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Vol. 12 (May - October 2010)

THE LIBERATION OF SOUTHERN AFRICA

No. 1 - May 2010

Editorial / Southern Africa: The Liberation Struggle Continues

By John S. Saul Fifty years on from the beginnings of liberation in Africa, John Saul finds there is still much work to be done, especially in southern Africa where the final triumph over colonial and racial domination occurred. In each of the the five sites of the overt struggle against domination – Angola, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa – there are clear signs of recolonization. This time by capital.

No. 2 - June 2010

Angola: Reinventing Pasts and Futures

By David Sogge Angola's leadership, having triumphed militarily and politically over domestic and foreign adversaries, now enjoys popular consent at home and fulsome courtesies abroad thanks to skillful statecraft and a lot of petrodollars. Having abandoned social ideals of the past, it has set about inventing a post-war order that combines neoliberalism with suave repression. Today's model, not unlike the colonial order of yesterday, is geared to redistributing wealth upward and outward. Yet in contrast to the past, it has little place for Angolans, whose expectations nonetheless keep rising. Not far off, however, is the end of the petrodollar gusher on which elite pacts depend. Political strife, but also opportunities to revisit those abandoned social ideals, may soon present themselves.

No. 3 - July 2010

Mozambique: Not Then But Now

By John S. Saul How did Mozambique go from socialist hope in the 1970s to the capitalist pet it now is? John Saul's article indicates the problems – from Portuguese neglect to South African and Rhodesian-sponsored terrorism to Frelimo's early sins of vanguardism and impatience – without lengthy post-mortems. He examines the present situation carefully and suggests a possible and hopeful future. Instead of mega-projects that make the elite wealthy and leave social programmes to the aid community, Mozambique could rather rekindle the counter-hegemonic strategies that once inspired its people.

No. 4 - August 2010

Zimbabwe: Liberation Nationalism, Old and Born Again

By Richard Saunders On the cusp of political defeat in 2000, Robert Mugabe's ZANU-PF remilitarized national politics by targeting the opposition MDC, civil society and sections of the State itself. A decade later, following years of disastrous economic decline and episodic waves of orchestrated political violence, the "Zimbabwe crisis" remains – and ZANU-PF remains in power thanks to a fragile power-sharing agreement brokered by regional governments and endorsed by international donors. Richard Saunders considers ZANU-PF's violent rebirth, the troubled origins of the current "unity" government and the challenges ahead for Zimbabwe's democratic transition.

No. 5 - September 2010

Namibia: A Trust Betrayed - Again?

By Henning Melber Two decades into Independence, Namibia continues to display deeply entrenched social divides. SWAPO, as former liberation movement and now dominant party, has transformed controlled change into changed control. As Henning Melber writes here, having their "own" government has not meaningfully improved the material conditions of the majority of the people. Instead, an elite pact has replaced settler colonialism to benefit only a relative few of the "previously disadvantaged" while a large majority continues to be marginalized. "A luta continua" - the slogan of the struggle days - has been translated, in popular parlance, into the formulation: "the looting



Murder at Sharpeville, 21 March 1960
by Godfrey Rubens/ CC Wikimedia

continues".

No. 6 - October 2010

South African Splinters: From "elite transition" to "small-a alliances"

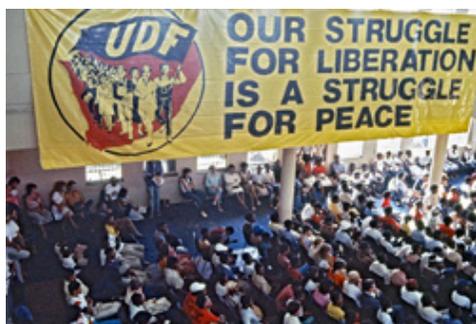
By Patrick Bond The struggle for full liberation in South Africa was truncated by a nationalist, neoliberal bloc led first by Nelson Mandela and then, more rapidly degenerating during the early 2000s, by Thabo Mbeki, both under the influence of global capital. The backlash by trade unions and communists, once Jacob Zuma was fired as deputy president in 2005, reverberated through the ruling African National Congress. With Mbeki tossed out in late 2008, a shift was anticipated under Zuma, but didn't occur. Unfortunately, however, as Patrick Bond indicates here, the independent left failed to construct a clear alternative and began to fade, while ubiquitous populist insurgencies were rudderless. This left merely a distant hope for a union-community fusion, on some future occasion.

Postscript: The struggle continues

By John S. Saul

Southern Africa: The Liberation Struggle Continues

by John S. Saul



A meeting in Johannesburg of the United Democratic Front in March 1985: important, but only half the story.

© UN Photo

Many of us came to southern Africa from the starting-point of support for the peoples there who were struggling, in the '60s, '70s and '80s, against the white minority/colonial regimes that dominated them and shaped so negatively their life chances. However, some in the world-wide liberation support/anti-apartheid movement also came to understand that defining liberation only in terms of national liberation from white colonial dominance told, at best, half the story. For, important

as it was to overcome apartheid and similar racist structures in southern Africa, seeing people liberate themselves from class and corporate oppression, from structures of male domination, and from authoritarian political practices could readily be seen to be at least as important to any true liberation as was national self-assertion. Now, several decades or more after the fall of the most visible forms of colonial and racial domination, it is ever more apparent just how accurate that critical insight was.

For what we have seen, various commentators have argued, is the virtual recolonization of southern Africa by capital. This is something new, for it is at present much less easy to disaggregate this "capital," than previously, into national capitals and see it as being primarily the instrument of various nationally-based imperialisms and their several colonialisms. No, coming from the Global North and West (as it has done historically) but also now from the East (Japan, China and India), it is an "Empire of Capital" that is currently recolonizing Africa. Of course, this has been complicated by the still independent role that national states *per se* (of both the North and the East), with their diverse *raisons d'état*, also play in the imperial equation. Moreover, it is the case that such a "recolonization" has been accomplished with the overt connivance of indigenous leaders/elites – those who have inherited power with the demise of "white rule" but who, in doing so, have manifested much greater commitment to the interests of their own privileged class-in-creation than to those of the mass of their own people. In short, it is not a happy world for the vast mass of ordinary southern African citizens – despite the freedom that they had seemed once to have won.

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So what do we now celebrate in 2010, precisely fifty years after the launching, in 1960, of the "thirty years war (1960-1990) for southern African liberation," thirty-five years after the year of Angola's and Mozambique's independence, more or less thirty years after the day of independence in Zimbabwe, and a full twenty years after both Namibia's inaugural day and the release from prison of Nelson Mandela that marked so clearly the first of the very last days of apartheid (days of transition that would culminate in Mandela's election as president in 1994)? For it is a sad fact that one feels forced to ask the question, as I have recently done, as to just who actually won the struggle for southern African liberation. As I continued:

We know who lost, of course: the white minorities in positions of formal political power (whether colonially in the Portuguese colonies or quasi-independently in South Africa and perhaps in Rhodesia/Zimbabwe). And thank fortune, and hard and brave work, for that. But who, in contrast, has won, at least for the time being: global capitalism, the West and the IFIs, and local elites of state and private sectors, both white and black? But how about the mass of southern African populations, both urban and rural and largely black? Not so obviously the winners, I would suggest, and certainly not in any very expansive sense. Has it not been a kind of defeat for them too?¹



Nelson Mandela casts his ballot in South Africa's first all-race elections in April 1994: we know who lost, but who actually won?

© UN Photo

How much of a defeat? Some facts for South Africa may provide an indication of such a reality, one that has also scarred each of the five countries of the region that once became key sites of overt liberation struggle: Mozambique, Angola, Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa. Indeed, the several country case-studies that comprise the body of this edition of AfricaFiles' *Ezine* will, cumulatively, give a very clear sense of this reality. Merely note here that in South Africa, for example, the economic gap between black and white has indeed narrowed statistically – framed by the fact that some blacks have indeed got very much richer (from their own upward mobility as junior partners to recolonization and from the fresh spoils of victory that this has offered them). Yet the gap between rich and poor is actually *wider* than ever it was – and it is growing.

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Much valuable research (by the likes of Terreblanche, McDonald and Natrass and Seekings, as cited in the selected bibliography) documents this harsh fact – and other similarly sobering facts – and its stark implications. But note also the intervention several months ago by a leading South African prelate, Rev. Fuleni Mzukisi, who charged that poverty in South Africa is now worse than apartheid and, in fact, "a terrible disease." As he said, "Apartheid was a deep crime against humanity. It left people with deep scars, but I can assure you that poverty is worse than that... People do not eat human rights; they want food on the table."²

This outcome is the result, most generally, of the grim overall inequalities between the global North and the global South that, as in many other regions, mark southern Africa. But, more specifically, it also reflects the choice of economic strategies in this latter region that can now imagine only elite enrichment and the presumed "trickle down benefits" of unchecked capitalism as being the way in which the lot of the poorest of the poor might be improved there. How far a cry this is from the populist, even socialist, hopes for more effective and egalitarian outcomes that originally seemed to define the development dreams of all the liberation movements. Indeed, what is especially disconcerting about the



Smiles of hope amid abject poverty in Soweto: waiting for the presumed trickle-down benefits of unchecked capitalism.

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present recolonization of the region under the flag of capitalism is that it has been driven by precisely the same movements (at least in name) that led their countries to independence in the long years of overt regional struggle. But just why this should have occurred, how inevitable it was, is something we must consider in the essays that follow.

To be sure, the record varies somewhat from country to country. Thus, Mozambique under Frelimo, once the most forthrightly socialist of

all the region's countries, has had to abandon that claim. True, it has also abandoned its initial brand of developmental dictatorship in favour of a formal democratization that has stabilized the country - albeit without markedly empowering the mass of its people or improving their socio-economic lot. Indeed, a recent text-book by Bauer and Taylor on southern Africa (a book of sympathetic though not notably radical predisposition) notes that the election to the presidency of Armando Guebuza who is the "holder of an expansive business empire and one of the richest men in Mozambique hardly signals that Frelimo will attempt to run anything but a globalist, neo-liberal agenda – regardless of the abject poverty suffered by most of the electorate."

What is especially disconcerting about the present recolonization of the region ... is that it has been driven by precisely the same movements that led their countries to independence.

As for Angola it has, until quite recently, experienced a much greater and more dramatic degree of divisive fragmentation than Mozambique – although its antidote to that, since the death of Savimbi, has had as little to do with popular empowerment and broad-based development as have the present policies of its fellow ex-Portuguese colony, Mozambique. In fact, it has been argued that it is only a handful of progressive international initiatives (Human Rights Watch, Global Witness and the like) that have had some success in holding the feet of exploitative corporations and of Angola's own government to the fire of critical scrutiny. For unfortunately, as David Sogge will argue in his article on Angola in the present collection, the country's own population, battle-scarred and battle-weary, has been rather slower to find effective means to exert their own claims. Yet, as the same Bauer and Taylor volume quoted above feels forced conclude of Angola, oil money and corruption have merely "exacerbated the already glaring discrepancies between rich and poor" and have, "quite simply, threatened the country's recovery and future development."

Meanwhile Zimbabwe, in the brutal thrall of Mugabe and ZANU, has witnessed an even greater deterioration of national circumstances than either of these two countries. There, say Bauer and Taylor, "the ZANU-PF's stewardship of the economy [has] been an unmitigated disaster" while its politics, through years of overt and enormously costly dictatorial practices, have produced a situation, as Richard Saunders will detail in his own essay here, that is proving enormously difficult both to displace and to move beyond.

The results in both Namibia and South Africa, even if not quite so bloody as those produced by Renamo's war, the prolonged sparring of Savimbi with the MPLA and Mugabe's depredations, are not much more inspiring in terms of effective mass enfranchisement and broad-gauged human betterment – as we will see in the articles by Henning Melber and William Gumede included in this issue of the *Ezine*. Thus, a long-time and firmly loyal ANC cadre (Ben Turok) has himself, in a recent book entitled *The Evolution of ANC Economic Policy*, acknowledged both the contribution of ANC policies to growing inequality in his country while reaching "the irresistible conclusion that the ANC government has lost a great deal of its earlier focus on the fundamental transformation of the inherited social system"!

In sum, South Africa, like the other "liberated" locales of the region, has become, in the sober phrase with which Neville Alexander has titled a book of his own on South Africa's "transition from apartheid to democracy," merely "an ordinary country" – despite the rather finer future that many, both in southern Africa and beyond, had hoped would prove to be the outcome of the long years of liberation struggle themselves. But Alexander's characterization could be said to apply to all of the countries in the region: what we now have, instead of a liberated southern Africa that is vibrant, humane and just, is a region of a very different sort indeed.



A squatter settlement in Katatura Township in Windhoek: hardly inspiring results for human betterment.

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Moreover, not only is there deepening inequality within countries but, in the region taken as a whole, there is also – to take one glaring example – a situation in which South Africa's capitalist economic power now merely complements global capitalist power in holding the impoverished people of southern Africa in quasi-colonial thrall (as the six-part series of Africafiles' *Ezine* on South Africa in the southern Africa region recently documented[3]) – while doing disturbingly little to better the lot of such people, the vast majority both in South Africa and elsewhere. Or take SADC, the Southern African Development Community: it has become (albeit with a few honourable exceptions) primarily a Club of Presidents that reveal itself to be – as the sad case of its kid-gloves treatment of Zimbabwe and its backing of an otherwise deservedly embattled Mugabe amply demonstrates – to be more a source of tacit support for the status quo than a force for facilitating any kind of just transition to effective democracy in Zimbabwe.

What we now have, instead of a liberated southern Africa that is vibrant, humane and just, is a region of a very different sort indeed... The current global situation offers no real alternatives, no real hope.

In truth, it is now often said by people of left persuasion that the current global situation offers no real alternatives, no real hope, for Africa (including southern Africa). It cannot, they say, count on any plausible socialist alternative (see Gabriel Kolko's deeply unsettling *After Socialism*). Moreover, a seasoned observer like Giovanni Arrighi can only urge Africa to look to a relatively benign China (a doubtful haven of hope, one fears) and/or to the kinder and gentler practices of its own elites in order to realize even a marginal adjustment to its desperate plight. Others fall back on the equally unlikely prospect of a revolutionary transformation of the exploitative West to then lift many of the key barriers towards a brighter future. Thus, as one friend has recently written to me: "I don't see how the South can ever liberate itself in the absence of a new socialist project becoming powerful in the North." Yet he feels forced to add that "I don't see that happening until people are hurting and see no prospect of meeting their personal needs under globalized neoliberalism, and until a new left movement with a serious attitude to organization and democracy." But this is a faint hope too, my correspondent – who confesses to feeling "very pessimistic" – obviously fears.

Failing a revolution in the global capitalist centres, however, what are the actual prospects for some dramatic change occurring within the region itself, one, necessarily, driven from below? The present author has called elsewhere for "a next liberation struggle" in southern Africa for precisely this reason, a struggle, like the one that is currently afoot in several places in Latin America for example, that seeks to at least neutralize the intervention of imperialist forces from the North while also facilitating the empowerment of its own people in political and economic terms.

And there are – as will be surveyed on a country by country basis in the articles that follow – localized and grass-roots resistances in the region in a wide variety of settings and on a broad range of policy fronts that seek to make headway and



Localized resistances: residents of Khutsong, South Africa, protest the redrawing of provincial boundaries which they fear will deny them access to services.
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even to begin to add up to potential hegemonic alternatives to the failed liberation movements that we still see in power. Moreover, some attempts to so resist – the initial rise of the MDC in opposition to Mugabe, for example, and the removal of the brazen Thabo Mbeki from South Africa's presidency before the end of his term; the dramatic grass-roots resistance, especially in South Africa, to the AIDS pandemic that stalks the entire region; and the signs of a resurgent economic nationalism that threatens to renegotiate contracts with the private sector and even to

reverse certain privatizations – do begin to so promise: promise, that is, to "add up," even if, to this point, "not quite" and certainly "not yet"!

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So the question remains: how might one hope, even expect, that the diverse instances of resistance that are visible could come to pose hegemonic alternatives in southern Africa to the recolonization that has been the fate of that part of the continent in the wake of its seeming "liberation"? What might Africans on the ground in the region have to do next, and how can they best be supported from outside in doing so? Equally importantly, how might residents of the global North organize themselves in order – with respect to any "next liberation support struggle" – to best assist them: staying the hand of our own governments and corporations on the one hand and speaking out clearly and effectively on behalf of such movements for genuine liberation on the ground on the other? One thing is clear: the liberation struggle continues. We cannot live in the (recent) past. We must act to shape the future.

Notes

1. John S. Saul, "Liberation Support and Anti-Apartheid Work as Seeds of Global Consciousness: The Birth of Solidarity with Southern African Struggles," in Karen Dubinsky, et. al (eds.), *New World Coming: The Sixties and the Shaping of Global Consciousness* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2009), 139-40; see also John S. Saul, *Revolutionary Traveller: Freeze-Frames from a Life* (Winnipeg: Arbeiter Ring, 2009).
2. Fulemi Mzukisi, as cited in Fredrick Nzwili, "South Africa: Pastor says poverty is worse than apartheid," from *Ecumenical News International* and circulated by AfricaFiles (September 10, 2008).
3. See AfricaFiles' *At Issue Ezine*, "Vol 8: South Africa in Africa" (2008).

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Angola: Reinventing Pasts and Futures

by David Sogge

What's in a name? For the ruling party of Angola, it seems, quite a lot. In December 2009, that party formally abandoned its original name from 1956, *Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola*, the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola. Henceforth it would be known merely by the old initials: MPLA. Evidently the party thought it best to bury and forget terms like "movement" and "liberation". Besides, it had long ago dropped the word *Popular* from new nation's first name, the *People's Republic of Angola*.



MPLA troops take part in a military parade in Luanda on Independence Day, 11 November 1975: best to forget terms like "popular", "movement" and "liberation".
© UN Photo/J.P. Laffont

Such fiery terms from a burnt-out era no doubt left a lot of people cold. But deleting those tokens of past ideals came at an odd time. For never in its 53-year history had the MPLA's claims to a popular mandate looked stronger. In high-turnout parliamentary elections in September 2008, it got more than four out of every five votes. Six years earlier, its triumph over warlord-led Unita, and the non-punitive peace deal that followed, met with overwhelming popular relief, even among people on the losing side. True, Angolans

express hearty contempt for their political class. Yet popular expectations are rising; most people express optimism about the future. Urbanized and Portuguese-speaking, they see themselves no longer chiefly as members of ethnic blocs, but as citizens of one Angolan nation. The MPLA, more than any other political force, contributed to those outcomes.

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No such scenario seemed feasible in 1973. At that time the party was on the ropes, reeling from Portuguese counter-insurgency and from its own self-inflicted wounds. Both Washington and Moscow had written it off. Yet from that near-death experience, the MPLA made an astonishing come-back as a thrusting new African power. With military help from Cuban communists and plenty of petrodollars from Western capitalists, it gained time, space and know-how to recover and get the upper hand. After taking power in 1975 it set about building three key institutions: a disciplined army and security apparatus; a professionally-run state holding company, Sonangol; and a well-oiled system of patronage. Shrewd management of all three led to advances on the fronts of coercive power, state revenues and domestic politics. In short, the MPLA built what Cold War Washington least wanted to see: a black African state with muscle and "attitude."

From that near-death experience, the MPLA made an astonishing come-back as a thrusting new African power... (building) what Cold War Washington least wanted to see: a black African state with muscle and "attitude."

For its impudence, Angola paid in blood. Unlike Afghanistan, where American support to Islamic fundamentalists to "roll back" communism brought nasty blowback for the US itself, American support to African anti-communists brought death and wretchedness only for Angolans. From 1975 to 2002 about 1.5 million of them perished, a staggering number for a country of only six million people in 1975. Of these, about 160,000 died in combat — the heaviest battle casualties, in absolute numbers, of any African conflict in the 20th century.

War utterly transfigured Angola. As violence forced nearly half the population to flee their homes, urban shack settlements mushroomed around towns and cities. As the elaborate agro-industrial system collapsed, it took with it a sizable class of small producers and most of the proletariat, proportionately one of Africa's largest. As the belligerents swept up tens of thousands of young people into their war machines, years of apprenticeship began in trade schools for violence. Many of these veterans are today on payrolls of the army, police and private security companies.



Angolans in Kuito huddle under a bullet-pocked building: war utterly transfigured the country.

© UN Photo/Milton Grant

The rest of the war's uprooted and dispossessed are scraping by in netherworlds of informal work and commerce, the onshore economy's new centre of gravity.

As elsewhere in global capitalism, that free market is only for losers. The economic winners, being politically well-connected, get rich pickings such as control over lucrative import monopolies. Import streams they control supply most of the markets where the *povo*, the common people, do the work, take the risks and pay off the Economic Police and other shakedown artists to leave them in peace. Such is life under *capitalismo selvagen*, jungle capitalism.

In contrast to the rest of Africa, Angola's elites never allowed the IMF to supervise economic policy directly. Yet by 1990 they had nonetheless embraced key tenets of the Washington Consensus: liberalization of external flows, austerity for public services and privatization of public assets. In so doing, they quashed any remaining hopes of a social contract — "satisfaction of the people's needs", in the discourse of the MPLA anno 1975. The policies ushered in a bonanza for the political class and their corporate allies abroad.

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With the introduction of "market friendly" policies, capital flight took wing. A recent study indicates that in the 1990s illicit outflows averaged \$542 million a year, roughly 6 percent of GDP; in the period 2000-2008 they averaged \$2.7 billion a year, roughly 14 percent of GDP.¹ Angola's "peace dividend" has meant, literally, big dividends for interests abroad.

Judicial activists like the French magistrate, Eva Joly, and research activists groups like Global Witness have revealed much about these shadowy systems. But just where Angola's siphoned-off wealth is stashed and who owns it, are largely guesswork. All outflows are murky and circuitous, coursing through multiple secrecy jurisdictions from London and Lichtenstein to Delaware to end up mainly on Wall Street. That is the most likely destination identified by a team of economists of the US Federal Reserve, after sifting a lot of data in the opaque world of petrodollars.² "Market friendly" policies have meant exactly that: friendly to The Markets.

In addition, legally-earned monies get special handling in Angola itself. Foreign corporations face low taxes and streamlined repatriation of profits — a fact attentively noted in a US government review of Angola's investment climate and in scorecards of "economic freedom" by influential think tanks in Washington DC.



An Angolan businesswoman supplies fresh fruit and vegetables to local and cross-border markets: serious profits require cutting a deal with a member of the political class.

© USAID/ACDI/VOCA

Domestic businesses, on the other hand, face different rules. They cannot accumulate at will; indeed any Angolan seeking to make serious profits has first to cut a deal with an appropriate politician. For the MPLA, any effort to accumulate beyond its supervision is a matter of zero tolerance, for that could lead to autonomous bases of power. Hence there are no Angolans making money on a *substantial scale* outside the purview and participation of the political class.

MPLA statecraft includes control over media and the flow of ideas. But its main levers work through the distribution of money, status and official positions. The MPLA has used these levers, backed by brute coercion, to forge informal pacts among elites, to co-opt and neutralise adversaries and keep the wayward on board. Despite rumours of mutual distrust — stories of VIPs at dinner parties who refuse to drink from bottles not opened before their own eyes or to eat anything not tasted first by their flunkies — the political class is holding together rather well. Pacts and patronage have been stabilising in Angola's case.

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Indeed the party's centrally-managed patronage system has thus far proven a reliable way to manage politics where centrifugal forces are strong and a lot of lootable wealth is at stake. That system enabled recruitment of former "outsider" ethnicities into the military's top brass. It works through revenue sharing (as in oil-rich Zaire and Cabinda, and diamond-rich Lundas) and the allocation of official positions from which rents can be extracted. Its domesticating effects are now apparent; with the exception of a renegade militia in Cabinda, which mortified the government in January by shooting up a busload of Togolese football players, Angola is at peace. The argument that resources breed political chaos doesn't hold for Angola; mere plunder and oppression to the neglect of statecraft has never been the MPLA approach.

The party has for example worked shrewdly to contain independent ideas and citizen activism. In the early post-independence years it tried to colonize civil spaces with Soviet-type monopoly organisations for women, workers, peasants and youth. But with the exception of the women's organisation these never

achieved any real legitimacy.

Today in civil society the MPLA employs both sticks and carrots. Repressive measures include containment (independent media confined mainly to Luanda, for example), secret police infiltration and strong-arm action such as against low-income residents of prime urban land in Luanda and Lubango. Positive incentives include the dispensing of charity by its own NGOs, notably the Eduardo dos Santos Foundation. Patronage and perks offered through the party's *Specialty Committees* have kept many urban professionals away from political activism. Progressive parties and vibrant periodicals (digital and printed) are alive and kicking in Luanda, but faced with MPLA cunning they have yet to form a critical mass in political life.



Citizens might mount stronger counter-pressures if there were effective court systems and other channels for public complaint and transparent regulation. And indeed cases sometimes get hearings in real courts of law, with occasional advances in real justice. These episodes may help explain why a small majority of Angolans polled by the BBC in 2008 claimed to trust the country's legal system. In March 2010, a provincial court convicted seven policemen of the unlawful killing of eight youth in a Luanda neighbourhood, although the court was at pains to exclude higher-ups from any culpability. Indeed it appears that most of those at upper levels enjoy effective immunity from justice. Also in March, the government promulgated a Public Probity Law that would penalise corruption and oblige top public officials to declare their personal wealth at home and abroad. It allows anyone to denounce abuses by public figures, but severely penalizes anyone making accusations deemed to be false.

Will this and other impressive laws actually promote transparency, honesty and respect for human rights? The leadership has in any case shown no haste in beefing up the Prosecutor's Office (responsible for enforcing the new Public Probity Law) or in expanding a responsive judiciary. It prefers instead to foist law-enforcement-lite agencies onto the public. The Judicial Ombudsman's office, provincial human rights commissions and mediation centres may provide occasions for citizens to ventilate complaints, but none has a mandate to enforce laws or impose legally binding outcomes. They help alert the authorities to problems without requiring them to find solutions. Yet because they reflect, however dimly, the principle that citizens may express grievances, those bodies can't be dismissed out of hand. They might someday provide sites for the powerless to gain a little leverage over, or at least embarrass, the powerful.

Privatization of public services is advancing... (they) are never portrayed as citizen entitlements, but rather as commodities you have to pay for, or beneficence you have to show gratitude for.

But how much of the public realm will survive? Privatization of public services is advancing, and it largely precludes the making of claims. Private providers, for-profit or not-for-profit, face almost no obligations publically to account for what they do or fail to do. In any case public services are never portrayed as citizen entitlements, but rather as commodities you have to pay for, or beneficence you have to show gratitude for. Neoliberal norms blanket the land, crowding out anything smacking of an equitable social contract. Indeed, Angolans are captive to a curious fusion of neoliberal formulas and a coercive state.

Nevertheless, a few groups in the emancipatory wing of civil society keep probing for progressive openings. They have engaged with public service providers and local level governments to press for public consultation and innovation in government services, such as schooling for children and range management for livestock. Whether such scattered efforts can hold the line against further



Angolan schoolgirls hard at work: probing for progressive openings.

© WFP/Neil Brander

commodification, vigorously backed by Angolan elites and most foreign donors, remains to be seen.

Angola's elites call most of the shots domestically. They do so with increasing self-assurance — some domestic critics call it arrogance — thanks to the state's huge spending powers. With oil output now surpassing that of Nigeria and oil prices still buoyant, the pressures for conspicuous consumption have been intense. That has left its mark in

traffic gridlock, port congestion, tiny apartments renting for 15 thousand dollars per month. Demand has provoked supply through conspicuous investment: superhighways, shopping malls and gated housing estates.

State corporations have now taken up an old Angolan practice, shopping abroad. Angola's main state holding company Sonangol has recently become a major if not dominant shareholder of Portuguese energy, banking and media firms. Maximizing financial returns is not necessarily the point here; some observers see instead Angolan elites gaining satisfaction in lording it over the former colonizer in Lisbon. Portuguese officials in their turn never fail to express gratitude for the Angolan patronage and custom. Angola has become, after Spain, Germany and France, the fourth most important customer for Portuguese exports. Meanwhile Angolan corporate interests are also spreading their wings in the D.R. Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon and elsewhere in the Gulf of Guinea.

Banks have worked overtime in Angola to sell loans and commodity credits. The Chinese have been hugely successful in this. Pressures to borrow are intense, yet don't always get satisfied. Government hopes to raise \$4 billion on the European bond market — billed as the largest ever bond issue by a sub-Saharan African state — have been shelved for want of an international credit rating. Perhaps for this reason in 2009 the IMF finally got its foot in the door with a \$1.4 billion loan to shore up government reserves and cushion a fiscal shortfall.

Foreign borrowings and services are destined to keep building a classically high modernist, outwardly-oriented model of development. The government's *Anti-Poverty Strategy* may be studded with terms like social equity and even redistribution; but today that earnest policy paper, stillborn in 2005, has been quietly forgotten. Recently several leading Angolan development specialists — Fernando Pacheco, Cesaltina Abreu and Carlos Figueredo — dismissed notions that Angola might achieve by 2015 even one of its eight millennium development goals — despite their all being achievable, as Figueredo observed, given Angola's financial capacities. The outlook is even more pessimistic, he concluded, considering the (political) weight of the forces and policies that prioritize those anti-poverty goals.³

Today's political economy resembles the colonial order of yesterday in a number of ways. A narrow state-based elite manages the economy ... to promote a development model that redistributes wealth upward and outward.

In sum, today's political economy resembles the colonial order of yesterday in a number of ways. A narrow state-based elite manages the economy in collaboration with foreign corporations to promote a development model that redistributes wealth upward and outward. The elite uses foreign-equipped coercive methods and a modicum of public services and charity to keep the lid on popular discontent. At the same time, activists in the emancipatory camp of civil society, in Angola and abroad, keep probing the connections, embarrassing the rulers with their revelations and animating social and intellectual responses.

Yet today's situation looks different in two fundamental ways: first, governing elites are African and hold territorial powers legitimized by elections; second, national economic life is now far more dependent on consumers and producers in

richer countries. Hence today's paradox: Angolans have formal standing as citizens with votes as well as informal claims on their rulers, but they don't count for much as consumers and producers; indeed the development model has no place for most of them. Elites' confusion of economic growth with development is, in the words of Fernando Pacheco, "painful and extremely penalizing for Angolans."⁴

But what of the future? Some foresee a developmental state comparable to the Asian tigers. For the cautious mainstream economist Paul Collier, "Angola, with its oil and its Atlantic coastline, could well prove to be another Malaysia." Others merely continue expressing breathless enthusiasm — "leaping from strength to strength", "on the cusp of a real economic take-off" — without conjuring up specific scenarios.

Hence a giddy optimism persists, spurred by up-ticks in oil markets. In contemporary capitalism, after all, only the short term really matters. Yet specialists focused on the long term have begun telling different story, one about falling oil revenues. "As its main oil fields reach maturity," a London business newsletter wrote recently, "production is likely to peak sometime around 2015, at which point its current and fiscal account surpluses are all but certain to disappear."⁵ In short, Angola's glittering coach may soon to turn into a pumpkin.

When a fiscal and debt crisis hits Angola, a political crisis will not be far behind. Among the urban salaried strata, especially those on civilian and military state payrolls, lifestyle and career expectations have kept on rising. So too have expectations among more peripheral members of the political class and their hangers-on at the receiving ends of patronage flows. Cutbacks to these flows would bring on an unpleasant downshift in expectations. Some would take harder hits than others. The basis of elite pacts could then become quite fragile.

When a fiscal and debt crisis hits Angola, a political crisis will not be far behind... some politicians might renounce their wilful amnesia and revisit the progressive political project the MPLA once talked about.

Should those pacts come unglued and discontent gel into organised pressure, some politicians might renounce their wilful amnesia and revisit the progressive political project the MPLA once talked about. The wish of the new Angolan bourgeoisie to prettify their biographies has already been satirized in the 2004 novel *The Seller of Pasts*.⁶ Today, members of Angola's bruised but resilient progressive camp, and its allies abroad, face the challenge of reinventing that political project.

Notes

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Mozambique: Not Then But Now

by John S. Saul

I first knew Mozambique through close contact in Dar es Salaam with Frelimo in the early and difficult years – the 1960s and the first-half of 1970s – of its armed liberation struggle. Then Mozambique was seeking both to unite itself and to find political and military purchase against an intransigent and arrogant Portuguese colonialism. And Frelimo – under the leadership of, first, Eduardo Mondlane (to be assassinated by the Portuguese) and, after him, of Samora Machel – did indeed manage, by 1975, to lead the country to victory. Along the way, Frelimo succeeded in liberating zones in Mozambique adjacent to its rear bases in Tanzania and Zambia where it built a new social infrastructure of agricultural coops, schools and health services. Equally important, it forged an impressive corps of politically conscious and disciplined leadership cadres (see Cabaço, 2001 and 2009).



Armando Panguene (bottom left) representing Frelimo at an Oslo conference in April 1973: seeking to find political and military purchase against colonialism and to launch a bold experiment in socialist development.

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Then, in the very first years of Mozambique's independence, Frelimo also launched a bold experiment in socialist development. The intention: to implement a society-wide programme that would liberate the country's economic potential

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while also meeting the needs of the vast majority of Mozambique's population. The result? As Norrie MacQueen, a careful chronicler of the "The Decolonization of Portuguese Africa" (1997: pp. 236-7), would firmly state of former "Portuguese Africa," the initial plans of Portugal's "guerilla enemies" did offer "a clear alternative to the cynical manipulation of ethnicity and the neo-colonial complaisance of the kleptocratic elites who increasingly defined African governance in the 1970s and 1980s." In sum,

Whatever their fate, the projects of the post-independence regimes of lusophone Africa were probably the most principled and decent ever proposed for the continent. They have not been superseded in this regard and seem unlikely to be.

"The projects of the post-independence regimes of lusophone Africa were probably the most principled and decent ever proposed for the continent." ... Equally dramatic, however, has been the reversal of direction that has taken place.

This seems to me (as I have argued at length elsewhere) to have been especially true of the new Mozambique during its first heroic decade of independence. Equally dramatic, however, has been the reversal of direction that has taken place in the country since that time. For what we have now witnessed, in Alice Dinerman's words (2006: pp. 19-20), is nothing less than a "rapid unraveling of the Mozambican revolution," with the result that Mozambique

once considered a virtually peerless pioneer in forging a socialist pathway in Africa, ... now enjoys an equally exceptional, if dialectically opposed, status: today the country is, in the eyes of the IMF and the World Bank, a flagship of neoliberal principles.

Moreover, as Dinerman concludes, "predictably, many of the leading government and party officials rank among the primary beneficiaries of the new political and economic dispensation. Those who enthusiastically promised that Mozambique would turn into a graveyard of capitalism are now the leading advocates of, and avid accumulators in, capitalism's recent, full-blown resurrection."



There are a number of possible explanations for such an outcome, and commentators have continued endlessly to debate their relative weight and significance. Certainly the country's inheritance from colonial domination was a poor one, reflected in such weaknesses as the paucity of trained indigenous personnel and in an economic dependence that pulled the country strongly towards subordination to global dictate despite efforts to resist it. There was also the on-going regional war that made Mozambique the target of destructive incursions by white-

dominated Rhodesia and South Africa and of the long drawn-out campaign of terror waged so callously and destructively by these countries' sponsored ward, the RENAMO counter-revolutionary movement. Finally, and despite Frelimo's benign intentions, there were the movement's own sins once in power, sins of vanguardist high-handedness and impatience and of the over-simplification of societal complexities and challenges. The latter weaknesses created additional obstacles of their own to further progress.

The results, in fact, have been bleak. For what now occurred, Bauer and Taylor suggest (2005: pp. 134-5), was the extremely rapid growth and dramatic spread of corruption (more or less unknown in the initial days of independence) in Mozambique, as well as a fevered "pursuit of individual profit [that has undermined] much of the legitimacy of Frelimo party leaders, who [have taken] advantage of market-based opportunities, like privatization, to enrich themselves."

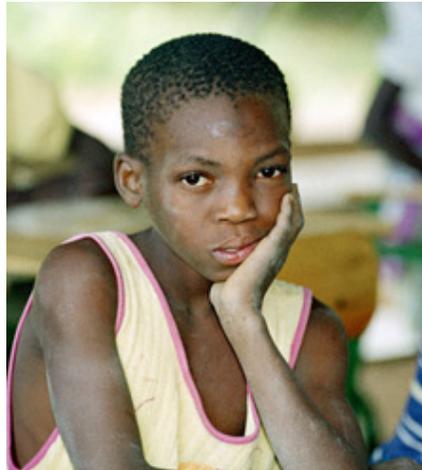
In short, as these authors then observe (and as we quoted them in the editorial to this issue of AfricaFile's *Ezine*):

the election of Guebuza [as the new President in 2002, and since], holder of an expansive business network and one of the richest men in Mozambique, hardly signals that Frelimo will attempt to run on anything but a globalist, neoliberal agenda – regardless of the abject poverty suffered by most of its electorate.

Such a somber conclusion seems to many observers an all too accurate one, unfortunately.

"The election of Guebuza, ... one of the richest men in Mozambique, hardly signals that Frelimo will attempt to run on anything but a globalist, neoliberal agenda."

Here, however, the main task of the present article comes clearly into focus: What is the nature of the present "globalist, neoliberal agenda"? What kind of prospects, if any, does it promise for the country? What alternatives to it exist, concretely? For it is much too late in the day for an article like the present one to stop at "mere" historical investigation or to preoccupy itself with the task of post-mortem and "might-have-beens." Rather we must carefully assess the actually-existing moment in present-day Mozambique – while also seeking cautiously to divine the future. This is no small challenge, as we will see.



There are a number of competing paradigms that are proposed in order to shape any such assessment. One, quite straightforwardly, sees the current unapologetically capitalist project as marking a promising revival of sobriety in Mozambique. Here, at last (or so it is argued by elites both global and local), is an acceptance by Frelimo and by the country it governs of the beneficent logic of global capitalism and the slow but certain working of the system's developmental magic. And certain figures as to growth rate are generally cited to support this claim: for example, a report from the UNDP's International Poverty Centre in 2007 quotes a growth rate for the preceding year of 7.9%, a rather impressive figure!¹

Yet the report also states this kind of growth rate – like similar statistics that are said to signal the country's socio-economic progress since the end of the country's wasting war in 1992 and the linked introduction of ever more accelerated "free market" reforms – to be "illusory at best." As it affirms, "most of the growth in income and consumption actually occurred among the population's richest quintile, with less than 10% of the growth affecting the country's poorest." Indeed, in the United Nation's 2007/2008 Human Development Index, the country still ranked 172 out of 177 countries listed.

Two linked dimensions of this apparent growth stand out starkly here. First is the inescapable fact of the deep and widespread poverty thus alluded to. For even if some of the results in "growth" terms can seem mathematically positive, the national development and poverty reduction dividends of this impressive growth rate are virtually absent. In fact, the reality in terms of extreme maldistribution and its impact on people's lives is most distressing. Hanlon (2009, and also 2007) gives a particularly clear account of the social distemper which "desperate poverty and hunger" has produced in both the rural and urban spaces, and he documents the "panic and rage of the poor" as "local people make a desperate attempt to regain some power – as a disempowered group finally taking a stand to defend its very survival."

True, the organized working class does retain some space to negotiate better wages and working conditions and otherwise act to defend itself. Unions are able to operate freely and workers are able to choose whether or not to join a union. Central labour bodies have formed a "concertation" structure for acting upon issues of common interest and to participate in national policy discussions around public policy questions like establishment of minimum wage levels and changes in the labour law. Some unions, of the security guards for example, have acted especially militantly, taking wage and hours of work issues to labour tribunals and undertaking strike actions in the face of companies like the large transnational security company, G4S, which has flagrantly refused to follow Ministry of Labour rulings in the union's favour.²

This being said, however, the space for workers challenges still remains severely limited, not only because of the structural factors that favour capital's interests but also because the trade unions themselves seem to have too little sense of workers' entitlements³ – this in a context where (as Pitcher [2006] states, with impressive supportive citation) any apparent concessions to such workers must be balanced against "the reality of growing unemployment; a minimum wage that is insufficient to meet people's needs; and inadequate efforts by the government to enforce aspects of the labour law regarding paid holidays, the regular payment of salaries and the punishment of employers who violate workers' rights."

The clear pattern of recolonization by global capital of the new Mozambique ... virtually negates the presumed independence that "liberation" was said to have brought.

A second dimension is the clear pattern of recolonization by global capital of the new Mozambique that is revealed. For the present salience of transnational firms and their "mega-projects" – on which the Mozambican elite has itself banked so heavily, not least in order to obtain lucrative sub-contracts for their own fledgling economic initiatives – virtually negates the presumed independence that "liberation" was said to have brought. The case of Mozal is a particularly graphic demonstration of the pattern, an aluminum plant that is said to be "a symbol of Mozambique's red-hot economy, touted as [indicative] of the investor-friendly environment that has led the *Wall Street Journal* to declare the country 'An African success story.' Mozal's exports have increased Mozambique's Gross Domestic Product by between 3.2 and 5 percent. Its output represents almost half the country's growth in manufacturing." However, as the article continues,

In spite of these apparent benefits this has contributed little to the country's development. Initial investment in the project amounted to approximately 40 percent of GDP, but only created around 1,500 jobs, of which nearly a third are held by foreigners. The smelters use more electricity than the rest of Mozambique combined. The company imports most of its raw material and equipment duty-free, and enjoys an extensive list of incentives ranging from discounted electricity to a prolonged tax holiday. It also has the right to repatriate profits. The result is an isolated economic enclave that uses large quantities of scarce resources without returning revenue or jobs to the economy.⁴

Castel-Branco (2008) and Pitcher (2006) document similar patterns, linked to mega-projects and to corporate free-booting, elsewhere throughout the Mozambican economy. Pitcher, for example, specifies the case of CFM, a public enterprise in the port and railways sector that was, until recently, "the largest employer in Mozambique," where management has sought aggressively "to rationalize the work-force" and make other kinds of adjustments thought to be appropriate to the new era – albeit, as with related practices that Pitcher also documents for Mozal, this has not occurred without some attempted resistance from the workers concerned.

Meanwhile, Judith Marshall finds an even rawer example of the nature of the "new Mozambique" in the key role being played by the giant Brazilian multinational, Vale, in a range of big mining, hydro-electric and transport projects in Tete Province. This is both central to the heralding (not least by President

Guebaza himself) of a "Tete Corridor" initiative, but also of a new "high octane global economy that feeds China's industrialization and in which Vale's role is [to provide] unprocessed minerals."⁵ And what about Mozambique? All this, Marshall concludes, "has nothing to do with building a national economy – whether socialist or capitalist – or creating jobs and development for the citizens of a particular geo-political space."⁶ Recolonization by the Empire of Capital you say: you wouldn't be wrong if you did.

In practice, Mozambique seems to have come up with a two pillar development strategy. The first pillar is to open the economy to private investors to bring mega-projects to the energy and extractive sectors. These mega-projects are driven by the external demands of the industrialized countries, and include the active roles played by capital from countries like South Africa, Brazil and China. The role of the Mozambican state, the corporations themselves and civil society in these new projects is highly problematic, as Marshall and others demonstrate.

Moreover, such mega-projects have come on stream as merely one part of the tide of neo-liberal economic and social restructuring. As a result, they are very far from feeding into a strategy of national economic development, one that might highlight job creation and links to plans for expanded industrialization – with royalties and taxes then being employed to benefit the surrounding communities and to underpin a broad range of social and redistributive programmes. Instead, they have been established in a way that implicitly negates the possibility of any kind of nationalist or developmental state emerging.

Such mega-projects ... are very far from feeding into a strategy of national economic development, ... with royalties and taxes being employed to benefit the surrounding communities and to underpin a broad range of social and redistributive programmes.

Indeed, such an influx of mega-projects in the extractive sector suggests an overall trend in Mozambique that has come to mirror what has also been happening with the "mining boom" in Latin America.⁷ All kinds of conditions are being created to attract foreign private investment – from tax holidays to changes in mining and labour codes, to the waiving of environmental regulations. Of course, much public discourse turns on "corporate social responsibility" and on the promise of mining company largesse for the building of schools, clinics, roads and malaria eradication. Yet, behind the scenes, high stakes negotiations turn on tax and tariff waivers, changes in land, mining and labour legislation, the easing of environmental regulations and a distinctly casual attitude towards forced human resettlement. The stakes in these less than transparent negotiations are all the higher in that the complementary business opportunities related to these mega-project investments seem all too likely to be linked to the entrepreneurial interests of various government leaders.

With mega-projects in the extractive sector as one pillar of Mozambique's economic strategy, the other pillar of the national economy, much documented by Hanlon, is defined by Mozambique's having become a "donors' darling": a country that, as an apparent reward for its eager compliance with IMF and World Bank prescriptions and the periodic holding of multi-party elections (albeit with some donor concern about "irregularities" in their execution), receives significant amounts of foreign aid in order to finance social programmes. Of course, this has even produced a significant role for the state – linked to the provision of agriculture, health and education services – albeit one heavily subsidized by western donors.

The more cynical suggest that, even were quite modest levels of taxes and royalties demanded of investors, the Mozambican government could itself readily finance all the social programmes that it desired. Yet it chooses to establish no such taxes and royalties and to suffer instead the indignity of western donors who hover at the elbows of the Ministers of Health, Agriculture and Education. In fact, this pattern – low taxes, little government oversight – seems designed to clinch investment deals while also permitting government leaders to ingratiate themselves with investors, thereby laying the groundwork for such leaders, in their entrepreneurial capacity, to then seal lucrative private partnerships.

Meanwhile, foreign donors wind up funding social costs: in such a way Canadian taxpayers – and those in other donor countries – find themselves subsidizing transnational mining companies in Mozambique!⁸

The Mozambican government could itself readily finance all the social programmes that it desired. Yet it chooses ... to suffer instead the indignity of western donors who hover at the elbows of the Ministers of Health, Agriculture and Education.

Are there countervailing trends to these disturbing patterns – and ways of interpreting them – that bear more promise? As seen, Hanlon is both a clear-sighted observer of the cruel inequality between elite and mass that has come to mark contemporary Mozambique and has also been a sharp critic of the overall multinationals-driven economic strategy championed by the country's elite in recent decades. Now, however, he seems to have come to a rather startling conclusion. As he and his co-author Teresa Smart (Hanlon and Smart, p. 3) put it, "in the contemporary world, development tends to be capitalist in some form." Hence they endorse the view of President Guebuza that, in their words, "Mozambique cannot wait with hands outstretched for mythical foreign investors, but must create, support and promote its own business people" – people, it bears emphasizing, like President Guebuza himself and other such members of Mozambique's fledgling national bourgeoisie!

In his more recent writings Hanlon has, rather surprisingly, continued to make the case – if not entirely convincingly – for the developmental vocation of such a "national bourgeoisie" (his erstwhile elite of Mozambican robber barons to now suddenly be transformed into captains of industry and of genuine development, a startling notion from Hanlon the articulation of which I register in an Appendix, below). Make no mistake. Hanlon is, of course, massively well-informed and also cares deeply about Mozambique, about its prospects for genuine development, and about the fate of its numberless poor. But would it not be possible for him and for us, instead, to look downwards, to the impoverished populace itself, instead of upwards, to the indigenous bourgeoisie, for any real promise of realizing fair and meaningful change? In sharp contrast to Hanlon's vision, at once nationalist and bourgeois, there remains a final scenario to be considered, a prospect that pins its hopes on a revival of the country's progressive vocation.

Is this any less fanciful and fugitive a hope than is Hanlon's? Certainly the immediate prospects along these lines are not great – though not any less so, one senses, than are those for an heroic and developmental future forged by a national bourgeoisie! Yet Anne Pitcher (2006) – though herself well aware of the growing wealth and power that the Mozambican elite is creating for itself – can still talk hopefully about the negative impact of elite self-aggrandizement on the attitudes and actions of those many millions of citizens, abandoned and often quite desperate, who seem consigned to languish "at the bottom" and well "below" the status and comfort afforded those at the top of Mozambican society.

Indeed, she goes further, suggesting a particularly tantalizing way of thinking about this reality. On the one hand, Pitcher finds that the elite is busily rewriting history and recasting its public pronouncements, in ways she documents extremely clearly, so as to block any popular recall – especially any positive recall – of an earlier socialist and progressive Frelimo. Yet, she continues, the ordinary Mozambicans are not so easily convinced, sickened by and angry at the dramatically escalating corruption and rampant greed they see to be everywhere around them in the "new Mozambique," while also both holding on to their own memories of a more promising time and manifesting their continued expectations of a state that protects its citizens.

The elite is busily rewriting history ... so as to block any popular recall ... of an earlier socialist and progressive Frelimo. Yet ... ordinary Mozambicans are not so easily convinced ... holding on to their own memories of a more promising time.

Pitcher places more hope than may be warranted in the Mozambican trade unions perhaps, some of whose weaknesses we noted above. Nonetheless, she does forcefully argue the importance of widespread worker protests that centre on demands for "benefits and subsidies that the government guaranteed to them in the past." And she also emphasizes the importance of other realities like

the robust sales of the recorded speeches of President Samora Machel, who oversaw the implementation of socialism from 1977 until his death in 1986 [that] reveal an ongoing popular dissatisfaction with the current mode of governance and lingering attachments to another time.

Moreover, it is the case that industries in the extractive sector – some of which, as in mining, also have an insatiable appetite for land – often find themselves increasingly to be in conflict with rural communities. Indeed, with the withdrawal of the state from regulating and protecting its citizens' rights, the companies and such communities are actually advancing quite different and competing visions of development! Local demands for job creation, for localized control of new business opportunities such as transport, food services and security, for adequate compensation to those displaced, for environmental protection of water sources, and the like: around each of these issues there is the likelihood of growing resistance.⁹

In fact, drawing on recent evidence of protests, strikes and other instances of overt resistance in present-day Mozambique, Pitcher concludes that, even if a recent letter of protest (which she quotes) to the editor of *Noticias* in Maputo may be "somewhat romantic about the good old days, it [does show] that a counter-hegemonic strategy rooted in socialist ideals may be (re)emerging in Mozambique." Aiming not so much, it would seem, to revive Frelimo's original project as to imagine the possibility of recasting the present in order that it might again embody something that will be (for them) much more positive. Grasping at straws? Note that this sometimes populist strain of resistance to penury and oppression can often be randomly violent, xenophobic and malfocussed, as Hanlon has emphasized. Moreover, it is, even in its very best expressions, still a long way from embodying the principled and organized force for change that could expect soon to present an alternative – and winning – counter-hegemonic "strategy" (such as Pitcher evokes) to the Frelimo elite's now self-indulgent and largely self-serving rule. But perhaps it can at least be said that, at the present grim time in Mozambique, the struggle for a more genuine liberation is far from being wholly moribund.

Appendix: From Robber Barons to Captains of Industry?

In his most recent writings Joe Hanlon has continued to make a strong (and, for him, novel) case for the developmental vocation of a "national bourgeoisie." Thus, with Mosse, he asks, startlingly, whether "Mozambique's elite [is] moving from corruption to development?" (2009b). In another recent article he sees that elite to be "finding its way in a globalized economy" (2009c). In these articles, he explores, revealingly, the precise make-up of that elite and the wide range of their various holding and economic interests. Writing with Mosse, for example, he places particular emphasis on the role of the President and the "Guebuza family companies," noting Guebuza's aggressive business sense and the roots of the degree to which he and other key members of the elite (former President Chissano for example) have built on bases derived from their stake in the "gangster capitalism," and "greed is good" days, of the 1990s when they were able "to expand their interests under the party and state umbrella."

And the list of the holdings of Guebuza, his immediate family and other relatives (and of other close associates like Celso Correia), is quite staggering. But the Guebuza group is also distinguished, says Hanlon, by a less "predatory," more "developmental," approach than many others of the elite – a development he sees to be most promising. Recall that Hanlon was once amongst those who more effectively excoriated that very Mozambican elite as it became, over time, more and more visibly corrupt and opportunist in the seizing of all manner of market opportunities. Now such is Hanlon's attraction to Guebuza's charisma, to his nationalism and to his savvy, that, by means of his (Hanlon's) authorial magic, Mozambique's elite of robber barons is suddenly to be transformed into captains of industry – and of genuine development! Indeed, the key questions Hanlon and Mosse now wish to pose seem to be

whether the development of presidential companies should be more openly

encouraged as a way of creating firms and groups which are dynamic and effective enough to be competitive and developmental. Can these presidential companies through their privileged access to the state, potentially grow to a critical mass allowing them to become major players in the development of Mozambique and southern Africa, as happened with the privileged companies in the Asian Tigers, Latin America and South Africa?

And whether "the Mozambican elite [can] develop the culture of hard work, saving and delayed consumption that was central to the economic development of the Asian tigers?"

But even if some such transformation were to occur (and he and his co-author by no means convince the reader that it can) to whose benefit would it be in any case? To the "robber-barons" own, self-evidently. And what of the impoverished mass of the population? It would surely take a pretty powerful "trickle-down effect" to see Mozambique move up from no.172 on the world table to be able to establish any convincing comparison with the Asian Tigers as Hanlon implies to be possible. Nonetheless, this kind of capitalist transformation, driven by just this kind of indigenous bourgeoisie, seems to be the best scenario, the best hope, that Hanlon can conjure up for Mozambique and for Mozambicans (but see also, rather paradoxically, Hanlon's most recent paper [Cunguara and Hanlon, 2010] entitled "Poverty is Not Being Reduced in Mozambique"!).

Is this where the experience of both the failure of Mozambique's socialism and the subsequent recolonization – both socially damaging and, in any transformative sense, economically unsuccessful – of the country by global capitalism must drive the well-intentioned observer: into the arms of the country's local elite who have, in fact, themselves been amongst the chief architects of the country's present sorry situation?

Notes

1. This report, itself readily available, is summarized in the article "Mozambique: What price the benefits of foreign investment" in Namibian Online Community at .
2. Interestingly, some of the staunchest defense of workers' rights in recent years has come not from the unions but from the Frelimo Minister of Labour, Helena Taipo. Acting on her own conviction that the role of the government is to maintain balance and mutual respect amongst the main actors in the economy, she has intervened on multiple occasions where workers' rights have not been respected, coming down hard on employers ranging from large transnationals like the G4S security company and Mozal to Chinese state companies and senior government leaders turned businessmen.
3. True, the unions themselves sometimes seem to act in such a way as to mediate labour conflicts away rather than to take a militant stand for workers' rights to a living wage, a safe workplace and dignified treatment. Moreover, many workers seem to read the strong government support for new mega-projects like those of BHP-Billiton and Vale and the modest government role in defending those whose lands and livelihoods are lost to these projects as an indication that fighting these companies for better wages and working conditions is almost tantamount to anti-government activity.
4. Op. cit. (footnote 1).
5. On Vale's egregious role in Canada, since 2006 the owner of Inco (now Vale Inco), see Bryan Evans and Greg Albo, "Celebrating and Struggling This May Day: The Long, Hard Haul at the Vale Inco Strike," *The Bullet*, The Socialist Project E-Bulletin #349, May 1, 2010.
6. Judith Marshall, personal communication. Here and elsewhere in this text Marshall's advice and assistance have been particularly important to its preparation, helping me to ground it firmly in contemporary reality. Comments from both Noaman Ali and Jesse Ovidia have also been of great assistance.
7. While the following (in Liisa North et. al., *Community Rights and Corporate Responsibility* [Toronto: Between the Lines, 2006]) was written about Latin America, it has much relevance to contemporary Mozambique; it warrants quoting *in extenso* here: "In response to the new incentives created by the neo-liberal state, the mining industry has enjoyed a new boom. Production has been reactivated in many traditional mining areas, and operations in new zones have been aggressively pursued. But in many respects the new incentive under which these enterprises were established signaled a return to the conditions of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Reduced taxation, reduced regulation, and forced labour-market flexibility meant that the countries where mineral exports grew in importance received a small share of the wealth generated by corporate mineral extraction regimes. As capital markets were liberalized, profits could be more easily transferred to, and invested in, outside countries rather than in communities and nations in which the mining operations were located. Since the new mining was even more capital-intensive

and employed more sophisticated technologies than did mining operations in the past, it created even fewer jobs than before and often those jobs went to highly specialized or skilled workers brought to the mines from outside. Meanwhile local people experienced the environmental contamination and social disruptions created by mineral extraction." Joan Kuyek underscores, in her article "Legitimizing Plunder: Canadian Mining Companies and Corporate Social Responsibility" in the same volume, a firm (and ugly) Canadian connection to such dismaying realities in the Global South.

8. The previous several paragraphs draw heavily on the suggestions and formulations of Judith Marshall, as cited in footnote 6, above. She further notes that even "the donors" began to become uneasy with the Mozambican elite's behaviour. Thus "the beginning of 2010 found these arrangements fraying at the edges. The donors delayed their transfers to the social ministries until such time as the Mozambican government was prepared to introduce changes in its electoral law and regulations regarding conflict of interest"! (personal communication).

9. For there is also the promising fact that transnational mining companies are not the only players that have begun to establish complex multinational linkages: civil society networks concerned with mining issues are also connected. Indeed, as the African experience comes to mirror that of Asia and South America where these kinds of new mining investments are more advanced, Mozambican organizations will, in all likelihood, soon be sharing even more experiences and strategies with other communities in resistance around the world.

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Zimbabwe: Liberation Nationalism, Old and Born Again

by Richard Saunders

The historic defeat of ZANU-PF in the February 2000 constitutional referendum by an alliance of leading civil society organisations and the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC)¹ marked a pivotal point in Zimbabwean politics (Bond and Saunders, 2005). It was the first time the party had lost a national poll since independence. After a decade of neoliberal reforms, and rising economic dislocation and social protest that emerged with the unwinding of the "liberation consensus" around national development (Raftopoulos and Phimister, 2004), ZANU-PF was faced with an unprecedented challenge on a political terrain it had unilaterally dominated for more than a decade. With no coherent policy compass in hand after the relegation of the 1980s redistributive state and the jettisoning of structural adjustment in the late '90s, declining economic indicators and fresh parliamentary elections featuring a new party looming in early 2000s, ZANU-PF responded by unleashing a series of violent interventions that announced its abandonment of mass-democratic politics "business as usual". A new self-styled "liberation politics" was born.

The multiplying victims of party violence and state restructuring

In April 2000, the first of an extended series of commercial farm invasions was launched under the protection of, and often with the direct assistance and orchestration of, the state and party structures. "Fast track" land reform, as it became known, would take on wider significance for ZANU-PF's economic programme and ideological repositioning in the years ahead, and lead some (Moyo and Yeros, 2007) to portray ZANU-PF as a paragon of militant African nationalism in the face of globalisation in the post-Cold War epoch.² For others, "jambanja" marked the reintroduction of systematic political violence under the patronage of the state, and more broadly, the *subordination* of the state (particularly the realms of justice and law and order) to the party's emerging new agenda. Soon after the land invasions began, violence spilled from the rural areas onto the broader political terrain. It would be regularised, institutionalised, "legalised" – if not legitimated – in coming years by a wall of repressive legislation that targeted rights to public association, media and freedom of expression, citizenship and electoral participation, among others.³

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The primary victims of these measures were the opposition MDC leadership, rank and file members and supporters. But targets of repression also included a range of civil society organisations – particularly those which represented key constituencies in the popular sector and had a sustained grounding in communities, like the national labour movement, residents associations, human rights defenders and professional cadres including teachers, doctors and nurses. An enormous and incalculable cost in lives, health, security and organisational resources was paid as ZANU-PF defaulted to violent coercion as a means of confronting the spectre of electoral defeat in 2000, 2002 and subsequent polls. One 2006 report documented more than fifteen thousand politically-motivated gross human rights abuses since 2000, with more than 90 percent of these perpetrated by ruling party and state officials against perceived ZANU-PF opponents (Zimbabwe NGO Human Rights Forum, 2006). Murder, torture, rape, beatings, illegal detentions and property destruction, in oscillating waves related to electoral cycles and campaigns, made state-enabled political violence an established feature of the political landscape by mid-decade.

"Operation Murambatsvina" (Clear Out the Rubbish), a 2005 post-election security forces-led campaign directed primarily at MDC-supporting poorer urban areas, signalled the commitment and ruthlessness with which systematic violence was pursued. More than 200,000 homes were bulldozed, large swathes of informal sector infrastructure was pulled down, more than 20,000 people were summarily arrested and perhaps more than one million in all were displaced and dumped (UN Special Envoy on Human Settlements Issues in Zimbabwe, 2005).⁴ At the same time, ZANU-PF officials suggested that informal sector permits, licenses and rights to work would, in the future, be subject to effective political approval. The economic misery visited on the urban poor, particularly those displaced to the informal sector by the crash of agriculture, industry and mining, helped fuel new waves of underground migrancy to neighbouring South Africa.

Another important casualty of ZANU-PF's new politics was the state itself. The party's coercive strategy was underpinned by – indeed *required* – a corresponding attack on the institutions of government built in the 1980s: the judiciary and security forces, state bureaucracy, parliamentary institutions, media and information structures. These public institutions now threatened ZANU-PF's commandism by their grounding in the "rule of law", established administrative procedures, accountability and "professionalism". What was left of the welfarist "development state" of the 1980s in the wake of 1990s' neoliberal policies was selectively and effectively demolished in the course of its subordination to ZANU-PF's instrumental interests in the 2000s. Sections of the ruling party were also targeted. In a selective house-cleaning led by the war vets, local party officials were summarily thrown out of structures under force of violence and with the backing of the national party leadership.

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The clearing out of established state development and party structures helped exacerbate an economic crisis that had taken root in the 1990s, and spiralled out of control in the 2000s. With the decline of commercial agriculture, deepening shortages of foreign exchange and slumping domestic demand in the early 2000s, Zimbabwe became the world's fastest-collapsing peacetime economy, contracting by as much as 60 percent in the period 2000-06 (Ledriz, 2006).⁵ Inflation exploded past 700 percent in 2005 and then went supersonic, as government printed more money and repeatedly revalued and reissued currency in a failing bid to keep up with crashing market confidence. Before it finally went out of effective circulation in 2009, annual inflation had reached over 225 *million* percent. Inflation and crashing production saw sharp falls in formal employment, and rising poverty. By 2004 formal sector wages had fallen from 95 percent of the 2001 Poverty Datum Line to less than 50 percent. By 2006 wages fell further, to pre-1980 levels. By then perhaps 80 percent of Zimbabweans lived in profound poverty. Hundreds of thousands more escaped poverty and violence by leaving the country, to South Africa but also further afield. Some reports estimated that as

many as 3 million Zimbabweans were living in South Africa by 2010 – certainly at least half that number would be a conservative estimate.

Operation: Political Survival

This sort of disastrous performance might have spelled political death for many political parties. But ZANU-PF survived by playing to its strengths: on the one hand, its access to the instruments of organised violence and the state electoral bureaucracy; on the other, its peerless liberation credentials. Thus ZANU-PF's unique linked claims to institutionalised violence and the mantle of restorative nationalist justice became the hallmarks of its election campaigns throughout the decade. If state and ruling party violence increasingly characterised the election process, it was in defence of national interests and the gains of the struggle; if the opposition was short-changed, it was in the name of defeating the agenda of recolonisation; if electoral processes were flawed by imposed international standards, they nonetheless produced results that were favourable to Africanist aspirations; and so forth. This recasting of electoral standards and legitimacy was peddled with considerable success in southern Africa, and more widely on the continent, even as it failed to find traction inside the country.

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Most independent observers now concur that the MDC likely won the vote in every national election since 2000. The MDC's main problem, however, was in winning *recognition* of this reality, and the corresponding *transfer of power*. Here, the enabling role of ZANU-PF's southern African neighbours and erstwhile allies in tolerating the party's overt manipulation of electoral processes emerged as a defining and perplexing element in Zimbabwe's continuing political crisis. Despite the refrain frequently repeated by SADC governments, that Zimbabweans must "solve their problems by themselves", every attempt to do this through the ballot box since 2000 has been frustrated by the interventions of regional and continental powers – interventions skewed, almost without exception, in favour of one political player.

Was this a sign of consolidation of an old-boys club among ageing liberation movement ruling parties? Of a cynical supportive stance for local nationalist-clad regimes, no matter how soiled the cloth, against the insistent and often condescending critiques of northern donors and rights activists? Or worse: of a strategy of collective mutually-assured political survival in the longer term?

Yes, partly. But while regional responses to the Zimbabwe crisis often reflected such concerns, there were other factors that spoke to the continuing fragility of the wider terrain of mass-democratic politics in much of the region. Distrust of, or lack of familiarity with, the MDC among many regional ruling parties worked in ZANU-PF's favour. It seems clear that the model of a labour movement-led alliance of civic and popular forces is not one which nationalist regimes in the region wish to nurture, lest it lead by example. ZANU-PF worked hard, with the resources of the state behind it, at maintaining a diplomatic foot in the door to key regional spaces, while seeking to jam the MDC's fingers in it whenever possible.

At the same time, relatively weak and ineffectual links among regional civil society organisations helped to undermine their own capacity to lobby home governments in the region. In key countries, notably South Africa, civic interventions with government around the Zimbabwe issue were complicated by the dynamics of relations among civil society organisations and national ruling parties – which ZANU-PF was quick to exploit.

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In important ways, then, ZANU-PF enjoyed a relatively open space to play out its nationalist hand in the region – an advantage that dovetailed powerfully with its efforts to marginalise international initiatives against ZANU-PF's electoral and human rights abuses, while appealing to SADC to oversee "normalisation" of the political order inside the country. The outcome was a fragile political equilibrium that saw ZANU-PF come through a series of flawed elections still in power, and dominating a thwarted, increasingly divided opposition MDC – the party split into two entirely separate entities in 2005 following deepening leadership and strategic wrangles – and a similarly factionalised, weakened and wearied civil society.

Class formation, revisited

This uneasy political *status quo*, placed against the backdrop of a weakened state, low transparency and pervasive influence of securocrats, facilitated a significant restructuring of class interests in the ruling party leadership in the 2000s. It saw the *institutionalisation* of elite-organised violence at the centre of Zimbabwe's political economy. At critical junctures of political challenge (like elections) and accumulation opportunity (whether on the land, in diamond fields or in urban vending markets), organised violent interventions would prove decisive in sustaining the ZANU-PF ruling coalition. By 2010, this fact – not the choices of Zimbabweans as expressed through their votes – would come to weigh heavily on the terrain of national electoral politics and economic policy-making.

The massive shift of agrarian commercial assets in the first part of the decade – a process which is still not fully understood and about which reliable evidence remains thin – initiated a period of unprecedented reallocation of public and private productive assets. Much of this was hidden from view, the exact identities of the players and competing political factions unannounced. But it is clear from glimpsed cases of shifting ownership in commercial agriculture, parastatals, public infrastructure, mining and services, among other sectors, that substantial factors of accumulation agglomerated in political-security business networks; that this happened through irregular means, beyond the direct and transparent control of the state bureaucracy and legal system; and that this unfolding of events had profoundly negative implications for the resuscitation of a democratically-driven development state.

Restructuring of the political-business elite in the 2000s was not simply a matter of including new "briefcase businessmen" in the circles of state-dependent accumulation – a phenomenon seen earlier in the 1980s when politically connected entrepreneurs used access to import licenses, foreign currency and other rationed production inputs, and in the '90s under the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme, when soft loans, government contracts and pressures for "indigenisation" fleetingly provided new points of business entry for party loyalists. Those earlier forms of primitive accumulation were relatively openly structured, and animated and sustained to a large extent by the ZANU-PF government's policy. Rather, in the 2000s, elite accumulation increasingly went off-grid: out of reach of transparent regulation by government; primarily benefiting a small cadre without systematic "empowerment" redistributive concerns; and frequently, overlapping with regional "parallel markets" and criminal networks. If accumulation and new class formation were driven in the first two decades of independence by state-based policy-making, in the third it was often hidden behind a veil of secrecy, operating on the edges of the state and fuelled and protected by business-security networks patronised by competing ZANU-PF factional blocs with links to the military and political wings of the party. Indeed the prospect of a rehabilitated, professional Zimbabwean state *stood in the way* of the new accumulation project – whereas in the past it had been employed to nurture it.

In the 2000s, elite accumulation increasingly went off-grid... hidden behind a veil of secrecy ... patronised by competing ZANU-PF factional blocs with links to the military and political wings of the party.

The convergence of political, security and business interests in opaque and powerful networks was chillingly illustrated in the emergence of Zimbabwe's own

"blood diamonds" in 2006 (Saunders, 2010).⁶ The discovery of alluvial diamonds in the eastern district of Marange was soon followed by the arrival of state security agencies, led by the police and army, to "secure" the diamond fields against illegal miners and smuggling networks. In short time, reports of extensive human rights abuses started flowing from the area, along with indications that security forces personnel were involved in illegal mining and smuggling. In successive military-style and violent "operations", hundreds of informal miners, traders and innocent locals died violently at the hands of security forces; untold numbers suffered rape, assault, illegal detention, forced labour, harassment and, for locals living near the diamond fields, forced removals.

Opposition parties and civil society, including the media, struggled to prevent the violence and mounting corruption and criminality. So did the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme (KP), the international organisation with a mandate to certify "clean" rough diamonds for export. The KP and its consensus-driven processes was repeatedly manipulated by ZANU-PF to blunt its investigative and censoring powers. Meanwhile, local civil society organisations and other investigators working on Marange diamonds were prevented from freely accessing the region to assist victims of rights abuses and compile evidence of who was responsible for, and benefiting from, the chaos.

Marange starkly illustrated a contradiction at the centre of ZANU-PF's nationalist project *v.2000*: the entrenchment of narrowed elitist securitized power in the state and economy, amid the deepening exclusion of constituencies that previously had formed its bedrock support. The political outcome was widespread desertion of the party by voters – a problem that has been manageable through election manipulation and the tolerance of SADC friends.

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But it was the economic repercussions of ZANU-PF's new tack, punctuated by continuing donor and investor boycotts, hyperinflationary spending under Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe Governor Gideon Gono and the crash of the formal sector economy, which undermined the sustainability of the ZANU-PF accumulation project. "Legitimacy" therefore became a key sought-after economic input, and ZANU-PF identified new elections as the key means to achieve it while retaining overall control of the transition to "normality".

An inconvenient truth, and its aftermath

In this context, the 2008 parliamentary and presidential elections were a hallmark of the contradictory political and economic imperatives within the restructured ZANU-PF *status quo*. The elections were held under slightly improved rules of procedure negotiated by South African mediators that temporarily closed loopholes which in the past had been used to control the poll *count* if not the vote itself. ZANU-PF had agreed to these changes, sufficiently confident of gaining a plurality in the context of a divided opposition – part of which had already expressed interest in a government of "national unity". But the party had woefully misjudged the situation: the depth of anger towards ZANU-PF, even in rural areas where it had once ruled unchallenged; the opposition and civil society's careful attention to vote counting procedures, which made it difficult to cook the count; and the enduring popularity of the main bloc of the MDC led by Morgan Tsvangirai, which made large gains in all parts of the country, among all class and ethnic constituencies.

There were days of ominous silence from ZANU-PF... Its answer became clear as state security forces, war vets and youth militias were deployed to viciously attack MDC officials and supporters, but also,

significantly, traditional ZANU-PF areas that had turned against the party.

The surprise results of the first round of voting on March 29, 2008 (the combined opposition MDC won 109 seats to ZANU-PF's 97) suddenly threatened to set in motion a transfer of power. There were days of ominous silence from ZANU-PF and its sounding board state media – reruns on television of FIFA World Cup Finals of years past, endless American action movies, Swahili children's programming, *anything* except the officially indeterminate state of Zimbabwean current affairs – as the old guard debated how to extricate itself from the mess of democracy. Its answer became clear as state security forces, war vets and youth militias were deployed to viciously attack MDC officials and supporters, but also, significantly, traditional ZANU-PF areas that had turned against the party in March. With this – an unprecedented and sustained attack on ZANU-PF's heartland structures and constituents, unambiguously labelled "Operation Makavhoterapapi?" ("Where did you put your vote?") – the new ruling coalition of elitist securitized interests in ZANU-PF announced the death of the old mass-based movement that had prosecuted the liberation war. They also highlighted the central challenge facing any transition in the near term: the security apparatus, namely the ZANU-PF-aligned military, now openly claimed the role of arbiter of power in any transfer of authority to a new political order.⁷

Since 2008, the threat of institutionalised violence by state security agencies has been a key vector shaping the trajectory of political restructuring, dragging the country away from the edge of democratic transition and all of the uncertainties that holds for the ZANU-PF leadership. For Tsvangirai's MDC, the perception of this military threat by *others* – including most SADC governments, foreign donors and diplomats – was a key obstacle to securing recognition of its win in March 2008 (Kwinjeh, 2008). The power-sharing Global Political Agreement (GPA) signed in September 2008 was effectively imposed on the MDC through diplomatic and coercive pressure, and had little to do with the fair and accurate representation of Zimbabweans' political voice as expressed through their votes.

Compromised Equilibrium?

With such problematic origins it is unsurprising that the GPA has been ineffective in meeting its key objectives: among them, demilitarizing the political space, tackling rights abuses, preparing a new constitution, readying the country for a new round of free and fair elections within two years, and importantly, reintroducing a sense of order grounded in economic recovery.

In contrast, the GPA increasingly appears to have been most efficient in serving the instrumental needs of the ZANU-PF elite. It has provided a flimsy but sufficient veneer of legitimacy while facilitating ZANU-PF's continued access to strategic levers of state power – including the defence, security, police, foreign affairs and information portfolios, as well as control over state prosecutions through the Attorney-General's office, and responsibility for strategic resource extraction sectors like mining and agriculture. These instruments have been turned overwhelmingly to meet partisan ends (Research and Advocacy Unit, 2010).⁸ And while incremental gains have been made – for example, disastrous hyperinflation ended with the dollarization of the economy, although continuing dollarization is rife with hazards in the longer term – these are primarily gains only in comparison to manifestly unacceptable and unsustainable conditions of the recent past.

In the meantime, continuing secretive and partisan exploitation of national resources, including assets in the agrarian and mining sectors, stand the risk of fuelling renewed capacity for ZANU-PF violence in the future as political-cum-security business networks move to defend themselves on the terrain of the state. Here, Marange is a sobering example of not only the depth and extent of political-security-criminal linkages; but also the efficiency with which they have made use of state power and illegal violence; the relative weaknesses of regulatory bodies and oversight institutions; and the comparatively high tolerance of governments in the region – for whatever reason – for such overtly shady behaviour.

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Some of the worst human rights abuses at Marange occurred *after* the GPA was signed in September 2008. In ways that would be symptomatic for the unity government more broadly, the GPA state appeared to nurture the *consolidation* of criminality at Marange under the direction of security and political interests. Using its strategic ministerial powers, ZANU-PF severely restricted access to Marange or information about developments there, amid documented allegations of continuing rights abuses, revenue diversion and illegal exports of diamonds by the state mining parastatal. The MDC seemed helpless to alter the situation; as was KP, as ZANU-PF skilfully lobbied regional and other allies within the KP to hold off censure, while attacking and threatening local civil society diamond researchers working in Marange.⁹ For some, the new government's handling of Marange represented a "litmus test" of sorts: if the grip of overtly criminal and politically partisan diamond networks could not be dislodged by the new government, what hope was there for the wider "normalisation" of the national political economy?

Long and difficult struggle, again

In mid 2010, the outcome of the "litmus test" of diamonds remains unclear, and stands as an example of the new and complex kinds of challenges faced more broadly across southern and eastern Africa by democratic movements calling for political and economic participation and equity. Is it possible to establish viable transitional government structures incorporating powerful constituencies with a vested interest in *preventing* real transition and transformation of political-economic systems? Can regional democracies and economies be counted on for meaningful support for change, particularly when similar voices of change become stronger across borders and threaten old orders and tired, threadbare political rhetoric? Can entrenched security and business interests, increasingly extended across regional borders, be effectively disinterred by weakened states and vulnerable civil society constituencies? Thirty years on from independence, the last vestiges of Zimbabwe's popular development state project lie in ruins, and civil society voices demanding a return to authentic participatory politics remain under attack and divided.

**Thirty years on from independence, the last vestiges
of Zimbabwe's popular development state project lie
in ruins... The struggle to recoup popular control over
markets, states and democratic transitions will be a
long and difficult one.**

Zimbabwe's lessons for the region are not hopeful, and point to the residual creative survival capacities of late-nationalist ruling elites and the corrupt and sometimes criminalized networks of accumulation they helped establish. A crucial remaining question is whether anyone or any institutions, in southern Africa or beyond, has the willpower *and* the means to challenge this situation. The regional proliferation of late-nationalist regimes, each with their own networks of politically-brokered accumulation, assembled behind veils of structured corruption and extensive concealment; the fall-out of market excesses and ineffective supervisory regulation; and the weakness and halting, mostly ineffective interventions of international governments and organisations; suggest that the struggle to recoup popular control over markets, states and democratic transitions will be a long and difficult one.

Notes

1. The MDC, a party formed in 1999, was established under the patronage of the labour movement and other leading membership-based civil society organisations. The bulk of its initial leadership and organisational capacity came from the labour structures of the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions and its affiliates, although it soon grew substantially to include a broad range of social

forces.

2. For a contrasting view to Moyo and Yeros that considers ZANU-PF in the 2000s in the context of fascism, see Timothy Scarnecchia (2006).

3. For example, the "Public Order and Security Act", which replaced the draconian Rhodesian "Law and Order (Maintenance) Act", and the "Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act", which targeted media houses, journalists and the communication of information. Both were rushed through parliament by ZANU-PF in advance of the 2002 presidential elections (as were other Acts amending and restricting citizenship and voting rights, rights of monitoring agencies to observe and report on voting, and so forth).

4. See also reports by a range of local civil society and academic researchers (Bracking, 2005; Solidarity Peace Trust, 2005; Zimbabwe NGO Human Rights Forum, 2005).

5. All GDP, wage and poverty figures in this section from Ledriz, 2006.

6. See also recent published reports documenting the role of security forces and political interests in Marange (Partnership Africa-Canada, 2010; Global Witness, 2010; Human Rights Watch, 2009; Zimbabwe civil society coalition on blood diamonds, 2009).

7. The orgy of violence perpetrated in support of ZANU-PF between the March and June polls saw more than 150 opposition supporters killed and thousands assaulted and displaced from their home voting areas (Human Rights Watch, 2008; Solidarity Peace Trust, 2008). Coupled with extraordinary post-vote interventions by the Mugabe-appointed electoral commission, including its delay of more than a month in announcing the results of the first round of presidential voting while ZANU-PF violence raged, dispelled any notion that a second round of voting for President in June could be legitimate. Tsvangirai, who had officially polled 47.9 percent to Mugabe's 43.2 percent in March, subsequently withdrew from the second-round run-off, leaving Mugabe to "win" with 86 percent of the vote. The June vote result was widely rejected – also by official African observer teams, including the Pan-African Parliament Election Observer Mission, African Union Observer Mission and SADC's own team.

8. This paper includes a critique of another position more supportive of sustaining the GPA (Solidarity Peace Trust, 2010).

9. In June 2010, Farai Maguwu, director of the Centre for Research and Development, a key organisation investigating Marange diamonds, was arrested and held for passing on information critical of the Zimbabwe Government. This latest attack, designed to silence a leading critic and his organisation in the midst of a KP review of Marange's export-worthiness, reflected ZANU-PF's extreme sensitivity on the issue of the lucrative illegal diamonds sector – as well as the benefits of its hard-line approach. At the KP Intercessional Meeting in late June 2010, where Zimbabwe was the centre of debate, ZANU-PF's international friends and allies again saved Marange's criminalised mining regime from suspension.

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Namibia: A Trust Betrayed – Again?

by Henning Melber

"As Namibian youth, and as Africans, you must therefore be on the full alert and remain vigilant against deceptive attempts by opportunists and unpatriotic elements that attempt to divide you. As the future leaders of our country, you should act with dedication and commitment; to always promote the interests of the SWAPO Party and the national interests before your own. It is only through that manner that the SWAPO Party will grow from strength to strength and continue to rule Namibia for the next ONE THOUSAND YEARS."

Sam Nujoma, Founding Father of the Republic of Namibia, in a

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*speech to the SWAPO Youth League in 2010.*¹

Every case of decolonization (or any other form of social transition and transformation, for that matter) has a unique character – the uniqueness of Namibia's decolonization process lying in its being seen to be an official United Nations responsibility. The League of Nations had, under the terms of the Treaty of Versailles, transferred the administration of what was "German South West Africa," as a now Class C mandate, to the British Crown. Britain, in turn, had delegated the task to the Union of South Africa. But, after WW II, South Africa simply refused to acknowledge the UN as the legitimate and responsible successor to the League in this respect.

A Brief History of SWAPO

The dispute that then emerged, from the late 1940s, over the mandated territory resulted, beginning in the 1960s, in an increasingly active role for the UN, guided by the understanding that the continued South African occupation of the territory was tantamount to "a trust betrayed," in the conflict. The UN instituted both the UN Council for Namibia and the UN Institute for Namibia, its mission in support of national sovereignty for Namibia ultimately being accomplished, through the UN-supervised transition to Independence, during 1989/90.²

The South West African People's Organisation (SWAPO of Namibia) was officially established in 1960. It managed to rally the support of large parts of Namibia's colonized majority under its banner of "Solidarity, Freedom, Justice." Equally importantly, SWAPO's backing by a majority of UN member states, especially from the non-aligned movement and the Soviet bloc, further consolidated its status as the exclusive agency of anti-colonial resistance. Although unable to influence decisively the UN Security Council's more hesitant posture (as promoted principally by various Western states), those in support of the liberation movements made their voices heard in the UN's General Assembly. Indeed, by the mid-1970s, a UN resolution recognized SWAPO as "the sole and authentic representative of the Namibian people" – such a UN sanctioned monopoly in representation encouraging the movement's slogan that SWAPO is the people and the people are SWAPO. And this, in turn, spawned the ominous formulation that SWAPO is the government and the government is the state – implying that SWAPO itself is the state and therefore has the sole power of definition over who is entitled to be a true Namibian on the basis of his/her loyalty to the party!

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The Political Program adopted by the SWAPO Central Committee meeting from July 28th to August 1st 1976 in Lusaka stated that among the movement's present and future tasks was "to unite all Namibian people, particularly the working class, the peasantry and progressive intellectuals into a vanguard party capable of safe-guarding national independence and of building a classless, non-exploitative society based on the ideas and principles of scientific socialism" (SWAPO of Namibia, undated: p. 39). It further elaborated that "the economic reconstruction in a free, democratic and united Namibia will have, as its motive force, the establishment of a classless society. The social justice and progress for all is the governing idea behind every SWAPO policy decision" (ibid., 45). This claim, and the fact that the trust betrayed by South Africa was transferred by popular vote in the UN-supervised elections of November 1989 to the new government formed by SWAPO at Independence on 21st March 1990, merits further examination. To what extent, in short, has the trust as defined in this program of SWAPO been fulfilled through the political actors – still to a large extent the very same persons who had adopted this document – now in control of the sovereign Namibian state?

SWAPO: From Promises to Failures

Not that many informed observers really believed in the stereotypical, pseudo-

socialist gyrations that the SWAPO representatives abroad undertook in the course of their diplomatic efforts to garner the support from the Soviet regime and its allies. Thus, as Brian Urquhart, directly involved as UN Under-Secretary-General for Special Political Affairs in the negotiations for Namibia's independence since the 1960s, dryly testified (in his biography, published prior to Namibian Independence), regarding SWAPO's president (and later Namibia's head of state for three terms in office, 1990-2005): "I doubted if Nujoma would know a Marxist-Leninist idea if he met one in the street, but like most liberation leaders, he would take help from wherever he could get it" (Urquhart 1991: p. 321).

Nonetheless, despite such realistic assessments, there were activists who wanted to believe in the political aims declared by leaders who claimed to be among those representing the "wretched of the earth" – this in spite of Frantz Fanon's warning (in the chapter of his book *The Wretched of the Earth* entitled "The pitfalls of national consciousness") as to the strategy of selfish enrichment adopted by the new and opportunistic nationalist elites. As he critically observed, they managed to occupy the commanding heights of newly accessed state power in order to serve primarily their own class interests (Fanon 2001) – an assessment of the early 60s that has since forced itself on many other observers who agree "that the discourse of justice and liberation were often used in pursuit of exclusive nationalist and separatist agendas that went against the needs of ordinary people" (Francis 2010: p. 2).

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Unfortunately, SWAPO of Namibia provides a clear case in point of this sobering reality – not least in the willingness of the leadership in control of the exile wing to commit human rights violations in its own ranks if need be in order to protect vested interests of the established hierarchy, as well documented by several studies published early in the Independence period (cf. Leys/Saul 1995, Dobell 1998). Post-independence statistics speak a similarly sobering language: the life expectancy of Namibians has been reduced from an estimated 60 years of age at Independence to 47 years in 2005 (not least through the HIV/Aids pandemic). Similarly, the situation as regards under-five mortality and maternal mortality has deteriorated, while poverty remains at a chronically high level.

Thus an official Household Income and Expenditure Review published towards the end of 2008 by the Central Bureau of Statistics revealed that almost one third of the country's two million people lived on US\$1 or less per day. Moreover, the report also noted a sharp rise in households classified as "severely poor", i.e. living on less than US\$20 per month. The same survey found that one fifth of the population has a share of 78.7% of the country's total income, while another fifth has to survive on 1.4% of the country's annual income.³ Moreover, according to official figures released in 2010, the unemployment rate has crossed the 50% mark. In sum, this social reality contrasts sharply with the statements quoted above from SWAPO's Political Program, suggesting that present-day Namibia is quite another country from the one the movement – as guided by promises of "solidarity, freedom, justice" – suggested that it wanted to lead "towards the abolition of all forms of exploitation of man by man" (SWAPO of Namibia, undated: p. 46).

Liberation or Self-Aggrandizement?

In short, the nationalist claim merely "operated as a rhetorical device, casting SWAPO in the role of 'revolutionary agent,' bent on reconfiguring the socio-economic and political landscape" (du Pisani 2010: p. 24). Yet, in fact, the reconfiguration of the socio-economic landscape, based on control over the political commanding heights of the newly proclaimed Namibian state, operated only through the vehicles of "Affirmative Action" (AA) and "Black Economic Empowerment" (BEE), a redistributive strategy based on the cooptation of a new elite into the old socio-economic structures (cf. Melber 2007). As underscored by

André du Pisani, "national reconciliation" of such a class character could only be "an elite discourse bent on maintaining the legitimacy of the state and responding to the inherent contradictions that characterize SWAPO's [own] anti-colonial discourse" (du Pisani 2010: p. 31).

The new terminology by which the ordinary people have responded to the sobering realities since 1990 highlights reference to a new species, the "fat cats" ... (who) appropriate public goods and state property for private self-enrichment.

In contrast to past promises, the new terminology by which the ordinary people have responded to the sobering realities since 1990 highlights reference to a new species, the "fat cats." For it is well understood that a new political and bureaucratic class now uses its access to the country's natural wealth to appropriate public goods and state property for private self-enrichment. As suggested above, legitimacy for such an appropriation strategy has been cloaked in a nationalist discourse which has operated through an aggressively crafted version of "patriotic history" (Melber 2003, Saunders 2007) supportive of the erstwhile liberation movement's claim to be the dominant (de facto, one and only, solely legitimate) political force as representative of "the" Namibian people.

Permitting, as seen, no distinction between its role as party, as government and as state SWAPO has, since independence, stressed the notions of peace and stability while also paying lip service to democracy (while, interestingly enough, the terms "justice" and "equality" have never featured prominently if at all in its official vocabulary). Instead, "national reconciliation" has become the programmatic slogan for a cooptation strategy based on the structural legacy of settler colonial minority rule and its corresponding property relations – SWAPO's strategy becoming one of facilitating, as "cultural entrepreneur," an elite pact designed to "reinvent," by means of an Africanization of the settler structure, "an historical communality and continuity among the Namibian people(s) and [to project] a common destiny into the future" (du Pisani 2010: p. 16).

That this had worked only partially was first visible in the failed secessionist attempt by a desperate minority in the so-called Caprivi region, this in turn leading to the first and so far only declared state of emergency since Independence as invoked in August 1999. Those arrested and accused of high treason have since been on trial for a decade, even though the majority of them fall under Amnesty International's definition of political prisoners (cf. Melber 2009). Nonetheless, the consolidation of the dominant party state by means of parliamentary and presidential elections held every five years illustrates the continuing hegemonic status of SWAPO – though it also suggests that the basis for such a status outside of its stronghold in the Northern regions of the former Ovamboland (which offers up to SWAPO more than half of the Namibian population and an absolute majority of votes in any national elections) is fairly weak.

Indeed, the results of the last National Assembly elections (held at the end of November, 2009) suggest, in growing ethnic-regional voting patterns, an increase of local identities guiding the preference for political parties; moreover, in parts of the few urban centres SWAPO's dominance has become more contested by opposition parties than ever before. Nonetheless, SWAPO has clearly retained its dominant status. Despite the formation of a new opposition party, comprised primarily of those who had lost out in the internal power struggle over the post-Nujoma succession, SWAPO lost only one seat, keeping, with 74.3% of the votes, 54 out of 72 MPs with voting rights. The new Rally for Democracy and Progress (RDP), led by former Foreign Minister Hidipo Hamutenya and founded at the end of 2007, managed, with 8 seats, to become the official opposition (Melber 2010; Cooper 2010).

The consolidation of the dominant party state by means of parliamentary and presidential elections held every five years illustrates the continuing hegemonic status of SWAPO... There is no sign of any meaningful socio-political alternative to SWAPO on

the horizon.

In any case, the RDP has seemed chiefly to promise more of the same, rather than any real alternative. For the most part, individuals promoting alternative political parties to SWAPO tend to campaign more to promote personal ambitions than political alternatives, seeking principally to secure at least some limited access to the honey pots provided by publicly financed political posts. This means that there is no sign of any meaningful socio-political alternative to SWAPO on the horizon. Indeed, if there is to be change, it is, for the moment, most likely to emerge as an alternative policy direction being articulated from within the former liberation movement. And yet, unfortunately, any such fancied alternative currently appears to be more the product of wishful thinking than the embodiment of some readily discernible tendency on the horizon.

Class Formation, Land Grabs and International Actors

What, in the meantime, of Namibia's social structure? Here Volker Winterfeldt (2010) has recently offered some helpful methodological arguments as to the need to apply a more rigorous class analysis. He pays little attention, however, to the rent-seeking nature of the new black class-in-formation, a blend of political office bearers and of entrepreneurs. These are mainly fledgling business people, although more in the sense of "tenderpreneurs" who lack substantial elements of the classic features of a bourgeoisie in the making.⁴ Their strategies for securing and maximizing profit are of a parasitic nature and not – like a "patriotic" bourgeoisie – oriented towards long-term investment in productive sectors for the further accumulation of capital. Instead they use access to the state coffers for their self-enrichment strategy at the expense of the public purse (Melber 2007). According to a government official, himself a beneficiary of this form of "redistribution," politics and economics are close bedfellows but clearly not about any meaningful kind of social reconstruction: BEE, quite simply, is about "empowering individuals who have business ideas and need information and capital to take off."⁵

The rent-seeking nature of the new black class-in-formation ... (is) of a parasitic nature and not oriented towards long-term investment in productive sectors... (nor) about any meaningful kind of social reconstruction.

In a similarly selective fashion, one that also smacks far more of class self-interest than of concepts of equality and redistribution, the government's land policy has for two decades been idling, seeking mainly to satisfy the appetite of the new black elite for securing their own private farms. Thus, while the issue of land is at the core of much contestation in Namibia, the government has wasted time on, at best, half-hearted and half-baked legal fiddling with the matter. Harring and Odendaal (2002: 96), for example, have noted that during the first decade of Namibian Independence only 90 commercial farms were acquired. This would equate to 900 farms over a century – less than one fifth of all commercial farms in the country. One is tempted to cynically observe that the efficient implementation of the Odendaal Plan in the late 1950s and early 1960s, which introduced the Bantustan policy of the South African administration in Namibia by creating and/or consolidating reserves (including the resettling not only of tens of thousands of Africans, but also of white commercial farmers), was implemented much more efficiently than the Namibian government seems capable of (or willing to do) – despite the desperate need to reverse the effects of institutionalized "separate development."⁶

In the end, then, land has become every bit as much a natural resource for individual acquisition by a new political class and its allies – be it for commercial farming or for the use of protected parks and reserves for tourism enterprises or other forms of utilization – as the country's collective natural wealth. In fact, it is yet another sad irony that it is not the (still predominantly white) commercial farmers who are most at risk in all this. Rather, it is the peasants in the communal areas (the former reserves, where people do not hold any private land titles and hence can claim no ownership over land but rely on the patronage of the

traditional authorities [who, in fact and in most cases, cooperate closely with SWAPO or represent the party's interests] who are the most vulnerable. The most recent evidence is the currently discussed Land Bill, which according to Werner (2010: p. 21) "does not introduce any innovation, although this is absolutely necessary in view of the [recent] 'land grabs' that have affected Namibia. Without improved accountability and transparency towards land right holders, people in communal areas will be vulnerable to the predations of international investors and their local allies."

These latter "international investors" currently represent a wide panorama of old and new players. They range from British, Australian, French, Canadian, German, US and Japanese multinationals, mainly operating in the mining and energy sector (while Spain has concentrated on the lucrative fish industry), to the government's fiercely competitive new friends: Russia offering to develop a nuclear reactor for local use of Namibian uranium; India and South Korea joining the race for access to uranium deposits (Namibia ranks 4th among the world's producers of uranium); Iran holding a smaller portion of shares in one of the established uranium mines; the Chinese entering the race not only for access to the country's mineral and energy resources, but also for large parts of the construction sector; and with the North Koreans having built the pompous Heroes' Acre and the megalomaniacal new State House complex. Out of business in all this are many pre-existing Namibian companies and their local workforces – while local hawkers and street vendors are confronted with the fierce competition of Chinese shops (the relatively small capital, Windhoek, with two shopping complexes called Chinatown made up exclusively of Chinese traders).

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In fact, most new short-term ventures simply generate high profits at the expense of the local economy and people; the beneficiaries, such as they are, are to be found only in the higher echelons of the public service or political offices – as the saga of the Malaysian textile manufacturer, Ramatex, suggests. This company started to manufacture apparel and textiles for export to the North American market under the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) in a newly established complex in Windhoek. In a classic kind of "race to the bottom," several southern African governments had competed for favours in return for the sanctioning the investment, with Namibia, in the end, winning out. But not for long. For several years Ramatex did indeed produce profits (to be transferred primarily to its Malaysian owners, of course) – before closing down abruptly one day and re-locating its production to China where the Multi-Fiber Agreement provided a more lucrative option. The Namibian taxpayers and the Windhoek municipality were the losers in this deal, while several thousand unqualified workers (almost exclusively young women) could merely return, after years of hard work under horrible conditions (no trade union was allowed in the factory and the Namibian labour laws were not applicable, since the location was declared a Free Trade Zone) to their shacks without any compensation or savings. In his detailed case study, Winterfeldt (2007: p. 91) concludes:

Does this hold out the prospect of social progress, as measured against the principles of social equity? The liberal discourse, whether in its classical or its present shape, boldly rests on the glorification of the principle of social retardation: first comes the successful individual, the entrepreneur; then (if all goes well, and always to a lesser extent) society, that productive majority actually instrumental in creating economic wealth. First come, first served. The liberal economic ideology is not the epitome of social responsibility. It is class-biased, and so is its concept of development... The analysis of Ramatex's Namibian operations shows that neoliberal economic orientations, seen in the long term, tend to affect or even negate collective structures based on social solidarity. Conversely, any vision of social welfare must [instead] make the preservation and promotion of collective structures of social solidarity the focal point of accelerated sustainable development.

Basic Income Grant: Enemy of the "Fat Cat" Syndrome

A recent Namibian debate around a Basic Income Grant (BIG) bears the promise of something a bit different, however. Indeed, BIG has help launched a significant symbolic discourse as regards social policy priorities under the current government, thus complementing our assessment here. The BIG initiative, springing from a campaign spawned by a church and labour movement alliance, in collaboration with like-minded NGOs, raised money from donors and undertook a pilot project in one selected (and quite destitute) village, that paid monthly cash allowances of N\$100 (approximately US\$14) over the past two years to each individual resident there – in an effort to convince government that, in the absence of any other meaningful alternative, this might for the time being begin to contribute to the empowerment of local communities. Yet since its inception BIG has been met with an almost knee-jerk response that ridicules such proposals for financial transfers as naïve justifications for free rides for those who do not really want to earn a decent living by working with their own hands.

Thus, when President Hifikepunye Pohamba delivered his State of the Nation address in Parliament earlier this year, he was asked his views on BIG and on the attendant demands that the Namibian government should introduce a generalized BIG for all Namibians. His position: to dismiss BIG as a form of exploitation of those who are able and privileged to earn their living through work, which provides them and their families with a salaried income, while their taxes would then be used as payouts for others! Quite simply, for Pohamba and for other political leaders, greed seems to be much the more acceptable way. Note that it was these same political leaders who reportedly celebrated the 20th anniversary of Namibia's Independence by toasting with French champagne at N\$1,000 a bottle. Moreover, cabinet members recently received new top class limousines – perhaps because the old ones had become too small for their well-fed bodies!⁷ Moreover, as if to add insult to injury, the Namibian trade union umbrella body, the National Union of Namibian Workers (NUNW), announced in July, and out of the blue, that, with immediate effect, it had abandoned the BIG coalition. NUNW is, as it happens, affiliated to SWAPO and the move was widely seen as a response to the President's dismissal of the initiative.⁸ Seemingly representatives of the organised Namibian labour movement had come a long way from the days when the slogan "an injury to one is an injury to all" had a different meaning – forgetting, apparently, that solidarity is a complementary notion to social justice and part of an on-going struggle to achieve it.

**Solidarity is a complementary notion to social justice
and part of an on-going struggle to achieve it... The
hard-fought-for liberation from minority rule must now
mean more than merely the renewed promotion of
Social Darwinism.**

Conclusion

Of course, BIG may not be, in and of itself, the best answer for solving the challenges of structurally rooted inequality and destitution in Namibia. But at least the initiative had sought to contribute to creating a society in which all members obtain the minimum standard of living they deserve. It has been an effort to create an environment that could begin to enable the excluded to master their living conditions in a more empowering way and with some degree of dignity. In Namibia, any such effort is simply dismissed by those who seem to care more about securing and further advancing their own privileges than showing empathy with the plight of ordinary people. But the hard-fought-for liberation from minority rule (and against privileges for a few at the expense of the majority) must now mean more than merely the renewed promotion of Social Darwinism. As a result of this latter mindset the fat cat (species *Namibiana*) prospers and advances – while, in sharp contrast, the people of Namibia, who are battling to survive their anything-but-self-inflicted misery, are once again quite simply *losing out*. The BIG initiative does at least suggest that some resistance remains. Indeed, for so long as "a luta continua" continues to be translated, in practical terms, as "the looting continues," the struggle in Namibia will be far from over.⁹

Notes

1. Sam Nujoma, "Where we came from" (capital letters in the original!), posted at the SWAPO Party web site: http://www.swapoparty.org/where_we_came_from.html (accessed 16 July 2010). "Founding Father of the Republic of Namibia" is the official title conferred upon Sam Nujoma by the members of Parliament when he retired after three terms in office as Head of State (1990-2005). For the third term in office a first change of Namibia's constitution was required.
2. This represented the relevant background to the award to Martti Ahtisaari – the UN Commissioner for Namibia at the time and in charge of the UN Transitional Assistance Group (UNTAG) – of the Nobel Peace Prize in 2008.
3. Namibia ranks among those countries with the biggest income gaps in the world and the highest discrepancies in the distribution of wealth, in terms of the Gini-coefficient. Nominally, the average income per capita even among the poorer segments of society has grown slightly. But when measured against the cost of living and the lack of basic social services, as well as other criteria contributing to the Human Development Index, the overall trend is negative. As one UNDP-affiliated economist concluded, "over time income poverty appears to be decreasing while human poverty is increasing" (Levine 2007: 29).
4. This term has been used by Andrew Feinstein (2010) with reference to similar strategies in South Africa: "The practice of high-ranking members of the party, and those close to them, benefiting from decisions about tenders of the government has become so widespread that the title 'tenderpreneur' has been coined to describe the beneficiaries."
5. Quoted in Brigitte Weidlich, "Namibia: Politics and Economics are Bedfellows – Shangala," *The Namibian* (Windhoek), 27 May 2010.
6. It therefore comes as no surprise that Kapama (2010: p. 202) concludes: "The implementation of the Land Resettlement Programme seems to be riddled by numerous significant challenges which lead to procrastination of implementation. The same applies to the significant downgrading of the initiatives for integrated rural development and poverty reduction...[I]t is alleged that the 'economics of affection' have found expression in the ties of political patronage, which are being exploited by some bearers of political office and bureaucrats alike as elaborate avenues for allocating preferential treatment to party stalwarts, as well as friends and relatives of the ruling elite."
7. This is by no means some kind of weird satire but was indeed the reason given by the Permanent Secretary justifying the expense of a brand new Mercedes Benz fleet at a total cost of N\$300 million for members of the new cabinet.
8. The NUNW President, in a Press Conference, cited a lack of creative ideas to address poverty as the reason for this move and stated: "We are sincere in our belief that there's serious need for poverty alleviation in this country. We believe that the [BIG] coalition's idea is good but not the best. We're striving for the best." He further emphasized the need to reproduce wealth, which, in his view, would be almost impossible if money were handed out to individuals for free: "We'd rather suggest that instead of giving out \$100 to everyone each month, Government should be pushed to make it easier for equity participation by Namibians in local companies." Quoted in Toivo Ndjebela, "NUNW dumps BIG Coalition," *New Era* (Windhoek), 8 July 2010.
9. Recall the social awareness and responsibility expressed by Thomas Paine, in his tract "Agrarian Justice" of 1797, where he argues for the creation of a national fund to provide every citizen above the age of 21 with an annual financial amount independent of their other income and property. "Poverty," as he diagnosed, "is a thing created by that which is called civilized life." As a result, so-called civilization, "make[s] one part of the society more affluent, and the other more wretched, than would have been the lot in a natural state." He therefore maintained: "It is not charity but a right, not bounty but justice, that I am pleading for." In Namibia, more than two centuries later, the argument still holds.

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South African Splinters: From "elite transition" to "small-a alliances"

by Patrick Bond

Since the freeing of Nelson Mandela in February 1990, the South African liberation struggle has witnessed the truncation, hijacking and reversal of its fabled "second stage": the National Democratic Revolution (NDR), which aims to transform the state and address class inequality. Instead, the state has become an even more blatant vehicle for crony capitalism and merely tokenistic welfarism than under the Afrikaners' Nationalist Party rule. By mid-2010, the contradictions had become unbearable, and a spate of labour unrest suddenly brought home the obvious point: Alliance politics must urgently restructure – as must national socio-economic policies – or face an historic breaking point.

Society divides

The whole society began splintering just a few weeks after the World Cup provided a show of nation-building, broad-based excitement and unity. But the structural cracks had been widening during a long era of neoliberalism, for as the University of Cape Town's SA Labour and Development Research Unit recently reported, "income inequality increased between 1993 and 2008" (from a 0.66 Gini coefficient to 0.70) as South Africa raced ahead of Brazil to become the world's leader among major countries. The income of the average black (African) person actually fell as a percentage of the average white's from 1995 (13.5 percent) to 2008 (13 percent), and "poverty in urban areas has increased" (Leibbrandt et al, 2010).

The structural cracks had been widening during a long era of neoliberalism ... How could a democratic government actually amplify apartheid-era race- class inequality?

How could a democratic government actually amplify apartheid-era race-class inequality? It's stunning, but Mandela (1994–99) and his successor Thabo Mbeki (1999–2008), long-serving former Finance Minister Trevor Manuel, former Trade Minister Alec Erwin, former Reserve Bank Governor Tito Mboweni and current President Jacob Zuma, deserve recognition for constructing a "class apartheid" system that not even the most extreme pessimist would have predicted when the African National Congress (ANC) was unbanned.

According to the University of Cape Town researchers, inequality is "due both to rising unemployment and rising earnings inequality" which is in turn partly due to labour broking, i.e., the outsourcing of formerly secure employment at much lower wages with no benefits to around half a million workers. Yet, in his 2010 State of the Nation speech and more recently in the midst of a strike in which he threatened to fire the entire civil service, Zuma displayed "no appreciation of the full extent of the massive crisis of unemployment, poverty and inequality," according to the Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu).

Indeed the two loudest anti-labour voices in Zuma's cabinet – Defense Minister Lindiwe Sisulu and Public Service Minister Richard Baloyi – provided a burst of neoliberal-nationalist political rhetoric and strident discord so loud, in late August, that it drowned even the sweet memory of World Cup vuvuzelas a few weeks earlier. Zuma's Treasury was most to blame, for refusing to spend an extra \$700 million per year to quickly halt the public sector strike.

For those supportive of more genuine liberation traditions, the good news amidst the political and socio-economic rancour is that the centre of power, and associated neoliberal policies, may not hold. The extreme political divisions and ideological distortions associated with the ruling party's "big-A Alliance" with labour and the Communist Party may not permit the ANC's big tent to stay open to all, no matter Zuma's personal charisma and good-times inclusiveness. It may well be necessary, finally, to construct a "small-a alliance" – as John Saul (2005) named the idea – of organized workers, poor people, NGOs, environmentalists and other organized progressives.

The reason is simple: the neoliberal ruling clique is making the rich richer and the poor poorer. As one of the most prescient observers of South African politics, William Gumede, pointed out just after the 2007 ANC leadership putsch of Thabo Mbeki at the Polokwane congress, "For all the doubts that hang over Zuma's character, many argue that he offers a critical conduit for the poor's grievances. These people are going to be disappointed."

Instead the personal has become political. Asked in early September 2010 about the lucrative and extremely dubious deal that global steelmaker ArcelorMittal (formerly SA's state-owned Iscor) cut with a consortium (including his son, Duduzane), as well as his nephew Khulubuse's role in hotly-contested oil prospecting claims in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Zuma replied, "Nobody has said, here is corruption. I think for people to think that if you are a Zuma you can't do business is a very funny thing, I tell you."

Not everyone is amused, and communist youth leader David Masondo coined a frank rebuttal, speaking of "ZEE" – Zuma Economic Empowerment. For Masondo, writing in *CityPress* newspaper (5 September 2010), "ZEE is not only an assault on the Young Communist League and South African Communist Party resolutions – which called for the nationalisation of monopoly industries – it amounts to a burial of the Freedom Charter. Only a few can be misled to believe that there is no link between Zuma's rise to the presidency and his family's rise to riches."

But this isn't only about a