

Full Length Research Paper

Fake heroines and the falsification of history in Zimbabwe 1980 - 2009

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The ideology of femocracy is so entrenched in Zimbabwean politics that it has become a tradition. It started as a tendency during the liberation struggle of making room and integrating a few women into politics. After independence, it developed into a habit of promoting the same women who had been exposed during the liberation struggle into political offices. Finally, at independence it became a tradition whereby the state confers heroine status to the very women who had held position during the war. However, one feature that stands glaring at the national heroes' acre is that the heroines who were lay, are all related to men in political positions in both current ruling party and the state. This paper will demonstrate that most Zimbabwean heroines are forgotten. It also proves that even at death the patriarchal nature of Zimbabwean politics manifests itself when one considers that the number of male heroes vis-à-vis the heroines who lay at the acre. Finally the paper will show how femocracy as an ideology has led to the falsification and misrepresentation of historical facts all in an attempt to promote nationalist history.

Key words: Heros, heroines, femocracy, Zimbabwe

INTRODUCTION

Femocracy is an ideology which believes that in order for women to rise in the political arena they have to be linked to men in political positions i.e. the big brother syndrome. The males in political parties or positions assist and facilitate the promotion of women to get into politics. However, the negative aspect of this ideology is that the women who are put into political positions end up advancing the male political agenda at the expense of female political agenda since they owe their political positions to the men who would have assisted to prominent political positions. In Zimbabwe the adoption of this ideology by the state has seen many women deserving to be heroines being forgotten and left out simply because they are not connected to any males in political positions. By and large, women who are also connected to males in positions have been declared as national heroines. This has led to the omission of the

nation's historical facts and the falsification of its history. The paper therefore intends to analyse the aforementioned issues with the aim of exposing the history of women in Zimbabwe in general and heroines in particular.

CONTENDING ISSUES

In honor of thousands of its gallant fighters the Zimbabwean State at independence built the national heroes acre. Other sacred shrines were built across the country to honor heroines and heroes of Zimbabwe past, present and future. Accordingly the 11th of August was set aside as a day to commemorate these gallant sons and daughters' efforts to liberate Zimbabwe. According to Jonathan Moyo, a Political Scientist and former Minister of Information and publicity in the office of the president,

"The national heroes' acre is the pride of the people of Zimbabwe. It is a symbol of bravery and selflessness of these those whose remains are laid to rest there (Ministry of Information and Publicity 1989: 3)."

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In an interview with Gweru curator of the Zimbabwe Military Museum, Mrs. Rumbidzai Bvira (Interview 2009) she explained that,

“During the liberation struggle our people spent long spells in detention without trial like for example Mrs. Chinamano who spent 11 years in jail. Many women and men sacrifice their lives to free Zimbabwe. In honor of those fallen heroes and heroines our government has built shrines across the country where conferred heroes and heroines are laid. Then department of museums and national monuments administers these national shrines.”

From the above sentiments it can be concluded that the national heroes' acre was built to honor the gallant sons and daughters of Zimbabwe. The heroes and heroines include leaders, freedom fighters and dedicated supporters of the national liberation struggle who participated in or undertook revolutionary activities which contributed directly to the final victory of Zimbabwe (Ministry of Information and Publicity, 1989: 4). Heroines and heroes are classified in three categories and generally reflected the departed heroes contribution to the national heroine. Their status is of highest honor that can be conferred to an individual and the recipients are entitled to be buried at the national heroes' acre. Secondly, there is a liberation war hero or provincial hero, then the liberation hero or district hero. The liberation war heroes are buried at the provincial heroes' acre. While the liberation war heroes are buried at the district shrine. Mrs. Mapuranga (interview, 2009) an ex combatant explained that,

“Liberation war heroes are the comrades who fought at the front who were in combat and the liberation war heroes are the men and women who remain back home supporting the war efforts as informers aiding with food, clothing etc., the business community who gave the guerrillas aid in various forms.”

The curator of the national heroes' acre Mr. Mandima (Interview, 2009) explains that,

“National heroes or heroines are those that led the national liberation war struggle. Liberation war heroes or provincial war heroes are those who fought at the front and heroically defended the liberation cause. In the same instance, depending on heroic acts they can be found among the national heroes or heroines. The district heroes are the heroic supporters of the national liberation war struggle who through their support Zimbabwe got their independence.”

The other heroes according to the 1982 brochure, “Contemporary and future sons and daughters of Zimbabwe of the same caliber as those fallen heroes, whose dedica-

tion and commitment to the new nation of Zimbabwe will justify their burial at this sacred spot.” (Government of Zimbabwe 1982).

The heroes and heroines status is determined by the state in a case -by-case basis. As already mentioned the national hero's status is the highest honor that can be conferred to an individual and the recipient is entitled to be buried at the national heroes' acre. According to the National Heroes Act chapter 10:16,

“Designation of heroes is done by the president, where the president considers that any deceased person who was a citizen of Zimbabwe has deserved well of his country on account of his outstanding distinctive and distinguished themselves in the liberation struggle, such a person is awarded a national, provincial, or district hero status of Zimbabwe.”

However the fact that the president alone designates heroes or heroines has sparked a lot of discontentment amongst other parties, ministers, parliamentarians and civil society at large. The majority of the stakeholders are not clear on the criteria used by the president to choose who is a heroes or heroine and who does not qualify for that post. According to Bhebhe and Ranger (1995), creating national heroes has been a political turbulent process, one which has made mass or elite inequalities highly visible. The entire prospect has revealed the governing elites commitment to hierarchy, bureaucratic control and top down decision making. Not understanding how the president arrives at the decision of conferring one a national hero or heroine, in August, 1982 ZAPU member of parliament Ruth Chinamano asked the minister of information how a hero status was reached at. She was told that the government forwarded names to the cabinet, which made the decisions. Through the Sunday Mail of October, 1982 the government laid down its idea of a national hero should who lie at the national heroes acre. It stated that,

“The national heroes' acre has been established to honor a specific and exclusive type of hero. It is that hero, whose courageous deeds were, designed for and connected with one sole objective –the liberation of Zimbabwe. Those who risk their lives.”

Following the criterion the president over the years has considered and declared several sons and daughters of Zimbabwe heroes and heroines. The only disturbing element when it comes to Zimbabwe national heroines lying at the acre is that all are wives of nationalists who were and still are ZANU PF heavy weights and prominent figures in the state. The very women who were given political position during the liberation struggle were the ones who were considered heroines at death.

A former ZANLA detachment commander Amos Sigauke complained in Parade in 1991. He bitterly ex-

pressed that only government employees with close contacts with the central committee were being buried at the heroes' acre.

At present, at the heroes' acre four heroines, all former wives of ZANU PF political heavy weights were laid. There is Sally Mugabe wife of Robert Mugabe, who died on the 27th of January, 1992 and was buried at then heroes' acre on the 1st of February, 1992. Also at the heroes' acre is Johanna Mafuyana Nkomo, wife of the late vice president Joshua Nkomo. Johanna died on the 3rd of June, 2003, was conferred national heroine and was buried on the 7th June, 2003. Ruth Chinamano again lies at the acre. She was the wife of the late Josiah Chinamano a political heavy weight in ZIPRA. Born in Cape Town 1935; she died on the 15th of October, 2005. Julia Tukai Zvobgo wife of the late Edison Zvobgo lies at the national heroes' acre. Zvobgo was ZANU PF Secretary during the liberation war and the states' minister of justice at independence. Julia born 8th of November, 1937 died on the 16th of February, 2004 and was conferred a national heroine and was buried on the 22nd February, 2004.

As explained earlier on, the Sunday Mail explained that the president only conferred the heroine status to people who had risked their lives to liberate Zimbabwe, understandably these four women could be said were the only heroines the president saw as risked their lives at a national level of all the 10 000 people who joined the liberation struggle. Can the only four women who lie at the acre explain the number of women who risked their lives during the war? Surely there is omission somewhere and the omission is history thereby robbing the country of its true history. If 10 000 women went to fight in the war, is it not possible that at least 10 could have qualified to have risked their lives enough to be honored as national heroines. Amos Sigauke (Government of Zimbabwe 1982) a former ZANLA detachment commissar stated that,

"There are people whom decide to be politically inactive after independence yet they contributed so much. Should they not be declared heroes because they are no longer active?"

According to a press released in the Herald on the 20th of January 1992 Sally was declared a national heroine because,

"She was the secretary of the women's league in Mozambique in 1978, and supported her husband committedly during the war and was arrested by the Rhodesian forces. At independence she campaigned for women's rights and was instrumental in the transforming of the women's league in to a formidable force and a pillar of ZANU PF."

The Chronicle January 12, 1991 repeated that:

"The needs of children are always at her heart. To

that end Mai Mugabe issued patronage of many children's' centers from those catering for the disabled to those catering for orphans and children of ex combatants ensuring that they have enough food clothing. She was also patron of Mutema Leper center in Mutoko in 1981 and raised many donations for the centre" (The Herald, 1984).

An analysis of these narrations gives the impression that Sally's strength lay in her ability as a social worker not a politician even her position as secretary of the league in Mozambique then in independent Zimbabwe "campaigning for women's rights "she was more of an administrator and philanthropist than a politician. It should be noted that Sally never fought at the front nor was she in combat. She was at the rear doing administration work. At independence her heart she gave to the children and to the sick. She upheld ZANU PF of its women as mothers and wives and politician. To that end she was declared a heroine.

Surprisingly when Jairos Jiri died in 1982 he was not given a hero's status. Jiri was a philanthropist who had dedicated 32 years of working with the disabled. He had gone on to establish the Jairos Jiri Association. His heart he gave to the lame and disabled like Sally and even spent many more years in this area than Sally. Upon his death many suggested that he should be accounted a national hero. However the government disagreed with Joshua Nkomo who was in the lead with the suggestion to have Jiri be declared as a hero. The Sunday Mail 28 November, 1982 noted explicitly that,

"The acre was for those who risked their lives, the other fields of greatness like philanthropy did not have the element of risk "

However here the state seems to be contradicting itself because on Sally's profile her philanthropic greatness was an added point to her being accorded hero status. Furthermore in 1982 brochure and its heroes' acre and its heroines stated,

"The other includes contemporary and future sons and daughters of the same caliber as those fallen heroes whose dedication and commitment to the new nation of Zimbabwe will justify their burial at this sacred spot."(Government of Zimbabwe).

Jiri might not have fired a shot to liberate Zimbabwe but he served the country before and at independence, committedly and dedicated to the country's disabled. If Jiri's acts' could not be regarded as heroic then what other deeds can they be? When ZAPU Deputy Minister of Manpower Planning and Development, Daniel Ngwenya raised this question in parliament in December 1983, the Prime Minister's answer was not illuminating, "Heroes are of different types, some are more heroic than others" (Chronicle 8 December, 1983).

What the honorable Minister failed to state was that one needed to be properly connected to the political heavy weights and the day to be given space at the heroes' acre.

When Mama Mafuyana died Mugabe explained in the Herald 4th June 2003 that,

"To be the wife of a nationalist politician in those days was not easy. One was exposed to a hard life in cruelty, pain, self denial constant danger and tragedy. Mama Mafuyana met all these pressures but labored steadfast, unflinching, loyal, virtuous and committed to the family."

Why was she conferred a national heroine, the President started in the Herald of the 5th of June, 2003 that,

"Through sheer effort and determination she raised her family virtually all her children single handedly, ensuring that they receive good education while their father was in detention or had left the country to lead the armed struggle. She took most of the pressure thus keeping her husband well sequestered and thus focused on the enormous challenges of leading the struggle for independence, therein lies her heroic contribution."

The above speech makes it clear that Mama Mafuyana was accorded a heroine status not because she was at the front fighting. Her heroine status lay in her ability to,

"Raise her children single handedly ensuring that they receive good education while their father was in detention or had left the country to lead the armed struggle" (Chronicle 8 December, 1983).

Her heroic deeds were not in fighting but in "taking the pressure off her husband so that he remained focused on the remained challenges of leading the struggle for independence" (Chronicle 8 December, 1983). As such history recorded her as another heroine. Again, not losing his view of women as mothers and politicians the president sadly stated,

".....The nation has lost a 'mother'" (Chronicle 8 December, 1983).

Bringing into light the patriarchal nature of Zimbabwe politics, the speaker of the house of parliament Minister Mnangagwa on the 8th of June, 2004 in the Herald stated that,

"We will remember you and your resilience, inspiration, dignity as a mother and determination. You stood by your husband during and after the struggle and continued to be a torch bearer for the empowerment of women ..."

As such for Mafuyana her resilience and dignity as a

mother gained her heroines' status at the shrine. Her ability to stand by her husband during and after the war earned her a heroine status.

For Julia Zvobgo the president in the Herald of the 22nd of February, 2004 explained that,

"Amai was a strong pillar for ZANU PF as a party during the liberation struggle. She ventured into politics and was harassed for carrying political messages during the time of her husband's detention. Later in 1978 she was elected into the ZANU PF Central Committee and served till 1990. She was elected a member of Parliament for Zvishavane in 1980. She represented that area for 10 long years before her resignation."

So for Julia, her heroine status lay in her ability, first in carrying political messages during the time of her husband's detention. In other words she was a political informant, (Chimbwido); her ability to withstand her harassment at the hands of the Rhodesian Forces was also taken into consideration. However the most important deed for this gallant daughter of Zimbabwe was that she was the wife of Edison Zvobgo the party's publicity Secretary. This had made her to sacrifice her education by joining liberation struggle. She was also heroic for she represented Zvishavane constituency as an MP for 10 years till her resignation. On his part Chief Charumbira described Julia as,

"A Veteran politician, a rare woman who persevered and sacrificed her education in order to liberate the country." (Chronicle 23 February, 2004).

For him the heroic effort Julia lay in her selflessness of sacrificing her education. However the question to be asked is many other daughters of Zimbabwe sacrificed their education just to liberate Zimbabwe. The Munene abductees, Mount Selinda cases involved hundreds of girls who left school to join the war yet they are the forgotten, unmentioned majority. Maybe because they are not connected to political heavy weights that is why they can not make it to the heroes' acre.

Nhongo-Simbanegavi (2000: 57) noted that these women arrived late into the political scene. Coming from the States Julia had a Master's Degree. However she arrived in 1979 a year before Zimbabwe attained independence. Furthermore, a number of educated women had also joined the liberation struggle. As much speculation about Julia's husband's influence regarding her conferred status as a heroine cannot be overlooked. One ends up having the impression that the national heroes' acre is only for presidents' and ministers' wives. ZANU PF has many women who fought in the war. Some of them even lost their lives at war front for all the love of liberating their country. By 1978 ZANU boasted that a third of its guerillas were women. The party also acknowledged the crucial role women played in liberating

Zimbabwe. However, it is disturbing that at death, very few women are found as national heroes. By August 2002, the total number of heroes and heroines found at the heroes' acre was 51 and of those one was a woman-Sally Mugabe. As evident the Minister of Information and Publicity stated that,

"These illustrious sons and daughters of Zimbabwe either wedged the armed struggle made for outstanding contributions to freedom." (Government of Zimbabwe). Currently there are 79 heroes and heroines laying at the acre and four of these are women. Even at the Midlands provincial heroes acre women are still under represented. At the midlands provincial acre eleven are women. Of interest is the fact that the wife of the Midlands former Governor also lays there. Mrs. Sheila Hove wife of Richard Hove, once a cabinet minister under ZANU and a staunch party supporter."

If one considers what the national heroes act stipulates, the president considers one who would have outstandingly distinguished themselves by participating and interlacing revolution activities that contributed to the final independence of Zimbabwe. As such one wonders why Sheba Tavarwisa was not conferred a national heroine when she died in the early 80's. Sheba was a guerrilla fighter and the only woman ZANU PF to have made it in the high command. According to Mugabe in Nhongo-Simbanegavi (2000:57),

"...In the high in command there is only one woman Sheba Tavarwisa who is Deputy Secretary of Education and Culture in the central committee."

As such, Sheba participated and took revolutionary activities which contributed to the independence of this country but she was not recognized as a national heroine. The issue is that she was not politically connected with any high rank man in the party structure. Her war time boyfriend and later husband Edgar Moyo who was a ZIPRA commander had died during the war. According to Chung (2007:37),

"Moyo was a ZIPRA commander who had joined ZIPA, the Zimbabwe People's Army, consisting of ZANLA and ZIPRA guerillas formed directly under the patronage of president Samora Michel and Julius Nyerere in 1975 - 1976. He died apparently in cross fire between the Rhodesian forces a ZANLA soldiers."

It is possible that if Moyo had been alive he would have made it within the ruling party structure and Sheba would have been a heroine.

If one looks at the criteria which the president used to confer the four heroines at the national acre one sees that it had nothing to do with the actual fighting at the front. The women at the acre were given heroine status

because "they supported husbands during the war; they raised their children single handedly while their husbands went to lead of fighting in the liberation struggle. "If that is the case, then the majority of Zimbabwean women are heroines particularly those who were at the front, who lost their lives or limbs, who cooked and provided information for the soldiers.' Many women raised their children single handedly while their husbands went to fight in the war but today they are not heard of or recognized as national heroines,. According to Mrs. Thelma Khumalo in Staunton (1990:45) an excombatant,

"All over Zimbabwe women are heroes."

Mrs. Khumalo declaration is true indeed because many Zimbabwe's women are heroes. Only the government never bothered to look around. According to Mrs. Mary Gumede in Staunton (1990:45),

"Yes, women did a lot but no one recognized what they did... but the war could not have been won without the participation of women."

The state is well aware of the role and importance played by women but it dopes not want to acknowledge it because it feels in doing so would be giving power to women to demand a lion's share in government. During the war ZANU PF found it to be convenient to galvanize women into political action and draw upon their massive reservoir of strength to win the war. After the war the state found it convenient not to recognize the role played by women.

Alex Mudzingwa former ZANU PF MP for Chegutu noted with sadness of how women who fought the war had been neglected while others benefited from their sacrifices, "They are being treated like dogs because after a good hunt while in the bush hunters sit in their homes and eat their meat with their families, leaving the bones for the same dog that caught the same animal. This is what we doing to our liberators." (Chronicle 20 June, 1982). Sheba Tavarwisa is not the only heroine who was denied her rightful place at the acre. On the heroes' day in 1981, Joshua Nkomo stated that ZAPU's Central committee member Mrs. Lois Sihwa had a claim of being a national hero. At her funeral in Bulawayo in June 1982, Nkomo called on all Zimbabwean citizens to remember their fallen heroes such as Mrs. Sihwa, who through their non-tribalism and non-racialism had created a foundation for a stable Zimbabwe (Chronicle 17 March, 1988). In September, 1982 open conflict broke out over whether ZAPU's Mrs. Ruth Nyamurowa who had been a commander of Victory Camp in Zambia qualified to be buried at the Heroes' acre. In his speech Nkomo claimed she was a national heroine,

"Ruth is a hero of the people of Zimbabwe and she has to be treated as such. We in ZAPU claim her as such because her contribution goes far beyond these

considerations.” (The Herald, 16 August, 1983)

The government gave her a state financial funeral. At the funeral Nkomo stated that the government had been asked if she could be buried at the Acre but since the Prime Minister Mugabe was away a decision could not be made. Minister of Information Shamuyarira on the same note challenged Nkomo's optimism and publicly declared that the decision not to honor her as a national heroine had been taken before her funeral. If Ruth had been a commander who fought against Rhodesian forces, commander of Victory Camp, who risked her life with the aim of liberating Zimbabwe, who then can be viewed as a national heroine? This only goes to show the true nature of Zimbabwean politics. It also shows how the true heroes and heroines are sidelined and ignored. This should open the eyes of the Zimbabweans on how the state has robbed the nation of its true heroines, how history has failed to record the legendary daughters of Zimbabwe. In August, 1984, Ruth Chinamano asked the Minister of Information why ZAPU cadres such as Nikita Mangena, Mrs. Nyamurowa... had not been declared National Heroes. The Minister blamed ZAPU for not making the request. However, he was clear in stating that,

“Had the request been forwarded we would have considered it, but that does not mean we would have accepted it” (The Herald, 20 October 1984).

Kruger (1983:2) is of the opinion that the Minister's reply suggest that parties were responsible for nominating national heroes. An article in the Herald indicated that in some cases the government undoubtedly guided by ZANU PF's central committee had decided on whether to confer national hero status that is ZANU PF's central committee had made the decision. The author of the article pleaded for selection of national heroes to be divested of partisanship not only because Zimbabwe still had a multi-party system but also because the concept of a national hero meant that there were objective criteria in the selection of a hero.

The fact that ZANU as a party has the prerogative of selecting heroes perpetuated the conference of fake /man made heroines. Most of the heroes/ heroines that lie at the acre today are ZANU PF's party members only; surely there are some heroes/heroines who were outside ZANU's circles.

Others are heroines who have selflessly served their nation after the struggle but still these are not recognized. However, had other political parties and civil societies been consulted in the conference of national heroes the story could have been different. As it is today the conference of heroes can be rightfully be called the ZANUisation of the heroes' acre. Recently Prime Minister Tsvangirai commented in The New Zimbabwe that while they admit that the late Zvinvashe was a true hero, he how ever feels that in future all interested stakeholders that is, ZANU PF, other political parties and

civil society should all decide on the hero status of an individual to save the state's dividing finances. In August 1990, Anonymous, Parade, (1991:12-13), asked,

“What then does a national hero represent in Zimbabwe? He, (and we have no heroines yet) must make it in politics, must cultrate patronage from the powerful politicians and must aspire to be a chef.”

Anonymous asks if the nation wishes to encourage qualities that are enlisted, self serving, and elitist unquestioning and remote. (Anonymous, Parade, 1991:12-13)

Anonymous argued that Zimbabwe's true heroes/ heroines are desperate, bear-footed excombatants roaming the streets or unemployed in their rural homes despite their contribution to the liberation struggle. (Anonymous, Parade, 1991:12-13).

In April 1991, Mrs. Dongo, a ZANLA excombatant, member of parliament for Harare East and a member of the united ZANU PF central; committee, sparked an emotional debate in the house of assembly when she asked what criteria here used to determine national heroes. Dongo gave examples of people who were supposed to have been declared national heroes but were not included. She also noted that no ex-ZIPRA commanders and ex-combatants declared heroes were at the district level. Dongo questioned as others had earlier whether only high ranking politicians and government officials were heroes. There were no answers to Dongo's questions. The Minister of Justice Legal and Parliamentary Affairs. Emmerson Mnangagwa and the Minister of State for the public service Edison Zvobgo appealed to Dongo to withdraw her motion. Minister Zvobgo said,

“Mr. Speaker, there are some matters too sacred for any nation to discuss in a forum of this kind” (In, Bhebhe and Ranger 1995).

The evasive reply suggests the importance of the national heroes' project for government legitimacy. Furthermore, what this points to is that there is a bias as to who is or who is not a hero/heroine. There are many heroines who contributed to the liberation of the country. In defense of this anomaly, the Midlands curator stated that,

“These women (heroines) are so many and you cannot expect to find all of them at the national shrine” (Interview with Bvira. R, 200).

She explained that all of these women are represented with the tomb of the Unknown Soldier which is at the national heroes' acre. Towering majestically, the tomb of the Unknown Soldier symbolizes the final resting for tens of thousands of Zimbabwe's sons and daughters who sacrificed their lives for the sake of our freedom and independence, but whose remains are scattered in valleys and graves spreading across the nation in neighboring

states.

Whilst one can succumb to such rhetoric, one wonders if the tomb of the Unknown Soldier also represents even the daughters of Zimbabwe who survived the war. Furthermore, one wonders if the president and ministers wives are the only heroines the president can find in the country who were dedicated to serving the nation.

Former MP Mr. Ndlovu stated in 1989 that the issue of falsifying Zimbabwe's history would have been convicted if the state would recognize the living heroines but then the state wait till people die it to see their heroic deeds. He states that,

"Talking about the heroes who are they? Are we referring to the dead heroes? If we are referring to our dead heroes don't we have living heroes? I believe if we had declared those dead as heroes surely there should be some living heroes declared. On heroes day the living heroes should be seen taking the fore front, parading in front of the graves of the dead heroes" (in Bhebhe and Ranger 1995: 159).

Mr. Ndlovu explained how he was wondering why the state has failed to bring forward its living heroes. He stated that the government only wants to present them to the nation when they are dead. To him the very fact that they are not being noticed or shown that it is a cover up by the government as most of the heroes are walking the streets of Harare barefooted, dressed in torn trousers without jobs. They are walking the streets of Mutare, Gweru, Bulawayo, Kwekwe or any other cities of this country without actually mentioning those who backed away from the city centers without anybody realizing what their plight is about. He explained that,

"I think; this is deliberate omission of our living heroes because we do not want to hear the truth. We do not want them to be known but they are the real people who brought about this independence which we are now enjoying...in fact their hopes are dead already because nothing has come forward" (In Bhebhe and Ranger 1995: p.159).

A former governor stated that,

"The true heroines are there lying forgotten by the party and state, those women and girls who died miserably at the front or at the hands of the Rhodesian forces. Those women who were devoured by the hyenas and jackals, female fighters who were discarded by the p[art after the war are the true heroines. what we have at the acre are man made heroines and Zimbabweans have become faithful onlookers of the falsification of its own history" (Interview with former Governor, 2009).

The implications of these comments are that the use of a wrong and false ideology in politics by the state has had

the adverse effects of distorting the Zimbabwean history. It has led to the party's most elite women being conferred as heroines. One cannot help but speculate about the four heroines' husbands'; influence regarding their being conferred as heroines. A case in point is of Mama Mafuyana. She was known as Nkomo's wife and never stole the spotlight from her husband. However, upon the death of her husband, Mama became the darling of the media and the nation's mother who heroically fought against colonialism. According to the news, Mama's heroic efforts contributed to the independence of the country. One wonders why it had to take 18 years after independence and upon Nkomo's death for the nation to realize her heroic actions.

Overnight she became the leader of the women's league in Matabeleland. Her presence at the nation galas graced the occasions. The reality is that ZANU PF made her a heroine, the reason being that someone had to fill the gap left by Nkomo. Nkomo had cemented the Unity accord of 1987 then ZAPU and ZANU PF had formed the Unity government, easing the tension between the parties. With Nkomo's death, it was feared that violence will erupt between the two parties which were tribalist in outlook, so a national figure had to take Nkomo's place and that person was none other than Johanna.

In other words Mafuyana was used for the party's expedience. According to the president, The Herald,

"Mama Mafuyana played a significant role as she encouraged ZANU and ZAPU to bury their difference, even after independence. When we had our differences as ZANU and ZAPU she reconciled positive and a firm prospect of nation unity" (The herald, 5 June, 2000).

Conclusion

Today Zimbabwe has got man made heroines. This is the unfortunate part of our history, which perhaps will remain unwritten purposefully because the state shuns mentioning out who was a hero whilst alive. When we make our man- made heroes, histories records them as heroines. The research had the responsibility of shading light on issues involved.

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