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RETHINKING PARLIAMENT'S ROLE IN
ZIMBABWEAN SOCIETY

by

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1. PROLOGUE

It was neither an accident of history, nor was it blatant plagiarism that on the 11th of November 1965, the Rhodesian Front regime in declaring Independence from the British Crown, read out the very same words uttered by North American settlers in 1783 when they too had declared their independence from Britain. Rather, it was the apotheosis of the vision of the Rhodesian frontiersman. The parallels were too obvious for Smith and his henchmen. After all there had been constitutional debates in that North American bastion of freedom and democracy on whether the black man was a complete human being or not. Just as in Southern Rhodesia there had been extensive debate on whether to have a common roll or a qualified franchise for Africans. After all Sir Robert Tredgold's Franchise Commission in 1957 had recommended that special qualifications for Africans to vote for a single roll for the country would be unworkable because:

'So large a section of the population is backward and illiterate, and completely lacking in political background that the effect of the adult suffrage would be to place political control in the hands of people sadly unequipped to exercise it. An uneducated peasant from a remote area might possibly be able to form some sort of judgement upon the personal qualities of a candidate. But under our system of parliamentary government that is not enough. A voter must be able to form an opinion as to the true merits of the policy for which the candidate stands. This he certainly could not do.'

'Politics', indeed for the white settlers, of whatever political complexion ranging from rabid racism to liberal paternalism came to mean the timetable for the recovery of humanity by the black majority. Following the Tredgold Commission, the Electoral Act of 1957 instituted some complex changes in the franchise: it increased the number of African voters and at the same time introduced a new method of entrance into the voter's roll which would fall away once 'special voters' (that is those Africans sufficiently deemed to be human and responsible) had reached 20 per cent of the electorate in effect 1.16 per cent of the electorate, at which stage the African electorate would more or less remain fixed.

Early in 1969 the Rhodesian Front Government of Ian Smith published its 'Proposals for a New Constitution for Rhodesia' in an attempt to chart the political foundation for the country's social and economic development. Political representation was directly linked to the payment of income tax by racial groups, so that the processes for Africans becoming recognised as human beings became a functional relationship of a certain type of economic

progress, viz, that type of economic development that raises incomes so that they fell within categories liable for taxation. The eventual working out of the whole-like process was to be the achievement of political parity between the minority settlers and the majority political black population. Ian Smith's statement, now listed in a Book of Definitive Mistakes and Misguided Predictions:

"I don't believe in black majority rule ever in Rhodesia, not in a thousand years"²

exemplified the spirit of the constitution.

On the lunatic fringe of the Rhodesian Front however, the constitution was no guarantee against the sceptre of black rule; a mathematician after carrying out various calculations, wrote concerning the 1969 constitution:

"... for twice already in my life Rhodesian political events have destroyed the future I had mapped out for myself, and have reduced to nothing the work I had done since leaving school History has clearly shown that when an African state has black rule then there is no permanent place for the White man left on its soil - a fact that the Rhodesian white population well know The whole system of pegging economic progress in the African sector of the community to their political progress and vice-versa is a disastrous concept for significant and necessary economic advancement means loss of political control by the white population in the very near future, whereas a delay in their political advancement can only be brought about by a constitution of a below subsistence level economy in the African sector. For national security and for justice and advances for all Rhodesians this pegging must be abolished".³

The eventual recovery of the black man's human dignity was, however, in the final analysis determined not by some abstract number's game nor was it to be a function of economic crumbs falling from the white man's table, but rather of bloody and armed struggle initiated at the Battle of Chinhoyi in 1966. And the very uneducated, backward and illiterate peasantry that was supposed to lack political knowledge, rather than those Africans deemed to possess 'special qualifications' to vote responsibly, were instrumental in its recovery.

The Lancaster House Constitution which formally ushered in Zimbabwe independence while conceding majority rule, introduced another sort of 'pegging' in the form of the twenty reserved white seats. This was so as to protect 'minority' interests, but more insidiously represented a view long held about our society vis a vis the rest of the continent - that the white man here was homo

technologicus par excellence. The twenty white seats were unlike what had been found for the black seats in previous constitutions, pegged to some economic or demographic indicator, but rather to a static stereotype. The continued 'white presence' in Zimbabwe has in short, in many a prognosis of our future, become the most important technical condition of production - that even stock-market prices, possibilities of investment in the economy have been pegged to a notion of 'white confidence' whose barometer was the frequency of speeches driving some home-truths into the heads of Rhodesian frontiersmen. Zimbabwe must be the only country whose technical conditions for production have been defined in such a racist framework. (For the technical/material conditions of production reflect the relationship among people, the means of production and nature). In any other society they would include not only such aspects as ecological conditions, existing tools, available natural resources and technology but the knowledge, skills and practices, imagination and will power of the whole population. But for Zimbabwe, it seems to those concerned about the continuance of the Lancaster House Constitution that the small white population embodies our technical conditions of production - and that together with their culture, values and intellectual traditions, forms a system which defines and will continue to define our potential for production so that the emigration of whites remains a sensitive indicator for international business confidence.

The internal reflex of this view has been expressed in the failure to demarcate the post-independence era, by spurious references to notions of maintaining standards rather than the creation of new standards befitting new socio-economic realities.

External observers of the Zimbabwean post independence situation have also sought to seek another sort of continuity in post independence institutions - the existence or non-existence of democracy in Zimbabwe has thus been determined by various standards of deviation from the archaic Westminster parliamentary system. Thus the mumbo-jumbo of British parliamentary procedure, which even after so many centuries is still shrouded in mystery for the Englishman on the Clapham Omnibus, is expected to represent democratic procedures for a liberated Zimbabwe.

In our view, Parliament is only one aspect of state power which enables stabilized messages to be transmitted through the state's territories by its agents enabling legal responsibilities to be codified and stored, so that it reflects the political culture of the society for which legislation is

enacted. It is therefore necessary to begin to shift the assemblage point of enquiry on the role of Parliament in Zimbabwe away from the expectations of our former colonial masters to one encompassing the political, economic and social needs of the Zimbabwean populace. Parliament should be a reflection of political development and in every society economic theory plays a pivotal role in social thought, so that theory has developed on the basis of the dominant version of economic theory. For Zimbabwe, it therefore means that the search for this dominant version lies outside books, otherwise the whole exercise of rethinking Parliament's role can boil down to an exercise in studying the development of recent Western social and political theory which can only lead to a cul de sac:

"Since World War II, all theorising about political development, be it positivist or Marxist has in many ways emphasized 'thought' at the expense of material life. Ideas were taken to be the creator or determinant of the form history was to take in the Third World. It was commonly believed that the problems of the Third World could be solved by directly applying theoretical constructs derived from the study of the historical evolution of the West".⁴

Our assemblage point for enquiry therefore has to shift away from any ready made models of political development because, be they 'capitalist' or 'socialist', more often than not these are usually offered up for implementation by foreign professional analysts who have no direct assumption of responsibility for the political implications or eventual outcomes of their advice. The task is one of divesting the enquiry of all tinges of cultural imperialism. For in many critiques of the Western parliamentary system by African intellectuals, the very categories in which the criticism is made - the defence of the one party state concept, the rights to sovereignty, distributive justice and rational self-determination are an inheritance of the West, following as we do with enthusiasm the latest currents in intellectual life in Europe and North America. What we so often forget is that:

"The influence of the literature of one country on the literature of another is proportional to the similarity of the social relations of these countries".⁵

Literature reviews of parliamentary institutions of other countries will therefore be of limited utility in attempting to clearly delineate the foundation of our understandings of the constitution and parliament. The problem is analytic rather than a methodological one needing an a priori solution.

The focus of the enquiry has to be based on consensibility rather than consensus, in order to ensure that we do not become slaves to any prevailing agreement among foreign scholars about the nature of our society.

And even if one descended to a very banal level, wherein parliamentary procedures are regarded as rituals, the question would still have to be asked: how are these rituals linked to productive and material processes in Zimbabwe at all levels of political organisation from the ten cell household, through the village development council, right up to the House of Assembly and the Senates. Politics cannot therefore be limited to the purely political, with the attendant narrow focus on administrative reform. This is so because the mechanisms by which social and economic reproduction take place are not purely 'economic mechanisms' relying solely on the mobilisation of individual self interest to secure the socio-economic reproduction of society. Social processes within which the economic reproduction of society is secured involve political, legal and normative regulation that call forth specific social institutions on which regulative functions devolve.

Despite structures imposed by the Lancaster House Constitution, the Zimbabwean Government has within the limits of the constraints, created political and economic space for the further restructuring of Zimbabwean society - for example, the establishment of the village development councils, which have access to the provincial governor. And in turn, the provincial governors occupy seats in the Upper Chamber of the House of Assembly. It is therefore with a view to strengthening these types of links between political representation and productive processes, that Parliament's role in Zimbabwean society has to be rethought.

The process of re-evaluating Parliament's role should, however, go beyond an analysis of political factors which primarily reflect the structure and the function of the state - and the impact of elected representatives of the people on such important national issues as policies for agriculture, health and education, income and price policies and also the existing legal system. It should also incorporate a study of ideological factors at all levels of Zimbabwean society. This reconsideration of 'ideological factors' should not however be carried out within an abstracted empiricist fashion, with all the overtones of the Cold War, and class distinctions based on the historical experiences of other countries. Rather what is important is to clearly delineate Zimbabwe's social relations, as they are influenced by ideological factors, not in the restrictive academic sense of mindless labelling but 'ideological factors' as covering broad aspects of society, for example, religion, culture, tradition and

beliefs.

This Working Paper will not make the rash attempt to broach all the issues mentioned above, but rather seeks to provide a basis on which further questions can be posed, and ideas explored about the role of parliament in Zimbabwean society.

BEYOND THE LIMITATIONS OF DELINEATED HISTORICAL COST OF
PRODUCTION FRAMEWORKS FOR THE ROLE OF PARLIAMENT IN
ZIMBABWEAN SOCIETY

In any human society economic theory has played a pivotal and crucial role in social and political thought. As economic theory is not primarily academic but also encompasses information about actual material conditions very close to the essential concerns of every living soul, it can be said that all political science theory has developed on the dominant version of economic theory. In order to go beyond the limits set in the Lancaster House Constitution it is not sufficient to merely tear it up through the legislative processes. It is necessary to consider the dominant version of economic theory that underlies British constitutional making for Zimbabwe. That would be sufficient material for an exhaustive study in itself - but a mere description of this process would be engaging in pure and crude scholasticism - what is more important at this particular stage in Zimbabwe's political development for the social researcher is to attempt to point out the observable manifestations of rule making by the British in Zimbabwe on all aspects of our living conditions. The history of the physical methods employed since 1890, belongs to a very recent past whose memories are still too fresh - and might only be of worthwhile study to a political and disinterested fundis of military science. What concerns us is more delineation of some the appropriate structures, and in what form their internal methods of operation should be patterned in order to generate political strategies that can complete the process of liberation in Zimbabwe. It is therefore essential to point out some of the structures of political behaviour in Zimbabwean society inherited from the colonial regimes of the past (whether these be present in both formal and informal political institutions) and expose the economic theory that underlies the political behaviour of surviving Rhodesian frontiersmen and their witting or unwitting Zimbabwean collaborators.

Constitutions made by the British ever since they formalised their colonial presence in Zimbabwe by the Order in Council of 1898 have been based on the variations or permutations of the dominant economic theory of the British bourgeoisie outlined in 1776 by Adam Smith in the Wealth of Nations (Read The British Nation), Ricardo, and Malthus in his An Essay on Population. Thus Claire Palley wrote in 1966, on the constitutional consequences of 'throwing open' Zimbabwe to white settlement:

"... the major institutions, the instruments of administration and legislative policies, most of which were to endure until the present day were at an early stage established on this view of Southern Rhodesia's future and the structure of Southern Rhodesian institutions is even today almost entirely a reflection of European politics".

Five years after independence, no amount of even 'home-bred' leftist radical cynicism can say that the position is still the same. Despite the fact that Zimbabwe still adheres to the Westminster structure of government and follows the procedures of the House of Commons in Britain, it cannot be said that Zimbabwean institutions are a reflection of European politics. To continue to seek such reflections in the Zimbabwean state is at best engaging in a futile exercise of attempting to blur the very real discontinuities in Zimbabwean society from the previous order. At worst it is a rather crude and mechanistic phrase mongering to support the idealist view of society that the ideological superstructure of a social formation is autonomous of its material base. And as usual the class analyses emanating from such misguided prognostications are based on behavioural indicators abstracted from sociological studies of other societies, at different points in history.

It is not within the scope of this paper to laboriously trace the constitutional history of this country. Only that crucial aspect of constitutional history relating to the franchise or the right to vote - in other words the right to be considered a full human being is reviewed. For in the final analysis, it has been the most vivid reflection of the dominant economic theory about the black man's place in society.

Thus under the Southern Rhodesian Order in Council of 1898:

"Male persons over the age of twenty-one who were either British subjects by birth or by naturalisation, or had taken an oath of allegiance and had for six months preceding the registration of voters either occupied a building in the electoral district to the value of £75 or owned a mining claim or received wages at no less than £50 per annum were entitled to register provided they could write their name, address and occupation".⁷

The franchise qualifications were thus couched in non-discriminatory language, but it was and is still clear who was not included. There was still uncertainty in the imperial mind, whether he was a hundred per cent human or not - he certainly could approximate to that if he could be tutored to read and write his name - or if he somehow acquired property. The laws of population and of wages would ensure that not too many Africans in the new colony would be able to vote - at least in the foreseeable future.

By the 1920s it was clear that the mere ability to read and write English was no sufficient guarantee to blacks meekly accepting their subjugation, as had been evidenced by the activities of the Southern Rhodesia - Native Congress, the International Commercial Workers Union (ICU), the Rhodesia Bantu Voters Association etc. In 1923 the Southern Rhodesia Constitution - Letters Patent provided for a typical 'westminster' export model of that period - with a unicameral legislature and House of Commons procedure. The interests of the native majority were not to be met by their actually voting for their representatives but by entrenched clauses in the constitution which would protect them against 'discriminatory legislation' by the settlers to ensure that the laws of population and wages continued to operate. Having been given state power under Responsible government, the settlers then proceeded to ensure that the laws passed in their version of the House of Commons would ensure that the law of population and wages would always work out for the benefit of the white man. Racist ideas then in vogue in the Western World were grafted onto the classical laws of population and wages, to give the semblance that the inferiority and sub-humanity of the native population were as natural phenomena as the rising and the setting of the sun.

Beginning with the White Man's Magna Carta - the Land Apportionment Act of 1930, the settlers' house of commons passed legislation institutionalising the suppression of the black man in every conceivable field of political, social and economic life. The Rhodesian settler frontier thus expanded, and with the gentleman's agreement that the 'native question' should not be a matter for party politics among the elected representatives of the whites - political life in the colony entered that very strange disaggregated world consisting of the tens of thousands or so whites, choosing between thousands of goods attempting to maximise their utility, with the black man providing the labour power.

But after the Second World War, especially in the wake of the General Strike of 1948, the need was seen to shift the assemblage point slightly in order to ensure the industrialisation of the colony. There now emerged talk of 'partnership' of capital and labour - based on the horse-rider principle. It was realised

that the carrot of the 'benefits of exploitation' could only be effectively dangled if there was some modification of pass laws that restricted labour migration - which prevented black individuals from freely selling their labour power in their own interests and in the interests of the colonial masters. Factor mobility was simply a matter of response to prices without consideration of the general social conditions which gave rise to those factors and prices. Both black and white individuals were seen as having fixed tastes and talents and the fewer questions asked about how these had been derived the better.

But with many Africans becoming literate and even going to university and some acquiring property, besides introducing further legislation to restrict access to land by Africans (1947 Land Apportionment Act), in 1951 voter's qualifications were raised - to the need to possess property worth £500. Further, applicants had to be able to speak and write English.

With the rising crescendo of African nationalism in the 1950s the Tredgold Commission, appointed in 1956, considered and reported on what they considered to be a system for the just representation of the people of the colony in the Legislative Assembly, "under which the Government is placed and remains in the hands of civilised and responsible persons". The 'special' qualifications for Africans to vote were such a mechanism proposed to maintain in the words of Sir Robert Tredgold:

"A society which would give every individual the opportunity to lead the good life as he sees it".⁸

The vital point was that the settlers could never define for Zimbabweans what the good life meant. The spate of British sponsored constitutional proposals, still maintaining that Africans did not know what was good for them, continued for the next two decades. Ian Smith, by declaring U.D.I. in 1965, openly declared that it was the settlers, who had evolved their political institutions on the frontier between civilisation and barbarism in Rhodesia, who knew how to both define and administer the needs of the African population. And in words which have been immortalised as constituting the most definitive mistakes and misguided predictions in human history Smith declared:

"We now have a Rhodesian Constitution and if anybody thinks it can be improved, I would like to know where.

We have the happiest Africans in the world".⁹

With the intensification of the armed struggle after 1972, it however became clear that Africans in Zimbabwe would not be happy until they had the right to determine their own needs and destiny.

Various ideas were thrown up by various reformist white groups and economists who believed that if only the carrot was made larger, through some form of trickle down, the rider-horse partnership could be made to work for the benefit of blacks and whites. Thus the cost of production perspective about Zimbabwe gained respectability amongst sensible whites who did not regard themselves as red-necks.

In short, it was argued that all efforts should be directed at satisfying the basic needs of the black majority as defined by the whites. It was of course conveniently forgotten that there has never been a society based on just basic needs - and that the fulfillment of so called non-material needs are paramount in the legitimation of state power. Economists writing in the Rhodesian Journal of Economics were in various tortuous ways to argue to the Smith regime that social relations in Zimbabwe were determined by the needs of technology and patterned by the pattern of distribution - necessitating some adjustment in the income levels of black workers. U.D.I., it was further argued, was restricting the prospects of industrialisation in the country. Industrialisation would only follow if the political economy of race discrimination rather than exploitation were removed.

The search for a settlement to the Rhodesian problem, by both the American and British government was to follow similar patterns of thought as outlined above - i.e., finding a simple flexible model which would bridge the gap between the abstractions of liberal political theory, and the antagonistic relationship between capital and labour.

Ian Smith himself, faced with the mounting tide of the liberation war, was by 1978 touting the internal settlement. He then sought to recruit black collaborators to his twisted adaptation of subjective preference theory. Recognising the economic power the settlers had accumulated, he sought to take with him Bishop Muzorewa and Ndabaningi Sithole into that disaggregated mythical world consisting of seven million separate individuals choosing between millions of goods and attempting to maximise their individual utilities.

That brief episode in our history was ended by the Lancaster House Constitution, after the realisation by the British Government that the 'internal settlement'

had in fact led to an intensification of the armed struggle.

Whereas in previous constitution-making the British had made some feeble noises about the protection of African interests, they now dug their heels on the question of entrenching into the constitution the reserved twenty white seats. Thus while giving in with one hand the principle of majority rule, they now elevated the tiny white population to supermen - homo technologicus par excellence. The presence of whites in Zimbabwe was seen as the most vital condition of production. And as we have stated before, their emigration is still perceived as the most reliable indicator of business conditions in Zimbabwe.

Thus far we have given a bird's eye view of the principles which underlay constitution-making in Zimbabwe since 1890. Within the confines of the Lancaster House Constitution the Zimbabwean state has gone a long way in democratising society and moving away from a cost of production framework, and in the first five years of independence, space has been created for the further development of the political system. This 'space' created in the inherited political structures will be considered below, primarily concentrating on the extension of the democratic principle to the Zimbabwean society.

The principles which should underpin an inquiry into the nature of political development must involve a shift away from the assemblage point of cost of production theory in all its permutations. Social democracy for instance, following Kautsky has tended to see the relationship between workers and intellectuals in the transition to socialism in formal and mechanistic terms with the intellectuals - refugees from the bourgeoisie and the petty bourgeoisie, providing theory and ideology for a mass base of non intellectuals, i.e. workers. It is from such a mechanistic and formal conception of the transition to socialism that well-meaning 'positive deviants' in the United Kingdom are trying to recreate the white man's burden by patronising in our country what they perceive to be the left intellectuals - and underlay the debacle of the British Labour Party's Militant Tendency's attempts to infiltrate the Zimbabwean Labour Movement. This self appointed role of British academics on the left, to reinvent the white man's burden is all too evident in a publication from the Universities of Keele and Leeds called the Review of African Political Economy whose most recent issue deals with the tantalising topic: "Intellectuals and the 'left' in Africa" in which we read:

"... when we started publication there was but the embryo of an intellectual left in most of Africa. This, as we shall now see, has changed dramatically and so it is perhaps overdue that we assemble views about the role that 'intellectuals' - and despite the connotations it is hard to come up with another term for those in Africa likely to sit down and read worthy articles in a foreign language - do and might play in the political practice of the continent.

The 1970s in fact saw a vigorous blossoming of the spread of Marxist perspectives of left intellectual debate and radical scholarship in Africa. The University of Dar-es-Salaam was full of lively debate in the years after 1968. Dakar had had the kind of vigorous intellectual climate which fostered a commitment to Marxist ideas even before that. After 1975 many radical scholars congregated in Maputo".¹⁰

It would not take too much historical inquiry to actually show that the editors of this reputable journal credit themselves with having sparked off these 'lively debates' hence their subjective definition of the intellectual as someone 'likely to sit down and read worthy articles in a foreign language' written by none other than themselves.

The implications of this are that these 'positive deviants' or intellectual refugees from their own political cultures, will chart the way out for the rest of us ignorant Africans who do not consider their articles worthy as a basis for political practice. More at issue in this working paper, lest it be diverted into a review of these worthy ruminations in foreign languages, is the cost of production framework implicit in all these attempts to chart a course for our political development. We have already stated how the twenty white seats embodied the principle that the whites settlers, regardless of numbers, constituted the vital technical condition of production for Zimbabwe.

There is basically no difference in that 'enshrined' constitutional principle of Lancaster House, and the attempt to patronise and chart our political development by the British left. The technical conditions of production of a society, it must be emphasised, include besides natural resources and technology - knowledge, skills practices, imagination and will power. But it distinctly emerges from these self-important positive deviants in British universities that unless we read their articles we cannot define ourselves as intellectuals - and therefore that without their benevolent intervention we inherently lack the knowledge, imagination and will power to map out our own practice for the transition to socialism.

For their own very often careerist reasons and in order to fuel consultancy mongering, following Kautsky these foreign political experts have turned the relationship between workers and intellectuals into a rigid and mechanistic

article of faith - with deviant intellectuals in the West providing global theory and ideology, being transmitted down personal networks of their African petty-bourgeois catechists who would then provide the local variant of the theory and ideology (and often leadership) for the mass base who do not find time or cannot afford to read these 'worthy articles in a foreign language'. The division of labour within a socialist movement was vigorously contested by Lenin, who declares in What Is To Be Done that in the revolutionary party 'all distinctions as between workers and intellectuals ... must be obliterated'. Lenin's attitude to the problem of the intellectuals was closely connected with his theory of the vanguard party, and when he wrote about the need for socialist consciousness to be brought to the working class from outside, the agency he foresaw for carrying this out was not the traditional intelligentsia, but the revolutionary party itself, in which former workers and former professional intellectuals of bourgeois origin would have been fused into a single cohesive unit.

The advent of majority rule in Zimbabwe has meant that informally the 'concept' of legislator can now be identified with the concept of 'politician'. Since all men are 'political beings' all are also legislators. But formal distinctions have to be made because a legislator or Member of Parliament has a precise juridical and official meaning, i.e. it means those persons empowered by the constitution to enact laws. But as Gramsci points out, it can have other meanings too:

"Every man, in as much as he is active, i.e., living, contributes to modifying the social environment in which he develops (to modifying certain of its characteristics or to preserving others); in other words, he tends to establish 'norms', rules of living and behaviour. One's circle of activity may be greater or smaller, one's awareness of one's own action and aims may be greater or smaller; furthermore, the representative power may be greater or smaller, and will be put into practice to a greater or lesser extent in its normative, systematic expression by the 'represented'. A father is a legislator for his children, but the paternal authority will be more or less conscious, more or less obeyed and so forth".¹¹

With such a framework it is possible to further describe how the making of these rules and the actual rules are closely integrated to productive processes in society. For every community or society right down to the household has a certain potential for production. What does eventually get produced is influenced by technical, social, political and ideological factors. It is also possible to clearly define at what levels resources are controlled and the institutional rule maker. Thus in Zimbabwe, resources are controlled primarily at the following levels:-

Household

Village

Ward

District

Province

National

International

The inter-face between the levels at which resources are controlled in Zimbabwe, and the decision making processes, are the real indicators of the extension of democratic processes rather than hypocritical protestations about the virtues of Western Parliamentary Democracy by leaders of minority parties and Rhodesian frontiersmen. The decision making process has in Zimbabwe since independence been disaggregated through the creation of Village Development Committees, Ward Development Committees, District Development Committees, and Provincial Development Committees. No formal institutional links as yet exist between these committees and Members of Parliament in the House of Assembly, but the election of Provincial Governors to the Upper Chamber has initiated their integration into national decision-making processes.

The introduction of a one party state would further integrate the lowest political units in Zimbabwean society into the parliamentary system. Archaic models of Westminster 'parliamentary democracy' or of pluralist democracy will neither lead to an integration of political and economic life, nor to an extension of the democratic process. For, under a one party state further institutional linkages between the levels at which economic resources are controlled, the local government structures, and the party would be developed across all levels. At present the decision making processes within ZANU (PF) exist at the following levels:

- Cell (10 households)
- Branch
- District
- Province
- Central Committee
- Polit Bureau

Parliament's role therefore would be to ensure the maximum legislative capacity, which would be inferred not from faithful observance of Western parliamentary procedures, but when a perfect formulation of directives from the Polit Bureau and Central Committee is matched by a perfect arrangement of the organisms of execution and verification in the National Assembly, and by a perfect preparation at grass-root levels of the party, of the 'spontaneous' consent of the masses who must 'live' these directives, modifying their own habits, their own will, their own convictions to conform with those directives and with those development plans which they propose to achieve. If everyone is a legislator in the broadest sense of the concept, he continues to be a legislator even if he accepts directives from others - if as he carries them out he makes certain that others are carrying them out too; if having understood their spirit, he propagates them as through making them into rules specifically applicable to limited and definite zones of living.

THE ROLE OF THE ZIMBABWEAN MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT IN THE TRANSITION TO SOCIALISM BEYOND FORMAL STRUCTURES.

The ruling party's Member of Parliament in the Second Zimbabwe Parliament in a sense finds himself straddling two contradictory political and social traditions, out of whose mixed inheritance he has to define his own role, and enhance the political capacity of his constituency. The first tradition is the more formalised one represented by the Lancaster House Constitution, and the western parliamentary model of resolving political matters - i.e., the bourgeois democratic tradition, as represented by the so-called Mother of Parliaments - the British House of Commons. The other political tradition, albeit as yet expressed in formal terms, that he represents, is however steeped in the revolutionary culture of Zimbabwe; it is a tradition that has given the ruling party its legitimacy, as demonstrated by the general election results in 1980 and in 1985. It is a tradition he has inherited from those very same peasants considered by British jurists and colonial constitution-makers, too backward and irresponsible to be able to exercise the vote. The legitimacy of the party he represents - ZANU P.F., has not been primarily derived through the ballot but through political strategies pursued by the revolutionary vanguard party during the liberation war.

It was these 'illiterate' peasants who, when their strategies for survival had become nearly exhausted, in order to regain their own designs of living, their own conception of social justice, participated in the revolutionary politics

of the armed struggle spearheaded by Z.A.N.U. (PF). This was outside the framework of British sponsored constitutional proposals, ranging all the way from Tiger, Fearless, the Home proposals, right up to the Internal Settlement of 1978. In as much as Z.A.N.U. (PF) has derived its mandate to rule Zimbabwe from practices during the liberation war that validated much of what the working people wanted by way of justice and order - it becomes possible to speak of the Zimbabwean revolution as a folk revolution, that is a revolution in the service of the humble folk. In the most fundamental sense, this legitimacy was therefore earned by raising a protective shield before the peasant communities. It was therefore not a negation of their traditions, but rather the development of a political work style in harmony with the peasants' own proposals for self-rule, which were only formally articulated at the Lancaster House Conference. This work style was the product of the liberation forces' interaction and communion with the people. In political mobilisation, the ruling party, had therefore interacted with the goals of an infuriated peasantry, and in the process, had its Marxist-Leninist ideology infused from below by a robust folklore on revolution going back to the first Chimurenga of 1896/97.

The ZANU (PF) Member of Parliament in the Second Zimbabwean Parliament, in a sense is faced with a monumental task of, on one hand operating within the inherited formal democratic procedures and forms of an alien culture imposed by the Lancaster House Constitution, and on the other building up the political capacity of his constituents to participate in the process of remodelling their society in their own image. This implies a deepening of the gains of the political revolution brought about by independence in 1980. The policy of reconciliation as symbolised in the white in the Zimbabwean flag was an essential element in consolidating the political revolution, and had little to do with cost of production considerations relating to European 'know-how' and expertise. Revolution after all is not simply a certain transformation of society but above all a transformation of people - and in the case of Zimbabwe, and in conformity with the ruling party's non racist philosophy, this included members of the oppressor white ruling class.

Unfortunately, however, in philistine circles 'reconciliation' has also been taken to mean adherence to the multi-party model of democracy, so that parliamentary procedures remain static reflections of the British system of political reconciliation - with any proposed move away from this being interpreted as undemocratic. What is often forgotten by such political commentators, however is that the question of democratic forms has to be totally different for a

liberated Zimbabwe. The democracy the Zimbabwean masses fought for went beyond governmental forms and extended to the social question, to the democratization of socio-economic life - a task still beyond the political horizon of Western political cultures. For in both the United States and in the United Kingdom, the 'hallowed democratic principles' built up over centuries, have been nothing more than an exercise in convincing a maximum of the people that they were participating in state power by means of minimum concessions to democratic forms.

The first five years of independence, culminating in ZANU (PF)'s landslide victory in the general election this year, heralded the cementing of the political revolution. The legislators representing the ruling party must now in a sense build a social revolution from the foundations laid down during the first five years of nationhood. If this social revolution means a basic transformation in the social system involving its class base, then it is apparent and clear that such a sweeping change cannot be conceived of as a mere act or event but as a process more or less extended in time, through the creation of formal linkages by legislators with the social base they represent.

It is therefore specific modalities for achieving these linkages which should be the subject for debate i.e., what mechanisms should be instituted to assist ZANU (PF) parliamentary representatives in developing the political capacity of the masses to build self-reliant communities under the rule of law for the pursuit of the ideals of justice, equality, participation and the commonweal. Debates about British parliamentary procedure as defined by Erskine May or any other such authority are irrelevant. National Transformation after all is not about the transformation of constitutional phrases into Zimbabwean realities. If parliament is to be developed in an African sense, there is no room for the imitation of European patterns on the ground of sheer analogy or in the parroting of watchwords sacred to the British political dictionary. Such debates should best be left to those who imposed it on Zimbabwe. Most of these procedures have little meaning for the working people of the countries for whom they were intended - what more for Zimbabwe? The time has long passed for our parliamentarians to drug themselves with recollections about the operation of the British constitution.

In order to arrive at its own content, the Zimbabwean revolution must let the dead bury their dead. The methods and procedures for parliamentary activity cannot therefore be drawn from past experiences of other societies, but rather from our own past and from our future. There is therefore the crucial

necessity to strip all discussion about the reform of parliament of all superstition surrounding Western bourgeois democratic forms and procedure.

By way of conclusion, it should be stated that in a paper of this nature, which is merely exploratory, it would be arrogant and indeed foolish to attempt to specify the precise modalities for the re-arrangement of Parliament. Doing so, from a research point of view would be indeed attempting to substitute social science analysis for political processes and would only lead to distortion.

What has been put forward at best in this paper, has been a conceptual framework for reformulating Parliament's role in Zimbabwe.

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