

9. What Blacks, Which Africans and in Whose Zimbabwe? Pan-Africanism, Race and the Politics of Belonging in Postcolonial Zimbabwe

TERENCE M. MASHINGAIDZE

Introduction

The ZANU-PF-led government confronted waning credibility and unprecedented challenges to its domination of the political sphere from the labour- and civil-society-backed MDC in the period after 2000. This domestic pressure was compounded by Western criticism of its chaotic land reform and questionable human rights and governance records. In response, ZANU-PF politicians, aligned intellectuals and some state functionaries adopted a victimhood-cum-radical discourse in which they constructed Robert Mugabe and his regime as representative agents of sovereign pan-African nationhood under attack from neo-colonialists. On international platforms Mugabe projected himself as the candid sentinel-in-chief against Western domination and exploitation of Africa, its Diaspora and other marginalised racial categories.¹ He clamoured for the democratisation of the United Nations (UN) by according more voice to the Global South in big power dominated structures such as the Security Council and accused Western nations and multilateral institutions of bullying the South under 'the dirty cover of democracy.'²

1 'UN Cheers as Mugabe lashes "Political God, Bush and Blair his Prophet." <<http://newzimbabwe.com>> (accessed: 15 March 2008).

2 President Robert Mugabe's speech at the United Nations Earth Summit, Johannesburg, 26 August–4 September 2002, *NewAfrican*, October 2002.