

# 1 *Violence, a Colonial Curse* *The 1980 General Elections*

## Introduction

Anti-colonial struggles staged across Africa against repressive European colonial rule invariably depicted a liberation for equality, freedom and democracy. Joseph Schumpeter comprehends democracy as an institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by a competitive struggle for the people's vote.<sup>1</sup> Adam Przeworski and colleagues adopt and extend this notion by insisting that elections encompass (1) *ex ante* uncertainty; (2) *ex post* irreversibility; and (3) repeatability.<sup>2</sup> For these writers, if a system regularly holds elections to choose leaders, if there is a chance that one or more ruling parties can lose office in a particular election, if any winner of a free and fair election can assume office, and if the winner of one election cannot prevent the same competitive uncertainty from prevailing in the next election, then the system is a democracy.<sup>3</sup> However, there is no equivalence between elections and democracy. The minimalist conception of democracy limits itself to one indispensable institutional characteristic of democracy – namely, electoral competition and its uncertainty. The maximalist notion requires other extra electoral imperatives for democracy to fully flourish, incorporating a wide range of other types of institutions, processes and conditions that must also be present for a regime to be called a full democracy.<sup>4</sup> Among others, John Makumbe, Masipula Sithole, Jonathan Moyo and Lloyd Sachikonye debate Zimbabwe's struggle for independence and political processes as a quest to develop ideal democratic cultures that embrace

<sup>1</sup> J. Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy*, Allen and Unwin, London, 1976, p. 260.

<sup>2</sup> P. Clarke and J. Foweraker, *Encyclopedia of Democratic Thought*, Taylor & Francis, Portland, OR, 2001, p. 149.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> L. Diamond, 'Is the Third Wave Over?', *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 7, no. 3, 1996, p. 22.

electoral democracy, government accountability and the rule of law.<sup>5</sup> They however omit full discussion of election violence – Zimbabwe's greatest political problem. In this and the next nine chapters, long overdue attention is paid to election violence, identifying *mhirizhonga* or *udlakela* as the elephant in the room.

## Violence as Colonial Inheritance

Barring its flaws, path dependence offers an analytical framework for the roots of election violence in Zimbabwe. The concept tries to explain the continued use of electoral practices based on historical preference or use. This holds true even if innovative, more efficient electoral practices are available. Path dependence states that contemporary decisions hinge on past knowledge and experiences. In other words, history matters for current decision-making situations and has a strong constraining influence on activity and strategic planning in political and other processes. Peter Hall and Rosemary Taylor argue that historical institutionalism constrains future political choices, practices and policies.<sup>6</sup> This dynamic occurs because institutions, practices and policies have a tendency towards inertia; once particular paths have been forged, it requires a significant effort to divert them on to another course. Arguably, historical institutionalism's most distinctive feature is an image of social causation that is based around the notion of path dependence – how the 'historical' gets into historical institutionalism. Works utilising the concept use it inconsistently, with little agreement on its definition, making path dependence appear to be a kind of metaphor for a political organisation in which history matters.

Ninety years of colonialism in Zimbabwe was characterised by violence because the colonial Rhodesian state built an elaborate, brutal political system that permeated the whole society. It was supported by a hugely repressive legislation, enforced and implemented by an

<sup>5</sup> M. Sithole and J. Makumbe, 'Elections in Zimbabwe: The ZANU (PF) Hegemony and Its Incipient Decline', *African Journal of Political Science*, vol. 2, no. 1, Special Issue: Elections in Africa (June 1997), pp. 122–139; J. Moyo, *Voting for Democracy: Study of Electoral Politics in Zimbabwe*, University of Zimbabwe Publications, Harare, 1992; L. Sachikonye, *When a State Turns in Its Citizens: 60 Years of Institutionalised Violence in Zimbabwe*, African Books Collectives, Bulawayo, 2011.

<sup>6</sup> P. Hall and R. Taylor, 'Political Science and the Three New Institutionalisms', *Political Studies*, vol. 44, no. 5 (1996), p. 936.

overzealous judiciary and civil service. Herein lie the deep roots of covert and overt violence. The Rhodesian Security Forces (RSF) comprising the continuously notorious Central Intelligence Organisation (CIO), the partisan police and army routinely harassed, detained, tortured and executed political opponents of the racist colonial regimes: company rule (1890–1923); responsible government (1924–1953); federation (1953–1963); and unilateral declaration of independence (UDI) (1965–1979). The partial courts, willingly acting under a pervasive array of draconian security laws, sentenced thousands of Africans to long prison terms with arduous labour for infringing the oppressive laws. Colonial dictatorship increasingly became more ferocious with the rising tide of African resistance against colonial rule. For example, from 1933 to 1958, the Huggins and Todd governments enacted and perfected the Subversive Activities Act (SAA), which allowed the government to ban all activities ostensibly deemed subversive. Also, from 1959 to 1970, colonial Zimbabwe witnessed the enactment of more oppressive legislation like the Vagrancy Act (VAA), chapter 92, which empowered the police to arrest and imprison hundreds of thousands of Africans without warrant for failing to show proof that they were gainfully employed or had adequate means of support. However, instead of ‘taming’ Africans, these violent measures had the opposite effect of aggravating resistance and the clamour for independence.

In 1960, the Rhodesian state introduced the Law and Order (Maintenance) Act (LOMA), chapter 65, which was directed at purportedly crushing African nationalism with finality. The LOMA was the most draconian piece of legislation in the history of the colony, providing police with sweeping powers to enter and search private homes without warrant, forbid any person from addressing any meeting, disperse any public gathering, and stop and/or impose any conditions on the holding of public processions or demonstrations. In the 1960s, nationalist leaders repeatedly sought constitutional reforms to end such colonial excesses through violent and non-violent action. The Rhodesian government refused to make even minor concessions and responded by banning nationalist organisations and parties, and by incarcerating the leaders. For instance, after being founded in January 1962, the Zimbabwe African People’s Union (Zapu) was soon banned within the year. With the leaders of Zapu either in prison or in exile, quarrelling African nationalists split, often violently, into new

antagonistic parties: the Zimbabwe African National Union (Zanu) formed in 1963; the Peoples' Caretaker Council; and the National Democratic Party. The enormous resources at the disposal of the government, both in terms of physical repression and through propaganda, enabled it to divide and manipulate the black liberation movement in a similar fashion to the situations in Kenya, Malawi, South Africa and Namibia.

Under the LOMA, the Ministers of Justice and Internal Affairs were empowered to ban any publications that they believed to violate the so-called public interest. Officials imposed punitive penalties for the publication, printing, selling, distribution and/or reproduction of prohibited materials. The *Moto* periodical published by the Roman Catholic Church at Mambo Press in Gweru was critical of the Rhodesian state and was regularly censored or banned and its staff put under constant harassment and surveillance. The wearing of uniforms or displaying of placards or notices that might lead to public disorder were ridiculously classified as criminal offences. Heavy penalties were prescribed for people found guilty of threatening violence to others or property. It was a punishable offence to incite or organise a strike in an industry designated as an 'essential service', and nearly all industries were defined as vital. It also became an offence to do anything that might expose government offices and security personnel to contempt or ridicule.<sup>7</sup>

The emerging pattern of state-sponsored violence could not be in any doubt with the 1965 Emergency Powers Act (EPA), chapter 83, provisioning the government apparatus with draconian powers to declare a state of emergency and follow it up with regulations to deal with any perceived crisis. In the same year, the government announced the UDI and a state of emergency predicated on violence that was renewed every six months thereafter in an unrealistic attempt to halt progress towards majority rule. One particularly notorious rule under the EPA authorised government to detain indefinitely any person without trial and, as a result, thousands of Africans including nationalist leaders suffered long detention periods accompanied by torture and countless secret executions. Many died under torture, which included beatings, electric shocks

<sup>7</sup> National Archives of Zimbabwe (NAZ), LOMA 53/1960, 24/1962 [chapter 11:07]. 2, <https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/C1194162>. The LOMA of 1960 infringed on people's freedom of association, assembly, movement and speech.

and immersion in water until the victim lost consciousness. Available archival evidence shows that the security agencies, the Police Special Branch, the CIO and army used the legal framework in a display of 'savage resourcefulness and initiative by setting up murder and sabotage squads' to suppress nationalist agitation, boycotts, strikes and protests.<sup>8</sup> As the war of liberation escalated, the Rhodesian Air Force (RAF) resorted to indiscriminate measures and extra-judicial killings, especially against the rural population. In 1967, the RAF began to use rockets and napalm bombs against the civilian population. In the 1970s, the government forcibly moved peasants in some parts of the country (1 million by 1979) into 'protected villages', or *makipi*, to deny the guerrillas of the liberation struggle critical civilian support. Curfew law in protected villages often lasted from dusk to dawn or till noon the next day, leaving little time to tend livestock and crop fields.<sup>9</sup> While the international community refused to recognise the Rhodesian government, Britain engaged in a series of negotiations with the regime – the Tiger and Fearless talks in 1966 and 1968, respectively, and in 1971, the Smith–Home Agreement, which gave implicit recognition and legitimacy to the regime.

In 1971, the Unlawful Organisations Act (UOA), chapter 91 was passed, bestowing wide powers on the President to be able to declare any organisation, including political parties, to be unlawful if it appeared to him that the activities of such organisations endangered public order. The Act stipulated all nationalist parties to be unlawful and empowered the authorities to declare curfews in more areas of the country, restricting the movement of citizens.<sup>10</sup> In combination, the LOMA, the VAA, the UOA and the Preservation of Constitutional Government Act (PCGA), chapter 69 had the overall effect of criminalising legitimate African participation in politics. The LOMA was the most brutal to the extent that the then federal chief justice, Robert Tredgold, resigned in protest, characterising the Act as a 'savage, evil, mean and dirty' law.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>8</sup> NAZ, *Moto*, vol. 17, no. 1, January 1980; *Moto*, vol. 17, no. 5, February 1980.

<sup>9</sup> B. Campbell, 'Canadian International Council Report on the Zimbabwe Elections February 1980', *International Journal*, vol. 35, no. 4, 1980, pp. 703–704, [www.jstor.org/stable/40201911](http://www.jstor.org/stable/40201911).

<sup>10</sup> NAZ, The 1959 UOA 91/1971.

<sup>11</sup> NAZ, 78 S. African L.J. 13 (1961) Resignation of the Rt. Hon. Sir Robert Clarkson Tredgold, Chief Justice of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, p. 13.

Furthermore, the Indemnity and Compensation Act (ICA) 45 of 1975 (which was retroactive to 1972) removed the legal basis to sue perpetrators of political violence in the name of suppressing the so-called terrorism. In practice, the Act defined torturers in any political case in the widest possible sense. In the 1970s, the bulk of work for police and prosecutors focused on the civil war. The Rhodesian government saw no reason to investigate and prosecute torturers involved in ordinary or non-political cases either. Most of the prison population was black since the whole system was based on institutionalised racism to protect white interests and privilege. The police were white or white-controlled, and the victims of torture and state violence were blacks invariably denied basic human rights whether or not they became embroiled with the police. Investigations and prosecutions for torture of black people were rare, even in non-political situations. Violence and racism inherently lubricated the colonial system. At all times before independence, torture was used to extract confessions or to gather information in the pursuit of ordinary as well as political crime. The only real deterrent was that if it was found that a confession had been made under duress, it would not be legally admissible, but, apart from such considerations, little stood between the torturer and their victim. One of the major results of colonisation was that ordinary blacks came to see the law and its enforcers as their key enemies rather than protectors. Another result of colonialism was the genesis of wider violence in society that independent governments failed to stop notwithstanding the very high expectations from most of the people for long-lasting peace.

### **April 1979 Elections**

With the formation of the Zimbabwe Peoples' Army (ZIPA) in 1976 as a coalition of the Zimbabwe Peoples' Revolutionary Army (Zipra), the late 1970s witnessed intense fighting on the war front and increased diplomatic pressure on the warring parties in the regional and global political arena. In 1977, the Rhodesian government rejected the Anglo-American proposals that provided concessions on African demands, fearing that these would eventually lead to majority rule. The two major liberation movements, the Zapu and Zanu, later added Patriotic Front (PF) to their names as PF Zapu and Zanu PF, presumably to promote national appeal. They both disparaged the constitution of an internal

political settlement of 3 March 1978 agreed upon by the Rhodesian government and three locally based African leaders: Bishop Abel Muzorewa, leader of the United African National Congress (UANC); Chief Jeremiah Chirau; and Reverend Ndabaningi Sithole of another splinter party called Zanu. The constitution provided for a two-tier racial voting system for blacks and whites. The settlement enshrined in law the special privileges and rights of whites, guaranteeing them 28 of the 100 seats in parliament for ten years. In 1978, there were approximately a quarter of a million whites and 7 million Africans in the country, a ratio of 1:28 or 3.6 per cent of the population. The 1978 constitution maintained the status quo in land distribution, with whites retaining 50 per cent of all land, generally the prime agricultural lands as enshrined in the Land Apportionment Act (LAA) 1930 and the Land Tenure Act (LTA) 1969. The Rhodesian Front Party (RFP) of Ian Smith sought to constitutionalise the measures of the internal settlement through an election on 9 April 1979.<sup>12</sup>

The resources mobilised by the Rhodesian government to sustain the war effort reached 37 per cent of total government expenditure in 1979. This was approximately Rh\$402 million per annum, Rh\$1.1 million a day at the going exchange rate of 1Rh\$ to £0.93.<sup>13</sup> The International Institute for Strategic Studies estimated the total manpower of the various units comprising the Rhodesian forces to be 74,000 in 1979. A study by the Anti-apartheid Movement placed the total strength of the Rhodesian military in 1979 at 142,200 strong. The CIO became the most feared force for using Hermann Göring's brutal gestapo torture techniques.<sup>14</sup> In 1979, war reached a stalemate.

The exiled and externally based leaders of PF Zapu and Zanu PF Joshua Nkomo and Robert Mugabe, respectively, and their military wings, Zipra (7,000 fighters) and the Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (Zanla) (15,000 combatants), not only ridiculed but also waged a 'No' campaign to the holding of elections, and intensified the war. To make matters worse, the Rhodesian government continued to label both parties and their armies as terrorist organisations and excluded them from participating in the 1979 elections. Certainly, the 1979 elections were the precursor of divisive violent polls.

The liberation movements wanted a low turnout to discredit the 1979 poll, but the government tried to bring about the opposite

<sup>12</sup> Campbell, p. 706.    <sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 704.    <sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

scenario to legitimise itself. These wartime elections were held under highly irregular circumstances, especially the widespread use of coercion to bring voters to the polling stations. Lord Chitnis observed the elections on behalf of the British Parliamentary Human Rights Group and concluded that they were achieved at the expense of a 'cowed and indoctrinated electorate'.<sup>15</sup> Palley notes that many large-scale commercial farmworkers, generally of foreign descent, voted under compulsion from their white employers, in turn fearing the loss of their jobs and threats of expulsion from the country. Threatened, many people believed it did not really matter greatly whether they voted Muzorewa or Sithole since they knew real change was forthcoming. Many people observed the PF call to boycott the elections. The government claim of a 64 per cent voter turnout was a meaningless figure because there was no prior registration of voters. A year later in 1980, 2.7 million votes were cast over three days in comparison to the 1.87 million votes cast also over three days in 1979.

Quite widespread during the poll were the violent activities of Muzorewa and Sithole's armed units called auxiliaries, who not just turned against each other but added one more dimension and structure of repression against the rural and urban population. Auxiliaries were recruited mainly from unemployed youth, often far away in the towns and they only related to the rural population in a bullying way. Continued government repression also damaged and discredited the constitutional process that led to the 1979 elections. Rampant intimidation and harassment by auxiliaries during the campaign disaffected many people. War had not ended, but instead intensified after the brief Muzorewa government took office in June 1979, lasting only six months. Muzorewa's government committed many atrocities, including its heavy-handed reaction in massacre of 183 insubordinate Sithole auxiliaries in the Gokwe area.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>15</sup> The British Parliamentary Human Rights Group under the presidency of Lord Chitnis who was an observer at the elections concluded that the process could be considered neither free nor fair; *Free and Fair?: The 1979 Rhodesian Election*, British Parliamentary Human Rights Group, London, 1979, p. 61; The reaction of the PF to the new regime is contained in S. Ndlovu, 'L'opposition du Front patriotique au regime Smith-Muzorewa de Rhodesie', *Le Devoir*, 6 July 1979, p. 6.

<sup>16</sup> Personal private archive (PPA), *Moto*, February 1980, p. 6.



The British Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, sent a team to observe the elections that included Merton, Lord Boyd and Miles Hudson. Another observer team from Freedom House in the USA also monitored the election. Both teams observed rampant incidents of coercion on voters by employers, government soldiers and Zipra–Zanla forces. This election was without doubt the foundation and establishment of a pernicious, long history of terror tactics directed on the Zimbabwean electorate by colonial oppressors and liberators alike. Election monitors concluded that government propaganda was excessive, and voters faced very considerable physical violence used or threatened against them to either force them to vote or stop them from voting. It was observed that many people either abstained or deliberately spoiled the ballot papers. Hudson concludes that, regardless of the irregularities, an election during wartime had been possible and proved that the ballot box rather than the bullet was the arbiter of power. Conveniently ignoring the fact that the Scottish or Welsh minority would never form a majority government in the UK, Hudson contemptuously but justifiably and prophetically wrote:

Africans in Zimbabwe-Rhodesia are not mature enough in political terms to accept the results of the ballot box, to submerge tribal rivalries for the greater good of the whole and to curb personal ambitions. This has been the case in many other African countries. The dangers of tribal warfare and bitterness are very real. At least by this device the Ndebele who with only 17 per cent of the population would have no hope of forming a majority government, can be represented at top level.<sup>17</sup>

Enforced participation in the poll and forced abstention were widespread. The government arrested or exiled people meeting and demonstrating against the elections. The outcome of the election was a country called Zimbabwe-Rhodesia in which whites continued to hold dominant positions (notably in the economy and the security forces) and controlled the apparatus of power, with Muzorewa and other Africans as window dressing puppets in the government. Many observers reported that the election results did not reflect the popular will of the people and condemned the April elections. In part because of these

<sup>17</sup> M. Hudson, 'The Rhodesian Elections: A Basis for the Future', *The World Today*, vol. 35, no. 8, August 1979, p. 328; [www.jstor.org/stable/40395336](http://www.jstor.org/stable/40395336); see also, *The 1980 Rhodesian Elections: A Report*, Catholic Institute for International Relations, Salisbury, 1 March 1980, p. 8.

views, but largely because of the undemocratic and perpetuation of a racist constitution, neither Britain nor any other state would recognise or legitimise the Smith–Muzorewa government. As 1979 ended, it became clear the new government was incapable of ending the war as it had promised in its election campaign. It undoubtedly was unable to control the armed conflict in order to achieve lasting peace.

### **Residual Wartime Violence**

From 10 September to 21 December 1979, Margaret Thatcher's new Conservative government convened the Lancaster House all-party talks that aimed to achieve political settlement in Zimbabwe. The fractious discussions brought together leaders and representatives of the warring parties. Muzorewa was instructed to resign as Prime Minister and his government was dissolved. The UK took interim sovereignty over Zimbabwe, with Lord Soames as governor. The protracted civil war had caused severe economic difficulties for the economies of Zimbabwe and Southern African states, whose leaders cajoled and pressured the PF parties onto the negotiating table. In holding the Lancaster House negotiations, Britain evidently wished to stabilise the situation to protect existing British and Western interests in Zimbabwe in the context of global Cold War politics. Britain excluded the United Nations (UN) and the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) from playing an active observer role in the 1980 elections. A Commonwealth monitoring force rather than the international peacekeeping force requested by the PF monitored and supervised the 1980 elections.

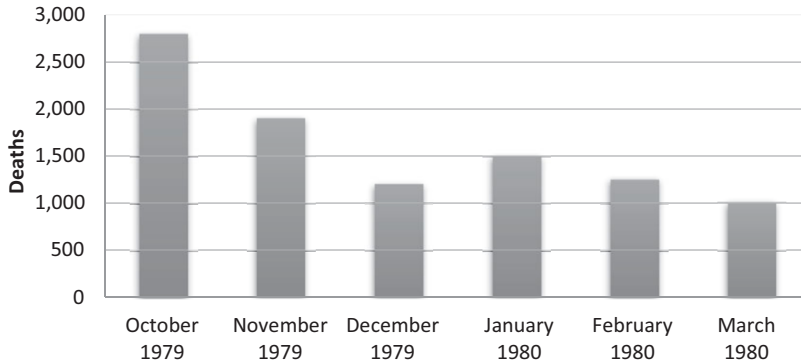
Nkomo and Mugabe took major risks and directed their forces to gather at sixteen designated assembly points within Zimbabwe and to put themselves under the collective authority of the Rhodesian military, a special Commonwealth force, and the auxiliaries – easy prey and targets of their former enemies. The UK was responsible for security and for the conduct of new multi-party elections and, assuming the outcome reasonably reflected the freely expressed will of the people, acceded its authority to the new government. Arguably, the Lancaster House Agreement (LHA) did not represent a rupture with past negotiations and peace terms. It was in several respects an outgrowth of the 1978 constitution. The LHA provided for a new constitution that was a product of negotiation and compromise and therefore did not represent a radical break with the existing status

quo. The agreement had proposals for elections that reflected a certain degree of continuity with the internal settlement in that they retained a racial division in the voting process. The white vote was scheduled separately for 14 February and the black vote from 27 to 29 February 1980. The agreement institutionalised racial privileges by conferring 20 of the 100 seats, a fifth, on the white minority – 250,000 whites contrasted with 7 million blacks. Among other proposals, the LHA had critical provisions for a ceasefire.

Curiously, the interim British authority was heavily dependent on the Rhodesian administrative and military structures, a reliance that produced serious imbalances in the implementation of the LHA. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) accepted responsibility for repatriating refugees from neighbouring frontline states: Botswana; Mozambique; and Zambia. The UNHCR had overestimated British influence over the previous Rhodesian administration. The British failed to control or prevent the obstacles and torture faced by refugees returning from Mozambique and Zambia. The implementation of the ceasefire was the responsibility of the Ceasefire Commission chaired by Major-General John Acland who was also Commander of the Commonwealth Monitoring Group. The Ceasefire Commission included representatives and commanders from the three armies: Dumiso Dabengwa for Zipra; Rex Nhongo (General Solomon Mujuru) of Zanla; and Lieutenant-General Peter Walls of the RSF.

For a free and fair election to take place, the policing of the delicate ceasefire should have been the duty of neutral elements like the UN, more especially in the monitoring of the secession of all hostilities. The situation in Zimbabwe was far from the spirit and letter of the Lancaster provisions because of Soames' total dependence on the Rhodesian administration to manage and control the country. Nonetheless, the fragile ceasefire created a reasonable environment for the holding of elections. Conservative estimates by the International Defence and Aid Fund show that before the ceasefire, the war killed at least 500 people per month during September to November 1979.<sup>18</sup> For the same period, the Catholic Institute for International Relations estimated a monthly death toll of over 1,200 people. Without the ceasefire, the death toll in the volatile period December 1979 to February 1980 would have exceeded

<sup>18</sup> *The 1980 Rhodesian Elections*, p. 8; NAZ, The International Defence and Aid Fund Report, 1980; *The Herald*, 16 January 1980.



**Figure 1.1** Death rate in Zimbabwe from October 1979 to March 1980. Most deaths in October–December 1979 showed a decreasing trend. The death rate peaked in January, decreasing in February and March 1980. They were believed to be related to both post-war-, political- and election-related violence across Zimbabwe. Source: Estimate statistics compiled from archival newspapers and magazines.

3,500. These were months of confusion, countless ceasefire violations and extreme residual wartime violence. Estimates for the monthly death toll during the campaign period January–March 1980 were over 1,000 killed, or an average of 34 a day. Reliable statistics during this volatile period are unavailable. Figure 1.1 provides estimate statistics on the death toll during this period.

The death toll was largely due to a ceasefire ‘balancing on knife edge’ due to violations from all parties predominantly trigger-happy government soldiers.<sup>19</sup> Soames was criticised for the many abductions, rape cases and disappearances taking place across Zimbabwe. Busloads of Zanu PF supporters from all over Zimbabwe sought refuge in Harare. Auxiliaries moving in government-marked vehicles banned Zanu PF meetings, boasting to the rural population that: ‘we have fenced in your forces. Now we are going to deal with those not in assembly points. When we are through with them, we will go back to finish those in assembly points.’<sup>20</sup>

To manage the political fragility, British authorities redeployed Rhodesian forces throughout the country, despite the LHA stipulating that they should have been confined to the barracks. Tilden J. LeMelle

<sup>19</sup> PPA, *Moto*, vol. 17, no. 1, January 1980, p. 1.      <sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

states that Muzorewa's 26,000 auxiliaries freely 'roamed' the country and occupied several areas formerly controlled by PF forces. Soames' political miscalculation was to assign duties of one hostile force to police the ceasefire and maintain law and order, giving military and territorial advantage it could not gain by its own efforts. There was heavy military presence on highways, road block check points, at rallies, in communal areas, towns and cities as local whites and their South African visitors openly carried firearms in public places – a practice, if done by blacks, would have led to terrorist and treason charges. Soames and Commonwealth election monitors remained largely stationed at designated bases, relying heavily on reports by Rhodesian forces on ceasefire violations, all of them ostensibly committed by PF forces. The tenuous military balance established on paper at Lancaster House tilted in favour of the Rhodesian forces. Repression and military force reached a climax on 24 February 1980, three days before the election, when Rhodesian forces displayed new military hardware, with pictures appearing in government-controlled Zimpapers.<sup>21</sup>

With regards to returning refugees, the Rhodesian military put many obstacles on their repatriation to participate in the election. Paragraph 19 of the LHA stipulated that 'as many as possible' of the quarter of a million refugees should be repatriated on time. The army restricted border crossing on the Mozambique border, impeding and slowing down the return. The UNHCR estimated 30,000 to be able to return from Mozambique but only 10,935 people managed to re-enter Zimbabwe before the elections. Refugees returning from Zambia had to endure similar arrests, detentions and torture under the existing martial law and emergency regulations, and crossings were stopped on 15 February. Only 4,290 of the 14,000 refugees anticipated by the UNHCR returned from Zambia in time for elections. These refugees were the most highly politicised. In contrast, all 20,000 refugees from Botswana returned for the election. From Mozambique and Zambia, only 35,000, or 7 per cent, of the expected refugees returned to vote, depriving the PFs of many votes.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>21</sup> T. J. LeMelle, 'Winning against a Stacked Deck: The Election in Zimbabwe', *Africa Today*, vol. 27, no. 1, Salute to Independence in Zimbabwe (first quarter, 1980), p. 7; *The Herald*, 29 December 1979; *Moto*, vol. 17, no. 1, January 1980.

<sup>22</sup> Campbell, p. 711; *The Herald*, 25 December 1979. The Chirundu, Victoria Falls, Forbes and Nyamapanda border posts had been closed and booby-trapped during the war and lacked manpower and facilities to expedite the return of refugees.

Compared with the 1979 elections, the 1980 poll offered much hope of breaking with the colonial past. Nine political parties participated in the election: Zanu PF; PF Zapu; UANC; Zanu-Sithole (Zanu-Ndonga); Zimbabwe Democratic Party (ZDP); National Front of Zimbabwe (NFZ); National Democratic Union (NDU); United National Federal Party (UNFP); and United People's Association of Matabeleland (UPAM). They represented all major interests, and various media publications covered mainstream political viewpoints. However, the cease-fire period was full of severe tensions. Zanu PF had instructed a core of its Zanla guerrillas as a reserve force to avoid the assembly points, fearing entrapment, only for the auxiliaries to hunt down some of them. PF Zapu and Zanu PF leaders demanded an extension of the interim period and a delay in elections. Tensions gradually eased but the elections occurred under a state of emergency renewed since 1965. Martial law had been extended to cover 90 per cent of the entire country and was maintained during the election campaign. Regardless of nominal legalisation by the LHA, PF parties campaigned under restrictive conditions akin to a ban. According to *The Herald*, Soames had legalised the PF parties on 22 December 1979.

Among many observers and journalists monitoring the elections were Leonard Sussman, Raymond Gasti, Bayard Rustin, and Howard Penniman representing Freedom House. They noted that the authenticity and credibility of the elections were at stake due to the volatile situation obtaining in the country. Superficial interviews by election observers did not offer credible means to understanding election problems, however essential these monitors might have been. But observers made bureaucrats and the government a bit more careful and, in that sense, they were desirable. Still, observers operated under institutional limitations and in serving the political interests of their governments made an independent verdict impossible. Many private observer groups came with their minds already made up and reversed their opinions when results proved otherwise.

### Campaign-Based Pre-election Violence

Missing in the election works by political scientists Sithole, Makumbe and Moyo is analyses of the nature of election violence. Their theoretical work focuses on proving how the democratic processes are manipulated and unfulfilled. They neglect full examination of election

violence, ignoring its central relevance towards mature democracy. For instance, during campaigning for the 1980 poll, widespread harassment by militants, illegal arrests, a ban of PF literature and embargoes by customs of vehicles and campaign material sent from abroad for PF parties was a bad omen for future elections. The same applied to the state censoring television programmes prepared by the PF parties (PF Zapu contested the election under the name PF). Some Zanu PF candidates like Enos Nkala (later Minister of Finance) were banned by Soames from campaigning in Matabeleland South. Nkala used abusive language that incited violence and Soames excluded him from participating in election campaigns under the Elections (Prevention of Disruptive Activities) Ordinance of 1980. Nkala had continuously stated that war would resume unless Zanu PF won the election. A war-weary population felt intimidated by such pronouncements. Other candidates such as Dzingai Mutumbuka (who became Minister of Education and Culture) were imprisoned because their campaign statements were considered subversive by the Rhodesian authorities.<sup>23</sup>

Pre-election violence elsewhere in the country undermined the elections. A Harare magistrate, Raymond Matthews, sentenced four UANC members to four years in prison each for assaulting and stoning Zanu PF political opponents.<sup>24</sup> From December 1979 to early January 1980, more than sixty-five incidents of extreme inter-party election violence in Harare suburbs were reported. For example, in Dzivarasekwa, 100 UANC supporters danced, sang provocative songs and attacked the then timid Zanu PF followers.<sup>25</sup> Of the reported cases in mid-January, 102 were incidents of violence, 158 complaints of harassment, 33 stoning of vehicles and houses, and 69 of intimidation and assault. In Seke, UANC supporters at Tugwete Village attacked and seriously wounded Zanu PF members. Some of the attackers paid various fines while others served prison terms.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>23</sup> NAZ, *The Herald*, 11 February 1980.

<sup>24</sup> NAZ, *The Herald*, 3 January 1980. The four were Solomon Bafana, 36; Noah Jaravandah, 34; Peter Matewere, 28; and Gashe Madora, 21.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> NAZ, *The Herald*, 9 January 1980; *The Herald*, 16 January 1980. The perpetrators included Lovemore Dzawo, 27; Charles Samuriwo, 26; Alice Manzinde, 21; two girls aged 18, and three other girls of 14, 16 and 17 years of age.

At the end of January, more than twelve people were killed in rural areas by the Rhodesian forces. Zanla guerrillas murdered two people in Zvimba and one in Musana, while Zipra carried out several executions in Hurungwe.<sup>27</sup> Courts recorded 800 cases of convictions for violence and intimidation. In the first week of February alone, 185 such cases were processed by the police and courts; 104 involving attacks by Zanu PF; 62 by UANC; 17 by PF Zapu; and 2 by Zanu.<sup>28</sup> Soames' decree to curb violence was a paper tiger, as he admitted:

Almost daily there are reports of attacks on party officials and their homes, of intimidatory statements at the meetings of certain parties, of meetings not being allowed to be held in certain areas and of attacks on members of the public. People have been told that if they do not vote according to the wishes of a party the war will continue and they will be killed. The horrifying attacks on buses which took place last weekend are being investigated by the police. But they cannot be explained as incidents of mere banditry. All nine political parties must give the clearest and most public undertaking that they dissociate themselves from political violence and intimidation.<sup>29</sup>

Amnesty International criticised Soames for detentions without trial, torture and secret executions. Dick Oosting, Amnesty International's Deputy Secretary General, reported the high extent of the human rights abuses in Zimbabwe. Part of Oosting's telling statement read:

Arrests and detentions under martial law are reported to continue, as are short-term detentions under the Emergency Powers Regulations. In addition, up to 6,000 convicted political prisoners are still believed to be held, many of them convicted by special martial law tribunals, tribunals that have now been suspended by the governor. We believe that the governor's administration is grossly under-estimating the extent to which torture and ill-treatment have become a routine practice, and we are disappointed that no clear policy has been established. The failure to act swiftly, firmly and visibly on this problem may make it more difficult to eradicate torture in the future. Executions have been carried out in secrecy in Rhodesia since 1975. We also renew our call to the President of Zanu PF Robert Mugabe, to release immediately a number of prisoners held in Mozambique.<sup>30</sup>

In February, suspected UANC auxiliary forces attacked the Harare homes of senior Zanu PF leaders including Kumbirai Kangai and

<sup>27</sup> NAZ, *The Herald*, 31 January 1980.

<sup>28</sup> NAZ, *The Herald*, 6 February 1980. <sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> NAZ, *Moto*, vol. 17, no. 3, January 1980, p. 1.



Mugabe. In the same month, two other attempts to assassinate Mugabe as well as six senior Zanu PF leaders across the country also failed. Cynics believed these amateurish assassination attempts were a shoddy Zanu PF inside job designed to portray Mugabe as larger than life. Weighed against the possibility of mayhem in Zimbabwe, it was not such a difficult task for the Rhodesian forces to kill Mugabe. That Mugabe escaped and survived made him appear immortal. Mugabe apparently believed in this immortality. On his triumphant re-entry into Zimbabwe in January, he made history by addressing the biggest crowd of supporters at the Zimbabwe Grounds (estimates ranged from 150,000, 300,000, 500,000 to 1.5 million). Mugabe became more self-conscious and assumed a messianic, half-deity approach to his leadership. He did not believe a word of what he said at the Zimbabwe Grounds on 27 January 1980. Mugabe told 'his' multitude that: 'The state of the new Zimbabwe which we envisage must truly be democratic. In other words, there must be a complete reversal of the situation where you have "equals" and "unequals," superiors and inferiors. We mean what we say.'<sup>31</sup> Ironically, he was the most superior Zimbabwean in the making.

At one of his many campaign rallies across the country, he demanded from Soames the release of 118 Zanla forces rounded up by government soldiers in Mberengwa. Four commanders of these men were forced alongside another 158 Zanu PF political commissars to campaign for Muzorewa.<sup>32</sup> According to *Moto*, the 118 Zanla forces had been very late to assemble. When they presented themselves to the British monitoring force, Rhodesian forces disarmed and kidnapped them in two buses. They had been detained and tortured in Mberengwa near Zvishavane on 14 January 1980. Their commanders Donny Haanei, John Muchakata, George Gwinyai and Piston Mushambaropa escaped to tell the tale to Mugabe, including attempts to bribe them to campaign for the UANC. Despite repeated public demands, the High Court refused to reveal the whereabouts of 114 of them.<sup>33</sup>

Acts of repression and intimidation often ended in murders, especially of Zanu PF and PF Zapu candidates and supporters. For

<sup>31</sup> NAZ, *Moto*, vol. 17, no. 4, February 1980, p. 1. On the assassination attempts of Mugabe, see *The Herald*, 7 February 1980; *The Herald*, 11 February 1980; *Moto*, vol. 17, no. 6, February 1980.

<sup>32</sup> NAZ, *The Herald*, 7 February 1980; *The Herald*, 11 February 1980.

<sup>33</sup> NAZ, *Moto*, vol. 17, no. 5, February 1980, p. 1.

example, Francis Makombe, the Zanu PF candidate for Masvingo, was killed by unidentified political opponents. Soames and Mugabe disagreed on who was by and large responsible for ceasefire breaches and acts of intimidation in various parts of the country. Mugabe threatened to defy Soames on security issues and political violence, demanding that Nkala had every right to be part of the election process and that the 2,500 Zanu PF supporters in detention should be released. Mugabe was furious that government soldiers had killed several Zanla and Zipra guerrillas during the campaign period.<sup>34</sup> Soames turned a blind eye on the atrocities being committed by UANC supporters and security forces.<sup>35</sup> Muzorewa had the incumbency advantage, with state support from the civil service, government apparatus, tacit British backing, but notably the security forces, and auxiliaries, the main intimidators.<sup>36</sup> Mugabe was defiant, telling Soames that:

My party thus demands that these forces (Rhodesian security forces, South African troops and auxiliaries) be forthwith confined to their barracks and awaits evidence of that happening. Our definite position is that unless the acts of terrorism being directed against us immediately cease, my party reserves the right not only to defend its members with vigour but also to retaliate with equal ruthlessness.<sup>37</sup>

Nkomo's triumphant re-entry in Zimbabwe was low key compared to Mugabe and he addressed a lesser gathering (120,000–300,000) at the Zimbabwe Grounds. Compared to Mugabe, he was less ruthless, principled and resolute. Nkomo had been known in the liberation struggle as a flip flopper, at one time being taken for a ride by Smith. Mugabe manipulated Nkomo for his own interests and rise to power. Nkomo pleaded with Soames to stop the former warring parties from killing each other during the election campaign. Nkomo appeared genuine in calling for the building of true peace and reconciliation and deplored the killing of Zipra cadres making their way to assembly points.<sup>38</sup> At a rally in Chinhoyi Nkomo, he addressed 5,000 people, warning them to be wary of politicians threatening them with death or the resumption of war if they lost in the elections. Nkomo forewarned the crowd against creating an Idi Amin in Zimbabwe.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*; *The Herald*, 13 February 1980.      <sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>36</sup> NAZ, *Moto*, vol. 17, no. 6, March 1980, p. 2.

<sup>37</sup> NAZ, *The Herald*, 13 February 1980.

<sup>38</sup> NAZ, *The Herald*, 14 February 1980.

Politicians threatening you with death if you do not vote for them are dangerous and ought to be kept out of power because when they are in power they are going to do worse things. Don't impose an Amin (Ugandan dictator) on yourselves. Amin terrorised Uganda, but he was not elected. An Amin chosen by you will be a most dangerous Amin. The people of Zimbabwe have before them a golden opportunity to choose a government that recognised that people were human beings.<sup>39</sup>

Nkomo was referring to Mugabe and Zanu PF terror tactics in election campaigns. On threats of war if Zanu PF lost the election, Nkomo sounded very patriotic and democratic.

When you fight or give yourself to fight, you know it means death. You do not win an election when you are dead. Therefore, the cause must be bigger than the elections. Your person or your own life is not as important as the cause. It is the cause that is more paramount than your life. People who talk of a civil war erupting if they do not win the elections are speaking in terms of party or individuals who are anxious to build up themselves and not the cause of democracy.<sup>40</sup>

Several murders of the clergy by auxiliaries took place across the country. A Gweru Diocese priest, Father Killian Huesser of the Swiss Bethlehem Missionary Society in charge of Berejena Mission, was shot and stabbed thirteen times with bayonets at 2 am on 19 February 1980 in the presence of terrified primary and secondary school pupils and other mission inhabitants. He died of the wounds at the mission clinic soon afterwards.<sup>41</sup> The Ceasefire Commission found out that Zanu PF bore the second largest responsibility for election violence after the Rhodesian soldiers. Zanu PF members Phillip Charumbira and Amos Chisveto murdered Father Raymond Machikicho and a catechist Edson Madzekedza in the Mujakachi village, Zimuto, accusing the two of being sell outs. The Gweru Diocese priests from Gokomere Mission got killed while cycling to conduct mass in the Zimuto communal areas.<sup>42</sup> Five Zanla guerrillas in the Hwange area also tortured eight women and killed two of them for purportedly being in love with auxiliaries.<sup>43</sup> In the Kadoma District in areas like Sanyati, Chenjiri and Ngezi, 90 Zipra and 100 Zanla guerrillas engaged in acts of political

<sup>39</sup> NAZ, *The Herald*, 11 February 1980.

<sup>40</sup> NAZ, *Moto*, vol. 17, no. 2, January 1980, p. 1.

<sup>41</sup> PPA, *Moto*, vol. 17, no. 5, February 1980; *Moto*, vol. 17, no. 7, February 1980.

<sup>42</sup> NAZ, *The Herald*, 13 February 1980. <sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*

violence and intimidation. They defied confinement at the Foxtrot and Romeo Assembly Points, making rural areas in the district 'no-go areas' (NGAs) for the UANC.<sup>44</sup>

Frontiers of political violence and intimidation included areas in which only one party could campaign – the NGAs.<sup>45</sup> Lionel Cliffe sums up the campaign period as characterised by intimidation, the disruption of rallies by PF parties, state propaganda and massive government support for the UANC. The government arrested an estimated 20,000 Zanu PF candidates, officials, supporters and sponsors. More than the urban inhabitants, rural people suffered the bulk of the repression, especially in Masvingo, Manicaland and Midlands regions. According to LeMelle and Bonnie Campbell, the siege-like atmosphere, the killings and beatings of Africans continued throughout the campaign period.<sup>46</sup> Lionel Cliffe, Joshua Mpfu and Barry Munslow argue that the Rhodesian administration, South Africa and Britain mounted a massive campaign against Zanu PF and Soames displayed open hostility towards Mugabe.<sup>47</sup>

The open and implicit threat by Zanu PF that it would resume the war should it not win the election was an important indirect form of intimidation. The threats by South Africa and the Frontline states of non-recognition or intervention in the event of a PF party or Muzorewa electoral victory, respectively, represented external regional intimidation. The intimidation uppermost in most peoples' minds was the direct threat to individuals or families that they would lose their jobs, be beaten or killed if they showed any sign of considering a party other than that of the intimidators, if they campaigned for such a party, or voted for such a party. Although it was impossible to judge the impact of these threats, in many areas of the country, such threats, or the

<sup>44</sup> NAZ, *The Herald*, 19 February 1980.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.* These were Zanu PF strongholds of Mashonaland Central: Chipuriro and Rushinga, Mashonaland East: Mutoko, Mudzi, Murehwa, Hwedza and Chihota, Midlands: Mberengwa, Shurugwi and Chirumhanzu, Chivhu and Insiza Districts, Manicaland: Nyanga, Mutare and Mahusekwa, Masvingo: Chivi, Maranda, Mashava, Matibi and many other areas.

<sup>46</sup> LeMelle, pp. 7–8, see appendix pp. 11–16; Campbell, p. 713; L. Cliffe, 'The Zimbabwe Elections', *Review of African Political Economy*, nos. 15/16, pp. 124–126.

<sup>47</sup> L. Cliffe, J. Mpfu and B. Munslow, 'Nationalist Politics in Zimbabwe: The 1980 Elections and Beyond', *Review of African Political Economy*, no. 18, Special Issue on Zimbabwe (May–August 1980), p. 47.

anticipation of such threats, effectively blocked the free expression and presentation of the positions of competing parties. This particularly affected the chances of the weaker parties to free speech, assemble and movement, but to varying degrees, all parties had difficulties in one way or another, in one or more areas. Supporters of the UANC, PF Zapu and Zanu PF, the three major political parties, were the leading perpetrators and primarily responsible for the intimidation. PF Zapu and Zanu PF were most effective in 'quarantining' certain areas in which political opponents could not campaign. Campaigns by PF parties seemed effective because they promised to end the war, redistribute land, introduce minimum wages and provide social services and fair business opportunities. Despite these NGAs, the bulk of the population was conscious of the campaign messages of two or more competing parties. The belief in and experience of secret balloting in the April 1979 election reduced the effect of intimidators on electoral choices. However, in the 1979 election, the fact of voting could hardly remain unknown, and both sides could apply direct and effective pressure on the public act of going to the polls. Intimidators in the 1980 election relied on more indirect means of influencing voters since all parties desired a high turnout. The pervasive climate of fear significantly reduced the freedom with which voters cast their ballot. The entire electorate had suffered from violence during the war and election, and many areas were used to seeing opposition political parties as dangerous and violent.

The violent circumstances impacted on the freeness and fairness of the elections. Events taking place during the three-day poll were of great importance. In the urban areas of Harare and Bulawayo, voters generally exercised a free choice of their candidates and party. Major anxieties about the election regarded the rural areas particularly communal areas. In many parts of the country, Matabeleland and much of Mashonaland (Bindura being a notable exception) and parts of the Midlands, there was little direct evidence of overt intimidation. There was undoubtedly pressure upon voters in communal areas and the more remote areas of the country. However, there was already a high degree of commitment to a party in these areas and the pressures exerted probably had little significant effect upon the pattern of votes cast.

In contrast, the massive turnout in Masvingo, parts of Manicaland and Midlands provinces was largely achieved by aggressive 'herding' of voters by party enthusiasts, who escorted voters to the polls, patrolling up and

down or mixing with the queues to ensure support for their party by sounds and gestures backed by threats. Many voters were frightened into voting by threats of death, and the aged, infirm and pregnant were denied the opportunity to abstain. Many voters bypassed nearer polling stations in obedience to party instructions, to swamp other polling stations more distant where no doubt their party discipline and control was more rigid. Some voters were so anxious to demonstrate their obedience that they declared orally or by display of their ballot papers (e.g., to be visible at a window in the polling station) that they had voted as instructed. Voting in these areas took place in an atmosphere of fear and under evident compulsion.<sup>48</sup>

A signed declaration to stop violence by all leaders rang hollow. It claimed a renewed commitment to: 'campaign peacefully and without intimidation. As a party we call upon all persons who support us to desist from any activities designed to influence voting by threats of force; and to desist also from interference with the ability of other parties to campaign freely, to hold meetings and to put their case to the electorate.'<sup>49</sup> The governor's powers to ban a party or abrogate the election in any designated area contributed to a marked reduction in the level of intimidation and greater caution in the conduct of some of the parties. As a result, there was some low-level campaigning by previously inhibited parties and a general relaxation of tension in the final days of the campaign. It was not, however, possible to estimate the residual effect of previous intimidation and violence.

### The Polling Process

The 1980 poll placed Zimbabwe at the crossroads of either perpetuating colonial-style dictatorship or establishing a new democratic dispensation. A democratic system requires that elections should meet basic principles and standards and provide accountability by those administering the process. Such criteria demand that elections should not exclude major sections of the adult population from either active participation in the campaign or voting processes. Voting must be conducted in secret and the counting and tallying of ballots must

<sup>48</sup> 'Report of the Freedom House Observer Team: The Common Roll Election in Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), February 1980', *World Affairs*, vol. 143, no. 1, p. 96; *The Herald*, 3 January 1980; *The Herald*, 9 January 1980; *The Herald*, 31 January 1980.

<sup>49</sup> *The Herald*, 31 January 1980, p. 107; *The Herald*, 6 February 1980.

be fair and transparent. The electoral campaign process must be peaceful and allow for the competitive presentation of choices, policies and programmes by all parties in a free atmosphere. In a multiparty democracy, all competing parties must have access to the communications media, and, ideally, the media should represent a variety of viewpoints. While protecting minority rights, the constitutional system must provide elected representatives with the power to rule the country. Ideally, voters should be represented in the parliament in proportion to their numbers, without providing undue weight to sectional interests: class, colour, ethnicity or religion. In 1980, Zimbabwe had a long way to go to meeting these conditions.

One means of increasing the security of the voting process was to use agents appointed by political parties to help invigilate the polling process. By law, each party had the right to appoint one polling agent per polling station in accordance with the LHA. Several difficulties arose over implementing the concept of using polling agents: parties had logistical difficulties in appointing their polling agents at 657 stations nationwide. The late notification of the number of polling stations by the National Election Directorate (due to uncertainty over the procurement of mine-protected vehicles), necessitated an extension of time for parties to make these appointments. Some polling agents exceeded their responsibilities, resulting in several arrests and removals from the stations. Most were charged, released and returned to their duties. Some police were unfamiliar with the concept of agents and became overzealous in dealing with party election monitors. In some cases, local shortages arose, and ballot boxes were left partly sealed, or unsealed with the paper tape, which did not provide the basic security of the box (lock, string and sealing wax being preferable).<sup>50</sup>

On the first day of polling, long queues formed at many stations, with voters starting to line up at dawn on the morning of 27 February. There were no voters roll since the process only required an X on the voting slip, and anonymity removed fears among voters. In Bulawayo, voters panicked over a rumour alleging that the poll had been restricted to one day, resulting in very long queues in the city. In the light of reports of long queues, Zanu PF complained that the election process could not be completed within three days and requested an extension, which was rejected. The cumulative number of votes cast

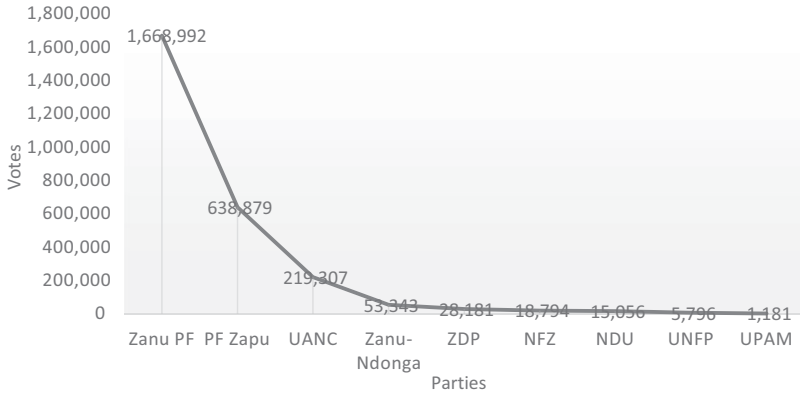
<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 105–106; *The Herald*, 29 December 1979.

on each of the three days was as follows: day 1, 1,375,468; day 2, 2,281,146; day 3, 2,699,450.<sup>51</sup> The fears that a major violent incident might occur proved to be unfounded as polling stations were secured by the presence of the police. There were four reported incidents near polling stations, but no lives were lost in the arrests or gunfire that occurred. In Harare, there were many armoured vehicles present during the poll. The purpose of their presence was not clear, and although they were not sited near polling stations, they may have intimidated some voters. There were many complaints of intimidation of voters and several arrests of youths for intimidating voters in the queues. Irregularities at the poll were of a minor character, apart from the intimidation exerted on queues of voters by young party zealots joining the queue for campaigning.<sup>52</sup>

There are differing interpretations regarding the voting pattern in 1980. First, it is argued that real electoral competition took place between Mugabe and Nkomo, with their support based on linguistic regions, Shona for Zanu PF and Ndebele for PF Zapu. Another interpretation suggests that the ballot followed the bullet because politicisation by Zanla and Zipra forces influenced grassroot support. Zanu PF dominated the Masvingo, Mashonaland Central and Manicaland regions, while PF Zapu had solid support in Matabeleland South and North. Support was divided in Mashonaland East, West and Central, the Midlands, in towns, cities, farms and mines. Freedom House observers argued that rigidity of ethnic influence seemed to have been more important than recent guerrilla force domination. For example, in Matabeleland South, an area of significant Zanla guerrilla success, Zanu PF failed to win a single seat. Although the voting pattern could be interpreted as 'tribal', it could also be interpreted as being without primordial loyalty to ethnicity. Testing inherent ethnic attitudes is a complex issue and presents methodological problems. Nkomo himself was Kalanga and not Ndebele. Also, some Shona and Ndebele candidates lost the election in their local areas to candidates of other parties. Individuals voted for a party of their choice, not for a candidate. The process of identification is not identical to 'tribal' attitudes and was largely a consequence of guerrilla operations as parties always sought a national following. However, guerrilla politicisation was often flawed in its linguistic and political leadership choices. In addition, some party

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*      <sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*



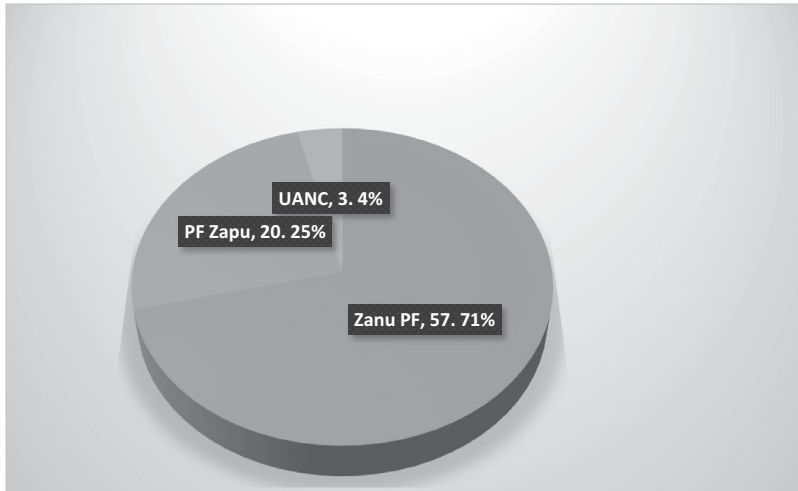


**Figure 1.2** 1980 common roll vote distribution. Zanu PF won the most votes, PF Zapu was in second place. Other parties fared badly.

leaders appealed to and exploited ‘tribal’ loyalty for Karanga, Manyika, Zezuru and Ndau support but with very little success. In Matabeleland South, people did not vote following the gun because Zanla guerrillas blundered in looking down upon Ndebele culture and condemning Nkomo as someone who sold out to whites. PF parties won 77 of the 80 seats allocated to Africans, or 87 per cent of the popular vote. While much of the violence was directed at Zanu PF, its percentage of valid votes and seats were 62.99 and 57 compared to 24.11 and 20 for PF Zapu and 8.28 and 3 for the UANC and Zanu (Sithole) 2.01 and 1. People were overwhelmingly Zanu PF, but also incidentally Shona. The Rhodesian Front won all of the 20 seats allocated for whites. Murphree observes that the voting pattern by the 103,000 registered white voters seemed to suggest a tightening of a negative sense of identity in the face of inevitable majority rule – see Figures 1.2 and 1.3.<sup>53</sup>

According to the British Election Commissioner John Boynton, Zanu PF and PF Zapu complained against the media, especially the biased reporting of both the Zimbabwe Rhodesia Broadcasting Corporation and the South African News Bulletin. Zanu PF took solace in the propaganda broadcasts aired on its behalf on Radio Maputo, Mozambique. The Roman Catholic Publisher Mambo Press was bombed and destroyed for its anti-establishment media perspectives.

<sup>53</sup> Cliffe, Mpfu and Munslow, pp. 51–53.



**Figure 1.3** 1980 seat distribution in parliament. Zanu PF had the majority of parliamentary seats, with 57.71% of the seats. PF Zapu was second, with 20.25% of the seats.

Some official observers queried the impartiality of *The Herald* newspaper. Other complaints regarded the use of the word ‘terrorist’ to describe PF forces who had not assembled, and the prominence given to communiqués of government forces. Although Soames gave a personal undertaking that the vote was secret, and this was widely advertised, the mainstream media was monopolised by the UANC. As part of a wider declaration, all political leaders signed a media statement in which they assured voters that there would be a zero tolerance on violence and that the ballot was secret.

If free elections are defined as the degree to which the government provides for open competition and guarantees a transparent electoral process, and fair elections as referring to the ability of the parties to equitably compete against each other, then I would conclude that the 1980 election was neither free nor fair. Democracy requires compromise, and only compromise will bring an end to violence and allow for the reconstruction that Zimbabwe’s people needed, particularly its poorest people. Democracy also implies readiness to accept defeat, and to join the winners with a will to resolve the problems that face the community. Zimbabwe was, however, likely to adopt lock, stock and barrel all the anti-democratic excesses and repressions of Rhodesian times and those

found elsewhere in Africa. In the post-election period in 1980, acts of political violence continued across Zimbabwe. In early 1981, military and political disagreements between Zanu PF and PF Zapu sparked instability in Matabeleland as former Zanu and Zipra fighters clashed, resulting in the deaths of more than 500 people.<sup>54</sup> The heavy-handed reaction by the government reminded Zimbabweans of Rhodesian brutalities. The Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops Conference (ZCBC) marked the first anniversary of independence on 18 April 1981 with a warning on political violence and that a way must be found to end the security problems in Zimbabwe. An elderly priest had been murdered in Lupane at the end of April 1981. Men armed with AK rifles terrorised villagers in the Lupane area throughout 1981. The ZCBC lamented the lack of security: 'Despite the joy we feel at the attainment of independence, it is with deep sorrow and concern that we look at the sporadic incidents of violence since the attainment of independence.'<sup>55</sup> Sporadic incidents of political violence continued during the first five years of independence.

## Conclusion

In 1980, high levels of violence and intimidation upon voters to vote for a party distorted the election outcomes. Although there was already a high degree of commitment to one political party, the result of the election was affected by ethnic influences, intimidation and widespread election violence. Coercion played a big role in determining the election outcome. However, the country appeared to have achieved broad peace and a reconciliation policy promised political stability essential for economic and social progress after a decade and half of civil war. Developing a democratic culture would be a central ingredient for sustainable economic development in the future.

<sup>54</sup> NAZ, *Moto*, February 1980, p. 6.      <sup>55</sup> NAZ, *Moto*, May 1981, p. 6.