

Notes on 32 Years of Zimbabwe's Independence: Copyright
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Brief Preface:

Please see below, the first three essays written by Zimbabweans in aid of seeking to reflect on the nature and meaning of 32nd commemorations of our national independence in Zimbabwe. The three essays cover three topics, national historical consciousness, reflections of young Zimbabweans on the meaning of independence and tracing the fading democratic value of leadership in Zimbabwe. The essays vary in length and are essentially individual reflections of Zimbabweans. The electronic publication of these essays has been facilitated by the Zimbabwe Committee of the Peoples Charter (<http://peoplescharter.blogspot.com/2012/02/resolutions-of-commemorative-meeting-of.html>) . There are at least two more essays expected to be published before 18 April 2012, in the anticipation that they will allow for increased public debate on the meaning of our national independence.

Kind regards,

Committee of the People's Charter.

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Our National Historical Consciousness and our Future.

Takura Zhangazha.

Introduction.

Zimbabwe and Zimbabwean society, like all other countries that exist in the world, cannot claim a clear and unambiguous disjuncture with its history. The creation of the modern day polity that has come to define the territory between the Zambezi and Limpopo rivers has been a process laden with various but continuous historical interactions. These overlaps of history have included conquest, colonialism, commerce, Christianity, African nationalism, revolutionary war, the Cold War and the broad pursuit of democracy. All of these occurred without clear distinction and have been invariably interwoven.ⁱ

It is essentially 'African nationalism' , 'revolutionary war' and 'democracy' that were intended to be victorious on 18 April 1980, the day and year on which the Zimbabwean flag was raised. With the benefit of hindsight and on the basis of various historical analysis, it has come to be known that these three paramount values were not going to be completely acquired and therefore had to be negotiated. ⁱⁱ

The end result was the compromise and ceasefire document that is historically referred to as the Lancaster House Constitution which was agreed to in December 1979. It is the nature and extent of the compromise that informed the politics of a ten year post independence period which assists in analyzing the birth pangs of the Zimbabwean state. It is a 'compromise' that has been referred to as having been influenced by the Frontline States which were insisting that the liberation war had to end and therefore the liberation movements had no choice but to agree or lose regional and continental support. In other instances, explanations of the 'compromise' agreement relate to issues to do with the fear by the incoming nationalist leadership of a massive skills exodus as

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well as disinvestment by Rhodesian and international capital in our newly independent state.

All of these reasons however point to the direct or complicit participation of our nationalist leaders in the decision making processes of that time. Some more than others, but all with a specific complicity that may have been historically necessary , but cannot be whitewashed. In other words, the leadership of the liberation movements, the post independence successive governments and our contemporary inclusive government are to a greater extent the ones who have been responsible for the state of affairs in the country since 1980, the role of external factors notwithstanding. ⁱⁱⁱ

It is therefore imperative to point out at the beginning of this essay that the primary challenge of the leadership of that time and of present day remains that of not fully coming to terms with their role, complicit or direct, in the construction of our national independence project. Because of this fundamental challenge that the nationalist and in part contemporary leadership have faced in understanding the full import of the struggle that they undertook to liberate Zimbabwe, as well as the inability of the post nationalist leadership to grasp the significance of the historical occurrences of the past as linked to present day and future Zimbabwe, it is also important to outline the general characteristics of our country at 32 years of independence outside of their narrow and partisan politicized frameworks.

This essentially entails a grasping of the historical and contemporary realities that Zimbabwe faced and continues to face within the context of an increasingly unfocused national political leadership that is acting both in the interests of narrow political persuasions and ideologies that are exploitatively linked to an emergent east-west collaborative global capitalism.^{iv}

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It is by doing so that we become conscious of the historical challenges that lie before the generality of all Zimbabweans inclusive of those that are in contemporary leadership.

Our solutions to our particular socio-political and economic challenges therefore reside in our ability to conscientiously apply ourselves to particular, historical and well thought out as well negotiated frameworks of engaging the challenges that we face in the present and their full import for the future.

Definitive premise of our national independence.

Historically, the struggle for justice by the people of Zimbabwe has been fundamentally social democratic in intent and purpose. From the years of the initial resistance to the Pioneer Column, through to the First and Second *Chimurenga's*, the values of our struggle, with the benefit of historical hindsight, were intent on the restoration of our collective human dignity, the pursuit of equality, socio-economic justice, democracy and economic/technological advancement. ^v

In 2012, these are the same challenges that we all face, though in a less Manichean manner and even where our political leaders remain in denial. The primary issue to therefore be considered in the commemorations of our 32 years of national independence is whether our struggle for freedom remains an ongoing one. This, not merely on the basis of generally enunciated democratic values but as a combination of the lack of completion of the definitive and historical struggle against the usurpation of our right to self determination, social and economic justice, equality before the law, democracy, a justiciable bill of rights, global human equality and the right to choose a national political leadership of our choice. It is this perpetual struggle question of 'arrival' that has now come full circle and must be examined by all Zimbabweans.

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It is in this sense that the primary purpose of this essay on Zimbabwe's 32 years of independence is to measure the extent to which we have remained committed to the to the 'revolutionary path' via our leadership.^{vi} This revolutionary path is defined by the values of our national independence defined above. It is also a reaffirmation of the truth that Zimbabwe must continue to make its own history conscientiously on the basis of what we hold to be our inalienable democratic principles and values. These same said principles and values should be based on the firm understanding that we have not yet done enough justice to our historically grounded societal, political and economic aspirations.

These notes on 32 years of Zimbabwe's national independence therefore seek to explain the necessity and urgency of the return to the revolutionary path for Zimbabwe. The return to the revolutionary path is a return to commonly held and shared principles that relate to the social democratic project that was the liberation struggle (whatever angle you look at it) together with a specific recognition that we should return to a conscientious and organic making of our own history as a country, members of a continent and participants in the global political economy. Simply put, if we have refused to be defined in one way or the other, via resistance and struggle, as the 'native others' we now have to prove in word and deed that we are here to make a history that is linked to past struggles, contemporary challenges and intent on creating a better social democratic future for all who live in Zimbabwe, Africa and the World.

In explaining the above cited issues and challenges this essay will tackle three phases of our national independence periods. These being 1980-1990; 1991-2000; 2001-2008 and 2008 to 2012. In all of these aforementioned historical phases assessment will be made of the primary challenges that our country has been faced with.

Our time-transcendent common historical thread of struggle.

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At the onset of Zimbabwe's independence the new national leaders, arguably on the basis of pragmatic considerations, sought to demonstrate their capacity to embrace modern/ scientific socialism with significant dosages of western modernization. They sought a partial departure from the historical context that defined their arrival to power in order to avoid what they considered the mistakes of other African leaders to fail to embrace either scientific socialism or western model modernization. This essentially meant that the principles and values of the founding struggles of our nation-state were re-negotiated ahistorically because of three reasons.

The first being that in the process of undertaking the struggle for national liberation, we had not quite learnt what to expect and how to handle it in the aftermath of the acquisition of the political power that came with self determination. Given the serious difficulty of waging a guerilla war, our then (and in some instances contemporary) nationalist leaders may not have had the luxury of understanding the clearer organic nature of the processes of the anti-colonial struggles. This is to say, the linkages between the oral and cultural history of anti-colonial struggles with eventual victory were limited. Instead, the usage of understanding the historical trajectory of the liberation struggle since the arrival of the Pioneer column may have been more for the purposes of various liberation movements' populist appeals to the populace and not integrated into organic post-liberation struggle victory implementation frameworks.

The reasons for this approach have been recorded via a number of academic writings which indicate the disparate and disunited nature of our liberation movements.^{vii} It would however be poignant to point out that part of the problem that led to the disjuncture in the organic narratives of the First Chimurenga and those of the Second Chimurenga (which was in part victorious) relate mainly to our collective inability to harness both the advent of technological advancement with our primary liberatory intentions. (This is an argument that can only be made with the benefit of historical hindsight and not on the basis of seeking to judge our leaders of that time as their circumstances where peculiar to that time and had much more difficult challenges.)

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Put simply, we got overawed by our interaction with the medical, material and military technological advances of the 'others' during our first struggle for liberation as well as in the second one.^{viii} Indeed we eventually got better education from the missionary schools, better health treatment via the same institutions while simultaneously being repressed by the police/military/minority rule state in which we existed in both phases of the liberation struggles. However our narratives followed more the history of the 'other' than it followed our own direct interactions with colonialism, dispossession and direct repression primarily due to the arrival of modern equipment and the establishment of new urban settlements.^{ix}

These challenges of perception together with cultural and economic cooption were however determined primarily by the historical circumstances of that time. By the time of the Second *Chimurenga*, our national leaders had come to accept the necessity of learning the ways of the colonialist in order to achieve national sovereignty. Coincidentally in the same period the ideological differences between the global East and the West had come full circle in the aftermath of the Second World War and our leaders took the opportunity to interact with the leftist revolutionary thought of emergent socialist states with eagerness.

However in the process of negotiating with two global ideological camps that had been established without our direct participation, we had to learn the art of negotiating with the same said two global ideological camps in order to achieve the primary objective of national independence. This process of negotiation led to further divisions within our liberation movement as to what was the best strategy to pursue in order to achieve the primary task of national independence. This was a development which led to our further departure from the historicity of the challenge at hand. ^x

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In the real event that we all decided at various stages to wage wars of liberation, the reality of the matter is that we became complicit in narratives of struggle that would be more embedded in solutions generated more from elsewhere than from ourselves. This is not to say that the struggle came to be determined by the dictates of those who were willing to assist us in their own national interests but that we were increasingly determined to acquire self rule as had been determined by our then increasingly negotiated historicity. We therefore came to understand more those that were willing to assist us than we were willing to consistently understand ourselves and our historical agenda of liberation.

When victory arrived in 1980, after phenomenal sacrifice from the sons and daughters of the soil, the 'struggles within the struggle' and the ambiguity of proximity to power was a nail in the coffin for revolutionary organic continuity.^{xi} Our intentions to prove to be the better 'natives' got the better of us. We fought amongst ourselves without understanding the full import of the historical challenges that were with us and that lay before us. We fought ideological and power battles that were by definition not necessarily ours and our victory remained embedded in inadequate articulations of the challenges that awaited us after independence.

1980 to 2000, The challenges of building an historical democratic hegemony via 'mimicry' and policy ambiguity.

There have been many arguments as to the extent to which the immediate post independence state was under tremendous international pressure not to deviate either from the pro-capital Lancaster House Constitution or the social democratic intentions of the liberation struggle. These arguments will at varying stages hold cogency to different ideological groupings but it must be emphasized that within either ideological camp, the modus operandi was unfortunately that of '*mimicry*'.^{xii}

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Whether one claimed socialism or free market political economy as frameworks through which the intentions of national independence could be achieved, the technicalities of these same said solutions resided on over-reliance on models that were in most cases out of context.^{xiii} The almost immediate improvements in civil liberties, expansion of social services (health, education, transport, recreation) and the nationalist fervor of the first ten years were largely out of political necessity than they were directly related to grounded specific organic ideological leanings. The mixed bag of economics where the newly independent state maintained a capitalist political economy imbued in socialist rhetoric was more in order to keep the country stable than it was to ground it in a singular long term hegemonic and political direction.

Whereas the political direction was clearer, particularly as regards to conflicts between those that led various liberation movements, the unfortunate tendency to not address issues holistically and organically compromised the independence project. The insistence on a one party state without linking it to its necessity for economic advancement of the country or the fact that Zimbabwe has always had multiple parties/political organizations at inception of the liberation struggle was ahistorical.

A desire to be part of the African liberators lexicon and follow the lead of initially successful and legendary African revolutionaries in either the Frontline states or West Africa may have been the cause of this. Either way we fell into the trap of being too eager to suit models that were not necessarily our own. Hence for example the tragic killing of innocent civilians during what has now come to be referred to as *Gukurahundi* in the early to late 1980s in the middle and southern provinces of the country with the assistance and training of North Korea.

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As we arrived toward the end of the first decade of our national independence , with the demise of the Socialist block via the collapse of the Soviet Union and Eastern European Socialist bloc, our national leaders failed to define a clearer path for us to realize the objectives of our national independence. Because in part they were more interested in the politics of power and dominance via expedient and more foreign policy related than domestic considerations, our national leaders found themselves almost hapless when it came to the global shift to the ideological right.^{xiv} They lost out on the historicity of our own national independence struggle, the expiration of the 'protective' Lancaster House Constitution's clauses and once again sought the easier path of mimicry.

It was this *ahistorical* path that led us to embrace structural adjustment programmes that were beginning to be emphasized by the dominantly hegemonic West and its Bretton Woods institutions. Successive finance ministers sought to embed us into the Washington Consensus less with an understanding of our context and the peoples' needs and more in pursuit of abstract and neo-colonial recognition by the World Bank as some of the 'rising stars' of a still to be manufactured African intelligentsia and middle class. In short, at the turn of the decade, with only one globally hegemonic power to negotiate with, we moved further away from what were the primary objectives of our liberation struggle and our national independence.

As such, the full implementation of economic structural adjustment saw a speeding up of the destruction of the social welfare state and an increase in political repression less to do with the old liberation war movement rivalries (the Unity Accord had been established by then) but more with state-led denial of the citizens enjoyment of basic human rights. This led to an increase in opposition political party activity as well as an expansion of civil society actors outside the aegis of the then recently united Patriotic Front.

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The loss of jobs and the failure to create employment coupled with massive droughts in the early and mid 1990s as well as the closure of local manufacturing companies led inevitably to a more radicalized urban populace and with it, a stronger trade union and inevitably the formation of a popular labour backed political party by the end of the second decade of our national independence. ^{xv}

The key point to be emphasized in this particular section of this essay is that our national leaders at that time lost touch with the organic historicity of the liberation struggle as the years moved further and further away from the year of our country's inception.^{xvi} Their initial reliance on the Frontline States, the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) , the Socialist bloc, Scandanavian countries and leftists in the West for technical support and struggle knowledge production either by way of being taught how to wage a struggle for liberation or of what to after independence was acquired may have been an historical necessity. In the aftermath of 1980 our national leaders sought to accentuate these global linkages at the expense of our national context and in the process implemented frameworks that made them appear more proxies of one global ideological persuasion or the other(particularly before the end of the Cold War) than they appeared as leaders who were conscious of the destiny of their own country. In the same process, they overemphasized political power as opposed to a counter- hegemonic and democratic understanding of power.

They sought more power of the moment, and power that may have been dotted with celebrations of the heroic past, while with each passing year, their leadership became less and less organic with our country's history or its ideally historically determined future. They flirted with the global left as well as with global capital, and pandered more or less to whatever was expected of them by one particular side when it was most opportune. Where, with the end of the Cold War there was only global power to contend and negotiate with, they pursued that power's ideological dictates without revolutionary

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context or firm negotiation and with further 'mimicry' and instrumentalisation of the state. xvii

2000-2008 and the remembrance of the values of our national independence.

The increasingly radical activities of Zimbabwe's labour unions in the late 1990s as a follow up to labour and student radicalism and the entry of human rights discourse in Zimbabwe turned initially the Zimbabwean urban political narrative to one of defiance against the state. Coupled with the economic hardships of the same period, the initiative of the ZCTU to initiate the National Working Peoples Convention (NWPC) in early 1999 was to be definitive in the establishment of an alternative political leadership and party in Zimbabwe. It was this convention that gave an initial mandate to the country's main labour union to undertake consultative processes with the public on whether it should form a labour backed political party.

Civil society actors had by 1997 formed the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA) which had galvanized public policy discourse around the urgent need to undertake a people driven constitutional reform process. Both labour and civil society actors, particularly under the auspices of the NCA, were to become the mustard seed of the search for a democratic political alternative in Zimbabwe. Initially intending to send a message of 'democratization' ala carte Western knowledge production systems to the incumbent leaders of that time, the leaders of both labour and civil society came into their own consciousness of the necessity of returning the country to the path that had been envisioned by the processes and occurrence of our national independence. Naturally, with the end of the Cold War, and with the kaleidoscopic interests that comprised civil society, the language of this return to the revolutionary path was less

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radical and more in keeping with the then new global trend of embracing democracy and good governance. ^{xviii}

The eventual rejection of the Draft Constitution via a national referendum in February 2000 was indicative of general public disaffection with the government of the day. It was also a statement of intent on the part of the people of Zimbabwe that indeed the rhetoric of the liberation struggle was no longer adequate to assuage their aspirations for a better life within a democratic setting. This would be part of the reason why they would give the newly formed Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) labour backed party significant representation in the parliament of Zimbabwe in 2000. This, less than seven months after it had been formed.

The incumbent national leadership (Zanu Pf) however also decided to return to the past and sought to retain legitimacy by implementing a fast-track land reform programme (FTLRP).^{xix} It was an evident attempt to reignite the nationalism of pre-1980, even though in the public perception the ruling party had the fault of incumbency. The manner in which it was done was an attempt to 'grab' the Zimbabwean liberation history narrative back to those that had participated in the same struggle directly.

Furthermore, Zanu Pf sought to ensure a distinction between itself and the nascent MDC through claiming greater authenticity in relation to the values of the liberation struggle.^{xx}

All of these developments and the repressive political environment together with the disputed national elections that ensued between 2000 and 2008 have led to reality of the emergence of two major political players in Zimbabwean players, the MDC and Zanu Pf. The latter had the strength as well as the fault of incumbency, while the former had the strength of popular anticipation of leadership renewal in order to achieve the goals of national independence in a post cold war global environment. This while facing the

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primary weakness of inexperience in government or in finding the fine line of how to negotiate with the international community on how best to achieve these objectives.

It must however be stressed that in the eight years that it took for the Global Political Agreement to be signed in 2008, it remains Zanu Pf that held the primary responsibility of the exercise of executive authority in the country. This essentially means that whereas there were sanctions that would come to be imposed on members of government , parastatals and private companies related thereto, from 2002 to present day, the fault for reneging on the pursuit of the aims and objectives of our national independence resided with the ruling party of this period. This particular point is made because of the need for us not to lose sight of the fact that whatever may be said about who brought sanctions upon Zimbabwe, the ruling party is directly complicit by being unable to negotiate its way to preventing the sanctions or reversing them in the period before the formation of the inclusive government. It cannot do a 'Pontius Pilate' on the matter in as much as it cannot say it was not responsible for the economic structural adjustment programme of the 1990s or the economic meltdown at the turn of the century.^{xxi}

As it turned out, the pariah status of the Zimbabwean state in direct relation to its disappointing human rights record, the technical and political impact of international sanctions and the inability to hold free and fair elections in this period left the values of the liberation struggle severely compromised in the period 2000-2008. Where the fast track land reform programme has been highly contested or acclaimed as a policy success in relation to the struggle for independence, it alone cannot be viewed as the *raison-de-etre* of the liberation struggle. It was one of the foremost causes and triggers of the liberation struggle and a fundamental success measurement goal for the first post independence governments. But in the 32 years after independence, its success or failure cannot be viewed in isolation from the other objectives of the liberation struggle.

2008-2012: Assessing the alternatives and remembering the future.

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The protracted SADC mediation process that began soon after the March 11 2007 assault on mainstream civil society and opposition political party leaders, was essentially intended to bring about the inclusion of all major political parties to share power in order to stabilise a country that was becoming problematic in the region.

The eventual swearing in of the Prime Minister of Zimbabwe in February 2009, was to be the formalization of a power sharing agreement between Zanu Pf and MDC. Its nature and structure of the GPA was intended that the inclusive government be a transitional one.

Since its formation in 2009, the inclusive government has largely sought to stabilize and improve the national economy, introduce a new constitution, put an end to politically motivated violence, lobby for the removal of sanctions, observe the rule of law, respect human rights, undertake electoral reform and redress the pariah status of the country in the international community. In attempting to deliver on all the aforementioned issues, the inclusive government has demonstrated a patent lack of collective responsibility.

Instead, there has been policy pronouncement based on partisan political lines even on the most basic performance legitimacy issues of any government (inclusive or otherwise). Again, as in the period where the political protagonists Zanu Pf and MDC were not bedfellows in the inclusive government, contestations as to which party remains best placed to lead the country to the 'promised land' of independence are abound. These are most visible in relation to issues around electoral and constitutional reforms, as well as the way forward as regards economic indigenization (read as the national economy) and matters related to land tenure in the aftermath of the fast track land reform programme. One party claims the necessity of a radical nationalist approach while the other is arguing for a rational one linked to global trends in best economic and democratic practice.

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Neither party however cannot escape the weight of 'performance legitimacy' not only in terms of what is deemed best democratic/economic practice but more what has come to define the historical aspirations of the people of Zimbabwe. As controversial as it may seem, the primary challenge of the inclusive government like that of the first post independence government, remains one of avoiding the discontinuity of our national historicity. A task which on the occasion of the commemoration of our 32nd anniversary means undertaking politics by negotiating with global capital, global political powers with a firm understanding of all of the historical or continuing processes and reasons as to why the Zimbabwean polity was established in 1980.^{xxii}

This particular point must then bring us to considerations of the future. It is no longer feasible for one generation of leaders to assume either revolutionary or popular/populist infallibility. This is particularly so if the objectives of our national independence are to retain any semblance of organic relevance to subsequent generations of Zimbabweans half a century henceforth. Our current national leadership (comprised as it is of two main protagonist camps) must begin to understand this with a new sense of urgency and learn that with each politicized policy decision that they make, they are running the risk of making our collective national history seem a distant and irrelevant ideal to those that will come after us. While the global future seems to be leaning toward an integrated world value system, via the new liberal interventionist approach of world superpowers, we must urgently learn to arrogate ourselves the role of being makers of own history based on values that founded the state of Zimbabwe. This, with an aim of improving not only the lives of all Zimbabweans regardless of race, colour or class but also with the intention of making Zimbabwe's presence as a progressive and democratic state realized on the African continent and in the world.

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Such an approach would entail that we collectively come to understand our 'national common ground' regardless of political affiliation as we move forward towards another year of our national independence. Where the GPA formulated in 2008 has failed we must honestly assess why it has done so, not on behalf of the the political parties, but on the basis of this same said national common ground. This being a framework that comprehends the values of our liberation struggle together with our post independence struggles for further democratization and social and economic justice. This is perhaps why civil society must revisit and recommit itself to the broad principles that have been enunciated in the Zimbabwe People's Charter. The latter point is significant primarily because in the passage of time comes the creation of new political realities and challenges that must be tackled conscientiously and with principled effort. Our immediate or long term past is not our definitive contemporary reality but it must instruct us as to how to construct a better and social democratic future.

Conclusion.

The primary purpose of this essay has been to seek to outline the challenges of the last 32 years of Zimbabwe's existence as an independent country. This was done primarily from an assessment of the leadership of the country and its ability over the same period to remain focused on the holistic aspirations of the liberation struggle. I have attempted to outline the definitive premise of our national independence as social democratic in intent and character given the plethora of grievances that motivated the liberation struggle together with an attendant historical discontinuity between our initial resistance to colonialism in the 1890s through to the more modern liberation struggle in the second half of the 20th century. The post independence periods were, partly as a result of the historical discontinuities alluded to earlier, not demonstrative of organic commitment to the values and principles of the struggle but driven by negotiated 'mimicry' of the developmental and political models of global and African ideological powers of that time. The aftermath of the Cold War saw our national leaders embracing

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most of the recommendations of the singular global power and once again falling into the trap of straying further from the path intended by our national independence. This development essentially led to increased repression and an economic downturn that greatly assisted a new alternative leadership to emerge and challenge the ruling party in the later 1990s.

Whereas this new leadership was intended to return the country to the independence path, it too, with the formation of the inclusive government has not adequately reflected or acted on the historicity of our national independence. In all this, there is the patent risk that national independence may eventually become abstract to subsequent generations of Zimbabweans and the state may be reinvented less on the basis of its history and more in always seeking to fit into whatever dominant global hegemony is dominant at a given time.

It is however prudent to state that in remembering our national independence in 2012, we must insist that 'never again!' shall we or our children bear witness to such repression either by way of racism (of any kind), social and economic injustice or the wanton killing of innocent civilians and deprivation of human rights to all. This is regardless of whatever government is in charge of the Zimbabwean state at any given time in the past, present or the future.

Finally it must be emphasized that the path that Zimbabwe must now pursue is one that while being conscious of our history must not be imprisoned by it. In celebrating or commemorating 32 years of our national independence, we must think more of the future than the past. We must grasp that our existence as a country is based on what were essentially struggles for the freedom of all and not the few. In so doing, we must carry forward the burden of the mistakes made more honestly and with the clear intentions of ensuring that these mistakes never occur again of our own volition. This means that as we await 2012's independence we must be conscious of the challenges

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that we face collectively and approach them with the necessary historical and social consciousness that returns our country to a social democratic path.

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ⁱ These linkages are well explored in Raftopolous B; Mlambo 2009 (eds) *Becoming Zimbabwe: A history of the Precolonial Period to 2008*. Weaver Press, Harare.

ⁱⁱ See Bhebe N, Ranger T, 1995 *Soldiers in Zimbabwe's Liberation War*, Volume 1, University of Zimbabwe Publications, Harare

ⁱⁱⁱ One early assessment of the post independence leadership can be found in Astrow A. *Zimbabwe. A revolution that lost its way?* Zed Books, 1983, London

^{iv} There are new emerging arguments about the role of natural resources and a new scramble for Africa. See Southall R, Melber H (eds) *A new scramble for Africa; Imperialism, Investment and Development*, University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, South Africa

^v This is a disputed point in relation to the liberation struggle given the socialist rhetoric that characterized it and the eventual mixed economy of the post independent republic.

^{vi} This phrase is derived from Nkrumah K, 1973 *Revolutionary Path*, International Press

^{vii} For explanations of divisions within the liberation movements and guerilla armies see also Sadomba Z, *War Veterans in Zimbabwe Liberation Struggle, Challenging Neo- Colonialism, Settler and International Capital*, 2010, Weaver Press, Harare

^{viii} This is in part well explained in Stanlake Samkange's novels, see, Samkange S. *Year of the Uprising*, 1978. Heinemann, London

^{ix} There have been a number of researches done on rural interactions with dispossession and conquest, see Moore D. 2005, *Suffering for Territory: Race Place and Power in Zimbabwe*, Duke University Press

^x See also Mhanda W. 2011. *Dzino: Memories of a Freedom Fighter*, Weaver Press, Harare

^{xi} See also Sithole M, 1999. *Zimbabwe. Struggles within the struggle (1957-1980)*, Rujeko Publishers, Harare

^{xii} Fanon writes extensively of the nationalist bourgeoisie tendencies to replicate those that oppressed them in *The Wretched of the Earth* and an interesting dimension is added by Homi Bhabha *From Mimicry and Man, The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse*, taken from p85-92 On the location of Culture <http://prelectur.stanford.edu/lecturers/bhabha/mimicry.html>

^{xiii} For analysis of government programmes in the first decade of independence see also Mandaza 1. 1986 *Zimbabwe: The Political Economy of Transition*, SAPES Books, Harare

^{xiv} Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions, 1996 *Beyond Esap*: <http://www.weaverpresszimbabwe.com/latest-reviews/87-beyond-the-enclave/438-statement-by-cde-lovemore-matombo.html>

^{xv} Kanyenze G, Kondo T (eds) 2011. *Beyond the Enclave: Toward a Pro-Poor and Inclusive Development Strategy for Zimbabwe*, Weaver Press, Harare

^{xvi} For further reading on organic intellectuals and hegemony please see Hoare Q, Smith G, 1971, *Gramsci: Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, International Publishers, Co

^{xvii} Chabal P, Daloz J (eds), 1999, *Africa works, Disorder as Political Instrument* Indiana University Press

^{xviii} Yeros P. *Zimbabwe and the Dilemmas of the Left. Historical Materialism. Volume 10, No. 2, 2002 pp 3-15*

^{xix} See also analysis by Ian Scoones et al, 2010, *Zimbabwe's Land Reform: Myths and Realities*, James Currey,

^{xx} Ranger T, 2003. *Historiography, Patriotic history and the History of a Nation; the struggle over the past in Zimbabwe*(Idoga Annual Distinguished Lecture on Africa 2003, University of Ghent) <http://cas1.elis.ugent.be/avrug/pdf06/ranger.pdf>

^{xxi} Hammer A, Raftopolous B (eds) 2000. *Zimbabwe's Unfinished Business. Rethinking Land, State, Nation in the Context of Crisis*, Weaver Press, Harare

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^{xxii} Cabral A. The Weapon of Theory. Address Delivered to the First Tricontinental Conference of the Peoples of Asia, Latin America held in Havana in January 1966.

<http://www.marxists.org/subject/africa/cabral/1966/weapon-theory.htm>

Essay 2.

It's our time to define our own destiny.

By Clever Bere

On the 18th of April 2012, our country will be celebrating her 32nd Anniversary. If it was a human being, the country would have reached adulthood, be able to fend for him/herself, expected to or already having fathered or mothered, and able to decide what is right or wrong. With a human being this process of decision making, growth and so forth is influenced by relatively fewer forces. It is different when it is applied to a state or a country.

Consequences of decisions made by those in national political authority have far reaching consequences on their people, the current generation and those to come. As in societal families if a previous generation has not invested in the future of those to come, its mistakes weigh heavily on generations to come. I am saying this mindful of the fact that as with a human families, a country can face constraints associated with pursuing the right track towards development and success for the benefit of posterity. It is therefore of fundamental importance for careful thought to be applied when making such decisions that have such far reaching consequences.

I am authoring this piece under particularly complex circumstances for young people in Zimbabwe. On the one hand, these seem to be really exciting times for youths and prospects for youth development and empowerment in 32 years of our national independence. This is especially so when one listens to the rhetoric that has been espoused by our contemporary leaders in the country and on the continent at large regarding youth empowerment. On the other hand real challenges seem to continue to mount on the youths in Zimbabwe, Africa and globally due to spiraling unemployment,

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lack of vocational skills training, universal access to education, access to capital and opportunities, lack of access to health services including those related to diagnosis, treatment, and care of those living with HIV and, above all, prevention of new HIV infections among the youths.

To be specific to Zimbabwe, the issue of political patronage of the youth has compounded matter further. Indeed for one to survive as a young person in the country, one has to tow a certain political line. Failure to tow the political line is associated with persecution, victimization and exclusion. Cases of this treatment to young leaders who would have dared to stand their ground and speak the truth, only to face the music are numerous (even this author is also a victim). This is not in any way implying, as has been said in some spaces, that the author is a bitter-man, disgruntled and so forth. He is not.

This persecution does not apply to Zimbabwe alone; we have also witnessed and followed with keen interest the consented, sustained and vicious attack on the youth leadership of the Africa National Congress (ANC) in South Africa, with its president being the major victim. Malema might not be the best of young leaders on the continent and I seek not to defend him, but I will sympathize with him for as long as he is youth leader with a constituency that voted for him and that continue to support him, simply that.

The process of young people claiming their birthright to define their future has however dawned upon us all. This is particularly in the wake of evidence of the exclusion of young people in mainstream policy making processes via riots and demonstrations in Egypt, Tunisia, the United Kingdom and the Occupy Wall Street movement of the United States. Zimbabwe is in no way an exception as we approach our 32nd anniversary

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of our national independence. Unless young people are taken with greater seriousness, it is for every political, business and social player to realize that the youth of Zimbabwe, Africa and the World are most likely to rebel. As a matter of fact, the rebellion has already began; a rebellion against patronage, a rebellion against corrupt leadership, a rebellion against manipulation and indeed a rebellion against poverty. Yes we say no to dictatorship in all its from, subtle or blatant.

All this is happening during a very historic period in the quest for youth development in the country and on the continent. The continent's leadership adopted African Youth Decade 2009-2018 Plan of Action for Accelerating Youth Empowerment for Sustainable Development as the Road Map towards a multi-sectoral and multi-dimensional engagement of all stakeholders towards the achievement of the goals and objectives of the African Youth Charter. Indeed it is a charter to which the Zimbabwean government is signatory and which was a milestone step meant to bring Zimbabwean and African stakeholders to address the challenges of young people in the country and on the continent.

Unfortunately there are deficiencies particularly around the crafting of the Plan of Action. Very few young people were involved, consulted and are aware of the existence of the Plan of Action and the Charter itself. Its implementation is driven by the older generations that has left us more miserable that we were twenty years ago, that generation we are rebelling against. And yes we must rebel. Even the very same older generation indeed realize that, and to quote the words of one African statesman, former president of South Africa Thabo Mbeki,

“ It (youth) must organise and ready itself to constitute itself into a rebellion because it would obviously be unnatural that I, a member of the older generation, would easily and willingly accept that younger people, my own children, should, at best, sit side-by-

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side with me as co-leaders, fully empowered to help determine the future of our people.^{xxii}

Yes young people must have a strong say in the determination of the future of our country. We have learnt that, over the past thirty two years, the political leadership in particular but also leadership in business and society have been so selfish and curtailed the development of young people.

The Zimbabwe People's Charter is clear in as far as answering what needs to be done. Regarding the youth, the charter acknowledges that

“ young people represent the present and the future of our country and that all those in positions of leadership nationally and locally must remain true to the fact that our country shall be passed on from one generation to the next. The charter further state that, in order for each generation to bequeath to the next a country that remains the epitome of hope, democracy and sustainable livelihoods, the following principles for the youth must be adhered to and respected:

- i. The youth shall be guaranteed the right to education at all levels until they acquire their first tertiary qualification.*
- ii. The youth shall be guaranteed an equal voice in decision-making processes that not only affect them but the country as a whole in all spheres of politics, the national economy and social welfare. ·*
- iii. The youth shall be guaranteed access to the right to health.*
- iv. The youth shall not be subject to political abuse through training regimes that connote political violence or any semblance of propaganda that will compromise their right to determine their future as both individuals and as a collective.*
- v. The youth have the right to associate and assemble and express themselves freely of their own prerogative.^{xxii}*

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Past and present developments have shown us that this cannot be achieved on a silver plate, thus the relevance of a rebellious approach. The young people of Arab world have rebelled in their way, providing inspiration to young people across the world. The occupy-wall-street despite its limited media coverage by the biased international media is a significant rebellion against global capital.

The Zuma-Malema saga further shows us that young people also have the capacity to stand their ground. We have done the same here and will continue to do so. Yes young people have started to speak out on the manner in which empowerment funds are being disbursed. We continue to speak against the gross injustices in the workplace. And we will speak against the continued looting of our natural resources, through the unholy alliance and tag team of global capital and the selfish political elite to which we will not be far from the truth if we would based on their conduct label them unpatriotic.

However one major obstacle impeding on young people's ability to achieve results has been the disunity in our youth's movement. Of cause in some way this disunity is because of the hand of the older generation. As the Youth Committee of the Committee of the People's Charter we are of the reality that unless we come together as young people, define our agenda and pursue it we will remain living at the mercy of the political and business elites. To buttress my point, I will borrow the influential statement made by that great thinker and proponent of human liberation, Frantz Fanon, many years ago - that

"Each generation must, out of relative obscurity, discover its mission, fulfil it or betray it."

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We were not in the front not because we are cowards, not because we are less patriotic; it is simply because we were not yet born. This doesn't mean in anyway that we do not appreciate the sacrifices of the gallant sons and daughters who, shoulder to shoulder with the peasants, the workers and all Zimbabweans in the country and abroad, to liberate the country.

For that we appreciate and remain grateful, for it was a worthy cause. The fact that we were not there in 1999 when the real opposition to ZANU PF, MDC was formed does not mean we are cowards either. It is just that we were too young to be there. The equally recognize the work done by the MDC in trying to bring democracy to the country. Every moment however has its leaders, with a different agenda and mandate, whether you fulfill it or betray it, your time will come to pass and other generations will come.

Our time has come and we will define our mission and we will fulfill it.

It is our right to enjoy the benefits of independence.

Happy 32nd anniversary Zimbabwe. Uhuru.

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- i) Thabo Mbeki Address at the UNDP-UN Habitat 21 Global Youth Leadership Forum on Inclusive Governance NAIROBI, KENYA; MARCH 17, 2012. *TASKS OF THE YOUTH OF THE WORLD.*
- ii) Zimbabwe People's Charter adopted Feb 2008.

Essay 3.

**Zimbabwe at 32 – Tracing the Fading Democratic Value of National
Leadership**

By Tabani Moyo

In our lives as living organisms, we take time to introspect especially on the day one was born. The same is true for our country Zimbabwe on a day such as 18 April 2012. It is expected that we all fall back into the memory lane and try as much as is possible to rethink how our country has traveled and locating those areas could have been done differently, if not better.

Though the day might be congested with slogans specifically from those who wish to sweep the grey areas of the passage of time under the carpet, but as a collective we need to outdo the drowning partisan portrayal of our national independence by the few. In the process we must see to it that we are as candid as we can in the introspective process. This is the reasoning behind the penning of this essay, nothing less nothing more, but a frank attempt at charting the nation's progression and development.

There is a striking reality in Zimbabwe. It's a nation that has known of one leader since independence. This we have nurtured either consciously or subconsciously. The generation represented by the ageing leadership has literally surrendered offering sound advice on the need for renewal and rather joined the wagon in praise singing acts rather than doing the honourable thing. This same generation and the 'supreme leader' have become a danger to the national thinking and the sooner the peoples of Zimbabwe realize and act on matter the better for national progression. In discussing this concept

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it is anchored on an understanding that the weaker the leadership, the weaker the state and nation becomes domestically, regionally and internationally.

This singular factor, tied up to other trickling tributaries has accounted to the weakening of the state as those that stampede to surround themselves around the supreme leader end up thinking on narrow personal and trivial party interests and entrenchments rather than serving the nation and its people therein.

This has in a way created a super elite group of primitive accumulation actors within the leadership. For the purposes of this article the leadership being a person, who often emerges as the head of the government, the head of the party and government in totality. The long and sort of it is that for the past 32 years we have modeled Zimbabwe around an individual who commands a clientele group of people at party level, through to the government and in a larger way controlling how the entire society as a nation is engineered.

This has collapsed organized systems in which a government, a country and the polity are supposed to operate. The 32 years of our independence have been a sliding of Zimbabwe from a liberated nation towards a clientele leadership who spend quite a sizable amount of time in crafting song, dance and other forms of art in praising an individual not a collective agenda for the nation. The collective national agenda espoused in the liberation struggle ethos are therefore subordinate to the leader, conveniently when it suits him/her for political capital, rather than pursuing the national agenda of developing and ensuring the nation state is competitive in the full measure of progressive and democratic development.

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This, the prolific writer Wole Soyinka noted in his book, *You Must Set Forth at Dawn* when he argued,

"This strange breed was a complete contrast to the nationalist stalwarts in whose hands we had imagined the country could be safely consigned while we went on a liberation march... we were bombarded by utterances that identified only flamboyant replacements of the old colonial order, not transformation agents, not even empathizing participants in a process of liberation."

The views by the Nigerian scholar have become so profound to the interpretation of our state of leadership in Zimbabwe, 32 years after independence. I alluded earlier on that leadership in this case is an epitome of an individual, whose wishes, actions, thinking, sleeping or breathing becomes the non-progressive definition of a nation. 32 years on, the actions of an individual: wrong or right; brutal or in good faith; heavenly or evil, are still defining the axis in which the nation state orbits.

What has become apparent is that the current crop that emerged from the liberation front has lost the transformation agency spirit that guided the struggle. The ideals of the liberation struggles and that which is unfolding on the ground showcases a serious deficiency in the letter and spirit of transforming the country into a responsive state that satisfies the needs of its citizens.

In this regard, Zimbabwe, a nation of close to 14 million people faces the challenge of failing to secure a renewed effort in choosing the leader of the Republic who wields the psychological (mental) and physical (healthy and youthful) strata of leadership that can take over the liberation struggle agenda to that of transforming a nation state into an

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organic one that answers to the citizens' yearnings. In our small and humble measurement, we are the SADC Island that fails to appreciate that there is life after figureheads at the helm of the state.

But we do protect this figurehead for personal reasons, given the fact that the bulk of these people who call themselves business people, can only claim that title because they have made our state a private enterprise. Without the protection of the state and the state providing tenders and other protective measures, this group of clientelism will not survive competing in the business world.

This in the long run is bleeding the state as it becomes an opportunity cost on the central government to fulfill its mandate of social service delivery. But the syndicates in this clientele group will keep on managing spin headlines to the international world, that the nation state has developed the most skilled minds in Africa, that the land is back into the hands of the majority and that we have one man one vote system in place.

Though it might be noted that the land question in Zimbabwe though controversial but is no longer reversible, it remains necessary to highlight to the powers that be that the average citizen who was allocated land in Mazowe, which is prime land in Mashonaland Central is now being evicted and being pushed back to marginal lands which they were previously. In their place it is the very same 'business' magnates who relay on the 'captive state protectionism' for their tender and other means of survival.

Our curriculum is now structured in a way that it is like a conveyor belt which fails itself in grading the final product from the raw ones, but still prides itself of producing the best of quantities as opposed to the much needed quality outcome. Our voting schedules

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and procedures are now resting in the hands of other nations. This is, as argued by Soyinka, *' because our state which is a centre of resource allocation was captured by flamboyant replacements of the old colonial order, not transformation agents, not even empathizing participants in a process of liberation.'*

Soyinka went on to note that, *"We ask ourselves, were these men, who routinely conducted themselves with such gracelessness, the true representatives of a national mandate?"* On this important day, this question is no longer pointed at the leaders from the liberation struggle but to those who started leading the defiance campaign to those who lost the liberation struggle mandate due to their deeds post independence. We therefore, collectively place the new government order under spotlight. How fast has been the process of sublimation? As in the old time classic, *Animal Farm* if we are to look at the pigs and the people, are we going to find marginal differences? This is what the Zimbabwean nation should answer.

We have been watching them from a distance and noted that the new entrants into the leadership roles of the government, through their deeds as contrary to their spoken word seem to send a clear message that their ascendancy to the national government is the monopoly of the privileged by the minority. As if to say that the messages on this occasion of 32 years of independence the language is that of say, stake your claims. The earlier you position yourselves, the bigger your slice of the national cake. It is necessary here to reassert my point that the definition of leadership has not changed. At 32 years of age, can the country stomach a leadership which scrambles for aggrandizement through cars, houses, allowances and paid for massages?

In this process of commemorating our national independence, we ought to make it candidly clear that the call for transformation agency has really become urgent. This is

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to say that we must never allow ourselves to be slaves of our own liberation efforts. It is paradoxical that at every time we differ in our course of direction, a ransom demand is made by those who have lost the liberation struggle mandate, reminding the nation, the people and at times defining how blood can easily be shed. This belongs to savages, barbarians, sadists and other forms of "isms" that have no place in modern states configuration. To a larger extent it points to a failed understanding of the liberation struggle's compass and its meaning thereof to the peoples of Zimbabwe, the region and the international world order.

We know very much that our place within the evolving organisms of new nations shall be redefined. This is more urgent given the fact that the current leadership does not have adequate knowledge of the net worthy value of its belongings nor the value of the country. I am yet to meet a single leader with competent knowledge of the interpolation of the amount of minerals, the amounts of gas, the net worth of wild life and how best it can be cultivated into the development of our nation. With such poor leadership, the nation is in danger. Anyone with access to these unaccounted for resources can easily fund insurgence. It is more dangerous with a weak state like ours where the public and even senior officials are clueless of the net revenue emanating from the country's trading with the world.

Irrespective of the limited knowledge of the country's resources, we continue to structure deals which are nothing short of fraudulent behavior. One for example cannot competently explain why the government gave the Chinese 'unlimited' access to diamonds in the Chiyadzwa mine fields in exchange of the company building a military staff college located in Mazowe. Rationale thinking would point to a profitable decision of dualising our highway roads in the country in exchange to such access to the precious minerals. Addressing issues of the country wide pronounced starvation, health system, education and the failing industry.

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At 32, I hope against the tide that, we must see to it that we cause change to happen. Changing of the configuration of the country is a function of a sound mindset leading it. As is, we have a long way to go, unless a new breed with new thinking surfaces.

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