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Gerald Horne. *From the Barrel of a Gun: The United States and the War Against Zimbabwe, 1965-1980.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001. 338 pp. $59.95 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-8078-4903-3.

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Professor Horne's timely book is essentially a socio-historical study of the role of the US government, and some of its citizens, in Zimbabwe's war of liberation from 1965-1980. Horne adopts a multi-thematic approach and examines the period in terms of race, politics, socio-dynamics, and, to a lesser extent, military operations and gender.

The book is divided into four parts and a conclusion. Part One introduces one of the major themes of the book: race and racism (particularly the pan-European white elitist mythos). Horne also notes that Washington's seemingly chaotic policy towards Southern Africa during this period was emblematic of the tensions within Washington itself and between Washington and its Western allies. The rise of this conservatism in the United States included a "back-lash against the idea of racial equality. These two factors–white supremacy and anti communism–often were intertwined in a manner that makes it difficult to unravel the two" (p. 20).

The tensions within and between neo-liberalism and neo-conservatism and, at another level, the strategic paradoxes of the Cold War, certainly militated against a consistent "Third World" (especially Africa) policy by the Americans. It is here that Horne makes the valid point that whilst the issue of race is important in American foreign policy towards Zimbabwe, equally important is the "ignorance/indifference factor". Zimbabwe–and most of Africa–is out of the "loop" of American consciousness. Many of America's "sins" towards Zimbabwe during the war were "sins" of omission, rather than commission. Official inertia thus gave leeway for more focused interest groups to push their conservative agenda(s).

The opening chapters also introduce the American mercenaries who fought for Rhodesia. This theme suggests two hierarchies of need which explain the mercenary presence: at a fundamental level, the American mercenaries needed to escape their own cloying environment "back home" and gain relief through (brutal) action in the "cowboy" frontier of Rhodesia (whilst being paid to do so). At a subsidiary level, this "joint operation" was a re-affirmation of whiteness of Pan-European solidarity and heroism against the forces of "chaos".

In Part Two, the author examines the synergies and dissonances between the Rhodesian and American governments (especially the Republicans) in the white supremacist/anti-communist crusade. Various conservative interest groups bolstered the Rhodesians, both in cash and in kind. As any good book should, *From The Barrel of a Gun* is full of telling details, of vignettes which pique the readers' interest. We learn, for instance, that (popular novelist) Taylor Caldwell was "a crucial link in a chain of pro-Salisbury organisations" (p. 4).

In this section, the author also examines the ideological and cultural links between American and Rhodesian societies and administrations, especially the link between war, race and gender. For many conservative Americans, buffeted by the tides of civil and gender rights and demands for greater police and military accountability, Rhodesia, which deified the white male and its basic culture of "white might is right," must have seemed to be a "good old boy's paradise."

In Part Three, the author specifically examines how the various American administrations approached the Rhodesian crisis. He also assesses the complex involve-

ment of some U.S. companies in sanctions-busting. Overall, it would seem that the conservative lobby was keen to help the Rhodesians to survive, but they did not want them to prosper, because the Rhodesians were business rivals in tobacco and chrome. Horne also analyses the motives and personality types of American mercenaries who fought for Rhodesia. This section is very interesting, because he also touches on the relationship between black Zimbabweans and Afro-Americans and how they viewed the mercenary phenomenon.

In the conclusion, he suggests that the Rhodesian white-militarist ethos was absorbed into the South African (apartheid) system after 1980. It still exists, he claims, both as part of South African National Defence Forces and the South African Police, and also as part of "privatised security" (particularly the mercenary company Executive Outcomes). In addition, Zimbabwe's radical brand of Pan-Africanism (the land and war veterans issue) since 1997 has proved to be as problematic to the supposedly unified Pan-Africanist group as Rhodesia's radical white supremacy was to Pan-Europeanism earlier. Whilst Zimbabwe's ultra-black Nationalism might be galvanising for those who view all whites as "the enemy," the violations of human and gender rights inherent in this approach have alienated support among those Africans and Afro-Americans who view the world as a global community with shared values. The author's conclusion is disturbing: power within Zimbabwe and access to it, that is through global alliances with powerful sponsors in the US and elsewhere, is attained and maintained through the "barrel of a gun."

There are some issues where the book could have been clearer. Horne is vague on the numbers of American mercenaries who fought for Rhodesia. His estimates range form "several hundred, to several thousands" (p. 26)–he prefers the higher estimate. This is rather obfuscative, for if we speak in cumulative terms, it is possible that from 1965-1980 a few thousand mercenaries fought for Rhodesia, but it is unlikely that there were more than a few hundred fighting for Rhodesia at any given moment. Horne needs to be aware that all liberation movements routinely exaggerated the numbers of "mercenaries" they claimed fought for government forces, for propaganda reasons. The Rhodesians also exaggerated figures (although they called the mercenaries "volunteers") to promote the myth of Pan-European solidarity. More details on the nature of the mercenary involvement and the role of the Nixon-Ford administrations would have been useful.

Horne also needs to address in more detail the power of the media. 1975 saw the collapse of South Vietnam, with pictures of U.S. marines and civilians desperately being rescued by helicopter from the US Embassy roof-top in Saigon–and the anguished faces of their South Vietnamese allies they left behind–being shown worldwide (including on Rhodesian TV). Those images of American weakness immeasurably strengthened African resistance and nationalist consciousness.

Nevertheless, Professor Horne's book is to be recommended, and should be required reading for those with an interest in U.S.-Zimbabwe relations, Pan-Africanism, and also the nationalist and post-nationalist historiography of Southern Africa.

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