

THE POST-INDEPENDENCE 'SKILLS CRISIS'
AND TRANSFORMATION IN ZIMBABWE

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When Zimbabwe became independent in April 1980, among the new government ministries that were immediately created was Manpower Planning and Development. Some months later, during a major press interview, spokesmen indicated that one of the main objectives of the Ministry would be 'to develop throughout the nation a high level of self-reliance in technological skill and trained manpower so as to advance the overall national objective of attaining genuine economic independence and progressive social development' (The Herald, 19 Dec. 1980). A comprehensive exercise to establish an inventory of the nation's skill resources and manpower needs was also announced. The National Manpower Survey was launched early in 1981 and the first volume of its final report publicly released in August 1983. In a foreword to the report, the Prime Minister states that prior to independence three factors were central to the liberation movement's thinking regarding the colonial economy and future human resources planning, viz. the dominance of white skills in all sectors of the colonial economy, the dearth of skills among the black population, and the possibility of a mass exodus of skilled whites at independence (Government of Zimbabwe, 1983).

It is clear that at independence the principal short-term goal was to gain effective control of the instruments of government as a means of gradually extending control over other sectors of society and bringing about the necessary changes within them. The experience of other African countries, and of Mozambique and Angola in particular, was, however, sufficient warning that this should be attempted without severely disrupting the economy, which had already been badly affected by the war.

The majority of whites were, of course, apprehensive to say the least, and had little confidence in the new government. Many were persuaded that black government must of necessity spell disaster, and feared that Zimbabwe would slide into inefficiency, a breakdown of services, and virtually bankruptcy, like 'other countries to the North'. They had, after all, been fed on this kind of fare for years as an inducement to resist a black

take-over at all costs. As far as blacks themselves were concerned, there was the claim that Zimbabwe, by virtue of the long delay in the achievement of majority rule and the scholarship support of many countries, had more academically trained nationals per capita than any other African country at independence.¹ There were, nonetheless, sufficient references after independence to the need for ensuring efficiency and maintaining and improving standards to suggest that leaders were aware of a possible deterioration in the quality of administration and services. The government recognised that in this issue the availability of adequate skilled manpower was crucial. What, then, has the experience of Zimbabwe been thus far?

Briefly, I want to argue that there has indeed been a skills problem after independence; that it has been due largely to the sharp increase in demand and mobility since 1980, coupled with the effects of the self-fulfilling prophesy of whites dating back to before independence, that the extent of the so-called 'skills crisis' could, nevertheless, easily be exaggerated and might, for the most part, prove to be only a temporary phenomenon; and, finally, that while some measures taken by the government to deracialise and democratise skills are beginning to create a broader skills base in the population, other processes, both planned and unplanned have had unanticipated consequences which are inimical to the development of socialism. There is not enough data yet to adequately substantiate all of these points, but I suggest that they are worth pursuing.

To assess the nature and causes of manpower shortages it is necessary to look at both the demand and supply side in turn.

Popular demand, change, and mobility

Throughout the Third World, independence has stimulated a sharp increase in the demand for services (and hence personnel), usually well beyond the capability of governments to supply them. Zimbabwe is unlikely to prove an exception to this. Once certain barriers to access are removed or the difficulties of overcoming them are eased somewhat even for limited categories of people, demographic pressures immediately become more apparent; that is, the sheer number of people who were previously denied opportunities and are now ready to claim them.

The abolition or official discouragement of previous forms of racial discrimination improves access for many, even when grave inequities remain on class or other bases. The drive for 'integration' or racial equality often

reveals how grossly unequal previously segregated facilities or institutions such as hospitals or schools were and how great the financial costs and other problems are of attempting to bring them on a par with each other, seeing that the pressure is usually to 'equalise up'. The opening up of facilities such as hospitals or public offices previously used mainly, or exclusively, by whites often means that they become severely crowded since many would like to avail themselves of their superior services, resulting in queueing and considerable problems for hard-pressed staff. This soon became apparent at Harare's Parirenyatwa hospital's casualty and outpatient departments, for example. The Minister of Health recently admitted that the small complement of government doctors had difficulties in coping since the hospital had traditionally been served largely by private practitioners.

Such situations are not new to blacks who had previously been accustomed to have to wait or queue at overcrowded and understaffed establishments, but whites tend to stand aghast at such 'lowering of standards'. The better-off are therefore inclined to establish or expand more expensive private facilities, such as clinics, schools, clubs and the like, against the government's declared aim of fostering greater equality,

There are other factors which stimulate popular demand. First among these is the introduction of free services, at least for some, or a significant lowering of their cost to consumers. Thus the government abolished public fees in primary schools, reduced those for secondary schools, and introduced free health care for people earning less than \$150 per month soon after independence. The extent, and various ramifications, of the explosion in demand are not always foreseen. The most dramatic indication in Zimbabwe is probably the increase in total school enrolments from 885 801 in 1979 to 2 495 297 in 1983, a nearly threefold increase in four years (The Herald, 18 April and 2 June 1983). Recently the Minister of Education announced, however, that in future urban communities will have to build their own primary schools and that those who could afford it might also have to pay for their childrens' education (The Herald, 11 April 1983). To return to the health field again, it became apparent after independence that pharmaceutical firms were not geared to meet the sudden increase in the demand for drugs. Rural hospitals and clinics in particular suffered. This situation has now been rectified to a large extent. Frequently, however, the cumulative manpower and cost implications of more egalitarian policies are not properly assessed, appropriations for departments or contingencies prove to be

hopelessly inadequate and a variety of shortages or bottlenecks appear.

Manpower shortages constitute a fundamental constraint on development but are often compounded with other complications. When the government over-commits itself or has to reduce expenditure due to economic stringency such as at the present time, recourse is not usually taken to retrenchment because of pressures to maintain employment levels. It is typically allocations for new equipment, buildings, consumables and other recurrent expenditures which are cut first. This may well aggravate frustration. An over-stretched and harassed staff may now also find themselves short of the necessary means to do their job. To pick one current example, rehabilitation staff confront a situation not long after the international Year of the Disabled in which little or no public funds appear to be available to supply indigent patients with adjustable or elbow crutches, let alone wheelchairs.

The rising income of some (until inflation catches up with it) due to the establishment of minimum wages and the growing number who move into the middle-income bracket also means that more can afford, or seek services which are not free. This probably leads to longer term shifts in demand and consumption patterns, for example, toward using certain private services where these are available, even when their cost demand sacrifices. This, once more, helps to maintain privilege.

Improved communication and the impact of conscientization over time in themselves encourage increased demand. People believed that independence would mean being able to share in a better life which they had been denied heretofore. Public claims, promises, and information, designed to enhance the legitimacy of the new government, make people more aware of what is (or should be) available and encourage them to claim it. And the leadership indeed feel a genuine obligation to meet many of these demands.

The desire to transform society generates its own momentum, calling for additional trained personnel. Quite apart from pre-independence promises, there are widespread expectations that rapid progress would be made toward a more just order. Leading officials and ministers, many of whom have returned from long and trying years of exile which fired strong idealism, are keen to give effect to ambitious plans. These plans and policies directed at transformation spawn new programmes, departments and projects, all calling for skilled and experienced staff who can produce quick results. The lure of foreign aid offers, backed by their own philosophies, interests and designs, further encourages such new ventures and expansion. Much of this is focused on important objective needs. Engineers and technicians are required for

water development programmes, project planners for a whole range of rural schemes, notably those associated with resettlement, promotion officers for the cooperativisation drive and so on. Most of them are initially in short supply, giving rise to delays, organisational problems and make-shift solutions. Idealism is also soon overtaken by other realities such as budgetary constraints, inter-ministerial and inter-departmental rivalries, empire building tendencies, lack of public support etc., resulting in lack of coordination, duplication, or the withholding of essential cooperation.

All of these developments have occurred in Zimbabwe in the context of a necessary demand specifically for more black skills. The racial disparities in employment in the past are well known. According to a public service commissioner, at the time of independence, 68 per cent of the graded (officer) posts in the service were held by whites, while the top positions were exclusively in their hands. In the probationary grades 57 per cent were white (The Herald, 21 Jan. 1982). In May 1980 a presidential directive was issued to the Public Service Commission with the stated objective of 'the early creation of a balanced service fully representative of all elements of the population and with the skills appropriate to the country's needs'. In order to achieve this it was necessary 'to give more rapid advancement to suitably qualified Africans in appointments and promotions to senior posts', although due regard had to be given 'to the maintenance of a high state of efficiency within the Public Service, and the need to satisfy the career aspirations of existing Public Servants.' (Quoted in Government of Zimbabwe, 1981c:121).

The result of this directive was that 2 200 new blacks were appointed in established posts within the first year, their share of unestablished posts rose to 74 per cent, and by the beginning of 1982 there were 134 in the top grades against a remaining 142 white officers (The Herald, 21 Jan. 1982). Many of the new appointees were highly qualified individuals who had returned from abroad. There was, however, a growing manpower shortage, especially in technical and professional posts, due to the rapid resignation of whites, more than 2000 of whom left the service in little more than a year. Resignations in the army and police, of course, came even faster, with 40 percent leaving within the first six months (The Herald, 19 Nov. 1980), and by now only a relatively small number remain in the higher ranks.

In the public service a new compulsory retirement age of sixty forced older whites to leave, but the consequences of the retirement incentive scheme included under the terms of the Lancaster House independence agreement were probably not entirely foreseen. Designed to induce whites to take early retirement under favourable terms during the first few years after independence, by being allowed to commute a large part of their pensions, and thereby making room for blacks, it also encouraged some who had no particular wish to resign, to take advantage of the financial benefits involved. In some professional categories they can hardly be spared, and under the present ruling are not allowed to be re-employed in the public service at a future date.² It is reported that some black professionals have also been availing themselves of this opportunity. The deputy regional director for Matabeleland in the Ministry of Education and Culture reported that they were losing an average of 50 secondary school teachers a term 'who were abusing the scheme to create a little nest-egg for themselves and embarking on a second career' (The Herald, 22 April 1983). The rapidly growing education sector which represented the largest pool of academically trained and experienced blacks at independence, has already lost a substantial number of staff both to other government ministries and the private sector. Similar lateral or upward mobility occurs when scarce technically trained black professionals are drawn into senior administrative positions. What has happened, therefore, in certain instances due to the expanded demand and opportunities for advanced black skills, is that 'Peter has been robbed to pay Paul'.

Most of the whites from the public sector who did not emigrate, of course, moved into the more congenial environment of the private sector. It has been frequently accused of maintaining white preserves, engaging in only token advancement of blacks for window-dressing purposes, and for competing unfairly with the public sector for scarce skills. Many private firms have, however, actively pursued 'Africanization', at least at certain levels, for reasons both economic and political. The Association of Building Societies, for example, reported that the representation of non-whites in their employ grew from 24 to 67 per cent between 1970 and 1983 (The Herald, 13 May 1983). Some prominent black public servants have also been attracted into top management positions. Thus, for example, both the first two Chief Industrial Relations Officers after independence, who have had a key role in the implementation of new government labour policies, have been

recruited into senior personnel positions in industry, in the one case with a mining company which was having difficulties in negotiating retrenchments with his former ministry.

It is specifically in areas of skills shortages such as with respect to artisans, accountants, engineers, technicians and higher level managers that the private sector has an advantage in recruitment over the public sector because of the higher salaries, fringe benefits and better working conditions which it offers. The Riddell Commission (Government of Zimbabwe, 1981c: 30) reports that 'many examples of skilled personnel moving from the state and para-statal sectors to the private sector were given to them.' One response of the private sector to the skills shortage and the pressures to Africanize has been to create or expand their own training schemes. As a result, the Minister of Manpower Planning and Development has accused the private sector of 'waging a policy of economic destabilisation in our country' by offering inflated salaries, poaching training staff from government institutions and 'establishing their own little polytechnics headed by former college lecturers' for which they now request foreign exchange (The Herald, 16 July 1983):

Changes in manpower supplies

Related to the above developments there have also been changes in the composition and nature of available skills. It should be noted, however, that skills shortages are not a specifically post-independence phenomenon. All that has happened is that they have been aggravated in some spheres. During the 'seventies there were persistent reports and sometimes alarm, about existing or projected skills shortages. In January 1971, the Associated Chambers of Commerce of Rhodesia (ACCOR) reported that there was an 8,2 (average) per cent shortage in the skilled trades. Mothobi (1978: 3-5) estimated on the basis of other surveys that there would be a shortfall of 64 per cent on the projected demand in these trades between 1974 and 1982. These shortages had their source in two principal factors viz. discrimination and therefore restrictions on the recruitment of blacks, and reliance on immigration to provide cheap 'ready-made' skills.

The latter was conducive to creating also a shortage of white skills during periods when the rate of immigration fell off or turned negative. It is because of this that the previous government created the apprenticeship training system in 1968 to stimulate local initiative in this regard.

Up till that time some 80 per cent of artisans were immigrants. By 1975 65 per cent of such manpower came from abroad and 35 per cent was being supplied by the local training system. But as we have seen, this was still far from enough and industrialists were continually complaining about an 'acute' problem of 'crisis proportions' which was 'limiting expansion' and 'threatening to become more serious', (Mothobi, 1978: 27; 3-5). They might have been exaggerating in order to create a justification for job fragmentation (enabling them to employ cheaper, unregistered black skills) but the position could only have worsened with the accelerating white emigration during the last years of the war and after independence. It is estimated, for example, that between 1976 and 1979 of an output of 2612 journeymen about 2025 were lost to the country through emigration (Government of Zimbabwe, 1981b: 47). In order to check this outflow, the government introduced a bonding system in 1982 which required apprentices to work in the country for a number of years equal to that spent in training. All round training efforts were increasingly focused on blacks or, as the major policy statement put it, 'manpower with a low emigration risk' (Government of Zimbabwe, 1981a: 9).

The restrictions on black recruitment and training during the colonial period has too long a history to chronicle here. It was based on a variety of economic, political and social considerations. Limiting registered skills to whites, kept their wages high and assured their dominant position. As Peter Harris (1975) pointed out, 'job reservation, Rhodesian style' operated effectively to restrict the entry of blacks into skilled jobs, by skill definitions in industrial agreements which protected white artisans, and by permitting the indenturing of young blacks only in such industries as building, in which it was no longer possible to find enough immigrants or local white apprentices.

In many public positions, such as in district administration, the army and police, and various 'sensitive' ministries, blacks were not permitted above certain levels or ranks for security reasons. As a Minister of the Public Service stated in 1973 (quoted in Government of Zimbabwe, 1983): 'We have to consider the suitability of the candidates [for appointment], bearing in mind certain factors. Perhaps the most important single factor so far as the public service is concerned is loyalty to the state ... secondly, the national security.' It was assumed that the loyalty and reliability of all blacks with respect to the settler state was sufficiently suspect to warrant their exclusion from most higher positions. The first black magistrate was only appointed during the period of the Muzorewa regime, shortly before independence.

Various prejudices also played an important role. Blacks were assumed to be deficient in background, culture and certain aptitudes. Whites tended to believe that they were lacking in initiative, confidence, adaptability, imagination, keenness, mechanical ability, and so on (Mothobi and Chester, 1975: 269-273). Because it was said that they could not do certain jobs properly they were given little opportunity to learn or prove themselves. Their exclusion from certain jobs was also justified on the grounds that white workers refused to train them, accept them as equals or work under them, or share toilets and canteen facilities with them; or that the white public did not want to deal with or be served by them. Firms which wanted for economic reasons or as a political hedge to train and employ more blacks in formerly 'white' jobs had to resort to all kinds of subterfuges, special arrangements, and inducements to white employees in order to achieve this (Mothobi, 1978: 32-33).

All of these factors contributed to the shortage of black skills in certain fields at independence, at a time when there was a particular demand for them.

The first three year transitional development plan comments (Government of Zimbabwe, 1982: 9): 'In the public sector, skilled manpower shortages of technical, managerial and middle-level administrative personnel exist at a critical moment when Government is mounting large development and other programmes.' The government adopted various measures to cope with this situation, of which the following were the most important.

Many foreign-trained Zimbabweans returning from exile were employed and others completing their studies were more or less ordered to return. The National Manpower Survey Report (Government of Zimbabwe, 1983) states that 'many of these new African administrators, executives and managers have had enormous experience as either leaders in the national liberation movement, international civil servants, key executives in the state administrations of a variety of countries or experts in a variety of professional and scientific fields.' Local blacks with some experience were also promoted rapidly, sometimes superceding their former white seniors. Thus a sergeant could rise to the position of Commissioner of Police within a few years. A skills upgrading exercise was launched allowing semi-skilled workers to be trade-tested. 3 000 have already achieved artisan status in this way (The Herald, 11 August 1983). Some courses have been shortened, or been combined with in-service training, and several crash training programmes have been launched, including one for magistrates, and the Zimbabwe Integrated Teacher Education Colleges (ZINTEC).

In a major development several schemes for producing lower level auxiliaries who could especially serve the rural areas, have been initiated. These have already begun to turn out significant numbers of village health workers (of whom more than 1 500 have been trained to date - Supplement to the Herald, 18 April 1983), rehabilitation assistants, home economics demonstrators, and literacy volunteers. A parallel initiative in skills upgrading, in-service training and non-formal education is the intended establishment of a National Vocational Training and Development Centre (NVTDC) which will operate through four regional skills centres and three hundred smaller rural skills centres (Government of Zimbabwe, 1982: 59). Such programmes obviously go beyond the provision of manpower for formal employment, to disseminating skills for self-employment and attempting to improve productivity and the quality of life of people throughout the country.

Although the 'Government is fundamentally opposed to any system of external recruitment based on expatriate conditions' it has proved 'necessary in the

short term /also/ to resort to external sources' of manpower (Government of Zimbabwe, 1981a: 8). Especially secondary school teachers have been recruited from Britain, Ireland, Canada, Mauritius, Australia, Holland, Yugoslavia, India and Pakistan. Railway technicians have also been brought in from India, doctors and para-medical staff from Pakistan and Bangladesh, and engineers from Britain and elsewhere.

White reactions and other complications

Zimbabwe's initial version of 'affirmative action' in the form of the presidential directive could not have been very popular with whites. By and large they reacted with three forms of withdrawal (or were sometimes in a sense simply kept out or pushed out) viz. into familiar networks of remaining white colleagues where they stayed on; into the private sector where they now felt more secure and had better promotion prospects; or, like many, they simply emigrated. A moment's reflection on the two parts of the presidential directive which requires the 'rapid advancement and promotion /of Africans/ to senior posts' on the one hand, and that due attention should be paid to 'the need to satisfy the career aspirations of existing Public Servants' on the other, would indicate that they are likely to be incompatible in many cases where the last-mentioned are whites. It was evident to many of those who were near the top of their career that once a black permanent or deputy secretary had been appointed, their chances of further promotion were effectively blocked. With blacks being appointed in increasing numbers both in the most senior positions and in the entry officer grades, they found themselves sandwiched in the middle. Furthermore, few senior staff would take enthusiastically to seeing a young black whom they themselves had recommended for appointment in a junior position not long ago, being promoted over their head not merely in the same division, or institution, but as national director of the whole programme in which they are serving.³

A particular kind of vicious cycle came into operation with respect to whites who remained behind in many establishments. The greater the number of whites who left - whether because they were unwilling to work under blacks, felt socially uncomfortable with them, anticipated a rapid "drop in standards", or whatever - the greater the pressures were on those who remained. Not only were they likely to feel more isolated and under threat psychologically of 'being swamped', but their day to day problems and work loads (due to rapidly increasing demand, shortages of staff, space, or equipment, and the need to quickly train

many inexperienced new black recruits) often grew to the point where they also decided to 'throw in the towel' and leave. Sometimes experienced blacks also pull out of government jobs because of the same pressures. So, for example, from an earlier apparent surplus of black registered nurses, there is now a shortage in government hospitals, whilst nursing agencies are booming.⁴ Once again capitalist initiatives flourish, contrary to the declared socialist goals of the government.

Continuing mistrust between black and white employees is, of course, largely an understandable carry-over from the past, and the war in particular. Foreign consultants or seconded staff who arrived in Zimbabwe after independence, in fact, found a curious situation. Each government ministry consisted of two networks which hardly overlapped. On the one hand there were the whites, the 'old guard', who nervously were trying to carry on more or less as before and who had the knowledge and experience of the operations of their respective departments. On the other, there were the newly appointed blacks who had contacts in high places and, to the whites, seemed to be quietly scheming in their offices, hatching all sorts of grandiose and impractical schemes. Policy initiatives of course, lay with the latter. On their part they felt that they did not have the confidence of many of the established whites, who withheld information from them, or tried to obstruct their efforts. The whites, again, who had in the past been very much in on the grapevine, with informal access to the various seats of power, now found themselves very much out on a limb, as if they were working in a vacuum. Mostly, they did not know very well which decisions were being reached by whom, causing many to feel insecure and superfluous. The tables had been neatly turned. Just as the effectiveness of blacks under the old regime had often depended on a sympathetic white contact or sponsor, whites who desired to stay on now found that it was not so much what you know as whom you know that mattered (compare Colson, 1967). Their own effectiveness for the time being was much more contingent on their personal and political acceptability.

While the black-white equation was, perhaps, the most important immediate issue in the public service (and it was mirrored in varying degrees in other spheres), there were also other incipient or passing relational tangles emerging. Underlying tensions existed between former exiles, some of whom now occupied the most senior positions after absences from the country of ten or fifteen years, and those blacks who had remained behind. The former were usually more closely linked with the party and felt that they had a better ideological grasp of the whole situation, whereas the latter were under suspicion of having collaborated

with the white regime and therefore to have 'sold out', rather than actively supporting the liberation struggle. The latter on their part had reason to feel that they were much better acquainted with the contemporary situation and had borne the brunt of the suffering over the past years while the others were studying or living in safety and comfort in foreign cities.

Post-independence expatriates, again, while not tainted directly by the colonial past and more likely to have been sympathetic to the liberation cause, take some time to adjust to local conditions (part of which is learning to cope with their settler counterparts!). Those from non-Western or non-African background have to find a place for themselves somewhere in or between the two major communities. Often they also face a similar problem as those former exiles who had been trained outside the Anglo-Saxon world. Inevitably, professional standards in Zimbabwe are still based on British criteria. The products of diverse systems from West to East and South, they now find that their qualifications are considered suspect or are not formally recognised by local professional bodies. In most instances the Public Services Commission require registration with the relevant accrediting bodies before an appointment or secondment to the civil service is confirmed. Where they are accepted, they might still find that their local counterparts give them less than enthusiastic support in adjusting, or in such retraining as might be necessary, or simply continue to look down their noses at them. Understandably, they feel snubbed.

Conclusion

What kind of skills crisis has there been, then? The Kiddell Commission noted that 'the country is short of skills in the artisan, accountancy, engineering, medical, scientific, agricultural research and extension veterinary and managerial fields'. Out of 91 job categories in the Public Service with 2 432 posts on the full establishment, vacancies amounted to 40 per cent in January 1981. At the same time there was, for example, 130 vacancies out of 348 artisan posts in the Central Mechanical and Equipment Department (Government of Zimbabwe, 1981c: 129, 30). The transitional development plan notes that 'one of the most important constraints facing the economy which may become more critical in the short term, is the shortage of skilled manpower.' (Government of Zimbabwe, 1982: 9). In many other quarters there has been mention of problems arising from staff shortages or turnover. The Deputy Minister of Home Affairs has said that 'some policemen were not fulfilling the responsibilities that their ranks demanded' (The Herald, 30 April 1983), while the Minister himself has stated that he is

'on record for publicly calling upon experienced police officers to give us more time so that the young ones can become more experienced' (The Herald, 19 Aug. 1983). Several industries have blamed the loss of artisan and managerial skills, alongside cuts in foreign currency allocations, for sharp drops in production (The Sunday Mail, 7 Feb. 1982). The (white) Minister of State for the Public Service has also claimed that lack of experience has lowered standards in some fields of the civil service. He said that some officials who were appointed to replace skilled personnel who had left since independence had 'impressive qualifications but little or no experience in administration' (The Herald, 14 June 1983).⁵ The Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development has revealed that the tax department is experiencing 'extreme difficulties' and losing revenue through insufficient and inexperienced staff (The Herald, 23 July 1983), and more recently has admitted that the government is at its 'wits end' about the loss of top civil servants to the private sector (The Herald, 1 Sept. 1983). Delays and breakdowns in the telephone system have also repeatedly been blamed on an extreme shortage of technicians due to the loss of skilled staff by the Corporation.

In many respects the country has, however, been coping remarkably well following the change-over to majority rule. The effects of the manpower shortages can, and at times probably have been exaggerated. Dire consequences were, after all, predicted once whites leave. Blacks were expected by many to have to struggle to keep things going. We have seen how white assumptions before independence about the deficiencies and inabilities of blacks led to a refusal to advance them, thus contributing to the skills shortage at independence; and how these attitudes made it more difficult for whites to adjust to the new situation after independence, aggravating the problem and enabling them to turn around in the end with a 'I told you so; they are not capable of doing it!' (Mothobi and Cheater, 1975: 273, also point to the effects of this self-fulfilling prophecy prior to independence).

Even though there have, as one would expect, been many problems, there has hardly been a collapse of services, even in limited spheres. This is largely due to the various corrective and 'emergency' measures taken by government and the fact that blacks with unrecognised or unregistered skills who had been playing an increasing role since the war days when so many whites were frequently away on call-up, have eventually filled their shoes or continued to step into the breach.

Many of the problems outlined above are of a temporary nature and due to the pace at which change has taken place after independence. Expectations generated by the victory of ZANU(PF) of necessity created tremendous political pressures.

Already, cut-backs in expansion due to the current recession will help the manpower situation to catch up and the impact of various training programmes are only beginning to be felt now. A more effective accommodation between blacks and whites within the work sphere is probably also being reached.

As skills shortages, however, become less pronounced, attention will be drawn to the more fundamental and 'normal' pathologies of bureaucratic growth and their consequences. Here I have really only looked at Zimbabwe's struggle to maintain stability and production following independence. As I have indicated, some of the by-products of this struggle do not auger well for achieving greater self-reliance and equality within our society.

In this respect, as in many others, Zimbabwe's experience contains many lessons for South Africa. At the moment, however, there is little reason to believe that these would be heeded. It would seem that Zimbabwe itself has learnt only a limited amount from the experience of others.

Notes

1. Various estimates of the number of black Zimbabweans who had been, or were, doing university level study abroad put them around 8 000 - 9 000 just before independence (UNCTAD, 1980: 274) In addition, in the vicinity of 2 000 had qualified within the country or Southern Africa.
2. I know of a woman, whose professional skill is in very short supply, who wanted to resign temporarily from a government ministry for twelve or eighteen months since she was expecting a baby. She was called by the (white) staff officer who asked her whether she knew that if she resigned permanently she would, in spite of having been in the service for only a limited number of years, qualify under the Lancaster House agreement for a lump sum payment of Cxxxxx and a monthly pension of \$xxx per month thereafter for life. Having had no intention of leaving government service for good, she nonetheless promptly accepted the offer.
3. I have in mind a particular instance of which I have knowledge, but there could be many others like this.
4. A similar type of development might occur where experienced technicians resign from the public sector or para-statal, only to set up their own businesses, to continue servicing the very same machinery or instruments, now under independent contract (and possibly greater cost to the government).

Notes contd/

5. I am reminded of a casual comment by a black civil servant in a meeting that it takes two years to turn a Ph.D. into a useful project planner or evaluator.

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