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URBAN DEVELOPMENT, CULTURE AND
POLITICS IN BULAWAYO**

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Introduction

'Si Ye Pambili'—Let Us Go Forward—is the motto of the Bulawayo City Council. This article addresses some of the conflicting ideas of what 'forward' might imply which have been contained in debates and struggles over urbanisation, cultural development and politics in Bulawayo from the beginning of this century and focusses on the period between the 1940s and today. It examines in particular what may be called colonial projects of modernisation in white-ruled Rhodesia, the contradictions which existed within the Bulawayo City Council's policies vis-a-vis Africans entering the modern world and becoming townspeople and the cultural and political responses of different groups of Africans to these policies. Finally, it assesses the extent to which post-1980 cultural institutions and forms of articulation continue to be bound up in paradigms defined during the colonial era and to what extent the scope of cultural activity and the

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relationship between culture and politics have been transformed into something significantly new after independence.

Visitors to Bulawayo today are often struck by the different impression given by Zimbabwe's second largest city and that of the capital Harare. Whereas Harare after independence has continued to be a deeply divided place, dominated by the enormous distance which colonial planning established between Black and White and between the wealthy suburbs of the north and the townships and Chitungwisa south of the city, Bulawayo appears relatively much more together. Segregation between races and between rich and poor is less spectacular, and there is more of a gradual transition between the town and the townships on the western side, indicating a history of different interactions and providing other possibilities for contact. Many people in Bulawayo also tend to be proud of what they claim to be the relatively higher standards of their townships as compared to those of Harare, of the housing provided and of the municipal welfare and community services offered, and will point to a more liberal history of administration and council policy dating back to the 1950s. At Bulawayo's centenary celebrations in June 1994, the togetherness of the city was underlined by the establishment of a central mall for festivities in Jason Moyo Avenue, and the City Council has recently donated land for a new Cultural Centre to be set up in Mzilikazi at the interface between the central and western parts of town.¹

Bulawayo is interesting further because of its closeness to South Africa. As there has been close interaction between the development of town planners' philosophies in Bulawayo and those of South African urban officials, there have been tight links between the political and cultural development of the capital of Matabeleland and those of urban South Africa. Nationalist political organisations in Bulawayo have historically been close to the ANC and shared many of the Congress movement's basic outlooks, contributing to its

different political tradition from those of movements based in other regions of Zimbabwe.

In the field of popular culture, Bulawayo and South African towns, Johannesburg in particular, share the same space and have been on the same touring circuit. Dorothy Masuka, 'the pride of Pumula', has been a South African star as well as Rhodesia and Zimbabwe's answer to Miriam Makeba. *Mbube* choirs and jazz bands from South Africa have travelled north and inspired imitations and elaborations. Bulawayo drama groups today look south to the performance energy of Sowetan and other township theatre and have made the interaction between the two societies part of their field of representation.²

Migration, family links and language networks have made communication with South Africa part of the everyday reality of numerous Bulawayo individuals, and increasingly so recently as drought, recession and structural adjustment have forced people to look outward to supplement their resources and to question the God-given nature of present-day nation-state boundaries.

Also in the literature, both fictional and academic, about the history of Rhodesia and Zimbabwe, Bulawayo and Matabeleland and have been given a special place and attributed particular characteristics. White Rhodesian novels made a stereotype of the 'Matabele' character as 'noble savage' as different from the threatening slyness of the 'Mashona tribe'. At the same time, literature in Ndebele from its beginnings had a strong dedication to the exploration of the glorious past of Mzilikazi and Lobengula.³ And historians have painted pictures of fundamentally different resistance histories in Matabeleland and the north-east, describing particular lines of development rooted in different conditions of conquest and in a specific tradition of political culture influenced partly by the prominence of trade union and worker organisation, partly by the

continued existence over the years of varieties of local Ndebele nationalism.⁴

After independence this pattern has to some extent been continued in the historiography of the Liberation War, first in the rather celebrationist writing just after 1980 which extolled ZANU-PF and ZANLA as the leading militant forces in the battle for independence and neglected or wrote down the contribution of PF-ZAPU and ZIPRA. More recently, after the cooptation of ZAPU ministers into the Zimbabwean Government in 1987-8, it has been possible to prepare new histories which point out ZIPRA's war contribution and special strategies.

It is argued now that because of the particular political traditions of Bulawayo and Matabeleland, ZAPU's line of struggle and mobilisation was more socialist and less populist than ZANU's, more urban-based and modernisation-oriented, more rationalist and less reliant on cultural and religious discourses, and less coercive in its handling of relations between soldiers and civilians during the war. This was possible, the argument goes, because ZAPU had available intact organisational structures inside Zimbabwe throughout the 1960s and 70s, which made a different political culture possible and presented different potentials for post-independence development.⁵

This is obviously a field where much more research is needed, partly because of the extended time-lag of the period between 1982 and 1987 when the history of ZAPU and Matabeleland was too controversial to approach because of the strife between the two big nationalist organisations (and during which much important documentation disappeared). And partly because so relatively little work has been done so far on the political and cultural history of towns in Rhodesia in the 1960s and 70s. It is tempting to assume, though, that during 'the period of silence' itself, between 1982 and 1987, when ZAPU was repressed, Bulawayo became a centre of

potentials for radical oppositional politics, an important base for the emergence of new and different political polarities to emerge after the reconciliation of the two major fractions of 'old' nationalist politics in 1987.

During this period, it can be argued, Bulawayo also developed or reasserted its own specific cultural traditions. Because of the difficulties and dangers of engaging in 'open' politics during the period of silence, cultural articulation gained a special significance. In this context, the development of township theatre was particularly impressive. While theatre groups mushroomed all over Zimbabwe, they were particularly prolific, inventive and fearless in Bulawayo.

Bulawayo drama groups seemed to be building potentials for a new political culture, for the articulation of democratic initiative from below. They pointed a way out of the apathy which had been produced partly by years of Rhodesian mental colonisation and racist patronisation, partly by the *pungwe* psychology and the political culture of rallies and unconditional assent, which had been among the outcomes of the Liberation War and the early years of nationalist government.⁶

The Development of Bulawayo's Townships from 1893

Contrary to the assumption, that towns are 'un-African' phenomena, the colonial city of Bulawayo from the mid-nineteenth century was preceded by a pre-colonial town.⁷ It was one of the sites where Mzilikazi would hold court and exert control over his kingdom, and from 1875 became the main urban settlement of Lobengula. In 1889, it was estimated to have between 15 and 20,000 inhabitants and had a special 'township', or accommodation quarters, for White concessionaires and traders seeking contact with the Ndebele kingdom. This old Bulawayo was evacuated during the war of conquest in 1893 and subsequently burnt down.

The colonial city of Bulawayo came into existence after the

subsequent occupation of Matabeleland , and the new town, with its American-inspired grid of broad avenues and streets, and situated at Cecil Rhodes' request as closely as possible to the former King's centre of power, was declared open on 1 June 1894.⁸ This was triumphantly a White city not meant for African habitation, and one in which Africans were to need special permission to be present. As wrote Dr. Hugh Ashton who became a prominent City Council official and township developer from 1949 onwards : 'With the new Bulawayo arising out of the ashes of the old, all connection with the past was obliterated, and when Africans drifted back to the towns, they came as strangers, as strangers both to themselves and to the Europeans, who were now their masters'.⁹

Bulawayo's first African township was the Native Location, later known as Old Location, which was situated close to the centre of town where Makokoba is today and came into existence from 1894 first as a spontaneous settlement of Africans seeking employment in town. There was little planning or control invested in the early development of the Location : 'The only public concern was to prevent various nuisances attributed to the "kaffirs" such as noise, dirt, prostitution, tom toms, idleness, thieving, and it was left to the churches and missionaries to look after African welfare and recreation'.¹⁰ In 1899, 300 people were estimated to be living in the location, compared to the 2,000 Africans who in 1896 were thought to be living in the town of Bulawayo itself.

A few further figures will give an idea of the scope of the urban development which has taken place in the townships of Bulawayo since then. The figures are not immediately comparable, but the different ways in which they are calculated at different stages of urbanisation are in themselves indicative of the changing situation of Africans in town.

In 1936, 1943 and 1949, there were, respectively, 15,322,

25,000 and 48,000 'African males in employment' resident in the townships. In 1957, there were 82,617 Africans registered to live there, including 9,264 families'. In 1964, the population of the African townships was counted as 127,180 including an estimated 6,000 illegal residents, but excluding 30,993 people living in railway or industrial compounds or in private, so-called 'secondary dwellings'. In 1969, when a census was taken, the population in Bulawayo 'high-density areas', largely synonymous with the African townships, was counted as 197,490. At the time of the next census, in 1982, the 'high-density area' population was given as 371,488. An estimate of the 1992 population in Bulawayo's 'high-density areas', based on an average 5.9% annual growth since 1982 (the rate of the period 1969-1982), would come out at 659,028.¹¹ The preliminary report of the 1992 census, however, sets the total Bulawayo population at only 620,936 and gives no separate figures for townships or high-density suburbs.¹²

The early figures are likely to be too low — the Bulawayo City Council generally tended to underestimate the number of illegal urban residents, and the census figures of 1969 fell way below the pre-census estimates of the Council, indicating that a significant number of people have tended to stay clear of information gatherers. Something similar was said to have been the case in 1982.

In any case, the growth in population and the speed of urbanisation in the townships have been spectacular, if of uneven intensity, with a particular upsurge in migration influx of 157% taking place between 1941 and 1951 and coinciding with the great boom in industrialisation which took place in Bulawayo during and immediately after World War Two. The latter part of the same period saw trade unionisation strike root as a form of organisation of Africans along urban class lines, culminating in the railway strike of 1945 and the attempts to launch a general strike in 1948. And had Benjamin Burombo and the African Voice Association come forward

as the first political movement to link together effectively the struggles of urban and rural residents.¹³

From the beginning of the century, policies of segregation were pursued by both the Rhodesian government and the Bulawayo City Council to control African urban settlement.¹⁴ Efforts were directed at keeping out a 'floating population' of 'loafers' and 'self-employed persons' and to restrict Bulawayo's African population to people in wage employment who had undergone medical examination and been issued with registration certificates. Early attempts concentrated on moving as great a proportion of the African population as possible from town itself into the Location and railway and industrial compounds and reserve these areas for 'natives' by expelling Indian and White traders.¹⁵

Before long, city fathers began to worry about the Location being too close to the centre and the White town, and Native Village Settlement Schemes were initiated under the provisions of the 1930 Land Apportionment Act to situate African urban settlement much further away towards the west. Thus Luvuvu village was created in 1938, while there was an attempt to check the growth of the Old Location by allowing it to decay and demolishing houses in it as part of 'slum clearances' which were especially directed against housing which was privately owned by Africans.¹⁶

The Native (Urban Areas) Accommodation and Registration Act of 1946 introduced stricter regulations on influx, which made Bulawayo a 'proclaimed area' for which residents must have a new type of 'town pass', and — against the protest of the City Council — placed a much higher degree of responsibility for administration, planning and provision of services on local authorities. A number of committees reporting on township conditions in the same period and comparing them with South African experiences (Tredgold 1946, Hudson and McNamee 1948), on the background of the more general reports on urban African conditions in Southern Rhodesia by Ibbotson

and Howman in 1943 and 1944, had expressed fears that miserable housing and living conditions might bring about a 'spirit of hopelessness, sullenness and desperation...mass disaffection'.¹⁷

Consequently, Bulawayo's Native Administration Department was set up reluctantly by the Council in 1949 as a 'buffer between the two races..., [to provide] relief of points of friction...[and] easing of tensions, particularly on the African side',¹⁸ and this signalled the beginning of a new era of both tighter control and more elaborate policies for township development.¹⁹

As part of the new Act, the City Council was given full responsibility for the provision of housing, and with the Native Land Husbandry Act (1951) simultaneously placing restrictions on settlement in rural areas, pressure was put on authorities to come to terms with prospects for more permanent residential schemes for Africans in town. Thus, in Bulawayo, 'slum clearances' were replaced with renovation schemes and building of new rented accommodation and hostels for single workers in the township areas closest to town, and Makokoba (as the Location was now known) was supplemented by the establishment of nearby townships at Mzilikazi in 1946 and at Barbourfields and Nguboyenja in 1949. At the same time, different townships based on 'home ownership schemes' with long leases and possibilities of eventual freehold were created further away from the city at Pumula (1952), Pelendaba (1953), Njube (1954) and Mpopoma (1956). Further townships, with a mixture of home ownership and rented accommodation, were established in the 1960s at Tshabalala, Magwegwe, Mabutweni and Iminyela, and in the 1970s at Lobengula, Nkulumane, Emakhandeni og Entumbane.

Summarised in this way, there was nothing much to set the urban history of Bulawayo apart from that of Salisbury, of the South African towns on whose examples the city's planners were so dependent, or of a town like Nairobi.²⁰

Instead of appearing more liberal and integration-oriented than the average Southern African city, the Bulawayo City Council in some respects seems to have acted in unusually conservative and segregationist ways, and in several instances Bulawayo resisted the development of national policies to give relative support to African consolidation in towns.²¹

It was the national government which intervened to stop the destruction of Makokoba through slum clearances in the 1930s and 1940s against the wishes of the City Council to have all African urban settlements moved further away from the city. It was national legislation which forced the Bulawayo City Council to set up a Native Administration Department in 1949 and to mobilise resources for planning, housing and a minimum of welfare activity. The national government kept putting pressure on the Bulawayo local authorities to spend part of the revenue obtained from White ratepayers and the taxation of businesses on township development, while the Council kept insisting that Africans must pay for their own welfare. The great pride of the Bulawayo Council was the high rate of growth in profits from the municipal African beer brewery and the monopoly of beer sales and of beer gardens in the townships. While government wanted such income spent on welfare and recreation activities alone, the Bulawayo council managed to keep beer revenue one of the main sources of income (with rents and loans) out of which total township expenses were met and to prevent the spending of any significant amount of White ratepayers' money on African urbanisation.

Until the 1960s, the main part of social and educational provision in the townships was maintained by missions and other private organisations and charities. And while the Council gradually came to acknowledge the desirability for reasons of social control of letting families rather than single males settle in town and to support some degree of permanence in this settlement, this remained a deeply

ambiguous and disputed attitude. Out of a fear of both, the Council strove to find an impossible compromise between transitoriness and permanence in its regard and treatment of urban African citizens. The result of such half-heartedness was a degree of misery and deprivation which shocked people who were newcomers to it. Ngwabi Bhebe describes his first visit to Bulawayo, as a schoolboy, in 1959.

That was the first time I had seen a tarred road, let alone a city of that magnitude with its heavy traffic of cars and human beings. Arrangements were made for us to put up in the Luveve Village. In the few days that we were in town we were able to see the Old Location, now Makokoba Township. Seeing Makokoba was to me simply a frightful experience which, even today, I am unable to forget. The place was filthy, men and women seemed generally drunk at the most unexpected times of the day, gambling was a common sight and, worst of all, people simply urinated anywhere in broad daylight and in public view. The whole ghastly and degenerate view of extreme poverty perplexed my young mind, more so because all those things were taking place only next door to the big and rich departmental stores of the city centre, so that for years I wanted to find out how it was possible for such extreme poverty to exist amidst such plenty. ²²

It will be interesting, eventually, to have the chance to compare more systematically the social history of Bulawayo and its townships with those of Salisbury/Harare and of the Witwatersrand which are presently being investigated by Brian Raftopoulos and Phil Bonner respectively. ²³ In the meantime, at least one thing which seems certainly special about the history of Bulawayo, is the 'liberalism' and the high-profile modernisation ideology which was characteristic of the City Council's African Administration (later Welfare and Amenities) Department from about 1953 onwards. The following section will describe briefly the cultural policies which were pursued

by the Bulawayo City Council through the 1950s, 60s and 70s, before turning to the response with which these policies were met by African nationalist organisations :

Modernising Segregation : Cultural Institutions and Municipal Policy

A spectacular contrast to Ngwabi Bhebe's impression of Makokoba in 1959 in the quotation above can be found in a Ph. D. dissertation from 1971 by Eric Gargett who was Senior Welfare Officer with the Bulawayo City Council in the 1960s and 70s. Gargett describes the response of visitors who were taken on guided tours of the townships :

Their reaction is predictable, they are surprised. It is not as they expected. Tarred roads, well-built houses, neat gardens, shopping centres, clinics, cocktail bars, youth clubs, halls, playing fields, schools, libraries—the array of amenities and their quality contrast with vague notions of 'shantytowns', or even with experience of great city slums, ('Sir, do they get letters?' a European schoolchild asked), lack the Africanness which it was assumed would pervade the scene. It is the air of normality, the very absence of strangeness, that is strange... Then [on closer sight] 'Africanness' begins to emerge, but in a deeper sense. ²⁴

What Gargett wanted to present with such remarkable self-confidence, were the achievements of the African Administration Department which had been set up in 1949 with Hugh Ashton as Director, and whose design it was, based on the most fashionable tenets of contemporary modernisation theory, as described in detail in Gargett's dissertation, 'to ease the transition to a Western way of life' for Bulawayo's African inhabitants.²⁵

Cultural policies and the accommodation of psychological needs were of the special importance in this process of easing—'Mass recreation and public entertainment dominated the municipal programme for many years'. ²⁶ A main aim of Council intervention was

to prevent, or arrest, the disintegrative forces of town life, which are accentuated by the abrupt transition from tribal, rural existence; and to counter the drabness of town surroundings and the dreariness of industrial experience; to offer a positive release to frustration and bewilderment occasioned by these factors, and exacerbated by racialism and daily humiliation; to provide decent gay, attractive, constructive recreation as an alternative to beer swilling and fornication; [to combat] juvenile delinquency. 27

The situation prior to the establishment of the Department of African Administration was described as something similar to a Hobbesian state of uncivil society, in which there was even 'little evidence of traditional cultural activity'. 28 Townships were seen as cultural deserts, in which leisure activities were dominated by shebeen drinking, prostitution and gang fighting :

The leisure-time pursuits which surpassed all others were the beer drink and its 'sophisticated' counterpart, the 'tea party'. The latter took its name from respectable functions organised at mission schools and it originated as a means of supplementary income. A group of friends would take turns to put on a food and drink party in their own house or room, the host taking the proceeds. As the parties became more popular and profitable they were promoted on a commercial scale. They were held out-of doors, behind hessian shelters and were accompanied by flagrant prostitution, which became the main attraction. According to a study carried out in Salisbury in 1948, the tea parties were responsible for an alarming increase in venereal disease there and accounted for nearly half the admissions to the V. D. hospital... Bulawayo was said to be 'relatively free', which might have meant little, as Salisbury's parties exceeded twenty on a Saturday night and were spoken of as far away as Cape Town. Certainly in Bulawayo, illicit brewing reached mammoth proportions during the immediate post-war years, when 'illicit drink parties of 1,000 strong were not uncommon'. Tear

gas was needed to break them up, and the police liquor detachment travelled in armoured vehicles. It was in such an atmosphere that what is now the municipal welfare service came into being. ²⁹

The work of welfare officers required special qualifications and sensitivities. They should be

guided mainly by decency and common sense. If they have some training in anthropology, so much the better, as this will help them understand what problems the Africans are faced with, and what difficulties they themselves will be up against. But we want nothing academic; their anthropological training should be such as to inculcate respect for and understanding of primitive culture, but not inspire a wish to fossilize it. ³⁰

The claims by Council officials that they were moving into a chaotic, cultural vacuum to provide structures for 'participation', 'associations' and 'healthy home life' activities, however, tended to ignore a wide range of popular cultural genres and institutions which were already there, but could be moulded and tentatively domesticated by municipal initiatives. 'Tea parties', shebeen and beer hall entertainment comprised a lot more than just drinking and prostitution, and Joyce Makwenda who is preparing a book and a film about township culture in Zimbabwe describes the period between 1940 and the late 1960s as the 'golden age' of urban African popular culture. ³¹ Apart from hosting visits from South African performers, Rhodesia's townships during these years fostered their own jazz, *amasiganda* (one-man band) and *amakwaya* (choir) stars like De Black Evening Follies, The City Quads, George Sibanda, Josaya Hadebe, the Merry Makers, the Bantu Actors, the Epworth Theatrical Strutters, Dorothy Masuka, the Gay Gaieties, the Yellow Blues and the Milton Brothers. And performances would range from more formal community or beer hall concerts to 'tea-party' or shebeen jam sessions and improvisations. ³²

Outside the world of jazz, there were other more or less well-established traditions and institutions of township popular cultural life. Churches and missions had inspired the formation of choral societies dedicating themselves to religious songs and spirituals. Migrant workers returning from South Africa would bring with other genres of choir performance such as *mbube* competitions as well as the gumboots dancing of the mining compounds around which clubs and associations could be formed. Immigrants from Nyasaland/Malawi had brought *nyau* and *ngoni* dances with them, and like them migrants from Northern Rhodesia/Zambia and Portuguese East Africa/Mozambique would group together to cultivate the performance traditions of their home areas. Similarly, people coming to the townships from different parts of Rhodesia would try to establish internal cohesion and preserve backward linkages through performance activities. In the Bulawayo townships in particular, Venda, Kalanga, Sotho, Swazi and Tswana performance traditions would be represented and Ndebele *isitshikitsha*, *isitshingo* and stick-fighting dances with vocal, clapping and drumming accompaniment and varieties of praise-singing held special significance. Similar, in the townships, *sangoma* healing practices would include dances whose ritual and performance aspects were hardly separable. African weddings were important institutions for the unfolding and bringing together of genres and, if they were to be respectable, had to offer a wide variety of competing performances and be semi-public occasions, which would provide the opportunity for comment on and discussion of topical events.

Rather than creating a township cultural life from scratch, the contribution of the municipality was one of providing support for selected existing cultural activities, establishing alternative ones, creating a general system of control and providing new institutional forms. The provision of facilities and the exertion of control were inseparable — the Council operated its own Municipal Police to

check registration and health certificates as well as rent payments, loudspeakers and public address systems were set up in the townships as early as 1941 to be followed by 'flood-lighting' and 'tower lights... to discourage assaults' in the 1960s.³³

The organisation of sports was an important field of contested control. Boxing and football had been central popular cultural pastimes from the 1920s, with the Council providing a football ground at Barbour Fields from 1931 (to be followed in the 1940s by White City Stadium and the Mpopoma sports ground). Otherwise the organisational arrangements regarding football stayed in the hands of the Bulawayo African Football Association, which until the 1950s cooperated with the private African Welfare Society, but resisted repeated attempts by Council to take it over.³⁴

Boxing on the other hand, came under municipal control from early on. Boxing, especially in the ring set up at Stanley Square in Makokoba, was extremely popular both as a 'participation' and a 'spectator' sport, and great importance was attributed to it by Council welfare officials who saw it as helping 'reduce fighting and brawling' as well as being 'health promotive and invaluable character-building' in the same way as football might 'develop... initiative and sense of responsibility'.³⁵ Especially in the early stages of the 'easing process', boxing was essential :

Boxing was a natural successor to faction fights and attracted immense crowds: a fire hydrant by the side of the open-air ring provided the social organiser with a useful deterrent to over-exuberance. It was many years before it ceased to be needed, by which time boxing had lost its early appeal and spectators were being counted in hundreds rather than thousands.³⁶

In association with NGOs, Council entered the field of music, song, dance and drama. A municipal 'Bantu Brass Band' and an 'African Choral Society' were established from early on to be followed by support for jazz bands and jazz festivals later. An

'African Eisteddfod Association' provided other opportunities for choir singing, organised an annual general cultural festival in November and became a success story of racial integration as it eventually 'became feasible to integrate with the Bulawayo Eisteddfod Society, its syllabus being enlarged to maintain the link which the African Association had with African cultural traditions.'³⁷ The African Eisteddfod was seen as 'an extremely valuable cultural institution which [gives] a great incentive to the development of music and dancing of all kinds, drama, needlework, various arts and crafts'.³⁸ Support for dancing was liberal-minded and included the sponsoring of 'tribal, jiving and ball-room' dancing, though 'traditional dance' was given special attention:

Many Africans are shy about their tribal dancing, and tend to shed it when they come to town, although many small groups continue it in one form or another. Their interest should be stimulated by periodic dancing competitions and displays, and by visits of dancing teams from Shabani and Wankie which are organised by the Mines. This would, incidentally, also be an attraction to Europeans. An open air dance floor and amphitheatre, such as have been developed on the South African Mines, is needed.³⁹

Such a central dancing arena was created next-door to the Mashumba Beer Garden in 1957. The general ambition was to provide a new institutional framework for cultural activity, partly by making beer gardens more 'decent' - 'raise their tone, and encourage the attendance of many self-respecting people who at present avoid them'.⁴⁰ Partly by moving cultural activities out of the beer gardens altogether and into the community halls, where they would be placed on an elevated stage in front of an entrance-paying audience, seated in rows, and without drinks being sold – thus institutionalising culture within its own aesthetic sphere and differentiating it from the generality of drunken leisure.

The main community halls were Stanley Hall in Makokoba, which had been established as early as 1937, and Macdonald Hall in

Mzilikazi which was opened in 1957. The halls would provide venues for cultural performances, but also stimulate 'participation' by accommodating meetings of 'associations' and allowing film shows to take place, directed at different layers of the township population.⁴¹

In accordance with the modernisation theories which inspired the philosophies underlying Council interventions—most particularly Daniel Lerner and his *Passing of Traditional Society*—policy recipients were divided into three community groups. These were the masses ('as yet uneducated, simple in their tastes and completely lacking in initiative and responsibility'), the 'emergent' group ('who can do something for themselves but still depend largely upon European guidance, organisation and control') and the elite (having 'a good deal of education, understanding, initiative and practical sense, they can assume a considerable degree of real responsibility, and need only sympathetic guidance and encouragement... and invaluable section of the community').⁴²

Each of the three groups required their own cultural fare — the masses, 'public participation non-existent except as spectators', needing 'mass entertainment' like 'Westerns', the emergent group being capable of absorbing encouragement of 'individual initiative' and 'active participation', benefitting from 'cinema for educational purposes' and gradually qualifying to join the elites in their activities of 'intelligent and responsible African participation' and preparations 'to enter the field of local administration'.⁴³

The 'elites' were the focus of special attention, being seen as 'the leading sector in the headlong rush to modernity'.⁴⁴ The Bulawayo City Council tried, through cultural policy, to make good some of the shortcomings in terms of 'prestige differentiation which had been characteristic of its building and housing policy—'Home-ownership schemes have encouraged the greater cohesion associated with class

consciousness but have been criticised for allowing too little scope for this'.⁴⁵ Instead of better housing, elite members were offered cultural markers like membership in cricket, golf and tennis clubs (the most famous of the latter being named the 'Never Despair Club').⁴⁶

On the whole membership was encouraged of almost any type of association from trade unions to burial societies (but excluding African nationalist political parties). In accordance with modernisation theory, 'voluntary association membership' was seen as an important indicator of potential for 'participation', and the generally low level of membership of anything which could be understood by Council as a formal association was regretted.⁴⁷ The municipality therefore used the availability of halls to support the creation of 'guilds' such as the 'J. M. Macdonald Guild' to provide 'a meeting place for persons of all shades of opinion, through its steadfast refusal to associate itself with politics in any way. Lectures, discussions, educational film shows and a mock Parliament (humorously conducted) were among the Guild's cultural activities,' though 'social gatherings with dancing and refreshments were the most popular activity'.⁴⁸ The term 'guild' was carefully chosen-Council officials saw themselves as working in conditions which were comparable to those of early nineteenth-century Britain, the chaos and upheavals of an industrial revolution.⁴⁹

Other activities supported were women's clubs with 'model homes' being provided 'in the principal married areas... to introduce more varied activities such as dressmaking, crafts, cooking and gardening on the instructional side, and reading, games, etc. on the social and recreational side,' and 'to stimulate the active participation of the women of the townships.' Gardening was to be particularly encouraged 'for the sake of its tranquilising and civilising effects'.⁵⁰

An especially important policy area had to do with youth work and the establishment of clubs to prevent 'the growth of tsotsi

behaviour and mentality'.⁵¹ Unemployment was high as was the percentage of illegal residents, and the drinking of beer and *skokiaan* as well as *mbanje* smoking continued without competition to be the most popular 'recreational' activities. Families were often in a state of flux and broken up in the process of 'transition' to the nuclear modalities of modernity, though the persistence of the extended family was remarkable.⁵² In this context, crime rates and fears of crime were soaring and also seen to be coinciding with the rise in political violence and 'terrorism'.

Important parts of the work undertaken by Youth Clubs and during the Youth Weeks which were organised annually from 1964 were directed at retraditionalisation and the establishment of an 'awareness of roots' rather than 'modernisation' and were indicative of the contradictoriness and half-heartedness which were characteristic of modernising township policies. A tendency which might also be seen in the Council's support for the remnants of an old-fashioned, conservative ethnic organisation like the Matabele Home Society.⁵³ Hudson Ndlovu, who joined Council as a youth leader in 1959, and who has been keen to 'purify' Ndebele culture of the corrupting influences of Westernisation, remembers:

In the Youth Clubs we produced drama, sewing for the girls, and cultural activities of various kinds like enactment of African weddings, dances of the warriors of the amaNdebele people, how to crown a king and so forth. We did this to bring the children back to their own culture.

The point of such activity was not merely to preserve as folklore memories of a rural past, but also to preserve patterns of authority between generations and sexes and practically remind young people that their urban present might be a transitory phase and to practically equip them for life in the countryside:

We also introduced animal husbandry. We taught the children how to milk cows and how to turn whole milk into *amasi*, thick milk, and how to mix it up with corn and so on as a way of life in the African

setting... At the time, we were still living under the Land Apportionment Act. The Africans were in the city as a labour force, but after retirement we went back to our roots. We let these children, even if they were born in the city, learn something about their background so that when they went out there to the rural areas, they would not be strangers. They must know their own way of life... We encouraged things like initiation ceremonies.⁵⁴

The drama produced in the Youth Clubs would also seek to revitalise tradition. The Rev. Osias Mkosana, who joined Council youth work in 1957, produced two highly successful early plays around 1960—*u Sikwili* ('The Grudge') and *Ngiyalunga* ('I am doing well') and was influential in setting up an African Drama Society in the townships. Mkosana describes the appeal of traditional settings:

All the young people in the urban areas at that time had that traditional cultural background. I found that if the plays were based on the lives of the Zulus and the Ndebele, then they were very vivid and full of action. There would be a lot of fighting, using shields and so forth. In fact, as young men, we grew up like that. We would fight hard for everything—stick fighting and that sort of thing... The plays would open with song and dance. At the end, to conclude it all, you had to have that impact of dance and song. In *Ngiyalunga*, there were wedding songs and a lot of dancing... We were being encouraged really to do a lot of traditional plays.⁵⁵

Jerry Sigola, another Council official, who joined in 1961, indicates that there was some competition between 'traditional' and 'modern' genres and performances. At the dance sessions in the Mashumba arena, the audience would be

mainly grown-up people and very young people because the whole thing was new to them. They could imitate it although in a small way. You need to be dressed in the right attire in order to for it be attractive. Elderly people used to come there with their little babies and so on. The teenagers didn't have time for that. They wanted to go somewhere where they were playing guitars. Traditional dancing

was not welcomed by the new generation, although some did come just for a couple of minutes and then they would push off.

Though Sigola sees *mbube* as having 'always been there', he counts it among 'modern' and 'foreign' genres:

Nobody really tried to push it very hard. It was mainly done during weddings, otherwise it had no meaning. People liked it because of the South Africans who played so much *mbube*. South Africans came here and the way they were singing it made it look new... When I grew up I was told that this type of singing was *mbube* as opposed to traditional singing... When I came to Bulawayo, I found it here. The traditional singing was performed in the rural areas many years ago, but *mbube* I heard at home only when there was a wedding. Otherwise we would not say it is a cultural thing. Definitely not. It is something that people learnt with the South African influence. It is almost modern. ⁵⁶

Thus the cultural policies of the Bulawayo City Council were as contradictory and aimed for the same uneasy compromise as the rest of the body of its liberal township administration. On the one hand, the African residents of the townships should be reminded of the transitory nature of their urban existence and taught to appreciate the authenticity of their 'traditional' African culture, which was essentially rural. On the other hand, they were also supposed to be in a very different process of one-way transition from this very 'tradition' to a state of universal, urban-industrial 'modernity' which demanded of them totally different self-images and patterns of behaviour and adaptation.

In terms of cultural discourse, the compromise was sought in the image of a glorious Ndebele past which in honest battle had given way and recognised defeat to the superior force of European civilisation. In 1968, a double celebration took place of the 75th anniversary of the conquest of Matabeleland in 1893 and of the centenary of the death of Mzilikazi. While White Bulawayo congratulated itself with the success of its usurpation of 'the historic battleground of Rhodesia',⁵⁷ the townships were treated to a complex

pageantry of drama, tableaux, dancing, praise-singing, speeches, band music and choir performances in commemoration of the past glory of Mzilikazi and of the special adaptive talents of the Ndebele. Events culminated with the enactment of a spectacular Ndebele wedding and the arrival at the Mzilikazi Memorial Library of an 'oxdrawn covered wagon with actors from the Theatre Workshop, which produced the recent play "A King in Jerusalem" playing the parts of the Moffat family, Mzilikazi, his Indunas and warriors'.⁵⁸

This was followed by the performance of a praise poem, which aimed at presenting Mzilikazi as having been at the same time the first Ndebele and the first Rhodesian:

Mzilikazi, King of the amaNdebele
Who united all the tribes
And made them amaNdebele

Both Black and White
Are called "amaNdebele".

We are proud of being called
By Mzilikazi's name, Black and White.

He told us to go forward

To follow this motto of Mzilikazi, of Matshobana,
Of Mangede, of Langa, the King of the amaNdebele

We are going forward as we are called Rhodesians today.⁵⁹

Township Culture and Nationalist Politics

In spite of Mzilikazi celebrations, the 1960s were a period of great hardship for Bulawayo's township inhabitants and of grave difficulties for City Council policy endeavours. With the banning of African nationalist organisations from 1959 onward, the path which national policy had 'sought unsuccessfully to tread between participation and alienation' became increasingly unnegotiable, and dialogue and collaboration replaced by boycotts and sabotage, not least in the towns which 'are the generators of political awareness'.⁶⁰

The liberal policies of township administration in Bulawayo must be seen on the background of the attempts to promote the formation of an African middle class, 'multiracialism' and degrees of African participation in national politics during the period of the Central African Federation and Garfield Todd's premiership from 1953. According to Terence Ranger, this was 'the golden age of participation', but it was soon challenged by the emergence of radical nationalist organisations like the City Youth League in Salisbury from 1955 and the Southern Rhodesian African National Congress in both Salisbury and Bulawayo from 1957.⁶¹

From the early sixties, the participatory structures which had been established around township administration in Bulawayo began to fall apart, as township citizens were encouraged by nationalist organisations to boycott the election of members to the African Advisory Board and demand 'direct representation' rather than 'participation'. The Board resigned in June 1964, and Council officials complained about 'the introduction of nationalist politics into local affairs, which has discouraged non-political participation and driven away those who were prepared to deal with local matters on a non-political basis' and the emerging 'nationalist policy of dissociation from European institutions and of wrecking any cooperative effort'.⁶²

As the Rhodesian government came to be dominated by more conservative and segregationist forces, Bulawayo's Housing and Amenities Department as it was now called saw itself as being under fire from both nationalists and government, as there was 'a wave of reaction among European voters against any further efforts at racial integration'.⁶³ The election victory of the Rhodesian Front Party in March 1965 'marked the complete reversal of the trend towards multi-racialism in national and local politics that had been developing since the war'.⁶⁴

Though the Bulawayo townships did not experience the same states of emergency as Harare and Highfield and Salisbury, the early sixties were a period of demonstrations, rent and beer boycotts, 'constant turmoil', 'breakdown of law and order' and 'a climate of fear':

What is happening is that pressure is being brought to bear on all and sundry to conform to whatever happens to be the prevailing fashion or mode of thought and behaviour. This pressure is exercised by veiled rumours and threats of violence spread by posses of young men, by smears on walls or notices slipped under doors at night, and by actual violence such as stonings, bombings, beatings-up, directed both at public and private property, at particular individuals, and indiscriminately.⁶⁵

Notices would refer to 'the underground army' of 'General Chedu' which would eliminate people who paid rents, and Council institutions and infrastructure came under special attack as reformist camouflage for a system of racist segregation and oppression. The Council's parks and gardens, which were to have had such a 'tranquilising and civilising effect' were burnt, watermeters destroyed, schools and buses stoned and beer mugs slashed. In spite of this, 1964/65, from the point of view of the municipal 'Liquor Undertaking' was 'the most successful beer year yet'.⁶⁶

Council officials also came under pressure, and those who were known to be members of nationalist organisations were fired by Council :

Political tensions have regrettably strained staff loyalties on some occasions.... a member of staff took a leading part in a Leaseholders' Association which was calling for a boycott of rent payments following the rent increase. The individual concerned was asked to define his loyalty to Council's service or to his organisation, and appeared to about to choose the latter when he was restricted and so forfeited his employment. This incident gave rise to a Council ruling against participation by staff in political and associated matters inimical to their responsibilities. There has been some

dissatisfaction....but on the whole..... it is even welcomed by some as protection against unwelcome political pressures.⁶⁷

In spite of this, a number of nationalists seem to have continued for work for the City Council and with township welfare programmes in spite of their organisations' formal policy of dissociation from collaboration and keeping their memberships under cover from the Council.⁶⁸ This may have been for tactical reasons, but it may also be that substantial sections of the nationalist constituency would sympathise with elements of the City Council's 'modernisation' programme for the townships and want this to be continued into eventual independence.

In the cultural field, there was competition between initiatives sponsored by Council and by nationalist organisations. The radicalisation of nationalism in the early sixties for a time made it more Africanist and culturalist also in Matabeleland, and in the periods when it was possible to hold public meetings, organisations would have their own groups of singers and dancers to support their messages. Even at non-political cultural performances, the party allegiances of particular groups would be known to audiences, and political messages would be smuggled into occasions which were believed by authorities to be 'gatherings [which] would sway the people away from political activity':

the whole thing was traditional, but they would bring in politics by singing words such as "amakhiwa asibulala"—the Whites are killing us — and then go back to the traditional thing just to make sure everyone understood the real thing behind the song.⁶⁹

At the same time, Council officials would complain that community hall activities were being boycotted, or that very little people showed up.⁷⁰ Attempts, however, were continued to institutionalise and aestheticise popular cultural performance and move it to the halls and other municipal venues. Thus performances on the huge stage of the Big Bar in Makokoba seem to have been

discontinued in the mid-sixties for being too riotous.⁷¹ And political tension, according to Joyce Makwenda, brought an end to the 'golden age' of jazz culture in the late 1960s, though this may also have been related to the influx of new genres like *mbaqanga* or *simanje -manje*, highlife, rhumba and rock.⁷²

When political meetings were banned, and nationalist leaders restricted or imprisoned, cultural activity would take on a new significance as 'substitute politics'. In the periods of underground activity, politics was forced indoors, meetings improvised in private homes, and big celebratory occasions like weddings could be used both to bring people together for secret meetings and also through varieties of cultural performance, singing and dancing, to give vent to nationalist aspirations. Township family networks as well as township market places became institutions for the mediation of political communication.⁷³

But on the whole, police surveillance and repression of politics between the late sixties and the late seventies were massive and, for instance, prevented the development of any independent township theatre activity, outside the Council-controlled drama societies.⁷⁴ This development in the direction of more total control is also reflected in the City Council documents. From the late sixties, Council becomes increasingly propagandist about its own activities. A free monthly information magazine, *Masiye Pambili*, was distributed in 20,000 copies in the townships from 1964-65, coinciding with the launching at the national level of the government's *African Times* and the banning of independent African newspapers. Also, the tone and level of information of the Annual Reports from the Housing and Amenities Department seem to change in a more bland and idyllic direction. Thus the 1968/69 Report

The pleasant and peaceful atmosphere in the Townships, which has been so noticeable during the last two or three years, continued. Only one incident of stoning was reported and there were no petrol bombs.

There were no attempts to prevent attendance at work, except for an entirely abortive affair at Tshabalala.....75

While the Bulawayo townships were being policed and propagandised into seeming quiet, the Liberation War was escalating in the countryside, forcing the acceptance of the Lancaster House Agreement and, finally, national independence in April 1980. The way in which the nationalist movement was divided in the last phases of the liberation struggle and the process through which independence was implemented, however, was to have important implications for political life in Bulawayo and for the unfolding of the cultural life of its townships after 1980.

Change and Continuity: Township Culture and Politics after 1980

Bulawayo today is a fascinating mix of change and continuity. The townships, 'high-density suburbs', continue to display old characteristics of poverty and deprivation, crime persists as an everyday problem, and the limited institutional cultural facilities continue to centre around beer gardens, shebeens, churches and community halls. Thus the overwhelming impression a visitor gets now is one of persistent segregation between the living conditions of rich and poor, proper citizens and tolerated ones.

But there is also a sense of a gradually changing geography. The old relationship between centre and periphery seems to be slowly shifting, the city itself with its offices, shops and restaurants dying out in the early evening, and the life and excitement moving west into the townships. The proportion of Whites in Bulawayo was always much smaller than in Salisbury, and this balance has become even more marked with the post-independence exodus of Whites and the entry of a new Black elite into the quiet residences of the wealthier suburbs.

Also in the western townships, one is aware of increasing consolidation and self-confidence. While unemployment,

homelessness and destitution continue to be terrifying problems, not least in the context of persistent drought and accelerated influx from rural disaster areas, there are enlarged areas which display permanence, a sense of people having established themselves firmly where they are, adding to their houses, and settling into the warm social life of evening and weekends. There is a feeling of almost conservative establishment about the Big Bar in Makokoba and the beer gardens, elderly citizens and visitors from the countryside donning their Sunday best for an afternoon outing. The 'Baghdad', most popular of present-day Makokoba shebeens, and its landlord, Saddam, are institutions and hosts to some of the fastest talk one can come across in Zimbabwe, and similarly well-established is the backdoor 'workshop' to which clients will retire for the smoking of Malawian joints under the presidency of a giant Bob Marley poster.

In terms of Urban development conducted by the City Council, home ownership is expanding with a new master plan being implemented for the townships, which includes redevelopment and new low-income family residences for Makokoba and the older townships closest to the city.⁷⁶ Township residents are in the process of becoming rate-payers, and the traditional segregation between town and township finance, and the dependence on brewery profits for development, are being broken down.

There is a great deal of continuity in township administration with new town planning documents building on ideas developed in the 1970s.⁷⁷ Many old staff members continue to work for the Council's new Housing and Community Services Department and see their efforts as carrying on from the liberal ambitions of the 1950s and 60s. The provision of new educational facilities after 1980 may have helped to solve some problems of 'Juvenile delinquency', but the rapid growth of unemployment among educated and uneducated youth alike creates new ones, and the Department's self-understanding now seems to be one of dealing with modern urban problems, rather than of easing life for 'transitional' individuals.

One example of Council community work has been the support provided, together with NGOs and foreign donors, for some of the many township theatre groups which have emerged since independence. It has been characteristic of this development, though, that groups have been established at their own initiative and defined their own needs for cultural expression.

After a brief period of independence euphoria, the 'pleasant peacefulness' of township policing and control of the 1970s, was succeeded from 1982 by a different type of quiet, as Zimbabwe's ruling ZANU-PF party clamped down on 'dissidents' in Matabeleland and sought to remove through repression what they saw as the roots of PF-ZAPU masterminded plans for a coup d'etat.⁷⁸ While the anti-'dissident' campaign in the Matabeleland countryside assumed proportions of general destabilisation and indiscriminating massacre,⁷⁹ the effects in Bulawayo were to create 'a period of silence',⁸⁰ which lasted until the reunification of the two major nationalist organisations in December 1987.

During these years, when open political discussion was dangerous, while popular sentiments were outraged and radicalised, drama groups came to play a crucial role in providing alternative fora for critical articulation and discussion, fulfilling the old role of culture as 'substitute politics'. Or perhaps rather, carving out a new space for a genuinely popular politics outside the hierarchical structures of parties and state institutions. In 1988, a preliminary study of community theatre in Bulawayo pointed out the existence of more than 30 drama groups, operating at different levels of competence and ambition, and with groups like *Amakhosi*, *Meridian*, *Young Warriors*, *Tose Sonke* and *Iluba Elimnyama* standing out among them.⁸¹ Performances would be characteristically 'modern', mixing text and influences from a variety of inspirations and reworking and integrating traditional performance styles and genres into new settings. Also typically, the attitude towards language would be pragmatic-

scripts being continuously reworked or improvised, Ndebele, English or 'Ndenglish' could be used to communicate most efficiently with different groups of audiences.

Apart from producing plays and acting, theatre groups would take on a wider range of organisational tasks within the community. Organising unemployed youngsters, they would aim at creating livelihoods for themselves through performing and training. Basing themselves in some cases on clubs of karate practitioners and *kung fu* fans - Hong Kong films having replaced westerns as the preferred popular cultural fare among young people in the Bulawayo townships of the 1980s - they would promote physical fitness and grace, self-respect, discipline and the capacity to 'walk tall'. And they would see themselves as an inspiration for their surrounding township communities to get organised and insist on elementary rights of self-expression, dignity and debate.⁸²

There are obviously continuities here going back to some of things the liberal 'modernisers' of the Bulawayo City Council were attempting to promote in the decades before independence: The Aim of producing self-respecting citizenhood; of building capacity for self-expression; of using combat sports for purposes of 'character-building', of using cultural activity to combat crime and shebeen alcoholism.

But elements of change outweigh those of continuity. The best of the drama groups have been largely self-organised and aimed at controlling the support they have been able to raise from the City Council and other sources. The term 'participation' would mean little to them - the debate they want to inspire is political and goes beyond the level of the narrow locality. And they need no help from anyone to reconcile 'traditional' culture with modern urban conditions, as their self-expression and communication of intent are geared towards choosing and mixing available discourses to the maximum possible effect.

The political role of township theatre in Bulawayo has continued to be central after the conclusion of 'the period of silence' and the unity agreement between ZANU and ZAPU in 1987-88. If unity restored a level of state representation to Bulawayo and Matabeleland, it also did away with the image of ZAPU as a possible party of radical opposition and a different post-nationalist politics. This was articulated clearly in *Amakhosi's* main 1992 production *Dabulap*, which energetically and with a good deal of desperation debates structural adjustment, unemployment, new types of poverty in the streets of Bulawayo and for the first time uses the supposedly left-wing ZAPU Minister of Home Affairs, Dumiso Dabengwa, as its image of the politician betraying his people. And also, in quite surprising ways, points to South Africa as the land of possibilities and opportunity.

There is another tradition alive within Bulawayo township theatre, however, than that represented by groups such as *Amakhosi*, which links up with the history of City Council administration in different ways. This is the Ndebele cultural nationalist drama represented by MAWA, the Mthwakazi ('the Ndebele Nation') Actors' and Writers' Association and its chairman, the recently deceased playwright and novelist Mthandazo Ndema Ngwenya.⁸³ This organisation, which has roots back to the 1970s, has been very active both in producing plays and in organising support for theatre through the local and national Arts Councils and from the Bulawayo City Council, with whose Town Clerk's Office Ndema Ngwenya was an employee. In the early 1980s, they became known nationally when they produced a television series for ZTV on Shaka, the 'father' of the Zulu state.

Recently, after unity, and with the increasing political frustration in Matabeleland at the outcome of ZAPU's integration into national government, Ndebele ethnic organisation, cultural nationalism and ideas of federation and possible alternative affiliations to parts of South Africa have been gaining new ground. Thus, a new cultural

society called *Vukane Mahlabezulu* ('Wake Up, You People!') gained prominence in Bulawayo in the process of preparing for the controversial centenary celebrations of the 1893 Ndebele War.

The revival of local Ndebele nationalism wants to secure a better deal for people in the region, whom they claim have been betrayed by a centralist Zimbabwean state, dominated by 'the Shona'. The 'period of silence' was really a war of Shona against Ndebele, and the unity of 1987 'had nothing, nothing whatsoever to offer the minority and dominated Ndebele'.⁸⁴

Vukane Mahlabezulu was formed with Hudson Ndlovu as Organising Secretary and Mathandazo Ndema Ngwenya as Publicity Secretary - both of them ex-City Council officials. The society also aims at the restoration of the authenticity of Ndebele culture and at giving an advice on correct traditional cultural practices. Known as Halimana, Ndlovu appears on weekly radio programmes 'Amasiko lokhololwesi Kristu' ('Culture vs. Christianity') and 'Amasiko Ethu' ('Our Culture'), gives advice on and answers phone-in questions about Ndebele tradition.

Ndlovu is critical of the way some of the modern performance groups take freedoms with and reinterpret traditional cultural forms and misuse for example *isitshikitsha* dancing:

It is being spoilt these days. Yesterday is was not allowed to do things like that because it was not something to play around with. Modern people want to do that. The majority of us who have remained do not like that and I am dispelling it on the air on Amasiko Ethu. I have always spoken against it because it lowers the prestige of a purpose that is useful to the people.⁸⁵

Thus, two very different understandings of culture seem to coexist in the township practices of today, exemplified by the traditionalist authenticity of Hudson Ndlovu on the hand and the modernist eclecticism of drama groups like *Amakhosi* or *Meridian*.

It could be argued that both understandings have links back to the projects of colonial modernisation which were undertaken in

1960s and 1970s. These projects were characteristically contradictory or half-hearted in their attempts to at once modernise and traditionalise African urban citizens. An important current development seems to be that the two strands of the contradiction are coming apart. The future will show which understanding of culture will come to dominate the life of Bulawayo's townships, and what the political consequences will be.

The question is partly what form ethnic mobilisation will take — whether it will be 'soft' and integrative, providing a political language for otherwise alienated groups, as one tradition in Matabeleland exemplifies, or 'hard' and exclusivist in a perhaps more 'modern' and chauvinist variety, closer to the appearance ethnic politics have recently been taking in South Africa through the *Inkatha Freedom Party* and related initiatives.⁸⁶ And partly how the political culture of Zimbabwe and Matabeleland will serve to accommodate ethnically oriented organisation - will the boundaries of tolerance be flexible enough to integrate such discourse through dialogue, or will it be exorcised as a devil rearing its tail from a 'pre-modern' past?

Notes and References

- 1 Cf. two project documents, 'Bulawayo Community Arts Initiative "Esikhosini"' and 'Proposed Cultural Centre' prepared by Amakhosi Performing Arts Workshop (Bulawayo [1994]).
- 2 Cf. [E. Globerman], 'Theatre Project Resource Centre LINKFEST, 5th Anniversary Festival Report, 12-14 December 1991, Macdonald Hall, Mzilikazi', [Bulawayo 1992].
- 3 The first Ndebele novel published by the Southern Rhodesian Literature Bureau was P. S. Mahlangu's *UMthwakazi* (1957) — a historical epic which is still in circulation and popular.
- 4 Cf. T. O. Ranger, *The African Voice in Southern Rhodesia, 1898-1930* (London 1970).

- 5 Cf. Jeremy Brickhill's contributions to Ngwabi Bhebe and Terence Ranger's collection of papers on the Liberation War (*Soldiers in Zimbabwe's Liberation war* and *Society in Zimbabwe's Liberation War* (forthcoming, London 1994).
- 6 *Pungwes* were night-time meetings held for village communities by ZANLA guerrillas in disputed areas of control at which political speeches were made, *Chimurenga* songs sung, the objectives of the armed struggle explained, and the support of the villagers for the guerrillas confirmed. They were also the occasion for the pointing out and punishing of 'sell-outs'.
- 7 On 'pre-colonial' and 'colonial' cities, see C. Coquery-Vidrovitch, 'The Process of Urbanisation in Sub-Saharan Africa' in P. Kaarsholm (ed.), *Modernisation of Culture and the Development of Political Discourse*, IDS Occasional Paper, 5, (Roskilde, 1992).
- 8 O., *Bulawayo : Historic Battleground of Rhodesia* (Cape Town, 1968), p. 67 and map 10 facing p. 69.
- 9 [H. Ashton], *African Administration in Bulawayo* (Bulawayo, September 1957), p. 1.
- 10 Ashton, *African Administration ...*, p. 6.
- 11 Figures 1936-1964 based on Bulawayo City Council *Annual Report*. Figures 1969-1982 based on Central Statistical Information Office (CSO) data. 1992 estimate calculated from 1982 CSO figure. In his PhD dissertation on Bulawayo, 'Welfare Services in an African Urban Area' (University of London, 1971), Eric Gargett gives the following estimates of the growth in the total African population of the city: 1931: 21,000; 1936: 20,000; 1941: 30,000; 1946: 50,000; 1951: 77,000; 1956: 100,000; 1961: 130,200; 1966: 165,750; 1970: 196,600. Rates of Growth: 1931-41: 43%; 1941-51: 157%; 1951-61: 69%; 1961-70: 51% (Table III, p. 23).

- 12 Central Statistical Office, *Census 1992. Zimbabwe. Preliminary Report* (Harare, [1993]), p. 129. The report refrains from estimating any 1982-1992 population growth rates, because the geographical boundaries used in the two census are not the same (p. 11). The low 1992 total figure for Bulawayo may have to do with changes in ward boundaries, but could also indicate a slowdown in the rate of urbanisation which may have been unusually high during the years of warfare in the countryside in the 1970s and 5th Brigade operations in the 1980s.
- 13 Cf. T. O. Ranger, 'African Politics in Twentieth Century Southern Rhodesia' in T. O. Ranger (ed.), *Aspects of Central African History* (London, 1968), p. 236, and N. Bhebe, *Benjamin Burombo : African Politics in Zimbabwe, 1947-1958* (Harare, 1989).
- 14 For a comparative perspective on early Salisbury history, see Tsuneo Yoshikuni, 'Black Migrants in a White City : A Social History of African Harare, 1890-1925' PhD dissertation (University of Zimbabwe, 1989).
- 15 Ashton, *African Administration* ..., pp. 6-15
- 16 Ashton, *African Administration* ..., pp. 21-27
- 17 Ashton, *African Administration* ..., pp. 22. Cf. Bhebe, *Benjamin Burombo* ..., p. 9-18.
- 18 Ashton, *African Administration* ..., pp. 51
- 19 The Native Administration Department took over from the non-governmental Native Welfare Society which had been set up at the beginning of the 1930s with the purpose of organising recreation and providing urban health care, but took on 'a vast range of matters concerning the affairs of the African population. Of these the most important were the level of African wages, living conditions, African trading, recreation,

sport, youth organizations, medical services, legal aid and social problems ... One of the Welfare Society's most prestigious schemes was the building of Stanley Hall in the Main Location in Bulawayo.' See O. W Stuart, "'Good Boys", Footballers and Strikers : African Social Change in Bulawayo, 1933-1953', PhD dissertation (SOAS, London, 1989), pp. 87-98

- 20 Cf. B. F. Frederiksen, 'Making Popular Culture from Above : Leisure in Nairobi, 1940-1960', CSSSC Occasional Paper No. 145.
- 21 On the opposition between national government and Bulawayo City Council policies and changes in the latter from 1953 onwards, cf. O. W. Stuart, "'Good Boys", Footballers and Strikers...', p. 83 and p. 180
- 22 Bhebe, *Benjamin Burombo*....., p. 5.
- 23 Cf. e. g. B. Raftopoulos, 'Nationalism and Labour in Salisbury, 1945-1965', seminar paper (St. Antony's College, Oxford, June 1994) and P. Bonner, 'Family Crime and Political Consciousness on the East Rand, 1939-1955', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 14, 3 (April 1988).
- 24 E. Gargett, 'Welfare Services in an African Urban Area', p. 43.
- 25 Ashton, *African Administration*..., pp. i. The theoretical foundations are presented more fully in chapter one, 'Urban Studies and Social Change', in E. Gargett, 'Welfare Services in an African Urban Area' pp. 5-16. An extended case is made for the need to ground social policy development and welfare work in theory and research in chapter 9, 'Research, Administration and Planning', pp. 220-248.
- 26 E. Gargett, 'Welfare Services in an African Urban Area', p. 48
- 27 Ashton, *African Administration*..., p. 56.

- 28 E. Gargett, 'Welfare Services in an African Urban Area', p. 71.
- 29 E. Gargett, 'Welfare Services in an African Urban Area', pp. 48-49.
- 30 Ashton, *African Administration...*, p. 56.
- 31 T. Adolfo, 'Echoes of a Lost Era. Researcher Captures Zimbabwe's Golden Age of Music on Film', *Horizon* (June 1992), pp. 34-35 and 50.
- 32 For further perspectives on the interaction between performance culture in Rhodesian and South African cities, see M. Chitauro, C. Dube and L. Gunner, 'Song, Story and Nation: Women as Singers and Actresses in Zimbabwe' in L. Gunner (ed), *Politics and Performance: Theatre, Poetry and Song in Southern Africa* (Johannesburg, 1994), pp. 111-138.
- 33 Ashton, *African Administration...*, p. 47; [H. Ashton], *Annual Report of the Department of Housing and Amenities, 1968/69* (Bulawayo, 1969), p. 11.
- 34 Ashton, *African Administration...*, p. 48. On the Bulawayo football 'war' as prelude to the railway and general strikes, see O. W. Stuart, "'Good Boys", Footballers and Strikers...', pp. 99-117.
- 35 Ashton, *African Administration...*, p. 47 and Appendix C: 'Recreation and Welfare' [written by Gargett], p. 2
- 36 E. Gargett, 'Welfare Services in an African Urban Area', p. 48. Terence Ranger describes earlier disagreements among administrators in Salisbury in the 1930s about the usefulness of boxing in the context of social control-disagreements which betray ambiguities concerning African urbanisation which are very much like the ones discussed here in relation to Bulawayo. See T. O. Ranger, 'Pugilism and Pathology: African Boxing and the Black Urban Experience in Southern Rhodesia' in W. J. Baker and J. A. Mangan, *Sport in Africa: Essays in Social History* (London, 1987).

- 37 E. Gargett, 'Welfare Services in an African Urban Area', p. 71.
- 38 Ashton, *African Administration...*, Appendix C, p. 6.
- 39 Ashton, *African Administration...*, Appendix C, p. 4.
- 40 Ashton, *African Administration...*, Appendix C, p. 4.
- 41 On Stanley Hall, cf. O. W. Stuart. "'Good Boys", Footballers and Strikers...', p. 91; on community halls in Nairobi's Puwani and Kaloleni townships, see B. F. Frederiksen, 'Making Popular Culture from Above...'
- 42 Ashton, *African Administration...*, Appendix C, p. 1. Cf. D. Lerner, *The Passing of Traditional Society: Modernizing the Middle East* (New York, 1958), and the discussion of 'Lerner's trichotomy of Traditional, Transitional and Modern' in E. Gargett, 'Welfare Services in an African Urban Area', p. 10. On the concepts 'urbanisation', 'westernisation' and 'modernisation', the latter providing 'the unifying principle... the individual's adoption of the attitudes, values and life-style of the contemporary industrial world...in Lerner's phrase, "the personal meaning of social change",' cf. E. Gargett, 'Welfare Services in an African Urban Area', p. 13.
- 43 Ashton, *African Administration...*, Appendix C, pp. 1-2.
- 44 E Gargett, 'Welfare Services in an African Urban Area', 32.
- 45 E. Gargett, 'Welfare Services in an African Urban Area', p. 32. Gargett points to Salisbury's 'government-sponsored luxury suburb of Marimba Park' as an example of how elite township housing might be provided.
- 46 [H. Ashton], *Annual Report of the Department of Housing and Amenities, 1963/64* (Bulawayo, 1964), p. 24.
- 47 E. Gargett, 'Welfare Services in an African Urban Area', pp. 32-3. In 1958/59, in Bulawayo's townships, 74% of single men, 66% of family men and 89% of wives were not members of

any association. By 1969, this level had increased only slightly. Trade union membership in 1958/59 comprised 13% of family men and 7% of single men (*ibid*).

- 48 Ashton, *Annual Report of the Department of Housing and Amenities, 1963/64*, p. 24. For radio-transmitted 'mock parliaments' in Kenya, cf. B. F. Frederiksen, 'Making Popular Culture from Above...'
- 49 E. Gargett, 'Welfare Services in an African Urban Area', p. 49. For similar conceptions in Kenya, cf. J. Lonsdale; 'The Moral Economy of Mau Mau: The Problem' in B. Berman and J. Lonsdale, *Unhappy Valley: Conflict in Kenya & Africa*, Book Two: *Violence and Ethnicity* (London, 1992), p. 276. Another parallel seen to the 'painful psychological' situation and 'volatility' of African 'townspeople' was that of uprooted youth criminals in big American cities. Cf David Riesman's introduction to Lerner, *The Passing of Traditional Society...*, as referred to in Lonsdale, 'The Moral Economy...', p. 282.
- 50 Ashton, *African Administration...*, Appendix C, pp. 5-6.
- 51 Ashton, *African Administration...*, Appendix C, p. 5.
- 52 E. Gargett, 'Welfare Services in an African Urban Area', p. 35
- 53 Ashton, *African Administration...*, p. 48.
- 54 Interview with Hudson Ndlovu by Evie Globerman and Preben Kaarsholm, Inyathi Youth Centre, Mpopoma, 31 July 1992.
- 55 Interview with Osias Mkosana by Evie Globerman and Preben Kaarsholm, Nguboyenja Housing, Office, 27 July 1992.
- 56 Interview with Jerry Sigola by Evie Globerman and Preben Kaarsholm, Nguboyenja Housing Office, 27 July 1992. Jerry Sigola is the son of the late Chief Sigola of Esigodini. For associations between weddings and *mbube* or *isicathamiya* in South Africa from the 1930s, cf. V. Erlmann, *African Stars: Studies in Black South African Performance* (Chicago, 1991),

- p. 162 and Erlmann, "'The Past is Far and the Future is Far': Power and Performance among Zulu Migrant Workers', *American Ethnologist*, 19, 4 (November 1992).
- 57 *Bulawayo: Historic Battleground of Rhodesia* was the title of the magnificent coffee-table book produced by Oliver Ransford for the occasion.
- 58 *Masiye Pambili*, 42 (May 1968), p. 3.
- 59 Quoted in *Masiye Pambili*, 46 (September 1968)p. 9.
- 60 Quoted from E. Gargett, 'Welfare Services in an African Urban Area', p. 34.
- 61 Cf. Ranger, 'African Politics in Twentieth Century Southern Rhodesia', p. 238f.
- 62 Ashton, *Annual Report of the Department of Housing and Amenities, 1963/64*, p. 2.
- 63 Ashton, *Annual Report of the Department of Housing and Amenities, 1963/64*, p. 2.
- 64 [H. Ashton], *Annual Report of the Department of Housing and Amenities, 1964/65* (Bulawayo, 1965), p. 1.
- 65 Ashton, *Annual Report of the Department of Housing and Amenities, 1963/64*, p. 4.
- 66 Ashton, *Annual Report of the Department of Housing and Amenities, 1964/65* (Bulawayo, 1965), p. 6
- 67 Ashton, *Annual Report of the Department of Housing and Amenities, 1965/65* (Bulawayo 1965), p. 5
- 68 Interview with Hudson Ndlovu, 31 July 1992.
- 69 Interview with Jerry Sigola, 27 July 1992.
- 70 Ashton, *Annual Report of the Department of Housing and Amenities, 1964/65* (Bulawayo, 1965), p. 18.
- 71 Information from Big Bar clients, Makokoba, July 1992.

- 72 T. Adolfo, 'Echoes of a Lost Era...', p. 50. *Masiye Pambili* reports several visits of the Bulawayo townships during the late 1960s and early 1970s of 'British pop groups', Percy Sledge, Simon Mahlatini and the Mahotella Queens, the Trekkers' Band, Baba Gaston and Congo Cha Cha, the Dima Sisters etc. See also Chitauro, Dube and Gunner, 'Song, Story and Nation...'
- 73 Interview with Arthur Chadzingwa, Harare, 1 August 1992.
- 74 Interview with Makokoba dramatist Cont Mhlanga, Copenhagen 22 September 1989.
- 75 *Annual report of the Department of Housing and Amenities, 1968/69*, p.11.
- 76 City of Bulawayo, *Local Development Plan No.1. Western Area: The Written Statement* (Bulawayo, July 1980); City of Bulawayo, *Master Plan: The Study, The Written Statement and Summary of Major Proposals* (Bulawayo, November 19981); City of Bulawayo, *Makokoba District Commercial Centre Design* (Bulawayo, February 1988).
- 77 Cf. City of Bulawayo, *The Replanning of Makokoba* (Bulawayo, December 1973).
- 78 See e. g. S Sekeremayi, 'Bandits: The Struggle Ahead—ZAPU's Road to Self-Destruction', E. Mnangagwa, 'Dissidents Are PaperTigers' and Anon., 'The Abduction of Foreign Tourists', all in ZANU-PF's monthly *Zimbabwe News*, 14, 1 (April 1983).
- 79 Cf. Anon, 'Tragedy at Tsholotsho' in *Horizon* (July 1992), pp. 14-15, 18 and 21. See also R. Werbner, *Tears of the Dead: The Social Biography of an African Family* (Edinburgh and Harare, 1992).

- 80 Interview with Cont Mhlanga, Copenhagen, 22 September 1989.
- 81 Cf. P. Kaarsholm, 'Mental Colonisation or Catharsis? Theatre, Democracy and Cultural Struggle from Rhodesia to Zimbabwe', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 16, 2 (July 1990), p. 260.
- 82 By 1994, the number of drama groups in Bulawayo seems to have diminished by about a third, but theatre and related performance genres remain central and lively rallying points. Cf. N. Halm, P. Kaarsholm and C. J. Silia, 'Appraisal Report on Project to set up a SADC-Danida Centre for Training in Culture Administration' (Copenhagen, June 1994).
- 83 On the death of Ndema Ngwenya in a car accident, see articles in the Bulawayo *Chronicle* 26, 27, 29 and 30 October 1992, and 'Masakheni', 'Tribute to Mthandazo Ndema Ngwenya"', *The Daily Gazette* (Harare, 3 November 1992). After the death, rumours quickly got into circulation that the accident had been arranged.
- 84 M. N. Ngwenya, 'Views of a Ndcbele', *The Insider*, 18, (Bulawayo, July 1992).
- 85 Interview with Hudson Ndlovu, 31 July 1992.
- 86 Cf. T. O. Ranger, 'Language, Law and Nationalism. Ethnicity and Nationalism: The Case of Matabeleland', seminar paper, Institute of Commonwealth Studies (London, May 1991), and 'Indigenous Ideas: Accounting for Drought, Making Rain and Healing History in Matabeleland, 1992', seminar paper, St. Antony's college, Oxford (October 1992). See also L. Mhlaba, 'Local Cultures and Development in Zimbabwe: The Case of Matabeleland' in P. Kaarsholm (ed.) *Cultural Struggle & Development in Southern Africa* (London, 1991), pp. 209-225.

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