

Full Length Research Paper

‘Aluta continua’: A critical reflection on the chimurenga-within-Third Chimurenga among the Ndaу people in Chipinge district, Southeastern Zimbabwe

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The contemporary land reform programme, which is anchored in the framework of national struggles, and popularly known as the Third Chimurenga, is a contentious issue in Zimbabwe and has sent shockwaves across the world. Many weird happenings have taken place in the history of the country on account of it and have only managed to put Zimbabwe on the international spotlight. This study argues that the history of the land question has been the history of its perpetual conflict from the colonial period and the effects are still nagging Zimbabweans today. The paper examines a fresh insurrection of chimurenga-within-Chimurenga (a struggle-within-the struggle) by investigating its causal circumstances among the Ndaу people. As part of the findings, the study perceives some notions of aluta continua (the struggle continues) in which the land issue supplies a determined stimulation to the evolution of chimurenga as a movement for identity and suitable pathway towards sustainable development in Zimbabwe’s rural communities.

Key words: Chimurenga, land reform, Chipinge highlands, black landlord, African Purchase Areas (APAs).

INTRODUCTION

In Zimbabwe, land tenancy as the basis of an agrarian system was the brain child of the white settlers during the colonial period. This land tenancy was mainly instituted to solve both the labour problem and to cut down on the operational costs. The expropriation of land by the white settlers did not however mean an immediate restriction upon the land resources available to the African peasants. Africans were generally allowed to remain on their ancestral land upon payment of rent or commitment to supply labour services (Roder, 1964). In 1909, the British South Africa Company (B.S.A.C) introduced a rent charge on the alienated land that made it obligatory for all Africans residing outside the reserves to pay rent (Arrighi, 1973: 195). The reasons why Africans were not evacuated from their ancestral lands at this particular time are easily discernible. The land was still abundant and labour was in short supply. Therefore, the

establishment of semi-feudal relations of production was a short-term answer to the labour problem.

As time went on, the colonial government lost interest in labour tenancy. With the development of white settler agriculture, land value appreciated and the labour situation improved (Arrighi, 1973: 196). As a result, the advantages of keeping African tenants were reduced in many instances since labour was more obtainable on the market. However, in the unalienated or crown lands in which many Africans were found, provision was made for the continuation of rent payment until such land was alienated, at which time, the tenants involved had two options. They were either to move onto the reserves or enter into labour agreements with the landlords (Moyana, 2002: 76).

In spite of the fact that Africans were allowed to remain on the crown lands upon payment of rent, some developments that took place did not favour the continued existence of labour tenancy on the crown lands. Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) experienced an agrarian boom after the end of the Second World War

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(1939 to 1945). This increased the white farmer's interest to farm. In addition, the colonial regime passed and enforced the Land Apportionment Act in 1930 by evicting Africans from the fertile plateau and resettling them in the marginal lands. The return of European service men after the Second World War also brought with it a pressing demand for more commercial land. The post-war agrarian boom speeded this up. The agrarian boom made it more profitable for the Europeans to farm the land they had been allocated under the Land Apportionment Act of 1930 than to rent it out to African tenants. Ncube (2004:

35) argues that the demand for the land had grown so great that sweeping measures were taken to clear off Africans from the crown land within a period of five years. This Act had far reaching consequences for Africans. They were left with two options. Either they had to move into the reserves or become wage-labourers. In the Chipinge highlands, however, some Africans went into the poor reserves and others joined the labour market, while quite a considerable number of Africans found a haven in the Africa Purchase Areas (hereafter, APAs). In those APAs, Africans entered into stringent feudal arrangements with their fellow black landlords. Nevertheless, a cursory survey of other related areas, in terms of fertile soil and rich rainfall pattern, like in Mazoe valley in Mashonaland province brings forth a paradox. The Korekore people who lived in Mazoe before the Land Apportionment Act (1930) did not enter into feudal relations of agrarian production. Instead they moved into the neighbouring reserves such as Chiweshe and Chinamhora. Accordingly, the aim or rationale of the present study is to explore the peculiar factors that compelled the Ndau people (who specifically reside in the fertile highlands of Chipinge) to enter into rigorous feudal relations with the black landlords. There was black-on-black exploitation in the APAs but the tenants endured for so long until they mounted a new insurrection against their black landlords in October 2009. The study is being carried out within the backdrop of weaknesses or limitedness of the Third Chimurenga. Briefly stated, it must be noted that the Third Chimurenga was a top-to-bottom reform programme. Its major flaw was that it failed to identify the genuine peasants who were landless, including those in the APAs. In addition, the Third Chimurenga was not an outcome of a systematic planning in respect to the welfare of the ordinary people involved in the programme and the sustainability of the national economy as a whole. These shortcomings, amongst others, gave rise to Ndau insurrection on 9 October, 2009. This insurrection was a reaction over the issue of landlessness which has been topical in Zimbabwe and has sent shockwaves across the world (New African Magazine, 2008: 15). In our perception, this recent insurrection constitutes a fresh chimurenga-within-the Third Chimurenga that began way back in 2000. There is a continuum in Zimbabwe's historical conflict over land ownership. Therefore, this historical conflict

underpins the present concept of *aluta continua* in the land ownership pattern as characterized in the current struggle.

METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

With respect to the methodological issue, a holistic approach was used in which a number of methods and techniques were harmoniously blended. Primary sources in the forms of official documents and newspapers deposited in the National Archives of Zimbabwe (NAZ) were utilised. These were significant in the analysis of the land management policies that were undertaken by both the colonial and post-independent governments in Zimbabwe. Secondary sources like books were consulted since many writers have evaluated the land question in Zimbabwe. The present research was carried out from an interdisciplinary perspective and within a broad base of environmental and social sciences. In addition, the phenomenological method was very crucial especially when applied to fieldwork that was carried out with people between April to July, 2010 among the Ndau in Chipinge district, Southeastern Zimbabwe. During this fieldwork, sample interviews were conducted in some selected villages in the two chieftaincies of Mapungwana, and Gwenzi that are located in the eastern highlands of Chipinge. These chiefdoms have been the site and scene of Ndau insurrection since October 2009. The target groups for the study were the chiefs, village heads, former tenants, ordinary peasants, and district administrator. This interview technique provided an opportunity for a face-to-face interaction with the locals who specifically participated in this new insurrection (*chimurenga*). The merit of the interview technique was that it yielded first hand data that was both relevant and crucial in shaping the direction of the present study.

STUDY AREA AND ETHNOGRAPHY

The Ndau people mostly inhabit Chipinge as a geographical space. The Ndau traditions that deal with their emergence as an ethnic group go back to the time of the collapse of the kingdom of Mbire in the history of medieval Zimbabwe. In later history, the effects of the 'Mfecane' movement that affected the whole of Southern Africa in the mid 19th century did not spare these Ndau people. Mfecane was a time of trouble around the mid 19th century in which the Nguni people in Zululand, in South Africa, fought each other. The result was forced migration of the defeated groups, including those led by such leaders as Zwangendaba, Mzilikazi and Soshangana (Parker and Pfukani, 1975: 89). As one of Tshaka's separatist generals, Soshangana, established a nascent Gaza State. The Gaza State as a creation of the Mfecane was located largely in Southern Mozambique only after conquering the local Ndau people. Upon defeating the Ndau, Soshangane's capital was shifted from Chaimiti to a new one at Mt. Selinda on the headwaters of Budzi River, as it is known today (Beach, 2002). The choice of Mt Selinda as the capital of the new Gaza State was influenced by the strategic military concerns and good soils in the Eastern highlands.

Chipinge district is located in the southeastern region of

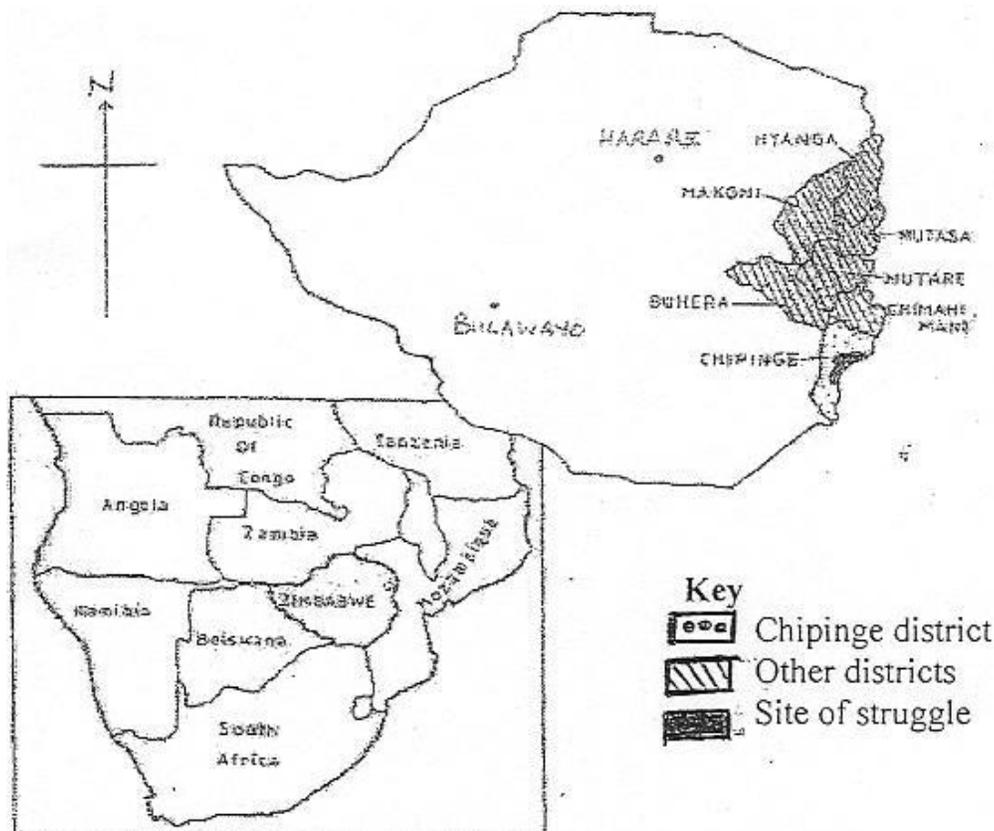


Figure 1. Map of Zimbabwe showing location of the Ndau in Chipinge and an Insertion of Southern Africa. Map drawn by Richard Mazuru: Computer Technician in the Department of Information and Technology, 10 July, 2010, Great Zimbabwe University.

Zimbabwe (Figure 1). In terms of physical features, the district is made up of the highlands, with fertile red soils that support commercial agriculture. The highlands are also criss-crossed by several perennial rivers such as Budzi, Msirizwi, Zona, and Chinyika. The presence of such perennial rivers and streams is a blessing to agriculture. Dams have been built to support plantation agriculture in the area. In the west, the major feature is the dry Save river valley, which runs from around Mutare and meanders deep into Southern Mozambique until it empties its perennial waters into the Indian Ocean. To the north, Chipinge borders with a range of mountains in Chimanimani district. In the eastern side, Chipinge shares an international border with Mozambique (Figure 1 show the insertion of Southern Africa).

The climatic conditions are mainly determined by the geography of the land. The high altitude, in conjunction with other factors, is responsible for the copious rains that are recorded in the highlands. The scenic beauty of the highlands area is associated with portions of dense tropical forests. Its agricultural conditions were the envy of many white settlers in the past. For instance, one white traveller, Bruce had this to say: 'We passed streams, the rippling of whose waters was a novelty to me who heard

nothing like it in Africa since I left England' (NAZ Gen-Bur). This comment is a testimony that Chipinge highlands possess exceptionally good climatic conditions that favour both human habitation and agricultural activities. Bruce had to remark again that 'they all agreed that the equitable temperature and rainfall of the highlands made them quite favourable for agricultural production' The result was that even before the settler government had passed legislation that was meant to deprive Africans of their land, Chipinge had received many white settlers who had come to do serious commercial farming. This explains why there has been little arable land meant for allocation for the Africans. In a wider national context, in which the study is anchored, this is one such big explanation of the genesis of the land question in Zimbabwe. A trajectory of the land question becomes necessary at this juncture.

ROOTS OF THE LAND QUESTION

Zimbabwe was colonised by Britain in 1890. The white liberal historian Palmer (1977, 1986) conceded that successive settler colonial laws were responsible for

segregating the indigenous Africans of their land. As Gundani (2001: 48) observed later, the history of the land question in this country is fundamentally a history of its alienation. According to Canaan (1982), the first Constitutional President of Zimbabwe and leading theologian, the continuing land imbalances have not been due to shortage of land as a human resource and national asset but about unfair and unequal distribution patterns. Africans were forced to leave their historical and ancestral land. It was this land alienation that became a major factor behind the eruption of what historians called, the First Chimurenga (struggle) in Zimbabwe. The first Chimurenga took place in 1896-1897. Africans were defeated in this first mass struggle. As Moyo (1988) noted, the immediate impact of the defeat was a major blow to the Africans because they were immediately driven into the created Tribal Trust Lands (T.T.Ls). Those T.T.Ls, however, were hot, poor, and stony. They were simply 'reserves' for indigenous labour. On one hand, in the whole of the western Matabeleland province, for instance, the most deplorable reserves were Gwaai and Shangani that were created in 1894. On the other hand, in the entire Eastern Manicaland province, Chikwaka reserve in Chimanimani, then Melsetter district, was the most unbearable place in colonial Zimbabwe, given its rocky and mountainous geographical terrain (Moyana 2002: 31). By 1899, nearly 16 million acres of good land had passed into white settler hands (Auret, 1990: 5). But white 'hunger' for land was not quenchable until it was satisfied through the Land Apportionment Act of 1930 which divided land along deep racial lines so much that about 1000 acres of land per head were set aside for 48000 white settlers whilst only 29 acres per head were set aside for blacks who were the majority. Though the Land Tenure Act superseded this Land Apportionment Act in 1969, the basic principles were retained and the pattern of land distribution decisively put indigenous Africans at an awful disadvantage. Worse still, 48000 acres of land by the 1970s were specially meant to produce cash crops for external export to metropolitan markets. For example, the level of damage to the indigenous people in 1977 can demonstrate how Africans were groaning under poverty, whilst the white Rhodesian government realized Z\$122 million from agricultural exports. Exports included 59000 tons of meat, 507400 tons of maize, 104500 tons of raw sugar, and lesser tonnage of tea and coffee. These statistics show that white commercial farmers increased the productive output of land, primarily through black labour exploitation. In sharp contrast, black productive output of land deteriorated and the size of black allocation of land also diminished due to population pressure for much of the colonial period. Again in terms of statistics, 96% of blacks occupied 50% of the total land of the country whilst whites, Coloureds and Asians who made up the remaining 4% of the entire population occupied the other 50% of the total land of the country. This vicious land

alienation was, once again, a major factor in the eruption of the Second Chimurenga (1965-1980), just as the First Chimurenga (1896-1897) in Zimbabwe. This second Chimurenga was also mainly fought under the banner of 'ivhu kuvanhu' that is, restoration of land to the people. In the nationalistic politics of the 1960s and 1970s, every black person was 'mwana wevhu' to mean son of the soil, which is land. To deny this 'son of the soil' of land ownership was perceived as a violation of basic human rights (Zvarevashe, 1982:14). It can be claimed that the land issue has been topical because the land ownership pattern changed hands through controversial means. Firstly, the whites expropriated land from blacks without payment. Secondly, the blacks have attempted to restore their land from the commercial white farmers to correct the historical imbalances through land invasion. Therefore, the land issue has always been the epicentre of national struggles in Zimbabwe. Hence, this struggle is *aluta continua*.

Today, when the government of Zimbabwe says the land question is a bilateral problem between the United Kingdom (U.K) and Zimbabwe, many people around the world scoff at it. What happened at the Lancaster House Conference in 1979 perhaps validates the manner in which Zimbabwe has handled the land reform exercise. The Conservative government of Margaret Thatcher that came to power in 1979 in the U.K. under whose auspices the Lancaster House Conference was held reneged on its promise to pay full compensation. It only gave 20 million pounds, instead of 75 million pounds, spread over five years. The ZANU (PF) government of President Mugabe, then Prime Minister, faced a daunting task of how to urgently resettle more than 162 000 families on nine million hectares of land only. The government could only acquire land on the basis of the 'willing seller-willing buyer' formula and principle. This obviously set the limits to the quantity, quality and location of land to be re-distributed. Again, such particular land 'free market' characteristic was deeply entrenched in the Lancaster House Agreement of 1979. Had the government of the U.K. honoured its promise to fully finance land resettlement early on in the 1980's, the land question would probably have been a closed chapter by now. But this was not to be. The government in Harare had to battle with piece-meal efforts at land reform between 1980 and 1990 when so many people continued to be landless. Even as late as 1999, a lot of fertile land was still in the hands of the few 4000 white farmers whilst about 80% of the black population had little land. It was only in February 2000 that a gigantic programme of commercial land seizures was unleashed, following the failure of the government sponsored constitutional Referendum in January 2000. Chronologically, the violent seizure of land is what was called, the Third Chimurenga and popularly code-named as, 'Hondo ye Minda', (the struggle for land). In the years after 2000, in essence, this Third Chimurenga was perceived to offer a lasting

solution to the land question in Zimbabwe. However, that was not to be. Quite a number of peasants have continued to be landless. The landless people have continued to demand for what is rightly theirs- land. Again, this is how the land question degenerated into a new phase of chimurenga-within- the Third Chimurenga. This is a new phase and new form of struggle that is linked to the previous three Chimurengas via the efficacy of the land grievance. The study sees it as new, because it is a bottom-up programme, unlike the officially pronounced Third Chimurenga that is perceived as a top-bottom deal. Nevertheless, the common denominator that stimulated this African struggle is the issue of land. That is why it is prudent to speak of *aluta continua*, that is, continuity in the Zimbabwean struggles. The Third Chimurenga and its related events has always been perceived as re-invention for authentic African identity and meant to achieve sustainable development on the ground. Hence, the usage of the caption, *aluta continua*, is relevant for the study. 'Aluta continua' is a popular phrase that was adopted by Zimbabwean war veterans in the 1970s from Portuguese language to mobilize the ordinary people to resist white colonialism in Rhodesia (now, Zimbabwe). So, it is a language of unyielding resistance and group solidarity.

EMERGENCE AND JUSTIFICATION OF 'CHIMURENGA-WITHIN-THIRD CHIMURENGA'

The new insurrection among the Ndau people erupted in October 2009. It followed a bottom-top pattern, as it was initiated by a group of the landless people themselves who reside in Gwenzi chieftdom. By December 2009 its ripple waves were also spread to people under chief Mapungwana, mostly in the environs of Emerald Hill, Beacon Hill, Dimire and Chinyaduma. These are key APAs that were created around Mt Selinda mission farm. These APAs, in essence, were small-scale farms that were created as an after-thought measure to complement the Land Apportionment Act of 1930. The APAs were exclusively meant for the emerging African class of petit-bourgeoisie so that, at least, it could have productive land. This class was mostly drawn from the ordinary ranks of mission-educated elite: Teachers, nurses, evangelists, agricultural demonstrators and small-scale traders. In reality, it was a ploy to pacify this emergent elitist class so that it could not lead other Africans in opposing the colonial land policies that were segregatory in nature. It perplexes a sane mind that many tenants in these APAs decided to live under stringent feudal terms. On the surface, and in the light of the research findings, the new Chimurenga that began in October 2009 grew from the strained landlord-tenant relationships. This relationship is cast in a picture that depicts the paradigm of a host and a parasite. In this picture, the tenants are mirrored as 'beasts of burden'. To fully paint this picture, tenants in APAs are involved in tedious jobs; digging,

weeding, harvesting, tending goats and cattle and undertaking many other menial routines. The working time of the tenant is divided into two parts: The necessary time and the surplus time. During the necessary time, the tenant produces what is needed for his own subsistence and that of his family. During the surplus time, however, the tenant creates surplus products that are expropriated by the black landlord. Theoretically, the system appears fair. However, the tenants do not own anything they are unable to produce enough food for their sustenance. The future is not in their favour! This is in line with the Marxist interpretation of labour relations since, land as the chief means of production, is strictly in the hands of the black landlord and the tenant is also strictly subordinated to the black landlord. Dhlakama (2010) has said that labour rent constitutes the main feature of the feudal relations of production. Though in the past money rent was accepted, at the moment, the black landlords insist on labour rent because it is more valuable than money that quickly loses its value. Even today when Zimbabwe is using multi currencies that are relatively stable as compared to the defunct Zimbabwean dollar, the black landlords still prefer labour than rent in money form. The reason is that money is still viewed as insignificant. Clearly, one may quickly ask how this labour rent was paid in the APAs?

Everyone residing on the feudal land is expected to go to work, otherwise one is dismissed from the farm. Under normal circumstances we would expect one member to report for work as a family representative. However, circumstances have not been normal. Instead, there is grievous black-to-black exploitation in the APAs. It was this dehumanising relationship that eventually aroused courage in the tenants to rise against their black landlords by way of invading their farms (Hliziyo, 2010). If a man has several wives, for example, all should report for duty. It is obligatory for all men to report for duty as well. This is how the labour force is exploited in the APAs. A person assigned to do a particular job is expected to execute it with all willingness and skill. The landlord only gives a small portion of his land for the establishment of the tenant's homestead. An extra portion of land on which to grow more crops for the survival of the tenant is acquired from the landlords at a cost considered as annual rent. Most of the land that is loaned out in this way is usually infertile. As land is unproductive, we were informed that many tenants find alternative land for tillage in neighbouring Mozambique. Although land is abundant and productive on the Mozambican side, the fields fall prey to wild animals, like baboons, pigs and monkeys that literally 'harvest' crops ahead of normal time.

The other borne of contention in the black landlord-tenant relationship is that the labourers are not allowed to build permanent structures in the APAs. There are no brick walled houses for tenants. The unfounded fear is that if a tenant is allowed to build a permanent structure, it will become difficult to remove him when it becomes

necessary to do so. Therefore, building a permanent structure is a social taboo and a cardinal sin. The common type of housing on the farms is a grass-thatched hut. One tenant who dared to erect a brick walled house on Thabete's farm in Gwenzi area, learnt a lesson when Thabete, the landlord, came brandishing a gun and accused him of witchcraft and thereby threatened to kill the whole family. The tenant left the farm compound in a matter of days! However, as Mukwidzahuma (2010) has pointed out, witchcraft was used as a ploy to compel the tenant to vacate the farm. This incident is a picture that shows that the tenants, in general, survive under squalid conditions, as they are forced live in badly built grass-thatched huts.

The geographical features have contributed much in determining African decision to stay in the APAs. Physical barriers such as the Sabi Valley, the Chimanimani range of mountains and the international border with Mozambique in the east have played a big role to limit the people's spatial expansion. In the eastern part, there is plenty of land with good soils good climatic conditions. The area is sparsely populated and can accommodate surplus people, too. But, the colonial boundary makes it impossible for the people to cross the border. Therefore the international border is a man-made barrier that limits the availability of land for the inhabitants of Chipinge highlands. In the northern part, the Chimanimani ranges of mountains that start to curve around Ngaone are natural barriers that worsen the agrarian misfortunes of the Ndaue people. The mother of all physical barriers is the dry Save valley that lies to the West of Chipinge highlands. Being located on the leeward side of the Eastern highlands, Save valley forms a rain shadow belt. This belt experiences harsh climatic conditions. Commenting on the harsh climatic conditions in the valley, one white settler remarked, thus It is impossible for natives to work there between 1000 am and 3 pm. Otherwise a couple of days sees them crippled. It is malicious and the general climatic conditions are not favorable to the propagation of the Nordic white race, perhaps the dark Mediterranean races might make a practical success (NAZ 1/1/1, 1925).

The above observation indicates that the Save valley is not ideal for human habitation. The decision by the people not to settle into the valley was confirmed by a Native Commissioner who pointed out that, 'The Africans were anxious to remain on the plateau, whose rain is always plentiful ... that they preferred to work as tenants rather than go down and live in the Sabi valley' (N.A.Z S235/356). Therefore, as much as we can tell, the Ndaue people were compelled to move into the APAs by sheer necessity caused by physical barriers. Africans entered into nasty feudal relations with black landlords whom they perceived as 'better devils' rather than crouch like baboons on the fringes of interlocking mountain ridges.

Secondly, there were quite some unrewarding working conditions in the APAs. Somehow, if the reserves and

white farms could provide a veneer of a home and a work place from which to get some money to meet the basic needs for human livelihood, why then did someone in his normal senses move into the African Purchase Areas? The answer is found in the unrewarding and cruel working conditions that African workers had to contend with in the alienated white commercial farmlands. Virtually, Africans on the white commercial farms were regarded as squatters. The practical implication was that a squatter worked solely for the right to remain on such designated white lands, but for no wages. Chipinge was one district across the country where indigenous farm workers were not paid at all at the end of every week since farm workers were paid weekly. This was so because of the Afrikaner mentality that was prevalent in the area. The Afrikaners came in scores and grabbed the fertile Chipinge highlands as part of Cecil John Rhodes' programme. Here, one white settler, Parry, pointed out that Cecil John Rhodes had emphasised that he would welcome no other stock of European settlers than the Dutch trekkers from South Africa since people of Afrikaner descent were considered as hardworking citizens in opening up new farming settlements (N.A.Z S235/356). Furthermore, Rhodes lured them into Chipinge highlands with the hope to create a political buffer zone against the Portuguese expansion into the area. Historians now know that the whole of the eastern geographical belt was a contested border between the British and Portuguese colonialists. Because the Afrikaners had long established negative attitudes toward the African people, the indigenous people in Chipinge were accordingly not paid wages. One white Native Chief Commissioner had this to say: "In answer to your circular ... to have to say that with expectations the Natives working for whites in this district are tenants of the farmers for whom they work and that they work for them without wages for more or less fixed periods in lieu of paying rent for the land they occupy and use (NAZ S235/356)".

Furthermore, where wages were paid, another white Native Commissioner acknowledged that they "... Were the lowest in the country" (NAZ S235/502). Therefore, Africans found it counterproductive to work for the white commercial farmer because it was very unrewarding. In view of this assessment, the decision to move into the African Purchase Areas becomes understandable.

Thirdly, the general failure under post-independent Mugabe's government to fairly implement the Resettlement Schemes is a valid factor that made some Africans to stay on the APAs. The Resettlement Schemes that were established to address the plight of the rural tenants in the 1980s and the 1990s. Land was delineated and the landless people were resettled in schemes dotted around Msirizwi, Tazviona and Bangira. The landless people opted to continue living in the African Purchase Areas as labour tenants. There were deep-seated problems and fears that can account for this

state of affairs. To commence with, the post-independence resettlement schemes dismally failed to address the problems of tenants (Hlomuro, 2010). For instance, Msirizwi Resettlement Scheme fell under the Accelerated Resettlement Programme (ARP) where the government only provided land. There were no social services provided there. People had to move a good distance away in order to utilize the infrastructure and services in the nearby communal areas. The Msirizwi Area was devoid of the infrastructure such as clinics, accessible roads, adequate clean water supplies and other amenities. The other ugly head of Msirizwi Resettlement area is that it is found in the steep-sided Msirizwi River valley. Owing to its rugged, rocky nature and vulnerability to flooding in times of cyclones, the colonial government had not allowed any form of human settlement in the area. Instead, it was used for cattle ranching. However, the new government of Zimbabwe resettled people there because of the constraints that were imposed by the Lancaster House Constitution. For example, the willing-seller and willing-buyer clause of the Lancaster Constitution (1979) prevented Mugabe's new government from acquiring good land in the interest of resettling the generality of the rural lot. The result was the commercial white farmers were only willing to dispose of marginal lands. That is how, for example, the Msirizwi River valley resettlement in Chipinge came into being. The people did not move in numbers into the valley because of the apparent problems such as transport unreliability, lack of clinics, prevalence of malaria and the loss of contact with their ancestral neighbourhoods. In general, and in the long run, the consequence was that the resettlement scheme, as a government programme, never ameliorated the plight of the landless people. This is why the APAs were seen as more attractive than the Msirizwi valley settlement area.

Fourthly, commercial plantation farming has also contributed to the shortage of land for Africans. Owing to the fact that the soils are rich and the climatic conditions allow diversified agriculture, the commercial companies have monopolized most of the fertile land in the Chipinge highlands area. There are eight monopoly commercial estates that are found in the highlands areas. These are New Year's Gift Estate, Aventura Estate, Jersey Estate, Zona Estate, Smaldel Estate, Clearwater Estate, Ratelshoek Estate and Southdown Estate (Nhandara 1988: 29). They specialise in the large-scale commercial production of tea, coffee, bananas, beef, milk and timber. The positive effects of these big estates are easily discernible. They provide employment not only to Zimbabweans but also to the neighboring Mozambicans. They have established educational and medical facilities. Tarred roads have been constructed to facilitate farming activities. Above all, there has been a proliferation of 'growth points' in the estates that have brought in some semblance of modern life. However, the big estates constitute a formidable problem that hinders the

acquisition of land for resettling the landless peasants surrounding them. As a matter of fact, even if the government is willing to resettle the peasants, the hard reality is that there is no available land. On its part, the government does not wish to antagonize these multinational companies by arbitrary land acquisition because they are a rich source of the much-sought foreign currency. Conscience always tells well-meaning people that it is 'unwise to bite the hand that feeds you'. In part, the foregoing explanation answers why there is an enduring conflict over land in Zimbabwe.

The attitude of the black landlords after 2000 has a bearing on the continued plight of the landless people still living in the APAs. The landlords have discouraged the tenants from leaving the black owned farming properties. The Third Chimurenga tended to threaten the collapse of black feudalism if the tenants left the APAs. Thus, the black landlords did everything possible to strike fear into the tenants. They told tenants that the ZANU (PF) government was giving out 'pieces of land' to the people, as a provisional strategy for political gain and after the election people would soon be evicted from the newly acquired farms. For example, one scholar, Alexander has remarked that the land reform programme was undertaken by the ZANU (PF) government as a bait to win votes. Here, Alexander (2003: 99) claimed, for instance, that: "The referendum defeat marked by the moment ... it became clear that the ruling party fraud a major electoral challenge in the shape of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), and it forced a dramatic shift in the strategies of ZANU PF. The populist rhetoric of land no longer convinced – action had to be taken. This is one such strong reason, why the landless people felt that they should stay on in the APAs. In addition, tenants in the APAs developed 'cold feet' because of the perceived eminent victory of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) in the national elections, viz: 2000, 2002, 2005 and 2008. From its inception in 1999, the MDC party was not in favour of the chaotic land invasions, especially as it came to be coordinated by war veterans of the Second Chimurenga in the 1970s.

Because they worked for whites, the war veterans classified all African farm workers, countrywide, as 'traitors' and enemies of the State (Financial Gazette, 2000). Land distribution was hurriedly and haphazardly done. In this way, the detractors of the Third Chimurenga have blatantly criticized it as unsystematic or chaotic. In retrospect, Third Chimurenga must be viewed as a revolution from above. The people who mattered most at the grass roots level, for instance, leaders like the traditional headmen and chiefs were shocked to see some war veterans on the white commercial farms as the new landowners. The chiefs were not consulted on how to distribute land within their jurisdictions. An African organization that represents farm workers in Zimbabwe lamented the sidelining of farm workers under the fast-track programme. Due to discrimination and a sense of

their apparent 'worker position' the poor labourers on the former white farming areas were not considered for resettlement. Their names were deliberately excluded from the list of the beneficiaries. Rather, many of the beneficiaries were the war veterans, the politicians of the ruling ZANU (PF) party, and other chief supporters of President Mugabe himself. This was the major weakness in the way land reform was carried out. Because it was done in a partisan way that was subjective and unfair, the result is manifested in the present internal dissent and the international isolation of Zimbabwe. The tenants stayed on in the APAs and logically aligned themselves with opposition MDC politics, as they were not enthusiastic to join the bandwagon of the perceived disorderly war veterans. Therefore, the Third Chimurenga has continued to be an unfinished business and this is why the conflict over land is enduring in Zimbabwe (The Sunday Mail, 5-11 September, 2010). It is against the backdrop of the foregoing insight that an emergence of a new 'Chimurenga-within-the Third Chimurenga' among the Ndau becomes lucid. Basically, the participants of the new insurrection were the former tenants from the APAs. Poor peasants from the surrounding villages of Gwenzi, Muzite and Mugondi gradually joined the tenants to invade the APAs.

BASIC MECHANICS OF LAND INVASION

The immediate cause of the disturbances in October 2009 is traced within the ripple effects of the Third Chimurenga. Whereas in 2000 the tenants shared a general skepticism about the reality of *hondo ye minda* (Third Chimurenga), it was almost realised by the time of the controversial Presidential Elections of March, 2008 that the land Reform was a permanent revolution in Zimbabwe. The notions of political gimmicking were gradually superseded by the 'gospel' of prosperity here on earth. On the ground, the few tenants who had courageously invaded the white farms were seen to be doing well than their former colleagues who had opted to stay put in the APAs. In fact, there was a noticeable spectre of modernity displayed by a few successful black farmers, dubbed, 'varimi vatsva' (new farmers). Some of them suddenly bought cars (though of course not brand new ones) for the first time in their lives. Some even built new houses in towns and growth points across the country. These social developments, so it was claimed, were done out of proceeds got from new farming. Thus, those tenants who had not invaded the white farms came to realise that the 'golden' agrarian reform under the Third Chimurenga had eluded them. A new inspiration caught people's imagination as they re-visited the old adage, 'Better late than never'. Thus, the tenants gathered new courage and new spirit to invade the APAs that they saw as the last bastion of successful agricultural production. As a matter of fact, peasants in Gwenzi

village spearheaded the new land invasions in the APAs in Chipinge on 9 October, 2009. Members of Chief Gwenzi's royal family gave these peasants some moral support and determination to invade the black-owned farms. Traditional family heads of notable villages of Manyuchi, Munamba and Zibuke provided the much-needed operational leadership of the insurrection to reclaim a lost resource, which is land. What happened was that the landless peasants pegged a number of 'square-boxed' portions of land inside a black owned farm and allocated each to the needy families and individuals (Muzite, 2010). As the study findings revealed, the peasants moved into the farms and violently forced the black landlords out of their farms. There was massive destruction of property and looting as well. These mechanisms of land acquisitions were a re-play of what war veterans did in 2000 and in the ensuing period (The Manica Post, 23 October 2009). There was no order on how to declare a prospective land for acquisition. Some plots of land were even pegged at night whilst people were drinking local beer brand known as 'chikeke' amidst frenzied singing and ululations (Sidhuna, 2010). These beer brands are heavy intoxicants. But the guiding principle was that 'a hungry man is an angry man'. The black owner was simply told of the new farm delineations, which were randomly done. The first black owned farm to be invaded was Farm number 39, which belonged to Mahaka. This farm was given to the Mahaka family in 1930 on the basis of the Land Apportionment Act yet it traditionally belonged under Gwenzi Chieftaincy (Mungenge, 2010). The farm site was also the traditional royal site for the Gwenzi clan. Farm number 39 became the new 'Command Centre' of the subsequent rounds of land invasions that engulfed all the black owned farms in the APAs. Some examples of black farms that were acquired mercilessly included those belonging to Cherele Ndlovu, Hohodza Dube, Mahasha Hlatywayo, Matiso Dhlakama, Rupiya Dube, Watch Thondhlana, Katali Musimbo, Hlabati Dzukuso and Gwenzi Sithole (Hlainjani, 2010). In the ensuing process, animals and property were destroyed as well. The farm owners eventually escaped because their lives were at stake. Such mayhem, however, caused sensations that caught the attention of the State.

STATE INTERVENTION AND HUMAN RIGHTS CONCERNS

The farm invasions by the tenants were not carried out in a peaceful manner. The tenants turned violent against their black masters. As the Assistant District Administrator for Chipinge has indicated, tenants committed acts of arson, for instance, the black farmhouses, barns, fowl runs and other physical structures were burnt to the ground (Dhliwayo, 2010). There was general lawlessness. The government was

worried by the goings-on in the APAs in Chipinge district. Given such a violent situation, the government swiftly responded by intervening to enforce law and order. As an arm of the State, the Police entered into the arena of land seizures. From the start, however, government intervention was not only motivated by the desire to protect life and property on the farms that were literally burning, but also to completely stop the invasions themselves. According to the government policy, black-owned farms are immune to arbitrary acquisition and resettlement. Black ownership is regarded as a status symbol of black advancement and empowerment. From this official State perspective, therefore, the new Chimurenga among the Ndaus was being carried out as a breach of government policy. From perspective of the government, in a way, this new insurrection was supposed to be stopped forthwith because it was disempowering some black indigenes in Zimbabwe.

The new land invaders met the wrath of the law as the police either arrested or beat or maimed or detained the gouches. The make-shift huts that had been erected were bulldozed to the ground while others were burned together with the blankets, utensils and foodstuffs. There was no forewarning when the police, in broad daylight, meted out these sordid actions (Simango, 2010). This is how human rights were violated as well. In Gwenzi village alone, this police action left 540 households homeless and destitute overnight (Muzite, 2010). No concrete plans were made to properly re-locate them to safe havens. The study found out that even by June 2010, some 96 households were living on the open grazing space. The study also revealed that some 176 more households are stranded at Muzite Growth Point (Dhliwayo, 2010). All these families do not have decent shelter and basic food to survive on. The government has not been proactive to re-settle former tenants as a marginalized class so as to address their age-long predicament of genuine landlessness. Whether it is due to the non-availability of land as a natural resource or what, but the fact remains that the peasants continue to be anxious and restive about their existential reality and prospects of sustainable development of their communities. Nonetheless, their plight has attracted sympathy and notice from some Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) operating in the country such as Christian Care, Action Faim, International Organisation of Migration and World Vision (Maranda, 2010). Since December 2009, these NGOs have been handy in providing some of the necessary provisions needed by the stranded peasants. They provide things like: tents, food, medicine and clothing to this seemingly ignored group of people in the society (Thondhlana, 2010). However the other tenants who are not serviced by the NGOs have found a sanctuary at Chimbuwe, which is like a 'no man's land' lying between Zimbabwe and Mozambique. Chimbuwe is a borderland enclave that was heavily mined by the Rhodesian forces to prevent Zimbabwean liberation guerilla fighters who

repeatedly made military incursions during the Second Chimurenga in the 1970s. The tenants are living dangerously since the capacity of space at Chimbuwe is too small to accommodate the large number of stranded tenants. In the context of human rights, this situation is worrisome as tenants are exposed to the possibility of stepping on land mines (Zibuke, 2010).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study has managed to show that the Fourth chimurenga that began in October 2009 is a sensitive saga. Its sensitiveness must be understood in the context of the wider land reform that attempts to redress the historical imbalances of land distribution in Zimbabwe. It emerged in the study that the wrangles for land possession in the Chipinge highlands that are affecting the Ndaus people reflect the hangovers of colonialism. It has also been noted that non-availability of fertile land for Africans in the area has undermined government efforts to provide land to the landless tenants. As has been pointed out, the non-availability of land is not because there is an acute shortage of it as a national resource. Rather, its non-availability in Zimbabwean indigenous hands is due to the commercial companies that have monopolized it through the plantation estates that were established in the heartland of Chipinge's arable highlands.

The study further highlighted that genuine landlessness and crude exploitation by the black landlords triggered off the new insurrection which we have described as a chimurenga-within-the Third Chimurenga. The study also explicated on the nature of black-to-black exploitation which is manifested in a variety of interlinked ways. As has been shown, among others the tenants paid through their labour power to justify continued stay in the APAs. They also were not allowed to erect permanent house structures, a condition that condemned them to live in untold squalor or misery. This misery is not 'innocent' but rather is structural in its form. Thus, the new Chimurenga that was initiated by the Ndaus is particularly grounded in the conditions that thrive on dehumanization. Yet, in the context of what happened on the ground, the mechanics of land invasions were disorderly and destructive, equally as was government response. In the process of the invasions and the subsequent police action to stop the rot, basic human rights have been sacrificed on the altar of government policy. In our evaluation of the history of struggles by the Africans in Zimbabwe, land has constituted the key issue that produced the Chimurengas. Therefore, the spirit of *aluta continua* has characterized the inner logic of all the Chimurengas, past and present.

All in all, the study concludes by suggesting some key recommendations concerning stakeholders vis-a-vis the conflict over land imbalances in Zimbabwe. Firstly, the government, estate or commercial companies and

traditional authorities are called upon to forge an alliance and dialogue together in resolving the historical land question in Zimbabwe, in general and Chipinge district, in particular. This dialogue is a 'journey' in which the three partners have to be sincere in the search for peace so that economic sustainability is realised and also justice prevails. Secondly, attempts towards conflict management calls for the establishment of a joint position that will culminate in the re-definition (or new definition) of farm sizes for both the commercial farms and individual plots so as to create agricultural space that accommodates the landless citizens across the country. Thirdly, an audit exercise must be undertaken in order to address some anomalies that are inherent inside Third Chimurenga. It must be noted that Zimbabwe's land reform programme was largely done in a chaotic manner that defied economic considerations. It is a hard reality that there are some beneficiaries who have multiple farms at the expense of the majority of the peasants. Therefore, this audit exercise is urgent because it may work to avail land to the landless peasants. There must be joint leadership for the recommended Audit Unit and made up of credible civic bodies and church leaders chosen by the people through a referendum across the country. The Audit Unit on land reform programme must be an arm of a standing Portfolio Committee of the Government of Zimbabwe. In light of these recommendations, the roots of internal conflict could be contained, equally as the packages of sustainable development could be attained in Zimbabwe.

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