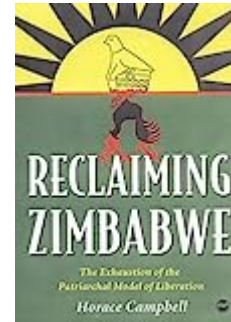


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Horace Campbell. *Reclaiming Zimbabwe: The Exhaustion of the Patriarchal Model of Liberation.* Trenton: Africa World Press, 2003. vi + 346 pp. \$29.95 (paper), ISBN 978-1-59221-092-3.



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Horace Campbell's book contains five sections, written between 1980 and 2002. The first section covers the transition to independence in 1980 and the integration of the armed forces. Reflecting on this section that was written in the early 1980s, the author concedes that he omitted to cover the ruling party's large-scale killings in Matabeleland, in part because he was swept up in the euphoria of independence. Section 2 contains a chapter written after the opening of the United Methodist Church's Africa University in 1994–Zimbabwe's first private institute of higher learning. The author contemplates whether this church will provide an opportunity for Africans to break with the ideological and cultural oppression of Europe and America. Another chapter introduces the reader to the Southern African Development Community's (SADC) Organ of Politics, Defence and Security, of which President Mugabe became the first chairman in 1996. Within the following year, a war of liberation drove out President Mobutu, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) was admitted as a member of the SADC. The core of the book, written in the aftermath of the land invasions that began in 2000, is contained in section 3 and section 4. Section 3 criticizes the political leadership for its "executive lawlessness"—its use of state violence against the political opposition in the context of the land invasions—and for its intolerance manifested in its attacks on homosexuals. Section 4 is

a critique of the political and military leadership, which responded to Laurent Kabila's request for troops to defend the DRC's sovereignty against foreign invasion, but then sought self-enrichment and forged an alliance with the *Interahamwe* who had been responsible for the genocide in Rwanda. Section 5 recapitulates the main themes in the book, discusses the exhaustion of the patriarchal model of liberation, and concludes with the author's vision of emancipatory politics that requires the elimination of structures of domination.

The author argues that the ZANU-PF political leadership in Zimbabwe betrayed its liberation promises to the people. A missionary-educated elite, the leaders internalized the "European ideation system" and rejected the precolonial "African ideation system." When the new leaders took control of the Rhodesian state, they Africanized it but did not change its European/Rhodesian masculine and militarist character. Similarly, they did not change settler agriculture but continued to subsidize this small white privileged minority, much as the Rhodesian state had done. When they did finally take white-owned land, beginning in 2000, they upheld European ideas of private land ownership rather than pre-colonial African ideas of collective ownership of land, water, and other resources. Moreover, the leadership embraced European ideas of patriarchy and labor exploitation and ignored

pre-colonial African ideas about the linkage between material and spiritual realms and flexible gender roles. Further reflecting the influence of the European ideation system, the leadership used the militarist liberation war veterans to lead the violent takeover of land when it would have been preferable to take the land by law and without violence. The key beneficiaries of land redistribution were the members of the tiny African male capitalist class; the majority of people could not afford agricultural inputs. In adopting structural adjustment, the leadership had opted to support these “economic nationalists” in their desire to compete with settlers for a share of the economy, and abandoned their revolutionary commitments to transform the economy in the service of improving the lives of the majority.

According to the author, the war in the DRC was another prong in the leadership’s military strategy to support capital accumulation by the nascent African capitalist class. But the high costs of the war exacerbated the financial crisis in Zimbabwe for the majority and the ruling party’s crisis of legitimacy. Likewise, the leadership’s alliances in the DRC with white Rhodesian businessmen, who had been sanctions busters during the liberation struggle, and with groups such as the Interhamwe, further discredited the regime. The author juxtaposes the leadership’s rhetoric about liberation and Pan-Africanism in the context of the land invasions with these unsavory partners in the DRC. Ultimately, the Zimbabwe defense forces in the DRC were defeated in battles against Rwandan troops and their local allies in the last three months of 2000, in large part because the Zimbabwean air force lacked the necessary financial resources and could not play its expected role of providing support for the ground troops. In August 2002, President Mugabe announced that Zimbabwean troops would be withdrawn from the DRC where they had been for the previous four years.

The author concludes that the militarism and masculinity of “the patriarchal model of liberation”—a concept introduced by African women from oppressed classes—has been exhausted in Zimbabwe and has ceased to have legitimacy. He sees hope for regeneration and genuine liberation in neither the ruling party nor the opposition MDC but in the vibrant women’s movement. It alone understands the need to replace the patriarchal model of liberation with economic transformation and social justice for all.

There is much of interest in this lively and politically engaged volume. I especially appreciated the links the

author made between both the land invasions and the war in the DRC as military strategies of primitive capital accumulation. The discussion of the prescient warnings of the likes of Walter Rodney, Samir Amin, and Franz Fanon on the challenges of national liberation are well worth revisiting. At a general level, I found myself in agreement with much of the author’s argument: the political leaders’ betrayal of their liberation promises, the promotion of a small capitalist elite at the expense of the majority, the violence of ZANU-PF rule, and the continuities between Rhodesian and post-independence rule. At the same time, I had some concerns about what I thought were elements of romanticization, seeming contradictions or confusion, problems of evidence, the alleged disconnect between liberation war politics and post-independence politics, and too many errors.

I found Campbell’s description of the pre-colonial African ideation system romanticized and wondered whether he had not exaggerated the power of the European ideation system. Let us look at two cases—land reform and the military—where Campbell argues for the influence of the European ideation system in post-independence African policies and practices. Contrary to Campbell’s claim, African land reform since 2000 has not followed what the author portrays as the European model of agricultural production (p. 94). The government did not provide subsidized inputs for even the commercial farmers, a Rhodesian state practice. Campbell acknowledges both these points. Nor did the government, contrary to Campbell’s assertion, respect private property. In fact, the ruling party leased the land to new settlers and cancelled leases for any perceived disloyalty to it. With respect to violence in Matabeleland, Campbell alleges the influence of the European ideation system via Rhodesian settlers and the British military team that trained the newly integrated Zimbabwean army (p. 273). It is important to recall non-European influences. The Zimbabwean Air Force, which played an important role in the DRC war, was trained by the Pakistanis, and the Fifth Brigade, which played a devastating role in the killings in Matabeleland, was initially trained by the North Koreans. Moreover, one must ask what impact the liberation armies’ practices had on ex-guerrillas integrated into the new army. I return to the question of continuities between the behavior of liberation armies and of ex-guerrillas inside and outside the army.

Many claims in the book are inconsistent. For example, were the leaders unable to transform laws and economic structures after independence or were they too influenced by the European ideation system, as Campbell

argues most of the time (p. 275)? Were the killings in Matabeleland by the military part of post-independence ethnic antagonisms and militarism (p. 272) or were the large military expenditures after independence a product of the British military training team's "modernization" of the former guerrilla armies (p. 233)? Readers learn that by 1999 over 160,000 Zimbabweans had died of AIDS-related illnesses (p. 288) and that over 400,000 had died of AIDS (p. 128). While the majority of the population were not seduced by state-sponsored violence after 2000 (p. 133), Campbell also says that state repression of the new movements for change "created a tolerance for domestic violence in the home" (p. 134). What precisely triggered the land invasions—the crisis of accumulation for the embryonic capitalist class (p. 94) or the inability of the government to pay for the war in the DRC and its IMF debts (p. 289)?

I found some evidence lacking or unsatisfactory. I was not persuaded by the evidence on water resources that the post-independence leaders had subsidized white settlers. To take one small example, the author quotes President Mugabe boasting in a 2000 Independence Day speech about the dams and boreholes his government had built for white commercial farmers over the previous twenty years (pp. 115, 117). However, I read Mugabe as saying that his government had invested in building dams and boreholes for non-settler groups in the rural areas. Similarly, though the author repeatedly invokes the energetic, dynamic, and vibrant women's movement in Zimbabwe (e.g. pp. 82, 154, 167-8, 283) and describes it as having had a "phenomenal rise" (p. 170), he does not offer supporting evidence for such strong claims. There are brief references to the Mutasa project for battered women (p. 168), the Women and Law in Southern Africa project (p. 168), and the Women's Coalition (p. 309). But what impact have these groups had on society and how much support do their ideas garner? Moreover, it is misleading to include Sam Moyo as an African feminist who has been exposing the patriarchal model of liberation (pp. 82, 316 n15). Moyo has been in the forefront of defending the violent land invasions and of arguing that their violence has been exaggerated. Other examples of lack of evidence include the author's assertions that among the main beneficiaries of the post-2000 land reform have been "the big banks and international food corporations" (p. 146), that the farm invasions "paved the way for big agribusiness to sharpen its plans for the introduction of genetically modified seeds and foods to Zimbabwe" (p. 142), and that "the government is providing the space for large-scale international agribusiness companies to move

into the agricultural sector in Zimbabwe in order to intensify the exploitation of farm workers" (p. 83). I was intrigued to learn that ZANU had trained the *Interahamwe* and *Mai Mai* inside Zimbabwe and that this training inspired the war veterans' militia type activities in the 2000 farm invasions (pp. 198, 215). But the author does not provide documentation for this claim.

I thought the author might have argued that militarism, masculinity, and violence were problems that go back to the liberation war (and indeed the earlier nationalist movement) and the transition. Despite references to the violation of women ex-combatants by their comrades in the war and to the violent internal leadership struggles in ZANU/ZANLA (p. 265), the author finds militarism and masculinity to be a problem only after the post-independence period. Likewise, he acknowledges that the leadership manipulated ethnicity during and not only after the liberation struggle (p. 296), but also criticizes scholars for highlighting ethnic issues rather than ideological and strategic differences (p. 273), as if they invented ethnic problems. The author ignores available evidence that ZANLA forces poured into Rhodesia in the thousands in violation of the cease-fire and used violence and intimidation to ensure electoral victory in 1980. Instead, he contrasts ZANU's respect for the 1980 peace settlement with President Mugabe's disregard for the Lusaka Peace Accords to end the war in the DRC (pp. 222-25), and portrays the 1980 election as one in which ZANU was solely on the defensive against the Rhodesian state violence (p. 80). In short, the author's own evidence and other well-established data might have led the author to question his understanding of a disconnect between the liberation armies' practices during and after the war.

There are a number of unnecessary errors. For example, the state of emergency existed in the entire country for the first ten years of independence; the government did not have to declare a state of emergency in Matabeleland after 1982 (p. 306). The Presidential (Temporary) Powers Act was introduced just before the state of emergency was ended rather than in November 2001, and it did not introduce an amendment to the Land Acquisition Act but was used to effect that amendment (pp. 80, 96, 148). ZANU did not operate in Mozambique after 1976 but from 1972 (p. 47). It is not possible that over 23 percent of the rural population has died of AIDS (p. 128). To add to this list, it is the Pearce not Pierce Commission (p. 24), General Acland not Ackland (p. 30), Teurai not Tendai Nhongo (p. 282), *chimbwido* and not *chimwuido* (p. 47).

Despite these concerns, I recommend the book to those interested in the transition of liberation movements to governments, and the particular case of Zimbabwe. Campbell is politically engaged and provocative as he grapples with the problematic leadership of nationalist movements. One can but hope that he is right that the violence and terror being perpetrated on Zimbabweans are the last gasps of an exhausted and illegitimate political leadership. Certainly, the majority of Zimbabweans have had more than enough of ZANU-PF style “liberation.” For positive change, the regional powers, whom the author never takes to task for their support of President Mugabe since 2000, must offer some relief to the people of Zimbabwe rather than its illegitimate leaders.

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