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FACULTY OF ARTS

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

***THE ZIMBABWE LIBERATION WAR VETERAN'S 1997 VETTING PROCESS AND ITS
IMPLICATIONS ON FORMER ZPRA COMBATANTS.***

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**THE ZIMBABWE LIBERATION WAR VETERAN'S 1997 VETTING PROCESS AND
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DEDICATION

For Samkelisiwe and Mphathisi Ngobe. Their sacrifices took me this far

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ABSTRACT

The study purports to trace the continuity in the history of the marginalization of former ZPRA combatants paying particular focus to the 1997 vetting process. This endeavor was stimulated by the various vetting exercises have been repeated time and again in which ZPRA veterans have clamored over being constantly sidelined by a system targeted at former ZPRA combatants. The research therefore traces back to the veteran policy shortcomings of the post Second Chimurenga and how these transcended over to the twilight of the millennium in 1997 where some former ZPRA veterans were left out during the disbursement that would have contributed to their emancipation. It interrogates how the systems that were employed consciously and subconsciously side lined certain genuine veterans and benefitted manufactured veterans. Lastly the papers attempts at analyzing the implications of the manner in which events in the 1997 affected the standing of the war veterans and the general citizenry at a socio-political and economic level. The study employed the qualitative research approach that necessitated the interaction with the involved custodians of the vetting process of 1997 as well as the beneficiaries and the victims of the vetting process who proved that disenfranchisement of certain sections of the ZPRA veterans lay in the vetting criteria that not universal and inapplicable given the fundamental differences that lay in the composition of the former guerilla armies that is ZPRA and ZANLA and the manner in which they had been trained and operated during the liberation struggle.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ZPRA	: Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army
ZANU PF	: Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front
ZANLA	: Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army
RSF	: Rhodesian Security Forces
ZAPU	: Zimbabwe African Peoples Union
ZANU	: Zimbabwe African National Union
SEED	: Soldiers Employed in Economic Development
ZLWVA	: Zimbabwe Liberation War Veterans Association
ZUM	: Zimbabwe United Movement
DDR	: DemobilizationDemilitarizationand Reintegration
ZCTU	: Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions
ESAP	: Economic Structural Adjustment Programme
DRC	: Democratic Republic of Congo
MDC	: Movement for Democratic Change

INTRODUCTION

In October 1997 the Zimbabwe liberation war veterans pressured the government of Zimbabwe into issuing a gratuity payout amounting to 50,000 Zimbabwean dollars per individual and a monthly allowance of 2,000 Zimbabwean dollars to former freedom fighters for their wartime contribution. The demand by the veterans accrued from distaste of the continual deterioration of the welfare of veterans as well as the squandering of funds meant for the economic emancipation of the veterans by linked elitist individuals as well as politicians. This state of affairs was not a result of an event but rather a culmination of a decade long defective veteran policy as well as a failed reintegration process. To this effect the veterans argued that they had wallowed in abject poverty for a decade while their former compatriots the politicians were getting richer.¹ Through violent demonstrations at the presidential residence and at the national shrines after the suspension of the war victims and disability fund in April 1997 the war veterans managed to arm twist president Mugabe into disbursing the above mentioned unbudgeted once off gratuity payout.

The disbursement of the payout entailed a controversial vetting process that inaugurated an economic plunge from which Zimbabwe has not recovered.² The vetting process was biased as it sidelined many genuine veterans especially ZPRA ex combatants the majority who were former ZPRA women combatants, as well as the disabled. Further on instead of being a genuine process of earmarking the veterans, the whole process was hijacked politically by ZANU PF to salvage its support that was declining hence it inaugurated a crop of manufactured veterans who benefitted at the behest of genuine ZPRA combatants.³ This accrued from the loose definition of

a veteran derived from the War Veterans Act chapter 11:15 of 1995 that did not take into account the fundamental differences between the erstwhile former guerilla forces. Therefore as such the lack of universality in the definition resulted in the sidelining of the same people who had been lauded as the sons of the soil after independence and hence inherently constituting an insult on their integrity when juxtaposed with the role they played in the liberation of Zimbabwe.

However 19 years have passed since the disbursement of the gratuity payout in 1997. Numerous vetting exercises that were meant to endorse new or the sidelined veterans of the vetting process as well as root out the fake veterans have been repeated over the years but surprisingly the number of ZPRA combatants showing up for vetting continues to rise begging the question on what happened in the initial vetting of 1997. This in itself has propagated an element of continuity in the manner in which ZPRA veterans are disadvantageously handled in the vetting processes since the attainment of independence. This can be traced beginning with victimization in the assembly points where ZPRA combatants were vilified as dissidents or dissident sympathizers to the sidelining in the War victims compensation fund which was fraught with fraud and corruption resulting in the 1997 vetting process after its suspension. The systems put in place to deal with war veterans issue in the post war period had institutional and policy gaps which that crippled or derailed the advance towards emancipation hence laying foundation to the gratuity payout that further alienated ZPRA combatants. Therefore in this regard this state of affairs begs for an interrogation of ZPRA ex combatants and the 1997 vetting process to exhibit the origins of the war veteran's problem as well as how ZPRA combatants were sidelined.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Various ex combatant vetting processes have been undertaken for the purpose of veteran benefit but a pattern consistent of members of ZPRA complaining of being left out has been visibly

dominant. Various vetting and re-vetting exercises have reoccurred over the years where former ZPRAs continue to show up for vetting and later publicly complain on the issue of bias within the systems of vetting hence begging the question on what happened in the initial vetting. More so, there has been conflict among the war veterans over official and grassroots definition of veterans which has seen certain sections of the ZPRA combatants branding others as fake veterans hence creating bad blood amongst the veterans. It is also worth highlighting that the Zimbabwe Liberation War Veterans Association that advanced the cause of war veterans in 1997 has also split into various representative organizations over the manner in which veterans problems are handled and were handled resulting in ZPRA veterans forming their own association. Thus this warrants the need to revisit the 1997 vetting process and the history surrounding it to reflect where the origins of the war veterans problem.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This research is molded by a multiplicity of questions that develop the framework for the objective analysis of the Zimbabwe Liberation War Veterans vetting process and its implications on former ZPRA ex combatants in 1997. The research attempts to bring out where the process derailed and how it impacted on ZPRA combatants. It is these questions that this paper will attempt at answering.

1. What were the root causes of the 1997 vetting process
2. Which criterion was used to define a Zimbabwe liberation war veteran during the 1997 vetting process and how was it applied?
3. How did the selected criteria affect ZPRA war veterans?
4. What were the implications of the vetting process of 1997 on former ZPRA combatants?

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To bring out the historical factors that led to the 1997 and the war veteran's problem.
2. To present the manner in which the vetting process was undertaken and how it affected former ZPRA combatants
3. To spell out the implications of the vetting process on former ZPRA combatants as well as the characterization of its victims.
4. To present the continuities in the manner in which issues concerning ZPRA combatants to their disadvantage since 1980.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Zimbabwe War veteran vetting process of 1997 can be traced back to the failed post war reintegration attempts between 1980 and 1983. During this period, the nascent State was struggling to strike a balance between advancing a new system underscored by pursuing war time socialism and inheriting a capitalist state whose systems had been operational basing on racially polarized oppressive and segregated professionalism and meritocracy.⁴ Independence had been achieved through a protracted struggle between the nationalist guerilla forces that is Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army (ZPRA), Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (ZANLA) and the Rhodesian Security Forces (RSF). ZPRA was a military wing for Zimbabwe African Peoples Union (ZAPU) whereas ZANLA was a military wing for Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU). However external pressure through sanctions as well as human and capital costs of the war pushed the Rhodesian government into negotiations with the Nationalist leaders at the Lancaster House agreement in 1979 to end the war.⁵

With independence having been negotiated and power transferred to the black majority under Robert Mugabe the government was faced by the mammoth task of disarming, demobilizing and reintegrating the former fighters and creating an inclusive and professional army.⁶ Statistics show that there were over 70 000 combatants, half of which were single between the ages of 20-25 years. Within these, 13% had no previous education, and 75% had no prior work experience.⁷ This inherently presented a financial challenge as the majority combatants had reached an age where they had to settle and thus they expected the new government to live up to its promises of black economic emancipation. The Lancaster House agreement they had signed acknowledged all three fighting factions as having legitimate claims for incorporation into the national army hence the government was under fire as it had to amalgamate the three previously antagonistic forces that distrusted and had frequently fought each other during the war.⁸

The Government embarked on a demobilization programme with the assistance of the Commonwealth Monitoring group. This was a multinational task force that drew its personnel from countries like Australia, Kenya, Fiji and New Zealand. Its task was to implement the demilitarization and maintenance of the cease fire through separation and containment of the erstwhile warring parties in the 16 permanent Assembly points as well as the 23 transition rendezvous points. The task of demobilizing veterans was placed under the Department of Labor and Social Services. Cash payouts commensurate with ones rank during the war were given to the combatants in assembly points. Registered combatants were issued with pay books through which they obtained cash averaging \$185 per individual for a period of two years. However the disbursement of the payouts was marred by widespread looting and corruption by senior officers

who fraudulently took advantage of the fact that the majority of the demobilization staff were incapacitated lacking administrative competence.⁹

Further on it needs to be opinionated that much of the money were carelessly squandered by the veteran who were not groomed in capacity building and entrepreneurship.¹⁰ Agrippa Ngwenya a former ZPRA combatant was of the view that they spent a long time idling in the camps hence the money did not last as the veterans lavishly expended it in radios, clothes, beer and women.¹¹ Capacity building programmes like operation SEED (Soldiers Employed in Economic Development) were introduced to reintegrate the former combatants but these were largely unsuccessful. This was due to the ad hoc manner in it was designed without foresight.¹² Lack of motivation among the former fighters whose hope was a place in Zimbabwe National Army affected the progression of the initiative.¹³ Far from embracing these socialist agricultural initiatives the veteran viewed operation SEED as demeaning as it more or less the same system they had gone to war to fight, a system that relegated them to menial labor such as farming.¹⁴ Those who opted to form cooperatives were affected by stunted capacity on the crucial aspects of business management and accounting. For the former ZPRA combatants the cooperatives like Vukuzenzele and Zenzele in Bulawayo fell victim to the ZANU PF vendetta over ZPRA and ZAPU which viewed them as a harbor for dissidents thus most of the cooperatives could not return enough profits to benefit all its members.

The majority of the combatants were demobilized with 43 000 entering the private sector, 14 000 going forming cooperatives and also furthering their studies in various fields.¹⁵ Statistics also show that of the 70 000 combatants demobilized, 18.6% became unemployed in the mid 1980's. The Unemployment increased as many of the cooperatives died and thus the majority of veterans found themselves wallowing in poverty. During this period the predicament of the

politically, socially and above all economically neglected son of the soil came to the fore through the media with the parliamentary debates on veteran predicament beginning in 1988 leading to the formation of the Zimbabwe Liberation War Veterans Association.

The founding of the Zimbabwe Liberation War veterans Association(ZLWVA) occurred as a result of the realization of the dire state the veterans were in that threatened their very existence hence they had to organize themselves to challenge the nationalist state of Robert Mugabe. It drew its membership from both former ZPRA and former ZANLA combatants. It needs to be highlighted that the founding of the ZLWVA coincided with the emergence of the first opposition parties Like Zimbabwe United Movement (ZUM) and therefore it was viewed with suspicion by the government. With pressure mounting on the government the War Veterans Administration bill of 1991 was legislated by the Minister of labor and social welfare. The bill was rejected over the element of placing more power in the responsible minister and the government reached a compromise in the promulgation of the War veterans and War Victims Compensation Act in 1992. The act disbursed disability funds to war victims proportionate to the degree of injuries in and individual.

The fund was short lived as it came to be chaotic between 1993 and 1997. The funds were largely mismanaged by the administrators of the compensation scheme. Mudzingwa a soviet trained doctor who did disability assessment on the ex-combatants was of the view that the assessment of the injuries was grossly flawed with veterans not being awarded the proper percentage of disability hence resulting in fraudulent claims.¹⁶The fraudulent claims are evidenced where the Abel Sithole a former ex combatant was brought before a panel of inquiry over his claims. The panel had to agree that Sithole be re- examined as he had proved beyond doubt that he had no hearing problem that warranted compensation when he retorted that “I hear

a lot of sounds when I am sleeping and no one can tell me. I do have an injury. I have a disability”¹⁷.

In this case the politically and elitist linked veterans would claim high percentage disability when in effect they were efficiently and effectively occupying positions in the public and private sector.¹⁸ Thus having realized the magnitude of corruption fund was thus suspended in April 1997 pending an investigation by the Chidyausiku Commission of inquiry.

The suspension of the fund led to violent demonstration by the veterans at the state house and parliament building in a manner that had not been witnessed before. The war veterans threatened anyone who would try to stop them with violence hence demonstrations with their call to arms if their demands were not met came as a shock to the government.¹⁹ The army and police that were sent to deal with the veteran’s demonstrations did not act and thus the panic that ensued culminated in the unbudgeted 1997 gratuity payment in an attempt to appease the veterans.

The 1997 vetting process was meant to benefit deserving after submission to a vetting process to prove genuine claims. However it emerges that ZPRA veterans have dismissed the 1997 vetting process as a biased exercise that sidelined many deserving veterans. ZPRA veterans have argued on the perpetuation or the continuity of the ZPRA disenfranchisement phenomenon where ZPRA veterans have fallen victim to the various biased vetting processes over the years since the 1980’s. Various vetting and re-vetting processes have recurred over the years presenting a dilemma on what transpired in the first vetting process. Therefore this is the basis that the research intends to interrogate the ZPRA veterans and the 1997 vetting process in the bid to ascertain the manner in which the war veterans were sidelined.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The buildup of the research made use of qualitative data collection from primary and secondary sources. The research was mainly informed by primary sources which was collected through a targeted population sampling approach. This method entailed In-depth interviews with selected key individuals who included the patrons of the social services department who were responsible for the vetting as well as former ZPRA combatants including those who benefited and those who did not. These individuals offered an insight on how the vetting system was done. ZPRA Ex combatants who witnessed and were subject in the vetting process were also interviewed to determine how the vetting criteria was applied hence how certain individuals came to be sidelined.

Also general members of the public who witnessed the events as they unfolded will be interviewed and this provided the information on the general atmosphere surrounding the vetting process. Interviews were also be conducted with the patrons of the ZPRA Trust, an organization responsible for the welfare of former ZPRA combatants. The interviews illuminated how the selected criteria affected former ZPRA combatants.

Primary Data was also obtained from the National Archives as well as Mafela Trust a private Archives for organizations dealing with issues concerning the ZPRA war veterans. Secondary data also accrued from an extensive review of relevant literature from books, journals, magazines, newspapers, Parliamentary debates as well as other unpublished works on the 1997 vetting process. The respondents expressed themselves freely which yielded new insights and the opportunity to explore the topic in-depth from both a personal and organizational trajectory hence building a Universalist view on the way the whole process was conducted.

Various challenges were experienced in the course of obtaining data that informed the study. There was generally few if non texts on ZPRA veterans in the public libraries and archives and

therefore the researcher had to rely more on primary sources. Deliberate silences by informants in fear of political victimization, general falsification of facts and nostalgia among the informants owing to the nature of the political atmosphere as well as personal code regarding the various political party affiliations was also encountered. It must be noted that some of the significant records and information are still classified secrets and kept at private archives accessible only to people with higher security clearances than a student could obtain therefore such information was hard to come by. To counter the aforementioned, efficiency and time consciousness was exercised in order to obtain a lot of information from primary sources that served to ratify as well as fill in certain silences that existed in the few existing texts that the researcher went through.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A wide range of literature on the war veterans in general exists and the researcher was compelled to consult various publications to have a broad outlook thus developing the basis upon which the theoretical framework was built. Kriger as a major voice on war veterans explains the emergence of war veterans as a new political order in Zimbabwe basing this on their status as the liberators of Zimbabwe. She deals with post war transition, peace consolidation noting that the lamentations over their being ignored were observed as an important symbolic resource and a strategy to seek privileged access to state resources and the need by the ruling party to build power and legitimacy following the grim legacy after the peace settlement.²⁰ Kriger observes that the peace settlement became a harbinger of continued armed conflict and set stage for politics of guerilla incorporation.²¹ Her discussion rounds off with the discussion on attempts by the ruling party to withdraw the ex-combatant's status and their responses to the dawn of 1997. However Kriger foregoes 1997 vetting process and the extent to which its criteria selection and veteran

definitions were redrawn for the purpose of monetary appeasement resulting in the sidelining of many deserving veterans.

In a recent research by Chogugudza, observation is focused on the contribution of women as an inseparable aspect of the liberation struggle. Women are portrayed as fighting incessantly to sustain the force of the revolution both at the front and at home with the cooking stick.²² The contribution of women is traced from the time of the first Chimurenga as personified in the selfless sacrifice of Nehanda who vowed that her bones would rise again through the vibrant stages of African Nationalism in the 1960's and the liberation struggle. Her findings revealed that post-independence Zimbabwe did not see any gains specifically meant for women fighters.²³ She objects that women ex-combatants were victims to the effect that it is difficult to find out how many women if any benefited from the 1997 gratuity payout owing to a myriad of reasons that have directly and indirectly kept women behind the societal curtain.²⁴ However, Chogugudza does not further advance the manner in which the 1997 vetting process was done and the manner in which the chosen criteria affected ZPRA female war veterans or even specify the former military wings to which they belonged as ZPRA women combatants and ZANLA women combatants were affected differently.

Musemwa is more predisposed to the nature of demobilization and the ordeal of rehabilitation between 1980 and 1993. He opines that the demobilization process was an exercise that impacted on the ex-combatant who in the end found himself without the resource base and social basis to fully reintegrate him/her into the society.²⁵ Failed government initiatives like operation SEED and unsuccessful attempts in the Co-operatives that were marred by drought, undercapitalization and political destabilization are also discussed in depth. His analysis rounds up on the formation of the Zimbabwe War Veterans Association in 1989 and the reasons behind

its formation and the promulgation of the War Veterans and Victims Compensation Act of 1992. Though Mashike provides a vivid insight into the short comings of the reintegration programmes, he does not advance the manner in which ZPRA combatants were compromised because it is the compromise accruing from the post war era that still affected them in 1997.

Mashike analyses DDR programmes in Southern Africa focusing on Zimbabwe, Namibia, Angola and Mozambique. Attention is focused on the similarities in the nature of their struggles for independence and their proximity to South Africa which is presented as the last bastion of white supremacy and its legacy on attempts at regional destabilization. He argues that the DDR programmes did not effectively reintegrate ex combatant with demilitarized identities enough to facilitate access to employment and supportive social networks.²⁶ This therefore resulted in social dislocation and marginalization and did not reduce the tendency to resort to violence.²⁷

Mashike hammers on the welfare of veterans up to the promulgation of the War Veterans and War Victims Compensation Act and the way disability funds were looted by government officials and the rank and file. Mashike however does not go beyond DDR in southern Africa and how its propagated problems experienced with the war veterans as the Zimbabwean case in 1997.

Hove et al vividly presents the manner in which the ZANU PF led Government dealt with the welfare of the war veterans between 1980 and 2013. He notes that the government ignored the welfare of the veterans in the post DDR process.²⁸ The manner in which demobilization was undertaken is presented as an unfair imposition fraught with lack of foresight.²⁹ He further elucidates on the rationale behind the unholy alliance between the veterans and ZANU PF and how it has bred insecurity as the war veterans continue to violate the state's legal system without retribution.³⁰ Their discussion focuses on the political transmogrification of the definition of a

war veteran but however skips a beat with regards to how this went on to affect the bearing of the 1997 vetting process criteria selection and application as well as its impact on former ZPRA combatants.

Dzinesa provides an overview of war veterans under the auspices of violence as it dominates the Southern African region. He juxtaposes the role and existence of war veterans in transitional societies and the scale, incidence and consequence of violence. Militarized masculinity and its impact on violence, the process of demobilization, demilitarization, reintegration and issues of identity, trauma and the role of weapons are compared and explored across Angola, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe. In all cases, Dzinesa notes that

“DDR fell short of meeting this target, with different security and stability implications within a decade or so of the implementation of DDR. Findings from the majority of these case studies show that ex-combatants have been implicated in acts of violence and these countries still grapple with remedying this.”³¹

Dzinesa therefore majors on the characterization of the war veterans as former fighters and how this predisposes them to violent confrontations as in the 1997 war veteran’s demonstrations. Dzinesa does not however go further to elucidate the perpetuation of the culture of violence as well as politics of forcing the government to accede to their rampant demands and its existence in ZPRA given the differences in outlook that exists between the former ZANLA and ZPRA.

Kostner and Bowles tackles the question of how best to compensate veterans in the aftermath of war in the context of developing countries affected by struggles for independence as well as civil war. They are of the view that less attention has been paid to the development of veteran policies. They note that of the view that the international community tends to focus on an immediate peace dividend through the implementation of a DDR program, which it usually finances.³² More so the importance of developing sound veteran’s policies in post-conflict

settings, and the pitfalls of inequitable, unsustainable, and non-transparent systems of benefits is also hammered on.³³ The vast differences in approach different countries have used are illuminated into and common challenges and constraints faced by policy-makers in developing veterans policy in post-conflict settings are discussed.

JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

The importance of the study lies in the fact that the study illuminates into the 1997 vetting process. It echoes the grievances of ZPRA victims who include women, former combatants especially those who came to be considered reactionaries, political malcontents in the mid 1980's and those who had migrated to the Diasporas well as the disabled. The study also attempts to prove the credibility of claim that ZPRA veterans have been sidelined as well as clear the air over the finger pointing each other as bogus veterans. The research amplifies current problems that are plaguing the war veterans organization in general and the state in particular. It echoes the problems and vulnerabilities that accrue from the assimilation of an independent representative body by a political party. Further on the significance lies in the elucidation on administrative and constitutional flaws around the vetting process hence giving insights on the origins of and the manner in which unending demands can be averted.

SCOPE OF STUDY

The research broadly focused on Former ZPRA combatants regardless of their district of origin. In this sense it needs to be understood that ZPRA veterans who were affected by the vetting process are not only confined to Bulawayo geographically but are scattered all over Zimbabwe and were affected by the vetting process in the same manner hence premising on a particular

geographical casing point would seemingly divorce other ZPRA veterans hence a myopic view of the 1997 vetting process.

DISSERTATION LAYOUT

The research consists of four main chapters that will be structured in the following manner. The first chapter will mainly focus on the historical origins of the 1997 vetting. The section will take a thematic approach to the origins of the war veteran's question beginning with the mid 80's Government emancipation initiatives to the time of the promulgation of the war victims Compensation act of 1992 and its shortcomings. The defects or flaws made during this period are analyzed under themes of veteran policy deficiency, institutional and programmatic gaps within government structures that dealt with the war veterans issues over the years as well as the socio-economic shortcomings created by the manner of governance during this period hence presenting the picture of veteran welfare that was a precursor to the 1997 vetting process.

This second chapter will interrogate the 1997 vetting process in detail. It will hammer on factors that derailed the vetting process focusing more on criteria selection and application as well as the characterization of the custodianship of the exercise. Attention will also be paid to the characterization of the disenfranchised victims or minorities and reasons why they were overlooked. The study will echo the role played by ZPRA as an organization in vouching or standing for its membership in 1997.

Chapter 3 will delve into the characterization of the victims and implications of the 1997 vetting process. It will delve into the social, economic and political ramifications thus expound on why

the vetting process has become a recurring discourse. The chapter will also echo the nature of the surrogate relationship with the state and how problems within Zanu PF have become contagious to the War veterans as body in direct contrast to the situation that could have attained had the Zimbabwe liberation War veterans Association remained an independent body.

The last chapter will round up the dissertation and give a general assessment on the war veteran's question. More so it will illuminate what war veterans thought was supposed to be done and also their view on what they think the future holds for them given the many problems that are affecting them that can be traced back to the 1997 vetting process.

END NOTES

1. C. Zenda, "More benefits for war veterans", Available at <http://www.nehandaradio.com> Accessed 22/09/15
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CHAPTER 1

HISTORICAL ORIGINS OF THE 1997 WAR VETERANS VETTING PROCESS

1.1 INTRODUCTION.

The 1997 Zimbabwe liberation war veterans vetting process has been a popular issue or household name in political and media circles for the past 35 years despite attracting limited in-depth focus in academic spheres. Despite discussions on it hovering around how the fund like the other previously disbursed funds was fraught with fraud and corruption and how it contributed to the crash of Zimbabwe's stock market on the 17th of November 1997, less attention has been focused on the position of former ZPRA and the compatibility of the preselected vetting criteria as well as the continuities that can be traced to the 80's that have propagated the continual sidelining phenomenon among ZPRA combatants. It needs to be understood from the onset that the 1997 gratuity was not born out of an event but was rather a culmination of a decade long cry by the war veterans over the manner in which the government was treating the veterans. In this instance the predicament of former ZPRA combatants was hinged on the phenomenon of continual sidelining and denigration at the hands of the ZANU PF government.

At this juncture it is paramount to highlight that the 1997 vetting process was a far cry of the defective ad hoc post Second Chimurenga strategy of demobilization and reintegration of ex combatants. Policy deficiency, institutional and administrative gaps within the Ministry of Labor and Social welfare responsible for the welfare of war veterans as well as government policies that resulted in the deteriorating economy in the first decade after the war propagated the war veteran's problem.¹ One notes that the government dumped the war veterans in their infancy by neglecting their welfare and hence the war veterans became predisposed to the use of violence

and confrontation to make their grievances heard. Their consequent success in managing to force the government to accede to their demands “*pronto* “ laid foundation to the unending demands that plague the state today.²

The 1997 appeasement payout was a classic example of the effects of the defective policy hangover and institutional shortcomings. In 1997 it was assumed that a once off monetary payment would deal with the war veteran’s problem once and for all as well as solidify the relationship with veterans but however the attempt was just patching an old dress with a new cloth as the new cloth went on to tear an even bigger hole than before.³ Instead of staving off future demands, it created more problems than solutions. This chapter will therefore interrogate the historical origins of the 1997 war veterans vetting process and the continuities in the manner in manner in which veterans continue to be sidelined.

1.2 POST SECOND CHIMURENGA VETERAN POLICY DEFICIENCY

The history of the 1997 war veterans vetting process can be traced to the government policy on war veterans as well as a failed Reintegration process after the Second Chimurenga. It needs to be noted that Veteran policy and a comprehensive Disarmament, demobilization and above all “reintegration” exercise are paramount in the creation and maintenance of peace in post conflict societies. This is because they serve to safeguard ex combatants from economic, social and political problems that may compromise their settlement in their communities of settlement resulting in their recourse to arms.

First and foremost it is of paramount importance to realize that reintegration is both a critical aspect of war veterans as well as a weak link in the general demobilization and reintegration programmes specifically designed for war veterans in post conflict zones. This is deduced from

the fact that there is relatively no universal blueprint that best fits the needs of the various post war situations therefore certain salient aspects are consciously or subconsciously overlooked hence propagating problems with veterans.⁴ One also observes that reintegration is paramount to peace building as it is the basis upon which the future predicament of war veterans is built hence it needs to be prioritized as it serves to defer the tendency to resort to the use of force by former ex-combatants as well as stave unending demands by the veterans.

Reintegration can be defined as a system through which ex-combatants are supported to relocate in after-war communities hence enabling them to be involved in political decision-making as well as get sustainable reintegration schemes that will facilitate relief aid, capability and the ultimate long-term self-sufficiency of recipients.⁵ The measurement of success of reintegration can be determined by the attainment of stability or attainable project goals, elimination of material and non-material differences between ex fighters as well as social amalgamation by combatants.⁶ Further on success or failure of reintegration can be determined by analysis of its socio-economic as well as political outcomes.⁷ Reintegration as an ongoing process is important as it enables ex combatants to readapt into a normally functioning society.

In 1980 with the help of the Commonwealth monitoring force developed a programme of demobilizing combatants and creating a new inclusive army by amalgamating combatants from ZPRA and ZANLA and Rhodesian Security Forces under Operation Merger. The intended size was a 35 00- 40 000 strong army by the end of 1980 condensed from the 70 000 combatants available in the assembly points.⁸ However 25000 combatants disbanded into civilian life without benefits hence sounding the death knell on the predicament of war veterans. ZPRA had its Intembe regiment that consisted of 2 000 well trained women combatants but a small fraction

managed to be integrated into the army. Tshayina Moyo a former female combatant was of the view that

We were told that the war had ended, that our services were no longer required and therefore we just packed our bags and left the assembly points bleak on what the future had in store for us.⁹

With nature of the systems in the government of black majority being patriarchal women combatants found themselves isolated and felt dumped into an unfriendly social and economic environment that was openly hostile especially to individuals who were academically under capacitated.

It also needs to be noted that nationalist's scuffles for consolidation of power and also the fear of the ZPRA threat deferred the development of a strong policy for veterans that would universally meet the needs of the erstwhile different ex combatant groups. Kriger opined that the ad hoc demobilization accrued from the fear of ZPRA threat after the Entumbane uprising as well as tension from the neglected combatants and the sections in the National Army whose services were no longer required.¹⁰ An interview with Agrippa Ngwenya revealed that ZPRA was viewed with suspicion and therefore the policy development for ex combatants came to be premised on a "the sooner the better" strategy hence resulting in veterans descending into poverty within months after demobilization.¹¹ Thus the desire for consolidation of power deferred a well-developed strategy for war veterans thus paving the road to 1997.

It is of paramount importance to understand that the link between policy and Reintegration came to be illusory as the government bundled up both policy and reintegration hence sowing the seeds of discord in the future. The strategy that was undertaken bundled up policy with reintegration in the hope that it would universally settle the war veteran's problem hence overlooking the critical aspects such as economic sustainability and societal roles that

combatants were to play. Nyathi corroborates this by arguing that Government believed that reintegration was a simple matter of demobilization, and not a process that required a comprehensive policy that would need to be implemented for years.¹² Kostner and Bowles also reiterated the importance of the link between policy and demobilization and noted that Veterans policy should credibly and transparently provide for equitable and sustainable assistance.¹³ Thus the deficiency of sustainability accruing from the absence of a clearly articulated policy for the future welfare of veterans was instrumental in leading to the 1997 vetting process.

In addition to bundling up policy with reintegration it needs to be opinionated that the interlude between demobilization and full reintegration which is also referred to as reinsertion was undertaken with lack of foresight. The Reinsertion process involves support monetarily or materially to the ex-combatant and their families to facilitate acceptance their incorporation into the society.¹⁴ Monetary benefit system for the Zimbabwe liberation war veterans were disbursed without the lack of foresight on the future of war veterans. Each soldier received \$185 Zimbabwean each for a period stretching over 2 years. However the majority of ex ZPRA combatants interviewed corroborated that they had no homes to go back to and few possession if any to begin a life with and also responsibilities like siblings who needed education therefore the payouts were soon spent. Albert Nyathi retorted that the payouts were

“...in fact ‘notorious’ for falling far short of adequately preparing ex-combatants to return to civilian society. It was an impetuously designed programme which overlooked the diverse socio-economic needs of each and every demobilized combatant.”¹⁵

An interview with Musolini Dube a former ZPRA combatant revealed that most ex combatants lacked monetary foresight thus contributed to the war veteran’s problem. He argued that

“Most of us were young were young and did not know what to do with the money. We had come from the bush and no one had used or survived on money in the bush and therefore we were not used to the cash

economy and thus we wasted a lot of money on beer, girlfriends as well as radio's which almost everyone had always dreamed of owning."¹⁶

Further on it needs to be opinionated that those who opted for entrepreneurship bought insolvent and unprofitable business due to lack of knowledge of business dynamics. Thus in this sense lack of foresight on the party of the veterans and lack of financial grooming played a role in clearing a road to events that eventually culminated in the 1997 vetting process as money was expended on consumable goods rather than investments.

Apart from that Reintegration was characterized by a corrupt and inequitable of system of benefits that mainly affected ZPRA combatants hence a cause for the war veteran's problem of 1997. ZPRA combatants suffered as they could not obtain their monies due to fear of being arrested or branded a dissident or deserter. This stereotype hence served to condemn the veterans to perpetual poverty as combatants had to stay away to avoid victimization by a system that was anti ZPRA and anti ZAPU from the onset. In an interview with Lwazi Tsheza a former ZPRA commander, he noted that

"ZPRA veterans were affected most as the army arrested those veterans who lined up for payment and also combatants came under fire from dissidents who accused them of selling out the revolution to the struggle."¹⁷

Thus as such economic emancipation of the veterans was arrested as veterans could not freely access funds meant for their economic sustainability.

Socialist modelled projects for economic emancipation like "Operation SEED" (Operation of Soldiers Employed in Economic Development) were also attempted. The projects administered by the Zimbabwe National Army and were meant to occupy soldiers as they awaited to be drafted into the army as well as achieve food self-sufficiency for the army. However they were largely rejected by veterans who lacked motivation and hoped for a place in the Zimbabwe

National Army and Therefore the veterans would not accept rustication to become farm laborers.¹⁸

In addition to, poor planning and shortage of inputs and implements as well as the drought of 1982 -1984 hindered the survival of the projects. More so cooperatives rarely had enough money to distribute to their members.¹⁹ZPRA cooperatives also fell victim to ruling party vendetta to ZPRA and ZAPU as they were viewed as havens for dissidents.²⁰For example Zenzele transport cooperative established by ZPRA combatants seized operations after its best bus was destroyed by government security forces posing as dissidents and its members arrested.²¹Unemployment rose as many ex combatants failed to secure jobs due to lack of requisite academic qualifications required. Therefore in this sense economic reintegration was incomplete hence setting into motion the events that led to the 1997 vetting process.

PROGRAMMATIC AND STRATEGIC SHORTCOMINGS IN MAPPING OUT THE FUTURE OF THE WAR VETERANS

Programmatic gaps within the strategies of dealing with war veterans affairs especially those ejected into the society laid the foundation to the war veterans problem of 1997. In this sense the bid to fast track the creation of an army for the national defense the government bribed the veterans so that they could walk away hence weaning off comrades membership without documenting their hopes and aspirations.²² The process of demobilizing the veterans was undertaken basing on a theoretical assumption basis that somehow the veterans would find a way to take care of themselves in the new Zimbabwe.²³ One certain political commentator was content to note that it was typical of Mugabe's time buying nature where his analysis of the issues on the ground prove him wrong hence he compensates the misfits through generous handouts which in themselves are just deliberate ploys to buy time.²⁴ In this sense consideration of the hopes and aspirations of the war veterans would have gone a long way in designing programmes that would

fit veterans where they would function productively and happily and therefore prevent discontent. Thus as such programmatic gaps played a role in sowing seeds of discontent amongst the war veterans

1.3 INSTITUTIONAL AND LEGISLATIVE GAPS IN VETERAN WELFARE ESTABLISHMENTS 1980-1993.

Institutional gaps within the Ministry of Labor and social welfare as well as legislative gaps of the and War Victims Compensation Act that it was administering affected the war veterans in the manner that it came to be accessed by bogus veterans hence losing the benefits that were meant for the genuine veterans. First and foremost it needs to be noted that legislation for veterans was poor if nonexistent prior to the founding of the Zimbabwe Liberation War veterans association. Veteran's affairs were handled by the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) that was created by the ZANU government for those employed in the private and private sector in which veterans came to assume influential posts.²⁵ This ZCTU in a way managed to postpone discontent from the war veterans for some time but the founding of the Zimbabwe Liberation War veterans Association (ZLWVA) after the demise of conditions especially for those who were not employed played a crucial role in pressing for the promulgation of legislative acts to cater for the welfare of war veterans. The war veterans association was founded in 1989 at the peak of the clamor by war veteran legislators prominent among whom was Margaret Dongo and the media over the neglect of the once "mwana wevhu" or the son of the soil.²⁶ Its founding also coincided with the founding of the first opposition party Zimbabwe United Movement (ZUM) led by Mugabe's former confidante Edgar Tekere who had been a prominent whistle blower on corruption which manifested itself in the Willow gate scandal of 1989 that chronicled the fall of prominent government ministers Enos Nkala and Maurice Nyagumbo over

abuse of office and defrauding the state of cash through violating government price controls through the sale of cars from a government company in the black market.

The minister of Labor and Social welfare promulgated the War Veterans Administration Bill of 1991 as a quick fix measure after the realization after realization that the veterans constituted a significant political and moral force. War Veterans Act in 1992 and War Victims Compensation Act in 1993 came as a compromise with the war veterans association that had rejected the bill of 1991 arguing that it vested more control on the responsible minister. The War Victims Compensation Act compensated war victims at a ratio commensurate with the degree of injury in an individual through the War Victims Compensation Fund.

The disbursement of the fund under the department of Social Welfare became chaotic between the years 1993 and 1996. This accrued from the difficulties within the institution of the Ministry of Labor whose personnel had challenges in interpreting the act. The fund was also looted through fraudulent claims by elitist veterans who had links to the Zanu PF hierarchy.²⁷ Under the link injured veterans could claim a disability percentage for each of their injuries. Nketha a former ZPRA veteran confirmed this by arguing that

“Whether it was a mere scratch, itch, loss of an eye, a finger or a toenail, it constituted a percentage of disability that the chiefs could claim.”²⁸

Meredith was quick to note that the list of recipients became more of a roll call of ministers and officials claiming such disabilities as aching feet, loss of appetite, back ache and blisters with the two most common conditions being mental stress disorder and poly arthritis²⁹. Thus in this case 450 million Zimbabwean dollars were lost in a space of 8 months by the manipulation of the fund by the elites and the challenges in interpreting the act hence other ex-combatants could not access the fund resulting in confrontation with the government.

1.4 SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROBLEMS

THE ROLE OF ECONOMIC STRUCTURAL ADJUSTMENT PROGRAMMES

The inception of Economic Structural Adjustment Programmes had a profound negative effect on the welfare of former ex combatants hence laying the carpet for the 1997 vetting process. It needs to be noted that Mugabe's government had pursued a socialist strategy for economic development for most of the post war period. The environment thus created favored socialist initiatives like cooperatives. This state of affairs collectivized the predicament of the workers basing on the assumption that collectively the veterans would find their way hence deferring the creation of a clear cut strategy for economic development. Thus in this sense Mugabe's reverence of socialism distanced him from the difficulties of the people hence affecting the status of the veterans in the process.³⁰ The socialist path followed by the government was hostile to individual entrepreneurial activity like job creation. Therefore in a way it could be noted that the socialist model served to universalize poverty hence pushing the war veterans into making their demands.

In the 1990's Zimbabwe's economy was overhauled through Economic Structural Adjustment Programmes designed by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank to liberalize the economy towards trade. The government was encouraged to adjust its economy by removing protective import-export barriers and price controls as well as cut spending on the labor force. Its implications were catastrophic on the war veterans especially those who had been incorporated into veteran recruiting government departments. Sadomba noted that ministries like the Ministry of Local Government's promotion and training section, the Department of Youth, Sports and Culture as well as the Department of Community development under Ministry of Community Development and Women Affairs had to lay off about 300 former combatants it employed.³¹

Restrictions on imports was removed hence affecting locally made products that could not stand the competition with imported brands as they were ill-equipped to deal with this more competitive environment hence businesses closed by the dozens. This was reiterated by an interview with Bernard Ncube who noted that the Acronym ESAP sarcastically came to be defined as extended suffering of African People. Hence unemployment and unfavorable market condition presented a point of discount hence the demand for payment for war contribution by the former ex combatants.

1.5DECLINING ECONOMY

Further on it is worth noting that a declining economy in the 90's played a role in shaping the veteran's psyche hence their propensity towards confrontation with the state. With the fall of socialism, Zimbabwe was forced to shift towards western oriented capitalism hence the inauguration of the Bretton Woods institutions aid and its stringent conditions that resulted in the declining economy. By 1992 unemployment was at record high of 22%.³² One notes that a stable economic growth would have gone a long way towards revisit to the war veteran's predicament. This accrues from the extrapolation of the Zimbabwean case with the South African economic situation whose stability ensured the maintenance of veteran's grievances or the descent of their welfare in check.³³ In this manner a declining economy served to entrench the veterans into poverty hence confrontations in 1997.

War veteran isolation and identity crisis in an environment where elitist war veteran politicians were getting richer and popular at than their compatriots was a factor in leading to the 1997 vetting process. The media presented the predicament of war veterans by amplifying the

disparities between politician and freedom fighters hence the theme of son of the soil at independence had been turned into a sorry state of a beggar. Nyathi noted that

“Ex-combatants had to struggle with an identity crisis: they knew they were ‘winners’ in terms of the revolution, but what did they have to show for it? Most had expected real material benefits – to own big houses and drive cars. But most had returned with little education, and found themselves doing menial labor.”³⁴

While some veterans who had not participated in the struggle were enjoying life, some veterans were languishing in poverty. Thus in this sense the feeling of being forgotten, unrecognized and alienated in a country that they had liberated from the colonial masters was instrumental in fomenting the spirit of confrontation with the government in the attempt to rewrite themselves in Zimbabwe’s social and political map.

1.6 LAND PROBLEM

The land issue also was a factor in reorienting veterans in the direction of confrontation with the government hence the 1997 payout. It needs to be highlighted that the land issue was central in the liberation struggle as the guerillas were fighting to address the skewed land distribution imbalances. African had lost their fertile lands to the British imperialists at colonialism and therefore land became a rallying or unifying factor that spurred the guerrillas into fighting the Rhodesian armed forces. Hove opines that the use of the term “mwana wevhu” or child of soil by nationalists served as the rallying point for the blacks to cooperate and fight for their land and thus land was central in the struggle.³⁵ Thus in this regard the delays in transferring land to the ex-guerrillas as promised affected the economic emancipation of the war veterans. Had the land problem been tackled earlier the war veterans would have been empowered economically thereby deferring confrontation as well as political manipulation. Ngwenya was quick to note that war veterans were beginning to voice their concerns openly that they had been led to believe

they would be rewarded with land after the struggle but that never happened hence they felt used and cheated.³⁶The veterans became bitter over the transfer of prime land to members of the members of the ruling party while little was being done to assist the poor among which were veterans. Ngwenya noted that

Some of the veterans being evicted from the farms which were acquired by the politicians were genuine veterans who had been condemned to farm labor because of unemployment.³⁷

Therefore in this sense the delays in land distribution in the first for more than 17 years since independence left the veterans economically exposed.

1.7 SOCIAL HUMILIATION AND GOVERNMENTAL INDIFFERENCE

Social humiliation and government indifference in the face of a deteriorating conditions played a role in reorienting the veterans towards confrontation and demand for gratuities. Deteriorating health sector and the onset of the HIV/AIDS pandemic which began to wipe out a considerable section of war veterans was also an eye opener on the war veterans on how deep they had sunk in poverty. A considerable section of war veterans fell victim to the HIV/AIDS pandemic .It needs to be highlighted that the victims were locally known as genuine war veterans who had been ignored by the government after the war hence here developed resentment towards the eulogization of the heroes in earth when they had lived a life of poverty.³⁸ An interview with ZPRA ex combatant Charles Ngwenya revealed that veteran meetings to bury their fallen brothers served as focal points where we got to reflect on our situation hence realizing how the government had dumped them.³⁹

Furthermore veteran anger was fueled by indifference from the people, government and even civil unions in the face of the deteriorating conditions. The war veterans felt isolated and humiliated in the country that they had fought to liberate and attempts to make their predicament

known to the elites in the corridors of power was met with bluntness and cold denial. Sadomba is of the view that the nationalist leaders were not even diplomatic in the way they treated the former guerillas and soon began to ironically express the fear that one day they would even be branded war criminals for having participated in the liberation war.⁴⁰ The sense of alienation was further exacerbated by sentiments of the late vice president Simon Muzenda who at the burial of a liberation hero Gayland Hlatshwayo warned that veterans “Stop beating their chests as if they are the only ones responsible for the liberation of Zimbabwe.”⁴¹

With the increase in the opposition to Mugabe from students, civil society organizations, students battling for space in the confrontation with the state, anti-veteran propaganda increased. When the veterans confronted the government over nonpayment of compensation gratuities, the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) issued no statement of support in contrast to what they had during the doctors, nurses and civil servants strike.⁴² Thus in this sense the sense of isolation went a long way in influencing their struggle for identification hence the demonstrations that led to the gratuity payment.

1.8 CONCLUSION

Having pointed out the historical origins of the 1997 vetting process it needs to be opinionated that there is a pattern of deliberate sidelining of former ZPRA combatants in the vetting that have been conducted since 1980. One notes that there is a continuity in the manner that ZPRA combatants are treated and this served to unite them with the other ZANLA combatants into claiming for payment but surprisingly a significant section of ZIPRA combatants was sidelined. ZPRA veterans concur that their relationship with the state has been characterized of animosity and therefore strategies for veterans have been biased towards favoring former ZANLA at the expense of ZPRA combatants. Therefore this nature of their relationship transcended beyond the

politics of unity and oneness and affected their standing in the 1997 vetting process as will be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 2

ZPRA COMBATANTS AND THE 1997 VETTING PROCESS

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The 1997 Zimbabwe liberation war vetting process was a screening process for potential veterans who would become beneficiaries of the 50 000 Zimbabwean Dollars gratuity package as well as the 2 000 Zimbabwean Dollars monthly pension offered by President Robert Mugabe. The screening process set in accordance to the War Veterans Act chapter 11:15 of 1995 ,an act that provides for the establishment of schemes for the provision of assistance to war veterans and their dependent as well as establishment of a fund to finance such assistance.⁴³ The act also serves to provide for the constitution and functions of the war veterans board responsible for receiving and addressing issues affecting veterans.⁴⁴

The payout was a culmination of demonstrations by war veterans over the manner in which their welfare had been handled by the nationalist government of Mugabe. Magwizi recounted one veteran Member of Parliament who stated that

“We did not fight for someone to rule. We fought to rule .we can still operate those guns effectively and efficiently. Particularly after having been treated this way .you will get it very thick we must tell you this.”⁴⁵

The violent nature of the veterans and the complacency of the army and the police who refused to shoot at their former comrades, in the face of extreme measures the veterans had taken like when they held up ministers sent to address them managed to push Mugabe into a corner and so he had to disburse the payout to appease the veterans.⁴⁶ To this end a vetting system was

designed to prevent looting of the fund by bogus veterans and the employed system was founded on a definition contained in the War Veteran's Act chapter 11:15 of 1995.

The act described a veteran as

“an individual who underwent military training and participated consistently and persistently in the liberation struggle which occurred in Zimbabwe and in the neighboring countries between 1 January 1962 and 29 February 1980 in connection with bringing about Zimbabwe's independence on the 18th of April 1980.”⁴⁷

The Act in itself was seemingly targeted those who had been specifically involved in active combat duties hence demarcating a veteran basing on it presented a challenge in terms of applicability to the two ex-combatant bodies that is ZPRA and ZANLA. The challenge accrued from the fact that there were fundamental differences in the manner in which guerilla warfare was waged by the different guerrilla armies, the type of training the various combat groups received as well as duties or combat operations individuals performed towards fighting the Smith regime. ZPRA employed the Soviet version of warfare that championed the gradual evolution from a small guerilla band depending on sabotage and hit and run tactics to a fully equipped conventional Army. On the flipside ZANLA's struggle and structure was influenced by China prioritizing political indoctrination as well as a struggle by numbers. Thus overlooking these differences in the interpretation of the definition of a war veteran hence affected its applicability hence certain sections on the ZPRA side saw themselves sidelined.⁴⁸

ZPRA veterans are content that the system used was inapplicable to ZPRA veterans and still contained ingrained continuities of the isolationist tactics reminiscent of the anti ZPRA and anti ZAPU politics of the 1980's. The veterans argue that it has been a deliberate ploy to keep the veterans in a position hence denying them the emancipatory resource that can enable them to

even stand up against the Mugabe regime.⁴⁹ Thus this section will endeavor to show how the vetting process was undertaken and how ZPRA veterans came to be sidelined. It will attempt to illuminate into the manner in which the vetting was conducted hence expound on the continuities without change in the issue of ZPRA combatants sidelining.

2.2 THE FUNDAMENTAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN ZPRA AND ZANLA AND THE 1997 VETTING PROCESS.

To commence with it needs to be understood first that the manner in which ZPRA waged the guerilla struggle for independence in Zimbabwe differed from that of ZANLA hence this contributed to the inapplicability of the definition of a war veteran in the 1997 vetting process. To this end the definition of a war veteran was universalized without consideration of the differences in definition of a guerilla as per the erstwhile former guerilla forces. ZPRA was supported by the Soviet Union with its major predisposition being to build up an [conventional] army with additional guerilla units while ZANLA was supported by China and pursued a strategy of creating grassroots party structures to effect political mobilization.⁵⁰ Therefore as such the two guerrilla armies were different and their strategies went in line with their different supporters hence influencing their recruitment, mobilization as well as tactics that were employed towards fighting the smith regime.

ZPRA's guerilla warfare was not a single entity but a war strategy with various stages, each with unique personnel composition as well as strategic strategies. The stages include recruitment and mobilization, sabotage, semi-conventional and lastly conventional warfare.⁵¹ Recruitment and mobilization involved concretization of the masses as well as potential recruits on the reasons of the struggle hence encouraging them support the cause that would benefit both parties. To this end the masses would become the water and the guerillas the fish as derived from the doctrine of

guerilla warfare by Mao Zedong. The sabotage stage involved no confrontation with the enemy but clandestine operations of destroying targets of high value like roads, railways, bridges, fueldepots. This would serve to wear the enemy down economically and psychologically hence keeping the enemy in a constant state of paranoia. Semi-convention Warfare involves the insertion of small armed guerilla groups would not however engage in major battles. The conventional warfare stage involved use of well-armed and well organized battalions of troops supported by battle tanks, artillery as well as air support which engage in major decisive battles. Thus each stage made use of unique personnel with relatively different training.

Therefore the difference between ZPRA and ZANLA lay in the manner in which the stages of guerilla warfare were followed. Tshezawas of the opinion that the fundamental difference between struggles ZPRA and ZANLA waged can be traced to the manner in which they followed the stages. ZPRA went through all the four stages such that by 1979 it had a well-equipped conventional Army that engaged in urban warfare, something which ZANLA did not major in due to poor if inferior resources. ZANLA focused more on recruitment and mobilization and later attempted to skip sabotage to semi-conventional warfare hence suffered heavy losses at the hands of the Rhodesian forces.⁵²

Furthermore ZPRA's recruitment entailed the ex-filtration of individuals via Botswana where they would be thoroughly screened for security then later flown to the training camps in Zambia. In this sense the individuals were whisked across the border not as refugees but as potential recruits to the various training camps in the frontline states.⁵³ Thus during the selection processes in the camps the basic assumption was that everyone had an active role that they would play in support of the struggle hence manpower or capacity assessment was conducted as soon as the individuals landed in Zambia. Mc Gregor corroborated this by pointing out that the potential

recruits would be forwarded to a house in Nampundu in Zambia where they were screened and those with qualifications got deployed as teachers, medics and it was a decision that no individual had control over thus leaving many disappointed as everyone wished to carry a gun and fight.⁵⁴ Thus the recruits would be sent for training in various fields hence after delegation of a suitable task, one would cease to be a civilian or refugee and automatically become a ZPRA combatant.⁵⁵ Therefore ZPRA considered everyone who played a role towards the maintenance of those in combat duties well supplied a veteran hence the number of refugees was lower.⁵⁶

In the sabotage operations stage, it needs to be highlighted that ZPRA conducted its recruitment and training in forward camps established in areas of operation inside Rhodesia. In these camps recruits drawn from the surrounding communal areas were trained and conducted weapon drills as well as training crucial tasks like laying of mines. These locally trained individuals constituted an important section of the ZPRA army even though their training and scope of operation was limited thus even though they were trained in small numbers in Rhodesia they were referred to as guerillas.

Furthermore it needs to be pointed out that training duration between ZPRA and ZANLA combatants differed. ZANLA combatants undertook a three month training whereas ZPRA combatants went through a six months advanced training. Thus coming to the definition of a war veteran in the 1997 vetting process, it can be opined that these fundamental differences or anomalies were overlooked. The definition did not set standards for the training as well as the type of operations that qualified one to be referred to as a war veteran. Thus ZPRA patrons of the vetting process had challenges in interpreting the act hence the phenomenon where a significant number of ZPRA veterans were sidelined as the composition of its former fighters was complex and variegated.

2.3 ZPRA VETERANS IN THE 1997 VETTING PROCESS

The 1997 gratuity was announced by President Mugabe on the 28th of August 1997 after veterans had proven that they were tired of cheap politicking by the nationalist leaders. The veterans had been promised that they would be provided for at home but to them they were not yet at home hence they took to the streets demonstrating and threatening anyone who tried to stop them with extreme violence.⁵⁷ In Bulawayo and Harare ministers sent by the president to reason with the veterans were harassed, taken hostage and verbally harassed with former women combatants dumping in front of them crawling and crying babies demanding the ministers to feed them.⁵⁸ At the extreme, the veteran demonstrated outside the presidential residence and the soldiers and police ordered to shoot at the veterans refused to shoot.⁵⁹

Thus having been pushed into a corner Mugabe went on to approve the payout to the veterans without any parliamentary approval.⁶⁰ Each veteran was promised Z\$ 50 000 once of package accompanied by a Z\$ 2 000 monthly pension from January 1998. The veterans argued that the Z\$ 50 000 was small but later agreed after Mugabe agreed to reviewing the payout annually. Mugabe retorted that

“But we said they must find the money even if it means borrowing heavily. Whosoever heard that a country disintegrated because of borrowing?”⁶¹

Thus the unbudgeted payout was disbursed through a vetting process whose criteria was derived from the war veterans act chapter 11:15. Vetting panels were set up at District and Provincial level. Patrons were drawn from members of the former liberation forces the majority who had been senior officers in the war. ZPRA had its own panel of officers vetting ZPRA combatants

while former ZANLA officers participated in vetting former ZANLA combatants. The patrons made use of registers of all camps and also a register of ex-fighters which they used to ascertain the credibility of a claim. The questionnaires that they used focused on who an individual knew that is former squad members and the commanders as well as the names of the bases one trained in and their instructors as well as area of operations.⁶² One had to tell who they had operated with during the war as well as their area of operation which was supposed to be corroborated by former detachment commanders who in most times were not readily available to vouch for anyone.⁶³ Those whose claims were not successful at district level had to be forwarded to the provincial level but had to be accompanied by a witness to corroborate or vouch for them. Official statistics have it that a total of 52 000 veterans received the gratuity payout.⁶⁴ ZPRA claims that it forwarded fewer ex combatants than ZANLA and allegedly argues that ZANLA vetted veterans in excess of 60 000 combatants.⁶⁵ Thus the statistics of vetted members became astronomical given the fact that 70 000 had been demobilized in 1981 hence raising question on the credibility of the vetting system as well as speculation over widespread corruption in the vetting system that inherently saw a few ZPRA combatants qualifying while hordes in ZANLA qualified in numbers.

The vetting criteria as derived from the War veterans Act had various loopholes that caused confusion those conducting the vetting process on former ZPRA combatants especially when the various dynamics in the composition of the force began to surface. It needs to be understood also that the manner in which the vetting process affected the veterans differed between those who had been integrated into the army and were still serving in 1997 and those who were demobilized in 1981. Those who were in the army had the advantage of links that they had created that is close

relationship they had consolidated over the years thus most of them benefitted while those who were demobilized constituted the larger proportion of those who were sidelined.

The Patrons in ZPRA faced the challenge in interpreting what the war veterans act meant by “trained” as well as what it meant by fought consistently and persistently. Lwazi Tsheza opinionated that “we had challenges in interpreting the act as ZPRA had variegated detachments”. ZPRA had guerilla units and the conventional units whose trainings differed. Most members in the conventional units had been trained in the Soviet Union while guerilla units were trained in the Frontline states that is Zambia, Angola, Tanzania and Botswana as well as inside Zimbabwe. Further on there were units that received limited but crucial training in forward base located in the operational zones in Zimbabwe but were referred to as combatants even though their scope of operation was limited. Thus with the 1997 vetting process these groups presented themselves for benefit resulting in those who were trained inside Zimbabwe being sidelined as it increasingly became challenging to determine if the vetting included them.⁶⁶ Libha Tshuma a veteran who did not receive the payout retorted that

“I was told that I was trained in a camp that was not recognized. To me it was very painful especially when I remember the risks we encountered in handling the landmines. I lost some of my friends to the exploding landmines. It was funny how the guys did not recognize us when we had fought side by side in the war.”⁶⁷

It also needs to be highlighted that the definition of fighting consistently and persistently was volatile hence presenting a challenge in determining who was to qualify. In this sense ZPRA argues that it had the women’s brigade that never saw combat but contributed through various duties in the rear with the gear. Tsheza was of the view that

“There developed a challenge with the definition where it said consistently and persistently because it came to bundle up our women combatants with the roles played by the mujibha who also contributed with duties like treating the sick as well as cooking for them....”⁶⁸

Thus in this manner in this manner the challenge in interpreting the definition within ZPRA affected the combatants as significant numbers were left out when they began to focus on those who had participated in direct combat operations.

An interview with Nketha a former ZPRA combatant corroborated that the strictness that ZPRA did sidelined many of its own combatants. Dube pointed out that

“We as the veters in ZPRA came to be strict and tough on our combatants. We focused on those who had engaged in combat while ZANLA vetted all its members hence even their refugees got the money”⁶⁹

Thus on its part, ZPRA loosely interpreted the definition hence the number of the combatants was significantly higher than that of ZPRA which turned away some of its veterans due to the dilemma in interpreting the Act.

It is also worth noting that ZPRA had no reliable written documents that would have been used to vouch for its former membership. This stems from the fact that ZPRA documents had been confiscated in 1981 during ZANU's vendetta with ZAPU which it accused of conniving with dissidents in the attempt to remove Mugabe from power through unconstitutional means. The vendetta contributed to the Matabeleland campaign by the Korean trained Fifth Brigade also known as “Gukurahundi” which means the rain that washes away the chaff. The brigade was disbanded on the pretext of flashing out the dissident problem but it unscrupulously bundled up or affected innocent former ZPRA guerillas. In this manner Nketha a former ZPRA combatant was of the view that Gukurahundi displaced many ZPRA combatants the majority of whom were not vetted. There was deliberate destruction of credentials in the bid to avoid being identified as a dissident and also many ZPRA veterans had to flee for their lives. Nketha thus pointed out that for those who have since been based in the Diaspora ever since the vetting process came to be

premised on view that “Asipo haapo or ongekho kakho” meaning those who were not present automatically lost.

Further on for those veterans who were could not succeed at district level and had queries were forwarded to the provincial vetting body where they were supposed to bring with them a witness. This served to side line some of the veterans a some were poor and could not afford to transport themselves and the witness to provincial vetting centers. Further on the difficulty of the task was compounded by the fact that there were long queues at the vetting centers therefore the majority of ZPRA combatants became dejected hence losing the payout.

Deliberate politicization of the vetting process has also been attributed as a cause for the sidelining of ZPRA combatants. In this manner it has been argued that the exercise was politicized by ZANU PF hence it came to benefit former ZANLA members more than former ZPRA combatants. In this case Nketha was content to note that “ZANLA vetted all even those who were not trained including because they were in a position of power thus when ZPRA complained, they said ZPRA misinterpreted the Act”⁷⁰ He further on noted that veterans were also unscrupulously manufactured hence more money went to ZANLA and when we complained they said it was our fault that we had misinterpreted and there was no longer any money left to cover those on our side who had been left out. Thus in this manner politicization served to benefit former ZANLA hence at the expense of former ZPRA hence many were sidelined.

ZPRA veterans have also decried the general awareness of the programme for those living in the peripheries. In this fact it has been noted that the time frame that was given for vetting was small and thus many arrived late and hence were left out. Awareness of the programme was generally poor for those living in the peripheries and many received the message late. One commentator was of the view that we did not receive any message through our structures and therefore we

arrived late and were referred to the provisional offices. Thus in this manner poor publication of the vetting process played a role in the sidelining of some of the former ZPRA combatants.

It also need to be highlighted that far from benefitting former ZPRA combatants, the vetting process bogus and manufactured veterans. In this sense individuals who included former war collaborators, as well as relatives of deceased veterans who had knowledge of the war and operation conducted by their relatives also claimed the fund. Magwizi noted that

We had incidences where young people who did not fight in the war took advantage of knowledge of their brother or sister's non de Guerue as well as area of operation and commanders and used it to defraud the state at the expense of genuine veterans.⁷¹

Thus in this manner the majority of former ZPRA combatants were left out resulting as bogus veterans laid claim to a fund that was not due to them.

2.4 CONCLUSION

In summation the definition of a war veteran in 1997 vetting process proved to be a tremendous challenges to the patrons responsible for vetting the ex-combatants. Characteristics amongst the veterans differed and therefore the lack of clarity as to what the Act meant by trained and fought consistently and persistently resulted in patrons in ZPRA and ZANLA interpreting the Act differently. ZPRA interpretation narrowed the definition hence leaving out some of it crucial veterans. ZANLA on their part interpreted the act in a different manner which bought on board fake veterans who benefitted from the act at the behest of genuine combatants. Thus in the end many ZPRA combatants who had been active participants in various capacities found themselves left out hence the constituting the numbers that were sidelined and hence corroborate the claim that the vetting process sidelined significant section of veterans who had contributed to the liberation of Zimbabwe.

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CHAPTER 3

THE FLAWS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE 1997 VETTING PROCESS

INTRODUCTION

The 1997 vetting process as an appeasement strategy was generally successful in monetarily satisfying the lucky war veterans who received the payout. Getting the payout was easier for those who had been reintegrated into the army in 1981 and to those with links to the bureaucracy responsible for the vetting but however the vetting process left a string of victims in its wake. The victims involved those genuine veterans who were left out due to the incompatibility to the selected vetting criteria drawn from the War Veterans Act as well as those affected by the shock effects of the vetting process. The vetting process had implications that affected the socio-economic and political standing of the veterans as well as that of average Zimbabwean citizens.

The payout served to cement a relationship between those ZPRA combatants who benefited and ZANU PF, a situation that did not exist in the previous years because ZPRA combatants harbored hatred over the purge that ZANU had spurred in the 80's. In this sense the relationship was converted into a give or take relationship with the ruling party using the veterans as a campaign strategy and the veterans on the other hand supported ZANU PF policies no matter how detrimental they were in anticipation of a monetary largesse to be forthcoming from the government for its continual maintenance in power.¹The veterans came to view themselves as an indispensable aspect of Zimbabwean politics around which even the executive powers were rooted and substantiated. On the other hand those who did not benefit came to become isolated and hence automatically constituted the voice in the wilderness that has been clamoring for the

revisit of the vetting. These also been manipulated by the ruling party that promises that maintaining them in power would ultimately result in gratuity payments for them. Various amendments of the war veteran's act as well as the various re-vetting process have been repeated thus creating the recurring war veterans problem.

The surrogate relationship that it founded in the 1997 vetting process has seen problems within Zanu PF becoming contagious to the War veterans as body in direct contrast to the situation that could have attained had the Zimbabwe liberation War veterans Association remained an independent body. One notes that the union between the state and war veterans and the government has transmogrified into the horse and rider relationship and perpetuated a tradition of arm twisting the government into acceding to their demands whenever the veterans see fit. The economy has continually bled as funds have been lost in the exercise of tracking falsified claims as well as try and accommodate the veterans that were overlooked. Thus this section will set out to expound the implications of the 1997 vetting process both on the ZPRA combatants and the country at large.

THE VICTIMS OF AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE 1997 VETTING PROCESS

The 1997 vetting process left a string of victims in its wake as it had loopholes which were instrumental in the sidelining of certain deserving veterans. Among the victims were those veterans who live in the geographical peripheries as well as social peripheries of the community like orphans and widows of former liberation fighters. SG. Dube was of the view that

The [vetting] exercise was ill advertised and as such there were veterans staying in the peripheries like Phelandaba close to the Botswana -Tsholotsho border where there was virtually no means of communication during the time. Thus some of them got the message through hearsay and hence could not make it early to the vetting stations.²

Further on it needs to be highlighted that there were orphans as well as widows of prominent veterans who had fought in the war but did not get the payout. In this case the vetting system accommodated those who managed to stand for their own claims hence those who wanted to claim the gratuity for their deceased relatives were simply left out.

It also needs to be pointed out that there also were women combatants who were sidelined in the vetting process. These included those who voluntarily demobilized themselves by not entering into the Assembly points for registration. In this case Tshayina Moyo a former ZPRA woman combatant noted that

“Some female combatants chose to go home rather than enter into the assembly points for registration. This was because they feared the situation where they would get bombed or redeployed into the bush, a situation which no one wished to happen because war is not a nice experience.”³

Further on it needs to be realized that there were some who were bundled up as refugees after the war and among these were female combatants who had however fallen pregnant during the war.

Tshayina Moyo a former female combatant concurred this by retorting that

“Falling pregnant was a very disgraceful thing for a female combatant therefore those who got pregnant were relegated to the refuge circle where their jobs involved sewing and patching uniforms for the other comrades”.⁴

Thus with the end of the war many went home and did not go into the assembly points. Therefore in this sense these came to be sidelined as there was lack of evidence from the records from the assembly points that could be used to bolster their claims.

It must be pointed out that there were veterans who were in the diaspora who could not be there to vouch for themselves. In this sense the continual deteriorating economic situation as well as the persecution of former ZPRA combatants during the Gukurahundi Campaign pushed the majority into the diaspora like South Africa. Many ZPRA including those who were reintegrated into the new army as well as those who had been demobilized left for South Africa deserted and

had to assume new identities in order to escape capture and torture and accusations of being a dissident.

One combatant was of the view that the situation was so tense for us ZPRA combatants in the Army.

“You were not to go beyond the 40 km radius of the Harare post office and after the killing of Elias Ndlovu a former ZPRA combatant serving in the Zimbabwe National Army in Lupane by the members of the 5th Brigade, it became clear that no one was safe thus many ZPRA combatants deserted and went to South Africa where some changed their identities and therefore could not come back to make any claims.”⁵

Thus in this sense it can be noted that they were genuine combatants who could not get the gratuity payout due to their unavailability and thus they contribute to the voice of victims that is still calling for another re-vetting so that they may also benefit.

3.1 POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS

ZPRA VETERANS AND ZANU PF ALLIANCE

The events of 1997 payout saw the solidification of the relationship between ZANU PF and some ZPRA combatants especially the beneficiaries of the payout hence ex combatants were turned into storm troopers for ZANU PF. The beneficiaries include both the genuine veterans and the manufactured veterans. The new relationship came to be premised upon the ideology of common struggle for independence and was maintained through appeasement, violence and coercion.⁶ This revolution of veteran identity and mode of operation or strategies has affected the socio-economic and political status of war veterans in the society. In this regard the veterans becoming a law unto themselves and becoming immune to prosecution as they are apt to hint their close and personal relationship with the president and ruling party ZANU PF.

It must be noted that veterans who benefitted the gratuity came to fully support ZANU PF policies regardless of how detrimental they were to the socio-economic and political lives of

other fellow Zimbabwean citizens which was not the situation in the past times when they had been a voice of reason. This is evidenced in Zimbabwe's involvement in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) war. In this case about 11 000 troops were deployed to the DRC operation. In this case the war was unbudgeted for and Zimbabwe was spending money in excess of USD 1 million a day in a conflict that was no threat to Zimbabwe's political and international sovereignty.⁷The operation was detrimental as it spent money that was earmarked for poverty alleviation and resolving the land problem but war veterans remained supportive of the government over the issue hence perpetuating the descent of Zimbabwe's economy.⁸ Thus in this case the veterans became tools and seized to become voices of reason hence affecting the economy.

The alliance with the war veterans also perpetuated a culture of violence and politics of coercion with the veterans leading in the frontlines. In this sense the veteran alliance solidified in the 1997 payout brought the two sides closer together hence effectively turning the veterans into ZANU PF's military wing by 2000. To this end the government enlisted the help of the war veterans in suppressing the National Constitutional Assembly constitutional demonstrations of 1998 which is viewed as the first time the veterans got involved in state politics since 1980.⁹ The war veterans were also instrumental in the onslaught against the emerging urban based labor party MDC in 1999 declaring certain areas as no go areas for MDC activists. It also needs to be highlighted that war veterans were also involved in coercing members of their communities into supporting ZANU PF or face the wrath of the veterans who prefer to see themselves as dangerous with the propensity to even unseat the President if they so choose. Thus war veterans have increasingly been involved in gross human rights violations in the name of the state.

One also notes that the successful in forcing the government in acceding to their demands pronto has given the veterans a sense of invincibility hence perpetuating a culture of unending demands. An interview with Agrippa Ngwenya a war veteran revealed how veterans always have their way owing to the appeal their veteran status that epitomizes danger, death as well as cruelty.¹⁰ In this case one notes that the manner in which the gratuity payout was disbursed was converted from being a payout that the veterans deserved into a well-wishers fund or token of appeasement. In this sense the payout has been transformed into a bribe and hence the veterans continue to milk the state dry with their unending demands. This is evident in the claim by the war veterans that the government owes them as they received less in 1997. This is a mere extension of a statement of intent made by former war veterans leader Chenjerai Hunzvi in 1999 who argued that the 1997 payout was merely a statement of intent by the government as every veteran deserved cash in excess of Z\$500 000.¹¹ As if the above is not enough Veterans have also demanded diamond claims in the Marange diamond fields arguing that the service chiefs in the defense sector are benefitting while they continue to wallow in poverty.

The relationship between ZPRA combatants and the war veterans as cemented in 1997 has also see the war veterans becoming economically and materially enslaved to ZANU PF hence the horse and rider relationship. In this sense one notes that a dependence syndrome has developed amongst the war veterans who depend on the government on the government for survival hence they work in cohorts with government rather than as an independent veterans association. Scholars also prefer to view this state of affairs as a carrot and stick approach as the war veterans are promised increments in pensions and other benefits and at the same time are threatened with the revocation of the benefits especially if they allow the opposition to come to power. Ray Ncube opinionated that the liberation struggle had been hijacked by selfish politicians so me

who see themselves war veterans and so instead of rehabilitating the veterans they take advantage of their poverty to abuse them as cannon fodder in self-serving and violent political projects.¹²

POLITICIZATION OF WAR VETERANS WING AND THE FATE OF ZLWVA

The politicization of the war veteran's wing and using the gratuity payout in 1997 as its precursor had implications that have seen problems within ZANU PF affecting the political standing of war veterans. In this sense it needs to be highlighted that succession wars and factionalism that has affected ZANU PF party have also affected the war veterans which is no longer an independent organization but rather a party wing. The existence of factions and factional fights beginning with the Joice Mujuru saga that saw the first women vice president of Zimbabwe booted out for planning to unconstitutionally depose president Mugabe and the current wrangles between the Mnangagwa Faction also referred to as the Lacoste faction and the Young Turks faction also referred to as the G40(generation 40) under the reins of the first lady Grace Mugabe has resulted in problems in the war veterans as their leadership has been reshuffled repeatedly to suit the political ends of ZANU PF.

To this end President Mugabe accused veterans of behaving as if they had monopoly over the liberation struggle as well as discriminating others basing on war credentials.¹³ The statements in a way echoed the magnitude of Mugabe's power over both the state and the veterans body and spared neither the veterans leadership nor the followers hence creating bad blood between the veterans and the Zanu PF leadership.¹⁴ This saw the vibrant and militaristic war veteran's leader Jabulani Sibanda being dismissed for having retorted that the war veterans would not sit and watch a bedroom coup happening in reference to the transfer of power to the first lady by the president. As if the above was not enough honorable Chris Mutsvangwa who succeeded Jabulani

Sibanda was also booted on allegations of despising the first family as well as his assumed alliance with the Mwangagwa faction.

Therefore this state of affairs has resulted in the split of the war veterans association resulting in the formation of ZPRA veterans association which opted to be allied to ZAPU. The veterans argued that the state of affairs in ZANU PF was tainting the images and integrity of war veterans. This was echoed in the statements by Dumiso Dabengwa the leader of ZPRA War Veteran Association who said

“The veterans have staunchly refused to be turned into pawns in ZANU PF game of succession chase.”¹⁵

The war veteran's alliance had implications in that it politicized an association that was meant to be independent. The war veteran's body would have been effective as an association that was nonpartisan and focused more on championing the cause of war veterans, many who are still languishing in poverty. In a way one notes that alliance with ZANU PF blinded the veterans of their mandate and hence they were abuse and the events in ZANU PF are now reflecting how expendable the veterans are in Zimbabwe's political canvas.¹⁶ This is evidenced in the way in which the veteran's demonstration in Harare was brutally crashed by the police, a situation to which Mugabe turned a blind eye. Therefore in this sense the alliance solidified in 1997 served to use veterans as tools and therefore had the effect of blunting the voice of the veterans that has been split hence affecting the vibrancy of the lobby voice of the veterans that was during the formative years of the Zimbabwe Liberation a war veterans association.

EMERGENCE OF NEW VETERAN REPRESENTATIVE ORGANIZATIONS

New veteran representative organizations have emerged as a consequence of the alliance with zanu pf that resulted in the muffling of the war veterans voice as well as the deference of their rehabilitation and emancipation. In this sense it can be argued that the alliance with ZANU PF

beginning in 1997 saw the Zimbabwe Liberation War Veterans Association being transformed from being a veteran's welfare body into a tool for furthering the political interests of Zanu PF. The mandate shifted from improving the social and economic status of war veterans to maintaining ZANU PF in power through politics of coercion and intimidation in the hope of material remuneration from Zanu PF.¹⁷ However a closer scrutiny of the state of affairs in the lens of war veterans welfare since 1997 shows that nothing has been forthcoming from Zanu PF. Rather veterans have been useful and at the same time continued to wallow in poverty and therefore as such the realization of their condition and status was instrumental in the founding of other veteran organizations hence considerably reducing the punch that Zimbabwe Liberation War Veterans association had as an independent entity.

The ZPRA veterans trust was founded as a response to the continual deterioration of the welfare and the dignity of war veterans. Its mandate was mainly to take care of the welfare of the veterans that were instrumental in bringing about the independence of Zimbabwe as well as establish peace, tranquility as well as facilitate national healing.¹⁸ The organization was seen as a stepping stone towards restoring the dignity of war veterans through positive dialogue with the communities so as to determine where the war went wrong as a step towards reconciliation. Ncube was of the view that

“There is a disturbing phenomenon where ex-combatants are involved in political violence. We feel that ex-combatants are becoming victims of abuse during the process of elections or any national events.”¹⁹

Further on he was of the view that past elections had been bloody and violent and most of the perpetrators were war veterans. Thus ZPRA trust aims to design programmes to counter the ZANU PF bred phenomenon that had resulted in the creation of fear zones by rogue veterans during elections.²⁰ Thus in this manner the organization is disassociated with the ZLWVA

association which is seen as a militant loyal group to Mugabe and ZANU PF. In this regard the abuse of war veterans after the solidification of their relationship in 1997 was instrumental in the founding of the divergent ZPRA trust.

3.2 ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS ON ZPRA VETERANS

Zimbabwe's economy had to bear the brunt since the payout of the gratuity. In this case it needs to be highlighted that the value of Zimbabwean dollar fell by 73% to the American dollars as of 17 November 1997.²¹ Economics remember the payout as the black October payout as the payout inaugurated the decline of Zimbabwe's economy. This state of affairs not only affected those who did not benefit from the payout but also those who also benefited as the payouts were quickly deflated due to the loss of the value of the American dollar. The economy became continually frail ever since the payout and therefore both the beneficiaries and the sidelined suffered and the general populace suffered. It is also worth noting that the 1997 vetting process smuggled fake veterans who bled the economy of funds and still there are some who are benefitting at the behest of genuine members. Thus in this sense this puts stress on the states revenue fiscus as the government is losing money to fake veterans.

On the leaside it needs to be highlighted that the vetting process inaugurated considerable economic emancipation in the short term for those who ventured into entrepreneurship. In this case some veterans established income generating projects like cattle fattening, poultry, and retail as well as transport business. Other veterans managed to buy tracts of land and tractors and engaged in agriculture. Thus for those who ventured in entrepreneurship, the payout went a long way towards their economic emancipation.

3.3 SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS ON ZPRA IMPLICATIONS

The 1997 vetting process impact on former ZPRA combatants can also be realized in the manner in which it affected the psych of the war veterans. In this sense it needs to be realized that the payout went a long way in influencing and perpetuating politics of arm twisting tactics in the society. In this case the veterans appeal to the use of force in the bid to impose their objectives on the society. This is evidenced in the creation of fear zones in their areas of residence that have been declared no go areas for non-zanu pf supporters.

It also needs to be highlighted that ZPRA veterans have also suffered from character assassination as well as identity redefinition by the society. In this sense one notes that the veterans have been vilified as the ones responsible for the downfall of Zimbabwe's economy as well as the blockers of the transition to democracy. As if that is not enough they have also been viewed as a bunch of fake pests manufactured by Zanu Pf who are preying on taxpayer's money when the real combatants are languishing in poverty in the rural areas. The veterans also suffer from denigration derived from the manner in which they are poor. Thus in this regard the veterans suffer from some form of identity crisis as actions ascribed to them since the union or alliance with zanu pf have served to separate them from the society who begin to view them as organs of their oppression.

CONCLUSION

In summation the 1997 vetting process had far reaching consequences on the political and socio-economic dynamics of Zimbabwe. Its skewed disbursement strategy served to create bad blood between the average citizen and the veteran because the definition of a veterans came to include the maintenance of the Harare regime in power and thus substantiating politics that epitomize the continual suffering of the Zimbabwean people. Further on in the inverse the same alliance

solidified by the payout has come to haunt the veterans as squabbles in the ZANU PF party they are affiliated to have been laterally transferred to the veteran's body hence deferring the promised economic emancipation that the veterans hoped would accrue from the alliance with the party in power.

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CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION

In summation the 1997 Zimbabwe Liberation War Veterans vetting process as unfair to certain sections of ZPRA combatants. The 1995 War Veterans Act that was used to design the screening criteria did not take into cognizance the fundamental differences between combatants of ZPRA and those of ZANLA. The two erstwhile military wings allied to ZAPU and ZANU respectively differed in terms of war strategies and manner of articulation of these, combat group composition as well as training. This is mostly due to the fact that ZPRA received backing and instruction from the Soviet Union hence it more conventionally focused and trained while ZANLA was Chinese supported with its major predisposition being a protracted war with the support of the local masses.

Thus to this end the patrons responsible for screening the applicants of the payout faced challenges in applying the definition of a war veteran as the definition as per the war veterans act had various anomalies that affected its universal applicability to both ZPRA and ZANLA. What the act meant by training was not standardized as there are various trainings for various personnel in various places that were undertaken. ZPRA had personnel trained overseas in the Soviet Union, in Zambia as well as in forward bases located inside Zimbabwe. Though the types of trainings they received they were all equally important as they fitted in the 4 stages of guerilla warfare transition that is recruitment and mobilization, sabotage, semi-conventional as well as conventional warfare. Thus the majority had to be left out as it proved difficult to apply the act thus those who had been trained within Zimbabwe found themselves alienated.

Further on ZPRA was affected by the lack of documentation that would have enabled them to vouch for their membership. In this case the post war political vendetta between ZANU and

ZAPU had seen the persecution of former ex combatants and confiscation of all assets owned by ZPRA by the government thus there lacked the database that would have been crucial in validating claims by veterans. Thus this serve to sideline many genuine ZPRA combatants as many especially women had gone straight home without registration at the assembly points hence they were not available in the database possessed by the government that had been compiled during the DDR period. Thus in this sense the system that was used was unfair to some veterans.

Having said this it is inquisitive to note that circumstances surrounding the fate of former ZPRA combatants show evidences of continuity in being sidelined. When the war ended ZPRA combatants had the anticipation that they were going to be taken care of by the government as the manner of the struggle as well as integration of military and political systems before the end of the war showed that ZPRA and ZAPU was a government in making. In this end attention was no longer focused on guerilla warfare but also creating a conventional army that would be the defense force of Zimbabwe as well sending academically astute individuals for professional courses overseas in preparation for taking over power. Thus it is this conviction that bonded them together regardless of the enormity of the task that one performed during the war thus they saw each other as comrades. Howevercircumstances did not turn out as expected as the majority found themselves demobilized and rejected and under attack from the ZANU government that came to assume power.

ZPRA veterans came to be alienated and persecuted on allegations that they championed the overthrow of the Mugabe regime through unconstitutional means. Thus in a way programmes that ensured have seemingly came to sideline most of them as the ghost of the past continues to haunt them. Even attempts at rapprochement as former nationalist fighter were done in the

signing of the Unity Accord in 1987, ZPRA combatants still maintain that the system has not been fair as the ingrained effects of tribally oriented politics basing on the fact that the majority of former ZPRA are dominantly Ndebele and Khalanga while former ZANLA are Shona. Thus in this case they argue that they have continually been sidelined. Thus this state of affairs has been the cause for the withdrawal of ZPRA to form parallel organizations as they are convinced that the odds have always been against them due to politics of separation of ZANU PF.

Thus the ZPRA ex combatants founded the ZPRA Veterans Trust as well as the ZPRA war Veterans Association that is not aligned to ZANU PF. Their major conviction is that they have been abused by ZANU PF hence they hope to rewrite their history through rolling out various programmes that will mainly champion the cause and welfare of their membership that has continually descended into poverty under the ZANU PF controlled Zimbabwe Liberation War veterans Association. The veterans hope that through positive dialogue with communities they will be able to achieve reconciliation, fight the politics of violence and coercion amongst their membership as well as champion democracy through educating the people on their constitutional rights. Thus in this manner they will achieve ZPRA's lost wartime commitment and pledge to defend and embrace the people.

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APPENDIX A

My name is BHEKUZULU LITHAM NGOBE. I am an undergraduate student at Midlands State University reading for a Bachelor of Arts honors degree in history. I am doing an academic research focusing on **THE ZIMBABWE LIBERATION WAR VETERAN'S 1997 VETTING PROCESS AND ITS IMPLICATIONS ON FORMER ZPRA COMBATANTS. VOICES FROM BULAWAYO.**

INTERVIEW GUIDE WITH FORMER ZPRA COMBATANTS

1. What criteria was used in the vetting of ex combatants in 1997 and how the criteria was applied.
2. Who were the patrons responsible for the vetting process and what protocol guided the manner in which they separated genuine from fake claims.
3. What challenges did the patrons face in the vetting of the ex-combatants?
4. In what way did the responsible ministry deal with grievances and queries that accrued from the manner in which the vetting process was conducted?
5. To what extent were ZPRA veterans sidelined and what the characterization of the individuals that were sidelined.
6. What role did the existing ZPRA command play in vouching for its membership?
7. What were the implications of the 1997 vetting process?

8. In what way has the alliance between the ZPRA veterans and the ZANU PF affect the political and socio- economic standing of war veterans?