

## 4. Zimbabwe's narrative of national rebirth

This chapter examines how the new regime has drawn on the memory of the liberation war in order to constitute nationhood and create its own authoritative code of membership. That nationhood is realised not uncommonly through war (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983:279) was something that Anderson (1990:129–31) understood when he attributed our attachment and willingness to die for the idea as an outcome of the nation's depiction in terms associated with kinship and home. Zimbabwe's war memory provides, as it were, a classificatory scheme, the wherewithal to think about who belongs, and how, to the Zimbabwean nation, for war is no less a force in the development of nationhood where, as in Zimbabwe, the conflict to be remembered is internecine (Grant 1998:163). Objectification of the civil war at the Heroes' Acre memorial complex is described below. The first section details how the Rhodesian colonial past is 'registered and felt' (Hirschkop 1996:v) in the official account of the nation's rebirth. Representations of white subjectivity presented at the site and embedded within Zimbabwe's narrative of national rebirth and its ideology of personhood are identified. Particular attention is then directed to the extent Zimbabwe's whites are able to constitute their subjectivity within the subject positions produced at Heroes' Acre, or recognise themselves among the country's national heroes. Finally, the consequences of the State's narrative for the white community's sense of national belonging are examined.

### Perceiving the national shrine

The State in Zimbabwe, as in much of the Third World, has played a key role in national construction. Representations, described in the previous chapter, illustrated that Zimbabwe was reconstituted as an African nation, located politically within the Pan-Africanist movement and committed economically—at least at the outset—to socialism. It is also a product of a civil war fought against settler colonialism. Mugabe, perhaps because some hardliner whites insisted otherwise, made this point very clearly when he said, '[I]ndependence was not given to us at the Lancaster House Constitutional Conference in December 1979; it was won on the battlefield in sixteen long and arduous years of a bitter and hard armed struggle' (Shamuyarira et al. 1995:2).

The memory of the anti-colonial war as the revolutionary founding event is conveyed and sustained most powerfully in ceremonies held on Heroes Day, and re-presented at the state funeral of each newly proclaimed hero. The site for these

commemorations is Heroes' Acre,<sup>1</sup> thus far the State's most ambitious national representation, which the government began building in 1981. The memorial complex covers 57 acres (23 hectares), originally set aside for a new Rhodesian Parliament House, on the edge of Harare. It comprises two predominant visual foci. The first incorporates the Statue and Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, the national flag and the eternal flame bounded by a black granite wall engraved with murals depicting the history of the anti-colonial struggle from 1960 to 1980. The second takes in the terraces of Heroes' graves, to which I return later in the chapter. This commemorative complex is described in official texts as the product of 'the masses' desire to be the makers of their own history' and 'a place of pilgrimage'<sup>2</sup> designed to 'arouse national consciousness, forge national unity and identity'. To this end, plans were also afoot to erect a museum at the site in order to tell 'the people's history'.

Kruger and Werbner have described the political significance of this monument in some detail. Kruger (1995:135) argues that ZANU PF's ruling elite has attempted to promote its legitimacy and foster national identity by using the civil war as a symbol of black unity. This exercise has, however, misfired, demonstrating instead the party's tendency for 'hierarchy, bureaucratic control, and top-down decision making' (Kruger 1995:145)—characteristics evident in its choice of national heroes, the majority of whom have been ruling-party political or military figures.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, hero biographies, detailed by the Ministry of Information, Posts

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1 Elsewhere icons such as this are said to 'root the living in a distinctive cultural identity which assures national pride and self-respect' (Rowlands 1996:10; see also Inglis 1998:115). Flames of remembrance, commonly incorporated in their architecture, pledge eternal commitment to the memory of those who died for national purposes (Inglis 1998:204). Thus, not only do war memorials embody the collective recognition and legitimacy of the memory deposited within them (Savage 1994:136), they provide important sites representing the religious force of national identity (Anderson 1990:18). Scholars point to the importance accorded public participation in design, funding and ceremonial occasions that promotes the internalisation of memory, inviting agency and generating a sense of belonging within a community of memory (Bodnar 1994:74; Rowlands 1996:13–17; Inglis 1998:171–93).

2 ZBC Commentary on Heroes Day, 11 August 1997; Ministry of Information, Posts and Telecommunications 1986:2. Public access to the site was, however, restricted. The shrine was opened daily to the public for the first time in January 1999. Before this, an appointment had to be made with the Ministry of Home Affairs; an official guide indicated that there were fears of vandalism and the monument was considered 'too sensitive' to be opened more freely. Before this was possible, he said, 'the people had to be taught to appreciate their history' and 'to value their heritage'.

3 There were various grades of heroes, with the status of national hero being the most prestigious and the most coveted. When someone important died, a request to grant hero status was made to the ZANU PF Politburo for consideration. The request could come from the party, from the War Veterans' Association or, more recently, from the indigenisation lobby (see Chapter 6). While the process of decision making was shrouded in secrecy, Welshman Ncube, Professor of Law, believed that, ultimately, the President decided (*Manica Post*, 7 July 1996, p. 6; see also *Parliamentary Debates*, 5 May 1999, col. 5249). Only national heroes were buried in Heroes' Acre in Harare. The State paid for their funerals and various financial benefits accrued to widows and any dependants, which were paid through the Heroes Dependants Assistance Fund. Debate about the status of would-be heroes indicated widespread discontent concerning the criteria applied when conferring the status (*House of Assembly*, 15 September 1982, cols 509–16; *The Financial Gazette*, 7 July 1994, p. 4; *Zimbabwe Independent*, 16 May 1997, p. 7; *Parliamentary Debates*, 15 August 1996, cols 736–75, and 17 August 1994, cols 778–815).

and Telecommunications (1998), indicate that around two-thirds were former members of ZANU and/or ZANLA. Many other worthy candidates have been ignored.<sup>4</sup>Kruger (1995:150–2) reports the growing dissatisfaction within the Ndebele 'nation', as well as the increasing distance between the country's elite and the masses that, almost from the start, controversy over candidature brought into sharp relief. Richard Werbner (1998) also discusses the politicisation of the memorial complex, in particular the ruling elite's appropriation of the memory and identity of those who died for state ends. He goes on to trace the rise in popular 'counter memorialism' in light of the ruling party's involvement in the post-independence massacres in Matabeleland, described towards the end of Chapter 2.

These scholars address fissures within the black majority. I wish to focus instead upon white subjectivity, and ask in what ways the Rhodesian memory is projected 'into the weft of the collective narrative' (Balibar 1991:93) fabricated at the Heroes' Acre complex. Insofar as war memorials are simultaneously fictions and principles of social organisation (Bowman 1994:147), it is pertinent to ask whether Zimbabwe's political elite envisaged that Heroes' Acre would embody the memory of those who fought on the losing, Rhodesian side. Is it, for instance, a commemorative landmark that provides dignity for all who died and suffered during the war? What categories of nationals and non-nationals are fashioned out of the war's memory? Were whites also to be accorded a place in the national family?

Early on, political activist, detainee and minister in the post-independence government Nathan Shamuyarira described the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier as commemorating

the lives of all Zimbabweans—black, white and brown—lost in the cause of freedom and national independence. For example the many white and black missionaries who were killed because of their support for freedom and independence will be remembered alongside our heroes.<sup>5</sup>

Also taking a conciliatory position soon after independence, Mrs D. Stebbing of Greendale, Harare, suggested that 'a statue of a white troopie' should stand in Heroes' Acre, 'side by side or shoulder to shoulder' with the three freedom fighters, two men and a woman, who together make up the Statue of the Unknown Soldier. She continued:

[T]hen, in gratitude, show the many mission priests, doctors, nuns and teachers who lost their lives while trying to minister to all in

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<sup>4</sup> See, for instance, controversy over the status of George Marange and Edmund Garwe (*Parliamentary Debates*, 30 September 1997, cols 1627–50).

<sup>5</sup> 'Reconciliation and war memorials', *The Herald*, 1 August 1980, p. 1.

need—whether black or white; to the Red Cross and other health administrators who died helping the sick and wounded, and to the would-be peacemakers.<sup>6</sup>

In this way, Mrs Stebbing asked for a ‘vernacular representation’ (Bodnar 1994:74), which registered the grief, sorrow and contribution of ordinary people in the front line of war. She finished with the following plea: ‘Those of us whites who are staying in the country we love would dearly like to be reassured that we, and those who died to keep us safe, are considered as much an integral part of Zimbabwe as the black freedom fighters.’

Shamuyarira’s and Mrs Stebbing’s remarks suggest that they considered Heroes’ Acre had a role to play in healing the social fabric, as an act of closure and a memorial to the suffering and sacrifice of all of the people, in essence an icon to inclusion rather than to victory. Similarly, a white MP spoke at independence of ‘the responsibility to heal’ and ‘rebuild from the agonies and miseries of war’. With this in mind, he suggested dedicating the public holiday to ‘those who have fallen’; in which case the eternal flame could memorialise ‘all people who died in the civil war’.<sup>7</sup>

The memory embodied at the shrine is, however, depicted in more circumscribed, familial terms. Official documents specify that Heroes’ Acre represents those who fell in the struggle, ‘the illustrious’ and ‘patriotic sons and daughters’ of the nation who ‘distinguished themselves through profound service and suffering’ and ‘paid the supreme sacrifice for Zimbabwe to be born and for the masses to be liberated’.<sup>8</sup> Along the same lines, the President, reminiscing in 1995, spoke of the Tomb as honouring ‘the many thousands of freedom fighters who died in the forests and valleys of Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Zambia and Botswana’, many of whom were not properly buried and have no known grave (Shamuyarira et al. 1995:2). They are ‘buried here, far from their homes and their families...they now belong to the large family of Zimbabwe, the whole nation’ (Shamuyarira et al. 1995:6). The statue of the Unknown Soldier, whose figures today represent them, are ‘in place’ for they are ‘the happy ending’ of the anti-colonial struggle (George 1996:14). With feet planted firmly in the soil and true to the ways of their forefathers, this select group is described in tropes of assurance, fitness and moral certainty. Local and centred, they belong ‘naturally’ as ‘sons’ of the national ‘soil’. Special mention is also made of the President’s first wife, Ghanaian-born Sally Hayfron, who at the time of research was the sole heroine, now cast as ‘mother’ to the freedom fighters, her patriotic sons and daughters, and the nation (Shamuyarira et al. 1995:1, 7). Zimbabwe’s familial ideology was

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6 ‘Let us remember all war dead on Heroes Day’, *The Herald*, 18 August 1981, p. 6.

7 *House of Assembly*, 4 October 1979, col. 152, 26 June 1980, cols 1081–2.

8 Ministry of Information, Posts and Telecommunications 1986:3–4, 1998:1, 2, 5.

concretised through financial backing in November 1997. Earlier that year, war veterans had taken to the streets, shut down ZANU PF headquarters and refused to commemorate Heroes Day. At the time, some bystanders saw only an unruly demonstration of mostly down-at-heel rural men. Others perceived something more worrying—namely, a de facto second army, loyal only to its patron, Mugabe, marching in the streets of the capital. Subsequently, ex-combatants deemed to be part of the 'national family' benefited through an unbudgeted compensation payout that has proved highly divisive. Registered comrades received a one-off payment of Z\$50 000, a monthly pension for life of Z\$2000 (increased in 1999), plus health and education benefits and a promise of land.<sup>9</sup>

This now pre-eminent version of belonging depicts the Zimbabwean nation in terms of kinship and conduct and the unity of those joined by blood and sacrificial love for the liberation cause. Consequently, for some black nationalists, it had been

ludicrous to contemplate those who died for Ian Smith and all he stood for—white supremacy, inequality and domination—as heroes of Zimbabwe... There can be no two ways about this. Those who died defending colonial oppression died for a lost cause. Reconciliation dictates that we do not open old wounds. But we cannot sit back quietly while those representing the old guard mock our heroes who made the supreme sacrifice.<sup>10</sup>

As the most important monument of Zimbabwean nationhood and anchor of the civil war's memory, Heroes' Acre could not with credibility include a white Rhodesian soldier, just as the bodies described by Savage (1994:131) as subsumed within American Civil War monuments have been conceived within certain boundaries and allegiances, and typically depict erect, unwounded Anglo-Saxon soldiers. Instead, dogmatic formalism (Bodnar 1994:74) calls for

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9 This package represented considerable economic wealth and provoked anger among some members of the black educated elite, many of whom had been studying out of the country during the war and who now found themselves shouldering higher taxes to fund the payments. The payout also delivered a severe blow to national unity because vetting of would-be war veterans was carried out by party officials at party district offices (*The Financial Gazette*, 27 November 1997, p. 7). Political detainees, former *mujibas* and *chimbwidos* (the young boys and girls who had supported the liberation forces by providing food, provisions, information on the Rhodesian forces in the area and so forth, described more fully by Astrow 1983:151), as well as other former freedom fighters and those considered 'sell-outs' did not qualify. Sell-outs fought for the Rhodesians and some considered they were entitled to gratuities and benefits under the terms of the Lancaster Agreement. Chidyausiku (1998:7–8) gives the counterargument. This controversy came on the heels of revelations from the Chidyausiku Commission of Inquiry, which showed that the War Victims Compensation Fund had been defrauded of millions of dollars through false, unsubstantiated and multiple claims, prompting its suspension. The 79 major beneficiaries were people prominent in political and military circles (Chidyausiku 1998; Deve 1997; *The Financial Gazette*, 20 August 1998, p. 6). Many other claims were never considered because claimants found it impossible to have their papers lodged by the relevant authorities (Amani Trust 1997:8). Together, these exclusions and controversies raised the fear that the war would be rekindled.

10 'Old wounds', *The Herald*, 12 August 1983, p. 8.

a memorial not to common grief and sorrow, but to triumph, patriotism and national rebirth. Nationalisation of the comrades' lives (and deaths) therefore requires the marginalisation of alternative, non-national war memories and that competing interpretations, such as those proffered by Mrs Stebbing, are downplayed.

Nonetheless, as the monument to the fallen, Heroes' Acre does not exclude memories of the Rhodesians so much as evoke and entrap them as the enemy. The shrine, said Mugabe, memorialises the 'callous nature of those who ruled us yesterday' and serves 'as a reminder of the crimes perpetrated by the Smith regime'.<sup>11</sup> Murals at the commemorative site depict the war in racial terms. They juxtapose the virtues of the liberation forces—men in bulky Eastern Bloc uniforms and women in headscarves and peasant attire—with the rigidly uniformed Rhodesian forces, their lackeys and dogs. The eternal flame represents the people's spirit of independence and infinite desire for freedom. These qualities served to 'defeat the forces of colonialism' and underscore the will to 'defeat external forces of destabilisation and internal forces of reaction' (Ministry of Information, Posts and Telecommunications 1986:6), thereby safeguarding the nation in the future. The contingent symbolic message (Cohen 1994:163) suggested by back-to-back Heroes and Defence Forces national holidays is that the heroes' sacrifice will be protected by the military might on display the next day and that Zimbabwe's independence, won at a price, will be protected whatever the cost. Indeed, the President's 'never again' national vows highlight the regime's resolve to guarantee state security and survival from threats emanating from South Africa as well as 'the fifth column among us'—the enemy within. Passing judgement on the settler regime is therefore a constitutive act of the post-independence government. The war memorial, as a testimonial to and accusation of the colonial era, establishes the dialectic of those who are in place and belong naturally, who are authentic and at home, and the former colonists who, as different and threatening, are out of place and can never belong in the same way.

Zimbabwe's white community, no less than the African-Americans<sup>12</sup> before them (Savage 1994), has found itself unable to perceive the national shrine as

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11 'Presidential address', ZBC TV, 12 August 1998.

12 Savage (1994:131–5) describes the proliferation of local-level Civil War monuments in the United States that avoid all but the most innocuous representation of the war's origin and significance. In the interest of developing a common white American identity, the conflict was 'recast as a struggle between two ultimately compatible "principles" of union and state sovereignty' (Savage 1994:132), making it possible for former white enemies to appreciate that there were no losers or winners to the dispute. For this narrative to be sustained, however, black American cultural representations were excluded from the memorials and the importance of slavery and the black contribution to the war effort were left unrecorded and so 'forgotten'. Similarly, the Lincoln Memorial, built more than 60 years after Lincoln's assassination, while remembering Lincoln as a nation builder, fails in its inscription to mention slavery as the issue that divided the nation and provoked the American Civil War (Savage 1994:138–41; Rowlands 1996:15).

a memorial to its dead or to realise its identity in the Heroes' complex. Some have chosen to ignore or subvert the memorial's meaning and in everyday, mundane ways reassert self-determination and tell a different version of history. For instance, in the years soon after independence, when the front pages of the daily newspaper were dominated by the ruling party's commemoration of Heroes Day, the small print at the back inscribed another memory. The 'Roll of Honour' and 'In Memoriam' columns carried a dozen or so notices in memory of the Rhodesian security forces—the Selous Scouts, Rhodesian Light Infantry, the Southern Battalion Rhodesian Regiment, the Second Engineers Squadron, the Old Puritans<sup>13</sup> and Police Reservists who gave their lives between 1965 and 1980; 'may all those who fell be remembered for they were men of men'. Another entry was dedicated to all 'those who fought and died for the green and white flag'. A third, more inclusive note referred to 'the proud memory of men and women from all races who died or were maimed for the right they believed in. Let us now not fail in this gift of reconciliation and peace.'<sup>14</sup>

While memorials such as these were no longer published in the press, material collected during fieldwork suggested the sentiments they reflected were still keenly felt. Informants believed that Heroes' Acre represented neither the Europeans killed nor the majority of the Rhodesian security forces, who were black. As the young mother, having trouble with the new street names in the previous chapter, saw things, '[H]eroes' is not ours'. Having said this, she asked, somewhat defensively, 'Where are our soldiers buried? Is it in Warren Park [public] Cemetery? I suppose their families have left...our war vets should receive payouts as well, most of our soldiers came from Matabeleland.' Certainly, it would have been impossible for the white minority to conduct the war if a significant number of blacks had not also contributed to the white cause and continued to serve its public administration (Hudson 1981:205). This point has led some scholars to argue that Zimbabwe's was not so much a mass revolution as a confrontation between two elites: the majority of white Rhodesians on the one hand, and an educated black elite on the other—the fighters of both sustained by forces outside the country.<sup>15</sup>

Other informants described the Heroes Day commemoration as a 'one-sided occasion' and the shrine 'a waste of taxpayers' money'. A former Rhodesian officer said, 'Heroes Day is a needle in our sides, a meaningless alienating symbol; let them [the government] call them [the comrades] what they want, I know what they really were [terrorists].' A conscientious objector, who supported the black cause before independence, felt that 'Heroes' Acre does more harm than good.

13 Former students of Plum Tree High School, located in the west of the country close to the Botswanan border.

14 See *The Herald*, 11 August 1981, p. 7, 11 August 1982, p. 7, 18 August 1982, p. 8.

15 See Hodder-Williams 1980:104; Hudson 1981:206–8; Kriger 1988; Alexander 1998.

It commemorates a lot of dead, forgotten people.' He continued in reference to the price riots that rocked the country in January 1998: 'the needs of the people are being ignored. It's ironic that the State gives more attention to the dead than the living.' The riots were in fact a direct result of the war veterans' payout, as the government had raised the sales tax on basic foodstuffs from 2.5 per cent to 17.5 per cent to cover their gratuities. An elderly man, who also saw Heroes' as 'looking backwards', believed 'the government should stop this nonsense of appointing heroes'. Others, bitter, argue that the white community too should be entitled to remember and honour their dead, for the white community generally considers that it is prevented from constructing public monuments<sup>16</sup> to its fallen. Thus, without a sense of authorship and unable to position their identity within the State's narrative, white Zimbabweans have failed to develop a sense of national belonging out of the civil war memory.

Experience elsewhere, however, suggests that it is unrealistic to expect that the defeated, white or black, will find a creditable place in public memory. The Japanese and Germans were either discouraged or forbidden to build military cemeteries at the close of World War II (Gillis 1994:12), while blacks, without 'cultural privilege', had their representations 'overlooked' in the design of this sort of monumental legitimacy after the American Civil War (Savage 1994:136). Yet in Zimbabwe memorials do exist, albeit of a less visible nature. A Rhodesian web site carries the Roll of Honour giving the names and details of whites as well as blacks who died for the previous regime, and without whose support the Rhodesian State would not have remained in charge for as long as it did. Visits to the tiny churches in the Eastern Highlands, where there was fierce fighting, revealed a more private family grief inscribed in a pew or church window.

The Heroes Day epitaph 'We remember. We must never forget' also proved contentious. Several informants took exception to it and queried 'Does that sound like reconciliation to you?' Echoing this idea, others felt 'the party won't let the war be forgotten; it continually rubs salt in the wounds'. Alexander et al. (2000:259) note the widespread use of 'old wounds' as a marker of historical violence and 'opening' them as a metaphor for public probing. In this instance, whites allude to ZANU PF's invocation of war memories as 'salt' that keeps the wounds not just open, but inflamed. Remembering differently has, in effect, made it difficult for past protagonists to recognise each other as part of the same nation. Any 'mutual affirmation of past interactions—our introjection of one another' (Lambek 1996:239)—was hard to perceive or accept with the nation shaped by what it stood against. Zimbabwe's memorial complex as a record of what 'must

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16 Whites also complained that gathering to mark Armistice Day was treated with official suspicion. Coinciding as it did with the anniversary of UDI, it was, however, perhaps understandable that, to the State, such gatherings represented an act of insubordination, or an instance of what Scott (1990:19) termed low-profile resistance characteristic of non-dominant groups.

never be forgotten', of what must never be lost, has proved deeply divisive and failed to produce the effect of unity by virtue of which all Zimbabweans were made to appear 'as the people' (Balibar 1991:93). Consequently, Heroes' Acre, as a commemorative landmark, was unable to provide symbolic compensation to all who had suffered on account of the war.

Reverends Mashopa<sup>17</sup> and Zvarevashe (1994) shared different concerns. Developing a familial analogy on Heroes Day 1998, Mashopa argued that national days should be days for 'serious national prayer, led by the nation's father'. 'Remembering past injustices and glorifying war memories,' he went on, 'does not contribute to meaningful reconciliation.' To talk of 'heroes as an achievement' is to adopt a secular vision, devoid of the sacred qualities that characterise Biblical heroes such as Noah, Moses and Isaiah. Without personal faith and prophetism, this form of heroism runs the danger of 'degenerating into self-centeredness, pride and greed'. Along the same lines, Zvarevashe (1994) said 'big days' such as Heroes Day should 'not appear as a one-man show'. He believed 'the only way to honour the dead, is to pray for the eternal rest of their souls with the ancestral spirits'. Instead of jet flypasts, deafening gun salutes and political rhetoric, Mugabe should be seen leading the nation in prayer. A number of Christian Church leaders should then be invited to come forward and offer prayers for all those who died. For both men, displays of might had ousted 'the religious element' that they deemed appropriate when commemorating sacrificial death.

Remembering entails engagement with the past, leading Renan (1990:11) to suggest that perhaps forgetting is a crucial factor in the creation of a nation. Indeed, by the time this research was under way, the war, according to some younger more positively minded whites, had 'become a common experience. We now work with the people we fought and we've forgotten we were on different sides', they said. 'It's all in the past, we've moved on to another country.'<sup>18</sup> For them to perceive commonality, past atrocities had to be forgotten or at least memories be fashioned by the requirements of reconciliation. For the ruling party, however, the opposite held true. Party rhetoric justifies the erection of Heroes' Acre on the grounds that 'the people' are forgetful and must be taught to value their heritage. The State asserts that the general populace needs education in 'the people's history' and 'development' as citizens. Its memory of the armed struggle is conceived as a moral imperative that must be transmitted to the next

17 Reverend Noel Mashopa, 'Heroes of the Faith', ZBC Radio, 1–9 August 1998.

18 Weiss (1994:161) describes the mutual respect felt by a former ZIPRA fighter and a Rhodesian lieutenant-colonel having found themselves in the same work setting after independence. Godwin (1996:331–4) relates a similar experience in his autobiography, *Mukiwa*. Preparing during the mid 1980s the defence case for Matabele 'dissidents', in particular the former ZIPRA Commander Lookout Masuku and Head of Intelligence, Dumiso Dabengwa, Godwin discovered the commander and his section of the Rhodesian Army had previously fought each other during a civil war engagement.

generation. All of which underlines the importance the political elite accords to 'not forgetting' and suggests some anxiety about the credibility of its idea of nationhood.

Thus, without a doubt, nationalisation of Zimbabwe's war memories had its import for state purposes. Commemorations constructed a great moral distance between the evils of the Smith regime and the virtues of Mugabe's, thereby establishing the new political elite's credentials to rule by refracting its image off the illegality of the colonial regime. In this way, memorialisation of the war as the contingent event of Zimbabwean nationhood introduced a barrier to social memory and provided a means to impose discontinuities on the population and history. To employ Foucauldian terms, 'not forgetting' provided the rationale for the production of knowledge that was self-interested and reflected the State's 'will to power'.

## Heroes as exemplary citizens

Heroes' Acre is, however, more than a memorial site that attempts to 'fix the meaning and purpose of the war in an enduring form' (Savage 1994:128). Built in order to inspire all Zimbabweans to emulate the ideals and values of the heroes, it also embodies prescriptions for future behaviour.<sup>19</sup> Accordingly, the Heroes Day holiday is a time for self-reflection and rededication. Each year, the Presidential address links the themes of patriotism and sacrifice to other topical political issues such as reconciliation, the relationship between the party and the courts, black economic empowerment and the land issue. Citizens are then asked to consider how they measure up to the example set by the nation's heroes. Were they walking in their footsteps? Did they, for instance, submerge individualism to the collective will and forsake personal gain for the greater good?<sup>20</sup> With these questions in mind, I will look briefly at the patriotic lessons to be learnt from heroes who originated from the country's racial minorities and ask to what extent they inspired admiration among their compatriots.

The single white national hero<sup>21</sup> is Guy Clutton Brock, a British missionary who arrived in Rhodesia in 1949. He worked for a decade at St Faith's Mission Farm in the Eastern Highlands, where he met and became lifelong friends with future politicians Didumus Mutasa and Maurice Nyagumbo. Clutton Brock

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19 According to General Dube, the concept of national heroes was borrowed from the socialist countries where many comrades studied and received military training before 1980 (ZBC Radio 1, 11 August 1998).

20 Special Correspondent, 'Who is a hero?', *Parade*, August 1990, p. 28.

21 John Conradie, of Afrikaner and German descent, was awarded the lesser rank of liberation war hero in 1998. Conradie joined the struggle in the mid 1960s and received a 20-year prison sentence in 1967. After serving 11 years, he was released in 1978 on condition that he left the country. He returned after independence and established the Kushanda self-help project.

was instrumental in the formation of the Southern Rhodesian African Congress in 1957. In the late 1960s, he assisted the Tangwena people to resist removal from their home area, which had been classified as European under the 1930 *Land Apportionment Act* (Clutton Brock 1969). He also took an active part in establishing two multiracial farming co-operatives in Rhodesia: first, Nyafaru Farm in the Eastern Highlands and later Cold Comfort Farm on the outskirts of Salisbury (Chater 1985:7–15). Because of the political nature of these activities, he was briefly detained in the late 1950s, and later stripped of his citizenship and deported by the Rhodesian authorities in 1971. President Mugabe, reminiscing with family and friends on Clutton Brock's eightieth birthday, wrote, '[W]hen, in the fullness of time, after our long and bitter struggle, I was called on to form the government of the new Zimbabwe, the example of the Clutton Brocks made it easier to adopt our policy of reconciliation' (Clutton Brock 1987:132). Clutton Brock was declared a national hero after his death in 1995 and his ashes were scattered at the Heroes' Acre shrine. This subdued affair, devoid of the customary pomp and media attention, barely received comment from the white community. Clutton Brock had left the country one-quarter of a century earlier, at which time he had been ostracised by his own race. He was virtually unknown to them at the time of his death. He was not a person most whites chose to emulate or aspired to follow, although his thinking had a profound impact on older African nationalists.

It was, however, not without regret that some whites found 'their kind' unrecognised in the State's pantheon of national heroes. Putting pen to paper a few weeks before Clutton Brock's death, Mr Bennett of Harare described watching

with sadness and some pride the televised burial of Joe Slovo—pride because the black people of South Africa are willing and able to acknowledge that there are whites in Africa who deserve the accolade of National Hero...South Africa has been able to move further down the road to reconciliation in less than one year, when this country has failed after fifteen years...Are we to believe that not one of the many whites who fought for the rights of blacks in what was Rhodesia, and who have subsequently died, did not deserve to be recognised and honoured as National Heroes.<sup>22</sup>

White liberals, in particular, would like to be credited for their stand against the Rhodesian Front, even if they were unable to espouse a more radical understanding of the black-nationalist political cause. The next contribution, prompted after the President in 1996 publicly castigated whites for their disinterest in Heroes Day, began:

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<sup>22</sup> 'White heroes forgotten', *The Financial Gazette*, 19 January 1995, p. 5.

[A]s in every war there are undoubtedly atrocities on both sides. There were also heroes on both sides...In Spain, a country which went through a very bitter civil war, I believe there is a memorial which simply says 'In memory of all the brave men who gave their lives in the war'. If only we had something like that, which we could all share, in Zimbabwe.<sup>23</sup>

Here again the importance of common memories, of having 'something to share', is raised. Assessments made in the privacy of a white home or an office tended, however, to be more hard nosed. While informants did not consider the official heroes as their heroes, they had other ideas of who they believed qualified. 'There were white heroes—they may have fought on the wrong side, but they are still our heroes.' UDI sanctions busters—'those who sold our tobacco and beef to Europe and flew new jets back from the USA'—were mentioned. A man who had fled the country finding himself 'unable to shoot at the likes of our gardener' nominated conscientious objectors, 'those brave enough to stay in Rhodesia and refuse to fit in'. A more contemporary candidate, admired for standing by her principles, was the outspoken journalist and popular critic Lupi Mushayakarara, respected by many whites for exposing government hypocrisy and disinformation during the 1990s. A sizeable number also nominated the former Rhodesian Front leader Ian Smith for the following reasons:

Ian Smith has stood by his principles; he continues to live by them till this day. Smith has not left Zimbabwe, not even when his wife died. He has brought his people to this place in history; he will not abandon them, especially the elderly who are here alone.

And again:

He's here, he didn't desert the old people, he votes, he keeps his mouth shut and that must take some discipline. My brother talked to him the other day. Smith said, 'Don't get fazed by the riots, hold your head high, do not be afraid, show you are not budging and the government will leave you alone.'

Smith's popularity was evident in the lines of whites waiting for his signature when his autobiography was released in Harare at Christmas in 1997. They were captured, hiding their faces and turning to the wall, as television cameras recorded their 'betrayal' for the evening news. However, not all whites felt this way. Some liberals considered Smith, who died in 2007, as well as his Rhodesian Front colleagues, traitors, believing their refusal to repent and acknowledge the errors of their regime had resulted in all whites being tainted with the same crimes (Moore-King 1989).

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23 'Remember them all', *The Herald*, 17 July 1996, p. 6.

The second minority hero—whom I include for mention because a few research participants were members of the coloured community—was Senator Joseph Culverwell, Deputy Minister of Education and Culture from 1980 to 1988. Culverwell thus achieved a high position in the post-independence government. Tributes paid to him by fellow MPs at the time of his retirement were revealing. Culverwell was praised for, among other things, his 'jovial' and 'encouraging attitude'. 'Light heartedly we referred to him as *muzukuru*. He is our link between blacks and whites...He is more committed to black than white, he lives with us and works with us and indeed he enjoys to be with us.'<sup>24</sup>

'*Muzukuru*' denotes a male relative from one's mother's lineage. Applied as an honorific, it indicates a cordial and intimate bond. A senior *muzukuru* has certain ceremonial functions and, more importantly here, political standing. He is able, for instance, to publicly rebuke a chief for failing to live up to community expectations (Bourdillon 1987:35). The MP quoted above used the analogy to refer to Culverwell's reputation for speaking directly to whites, for 'putting them in their place' during Senate debates soon after independence. Known affectionately as Uncle Joe and *muzukuru*, Culverwell was accorded national membership in terms of fictive kinship, denoted on account of his personal characteristics and political loyalty.

Among his own people, Culverwell was admired for his charitable and community work, 'for pulling us [the coloured community] together' at the national rather than simply the local level. Accordingly, he was a well-known figure, and when he died in 1993, was considered an appropriate choice by his compatriots. Regardless, coloureds did not look on Heroes' Acre any more favourably because they believed the complex gave the impression that 'only ZANU PF can rightly claim to have liberated the nation'. Coloureds joined ZAPU, and to a lesser extent ZANU, the latter being less receptive to non-Africans, during the 1960s (Muzondidya 2005:223–5, 256–60). Coloureds and Asians also fought with the comrades, but were denied registration as war veterans in 1997 and consequently missed out on the monetary payout. At that time, an informant said angrily, 'Our fathers fought with the liberation forces...They are not being written into the history of this country. The promises made to us during the war have not been kept.'

This community leader recognised the importance of having his people's role in the liberation struggle recorded for posterity, particularly when the coloured community was accused of 'fence-sitting'. A second representative also sought to initiate authorship in the narratives of national liberation when he said:

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24 *Parliamentary Debates*, 30 September 1992, col. 2619.

The coloureds also sacrificed for independence. We want to document our contribution to the liberation struggle. We need to make our community more aware of its heroes—Foya-Thompson, Berman, Cecil Smith and others—all of whom fought and were detained during the war.

These informants pressed the point that the war was a collective effort. Many contributed in different ways, including members of the coloured and Asian communities, taking risks that have gone unrecognised. For example, Foya-Thompson, Cecil Smith, Frank Berman and others provided urban safe havens as well as moral and material support, raised finances for the families of restricted nationalists and were active in recruitment and underground activities (Muzondidya 2005:224–5).

The liberation struggle had been heavily dependent on civilian help (Alexander and McGregor 2004:83). In addition to the *mujibas* and *chimbwidos* (the youngsters providing food and information in the countryside), there were town dwellers filling orders for the freedom fighters and staff at the mission hospitals who provided medical attention. Others made sacrifices to feed and protect them. Countless more suffered due to the insecurities that war inevitably brought. The signing of the Unity Accord, which saw ZANU PF and ZAPU merge in 1987, offered academics and politicians the chance to reappraise the official version of the liberation war and review ZIPRA's contribution, as well as that of other sections of society, to the armed struggle (Bhebe and Ranger 1995:3). By the mid 1990s, former ZIPRA soldiers 'could present themselves with justification as the unrecognised and persecuted heroes of the liberation war' (Alexander and McGregor 2004:96). Since then, a few former ZIPRA combatants and ZAPU members have been interred at Heroes' Acre—a gesture designed 'to give some semblance of ethnic equation' at the shrine.<sup>25</sup> In 1998, for instance, the remains of Comrades Mangena, a ZIPRA Commander and Makonese, a ZAPU political leader, killed towards the end of the war, were exhumed, brought back from Zambia and interred at Heroes' Acre.<sup>26</sup> Both had been 'overlooked' as candidates for hero status during the 1980s (Kriger 1995:152). Speaking after the Presidential dedication, Mangena's brother described the family's 'obsession' with the 'mysterious circumstances' of his death in a 'landmine accident', intimating that Mangena had been a casualty of the friction between Mugabe's and Nkomo's forces, mentioned earlier. 'Having heard nothing from the current government,' he went on, 'our mother's tears had never dried', suggesting the government's recent attempt at a corrective gesture hadn't washed with the deceased's family.

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25 Independent committee should adjudicate hero status', *Zimbabwe Independent*, 16 May 1997, p. 7.

26 'Let's rededicate ourselves to freedom fighters' goals', *The Herald*, 10 August 1998, p. 10; 'Remains of Mangena and Makonese reburied', *The Herald*, 12 August 1998, p. 1.

Rather than offering a moment of familial 'recountability' (Werbner, R. 1998:1) where, in the face of official violence a citizen's memory is acknowledged and made known publicly, the ruling elite continued, as before, to stand accused of misrepresentation and the gross distortion of history.<sup>27</sup> The unresolved circumstances surrounding these, and other, deaths threw up contradictions within the liberation war's history. For instance, the families living in Bango chiefdom, south-western Matabeleland, and described by Werbner (1995:107), did not remember the liberation war as a unified or heroic struggle, or even a time of triumph. Their narrative suggests it was more an experience of division, suffering and moral ambivalence, where it was survival itself that was heroic (Werbner 1995:108). The state apparatus seems intent on silencing such disparate memories, just as it is prepared to deprive the coloured community of its war memories, for only certain groups and individuals are credited with 'founding' or 'fathering' the nation, and only this section of society unequivocally belongs. Notwithstanding this, state normalising judgements decree that all the minorities are duty bound to give thanks, for they too have enjoyed liberty and peace brought about by the Heroes' sacrifices.

## White national commitment: the obligation to participate

Although whites debunk the State's official heroism and refused to pay lip-service to memories that were incompatible with their sense of historical truth, the existence and commemoration of historical injustices nonetheless raise the question of their rectification. In this regard, Connerton (1989:9) asks what obligations do those responsible for past injustice have towards others who suffered because of them. What ought they do, he asks, in order for the historical slate to be cleansed of their illegitimate acts (Connerton 1989)? I suggest the ruling elite expected, among much else, the white community, young and old, to support its national events as a token of their loyalty and the new regime's legitimacy. The following statement issued soon after independence and directed to 'white and brown Zimbabweans' indicates the importance the State attaches to the minorities' investment in its discursive formations:

National Days should be observed by all Zimbabweans. They are unitive [sic] days, and in a young country still struggling to crystallise and consolidate its nationhood, they should be taken seriously...it is not

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27 'Opposition urges government to respect unsung heroes', *The Daily Gazette*, 15 August 1994, p. 4.

enough to simply give donations towards national events. Rather there is an obligation [to] experience and concretely share our national oneness [in order] to build a cohesive nation.<sup>28</sup>

A decade and a half later, the same themes continued to be repeated:

Until all the different races in Zimbabwe start paying equal respect to state occasions that are landmarks of our evolution as a nation, the people of this country will never truly believe that they share a common national identity. And without a common identity, the people will never feel they share the same destiny.<sup>29</sup>

Taken together, these statements point to Foucauldian practices of discipline and training that reconstruct and ultimately produce new kinds of people (Rouse 1994:95). Experiencing collective phenomena, which the State articulates in nationalist terms, provides, according to Fanon (1965:155) and Memmi (1965:89), opportunities for colonialists to be liberated from their 'disfigured' and 'oppressive' selves, to develop a 'new consciousness' and thereby form a common bond with their fellow countrymen. Thus, speaking of 'how Zimbabwe was won', Mugabe noted that whites 'had to be fought and won over' through a combination of education and force.<sup>30</sup>

The ruling party also expects children to take part in national events created specifically with them in mind. The President voiced his disapproval of white parents who confined their children to a cultural, political and social laager by not encouraging their attendance, for it was the State's wish that they be socialised in its form of national belonging. Similarly, the Vice-President, Joshua Nkomo, confronted white parents with the prospect of civil strife if their children continued to exclude themselves from 'anything to do with Zimbabwe as a nation'. He asked, '[W]here are your children? Do you want us to fetch them out so that they can participate in national events? They are our children too. There is absolutely nobody who has the right to hide them.'<sup>31</sup> In part, these utterances reflect the notion that children belong not just to their immediate families but to the wider community, and hence all adults have a responsibility to see that children are properly socialised. The President, however, continued, 'they don't want to hear our revolutionary stories, they don't like to be reminded' of the nation's history.<sup>32</sup> They would rather forget than learn from Mugabe as 'the

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28 'National days', *The Herald*, 19 September 1982, p. 4.

29 'Our history still a tale of two cities', *The Sunday Mail*, 16 August 1998, p. 8.

30 'How Zimbabwe was won', *The Sunday Mail*, 16 February 1997, p. 1.

31 'Opt for racial harmony or risk civil war', *The Sunday Mail*, 15 May 1994, p. 6.

32 'How Zimbabwe was won', *The Sunday Mail*, 16 February 1997, p. 1.

father of the nation'; they were not prepared to absorb the elders' wisdom. Yet the word father (*baba*) is 'a heavy word'; it means respect; 'you cannot refuse your father'.

So, in short, white attendance at Heroes and other national days was conceived to be transformative—of decolonisation through familiarisation with another history—and an act of volition by which to become nationals. The white community, however, refused to accommodate the State on this score. They were familiar with the State's public transcript, well aware that the government was 'pushing the idea of one nation' and expected them 'to join the people' and commemorate or celebrate national events. An informant said, 'Mugabe is angry about our lack of involvement and has begun a dialogue with us through the press about it.' Others, irritated by surveillance, complained that politicians and government officials appeared preoccupied with how poorly whites were represented on national days. Countrywide, however, low turnouts are commonplace, for the majority of the black population does not participate.<sup>33</sup> Provincial Heroes' Acres lie in disrepair, lending some currency to critiques referred to above that assert that the war was neither a mass movement nor a peasant revolution (Hudson 1981:205; Kriger 1988:306). Indeed, relatives were not always happy for their loved ones to be interred at these sites, preferring instead to bury their kinsmen at the family homestead where accessibility was assured and the grave could be tended and visited regularly. Alexander et al. (2000:259–61) describe the impossibility and eventual failure of constructing this sort of monument at Pupu in Lupane, Matabeleland. Despite all of this, it was the invisibility of whites that was repeatedly censured in the government-controlled media. In this way, the white community was made the object of a system of knowledge that defined it and was applied to it through discipline. Before considering the narrative consequence of the State's construction of the nation as a community of obligation, I wish to consider some of the ways in which white resistance to discipline was framed.

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33 Despite annual exhortations to 'show solidarity with the fallen heroes' and attend commemorative activities out of 'a sense of national duty' (*Sunday Mail*, 10 August 1997, p. 8), attendance nationwide was generally poor. In suburban Harare, a substantial number of smaller shops opened for business, flea markets were in full swing and weddings were under way during commemorations in the early 1990s. This was also the case in 1996, the centenary of the first *Chimurenga*, and was roundly condemned as 'a national shame' (*Sunday Mail*, 10 August 1997, p. 8). Entries in the Heroes' Acre official register also indicated that, apart from relatives, the majority of those who visited the shrine were school groups and tourists. Questioned about this, a guide indicated his disappointment with Zimbabweans who claimed 'we don't need to come, we know our history, we were part of the struggle'. The appearance of social solidarity was also difficult to sustain on some ceremonial occasions. In 1997, war veterans disrupted proceedings at the national shrine in their campaign for a compensation payout, while in 1998 security forces removed the heroes' widows who were trying to demonstrate their poverty and the government's careless attitude towards them. Yet, from the start, there was little attempt to encourage popular participation in the monument's construction. The design did not originate from local artists but came from North Korea. Thus Heroes' is, in many ways, a failed monument when compared, for instance, with the public's response to the Vietnam War monument described by Rowlands (1996:14–16).

A decade after independence, a returnee wrote of her own weakening sense of nationalism and the experience of her son, who lived overseas. She and her husband emigrated to Australia soon after independence. The following passage, written in reflection on Heroes Day 1989 and some three years after their return to Zimbabwe, began:

My life seems to have been divided into BA and AA—before Australia and after. Before Australia, my pleasure in my home was much more intense. Now it's an effort to remain interested. I do enjoy things aesthetically pleasing, but somehow I feel the circumstances in this country, like impetus, long term involvement, is there any peace for us here? I mean by that the feeling of belonging. We don't really belong any more. Even John, my son, has commented on how strange it is not to feel that one belongs, and that he feels an outsider when observing the pride of other nationalities in their country... Today official statements allude to white and black Zimbabweans. There is no doubt in my mind that the former is not wanted here. Every so often there is a complaint that the white Zimbabweans don't attend the celebrations that include tribal music and dancing. No one ever seems to point out that our cultures differ so widely, and that it's not a slight, it's just too diverse to interest us.

Hers is an instance of identity failure (Gupta and Ferguson 1997a:15). Unable to link up with the anti-colonial rhetoric, she, like many other informants, talked to ethnocentrism. Distancing herself, she pointed out that 'we're not emotionally involved with the liberation movement' and 'it is alien to our culture to attend parades and mass celebrations'. Whites generally claimed that it was inappropriate to attend funerals of people or families they did not know. They invoked cultural incompatibility and a litany of other justifications—the heat, the crowds, the possibility of pickpockets and car thefts—to express their reluctance to participate in any of Zimbabwe's national days. Arguments of this particular cast invoked 'culture' in Said's (1993:xiii, xix) sense of a source of identity 'blind to histories, cultures and aspirations of others'. As a site of political struggle, white invocations had acquired a distinctly pragmatic, defensive purpose, insulating them from the official discourse that took participation to be a measure of their national commitment.

There is, however, another important reason proffered for white reticence. Comment was made in Chapter 2 that authoritarianism was a feature of the Zimbabwean State. Dissent has led to the humiliation and repression of citizens (Jenkins 1997:592). At national events, whites were often targeted for criticism; funerals and public holidays had become a 'time for sniping at whites about the past'. On Heroes Day in 1988, for instance, whites were accused of throwing

'the magnanimous gesture of reconciliation back in the government's face'.<sup>34</sup> The President has also earned a reputation for his outbursts at funerals in language reminiscent of Fanon<sup>35</sup>—for instance, at the incarceration of the forty-third national hero, Comrade Stanford Shamu, who was buried at Heroes' Acre in 1996. On this occasion, the President labelled whites 'enemies [who] deserved to die from a hail of our bullets, your carcasses being thrown to the dogs and vultures'.<sup>36</sup> This was not a narrative of nationhood that the white population was able to invest in. At another funeral a few months' later, whites were again singled out as 'the oppressors of yesterday, they are still oppressors today of our liberated people'.<sup>37</sup> Thus, ceremonial events taking place at Heroes' Acre provided what Falk Moore (1993:2) termed 'summarising occasions' or 'moralising moments'. References to colonial atrocities, adding 'a moral tone to a political position' (Falk Moore 1993), were part and parcel of ZANU PF's discourse regarding how society should be understood and organised.

The President's 'moralising moments' served to construct white identity and strengthened their sense of community. Distinctions made earlier between themselves as liberals or conservatives were put aside or blurred somewhat through the recognition of a common, post-independence oppression. And, while the presence of a Western tourist or hapless backpacker at national functions received extensive media attention, the majority of Zimbabwean whites never, to use their parlance, 'pitched up'. As elsewhere in the world, the message intended by political mobilisers was not always accepted at face value (Falk Moore 1993:1). Mugabe, it was said, was 'playing the white card' for his own purposes. Whites perceived themselves to be demonised in the national narrative, 'rejected' and 'driven into a laager', and remarked that 'the government will have to change its attitude before we are seen at any national events'. Being accused of crimes and publicly stigmatised led them to ask, 'What did we stay in the country for?'

Instead, they left it to their community leaders to sometimes put in an appearance. Senior figures from the CFU, for instance, attended the funeral of popular Zimbabwe Farmers Union President Gary Magadzire at Heroes' Acre in 1996. As the representative of small-scale black farmers and a successful farmer in his own right, Comrade Magadzire spoke not of race but of a community of farmers sharing common interests. 'By working beside each other we can learn,'

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34 'Saboteurs must leave', *The Herald*, 12 August 1988, p. 1.

35 Zanu PF propaganda was also couched in Fanonist language and supported by photographs of colonial atrocities. See, for example, ZANU PF's advertisements in *The Herald* on 12 August 1994, 11 August 1997 and 18 April 1998.

36 'Mugabe castigates whites for spurning reconciliation', *The Herald*, 7 June 1996, p. 1.

37 'President Mugabe, funerals and white oppressors', *Zimbabwe Independent*, 25 October 1996, p. 10.

he said, 'by staying separate we are perpetuating what we fought against' (quoted in Alden and Makumbe 2001:227). Speaking of the CFU's 'oversight' in the early years, an informant said:

[O]nce the CFU realised it was hurtful, a slight, not to show that you identified with the nation by attending the celebrations...once the CFU realised this, then the leaders and the local CFU councillors made it a point to attend with their wives...mind you, it took a few years for them to discover this.

As the government-controlled press would have it, however, it was not until 1997 or thereabouts that CFU officials in the Midlands and Manicaland Provinces made an appearance, in this instance at Independence Day festivities. Local dignitaries praised them, saying 'this marked a turning point in the race relations' and 'a milestone in the country's history'.<sup>38</sup> Editorial comment was not so generous. The farmers were rebuked for not coming of their own volition, but only in response to 'special invitations', which were a reflection of fundamental white difference. Again, whites had been marked out in practice by dis-assimilation and special dispensation where various senior party officials believed they should be issued with orders and instructions, and turned into nationals through the process of social and cultural assimilation. *The Herald's* editorial continued:

The point to deduce from white reticence is that they do not belong. They do not belong and their offspring are made not to belong as well...People should come to the stadium willingly...The independence anniversary is something true Zimbabweans, with a commitment to this country, should feel obliged to participate in. It should be a personal commitment.<sup>39</sup>

Yet the majority of whites had difficulty perceiving the issue in this way. To attend national days would be to assent to, or collude with the State's version of historical truth. The white community was not prepared to concede this. Their counter-discourse rejected their representation as a conquered people and asserted that they did not lose the war on the ground but at the negotiating table. Settlement was 'forced' on them by the international community—in particular Britain, the United States and, ultimately, South Africa. Accordingly, they discounted or made light of national days as 'a black or ZANU PF thing', rituals that the party organised for itself. Nor were white parents prepared to send their children to Mugabe's birthday celebrations, for they considered these to be nothing more than an attempt to promote the party and build a personality cult around the President. Their dismissive remarks did not credit this conflict

38 'It's a turning point', and, 'Governor praises white farmers', *The Herald*, 19 April 1997, pp. 6, 8.

39 'Whites don't need special invitations', *The Herald*, 10 April 1997, p. 8.

with the importance it deserved for, I suggest, the whites generally failed to apprehend its narrative consequences. As indicated above, white participation in national days was taken by the ruling party to be a measure of commitment and a corresponding moral right to belong. In this way, nationalism emerged as a trope for belonging, bordering and commitment (Brennan 1990:47). Having failed, however, to be re-socialised in the State's form of national inclusion and unable to recognise the revolutionary new Zimbabwe as their own, the white community was no longer perceived to be legitimately at home in the territory.

## **National disunity: identification and counter-identification**

At independence, the ruling party took responsibility for keeping alive the memory of those who had died during the armed struggle and recast their deaths as a sacrifice given without accounting for national rebirth. Having delegated itself the custodian of their memory, the party constructed a public transcript out of the civil war that served to support its interests and ideological position, as well as define national membership. The party's Marxist-Leninist rhetoric linked the ruling elite to the peasants and workers as freedom fighters and victors in a revolutionary, anti-colonial war. The civil war memory therefore provided a source of state legitimacy; 'nation' building had established the hegemony of ZANU PF and 'sameness' came to signify unity.

For its transcript to be credible, however, the ruling elite required a show of discursive affirmation from below, a settling of historical accounts through repudiation of the old regime and celebration of the new, a performance of deference and consent in reply to its portrayals of mastery and power (Scott 1990:58). As pointed out above, however, the white community refused to provide an audience to ceremonies that marked their own defeat or offer other symbolic gestures of subordination as the erstwhile colonial enemy. To acquiesce would have been to accept the State's representation of white Zimbabweans as the vanquished and defeated beneficiaries of the unjust colonial regime. Their oppositional stance is an example of counter-identification, of white resistance to the subjectivity imposed on them within the ruling party's discourse (Childs and Williams 1997:195). They rejected the basis of the debate about their identity and the terms of their incorporation. Moreover, white counter-narratives introduced inversions that violated the heroic/sacred character of the new regime and unmasked the State's self-interested production of knowledge. These called into question official realities by drawing attention to instances—for example, the abuse of power in Matabeleland—in which state-sponsored violence contravened the official transcript, and in so doing challenged the validity of the nation's revolutionary new beginning. Minority acts of resistance

and non-compliance not only indicated the white community's sensitivity to the State's national integration project, which they perceived as oppressive, they signalled that the dominance of the ruling elite was nothing more than a tyrannous exercise of power. In this way, the white counter-narrative sought to wrest from ZANU PF some moral high ground and control over the parameters of the debate regarding the nature of a just society. The incapacity of the State to prevail, despite ordering the white presence at national events, was a measure of its weakness. It was neither successful in annexing white loyalties to its symbolic forms of nationhood nor able to compel the white community's acquiescence.

While the official transcript served to affirm the ruling elite, defining the nation by that which it opposed also meant society remained 'haunted' by its 'definitional other' (Welsh 1997:51). The official narrative of the country's rebirth failed to induce a dialogue out of the violence of the colonial encounter. Instead, as the past was interpreted, a pattern of mutual hostility and misunderstanding, of 'schismogenesis' (Bateson 1958:175, 187), was set in train for the future. Here, in cumulative interactions, the personalities of both communities were distorted as each, perceiving themselves as reacting rather than initiating conflict, blamed the other for their discomfort. Their ever-more alienating utterances and gestures described in this chapter built and amplified difference, introducing into the present and future the politics of confrontation and hostility, out of which the old, adversarial categories of colonist and colonised re-emerged, polarised and hardened (Said 1993:19, 21). This process of increasing differentiation or, in Mbembe's (1992:4) words, their 'mutual zombification', robs all parties of their vitality and, in the longer term, offers only a restrictive and embattled vision of Zimbabwe's future. Ultimately without restraint, schismogenesis could lead to either the assimilation or the elimination of one or other group and the breakdown of the relationship (Bateson 1958:183).

## Conclusion

Much of what is officially remembered depends on state decisions about what to record (Hirschkop 1996:v; Lambek 1996:250). In this chapter, attention was directed towards some of the ideas Zimbabwe's ruling elite believed deserved representation at Heroes' Acre, the country's premier monument of nationhood. The cultural work done at the site provided, among other things, the meaning of the war, patriotism and sacrifice and, in the process, nationhood was constituted out of the memory of the liberation struggle. The argument can be made that the war memorial, as a monument to decolonisation, restored black historical identity and asserted nationalist pride in reclaiming the territory—geographically and historically—from the colonists. Perhaps, just as importantly, however, the iconography delineated a core nation, distinct from the population

as a whole, with legitimate claims to ownership and control of the State (Brubaker 1996:5). This comprised the freedom fighters and their supporters, who were tied 'naturally' to the national collective, their membership described with familial tropes. Those who fought for Rhodesia will never belong in the same seemingly natural way. This exclusionary national ideology divided the population into the anti-colonial and the colonial, the deserving and the non-deserving, the indispensable and the dispensable. By this means, the colonial intruder and their supporters are cast outside the national family, set apart from the nation by a politics of difference, for the Heroes' complex also objectifies a system of knowledge that reflects the political elite's ambivalence towards the Matabele 'nation' and denies authorship in its narrative of national liberation to the minority coloured and Asian communities. Consequently, reconciliation, conceived as settling accounts from the past, bringing to an end the cycle of accusation and counter-accusation (Asmal 1997:47), has been denied to many.

Thus the State's discourse employs the civil war memory to establish white identity as 'the alien other' in the national consciousness. The struggle over what is to be remembered is intensified, rather than put to rest, when equivalence continues to be drawn between race and history thereby sustaining colonial subject positions and permitting settlers and their descendants only a few limited ways of being in history. Whites have not acquiesced without complaint. In part, this could be attributed to the inflexibility of colonial attitudes and distaste at their interpellation as a conquered people. Equally, however, a case can be made that they are resisting the hegemony of the State's discourse, its homogeneity and containment. Their marginalisation has been compounded by the State's assimilation project whereby whites are required to assume the views of the political elite. Failing in this resulted in their representation as anti-nationalist with no moral right to belong in the country.

With whites unable to share memories and not permitted a new beginning through forgetting, the question that comes to mind is whether it is possible for them to be incorporated in myths of a common destiny. Although they are denied a creditable position in the State's community of memory, are whites able to belong in terms of having a shared programme to put into effect in the future despite differences of history and race (Renan 1990:19)? Oommen (1997a:19) suggests that citizenship, as another subject position and idiom of belonging, has a role in reconciling these tensions. He writes that, as an instrument of equality and inclusion, citizenship has the capacity 'to provide non-national ethnic and minority populations...with a sense of belonging and security' (Oommen 1997a:28). In this way, citizenship provides a 'partial compensation for their remaining within the state in spite of their different identity from the mainstream dominant nation or nations' (Oommen 1997a). I propose to look at these ideas in the next chapter.