the same practices contributed to both individual and group identity formation.

The first mechanism through which commissars created conscious soldiers was through their pedagogical practices, namely the Socratic, or more precisely, dialogical methods of instructing and training soldiers in Marxist and anti-colonial revolutionary ideologies and methods of analysis.

Commissars would begin training recruits by convincing them that to become effective soldiers, who were agents of real change, they would have to become “conscious, intellectual soldiers” who recognise that they are fighting systems of oppression rather than a race of people. As GM recalled:

The first thing at the guerrilla training camp, the political commissar was there then called Ghedi, he asked, “What do you use to handle your weapon, your AK?” A lot of people are “I

⁴⁵⁴ JM, interview with author, December, 2018.

use my hand, my right hand, left hand” or whatever. Then, he said at the end, you know, “here we are going to teach you to handle your weapon with your brain, not your hand. Even a baboon can pick up a weapon, if it fiddles around enough it can fire that weapon and kill its own and whatever. We don’t want such soldiers; here we want soldiers who are conscious. So, the conscious soldier is one who knows we’re not fighting a race, we’re not fighting what what, we’re fighting a system. And that system is bigger than Rhodesia, you see? It’s imperialism. You’re fighting the imperialist system, the capitalist system.” So basically, we start from there where we have conscious soldiers; who don’t fight races, we don’t fight tribes, we don’t fight White. That’s from the outset, a conscious soldier. So that’s the duty of the political commissar; to teach these people about systems, about ideologies.⁴⁵⁵

Ghedi's address, which stressed “becoming conscious” has two effects; it begins by having the soldier question whether he is “conscious” enough, or humorously, whether or not he can differentiate himself from a “baboon.” The statement, particularly on the heels of soldiers incorrectly answering his question on what soldiers use to handle a gun, simultaneously creates an elevated version of the self, a “more conscious” self which Ghedi promises can be achieved through political education.

In JG’s reply to my question on the purpose of the roles of the commissars, he spoke directly about Ghedi’s dialectical pedagogical approach, demonstrating that commissars such as Ghedi and JG were discriminating in their teaching approaches. He explained,

That is now onto dialectics. Dialectics teaches that you have to have an operation on the mind by the mind, you know, to look outside the box and to [question], even if you are going into battle, Are you going to pray to God to pull the trigger, or are you going to use your hand to pull the trigger to kill the enemy? Are you justified in killing the enemy, or are you just there to go with these who are going to kill them? So, if you are going into battle to kill and to combat to kill, you have to know it’s you, it starts with you.⁴⁵⁶

JG's description of having “an operation on the mind by the mind,” describes the dialectical approach of logically questioning one’s self on one's motivations, values and the ability to carry through an act as difficult as killing. This stress on the “self” in the pedagogical approach, as well as in the taught ideologies contributed to individual identity formation.

The broader socialist curriculum was also a contributing factor to both individual and

⁴⁵⁵ GM, interview with author, December, 2018.

⁴⁵⁶ JG, interview with the author, December, 2018.

group identity formation. When asked what first convinced them to join the struggle, the majority of the forty-one interviewees mentioned personal or family grievances, usually racially-motivated discrimination and mistreatment. The political education curriculum began by teaching soldiers the cultural history of Africans and more notably what was lost through the colonial conquest and exploitation. Given this context, education about pre-colonial history, or as GM called it, the study of “who we are as Africans,” addressed the self-esteem of individuals whose previous education had relegated them to the status of second-class citizens without history. The historical narrative provided both individuals and the group with a vision of their ancestral rights for dominion over the land which was taken from them.

Moreover, the socialist curriculum, which was centred around sharing and comradeship, resonated with their experiences as guerrilla fighters who had very limited resources and were forced by circumstances to adopt a communalist ethos. As NS noted, “We learnt to share. Sharing everything, your compatriot would not go with torn trousers if you had two. We would give him the other, willingly. Not because we were forced to share, we learnt to share everything. That’s why this system of socialism was not going to be a problem for us. Because everything belongs to everyone.”⁴⁵⁷

In addition to the curriculum content, commissars consciously calibrated their lessons for their groups of soldiers in order to ensure that all understood the political lessons. Along with linguistic variations—lessons were taught in English, Shona, and Ndebele—I argue that these practices enhanced group learning and therefore aided and encouraged group cohesion.

In relating these commissariat ideological narratives to the curricula and subsequent

⁴⁵⁷ NS, interview with the author, June, 2017.

identity formation with ZAPU, what becomes clear is that each of the commissars calibrated their lessons to their students, and the militants, like students in any classroom, retained and applied theories which resonated with their personal ideas and experiences. In describing their teaching, one commissar noted:

Can [your goal] be broken down into certain levels so that at least everyone else can play around with it, but at the same time come and build cohesion amongst the community and consciousness of what we're involved in. This is how we managed to educate the grassroots, without intimidating them or coercing them violently.⁴⁵⁸

While another former commissar similarly stated:

They'll teach it to everybody, they wanted everybody, nobody to be left out. It was not an issue having gone to school, but it was an issue of raising your conscience so that you know what you're committing yourself and so forth. Right, they were speaking mainly on the average level of our cadres. Because from my point of instruction, I would always know the level at which I would have to disseminate this information. If ever it was an item which related to political economy, I would not deliver it as sophisticated as it would be from the textbook. No, I would bring it to level so that these guys would understand exactly what I was talking about. Let's say if I was talking about the issue of labour and the issue of exploitation of human labour, you see, I won't bring it in such a manner that this guy would not understand but I would make it in a simple manner that, "Okay, you are going to sell your labour to this bourgeoisie and this bourgeoisie would make so much money, but would pay you so much."⁴⁵⁹

And a third succinctly described ZAPU's educational ideology:

So, this political commissariat department would teach about ideology. ZAPU's ideology was very clear. It was to create a non-racial, non-sexist, non-divisive political order where every citizen would feel recognized. That was all about ZAPU.⁴⁶⁰

The commissars (like ZAPU more broadly), were aware of ethnic tensions and rifts among the cadres and were careful to integrate and unify different groups. In doing so, they were consciously trying to overcome tribal factions and create group camaraderie and identity.

Pastoral Care

For commissars to excel in their functions of political education, individual identity

⁴⁵⁸ JG, interview with the author, December, 2018

⁴⁵⁹ MP, interview with the author, July 2017.

⁴⁶⁰ JM, interview with the author, December, 2018.

formation, and group cohesion, they had to be well-acquainted with individual soldiers. Through the daily political education discussions, which were built into the military training schedule, a commissar would inevitably become familiar with his troops' backgrounds, characters, and proclivities. It is not difficult to imagine that his role would organically extend beyond that of teaching soldiers; soldiers sought out the commissars to help address both their personal and interpersonal challenges and conflicts. As JT, a ZIPRA veteran, explained:

So, when they [soldiers] have questions, when they have problems, they go to the commissar rather than go to the commander. You don't take your problems to your commander, you know. Yeah, you don't, he's got other duties. He's busy dealing with the deployment of soldiers going, but the commissar is busy observing. He's more or less at an intelligence level, observing the goings-on within the troops and the battlefield and so forth.⁴⁶¹

Commissar GM agreed with JT's point and added that commissars also felt responsible for their groups. He described, one incident in particular in which two cadres fought. In order to stop their argument, the commissar threatened to kill himself first before letting the cadres kill each other.⁴⁶²

However, the more difficult question to answer is how this role developed, since, from my conversations, there were no training manuals for the commissariat. Higher-ranked commissars handpicked and trained lower-ranked commissars. In teaching the soldiers, resolving interpersonal conflicts and providing moral justifications for the war, the descriptions of the commissariat relationships with the soldiers bear a striking resemblance to the relationships between teachers and students in missionary schools. While only a conjecture, these parallels are particularly interesting in relation to education during the war

⁴⁶¹ JT, interview with the author, July, 2018.

⁴⁶² GM, interview with the author, December, 2018.

because they highlight continuities between soldier experiences during the war and their prior experiences with formal education. The majority of soldiers had received some missionary education, and their schools and curriculums were imbued with religious doctrines as well as pastoral care from headmasters, teachers (who were often missionaries and/or priests themselves), and older students. This relationship was alluded to by an interviewee, who, in describing the commissars as leaders and morally upright citizens, notes that priests would have made excellent commissars had they joined the army. He then mentioned one priest, “Albert” who did join the war and was instantly chosen to become a commissar: “He [the commissar] is a motivator, a teacher, a leader, an advisor, but more importantly, he creates a broader awareness of what we are in and how it is to be done. And [he] prepares you and your mindset on the task ahead...”⁴⁶³

From a Foucauldian perspective, one might ask whether commissars or military trainers resembled teachers, or if the teachers in school resembled military trainers. In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault explores the ways in which technologies of discipline are shared across various modern institutions due to shared conceptions of the body and self.⁴⁶⁴ For example, Rhodesian schools used techniques of corporal punishment, physical and temporal discipline, uniforms, and regimented assemblies that were shared with military training camps; these shared techniques and regimes of discipline and instruction might explain why the teachers, who had to impart knowledge, instill discipline, and interact outside of the classrooms with students who were boarding, resembled commissars, as much as

⁴⁶³ PN, interview with the author, December, 2018

⁴⁶⁴ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vantage, 1995).

commissars resembled teachers.

As previous chapters have explored, the Rhodesian educational system was also highly ideologically-charged and contributed to the militarisation of the society and the justification of the perpetual conquest of the settler colony, although this was less obvious due to the hegemony of the Rhodesian state. The commissariat positioned itself as a counter-hegemonic educational institution, although it seems to have employed many of the same technologies of discipline and pedagogy with Rhodesian schools. Commissars were products not only of Soviet and camp socialist training in material dialectics, but also Pan-African nationalist study circles, Rhodesian schools and churches, and local African communities and cultures. The diverse sources of the ideologies developed by ZAPU and the individual commissars did not lead to an incoherent, *ad hoc* bricolage, but were debated, held in productive tension, adapted, and abandoned in different ways by different elements of the party—not unlike the ideological diversity and debates simultaneously taking place in the dominant Rhodesian political and educational spheres.

Veteran Narratives: Political Education, Ideology and Post-Independence Perspectives

Given that each of the interviews was conducted four decades after the war, the ensuing ideological discourses, and the worldviews they inspired, lasted beyond the war period, as veterans continued to critique the post-war crises through these same (or similar) socialist ideological frameworks. These critiques differed considerably amongst the commissars interviewed. While some viewed the post-independence crisis as a failure of the socialist movement within ZAPU to counter the less revolutionary “nationalists” who negotiated the Lancaster House agreement that led to Zimbabwe’s independence and

ZANU's election,⁴⁶⁵ others blamed the capitalists within the nationalist movement, and two commissars combined these critiques with critiques of socialism itself, calling attention to the perceived errors in its assumptions about human nature.

The veterans' critiques of the nationalists had some historic precedent. Even during the war, their socialist teachings were not universally embraced. Ideological rifts within the party, namely between the nationalist "old guard" and the more radical socialists and commissars characterized ZAPU almost since its inception, growing more pronounced in the late 1960's and 70's. While the commissars were in no way impeded in teaching scientific socialism, many of them, forty years later, characterized the nationalists as "unrevolutionary."

Prior to the commissariat's establishment in 1971, the March 11th movement split revealed the ideological and political fissures between the more socialist elements within ZAPU and the older nationalist elements. In particular, leaders such as J.Z. Moyo and T.G. Silundika had embraced socialism as the ideology within the party before the nationalists were released from prison in 1974. For example, Saul Gwakuba Ndlovu, editor of the *Zimbabwe Review*,⁴⁶⁶ states that ZAPU's socialist manifesto, *The Ideological Concept* was written by T.G. Silundika, ZAPU's Publicity and Information Secretary and a few other individuals, and had been approved by the Revolutionary Council in 1972 and printed.⁴⁶⁷

⁴⁶⁵ A view that appears to be shared by David Moore, see David Moore, "The Zimbabwean People's Army moment in Zimbabwean history, 1975–1977: Mugabe's rise and democracy's demise." *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 32, no. 3 (2014): 302–318.

⁴⁶⁶ Mr. Ndlovu had been an editor with *The African Newspapers*, for 4 to 5 years before the Rhodesian government it was banned by the Rhodesian government. He was then invited by ZAPU to start the ZAPU newspaper titled *The Zimbabwe Review* out of Zambia. See Chapter 3 for an extensive discussion of the newspaper.

⁴⁶⁷ Gwakuba Ndlovu, interview with the author, December 2018.

The Ideological Concept was a fifteen-page document which spelled out “the party’s ideological concept”, a ten-point manifesto of the ZAPU’s position on socialism, means of production and revolution. Point three identifies “...capitalism and the White racism of the European settlers are the two basic evils facing the people of Zimbabwe today” while point four proclaims: “A revolution is not only inevitable in Zimbabwe, but necessary. To destroy capitalism, racism and all their devices or apparatuses it must be an armed revolution.”⁴⁶⁸ The document then includes sections on the future state of “THE PEOPLE’S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ZIMBABWE [sic]”, including sections delineating the country’s future “Political rights... Economic Rights... Social Rights...”⁴⁶⁹ The final section, “On the programme of economic revolution,” spells out the future economic focus of the country including Agriculture production and types of crops, “Light industry”, “Heavy industry”, “External trade,” and a twelve point plan for education which ends with the declaration that “The content of all educational literature should be purged of all bourgeoisie-promoting ideas.”⁴⁷⁰

According to Saul Gwakuba Ndlovu, two years later, when Nkomo and his nationalist colleagues were released, Nkomo almost unilaterally, and without approval of the Revolutionary council, demanded that ZAPU no longer publish or use the document. He recalled:

It [ZAPU's *Ideological Concept*] was drafted by a team of ZAPU colleagues headed by TG Silundika... But it was actually revised and approved by the ZAPU Revolutionary Council. The reason for adopting socialism as the ZAPU ideology was that the struggle had reached a very difficult phase and that activists were asking the question: are we fighting for the liberation of the

⁴⁶⁸ Issuing body Zimbabwe African People’s Union, *Ideological Concept*. Lusaka, Zambia (Zimbabwe African People’s Union (ZAPU), 1970), 4

⁴⁶⁹ Ibid., 6-8

⁴⁷⁰ Ibid., 8-12

country, or are we fighting so as to enable our leaders to get into power as individuals for their own personal aggrandizement, for their own personal good, or their own personal benefit?

We used that document for quite some time, but when Nkomo was released from Gonakudzingwa in December 1974 and came to join us, 2 years later, he disowned that document and said no, that document... it would hinder progress towards independence rather than support it. He decided, more or less on his own, with maybe one or two top individuals, to throw away the whole outfit and to go back to the pre-ideological concept era where we were fighting for land. And we were fighting for, we were struggling for equal pay for equal work and so forth, more or less. But not the finer details as were contained in that document, the *ZAPU Ideological Concept* document.⁴⁷¹

Saul Gwakuba's comment that Nkomo believed that socialism would hinder Zimbabwe's independence was echoed by other interviewees privy to the Revolutionary Council meetings. Mr. Josiah Batiswayi Dube, who knew and still maintains a great deal of respect for Nkomo, argued that Nkomo was not merely playing politics but felt that capitalism was not entirely bad. Mr. Dube took the minutes at Revolutionary Council Meetings in 1978 and 1979.⁴⁷² He recalled:

He [Nkomo] admired the fact that, well, capitalist approach did bring in development, you could actually say for instance that Zimbabwe... gained certain things from them. We gained Christianity, we gained education and things like their culture and so on. That was good. But he hated the fact that those who get rich were exploiting other people. He thought, "Right, whatever profits are made, they must be shared equally while we are developing. But where a person wants extra profits, super profits at the expense of somebody else," then that he was against. He thought that's where capitalism is wrong, where a person wants to get rich and then he oppresses those who were already oppressed—he will oppress them further to get super profits, that's what he didn't like about capitalism. But otherwise, the European culture, when it came to Africa, he says it helped...spruce up the quality of life of the African people. And then, eh, and then of course education, he admired that; and the fact that it brought the idea of God as we know Him today, so he was more or less steering the middle course [ideologically].⁴⁷³

Saul Gwakuba Ndlovu mentioned Nkomo's outright capitalist leanings in his relationship with business leader such as Tiny Rowland: "Yeah, Nkomo was pro-capitalist, and you are aware that he was very close to Tiny Rowland, the Chief Executive Officer at the time and

⁴⁷¹ Saul Ndlovu, interview with author, December 2018.

⁴⁷² For example, he mentioned that he was the one who recorded the minutes the at the council meeting at VC camp in Zambia before Nkomo decided to take part in the Lancaster conference. He mentioned that Kaunda, president of Zambia felt uneasy to continue hosting ZAPU military bases and therefore felt compelled to take part in the Lancaster conference.

⁴⁷³ Ibid.

eventually the owner of Lonrho, and Tiny Rowland was helping ZAPU through Nkomo, on the understanding that his interest in the country would be safe under an Nkomo government.”⁴⁷⁴

The nationalists were careful not to publicize their disengagement with socialism. ZAPU’s publications, particularly the *Zimbabwe Review*, maintained the socialist leaning of ZAPU, and the commissars trained in the Soviet Union made no mention of ZAPU leadership limiting their teaching of scientific socialism. However, Nkomo and the nationalists’ repudiation of the socialism enshrined in the *Ideological Concept* created ideological rifts within the party. For example, while justifying the importance of Nkomo’s focus on land, Saul Gwakuba Ndlovu mentioned that several prominent party leaders, such as J.Z. Moyo, were ideologically left of Nkomo and the nationalist leadership. He noted:

Yes. Well there wasn’t a schism [ideologically] as such. The under-wing of the party had questions; there was death facing them in the field, so the question they had was: what were they sacrificing for? It was important. Were they sacrificing as it were for, what the British used to say “Land and King” or were they sacrificing for land and nation? So, the *Ideological Concept* was meant to answer that question and also, not only that, we were getting material assistance, a lot of it. We were getting financial assistance, a great deal of it, we were getting actual help, practical assistance from socialist countries. It would have been unrealistic for us to expect [this kind of assistance from] the socialist countries if we did not spell out our ideology. Were we fighting to promote capitalism, against which socialism was struggling, or were we fighting to promote socialism? You will remember that during those years, the Cold War was on. And the Cold War was all about ideology: socialism vs. capitalism. Now we had to be one or the other and so we chose to be socialist. I was the Director of Information and Publishing and was to a certain extent, to a very certain extent, responsible for the generation of ideas, of ideology. I was a part of this... We argued quite strongly, especially about land, that land belongs to the people as a whole. That you can’t sell land, no more that you can sell air, no more that you can sell water. That was our argument. But I must say that J.Z. Moyo had much earlier tried to be a member of the South Africa Communist Party (SACP). And he was certainly leftist in his ideological leanings. But Joshua Nkomo was just an African democrat, an African democrat with very strong pro-capitalist leanings.⁴⁷⁵

Gwakuba highlights the complexities of ZAPU’s engagement with socialism, while not questioning the sincerity of the commissars’ commitment to socialist ideals, he notes that there were substantial and political and material incentives for publicly adopting socialism.

⁴⁷⁴ Saul Ndlovu, interview with the author, 2018.

⁴⁷⁵ Ibid.

...a personality like Joshua Nkomo, he was a nationalist and he's called "Father Zimbabwe" throughout his life, he remained a nationalist, not a revolutionary. But with other characters of his like, like J.Z. Moyo, those were also nationalist from the start, but transformed the understanding of politics as they started to get with the armed struggle. And they become really true revolutionaries. No one would ever take away that status or that recognition as a revolutionary. The personality of J.Z. Moyo, even Robert Mugabe was never a revolutionary. But J.Z. was the father of revolution of this country.⁴⁷⁶

Based on my interviews with veterans, including S. Gwakuba and Josiah Dube, there is evidently much more to be learned about the political and ideological layers and factions within ZAPU. Whether or not Nkomo and his nationalist colleagues challenged ZAPU's socialist stance in *The Ideological Concept* on the grounds of political strategy, ideology, or a combination of both, is an interesting historical and political question that lies outside of the purview of this project.

Four decades later, a number of veterans, most notably the majority who had joined ZIPRA in the late 1970's labelled the nationalists as "un-revolutionary" and blamed the current state of Zimbabwe on the sidelining of the "revolutionary" elements of the liberation struggle. For some, like former commissar and deputy commander JG, the nationalists were more allied with the Western capitalist powers than the Eastern socialist bloc, a claim he bases on the fact that the nationalists allowed Britain to integrate the armies and broker the peace agreement, rather than the Eastern Bloc countries with whom ZAPU and ZANU had allied themselves over the course of the struggle. He noted:

We can talk of the revolution at that time being spearheaded by people like, Ernesto Che Guevara, Fidel Castro the Soviet Union... So we lived that way and we ended up adopting the Marxist-Leninist ideology... However, with the release of some of the nationalists from prison, because most of them, including Nkomo, they were imprisoned here, when some of us were already out there in the struggle. For example, by in 1975... I was already a student of Marxism-Leninism, and that's the ideology that I was made to believe was the party ideology...

We were the only socialist level while our leadership was pulling the other way, they were all Christian and they thought, "Hey we have created a monster." And their friends, their friends were actually British and Western. They were Western. They just associated with comrade Fidel Castro, Brezhnev, Eric Wonika and all that for arms procurement, but not

⁴⁷⁶ Saul Ndlovu, interview with the author, December, 2018.

necessarily for ideological [reasons]. They were not on the Leninist path or the Marxist path. So, it was easier for the British to manipulate them when the negotiations came in 1979. And they accepted a lot of retrogressive compromises and conditions, which were later to come back and haunt us. Had we been on the same plane, I think we wouldn't be having all this rubbish we're having.

The fighters were ideologically clear. But the nationalists were still disoriented...they accepted that our national army be trained and standardized according to British standards. They train with the BMATT, the British Military Advisory Technical Team. Why would you do that? We were insisting, the fighters were insisting, let us have the Chinese and the Russians. Then the Germans and the Cubans our friends must train our forces and integrate the army. But the nationalists agreed on Rhodesia and Britain doing that.⁴⁷⁷

Not all the commissars interviewed who separated “nationalists” from the “revolutionaries” based on ideology viewed the nationalists as *de facto* at fault for the post-independence outcomes. PN differentiates among the nationalists those who were progressive from the “capitalists”. For PN, the failure of post-independence Zimbabwe was not attributed entirely to the nationalists, but to the “capitalists” within the nationalists. He argued that the progressive elements and policies of the nationalists were thwarted by capitalist forces which maintained an exploitative capitalist state, reducing the radical potential of the revolution to a game of racial musical chairs:

Yeah, they were not socialist enough. How can I say, they were capitalists. Most of them were ... you have a nationalist ... nationalism was very progressive to an extent that you want to liberate yourself, but there are capitalists within those nationalists, you will find that they are capitalist. You should say ... if you will take off this chair, I'm the one who's going to sit in this chair. So it means there is no replacement. It's the same reason ... replacement but in different colour, is what has happened here. So, it must be pure negation replacement of the old by the new in a serious way⁴⁷⁸

Others, including JG, while blaming the leadership for not being socialist enough, admit to presently questioning the ideals of socialism, as he remarked:

That's a Marxist philosophy in the political and political economy of socialism. And basically, it's the theory that takes you from being a political ignoramus through to the capitalist system that we were going through, we were brought up under, into socialism and eventually into communism. That's how it was envisaged. However, we've gone through so much transformation in the system that even those of us who questioned it as we studied it, have been vindicated in that, you know, the idea was a bit too high for people coming from a sort of, em,

⁴⁷⁷ JG, interview with the author, July, 2017.

⁴⁷⁸ PN, interview with the author, December, 2018.

peasant, semi-worker, capitalist system to transform to communism, it was such a great leap that it was almost impossible to really, shall I say, accomplish?⁴⁷⁹

RM similarly noted:

The benefits as such were that each and every person would participate in the economy of the state, would be part and parcel of the state. That is the major issue. Well, really, it took me a long time to realize that the socialist ideology is contrary to human nature. In the manner that human nature would want to acquire, it is not pleased with distribution, or with sharing. Human nature is anchored on I, I, I. Human nature is not pleased to say, “We.” It wants to be I. Like as it is, I’d want to drive a big car like this one, buy myself... See somebody walking there, it’s raining, I won’t want to pick him or her up because it is my car. I’m fascinated when I’m trampling on the heads of other people. That’s how human nature is. So, that’s why you find that the socialist ideology cannot easily progress or move forward because the forces of human nature, which are capitalistic, are so powerful to withstand this socialist ideology.

I came to this realization in a manner, especially during the time when the Soviet Union was falling apart. That’s when I realized that aspect. And again, after independence. When we had achieved our independence, when what we had been preaching for so long, as the socialist ideology, started showing different colours. You see?⁴⁸⁰

While these sentiments may be Coloured by a presentist bias and dissatisfaction with the current state of Zimbabwe, there is good reason to believe that they are not merely revisionist, but reflect very real divisions within ZAPU, as can be seen in the documentary evidence of the *Zimbabwe Review*, the *Ideological Concept*, and Moore’s work on the March 11th movement. In Moore’s language, the commissars and the structures of the political commissariat represent the “traces” of the revolutionary Marxist-Leninist elements in ZAPU that never quite overcame the hegemony of the nationalist elites in the liberation struggle.

The fact that four decades later, many veterans invoke socialist concepts and dialectics in their analysis of the history and present state of Zimbabwe highlights the lasting impact of the socialist political education they received, developed, and taught. Veteran’s comments such as these further justify the importance of studying ZAPU’s political educational strategy, and particularly the political commissariat which appears to have been

⁴⁷⁹ JG, interview with the author, December, 2018.

⁴⁸⁰ RM, interview with author, December, 2018.

the main instrument of this strategy.

Political Commissars as Organic and Counter-Hegemonic Intellectuals

Having described the commissariat's institutional structure, curriculum, and function, this section examines the roles of commissars as intellectuals. Commissars described their purpose as two-fold: to promulgate ZAPU's socialist political doctrine and to legitimate ZAPU's war effort in response to not only the historical injustices of colonialism and the post-UDI government, but against the global exploitative capitalist bourgeoisie structure, which they argued, profited from those injustices. It is therefore only fitting that an analysis of the role these commissars played in the liberation struggle must take into consideration the Marxist conceptual vocabulary and ideological frameworks they used when describing their role in the struggle.

Within a Gramscian framework, if the Rhodesian government operating within the global capitalist framework formed the hegemonic status quo, then the commissariat comprised the "organic intellectuals" of a "counter-hegemonic" body. The political writers, commissars, as well as those whom they taught not only shared, but adapted and synthesized socialist/Marxist doctrines with respect to their contexts, ideological beliefs and the beliefs of those whom they taught.

Antonio Gramsci famously asserted that "all men are intellectuals, but not all men have in society the function of intellectuals."⁴⁸¹ In the same work, he later clarifies that "each man, outside his professional activity, carries on some form of intellectual activity, that is, he is a 'philosopher'... he participates in a particular conception of the world, has a conscious

⁴⁸¹ Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*, Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (tr. and eds.) (New York: International Publishers, 1971), 9.

line of moral conduct, and therefore contributes to sustain a conception of the world or to modify it, that is, to bring into being new modes of thought.”⁴⁸² But while Gramsci characterizes all people as engaging in this kind of intellectual activity, he reserves the more restricted social function of intellectuals for those who specialize in such intellectual work of articulation, education, and organization. Gramsci distinguished between “organic intellectuals”—those who are “organically” created by a social group and give it “homogeneity and an awareness of its own function not only in the economic but also in the social and political fields”⁴⁸³—and the “traditional intellectuals,” who were once organically tied to groups that have since evolved or disappeared through social changes, and now (falsely) see themselves as “autonomous and independent of the dominant group” (such as the clergy and professional academics), but in reality tend to support the interests of dominant social groups.⁴⁸⁴ In this model, the organic intellectuals of these dominant groups and the co-opted ivory-tower “traditional intellectuals” are important in articulating, disseminating, and reproducing the hegemony of the ruling classes, so that ruling class norms, culture, and ideology are adopted as “common sense” by the subordinated classes.⁴⁸⁵ Thus, any revolutionary effort must involve the formation of a “counter-hegemony”: alternative values, culture, and ideology, articulated by the organic intellectuals of the working and subaltern classes to challenge the hegemonic culture and ideology of the capitalist bourgeoisie. Gramsci argued for educational efforts that would produce such

⁴⁸² Ibid.

⁴⁸³ Ibid., 5

⁴⁸⁴ Ibid., 6–8

⁴⁸⁵ Ibid, 4, 12.

working-class, “organic” intellectuals who could develop such counter-hegemonic ideologies and cultures, not by introducing Marxist ideology as a set of foreign notions to be adopted by the working class, but by developing the existing critical intellectual activity of the proletariat to bring it into alignment with Marxist insights and theories.⁴⁸⁶

Thus defined, it is easy to see how ZAPU’s political commissariat functioned as an institution of Gramscian “organic intellectuals” dedicated to developing a “counter-hegemony” to global capitalism through political education. However, as Steven Feierman highlighted in his *Peasant Intellectuals: Anthropology and History in Tanzania*, Gramsci, “described the peasantry of incapable of elaborating or assimilating its own intellectuals. In his view, only the working class, with its organic link to the Communist Party, is capable of leading the peasantry to challenge the hegemony of dominant groups. This position is unacceptable on many counts....”⁴⁸⁷ Feierman goes on to describe how the eponymous “peasant intellectuals” of his study drew on their diverse experiences with trade, Christianity, Islam, traditional religions and rituals, and work in colonial and customary courts to “create new forms of political discourse,” and debate the nature of democracy, freedom, slavery,⁴⁸⁸ and ultimately to lead “movements which defeated the chiefs, and which provided the driving force for winning national independence.”⁴⁸⁹ These peasant intellectuals were able to mount effective resistance to the colonial and postcolonial state precisely because of their distance

⁴⁸⁶ Ibid., 15-16, 25.

⁴⁸⁷ Steven Feierman, *Peasant Intellectuals: anthropology and history in Tanzania*. (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990), 18. Similar insights on the agency and diversity of the peasantry are found in Terrence Ranger, *Peasant Consciousness and Guerrilla War in Zimbabwe* (London: James Currey, 1985) and David Lan, *Guns and Rain: guerrillas and spirit mediums in Zimbabwe*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985).

⁴⁸⁸ Ibid., 23-34

⁴⁸⁹ Ibid., 25-26

and independence from the central national party and its bureaucratic institutions.

While the ZAPU political commissariat were certainly not peasant intellectuals, Feierman's study highlights the creativity and agency of the civilian communities that the commissariat engaged, the power of the unique syntheses of diverse discursive sources (Christianity, Islam, Marxism, traditional religions, etc.), and the importance and influence groups can make despite, and sometimes because of, their marginalization. Thus, even when the more radical, Marxist elements of ZAPU represented by the commissariat were marginalized by party leadership, they could still exert significant influence on the party membership and broader population.

David Moore used Gramsci's framework to analyse the history of Zimbabwe's liberation struggle, arguing that these more radical elements represented in the March 11 movement and the short-lived Zimbabwean People's Army (ZIPA), were potential "organic intellectuals," but their marginalization prevented the development of a viable counter-hegemony to "the system" of global state capitalism.⁴⁹⁰ Nevertheless, he concludes, "the fact that 'Marxism-Leninism' is the official ideology of the Zimbabwean state is due to the efforts of the young organic intellectuals who attempted to fuse the best elements of populism and Marxism."⁴⁹¹ Moore focuses on ZIPA's creation of Wampoa college as the high water mark of ideological education and "ZIPA's main achievement":

Wampoa College was established to develop a coherent ideological grounding for the political commissars who would be 'in the bush', and to further the construction of a 'line' that would unite the soldiers from ZANLA and ZIPRA. The college only lasted for four months, but that short time seems to symbolise the essence of ZIPA's approach....

Indeed, Wampoa could be considered but a catalyst of a process that was already taking place in a limited and informal way, given that the roots of the college were in the 'study

⁴⁹⁰ David Moore, "The ideological formation of the Zimbabwean ruling class." *Journal of Southern African Studies* 17, no. 3 (1991): 472-495.

⁴⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 495.

groups' that many of the ZIPA leadership had set up in the camps in the early stages of the liberation struggle, and the dissent in ZAPU during the late 1960s and early 1970s.⁴⁹²

While more research needs to be done on the political education in ZANU camps and the role of their political commissariat, the evidence presented in this chapter demonstrates that far from being “limited” and “informal,” ZAPU’s political commissariat had a widespread and well-established program of political education in its camps by the time ZIPA was created in 1975. Moreover, Moore hints that this more radical, ideological turn in ZANU’s history, which ZIPA represents, may have been due, in part, to the influence of the better-trained ZAPU cadres and officers:

Yet the transformations which would lead to ZIPA were taking place ‘on the ground’ at the guerrilla camps, not in the high echelons of the party. By the early 1970s young commanders—a ‘second generation’ of volunteer and relatively well-educated: soldiers—were holding clandestine (because forbidden) seminars and discussion groups on the classics of Marx, Lenin, and Mao. The debates increased in intensity when refugees from the ZAPU crisis joined the camps, insisting that Maoist interpretations of the classics lacked rigour.⁴⁹³

As previous sections demonstrated, these kinds of seminar and discussion groups on Marx, Lenin, and Mao were neither clandestine nor forbidden in the ZAPU camps, but were among the main activities of the political commissariat. Drawing on Gramsci again, Moore contrasts the “war of manoeuvre”—the military capture of the state, with the “war of position”—the ideological battle for socialism through civil society, arguing that, “a guerrilla war in which the subaltern classes were dialogically engaged in the ideological soldiers’ project—and this was ZIPA’s aim—would seem to combine both of these notions. After ZIPA’s displacement, ZAPU’s aims were oriented to the ‘war of manoeuvre’.”⁴⁹⁴ Even as ZANU and ZAPU shifted their focus in the late 1970’s to a “war of manoeuvre,”⁴⁹⁵ the present research clearly

⁴⁹² Ibid., 493-494.

⁴⁹³ Ibid, 491.

⁴⁹⁴ Ibid., 492.

⁴⁹⁵ For ZAPU, this “war of manoeuvre” could be defined as their “Turning Point” strategy.

demonstrates that ZAPU's political commissars continued to combine the “war of position”—engaging the so-called “subaltern classes,” and developing new, creative, and critical ideological syntheses of the diverse discourses (Marxism, Nationalism, Pan-Africanism, Christianity, traditional African religions, liberalism, capitalism, etc.) in which they participated.

Conclusion

This chapter provides insight into the contested ideological conception of education in ZAPU, through an analysis of the political commissariat, which was one of the most important and influential structures in debating and determining the purpose and function of education within the liberation movement. As one of ZAPU's main instruments of political education, the commissariat was an important educational institution on the frontlines of the ideological front of the liberation struggle. In articulating and educating soldiers and civilians in a “counter-hegemonic” history of the region and their struggle, the institution and activities of commissariat illustrate the ways in which education was contested and instrumentalized on all “sides” of the post-UDI conflict. Through interviews with commissars, a political writer and editor for ZAPU, as well as ZIPRA veterans, the chapter aims to make a number of interventions in the history of the period.

Most generally, this chapter underscores the importance of political education within ZAPU and ZIPRA, which has been overlooked by many historians of the war, and whose existence has been outright denied by others. This study of the political commissariat should hopefully help put to rest such one-sided and simplistic accounts of ZIPRA and ZAPU's activities during the liberation struggle. More specifically, this study of ZAPU's commissariat reveals that it constituted a formalized system of education which drew upon

nationalist and especially socialist ideologies that were current in many of the liberation movements across the continent during the 1960's and 1970's. The political commissariat formed the institutional basis through which this education permeated the military hierarchy at all levels, and was spread throughout the camp schools and surrounding communities.

While the commissariat, in name and form, was derived from the Soviet Union and other socialist countries, the duties of the political commissars, as well as the political ideologies which they taught, were adapted to the context of the Rhodesian war. The commissariat's curriculum should be analysed not as a mere parroting of Soviet/Cuban Cold War propaganda, but rather as a creative and critical adaptation of these socialist ideologies to the local contexts and lived experiences of individual soldiers and civilians as well as the local political contexts of ZAPU, Rhodesia, and Southern African liberation movements more generally.

This leads to another contribution of this chapter—the use of oral histories to shed light on the functions and beliefs of the individual commissars and veterans themselves. It was only through the interviews that I was able to trace the genealogy of political education within ZAPU, from the early nationalist curriculum which shifted significantly to the socialist curriculum taught by the commissars. It was not only the curriculum of the commissariat that was counter-hegemonic, but also its dialectical pedagogical method, which sought to train cadres and civilians to be critical of radio news broadcasts, socio-economic structures (such as capitalism and colonialism), and religious beliefs and institutions, such as Christianity. Moreover, the commissars' studies and teaching experience also deeply impacted their own beliefs, leading them to synthesize, reconcile, or reject in diverse and divergent ways, socialist ideology, African cultures and traditional beliefs, Christianity, and

nationalist and capitalist ideologies and realities.⁴⁹⁶

In conclusion, the activities of ZAPU's political commissariat demonstrate how political education was an important ideological battleground, and that ZAPU considered this ideological dimension of the struggle important enough to invest significant resources to create publications and institutions, such as the commissariat, devoted to this "front" of the war. In addition to outlining the structure and functions of the commissariat, this chapter analysed the commissars as "organic intellectuals," and explored the ideology taught by the commissariat and its importance. Arguing that this ideology was more than mere rhetoric or "propaganda," this chapter has sought to demonstrate the ways in which the commissariat's ideology was (and to a certain extent, still is) taken very seriously by the commissars and non-commissar soldiers and the importance of the commissars' political lessons in galvanizing individual and group commitment to and identity with the liberation struggle, reframing and incorporating individual grievances (such as the theft of land) into anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist narratives of liberation. This study has tried to highlight the overlooked intellectual sophistication and importance of these ideological interventions in the liberation struggle.

However, much more work remains to be done on the history of political education during the liberation struggle and ZAPU's commissariat. More interviews with veterans and commissars, especially female veterans (including the possible female commissars in Victory Camp) urgently need to be conducted, as several important ZAPU veterans and political figures of the period have already passed away and many are quite elderly. The lack of female voices and the relative lack of civilian perspectives on the commissariat is another

⁴⁹⁶ See Chapter 2 within this thesis, for an expanded discussion on oral histories.

major limitation in this study, which I hope can be rectified by future work in this area. Although I attempted to interview several female veterans for this project, most were reluctant to discuss their wartime experiences. Another potential limitation of this study was the fact that the interviews were conducted in English, not isiNdebele. Numerous psychological studies have demonstrated the influence of language in memory encoding and recall,⁴⁹⁷ and future studies should be sure to interview veterans and civilians in multiple languages. The ideological and educational dimensions of Zimbabwe's liberation struggle were just as important as its military and political aspects and deserve the same kind of scholarly attention the latter have received. It is hoped that this chapter constitutes a modest contribution to this effort.

⁴⁹⁷ Marian Viorica and Ulric Neisser, "Language-Dependent Recall of Autobiographical Memories." *Journal of Experimental and Social Psychology* 129 no. 3 (2000): 361-368; Marian Viorica and Margarita Kaushanskaya, "Language Context Guides Memory Content," *Psychonomic Bulletin & Review* 14, no. 5 (2007): 925-933.

Conclusion

This thesis has hitherto explored the ways in which the Rhodesian Front and ZAPU not only instrumentalised education in order to win the war but also conceptualised the role of education in an imagined future state. Given ZAPU's commitment and war-time investment to the education of the citizens of this future state, one cannot help but wonder how Zimbabwe's educational system, and the nation as a whole, would be different if Joshua Nkomo's ZAPU party had been elected to government instead of the rival nationalist movement, the Zimbabwe African National Union ZANU in 1980.

While such counterfactuals can yield no definitive answers, the question invites contemplation of the central role that education has played in the political, social, economic and religious transformation of the country over the past century and a half. As the recent "Rhodes Must Fall" protests in South Africa and other countries demonstrate, the same calls that the political commissars in ZAPU made to decolonise educational curricula and eliminate neo-colonial-capitalism and racism remain salient today. Without recording these educational histories, the lessons learned, lives sacrificed, and possible, imagined futures might be lost to future generations.

Although not discussed within this work, ZANU, which was officially Maoist and supported by China during the liberation struggle, won the independence election in April 1980. However, despite attempts by ministers Dr. Dzingai Mutumbuka and Dr. Fay Chung to incorporate socialist and Maoist elements of "political economy of education" into the school system, the educational system ultimately differed little from its Rhodesian forebear, save for the significant fact that it was greatly expanded (attaining one of the highest literacy rates in Africa) and the colonial system's defining *de jure* racial segregation was abolished. After the

post-2000 economic crises however, schools have borne the brunt of political and economic conflicts and have been sites of political violence.⁴⁹⁸ As the economy continues to falter, the future of Zimbabwe's once-lauded educational system remains uncertain, but it is hoped that leaders and policy-makers will study and learn from the nation's unique educational history, which continues to inform the present, even if it is not widely-known.

This is particularly true of ZAPU's educational history, as the persecution of ZAPU veterans by the newly-elected ZANU government and the destruction of ZAPU records meant that ZAPU's role in the history of the struggle has been understudied. Understanding this history was of particular importance to me personally, as I grew up in Bulawayo, the epicentre of ZAPU's activities in Rhodesia. Although I had family members who fought on both sides of the conflict, including my father who was conscripted by the RF and my uncle who served as an RF commander, the war was never discussed—so I grew up and was educated in a society deeply affected by this history about which I knew very little. I hope that this thesis, and future studies like it, will help inform those who shape and are shaped by the legacy of Rhodesia and Zimbabwe's educational system.

This thesis began with a detailed narrative of the founding of the colony of Rhodesia in order to highlight the role of education in the architecture of state-building. The British South Africa Company used mission schools as vehicles for propaganda, monetisation of the economy, and as institutions of discipline and societal transformation. Subsequent chapters explored how, over a century and a half later, the Rhodesian Front and ZAPU similarly instrumentalised education during the Liberation War, the former, in order to maintain the

⁴⁹⁸ Davies, Lynn. "Schools and War: Urgent agendas for comparative and international education." *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education* 35, no. 4 (2005): 357-371.

colonial state, and the latter, to dismantle it.

Education in the Rhodesian Colony

Since education systems are embedded within the social, political, economic and even ideo-religious fabric of societies, the history of education in Rhodesia offers a unique perspective on questions of decolonisation and societal change. The background study on the history of education in Rhodesia, presented in chapter three, traces the origins and use of colonial education in the creation of the colony in order to demonstrate the importance of history in the study of education and the role of education in state formation. In the case of Rhodesia, militarily defeated African populations were coerced into mission schools by economic necessity. First, Africans were ordered to pay a coin tax by the colonial government, which forced them into jobs at the missions, where enrolment in schools and church attendance was a condition of employment. As the colonial economy advanced and became increasingly monetized, more Africans were needed for the colonial workforce, and needed basic English literacy and numeracy skills to perform these jobs, which they were obliged to perform in order to pay taxes, avoid imprisonment, and survive in a currency-based economy.

Through education, the British South Africa Company aimed to foster laborers and consumers, who were essential for the new colonial economy. Schools also became places of religious and moral education, wherein Christian and white-supremacist ideologies were taught, along with cultural norms about time, bodily disposition, and daily life. Viewed through a Foucauldian lens, individuals within the colonial state were subject to a form of discipline of mind and body shared among the schoolyard, the prisons, and the barracks.

Not only was the founding of the education system the result of violent conflict, but as its importance to the future of the colony increased, it increasingly became a site of contestation and conflict. The contrasting goals of missionaries—to create converts—and those of the Rhodesian state—to create a class of workers—led to a power-struggle over the educational curriculum wherein churches favoured a more academic or “literary” education, while the Rhodesian government favoured more vocational training. Over time, the Rhodesian government ordinances increasingly limited missionary control of education. For African, Coloured, and Asian Rhodesians, education also became one of the few avenues for social and economic mobility, and eventually political power.

The study of the educational history of the founding of the state offers insight into the nature of education in the colony. First and foremost, it underscores the non-neutrality of the formal education system; it was a tool used to create converts and restructure society. The educational curriculum and pedagogy were founded on white-supremacist ideologies that defended the colonial and missionary projects as “progress” by defining all that existed before the colony as regressive. The curricular narrative was therefore one of the deliverance of Africans from their culture, their histories and their religions. Through the education system, this ideology of racial hierarchy was disseminated throughout Rhodesian society and the state, gaining further legitimacy through the “informal education” of state propaganda and media.

The Rhodesian Front’s Use of Education

Over a century later, the Rhodesian Front used that very same educational and propaganda machinery in its attempts to maintain the white-settler minority government after the Unilateral Declaration of Independence in 1965. The relationship between the

government censorship of teachers and students and wider censorship campaigns illustrates the continuum that existed between the schools and the wider society. The Literacy Bureau, which managed a list of nationally banned books, also determined the educational curriculum in schools, while the Rhodesian Broadcasting Corporation featured anti-nationalist programming on the same channel as school and educational broadcasts. The censorship of teachers, students and the general public under the Emergency Powers Acts further highlights the racial divisions of Rhodesian society as in White schools, the censorship of teachers and students was portrayed as protecting state secrets, while in African schools, censorship was portrayed as clamping down on sedition. This censorship of teachers and students exemplifies how schools were both vehicles and victims of the state's political messaging during the war.

Schools were also instrumentalised more directly within the war. For example, the Rhodesian government recruited soldiers through advertisements in the school yearbooks of White schools; it distributed and collected the draft forms at schools, and teachers were often assigned to the military's Psychological Operation Unit in which they aided media specialists and psychologists in forming propaganda campaigns against the nationalist movement. Education was also used to entice guerrilla soldiers to join the Rhodesian Forces and was denied punitively, along with other government services, to villagers who appeared to refuse to cooperate with Rhodesian Forces.

The impacts of the war on schools were also mediated by race. My research revealed how White schools were proactively defended against attacks by the guerrilla groups and had "bright lights" or security forces patrolling the schools. White students underwent training and drills in case of an attack, and extra protections for students travelling to or from schools

were provided by the state during the war. African and Coloured/Asian schools were not protected and were merely closed down after attacks on or near the schools, resulting in thousands of school closures by 1979.

ZAPU's Use of Education

In some cases, the nationalist guerrilla incursions intentionally caused these school closures. ZAPU's military wing, ZIPRA abducted students and teachers from schools close to the Botswana border in order to build its own armed forces. Students 16 years and older were recruited and trained to fight while younger students were sent to camp schools which ZAPU built in Zambia. While there may seem to be a contradiction between ZAPU's calls for education as a basic right, and their forcible kidnapping of students for military training, upon closer inspection, I argue that ZAPU had an intentional educational ideology and policy, and that while the attacks were carried out for "shock value," generating headlines to demonstrate that the Rhodesian state was losing control of the country, ZIPRA cadres also believed that the Rhodesian educational system was indoctrinating students into compliance with a racist, anti-revolutionary state, and sought to counter this with their own programs of political education. On a more practical level, interviewees privy to ZAPU's strategy argue that ZAPU desperately needed to increase the size of the guerrilla forces, and that the kidnappings were also carried out in response to the Rhodesian Front's draft of White and Coloured men, and its coercive recruitment of Africans for its armed forces. ZAPU consistently valued education as the training of a skilled citizenry of a future state.

Documentary analysis and interviews showed how ZAPU's educational ideologies shifted over time, beginning with calls for increasing educational funding, access and expansion of education for Africans in response to the limited education provided by the state

and missionary institutions. By the mid 1970s, however, as ZAPU became decidedly socialist, it called for a “revolutionary education” which substituted African histories and socialist socio-economic theories to replace the Rhodesian curriculum. ZAPU viewed itself as “a government in exile,” which largely shaped their war-time educational strategies. Internal documentation indicates that they viewed an educated citizenry as the cornerstone of the future state and therefore devoted considerable effort and resources to obtaining scholarships for refugees and education for prisoners, guerrilla fighters and others in their party. Former prisoners interviewed discussed studying while in prison as part of their political training for future positions in the new state. Students studying abroad returned to work with ZAPU in the camps, military, and aided in crafting and disseminating party ideologies, while camp schools provided education for refugees and young abductees alike. Interestingly, ZAPU’s emphasis on education meant that some refugees and guerrilla fighters had more educational opportunities in refugee and military camps or prison than they had in the Rhodesian school system.

ZAPU requested scholarships from every country and NGO they could, not only as a means of educating their future leadership and citizens, but also as a form of diplomacy to establish ties with countries and organisations that were unwilling to provide military support. Under the umbrella of the Cold War, other countries also used education as a diplomatic and political tool to further their own agendas. For example, the US scholarship program for refugees was supported and monitored by the CIA as part of a Cold War policy to contain communist influence in the “Third World.” The US hoped that by educating students directly, they could counteract the communist ideologies to which students studying in the USSR and other socialist countries were exposed and in which some of them were

trained.

The fact that countries like the US and the Soviet Union aided nationalists as part of their own proxy wars is significant. Although not the primary focus of this research, it points to the important, but understudied role played by African and other so-called “Third World” countries in the wider Cold War. In a war fought ideologically in as much as it was militarily, there is much for future researchers to explore in the understudied transnational dialogues which took place in institutes of higher learning and other “South-South” networks.⁴⁹⁹

ZAPU’s Political Commissariat

Chapter 6 explores one particularly significant outcome of these transnational dialogues: the creation of ZAPU’s Political Commissariat, which was inspired by political education structures in the Soviet Union. In ZAPU’s military wing, ZIPRA, all deputy military-ranked officers became political commissars and taught political ideology lessons which were built into the daily training schedules of soldiers and other camp residents. Despite not having any written textbooks, interviews with veterans revealed that commissars taught a standard curriculum which was echoed in the discussions and phrases the veterans repeated almost five decades after the war. Veterans nearly unanimously described themselves as engaged in a fight against a “system, not a race,” and described this system as “an exploitative capitalist system” which was much larger than the Rhodesian state. The curriculum consisted of African history as well as economic and political theory which included detailed theoretical explorations of socialism.

This curriculum was not merely an intellectual exercise, but one with which soldiers

⁴⁹⁹ See Elleni Zeleke, *Ethiopia in Theory: Revolution and Knowledge Production, 1964-2016* (Leiden: Brill, 2019) for one such study.

actively engaged as part of their fight for their lives and future country. Apart from being the first case study of the commissariat, chapter six is significant in that it presents the perspectives of the veterans themselves through exploring the ways in which they critically engaged with their own beliefs and the diverse set of discourses (Marxist, Pan-Africanist, Christian, capitalist, etc.) in which they had been trained. Interviewees, some of whom were privy to the politics at the highest levels of ZAPU's leadership, also highlighted the ways in which these discourses shaped ZAPU as a movement, such as the ideological rifts within the party between the "old guard" nationalist leadership and the younger socialist cadres. The individual stories of veterans place them as active participants in shaping the war and not merely passive pawns in a political game of chess played on the local and international stages.

I argue that as "organic intellectuals," commissars synthesized differing socialist, nationalist, and religious ideals in a dynamic, ideologically capacious political education for soldiers and some civilians. For the commissars and veterans interviewed, this socialist ideology was, and remains, more than a mere tool of war or means of articulating socio-economic or political grievances; the myriad ways in which these commissars negotiated ideological complexities and tensions within their daily lessons—e.g. addressing capitalism and Christianity in light of socialist anti-theism—and in their own lives during and after the war, also speaks to the sophistication and centrality of the ideological battlefield of the liberation struggle. The ideals of socialism and pan-Africanism taught during the struggle shaped, and continues to shape, the worldviews of the veterans and their relationship with the Zimbabwean state.

The perspectives of these veterans, though presented within the final chapter of this

work, highlight what is at stake in this research project. Much of the project's contribution to the field of education and the history of the period lies in the oral narratives of individuals who lived through the period and who are able to fill in the gaps in the written historical record on education and the war. Since their individual and collective resolve fuelled the revolutionary war, it is only fitting that their individual views be showcased as significant to the war.

Future Research

Yet there is much work to be done to further record and contextualise these narratives before their keepers pass away. For example, one of the most important sets of narratives, that of women, with a few exceptions, was markedly absent from this project. While there were a number of practical difficulties in recruiting more women to speak about their experiences in the war for this study, no history could be complete without drawing on the educational experiences of women during the war. Their voices are imperative to understanding the “educational front” in its totality.

For the veteran narratives already presented, future research could be carried out in order to contextualise veterans' intellectual discourse within broader transnational discourses on socialism and the Cold War; much more could be learned about the educational experiences and exchanges of these veterans who studied abroad during one of the most tumultuous periods in modern history. This research should include post-war narratives of veterans who returned to work in and migrated from the newly-independent Zimbabwe; while the war may have officially ended with the signing of Lancaster agreement—education did not. For many veterans who studied in the Eastern bloc countries which were allied with ZAPU and not with ZANU, their claims that Mugabe's ZANU party and government refused

to recognise their degrees is understudied, and the history of education in the early post-independence period is also ripe for further research. Relatedly, although this research highlighted the role of education for two actors in the war, research on ZANU's educational ideology and strategy, as well as examinations of missionary education, are fertile grounds for further research which might lead to a more robust understanding of the instrumentalization of education in the war.

Conclusion: Looking Back, Looking Forward

In exploring the uses of education by ZAPU and the Rhodesian government in the war, I found myself forced to reconceptualise the very definition of education, which is often limited to the teaching and learning that occurs in a formal classroom. Rather than an institution unto itself, this research suggests that education may be best understood as a transformative process that occurs in multiple institutional sites. Education is perhaps better understood as an intentional process of systemically sharing knowledge which can transform the beliefs, behaviours and attitudes of individuals and societies. Through this conceptualisation, one might more easily capture the relationships among the formal and the non-formal education and the political educational campaigns deployed by both ZAPU and the Rhodesian Front.

More broadly, the intervention of this research, of exploring the role of education across the liberation struggle, has implications for future research in the field of education and conflict. Often referred to as "education in emergencies," this field primarily concerns itself with the impacts of war and insecurity on schools and the provision of education in the wake of armed conflict or natural disasters; questions of the ideological front are often left for the anthropologists and historians to explore. Yet this research has shown how formal

schooling is but one facet of a dynamic network of information sharing, an “educational front” that alters and restructures society even in the absence of apparent violent conflict. This is particularly true in this modern technological era of virtual learning and policing in which the schoolyard is literally embedded within a network of learning which expands across much of the globe. As schooling becomes virtual and global, global education becomes local, and state curricula, propaganda, and internet conspiracies live on platforms just a click away from one another.

Yet despite the vastly different conflicts we now face and the new educational landscape in which we operate, many of the questions raised by the study of education in Zimbabwe’s liberation struggle remain relevant. The questions of how communities can “decolonize” existing education structures and challenge dominant epistemological, historical and cultural narratives which pervade both formal and virtual schooling remain just as pertinent in the present as they were in Rhodesia. Even more abstractly, the questions of the ways in which education can both challenge and reproduce state and institutional power, the role of ideology in shaping education, and of education in shaping ideology, and of the various ways in which education shapes societies beyond the mere delivery of curricular content that this study raises, are widely relevant and important to explore and understand. From China’s “re-education” camps of Uyghurs in Xinjiang province⁵⁰⁰, to US President Donald Trump’s calls to create a more “patriotic education curriculum”⁵⁰¹ to the Rhodes Must Fall Movement in South Africa and the UK, conflicts over the ideological narratives

⁵⁰⁰ Adrian Zenz, “‘Thoroughly reforming them towards a healthy heart attitude’: China’s political re-education campaign in Xinjiang.” *Central Asian Survey* 38, no. 1 (2019): 102-128.

⁵⁰¹ Michael Crowley, “Trump Calls for ‘Patriotic Education’ to Defend American History From the Left,” Sept. 17, 2020. *The New York Times*. < <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/17/us/politics/trump-patriotic-education.html>> Accessed October 20th, 2020.

and educational institutions that shape the economic, social, political, cultural and ideological religious are here to stay. While there is no easy solution to these conflicts, understanding the ways in which education is instrumentalised in them gives us greater insight into both these issues and the far reaching “educational front.”

Epilogue:

An August 1973 editorial in the Zimbabwe African Patriotic Union’s publication, *The Zimbabwe Review*, entitled “Unrest in South African and Rhodesian Universities” describes how “non-white students demanding full academic rights” led protests at the University of Rhodesia in Salisbury which “culminated in the protest at the foot of the statue of arch-imperialist and colonialist Cecil John Rhodes.”⁵⁰² In response to these protests, student protest leaders were expelled, suspended, and “many were arrested after being brutally assaulted by the police.”⁵⁰³ This historical description of student protests tied to the revolutionary movement is strongly reminiscent of the recent “Rhodes Must Fall” movement, which began in South Africa, calling for an end to racial discrimination, neocolonial economic policies, and the decolonization of educational curricula.⁵⁰⁴

Although nearly two generations apart, both protest movements used Cecil John Rhodes as a symbol of white-supremacy and colonial imperialism and both emphasized the reform of education as part of a broader social and political project. Moreover, both movements, though geographically specific in their goals, were connected in broader

⁵⁰² “Editorial ” *Zimbabwe Review*, August 11, 1973.

⁵⁰³ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁴ Eve Fairbanks, “The Birth of Rhodes Must Fall,” *The Guardian*, 18 November 2015, <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2015/nov/18/why-south-african-students-have-turned-on-their-parents-generation>

transnational movements. The Rhodes Must Fall movement was adopted by students at Oxford University and was connected to movements on decolonization and against racial discrimination in higher education in the United States. In Rhodesia, these transnational exchanges of ideas, people and support, at a time when African countries were gaining independence, were amplified by the Cold War politics. The transnational relationships not only resulted in the financial and military support of various liberation movements, but the exchange of ideologies that shaped the visions of their future states.

While much has changed over the past five decades, that the students from those “future states” are presently echoing similar demands is significant. It raises questions long-debated in postcolonial studies on neocolonialism and the post-independence endurance of corrupt and racially discriminatory state structures. That the students are protesting also highlights how the colonial legacy of education has remained an important site of contestation and an instrument of social and political change.

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Unpublished Works

Appendices

Appendix A: Interview Guide

Interview Question Guide For First Round of Interviewing

1. Please state your name and telling me a little bit about yourself, where you were born, your education, your profession etc.
2. What led to you fighting in the liberation war?
3. Could you tell me about schools during this period, where there a lot of schools, what were people's attitudes towards education?
4. During your time fighting, did you come across any schools? What kind were they?
5. What was the relationship between these schools and the government and guerrilla forces? Were any of these schools used as sites for recruitment? Were schools attacked, or did they serve as places of safe haven?
6. Rhodesian government reports state that schools were attacked and closed by ZANLA and ZIPRA forces. Would you say that is a true account? Any schools you could specifically think of? Names?
7. When you joined Zipra what were people being taught? What was the education like inside ZIPRA? How/Did it spill into communities?
8. What educating did the pro-independence movement do during the struggle.
9. Before the struggle what was the education like for Africans and White people in the region? How did it change during the struggle, if at all?
12. Have you known any schools, teachers, or students that have been affected in the last 15 years by the violence?
14. What do you think about the future?
15. Is there anything you wish you highlight or expand on?

Appendix B: Social Media Surveys

Survey of 'Rhodesian Schools' Facebook Group

- I. Survey on impacts of the war on schools.

Hello! I'm a researcher, parents grew up in Rhodesia, and I have a question for you all. How were your schools affected during the war? It would be helpful if you could tell me the name and dates of your school. Any information would be greatly appreciated. Happy to tell you more about the study if you'd like ☺

Edit: A number of you have asked me about my research. I'm doing a PhD in Comparative Education Policy at Oxford University. I went to Hillside primary

and GC. My dissertation is on Education, Politics and Propaganda during the Rhodesian War. Some of my research questions include: How the formal education system was affected during the war, how politics and propaganda played out in the formal education system and in society as a whole in Rhodesia and then in some of the guerrilla camps in Botswana and Zambia. It's basically a survey of education during the war for both Rhodesians in-country and guerrilla fighters.

Survey of the 'Rhodesian Military History' Facebook Group

I. Survey on the impacts of the war on schools.

Hello there! Thank you all for responding to my previous questions. I'm doing a study on how the relationship between the war and education and I have another question for you! How were schools affected by the war? Or schools in general for those of you who came in direct contact with the schools while in the army?

Edit: I asked this same question in another group and a number of people asked me about my research. So for full disclosure, here it is. I'm doing a PhD in Comparative Education Policy at Oxford University. I went to Hillside primary and GC. My dissertation is on Education, Politics and Propaganda during the Rhodesian War. Some of my research questions include: How the formal education system was affected during the war, how politics and propaganda played out in the formal education system and in society as a whole in Rhodesia and then in the ZAPU camps in Botswana and Zambia. It's basically a survey of education during the war.

I am asking you all these questions because few of these details are recorded in the Annual Education Reports. Not to mention, I think more broadly there is a lot we can learn from histories of the ways in which conflicts affect education in order to improve educational outcomes of generations caught up in conflict.

I am grateful for those who replied to my questions. I hope you would not mind me using some of the information you gave me, for example, the names of schools and for example, dates closed, the kinds of war drills used in schools etc. and noting it in my dissertation. Where I can, I am going to try to cross-reference your responses so that I can find historical records of the events. Unless I explicitly ask you, I will not use any personal data or personal stories without your permission. These are very useful for me, and I'm sure for others reading, to understand your perspectives. No personal memories will be recorded at all. Nor will your name or any identifying information be recorded. I literally just want to understand what happened so that I can as accurately as possible depict a true account, albeit with varied interpretations of what happened during the war.

Please feel free to message me and I will happily share more information 📷😊

II. Survey of the 'Rhodesian Military History' about the Psychological Operations Unit

Hello everyone. My parents grew up under Rhodesia and I'm studying the war. I have a burning question- does anyone know anything about a Psychological Unit in the Ministry of Education that was active during the War? Can't seem to find anything on it.

CUREC Approval

Re: CUREC application: Education and Conflict: Case Studies in the History of Zimbabwe

Nikki Luke <nikki.luke@education.ox.ac.uk>

Mon 4/4/2016 12:43 PM

To: Naseemah Mohamed <naseemah.mohamed@stx.ox.ac.uk>; David Johnson <david.johnson@sant.ox.ac.uk>; Education Research Office <research.office@education.ox.ac.uk>

 1 attachments (113 KB)

CUREC 1A DPhil Mohamed_approved.docx;

Dear Naseemah,

Application Approval

Title: *Education and Conflict: Case Studies in the History of Zimbabwe*

The above application has been considered on behalf of the Departmental Research Ethics Committee (DREC) in accordance with the procedures laid down by the University for ethical approval of all research involving human participants. Thank you for submitting the requested amendments. I am pleased to inform you that, on the basis of the information provided to DREC, the proposed research has been judged as meeting appropriate ethical standards, and accordingly, approval has been granted to you.

If your research involves participants whose ability to give free and informed consent is in question (this includes those under 18 and vulnerable adults), then it is advisable to read the following NSPCC professional reporting requirements for cases of suspected abuse:

http://www.nspcc.org.uk/Inform/research/briefings/reporting_child_abuse_wda74908.html

Please note that CUREC approval does not guarantee access to participants, and it is your responsibility to check whether countries or contexts in which you plan to conduct your research might impose additional requirements (such as DBS checks).

Should there be any subsequent changes to the project which raise ethical issues not covered in the original application you should submit details to research.office@education.ox.ac.uk for consideration.

Good luck with the project!
Nikki

Nikki Luke