

The post-colonial state and Matebeleland: Regional perceptions of civil-military relations, 1980–2002

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Introduction

This article examines civil-military relations in Matabeleland in the period 1980–2002 from a historical perspective and is largely based on oral testimonies collected from the Ndebele themselves.

Brief military history of Matabeleland region prior to 1980

One of the important issues to note about the history of the Ndebele in general is that it has been overlaid with mythology. The Ndebele were portrayed as a militaristic offshoot of the militaristic and brutal Zulu kingdom under King Shaka. The Ndebele nation is said to have survived by plunder, pillage and violent raids upon their neighbours. It is held that the Shona of the Zimbabwean plateau were the targets of Ndebele raids in the nineteenth century.¹ This mythology—with perhaps a token root of truth—has had far-reaching implications for the Ndebele. As a result of this reputation, the imperialists approached the Ndebele wielding both ‘the stick and diplomacy’. They made various fraudulent and bogus treaties and concessions, undertook violent wars of conquest in 1893 and 1896, and eventually negotiated peace at the Matopos *Indabas*.² The mythological constructs, which the Ndebele often projected as truth to boost their own image, have led to antagonistic relations between the Ndebele and the Shona—the two major ethnic groups in Zimbabwe. This history of antagonism has had far reaching implications for post-colonial political developments, particularly in the military violence perpetrated by the largely Shona-speaking Fifth Brigade in Matabeleland in the early 1980s.

The Ndebele state in the nineteenth century provided a unique case of cordial civil-military relations. The age-set groups—which were erroneously characterized as regiments by early historians—from which the military forces were derived, were not just an institution of state dictatorship and violence, but were also units of production.³ There was a superb blending of military attributes and economic/productive imperatives in the Ndebele state. As a productive unit, the age-set groups remained subservient to the civilian society and made substantial contributions to the welfare of the broader society. After performing military duties or assignments, the Ndebele forces were readily absorbed back

into mainstream civil society. The groups performed important civil and community services like building homes, herding cattle and cultivating crops.⁴

If the Ndebele military forces were ever violent and brutal it was in external operations and against foreign foes. At home they were largely a unit of production and assumed full civilian status for carrying out policing duties, which were necessary for the smooth functioning of the state.⁵ This organisation of Ndebele military forces enhanced civil-military relations as the military emerged directly from mainstream civil society and returned to it after each military assignment. Cordial civil-military relations were further enhanced by the fact that war booty, particularly cattle, was distributed by the *inkosi* (king) to the provinces (*izigaba*) for the benefit of the Ndebele society at large.⁶

Another important issue to note about the history of the Ndebele relates to the dominance of violence in historical memory'. This theme is superbly captured in Jocelyn Alexander, Joan McGregor and Terence Ranger's recent and classic book, *Violence and Memory: One Hundred Years in the 'Dark Forests' of Matebeleland*, where they observe that 'violence has so powerfully shaped the history and the memory of the past in Matebeleland', including the *Mfecane* wars of the 1820s and 1830s; the imperialist wars of conquest (1893 and 1896); the severe history of forced evictions and coercive agrarian interventions of the settler colonial state; the nationalist resistance and intense colonial repression of the 1960s; the violence of the liberation war of the 1970s and finally the devastating post-colonial violence of the 1980s.

As such the dynamics of the Matebeleland region's civil-military relations must be located in this rather obscured political history of the region, which lies active at local level but at national level is submerged beneath the master-narrative of official Zimbabwean nationalism that celebrates the successes of the ruling Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU-PF) party and its guerrilla army, the Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (ZANLA), while at the same time pandering to pan-ethnic nationalism.

Liberation war time civil-military relations:

The case of the ZIPRA and Matebeleland region

While studies of guerrilla-civilian relations during the struggle for Zimbabwe are among the most sophisticated and detailed of their kind, most of them cover the areas of Mashonaland where ZANLA operated and where ZANU dominated the political space. The Matebeleland region where the Ndebele are dominant and where the Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA) mainly operated under the banner of the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) has remained outside the orbit of scholarly study.

The major studies on guerrilla-civilian relations in Zimbabwe include David Lan's *Guns and Rain*, where he notes that civilians were caught between two

armed forces—the ZANLA guerrillas and the Rhodesian Security Forces (RSF)—who were competing for the hearts and minds of the people. Lan presents the guerrilla-civilian relations in positive terms in the Dande area.⁷ The other important book on guerrilla-civilian relations is Terence Ranger's *Peasant Consciousness and Guerrilla War in Zimbabwe*, where he renders a largely positive picture of guerrilla-civilian relations based on the case study of the Makoni District where ZANLA operated.

Norma J. Kriger in her influential but controversial book, *Zimbabwe's Guerrilla War: Peasant Voices*, which is confined to Mutoko District where the ZANLA forces operated, emphasizes more than any other work the violence and coercive propensity of the guerrillas in their interaction with the civilians.⁸ Kriger's book is one of the most important critical studies of guerrilla-civilian relations and it stands as one of the monumental critiques of the traditional notion of popular peasant support for the guerrilla wars of liberation in Africa.⁹ What emerges from this study is that popular appeal and support were punctuated by and laced with intimidation, force, violence and murder. Even Josephine Nhongo-Simbanegavi's recent detailed study entitled, *For Better or Worse? Women and ZANLA in Zimbabwe's Liberation Struggle*, while concerned with gender issues, also underlines the prominence of violence and coercion in guerrilla-civilian relations where ZANLA operated.¹⁰

What can be said with certainty is that guerrilla-civilian relations during the struggle for Zimbabwe in areas where ZANLA operated were shaped by a number of factors including haphazard training, the role of the *mujibhas* and *chibwidos* as a link between guerrillas and the mainstream civilian population, attempts by the civilians themselves to use the guerrillas to settle their own local differences and general ill-discipline among the guerrillas. The disturbing academic issue is that all these insights are derived from the studies of the liberation war in Mashonaland where ZANLA forces were dominant and they cannot be assumed to be true for Matebeleland where a different guerrilla army dominated under the banner of ZAPU.

The point is that ZIPRA-civilian relations have not received the same academic attention as the relations between ZANLA and the civilian population of the regions where that army operated. The main studies on ZIPRA operations and their relations with the civilians include, Joshua Nkomo's *Nkomo: The Story of My Life*,¹¹ *Violence and Memory*,¹² Jeremy Brickhill's chapter, 'Daring to Storm the Heavens: The Military Strategy of ZAPU, 1976–79', in N. Bhebe and Ranger's *Soldiers in Zimbabwe's Liberation War*¹³ and Bhebe's award-winning and recent book, *The ZAPU and ZANU Guerrilla Warfare and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe*.¹⁴ What emerges from these few studies on ZIPRA-civilian relations is that ZIPRA did not need to draw on local sources of legitimacy such as spirit mediums like the ZANLA forces and that they had no need to use violence to establish themselves among the civilian population. Once they identi-

fied themselves as ‘Nkomo’s boys’, ZIPRA operatives could interact with the civilians through the hidden but existing ZAPU party hierarchy.¹⁵

The rural underground ZAPU political structures were invigorated with the arrival of ZIPRA in Matebeleland and played an important role in mediating between ZIPRA and the civilians.¹⁶ ZIPRA-civilian relations were based on a moral economy. The civilian’s acknowledged the ongoing efforts of the soldiers to uphold law and order and to widen the base of ZAPU membership and leadership; while the ZIPRA forces, like their ZANLA counterparts, relied on civilians for food, cigarettes, clothes, boots, medicine and intelligence on the movement of enemy forces.¹⁷ However, unlike the ZANLA forces who were actively involved in the construction of ZANU party political structures—destroying the existing ZAPU ones and violently harassing those who had sympathies with ZAPU¹⁸—the ZIPRA guerrillas modeled themselves as soldiers and left the politics to veteran ZAPU nationalists.¹⁹

The currency that the ZIPRA guerrillas entered their operational areas with was their knowledge of the names of key ZAPU political leaders. This meant the people accepted them easily and as such ZIPRA had no reason to rely heavily on violence and coercion to gain material and political support. Known local ZAPU representatives introduced ZIPRA to the civilian mainstream rural population.²⁰ This generated cordial guerrilla-civilian relations in Matebeleland.

What is even more important to note is that despite the fact that ZIPRA soldiers were highly trained and better armed, they remained subordinate to the civilian ZAPU nationalists. Some of these veteran ZAPU nationalists were themselves ex-detainees who had recruited and assisted the guerrillas to cross to Zambia in the 1960s and 1970s.²¹ The rural ZAPU nationalists held authority over the ZIPRA guerrillas and often questioned their conduct, basing their criticism on the ZAPU constitution. This relationship helped to limit the levels of ZIPRA violence and promoted cordial guerrilla-civilian relations in Matebeleland.²²

However the relationship between ZIPRA and the rural population was not without tension. ZIPRA like ZANLA sometimes involved itself in brutal killing of ‘sell-outs’ and ‘witches’.²³ These guerrilla interventions in issues of selling-out and witchcraft within Matebeleland region provoked some of the most traumatic incidents of the liberation war and occasioned intense moral and political debate. The local ZAPU civilian leaders—together with the ZIPRA command—strove to control violence, particularly against ‘witches’, precisely because it undermined support for the guerrillas. The ZAPU leaders and the guerrilla commanders debated the legitimacy of witchcraft accusations and the mandate of ZIPRA’s authority to kill the ‘witches’ under the broad terms of ZIPRA military strategy and ZAPU’s constitution.²⁴

The other issue that threatened cordial relations between ZIPRA and the civilians related to sexual relations between young girls and the guerrillas. When it became apparent that there were indeed widespread illicit sexual rela-

tions between the guerrillas and young girls, the ZAPU leadership intervened.²⁵ This intervention met with resistance from both the young girls who had taken advantage of the war situation to exercise their sexuality outside parental control and the ZIPRA guerrillas, some of whom eventually married their wartime girlfriends at independence.²⁶ Rape was not common.²⁷

Matebeleland civilian accounts of their relationship with ZIPRA do not emphasize violence, coercion and death, instead the accounts highlight ZIPRA bravery, political commitment and cooperation. Civilian complaints about the conduct of ZIPRA towards them are very limited. Hence in Matebeleland, the liberation war as prosecuted by ZIPRA, notwithstanding its structural violence and strains, remains a source of pride and solidarity for the civilians as well as the combatants.²⁸

The post-colonial state of Zimbabwe and the changing civil-military relations in Matebeleland region

At the conceptual level, Ibbo Mandaza in his book *Peace and Security in Southern Africa* tries to examine the character of the post-colonial state in Africa in general and Southern Africa in particular.²⁹ According to Mandaza, the main feature of a post-colonial state is that it is an artificial creation—a hostage, weak and dependent. It is a product of authoritarian, divisive and racist colonialism and it inherited unequal and uneven development derived from the exploitative and oppressive colonial situation.³⁰ As such every new African leader who assumed leadership of the post-colonial state after the departure of the colonialists had to grapple with the complex and delicate process of nation building, since the post-colonial state itself was a nation-state in the making.³¹ This analysis reveals that the post-colonial state in general was fragile—based on very poor political, economic and social foundations. As such its first priority was its security, or rather the security of those who assumed power.

The post-colonial state leadership faced the challenge of constructing a nation-state from people of diverse ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic backgrounds. It had the mammoth task of facilitating a situation where hitherto enemies could co-exist and identify with the new nation-in-the-making. In some countries the leaders themselves were elevated to positions of power by exploiting ethnic differences, making it difficult for them to achieve pan-ethnic solidarity as the basis of a united nation.³² The poignant reality is that the post-colonial state is prone to conflict by its very nature, particularly intra-state conflict. Given this fragility and insecurity, where the security of the state itself rather than the people was the priority, it would have been over ambitious to expect genial civil-military relations.

The major problem of the post-colonial state is that it was largely incapable of undertaking the expected role of mediating between competing and contending forces within society. Secondly, it failed to deliver the fruits of independence to the majority of its citizens. Its failure to find acceptable power sharing formulae and to resolve questions like the land issue, pan-ethnic solidarity, fair treatment of minorities and the building of truly national armies reflective of ethnic diversities in the state, have led the post-colonial state to be intransigent and to use the repressive machinery inherited from the highly repressive colonial state against its own people. The main characteristic of the post-colonial state is the use of the military to silence dissent.³³

Richard Webner in his book, *Tears of the Dead: The Social Biography of an African Family*, tries to situate the conflict that engulfed Matebeleland and the Midlands in the 1980s within the context of what he termed 'quasi-nationalism'.³⁴ This 'quasi-nationalism' was a product of failed nation building as well as the flawed and narrow ZANU-PF strategy of national construction premised on the assumption of absolute power and moral authority within a one-party political and ideological framework. The catastrophe of 'quasi-nationalism' as opposed to pan-ethnic nationalism is that it legitimized and authorised violence against all those that were perceived to be opposed to the new ZANU-PF agenda. The Matebeleland region and the Ndebele as an ethnic group were seen as standing in the way of the process of nation building. Matebeleland and the Ndebele were soon identified as 'other' and purging of the 'others' became necessary for the progress of nation building.

The legitimacy of these purges was predicated on the pre-colonial Shona-Ndebele antagonism of the nineteenth century, past political vendettas between PF-ZAPU and ZANU-PF and party ideological differences.³⁵ It was no coincidence that the Fifth Brigade was also called *Gukurahundi*, which in Shona language means 'the rain that washes away the chaff from the last harvest, before the spring rains'.³⁶ It seemed the 'last harvest' was the achievement of independence, the Matebeleland region and the Ndebele were the 'chaff' that was supposed to be washed away and the 'spring rain' was the establishment of the one-party state in Zimbabwe.³⁷

What emerges from this analysis is that the political developments and the violence that took place in Zimbabwe in the 1980s cannot be separated from the failure of the post-colonial state under ZANU-PF to undertake the expected role of peaceful mediation between the competing and contending forces that fought for the independence of Zimbabwe. The post-colonial state failed to open up enough space for full incorporation and integration of all people of Zimbabwe regardless of ethnic and linguistic differences. The ruling elite, as a strategy of nation building, resorted to violence via abuse of the military, which led to negative civil-military relations.³⁸

It is imperative to note that when independence was achieved in 1980,

Robert Mugabe as the prime minister and ZANU-PF as a ruling party, faced the mammoth task of trying to unite a country and a people that had been subjected to ninety years of oppressive, divisive and racist rule. The country had also experienced a decade of escalating military activity, which had served not only to accelerate the process of liberating the country from settler colonialism, but also to polarize the different ethnic groups. It was obvious that constructing a new nation would be no easy task.³⁹

Robert Mugabe's magnanimous and widely quoted speech at independence which encouraged every Zimbabwean to forget the past and heralded the official policy of reconciliation of all parties involved in the conflict that gave birth to Zimbabwe and the amnesty ordinances of 1979 and 1980, were part of a positive strategy of nation building.⁴⁰ This nation building agenda was to work in tandem with the integration of the ZIPRA, ZANLA and RSF into a true national army. However, these moves toward positive and peaceful nation building did not survive beyond 1980. They were soon thrown into the shadow of negative legacies that worked against the non-violent creation of a pan-ethnic nation.

These negative legacies included:

- the external threat from apartheid South Africa which saw a new united Zimbabwe as a threat to its own survival;
- the historical antagonisms between the Ndebele and the Shona;
- the legacy of colonial rule particularly as it applied to the abuse of and the lack of accountability of the military;
- antagonism between the ZAPU and ZANU politicians dating back to the split of 1963 and the legacy of mistrust between the two liberation armies of ZIPRA and ZANLA;
- the politicisation of ethnicity; and
- the ZANU-PF agenda of establishing a one-party state.⁴¹

All these negative legacies worked together to create a conflict situation and opened political space for the intervention of the military in civilian affairs, with serious consequences for civil-military relations. Mugabe and ZANU-PF entered a path of 'authoritarian nation building' based on the use of the military and violence.⁴²

The building of a Zimbabwe National Army (ZNA) and the alienation of Matebeleland

The building of the Zimbabwe National Army out of the erstwhile ZIPRA, ZANLA and RSF was code-named 'Operation Sausage Machine' and was an important part of the wider process of nation building. A number of factors including the negative legacies outlined in the preceding section militated

against the creation of a truly national Zimbabwean army, representative of all the people. High levels of mistrust emerged as a result of the assassination attempts on the prime minister Robert Mugabe between 1980 and 1982, largely associated with the former RSF and ZIPRA combatants. The sporadic outbreaks of violence between ZIPRA and ZANLA in the assembly points as well as between both and the RSF, further fuelled animosities. Inflammatory political speeches by ZANU-PF politicians like Enos Nkala and the prime minister himself did not assist the process of integrating the different military units into one national army. The discovery of arms caches in ZAPU owned properties broke the camel's back and the government used it as a pretext to launch a massive security clampdown on Matebeleland and to begin to lay blame for the deteriorating security situation on ZAPU and ZIPRA.⁴³

A number of studies have concentrated on the dangers posed by the absence of a dedicated policy on demilitarization, demobilization and civil integration at the expense of the more dangerous failure by the post-colonial Zimbabwean state to create a trusted national army out of the ZIPRA, ZANLA and RSF. This failure was typified by the government move between 1981 and 1982 to establish new 'politically correct military units' parallel to the Zimbabwe National Army (ZNA) such as the Korean trained Presidential Guards, the Artillery Regiment, the notorious Fifth Brigade and the now defunct People's Militia.⁴⁴

The defection of large numbers of ex-ZIPRA combatants and the forced demobilization of many others from the ZNA was also an indication of the failure of the government to create a trusted national army in Zimbabwe. What was even more disastrous was the government response to this reality. The ZANU-PF government accused ZAPU of lacking the political will to build Zimbabwe and hatched allegations against ZAPU and ZIPRA, accusing them of intending to topple the government.⁴⁵ The regime's security obsession blinded it to the real issues that caused the failure of the creation of the unified national army.

During the attempts to create a national army, the ex-ZIPRA combatants began to complain of being sidelined, being harassed and of threats to their lives. Some complained of being under serious pressure to demobilize from the ZNA. Those who had been demobilized soon found themselves being harassed and threatened by the newly created Fifth Brigade. It was from this situation that the 'dissident problem' emerged in the early 1980s. The harassment of Joshua Nkomo and other ZAPU leaders in the wake of the discovery of arms caches concretized the conviction of ex-ZIPRA combatants that they were under threat from the government.⁴⁶

The Fifth Brigade and Matebeleland region

The deployment of the Fifth Brigade in Matebeleland in 1983 was a major blow to existing civil-military relations in the region. The Fifth Brigade was an

almost entirely Shona-speaking military crack unit and the Ndebele-speaking people who were part of it were kept on solely because of their knowledge of the Matebeleland terrain and language. The Fifth Brigade was unlike any other unit of the Zimbabwe National Army (ZNA). It was answerable directly to the prime minister and operated outside the normal military chain of command. It received North Korean training that was both military and political in content.⁴⁷

In Matebeleland, members of the Fifth Brigade were identified by their red berets and their use of violence. The Brigade was specifically intended for what was termed 'internal defence purposes', meaning that it took over the duty of the police.⁴⁸ The unit prosecuted a grotesquely violent campaign from the date of its deployment in January 1983.

The Fifth Brigade, unlike the other ZNA units, justified its violence against civilians in Matebeleland in explicitly tribal and political terms. It even evoked pre-colonial memories of Ndebele raids on the Shona and modeled itself as a Shona defence force come to punish the Ndebele for their historical transgressions.⁴⁹ As such it targeted every Ndebele child, woman and man and was especially aggressive to ex-ZIPRA combatants and ZAPU leaders in rural Matebeleland.

The operations of the Fifth Brigade were marked by the establishment of bases at district offices, missions, police stations, schools, boreholes and in mountains. People were detained, tortured and murdered at these bases. The most notorious among them was Bhalagwe in Kezi where many people were secretly killed. The Fifth Brigade also directed its energies to 'political re-orientation and mobilization'. Ndebele people were forced to attend ZANU-PF meetings and ZANLA-style *pungwes*. At these meetings the people of Matebeleland were forced to speak in Shona, to carry ZANU-PF party cards, to sing party songs, to chant slogans and to denounce Joshua Nkomo and the rest of the ZAPU leadership. Many people were forced to come and witness the brutal torture and killing of their loved ones and to ululate in support of their death.⁵⁰

Fifth Brigade operations in Matebeleland included depriving people of food through closure of stores, grinding mills and butcheries and by burning granaries—acts committed under the blanket of curfew. Whole families were slaughtered and homes were burned down.⁵¹ The Fifth Brigade also engaged in the widespread rape and murder of Ndebele. The Ndebele perceived the rapes as an orchestrated, systematic attempt to create a generation of Shona children in Matebeleland—a 'shona-ization' of the region.⁵²

The actions of the Fifth Brigade hardened ethnic prejudice and created a strong link between ethnicity and political affiliation. The highly politicised military force alienated the Matebeleland region from the state and ensured an extremely negative relationship between the military and the civilian population. It created the perception of the military as a Shona dominated institution

designed to intimidate and kill the Ndebele as⁵³ the violence of the Fifth Brigade was perceived to be state sanctioned. The memories of civilians of this violence in the early 1980s overshadowed their memories of the liberation war in Matebeleland. The violence of the liberation war came to be seen as purposeful compared to the arbitrary and ethnically motivated terror of the 1980s.⁵⁴

The perception in Matebeleland was that the Fifth Brigade's violence was not an aberration but part of a plan orchestrated by the ZANU-PF's leaders. Their operations were thus crucial in amplifying both a political and an ethnic interpretation of violence. Civilians in the Matebeleland region make strong distinction between the Fifth Brigade—easily identified by distinctive red-berets—and other armies that operated in Matebeleland in the 1980s. Even so, the operations of the Fifth Brigade more than any other post colonial development impacted negatively on civil-military relations in region and left a long-lasting legacy.⁵⁵

Other militaries and the Matebeleland region

Other military operations in Matebeleland in the 1980s further tainted civil-military relations in the region. Other activities in the region included operations by the Central Intelligence Organization (CIO), Police Support Unit (PSU), ZNA, ZANU-PF Youth Brigades, Paratroopers, Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP), Police Internal Security Intelligence Unit (PISI) as well as the dissidents and the South African backed 'Super Zapu' bandits.⁵⁶

The ZNA and the Support Unit are remembered differently to the notorious Fifth Brigade. These military units are seen as largely focused on eliminating the banditry in Matebeleland. They were recognised as professional security organs that protected the people and their property and there were Ndebele speaking people in these units, which served as a confidence builder between the civilians and the military. However, within the ranks of the ZNA and the Support Unit, some took advantage of the lawlessness and the cover of the curfew to harass the civilians.⁵⁷

The ZRP was in a complex situation. Even if the police wanted to help the civilians they were seen to be helpless in the face of state sanctioned violence. At times the police risked their own lives by seeking to protect civilians from the Fifth Brigade and attempted to warn civilians of impending violence or danger. The Fifth Brigade would kill people in the presence of police officers and this led some people to accuse the ZRP of colluding with the politically motivated military units rather than protecting the civilians. People lost confidence in the police as a force for their protection.⁵⁸

Other notorious military units in Matebeleland were the CIO and the ZANU-PF Youth Brigade. These units had a similar reputation to the Fifth Brigade and carried out an even more targeted programme of political vio-

lence. The CIO orchestrated the detention and disappearance of many people, particularly ZAPU leaders, ex-ZIPRA combatants and civilians. The CIO sometimes moved with the Fifth Brigade conducting night sweeps throughout Matebeleland in an effort to surprise and capture key ZAPU activists. The ZANU-PF Youth Brigade also became a prominent agent of violence and intimidation, particularly leading up to the 1985 general elections.⁵⁹ While the ZANU-PF Youth Brigade was not a military force in the true sense of the word, it is remembered in the Matebeleland region for the violence it perpetrated.

The Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace and the Legal Resources Foundation in a report entitled, *Breaking the Silence*, sees the conflict in Matebeleland in the 1980s as two-pronged attack and as consisting of overlapping conflicts. The first was between the dissidents and the government defence units, which included the ZNA and the Support Unit. The second conflict involved government and party agencies such as Fifth Brigade, CIO, PISI, and ZANU-PF Youth Brigade acting against all those who were thought to support ZAPU and spoke Ndebele. This second conflict took the form of a military operation prosecuted by an established armed force with the support of paramilitary forces against unarmed civilians.⁶⁰ It was in this second conflict that there were gross human rights violations.

PISI was another notorious group of military personnel that operated in Matebeleland. It was an elite and secretive division within the home affairs ministry with a similar purpose to the CIO. In addition to intelligence collection, PISI had powers of arrest.⁶¹ Initially this group was termed Zipolis but was not active until Enos Nkala became minister of home affairs in August 1985. The people of Matebeleland were sometimes not able to distinguish between this group and the CIO. However PISI had a reputation for being even more ruthless and brutal than CIO and at times would arrest people in the guise of CIO. Both PISI and CIO operated as plainclothes security units. It was very easy for the public to confuse the two groups.⁶² Nkala surprised many people in Matebeleland by his intense hatred of the Ndebele people generally and Nkomo specifically, despite the fact that he came from Matebeleland. When Nkala became home affairs minister he told the nation that:

“We want to wipe out ZAPU leadership. You’ve only seen the warning lights. We haven’t yet reached full blast... the murderous organisation and its murderous leadership must be hit so hard that it doesn’t feel obliged to do the things it has been doing.”⁶³

This statement marked the launch of the PISI operation in Matebeleland which was marked by the mysterious disappearance of many civilians, particularly the ZAPU leadership.

Finally there were the dissidents and the Super ZAPU operating in the Matebeleland region in the 1980s.⁶⁴ The official thinking in Zimbabwe was that

the people of Matebeleland supported the dissidents and were sympathetic to their cause. It was also believed that the dissidents were sponsored by ZAPU. However, current accounts from both the civilians and the ex-dissidents prove otherwise. When the ZAPU leadership dissociated itself from the dissidents, the people of Matebeleland followed suit.⁶⁵ Among the dissidents operating in Matebeleland were:

- the South African sponsored Super Zapu who intended to destabilize Zimbabwe and cause security panic;
- the genuine ex-ZIPRA combatants who did not agree with the Lancaster House Agreement and who saw it as a sell-out on the part of the Patriotic Front leadership;
- ex-ZIPRA who had joined the ZNA and defected because of ill-treatment and threats to their lives;
- demobilized ex-ZIPRA combatants who became dissidents because of harassment by the Fifth Brigade;
- ex-ZIPRA combatants who became dissidents because of the treatment of their war time commanders and ZAPU leadership; and
- Ndebele youth who took advantage of the situation to lead a life of banditry.⁶⁶

These groups also engaged in acts of violence and rape during their operations—adding another dimension to regional civil-military relations.

Taking stock of military intervention in Matebeleland

The military intervention in police and civilian operations in Matebeleland in the early 1980s had devastating implications for civil-military relations. In the first place it undermined the structures of the state in Matebeleland. The first structure to be adversely affected was the ministry of home affairs. Joshua Nkomo as the first African minister of home affairs was rendered powerless and was often by-passed in decisions pertaining to the internal affairs department.⁶⁷ The military and the minister of defence usurped the police duties. While it is universally acknowledged that the military as an institution is authoritarian by nature, democratisation demands that the military is controlled by the state.

The intervention of the military in civilian operations indicated beyond doubt the move by the Zimbabwean government away from legitimate and democratic rule by consent of the governed to authoritarian rule by repressive and violent means that demanded the unquestioning compliance of the governed. This move not only alienated the Matebeleland constituency, it also ushered in a wave of militarization of politics that continues to negatively affect democratic governance in Zimbabwe today. The turn of the century in Zimbabwe has witnessed yet another military force operating in the political arena in the form of the War Veterans and the so-called 'Border Gezi Youth

Brigade', popularly known as the 'Green Bombers'.⁶⁸ These recent developments testify to the trend towards militarism in politics. As in the 1980s the intervention of the military and quasi-military organs in the political arena has been accompanied by erosion of the basic freedoms of association, speech and assembly as well as by the torture and murder of civilians.

What must be emphasized is that the military is not trained or equipped to deal with civilian operations. Their involvement in such operations has opened up the possibility of them employing excessive force, which undermines their image and credibility among civilians.⁶⁹ There is no wonder, therefore, that disquieting allegations of assault, torture, rape and murder of civilians and prisoners by the military followed their operations in Matebeleland in the early 1980s. Cilliers has pointed out that any practice that conflates the role of the police and the military runs the risk of encouraging clashes between the two groups and the lowering of professional standards, especially for the military.⁷⁰ Indeed by their very nature and ethos, the police and the military are different institutions and must be treated as such by any government that cherishes democratic principles.

Zimbabwe has experienced the devastating effects of the politicization of the military in the form of the highly political stance taken by the armed forces prior to the presidential elections (ninth and tenth of March 2002) when the army chiefs declared in a public televised speech that they would never salute anyone as president of Zimbabwe who had no liberation war credentials.⁷¹ This statement elicited profound indignation throughout Zimbabwe and even outside the borders of the country: the army was trying to determine the political pace of change in the country. This was indeed the highest level of involvement of the military in the democratic process—the attempt to choose for the people the person to rule Zimbabwe.

In Zimbabwe, the political influence of civilian personalities in the military impinged negatively on their operations and on civil-military relations. The prime minister, Robert Mugabe, was fond of making inflammatory political speeches as the commander in chief of the armed forces, which did not inform cordial civilian relations. In 1985 in the celebratory aftermath of the general elections, Mugabe made a broadcast in Shona in which he told his supporters to 'go and uproot the weeds from your garden.' This was followed by a spate of violence targeting supporters of PF-ZAPU and Ndebeles. It was during this time that mobs of ZANU-PF Women's League members rampaged through Harare and destroyed the houses of suspected PF-ZAPU supporters, killing two pregnant women. Mugabe had already legitimized the violence in Matebeleland in April 1983 when he said:

"When men and women provide food for the dissidents, when we get there we eradicate them. We don't differentiate when we fight, because we can't tell who is a dissident and who is not."⁷²

Nkala supported Mugabe by demonstrating the clearest example of the blurring of the boundaries between civilians and dissidents in a statement made in February 1983 at a rally for civilians in Matebeleland South, where he told them that if they continue supporting dissidents and ZAPU, 'you shall die or be sent to prison'.⁷³

Another culprit in this irresponsible politics was the minister of state security, Emmerson Mnangagwa. At a rally in Matebeleland North in April 1983, Mnangagwa told a huge, forcibly assembled crowd of civilians that the army had come to Matebeleland like 'fire, and in the process of cleansing the area of the dissident menace had also wiped out their supporters.' He went on to say in a parody of biblical scriptures that:

"Blessed are they, who will follow the path of the government laws for their days on earth shall be increased. But woe unto those who will choose the path of collaboration with dissidents for we will certainly shorten their stay on earth."⁷⁴

It was via the use of the military by the ruling elite in a political power game that the army lost much of its credibility among the Ndebele. In Matebeleland the existing perception of the army is that it is a coercive arm not only of the state, but specifically of the ruling ZANU-PF party. It is seen as a Shona dominated institution that uses Shona language as its official means of communication with the civilians. Sometimes the Ndebele who served in the army in the midst of the violence of the 1980s are seen as sell-outs who survived the violence by betraying their people. The other dominant perception is that the army is above the law and stands as an institution of violence and death. Many people interviewed emphasized that *amasotsha ngiyawesaba ngoba ayabulala* (I fear the soldiers because they kill).⁷⁵

This perception of the military is largely derived from the past violence in Matebeleland. The violence of the 1980s is vividly remembered both in urban and rural areas. When asked what the soldiers did, people quickly respond—*basibulala mntanami* (they killed us my son).⁷⁶ The violence of the 1980s left an estimated twenty thousand civilians dead.

As such the Matebeleland regional perception of the military is dominated by fear, mistrust, suspicion, alienation, exclusion and long-lasting bitterness. Of all the people who were interviewed none saw the military in positive terms as necessary protectors of life and people's general security. They would prefer that the soldiers were restricted to their barracks waiting to fight external threats and wars. In Zimbabwe, the military itself has developed a subculture of relating to the civilians in an intimidating manner. They know that the civilians fear them and they enjoy that relationship. Very little effort has been made by the military to cultivate cordial relations with civil society. It seems they see themselves as hired to protect the regime in power rather than the

population of Zimbabwe. One young man said 'soldiers are simply not with the people, they are with the ruling party'.⁷⁷

In the Matebeleland region, negative civil-military relations have generated two contradictory political behaviours among civilians in general. On the one hand, there is the fatalistic and helpless compliance with the government and the ruling party. This is derived from excessive fear of the repetition of the terror of the 1980s. The elderly men and women in rural Matebeleland mainly manifest this political behaviour. Their common position is that *asifuni ukubona esaku bonayo* (we don't want to see what we saw again).⁷⁸ They are more than convinced that the only way to avoid the repetition of the tragedy of the 1980s is to vote for ZANU-PF, confirming beyond doubt that they associate the violence of that time not only with military, but also with the ruling party. The ruling party is reaping positive political results from this excessive fear, and the politicians sometimes remind the people of Matebeleland of the violence of the 1980s if they are too politically assertive.⁷⁹ At the moment this strategy seems to be working for the benefit of ZANU-PF in rural Matebeleland.

On the other hand there are the youth in Matebeleland—urbanised and educated—who have emerged beyond the fatalistic and apathetic politics of compliance induced by the violence of the 1980s. They are willing to risk every thing and to join hands with other democratic national forces such as the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA) and the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), to work to change the status quo dominated by fear of ZANUPF and the threat of a repetition of the tragedies of the 1980s.⁸⁰ Thus the legacy of the violence of the 1980s continues to shape politics in Zimbabwe today.

The failure to restore cordial civil-military relations and the quest for accountability

The Unity Accord of 22 December 1987 signed between PF-ZAPU and ZANU-PF was aimed at restoring cordial relations and peace and security in Zimbabwe.⁸¹ The cordial relations were not only to be restored between the military and civilians but also between the people of Matebeleland and the government and between the two major political parties in the country.

However, the accord did not succeed in achieving a broad based restoration of cordial relations between the people of Matebeleland and the military and the government in general. Tensions were suspended rather than removed. On the positive side, is the fact that the military violence that engulfed Matebeleland from 1983 came to an end, as did the dissident activity. Those who were detained in connection with the politics of the 1980s, like Dumiso Dabengwa, were released. However, modern studies of peace and security

have shown that the absence of violence or conflict does is not necessarily indicative of peace, security or even cordial relations in a society.⁸²

One of the major flaws of the Unity Accord was that it was not a product of a democratic process that included the people. The accord was imposed on the people by the political elite and as such it was one of the authoritarian nation building strategies of ZANU-PF. The second major flaw was that the accord was not underpinned by a comprehensive post-conflict, peace-building package, which is imperative for the development of human security and the restoration of civil-military relations in war-torn societies.⁸³

The accord dealt only with political rebuilding based on a long lasting political settlement and the definition of a power-sharing arrangement between the erstwhile disputants. The second dimension to a post-conflict agreement involves the social rebuilding that includes the revitalisation of major social institutions like education and health as well as the genuine reintegration of war victims and ex-combatants into the civil society. This is closely linked to the issue of psychological rebuilding based on the premise that all communities that have survived the trauma and ravages of violence suffer deeply. In this area the accord failed dismally. Another issue on which the accord failed the people of Matebeleland is that it did not provide for the compensation of the victims of the abuses of the 1980s.

A fourth dimension of a post-conflict settlement relates to judicial rebuilding and involves the investigation of war crimes based on the principle of making sure that in the future fundamental human rights will be protected. However in Zimbabwe following the signing of the accord both the dissidents and the Fifth Brigade were granted amnesty and pardoned. In other words, the courts were denied their fundamental role in peace building through dispensing even handed justice to all citizens including the military.

The last dimension is that of economic rebuilding that involves the replacement of destroyed homes and assets. During the operations in Matebeleland in the 1980s civilians lost their homes and goods through arson and pillaging conducted by the military and civilian supporters of ZANU-PF.⁸⁴ Some people lost their jobs as they went into hiding due to threats on their lives. None of these issues were taken into account by the signatories of the Unity Accord in 1987. The quest for compensation by the people is not about revenge—the signs of military destruction of civilian homes and property are still marked in Kezi in Matebeleland South and Tsholotsho in Matebeleland North. The people of Matebeleland region continue to complain of marginalization and this complaint is dismissed as a hangover of the political tragedies of the 1980s. Perhaps affirmative action in the development of the region could provide some redress.

The people of Matebeleland have suggested that the way forward in the restoration of sustainable, cordial civil-military relations includes the demobilization of all those who are known for perpetrating terror and violence in the

1980s. This is seen as a way of indicating that the violence will never be repeated. The second common suggestion is that recruitment to the military must reflect the ethnic composition of the country so as to remove the perception that the army is a Shona institution there to intimidate the Ndebele. The people interviewed complained about the use of Shona language by the military even in Matabeleland. They preferred the deployment of military units for security and peacekeeping purposes who are able to communicate with the people in their local language. This was presented as a necessary confidence building measure. Some people expressed their displeasure at the politicians who tend to politicize the military for their own selfish ends. The other suggestion was that the army must be actively involved in civil and community services like the construction of the long awaited Zambezi Water Pipeline. The public relations organ of the military must engage in education campaigns in an effort to restore cordial civil-military relations and to destroy the bad perception of the army as an institution of violence, intimidation and death. Finally, it came out from the civilian accounts that they prefer internal security to be left to the police.

Conclusion

Oral evidence gathered from the Ndebele bears testimony to the persistence of a hidden but deep-rooted fear, anger and distrust of the perpetrators of the violence of the 1980s in Matabeleland. Until Zimbabweans are delivered from the pervasive fear of their police, their army, their government and their leaders, there will never be cordial civil-military relations, peace and security in the country. The way forward lies in the acknowledgement of the fact that a wrong was done. A sincere apology must be advanced to build a trust in the people of Matabeleland that such a breach of the people's human rights will never be repeated. Such an acknowledgement and assurance would definitely restore cordial civil-military relations in Matabeleland region.

Endnotes

1. There are two detailed studies on the Ndebele. One by J R D Cobbing, *The Ndebele under the Khumalo 1820–1896*, Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Lancaster, 1976. Another one by S J Ndlovu-Gatsheni, *Dynamics of Democracy and Human Rights Among the Ndebele of Zimbabwe*, Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Zimbabwe. These major works try to demythologize the mythology surrounding Ndebele past.
2. T O Ranger, *Revolt in Southern Rhodesia: A Study of African Resistance*, Northwestern University Press, Evanston, 1967 and D N Beach, *War and Politics in Zimbabwe 1840–1900*, Mambo Press, Gweru, 1986.

3. J R D Cobbing, The Evolution of Ndebele Amabutho, *Journal of African History* 15(4), 1974 and S J Ndlovu-Gatsheni, *op cit*, particularly chapter five.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
7. D Lan, *Guns and Rain: Guerrillas and Spirit Mediums in Zimbabwe*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1985.
8. N J Kriger, *Zimbabwe's Guerrilla War: Peasant Voices*, Cambridge University Press, London, 1992.
9. N J Kriger, The Zimbabwean War of Liberation: Struggles Within the Struggle, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Volume 14(2), January 1988, pp 304–322.
10. J Nhongo-Simbanegavi, *For Better or Worse? Women and ZANLA in Zimbabwe's Liberation Struggle*, Weaver Press, Harare, 2000, pp 20–28.
11. J Nkomo, *The Story of My Life*, Methuen, London, 1984. The importance of this book needs not to be emphasized. Although it is not an academic piece of work, its importance lies in the fact that it is a vivid account of the role of one of the key figures in the struggle for Zimbabwe and was written in the midst of the violence of the 1980s in Zimbabwe.
12. J Alexander & J McGregor & T Ranger, *Violence and Memory: One Hundred Years in the "Dark Forests" of Matebeleland*, James Currey, Oxford, 2000. See particularly chapters four and five.
13. N Bhebe & T Ranger (eds), *Soldiers in Zimbabwe's Liberation War: Volume One*, James Currey, London, 1995.
14. N Bhebe, *The ZAPU and ZANU Guerrilla Warfare and the Lutheran Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe*, Mambo Press, Gweru, 1999.
15. J Alexander et al, *op cit*, p 159. See also interview with E Dube of Matshetsheni in Gwanda District, 3 May 2002. Dube was one of the ZAPU rural nationalists and was very enthusiastic about the popularity of the ZIPRA combatants among the civilians.
16. N Bhebe, *ZAPU and ZANU Guerrillas*, alluded to this in his discussion of the ZAPU military strategy. He argued that ZAPU was so confident of popular support throughout the country and found it not politically useful to use the guerrillas to win support.
17. Interview with M Ndlovu of Matshetsheni, Gwanda District, 3 May 2002. M Ndlovu pointed out that he used to go to Gwanda town to buy clothes for the guerrillas particularly jean trousers. He said after buying he gave the parcel to the bus driver who put it under his seat to conceal it from the Rhodesian Security Forces. The money to buy these clothes was collected from the rural ZAPU supporters by the rural ZAPU nationalists.
18. This animosity dated back to the pre-1963 split in ZAPU.
19. The ZANLA forces unlike the ZIPRA forces concentrated on mass mobilization of the people in their operational areas through pungwes.
20. Interview with Mr Keyi Nkala of Matshetsheni, Gwanda District, 3 May 2002. Keyi Nkala was actually an ex-ZIPRA combatant as well as an ex-detainee. Nkala operated in Nkayi in the early 1960s and was captured in 1967. He was first sentenced to death and later the sentence was changed to life imprison-

ment. Nkala was, however, released in 1975 because they failed to get any evidence that he killed anybody. He became an active rural ZAPU nationalist and helped to introduce the ZIPRA to the people.

21. Some of the well-known ZAPU rural nationalists in Matshetsheni were Samuel Nkomo, Desire Moyo and Titus Ngeleza-Sibanda. These people were responsible for recruitment as well as linking the ZIPRA with the people. Leonard Ndlovu, Booklet Dube and Jealous Moyo remembered being politicized and assisted by Samuel Nkomo to join the liberation struggle in 1975. This information is based on an interview with Leonard Ndlovu conducted in Bulawayo on the 25th of April 2002. Leonard Ndlovu is an ex-ZIPRA combatant. He still respected the people who recruited him.
22. The late Titus Ngeleza-Sibanda was known for his debates with the ZIPRA combatants who operated in Matshetsheni based on his wide knowledge of the ZAPU constitution. Ngeleza-Sibanda was an ex-detainee who stayed in detention for more than ten years. He only came out of detention in 1975. In 1999, I had an opportunity to interview Colonel Mbonisi Gatscheni in Craneborne, Harare. He had visited us there. He confirmed that they discussed with the local ZAPU leadership a number of political issues during the struggle for Zimbabwe.
23. J Alexander et al, op cit, pp 170–172.
24. Colonel Mbonisi Gatscheni shared with me the story of how they responded to the biological/chemical warfare used by the colonial regime, particularly poisoning of clothes that killed a number of guerrillas in the Northern Front. He pointed out that they first of all suspected that their contact persons and the suppliers of the clothes were selling-out. That they even approached traditional healers to investigate the high rate of death among the guerrillas. This incident nearly spoiled the cordial relations between the ZIPRA and the peasants as some guerrilla groups responded violently and killed a number of civilians.
25. Interview with Sihle Dube of Garanyemba, by Mandlenkosi Ndlovu on my behalf, 30th of April 2002. Sihle has a 20year old son called Velepini (a product of the war). A ZIPRA combatant impregnated her during the struggle for Zimbabwe. Ephraim Dube said that as a local leader of ZAPU he had the task of telling the guerrillas the truth about what the people expected of them. Interview with Ephraim Dube of Matshetsheni, Gwanda District, 3 May 2002.
26. Interview with Thwala, an ex-ZIPRA combatant who married his wartime girl friend and up to today they are still together as wife and husband. Interview with Thwala of Matshetsheni, Gwanda District, 3 May 2002.
27. Ibid.
28. J Alexander et al, op cit. Even the account of the war based on oral interviews by underlined this point.
29. I Mandaza (ed), *Peace and Security in Southern Africa*, Sapas Books, Harare, 1996, pp xiv–xvi.
30. Ibid.
31. Ibid.
32. Ibid. See also other general work on the post-colonial state such as

- M Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism*, James Currey, London, 1996 and P Chabal & J P Daloz, *Africa Works: Disorder as Political Instrument*, James Currey, London, 1999 and J F Bayart, *The State in Africa: The Politics of the Belly*, Longman, London, 1993 and B Hibou, *The Criminalization of the State in Africa*, James Currey, London, 1999.
33. The discussion of the naturalization of conflict in post-colonial societies is in R Kaplan, *The Coming of Anarchy: How Scarcity, Crime, Overpopulation, Tribalism and Disease are Rapidly Destroying the Social Fabric of Our Pla et*, *Atlantic Monthly*, February 1994 and D Turton (ed), *War and Ethnicity: Global Connections and Local Violence*, University of Rochester Press, New York, 1997.
 34. R Werbner, *Tears of the Dead: The Social Biography of an African Family*, Baobab, Harare, 1992, p 159.
 35. Ibid.
 36. Legal Resources Foundation (LRF) and the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace(CCJP), *Breaking the Silence*, Building The Peace: A Report on the Disturbances in Matebeleland and the Midlands, 1980–1989, CWP & LRF, Harare 1997, p 28.
 37. This is my interpretation based on what I was told by my informants.
 38. J Alexander, J McGregor & T Ranger, Ethnicity and the Politics of Conflict: The Case of Matebeleland, Zimbabwe, in E. W Nafziger & F Stewart & R Vayrynen (eds), *The Origins of Humanitarian Emergencies: War and Displacement in Developing Countries*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2001.
 39. See Historical Overview section of the CCJP and LRF report, *Breaking the Silence*, pp 25–29.
 40. J Jackson, Repatriation and Reconstruction in Zimbabwe During the 1980s, in T Allen and H Morsink (eds), *When Refugees Go Home*, James Currey, London, 1994.
 41. These issues are discussed fully in CCJP and LRF report, *Breaking the Silence*, *op cit*, pp 245–260.
 42. Authoritarian nation building strategies include the use of excessive violence and the resort to the use of the military in civil affairs. It also refers to the process of nation building that negates the wishes of the masses.
 43. Major A Gava, From the Lancaster House to the Unity Accord: Marginalization and Conflict in Zimbabwe 1979–89, *A Case Study for Southern Africa*, unpublished paper, University of Zimbabwe, pp 36–38.
 44. G Mazarire & M R Rupiah, Two Wrongs Do Not Make A Right: A Critical Assessment of Zimbabwe’s Demobilization and Reintegration Programmes, 1980-2000, *Journal of Peace and Conflict and Military Studies* 1(1), March 2000, p 73.
 45. Perhaps Joshua Nkomo can be blamed for having refused the post of titular president in 1980. Jos ua Nkomo noted that “Prime Minister Mugabe had publicly called for violent action against my person. He said, quite falsely, that I was trying to overthrow his government.” See J Nkomo, *Nkomo: The Story of My Life*, p 2.
 46. Interview with Ronald Moyo, Luveve Township, I May 2002. Moyo was a ZIPRA combatant and he tried to join the ZNA but was harassed until he demobilized and jumped the border into South Africa in 1983.

47. "Gukurahundi-Ten Years Later" in *Zimbabwe Defence Forces Magazine*, Volume 7, No. 1 (1992).
48. *Ibid.*
49. The Fifth Brigade is said to have accused the Ndebele of having killed, harassed and of getting fat feeding on stolen Shona cattle. This was in reference to the nineteenth century Ndebele raids on the Shona.
50. All this comes out clearly from the civilian accounts of the operations of the Fifth Brigade contained in CCJP and LRF report, *Breaking the Silence*, *op cit.*
51. *Ibid.*
52. Interview with Nontando Sibanda of Kezi, Southview, 28 April 28, 2002. She mentioned the rape of her sister by the Fifth Brigade in 1984 that they eventually killed. Other informants mentioned that rapes were carried out systematically and blended with the overall violence that took place. See also *Breaking the Silence*, which contains civilian accounts of rape.
53. On ethnicity see T Ranger, *The Invention of Tribalism Zimbabwe*, Mambo Press, Gweru, 1985 and T Ranger & O Vaughan (eds), *Legitimacy and the State in Twentieth Century Africa*, Macmillan, London, 1993 and Leroy Vail (ed), *The Creation of Tribalism in Southern Africa*, James Currey, London, 1989.
54. J Alexander et al, *op cit*, p 274.
55. *Ibid.* See also interview with Marshal Mazwi Lujika of Bethell in Gwanda, Gweru, 30 April 2002.
56. CCJP and LRF report, *Breaking Silence*, tried to identify the major militaries that operated in Matebeleland in the 1980s. See the section on Historical Overview.
57. A number of people interviewed alluded to the professionalism of the ZNA and the PSU compared to the Fifth Brigade. Some even mentioned that they intervened on behalf of the people and stopped the Fifth Brigade violence temporarily.
58. This comes out clearly in J Alexander et al, *op cit*, pp 204–205. See also CCJP and LRF report, *Breaking the Silence*, pp 58–60.
59. *Ibid.*
60. CCJP et al, *op cit*, p 29.
61. *Ibid.*
62. A number of civilians interviewed in rural Matebeleland could not make any difference and they tended to telescope all the violence to the Fifth Brigade and nothing more.
63. CCJP et al, *op cit*, p 69.
64. On 'Super Zapu' see J Hanlon, *Beggar Your Neighbours: Apartheid Power in Southern Africa*, Indiana University Press, 1986 and D Martin & P Johnson (eds), *Destructive Engagement: Southern Africa at War*, ZPH, Harare, 1986.
65. J Alexander, Dissident Perspectives on Zimbabwe's Post-Independence War, *Africa*, Vol 68(2), 1998.
66. *Ibid.* See also *The Chronicle*, 12 February 1983.
67. Joshua Nkomo in his book *Nkomo: The Story of My Life* complained bitterly of his office being sidelined and his recommendations as a minister being ignored.

68. Towards the general elections and the presidential elections the government recruited youth from all parts of the country and drafted them into national service. These youth became a menace threatening people and beating all those who were opposed to the ruling party. It would seem the government is trying to rebuild the notorious youth league that was so violent in the 1980s. See also Zimbabwe Human Rights Forum, *Politically Motivated Violence in Zimbabwe, 2000–2001*, A Report by Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum, August 2001.
69. M G Molomo, *Civil-Military Relations in Botswana's Developmental State*, pp 8–12.
70. J Cilliers (ed), *Dismissed: Demobilization And Reintegration of Former Combatants in Africa*, Institute for Defence Policy, South Africa, 1995.
71. The privately owned papers like *The Daily News*, *The Independent*, and *The Financial Gazette* dished out open scorn on the statement.
72. Quoted in CCJP and LRF report, *Breaking the Silence*, p 44.
73. Ibid.
74. Ibid.
75. This was evident from all the informal discussions with the people in Matebeleland. I also interviewed some students from Matebeleland who had the same perception about the army.
76. Interview with Eleonor Nyathi, Gweru, 2 May 2002. This was a common perception in Matebeleland.
77. The young man refused to give his details saying *bazangitshaya* "They will beat me up". The young man cited the issue of the spate of violence in Gweru urban in the post election period where the soldiers were said to have invaded the bars in the city beating civilians randomly.
78. Many people in the rural areas preferred to maintain the status quo if it ensured that there would no repetition of the violence of the 1980s.
79. This included deployment of soldiers to Matebeleland towards the general and presidential elections in 2001 and 2002.
80. The MDC took advantage of this group and was able sweep all the seats in Bulawayo in 2001 and faired very well even in the presidential elections in 2002.
81. Details on the Unity Accord see WA Chiwewe, Unity Negotiations in C S Banana (ed), *Turmoil and Tenacity*, The College Press, Harare, 1989.
82. F Deng & I W Zartman (eds), *Conflict Resolution in Africa*, The Brookings Institution, Washington, 1991, p 130.
83. O Oche, Human Security in Africa: An Agenda For the Next Millennium, in P Mathoma & G Mills & J Stremlau (eds), *Putting People First*, SAIIA, 2000, p 47.
84. In 1999, I talked to a man called Sitsha Ndlovu at Rose and Crown in Hatfield in Harare, he was very bitter that he lost his house in Seke which was destroyed by ZANU-PF supporters in 1985 and he was never compensated.