

### **3. Re-inscribing the national landscape**

With majority rule, the question arose of what about Rhodesia's colonial era was to be remembered. This issue brings with it a struggle over historicity that has in part been waged over the decolonisation of Zimbabwe's national landscape. Radcliffe and Westwood (1996:28) make the point that there is a diversity of sites where correlative imaginaries between a people and a place can be produced. In this regard, states actively 'distribute space' (Driver 1992:150), setting material and representational boundaries that are formative of identities. These 'imaginative geographies' (Said 1993:6, 271) are contained, for instance, in 'the concrete and precise character' (Driver 1992) of territorial maps and texts, and are experienced subjectively by populations in their daily lives. In Zimbabwe, the re-inscription and repossession of an African identity began with the historical and geographical recovery of the territory. Several aspects of this process are addressed here and the argument is put that decolonisation of the national landscape was envisioned as an upheaval and a challenging step towards the reconstitution of white identity. First, the disassembling of Rhodesian icons, monuments and cartography in order that the landscape could be reclaimed and remade to reflect the majority is described. The white community's response, or rejoinder, to the State's erasure of the Rhodesian memory is then considered, together with the question of why remembrance of Rhodesia and the Rhodesians is an issue of future concern to them.

#### **Dismantling Rhodesian national identity during the internal settlement**

The years of contest started in earnest after the signing of the Rhodesia Constitutional Agreement in March 1978 and the accession of Bishop Abel Muzorewa to Prime Minister from April 1979. Thus, as an integral part of memory work, the restructuring of settler identity began during the transition—known as the 'internal settlement'—from white rule and before formal independence. While coming to a political settlement with moderate black leaders, white politicians were mindful of important implications inherent in the decolonisation process. They sought to salvage symbols and landmarks that provided recognition of what they saw as their community's considerable investment in the country. White leaders therefore pressed for some credit to be given to the Rhodesian memory in the externalities of Zimbabwean identity

formation and in its revised symbols of personhood that encoded national belonging. The following sections illustrate their concerns with particular reference to decolonisation of the country's name and flag.

The interim government introduced the joint names of Zimbabwe Rhodesia early in 1979. While white liberals expected and were prepared to accept the single name Zimbabwe, more conservative Rhodesian Front MPs argued for the retention of the name Rhodesia. Senator Ritchie's comments indicate the reasons for this. He said Rhodesia, considered to be

a jewel in Africa [had] developed magnificently since 1924...Let us not in any way suggest that the sacrifices by all our people to carve out this terrific country from virgin bush should be forgotten by removing the name Rhodesia. Our creditworthiness, our products, our minerals, the courage of our young people, our honesty and integrity have won recognition throughout the world for these attributes...in the name of Rhodesia.<sup>1</sup>

In this way, conservative white MPs put the case for having the memory of Rhodesia maintained in the name of the country.

Black MPs, however, stood to condemn the double-barrelled name. A genuine transfer of power would see the name Rhodesia 'come off'. They voiced disappointment and disapproval of the Europeans' desire to hold on to Rhodesia at the end of the colonial era and saw white yearnings as 'petty' and contrary to the spirit of majority rule. According to Mr Bwanya:

I, as a black man, would like myself to be identified as a Zimbabwean and there is no doubt that the whites would prefer to be identified as Rhodesians. For two people from one country to be identified under two different names I think is very ridiculous.<sup>2</sup>

Instead, black MPs argued for 'a vernacular name', 'a native name' with which the black population could identify. At independence, just over a year later, the country's name was shortened simply to Zimbabwe, meaning 'house of stone', effectively linking the new country to the Great Zimbabwe of an ancient past. These buildings, located some 300 kilometres south of Harare, were once the capital of the Munhumutapa Kingdom that flourished between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries. As the largest complex south of the Sahara and the work of an African people, the structures have long been a source of black pride (Shamuyarira et al. 1995:16) and references to them have been inserted into the names of black-nationalist political parties since the 1960s (Sinamayi 1998:95).

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1 *The Senate*, 29 August 1979, cols 280–1.

2 *House of Assembly*, 13 February 1979, cols 2581–8.

The desire of conservative white MPs to hold on to symbols of Rhodesian identity was also evident in the debate surrounding the remaking of the country's flag. As an icon of personhood, flags carry the State's ideology and reflect its aspirations, manner and future direction (Handleman and Shamgar-Handleman 1993:441), so suggesting to the international community and citizens alike how to conceive or think about the nation. There have been a number of Rhodesian flags since 1889 but for present purposes only the three most recent are of consequence. The symbolism of each will be examined briefly, for these shifting articulations of social relations communicate the identity of those holding power, as well as the position of those without (Berry n.d.).

After the breakdown of the Central African Federation in 1963, each of the three territories adopted flags of their choice. In 1964, Rhodesia reverted to flying the Union Jack and its own light-blue ensign with the Rhodesian shield in the corner—similar in all but minor aspects to Southern Rhodesia's pre-federation flag. In 1968, however, on the third anniversary of their unilateral declaration of independence (UDI), the Rhodesians lowered the Union Jack and the Rhodesian flag, replacing them with what became known as the Rhodesian Front flag, which consisted of three alternating green and white panels. Green, the predominant colour, signified the importance of the agricultural base of the country. Superimposed on a central, unremarked-on white panel was the Rhodesian coat of arms,<sup>3</sup> granted to the colony by the Royal Warrant of George V in 1924 (Berry n.d.:10). This flag was hoisted in front of the statue of Cecil Rhodes in the centre of Salisbury (now Harare).

In August 1979, the Muzorewa Government adopted another flag, its design mirroring political changes occurring in the country. A vertical black stripe symbolised the importance of majority rule. Placed prominently on a chevron at the top of this stripe was the Zimbabwe bird, deemed particularly significant by black MPs because the artefact represented an older, pre-colonial source of power and identity.<sup>4</sup> The bird, unique to the area, embodied the essence of Great Zimbabwe after the structure was abandoned. Black MPs therefore perceived the creature as the quintessential symbol of nationhood, a respected icon with the capacity to unite the various African groups making up the nation. The flag also had three horizontal stripes. Red represented the blood spilled in the struggle for majority rule, white the integral part of the European community and other minorities in all aspects of the country's life, while the green stripe reflected the importance of agriculture to the country's wellbeing.<sup>5</sup>

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3 The Rhodesian coat of arms depicted a gold pick on a green field with a crest made up of the Zimbabwe bird and two sable antelopes, the latter reflecting the country's natural heritage. Lions and thistles copied from the coat of arms of Cecil Rhodes were also incorporated. The coat of arms bore the inscription (in Latin) 'May [Rhodesia] be worthy of the name' (Berry n.d.).

4 *House of Assembly*, 15 August 1979, col. 1148.

5 *Ibid.*, col. 1144.

This Zimbabwe Rhodesia flag, although radically different to its predecessor, had the support of Rhodesian Front MPs because it reaffirmed the importance of the white community.<sup>6</sup> The flag credited their contribution to the country's progress and development and expressed the hope that this legacy would continue in the future. Moreover, while this flag indicated some movement towards white acceptance of the idea of black majority rule, it did not deny the country's origins and thereby jeopardise its future. Speaking to this theme, a white MP said:

Anyone or any people who deny their origins...deny their own existence. Rhodesia is part of our origins and is the history of our country and our people. If the Zimbabwe bird is considered an important part of our flag, then it is historical and so is the name Rhodesia.<sup>7</sup>

Something more, however, was at stake in this debate. Memories of a prior era embedded in, for instance, national symbols, invoke past identities as they legitimate identities of the future (Lambek 1996:239). To remember is, in effect, 'to place a part of the past in the service of conceptions and needs of the present' (Schwartz 1982:374). In light of this, white MPs perceived the flag to be a 'masterly compromise' that they felt should be acceptable to most people.<sup>8</sup> But to blacks MPs this, for all its alternation, was the flag of Zimbabwe Rhodesia and as such it did not represent much different to the Rhodesian flag. Little popular support was expected for 'the flag with two names'; it was as if nothing had changed. Senator Chief Charumbira put the idea this way: 'I am Zefeniah Charumbira meaning that I am the son of Charumbira. Now it [the country] is called Zimbabwe Rhodesia, this is the son of Rhodesia.'<sup>9</sup> Was Zimbabwe to be forever linked to Rhodesia as its progeny? The co-presence made the reconstituted nation unbelievable and its flag unacceptable. It was not a flag, the chief said, that 'can take us along the path' to majority rule for it did not signify that a distinct break had been made with the colonial past, and it was therefore incapable of projecting the image of an independent African state.

At independence in 1980, several further modifications were made. The horizontal white stripe representing Zimbabwe's minority groups was removed, while a yellow stripe representing the mineral wealth of the country and a white triangle symbolising the nation's desire for peace, development and progress, were added. The triangle also contained a five-pointed red star, indicative of the State's socialist aspirations and place in the international community of nations.

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6 *House of Assembly*, 15 August 1979, col. 1144; *The Senate*, 29 August 1979, col. 274.

7 *The Senate*, 29 August 1979, cols 280–1.

8 *Ibid.*, col. 278.

9 *Ibid.*, col. 291.

With the introduction of this flag, change had triumphed over any sense of continuity with the recent past. The whites' hope that their memory would receive recognition and be projected into the future through incorporation in the new national flag was not to be realised. They had been downgraded in the imagined community, no longer recognised as 'one of the two dominant peoples'<sup>10</sup> making up the nation. Instead 'one-ness' was to become the new catchall, with Mugabe saying 'we have one national army, one police force, one public service and I should say one national flag that symbolises our oneness, our nationhood' (Shamuyarira et al. 1995:40).

In short, at independence, white MPs were cognisant that remembrance was a moral and an identity-building act (Lambek 1996:249). European identity would be constituted out of what was remembered, and forgotten, about them as a people and their place, Rhodesia. Revised symbols and national names reflected the different ways of their 'being in history' in the future (Bloch 1996:229). Ultimately, however, various white efforts to memorialise the Rhodesian era during the term of the interim government—to be acknowledged in the icons with which the country presented itself to the world—were short lived. The Muzorewa administration was out of office by March 1980 and, with majority rule, the power to 'place make' passed to Mugabe's nationalist government. The process of white de-territorialisation picked up speed during the first decade of independence as the Rhodesian memory was removed from the country's national holidays, maps and monuments through erasing, overwriting and restitution. The State set about constructing another version of nationhood with its own local supporting icons of emplacement, and mapping in this way an African identity onto the landscape.

## Remaking national holidays

The post-independence government recognised that public holidays required renaming if the population as a whole was to be afforded the opportunity to mark its most important sacred and historic events and to honour people held in high regard. The Minister for Home Affairs argued that it was 'necessary to move away from the old historical holidays and create new ones for the new nation' in order that the masses could leave the past behind and identify themselves with the new era.<sup>11</sup> In line with this, the State created Independence Day and Africa Day, the latter to celebrate the inauguration of the Organisation of African Unity in 1963, effectively locating the new country within the main body of Africa and no longer as an appendage of 'the white South' (South Africa). May Day was

<sup>10</sup> *House of Assembly*, 29 August 1979, col. 276.

<sup>11</sup> *House of Assembly*, 25 June 1980, col. 1021.

introduced to remind the government that it was the workers who had brought them to power, while Ancestors Day, introduced by the interim government, was replaced with Heroes—now the Heroes and Defence Forces weekend—in August.<sup>12</sup> Heroes Day is the time to remember and ‘reflect on the sweat and blood that were spent by our compatriots so that our nation could be born’.<sup>13</sup> The public is exhorted to view this holiday—set aside for commemorating Zimbabwe’s revolutionary birth—as a particularly solemn occasion and give it the respect it deserves. They should thus desist from having *braais* (barbecues), getting married and other leisure activities on that day. I will return in the next chapter to the Heroes holiday as a display designed to affirm and naturalise the power and authority of the ruling elite, as it sustains white provisionality.

The white community was asked to accept these changes and adopt the new national days in good faith. A black MP from the backbench said:

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12 The interim government dropped the Rhodes, Founders, Pioneers and Republic holidays from the national calendar, replacing them with President’s and Unity Days and the more contentious Ancestors Day. The last name was selected as a compromise to Heroes Day, also nominated at the time, because of disagreement regarding who could be considered a hero. Some hoped that the more neutral title would ‘cut across the colour line’, enabling people to remember forebears in their customary or traditional manner (*House of Assembly*, 4 October 1979, col. 154).

13 ‘Heroes an example to us’, *The Herald*, 10 August 1982, p. 3. The national anthem makes the same points—namely that Zimbabwe was ‘born of the fire of revolution and the precious blood of our heroes’. It contains a plea for leaders to be exemplary and for labour to receive its just rewards. At independence, Mary Bloom’s 1975 national anthem, which depicted Rhodesia as a God-fearing country praying for Christian strength ‘to face all danger’ and blessed with a magnificent landscape, was replaced (*Rhodesian Commentary*, November 1975; see also Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet 1975). This had been sung to the tune of Beethoven’s *Ode to Joy*, which was also the European Community’s choice of anthem and, as such, was played annually at Harare’s Europe Day celebrations, to the chagrin of senior government officials, who were unaware of its origins. The music’s association with Rhodesia also caused a storm of protest when the piece was included in a Christmas organ recital organised to raise funds at a Harare church in 1994. After independence, the popular *Ishe Komborera Afrika* (*God Bless Africa*) served as Zimbabwe’s national anthem. *Ishe Komborera Afrika* was composed in 1897 by South African Enoch Mankayi Sonotoga and was later developed by another South African, Mqayi. It was adopted by the African National Congress (ANC) in 1925 and subsequently became the anthem of Tanzania, Zambia, the South-West Africa People’s Organisation (SWAPO) of Namibia and the regional Organisation of African Unity (OAU). Words for a specifically Zimbabwean anthem were chosen in 1990 from a national competition, won by Dr Mutswairo, lecturer in African languages and literature. It took another four years to find suitable music. According to Anderson (1990:132), singing the nation’s anthem should be an experience in ‘simultaneity...an echoed physical realisation of the imagined community’. Certainly, a local newspaper hoped Zimbabwe’s new anthem would engender these sentiments. The editorial explained that ‘a national anthem is not a dance song. It is more like a national flag in song and music, something to be proud of, to love, to rally around. So we had better learn it, and sing it with gusto’ (*The Herald*, 16 April 1994, p. 2). The public was given the choice of two tunes, but neither satisfied. Many Zimbabweans found them ‘tunes of the ear’ but ‘not of the heart’ as *Ishe Komborera Afrika* had been. Others felt the composers ‘must be of western-type music, which has no place in independent Africa’ (*The Herald*, 7 February 1992, p. 6). So, while the judges settled on one composition, the new anthem had little popular appeal and was largely unknown in the country during the late 1990s.

What the Minister has done is to give the holidays that are necessary and they mark the importance of African aspirations. All we ask of you is that you become Zimbabweans and do not remain Rhodesians. Once we are all Zimbabweans, we will have no conflict of interest.<sup>14</sup>

Taking on board the new order was thus envisioned as an upheaval and reconstitution of white identity. The MP's words suggest that the whites' association with the country could be strengthened if they were prepared to deconstruct their Rhodesian sense of self, embrace the new national holidays and so demonstrate their re-engagement as Zimbabweans. Change thus represented a step towards white liberation, releasing settlers from their colonial history and mentality, and part of making good their personal transformation called for in the State's discourse of national reconciliation. The government kept the holidays of the Christian calendar, offering these as its gesture towards reconciliation,<sup>15</sup> for the decolonisation of the nation's iconic geography ran concurrently with the introduction and development of this policy.

A few years later, the President's birthday was also made a national day with the inauguration of the February 21st Movement in 1986. The movement, built around Mugabe as its role model, invites children between the ages four and fourteen—'the born frees'—regardless of race, creed or parental political affiliation, to a birthday party with the expressed aim of imparting political knowledge to them. Said an official: '[T]his is a national event and we expect all children from various cultural groups to take part.'<sup>16</sup> Black/black divisions had also not been forgotten. In 1997, a decade after the Unity Accord mentioned in the previous chapter was signed, the ruling party proclaimed National Unity Day in recognition of the peace ushered in by the agreement. In this instance, however, the idea of one nation did not hold, for the people of Matabeleland spurned the holiday. Refusing to mark the day with festivities, they effectively threw doubt on the Accord's record in lessening what on this occasion was labelled 'ethnic tension'.

## Revising place names

Settler cartography, as elsewhere in the British Empire, was integral to the colonial project (Huggan 1989). Rhodesian maps signified the extent of the colonists' spatial power while colonial inscriptions privileged settler identity (Ashcroft 1997:13). Their place names effaced pre-existing African social and geo-cultural formations, detailed the expansionist aims of the settlers, legitimated these

14 *House of Assembly*, 26 June 1980, col. 1080.

15 *House of Assembly*, 25 May 1980, col. 1021.

16 'Children urged to attend celebrations', *The Financial Gazette*, 20 February 1997, p. 36.

against the conquest of an underpopulated land and, in the process, 'called up' the Africans as the subordinate other. Thus a critical task also awaiting black-nationalist attention was to pick apart the settlers' historiography. Returning African place names was part and parcel of taking back control over the location in order to bring the new place Zimbabwe into being. In this the government had the support of the black majority. The following quotations reflect the importance accorded reclaiming local names so that an earlier African history and identity could be recovered. The first comes from an African pastor, the second from a public discussion about African traditions.

In African tradition no name is innocent; all names make statements. The ancestors, the Christian God and the Devil are all interested in names. Hence names are important, they prophesise, give authority and have power. Name change is empowering; notice in the Bible we read of Jesus changing people's names. Names of nations, towns and provinces influence the nature of the place. Names snare the person who repeatedly uses the name; people can be caught up by the words in their mouth, hence it is important that colonial names are altered in order that past servitude is not perpetuated.<sup>17</sup>

The idea that names carried by people and places are a store of history is also evident in the next contribution.

History provides identity. Any people to be a people have to know their historical background. We are products of our people of yesterday, it is they who have given us our personhood, our language, family, culture and religion, that is our history as a people. If you use white language, names or gods you have a white man's history. History links up everything, if you want to change you must know your people's history. History is a rallying point.<sup>18</sup>

Names thus link identity to places and, in so doing, introduce the meaning of history into contemporary life. Consequently for black Zimbabweans, name change was empowering to the extent that it fractured colonial hegemony, de-linking a place from its colonial antecedents and returning control over its meaning to earlier inhabitants. Perforce, the 1982 Cabinet Committee on Place Names set about ridding the country of offensive, controversial and misspelt place names, many of these being reminders of the colonial past.<sup>19</sup> A lively debate covering the choice, derivation, appropriateness and spelling of names ensued between blacks in letters to the press. Countrywide, thousands of towns, villages, streets, public buildings, schools, hospitals, nursing homes, rivers, hills,

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17 ZBC Radio 1, 11 December 1997.

18 ZBC TV, 31 January 1999.

19 *House of Assembly*, 21 August 1981, col. 1218.

forests, communal lands and dams changed names during the 1980s. Where possible, names in use before settler occupation were restored. This proved an energetic top-down programme that employed Emergency Powers Regulations to limit debate in the House and alter ‘every colonialist or neo-colonialist or settlerist name...We want to wipe the slate clean and present our image of independent Zimbabwe without these vestiges of colonialism,’ explained the President.<sup>20</sup> After a decade of work, the pace of re-inscription slowed. The Place Names Committee transferred the initiative to the people when a directive—to the effect that residents who found local names offensive should notify the Ministry via their local council—was issued in 1993.<sup>21</sup> By this means the decolonising project was transformed into a ‘bottom-up’ process—something that was not widely known or advertised.<sup>22</sup>

Yet, despite these intentions, there was a proprietary palimpsest to the Harare landscape during the 1990s where African names still stood side by side with settler inscriptions. For example, the copper dial giving directions and distances to various Rhodesian landmarks, thereby inscribing colonial adventure tales and significant events that secured settler territorial possession, continued to grace *Kopje*,<sup>23</sup> Harare’s highest point and a popular tourist destination. Municipal notices described this as a ‘religious place’, the public was requested to ‘behave decorously and quietly’ and to not vandalise the site. Instances of colonial cartography were also evident in the central business district, where the names Selous, Baines, Fife and Allan Wilson Streets remained uncontested. Overwriting had also not erased other settler identities. For example, midway along its length, Josiah Chinamano Avenue lapsed back into Montague Avenue, then recovered the national hero’s name just before the road finished. Other signboards memorialising national heroes Leopold Takawira and George Silundika were contra-indicated on the pavement where Europeans Moffat and Gordon were remembered.<sup>24</sup> Moreover, in Harare’s suburbs, much did not change. In the older

20 *Parliamentary Debates*, 22 February 1984, col. 701.

21 *Parliamentary Debates*, 13 October 1993, col. 2909.

22 Late in 1998, however, the ruling party proposed to remove provincial names untouched since the colonial era. Preliminary measures created a storm of protest, particularly in Matabeleland, because ZANU PF was seen to have introduced the plan without consultation. The Governor of Matabeleland North, Welshman Mabheha, rejected the notion out of hand. A change of name did not mean a change of heart, he said (*The Herald*, 17 November 1997, p. 11, and 28 November 1997, p. 8). Ordinary people also proclaimed attachment to their provincial names, accusing the ruling party of a programme to destroy Matabele identity, when ‘it should be reconstructing our history and identity after the colonial era’ (*The Herald*, 20 November 1997, p. 10). Provincial re-inscription appeared to them as a naive solution to the problem of national integration. ‘Tribalism and regionalism, blamed on the wrong causes, were being prescribed the wrong medicine’ (*The Financial Gazette*, 20 November 1997, p. 9). At the time of writing, the government had made no concrete progress on the matter.

23 *Afrikaans*, meaning small hill.

24 At Rhodes’ request, Selous, a renowned hunter, guided the Pioneer Column around Matabeleland and onto the high veld of Manica and Mashonaland (Ford 1991; Gann 1965:93). Baines was a South African who, finding himself unable to develop his land concession, sold it to Rhodes in 1871. Fife was a director of the British South Africa Company; Wilson was a pioneer who took part in the Matabele wars and was killed at the

residential areas, it was not unusual to see inscriptions bearing the names of more senior members of Britain's royal family—the Rhodesians remaining loyal to the monarchy even after declaring UDI—in addition to references to several British generals. Here names also recalled British landscapes and prominent families as well as the first settler farms established in the locality. While bureaucratic oversight could account for the retention of some of these colonial names, the State, mindful of the tourist dollar, had directed that Victoria Falls retain its colonial name. Geographical evidence therefore pointed to a layered, though largely male, history and the interpenetration of imperial, colonial and African locations. The white community would have liked this tangled heritage, reflecting the plurality of the country's origins, to have been given greater recognition in Zimbabwe's new historical truths.

## Removing monuments

Public monuments also play a significant role in imposing a permanent memory on the landscape.<sup>25</sup> Rhodesian monuments had established the territory as a white homeland just as effectively as their geographical maps. They made credible particular collective identities and denied or eroded others (Savage 1994:143). For this reason, monuments the world over are an issue of public concern, built and removed by those with the power and public consent to erect and dismantle them. Zimbabwe's new government set about tackling black alienation by disassembling monuments and statues that depicted the colonial era, replacing these with others 'consistent with the new political and social order'.<sup>26</sup> Tasked with chairing the Monuments Committee, Minister Shamuyarira said 'the occasion...is not one of recrimination, but one of reconciliation—reconciling us to the reality of our independence, the death of colonialism and the natural aspirations of the people'.<sup>27</sup> Consequently, the colonial plaque commemorating 'the final halting place of the Pioneer Column' outside Salisbury's Railway Station was taken down, as were other offensive statues such as *Physical Energy*. The British South Africa Company had presented this grand, bronze sculpture of a prancing horse with rider to Northern Rhodesia in 1960 in Rhodes' memory. Rhodesia had requested and 'inherited' the statue, dismantled just six years

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defence of Shangani River (Gann 1965:315; Grant 1994). Chinamano, Silundika and Takawira are the names of black political activists, now national heroes. While Takawira died in prison before independence, Chinamano and Silundika distinguished themselves as government ministers after independence. Montagu was a member of the Rhodesian Legislative Council and Minister of Mines (Gann 1965:264). Father and son Robert and John Moffat were missionary advisors to Matabele Kings Mzilikazi and Lobengula, particularly in regard to their dealings with Europeans.

25 See Schwartz 1982; Connerton 1989; Bodnar 1994; Savage 1994.

26 'Rhodes statue moved', *The Herald*, 1 August 1980, p. 1.

27 *Ibid.*, p. 2.

later, from independent Zambia (McCarthy 1994).<sup>28</sup> Another statue to go was that of Cecil Rhodes, which had graced Jameson Avenue in central Salisbury.<sup>29</sup> These were not wantonly destroyed. Zimbabwean monuments are protected under the *Museums and Monuments Act* and artefacts no longer enjoying collective recognition and legitimacy are collected and stored by the National Archives for the education of future generations. Accordingly, Cecil Rhodes was to be found at the back of the archives building in Harare, while Alfred Beit<sup>30</sup> sat at a side entrance. New monuments replaced the outmoded—for example, statues of the Shona spirit mediums Sekuru Kaguvi and Mbuya Nehanda, who inspired the first *Chimurenga*, stand at one entrance to the Parliament building.

By and large, the exercise was to prove an orderly dismantling of the colonial relics. The Rhodesian Front, however, saw it differently. Representatives accused the government of deliberately antagonising the white community and argued that men such as Rhodes and Beit had ‘done a tremendous amount of good for the country’. A spokesman continued:

[W]hile fully supporting the principle of reconciliation in the development of the country, this [RF] congress does not accept that it implies that the white Zimbabweans must meekly accept the denigration of his achievements and past. On the contrary, reconciliation implies acceptance of the white man and his past.<sup>31</sup>

Other statues of explorers and missionaries such as David Livingstone<sup>32</sup> not considered politically provocative were spared during the 1980s. In the mid

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28 McCarthy (1994) relates the monument’s chequered history. Controversy surrounded its choice from the start. The BSAC selected a monument depicting the dynamism and energy of an Englishman, in order to inspire all the peoples making up the Central African Federation and to whom, the company believed, they all owed a debt, at a time when imperial memorabilia was being vandalised and removed in other parts of the empire. The Company rejected criticism that this statue was politically insensitive, as well as the suggestion of Federal Prime Minister, Lord Malvern, that a more appropriate choice could be the representation of David Livingstone’s body being carried to the African coast on its way back to Britain. *Physical Energy* achieved further notoriety when Southern Rhodesia’s Prime Minister, Godfrey Huggins, likened the Federation’s policy of partnership to the horse and rider—a remark taken as a racial insult in Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland.

29 Jameson Avenue became Samora Machel Avenue and Salisbury was renamed Harare.

30 Alfred Beit (1853–1906) was born in Germany, the son of a Jewish businessman. Later in life, he became a close financial ally of Rhodes and was known for his philanthropic work. The Beit Memorial Committee presented to the town of Salisbury a statue of Beit in 1911. The figure moved locations within Salisbury at least five times between 1920 and 1965. After Beit’s death, his wealth was consolidated in the Beit Trust to assist in development and has since contributed to infrastructure and educational projects (Gann 1965:155–6). Blake (1978:412–13) records the extent of his generosity.

31 ‘RF slams removal of old monuments’, *The Herald*, 29 September 1980, p. 2.

32 Missionary and explorer David Livingstone first saw Victoria Falls in 1855, and it was here that a memorial to him was unveiled in 1934 (Gray 1990; Pearce 1992). The bronze statue, likened more to a naturalist than an imperial conqueror, carries the inscription ‘the Liberator’ in reference to Livingstone’s antislavery work. Late in 1996, this epitaph was deemed to be offensive in some quarters and pressure was brought to bear on the Minister of Home Affairs to have the words removed.

1990s, however, a movement for 'The Restoration of Revered African Sites'<sup>33</sup> began to lobby for their removal, and the removal of Rhodes', Jameson's and other settlers' graves from the Matopos Hills, outside Bulawayo.<sup>34</sup> The graves, particularly that of Rhodes as 'the founding father', had by the 1930s become a national sanctuary and place of memory and pilgrimage for Rhodesians.<sup>35</sup> Receiving short shrift from the Department of National Museums and Monuments,<sup>36</sup> the activists issued in 1998 statements linking the presence of the colonists' graves to the unrest sweeping the country. 'The economic and social upheavals dodging [sic] Zimbabwe are the result of dissatisfaction by spirits of the land over the lack of initiative by the living and ruling to redress some of the sacrileges committed against the indigenous people of this land.'<sup>37</sup> An irate British reader of a Rhodesian web site expressed her 'horror' at this campaign and asked, '[W]hat a travesty...are we going to allow this to happen?' Whites were not the only ones to censure the plans. Black critics voiced their suspicions regarding the movement's political aspirations, while villagers in Matabeleland, whose homes were in close proximity to the graves and who derived income from tourists visiting the Matopos Hills, also denounced the activists' statements. The locals believed that the lobbyists, as a pressure group from another part of the country, had no right to speak on this issue,<sup>38</sup> thereby pointing to regional lines along which the Zimbabwean nation threatened to pull apart.

## White resistance: refusing historical re-visioning

As the 1980s progressed, Rhodesia began to look like a location that had been fixed more readily mentally than geographically (Massey 1992:11). The response of white politicians to the decolonisation of their landscape has been mentioned above. While not denying the new regime's authority to reconfigure the nation's iconic and physical geography, political spokesmen pushed for some recognition of the Rhodesian era to be incorporated in the collective memory. Their statements are part of the public record, but what can be said about the wider white community's decolonisation critique, their private transcript, spoken and acted on away from official scrutiny? Were they prepared to move from the known to an unfamiliar landscape?

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33 The Restoration of Revered African Sites is a project of Sangano Munhumutapa, supported by the Affirmative Action Group (see Chapter 6).

34 Ranger (1999:30–2) describes the graves in more detail.

35 See Tredgold (1968:98–101).

36 The Department described itself as an apolitical para-statal service and would not therefore institute change unless directed to do so by the appropriate minister.

37 'Remove Rhodes' remains from Matopos', *The Herald*, 19 February 1998, p. 7.

38 'Rhodes' remains must be removed', *The Herald*, 19 August 1998, p. 7; 'Let Cecil Rhodes rest in peace', *Zimbabwe Independent*, 21 August 1998, p. 4.

In the first decade of independence, most, finding themselves unable to publicly disavow the State's re-visioning project, adopted a somewhat sullen, silent stance. During the second decade, however, with changes to the political climate and dissent emanating from many sections of Zimbabwean society, whites felt more able to speak out. Yet only the most brazen sought to draw the State's attention to themselves or make headlines. The majority stopped short of outright defiance or masked disaffection in anonymity and cryptic humour, for although they did not support the landscape's decolonisation they believed it was foolhardy to confront the State head-on over the issue. To do so was 'to put us all at risk'.

Nonetheless, in various ways, they refused black claims and protested the rewriting of Rhodesian historiography. Their attitude was summed up in the retort 'you can't reinvent history'; it is 'a fact of life that there were 90 years of colonial rule'. Elderly respondents in particular echoed this sentiment. They claimed, for instance, to be 'offended' and 'insulted' by the removal of monuments that documented the Europeans' relationship with the place called Rhodesia. 'You don't tear down history, regardless of whether you like it or not; tearing down the past leaves a gap that can't be filled.' And despite being requested by authorities to rethink and avoid equating Independence Day with the colonial Rhodes and Founders holidays, some whites still referred to public holidays by their former names, thereby announcing themselves as 'men of yesterday'. Significant numbers also spoke of Harare's main thoroughfares and avenues—renamed in 1990 to honour black statesmen, presidents from neighbouring countries and heroes of the first and second *Chimurenga*—using their Rhodesian names. Preferring North Avenue to Josiah Tongogara, a woman remarked, 'What's so offensive about North Avenue? Just because it was so called by the whites is not a good enough reason to get rid of it.' The Rhodesians had established themselves by mapping their identity onto the landscape with these urban locators, drawing equivalencies that confirmed bonds between the Europeans and the territory. Yet, while whites believed they were being stripped of their heritage 'to serve ZANU PF's electoral needs', the meta-communication of the government's actions was not lost on them. They recognised that the geographical dismantling of the white homeland signified that 'the country now belongs to them [the black majority]...there's no Cecil John Rhodes any more; he's out of the history books and they're in'.

In view of this, noticing changes to urban landmarks after his return to Zimbabwe in 1993, a former Rhodesian military officer said:

When we returned it was all so foreign...change for change sake at great financial cost. It really annoyed me; a pointless exercise because changing names does not change history. Older people still use the old names, while youngsters and expats don't know the difference.

The officer's remarks suggest that, for older residents at least, the old names still embody the real character of the place (Massey 1995b:183). His choice of the word 'foreign' appears as a motif for uprooting and uncertainty. Its application represents a site of difference, a focus for the fears, anxiety and confusion that accompany experiences of transformation (Rutherford 1990:10), as well as white arguments that dismiss and discount revisions introduced as part of the landscape's Africanisation. Another informant, who had watched the coming of independence from the safety of the Cape (South Africa), felt she had 'lost my home the day the country changed its name'. In a more jocular fashion, a third described the dislocation 'of being lost in my own country; I'd hear a name and I'd not a clue where it was'. The ground appeared to be shifting beneath their very feet. Remarks such as these indicate the sense of disruption between the identity of a 'known' place and its colonial past, and the anomalous position in which whites now found themselves as the decentred other in the newly blackened landscape.

One of the knock-on effects of the State's renaming project was that businesses or companies with Rhodesia in their title were obliged to change them.<sup>39</sup> Most complied, but a handful took evasive action. Some inserted the prefix 'rho', or their initials, while others clung to the name 'Rhodesia', saying it was too costly to change—and certainly there was more to changing a company name than just updating the address. The new name had to be registered and advertised, company stationery, licences and vehicles altered and maps revised. The costs were 'a lot to consider for a small business' and 'an expense that needs time and planning'. Three years after independence, more than 40 companies were still registered with Rhodesia, or its abbreviation, in their names. In some cases, the business had ceased trading; but, otherwise, how was this behaviour to be read? Was it simply malaise, 'tardiness' or 'sheer idleness', or perhaps symptomatic of a deeper reluctance to commit to real change? Or was it 'an insult', an act of white defiance, for keeping a name associated with Rhodesia was not in the spirit of reconciliation? A government spokesman deemed it necessary to issue the following warning:

These companies are showing great disloyalty to the government and the people of Zimbabwe. They must change their colonial names without further delay. Cecil Rhodes died in 1902, and Rhodesia in 1980.<sup>40</sup>

Moreover, under the *Company's Act*, a name should not mislead the public. The Registrar of Companies refused to list any more companies if they had the word Rhodesia in them, saying, '[S]ince there is no such country as Rhodesia I obviously cannot register a company using that name. Such reluctance can only

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39 'Name of the game is change, reluctantly', *The Sunday Mail*, 13 December 1981, p. 5.

40 'Colonial names muddle in the phone book', *The Herald*, 4 July 1982, p. 1

be regarded with the deepest suspicion.<sup>41</sup> His words intimate that countries are, as Geertz (1995:21) points out, disjunctive, categorical and exhaustive. Implying that it was impossible to be in two places or countries at one and the same time, the Registrar suggested there was something unnatural or spurious about people who continued to claim to be in Rhodesia. The ‘when wes’ of South Africa provide a case in point. Uusihakala (2008) describes how they hold the colonial past close by using only the old names, commemorating Remembrance as well as Rhodes and Founders national holidays and surrounding themselves with Rhodesian memorabilia. They have, Uusihakala (2008:6) avers, ‘a profoundly felt anxiety’ that should they cease to remember and retell, they will no longer exist. They appear unwilling or unable to let go of the past and face the annihilation of Rhodesian identity (Memmi 1965:151), even should this lead to their metamorphosis.

In Zimbabwe, adopting the revised nomenclature was conceived as another form of de-authorisation and consciousness raising by which whites who had stayed on could divest themselves of dominance and privilege and at the same time demonstrate loyalty and national commitment. They, however, proved generally unsympathetic towards the black majority’s desire to claim and reshape the country in their own image through cartographic overwriting. The old Rhodesian names anchored white identity, naturalising the relationship between the settlers and the territory, and although many during fieldwork claimed to have ‘now adjusted’ to the new names, they were resigned rather than enthusiastic. Even spelling changes were deemed to be unwarranted, reflecting European privileging of written over oral history.

Contradictorily, however, many whites spoke of their attachment to ‘African history’ taught to them at school during the Rhodesian era. A young mother, reflecting upon the responsibility for her children’s future in the country, had this to say:

I’m battling with the new names. I still use the old names in the Avenues. I haven’t bothered to learn the new ones, though I don’t mind the changes. I try to explain the reasons for the changes to the girls. I bought a book, which gives the meaning of the names, and explains the events that happened at the spot. I loved African history at school...the Matabele Wars, Lobengula and his fat tummy, Mzilikazi and his *impis*<sup>42</sup> with spears...I like to tell the girls what Harare and Bulawayo were like when I was a girl. The kids say not another ‘when I’ story. Yesterday we were driving through Eastlea [a lower middle-class suburb of Harare]

41 ‘Companies using Rhodesia won’t be registered’, *The Herald*, 9 May 1983, p. 2; ‘No excuse’, *The Herald*, 10 May 1983, p. 3.

42 The term refers to the young, male warriors who made up the Matabele regimental system.

and I told the girls this area used to be inhabited by whites. The girls asked where did the blacks who live in Eastlea now live then. I didn't know.

White affection for the heroes of the Pioneer Column (1890), the Matabele Wars (1893) and the native uprising, now known as the first *Chimurenga* (1896–97), memorialises pioneer heroism as well as the struggles of the first settlers who arrived in what they perceived to be a 'dry, wild and fearful land'. Their lives continued to be celebrated in, for example, the activities and field excursions of the History Society of Zimbabwe, formerly known as the Rhodesiana Society. This telling of the past centres the young mother's forebears, yet overlooks the restrictive and segregationist legislation that kept blacks in the former Tribal Trust Territories or urban townships and out of suburban Eastlea. It is a version that generally gives an 'amicable gloss' to the colonial relationship (Parry 1995:93).

The Rhodesian flags described above were another symbol that some whites appeared loath to forgo. An informant spoke with some amusement of a Gwelo (now Gweru) headmaster, 'no starry-eyed liberal' but also no supporter of Ian Smith, who continued to fly Rhodesia's blue and white ensign until authorities stepped in. The green and white Rhodesian Front flag was waved defiantly by white supporters shouting 'Rhodesia' at the last rugby match to be played against South Africa in September 1980 (Caute 1983:437). It is also the emblem of various Rhodesian web sites, hoisted at 'when we' social gatherings held in South Africa (Uusihakala 2008:169) and the flag that former Rhodesian servicemen have marched under on Australia's Anzac Day. Other informants described holding ambivalent feelings towards the country's current national flag. They complained that the 'clashing' colours, copied from Ghana's flag, the first African country to achieve independence, and now identified as the colours of the 1960s Pan-African liberation movement, compromised the flag's dignity. And, given that a national flag 'shows the world what you believe in', Zimbabwe's revolutionary socialist red star is perceived to project 'a negative image' to the world's financial centres, thereby discouraging foreign investment. When viewed draped over a hero's coffin or defiantly hoisted in 1998 by squatters invading commercial farms, the flag evoked only negative white comment, such as 'this is nothing more than the symbol of those who have looted the country'.

For all of this, however, by the late 1990s, the Zimbabwean flag had become one of the more acceptable national symbols, particularly among junior members of the white community. This appears to have come about through the flag's association with various sports—symbols of popular nationalism in their own right for all Zimbabweans. A young man described his experience thus:

The change from Rhodesia to Zimbabwe took a while but, two years ago at a cricket match between India and Zimbabwe, I found I was waving the Zimbabwe flag and thinking of it as mine. I didn't think 'Geez, what's this I've got in my hand'; I remember it was a wondering thought at the time, simply the naturalness of it.

He was, I suggest, describing how he had allowed the new flag into his life, employing it in this sporting context to represent his sense of national pride. The young man's sentiments were echoed by an elderly woman who said 'it was heartening to see the surge of nationalism at the rugby recently, where our younger supporters had painted the Zimbabwe flag on their faces'. Similar scenes erupted at Harare's airport when the Davis Cup tennis team returned after beating Australia in the world group first round in Mildura, Victoria, in 1998. These sporting events provided sites where whites situated themselves within the nation. Waving the Zimbabwean flag enabled them to place their biographies within the national frame and thereby connect with a spirit of national belonging. Their patriotism was not, however, altogether innocent, for they simultaneously celebrated the sporting prowess of various minority figures. Whites were mostly antipathetic towards soccer, which is the black Zimbabweans' national passion. Again the majority was disappointed by their lack of involvement as players and disinterest as spectators. In their own defence, however, whites pointed out that soccer—dogged by administrative problems, allegations of corruption and poor performances—engendered at times a sense of national shame in Zimbabweans of all races.<sup>43</sup>

So, in short, the white community generally 'jibbed at changes' made during the 1980s and early 1990s. Informants appeared unwilling to forgo settler dominance over the landscape, signifying as it did control over the place. They perceived black re-territorialisation as downgrading to the Rhodesians and their history and symptomatic of their uncoupling from the place now called Zimbabwe. Elsewhere, coming to a shared sense of time and place requires settlers crediting and identifying with aspects of another culture and history as their representations are renegotiated in the interests of national integration (Clark and Reynolds 1994:41; Parry 1995:88). Generally, however, remarks proffered by white Zimbabweans indicated they would prefer the past to be 'irreversible' and 'inscribed in stone' (Wallerstein 1988:78), suggesting a static or non-negotiable conception of history that ignored the choice of memory as a moral practice (Lambek 1996:235). Although with much to lose, most wished to avoid, or appeared ill prepared to confront, the historical challenges that would facilitate their repositioning within the post colony.

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43 *Parliamentary Debates*, 18 August 1994, col. 836.

## Holding onto the homeland: reasserting otherness

Through non-compliance, evasion, refusal and protest, as described above, Zimbabwe's white community resisted and denied the State's historical re-visioning project. Theirs are the consciously intended, though petty, acts of insubordination, examples of 'the fugitive political acts of subordinate groups', and indicative of a realm of dissent (Scott 1990:xii)—something recognised by politically astute officials at the time. Alluding to the reasons for this seemingly passive stance, an elderly woman, keenly interested in opposition politics during the Rhodesian era, explained:

Resistance need not be defiant behaviour. The majority of whites have been scared for years. Individuals have been picked up over weekends and held on trumped-up charges. The domestic workers' union frightens people. You're afraid to open your mouth or rock the boat. So I'm glad to see whites now beginning to answer back and speak out about things that are not right. We want meritocracy. If something does not measure up, then they [the government] should be told so. Whites are mostly law-abiding and tax-paying citizens.

Collective white actions were not, however, simply reactive, as she implied. They were also creative and had their own politics (Falzon 1998:55; Ortner 1995:177)—in this instance to reassert otherness and keep creditable aspects of the Rhodesian memory alive. Many informants expressed pride in being raised as Rhodesians—'we learned respect, honour, dedication and commitment'—and in Rhodesian ability. In particular, the white community wanted some recognition of Rhodesian accomplishments that shaped the embryonic state. They pointed to the administrative apparatus—the electricity grid and road, rail and postal systems—that added productivity to the land and that were foundational to today's modern nation. The very permanence of engineering structures such as the Kariba Dam, which, in the late 1950s, was the largest hydroelectric dam in the world, spoke directly to the seemingly legitimate place of whites in the country. Its construction simultaneously built the idea that the Rhodesian way of life belonged in the Zambezi Valley (Hughes 2006b:837). More generally, they sought credit for carving out the beginnings of modernity from what they thought of as an untamed environment, for bringing progress and order and for achieving so much in the short time since white settlement.

The white assertion that at independence the State inherited an infrastructure and economy 'second only to South Africa in this part of the world' was acknowledged in 1997 in the government's *Departmental Committee on Technical Ministries Report*. The Committee tabled its findings immediately after a heated

debate over corruption in the public sector and referred its report to this problem. With regard to medical and educational facilities countrywide, the report noted that 'we inherited very good structures in terms of hospitals, schools et cetera, but these are breaking down and we do not want them to break during our presence otherwise history will judge us harshly'.<sup>44</sup> Indeed, what needs to be borne in mind is that some Africans, too, have been proud to come from 'the best' country in the region. Reflecting on this, a middle-aged European said, '[I]t would be far easier to identify with the government and the new Zimbabwe if recognition and credit was given to our achievements.' Other whites spoke of the transfer of knowledge, skills and trades, and contrasted their commitment and investment in the country with the cynical, rootless 'new breed of international expatriates' described earlier. They, like Dembour's (2000:78, 133) colonial administrators who gave their life's work to the Congo, believed they deserved a better record in history, only to find their positive contributions misrepresented locally and abroad. Indeed, some white Zimbabweans would like 'a thank you for a lifetime of dedication to this country'.

The ruling elite and radical intellectuals, however, hotly contested this creditable reading of the colonial legacy on the grounds that the colonists' motives were not to 'teach Africans' but to 'build a second Britain' or 'little England in Africa'. The colonists' role, according to an author writing during the Rhodesian years, should have been 'to bring the advantages of civilization to Southern Africa' (Vambe 1972:86). The white 'initiative and foresight' view of nation building was juxtaposed with a 'black sweat' perspective, which asserted that the country had been built out of African mineral, agricultural and labour resources. The latter, incorporated in current educational curricula, tells of black oppression and exploitation and is a far cry from Rhodesia's 'virgin bush' and potential as a 'modern El Dorado' version of the past.

White historiography was certainly forgetful of colonialism's institutional violence. A pastor located settler reluctance to face up to this other side of the historical legacy within the international context, when he said that 'whites the world over must now pay for slavery and colonialism. The blacks are saying they want their country back and the whites are the colonists. It's easy for you in Australia as the majority; whites here are in a very different position.' The potential cost involved in confronting the colonial past was, arguably, far greater for white settlers living in former intrusive colonies of Africa. Nostalgic memories of Rhodesia, the opportunities the country offered and their investment in its development represented ontological resources, important in the battle to become someone of positive regard. They allowed whites to think well of themselves and, as Davis (1979:36–7) pointed out, muted or filtered out unpleasant aspects of the colonial era. Positive constructs also expanded future

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44 *Parliamentary Debates*, 26 November 1997, col. 2608.

white options. The telling sustained bonds, linking them to the contested land, and shaped an alternative metaphysics of sedentariness that, with some pride, rooted whites firmly and legitimately in the Zimbabwean soil (Malkki 1992:31). While transcending the past in this way secures whites a rightful place in the territory, Falzon, following Foucault, nominates this a traditional or continuous account of history, one that reads the past only in terms of its initial standpoint. Profoundly uncritical, it is unable to question its own beginning and inevitably finds its own starting point confirmed (Falzon 1998:71). It was not a foundational mythology conducive to seeing the land through African eyes.

## Commemorating centenaries

These opposing perspectives came to the fore in disputes over how centenaries, falling during the 1990s, could be commemorated. The State did not take an active organising role itself, leaving the task to local councils, institutions and private interests to mark anniversaries in their own way. Consequently, these reflected diverse and local characters, as each grappled with the question of how to record its colonial heritage.

The cities of Harare<sup>45</sup> and Mutare in Mashonaland attained their centenaries in 1997. The mayors of each city, both party functionaries, candidly admitted having difficulty deciding what to do about the anniversary. While 83 years of white rule could not be condoned or celebrated, nor could the municipalities' beginnings be completely ignored, for 'who had not enjoyed the change in the skyline. Who had not delighted', for instance, 'in comparing the view of Harare from *Kopje* over the last one hundred years and more particularly from 1980 to 1997'?<sup>46</sup> Ultimately, each council projected the year as a time for looking critically at their city's colonial history and as a celebration of their rightful appropriation and enjoyment of the fruits of black labour since 1980. In this way, the centenary was divided into two parts: the cities' first 83 years as 'colonial instruments' and the majority's concomitant struggle against oppression, juxtaposed with a later period of liberation and celebration. The Mutare City Council invited 'old-timers', sometimes referred to as 'colonial fossils', to share their recollections and thereby provoked a boycott of its activities by war veterans. The Harare Council 'overlooked' those with early memories until it was 'too late' to extend invitations to them. This tack did not, however, defuse conflict. For where

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45 While the arrival of the Pioneer Column at Fort Salisbury (now Harare) was not marked officially in Zimbabwe, some whites travelled to centenary celebrations held close to the border in South Africa. These, described by Uusihakala (2008:189–210), were organised by South African 'when we' associations and re-enacted the flag-raising ceremony of 1880. Other events held in the Cape were markedly different in content and tone.

46 'Centenary is part of our history', *The Herald*, 8 November 1997, p. 4; 'No reason to celebrate', *The Sunday Mail*, 16 November 1997, p. 16.

Harare's Mayor, Solomon Tawengwa, argued that the centenary was a time for looking forward and, as the beginning of the next 100 years, was good for investment, the indigenous business community felt it had nothing to celebrate and ignored the event. As present-day dignitaries attended dinner dances, the general public responded apathetically to calls to clean up the parks and to the switching on of lights in First Street, Harare's main shopping mall.

Private companies, located in the capital, marked the occasion by commissioning the writing of the firms' histories, recording in this way white investment in the country. The exclusive Harare Club contemplated its eminent founding fathers, the 'developing dynasties' in its midst and the 'four-generation straight flush' held by some families (Wood 1997). Two prominent government schools in Harare, both with renowned principals, skirted round the difficulty of representing the colonial past by having heads and teachers from the Rhodesian era talk to the themes of a century of educational excellence and achievement. Old scholars, many now prominent blacks in their respective fields, are generally proud to have attended these schools and are grateful for the opportunities the education they received has since provided for them. Embedded in their nuanced recollections was an acknowledgment that something of value came out of the colonial past, the ownership and benefits of which could be shared. By this means, the challenge of national integration was surmounted.

In contrast with the ambivalence shown by the Mashonaland city councils, the General Manager of Zimbabwe National Railways, based in Bulawayo, presented the anniversary as a 'privilege' and an 'opportunity' enjoyed historically by just a lucky few. He went on to pay tribute to all past generations of railway men and women, black and white, and spoke of 'the proud track record which has been selflessly passed on'.<sup>47</sup> Earlier festivities that had marked the arrival of the first locomotives in Bulawayo in 1887, the year following the Matabele Rebellion and just three years after the region was occupied, when the town had been decorated with shields, *assegais* (spears), flags and bunting, were recalled. Then the slogan had been 'No railways, No Rhodesia—It was as simple as that', for rinderpest played havoc with transport reliant on oxen (Batwell 1996:3). By the 1930s, Bulawayo had become Rhodesia's most populous and go-ahead town, centre of the railways and the country's economic capital (Gann 1965:314). In view of this, the theme of progress, charted by the transition from ox cart to steam and, subsequently, electric locomotives, was linked in 1997 to the memories of some 'colourful [white] characters' of the old days, in particular George Pauling, the engineer in charge of construction (Gann 1965:153). The railway's general manager enjoined today's railway employees 'not to be prisoners of history' but 'trendsetters', deriving inspiration from yesterday's railway pioneers.

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47 'Celebrating a century of service', Supplement to the *Zimbabwe Independent*, 31 October 1997.

Accordingly, Zimbabwe National Railways energetically marked the centenary with a week-long programme of historical exhibitions, train rides and sporting fixtures reminiscent of events held 100 years earlier.

More usually, however, in the eastern and central provinces of the country, centenary celebrations served to counterpoise contradictory senses of place and history—all part of a process of claiming power through the production of different versions of autochthony (Rose 1995:116). Members of the white community and Mashonaland party cadres competed to have the legitimacy of their historical representations of nation building accepted as the dominant version. In this stand-off, neither side willingly conceded the contribution of the other—for example, that the cities of Harare and Mutare were built together, being structures that neither race in the past century could have built alone. While Clark and Reynolds (1994:1) note the importance to reconciliation of settlers developing a common sense of time and space with the majority, Curthoys (1999:18) reminds us that reconciliation can be obstructed when settlers wish to hold on to foundational myths and sentiments that find little recognition elsewhere. This pertained to Zimbabwe, where whites advanced Rhodesian achievements as conferring rights and productive of their sense of belonging, while the new political regime called up memories that predated the state formations of the colonial era. The new regime's telling linked the origins of modern Zimbabwe to the Munhumutapa Empire and re-presented the colonial era as an aberration, a brief disruptive episode in a longer national narrative. Furthermore, the black-sweat view of nation building located whites in a recent and discredited past as colonial oppressors. Historical re-visioning therefore problematised the whites' future by devaluing and denaturalising the link between people and territory, thereby unmapping white identity from the national space.

## Conclusion

The salience of place and memory in renegotiating white-settler identity was addressed in this chapter. The argument was made that the nationalist government considered the geographic mediation of national identity a significant decolonising site, and made the recovery of an appropriate identifying relationship between the African majority and the place Zimbabwe an integral part of its nation-building project. The processes and practices of place remaking simultaneously disrupted the Rhodesians' credible version of history, disallowing identification with colonialism and thereby disrupting white self-privileging. In this way, the State's retelling of history challenged

the colonisers' sense of omnipotence and permanence, as well as their sense of the irreversibility and linear progression of historical events (Memmi 1965:61; Nandy 1983:35, 58).

Clearly, revising and re-presenting the nation's past served to highlight the fragility and contingency of links between people and places (Malkki 1997:86). Where white political figures sought to have the memory of the Rhodesians' contribution to state formation acknowledged officially, thereby drawing attention to the plurality of the country's origins and invoking a moral right to belong in the future, this was not an idea that warranted inclusion by the State in its origin narrative. Denial of the significance of the white role in the nation's genesis problematised the whites' future by disrupting the seemingly natural relationship between the territory and the European population. Zimbabwe's white community found itself de-centred as decolonisation of the nation's landscape unpicked the intimate links, or roots, between the Rhodesian people and what they considered their homeland. In various ways, however, the white community resisted territorial re-formation and generated its own metaphysics of sedentariness, which was reliant on its particular reading of the colonial history and confirmed the white conviction of their rightful place in the territory. Colonial memories, varying between different groups, have therefore been mobilised in battles over the future of peoples and places (Rose 1995:97).

Where this chapter has focused on landscape as a symbolic field of memory and belonging, there are other ways to be in history and constitute subjectivity. The next chapter changes direction to look at the invocation of the civil war within the nationalist discourse of personhood in order to clarify how memory of the armed struggle operates in public life, further challenging white claims to be acknowledged as legitimate members of the national collective.