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DID CHILDREN MATTER? : UNPROTECTED CHILDREN IN “PROTECTED VILLAGES” CREATED BY THE RHODESIAN REGIME DURING THE LIBERATION STRUGGLE FOR ZIMBABWE, (1970-1979)

By

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Dedication

I wish to dedicate the thesis to my late father, Fanuel Mazambani. He was a father, teacher, unifier, peace maker and a source of inspiration. May his soul rest in peace. Our lives in the family have never been the same without him. Panopedzamunhuchikoromashokoanowanda.

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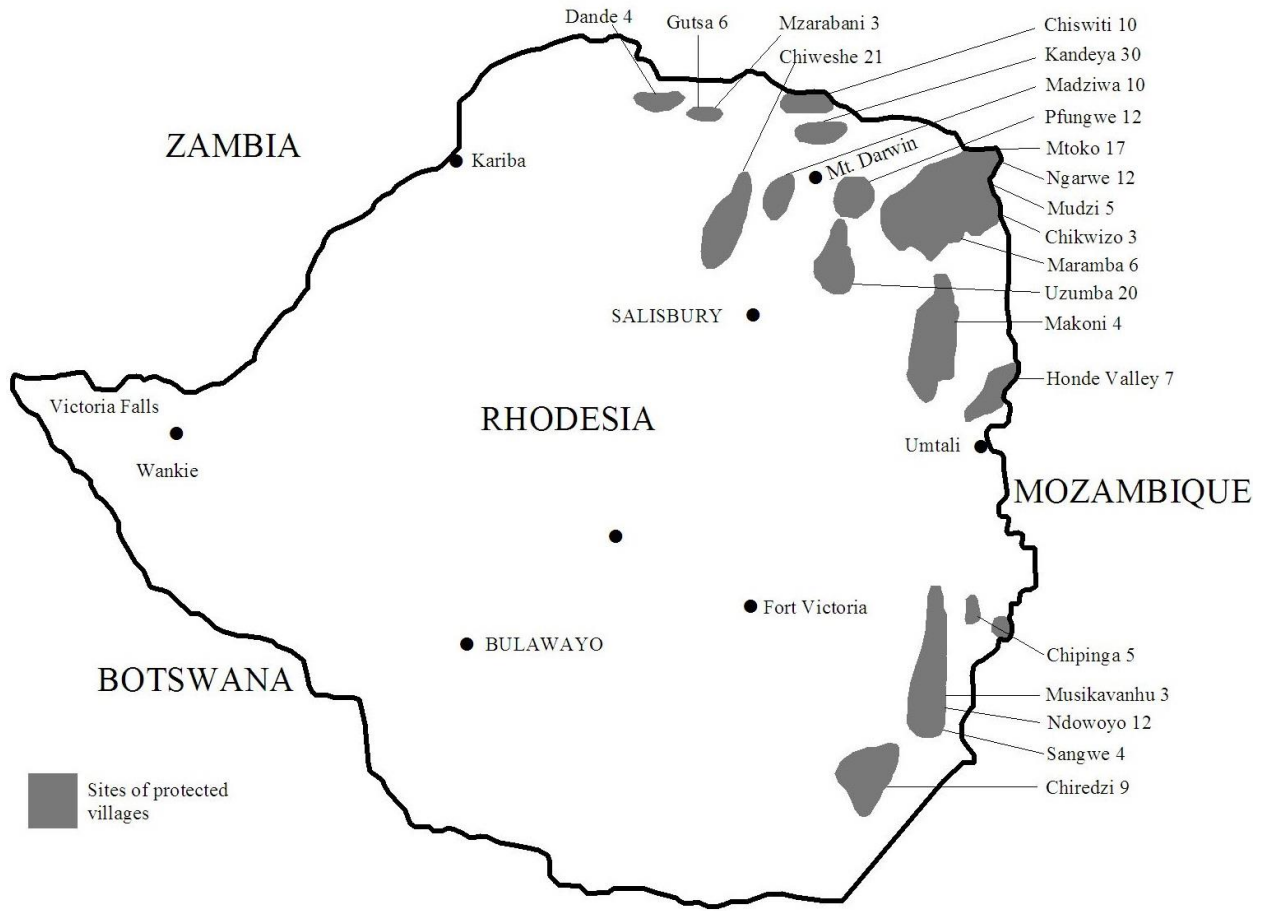
However, I bear the sole responsibility for the opinions expressed, arguments and interpretations raised in this thesis.

ABBREVIATIONS

CID	Criminal Investigation Department
DAs	District Assistants
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
DCs	District Commissioners
CCJP	Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace
CSVR	Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation
GF	Guard Force
HRW	Human Rights Watch
IDAF	International Defense Aid Fund
ISS	Institute of Security Studies
FRELIMO	Front for the Liberation of Mozambique
MCP	Malayan Communist Party
MP	Member of Parliament
MTC	Mkoba Teacher's College
MSU	Midlands State University
PF	Patriotic Front
PTSD	Post Traumatic Stress Disorders
NAZ	National Archives of Zimbabwe
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PVs	Protected Villages
RSF	Rhodesian Security Forces
TTLs	Tribal Trust Lands
ZANU	Zimbabwe African National Union
ZANLA	Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army
ZIPRA	Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army
ZWVA	Zimbabwe National Liberation War Veterans Association

ZEPPDRA	Zimbabwe Ex-political Prisoners, Detainees and Restrictees Association
ZWCA	Zimbabwe War Collaborators Association
STD	Sexually Transmitted Diseases
UZ	University of Zimbabwe
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	The United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund

MAP SHOWING PROTECTED VILLAGES IN RHODESIA.



Source. NAZ, CCJP in Rhodesia, Rhodesia The Propaganda War

ABSTRACT

This thesis provides a historical analysis of the plight of children who were the most vulnerable group and unprotected inside Protected Villages (PVs). It contributes to the historiography of the liberation struggle in Zimbabwe with special focus on experiences of children inside Protected Villages (PVs/Keeps). PVs were first established in 1973 by the Rhodesian Government as a counter-insurgency strategy to isolate the guerrillas. The thesis further unmask the official Rhodesian justification of the establishment of Keeps, captures the African perspectives on Keeps, and articulates the psychological ramifications of life inside Keeps on children and the humanitarian crisis faced by caged children. The thesis is empirically grounded in various case studies of Keeps across Rhodesia. The experience of children inside Keeps remains under-researched in Zimbabwean historiography. The thesis contends that children inside PVs deserve serious historical investigation in order to understand and appreciate the fact that children were not spared by war. The thesis demonstrates empirically that children were military targets and were caught-up in the middle as the Rhodesian regime and the guerrillas used violence and coercion as a military and survival strategy. Keeps exposed children to sexual abuse, diseases, hunger, shortages and other vices associated with horrific conditions inside these punishment enclosures. The thesis is based on extensive oral testimonies of former inmates, archival sources, secondary sources and official Rhodesian sources. The thesis subverts the Rhodesian colonial propaganda that Keeps were established for humanitarian reasons as safe havens which protected children in particular and African people in general. The thesis is anchored in the deconstructive approach. Colonial and nationalist narratives of Protected Villages will be deconstructed and a new narrative by those who were children inside them will be constructed. Primary and secondary sources were used in the construction of this new narrative.

INTRODUCTION

This study takes place at a time when the Security Council of the United Nations (UN) has passed resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security which proclaimed that, “civilians, particularly women and children, account for the vast majority of those adversely affected by armed conflict.”¹ The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) also noted that, “by 1988, the number of Angolan and Mozambican children under the age of five whose lives were lost as a consequence of war and destabilization totaled more people than were killed by atomic bombs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki”² According to UNICEF, “Children are the principal victims of modern warfare. More than 80 per cent of the direct and indirect victims of military action are children and women.”³ This study contributes to the histories of war and children by examining the fate of children who were caught up in violent conflict during the Zimbabwean liberation struggle and were inmates in Protected Villages (PVs) in the 1970s. The establishment of PVs opened the floodgates of children’s rights violations as various political players were engaged in a fierce and bitter political struggle. The plight of children who were inmates in PVs during the Zimbabwe liberation struggle needs to be exposed since they were a major category of victims during the war.

¹ Resolution 1325 of Security Council of the United Nations (UN) on Women, Peace and Security was passed unanimously on 31 October 2000.

² United Nations Children’s Fund, (UNICEF), Children in Southern Africa, New York, UNICEF, 1988,pp. 1-5.

³ Ibid.

The first PVs were established by the Rhodesian regime as a counter-insurgency military strategy in the Zambezi Valley in 1973.⁴ Between 1973 and 1979 several PVs were established in operational areas. (See Map). The forcible removal of the African people from their homes into fenced camps devastated and uprooted many African families. PVs or Keeps were camps surrounded by high security fence topped with barbed wire and floodlights facing outwards to light up the surrounding area where Africans who were displaced through mass population removals were kept. PVs/ Keeps and Consolidated Villages (CVs) served the same purpose of constraining African communities' interactions with the liberation fighters. However, unlike PVs consolidated villages were not fenced. These PVs were manned by regime troops who were based in the sandbagged barracks in the centre of the camp. Rhodesian security agents such as the Guard Force, police, soldiers, District Security Assistants (DSAs) and District Assistants (DAs), controlled the lives and movement of inmates. These security agents had enormous discretionary powers to detain, arrest, punish, and deny entry into or exit from the camp. They also had powers to confiscate, seize or destroy any property or building previously used by Africans in Rhodesian Tribal Trust Lands (TTLs) where PVs were established. Regime forces were empowered to shoot on sight any "terrorists", suspected terrorists or even their supporters. Although all children below the age of eighteen years were not a homogeneous group; their experiences, if put together, and analyzed systematically and historically, prove that the story of the liberation struggle and independence has not been fully told and understood.

⁴ National Archives of Zimbabwe, (NAZ), RH, 08-12-73. The Rhodesian Deputy Minister of Law and Order, De Kook argued that PVs were established so that African families could be evacuated and protected from terrorist attacks. Ronald Sadomba an African Member of Parliament had told the Rhodesian Parliament that the Rhodesian government had established concentration camps or cages in the Zambezi Valley.

The plight of children in PVs has never been a priority of historians. Despite the fact that PVs were used extensively by various colonial governments as a counter-insurgency military strategy, their effects on unprotected children has largely been forgotten. There were many children in PVs across Africa as PVs were established to eradicate African nationalism. According to the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP), in August 1977 there were 203 Keeps and an estimated 580 000 people were in these camps in Rhodesia.⁵ According to official estimates, approximately 750, 000 people were resettled into more than 200 PVs throughout the country between 1974 and 1979.⁶ John Cann noted that, there were 969 396 inmates in 953 *Aldeamentos*/Protected Villages/ Keeps in 1966 in Mozambique and there were over a million Angolans living in 3 000 PVs in Angola.⁷ It is important to note that the majority of inmates in PVs were children and it is unfair to continue to sweep their experiences under the carpet historically. The thesis aims to give the inmates who were below the age of eighteen years living in PVs a voice and a chance to tell their own experiences.

A large portion of history has remained hidden and untouched since the plight of children in PVs has eluded the attention of historians for some time. These children in PVs were forced to take part in politics during the liberation struggle, as *mujibhas*⁸, *chimbwidos*⁹ and were victims and witnessed violence. All went through a period of turmoil and relentless children's rights

⁵ IDAF, IDAF Zimbabwe. The Facts About Rhodesia, IDAF, London 1977, pp. 25-35.

⁶ H. Schmidt, Colonialism and Violence in Zimbabwe. A History of Suffering, James Currey, London, 2013, p.266.

⁷ J.P.Cann, Counterinsurgency in Africa. The Portuguese way of War 1961-1974, Helion and Company Limited, West Midlands, p.159.

⁸ For the purpose of this discussion Mujibhas were young boys below the age of eighteen who were engaged by the guerrillas to perform war related tasks.

⁹ For the purpose of this discussion Chimbwidos were young girls below the age of eighteen who carried out menial tasks assigned by guerrillas.

abuses. The hopelessness of these children, the social wreckage associated with conflict and the economic and social marginalization has not been explored fully by historians. It is, therefore, the objective of this study to contribute to the existing studies on conflict and violence through exposing the impact of liberation struggle and post-liberation violence on children as they are a vulnerable group in Zimbabwe and everywhere in the world.

This study is concerned with one of the neglected themes in mainstream nationalist discourse of the liberation struggle of Zimbabwe, that of Protected Villages (PVs) and the fate of the children. Bhebe, Kriger, Manungo and Nhongo-Simbanegavi have mentioned children in PVs in passing¹⁰. Therefore, the subject of PVs needs to be revisited to fully understand the impact of the liberation struggle on children as a vulnerable group and the effects of conflict and violence on minors. Children below the age of 18 were affected in various devastating ways by the establishment of PVs, yet historians have remained tight-lipped on the subject of their plight. Children in Keeps were not a homogenous group but the fact remains that children as a whole were victims of terror and counter-terror. The study's focus is on investigating the forgotten consequences of conflict and violence on Zimbabwean children who were unprotected in PVs.

What makes this study critical is the fact that children in PVs/Keeps/(CVs), were neglected by the Rhodesian state and were again overlooked by the historians. Bhebe noted that Protected Villages were started in 1973, uprooting peasants.¹¹ He also noted that the Guard Force (GF)

¹⁰ See, N.Bhebe, The ZAPU and ZANU Guerrilla Warfare and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe, Mambo Press, Gweru, 1999. N. Kriger, Zimbabwe Guerrilla War, Peasants Voices, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1992. .D. Manungo, "Surviving in Protected villages during the war of liberation in Chiweshe," A paper presented at the Economic History Conference, UZ, 1997.

¹¹ N.Bhebe, The ZAPU and ZANU, p.33.

abused inmates in various ways.¹² This demonstrates that conditions in PVs were horrible and this laid a foundation for my study.

Kruger also highlighted that PVs were an important counter-insurgency strategy introduced by the Smith regime in Mtoko Tribal Trust Lands (TTLs) to eradicate the spirit of nationalism and the guerrillas. Kruger noted that both the Rhodesian Forces and guerrillas used coercion and violence against peasants.¹³ This observation by Kruger demonstrates that there is a need for a serious study of PVs to document and analyse the effects of violence on vulnerable groups such as women and children who were in Keeps. War spares no one in PVs, but to suggest that the plight and experiences of children were similar to those of other villagers would be a distortion of reality. Children's experiences, because of their inability to protect themselves, differed from those of other villagers. This study, therefore, endeavors to unearth the experiences of the weakest inhabitants of PVs.

Manungo focused on the experiences of peasants in PVs during the liberation struggle. He revealed that peasants continued to support the guerrillas by providing food, clothes, intelligence and moral support, even after being forced into PVs. He noted that there were many children in the PVs in Chiweshe.¹⁴ The problem with lumping children together with peasants is that it trivializes the fate of children under difficult conditions. A publication by the International Defense and Aid Fund for Southern Africa (IDAF) also briefly highlighted the problems faced by inmates in PVs, demonstrating that there is a need to interrogate the plight of children under

¹² Ibid.

¹³ N. Kruger, Zimbabwe Guerrilla War, Peasants Voices, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1992, p. 53.

¹⁴ K.D. Manungo, "Surviving in Protected villages during the war of liberation in Chiweshe," A paper presented at the Economic History Conference, UZ, 1997. See K.D. Manungo, "The Role Peasants Played in the Zimbabwe War of Liberation, with special Emphasis on Chiweshe District" D. Phil, Dissertation, Ohio University, 1991. Manungo lumped together children and peasants, however, the study was very useful in understanding the war situation in Chiweshe.

difficult conditions. It also noted that “conditions inside the camps are harsh.”¹⁵ While the report is enlightening in many respects, it is not a systematic and in-depth study of children in PVs.

PVs were designed to stem the tide of nationalism by cutting off the guerillas from food and shelter and isolating them from the people. This resulted in a protracted and violent contestation between the guerillas and the Rhodesian settler regime as they tried to control and influence the African people. This led to an intensification of militarism and violence which adversely affected children who were caught up in the middle and the crossfire. PVs created humanitarian crises as military concerns took precedence over all other considerations.

In the eyes of children, both guerrillas and settler soldiers’ hands were unclean. Children who were caught up in the middle experienced physical, psychological and social scars, either as victims or as forced participants. The history of PVs, from the reasons for their establishment and to the conditions that prevailed, is a contested terrain, which makes it all the more crucial to examine the experiences of children therein. During the liberation struggle the white minority regime fallaciously argued that PVs were designed to protect defenseless civilians from terrorists and both the colonial print media and electronic media were awash with propaganda material to support that argument. Conditions inside PVs were described from a partisan perspective, making it necessary to offer an intervening narrative. Therefore, this study is an endeavor to unearth previously under-researched aspects of the history of the liberation struggle. There is a need to examine the history of PVs in order to give a more nuanced picture of events in the struggle.

¹⁵ IDAF, Zimbabwe, IDAF, London, 1977, pp. 1-10.

Justification of the Study

This study takes place at a time when:

In recent years, the impact of armed conflict on children has moved to the forefront of political, humanitarian, and academic agendas. The international community have taken several significant steps to address the problem. In 1990, United Nations established the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which contains important provisions for children affected by armed conflict. In 1994, the UN General Assembly commissioned the Machel Study on the impact of armed conflict on children. In 1996, Graca Machel presented a ground breaking report which made specific recommendations for action. Based on Machel's recommendations, the General Assembly created the office of the Special Representative of the Secretary General for Children and Armed Conflict in 1997. This office was commissioned to raise awareness and promote the collection of information about the plight of children affected by armed conflict as well as foster international co-operation to promote and respect children's rights amid such conflicts.¹⁶

Few studies have been done on the impact of political conflict and violence on children in Zimbabwe. Indeed as the nationalist parties struggled for dominance, engaged the Rhodesian settler regime and tried to crush opposition, they engaged in violence whose net impact on children has not been taken into account in existing studies. Children endured different forms of violence including physical, psychological and social wounds of terror as their parents engaged in political contestations and power struggles. Children are defined in this study as anybody below the age of eighteen years. This study is inspired by Graca Machel's argument that:

Millions of children are caught up in conflict in which they are not merely bystanders but targets. Some fall victims to a general onslaught against civilians, others die as part of a calculated genocide. Still other children suffer the effects of sexual violence or the multiple deprivations of armed conflict that expose them to hunger and disease.¹⁷

The fact that scholars acknowledge that children are caught up in conflict makes it important to study their plight in the liberation struggle for Zimbabwe. The use of violence as a political tool

¹⁶ A. Honwana, *The Ethnography of Political Violence: Child Soldiers in Africa*, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 2006, pp. 1-34.

¹⁷ G. Machel, *The Impact of armed conflict on Children*, UN Centre for Human Rights, New York, 1996, pp.1-9.

is well documented by Ndlovu and Sachikonye¹⁸ but its effects on children have not been explored. Ian Smith, whose soldiers and government committed numerous atrocities on defenseless civilians, even boasted that, “the more we killed, the happier we were...”¹⁹ This is as a result of the fact that Zimbabwe has a long record of impunity rather than accountability, planned silence, and forgetting,²⁰ forgetting even child victims during and after the liberation struggle. Children who could not find their rightful place in an environment crowded with vested interests and serious children’s rights abuses executed by state actors were deeply affected by the liberation struggle. Acts of violence and atrocities were not monopolized by the state, as freedom fighters were also participants in the violence. For example, prominent historians such as Bhebe have mentioned the abduction of 280 students in Mount Darwin in July 1973 and the abduction of 500 to 700 of Manama people in passing.²¹ T.O.Ranger also talked of banditry and violence perpetrated by various groups towards the end of the liberation struggle²², but the study only mentioned children in passing. The Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace also compiled a study on the effects of war in the Man in the Middle in 1975²³ but again the focus was not on the fate of children.

¹⁸ S. Ndlovu- Gatcheni, Do Zimbabweans Exist? Trajectories on Nationalism, National Identity Formation and Crisis in a Postcolonial State, Peter Lang, Oxford, 2009, p, 189.

¹⁹ D.B.Scholz, “Robert Mugabe: A Revolutionary or rebel?” in D.Harold-Bary (ed), The Past is the Future, Weaver Press, Harare, 2004, p.28.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ N.Bhebe, The ZAPU and ZANU, p.43 and pp. 171-174.

²² J.Alexander, J.McGregor and T. Ranger, Violence and Memory: One Hundred Years in the Dark Forests of Matebeland, Weaver Press, Harare, 2000.

²³ NAZ, CCJP, The Man in the Middle, Resettlement and Eviction, CCJP, Salisbury, Salisbury, 1975.

The call for research into various issues pertaining to Zimbabwe's political evolution was eloquently made by the first Vice Chancellor of the University of Zimbabwe, Professor Walter Kamba, who noted that:

For us the war is a living reality...we can look back...and ask questions about the effects of the war and its legacy for what has followed for the sake of Zimbabwe's understanding of itself. We need to raise questions about the social conflict during and after the war, about gender, about terror and counter-terror, about mobilization and demobilization, about combatants and ex-combatants, and even about dissidents.²⁴

Therefore, this study is partly a response to this call, and my entry point is through children as victims of terror and counter terror.

Conceptual Framework

This study situates the issue of the impact of conflict and violence on children within the wider fields of conflict studies and vulnerability discourse. Children like women and the elderly, constitute a vulnerable group in society that falls easily into victim-hood in times of political strife and violence. The idea of being caught in the middle of a conflict is very relevant towards the understanding of the impact of conflict and violence on civilians and vulnerable groups. Zimbabwean historians have not explored the harm that conflict and violence has done on children and thus have neglected them in their studies. Many seem to forget that war spares no-one, and by far the most affected are children. Under difficult circumstances and in situations of conflict, children as the weakest of the weak lacking the ability to protect themselves, are the most vulnerable group. It is both a moral and a legal crime to make children victims of any kind of political violence. Therefore, no violence targeted towards children can be justified.

The thesis focuses on the experiences of children in PVs during the liberation struggle for Zimbabwe. It conveys the experiences of children who lived and survived the war. It centers

²⁴ N.Bhebe and T.Ranger, (eds),Society in Zimbabwe's Liberation War, Vol 2, University of Zimbabwe,1995,p.1.

primarily on children who were in PVs: sexually abused girls and those who were infected with Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs), girls who were made pregnant by both Rhodesian soldiers and guerrillas, boys who were used as *Mujibhas* and messengers and other children who were caged in PVs. However, it also discusses children who were psychologically and physically affected by the war situation living in Keeps. The thesis makes six main arguments: (1) children who survived the war inside the Keeps has largely been forgotten by historians; (2) PVs were established by the Rhodesian government for military reasons and children in PVs were unprotected; (3) although children in PVs were not a homogenous group, they generally had a negative attitude towards PVs; (4) both female and male children in PVs faced specific problems which affected them because they were children and they also faced gender specific problems; (5) organized violence by both Rhodesian forces and guerrillas tremendously affected child inmates in Keeps; (6) there were numerous humanitarian problems faced by children in Keeps.

What makes this research important is the fact that children's physical and psychological scars sustained during and after the liberation struggle have not healed, and many have not forgotten their horrible experiences. The lack of rehabilitation and treatment of children's physical and psychological scars remained with them, many years after their experiences in the war of liberation. Capturing the history of children affected by violence and conflict is a step towards documenting and recovering histories of marginalized voices, which is a step towards restoring peace and promoting the future development of a peaceful nation. It is a fact that children who are socialized into democratic and tolerant behaviour are the foundation of an orderly and peaceful society.

This research mainly focuses on power relations which determine whose voice and opinions are recorded, who has power to speak on behalf of others, who is marginalized or silenced. It is a fact that the destructive legacies, the terror, the war time acts of violence and the violation, the spiritual and psychological effects of the liberation struggle on children have been forgotten and neglected in historical accounts of the struggle for this country. The employment of children's rights as an analytical tool enables this study to grapple with the liberation struggle from a non-partisan perspective.

It will be historically interesting to analyze whether the liberation struggle proved to be meaningless and a nightmare to children in PVs. To many children, the Zimbabwean liberation struggle was associated with death, violence, homelessness, starvation and pain.²⁵ To children who were victimized by both the state and guerrillas, these opposites were two sides of the same coin. Many analysts who have focused on the effects of the liberation struggle in Zimbabwe mainly looked at the causes of the conflict and generalized its effects and have altogether ignored the plight of the weakest members of every society. Children have been lumped together with peasants, villagers or women, but there is a need to disaggregate these categories in order to come up with more of a nuanced analysis of events in the liberation struggle.

Violence has many devastating physical and psychological effects on children. Victims of violence typically experience non-specific somatic effects such as stress, headaches, joint and abnormal pains. As Children as victims, children may also sustain brain injury, paralysis, fractures, traumatic stress disorders and many other psychological and physical effects. What

²⁵ Many children who were in Keeps during the liberation struggle for Zimbabwe either experienced violence or witnessed violence. See J.Alexander, J.McGregor and T.O.Ranger, Violence and Memory One Hundred Years in the "Dark Forests" of Matabeleland, James Currey, Oxford, 2000, pp. 10-80, who pointed out that Zimbabwean nationalism turned out to be authoritarian rather than emancipatory.

makes this research pertinent is the fact that there was no “Truth and Reconciliation Commission”, like the one established in South Africa, which gave victims a platform to share their war time experiences. It is important to note that children in PVs were tremendously affected by their experiences but the fact that these were children who were robbed of their childhood needs no emphasis. These were children who were displaced violently into PVs through violence and forced to witness and to experience war time violence. Honwana says that:

Children at war find themselves in an unsanctioned position between childhood and adulthood. They are still children, but they are no longer innocent; they perform adult tasks, but they are not adults. The position of guns and a licence to kill remove them from childhood. But child soldiers are still physically and psychologically immature; they are not full adults who are responsible for themselves. They live in the twilight zone where the two worlds of childhood and adulthood rub against each other in ... uneasy intimacy²⁶

Theoretical Framework

This thesis is predicated on a deconstructive approach to the study of colonial and nationalist narratives on PVs. Both colonial and nationalist historians wrote on PVs to advance their political ideologies and agendas. The approach involves the deconstruction of dominant colonial and nationalist discourse and critiquing their ideological motivations on writing the history of the liberation struggle for Zimbabwe and PVs. The versions of these two dominant groups were readily produced, reproduced, legitimized and circulated. The deconstructive approach enabled me to construct a new narrative which Vesser calls “new historicism”²⁷ Master narratives and singular versions of the liberation struggle for Zimbabwe will be deconstructed. Vesser noted that, “new historicism” took the form of rejection of universalizing

²⁶ A. Honwana, *The Ethnography of Political Violence: Child Soldiers in Africa*, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 2006, pp. 1-34.

²⁷ H.A. Vesser, *The New Historicism*, Routledge, London, 1989, pp.1-9.

theories of causality and recognition of ideology as all pervasive in the depiction of reality and truth. “New Historicism” enables one to rewrite and reinterpret recorded histories of the elite.²⁸

New Historicism will enable me to deconstruct grand master narratives of the liberation struggle for Zimbabwe. Colonial historians and officials believed that the colonial government was justified in establishing PVs. The history of PVs was politicised. In the same vein, nationalist narratives were also largely biased in addressing nationalist values and narratives of the elite nationalists. These two narratives were by and large singular versions of history. This thesis is theoretically anchored on new historicism which seeks to rewrite and reinterpret the history of the liberation struggle.

Colonial historians were themselves often colonial sympathizers and therefore they mainly viewed PVs as humanitarian centres established to assist Africans who were troubled and harassed by terrorists during the liberation struggle for Zimbabwe. They sought mainly to justify the establishment of PVs and advance the argument that the African people and children were protected and safe inside PVs. Children who endured and survived horrible conditions inside PVs. This study is an attempt to construct a history of the inmates and mostly for the inmates who were below the age of eighteen years.

Deconstruction in this thesis is also used to expose the atrocities perpetrated by Rhodesians and guerrillas on inmates who were children in PVs. Rhodesian security agencies were regarded as philanthropists by colonial historians. Guerrillas were considered to be politically “righteous” by nationalist historians. Ndlovu-Gatsheni defines deconstruction as “a way of revealing inherent incoherencies and instabilities within the Zimbabwean national project that made it prone to

²⁸ Ibid.

crises, contestations and violence.”²⁹ Nationalist historians such as Ranger and Bhebe, mainly focused on the heroic aspects of the liberation struggle for Zimbabwe. Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni argues that nationalist historians were “too close” to the cause of nationalism and they produced “praise texts” in the service of official nationalism.³⁰ They produced heroic narratives of the liberation struggle and neglected the experiences of children who were vulnerable, defenseless and exposed to both regime and guerrilla forces. This study attempts to break the tradition of focusing on “big men” by unpacking the war time experiences of children.

Deconstructing colonial and nationalist narratives enabled me to construct the history of Zimbabwe and the liberation struggle from the angle of children who were caught-up in the middle. It will be demonstrated that the past means different things to different people and similarly Zimbabwe meant different things to different historians and to children and adults. The study gives a platform to children who have been marginalized by historians for a very long time as there is very scanty literature on the experiences of children during the liberation struggle for Zimbabwe.

Although this thesis is not the first deconstruction project of the liberation struggle, it shifts the angle of analysis and brings out neglected aspects of the liberation struggle. N. Kriger is one of the earliest historians to break the celebratory tradition of nationalist historians when she highlighted guerrilla violence and coercion.³¹ J. Nhongo-Simbanegavi and T. Lyons³² also

²⁹ S. Ndlovu- Gatsheni and W. Williams, “Reinvoking the Past in the Present: Changing Identities and Appropriations of Joshua Nkomo in post-Colonial Zimbabwe,” LSE Research Online, p. 1-10. See, S.Ndlovu-Gatsheni, *The Zimbabwean Nation-State Project: A Historical Diagnosis of Identity and Power- Based Conflict in a Post- Colonial State*, Discussion Paper 59, Nordiska, Uppsala, 2011.

³⁰ S.J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni, *Do Zimbabweans Exist? Trajectories of Nationalism, National Identity Formation, and Crisis in a Postcolonial State*, Peter Lang, Oxford, 2009, p. 1-10.

³¹ N. Kriger, *Zimbabwe’s Guerrilla War. Peasant Voices*, Baobab Books, Harare, 1995, p.147. T. Lyons, *Guns and Guerrilla Girls. Women in the Zimbabwean Liberation Struggle*, Africa World Press, Trenton, 2004, p. 1-20.

demonstrated that the guerrillas were not political saints as portrayed earlier by nationalist historians such as Bhebe and Manungo. The two scholars revealed that the guerrillas used violence, coercion and violated the rights of young girls and peasants during the time of the liberation struggle. Ndlovu-Gatsheni also deconstructed the Zimbabwean liberation struggle³³

Eleanor O' Gorman also provided an interesting piece of work on women in PVs in Chiweshe. She deconstructed colonial and nationalist myths about women and the liberation struggle for Zimbabwe. She provided an "alternative narrative and the revolutionary war that halts the pendulum of fighters and victims"³⁴ In the same vein the study provides children with an opportunity to narrate untold stories about the war and life in Keeps. The deconstruction approach enables me to theorize children's experiences, unpack and explore their plight as they survived the war of liberation. The thesis intends to focus on the plight of children because sources on African and Zimbabwean history have been silent on children who were affected by conflict. This is despite the fact that UNICEF in 2006 highlighted that, "Conflicts in the last decade have killed 2 million children and have left another 6 million disabled, 20 million homeless and over 1 million separated from their parents."³⁵

This thesis is informed by the emergence of "new historicism" which deconstructed master narratives and singular versions of history.³⁶ My aim is to deconstruct colonial and nationalist

³² J.Nhongo- Simbanegavi, For Better or Worse? Women and ZANLA in Zimbabwe's Liberation Struggle, Weaver Press, Harare, 2000, p.112. T. Lyons, Guns and Guerrilla Girls. Women in the Zimbabwean Liberation Struggle, Africa World Press, Trenton, 2004, pp. 1-20.

³³ S.J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni, Do Zimbabweans Exist?, pp. 1-20.

³⁴ E. O'Gorman, The Front Line Runs Through Every Women. Women and Local Resistance in the Zimbabwean Liberation War, Weaver Press, Harare, 2011, p.7.

³⁵ <http://www.google.co.zw>. Children and war. (Accessed 14-01-15)

³⁶ S. Ndlovu- Gatsheni and W. Williams, "Reinvoking the Past in the Present: Changing Identities and Appropriations of Joshua Nkomo in post-Colonial Zimbabwe," LSE Research Online, p. 1-10. See, S.Ndlovu-

discourses on Keeps and thereby critique the ideological motivations of willing scribes whose versions were designed to win arguments and political struggles. Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni says that, “after deconstruction, the new historicist rebuilds on the platform of a new alternative story of history. One that advocates for justice, empowerment, tolerance, inclusivity, plurality and social change.”³⁷ This approach enables me to capture “subjugated knowledge of the poor, the marginalized, excluded ... voices”³⁸ of inmates of Keeps who were children during the liberation struggle for Zimbabwe.

Thesis Goals and Research Questions

This study seeks to provide a historical analysis of the plight of inmates of PVs who were below the age of eighteen in various PVs in Rhodesia. Using case studies across Rhodesia the thesis has the following objectives:.

- (a) To examine the reason behind the establishment of PVs in Rhodesia.
- (b) To demythologize colonial mythologies on the establishment of PVs.
- (c) To analyze African perspectives on PVs.
- (d) To examine the psychological effects of PVs on child development.
- (e) To document the humanitarian problems faced by child inmates of PVs.

To achieve these objectives the thesis is informed by a set of research questions which include those listed below:.

- (1) How were children affected by the establishment of PVs?

Gatsheni, *The Zimbabwean Nation-State Project: A Historical Diagnosis of Identity and Power- Based Conflict in a Post- Colonial State*, Discussion Paper 59, Nordiska, , Uppsala, 2011.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ M. Foucault *Power / Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings*, Pantheon Books, 1980 Cited by S. Ndlovu- Gatsheni and W. Williams, *Reinvoking the Past in the Present: Changing Identities and Appropriations of Joshua Nkomo in post-Colonial Zimbabwe*, LSE Research Online, p. 1-10.

- (2) What was the Rhodesian official version of the establishment of PVs?
- (3) What were the African narratives and testimonies of life in the Keeps?
- (4) What were the psychological effects of PVs on children?
- (5) What were the humanitarian problems faced by child inmates of PVs?

Literature Review

The liberation struggle and independent Zimbabwe have attracted a great deal of research interest. What is disturbing is that even some nationalist historians of the war of liberation and independent Zimbabwe neglected children who were negatively affected by conflict. Biographies by participants during the struggle such as J. Nkomo,³⁹ and N.Sithole⁴⁰ record an element of bitterness and highlight the power struggles that characterized the liberation struggle for Zimbabwe but the plight of children was not their priority. Some classic works on the Zimbabwean liberation struggle and independent Zimbabwe highlighted some aspects of the liberation struggle such as violence and use of commandist tactics employed in Zimbabwean politics. A book edited by Canan Banana⁴¹ overlooked children and their experiences in the liberation struggle Ranger concentrated on peasants⁴², Bhebe on “big men” such as Burombo and Muzenda. Bhebe also wrote on political movements, militaries and ideologies of the liberation struggle but unfortunately ignored the issue of violence and its impact on children⁴³. The gender

³⁹ J.Nkomo, Nkomo: The Story of my Life, Methuen London, London, 1984

⁴⁰ N.Sithole, African Nationalism, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1959. See Sithole, Roots of Revolution: Scenes from Zimbabwe, Oxford University Press, 1970.

⁴¹ C.Banana,(ed),Turmoil and Tenacity: Zimbabwe 1890-1990,College Press,Harare,1989

⁴²T Ranger, Peasant Consciousness and Guerrilla War in Zimbabwe, Zimbabwe Publishing House, Salisbury, Harare, 1972.

⁴³N.Bhebe, The ZAPU and ZANU Guerrilla Warfare and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe, Mambo Press, Gweru, 1999, p.113.

dimension of the plight of children in PVs was not a priority for nationalist or even gendered historians. Nationalist historians such as N. Bhebe, only mentioned problems faced by teenage girls in PVs in passing, pointing out that:

The protected villages were guarded by a Guard Force of 7,000 men, the majority of whom “were disparagingly referred to by the other (military) units as being the dregs of society,” because of their immoral and licentious manner of living. They robbed, raped and savagely treated the inmates of the villagers, whom they were supposed to protect.⁴⁴

Bhebe highlighted some very important points which demonstrate that inmates of PVs were living under horrible conditions. It will be demonstrated in this thesis that many girls were raped by the DAs and subjected to horror and extreme suffering. Therefore, Bhebe provokes the need for further research and this is a starting point. D .Martin and P. Johnson concentrated on nationalist rhetoric and the plight of children was not their priority.⁴⁵

Norma Kriger, a revisionist scholar, also mainly concentrated on peasants and children in PVs were not her priority. Kriger highlighted that, “over and above resources pressures on peasants, a combination of guerrillas and counter-insurgency strategies also deprived parents of ... public transport, marketing, cattle dipping, clinics and schooling for their children.”⁴⁶ Therefore, there is need to examine how the closure of schools in PVs affected children and altered gender relations and lives in TTLs. The transformation of the traditional set-up resulted in the creation of new values guided by military considerations. Therefore, there is need to examine how patriarchal values were affected and whether this had an effect on the status and position of

⁴⁴Ibid.

⁴⁵ D. Martin and Johnson, The Struggle for Zimbabwe, Zimbabwe Publishing House, Harare, 1980.

⁴⁶N. Kriger, Zimbabwe’s Guerrilla War. Peasant Voices, Baobab Books, Harare, 1995, p.147.

the female and male child. It will be demonstrated that the closure of schools and clinics had devastating consequences on inmates and children in PVs.

Norma Kriger's intervention on gender issues during the liberation struggle for Zimbabwe is very important for my study. She highlighted that, "During the war, women had roles as fighters, educators in the refugee camps, providers of food and shelter for the guerrillas and *chimbwidos* or female youths."⁴⁷ This goes a long way in demonstrating that Zimbabwean nationalists maintained gender discrimination and domestication of women during the liberation struggle. Kriger did well by questioning the official line, which tends to glorify commitment to gender transformation. She noted that, "Female participation during the war in roles from which they are normally excluded is not sufficient evidence of changing attitudes to women." She also pointed out that "... leading "comrades" thought they were entitled to the services of women." and that "Guerrillas themselves fathered many children during the war."⁴⁸

Kriger did well by demonstrating that the liberation struggle was not a platform for gender transformation and that women were subjected to discrimination, domestication, abuse, exploitation, coercion and exclusion. However, she turned a blind eye to the abuses of women by colonial officials especially in PVs. She also conflated women and teenage girls in her analysis yet women were not children and children were not women during the liberation struggle. Children faced many problems which were unique to them. Therefore, my study is an attempt to break new ground and assist in demonstrating that the liberation struggle for Zimbabwe affected different people differently and also affected male and female children differently.

⁴⁷Ibid.

⁴⁸Ibid., p.194.

Janice McLaughlin mentioned in passing that conditions were deplorable in PVs. She pointed out that:

Intended to isolate the nationalist guerrillas from rural population, this counter-insurgency measure resulted in thousands of peasant families being moved into guarded settlements where they lived in poor crowded conditions ... and where they were harshly treated by camp guards.⁴⁹

To merely mention that inmates of PVs were “harshly treated by camp guards” without further elaboration, clearly demonstrates that the plight of children and other inmates in PVs need to be further investigated. The harsh treatment which the inmates were subjected to needs documentation to expose the atrocities and crimes against humanity and children committed by Rhodesian colonial officials.

Weinrich was also not concerned about problems faced by children in Rhodesian “Concentration camps.” She took reports of several violations lightly. Weinrich noted that:

Several district assistants have not been slow in making use of their power. The most frequent accusations raised against them concern their sexual demands on young women in camps. Complaints of this nature have been made so frequently to my research assistants that this hearsay evidence cannot be brushed aside as being totally unfounded. Since district assistants are assigned to the keeps without their families, they are forced to lead bachelor lives. I have received several oral reports in which fathers and husbands, who defended their women against district assistants, were accused by these of having helped guerrillas. Cases of this nature seldom come to courts because of fear of greater suffering inflicted on the aggrieved families.⁵⁰

Weinrich makes a number of critical and questionable conclusions. It needs to be noted that the DAs were not “using their powers”, but abusing their powers. To say that they used their powers implies the justification and naturalization of the misuse of power. She also pointed out that there

⁴⁹ J. McLaughlin, On the Frontline. Catholic Missions in Zimbabwe’s Liberation War, Baobab Books, Harare, 1998, p.23.

⁵⁰ A.K.H Weinrich, “Strategic Resettlement in Rhodesia,” Journal on Southern Africa Studies, 1976, pp. 206-211.

were “accusations” raised against the DAs about their “sexual demands.” To say there were accusations complicates matters. I am not sure whether Weinrich wanted to physically and personally see women being raped by the DA. She also seems to be dismissive of the evidence and calls it “hearsay evidence.” Rape by its nature is a horror story told by traumatized victims and it is not up to historians to dismiss it or accept it. She also seems to be justifying the barbaric tendencies of DAs by claiming that the DAs were forced to live “bachelor lives.” Even if the DAs lived bachelor’s lives they had no justification whatsoever to rape young girls and women in Keeps. She also failed to follow-up on cases in which husbands of tormented inmates and victims were falsely accused of being terrorists by assisting guerrillas. All this demonstrates that there is need for historical focus on these so-called hearsay stories.

It is also important to note that even some prominent historians like T.O. Ranger failed to break the pattern of neglect of gender issues especially with regards to female children in PVs. Ranger pointed out that:

Men... who were used to controlling a flock of dependent women... now found that the initiative had passed to young men with guns. These young men called upon the unmarried women of Makoni to act as their cooks, informants and messengers and in these latter two roles, teenage girls were able to exercise a good deal of power, for the first time in Makoni’s history.⁵¹

It is surprising that Ranger decided to ignore some fundamental problems faced by children because of the war situation in Rhodesia. To claim that “teenage girls were able to exercise a good deal of power for the first time in Makoni’s history” is a failure to appreciate the difficulties and challenges brought by the establishment of PVs and the war situation. The loss of power over the control of teenage girls by men did not directly lead to the empowerment of these

⁵¹T.O. Ranger, Peasant Consciousness and the Guerrilla War in Zimbabwe: a Comparative Study, James Curry Ltd, London, 1985, p.207.

girls. The control of women was never eradicated but the sources of power changed hands. Teenage girls were now controlled, manipulated and abused by young men with guns. Patriarchal powers simply changed hands from older men in Makoni to armed young men. The coming of the liberation struggle did not necessarily open a window of opportunities for women and teenage girls. Teenage girls in Makoni were presented with new challenges and problems brought by the war situation. Therefore, the life, status and position of women in general and teenage girls in particular, were worsened by the establishment of PVs and did not improve when PVs were established in Makoni.

Ranger also argued that “both young men and women abused their position ... by cohabitating without approval from their parents ...”⁵² It is important to note that this observation provides a starting point and it is an eye opener in many respects in this study. However, as much as I concur with Ranger, I think that it is important to note that these relations and the cohabitation reveals deep seated gender problems faced by teenage girls in a conflict situation. My entry point is that the cohabitation and sexual indulgence were not romantic escapades by young girls, but were affairs of convenience and survival. These teenage girls had no powers over their affairs and were subjected to abuse, rape and forced prostitution. War time affairs were coercive affairs and not romantic affairs. Graca Machel captures this vividly by pointing out that:

In armed conflict, girls and women are threatened continually by rape, mutilation, violence, sexual exploitation and abuse. The dangers lurk in all settings, whether at home, during flight or in camps for displaced persons. Sexual violence, including rape, is any act of a sexual nature committed under coercive circumstances.⁵³

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ G.Machel, The Impact of War on Children C. Hurst and Company, London, 2001, pp. 2- 10.

Teenage girls were subjected to sexual exploitation inside PVs. Therefore, it cannot be argued that women or girls accumulated power inside PVs. PVs made teenage girls more vulnerable and exposed them to sexual exploitation.

Nhongo-Simbanegavi provided a starting point in understanding gender specific problems which women faced during the liberation struggle and in PVs. She dismissed the traditional myth that, ZANU and ZANLA supported gender equality during the liberation struggle. She castigated claims of gender equality as “official propaganda” and “misleading data.” Importantly, Nhongo-Simbanegavi also noted that:

Apart from the shortage of food, reports of young women being raped by guards abounded. Concern was expressed of the PVs fostering a culture of loose living amongst the youth, giving rise to chronic sex-related diseases.⁵⁴

Nhongo –Simbanegavi also provided a new dimension of the liberation struggle by focusing on women’s experiences, but again children and women were discussed together yet these terms cannot be conflated.⁵⁵ This demonstrates that there is need for rigorous historical focus of PVs, especially on young children who faced gender specific problems. Although she highlighted some main problems faced by children in PVs, it is critical to note that the so-called loose living was not responsible for the rise of STIs. There were other more important factors than this.

⁵⁴ J. Nhongo- Simbanegavi, For Better or Worse, Weaver Press, Harare, 2000, p.112. See an article by J. Nhongo-Simbanegavi, “Gender and nationalism: The case of Zanla” in T. Ranger, The Historical Dimensions of Democracy and Human Rights in Zimbabwe. Volume Two: Nationalism, Democracy and Human Rights, University of Zimbabwe Publications, Harare, 2003, pp. 77-100. Also see T. Lyons, Guns and Guerrilla Girls. Women in the Zimbabwean Liberation Struggle, Africa World Press, Trenton, 2004. Lyons provides the view that women were abused and suffered tremendously in Liberation war Camps and such experiences were excluded from mainstream nationalist representations of women in war. This provide a starting point for neglected narrative of the liberation struggle for Zimbabwe.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

Lan also provides another interesting piece of work on the liberation struggle. He believed that the liberation struggle was sanctioned, legitimized and guided by spirit mediums. Lan romanticized the liberation struggle by arguing that:

These guerrillas, all the residents of Dande – Korekore, Tanda, Chikunda and Dema – the poorest peasants and those who farmed about fifteen hectares, the school teachers, the shopkeepers, the mothers, the young women who disappeared and returned as armed fighters, the widows, the young children organised in their mujiba platoons, the elders, the headmen, the healers, the mediums of those and all other ancestors, united in opposition to conquering whites...”⁵⁶

Lan presented a unified, cohesive homogeneous struggle which relegated gender, ethnicity, generation, class, past and present to the periphery. Lan also however, turned a blind eye to gender specific problems faced by women and young girls as he believed that the sexual codes prescribed by medium spirits were religiously followed and that there was always harmony, peace, love, respect and tranquility because of the metaphysical nature of the liberation struggle. However, he provides a starting point in reconstructing the liberation struggle using gendered lenses. He argued that women were denigrated and humiliated by ritual taboos such as the banning of eating food prepared by menstruating women or pregnant women and the banning of people seeing menstrual blood.⁵⁷ Such prohibitions exposed women in various ways and negatively affected the lives of teenage girls who found themselves ostracized and isolated during their menstrual periods.

O’Gorman provides a basis for gendered analysis of life in PVs. She captured narratives of women who were inmates in PVs in Chiweshe. She pointed out that:

⁵⁶ D.Lan, Guns and Rains, Guerrillas and Spirit Mediums in Zimbabwe, James Currey, London, 1985, pp. 10-42.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

Voice is central to the methodology of writing about women's experience and agency in what was simultaneously a revolutionary, libationary, liberation, anti-colonial, civil, guerrilla and counter-insurgency war, particularly rural women who are still the lifeblood of their communities. Each has a story, a life and voice that is rarely heard or recognised. The testimonies of women from Chiweshe form the basis of the story to be told here. The use of their testimonies is a political act, seeking to empower and give space to women's voices; to allow women to bear witness to their own experiences, however inarticulate or contradictory they maybe compared to other sources such as archives, canonical historical works and organised perspectives.⁵⁸

In the same vein, each child who was in a Keep has a story, a life, and a voice that is rarely heard or recognised. They are subalterns whose voices are muffled. This study seeks to empower and give space to inmates who were children a voice and allow them to bear witness to their own experiences

This thesis is also informed by the study of violence by Heike Schmidt, which provides a basis for the study of how unarmed civilians are affected by violence in times of conflict. The focus on how children were affected by violence during the liberation struggle for Zimbabwe is an extension of studies on violence and civilians. Schmidt pointed out that:

The villagisation programme was the most drastic counter-insurgency measure the government adopted vis-a-vis the civilian population during the liberation war. It caused tremendous suffering and is an example of the creativity of violence, with frontier people having to adapt to forced conditions.⁵⁹

A report by the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace in Rhodesia defied all odds and broke the silence on victims on violence.⁶⁰ From the report it is clear that civilians who were caught in the middle deserve historical focus and attention.

⁵⁸ E. O'Gorman, The Front line Runs Through Every Women. Women and Local Resistance in the Zimbabwe Liberation War, James Currey, London, 2011, p.8.

⁵⁹ H. Schmidt, Colonialism and Violence in Zimbabwe. A history of Suffering, James Currey, London, 2013, p.266.

⁶⁰ NAZ, CCJP, Man in the Middle, CCJP, London, 1977.

Radical scholars concentrated on issues of democracy and human rights within the liberation movements. Ndlovu-Gatsheni concentrated on power struggles and the human rights dimension of the liberation struggle.⁶¹ Masipula Sithole focused on struggles within the liberation struggle.⁶² Raftopoulos specializes on workers and nationalism as well as democracy and human rights.⁶³ However, all these neglected the plight of children in PVs during the liberation struggle for Zimbabwe.

Frantz Fanon, a leading scholar on the decolonization process demonstrated that the decolonization process was characterized with violence against civilians and this caused mental disorders. He graphically captures the effects of the Algerian war on civilians who were tortured and harassed by colonial forces.⁶⁴ According to Fanon women were raped, humiliated and dehumanized by French soldiers. He also noted that the colonial forces committed mass murders and all this had horrific implications on the victims and witnesses. The book proved to be an “important handbook”⁶⁵ for my study.

Extant literature on child soldiers across the African continent provide vital background information. Honwana provides a detailed account of war and children in Mozambique and Angola. He noted that, “Children’s involvement in armed conflict is not a

⁶¹ S.Ndlovu, “Imperial hypocrisy, Settler Double Standards and the Denial of Human Rights to Africans in Colonial Zimbabwe” in N. Bhebe and T. Ranger, (eds) The Historical Dimensions of Democracy and Human Rights, U.Z. Publications, Harare, 2001. Also See S.Ndlovu, Dynamics of the Zimbabwe Crisis in the 21ST century, and African Journal on Conflict Resolution, vol.13 Number 1, 2003, pp.99-108.

⁶² M .Sithole, Zimbabwe: Struggles with-in the Liberation Struggle, Rujeko Publishers, Harare, 1979.

⁶³ B. Raftopolous and S. Yoshukuni, (Eds) Sites of Struggle: Essays on Zimbabwe Urban History, Weaver Press, Harare, 2000.

⁶⁴ F.Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth. The Handbook for the Black Revolution that is Changing the Shape of the World, Grove Weidenfeld, London, 1968. Fanon captures the problems faced by Algerian children during the decolonisation process.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

recent phenomenon. In the past, young people have been at the forefront of political conflict in many parts of the world, even when it has turned violent.”⁶⁶ According to UNICEF:

An estimated 120,000 of the 300, 000 children worldwide fight in armed conflict in Angola, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Ethiopia, Liberia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Sudan, and Uganda. Some children are recruited, others are abducted, and yet more are recruited once their caretakers have been abducted or their family structures have been broken down.⁶⁷

This shows that the absence of literature on Zimbabwean children during the liberation struggle needs historical attention and this thesis is such an attempt. This demonstrates that testimonies of children who were uprooted by war or even by PVs deserve scholarly attention. Honwana noted the following about experiences of children in armed conflicts:

Children are caught up in armed conflict in whole host of ways. Often, those who manage to avoid becoming soldiers are maimed or killed in attacks on civilian areas. Children are separated from their parents, orphaned, uprooted from their communities ... Those children who remain in the war zones are subjected to various forms of violence and exploitation. Some are injured by landmines while playing or working. Children are turned into spies or gunrunners, or they work as guards, cooks, cleaners and servants in the military camps. Particularly damaging is for future generations is the impact of war on girls. Disadvantaged even in peace times, girls experience sexual abuse, rapes, enslavement, and other tribulations during war. Children witness terrible atrocities and suffer from trauma. Children are deprived of education and basic healthcare. Wars and other forms of armed conflict have profound and lasting effects on young people.⁶⁸

Christine Ryana’s book on child soldiers in Sudan is another interesting piece of work which provided background information on children and war in Africa. She explored Southern Sudanese children’s experiences during wartime. She provided a platform for children who

⁶⁶ A. Honwana, *The Ethnography of Political Violence: Child Soldiers in Africa*, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 2006, pp. 1-34.

⁶⁷ UNICEF, *The State of World’s Children*, UNICEF, London, 1996, p. 1-10.

⁶⁸ A. Honwana, *The Ethnography of Political Violence*, pp. 1-34.

participated in war and had an uncaptured narrative.⁶⁹ Lessons were drawn from her research as she noted that, “The experience of being a child soldier is something that continued to live with the interviewees, it does not go away at 18 nor does their need for support.”⁷⁰ This demonstrated to me that the horrors children witnessed and experienced during the liberation struggle did not go away at 18, it is something that continued to live with the former inmates of PVs.

Stephen Achilihu also noted that worst forms of child labour such as child prostitution and child soldiers were highly prevalent in wars that occurred in Angola and Benin. He summed up this by saying:

Apart from enlisting them as direct combatants, both government and armed groups use children as messengers, lookouts, porters, spies able to enter small spaces, and even use them as suicidal bombers, and human mine detectors. Children are forced to kill or are themselves killed, sexually assaulted, raped, forced to become wives of commanders and are exposed to drugs and forced labour.⁷¹

Peter Eichstaedt also noted that, in Uganda children have been turned into deadly killing machines. He says, “Joseph Kony and his cult-like army of child killers terrorised the local population.”⁷² These children were initiated into deadly fighters by forcing them to kill their family members first. Such sadistic practices were designed to make these child killers heartless. It will be demonstrated in the thesis that the Rhodesian soldiers used such tactics during the liberation struggle for Zimbabwe.

⁶⁹ C. Ryana, Children of War, I.B. Tauris Co Ltd, London, 2012, p.34.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ S. Achilihu, Do African Children Have Rights? Universal Publishers, Florida, 2010, pp. 211-213.

⁷² P. Eichstaedt, First Kill Your Family: Child Soldiers in Uganda and the Lord Resistance Army, Chicago Review Press, Chicago, 2013, pp.1-12.

There is a lot of literature on the plight of children in conflict situations across the African continent. The abuse of girls is well documented. Ann- Charlotte Nilsson captures the horrible experiences of children in DRC, Burundi, Palestine, Lebanon, Israel and Nepal. She says that in all conflict situations:

The depth of the problems that children are faced with every day created deep-seated emotional consequences that affect the behaviour of the children in fundamental ways. To live in a context of fear and chaos and to see family and friends die leads to a lot of confusion for children because they live with the fear and confusion that they do not understand.⁷³

Human Rights Watch (HRW), noted that, in Mozambique, girls were often victims of sexual abuse by government forces.⁷⁴ Girls as young as thirteen became porters, camp followers and sexual servants of UNITA in Angola. They rendered sexual services and many were abducted for the primary purpose of serving as “wives” to the male soldiers.⁷⁵ The HRW also concluded that, during the genocide in Rwanda, more than 5, 000 women many of whom were adolescent girls, were impregnated through rape. HRW also documented the widespread use of sexual violence and abuse of girls in Uganda and Sierra Leone.⁷⁶ All this demonstrated showed that the history of the liberation struggle needs to be revisited by capturing narratives from those who were child inmates as children affected by conflict in other countries have been given a platform to tell their war time stories.

⁷³ A. Nilsson, *Children and Youth in Armed Conflict*, Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, Boston, 2013, p.3. See F.Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth. The Handbook for the Black Revolution that is Changing the Shape of the World*, Grove Weidenfeld, London, 1968. Fanon captures the problems faced by Algerian children during the decolonisation process.

⁷⁴ HRW, *Forgotten Fighters, Child Soldiers in Angola*, HRW, New York, 2003.p.5.

⁷⁵ ⁷⁵ A. Honwana, *The Ethnography of Political Violence: Child Soldiers in Africa*, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 2006, pp. 1-34.

⁷⁶ HRW, “We Will Kill You if You Cry” *Sexual Violence in the Sierra Leone Conflict*, HRW, New York, 2003.

HRW, *Stolen Children: Abduction and Recruitment in Northern Uganda*, HRW, New York, 2003.

There are plenty of scholarly works on the subject of counterinsurgency. David Galula made a huge contribution in the understanding and theorizing of the concept of counterinsurgency. He argues that a successful counterinsurgency operation should be based on Mao's idea that, "The people are the sea in which the revolution swim."⁷⁷ He prescribed four laws for counterinsurgency, namely, gaining the support of the population, gaining support of the neutral population, efficient protection of the population and driving away the armed group.⁷⁸ However, as much as Galula provided some interesting lessons for the Rhodesian government, the Rhodesian regime mainly used classical theories of counterinsurgency which were mainly "population centric"⁷⁹ and "enemy centric."⁸⁰

David J. Kilcullen also provided a counterinsurgency model based on three pillars, namely, Security, Political and Economic pillars. He says that these pillars are of equal importance and are critical in creating stability.⁸¹ It will be demonstrated that, the Rhodesian regime did not make any efforts to secure the population, mobilise support and offer development assistance.

Therefore, I find it imperative to examine how PVs affected the lives of male and female children. This is in order to avoid generalization as all children were affected negatively, but their experiences were not homogeneous. While it is undisputed that the villagisation programme caused extensive suffering to the people inside the Keeps, it is important to note that its impact

⁷⁷ <http://www.google.co.zw>. David Galula, Counterinsurgency Warfare. Theory and Practice, 1964 also David Galula, Pacification in Algeria, 1963, Accessed 12-01-16.

⁷⁸ Ibid

⁷⁹ "Population centric" classical theory of counterinsurgency advocates that, "First control the population and all else will follow."

⁸⁰ "Enemy centric" classical Theory of Counterinsurgency says that, "First defeat the enemy and all else will follow."

⁸¹ www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/uscoin/3 pillars of counterinsurgency, Accessed 12-01-16.

on the lives of children caused tremendous suffering and hence every child who experienced violence has a story to tell, a story of violence, exploitation, brutality, and displacement. That story forms the basis of my thesis.

Methodology

This qualitative study is primarily based on oral testimonies, archival sources and desk top research. The approaches enabled me to interrogate different narratives from the Rhodesian government, guerrillas, ex-inmates and children who were inmates in PVs during the liberation struggle for Zimbabwe. As I conducted my research I realised that PVs meant different things to different people, as the government and colonial historians argued that they were sanctuaries of protection while the inmates and nationalist historians considered them as sanctuaries of misery. The different interpretations given demonstrated Luise White's point that historical events are perceived differently by different people. She noted that, "historians and activists do not give all historical accounts equal weight or equivalent readings"⁸²

Many written documents from a number of scholars proved to be useful in the writing of this thesis. I first consulted written sources by colonial historians and officials. Colonial discourse was designed to mask and disguise the terrible plight of inmates of PVs in general and children in PVs in particular and the reasons behind the establishment of PVs. I also consulted works by various nationalist scholars, who again proved to be "willing scribes" by only focusing on the positive aspects of the armed liberation struggle. The different interpretation given to PVs by the Rhodesian government officials, journalists and colonial historians on one side and the

⁸² L. White, The Assassination of Herbert Chitepo. Texts and Politics in Zimbabwe, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, pp.1-10.

other one given by nationalists and nationalist scholars proved that these were written by partisan scholars with different agendas. History written from a political perspective is mostly characterised by flawed and dubious interpretations to buttress political interests. After consulting various sources, I realised that those who were children in PVs have an untold story which deserves serious historical analysis. This was also highlighted by Luise White who concluded that:

I am hardly the first historian to point out that an event takes on different meanings over time even a very short time to the different, sometimes opposing, groups who claim the event as part of their history ... Not everyone is included in historical texts, let alone when those texts are joined together to make a narrative of the past. But the very messiness of the live past ... means that all that has been omitted has not been erased. The most powerless actors left traces of themselves in contemporary accounts ...⁸³

I also consulted secondary sources from various libraries from the Midlands State University (MSU), the University of Zimbabwe (UZ), Mkoba Teachers College (MTC), the National Archives of Zimbabwe (NAZ), and personal libraries of friends and colleagues. The secondary sources demonstrated that children's voices were largely neglected and forgotten when the history of this country was being written and discussed.

Archival sources at the Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU PF) Archives based at the ZANU PF Headquarters in Harare and at the National Archives of Zimbabwe (NAZ) were largely critical in any study of the plight of unprotected children in Rhodesian PVs. The two archives were by and large the most important repositories of information on PVs. The two archives also were unique in the sense that the information on PVs was largely produced by warring parties engaged in bitter war and demonising each other. Colonial sources glorified and cherished the establishment of PVs on one hand while nationalist

⁸³ Ibid.

sources denounced them and labelled them as concentration camps. Thus, demonstrating Paul Cohen's point that there can be "real competition"⁸⁴ between political and historical texts which claim to represent the past.

Archival research at the NAZ provided a good starting point through accessing and examining official sources produced by the Rhodesian government. Reports by various government departments and officials such as Ministers and District Commissioners (DCs) were vital in providing propaganda and colonial discourse designed to portray Keeps in good light. Government sources give the impression that PVs were humanitarian centres to assist the African people besieged by terrorists. The colonial officials claimed that the African people were clamoring for Keeps and salvation from the government. The Rhodesian Herald was largely used by colonial officials to perpetuate colonial myths on PVs. The newspapers projected the official attitude of the government towards PVs. The NAZ also provided reports by international organisations such as the International Defense Aid Fund (IDAF) and the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP), who produced a different version from the official propaganda. These reports provided rich and critical views on PVs.

At the ZANU PF Archives there is a large chunk of uncatalogued and poorly preserved documents and reports by guerrillas who were operating in various areas across Rhodesia where PVs were in place. Some of the reports documented hardships which were largely faced by peasants inside PVs and cases of abuses of women by District Assistants (DAs). There were also reports on cases of the brutalities and violence perpetrated by the Rhodesian Security Forces on the African peasants. The reports by guerrillas mainly highlighted the evils committed by regime

⁸⁴ P.Cohen cited by L. White, The Assassination of Herbert Chitepo. pp. 1-10.

forces and how the guerrillas tried to alleviate the suffering of the inmates by either trying to prevent the people from moving into PVs or by destroying PVs. The guerrillas also dismissed colonial sentiments that PVs were established for humanitarian reasons as they portrayed them as part of a military strategy to isolate the guerrillas and cut the umbilical cord which existed between the people and the guerrillas. Narratives by guerrillas proved vital in the sense that these were completely different from sentiments expressed by colonial officials. The major objective of this thesis is to capture the testimonies of those who were child inmates in PVs. The narratives told in this thesis are stories of inmates who were children in various PVs across Rhodesia during the time of the liberation struggle who were relegated and neglected by colonial and nationalist historians.

This is an attempt to capture the voices of those who witnessed the destruction of their homes and were victims of forced evictions, violence and a war they little understood and had no vested interest in. Children's differentiated experiences in keeps across the country, enriches this thesis in many respects. PVs in Rhodesia were theatres of war, where war was experienced, witnessed and affected the lives of defenseless children. There were lots of informants in all areas where PVs were located and this in a way showed that this was historically new area. I started working on the topic in January 2011, when I was awarded a Research Grant by the Research Board at the Midlands State University. My intention then was to capture the plight of children in one of the chapters of my original broadly titled proposed thesis on children caught-up in political contestation in colonial to post-colonial Zimbabwe.

I began field work after visiting key offices and obtained written permission authorising me to conduct my research. Although most informants were helpful and willing to share their experiences, there were incidents when some political activists disrupted my schedule by cross

examining me for long periods and at times only wanting to demonstrate how powerful they were or wanting me to buy them some beer. Letters I obtained from MSU, the Zimbabwe National Liberation War Veterans Association (ZNLWVA), the Zimbabwe Ex-political Prisoners, Detainees and Restricttees Association (ZEPPDRA), the Zimbabwe War Collaborators Association (ZWCA) and ZANU PF were useful as most informants were at first wary of sharing their experiences with a stranger. At times interviews were delayed but such inconveniences were inconsequential compared to the suffering inmates endured in PVs.

Over 160 interviews were conducted in Chiweshe, Madziwa, Honde Valley, Chiredzi, Mount Darwin, Mrewa, Mtoko, Chipinge, Harare and Gweru. In areas where PVs were located fifteen ex-inmates were interviewed as follows: five females and five males who were below the age of eighteen in 1973 when Keeps were established and in 1979. The majority of the informants were people who were born in the 1960s who were below the age of eighteen years when they were driven into Keeps. I then went-on to interview five people who were adults at the time when they were in Keeps. Most of the people who live in areas where Keeps were established were inmates and identifying informants was not difficult at all. I largely made use of local leaders in various villages, who in most cases were helpful in many ways. They provided me with food, accommodation and research assistants. Informants were chosen randomly using the stratified random sampling methodology. The snow-ball sampling methodology was also used which enabled interviewees to direct me to other key informants. Although most informants were largely at liberty to narrate their experiences, mostly they were nervous and evasive when it came to issues with regards to guerrilla-female inmates relations. Some interviewees were willing to use their real names while anonymity and confidentiality were guaranteed through the use of pseudonyms for others.

Not only was the collection of testimonies important for the project, but in many instances informants were emotional and eager to tell their stories, to vent out the anger and the pain they suffered in Keeps. The collection of testimonies was self-empowering through giving space to former young inmates who have largely not been heard. These voices allowed them to bear witness to their own experiences and also challenge the colonial myths and stereotypes about PVs. The Oral testimonies of inmates who were the most vulnerable group provided a rich historical map of children's experiences during the liberation struggle for Zimbabwe. These narratives were unique, new and informative. The more I listened to the experiences of children who were victims of colonial terror and brutality, the more I became emotionally attached to it. The testimonies were different from one individual to another and diverse.

Although the oral testimonies were real life, they were subjected to many challenges. The stories, interpretation, perceptions and analysis of lives in PVs were influenced by a number of factors. These included the political climate, the perception the informants had about the project and the researcher, the ability and willingness to recall events and the experiences the informants went through in the last thirty five years after the war. Informants had to remember and reconstruct their experiences in retrospect. This was one of the major challenges in collecting these testimonies but I treated the accounts with the same weight and respect. However, the narratives remained valuable and the thesis gave the informants a chance to capture a lost history and narrative of children and war. It was an opportunity that demonstrated that children who were in PVs had a story to tell, a story of violence, destruction and a life filled with hardships. I also conducted the research after consulting various works on children and war. Alcinda Honwana had a point of advice for me. She pointed out that:

Children frequently change their narratives. They may say one thing one day, and the next day they may tell another story entirely, which makes it difficult for the researchers to establish the truth or more precisely, to decide which version of the narrative to adopt. For this reason researchers must develop skillful ways of cross-referencing children's testimonies...⁸⁵

There were minor misunderstandings in some areas on the selection of informants as some informants who were not children during the Keep days felt left out. The problem was more prevalent in Mrewa and Madziwa. Some suspected that the information was going to be used for compensation purposes and only the interviewed people were going to be awarded compensation. The situation was worsened by the fact that I only had limited tapes and questionnaires. I had to send one of my research assistants to make more photocopies of the questionnaires. Some people unfortunately believed that their stories were going to be used for commercial purposes or sold to Western governments to demonise guerrillas. Others believed that the information was going to be used to attract potential donors for funding projects. Although this motivated many to develop the willingness to participate in the project, it was unfortunate that this was done for wrong reasons.

Dissertation Layout

This thesis has been structured into six chapters which are arranged thematically rather than chronologically for various reasons in order to capture the plight of victims of state sponsored and designed violence endured by inmates in PVs who were below the age of

⁸⁵ A. Honwana, The Ethnography of Political Violence: Child Soldiers in Africa, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 2006, pp. 1-34.

eighteen. This approach enabled me to capture oral history and analyze it and compare the lives of inmates from different Keeps dotted across Rhodesia. This approach also demonstrates that the number of children who were inmates in Keeps varied greatly from the time these were established to the time they were disbanded. It will be demonstrated that the children who were inmates of Keeps increased as the racist Rhodesian regime increased the number of Keeps from 1973 to 1979. This study relies on oral history of child inmates from across Rhodesia to avoid regionalizing problems faced by children as if war affects children in different regions differently. Although the number and age, experiences and memories varied in different Keeps, the thematic approach enables me to tackle them holistically. It should be noted that the approach has many advantages but according to T.O. Ranger, it obscures periodization.⁸⁶

Chapter One focuses on the history of PVs and the liberation struggle for Zimbabwe. The chapter demonstrates that the existing historiography of the liberation struggle has largely neglected the plight of children or lumped children with women although they had different experiences. Chapter one demonstrates that the narrative of those who were children in PVs has largely not been prioritized by historians of the liberation struggle for Zimbabwe.

Chapter Two analyzes the Rhodesian official mind on PVs. It demonstrates that the concept was borrowed from Malaya and these were used by various colonial governments across Africa to suppress and arrest the growth of African nationalism. Keeps were established in Algeria by the French. They were also used to fight African nationalism by the Portuguese in

⁸⁶ I.Mazambani, "Women Political Imprisonment, Detention and Restriction in Southern Rhodesia, (1959-1980)" B. A Honours, Dissertation, UZ, 1999.

Angola and Mozambique. It demonstrates that the Rhodesian government used propaganda, draconian laws and psychological warfare to justify the establishment of Keeps.

Chapter Three focuses on African voices from Keeps and their perceptions on PVs. During the colonial period African voices on PVs were silenced and historians also neglected a large chunk of history from PVs. Although all children were negatively affected by Keeps, their individual experiences differed and this had a bearing on their perceptions. This chapter demonstrates that colonial narratives were biased and not testimonies of children. The majority generally displayed anger and hatred towards PVs. Those who were victimized by both Rhodesians and guerrillas had a confused perspective.

Chapter Four analyzes the experiences of children from a gendered perspective demonstrating that male and female children were affected by PVs differently. Female and male children faced gendered specific problems. This chapter proves that teenage girls faced gender specific problems which tremendously haunted them. It also be proved that male children were not spared as they faced numerous problems in Keeps.

Chapter Five captures the psychological effects of PVs on children demonstrating that the age of children tremendously affected their experiences. This chapter proves that children were subjected to psychological torture, sexual torture, deprivations, insecurity, physical torture, etc All this had disastrous consequence on child inmates.

The last chapter proves that children in PVs faced many problems because basic conditions for human survival were absent in Keeps, clearly indicating that these were not established for humanitarian reasons but for military reasons. This chapter demonstrates that children in PVs

had no access to basic needs such as food, clean water, sanitation and accommodation. All this put together shows that Keeps were “man-made hells” for child inmates.

CHAPTER ONE: HISTORIOGRAPHY OF THE LIBERATION STRUGGLE IN ZIMBABWE AND THE NEGLECT OF CHILDREN'S EXPERIENCES

Introduction.

This chapter aims to demonstrate that the plight of children who were inmates in Rhodesian PVs were largely forgotten by historians. Most historians were influenced by their own political ideologies and their experiences. It will be demonstrated that colonial historians such as Coenraad Brand wrote history on PVs from a colonial perspective. Nationalist historians such as Bhebe were influenced by many factors and the plight of children was not their primary concern, Manungo, Maxwell and Ranger were mainly concerned with Zimbabwean nationalism. Revisionist scholars such as Kriger mainly focused on deconstructing nationalist rhetoric and the liberation struggle for Zimbabwe. Gender historians such as Eleanor O’Gorman, mainly focused on the experiences of women rather than children. Military historians such as Cillers, Ellert, Paul Moorcraft and Peter McLaughlin, were more concerned about the military aspect of PVs as a counter- insurgency military strategy. Participants in the liberation struggle such as Sister Aquina H.K.Weinrich and Fay Chung, also provide interesting views on the liberation struggle for Zimbabwe from an insider perspective. International organizations such as IDAF and CCJP also provided some very critical information on the historiography of the liberation struggle for Zimbabwe. It should be noted that these broad categories are only applicable for the purpose of this discussion at hand. Historians have failed to break the pattern of neglect as children deserve special historical attention for various reasons. They constitute the most vulnerable group in times of conflict as they do not have the capacity to defend themselves. Children are only victims in conflict situations as they do not harbor any political ambitions and do not have the capacity to

control the political process. It should to be noted that children's participation in conflict situations is not by design or by choice but is a result of violence and coercion. It will be demonstrated in this chapter that the study on children in PVs is an uncharted area in terms of serious historical attention. This thesis wishes to shift the angle of analysis of PVs and focus on the plight of children. This is an attempt at capturing the memories of violence from witnesses and participants of the liberation struggle. This also demonstrates that the story of the liberation struggle and PVs is incomplete without capturing the memories of children.

1.1 Children, Colonial Historians and Protected Villages Numbering not proper.

Colonial historians, officials and administrators glorified the establishment of PVs. The history of PVs was written from a Eurocentric perspective to justify their creation. The reasons for the establishment of PVs were mainly portrayed as humanitarian as PVs were said to have been created to assist people who were occupants and to protect them from terrorists. Security reasons were also advanced. The reasons advanced by colonial officials and historians were mainly designed to depict the colonial government as a benevolent government, yet PVs were designed for military reasons and not to assist the African people or children.

Coenrad Brand who was a lecturer at the University of Rhodesia is one classic example of a colonial historian. He wrote a paper on PVs in 1978, which is very fascinating for a number of reasons. It was written by a Rhodesian historian at a time when PVs were introduced across Rhodesia. Brand believed:

... that villagisation does not so much represent a radical innovation to cope with rural subversion, or a copy of models developed but elsewhere, as a development and adaptation of familiar means of controlling and manipulating the black population. Specifically, that it represents the extension and "refinement", albeit in a harsher form as

can be expected in a war situation, of a well-trying institution of the industrial or urban compound. .”¹

He also attempted to deny the fact that as a counter-insurgency strategy PVs were derived from Malaya, Vietnam and the Portuguese. He says, “... the way in which it has been implemented and run suggests that its particular form has been derived from local experience”.² What is disturbing about his views is his desire to justify the establishment of PVs. To him herding people into fenced paddocks like animals was justified in a war situation. He also wanted to exonerate the colonial government by arguing that, “The decision to proceed with villagisation in a particular area has usually been taken by the responsible Joint Operations Command Centre, which coordinates the security efforts of the different military and para-military forces in that part of the country”.³ He believed that the resettlement was well planned after a survey of the population and livestock. He argued that, “From the start, however , local administrative, agricultural and other technical staff had to be involved in investigating the suitability of water, soil characteristics , division of local community ... and so on”.⁴ He also pointed out that the army provided transport and ensured that the operation went off smoothly. In this case Brand wanted to give PVs a “human face” by projecting it as a well-planned operation meant to provide a better life for the Africans. He also was economic with the truth about the role of the army in

¹ C. Brand, “From Compound to Keep: On the Nature of Settler Control in Southern Rhodesia,” A paper presented at the Research Committee on Ethnic, Race and Minority Relations 9th World Congress of Sociology, Uppsala, Sweden, 14-19 August, p.2.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

the process of the establishment of the Keeps.⁵ The Rhodesian army frog-marched Africans into Keeps and the whole process was associated with violence.

Brand argued that PVs were planned at the local level. However, these were planned at the national level “As part of the Defence Plan”, as pointed out by Jack Mussett, the Minister of Internal Affairs, who noted that, “it was decided at national level to resettle the African people of certain areas into protected villages planned”.⁶ Mussett also proved that Brand’s assertion that PVs were planned and implemented by local experts and government officials was myopic. He turned a blind eye on the problems associated with PVs by noting that, “These temporary disadvantages must be balanced against the overriding advantage of being able to live in comparative safety...” He also admitted that PVs were associated with hardships when he noted that “I will not try to pretend that the exercise has been without hardship or difficulties for the African men, women and children”.⁷ This observation by a Minister of Internal Affairs proved to be more convincing and academic than the views by Brand from the University of Rhodesia. Brand was correct on saying that coercion was the foundation of Keeps. At the same time he became apologetic by attempting to legitimize and justify the use of force. He argued that, “Given these war situations it is not surprising that Keeps were founded on coercion “. Brand also admitted that, the Rhodesian administration used various “means of mass coercion at its

⁵ Ibid

⁶ NAZ, Rhodesian Herald, 23-05-77

⁷ Ibid

disposal”.⁸ However, Brand was also evasive in many respects. He believed that PVs had the development potential as “future growth points”.⁹

Brand also showed his sympathy towards the Rhodesian regime and Keeps by concluding that, “From a strictly military view point it has been successful to some extent”.¹⁰ He ignored the fact that many PVs were constantly attacked by the guerrillas and that guerrillas moved in and out of PVs, a clear indication that they were not a success story. PVs were ultimately disbanded and the colonial regime was defeated indicating that the regime’s military strategies proved ineffective. PVs also failed to stop the African people from supporting the liberation struggle and also created more enemies of the regime. Therefore, colonial historians like Brand wrote the history of PVs from a colonial perspective to justify their establishment and also portray them as humanitarian centres to assist children in Rhodesia, yet in reality they were a humanitarian disaster of major proportions in terms of the plight of children.

Colonial historians wrote positively about Keeps and believed that the African people had a positive attitude towards them. John Cann, a Portuguese colonial historian, believed that the Portuguese counter-insurgency counterinsurgency was successful in a number of ways and that the “terrorists” were badly affected by them. He wrote that:

Accusations that the *aldeamentos* program in Mozambique was not successful overlooks its primary thrust. The regrouping of the population was very inconvenient for the terrorists in that their access to it was restricted. Every effort was made to preserve the local pattern of life, and the construction of huts and other habits of the population were

⁸ C. Brand, “From Compound to Keep,” p. 7.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

disturbed as little as possible. Such issues as rape, and other abuses were no greater or lesser in the *aldeamentos* than elsewhere.¹¹

However, he deliberately ignored the fact that FRELIMO ultimately won the war in Mozambique, demonstrating the failure of Portuguese military strategies. There were also no efforts made to make Keeps comfortable or to preserve the way of life of the inmates. Issues of sexual exploitation increased tremendously inside the *aldeamentos*. These forced removals were not in any way the regrouping of the people, it was callous, evil, brutal and heartless. To suggest that it was the regrouping of people is to portray the forced population movements as a peaceful relocation. It was a violent exercise in which violence was state-manufactured, sponsored and organized. It is critical to note that colonial historians wrote the history of PVs within colonial discourse designed to portray Keeps positively.

1.2 Nationalist Historians, Children and Protected Villages

Nationalist historians such as Bhebe, Ranger, Manungo and Lan wrote history of PVs from a nationalist paradigm. Ngwabi Bhebe a leading historian on the liberation struggle focused on PVs as a military counter-insurgency. He argued that PVs were not established to help the African people and for humanitarian reasons, a point which is useful in demythologizing the colonial perception of PVs. Bhebe pointed out that Smith's security forces wanted to flush or wipe out the guerrillas and the peasants who supported them, writing that, "In 1973 the regime grew even more ferocious in its treatment of the peasants, particularly in the Chiweshe communal area ..."¹² However, he only mentioned in passing, overcrowding, lack of sanitation

¹¹ J. P. Cann, Counterinsurgency in Africa. The Portuguese Way of War 1961-1974, Helion and Company Limited, West Midlands, 1997, p.160.

¹² N. Bhebe, The ZAPU ad ZANU, p.43.

and health facilities, and that children and babies were wiped out by outbreaks of cholera and measles.¹³ Although he mentioned that rural peasants were uprooted by Protected Villages and that colonial officials abused inmates, his focus was not on children. Bhebe's intervention is however, crucial as he laid the foundation for further research and is an eye opener in many respects.

Terence Ranger also emerged as one of the prominent historians on the Zimbabwean liberation struggle. He wrote a book on peasant consciousness and the liberation struggle in Zimbabwe. Ranger mainly focused on the role of the peasants as a unified class and the importance of the "peasant- guerrilla ideology" for mobilization and strategic purposes.¹⁴ Ranger also noted that women participated in various ways during the war in Makoni, but his focus was not on children in PVs. Peasants, women and children were discussed together in what he calls "collective action and collective suffering of peasants and guerillas." Although children were not his focus, Ranger highlighted some very important aspects of the liberation struggle in Zimbabwe such as indiscipline, banditry and violence perpetrated against the peasants.¹⁵ My study seeks to reveal the effects of violence perpetrated against children during the guerrilla war in PVs. Ranger focused on the Zimbabwe liberation struggle as remembered and told by peasants rather than children.

David Lan focuses on the role of spirit mediums in the Dande TTLs during the liberation struggle for Zimbabwe. He touched on the collaboration between ZANLA guerrillas and medium

¹³ Ibid

¹⁴ T. Ranger, Peasant Consciousness and Guerrilla War in Zimbabwe: A Comparative Study, Zimbabwe Publishing House, Harare, 1985, p.180.

¹⁵ Ibid. p.182.

spirits which legitimized the guerrilla cause in the eyes of the peasants. The link between the land, the ancestors and individual is also highlighted. He says, “A strong bond exists between the individuals and the territory of their ancestors... Home for the living is essentially the home of the dead. Life is good if you live where your ancestors lived before you.”¹⁶ My study on displaced children in Keeps benefited tremendously from Lan’s assertions as they help in explaining the resistance against PVs by the peasants. Lan’s study brings into focus the metaphysical aspect of the liberation struggle. Although he captures gender discrimination against pregnant and menstruating women in the operational areas, he tends to romanticize such practices as coming from the ancestors.¹⁷ The study is critical in understanding the plight of inmates of PVs at the hands of the guerrillas and the Rhodesian Security Forces. The study also informs my research on the reasons why children were easily mobilized and were prepared to kill in the name of the war. He points out that, spirit mediums legitimized and justified the killing for a good cause.¹⁸ Manungo also mainly focused on the role of peasants who were inside PVs during the liberation struggle for Zimbabwe. He argued that the peasants never looked back in supporting Zimbabwean nationalism even when they were in PVs.¹⁹ Manungo lumped children, women and men together. By so insisting, he dilutes attention on the unique experiences of each group.

¹⁶ D.Lan, Guns and Rains: Guerrillas and Spirit Mediums in Zimbabwe, California University Press, Berkeley, 1985, pp. 70- 120.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid. p148.

¹⁹ K.D. Manungo, “The Role Peasants Played in the Zimbabwe War of Liberation, with special Emphasis on Chiweshe District” D. Phil, Dissertation, Ohio University, 1991.

D. Martin and P. Johnson also touched on PVs as one of the measures put into place by the Rhodesian government as a military strategy to destroy Zimbabwean nationalism. They argued that PVs were introduced with new biting pieces of legislation that legalized the destruction of cattle, crops, clothes, homes, pots and pans.²⁰ However, the plight of victims of these measures in general and children in Keeps in particular was not their focus.

1.3 Revisionist Scholars, Children and Protected Villages

Norma Kriger also mentions PVs in her book in passing. She noted that, the first Keeps were established in Mtoko Tribal Trust Lands and that these disrupted farming activities leading to malnutrition.²¹ It is important to note that children are the most affected victims when there is a food crisis. Therefore, my wish is to extend the focus on critical points captured by Kriger. Her intervention in this case is very important. It is interesting to observe that the activities of government forces and counter insurgency measures and guerrilla activities contributed to food shortages. It is also worth mentioning that Kriger attempted to break the pattern of neglect on children by citing a grade seven boy during the war who recalled the guerrillas saying, “Parents do not worry about killing your cattle for us. You will get plenty more when you are independent.”²² This goes a long way in demonstrating that children like all participants and victims of a conflict situation have memories; memories of violence, memories of pain and memories of untold war stories. This also reveals that children were caught in the middle as guerrilla forces and government forces flexed their muscles to win the hearts of the men in the

²⁰ D. Martin and P. Johnson, The Struggle for Zimbabwe, Zimbabwe Publishing House, Harare, 1981.

²¹ N. Kriger, Zimbabwe's Guerrilla War. Peasant Voices, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1992, pp. 145-189.

²² Ibid.

middle. This also demonstrates that the history of the liberation struggle is incomplete without capturing and analyzing the memories of vulnerable children in PVs. However, Kriger's book is not a study of PVs in general and children in particular. This study makes a necessary intervention by focusing on the plight of children in PVs.

Kriger's intervention is a critique of the romantic approach by nationalist historians. She argued that, peasants had self-styled agendas not collective experiences and collective consciousnesses. Peasant's responses were influenced by gender, generational differences, inequalities and localized politics.²³ Her views demonstrated that there were struggles within the Zimbabwean struggle for independence. Therefore, the experiences of women, peasants, and children cannot be treated similarly. She noted that:

Where peasants found themselves squeezed between government and guerrilla coercion, peasants often did not behave as if they were motivated primarily by a desire to limit personal damages. Instead, peasants often took further risks to try to promote their own revolutionary agendas even when they clashed with guerrilla goals.²⁴

Kriger also proves that different people had different agendas during the liberation struggle. She aptly captures this when she argues, "Peasants had their own ideas and agendas and saw the guerrillas as potential allies or susceptible to manipulation to further their own goals."²⁵ This demonstrates that peasants and children should not be historically treated as the same with similar agendas. In any war situation, survival and protection top the children's agenda, which is completely different from the goals and aspirations of peasants and women. This study wishes to recover the memories and experiences of those who were children living in Keeps. These have

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

largely been forgotten by historians and this study gives them a voice and a platform to share their war time experiences.

Kruger also pointed that coercion was extensively used by the guerillas. She noted that, coercive factors such as threats, beatings, and use of force were commonly used by guerrillas to enlist support from the peasants. Punishing peasants if resources were not provided, if people failed to attend *pungwes* or religiously obey guerrilla instructions was common during the war.²⁶ All this had serious effects on children although they were not the primary targets. It will be demonstrated that children were forced to participate in the war in one way or another and that this endangered their lives tremendously.

One of the major academic accounts of the liberation struggle in Zimbabwe that has contributed to the understanding of the plight of children in the PVs is by Nhongo-Simbanegavi. She argues that PVs were “punishment enclosures” designed to cut off guerillas from the civilian support base. Nhongo-Simbanegavi highlighted cases of sexual abuse of PV inmates by Rhodesian Protected Village Guards.²⁷ Although this goes a long way in demonstrating that PVs were horrible places especially for children, she adheres to the pattern of neglect by discussing children together with women. Her study provides a starting point in demonstrating that the memories of the liberation struggle and of PVs in general and in particular of children, need serious historical attention to understand how conflict affects children who do not have the physical and mental capacity to protect themselves in times of war.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ J Nhongo-Simbanegavi, For Better, pp. 112-125.

Nhongo-Simbanegavi used ZANU (PF) Archives and the NAZ to scrutinize PVs more convincingly than most scholars. She states that inmates of PVs were driven into the camps leaving behind their food reserves resulting in food shortages. She also highlighted that there were neither sanitary nor health facilities in PVs.²⁸ This goes a long way in demonstrating that problems in PVs were gender specific. It will be historically worth exploring the plight of children in PVs to give a complete picture of life in Keeps.

Nhongo-Simbanegavi however, treated women and teenage girls similarly in PVs together as if they had similar experiences. She says the women were raped and sexually harassed by DAs.²⁹ While such an analysis is critical in many respects in the study of the liberation struggle for Zimbabwe, it is interesting to note that this study will deepen the study of PVs by focusing on children. Nhongo-Simbanegavi demonstrated that all was not well in Keeps and it will be crucial to study in great detail how these affected children. This will further deepen the understanding and appreciation of the fact that children suffer more than all other vulnerable groups in a conflict situation.

Another interesting academic piece is an MA Thesis by Tarisayi Marangwanda. The thesis focused on the effects of Keeps as a counter-insurgency strategy on the peasants in Chiweshe TTLs. Her biggest achievement was in tracing the history and concept of PVs in Rhodesia. She is probably among the earliest historians to break the pattern of neglect of protected villages as an important aspect of the liberation struggle for Zimbabwe. She also focused on the effects of PVs on the peasants thus introducing a new angle of analysis to the liberation struggle for

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

Zimbabwe. Traditionally, most historians focused on the leaders of the struggle. Focusing on the plight of the peasants and not the leaders who gave the common man a chance to make history and express themselves. Capturing their voices was a brave attempt on her part, demonstrating that the liberation struggle needs to be understood from many angles and not only from the perspectives of the leaders. It also demonstrated that there is need for further studies on this neglected area.³⁰

Marangwanda demonstrated that PV were used in Malaya, Vietnam and Mozambique. This demythologized the traditional colonial perception that PVs were established for humanitarian reasons. She also highlighted the problems which were associated with the forced relocation of the peasants in Chiweshe. Some of the major problems noted included, police brutality, the loss of freedom of movement and association, the lack of water, shelter and toilets, the destruction of their homes and crops, the loss of furniture, the lack of hospitals, sanitary problems, contaminated water, lack of pre-natal and post-natal care facilities, the closure of schools, curfew restrictions, loss of cattle, destruction of traditional value system, and immorality, etc.³¹

It should be highlighted that Marangwanda's work provides an entry point to further studies. However, the plight of children in the Keeps was overlooked. She also failed to problematiseproblematize the term peasants. Children were categorized as peasants, which is problematic. There is a need to differentiate the experience of women, men and children to fully understand the problems faced by these different groups of people in the Keeps. One of the major problems with her study is her exclusive focus on Chiweshe, limiting the potential

³⁰ T. Marangwanda, "The Rhodesian Counter-Insurgent Effort and Its Effects on the Peasant Population in Chiweshe," MA Thesis, UZ, 1986. P. 1-20.

³¹ Ibid.

richness of her study. My study wishes to go further by capturing memories of children in Chiweshe and other neglected areas where PVs were established.

1.4 Gender Historians and children in Protected Villages

Another important academic treatment of PVs was by Eleanor O’Gorman who focused on the plight of women in PVs in Chiweshe during the liberation struggle in Zimbabwe. She pointed out that, “Protected villages were established in Tribal Trust Lands (TTLs) to cut off the oxygen of community support to the guerrillas of the national liberation movements of ZANLA and ZIPRA”.³² She brings out an important aspect of Keeps by dissecting it from a gender perspective, which is both refreshing and captivating. O’Gorman believes that women in Chiweshe were simultaneously surviving a war and erecting a revolution. She also argued out that women were constantly renegotiating their relations with the state, the guerillas and their neighbours. Women who were caught in the middle of the struggle survived precariously and she noted that, support and subversion co-existed as women were both “... enacting revolution and living with guerrillas war.”³³ Under such circumstances the war impacted on individuals, farmers and communities as revolutionary and counter-revolutionary forces struggled to win their hearts and minds. She also noted that, “The frontline runs through every woman”, provides an alternative narrative of women and revolutionary war, and that the battleground drawn from women’s voices and perceptions uncovers layers of agency bound up with revolutionary resistance, local resistance and daily survival.³⁴

³² E. O’ Gorman, The Front Line, pp. 1-10.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

O’Gorman demonstrated that recovering forgotten voices is possible by capturing the forgotten voices of women. Children like women, “each have a story, a life and voice that is rarely heard or recognized.”³⁵ The testimonies of those who were child inmates of PVs form the basis of the story to be told here. It is my wish to empower and give space to inmates who were children and allow them to bear witness to their own experiences as O’Gorman did for women in Chiweshe.

However, it is crucial to note that O’Gorman was mainly concerned with women in Chiweshe and her focus was not on children. She neglected a very important point that the majority of the inmates of PVs in Chiweshe were children. As such she failed to break the pattern of neglect. While children may have had some common experiences with women in PVs, their experiences were different as there are psychological differences between women and children. As much as I agree that women constitute a vulnerable group, children are more vulnerable than women because of their lack of capacity and ability to understand things in general and under a conflict situation in particular. My study is not an attempt to prove that O’Gorman committed an error of omission by neglecting the voices of those who were children in PVs. PVs are new research area rich in history and testimonies of a violent war which many children failed to understand and struggled to survive in it. To those who were children, the liberation struggle is still vividly captured and stored in their memories which remained hidden and forgotten by historians for years. This study wishes to give them an opportunity to tell their stories of the Keeps.

³⁵ Ibid.

Another important focus on children during the liberation struggle is a book by a participant in the liberation struggle, Fay Chung. Her study is both a primary source and a secondary source. It is a primary source as it was documented by an eye witness and participant. It is also a secondary source in that it was academically handled and supported by research from both primary and secondary sources. Chung noted that the Rhodesian regime wanted to eliminate the guerrillas as they had largely managed to win the hearts and minds of the peasants. Chung also noted that the Rhodesian intelligence failed to push out the guerrillas and employed a scorched earth policy in a bid to eliminate both the fish and the water. She noted that the Smith regime even captured young girls.³⁶ She highlighted a case in which Pedzisai, a girl aged 14, was captured, arrested, and tortured by the Rhodesian forces. Various dehumanizing methodologies to force the children to provide information were employed. They were captured, tied by their ankles and hung from a tree upside down over a bucket of water and dipped into the water until they confessed. The captives were tortured using electric shock, with electrical wires attached to their sexual organs. Chung noted that the Rhodesian hostages suffered permanent physical and mental damage.³⁷ This clearly demonstrates that children during the liberation struggle for Zimbabwe were not spared and have a story to tell.

Chung also noted that thousands of secondary school students ran away from Southern Rhodesia to join the liberation struggle. She says, “School after school emptied itself of its students”.³⁸ Most of these students were below the age of 18 and as such constituted a vulnerable

³⁶ F. Chung, Re-Living the Second Chimurenga. Memories from Zimbabwe’s Liberation Struggle, Weaver Press, Harare, 2007, pp. 140-43.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid

group. Minors need special treatment and care as postulated in the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the African Charter on the Rights and Responsibilities of the Child. She also noted that when Nyadzonya was attacked the Selous Scouts were welcomed “by children who climbed into the army trucks believing that they were FRELIMO troops.”³⁹ This clearly demonstrates that the liberation struggle exposed children to violence even in refugee camps which they thought were safe heavens.

Schmidt also provides another important piece of work on PVs. She argued that:

The villagisation programme was the most drastic counter-insurgency measure the government adopted vi-a-vis the civilian population during the liberation war. It caused tremendous suffering and it is an example of creativity of violence, with frontier people having to adapt to forced conditions... the soldiers rounded up the valley population at night without giving notice. They burnt the homesteads and all possessions and foodstuffs that were left behind in order to discourage people from returning and at the same time to destroy potential shelter for guerrillas.⁴⁰

This work indicates PVs were established for military rather than humanitarian reasons. In fact the way these were established, as highlighted by Schmidt, caused a humanitarian crisis. It is prudent to examine the problems faced by inmates who were children and their coping mechanisms. An analysis of the plight of children across Zimbabwe who were inmates in PVs enables one to explore how the weakest of the weak remember these forced removals.

Julie Frederike’s work is also important in understanding the liberation struggle for Zimbabwe in many ways. The book is based on oral interviews from eyewitnesses and participants of the liberation struggle from a gendered perspective. The book is ground breaking in many respects as it not only focuses on the “great men and great events” of conventional

³⁹ Ibid

⁴⁰ H.I. Schmidt, Colonialism and Violence in Zimbabwe, James Currey, Woodbridge, p. 178.

history texts but on the common people (povo).⁴¹ Traditionally, Zimbabwean historiography has been concerned with big men, their empires, powers, positions, control of land, allocation and control of resources, religion and politics. Many of these historical narratives were male chauvinistic and androcentric in nature. The experiences of vulnerable groups such as women, children and the old were excluded. Most historical studies remained polemic in nature. Methodologically speaking, Zimbabwean history was mainly empiricist in nature. Frederikse demonstrated that history is not only a masculine narrative but common people are also historically important and fascinating. Most Zimbabwean historians of the liberation struggle focused on power struggles within the Zimbabwe liberation struggle, dictatorial tendencies, and politics of inclusion and exclusion within the nationalist movements. Masipula Sithole⁴² and Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni⁴³ focused on the dynamics and pitfalls of Zimbabwean nationalism. These two scholars demonstrated that nationalist historiography was largely romanticized.

Fredrikse also demonstrated that the liberation struggle for Zimbabwe should be interrogated from many angles rather than mainly focusing on the elite. The history of the liberation for Zimbabwe should not be reduced to the history of powerful individuals such as Mugabe and Nkomo, or organisations like ZAPU and ZANU. Mainly focusing on big men reduces Zimbabwean history to the traditional conception of history, which focused on kings and chiefs and which B Swai and A Temu called “drum and trumpet”⁴⁴ history. Many Zimbabwean

⁴¹ J. Frederikse, None But Ourselves, Anvil Press, Harare, 1982, pp. 70-80.

⁴² M. Sithole, Zimbabwe. Struggles within the Struggle, Rujeko Book Publishers, Salisbury, 1979. Pp.10-46.

⁴³ S. Ndlovu, “Dynamics of the Zimbabwe Crisis in the 21th Century,” in African Journal on Conflict Resolution, Vol 3,number 1, 2003, pp.99-105.

⁴⁴ A.Temu and B. Swai, Historians and Africanist History: A Critique, Zed Books, London, pp. 1-10.

historians such as Martin and Johnson failed to break from the past as they followed the sounds of the drums and trumpets of ZANU (PF) political gladiators.

Irene Staunton also produced another important book on the liberation struggle for Zimbabwe. Her book focused on the history of thirty women who were participants of the liberation struggle of Zimbabwe.⁴⁵ The book gave participants of the liberation struggle a chance to demonstrate that common people are worthy historical subjects and an attempt should be made to capture their memories. The book showed that life in the Keeps was horrible for the inmates and they were unprotected in PVs. It was also demonstrated that women were not political minors and agendaless as was assumed by colonial historians. Memories of women in PVs were captured, but were not those of children. Methodologically and ideologically the book is critical, but, it is not conventional history in which women's words have been analyzed, sifted and put into a proper analytical framework.

1.5 Military Historians, Children and Protected Villages.

Military historians provide an interesting analysis of PVs from a strategic perspective. They are mainly concerned about the history, implementation and effectiveness of PVs as a counter-insurgency military strategy. These help us to understand the history of PVs and why the Rhodesian government adopted them in a bid to eradicate terrorism and the "terrorists". It is worth noting that their focus and priority was not the plight of children in the Keeps.

Cilliers focused on PVs as a counter-insurgency military strategy which was adopted by the Rhodesian forces. He treated the subject in great detail by examining the adoption and

⁴⁵ I. Stanton, Mothers of the Revolution, Baobab Books, Harare, 1990, pp.1-40.

implementation of the counter-insurgency strategy. Cilliers focused on the theoretical matrix and the practical aspects of the military strategy. He pointed out that the methodology had three elements, designed to eliminate the causes of popular discontent and restore confidence in the government, isolate guerillas from the people and their resources and neutralize the guerilla organization.⁴⁶

He traced the development of the strategy from the time of the setting-up of the National Psychological Warfare committee to the establishment of PVs courtesy of Ian Sheppard who believed in psychological operations and the application of marketing and advertising principles in a war situation. According to Cilliers, the Sheppard group was involved in the planning of Operation Overload Two in Madziwa Tribal Trust Lands (TTLs). The group attempted “selling” PVs in Madziwa TTL to the local population. He also pointed out that the group proposed the establishment of a Development Bank to enable inmates of the PVs to buy agricultural equipment such as tractors, but all this was rejected by the government.⁴⁷ This demonstrates that PVs were not established by the Rhodesian government for humanitarian reasons and for the benefit of the African populace in general and African children in particular. Cilliers argues, that all attempts to make PVs habitable and beneficial to the African people were rejected by the government. Therefore it is important to examine the effects of counter military strategy on unarmed civilians and vulnerable children.

Cilliers also demonstrated in this book that the Rhodesian government was engaged in manufacturing propaganda material as it went on to publish “Anatomy of Terror” in 1974 and

⁴⁶ J. K. Cilliers, Counter- Insurgency in Rhodesia, Croom Helm, London, 1995, pp. 79-90.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

“Harvest of Fear”. These publications were prepared by the Ministry of Information for external and internal distribution. These books were meant to publicise the atrocities committed by guerrillas to discredit them and therefore win the hearts and minds of the Rhodesian people and the outside world.⁴⁸ Cilliers’s intervention is very important in many respects. He chronologically traces the development of PVs and demythologized them as humanitarian centres. He also demonstrated that the Rhodesian government was becoming more and more hostile. He used various sources to demonstrate that the Rhodesian government was becoming ruthless and reckless quoting the Minister of Defence, Van der Byl, stressing that, “I wanted to step up the use of the bayonet. That is the most effective propaganda.”⁴⁹

Henrik Ellert, who served as a Rhodesian police officer between 1964 and 1980, the time PVs were established as a counter insurgency mechanism, also contributed to my study. He noted that the Rhodesian government discovered that the guerrillas were well supported in TTLs of Mount Darwin, Chiweshe and Bindura. The people in the TTLs actively supported the struggle by providing food, information and planting landmines. Ellert managed to capture the actual reasons for the adoption of Keeps as he pointed out that the Rhodesians came up with Operation Overload 1 and 2 to isolate the guerrillas from the people for military purposes. He also managed to break the silence unlike other Rhodesians by revealing that “By 1973 thousands of villagers had been forcibly driven into detention camps at Msengezi Mission, Gutsa, Hoya and Mukumbura.”⁵⁰ Ellert, mentioned albeit in passing that, children were dying of measles in the

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ H. Ellert, The Rhodesian Font War, pp. 49-56.

overcrowded and unsanitary conditions.”⁵¹ This demonstrates that there is a serious need to capture the history of children who witnessed the death of other children of their age and who survived the horrible conditions inside Keeps. This also proves beyond any reasonable doubt that the history of the liberation struggle is incomplete without capturing the memories of violence from children who were affected. This study provides a platform for children who were inmates in Keeps to vent out their emotions of the liberation struggle for Zimbabwe.

Ellert also provided a clear picture of life in Keeps unlike many Rhodesians who portrayed them as humanitarian centres for the development of the Africans. He says that, the inmates of PVs were “... resettled under conditions tantamount to banishment in their own land”. He also argues that, “life for the inhabitants was very difficult indeed”. Ellert also captures a very crucial point that, the guerrillas were moving in and out of the PVs organizing *pungwes* and singing revolutionary *Chimurenga* songs.⁵² This demonstrates that life for a man in the middle was a nightmare. Children in Keeps like other inmates were caught between a rock and a hard place. Memories of children under such conditions are a “gold mine” historically speaking, which should be mined in order to achieve better conceptualization of the liberation struggle for Zimbabwe.

Paul Moorcraft and Peter McLaughlin, two Rhodesian participants in the counter-insurgency war, also provide an in-depth military analysis of the war. The two wrote history from a Rhodesian perspective. They argued that the “horrendous pictures painted by the guerrillas of life behind PVs were largely inaccurate... Some PVs were model villages with well-

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid.

constructed huts, clean running water and medical and educational facilities.”⁵³ Such statements demonstrate that the two were desperate to prove that PVs were designed to help the African people. They also believed that PVs protected the inmates by noting that, “The PVs may have been unpopular and irksome, but they did at least spare their inhabitants from the deadly ebb and flow of guerrillas ...”⁵⁴ However, it will be demonstrated that the inmates needed more protection from their protectors than from guerrillas.

The two Rhodesian military historians also concentrated more on guerrilla atrocities to justify the establishment of PVs. They argue that:

Guerrilla mines being indiscriminate weapons, inflicted enormous casualties on African bus passengers and those travelling in passenger cars, on scotch carts and on foot...The guerrillas destroyed many kraals of unco-operative headmen and household heads... Often whole families would be driven into their huts and then incinerated when the guerrillas set fire to the roofs.⁵⁵

However, the two scholars neglected the plight of children in PVs as they only mentioned them in passing. It is also important to note that the guerrillas were not solely responsible for violence, especially in PVs. This study is not an attempt to cover-up guerrilla atrocities, but rather capture the testimonies of victims who are the best judges in this case.

Another military focus on the liberation struggle was by Jim Parker, a former Rhodesian Special Branch Liaison Officer. As a Rhodesian at heart he wrote his book undermining the Zimbabwe liberation war as a “Rhodesian Bush War” and celebrating their war effort. He argues that, “ZANLA targeted white civilians, particularly farmers, to drive them from the land as well

⁵³ P. Moorcraft and P McLaughlin, The Rhodesian War. A Military History, Jonathan Ball Publishers, Johannesburg, 2008, p.132.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

as tribal blacks to bring them inside using a strategy of murder, torture, rape, arson and other horrible acts of terror. They laid landmines indiscriminately on public roads.”⁵⁶ Parker went to great lengths describing guerrilla acts of brutality. He noted that, in Tshovani a guerrilla commander indiscriminately shot an unarmed man twice in the chest and that the guerrillas carried out arbitrary executions as a means of instilling fear in civilians. He was obsessed with demonizing guerrillas highlighting that they were poor at shooting, that they abducted young people to join them, and that they were deserting in large numbers to join the Rhodesian forces.⁵⁷ He also regarded guerrillas as cowards who were even chased away by locals in Sipolilo with stones. He argued that the guerrillas were not supported by the African people by suggesting that, “ZANLA’S modus operandi was to control by fear and intimidation and get individuals committed by default.”⁵⁸ Parker romanticised the exploits of Rhodesian forces, and was not concerned with children in PVs

1.6 Participants in the Liberation Struggle, Children and Protected Villages

Sister Aquina H.K.Weinrich, a Catholic nun who helped Zimbabwean nationalists escape to Mozambique and was deported from Rhodesia, wrote an article entitled “Strategic Resettlement in Rhodesia.”⁵⁹ It is the first text that places serious academic focus on Keeps in Rhodesia. The article was written during the liberation struggle in 1978 and clearly demonstrated that PVs deserve historical attention. Despite the fact that the subject was important, the

⁵⁶J. Parker, Assignment. Selous Scouts, inside story of a Rhodesian Special Branch Officer, Galago Books, Johannesburg, 2006, pp. 51-60.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid.p.71.

⁵⁹ A.H.K. Weinrich, “Strategic Resettlement in Southern Rhodesia”, p.249.

Rhodesian government attempted to silence her so that the horrible conditions in PVs would remain hidden and unknown. The Rhodesian Government refused to grant her access to PVs. Weinrich utilized an African field research assistant who was related to inmates of the Keeps, since researchers and independent investigators were not allowed to enter these restricted areas. Weinrich notes that PVs were adopted as military strategy as a last resort and for the survival of the Rhodesian government after all other counter insurgency measures proved inadequate and in stopping the African people in TTLs from supporting the guerillas.⁶⁰ She noted that the Rhodesian government attempted to cover-up the horrible conditions in PVs by producing a government newsheet which showed a photograph of small corrugated iron shelters in a fenced area in the Zambezi valley emphasizing that the African people for the first time in their lives were living in houses made from modern building materials. The Rhodesian government claimed that the people enjoyed, “the facilities they had never known before”. Weinrich pointed out that, “... The new shelters were in no way superior to traditional African huts, because the Zambezi valley is an exceedingly hot region and the tin shelters turned into stoves during the day, but were bitterly cold at night.”⁶¹

Weinrich’s work also provides some useful statistics. She says that, by the end of 1973, 8000 people had been resettled in Gutsa Protected Village which was notorious for its poor living conditions. She also revealed that, “At one time four to five children were dying daily in the camp from cholera and measles.”⁶² Although Weinrich’s study was not entirely focused on children, her intervention is very important. Weinrich’s article therefore provides a starting point.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid. p.251.

And lays the foundation for my study on the plight of children in PVs. Weinrich also noted that children were victimized by the Rhodesian army, “In 1974 three children and a woman were shot dead by the army (Rhodesia).”⁶³ A critical interrogation of Weinrich’s article demonstrates that children by far were the most vulnerable inmates who were affected by the liberation struggle. Weinrich also pointed out that, inmates in PVs faced many problems such as poverty, lack of freedom of movement, restrictions under the dusk to dawn curfews, health issues, lack of food, etc.⁶⁴ It is important to scrutinize how children were affected by these problems inside the Keeps.

She also traced the establishment of Pvs in Chiweshe TTLs. Weinrich noted that the people of Chiweshe were frog marched into “keeps without toilet facilities as men, women and children were thrown into the fenced area.” She pointed out that 48 960 people became inmates of 21 protected villages. She says, that on 2 November 1974 the Rhodesian government once again resettled the people of Madziwa into PVs as 16 500 men, women and children were resettled into ten Keeps. The government further relocated 187 children, 47 women and 21 men from Madziwa to Beitbridge as punishment for continued support for the guerillas.⁶⁵ She also argued that the Rhodesian government committed many crimes against humanity. For example, the District Commissioner (DC) of Makaha Protected Village ordered the resettled people to sell their cattle to the government and went on to give them receipts only rather than cash. The DC informed them that the government would buy food for the inmates of the Keep.⁶⁶ This clearly

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid, p.253

⁶⁶ Ibid.

demonstrates the PVs were not designed as a counter insurgency strategic measure only, but were also a well calculated punitive mechanism designed to loot, economically incapacitate the African people and make them poorer than ever before. PVs had catastrophic consequences and it would be a gross historical mistake to sweep the problems faced by children in Keeps under the rug.

Janice McLaughlin, a Maryknoll Sister, who was arrested and deported by the Rhodesians and worked in ZANU camps in Mozambique, also touched on PVs in her book on the role of Catholic missions in Zimbabwe's war of independence. She highlights some very interesting and refreshing unknown facts about the establishment of PVs and the liberation struggle for Zimbabwe. McLaughlin believes that the closure of both primary and secondary schools at St Albert's, the surrounding of the schools with barbed wire, and the installation of searchlights marked the establishment of the first keep or concentration camp in the history of Zimbabwe on 19 February 1973.⁶⁷ She pointed out that these camps were used as interrogation centres for about 4, 000 people from Chinjira and Karanda villages. She also revealed that people around St Albert's mission were rounded up in big trucks and dumped on the mission where they endured horrible conditions. There were no sanitary facilities in place. Food was also in short supply and the inmates were subjected to torture, beatings, and ill-treatments at the hands of the Rhodesian security forces.⁶⁸

She argues that, the St Albert's experiment convinced the Rhodesian authorities that the isolation of the people from the guerrillas was necessary to win the war. From that time the

⁶⁷ J. McLaughlin, On the Frontline. Catholic Missions in Zimbabwe's Liberation War, Baobab Books, 1996, p. 85.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

government embarked on a large scale programme of forced villagisation into fenced enclosures called PVs. Violation of people's fundamental freedom of movement, assembly and association were a common feature. She also pointed out that colonial officials were brutal and heartless to the inmates and quotes a member of the Security Forces who told Father Fung that, "We are being rough now, and being soft does not work."⁶⁹ This demonstrates that the Rhodesian government was determined to crush and destroy both guerrillas and their supporters. Such an attitude resulted in massive human rights violations and children's rights violations. McLaughlin's work is important in many respects and this clearly demonstrates Keeps need more serious historical interrogation and memories of the youngest inmates of the villages need to be captured to fully understand the effects of violence on the most vulnerable and defenseless inmates of PVs.

She also demonstrated that children have horrible memories of the liberation struggle and of PVs by quoting Connelius Gwashure, a former student at St Albert's mission who became an inmate in PVs. He noted that:

People left their belongings, their cows and crops. In these keeps, people used to be beaten thoroughly by soldiers... The comrades used to come to the keeps by night. They would cut the fence and then they would collect food and clothes... These District Administrators were very rude.⁷⁰

This shows that there is need for historical attention on the plight of children in protected villages. McLaughlin says that children were not spared by the liberation struggle by highlighting that 291 students from St Albert's were abducted by the guerillas. The fighting which took place between the guerillas and the Rhodesian security forces during the rescue

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid. p. 86.

operation proved that life for the defenseless man in the middle was a nightmare.⁷¹ It was more horrible for defenseless children who lacked the capacity and ability to defend themselves, and who were psychologically incapable of understanding why they were captured and why the Rhodesian government wanted to rescue them. The capturing of children here does not demonstrate the passion by the guerrillas to promote the interests of children. To make matters worse, even the Rhodesian forces were not interested in the welfare of the children but rather concerned about the military survival of the Rhodesian regime.

Agrippah Mutambara also provides an interesting account of the liberation struggle from an eyewitness perspective. His book provides an interesting dimension in the sense that it was written by a participant in the liberation struggle. The book which mainly focuses on the Chimoio attack, is based on real life experiences in the liberation struggle. The book is important as a primary source and a secondary source. Mutambara was a Member of ZANLA General Staff, an instructor in guerilla warfare and an operational commander during the liberation struggle for Zimbabwe. Although the book is primarily a biography of the life experiences of a guerrilla leader it also reveals some unknown and untouched facts of the liberation struggle. Mutambara acknowledges that children participated in the liberation struggle for Zimbabwe. He noted that as an officer he was entitled to two batmen in the liberation camps in Mozambique. He revealed that, "... these would be young men between 14 and 20 years of age..."⁷² According to Mutambara the batmen took care of the laundry , provided water for bathing, prepared food ,

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² ZANU PF Archives see a book by A. Mutambara, The Chimoio Attack. Rhodesian Genocide, ZANU-PF Department of Information and Publicity, Harare, 2008. In the book Mutambara looks at how Chimoio was attacked by the Rhodesian Security Forces. He describes the carnage and massacre of unarmed refugees and children at the camp. He also revealed that there were a lot of children who participated in the liberation struggle. The issue of child soldiers who participated in liberation struggle remains historically neglected.

looked after the officer's personal weapons, cleaned and accompanied officers at all times. This demonstrated that there were child soldiers in the liberation camps which housed ZANU and ZAPU. These young children were exposed to attacks from the Rhodesian forces and also faced many challenges in these camps such as the shortage of food, shelter, clothes, sanitary problems, and a lack of blankets and protection. He also noted that, when the Rhodesian forces attacked Chimoio they spared no one, children included.⁷³

1.7 International Organizations, Children and Protected Villages

One of the first reports and analysis on this topic was compiled by the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP) in Rhodesia in 1975. It remains one of the most important pieces of work capturing the plight of inmates of PVs. The report also captured the reasons for the establishment of PVs. The CCJP also asked critical questions for the establishment of PVs:

One must also question whether this is regarded as a regrettable but necessary and temporary expedient or whether this is an attempt to change permanently a whole way of life. It is also necessary to inquire whether such a change is acceptable or indeed tolerable to rural African society.⁷⁴

The report proved useful in many respects. It also proved that these African people were frogmarched into PVs against their will. It stated that, "it was noteworthy that expressions of anger, hostility, resentment and opposition to the protected villages were consistently made."⁷⁵

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ CCJP, The Man in the Middle. Torture, Resettlement and Eviction, CCJP, London, 1975, pp. 1-12.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

The report demonstrated that the Rhodesian government manufactured propaganda and myths about PVs. It quoted a government official claiming that, “the people were delighted to move” into PVs. The report is crucial in many respects in the sense that it noted that conditions in protected villages in Chiweshe, the Zambezi Valley and Madziwa were horrible as people were moved into fenced paddocks without basic amenities. The CCJP report also captured specific problems which characterized PVs such as agriculture and livelihood problems, social disruptions and educational problems.⁷⁶ It needs to be underlined that the report proved to be useful in many ways and provided an impetus to the study of PVs. However, the work is not conventional history in which oral history by informants was analysed, sifted and put into some proper analytical framework. Importantly, the report laid the foundation for my study which will be more focused on the experiences of children who were inmates of PVs to avoid generalizations and discussing of children with women and peasants. My study wishes to bring a new dimension and dissect history from the perspective of the vulnerable by focusing on the plight of the weakest inmates of PVs, namely those who lacked the capacity and ability to cope with the horrible effects of these forced removals. To children who were subjected to violence and the horrible conditions, the liberation struggle for Zimbabwe left deep scars and open wounds. The struggle planted memories of violence and the lack of rehabilitation and reconciliation mechanisms embedded permanent wounds and painful memories.

The CCJP also produced another publication entitled “Civil War in Rhodesia” which focused on the abductions, torture and death in the Rhodesian counter-insurgency campaign. According to the CCJP the Rhodesian government maliciously spread the myths that,

⁷⁶ Ibid.

“The war being fought by Ian Smith’s troops is to defend “Western Christian Civilisation.” It was a war against communism, subversion and foreign infiltration.”... In reality war is being waged to maintain the privileged position of the white minority: to entrench the political oppression and economic exploitation of the majority of the Rhodesian people.⁷⁷

This helps us in understanding that all the strategies adopted by the Rhodesian regime were designed to serve the interests of the Rhodesians and not the interests of the African people who were inmates of PVs. The Rhodesian government went on to manufacture myths about the establishment of Keeps to cover-up the malicious intentions of the government. The publication is critical in the study of PVs and children.

A report by the International Defence and Aid Fund for Southern Africa (IDAF) also proved to be very useful in understanding the essence of PVs. IDAF highlighted that the regime realized that draconian pieces of legislation, threats, persuasion and heavy penalties failed to prevent cordial relations between guerrillas and the Zimbabwean people in TTLs. It stated that PVs were a military strategy designed to isolate the guerrillas, deprive them of food, shelter and information. This involved forcibly moving people into Keeps regarded by many as “cages”. The report also noted in passing the problems faced by inmates such as overcrowding, sanitary problems, food shortages, restrictions and disruptions and economic crisis. The report also pointed out that many Keeps were attacked and destroyed by guerrillas.⁷⁸ However, the report although very useful did not exhaust the subject of PVs. This study wishes to fill in identified gaps and creates a new body of knowledge on the most vulnerable members of any society.

⁷⁷ CCJP, Civil War in Rhodesia, CCJP, London, 1976, p.1.

⁷⁸ IDAF, Facts About Rhodesia, IDAF, London, 1977.

A United Nations Children’s Fund study by Graca Machel documents the impact of armed conflict on children. She noted that, “war violates every right of a child – the right to life, the right to be with a family and community, the right to health, the right to development ... and the right to be nurtured and protected.”⁷⁹ My thesis is an attempt to demonstrate that there were massive human rights violations in general and children’s rights violations in Rhodesian PVs, violations which have largely escaped the minds and attention of historians. Without capturing the war time stories of the children who were inmates of the Keeps, the story of the liberation struggle remains incomplete. To make matters worse, victims of the liberation struggle have also been forgotten in terms of establishing mechanisms to deal with their war time experiences.

Machel also makes a very important point which justifies my study. She pointed out that, “children’s needs and aspirations cut across all ideologies and culture. The needs of all children are the same”⁸⁰ Therefore, the needs of the children who were inmates of PVs were not unique but similar to the needs of the Zimbabwean children or any other children. There was thus no justification to legitimize the violation of the rights of children who were inmates of the Keeps. The guerrillas and the Rhodesian forces were both responsible for violating the rights of children. It will be demonstrated that violating children’s rights whether by the guerrillas or Rhodesian forces can never be justified. Machel aptly captures it by noting that, “Children have no part in warfare.”⁸¹ Therefore, it is important to note that children are in all cases and circumstances victims whether they are participants, witnesses, perpetrators, or refugees.

⁷⁹ G. Machel, The Impact of War on Children, C. Hurst and Co. Ltd, London, pp. 2-10.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid.

The document by Machel is very important in many ways. It demonstrates that armed conflicts affect children in many ways. The document gave impetus to the development of this project, and provided some leads for my study. Machel also demonstrated that the Rhodesian government and guerillas were not the only ones violating children's rights, but this was a common problem affecting many countries and societies.

Conclusion

It has been demonstrated that colonial historians were not concerned about the plight of children in Keeps as they attempted to justify their establishment. Nationalist historians also neglected inmates who were children, while revisionist scholars mainly focused on deconstructing nationalist propaganda. Military historians were mainly interested in the effectiveness and implementation of Keeps, and so children were not their priority. However, colonial, nationalist, military and revisionist scholars all provided a starting point in the capturing, understanding and analyzing the history of the liberation struggle. Therefore, it is essential to study the effects of PVs on children to fully understand the story of the liberation struggle for Zimbabwe.

CHAPTER TWO : THE POLITICS BEHIND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF PROTECTED VILLAGES

Introduction

The establishment of protected villages is closely linked to the concept of total revolution which involves the concentration and resettlement of the local population into defensible villages. There is a great deal of debate on whether PVs were intended and designed to protect the *povo* (people) or were designed as a counter insurgency military strategy to cut off contact between the people and the guerrillas and deny them food, intelligence, recruits, and access to the people. For one to fully understand the concept of PVs in Rhodesia one must ask various important questions including the following: “What were the reasons behind the establishment of PVs?” “Were military reasons the prime motives behind the establishment of PVs?” Were PVs beneficial to the people in TTLs in Rhodesia? “Were conditions in the PVs better than outside?” “What were the effects of herding people and innocent children behind the barbed wire and uprooting their traditional lifestyle?” “Were the people and children in Rhodesia safe and protected in PVs?” “What were the effects of propaganda campaigns waged by the government to capture the hearts and minds of the people of Rhodesia?” “Who was protected in PVs?” These questions will be answered in the thesis.

The adoption of PVs as a counter-insurgency operation was borrowed from various countries. Keeps were used as counter-insurgency military strategies in Malaya by the British, in Vietnam by the French, in Angola by the Portuguese, in Algeria by the French and in

Mozambique by the Portuguese¹. In each of these cases, military motives were the main reasons for the adoption of the PVs. It should be pointed out that in all cases humanitarian reasons were advanced to mask the military strategy in order to curry favour with the international community. In all these circumstances the implementers manufactured propaganda to justify their adoption of these quasi-detention camps. The misinformation campaigns involved the demonization of enemies/guerrillas as adversaries in an attempt to win the hearts and minds of the unarmed civilians. Thus, the establishment of PVs in Rhodesia was part of a strategy with a long military history.

2.1 The Origins of Protected Villages

The British were the first to use the technique against the Malayan Communist Party (MCP) in 1948. They forcibly resettled people into military planned villages administered by military authorities. The MCP was becoming popular and successful as it was supported by displaced Chinese in Malayan rural areas who gave them military supplies, food, money, information and moral support.² The Chinese people who were displaced and labelled as “squatters” supported the MCP. Therefore, this military tactic was a strategy designed to win the hearts and minds of the Chinese squatters. It was “a struggle to determine which side should govern and dominate the Chinese squatters”³. The British government decided to resettle the squatters in new villages to isolate MCP. This programme was implemented from 1949 to 1960

¹ I. Mazambani and T.M, Mashingaidze, “Demythologizing the Rhodesian Official Mind and the Establishment of Protected Villages” The Dyke, Vol 13, 2014, pp. 30-40.

² ZANU PF Archives, Defence Department, Harare.

³ Ibid.

and 530 000 people were resettled in new villages.⁴ This programme involved forced removals, transportation of the so-called squatters and construction of new settlements. This strategy enabled the British to defeat the communists and resulted in the unification and independence of Malaya. Malaya achieved independence on 31 August 1957 but the communists remained undefeated until July 1960⁵.

It needs to be highlighted that the forced resettlement programme was also used by the French and the Americans in Vietnam. The French began to construct PVs in 1952 called *agrovilles* to attract peasants from hardships. This policy was called “pacification by prosperity”⁶ through offering social and economic advantages to the peasants. The French believed that the new villages would provide better defence against the Viet Cong, as well as providing schools, medical and social services, and electricity to entice the peasants⁷. However, this military strategy was not successful in Vietnam; it was badly planned, implemented and also badly coordinated. The United States, which largely funded the project also did not provide adequate funding⁸. Therefore, in terms of providing historical lessons for future implementation, the Malayan experience provided more lessons than the experiment in Vietnam. It is also important to note that some Rhodesian forces served in the Malayan expedition and as such borrowed valuable lessons from the experience. The Malayan anti-insurgency campaign was regarded as

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ O. Beilbrunn, Partisan Warfare, London, George Allen and Union Ltd, 1962, pp. 30-50.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

“the first guerrilla war to be won by counter-insurgency forces.”⁹ The Rhodesian army had also recruited some American veterans into the Rhodesian army and as such it is more likely than not that the colonial government in Rhodesia borrowed a leaf from Malaya and Vietnam in adopting the use of PVs as a military counter-insurgency operation. The strategy was a resounding success in Malaya and a qualified failure in South Vietnam.

In Africa, PVs were adopted to stop the spreading of the winds of change across the African continent. The French were the first to adopt and use PVs in Africa in 1955. Brigadier Gaston Parlange was given the powers and mandate to re-organise guerrilla infected areas into twelve pacification zones with military protection and an administrative centre. Parlange attempted to market PVs by offering practical education schemes aiming to improve living conditions and offer employment opportunities to the locals. He also recruited local Algerians and sponsored them to fight against the revolutionary forces¹⁰. However, the project was an unsuccessful venture. The Portuguese also utilized the same strategy of mass population removals in Mozambique. *Aldeamentos* were established to isolate FRELIMO freedom fighters. The architect of the programme, Colonel Basilo Seguro, who believed that organised communities could easily refuse to help FRELIMO, whereas isolated Africans were vulnerable and could easily be coerced to support FRELIMO. The Portuguese adopted a “Scotched Earth Policy” clearing the border between Mozambique and Tanzania.¹¹ The Portuguese strategy had devastating consequences as vegetation and crops on the Mozambican borders with Malawi,

⁹ J.K. Cillers, Counter Insurgency in Rhodesia, Croon Helm, London, 1985, p.79.

¹⁰ O. Beilbrunn, Partisan Warfare, p.37.

¹¹ B.F. Junclannian, “Resettlement Programs: Counter- Insurgency in Mozambique”, Comparative Politics Vol 4, July, 1974, p.25.

Tanzania and Zambia were destroyed, creating a humanitarian crisis. The Portuguese attempted to market the *Aldeamentos* by promising fertile lands, clean water, improved communication lines, and defensive conditions to the Mozambicans.¹² All the promises in the end proved to be a lie and eventually the strategy proved to be a failure militarily. The adoption of PVs as a counter-insurgency operation was designed to defeat Mao's military doctrine where, "the people are the water and the guerrillas are the fish" that swims in the water.

PVs were intended to eliminate the guerrillas and their supporters. They were also meant to win the support of the people and destroy their support for the guerrillas. For PVs to be successful there was need for them to be attractive and beneficial to the local people both militarily in terms of security and developmental in terms of offering economic benefits. Thus conditions in PVs were supposed to be demonstrably better than outside them by providing facilities like running water, electricity, schools, clinics and fertile land. However, the Rhodesian Keeps were horrible in terms of living conditions as will be demonstrated later in this thesis.

2.2 The Role of Propaganda

The Rhodesian government designed a well calculated propaganda campaign to persuade the African people to accept PVs and isolate the guerrillas. The Rhodesian government churned out propaganda to psychologically prepare the prospective inmates of PVs and make them acceptable as "safe havens." The government would appear to be a government of good Samaritans who wanted to save the people from marauding terrorists. The Rhodesian government also wanted to show the vulnerability of guerrillas and the folly of supporting them. It wanted to demonise the guerrillas so that the people in TTLs would cease to support them.

¹² Ibid.

This was also designed to deliberately and intentionally distort facts about the war situation in Southern Rhodesia. The Rhodesian government launched a campaign meant to demonstrate that it was the African people who requested PVs in fear of terrorists. Myths and misinformation were also manufactured to hide the fact that conditions in these Keeps were horrible and inhuman. Propaganda was also used by the colonial government in Kenya against the Mau Mau to discredit African Nationalism as a criminal endeavour.¹³ In both cases African nationalists were labelled as criminals and terrorists who wanted to destabilise peace through violence and intimidation.

At first the Rhodesian government warned the people in TTLs against supporting the freedom fighters and threatened them with stiff penalties if they disobeyed. Typed fliers were distributed in areas where PVs were to be established so as to eradicate support for the guerrillas. For example, fliers like the one below became a common feature:

¹³ W.O.Maloba, Mau Mau and Kenya. An Analysis of a Peasant Revolt, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1993. p.98.

WARNING TO ALL

Tigers.

Terrorist informers.

Terrorist agents.

Sympathisers and feeders of terrorists.

Recruiters for terrorist training.

There are some people who continue to help the terrorists and a few even try to do their evil work for them. These people are counted as terrorists and will be killed by the Security Forces.

Source: NAZ, CCJP, Rhodesia. The Propaganda War.

The Rhodesians also distributed leaflets labelling the guerrillas as, “robbers of innocent people,” “Marxists,” “evil communists,” “enemies of the people,” “extremists,” and “agencies of foreign governments,” “terrorists,” “pet dogs,” “cowards,” “murderers of innocent people,” “robbers,” “communists,” “murdering mad dogs,” “mad-dog communists,” “kidnappers of children,” “murderers” and accused them of starving and beating recruits, infecting women and young girls with Sexually Transmitted Diseases, and engaging in every kind of brutality¹⁴.

¹⁴ NAZ, CCJP, Rhodesia. The Propaganda War, CCJP, London, 1976.

These leaflets were distributed in PVs to turn the people against the guerrillas and make PVs a success.

The third attempt was designed to demonstrate that the people in TTLs had realised that the guerrillas were fake and not genuine nationalists. The propaganda depicted them as the enemies bent on destroying the people with sickness and death so that, “their evil communist masters... may come ... and steal the country from the people.”¹⁵ The Rhodesian government tried to use propaganda as a weapon to destroy African nationalism and legitimize government efforts to create PVs. The government argued that Keeps were established to protect the innocent people from evil guerrillas. They used leaflets as well as radios connected to loud speakers to disseminate propaganda to inmates. In Kenya the government created offensive propaganda emphasising on the barbarism of Mau Mau and its “bestial and pagan oaths” portraying the guerrillas as mentally deranged and morally debased beings.¹⁶

Various other methods were also used in the psychological warfare against people in TTLs. The Rhodesian government used gory photographs of mutilated bodies of alleged guerrillas. The Psychological Services Department even went to the extent of putting bodies of Africans killed by security forces on public display.¹⁷ This was designed to demonstrate that joining the guerrillas was dangerous, as the Rhodesian forces were killing the guerrillas like rats. These displays were also meant to show the might and power of the security forces. Government official also sometimes used leaflets with photographs of atrocities alleged to have been

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ W.O.Maloba, Mau Mau, p. 101.

¹⁷ NAZ, CCJP, Rhodesia. Propaganda war.

committed by terrorists¹⁸. All these methods combined were meant to frighten inmates of “Keeps” so that they would stop supporting the guerrillas.

The other attempt was designed to demonstrate that the terrorists were not supported by Africans in most TTLs, but used various methods to coerce the people to support them. It was argued that the guerrillas were intoxicating and politicising innocent people in TTLs using intimidatory tactics. For example, John Lovett, had photographs from Chiweshe which showed a village headman with hands tied at the back presumably shot dead by the terrorists.¹⁹ Another picture showed a woman who was forced to cook and eat her husband’s lips and ear.²⁰ It was argued that the terrorists employed all these brutal strategies to force the inmates of PVs to comply and offer them material and moral support.

The Rhodesian government did everything in its powers to make guerrillas appear dangerous. In 1974 the Minister of Internal Affairs, Jack Musset, claimed that guerrillas were killing for fun. He noted that PVs were constructed “As part of the Defence Plan” to “provide protection to the African civilian population from the terrorists’ onslaught.”²¹ Colonial officials even claimed that, “terrorists who infiltrated the Korekore people in 1973 took the wives and daughters of tribesmen. They took men and boys as recruits.”²² This was meant to portray that the guerrillas were heartless and to force the people to turn their backs on them and provide support to the Rhodesian forces. The Rhodesian government went on a crusade to producing

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² NAZ, RH 17-03-73

leaflets to convince people that the guerrillas were evil. Leaflets with captions like the following became a common feature:

- Terror and death is the way of the communist terrorist in Rhodesia**
- Do not let the communist terrorist spokesmen deceive you with more lies and smooth talk**
- Terror and death is the way of communists camp instructors in Mozambique**
- The communist terrorists bring nothing but sickness and death to the people²³**

Source: NAZ, CCJP, Rhodesia. The Propaganda War.

2.3 Draconian Pieces of Legislation and the Creation of Protected Villages

The establishment of PVs in Rhodesia was associated with violence, intimidation, and brutality and naked use of force. The propaganda and the lies failed to entice the African people to move into Keeps voluntarily as proclaimed by colonial official records. What makes the whole situation more callous is the fact that the regime legalised and legitimised the violence. When violence is “legitimised,” the state is empowered to commit acts of violence against defenceless civilians. The Emergency Powers Act of 1960 was manufactured specifically and deliberately to arrest and kill African nationalists. The Emergency Powers Regulations were coined to supplement and strengthen existing laws. One important feature of Emergency Powers

²³ NAZ, CCJP, Rhodesia. Propaganda war.

(Maintenance of Law and Order) Regulations (1960) was that, it provided powers for forcible removal of populations and setting-up of PVs. It also legalised the destruction of property, clearance of vegetation and designation of curfew areas and free-fire zones, forced labour and confiscation of crops and livestock. The government was also empowered to create “no go” areas, to close schools, missions, community centres, hospitals, businesses, and to destroy and confiscate crops, livestock, and property in the name of suppressing terrorism. In addition collective fines were also introduced upon villages suspected of assisting guerrillas.²⁴ In a nutshell, the Rhodesian government legalised the use of the scorched earth policy to eradicate perceived terrorist activities and support for terrorism.

In October 1975 the Indemnity and Compensation Act was passed which exonerated security forces in advance of any misconduct committed while on duty. This piece of legislation was meant to empower the security forces to be above the law and to be a law unto themselves. Colonial officials had the power to beat, maim, kill, or disable suspected terrorists and their supporters. They were now above the law and were fully insulated from it.²⁵

PVs were manufactured and designed to politically castrate the Zimbabwean guerrillas and deny them moral and material support. The Rhodesian government had realised the inadequacy and failure of propaganda, persuasion, rewarding systems and other colonial measures, which had been formulated to isolate guerrillas but proved to be a failure. The Rhodesian government empowered Rhodesian officials to establish PVs whenever they deemed it necessary. The Deputy Minister of Law and Order, Wicaus de Kock issued a proclamation authorizing the

²⁴ IDAF, Zimbabwe, p.35.

²⁵ Ibid. p.49.

establishment of PVs in 1973. He gave the Security Forces powers to evacuate, screen, and resettle the African people in Centenary and Mount Darwin. The Commissioner of Police also had the power to confiscate, seize or destroy any property in areas that could possibly be used by insurgent forces. The legalization of the perpetration of violence and the destruction of property had devastating effects on Africans in general and children in particular. The CCJP captured this vividly by stating that, "... illegal acts became legal and were encouraged ..."²⁶

The Rhodesian government even manufactured diabolical laws to protect the regime forces, the DAs and DSAs. They were authorized to do as they wished to fight terrorism in areas where PVs were established. A government notice of 1973 stated that:

Only authorised members of the Security Forces, on Duty, will move in no-go areas and no action may be instituted against them for any death or injury caused to any persons within the area by any act performed in good faith in the course of operations conducted during the time whilst the order is in force.²⁷

The government also came up with the Indemnity and Compensation Act of 1975, which gave the state and government employees immunity from criminal and civil Court action for harm done "in good faith" of suppressing terrorism.²⁸ The Rhodesian government legalized and advocated for the use of violence, which resulted in massive human rights violations in PVs. These actions by the Rhodesians were products of a certain colonial psychology and philosophy.

2.4 The Rhodesian Psychology and Philosophy of Protected Villages.

²⁶ CCJP, Civil War in Rhodesia. 81.

²⁷ NAZ, Rhodesian Army Manual, Military Support to the Civil Power, December, 1973.

²⁸ Ibid.

PVs were developed as a military tactic to eliminate the root causes of anti-government sentiments and restore confidence, isolate the insurgents from the people and resources and to eliminate the guerrilla organisation. All this was systematically designed to gain support of the people and to restore faith in the Rhodesia government. The introduction of PVs in Southern Rhodesia was associated with the concept of psychological warfare. This involved the use of radios, loudspeakers and printed material to destabilise the enemy and gain support for the Rhodesian forces. Various strategies were formulated to control the population and deny them access to their resources. The Rhodesian government introduced curfews, food control strategies and created no go areas as a way of destabilising the guerrillas and winning the hearts and minds of the African people.

The philosophy behind the establishment of PVs was based on the need to concentrate and resettle the African population into defensible villages. The physical control of the African people was designed to destroy the contact between the guerrillas and Africans in communal areas and to deny the guerrillas food, intelligence, recruits, and access to the people. Robert Thompson, a colonial official, believed that:

The government must give priority to defeating the political subversion, not the guerrillas ... unless communist subversion by political organisations in the towns and villages is broken and eliminated, the units will not be defeated. If the guerrillas can be isolated from the population ... then their eventual destruction becomes automatic.²⁹

PVs were first launched by the Deputy Minister of Law and Order, Wicaus de Kock, as a military counter-insurgency strategy. It was officially launched on 17 May 1973, on the Rhodesian border with Mozambique in the Centenary and Mount Darwin districts.³⁰ It involved a

²⁹ NAZ, Rhodesian Herald, 21-05-73.

³⁰ H. Ellert, The Rhodesian, pp.49-52.

number of processes. Firstly, it involved counting the number of people, herding them behind the barbed wire, evacuating and screening and resettling them. Secondly, it also involved the confiscation and destruction of any property in these areas that could possibly be used by guerrillas. The third process involved the creation of no go areas where security forces were empowered to shoot guerrillas or guerrilla supporters on sight. Lastly, one of the processes involved was bulldozing strips of clear ground to track movement in and out of no go areas.³¹

The launch of Keeps was organised under Operation Overload 1 and 2. Under Operation Overload 1, Rhodesian policemen were required to carry out a population census in the Dande and Muzarabani communal areas. After that thousands of villagers were forcibly driven into Msengezi Mission, Gutsa, Hoya and Mukumbura PVs.³² The Rhodesian government went on to manufacture draconian laws to force people into PVs. DCs were empowered to impose collective fines on villagers suspected of assisting guerrillas as well to destroy huts and exile entire communities. We should note that villagers were punished on mere suspicion and not facts. Ellert points out that, “The dispossessed communities were often resettled under conditions tantamount to banishment in their own land”.³³

Operation Overload 2 was launched in the Madziwa and Chiweshe TTLs under the military justification that the guerrilla threat was approaching Salisbury. PVs were established in Chiweshe mainly because ZANU guerrillas were heavily supported by the villagers who provided food and information to the guerrillas. By 1974 Chiweshe was a security threat and this

³¹ J. Cillers, Counter- Insurgence, pp.80-95.

³² H.Ellert, The Rhodesian, p.49.

³³ Ibid.

was captured by Lieutenant Colonel Reid Daly, who noted that, “The apparent support for the ZANLA cause in Chiweshe..., was disturbing in a broader sense.”³⁴ The establishment of PVs in Chiweshe involved the movement of 49, 960 people into 21 PVs.³⁵

Colonial officials clearly explained that the operation was a military operation intended to “... deprive terrorists of their vital contact with the civilian population, particularly at night, when they force tribesmen to accommodate and feed them as they move through the area.”³⁶ To clearly demonstrate that this was a military operation through and through, the Rhodesian government deployed 17 companies of troops to seal off the TTLs and to saturate Chiweshe with security forces to eliminate guerrilla forces.³⁷

2.5 Colonial Mythologies and Protected Villages

The Rhodesian government used various methods to justify the creation of PVs in Rhodesia. Psychological warfare was waged to manufacture propaganda literature justifying the establishment of Keeps. The media was the primary platform used to unleash the body of propaganda literature to create a false impression of the reasons behind their establishment. Accordingly, the government created an impression that PVs were established for humanitarian reasons and for the betterment of the African people.

The government wanted to create a version of history to perpetuate colonial mythologies and stereotypes about the African people and the African continent. These myths mainly

³⁴ J.Cillers, Counter- Insurgence, p.85.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid., pp. 83-86.

³⁷ H.Ellert, The Rhodesian, p.51.

emanated from the colonial mentality that colonialism was a “Western Civilising Mission”³⁸. Colonial mythologies emphasised the notion that whites brought peace and stability to a war torn African continent which was ravaged by chaos and brutal wars. It was argued that in Africa there was a “War of all against all”³⁹. All this was based on social Darwinism, which provided persuasive rationalisation for colonialism. Colonialists believed that Africans were barbarians and uncivilised. This was well postulated by Cecil Rhodes who argued that, “I contend that we are the first race in the world.....”⁴⁰ Such sentiments characterised the reasons propagated by colonial officials to justify the establishment of PVs in Rhodesia. These attitudes are summed up by Benard Magubane who noted that, “Feelings of racial superiority infected almost all whites no matter what their class of origin”⁴¹

The Rhodesian government employed various non-military methods to get rid of the guerrilla infiltration. One of the methods was the use of psycho-politics to win the battle of the mind. This involved the use of persuasion and propaganda to brain-wash the populace. Literature was generated to legitimise and justify the establishment of PVs in Rhodesia. The Rhodesian government attempted to deny the fact that PVs were fortifications for military purposes but argued that they were established for humanitarian reasons. The media was used to broadcast propaganda material to deceive both the people in Rhodesia and in the international community.

³⁸ S.Ndlovu, “Imperial hypocrisy settler colonial double standards and the denial of human rights to Africans in colonial Zimbabwe” in N.Bhebe and T.Ranger, The Historical Dimensions of Democracy and Human Rights in Zimbabwe, UZ Publications, Harare, 2001, pp.53-60.

³⁹ Colonial officials believed that the African continent was a continent of anarchy. See I. Mazambani “African Response to European Colonialism: Demythologising the Colonisation of Zimbabwe,” The Dyke, Vol 6.4, 2012.

⁴⁰ B.Mangubane, “The Political Economy of the South African Revolution,” in B.Mangubane and I.Mandaza, Whither South Africa, Africa World Press, Trenton, 1988, pp.51-55.

⁴¹ Ibid.

It was argued that Keeps were beneficial to the African people politically, socially and economically. The Rhodesian Herald, the Sunday Mail and the radio commentaries were the most commonly used to induce fear and manipulate the public on the reasons behind the establishment of PVs. Mr W. B Chimpaka Chirambasukwa, a Member of Parliament for the Zimbabwe Rhodesian government argued that:

...These protected villages, widely referred to be called concentration camps by Africans, have been set up by the government in-order to protect the innocent tribesmen from murders, brutalities and influence, or from being recruited forcibly over the border for guerrilla training or to protect the tribesmen from diseases carried by insurgents such as cholera,...⁴²

Several colonial officials were engaged in a crusade to convince the international community that PVs were established for humanitarian reasons. A Rhodesia government spokesman argued that, “The prime aim is to protect the people from terrorists.”⁴³ In 1974 District Commissioner, Jim Latham, pointed out that, “The Korekore people have for months been pestering the authorities to be put behind the wire.”⁴⁴ He went on to claim that, “They are sick to death of the terrorist.”⁴⁵ In 1973, the Deputy Minister of Justice and of Law and Order, Wicaus de Kock, said that, “The people were moving voluntarily to the protected villages as individual tribesmen were unable to protect themselves against terrorists.”⁴⁶

Colonial officials also stated that the demand was heavy for places in the PVs. They argued that:

⁴² NAZ, MS 308/52. A report by Mr W. B Chimpaka Chirambasukwa, a Member of Parliament for the Zimbabwe Rhodesian government.

⁴³ NAZ, The Rhodesian Herald, 8-12-73.

⁴⁴ Ibid. Jim Lathan was District Assistant Administrator who argued that PVs were established to protect the African people and bring development.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ The Rhodesian Herald 13-9-77.

Tribesmen thinly scattered in the wild bush of Rhodesia were easy, soft targets for raiding terrorists. They could put up little resistance against the brutalities committed against them and were forced to feed and otherwise help their unwanted guests.⁴⁷

PVs were seen as safe havens for the Africans as the Rhodesian government argued that, “...those who have been victims of terrorism know that the temporary inconveniences were better than these alternatives deaths, rape, beating and torture.”⁴⁸

Colonialists such as Prime Minister, Ian Smith, tried very hard to give PVs a human face. Smith proclaimed in 1977 that, “.....all Rhodesians must demonstrate their resolve to stand firm against the forces of anarchy.”⁴⁹ Combined operations Deputy Commander, Air Marshal McLaren said the terrorists had showed complete disregard for family life by the abduction of young boys and girls for training. He described the terrorist as being no better than a polecat.⁵⁰ He went on to claim that:

So manifestly misrepresented to the outside world in a maliciously engineered campaign to discredit and undermine the efforts of the authorities in the country to protect the lives of the innocent black civilians from the inhuman and brutal activities of the terrorist.⁵¹

He stated that Keeps, “have proved to be one of the most successful tactics in countering the terrorist threat in tribal areas.”⁵²

Air Marshal M J McLaren, further argued that terrorist “activities have been extended to disrupt all the benefits that have accrued to the tribes people from the very active, humane, and

⁴⁷ NAZ, The Focus on Rhodesia Vol 3, No 3, 1978.

⁴⁸ NAZ, The Rhodesian Herald, 10-10-77.

⁴⁹ NAZ, BBC 5-10-77.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ NAZ, The Rhodesian Herald, 1-10-77.

⁵² Ibid.

compassionate administration. It was argued that the destruction of council offices, beer halls, clinics, dip tanks and stock records were specific goals of terrorists.”⁵³

Another colonial official engaged in a psychological campaign for the establishment of PVs argued that, “many people are very bitter.....Their daughters are forced to become the terrorists’ mistresses and they have babies which cannot be accepted by the tribes.”⁵⁴ He went on to claim that PVs were set up to, “establish a feeling of security among the people”⁵⁵ The Rhodesian government also attempted to entice the African people with rewards and cash. Various adverts were distributed to encourage the people to support the government and turn the people against the guerrillas. See an advert below:

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ NAZ Ms 308/53.

⁵⁵ Ibid.



REWARDS

Government will pay substantial rewards to anyone who volunteers secret information which leads to the death or capture of terrorists or their supporters and the capture of their weapons.

The names of anyone giving information will remain secret.

The amounts of the rewards offered by Government are:—

Five thousand dollars for a senior terrorist leader.

Two thousand five hundred dollars for a terrorist group leader.

One thousand dollars for a terrorist.

One thousand dollars for each terrorist vehicle mine.

One thousand dollars for each terrorist heavy weapon of war.

Five hundred dollars for each terrorist machine gun.

Three hundred dollars for each terrorist light personal weapon.

Three hundred dollars for each full box of terrorist ammunition.

Three hundred dollars for each full box of terrorist grenades.

Three hundred dollars for each full box of terrorist anti-personnel mines.

These rewards will not be payable to a civil servant who is engaged on duties concerned with anti-terrorist activities or to a member of the Security Forces, unless he obtained the information while he was off-duty.

By order of the Government of Rhodesia.

14/11/74.

Printed by the Government Printer, Salisbury.

Source: NAZ, CCJP, Rhodesia. The Propaganda War.

The Rhodesian government officials even concocted stories that justified the establishment of PVs. Chiredzi District Commissioner, George Barlow pointed out that:

Tribesmen and tribal elders in the Sangwe TTL have told me they feel happier and more secure in the protected villages. ... There certainly appears to be a growing awareness among the tribe's people of the advantages of the protected villages. Not surprisingly the safety and security provided by the guarded villages ranks high. Many people have had family and relatives killed by terrorist. Many more have been subjected to beatings and threats.⁵⁶

Thus, the Rhodesian government wanted to create an impression that the security of the people was its major preoccupation and priority. Therefore the gospel of wanting to save the lives of the local people was preached again and again. In 1975 Phillippa Berying, a Rhodesian apologist, wrote an article on PVs in the Sunday Mail to affirm the benefits of PVs. She argued that:

Thousands of Rhodesia's people are in the process of making such a move at the moment and making it, for the most part, cheerfully. One of the expressed aims of terrorist warfare is to deploy their activities over such a wide area that it becomes difficult to contain them. There is only one answer to it, to consolidate the population into smaller areas where they can afford proper protection. Otherwise they are left to suffer at the hands of terrorists.⁵⁷

Such arguments were associated with a number of deliberate distortions and exaggerations. The African people were frog marched into Keeps against their will and consent, there was no element of cheerfulness as claimed. PVs were also not established to offer any form of protection to the people, but rather as part of a military strategy to protect the Rhodesian regime from imminent collapse.

Hugh Laird, a cadet in military call-up, also pointed out that:

⁵⁶ NAZ, Rhodesia Herald, 12-04-77.

⁵⁷ NAZ Ms308/52, The Fact paper, 11/75.

They have really lost out. Their food has been taken, their livestock has been eaten, their daughters have been raped, their sons have been taken away, their children have been stopped from going to school, and their cattle have died because they have been stopped from dipping them. To them terrorist means total loss.⁵⁸

All government Ministries within the Rhodesian colonial system of administration were willingly participating in manufacturing propaganda material to deceive the international community on the reasons for the setting up of PVs. According to the Rhodesian Financial Gazette in 1977, “The government is all set to intensify its protected village campaign.”⁵⁹ The Minister of internal Affairs, Roll Hayman, argued that PVs were “havens,” and claimed that, “...the District Commissioner and his staff, who together with other ministries, are there to administer and to take care of him in every sphere, “from the womb to the tomb.”⁶⁰ He went on to claim that the Rhodesian government was a compassionate one, with the plight of the African people at heart who were terrorised by terrorists who had instilled fear in the hearts of the tribes people.⁶¹ Therefore, PVs were regarded as a strategy designed to eradicate all forms of alleged intimidation from the marauding terrorists.

The colonial officials vilified guerrillas to justify their counter-insurgency efforts. The Deputy Commander of Combined Operations, Air Marshall M J McLaren, stated that, “The terrorist, “... is a coward, who will not stand and fight, but will resort to lies to try and convince people as to how invincible he is.”⁶² The government also wanted to create an impression that the terrorists were to blame for the establishment of the PVs. On 4 March 1977, the Herald

⁵⁸ NAZ, The Rhodesian Herald, 25-7- 75.

⁵⁹ NAZ, The Rhodesia Financial Gazzatte, 14-10-77.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid

pointed out that, “These people are just a few of the 4 000 who were forced by terrorist activities in the Chiweshe Tribal Trust Land to uproot themselves and resettle within the protective walls of Keep 13.”⁶³

However, as much as colonial officials attempted to launch a sustained campaign for the establishment of PVs, the campaign was characterised by contradictions. Godfrey Hensen, Provincial Commissioner for Internal Affairs Head Office, unsuspectingly said that, “If all the tribes people in affected areas were put into protected villages, it would put us in a better position to win the war.”⁶⁴ He went on to explain that Keeps were part and parcel of a military strategy to isolate the guerrillas. He noted:

It is a fact that the local population is vital to the survival of terrorists. They depend upon the people for food, shelter and information. In areas where the people have been put into protected villages the terrorists have to attack the protected villages in order to get these basic necessities.⁶⁵

The Smith regime made tremendous efforts in manufacturing propaganda material to demonise liberation forces and discredit them. The Rhodesian government published booklets showing photographic evidence of the terrorists’ methods. The pictures depicted cases of murder, rape, abduction, torture, beatings, robberies and cattle maiming. The Rhodesian Ministry of Information argued that, “Today many thousands have taken grateful refuge in protected villages or live in communities protected by the Security Forces and para-military wing of the Ministry of Internal Affairs.”⁶⁶ The Ministry also postulated that the terrorists were terrorising and

⁶³ NAZ, The Rhodesian Herald,4/3/77.

⁶⁴ NAZ, The Rhodesian Herald,30/5/77.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ The Rhodesian Ministry of Information was also dishing out propaganda material to demonize guerrillas.

massacring innocent people. It claimed that, “tragically the villagers are dying in a war they do not want, waged to further a political creed they do not understand or care about.”⁶⁷

Colonial officials hoped to demonstrate that PVs were good for the African people in various ways. In 1978, a security force officer based at Beit Bridge noted, in reference the African people, that, “they have really been hit hard by the terrorists. Time after time there have been brutal atrocities carried out on them, and they are now so terrified.....”⁶⁸ The colonial government even attempted to be economical with the truth claiming that it was the terrified local tribesmen who requested PVs. The Minister of Internal Affairs, Roll Hayman said kraal heads and the Anglican Bishop of Mashonaland Rev Paul Burough had requested that a Protected Village be built near St Albert’s Mission, but funds were not available. The government even went further to select informants to justify the claim that they cared for the African people. Senator Chief J S Chirau and Vice President of the Council of Chiefs, Chief Kayisa Ndiweni, was quoted saying that the chiefs and headmen overwhelmingly supported the government in the fight against terrorism and the establishment of PVs.⁶⁹

Furthermore, PVs were regarded by the government as a panacea to Rhodesian underdevelopment problems. G Barlow, a District Commissioner in the Lowveld, argued that he wanted to protect the people and lead them along the road to development. He introduced management boards to facilitate community development which included providing clean water, new medical facilities, agricultural extension services, and the development of irrigation

⁶⁷ Ibid

⁶⁸ NAZ, The Rhodesian Herald, 6/3/78.

⁶⁹ NAZ, The Rhodesian Herald, 13/10/78.

schemes.⁷⁰ PVs were regarded by colonial officials as an answer to all African problems as D C George Barlow also concluded that PVs were meant to provide, “all the things they used to talk about before the war began.”⁷¹ In reality, however, Keeps did not and were never intended to bring development to the African people.

PVs were also viewed as an answer to agricultural problems and food shortages. The DC for Mt Darwin, Jim Lathan, argued that PVs improved contact between the people and civil administration bringing benefits to agriculture, health and education.⁷² He argued that, “in pre-protected village’s days maize yields in Mkumbura area were a meagre half bag per acre. Today because of closer contact with government agriculturalists, figures were up to 10 and 15 bags an acre.”⁷³

The concept of Keeps was romanticised by colonial officials to give them a human face. In 1977, the Minister of Internal Affairs, Rollo Heyman, argued that PVs were designed to facilitate primary development and community development.⁷⁴ He argued that, “....now that the inhabitants of the protected villages live in dense communities, all facilities such as shopping, social amenities, schools, churches and the like are literally on their door steps.”⁷⁵ He also noted that, “another great advantage to the people is that various services provided by the government

⁷⁰ NAZ, The Rhodesian Herald,24/11/73.

⁷¹ NAZ, The Rhodesian Herald,23/6/77.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ NAZ, The Rhodesian Herald,20/11/77.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ NAZ, The Rhodesian Herald, 14/10/77.

such as agricultural extension, community development, health services and education can readily be provided within the protected villages...”⁷⁶

The Rhodesian government further wanted to misinform the world by providing false information on PVs. The Chiredzi District Commissioner, George Barlow argued that, “The protected villages have also raised living standards. The inhabitants have water taps, toilet and medical facilities.”⁷⁷ He also claimed that, “.....villages provide a compact centre on which development can take place, virtually impossible in the scattered community which existed earlier.”⁷⁸ However, it is crucial to note that all these were mere claims meant to deceive, mislead, misinform and create a false impression about the motives behind the establishment of PVs and the horrors associated with Keeps. The facilities which colonial officials claimed existed in PVs were in fact non-existent. Rhodesian officials peddled malicious claims about PVs and development. The Deputy Minister of Law and Order, de Kock said that, “It is the government’s policy to provide health, education and community development facilities....”⁷⁹ He also says that he was convinced that government’s policy was the answer and that there was going to be tremendous development in the North-Eastern area.⁸⁰ The Deputy Minister also believed that PVs were built as a result of plans to develop growth-points which would promote “tremendous development.”⁸¹ It would be a waste of time to analyse these development claims,

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ NAZ, The Rhodesian Herald, 23-08-77.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ NAZ, The Rhodesian Herald, 23-07-77.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid.

as the lack of evidence of development is adequate to prove that PVs were not designed to promote African development. The government even wanted to create a false impression that Africans were happy to be in PVs. In 1972, a Security Forces spokesman argued that PVs, “Mean a changed environment for the rural African. They suddenly find themselves leading a more urban type of life.”⁸² Another colonial official also claimed that, “Accommodation in the protected villages was far superior to the one provided by the people for themselves.”⁸³

The colonialists even came up with a health reason for the establishment of Keeps. They argued that these were established to protect Africans from diseases carried by terrorists such as cholera. A government spokesman in 1973 argued that Protected Villages were meant to improve the health of the African people. He said, “Those moved to Gutsa have been issued with protein-augmented food by the government and in addition continuous on-the-spot medical attention has been available.”⁸⁴ Thus the PVs were considered a solution to African health related problems but it will be demonstrated later that the opposite is true. Colonial officials even attempted to justify the prevalence of deaths and diseases in PVs. They argued that, “Malnutrition and diseases had been a constant element in rural black life for numerous decades.”⁸⁵ However, the argument that on-the-spot medical attention was available in PVs was disingenuous. In fact, the argument that PVs provided some positives is fallacious. It is a fact that the destruction of crops, the disruption of agricultural activities and the confiscation of food items by DAs caused and exacerbated malnutrition and deaths in PVs as will be demonstrated later.

⁸² NAZ, The Rhodesian Herald, 14-2-77.

⁸³ NAZ, The Rhodesian Herald, 11-9-77.

⁸⁴ NAZ, The Rhodesian Herald. 24-10-77.

⁸⁵ Rhodesian Sunday Mail, 01-12-74.

Conclusion

This chapter demonstrated that colonial historians and officials manufactured propaganda to hoodwink the international community as well as inmates into believing that PVs were established to help the African people affected by the escalation of terrorist activities. The claim that Keeps were meant to provide protection to the inmates, bring development to the doorsteps of the African people and facilitate development in TTLs remained mere claims. The Rhodesian government established Keeps as a military strategy to isolate guerrillas, deny them food, intelligence, recruits and access to the people. Claim by a Rhodesian army official that PVs were designed to promote development were malicious and misleading. He claimed that, “The growth point is showing definite signs of development ...”⁸⁶ These were advanced to perpetuate the myth that PVs were established to help and protect the African people. The concept of Keeps was copied from Malaya, Vietnam, Algeria, Angola and Mozambique, as military strategy and not as a humanitarian strategy. The propaganda manufactured and advanced by the Rhodesian government was intended to mislead and to hide the actual reasons behind the establishment of Keeps.

⁸⁶ NAZ, Ms 308/40/3 Rhodesian Army Documentation.

CHAPTER THREE: AFRICAN CHILDREN'S PERSPECTIVES ON PROTECTED VILLAGES

Introduction

This chapter seeks to explore the local understanding of PVs by children and to uncover how they felt as they participated in and survived the liberation struggle for Zimbabwe. The focus on children is an attempt to uncover a large portion of history as most histories of subaltern groups mainly focused on peasants and women as if children were not there. Children as a category of social actors have largely escaped the attention of historians. Grand narratives in Zimbabwean historiography largely exclude the history of children. Many historians on the liberation struggle mainly focused on peasants and women, such that at best they absorbed them into the category of peasants or at worst completely ignored their presence in the liberation struggle in general and PVs in particular. Peasants, women, mothers, widows and young children were placed in one analytical category. However, children who were caught between government forces and guerrilla coercion perceived PVs from their own experiences which were not guided by any ideology or motivated by any political interests.

The question of perspectives on PVs is a contested terrain for historians, colonial officials and the inmates. Colonial historians and officials put forward the view that Africans welcomed the establishment of PVs and actually requested protection by the government from terrorists. Such a belief was peddled, accepted and regurgitated time and again by many Rhodesians. However, it will be demonstrated that such a perspective is more mythical than realistic as it was based on propaganda and colonial mythologies. Testimonies from former inmates of PVs confirmed that these were not designed to protect the African people and

children. It will be demonstrated in this chapter that there was resentment, hostility and complete rejection of PVs by many if not all the African people. This chapter seeks to capture African voices and their perspectives on PVs and prove that from the time they were established to the time they were dismantled in Rhodesia the African people never accepted them as their homes or even as safety nets. While there was a general rejection of PVs, it is interesting to note that such an attitude was shaped by many other variables and at times the perspectives were fluid rather than fixed.

3.1 Colonial Perceptions of African Perspectives on Protected Villages

At the time when PVs were established African perspectives were neglected and colonial officials spoke for the African people. Therefore, colonial officials peddled myths and manufactured a version of history which confirmed that Africans welcomed the establishment of PVs. It was argued that Africans requested the government to establish PVs and George Jordan, an Internal Affairs cadet who was in charge of Keep 13, in Chiweshe, argued that, “About 4 000 people were forced by terrorist activity in Chiweshe TTLs to uproot themselves and move into keeps.” He claimed that, “African people fled their homes because of terrorist brutality and cruelty.”¹ Therefore, PVs were regarded as safety nets for Africans who were tormented and terrorized by insurgents. Musset, a colonial official, argued that PVs were established to provide protection to the African civilian population from the terrorist onslaught. On 14 July 1976, he went on to argue that, “...Africans in many rural areas have pleaded to be put into the safety of protected villages to get away from the bestial attentions of the terrorist.”²

¹ NAZ, Rhodesian Herald, 22-7-77.

² NAZ, Rhodesian Herald, 14-7-76.

The government intensified efforts to demonstrate that the attitude of the African towards PVs was positive. Government officials argued that the African people welcomed the establishment of PVs because they were tired of abductions by terrorists and were subjected to every kind of atrocity and intimidations. Jim Lathan, the District Commissioner of Mount Darwin, argued that, Africans were pleading to be safely tacked behind the wire. He went on to claim that, Africans were flooding into PVs because, “For some time the terrorists mutilated and raped the tribes people...” He also argued that the African people were running away from terrorist cannibalism.³ Colonial officials advanced the myth that Africans were pressing to be put behind the wire for the sake of protection. Therefore, Rhodesian colonial historians perceived PVs as having been established by the Rhodesia government to help alleviate the suffering African people in TTLs.

Colonial officials even argued that PVs offered a bright future for the African people. In their eyes PVs were attractive to the African people who desperately wanted to stay in them. They also believed that negative attitudes by African people were based on ignorance and the failure to realize that PVs offered opportunities for both personal and community development.⁴ Colonial officials argued that PVs were designed to become future townships with light industries to benefit the local people. It was also argued that PVs were a cornerstone for agricultural development and the African people were enticed by the actual and potential benefits of PVs.⁵ The attitudes of the African people were therefore, shaped by envy and curiosity. It was argued that the African people realized that PVs offered more benefits than when living outside

³ NAZ, Rhodesian Herald, 14-10-77.

⁴ NAZ, Rhodesian Sunday Mail, 14-09-77.

⁵ Ibid.

them at the mercy of marauding terrorists who were plundering and destroying the crops, cattle and wives of the African people.⁶

Colonial officials also believed that PVs were accepted and tolerated by the African people as these provided security to the people. In 1977, a Colonial Official, argued that, “It is vital to establish a feeling of security among the people. We have told them that they are here to stay. Once they accept this they are quite happy.”⁷ PVs were portrayed as a welcome development and as a humanitarian exercise that was largely accepted by the African people. George Barlow who was the District Commissioner for Chiredzi pointed out that the African people were “extremely happy” inside PVs. He said that, “Now the attitude is a reversal of the early days. Tribesman and tribal elders in the Sengwe TTL have told me they feel happier and more secure in the PVs ...” He says that one African leader claimed that, “It is good to go about your day-to-day business without any fears from the terrorists.”⁸ It is interesting to note that the attitude of the Africans towards PVs in colonial historiography is memorialised and represented by colonial officials. There is no doubt that such sentiments represent the views of colonial official regarding what they thought the African people felt about PVs. Therefore, we must dismiss these sentiments as they reflected the colonial mentality and not the views of the African people.

Colonialists also designed mechanisms to appear to be helping the African people. A scheme called “Operation Comfort”⁹ was created. It was argued that the fund was started to help African children in PVs by appealing for toys, picture books, and scrapbooks which were for

⁶ NAZ, Rhodesian Herald 22-7-77.

⁷ NAZ, Rhodesian herald 25-4-77.

⁸ NAZ, Rhodesian Herald 23-6 77.

⁹ NAZ, Rhodesian Herald 6-2-77.

educational purposes. Allegedly the operation was designed to ensure that African children in PVs who were affected by terrorism benefitted educationally. It was therefore, argued that because of such schemes the attitudes of the African people towards PVs were positive for all to see. It will be demonstrated that such benefits only existed in the minds of colonial officials.

Colonial officials vehemently dismissed the notion that PVs were rejected by the African people. The Minister of Internal Affairs, Roll Hayman, refuted the contentions of the CCJP that the majority of the African people supported the terrorists and had no desire to move into PVs. He said that PVs were established “To protect those who needed protection.”¹⁰ Bickersteth, another colonial official, also noted that, “The people desperately want to be protected.”¹¹ To cover up the fact that the African people were forced into PVs, he argued that, “...If they move voluntarily terrorists will kill them...Therefore, we have to appear to be forcing them to move.”¹² However, it needs to be highlighted that the uprooting of the African people from their traditional homes into PVs was characterized by the use of force as Africans were driven against their will and under duress. Bickersteth contradicted himself by pointing out that, “So we eventually told them to move all their goods because we were coming to burn their huts down.”¹³ This confirms that the African people moved into PVs only under duress and not because they were impressed by the PVs.

Colonial officials painted a picture of jovial Africans in the PVs. They claimed that the attitude of the African people improved after realizing the benefits of PVs. A colonial official

¹⁰ NAZ, Rhodesian Herald, 12-03-76

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ NAZ, Rhodesian Herald, 27-11-76.

said that, “Now they are co-operative, friendly and cheerful”. He said that when he asked them if they were happy, each replied: “Tinofara” (We are happy).¹⁴ We need to note that these official statements all came from colonial officials who were putting words in the mouths of African people or possibly saying what they thought Africans would say. Therefore, these official accounts are characterized by the falsification and the deliberate distortion of the feelings of the African people toward PVs.

Colonial officials also believed that terrorists were enemies of the African people and that they were forced to support them. Such a false premise made colonial officials to assume that naturally PVs were a welcome development in Rhodesia. The DC for Honde Valley, Hamish Peters, believed that only a few misguided elements in TTLs supported terrorism. He said that, “...terrorists always use the dissident members of the community. They come with false promises and ...they establish themselves by the use of the gun ... so people live in constant atmosphere of fear....”¹⁵ As such colonial officials believed that PVs were seen positively by the majority of the African people who were inmates of PVs. This was also based on the notion that colonialism was a blessing to the African people who were considered backward and primitive.

Colonial officials also denied the fact that Africans were frog marched into PVs. A Rhodesian military spokesman admitted that Africans in Honde Valley were “not very happy” about being moved into PVs. However, he acknowledged this without admitting that those who were not happy “were persuaded rather than forced to move.”¹⁶ It needs to be noted that the

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ NAZ, Rhodesian Herald,06-01-77.

persuasion mentioned included the use of force to drive the people into PVs. African people in Honde valley and all other areas were forcibly removed and placed on PVs against their will. The movement into PVs was also associated with destruction of their homes although government officials stated the contrary. The Deputy Commissioner of Combined Operation, Air Marshal McLaren, believed that terrorist forces in Rhodesia were attempting to destroy the tribal structure. He said, "... far from being liberation forces the terrorists are bent on destroying the normal peaceful way of life of the tribesman."¹⁷ In this regard the government was perceived as a guardian of the African people against forces of anarchy.

The colonial regime manufactured myths that Africans who moved into PVs were given two options, either to move into PVs or to remain outside. This gives the impression that there was a choice. Captain David D. Scott said that "The response to the scheme has been very encouraging ...not only are people voluntarily opting for the security of the Protected Village..."¹⁸ However, it will be demonstrated that Africans in Chiweshe, Mount Darwin, Honde valley, Matibi and other areas where PVs were established were not happy and sure that these provided adequate security from both the Rhodesian security forces and the so-called terrorists. It is also important to note that the African people did not go into PVs voluntarily but coercion was the major weapon used by security forces. Colonial government officials blindly believed that the African people were against the guerrillas. Ian Smith, the Rhodesian Prime Minister, attacked Allan

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

Savory, for referring to the terrorists as freedom fighters and pointed out that the guerrillas had no support and that PVs were a positive move to protect the African people.¹⁹

PVs were considered as resettlement from terror by colonial officials. A government spokesperson in 1973 argued that, "...African families were evacuated and protected from terrorist attack."²⁰ He went on to claim that the African people liked PVs because "accommodation in the PVs was superior to that provided by the people for themselves."²¹ Such a premise should not be taken seriously for many reasons. First, the government never provided any accommodation for the inmates of PVs. There were also no better facilities in PVs than outside because the government essentially provided no facilities at all. It will be demonstrated later in the thesis that the evacuation of the Africans from their homes exposed them rather than providing security for them.

It was also argued that PVs were a welcome development to the African people as the movement of people into PVs was necessitated only minimal disruptions. A colonial official argued that, PVs were not intended to disrupt tribal lives but were designed "not to change their lives but to save their lives".²² In instances where the African people resisted the forced removal, colonial officials had ready explanations. A DC in Mount Darwin argued that "...the terrorists had threatened the people against the movement and construction of their huts in the confinement, since this would mean building prisons for themselves."²³ Such mythologies were

¹⁹ NAZ, Rhodesian Herald, 08-12-74.

²⁰ NAZ, Rhodesian Herald, 07-8-73.

²¹ Ibid.

²² NAZ, Rhodesian Herald, 17-10-77.

²³ NAZ, Rhodesian Herald, 10-03-77.

created to justify the use of force to make people move into PVs. It was also meant to cover up for the fact that Africans were moved into PVs where there was no shelter and dumped during the rainy season. The tactic was to heap all the blame on terrorists so that the government would appear to be responsible and caring.

Colonial officials also argued that life for the African people in PVs was normal as they continued to practice those activities which were common before the establishment of PVs. They argued that “Beer was brewed in the keeps and people drink it as long as they wish,”²⁴ and that marriage ceremonies still took place in Keeps. To colonial officials this meant that life in PVs was not disrupted. Brewing beer and conducting marriage ceremonies, however, does not imply normalization of life and are no signals of general happiness in PVs. Life in the Keeps entailed a number of restrictions. Although the African people designed some coping mechanisms to lessen the burden and trouble associated with PVs, life in these areas remained horrible and there was a general negative attitude towards PVs.

To colonial officials life in the PVs was “just like normal reserve life.”²⁵ They romanticised poverty and hunger. A colonial official in 1974 in Mrewa argued that, “lack of food and hunger was the case even when people were in their old homes.”²⁶ The passion to create a false impression made many colonial officials ignore the fact that African people disliked PVs as these were associated with hunger, poverty and shortage of food. Africans were forced to abandon their fields and their crops were destroyed by domestic and wild animals.

²⁴ NAZ, Rhodesian Herald, 19-11-77.

²⁵ NAZ, Rhodesian Herald, 23-09-78.

²⁶ Ibid.

PVs were far much better to colonial officials than the original homes of these inmates and it was further asserted that Africans tolerated PVs. The Minister of Internal Affairs, noted in 1977 that, “The inhabitants of protected villages are in many ways better off than in their old and sprawling villages.”²⁷ To them PVs were much more organized and structured than the traditional setup. They also attempted to deny the fact that the African people were bitter due to lack of compensation for the loss of property. The Minister of Internal Affairs, claimed that, “It is untrue to say that the inhabitants of protected villages are not compensated for the loss of property. The issue of compensation should not arise because the people are encouraged to move all their property when they move into protected villages, including thatched roofs, doors and windows.”²⁸ It is clear that the colonial administration was possessed with a zeal to defend the Rhodesian regime and the heartless and brutal destruction of African homes.

Rhodesian government officials argued that PVs were constructed to protect the defenseless local black population which was subjected to brutal attacks from the terrorists. As such, government officials argued that the African people felt grateful to the Rhodesian government for offering them protection. District Commissioner Jim Lathan pointed out that, “No one was moved against his own will although some people in some kraals had to be persuaded to move earlier than they should.”²⁹ Such claims are false considering the extent of the brutality and devastation suffered by the Africans who were moved into PVs. Such remarks demonstrate that the official accounts of how Africans perceived PVs were sources of propaganda to justify the establishment of PVs.

²⁷NAZ, Rhodesian Herald 22-9-77.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ NAZ, Rhodesian Herald 3-7-77.

The Rhodesian government officials believed that Africans supported the concept of PVs for various reasons. They argued that the terrorists were forces of anarchy and the villagers in TTLs in operational areas had many possessions destroyed by terrorists. The government launched “Operation Comfort” supposedly to help the destitutes whose homes were destroyed by terrorist attacks. Lathan, said, “They feel very helpless...They’ve lost everything and don’t know what to do.”³⁰ Therefore, the launch of “Operation Comfort” was designed to demonstrate that the government was a caring and compassionate body with the desire to serve the African people. Colonial officials portrayed Africans in PVs as a “grateful a lot” who wanted protection from their government. It will be demonstrated later that African inmates of PVs had a negative attitude towards PVs. The Rhodesian government believed in the contrary and continuously forced people into PVs even after guerrilla attacks arguing “villagers will get back on their feet after the attack.”³¹ Although the government forced Africans into PVs this does not amount to helping people to get back on their feet.

All colonial official, even agricultural officers believed that Africans had a positive attitude towards PVs. Peter Van Leenmen, who was stationed in Chiweshe believed that the African people changed their attitude towards PVs because of the attraction of net benefits conferred by the establishment of PVs. He argued that “Protected Villages offered a great future with land.” He claimed that, “... Later when attitudes have changed and the good farmers are again producing high yields, envy and curiosity may prompt some of the mediocre farmers to ask the extension assistant for advice.”³² However, the plots allocated were too small to produce

³⁰ Ibid

³¹ NAZ, Rhodesian Herald 11-02-77.

³² NAZ, Rhodesian Herald 6-11-77.

adequate yields. The government did not provide financial assistance to the farmers and production remained poor low inside PVs. For example, in Chiweshe, there were times when inmates were not allowed out at all except occasionally to collect fire wood.³³ Farming was not possible under these difficult conditions and people's attitudes towards PVs were hostile because there were no benefits from agricultural activities. In fact the shortage of food made many Africans develop a deep-seated hatred towards PVs and the colonial administration.

It was also claimed that Africans in PVs were "friendly, co-operative and cheerful" because their lives had been improved." Colonial officials argued that, "The real losers in the war were moved to a better life in Protected Village."³⁴ It is unfair to view the movement of Africans into PVs as a positive development. PVs were not established to protect the lives and livelihoods of the African people. It was a military strategy to protect the life span of the Rhodesian government. It was not meant to benefit or help the African people and the Africans themselves never considered PVs as their homes and as such their attitudes towards PVs were entirely hostile.

The Minister of internal Affairs Jack Mussett believed that inmates of PVs liked them so much because the government was providing them with basic necessities. Musset asserted that PVs came with "a bare minimum of infrastructure."³⁵ They were fenced, had a road and a water supply. These so-called minimum standards were in reality non-existent. The fencing was not helpful to the African people because it primarily brought restrictions and limited freedom of

³³ NAZ, Rhodesian Herald 22-7-77.

³⁴ NAZ, Rhodesian Herald, 22-07-77

³⁵ Ibid.

movement. In most PVs inmates were not supplied with clean water. The availability of roads to PVs was not a priority to the inmates because the roads were often used by Rhodesian soldiers who were terrorizing them. Overall, Musset's so called minimum standards were either nonexistent or unhelpful.

To clearly demonstrate that Jack Mussett was deliberately distorting reality when he argued that:

By taking tribesmen to protected villages we are saving their lives. I don't think we can be expected to do more than help them to help themselves. But we are not going to feed these people. They must grow their own crops... those who have had to leave permanent buildings or property will be able to move back when the terrorist threat is over.³⁶

Therefore, the claim that PVs were designed to save the people is a porous argument which can easily be dismissed and rejected. The above statement confirms the Minister confessing that PVs were established without taking into consideration the human suffering associated with such large scale population movements.

There are various reasons for the Rhodesian government to spent a lot of time, effort and money in manufacturing falsehoods on what Africans felt about PVs. This was mainly designed to win the hearts and minds of the African people by appearing to be a caring government driven by a passion to protect the inmates of PVs. Hamish Peters, a DC, pointed out that, "In the Malayan Emergency, the first guerrilla war won by western powers against communist infiltration, it was found that, in order to succeed, eighty percent of the effort had to go to the psychological field and only twenty percent to the military."³⁷ African views on PVs were

³⁶ NAZ, Rhodesian Sunday mail, 01-12-74.

³⁷ ZANU PF Archives, Protected and Consolidated Villages.

deliberately and intentionally corrupted to gain the support of the African people in war zones. It was also designed to change the attitude of the African people towards PVs. Therefore, views of colonial administrations on the attitude of the African people represented the biases of colonial administrators and not the views of the African people. Such sources need to be considered for critical analysis only and not for their reliability.

Government officials also claimed that people's attitude towards PVs were positive because of positive developments realized through the establishment of PVs. Peters also argued that, "The protected villages schemes were designed to regain and maintain order and security in the highly subverted areas..,"³⁸ To them keeps were a step towards prosperity and progress. It is important to establish that the stability government officials purported to have created only existed in their minds. PVs brought havoc, displacement, destruction and harassment. The trust and protection which colonial officials claimed existed were non-existent.

3.2 African Perspectives on Protected Villages by Africans: Hatred and Fear

There is a tendency by historians to homogenise the attitudes of the African people towards PVs as if all African people saw PVs in a similar manner and this needs revision. African perspectives on PVs were heterogeneous. The differences were influenced by various factors. Although all African people suffered hardships inside PVs, the problems they encountered were dissimilar and as such their perspectives differed from place to place and from one person to the other. The major feature which influenced these diversities was the age factor. African men, women and children perceived PVs differently at different times. While the attitudes of adult Africans were shaped by conscious political linkages and interests, the attitude of children

³⁸ Ibid.

towards PVs were entirely negative. Children never had a political agenda which influenced their attitudes. Political orientation was also another major determinant factor. Those who supported the Rhodesian regime regarded PVs as a necessary evil while those who supported the guerrillas had negative views towards PVs. Political expediency and economic aggrandizement were also other common factors, which influenced the perception of the African people towards PVs. Those who benefitted and were employed or gained politically had positive views towards PVs. The status or class of a person in society before the introduction of PVs had an influence on the attitude towards PVs. Guerrilla destruction of PVs also created envy and hatred within communities. Some regarded both guerillas and government officials as sides of the same coin while some either supported the government or the guerillas.

Several factors influenced the African people in their hostility towards PVs. This was summed-up by Elizabeth Moyo quoted by Ruth Weiss who pointed out that:

According to the Whites, the peasants had “asked to be placed under the protection from the terrorists” and willingly moved into keeps. Nothing could be further from the truth. Keeps were concentration camps, enclosed by barbed wire and under constant surveillance. People were herded together, utterly disrupting the pattern of village life. The keeps were set up for security reasons, without any thought for the welfare of those who were allegedly being protected. Indeed, peasants were removed without warning from their fields, crops and cattle. As a strict curfew was imposed, the long walk to fetch water and wood, and also to look after the gardens, proved too much for many women. As a result, food was in short supply and, as it was forbidden to plant food in the spaces around the thatched huts in the protected village, they not only looked like concentration camp, but served the very purpose such camps to those who were forced to live in them. Every inhabitant was carefully registered, every entrance and departure checked. The water bucket which the women brought back from their endless trips to the wells and watering places, for example, were inspected ...³⁹

PVs created a deep sense of injustice in the hearts of many African people. The way PVs were introduced aroused bitter resentment in the hearts of the African people. Some Africans

³⁹ R. Weiss, The Women of Zimbabwe, Kesho Publishers Ltd, London, 1986, p. 75.

described PVs from a historical perspective as “concentration camps.” Historically, concentration camps were introduced in German and were prisons where large numbers of Jews were kept and treated extremely cruelly. A former inmate of PVs in Mount Darwin described PVs as “jails”.⁴⁰ These sentiments were echoed in all areas where PVs were established. The term jail denotes forced relocations and a lack of choice and freedom. An inmate from Chiweshe once stated that, “The protected villages are completely unacceptable to us. “A person can’t like living in 15 square meters ... The people really hate the government for making them leave their homes and move them into a crowded place with no shelter.”⁴¹

This attitude towards PVs was based on the fact that PVs were fenced and the gates guarded and locked during the night. There was also a centrally situated administrative headquarters fortified by sand bags. The central enclosure, surrounded by a double fence, was where the European District officer and his African Assistants lived. Thus, PVs were labelled as “keeps” by the African people, meaning that those who were kept inside the fence were prisoners. Many former inmates argued that there was no difference between PVs and prisons. One former inmate of PVs in Mrewa regarded himself as a prisoner as he argued that:

I am an ex-political prisoner. I was in the keep for six years from 1974 to 1979. Our lives were controlled and we had no freedom. In most cases we were not allowed to go out even during the day. What is the difference between someone in a keep and in a jail if both were forced into a controlled environment? Our wives and daughters were abused while we watched. Life in keeps was horrible and tough.⁴²

I find such an analysis very interesting and fundamental in many respects. It demonstrates that there was a general hostility towards PVs by the African people. It also shows that claims by

⁴⁰ Interview with P. Mavanga, , Ex-inmate, Dotito, Mount Darwin, 2-04-12

⁴¹ NAZ, CCJP, Man in the Middle: Torture, Resettlement and Eviction, CCJP, London, 1975, pp. 10-17.

⁴² Interview with F.Rusike, Ex-inmate, Mrewa Centre, 6-06- 12.

government officials that people were happy inside PVs were not only mythical but also misleading. For example a government official once claimed that, the people were “delighted to move” into PVs.⁴³ Even up to this day former inmates display hatred, anger, hostility and resentment towards PVs, a clear indication that the forced removals were disliked and rejected by the majority of the African people.

One of the reasons why most Africans described PVs as jails was the fact that there was no clear explanation why PVs were established and why they had to move into PVs. Mr. Nyakudya a former inmate in PVs in Chiweshe, now a lecturer at the UZ, said that, government officials came one day in 1973 and counted all the people in the village and the next thing he heard was that he was supposed to move with his parents into PVs. Within two days the people were ordered to move into PVs without a clear explanation as to why they had to move.⁴⁴ Even Dr. Hill noted that, “The villagers nearest us are just being dumped in the middle of a maize field...it is like picking up animals and dumping them at another place.”⁴⁵

Former inmates of PVs had different names for them which demonstrated a clear hostile attitude towards them. P. Nzvimbo described PVs as “fenced paddocks”. She said, “We all disliked to be headed into paddocks like cattle or goats. We were like people in jail and we were not treated as human beings.”⁴⁶ All this was associated with the dehumanization which characterized life in PVs. These sentiments demonstrated anger and despair towards PVs by the African people who considered the government to be evil. In the eyes of the inmates PVs were

⁴³ NAZ, Rhodesian Herald, 14-10-77.

⁴⁴ Interview with M. Nyakudya, Ex-inmate, MSU, Gweru, 20-01-13.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Interview with P. Nzvimbo, Ex-inmate, Nzvimbo Village, Chiweshe, 12-10-12.

not designed to protect them but to protect government officials. The likening of the inmates to animals is a clear indication that PVs were not seen in good light. Therefore, the claim by government that PVs were a welcome development is baseless.

One of the sources of bitterness towards PVs was the issue of restrictions imposed on the inmates. Mavis Mazodza, who was an inmate in keep 14 in Mrewa, pointed out that, “The guards who manned the fenced enclosures checked our identities whenever entering or leaving the protected area. We were treated like “criminals.”⁴⁷ Such sentiments were a common feature among the African people. The guards who controlled the gates abused this system and subjected the inmates to any kind of treatment they deemed necessary. At times inmates had to queue for two to three hours at the gate while the DAs were drinking tea or writing letters to their girlfriends.⁴⁸ The DAs did all this to demonstrate their power and to show that they were in control. They also abused this system by confiscating identity cards of girls and women they wanted to abuse. This was often done in the presence of their husbands or brothers. Many African men felt insulted and belittled by such actions. This was also confirmed by former inmates in Chiweshe,

...the DA’s were taking people’s wives and daughters. They used the method of checking *situpas* (passes) when going out or coming in. The women the DA want to make love with get their *situpas* held as if checking something, until others go and then, he tells the women: I want to see you. And at times they are told to collect *situpas* on their way in to enable him to confirm his word.”⁴⁹

Africans had negative attitudes towards PVs as they were dehumanized and treated as lesser humans by the colonial administration. The rounding-off of people and frog marching them into

⁴⁷ Interview with M. Masodza, Ex-inmate, Nhakiwa Village, Mrewa, 07-06-12

⁴⁸ NAZ, CCJP, Man in the Middle, p.18.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

lorries created deep-rooted hatred towards PVs. When setting-up these targeted areas, colonial officials forced Africans to abandon their homes. Whenever, the warning by the DA was resisted, people were given a short notice and any forms of resistance were not tolerated. Many people regarded the forced removal as a “punishment.” One former inmate of PVs in Madziwa claimed that:

We were forced to move into keeps against our will. Inside the keeps we were prisoners of war at the mercy of DAs. The DAs treated us worse than animals or dogs. We were forced to abandon our beautiful homes or to destroy them ourselves. Refusing to destroy your own home was regarded as stubbornness by the colonial officials. We were ordered to dismantle our old houses and use the poles, grass, doors and window frames in our old houses to construct new ones inside the PVs.⁵⁰

Watching their homes going-up in smoke was a painful experience for the African people. Although the colonial officials attributed people’s reluctance to move into Keeps to intimidation from guerillas, this was not the main reason why there was a general resistance and reluctance to move into PVs. While it is true that the guerrillas in Madziwa, Mrewa, Chiweshe and all other areas warned the people against moving into PVs, this was not the main reason why the African people resisted moving into PVs. The guerrillas only confirmed the obvious. The reasons for resistance were different from the reasons that the guerrillas did not want them to move into PVs. While most Africans were sympathetic to the guerrilla cause, most people who resisted moving into PVs did so not because of their political consciousness or for political reasons. Abandoning their homes was a painful experience. One former inmate of PVs from Honde valley noted that, “We were forced out of our homes going where there were no homes”.⁵¹ To the African people this was not only inhuman but also insensitive on the part of the colonial government. Therefore,

⁵⁰ Interview with K. Kondo, Ex-inmate, Madziwa Secondary School, Madziwa, 18-11-12.

⁵¹ Interview with L. Gwete, Ex-inmate, Honde Valley, 3-04-13

the establishment of PVs became a source of grievance for the African people. This was also associated with all other forms of grievances Africans had towards the colonial government.

The way Africans were dumped into open spaces further infuriated the African people. Inmates of PVs were just given an open ground and ordered to construct their new houses. This forced them to sleep in the open for a very long time. Munyaradzi Nyakudya confirmed that people lived in the open for months. He also said that, these forced removals were done during the rainy season.⁵² Dumping people in the open was a sign of cruelty on the part of the colonial administration. It was also considered evil by the people who were forced to become squatters. This exposed the African people to the rain, cold and heat. Such problems and many more created a fertile ground for hostile relations between government officials and inmates. One former inmate also pointed out that, “We were sleeping in the open like animals. The whites never saw us as people, they thought we were baboons. How can people be forced to live in the open?”⁵³ This homelessness was also confirmed by former inmates of Keeps in Honde Valley, Maramba Pfungwe, Mrewa, Mtoko, Mount Darwin, Chiredzi, etc.

In Chiweshe, Africans had a negative attitude towards PVs for various reasons. Chiweshe’s proximity to Harare made it unique in many respects. Prior to the establishment of PVs, many people from the area worked in Salisbury and had constructed very good houses and acquired some property. Many were also successful tobacco farmers and had a fairly decent life. Weinrich postulates that, “Chiweshe has been one of the most progressive African areas in Rhodesia.”⁵⁴

⁵² Interview with M. Nyakudya, Ex-Inmate, MSU, Gweru, 20-01-13

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ A.H.K. Weinrich, “Strategic Resettlement in Southern Rhodesia”, p.249.

The forcing of people into “keeps” and forcing them to abandon their good houses and the destruction of their property created deep-seated hatred between the majority of the African people and the Rhodesian government. It also created an opportunity for the creation and establishment of positive relations between the African people and the guerrillas. Therefore, the people of Chiweshe were sympathetic to the guerrillas for many reasons but not necessarily the guerrilla cause. This, however, does not imply that the people of Chiweshe only supported the guerrillas because of localized grievances but these did contribute towards the establishment of cordial relations between guerrillas and the people. The dumping of their furniture in the open, exposing it to the rains, infuriated the people of Chiweshe. Paidamoyo Chisvo says that, “We lost all our property when we were dumped in the open like animals. The Rhodesian government officials were heartless and ruthless.”⁵⁵ This naturally drove the people to be sympathetic to the guerrilla cause.

Atrocities committed by Rhodesian government officials also created negative sentiments by the people in TTLs. The use of torture by Rhodesian officials is well documented. Dr. Selwyn Spray, an American doctor who worked in Mount Selinda and Chikore in Chipinge in 1977 noted that:

Systematic torture was carried out by members of the Police Special Branch and the Criminal Investigation Department (CID). Beatings by the army were spontaneous and a common occurrence. Torture was routine at local police stations, this involved beatings with fists and feet, whipping with horse pipes, beating with sticks and clubs, electric shocks, pushing the head under water and banging it against the wall.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ Interview with P. Chisvo, Ex-inmate, Nyakudya Village, Chiweshe, 13-10-12.

⁵⁶ NAZ, IDAF File 308/40/4. Torture was confirmed by many former inmates of PVs such as severe beatings, sexual torture, falanga, suspension by arms or legs, etc.

The people who experienced or witnessed these horrible experiences found the claim by the government that PVs were established to protect the African people hypocritical and to them these were centres of torture and great human suffering. The establishment of PVs meant more torture and suffering of the African people who had no means to defend themselves. Therefore, the adoption of brutal tendencies by the white minority government played a part in creating hatred towards PVs.

The use of physical violence which also included beating with fan belts, wooden planks and sticks, slapping about the head referred to as “skull bashing”, pulling out of hair, inflicting pain on private parts, and forced drinking of large quantities of water until vomiting occurs, created hatred and deep rooted resentment in the hearts of the African people. Those who were tortured and those who witnessed such horrible and sadistic practices developed ill-feelings towards the government in general and the security forces in particular. These practices also drove the people towards guerrillas who promised an end to colonial rule and an end to these diabolical practices. The atrocities in a way made the guerrillas cause attractive.

The brutalities by the RSF even forced churches in Rhodesia to condemn such actions and call for an end to these brutalities. In 1977 Rev Rea, a church representative stated:

In presenting our case we wish first of all to make it clear that in no way do we minimize the seriousness of the situation that has confronted the government: nor do we oppose the necessity for drastic action by security forces against terrorists. Our purpose is to express the gravest concern about the consequence of the policy that was adopted by the Government to achieve its end. Information leads us to believe that the means adopted have aroused the bitterest resentment in the hearts of the African people, which can have dangerous consequences. ... Of what value is it to the security forces to drive out the terrorists if in doing so they leave behind a heritage of hate and fear and a deep sense of injustice in the hearts of the whole African population?⁵⁷

⁵⁷ NAZ, CCJP, Civil War in Rhodesia, CCJP, 1976, pp. 10-40.

The Minister of Internal Affairs, L.B Smith, rejected this advice and portrayed it as “communistic inspired thinking”. He also denied that the RSF committed crimes against humanity. He said, “...The army are (sic) carrying out their difficult task with their customary desire to have a harmonious relationship with the civil population.”⁵⁸ Such public statements cemented antagonistic relations between the African people and the Rhodesian army personnel.

The failure by the colonial government to address the problems of Africans and the arrogance of the government officials annoyed many inmates of PVs. A colonial official dismissed people’s grievances and problems as “minor inconveniences”. He went on to argue that, “If these educated people do not understand the need to protect the tribesmen, could the villagers themselves be expected to understand it”⁵⁹. Many Africans were annoyed by such statements because they had been forced into PVs and this was certainly a cause for concern. They were given a very short notice to pick-up their clothes, furniture, food, all other household goods, goats and chickens. The houses and the goods which could not be carried were burnt and destroyed to ensure that the guerrillas were starved to death. Watching their houses and goods going up in smoke was a painful experience which created long lasting impressions of the brutality of the colonial officials. To make matters worse the government was not willing to pay compensation for the losses incurred. One former inmate of the Keep in Madziwa pointed out that, “We lost all our property, our cattle and beautiful homes when we were forced into the Keeps.”⁶⁰ Another informant noted that, “The way Africans were moved into Keeps was worse than how animals are treated. The whites never regarded us as human beings. They thought we

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ NAZ, Rhodesian Herald, 06-04-77.

⁶⁰ Interview with A. Gomba, Ex-inmate, Madziwa Village, 18-11-12.

were wild animals.”⁶¹ These sentiments clearly demonstrate that all was not well within PVs as inmates greatly resented their establishment. Therefore, the colonial official’s claim that PVs offered social and economic benefits was untrue as African people in TTLs across the country where PVs were established never realized those benefits. It is also clear that PVs were never intended to confer such benefits.

The enactment of vicious biting pieces of legislation created hostilities towards government officials. In 1973, the government manufactured the Emergency Powers (Collective Fines) Regulations, which empowered the Provincial Commissioner to impose collective fines on inhabitants of a place or area if he believed a person there had committed an offence, or harbored, concealed or assisted a person who he knew to be planning to commit terrorism. This resulted in the closure of schools, churches, African businesses, stores, petrol stations, grinding mills, hospitals and clinics, in Chiweshe, Chena, Mtoko, Mount Darwin and Madziwa. The closure of schools created hatred in these areas. Children who no longer attended school felt betrayed, while parents felt helpless and considered the move to be evil and inhuman. Food shortages and shortages of basic necessities created a long lasting negative impression in the hearts of the Africans. Most inmates regarded PVs as a “deliberate ploy to make the people suffer”.⁶² In Uzumba TTLs in keeps such as Chitimbe, Kaseke, Manyika, Katiyo, Chipfunde and Chidodo, inmates were forced to abandon their livestock such as cattle, goats and sheep when moving into the Keeps. Failure by the African people to herd and Keep their animals created sour relations between the people and the colonial officials. Some of the livestock were lost in the course of forced removals. Some were shot and killed by security forces so as to deprive the

⁶¹ Interview with T. Dondo, Ex-inmate, Honde Valley, 3-4-13.

⁶² Ibid.

guerrillas of meat and food. Some of the livestock strayed and could not be found. All this created a long lasting hostile relationship within the African communities. Loss of cattle was both painful and unacceptable. Cattle were a source of power, pride and prestige within African communities. It was a symbol of status and people treasured them tremendously. It was a source of wealth. They were also used for religious purposes. Cattle also provided meat and milk. As such, the loss of cattle created deep-seated resentment towards the government.

Brutal tendencies displayed by the RSFs were a cause of concern for most Africans. In a bid to eradicate terrorist activities and support for terrorism, RSF became more and more ruthless, which in many respects created bad blood between the people and government officials. The enforcement of curfew regulations was a source of conflict. Time and again, curfew breakers were shot. Some of the victims were the elderly people, women or children. This was a common occurrence in Chiweshe, Centenary, Mrewa, Mtoko, Mount Darwin, Mudzi, Shamva, Madziwa, Rushinga, Chiredzi, Honde Valley, etc. These areas were labeled by colonial officials as “sensitive”, “operational areas” or “war zones”.⁶³ Time and again the colonial government acknowledged and announced that curfew breakers had been shot. This deeply affected the African people in PVs. On 16th April 1975, the government announced that, “An African male was killed by Security Forces while breaking the curfew in the operational area on Sunday night.”⁶⁴ On 16 July 1975 Security Force Headquarters announced that, “an African male curfew breaker was killed...” As the war situation intensified such reports became a common feature. It was frequently reported that, “Curfew breakers have been killed...” e.g. on 29 July 1976, it was

⁶³ The Rhodesian Government considered all areas were the so-called terrorists operated as red zones which were a security risk.

⁶⁴ NAZ, CCJP, Civil War in Rhodesia, pp.50-55.

reported that, “six curfew breakers have been killed.”⁶⁵

What infuriated the African people most was the fact that the government was not remorseful or concerned about the death of these so-called curfew-breakers. The government officials argued that curfew breakers were putting their lives in danger and as such the killings were justified. Even the Rhodesian courts sanctioned such cold blooded killings. In 1976 two Africans were sentenced by a magistrate to six months in jail for breaking the curfew. The magistrate argued that such sentences were justified in the sense that it discouraged people from putting themselves in danger.⁶⁶ The issue of curfew breakers attracted local and international condemnation. African members of Parliament and church leaders appealed to the government to stop the killing of African people in operational areas under the guise that they were curfew breakers. Van der Byl confirmed the ruthlessness of the Rhodesian government declaring that, “I have no intention of attempting to do anything about this, and as far as I am concerned the more curfew breakers that are shot the better and the sooner it is realized everywhere the better”⁶⁷. These killings confirmed the widely held notion that the Rhodesian government was not concerned about the lives of the African people.

Despite the fact that there is overwhelming evidence to demonstrate that PVs were disliked by the majority of Africans in TTLs, the Rhodesian government aggressively perpetuated naked lies that PVs were liked by the inmates. An army official went on to claim that:

Kandeya was a hub of the war (in the North east) and a major killing ground from the beginning of Hurricane... with the implementation of the PVs and the maintenance of

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

reasonable force level, CT (Communist Terrorist) activity was de-escalated considerably...⁶⁸

The Emergence Relief Committee reported that all was not well in PVs and that the inmates were bitter and survived under difficult conditions. It reported that:

It would be impossible to describe all the conditions under which the unfortunate people are living ...Over more and more areas where the curfew imposed and every week some are shot for breaking it, sometimes old people, women and children. ... The inhabitants are not allowed out except occasionally to collect firewood. The men of working age are away in town or elsewhere, leaving the children, women and old people. ...malnutrition is increasing amongst the children. The morale is very poor indeed. The women are losing heart, shut up, unable to plough and do things which are part of their cultural life...⁶⁹

Therefore, it would be mischievous to suggest that children who were being shot, beaten up, who had no food and water, imprisoned and suffering from malnutrition had a positive attitude towards Keeps.

3.3 A Confused Perspective: Children at both ends of the Gun

Children by nature because of their age did not understand the cause of the fighting between the guerrillas and the Rhodesian forces. Most young children harbored no political interest and as such they were innocent victims who were dragged into a conflict they did not understand. A former inmate of PVs in Madziwa aptly described the situation as he claimed that “Children in Protected villages were at both ends of the gun.”⁷⁰ The Rhodesian forces and the guerrillas used children as messengers, look-outs, porters, spies, landmine detectors, sexual

⁶⁸ NAZ, Official Rhodesian Army Documentation

⁶⁹ NAZ, Emergence Relief Committee. Report on Protected Villages

⁷⁰ Interview with T. Takaruza, Ex-inmate, Madziwa, 21/11/12

slaves, etc.⁷¹ Both the Rhodesian forces and the guerrillas enlisted the services of children because of children's malleability and susceptibility.

In the eyes of many young children both the Rhodesian forces and the guerrillas were "Trigger Happy" and killing unarmed parents, relative, brothers, sisters, and friends. Time and again the Rhodesian forces fired on boys herding cattle after the curfew had begun.⁷² Many children lost their lives during the liberation struggle and such a scenario traumatized the survivors who failed to understand why their friends were being butchered. Children also witnessed the death of their parents and relatives at the hands of the Security Forces. Children in "war zones" witnessed mass murders. This was confirmed by a Chipso Chikozho of Mount Darwin who said:

In 1977, soldiers came to our village in the middle of the night while we were asleep. They suspected that guerrillas were sleeping in our huts. They shot and attacked randomly killing most of the people who were sleeping in the huts. I was afraid as I saw my brothers and sisters dying, my mother was injured and she was shot on the arm. Many children were crying and no one was prepared to help. Many people were killed by the soldiers.⁷³

The Rhodesian forces attacked inmates of PVs whenever they were themselves attacked by guerrillas. The attacks were a common feature in war zones. This was a way of venting their anger on unarmed civilians, dropping and lobbing shells indiscriminately into the huts of suspected sympathizers of terrorists. Many children died or witnessed death, traumatizing them.⁷⁴ What worsened their situation was that they saw the DAs and other government officials

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² This was confirmed by many former inmates of PVs.

⁷³ Interview with C.Chikozho, Ex-inmate, Mount Darwin, 02-04-12

⁷⁴ Interview with I. Mazano, Ex-inmate, Mount Darwin, 03-04-12

as perpetrators of violence. To them it seemed that PVs were established so as to enable the Security Forces to punish them at close range and in a confined environment.⁷⁵ This made PVs horrible places for children, who did not understand or know why their mothers, fathers and relatives were being killed. This made children military soft targets to be abused indiscriminately by soldiers.

The plight of children who were injured by the Rhodesian forces, children whose relatives were butchered and whose homes were destroyed by the government felt neglected and abandoned by the government.⁷⁶ The lack of psychological re-orientation and rehabilitation programmes for former inmates, especially children, after the liberation struggle in Zimbabwe also confirms that the legacy of neglect still lives on. To inmates of PVs anything which reminded them of the hardships associated with the Rhodesian government was a source of anguish, fear and psychological distress. The lives of children in PVs were bleak because of the horrifying experiences they endured or witnessed before or after they were driven into Keeps.

The indiscriminate use of landmines by both guerrillas and Security Forces in areas close to the Rhodesia borders greatly affected children in many ways. Government officials argued that landmines were used to prevent communist encroachment. The Prime Minister of Rhodesia, Ian Smith, believed that there was a need to destroy communist inspired terrorists and communists who were terrorizing the black people.⁷⁷ Landmines were planted outside PVs to prevent the so-called terrorists from entering these areas. These war zones were inhabited by

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid

⁷⁷ I. Smith, Bitter Harvest, Zimbabwe and the Aftermath of its Independence, John Black Publishing Ltd, London, 1997, p.147.

civilians and mostly children. The landmines were used to preserve colonialism at the expense and detriment of unarmed, vulnerable and defenseless children, who made up the majority of casualties. What made the situation worse in these areas was the fact that guerrillas also planted these lethal devices on roads and in clinics, stores and any areas suspected of being used by Security Forces or government officials. The point I wish to make is that the government in Rhodesia was obsessed with the quest to preserve colonialism at any cost and with no regard for the welfare of children.

Therefore, children who witnessed the explosion of land mines, who were amputated and injured by the mines considered PVs to be designed to maximize the number of casualties. The children considered Keeps as cages to trap them.⁷⁸ Children were forced by circumstances and age to go outside PVs since by nature children love to play and hate confinement. Therefore, children were by far the most affected and vulnerable group. The bushes and foot paths around PVs were the most common places where land mines were placed by the Rhodesian forces. The guerrillas usually planted them near dip tanks and other areas likely to be used by security forces or government officials. Anti-personnel mines were planted in villages, fields, forests, mountains, along riverbanks and on roads and bridges.⁷⁹ The Rhodesian government and security forces mined many areas, but not to protect the African people as they claimed.

There is a general tendency by historians to assume that children and peasants had a negative attitude towards PVs because they were sympathetic to the guerrilla cause and the liberation struggle. While it is valid to assert that the guerrillas articulated an agenda which

⁷⁸ Interview with I. Mazano, Ex-inmate, Mount Darwin, 03-04-12.

⁷⁹ P. Moorcraft and P. McLaughlin, The Rhodesian War. A Military History, J.Ball Publishers, Johannesburg, 2008, pp. 30-44.

called for freedom of the African people and the destruction of PVs, children in Rhodesia did not always share such sentiments or ideological perspectives. The plight of children in PVs was not always the primary concern of the guerrillas. While the guerrillas articulated an ideology which condemned all evil practices by the Rhodesian government, including the establishment of PVs, it is a fact that they too demonized PVs for their own survival and to win the liberation war. Both the SFs and the guerrillas wanted to enlist the support of civilians through intimidation to prevent them from supporting their enemies. This was confirmed by one former inmate of PVs in Mount Darwin who said that:

It is true that the Rhodesian forces and the comrades used landmines. It appears both sides were obsessed with wanting to win the war at all costs and at the expense of vulnerable civilians. The government forces wanted to prevent inmates of PVs from returning to the homes and producing food for the guerrillas. The guerrillas wanted to demonstrate that the SFs were not invincible and laid the mines on roads, schools, clinics, dip tanks outside PVs.⁸⁰

This, therefore, demonstrates that neither the guerrillas nor the RFs were concerned about the welfare and survival of inmates of PVs. The attitudes of children who were caged in Keeps were influenced by their daily experiences. The perception of children in PVs was not shaped by colonial propaganda or by guerrilla nationalistic rhetoric. Children were not happy to be confined in PVs and were not happy to see their friends dying or being injured by mines. To them whoever planted the mines which maimed their friends was an enemy to the children. Therefore, both security forces and guerrillas were perpetrators of violence against children who desired and needed protection by both sides. The liberation struggle was a nightmare for children. They were harassed from both ends.

⁸⁰ Such sentiments were confirmed by my former inmates of PVs.

Children's perspectives on PVs were somewhat characterized by and associated with myths, misinformation and propaganda. A lot of things took place during the liberation struggle which children neither understood nor were satisfied with the explanations given. The escalation of violence and the introduction of mass destruction strategies by the Rhodesian government made things worse. In the late 1970s the Rhodesian government introduced chemical warfare to eradicate terrorism. Cholera and anthrax were introduced around PVs in the southern parts of the country to deter access to water by guerrillas. The Selous Scouts (SS) destroyed and sabotaged the water supply pipelines close to the Nuanetsi River. There was a terrible outbreak of cholera in Matibi and Chilonga TTLs spread by infected guerrillas from Mozambique. The Rhodesian SS also infected cattle with anthrax. All this was designed to limit the availability of food for the guerrillas.⁸¹

The use of the lethal tactics resulted in the suffering and deaths of many people in general and children in particular. Most children did not understand why people were dying. They also did not understand who was responsible for causing such a calamity and mayhem within PVs. These children were at the same time bombarded with misinformation and propaganda. The Rhodesian government argued that the diseases originated from the communist world while the guerrillas blamed the government for the outbreak of such terrible diseases. These children did not know who to trust.⁸²

⁸¹ J. Parker, Assignment Selous Scouts. Inside story of a Rhodesian Special Branch Officer, Galago Publishers Pty Ltd, Albeton , 1999,p p. 89- 95.

⁸² Interview with P. Chiro, Ex-inmate, Mount Darwin, 04-04-12.

It is important to note that the creation of PVs exposed “A whole generation of African children ... to violence.”⁸³ What made the situation dire was the fact that the guerrillas and the RFs used violence inside and outside PVs. Both guerrillas and SFs perpetrated atrocities and shaped the attitudes of African children. Therefore, children’s perceptions of PVs were shaped more by experience than by what propagandists from both sides postulated. To children the difference between the two groups was insignificant, many children saw DAs and guerrillas as two side of the same coin.

Both sides brutalized Africans in general and children in particular. The guerrillas punished and killed many unco-operative household heads inside PVs. At times families were driven out of PVs and packed into huts and then set alight.⁸⁴ These calculated and planned massacres were meant to have a double effect on the people. Firstly, these were designed to punish collaborators and sell-outs that supported the Rhodesian forces. Secondly, they were intended to instill fear into would-be sell-outs. All these acts of violence created an element of fear and uncertainty in the minds of many children who had so much faith in the guerrillas as liberators. Therefore, many were indifferent in terms of attitude towards guerrillas. They did not understand whether the guerrillas were foes or friends.⁸⁵ It is important to note that children’s attitude towards PVs and guerrillas were not fixed but were characterized with contradictions and change.

The failure of PVs to eradicate guerrilla support infuriated the Rhodesian government which adopted a ‘get-tough’ policy to punish inmates of PVs who supported guerrillas. At times

⁸³ P. Moorcraft and P. McLaughlin, The Rhodesian War, p.134.

⁸⁴ Interview with I. Chipanda, Ex-inmate, Mrewa Growth Point, 02-06-12.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

the Rhodesian forces made indiscriminate shootings without responsibility and remorsefulness. They even celebrated the massacring and brutalization of the African people, one Rhodesian officer boasting in 1979 that, “If we carry on the way we’re going we’ll have a white majority.”⁸⁶ The terrorizing and killing of inmates of PVs created hatred and resentment in African children towards PVs. The Rhodesian government and the creation of PVs were monsters to them.⁸⁷ Thus, one PV in Mount Darwin was nicknamed “Fort Misery” to describe the suffering of the African people inside these so-called PVs.⁸⁸

From the point of view of children who were inmates of PVs and trapped in war zones it was difficult to escape injury or death from either the guerrillas or the Rhodesian forces. The adoption of ruthless tendencies by both sides caused more problems for those who were unaffiliated. One former inmate noted that, “We were burning from both ends. Failure to support the guerrillas was a good way of inviting trouble and supporting them was also inviting trouble from the Security Forces.”⁸⁹ This was also confirmed by participants in the war who bitterly complained that, “We are like maize being ground between two stones.”⁹⁰ Both guerrillas and the security forces wanted to win the hearts and minds of the people by torture and by the barrel of the gun.

⁸⁶ P. Moorcraft and P. McLaughlin, The Rhodesian War, p.134.

⁸⁷ Interview with P. Chiro, Ex-inmate, Mount Darwin, 04-06-12.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Interview with I. Chipinda, Ex-inmate, Bindura, 20-11-12.

⁹⁰ NAZ, CCJP, Civil War in Rhodesia, p.40.

The ruthlessness of the Rhodesian security forces was demonstrated in Mount Darwin on 2 June 1975. A *pungwe* was organized by pseudo guerrillas for people of Karima village. These fake guerrillas were members of the Selous Scouts (SS) who were masquerading as genuine guerrillas to deceive the African people. The Security Forces killed twenty people and injured fifteen seriously. Nine of those killed were children, along with five of those seriously injured.⁹¹ The Karima massacre was organized by the RSFs and the DA for Mount Darwin Mr. Jim Lathan to test the loyalty of the people⁹². It is hard to understand how the Security Forces and the DA expected the people to resist or refuse to attend a meeting summoned by armed men who portrayed themselves as guerrillas. This only demonstrated that the inmates of PVs were seen as punch bags where RSFs demonstrated their invincibility, ruthlessness and fire power. The use of unorthodox methods was both malicious and unwarranted, causing children inside PVs to see government officials as monsters with a keen interest in perpetuating the suffering and dying of the innocent and defenseless. They strongly felt the PVs were not intended to protect them but to protect the interests of an evil colonial system that was killing and maiming inmates at will. What makes this incident all the more disturbing to most inmates was that they used deception in misleading inmates of PVs who had no option but to appear to be interested in supporting armed men who were masquerading as guerrillas. Even if they had refused to go for the Pungwe, it is most likely that this was in no way going to shield them completely from trouble.

Another horrific incident took place in Madziwa, when inmates of Protected Village No. 7 near Mount Goora, were subjected to a horrific experience in which six Africans were ruthlessly and indiscriminately murdered by the Security Forces. Mr. Muzambeta (43), Mr. Reza (35),

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ibid.

Pingwe Reza (12), Dewo Chamboko (45), Crypain Katenga (15), Erina Muzavani (7) and Tazviona Mavura (12) were bombed by Security Forces helicopters on 20 May 1976.⁹³ It is important to note that four out of six people butchered by the government in this incident were children. After shooting these civilians the DA invited inmates of keep 7 to come and identify their relatives who had bullet wounds all over their bodies and heads. This incident was made all the more painful to former inmates of the PV by the way it was handled. The inmates were called by the loudspeakers to go to the DA's office to identify the dead bodies,⁹⁴ and were offered no further explanation besides being ordered to bury the deceased.

The Madziwa incident created a long lasting horrible impression in the minds of many inmates and children. This demonstrated the fact that the Security Forces were above the law and had a mandate to butcher innocent and unarmed civilians at will. It also demonstrated that the RSFs had the right to kill without offering any explanation. The inmate felt helpless and vulnerable. One former inmate noted that, "It was easier to die than to survive inside PVs. These Keeps brought us closer to the gun."⁹⁵ This in many ways terrorized and traumatized inmates of PVs, especially young children, who did not understand why their friends, relatives and parents were being butchered by government officials.

The guerrillas also showed little concern for the plight of inmates of PVs in their attempt to secure support from the civilians against the Rhodesian forces. It is also valid to note that the establishment of PVs disrupted guerrilla operations and made it difficult for guerrillas to secure

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Interview with I. Reza, Ex-inmate, Madziwa, 18-11-12.

food, clothes, information and other forms of support from inmates of PVs. The guerrillas introduced a tactic which entailed the destruction of PVs. This involved the burning down of PVs in Mrewa, Mtoko, Muzarabani and Mount Darwin.⁹⁶ While guerrillas argued that this was mainly done to liberate the African people from the horrors associated with PVs, it is more likely that this approach was mainly designed to revive supply lines for the guerrillas. Therefore, PVs were burnt down to protect guerrilla's interests and not the interest of the African people in general and children in particular.

Children who had witnessed the destruction of their homes and the uprooting of thousands of Africans into PVs by the Rhodesian government also witnessed the destruction of their huts by guerrillas. In both instances the two sides demonstrated that homelessness, suffering and the terrible plight of defenseless African people was not their concern. To many inmates, both guerrillas and Rhodesian forces were "heartless, ruthless and selfish" Tariro Madziwa, from Madziwa, believed that both guerrillas and Rhodesian forces were only concerned about their own selfish interests at the expense of the inmates.⁹⁷ She noted that what pained her most was that, "The guerrillas who preached the gospel of African liberation destroyed their huts to force them to live in caves."⁹⁸ The destruction of PVs in war zone areas became a common feature. In 1977 alone, the Rhodesian government reported that there were more than 70 terrorist attacks on protected villages throughout Rhodesia.⁹⁹

⁹⁶ NAZ, Rhodesian Herald, 5/7/77.

⁹⁷ Interview with T.Madziwa, EX- Inmate, Madziwa, 18-11-12

⁹⁸ Ibid

⁹⁹ NAZ, Rhodesian Herald, 5/7/77

It is important to note that military interests took precedence over the interests of unarmed civilians. The Rhodesian government created PVs for military reasons. One former inmate pointed out that, “The African people inside protected villages were vital for the survival of the guerrillas as they provided food, shelter and information.”¹⁰⁰ He also noted that, “The same people who were expected to assist the guerrillas were expected at the same time by the Rhodesian forces to do the same.”¹⁰¹ The situation was difficult for the inmates, who were terrorized by the two parties. Children inside PVs were faced with ugly alternatives. If they supported the guerrillas, they faced retribution from the government, and if they supported the government, they faced retribution from the guerrillas.

Conclusion

It has been demonstrated that the attitude and perceptions of inmates who were children in PVs were characterized with problems, glorifications, propaganda, ambiguities, misrepresentations and stereotypes. Colonial mythologies peddled by colonial historians and officials have largely been deconstructed in this chapter. Nationalist propaganda was also deconstructed as child inmates of Keeps suffered immeasurable pain at the hands of RSFs and guerrillas. Children’s perceptions about PVs were influenced not by a particular political ideology or interests but mostly by personal experiences as they survived the liberation war inside the Keeps.

¹⁰⁰ Interview with T. Madziwa, Ex-inmate, Madziwa, 18-11-12

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

CHAPTER FOUR: GENDERED DIMENSIONS OF LIFE IN PROTECTED VILLAGES

Introduction

This chapter explores specific experiences of female and male children inside PVs. Children in Keeps faced various problems such as food shortages, accommodation crisis, and lack of health facilities, hygienic conditions and blankets. It is important to note that these problems were faced by all other inmates but the plight of children was worsened by their inability to solve said problems, due to additional problems which specifically affecting children. This chapter wishes to demonstrate that children faced specific problems which affected them because of their age. It is important to note that the problems faced by female children were different from problems faced by male children. The problems faced by children also differed tremendously based on age. Teenage girls faced more problems inside the Keeps than other children. Teenage girls were sexually abused, molested, exploited, traumatized, brutalized and manipulated in Keeps dotted across Rhodesia. They were also impregnated and infected with sexually transmitted diseases. There were several cases of minors with children inside PVs.

Teenage girls faced a number of gender specific problems. These issues worsened the plight of female children who also faced all other problems faced by all inmates and by children insides these villages. There has been a general tendency by historians to generalise gender specific problems faced by women together with those faced by females below the age of eighteen years. Problems faced by young female inmates will be highlighted to demonstrate that female children were the worst affected inmates. This does not suggest in any way that life was palatable for other inmates. There is a general silence on problems faced by young girls inside Consolidated Villages/ Keeps. Their stories and plight have largely been forgotten and down

played. History has been written without highlighting their plight as if they were not there. Narratives of young female inmates will be examined to appreciate their plight and to understand how the liberation struggle affected vulnerable groups in general and specifically female and male children. My focus will be on the narratives of children who endured forced evictions and resettlement. My concern is the impact and consequences of war from a gendered perspective. It is also my wish to highlight the experiences of female and male children as they remember their experiences inside PVs. It will be demonstrated that PVs transformed and deeply affected the lives of children in different ways because of gender.

4.1 Girls and Sexual Violence in Protected Villages

Teenage girls below the age of eighteen years faced unique problems inside the Keeps. Adolescent girls were exposed to gender based violence perpetrated by both guerrillas and DAs. The plight of female children in PVs was different from that of all other inmates as they lacked the capacity and ability to deal with the problems inside the PVs. Keeps to them were sources of misery as they were subjected to abuse and exploitation. Rape was used as a weapon to attain various political objectives. Robynn Collins pointed out that:

In conflict affected areas around the world, individual rights and security are particularly for women and girls threatened for a variety of social, economic and political reasons. Decreased stability and security leave women and girls at increased risk of being raped.¹

The abuse of young girls in PVs has been treated differently by different scholars. There has been a general tendency by arm-chair analysts to believe that the breakdown of morality was responsible for prostitution in PVs. Dr. Selwyn, a Rhodesian medical doctor, argued that:

¹ R. Collins, "Defining Rape in Conflict- Affected Areas," in D. W. Pike (ed), Crimes Against Women, Nova Science Publishers, London,p.73.

These people are not accustomed to living in such close proximity with other people and this ... seems to have resulted in the breakdown of morals to some extent among young people... I heard many stories about young women being threatened by these guards... being forced into love affairs with these men against their will. These were stories. I can say from a medical standpoint there was a very high incidence of venereal diseases among the guards, I treated many of them. Whether this was coming from Protected Villages or not, I assume it is ... they must be involving themselves in sexual intercourse among the people of the PVs, that is just my assumption of course, my conclusion I should say. Again I will mention this because this is something that concerned ... African mothers and fathers, a great deal, a very great deal.²

The issue of morality in PVs has been used to explain the prevalence of Sexually Transmitted Disease (STDs). The ZANU (PF) Commissariat reported in 1978 that people in PVs were becoming promiscuous and pointed out that:

According to our culture, sister and brother when they are teenage they are not allowed to sleep in the same room. Now what hell! The DAs (District Assistants) are worsening matters, father, mother, brother and sister are forced to sleep in one room and sometimes at gun point.³

This was further pointed out by an informant quoted by the CCJP in Rhodesia in 1977 who blamed the breakdown of morality and social communal controls for prostitution within the Keeps:

In some keeps as I was going along women when they got pregnant from the District Assistants they are using medicine to remove the pregnancy before the husband knows it. As a result of this some are dying, e.g. Mirriam Keep 21. Some succeeded in throwing babies away. Victims of the removal of pregnancy are found put in plastic bags and thrown to the river and in toilets. For example such cases were met in keeps 10, 8 and 17. Also being crowded like this, boys and girls take advantage of it. They can see one another anytime to make love. The crowdednesscrowdness has promoted immorality to its highest point and the African custom of life is destroyed by the keep system. The general welfare is not at all maintained. The families are going to be of mixed blood.⁴ (sic)

² NAZ, MS 569/7/4. Testimony of Dr Selwyn Spray, Geneva 452.

³ ZANU PF Archives, Commissariat Department, 10 -04-78.

⁴ CCJP, Man in the Middle, p.10.

The issue of morality has been central in the arguments presented above. However, I find this disturbing, inaccurate and misleading to say the least. The morality issue is a scapegoat which is designed to minimize the existence of forced prostitution and rape in war situations. It is crucial to note that women and young girls were sexually exploited and abused inside the Keeps and that these abuses had nothing to do with loose morals. The claim by Dr Selwyn Spray that the breakdown of morality was as a result of people living in close proximity should not be taken serious because it was a baseless claim from a medical practitioner and not a sociologist. The medical doctor also noted that he has heard many stories about young women being threatened by the DAs, but to him these were mere stories not to be taken as truth. Testimonies of abuses of women in PVs therefore deserve serious historical attention.

The allegations by an informant from Chiweshe are also problematic in many ways. The informant firstly blames women for terminating pregnancy from DAs but does not question how those women got pregnant. He also portrays the aborted children as the only victims although the pregnant women were lively the first victims of abuse, rape and unwanted pregnancy. He also blames the ‘crowdness’ for the breakdown of morality but neglects the most important question: Why were the people crowded in PVs on the first place? The crowdedness and the breakdown of morality was a result of the establishment of PVs and therefore, all the problems inside the Keeps were manufactured by the manufacturers of PVs.

It has also been suggested that the breakdown of morality was a culmination of women’s new found freedom and a breakaway from parental control. Mike Kesby has postulated that, women were able to assert their sexuality in a way they had not been able to do before as men

lost control over their bodies and sexuality.⁵ To claim that women gained independence during the liberation struggle in war zones and PVs because of their sexual engagement and encounters with military men is disturbing to say the least. Kesby's assertions demonstrate elements of parochialism and misrepresentation of reality of the highest order. Nhongo-Simbanegavi rightly pointed out that Kesby missed the point. She argued that:

It is difficult to see how women could assert their sexuality through the experience of what in most were cases of coerced sex or rape ... He did not delve deep enough on the implications of those experiences for women ... Kesby became trapped in his theory ... by shifting attention from the women, the direct victims of the camp guards or guerrillas sexual exploits...⁶

Teenage girls were subjected to rape in PVs in Rhodesia. It is fundamental to note however, that rape during the liberation struggle for Zimbabwe was different from rape in independent Zimbabwe. Rape in this case had a different meaning with diverse motives and consequences on both perpetrators and victims. Robynn Collins noted that "Rape has historically been understood as a natural by-product of war, one that is unavoidable ... There is nothing natural or inevitable about war time rape, as it is often premeditated, planned and carried out with specific set of objectives in mind."⁷ Therefore, for the purpose of this discussion rape refers to sexual violence perpetrated against children in Keeps. Rape entails sexual violence, such as caressing of young girls, touching their bodies especially breasts, inserting fingers into their private parts, forcing young girls to undress in public, degrading and inhuman treatment associated with their sexual orientation. Young girls in PVs were subjected to various forms of sexual violence perpetrated by both guerrillas and DAs. Nhongo-Simbanegavi noted that:

⁵ M. Kesby, "Arenas for control, Terrain of gender contestation, Guerrilla Struggle and Counter-insurgency Warfare in Zimbabwe, Journal of Southern African Studies, Vol 22, 1996, pp.561-82.

⁶ J. Nhongo- Simbanegavi, For Better, p. 120.

⁷ R. Collins, Crime, p.76.

... We should also remind ourselves that most of the so called women were in fact children, young girls hardly past puberty. The war made them women before they were ready, and the majority have neither emotionally nor physically recovered from their traumatic experience.⁸

The poverty, starvation, hunger, malnutrition and shortages inside the Keeps exposed teenage girls to manipulation and made them more vulnerable. This resulted in many accepting and naturalizing sexual abuse such as rape as a survival strategy. The acceptance of sexual abuse does not in any way diminish its horrible effects on the victims and the fact that it is emotionally devastating. Josephine Nhongo-Simbanegavi noted that:

For women in places like the PVs where basic provisions were scarce, a situation similar to that in the camps obtained: those in control could, and often did, subject women to abuse in exchange for access to scarce consumables...⁹

The use of food as a bait for abusing women and young girls demonstrates that they did not enter into relationships with the DAs voluntarily but were forced by circumstances beyond their control. Accepting affairs with DAs was not a choice but rather forced upon them. After all, these young girls were abused in any way by the DAs who monopolized violence and other brutal methodologies at their disposal. Robynn Collins provides an interesting observation by clarifying the plight of women and young girls in a war situation. He says:

Rape in conflict affected areas where sex is considered exchangeable for money, security, food or weapons can be characterized as Collateral Rape. Since the rights and security of individuals, predominantly women and girls, are particularly threatened in these areas, they are especially vulnerable to rape ... Collateral. Rape is best understood as a type of transaction, "If you let me do this to you, I will protect you, pay you and offer you security." Collateral rape is highly prevalent in all stages of conflict where the scarcity of resources, economic deforestation, and need for security are in evidence.¹⁰

⁸ J.Nhongo-Simbanegavi, For Better, p.122.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ R. Collins, Crime, p.76.

Many informants confirmed that in PVs all the young girls and women who had relationships with the DAs did so not for romantic reasons but for survival. Mary Maluleke, from Chilohlela village in Chiredzi pointed out that,

Life in PVs was bad, there was no soap, no clothes, no sanitary pads, no food, no salt, nothing. Therefore, the choice was between death and survival. Many young girls chose to survive. It was a desperate situation which required desperate measures. All these people inside the keeps were trying to survive the war. After all, the DAs had powers to beat you up or punish you. They even had guns to kill you. If someone with a gun tells you that, “I love you and you say no, he can then say I am going to kill you.” No-one was there to protect us.¹¹

The above testimony reveals a number of things. Young girls were abused and forced to commercialize their bodies for survival. Commercialisation of teenage girl’s bodies entailed what can be termed as “forced prostitution”. One must note that the term forced prostitution tends to legitimize the illegitimate. Forced prostitution is rape. The use of various mechanisms to gain sexual favours and trap women into relationships with armed men is a form of sexual violence of the highest order. The DAs had power, money, food and many other war weapons at their disposal to create an impression that their relationships with young girls were “love relationships.” These victims of sexual abuse had no choice and this brings out the element of the use of young girls in PVs as sex slaves. They were sex slaves because rape in PVs was inevitable and the DAs were above the law. Therefore, there was no consent on the part of young girls; lack of consent means that they were raped and abused.

The Rhodesian government intentionally and purposefully closed schools to punish African people and children in particular. This was worsened because the guerrillas also used similar tactics to wage a protracted armed struggle. Kriger points out that:

¹¹ Interview with A. Maluleke, Ex-Inmate, Chilohlela Village, Chiredzi,01-06-14

... However, all schooling was seriously disrupted, with children commonly described as going “part time” to school... Everywhere stores closed. By end of the war, 1 500 primary schools and 89 secondary schools had closed countrywide, and over 1,000 of 1,500 dip tanks no longer functioned.¹²

The above argument demonstrates that children in PVs were burning from both ends. Hunger, destitution, food shortages, idleness and starvation among other mounting problems were the order of the day for all the inmates. Inmates of PVs were made vulnerable and desperate. The desperation forced inmates to resort to survival strategies which many people might consider immoral. It is crucial to note that the issue of morality in war-torn communities ripped by violence and devastated by poverty is not realistic. In such circumstances people adopt desperate measures to see the next day. Therefore, DAs abused their privileged positions to commit collateral rape especially on many young girls inside the Keeps.

The DAs, who were in control of scarce basic provisions subjected women to sexual abuse in exchange for access to scarce consumables and basics. Teenage girls were forced to commodify their bodies in exchange for scarce commodities. The use of hunger as a political weapon is both callous and criminal.

There is a tendency by many, including former inmates of PVs, to blame women for having affairs with DA for economic reasons and survival. Emelda Mukungulushi who was an inmate at Chilohlela Protected Village in Chiredzi pointed out that, “Many young girls became prostitutes. They abandoned their culture and moral values.”¹³ This was further pointed out by former inmate, T. Chauke:

¹² N. Kriger, *Zimbabwe's*, p, 147.

¹³ Interview with E. Mukungulushi, Ex-Inmate, Tsovani, Chiredzi, 01-06-14.

Women from Chambuta Protected Village loved money from the DA. They were sleeping around with a lot of men. They were prostitutes. As a result of the prostitution, many young girls were spreading STIs (Sexually Transmitted Infections). Women became very dangerous. Even married women were spreading these diseases. These girls were doing it for money. They were prostitutes.¹⁴

The above testimonies highlight some major gender specific stereotypes and myths about women in general and female children in particular. The claim that women were engaged in relationships with DAs for money denigrates women. However, it is important to note that in such difficult circumstances teenage girls had no choice. They were faced with the dilemma of living in hell if they refused sexual advances from the DAs who had power over the life and death of the inmates or to pretend to be in love with the DA for the sake of survival. It is also disturbing to note that STIs were considered “women’s diseases” and the spreading of these diseases was squarely blamed on women.¹⁵

Most male informants across the country where PVs were established mostly argued that women were responsible for moral decadence and prostitution in PVs. A. Maluleke, a headman from Chiredzi who was in Chambuta Keep argued that, “Women are weak and they are always interested in luxury and they do not want to suffer. Most of the young girls were after money from the DAs.”¹⁶ This demonstrates that women in general and teenage girls in particular were perceived negatively using traditional beliefs and stereotypes which foster beliefs that women are the “weaker sex.” This mentality is reinforced by gender perceptions of women only being good for the bedroom and kitchen. Men believed that women were spineless, weak, gullible and thus

¹⁴ Interview with T. Chauke, Ex-Inmate, Chilohlala Village, Chiredzi, 03-06-14.

¹⁵ STI were considered and described as women’s diseases. Victims of sexual violence were seen as loose and responsible for their abuse because of loose morality. It should be noted that there is nothing morale about rape and other forms of sexual violence.

¹⁶ Interview with T. Maluleke, Ex-Inmate, Chiredzi, 01-06-14.

easy targets for manipulation as sexual objects. Many people fail to realize that the DAs had a lot of power and strategies at their disposal to force women to give-in to their appetite for sex.

The DAs were feasting undisturbed on young girls by abusing their positions. The DAs were deflowering young girls recklessly and mercilessly in PVs. These young girls were harassed and tormented until they had to give in. At times those who resisted the sexual advances of the DAs were detained at the Keep entrance overnight and their identity particulars were confiscated or they were locked out of the Keeps or taken to the bush where they were punished by being forced to cut grass or firewood. Sometimes they were beaten-up using open fists, logs etc.¹⁶ It is clear therefore, that young girls were abused, not because of their wayward and immoral activities, but because the DAs abused their power. The issue of moral breakdown is problematic in the sense that it is judgmental and it only focuses on symptoms rather than the problem. The key issue which created all these problems was the establishment of Keeps. This, together with the conduct of marauding DAs who had enormous powers at their disposal resulted in massive abuse of power and sexual abuse of teenage girls in the Keeps.

Therefore, to claim that those who were victimized were targeted because of a lack of morality on their part is judging them unfairly in historical terms. Others believe that economic reasons drove women and girls into prostitution. Some men like M. Chilonga, believed that:

Only women who were loose were abused by the DAs. Most women wanted money and food from them. Food was scarce and there was no money. Poverty was haunting us and that is why women became prostitutes. Even married women were failing in love and having sex with the DAs, all for money. Money and food were used to seduce women to fall in love with the DAs. Married women were at times doing it because their friends who were not married were having good times with these DAs.¹⁷

¹⁷ Interview with M. Chilonga, Ex-Inmate, Chiredzi, 01-06-14.

The economic causal factors have also been advanced to explain why girls engaged in relationships with the DAs. An informant from Chiweshe pointed out that most women who were in PVs were not married and had difficulties in looking after their families. Food was scarce and they had no money. They resorted to prostitution to look after their children and to get money to buy new dresses, soap, shoes and many other basic commodities because the DAs had a lot of money. He also pointed out that even married women were competing with single mothers and girls for resources from the DAs. He noted that many innocent men were infected with STIs by their wives who were infected by the DAs. He concluded by claiming that, “Money is the root cause of all evils. Give women money, they can do anything.”¹⁸

To suggest that relationships between young girls and DAs were purely for economic reasons is again problematic and too simplistic. Although it could have been an immediate causal factor, there were more important long term causal factors which created destitution and forced women into a dilemma. The uprooting of large communities and the destruction of their crops manufactured hunger and poverty. Poverty and food shortages were symptoms of a heartless counter-insurgency strategy which was implemented by the colonial government. The use of hunger as a political weapon to force women and young girls into prostitution is immoral and unacceptable. Young girls were trapped into relationships as the DA planted poverty as snares to capture young innocent girls and women. Most victims of collateral rape were vulnerable poverty-stricken young women and girls who were engaged in what can be termed “obligation” or “survival” sex.¹⁹ Father Fidelis of the CCJP in Rhodesia highlighted that:

¹⁸ Interview with V. Gumbu, Ex-Inmate, Chiweshe, 05-01-14

¹⁹ R. Collin, “Crime”, p.77.

It was really a pathetic situation which history would never bring forth – a young woman who was attractive and all these men who have guns and do what they like; to young women who were left with no means of income and all these men were receiving good money. They are coming up to you, you have to make a choice and these were difficult choices.²⁰

Father Fidelis brings out some important facts but fails to realize that when young girls were approached by armed men, they had limited choices if any. Young girls were driven into relationship screaming and kicking against their will because the DAs had a long history of brutality.

It is important to note that there were also other types of rapes committed by the DAs on inmates of PVs. Strategic rape was also prevalent in PVs. According to Robynn, strategic rape is “politically motivated desire to cleanse a community”²¹ of communists and terrorists. The DAs argued that inmates of PVs had been infiltrated by communists and that all the women were everyone’s wives as dictated by the “Communist Doctrine” which talks of communal ownership of resources. They argued that all women or girls who were refusing their sexual advances were wives of communists and as such they used force and other dirty tactics to abuse inmates of PVs. Two reasons were advanced to justify the abuse of women and teenage girls. Firstly, it was to cleanse the pollution from communist insurgence and secondly to prove that they were more powerful than the communists. This resulted in many young girls being victimized and abused more for military reasons. Young girls were beaten up, raped and infected with STIs in PVs in Chiredzi, Chiweshe and many other PVs dotted across Southern Rhodesia.²² At times young girls

²⁰ D. Auret, Reaching for Justice. The Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace. 1972-1992, Mambo Press, Gweru, 1992, pp.65-69.

²¹ R. Collins, Crime, pp.75-78.

²² The abuse of young girls by Rhodesian Forces was confirmed by many informants and even many historians who wrote on PVs confirmed this. Although many historians managed to capture the abuses of women during the

suspected to be in relationships with guerrillas were subjected to thorough beatings before they were raped. In this case women's bodies became instruments through which political contests were resolved. Josephine Nhongo-Simbanegavi pointed out that, "Women have been subjects of military disputes in the past, but never before in the history of the country had their bodies been used as a terrain for military and political contestation in this manner."²³

At times young girls were raped by DAs who justified their heinous acts by arguing that they had a moral duty to prevent terrorist from reproducing. In Forty Misery Keep which was in Mount Darwin, pregnant women were rounded up by Rhodesian soldiers and their wombs were split open to kill enemy children.²⁴ At other times pregnant women were beaten-up in order to cause miscarriages. All these brutal and dreaded acts were perpetrated in the name of cleansing and purifying African societies of communists or terrorists. Women and young girls were raped to demonstrate that the Rhodesian soldiers were mightier and more powerful than the terrorists. This all demonstrates that life for young girls in PVs was traumatizing and humiliating. This degraded and dehumanized young girls who felt worthless in the midst of all these adversities. Many felt that to be born a girl was "more of a curse than anything else."²⁵

Tactical rape was also used extensively in war zone areas where most PVs were established. Tactical rape according to Robynn Collins:

liberation struggle especially by Rhodesian Forces, there is a general tendency to lump women and teenage girls together. Children because of their age lacked the capacity to cope with the devastating effects of sexual violence.

²³ J. Nhongo-Simbanegavi, For Better, p. 121.

²⁴ Interview with. V.Makomo ,Ex- Inmate, Mount Darwin, 02-04-14

²⁵ Ibid.

... can be characterized by the need to fulfil short term and immediate objectives such as establishing or maintaining control over a particular territory and its inhabitants. Military commanders and their leaders of armed groups encourage the use of rape as a way to terrorize civilians. Perpetrators will be uniformed and armed. Tactical rape is generally used to deliver a message to the population upon or within the body of the victim. This type of rape tends to instill fear and explicitly communicate to the people to stay out of a particular territory.²⁶

The introduction of the Selous Scouts (SS) as a military unit resulted in massive human rights violations in Rhodesia especially in PVs. The SS were a deadly fighting force which masqueraded as guerrillas. In a bid to turn the people in Mount Darwin against the guerrillas, the SS engaged in organized rape. Married women and girls were kidnapped and raped in full view or knowledge of their parents and husbands. After the rapes the DAs would round-up the people and tell them how cruel the guerrillas were. R. Mariponde, pointed out that, “At first we believed that these devilish acts were committed by the comrades. We later learnt that some of the perpetrators had painted their faces black and spoke Shona which was not clear.”²⁷ Many informants who were housed in “Forty Misery” confirmed that these rapes were premeditated. Once the rapes took place, the people were brought together as victims in full view of the inmates of the Keep. At times the perpetrators were sported using radios and had items synonymous with Rhodesian Security Forces such as beef, army gumboots, weapons, etc.

Tactical rape by the SS in this case was used to explicitly create the impression that the guerrillas should not be supported by the people. At times those who were actively involved in the liberation struggle as *chimbwidos* were targeted. People in PVs became suspicious when known supporters of the armed liberation struggle were victimized, purportedly by the people they supported. Chauke, recalled one instance in which the people were invited to a *pungwe*,

²⁶ R. Collins, Crime, pp.76-90.

²⁷ Interview with R.Mariponde, Ex-Inmate, Mount Darwin, 02-04-14.

purportedly by guerrillas. At that *Pungwe* young girls and old women were taken away and the armed men announced that they wanted to share these women because as “Communists every woman is everyone’s wife.” He explained that people at the *Pungwe* were shocked because the guerrillas who had operated in the area never did such terrible things. Before the women returned, guns were fired and armed soldiers told everyone to remain seated. Chauke, noted that the guns were pointed at the people rather than the so-called guerrillas and people became suspicious. He also noted that at times people were raped when they went out to the fields, and the following day the DAs would call for a meeting and tell the people that guerrillas were raping and killing people.²⁸ All this was done to eradicate guerrilla support by demonizing them as rapists, cannibal and heartless people bent on destabilizing Rhodesia and causing mayhem in African communities. The use of such military strategies made female children in PVs more vulnerable and exposed. This created fear, uncertainty, anguish, trauma and terror within the minds of victims and witnesses.

In some PVs the Rhodesian soldiers deliberately targeted known *chimbwidos* to deliberately impregnate them as a way of punishing guerrillas. S. Pasipanodya, from Madziwa, testified that, in 1977 soon after the establishment of PVs, Rhodesian soldiers captured some *chimbwidos* in crossfire. They were raped and one of the captives who attempted to run away, was recaptured and her genitals were burnt. The other four were paraded naked in an open space in the middle of the Keep.²⁹ Incidents of that nature, where captives of war were tortured more for their biological make-up than for political reasons, were numerous. The use of such cruel and

²⁸ Interview with G Chauke, Ex-Inmate, Chiredzi, 02-06-14.

²⁹ Interview with S. Pasipanodya, Ex-Inmate, Madziwa, 18-02-14.

barbaric tactics to punish civilians in a war situation was not a military tactic, but a tactic designed to terrorise and humiliate perceived enemies who in this case were young girls.

The use of rape in a war situation is a common feature across the African continent. A thirteen year old girl from Burundi who was abused by armed rebels testified that, “They would eat and drink, then they would call for you. If you refused, they would use sticks to whip you. They all had sex with me. A man would come, then another and another...”³⁰ Children have also been abused in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). According to UNICEF, “The Democratic Republic of Congo had more than 30 000 child soldiers and girls who were kidnapped and gang-raped by soldiers using them as entertainment and rewards for bravery.”³¹ In 1999 during the civil war in Angola UNICEF pointed out there were massive children’s rights violations in Angola due to the escalation of violence. It noted that, “Angola is the worst place in the world to be a child.”³²

There has been a general tendency by historians to portray the notion that women and girls were abused by DAs in PVs only. David Lan believed that the guerrillas religiously prohibited sex in operational areas so as not to annoy ancestral spirits who guided and protected them.³³ Many former guerrillas also present a romantic view of the liberation struggle by arguing that the guerrillas had a strict “sexual code” which outlawed and prohibited sex in operational areas.

³⁰ A. McIntyre, (ed.), Invisible Stakeholders: Children and War in Africa, Institute of Security Studies, Pretoria, 2004.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

³³ D .Lan regards guerrillas as warriors who respected traditional value especially when they go hunting which prohibits sex. However, the traditional values were not religiously observed, many informants confirmed that many guerrillas abused young girls during the liberation struggle.

Comrade Gweme said that, “Freedom fighters always sought spiritual guidance whenever they entered a new area and in all cases the spirit mediums listed things not to be done and sex was always on top of every list.”³⁴ As such guerrillas who were on a mission to liberate the Zimbabwean people were not prepared to risk their lives for sexual satisfaction. However, there is a need to investigate and analyse whether this was always the case. It will be demonstrated that, the said “sexual codes” were often violated. David Maxwell argues that “by 1978 the “guerrilla rank and file,” were breaking taboos regularly which prohibited sex.” He explains that, “this tendency was compounded by the decrease in the length of their training in 1978 as emphasis was placed on the final “big push “to overthrow the settler state.”³⁵

While the ex-guerrillas painted a glorified picture about the conduct of guerrillas, Rhodesian propagandists portrayed guerrillas as monsters and rapists. Stories of abuse of women and children by ZANLA guerrillas were a common feature. The Rhodesian Herald on 26 November 1973 reported that:

3 pregnant women died when force-marched with other captives out into the grueling terrain of the Zambezi ... more than 100 African women and children have been used by terrorists during attacks as human shields against security forces ... Girls were impressed to become porters and above all, “bed fodder” for the “self-styled” liberators.³⁶

The propagandists went on to claim that guerrillas were engaged in the capturing of young girls and making them “communal wives” as dictated by the Communist Doctrine and Communist Masters. Although the propaganda by the Rhodesian government was characterized by

³⁴ Interview with Cde T. Gweme, War Veteran, Southview, Gweru, 13-01-14.

³⁵ D.Maxwell, “Local Politics and the War of Liberation in North- East Zimbabwe,” Journal of Southern African Studies,19:3 September 1993,p.375.

³⁶ NAZ, Rhodesian Herald, 26-11-76.

distortions and exaggerations there is a grain of truth in that guerrillas were abusing young girls in operational areas. After the establishment of PVs the guerrillas recruited some *mujibhas* and *chimbwidos* into their ranks. These new recruits, although they had no military training, were not allowed to go back to the PVs. This meant that teenage girls were now staying in the bush with the guerrillas. Although most informants were not prepared to testify that they were abused and many guerrillas believed claims of sexual abuse were meant to tarnish their image, most interviewed informants state that they heard such claims. It is also important to note that there were a lot of children who were fathered by guerrillas. In Chiredzi about 10 children were identified, in Chiweshe 14 children were also identified, in Mount Darwin 19 children were identified³⁷

One interesting case was that of Paida Rushizha of Mount Darwin who had a daughter fathered by guerrillas. Paida claims that her child was born from a love relationship with Cde Ndege. She says that, “When Cde Ndege came into the area, he proposed love to her and they fell in love.”³⁸ When I asked her Cde Ndege’s real name and where he came from and whether they saw each other after the war, she could not answer. This clearly demonstrated that the so-called relationship was not a genuine love relationship, but that both parties entered into a relationship for strategic reasons. Paida boasted that, she was feared by many in the area, and she exerted a lot of influence and was responsible for allocating duties to other *chimbwidos* and

³⁷ A lot of children were singled out as having been fathered by guerrillas in areas where PVs were established. In most cases it was difficult to ask women whether their children were fathered by guerrillas or not. Most informants were avoiding that question.

³⁸ Interview with P. Ruzhizha, Ex-Inmate, Dotito, Mount Darwin, 03-04-14.

could eat good food with the commander and enjoyed many privileges.³⁹ Therefore, it can be concluded that, teenage girls were sexually exploited by guerrillas once they moved out of PVs.

The guerrillas also punished young girls who were said to have fallen in love with DAs inside the PVs. Young girls who were accused of being wives of DAs at Sengwe and Gezani PVs in South Eastern Zimbabwe were invited to a *Pungwe* where they were beaten up and labelled “Smith’s Prostitutes” (Mahure aSmith). The plight of teenage girls was made worse by the fact that, the following day after the *Pungwe*, the Rhodesian security Forces bombed the area, burning down homes and killing a large number of people. The area is now notoriously known as the “slaughter area” or the “Bloody Pool” (Guvi reropa).⁴⁰ The guerrillas and the Rhodesian security forces made life unbearable for most inmates of PVs in general and teenage girls in particular. The teenage girls who were beaten up at the *Pungwe* and those who witnessed the death of people in the area were faced with a dilemma.⁴¹ Both the guerrillas and the soldiers were perpetrators of sexual violence.

Although the guerrillas attempted to minimize the abuse of women and young girls in operational areas, the abuse of women continued unchecked in most areas. The Rhodesian media noted this and pointed out that:

Terrorists in TTLs of north-eastern Zimbabwe are said to have made crude attempts to establish courts... unconfirmed reports say that some better disciplined terrorists groups have brought some of their own members before these kangaroo courts for offenses like interfering with tribe women.⁴²

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Interview with A Mpapa, Ex-Inmate, Mpapa Village, Chiredzi, 03-06-14

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² NAZ, Rhodesian Herald, 2/7/74

It was very difficult for teenage girls to report their abuses to commanders, and worse still if the commanders themselves were the perpetrators. Therefore, most cases went unreported. Maria Mpapa noted that “It was playing with fire reporting these abuses because the guerrillas could label you a sell-out and shoot you.”⁴³ The use of violence to silence victims ensured that they suffered silently. Even up to today, many people were not at liberty to discuss anything they considered to be sensitive lest they will be labelled enemies of the liberation struggle; such labels are associated with horrific consequences.

4.2 Sexually Transmitted Infections and Teenage Girls in Protected Villages

Sexuality Transmitted Infections (STIs) were prevalent in all PVs across Rhodesia. The spread of STIs has generated a great deal of debate among historians. Most historians have attributed the prevalence of the problem to loose living amongst the youth which gave rise to chronic sex-related diseases.⁴⁴ The lack of accommodation which resulted in families sleeping in one room, where father, mother, son and daughter slept is considered as major cause of the spread of STIs. Many informants argued that husbands and wives were forced by circumstances to make love in full view of their children who in turn began sexual activity with each other through imitating their parents. While this explanation sounds convincing, it was not by choice that families were sleeping in one room. Therefore, the pattern of life as I have argued earlier was not responsible for the spread of STIs. It needs to be noted that the establishment of PVs transformed the lives of people forcing them to live in squalid and over-crowded conditions.

⁴³ Interview with M. Mpapa, Ex-Inmate, Mpapa Village, Chiredzi, 03-06-14.

⁴⁴ J. Nhongo- Simbanegavi, For Better, p. 113.

Moralists believe that the spread of STIs was associated with moral breakdown and decadence, resulting in prostitution. An informant from Chiredzi argued that, “Because of the war many young girls became prostitutes. They became prostitutes all because of money. The DAs had a lot of money which attracted women in a large numbers.”⁴⁵ The testimony above was based more on stereotypes, which denigrated women as people who sold their bodies for money. The informant also did not acknowledge the fact these young girls were made destitute and desperate by the war situation. His statement paints all women with one brush, which is a dangerous generalization historically. The young girls were forced into relationships with DAs who infected them with STIs. Therefore, the sources of these infections were the DAs who abused alcohol and drugs. Hendrick Ellert, a Rhodesian Police officer confessed that:

The guards, known as District Assistants (DAs) and District Security Assistants (DSAs) rapidly earned a reputation for brutality and lechery which was often emboldened by the consumption of home-brewed beer and the use of marijuana known in Rhodesia as mbanje or dagga.⁴⁶

It is interesting to note that although Ellert highlighted the major cause of problems in PVs, that is the alcohol abuse by DAs, he later on changed his mind and blamed urbanization for the breakdown of morality in PVs. Ellert argued that:

The worst legacy of this ill-conceived programme was that it drove a hitherto rural and peaceful people out of their traditional patterns of life into an intolerable system of forced urbanization in which all of the twentieth century social ills proliferated.⁴⁷

Ellert’s assessment is an attempt to cover-up for the atrocities committed by his Rhodesian colleagues. There is overwhelming evidence to confirm that the DAs were ruthless and brutal

⁴⁵ Interview with B. Mpola, Ex-Inmate, Mpapa Village, Chiredzi, 03-06-14

⁴⁶ H.Ellert, The Rhodesian Front War, pp., 120-130.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

rapists. Therefore, they should be blamed wholly for the proliferation of STIs in PVs. It is also important to note that the lack of consistency by Ellert in the way he argues demonstrates he was writing history with a Rhodesian bias and not from evidence. It is difficult to historically prove that the lack of privacy and moral decadence in PVs were behind moral breakdown and the spread of STIs. However, it is easy to prove that the DAs were responsible for most of the sexual abuses inside PVs.

It is also important to note that the DAs had a lot of women at their disposal and hence were sleeping around. Young girls were the majority of the people inside the keeps. For example, in Rumbizi Keep in Honde Valley, there were “184 men, 360 women and 786 juveniles”¹⁴ in June 1977. At Zindi PV there were “248 men, 553 women, 78 juvenile males and 143 juvenile females in April 1977.”⁴⁸ To Heike Schmidt, the demographic disruption presented women and juveniles with sexual opportunity in the absence of male guardians.⁴⁹ However, it is important to note these girls never had full control over their bodies inside the Keeps.

Many analysts, including colonial administrators, never saw the plight of inmates and juvenile girls as a priority. The Honde Valley Estate management noted that, “... there was a rise of venereal diseases “at a dramatic rate” among young women.” The management complained that, “Many working days were being lost by female tea pickers at Rumbizi and Katiyo while they underwent treatment. The villagers blamed the existing high incidence of VD’s on the guards whose approaches they could not reject without risking reprisals.”⁵⁰ However, after presenting

⁴⁸ H. Shimdit, Colonialism, p. 237.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

this overwhelming evidence to demonstrate that life was dreadful for young girls who were sexually abused and infected with STIs in PVs, Schmidt shockingly concluded that, “Despite the spread of diseases and their suffering, many young people also saw positive elements in life behind these fences, as they had the opportunity to escape parental control.”⁵¹

The conclusion by Schmidt is disturbing to say the least. The STIs had catastrophic effects on teenage girls and therefore cannot be lessened by the quest to escape from parental control. Life in PVs was horrible and associated with suffering, hunger, violence and pain. Therefore, Schmidt’s assertion is misleading. The infections and parental control are two things totally different matters, and these girls were not entering into these relationships willingly in a bid to escape alleged parental control. STIs were perceived very negatively in African societies and as such there was no way the teenage girls would happily accept their newly found freedom in light of the ostracisation associated with STIs. To suggest that the girls enjoyed new found freedom from parental control downplays rape as a crime against humanity and as a war crime. The 1949 Geneva Convention outlawed and prohibited the use of rape during conflicts and considers it as a violation of customary international law.¹⁸ Even the Rome Statute categorically and unequivocally states that:

Rape, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy, enforced sterilization, or any form of sexual violence of comparable gravity amount to crimes against humanity when committed as part of widespread or systematic attack directed at the civilian population ... these acts of sexual violence also amount to war crimes.⁵²

Sexually Transmitted Infections had terrible effects on teenage girls in PVs. In most TTLs, clinics and hospitals had been closed because of the escalation of violence. The closure of

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² ICRC, Geneva, March 2011.

medical facilities meant that victims of sexual abuse who were infected had no access to medical treatment. Josephine Nhongo-Simbanegavi revealed this when she highlighted that, “Unprotected sexual contacts with guerrillas, camp guards or soldiers often meant pregnancies and venereal diseases... No treatment for venereal diseases was available and some women and girls sustained permanent damage to their reproductive organs.”⁵³ Teenage girls who were infected with these diseases suffered tremendously as there were no avenues available to seek medical help. Most PVs were sealed-off by the imposition of the Curfew System. Inmates were not allowed to leave the Keeps for long periods, at times for many days or weeks. Chibuwe from Mrewa says that, “Life was made worse when one was infected with a sexually transmitted disease because there were no clinics and at times the victims were given traditional herbs which killed them.”⁵⁴

It was also difficult for most inmates to seek medical help from traditional healers because of the conservative nature of most African traditional societies. Sex and sexually related issues are a taboo and cannot be discussed openly in many African societies. Therefore, most of the teenage girls had difficult times seeking medical help. At times it was difficult for them to even know that they were infected because the majority had their first sexual encounters at a young age and under duress. In Honde Valley hospitals remained operational, but this did not necessarily make life easier for these victims. Miss F.Mutasa noted that, “Those who sought

⁵³ J.Nhongo-Simbanegavi, *For Better*, pp. 112-120.

⁵⁴ Interview with Miss B. Chibuwe, Ex-Inmate, Mrewa, 21-01-14

medical help from the estate clinics were humiliated and many victims were not prepared for such humiliation and suffered silently.”⁵⁵

Most PVs had no clinics and hospitals, and where clinics were still operational, for example, in Honde Valley, the estate management was more concerned about production than the health of sexual abuse victims. In Honde Valley the estate management in 1978 complained that, “Many working days were being lost by female tea pickers at Rumbizi and Katiyo while they underwent treatment...”⁵⁶ This demonstrates that the management was not concerned with the welfare of the inmates of PVs. Therefore, even in Honde Valley where there were clinics life for teenage girls was very difficult whenever they were infected with STIs.

Life for abused teenage girls was made worse by the fact that those who were infected and failed to seek medical treatment were likely to be humiliated or beaten when they were further abused and infected their partners. The DAs used to publicly reveal and humiliate their sources of infection. In 1977 three girls were beaten in front of all inmates of Keep 18 in Mount Darwin. The DAs told everyone that the three girls were “prostitutes” and were spreading “terrorist diseases.” They were stripped naked and beaten-up in broad daylight in front of even their parents and relatives.⁵⁷ Such sadistic treatment degraded and humiliated them for life.

Whenever guerrillas were infected with STI from girls from PVs, they were labelled as traitors or sell-outs. Once labelled as sell-outs, they were subjected to violence, death or beatings. The guerrillas were secretive about STLs because sexual contact was discouraged by most

⁵⁵ Interview with F. Mutasa, Ex-Inmate, Honde Valley, 01-05-14

⁵⁶ NAZ, Minutes of Honde Valley Labour Committee, 14-07-78

⁵⁷ This was confirmed by many former inmate of Keep 18 in Mount Darwin who witnessed such horrific scene. The incident demonstrated the ruthlessness and brutality of the Rhodesian Security Forces.

guerrilla commanders. Therefore, in terms of the way teenage girls were treated by both guerrillas and DAs or even Rhodesian soldiers, the difference was the same. Both groups gruesomely punished innocent young girls yet these girls had no power to resist the liaisons that resulted in the infections as they also had no powers to resist these sexual advances. Teenage girls in PVs were caught between a rock and a hard place.

Some teenage girls who were forced to marry at a young age because of poverty in the PVs faced a lot of challenges. Most married as a method of poverty alleviation strategy. In most cases the husbands ran-away to urban areas to look for employment or joined the guerrillas abandoning their wives in Keeps. These abandoned teenage girls were often forced into relationships with DAs. Their problems multiplied when they contracted STIs and they would in turn infect their partners. Judith from Chiweshe recollected this and pointed out that:

The DAs were raping women against their will. Some women contracted sexually transmitted diseases. These victims were not able to tell their husbands. When their husbands visited from town the husbands would become sick. These women were beaten up and rejected by their husbands. The DAs were not interested in them and they became destitutes. They were even rejected by their families.⁵⁸

Infecting their husbands meant a number of things for these teenage girls. The most immediate consequence was that they were rejected and their marriages were ruined. This created many unmarried women in the PVs who had no families and were not capable of looking after themselves because of restrictions in the Keeps. Secondly, when husbands contracted STIs they would summon the parents of their wives to embarrass them and inform them that their daughters were prostitutes who were sleeping around. This humiliated and embarrassed women to the extent that they lost respect in their communities. The ostracisation and demonization of

⁵⁸ Judith quoted by E. O’Gorman, The Front Line, p. 119.

victims traumatized them a great deal. Some teenage girls were beaten by their husbands, divorced and chased away from the Keeps. Life was very difficult for them under such circumstances.

4.3 Teenage Girls and Pregnancy in Protected Villages

The abuse of women in PVs by the DAs as well as by guerrillas to a lesser extent resulted in unwanted pregnancies. Once these teenage girls fell pregnant they faced many challenges. As a result of the fact that these were young victims unable to cope with situation, their plight worsened. Most historians only mention this problem in passing, but these victims deserve serious historical attention because this was a wide-spread problem affecting many children who were not mature enough to deal with the situation. In almost all the Keeps across the country, this was one of the most prevalent gender specific problems faced by teenage children.

In most societies before the establishment of PVs, when teenage girls were impregnated there were social networks and methods to deal with the problem. The establishment of PVs disrupted the social, economic and traditional ties and these teenage girls were left to fend for themselves. In addition to being uncertain about many things, they were not going to be married to the DAs. Failure to get married was an ultimate price teenage girls paid. Marriage was a cherished dream for most of the teenage girls and once they fell pregnant, their prospects of getting married in future were jeopardized. This was confirmed by one of the victims of sexual abuses in one of the Keeps which was in Chiredzi. She pointed out that:

In our culture every girl at birth was expected to marry, have a family and children. Marriage brought honor, respect and power to women. The way people respect you and see you changes once you get married. Once you fell pregnant out of marriage and worse from enemies of the people such as the DAs you were dead walking. Young girls lost everything, their futures were ruined forever. Their marriage prospects evaporated and

their future looked bleak. Most girls had no option but to take their lives, some even wanted to get rid of the pregnancies and they died in the process. Many young girls died because of the DAs.⁵⁹

The above testimony reveals reveal a number of things. The DAs ruined the lives of many young girls. Unwanted pregnancies were a source of shame and humiliation for teenage girls and their families and brought many unwanted scenarios such as death and baby dumping. The establishment of PVs also ruined the cultural and religious values of the African people in TTLs in Rhodesia. Abortion was taboo in Rhodesia, but it became rampant. The abortions were also done using traditional medicine and many teenage girls who used these methods lost their lives or had their health ruined permanently. It also needs to be highlighted that these teenage girls were victims of abuse not murderers as most people believe that all the girls who terminated pregnancies killed innocent children.

Eleanor O’Gorman also quoted Judith from Chiweshe testifying that lives for women in general and children in particular were ruined once they fell pregnant.

The DA forced them into love ... some women had children with the DAs ... some women were beaten by their husbands. Those unmarried just stayed... They (single mothers) faced problems in keeping those children because they had no fathers.⁶⁰

The teenage girls were also faced with the dilemma of how to negotiate relations with the guerrillas. Once the girls were made pregnant guerrillas treated them as traitors. According to an inmate from Chikombedzi Keep, “The guerrillas demanded that once women were abused by the DAs they should report to the guerrillas immediately. Failure to report to the guerrillas meant that they were sell-outs.”⁶¹ It needs to be noted that in Rhodesia, sexual encounters were not

⁵⁹ Interview with D. Muchena, Ex-Inmate, Honde Valley, and 02-05-14.

⁶⁰ Judith quoted by E. O’Gorman, *The Front Line*, pp.119.

⁶¹ Interview with W Mbiza, Chikombedzi Village, Chikombedzi, Chiredzi, 03-06-14.

openly discussed and so it was very difficult for these teenage girls to openly tell the whole world that they had been forced to have sex with the DAs. Life in the Keeps was also associated with restrictions. The DAs had power to deny permission to go out of Keeps once one was suspected to be sympathetic to the guerrilla cause. They had the power to even punish real and imagined enemies. Therefore, these young girls faced many challenges and in most cases they decided to keep quiet for security and safety reasons.

In Chiweshe the problem of unwanted pregnancies was a major problem which affected many women and teenage girls. Weinrich also noted that:

... The sexual demands allegedly made by district assistants, are said to have given rise to many pregnancies. Out of fear to admit voluntary intercourse or rape to their fathers and husbands, many women are said to have tried to conceal their pregnancies and to have prompted abortions by unqualified persons. As a result a number of women have already died. Moreover, unwanted children are said to have been abandoned in the bush. The latter practice was never heard of before in these tribal areas.⁶²

Teenage girls who were forced into marriages or who had entered into marriages of convenience for economic reasons inside the Keeps were confronted with many of problems. The presence or absence of the husbands was not a deterrent factor in preventing their abuse at the hands of the DAs. They were subjected to harassment, insults, punishment and at times rape. All this resulted in many married women falling pregnant inside the Keeps. Once married women fell pregnant, they had two difficult choices: either to keep the pregnancy, get divorced and suffer, or try to eliminate the pregnancy to save their marriage and possibly die in the process. Miss. W Mbiza from Chiredzi recounted that:

Many young girls were forced to marry for survival and for food. Men who had money and access to basic necessities could marry easily. As the war went on, most of the men

⁶² A.H. K, Weinrich, Journal of Southern African Studies, p.226.

abandoned their wives. The DAs would then arrest these women and pretend to be wanting to know where their husbands had gone arguing that they had become terrorists. These women were subjected to harassment, denied food and at times detained at the gate for days. When they show signs of breakdown, one DA would come to you and tell you that he can save your life. That is when the women would give in and be abused and made pregnant by the DAs. Once you fall pregnant by the DA, you will be divorced. So many died attempting to terminate their pregnancies. I know about seven girls from our keep who died from these abortions.⁶³

The above testimony reveals quite a number of things about life in PVs for teenage girls. It is clear from the above testimony that teenage girls were victimized by their own communities who forced them into marriages and were further abused by the DAs. In all these cases women used their bodies for survival which is tantamount to forced prostitution. In an attempt to manoeuvre and survive in PVs young girls used marriage as a survival strategy but this was largely ineffective. The DAs also used scapegoats to force teenage girls into relations such as that the girls were prostitutes. Therefore, it is important to note that abortions were not done voluntarily; they were typically a last resort to survive under terrible conditions. It is unfortunate that society tends to blame those who died attempting to terminate their pregnancies even today. The DAs were behind all this and should shoulder the blame.

Keeping the child was also one of the available options, but not a viable one. Once women fell pregnant by the DAs, their marriages broke up. Marriage breakdown created a number of challenges. The most immediate problem was that they were now divorced and forced to look after their children as single mothers. Rejected single mothers had to fend for themselves and their unwanted children under very difficult circumstances. In most cases they were first chased away from the family huts in the PVs. They had to construct alternative accommodation on their own while sleeping in the open. Miss W.Mbiza noted that, “When women were chased away

⁶³ Interview with W. Mbiza, Ex-Inmate, Chikombedzi, Chiredzi, 03-06-14.

from their homes, they became outcasts and were labelled as prostitutes.”⁶⁴ These victims were further victimized by their parents and relatives as people of questionable morality. To these teenage girls, life became a nightmare. They faced double victimization from the DAs and from their communities. Once they were driven away from their families, they had to sleep in the open and at times without blankets for a long period of time.⁶⁵

The lack of medical provisions and facilities to aid pregnant women was one of the major problems faced by pregnant women in the Keeps. Most clinics and mission hospitals had been closed because of the war. Therefore, pre-natal and post-natal care for pregnant teenage girls was not available. They had to resort to traditional mid-wives. Although these traditional medical providers did much to assist these young women, the pregnant women faced many problems. Those who required specialized attention usually died. One informant from Madziwa who was pregnant inside the Keep pointed out that, “A lot of pregnant women died. Pregnancy in Keeps was a death sentence.”⁶⁶

Some informants also believed that these DAs were making them pregnant as a way of punishing the people for supporting the guerrillas. In most cases the establishment of PVs resulted in massive migration of men who disappeared and abandoned their wives. Once the men disappeared the DAs abused their wives with impunity. Some DAs even told their victims that, “They wanted to prove to them that they were better men than their terrorist husbands.”⁶⁷ Pregnancies from such forced relations were a source of misery and a punishment

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Interview with G. Chizinga, Ex-Inmate, Madziwa, 18-02-14.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

for women. Moyosvi painfully concluded that, “Being a woman inside PVs was horrible”⁶⁸ This demonstrates how terrible it was to be subjected to abuse only because they were women. War therefore, affects women more than men in any conflict situation.

The war for women and teenage girls was horrible through and through as there were no opportunities created by the war situation. It is important to note that war provided an opportunity for some men to escape obligations. It can be argued that, “... All the dangers that were created by the war, mostly affected women, mostly because they are the people who were caught in between ...”⁶⁹ While it has been argued that women utilized the opportunities and gaps created by the absence of their husbands and other men to become sexually independent, the situation in PVs remained bleak and hopeless. It cannot be argued that women exercised freedom to control their sexuality when they were being raped, sexually abused, infected with STIs and made pregnant in PVs.

It also needs to be highlighted that teenage girls in PVs were not terminating their pregnancies as a matter of choice. Once they fell pregnant especially from DAs, they were rejected either by their husbands or were condemned by their parents/fathers. They were told that the children were not acceptable in their families. W Mbiza, noted that:

Once it was discovered that one is pregnant, the girl is chased away either by her husband or by her father. Once you are chased away, you had nowhere to go and the pregnancy was a source of anguish. We all knew that the children fathered by the DAs were not acceptable in our keeps. The DAs on the other hand were not tolerating any accusations concerning pregnancy. They also threatened to kill us. The guerrillas were also angry with us calling us sell-outs. Everyone was against us.⁷⁰

⁶⁸ Interview with F, Moyosvi, Ex-Inmate, Madziwa, 20-02-14.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Interview with W. Mbiza, Chikombedzi, Ex- Inmate, Chiredzi, 04—06-14.

The dilemma associated with pregnancy inside the Keeps made life unbearable for the teenage girls. The pregnancies endangered the lives of these girls. The circumstances in PVs were totally against women or girls falling pregnant. Many factors such as lack of community support, cultural norms which forbade pregnancy outside marriage and lack of access to reproductive health services made lives unbearable for victims of sexual abuse. It was also traumatizing to imagine looking after an unwanted child without family support networks. Many pregnant young girls committed suicide. In Mount Darwin quite a number of girls committed suicide after discovering that they were pregnant. D Maripfonde revealed that he lost a daughter and a number of relatives who committed suicide when they discovered that they were pregnant.⁷¹

In Chiweshe, many young women died after taking unknown substances to terminate their pregnancies. S. Gwashure said that, “In keep 16 in Chiweshe many young girls or even married women were made pregnant by the DAs. Quite a number of these women committed suicide but it was not even mentioned in the news.”⁷² The mere fact that many teenage girls resorted to suicide highlights the dilemma which confronted many young girls, some who were pregnant for the first time in their lives. This demonstrates that PVs uprooted the African people physically and socially. The traditional mechanisms which assisted traumatized members of a community were no longer in place. Young girls and women were suffering silently and were even rejected by their families. The anguish and humiliation forced the majority of them to commit suicide. I do not suggest that committing suicide was a noble solution to their problems, but I argue that it was the only available avenue to escape from hell brought by sexual abuses in the Keeps.

⁷¹ Interview with R. Maripfonde, Ex-Inmate, Mount Darwin, 02-04-14.

⁷² Interview with S. Gwashure, Ex-Inmate, Chiweshe, 06-01-14.

The plight of teenage girls who were impregnated by guerrillas was slightly different from the plight of those impregnated by DAs. Once PVs were established the guerrillas recruited some *chimbwidos* and *mujibhas* into their ranks. These girls were not allowed to return to PVs, and now stayed in the bush with the guerrillas. Teenage girls were forcibly recruited to provide entertainment, food and wash clothes for guerrillas. Although most guerrillas interviewed denied the fact that these new recruits also served as “wives of guerrillas,” evidence shows that the guerrillas took advantage of the war situation and abused these teenage girls. Various explanations have been advanced to explain these sexual escapades. Some guerrillas argued that it was out of love. Some argued that the guerrillas were worried about their survival and wanted to father some children in case they die in war. Some argued that only rogue guerrillas abused their powers but the majority of the guerrillas never abused teenage girls.⁷³ Whatever the explanation advanced, the fact remains that quite a number of *chimbwidos* became pregnant inside the Keeps.

It is also significant to note that the history of guerrillas and teenage girls in operational areas has been associated with propaganda, claims and counter claims. The Rhodesian government depicted guerrillas as terrifying rapists who abused women and girls on a very large scale. These propaganda accounts were designed to tarnish the image of the guerrillas. On 26 November 1977 the Rhodesian Herald claimed that terrorists were on a rampage, killing and raping African women.⁷⁴ The government went on to claim that the captured young girls were

⁷³ Various explanations have been advanced to explain why guerrillas were engaged in sexual relationships with teenage girls. Some believed that the guerrillas believed that sexual favours were war rewards for their sacrifices. Others believed that the deterioration of guerrilla discipline especially towards the end the war was responsible for increased cases of sexual abuses. I contend that no single explanation can fully capture all the abuses inside PVs by guerrillas.

⁷⁴ NAZ, Rhodesian Herald, 6-11-77

turned into “Communal wives”⁷⁵ However, as much as the guerrillas did abuse young girls, the picture presented by the Rhodesian government was over-exaggerated. Many guerrillas believed that such claims were meant to tarnish their image and cover-up for the callous activities of the Rhodesian Forces.

Chimbwidos who fell pregnant were ordered to return to the PVs where they faced many problems. Upon their return they found their names blacklisted as terrorists. Once one was labelled a sympathizer of terrorists and terrorism, they would be interrogated and tortured rigorously to extract information. Miss T. Gurupira testified that:

When PVs were established in Mount Darwin, a lot of girls and boys ran away wanting to join the liberation struggle. A lot of girls started to stay with the boys in the bush which resulted in many falling pregnant. Once they were pregnant, the comrades ordered them to return to the keep. The DAs had names of all the people who were suspected to have joined the guerrillas. My sister was detained by the security forces and she disappeared forever.⁷⁶

The situation for pregnant teenage girls was horrible as some were tortured resulting in miscarriage or pregnancy complications. Even those who survived faced many challenges because there was no food or support for their unborn babies. Many of the babies died because of malnutrition. Infant mortality rates inside the Keeps were alarming because of the proliferation of various child-killing diseases inside the Keeps. The children were also born without proper medical provisions and were not immunized. Therefore, the lives of children born inside the Keeps and their mothers were at risk and many succumbed to diseases.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Interview with J. Gurupira, Ex-Inmate, Mount Darwin, 03-04-14.

It needs to be noted that although the number of teenage girls who were impregnated by guerrillas was far less than those abused by DAs, the numbers increased tremendously especially towards the end of the war. Ian Phimister pointed out that:

From ... 1976 onwards, however, strains began to show in the broad anti-colonial alliance of the people. While guerrillas continued to be rapturously welcomed in some areas, their appearance elsewhere was less than enthusiastically received. To some extent this reflected a marked deterioration in guerrilla discipline during 1978 and 1979 as the pace of the war quickened and the period of training given to recruits was foreshortened.⁷⁷

Various explanations have been advanced to explain why the guerrillas became undisciplined towards the end of the war. Some claim that, "They were poorly trained." Others claim that the young guerrillas were "Young and overzealous."⁷⁸ It was also explained in terms of abuse of drugs and alcohol. One informant quoted by Ian Phimister stated that Zanla Pungwes organized by these guerrillas demonstrated that the guerrillas had become reckless. He noted that:

They are very dangerous. Sometimes they are held in the middle of the village, quite close to a road, and the "boys" dance to gramophone records and get very drunk on gin or brandy. ...There has been too little discipline among the boys recently... All of us support the "boys", they are our only hope, but recently their behavior with the girls has been very bad. They order the peasants to bring their best blankets and then they take their daughters ... Sometimes when it raining they turn people out of their houses and take the girls inside...⁷⁹

⁷⁷ I. Phimister, "The combined and Contradictory Inheritance of the struggle Against Colonialism," I. Phimister, (ed) Zimbabwe's Prospects. Issues of Race, Class, State, and Capital in Southern Africa, Macmillan Publishers Ltd, London, pp. 8-15.

⁷⁸ Different people had different views on guerrillas towards the end of the liberation struggle as relations with the povo were at times compromised by guerrilla indulgence with women. Many guerrillas maintained that they were guided by the Ten Commandments from Mao's teachings which outlawed the abuse of women. While officially it was not allowed to have sexual relationships or to abuse women, many chimbwidos were recruited from Keeps and abused by the guerrillas. The guerrillas also used to abduct children of suspected sell-outs and the abuse of these children was considered as revolutionary justice.

⁷⁹ An informant quoted by I. Phimister, Zimbabwe Prospects, pp.8-14

4.4 Gender Specific Problems Faced By Male Children Inside Protected Villages

I have argued that female children were more vulnerable than their male counterparts, but that does not mean that boys were not also vulnerable and exposed in PVs. Male children also faced a number of problems which affected their wellbeing. Most were recruited and forced to participate in the liberation struggle for Zimbabwe. ZANLA forces were mostly responsible for recruiting children below the age of eighteen to perform various tasks during the war. These boys were called '*mujibhas*', were child soldiers. Graca Machel noted that:

A child soldier is any child – boy or girl-child under the age of 18, who is compulsorily, forcibly or voluntarily recruited or used in hostilities by armed force, paramilitaries, civil defense units or other armed groups. Child soldiers are used for forced sexual services, as combatants, messengers, porters and cooks... The majority are boys...⁸⁰

While there is no doubt and debate on the fact that children participated in the liberation struggle, there is debate as to whether these children were forced to participate in the liberation struggle for Zimbabwe or they did so voluntarily. Most ex-guerrilla fighters who were interviewed vehemently and vociferously maintained that the people, (*povo*), *chimbwidos* and the *mujibhas* voluntarily joined the war to destroy colonialism. They argued that the boys and girls were politically conscious and were prepared to make sacrifices to bring freedom. The ex-guerrillas maintained that the *mujibhas* welcomed them and presented themselves for duty. In this case the boys “voluntarily” joined the war.⁸¹ However, G. Machel contested this view: “It is misleading, however, to consider this as “voluntary.” Rather than exercising free choice, these children are responding more often to a variety of pressures...”⁸² There were many factors which forced these

⁸⁰ G. Machel, *The Impact*, p.6.

⁸¹ Most guerrillas believed that the Mujibas voluntarily joined and supported the liberation struggle to fight colonialism.

⁸² G. Machel, *The Impact*, p. 11.

mujibhas to take part in the war. It is also important to note that this was against the Geneva Convention of 12 August 1949 which states that, “Children... shall neither be recruited in the armed forces or groups nor allowed to take part in hostilities.”⁸³ Therefore, the claim by ex-guerrillas that the *mujibhas* voluntarily supported and joined them is a clear admission of guilt that they violated the Geneva Convention and the Humanitarian law, which plainly and strictly prohibits the participation of children in hostilities.⁸⁴ Therefore, the recruitment and enlistment of children in any conflict, the Zimbabwean liberation struggle included, was both unjustified and wrong.

It is important to briefly look at the reasons that pushed many children to participate in the Zimbabwean liberation struggle. Zimbabwean nationalists argue that children inside PVs willingly participated in the fight against colonialism. The Rhodesian government, on the other hand argued that the African people in general and children in particular were forced to support terrorism. The Rhodesian government argued that:

Guerrillas are communist terrorists and communists embody all that is evil... kidnapping children, starving and beating recruits, infecting women with V.D. shooting old men and young girls, and engaging in every kind of brutality...⁸⁵

It has been argued that the Rhodesian government was engaged in the manufacturing of propaganda to demonize the Zimbabwean nationalists. Therefore, the colonial explanations on the reasons which forced children to support the guerrillas were based on colonial mentality, stereotypes and were politically manufactured for propaganda purposes. This does in any way

⁸³ See the ICRC, Children and War, ICRC, London, 1994, pp.1-23 .The Geneva Convention of 1949 prohibits children from participating in war situations.

⁸⁴ Ibid.The Humanitarian law also outlaws the use of children in war.

⁸⁵ NAZ, CCJP, The Rhodesian Propaganda War, pp. 5-12.

exonerate the guerrillas and make them politically righteous. I am only stating that the Rhodesian accounts were over-exaggerated. There were incidences where children were kidnapped from schools and PVs by guerrillas but this was not a standing rule prescribed by guerrillas. This also does also not justify the kidnapping of children by guerrillas. Kidnapping, whether done by guerrillas or Rhodesian Security Forces was unjustified and had terrible effects on children.

Economic reasons pushed many children to support the liberation struggle. Poverty in many TTLs where PVs were established led many to believe that the only way to end the suffering was to fight colonialism. The introduction of draconian pieces of legislation such as the Collective Fines Regulations and Emergency Powers (Maintenance of Law and Order) was another push factor. These empowered members of the Security Forces to loot goods, cattle and property of the African people drove many children to support or join the war. In 1973 a Member of Parliament pointed out that:

If I were in Chiweshe, I would have joined the terrorists if the people go on to take my mombes (cattle). That is the first thing an African would not want to see. If you want to touch the African from the bottom of his heart, go and take one of his animals...⁸⁶

Harassment by Rhodesian Security Forces and state sponsored political violence also pushed many children to support the liberation struggle. For example a missionary from Chiweshe revealed that:

... On Wednesday 6th August 1975, a group of five white and one black policemen moved into Chigaregare Village assaulting almost all adults present for no apparent reason. Some of the men and women were taken for questioning to Chibare ... The policemen ... killed five chickens, had them cooked and ate them on the spot. The people who had been left behind at the village were most offended and angry...⁸⁷

⁸⁶ NAZ, CCJP, Civil War in Rhodesia, p. 17.

⁸⁷ Ibid, p. 16.

Many children who witnessed violence, harassment and police brutality supported the guerrillas. The scorched earth warfare used by the Rhodesian government in the establishment of PVs forced many young children to participate in the war. The security forces also terrorised African people in TTLs by demonstrating the “fire power of the Rhodesian weaponry.” This was meant to demonstrate that they were invincible and that therefore, the people should not support the terrorists. The security forces also displayed dead bodies of alleged terrorists as a way of demonstrating that the terrorists were digging their own graves by trying to fight the white regime. According to the Rhodesian Herald on 15 May 1976, “The body of a terrorist was on view in Beitbridge police station yard. Among those who went to see it on Wednesday were many Beitbridge residents, including children...”⁸⁸ All these tactics and antics turned the African people and children against the Rhodesian government. Most believed that the guerrillas were a source of salvation and many children were easily recruited as *mujibhas* to fight the evil system. The parading of dead bodies as trophies provoked both the young and old in PVs. Because of this, the nationalist ideology was well received in PVs across Rhodesia and children embraced it. The acceptance of the guerrilla ideology was a pursuit for political freedom and the quest for an end to political violence, intimidation and brutality perpetrated by the colonial forces. The acceptance of Zimbabwean nationalist ideology in PVs does not in any way justify the recruitment of young children as *mujibas* into guerrilla ranks, however.

Mujibhas also joined and supported guerrillas as a survival strategy. Hunger, food shortages and starvation were major problems which affected inmates of PVs. Disruption of

⁸⁸ Ibid.

agricultural activities and destruction of crops due to the establishment of PVs resulted in massive food shortages while guerrillas were able to access food using force.

Therefore, many children had a high regard for guerrillas and were more than keen to serve as *mujibhas*. To them working with the guerrillas provided opportunities and privileges.⁸⁹ As such joining the guerrillas was an escape route from biting poverty and food shortages. For example the Rhodesian government in 1976 announced that:

“To ALL PEOPLE IN THE MASOSO TRIBAL TRUST LAND. The Masoso Reserve has been closed to enable the police and soldiers to find the terrorists. As you know, terrorists have entered your land and they are being given help by the people of your land. In order for the police and soldiers to be able to do their work well, your schools, your butcheries, your grinding mills and your general stores have been closed ... If you inform the police and the soldiers soon, your grinding mills and your general stores will be re-opened soon.”⁹⁰

Such brutal conduct by Rhodesian security forces enabled the guerrillas to market their propaganda easily and indoctrinate the *mujibhas* to fight colonialism. The guerrillas were able to lure many teenage boys to support the liberation struggle for Zimbabwe. To the children, the guerrillas were “Vanamukoma” (Big Brothers)⁹¹ who were living heroes sacrificing their lives to liberate the African people from colonialism. The guerrillas were living martyrs in the eyes of many children and as such many joined them to become guerrillas or *mujibhas*.

It is important to note that the guerrillas also used coercion to force the *mujibhas* to join the liberation struggle. They crushed violently those who were real or imagined sell-outs. During

⁸⁹ Interview with T. Chauke, Ex-Inmate, Chiredzi, 05-06-14.

⁹⁰ NAZ, CCJP, Civil War in Rhodesia, p.26.

⁹¹ The Guerrillas were called Vanamukoma and many people considered them as their sons, brothers or children.

pungwes the guerrillas demonstrated their ruthlessness on alleged sell-outs. T. Chauke, noted that:

Whenever, a sell-out was identified the *mujibhas* would be ordered to bring the person to the *Pungwe*. The boys were then ordered to torture or thoroughly beat the sell-out singing war songs. The boys would take turns to beat the sell-outs mostly with logs on the buttocks. The beatings were meant to demonstrate to the *mujibhas* that selling-out was a terrible mistake. Sell-outs were at times beaten to death. Therefore, anyone who refused to take part in the war was considered a sell-out and faced the consequences.⁹²

The use of coercion and violence to enlist the services of *mujibhas* was a common feature. The majority of the boys who were *mujibhas* joined the liberation struggle out of fear and to protect themselves against guerrilla brutality. This does not minimize the importance of other factors and does not in any way imply that the Rhodesian security forces were righteous in terms of the use of violence to gain the support of teenage boys. Therefore, teenage boys inside PVs were suffering at the hands of both sides. The guerrillas and the security forces were two sides of the same coin when it came to the use of force to achieve political ends. They both believed that power comes from the barrel of the gun. They were both ruthless and brutal when dealing with enemies.

Although both guerrillas and security forces used violence, it needs to be noted that they differed tremendously in terms of the way violence was unleashed and used as a political weapon. The guerrilla violence was targeted and selective, while Rhodesian violence was reckless, random, callous and ruthless. This was confirmed by a former security officer cited by

⁹² Interview with T. Chauke, Ex- Inmate, Chiredzi, 05-06-14.

Paul Moorcraft and Peter McLaughlin who confessed that, "... towards the end of the war Africans who lived in TTLs could automatically be classified as supporters of guerrillas."⁹³

Once one was labeled a supporter of terrorism, the regime unleashed undiluted violence towards the African people. The Rhodesian methodology actually achieved the opposite by pushing many young people to support the guerrillas. The use of *mujibhas* was a mobilizing military strategy. Moorcraft and McLaughlin argue that, "Particularly effective was the guerrilla *mujiba* system, which mobilized young males from the age of five who were romantically attracted by the admiration combat guerrillas enjoyed among Africans..."⁹⁴

The guerrillas and the Rhodesian Security Forces differed in terms of the systematic use of violence as a political weapon. The Security Forces used intimidation, threats and violence to a large extent while the guerrillas used violence as a last resort. Guerrillas began by politicizing the African people through political education which exposed the evils of colonialism and discrimination and promised a prosperous future in a "Free Zimbabwe." *Pungwes* which were held inside the PVs played an important role. It can be argued that:

Political meetings, called *pungwes* were held in villages at night. Speeches would be made by the political commissar, and almost invariably would follow the singing of Chimurenga songs and often beer drinking. Summary justice might also be meted out to those who were accused of collaborating with the Rhodesian government. Great play was made of the Chimurenga tradition of resistance, the need for land, the brutality of the Rhodesian forces and the general poverty of rural life.⁹⁵

The reasons why the *mujibhas* joined the liberation struggle are largely contested. The Rhodesian government believed that guerrillas always used terror tactics to terrorize the African

⁹³ P.Moorcrat and P. McLaughlin, Rhodesian War, p.98.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Ibid. p.101.

people and teenage boys. The guerrillas argue that, the *mujibhas* voluntarily joined the liberation struggle. While the debate remains unresolved, it is important to note that teenage boys were pushed by various factors to become *mujibhas*. The factors differed from one *mujibhas* to the other and over time. Children below the age of eighteen were recruited differently by different guerrillas. The factors were specific and particular and not general.

Mujibhas were mostly used as gatherers of intelligence on security forces movements. The guerrillas preferred using young boys because they were least suspected by security forces. According to Cde Mukumbuzi, one of the most prominent guerrilla who destroyed petrol tanks in Salisbury, “It took a very long time for the Rhodesians to discover that *mujibhas* were the backbone of guerrilla operations as they monitored enemy movements.” He pointed out that, “The *mujibhas* were messengers who disseminated information from one guerrilla group to another and from the guerrillas to people inside the Keeps. They were the eyes and ears of the comrades. He described them as “The heart or engine of the war”⁹⁶, as the guerrillas could not survive and function without them. G. Chiteya, who was in one of the PVs and a *mujibhas*, believed that the *mujibhas* were the backbone of the liberation struggle for Zimbabwe. He noted that, “You are useless without a backbone and you cannot survive without it and the guerrillas would not have won the war without the *mujibhas*.”⁹⁷

As much as the *mujibhas* played a crucial role in the prosecution of the war, their roles exposed them and endangered their lives tremendously. For example in 1979 the Rhodesian security forces in Nyajena TTLs conducted air strikes using napalm killing 120 *mujibhas*

⁹⁶ Interview with Cde W. Mukumbuzi, War Veteran, Lundi Park, Gweru, 01-2-14.

⁹⁷ Interview with G. Chiteya, Ex-Inmate, Chiweshe, 09-01-14.

mistakenly for guerrillas as they moved around with wooden AK rifle imitations.⁹⁸ This demonstrates that the role *mujibhas* played often had tragic consequences and exposed children to death. The plight of children was worsened by the fact that they were not trained militarily. In times of attacks children were found wanting. Many perished in crossfire situations. The lives of many *mujibas* inside the keeps were further endangered with the arrival of the Selous Scouts. Chiteya noted that, “We had a dilemma as we did not know who was a genuine or a fake guerrilla. We could not know whether one was a Rhodesian soldier or a guerrilla”⁹⁹ This confirms that the lives of *mujibhas* were endangered bearing in mind that they were unarmed and defenseless. To prevent the *mujibhas* from gathering intelligence and assisting the guerrillas, the Rhodesian government imposed a curfew system. Time and again, curfew breakers were shot and killed by the security forces and these were mostly unarmed *mujibhas*.

The *mujibhas* also routinely raided cattle from white commercial farmers which were closer to PVs. Although Mediel Hove refer to these raids as “cattle rustling,”¹⁰⁰ these were more organized political raids than they were theft cases. The *mujibhas* were not doing this purposefully with the intention of depriving the white farmers of their cattle and benefiting themselves. They did this for political reasons and the intention was more political than criminal. The raided cattle were usually driven by *mujibhas* overnight under the supervision of the guerrillas. For example on 3 October 1978 guerrillas and *mujibhas* raided about 50 cattle from a farmer in Chiweshe. The cattle were slaughtered and meat was shared among the inmates of PVs

⁹⁸ P. Moorcrat and P. McLaughlin, Rhodesian War, p.98.

⁹⁹ Interview with G. Chiteya, Ex-Inmate, Chiweshe, 09-01-14.

¹⁰⁰ M. Hove, An Examination of the Strategies and Tactics Used by the Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (ZANLA) Forces and Rhodesian Security Forces (RSF) in South Eastern Zimbabwe, 1976, MA Thesis, UZ, p.36.

so that they would be able to prepare food for the guerrillas.¹⁰¹ Meat from raided cattle was called “vegetables” (*Mavheji*) in most parts of Mashonaland and it was called *Mutamani* (*Mopani* worms) in Southern Eastern Zimbabwe. These names were meant to deceive the soldiers when they made follow-ups to recover raided cattle. The soldiers usually targeted young children and asked them the type of relish they ate on that particular day. The children would tell them that they ate “vegetables” or “*mutamani*.”¹⁰²

Raiding expeditions were not always successful. At times the raiding parties were met with fierce resistance and fire power from white farmers and Rhodesian soldiers. For example, a raiding expedition proved fatal in Honde Valley. In early 1978 *mujibhas* were instructed to raid cattle from a nearby white farmer who knew well in advance of the intended raid and invited soldiers to his farm. S. Mutasa explains what transpired:

About twenty young boys were summoned to the mountains by the guerrillas. They were instructed not to return to the keep on that particular day. We were briefed of our mission which was to bring a lot of cattle from Mr. Johnson’s farm. We left for the farm just before mid-night. We arrived at the farm and cut the wire and went straight to where the cattle were kept. As we approached the kraal the soldiers opened fire on us and switched on some search lights. There was nowhere to hide and ten of our friends were killed, three were captured and only seven of us managed to escape. The encounter was tragic we were not armed and defenseless.¹⁰³

This confirms that the lives of *mujibhas* were put on the firing line. Notable also is the fact that these children were not trained. The children did not have the experience necessary to deal with such encounters and they proved to be vulnerable. Most of the tasks assigned to the *mujibhas*

¹⁰¹ Interview with G. Chiteya, Ex-Inmate, Chiweshe, 09-01-14

¹⁰² Children were taught that meat from raided cattle should be called “maveji” (green vegetables) or “mutamani” (dried worms eaten especially in Rhodesia) to mislead Security Forces who targeted children for information. At times children were subjected to violence to force them to reveal war secrets.

¹⁰³ Interview with S. Mutasa, Ex-Inmate, Honde Valley, 05-03-14.

were dangerous and even fatal in many instances. A lot of children perished carrying out assignments given to them by the guerrillas. Cattle raiding became rampant and the Rhodesian government became ruthless in a bid to curb it. Many *mujibhas* were shot and killed by the Security Forces. This was captured by Moorcraft and McLaughlin who noted that:

Hut burning and the slaughter of cattle became more common as security forces methods of punishing civilian co-operation with guerrillas. First, dwelling huts would be razed, then grain storage bins would be destroyed and livestock killed if co-operation persisted. It also became a routine procedure after actions against the guerrillas to raze kraals in the immediate vicinity... stock theft was so prevalent that the national herd was depleted by nearly a million beasts in the last two years...¹⁰⁴

Mujibhas were also given tasks to destabilize the economy, communication, movement and transportation of goods and services to PVs. Chauke pointed out that, at times they were given tasks involving destruction of roads and cutting telephone lines.¹⁰⁵ The destruction of roads involved digging trenches across the roads making it impossible for cars and buses to pass through. Although the *mujibhas* were mostly successful in carrying out these tasks, time and again they were caught red-handed or they were killed by landmines planted by the Rhodesian forces. Jairos from Madziwa highlighted that if ever the young boys were caught or suspected of having carried out sabotage activities, they were subjected to a hiding. He testified that:

In 1974, all young boys aged ten years and above were rounded-up after a dip tank and a bridge were destroyed. They were taken to Madziwa police station. We were subjected to prolonged beatings, kicking, blind folding, and beatings with fan belts and banging of heads against the wall. We were beaten by European and African policemen. They called us collaborators and terrorists. Some of the boys sustained permanent injuries. I remember one had his ear permanently damaged.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴ P.Moorcrat and P. McLaughlin, Rhodesian War, p.98.

¹⁰⁵ Interview with T. Chauke, Ex-Inmate, Chiredzi, 05-06-14

¹⁰⁶ Interview with M Jairosi, Ex-Inmate, Madziwa, 20—02-14

It is important to note that the Security Forces were engaged in the indiscriminate use of terror against real and imagined *mujibhas*. The deliberate use of violence against children was gruesome. Children were tortured, brutally beaten and at times murdered or mutilated. The RSFs even went to the extent of destroying buildings and crops as a way of preventing people from supporting terrorism. At times the Rhodesian Air Force shelled whole villages as a way of punishing terrorist sympathizers. This exposed children to danger in many ways and made their lives miserable.

The *mujibhas* were also ordered to commit crime in the name of the liberation struggle. At times they were sent to rob stores and buses, tasks which were not only dangerous, but also criminal. These were well planned and orchestrated by guerrillas. Forcing children to commit crime does not in any way make them criminals. This had serious immediate and long term catastrophic consequences. Paul Moorcraft and Peter McLaughlin concluded that:

A whole generation of African children was exposed to violence. Their attitudes towards law and order were strongly negative, since every part of the white-built administrative system was fair game. Vandalism became a way of life for youngsters, and virtually every administrative or commercial structure in the TTLs outside PVs was destroyed. Youths as young as 13 enjoyed immense authority through their association with the guerrillas in the *mujiba* system and often held the power of life and death over adults. Unarmed boys in their teens could rob buses packed with adult males merely by invoking the authority of their guerrillas.¹⁰⁷

Notwithstanding all this, it is both misleading and naive to argue that *mujibhas* were empowered and exercised immense powers. The abuse of children by the guerrillas exposed them to extreme violence and this affected them psychologically. Children in their teens were too young to shoulder such burdens and this sowed the seed of violence in their minds and hearts. The abuse of the *mujibas* did not in any way empower them. They used borrowed guerrilla powers and

¹⁰⁷ Moorcrat and P. McLaughlin, Rhodesian War, pp.133-134.

these powers vanished when the war ended. Therefore, to suggest that the mujibas wielded enormous powers is problematic and should be dismissed. It is accurate to suggest that young children were recruited to perform dangerous and tasks not for themselves, but for the guerrillas.

Children in conflict areas across Africa face similar problems as those faced by children in PVs. It should be noted that:

War has particular brutal effects on children. They are forced to develop within contexts of seemingly permanent psychosocial trauma or what some psychologists refer to as the normal abnormality of violence. Situations that once seemed unimaginable, the burning of one's crops and home, the massacre of one's neighbors, the murder of one's parent or sibling- are now daily occurrences ...¹⁰⁸

Young boys were also forced to provide child labour for the construction of PVs. Male children were responsible for cutting down poles, carrying them long distances, constructing the houses and thatching them. The tasks which children performed in PVs were detrimental to children, affecting their wellbeing tremendously. See the picture below which shows children carrying poles for the construction of huts in PVs:



¹⁰⁸ <http://www.google.co.zw>.Children and war.The Psychosocial Effects of War on Children. (Accessed 10-01-15).

Source: NAZ, CCJP, Rhodesia. The Propaganda War: The picture shows children carrying poles to construct their huts. This demonstrates that children were overburdened in PVs.

It is also important to note that the guerrillas believed that all is fair in any war situation. Therefore, they believed that all this was necessary in uprooting colonialism and called it revolutionary justice. The Rhodesian government also naturalized and justified violence. The Rhodesian Security Forces adopted a “get tough”¹⁰⁹ policy by becoming ruthless and merciless. All this led to the violation of children’s rights since they were subjected to inhuman and degrading treatment.

However, it has been suggested that the *Mujibhas* were not always on the receiving end as they accumulated a lot of power from the guerrillas. Kriger argues that, “There were different attitudes between male and female youth, a male youth empathized with youth and lambasted parents for not letting their daughters stay with them in the mountains.”¹¹⁰ She says that the parents feared that their daughters would become pregnant and that generational conflicts were rampant between traditional Chiefs and guerrillas and their *Mujibhas*. She quoted one youth leader who boasted that, “...We would have to beat the parents sometimes before they let their daughters live in the mountains.”¹¹¹ Although this demonstrates that the *Mujibhas* abused their powers to force parents to comply with guerrilla demands, it is prudent to note that, these were not *Mujiba* powers but guerrilla powers. The *Mujibhas* were not forcing parents to release their daughters for themselves but for the guerrillas. Therefore, *Mujibhas* were political instruments

¹⁰⁹ P. Moorcrat and P. McLaughlin, *Rhodesian War*, pp.133-134.

¹¹⁰ N. Kriger, *Zimbabwe’s Guerrilla War*, p.181.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

who survived on “borrowed rags.” They did not have powers to make independent decisions on their own.

Kruger also brings out a very interesting point that,

Youth had no financial responsibilities to the government; nor did they have to provide food and money to the guerrillas. While parents struggled to pay their war taxes, youth and guerrillas consumed them. Since they ate together, the more lavishly parents contributed to the guerrillas, the better the youth ate. With meat regularly included in the guerrillas’ diet, youth probably ate more of it than usual during the war.¹¹²

She also highlighted that the youth abused their powers by forging letters and demanding more than what the guerrillas were demanding and pocketing the difference. Although, the youth cheated occasionally during the liberation struggle for Zimbabwe, this does not in any way make the war a romantic escapade. The so called benefits described by Kruger cannot be compared with the pain, suffering and trauma endured by children during the liberation struggle especially in PVs. Life in the war was associated with violence, death, hunger, displacement and many other problems, far too many to mention. It is also critical to note that, only a minority of the children were lucky to have access to food and power. The majority of the young *Mujibhas* did not have greater benefits but were instead closer and exposed to violence.

Conclusion

The escalation of violence tremendously affected the lives of many innocent children inside PVs. This demonstrates that female and male children were the principal victims of war in PVs. There were gender specific problems faced by children who were inmates in keeps which were dotted around the country (See map). War time roles and duties inside PVs were gender

¹¹² Ibid, p.143.

specific. It can be concluded that the liberation struggle for Zimbabwe was a nightmare for both male and female children. Between 1978 and 1979 both the guerrillas and the Security Forces forcibly conscripted thousands of young people from schools and kraals. It has been demonstrated that the DAs and Security forces violated children's rights to a greater extent than the guerrillas. Although both groups violated the Geneva Declaration which outlawed children's participation in a conflict situation, the types and the extent of the abuses differed. This was confirmed by the CCJP in 1977 noted that, "the village inhabitants were in greater need of protection from their keepers than from the guerrillas"¹¹³. The war situation in Rhodesia tremendously affected children in many ways. Studies on the effects of war on children in conflict situations across Africa have demonstrated that war destroys the capacity of a society to protect children as communities are ripped apart and can no longer provide a secure environment for children. This violates their rights to be protected from violence, abuse and neglect, to live in dignity and to be supported in developing to their full potential.¹¹⁴

¹¹³ NAZ, CCJP, Civil War in Rhodesia.

¹¹⁴ See an analysis on the effects of war on children on: [www.http://www.google.co.zw.warchildholland.org](http://www.google.co.zw.warchildholland.org). (Accessed 14-01-15).

CHAPTER 5: CHILDREN AND THE PSYCHOLOGICAL DIMENSION OF LIFE IN

THE PROTECTED VILLAGES.

Introduction

The Rhodesian government in an attempt to save the state introduced various counterinsurgency strategies. This involved unleashing state sanctioned violence as part of defending the colonial state, institutions, interests, naked racism, segregation, oppression and exploitation of the African people. Therefore, one of the landmarks of colonial imprints in the minds of victims of colonialism in general and children in PVs is that of violence and its memory. The history of children in various PVs in Rhodesia is a history of violence and its memory. Sabelo J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni aptly captured this by noting that, “Violence has been the main means used by colonialists, to invite the people into their hegemonic national projects with their different agendas.”¹ Violence in PVs was not random and incidental, but it was state sponsored, manufactured, justified and institutionalized. Organized violence in PVs fits very well in the definition of organized violence by the World Health Organization (WHO) which defined it as:

The inter-human infliction of significant avoidable pain and suffering by an organized group strategy and/or system of ideas and attitudes. It comprises any violent action which is unacceptable by general human standards and relates to the victim’s feelings. Organized violence includes inter alia “torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment” ... The effects of apartheid, destabilization, civil war, the forced displacement of people, and political violence constitute organized violence ...²

¹ S. Ndlovu-Gatsheni, Do Zimbabweans Exist? Trajectories on Nationalism, National Identity Formation and Crisis in a Postcolonial State, Peter Land, Oxford, 2009, pp. 189-195.

² The Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace in Zimbabwe (CCJP) and Legal Resources Foundation (LRF), Breaking the Silence. Building True Peace. A Report on the Disturbances in Matabeleland and the Midlands. 1980 to 1988, CCJP and LRF, Harare, 1997, p.172.

It will be demonstrated in this chapter that children in PVs suffered from various forms of psychological torture, sexual torture, deprivations, and many other kinds of violence which affected their psychological wellbeing. Organized violence in apartheid South Africa was similar to that in PVs used as a “means to destroy the will, motivation and self-esteem of future generations by concentrating one part of this policy on children.”³

5.1 Violence and Child Development in Protected Villages

The colonial state and the guerrillas were two major sources of violence in PVs. According to Lloyd Sachikonye:

In seeking to contain the advances of guerrilla forces of ZANU (ZANLA) and ZAPU (ZIPRA) regime forces used massive violence first against the guerrillas themselves and their collaborators (mujiba and chimbwido) as well as the local civilian population for morally and materially supporting the former.⁴

Various methods were used by the colonial state to perpetrate violence against its enemies. These included torture, extra-judicial killings, public displays of bodies of dead guerrillas, beatings, shootings of curfew breakers, abductions, disappearances, and distribution of posters of killed guerrillas. Guerrillas equally needed violence as a political instrument against security forces, collaborators with regime forces, informers, police guard forces, councilors, chiefs, white commercial farmers, farm workers of the white farmers, etc.⁵ Violence by both security forces and guerrillas was gruesome, ferocious and devastating and on child development. It is worth noting that there were qualitative and quantitative differences in the magnitude of perpetrated

³ World Health Organisation. UNICEF, Children on the Frontline, UNICEF, London, 1998, p.5.

⁴ L. Sachikonye, When a State turns on its Citizens. 60 Years of Institutionalised Violence, Jacana Media (Pty) Ltd, Sunnyside, 2011, pp. 5.

⁵ Ibid.

violence by the two groups. My concern here is not to “reinvent the wheel” by renewing the debate on the degree of ruthlessness and mercilessness of the liberation war in Zimbabwe. What is fundamental to note is that both guerrillas’ and regime security forces’ violence affected the development of children in PVs. The liberation struggle for Zimbabwe had devastating effects on the survival needs and development of children. However, the impact was determined by a number of variables such as the nature of individual experiences, the level of development, the circumstances, the personality of the children and the available interaction strategies.

The most outstanding factor which influenced the way children were affected was the age of children and appreciation of events. However, it is fundamental to note that although age in this case is the key to understanding the effects of violence on children, there are other determinant factors which influenced the way children were affected by violence. The problems which affected children of different age groups were influenced by the level of development, and which in turn influenced the way children in PVs survived under such circumstances.

5.2 Effects of violence on infants

The problems faced by infants and toddlers were peculiar to their age. Infants in any conflict situation are too immature to understand what is happening. This immaturity does not mean that they are spared by conflicts, however, their needs are different from the needs of other groups. When those needs are not met, that is when they realize that all is not well. Their survival depends on their mothers, and they are deeply affected when the mother is killed or disappears in a war situation. The indiscriminate use of violence especially by Rhodesian Security Forces, resulted in many mothers with infants dying in large numbers across Rhodesia. For example in 1975, six inmates of keep Number 7 in Madziwa were shot dead for mingling

with the guerrillas and eight inmates were shot dead as curfew breakers. Seven of the dead people were nursing mothers with infant babies. Three of the infants died due to various diseases.⁶

There are a number of elements which should be noted from the horrific example above. The killing of unarmed civilians was horrific. Innocent children perished as a result of the brutality of the Rhodesian Security Forces. The young children whose mothers were killed were made motherless and made more vulnerable to diseases. The indiscriminate use of violence especially by regime forces destroyed the lives of many innocent children who did not understand what was happening and why their mothers were killed. Violence in this case jeopardized and ruined the lives of many children who were denied breast feeding from their mothers. Breast feeding is crucial for the development and the growth of children as it is nutritive and produces antibodies which are critical for the survival and development of children. Lack of breast feeding resulted in malnutrition. Reports by IDAF confirm that malnutrition was a major problem in PVs.⁷

Breastfeeding was a problem for children whose mothers were killed or who disappeared. It was also a problem for most mothers who were hungry, distressed, traumatized and haunted by an element of insecurity. Food shortage in PVs was the order of the day and most mothers who were breastfeeding were malnourished. Lack of supplementary feeding schemes in most PVs tremendously affected the lives of many infants. Although the Rhodesian government denied the fact that there was rampant malnutrition in PVs, World Vision categorically stated that, “There

⁶ Interview with S. Badza, Ex-Inmate, Madziwa Secondary School, 19-04-12.

⁷ IDAF, Zimbabwe. The Facts About Rhodesia, IDAF, November., 1977, p.47.

was an alarming increase in malnutrition in the Chiweshe District.” It was also revealed that, there were multiple deaths due to starvation in Chiweshe.⁸

The Rhodesian government also attempted to blame the prevalence of malnutrition on the activities of the guerrillas. The regime politicized the distribution of powdered milk which was sourced by the Red Cross and World Vision. On 6 January 1977, the Rhodesian government claimed that there was malnutrition and starvation in the Kandeya Keep in Mtoko. The government claimed that on the New Year’s Eve, 20 terrorists burned down 212 huts and all the food and the huts were destroyed.⁹ Although the guerrillas destroyed the huts of inmates, this does not necessarily imply that the inmates had great deal of food destroyed by guerrillas. While the burning down of huts contributed in worsening the situation, it should be noted that the regime security forces were largely responsible for destroying crops and food when the people were driven into Keeps. While the Rhodesian Security Forces caused food shortages, guerrilla activities worsened the already bad situation.

Children in various PVs also perished because of the collapse of the health sector. Hospitals and clinics in PVs were closed and immunization programmes came to a standstill. A lot of children who were inmates perished because they were not immunized against polio, measles and other killer diseases. Infant mortality rates increased tremendously in Keeps. According to the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSV), “In total by the end of war, more than 30, 000 people had lost their lives, about 100 000 people were injured and

⁸ NAZ, World Vision, February, 1977.

⁹ NAZ, The Rhodesian Herald 06-01-77.

75, 000 people displaced from their homes into Protected Villages...”¹⁰ The majority of the people who lost their lives in PVs were children because children were the largest group in terms of numbers. Children were also exposed to various killer diseases and depended on others for their survival. The war situation disrupted the social networks which were critical for the survival and development of children. Informants who were inmates in various Keeps confirmed that mortality rates of young children below the age of four were very high.¹¹

In Keeps across Rhodesia, pre-natal and antenatal care was no longer available to pregnant women. The breakdown of such critical health services resulted in complications at birth for most women and children. The majority of pregnant women were teenage girls who were victims of rape. The breakdown of health services meant that all children who were delivered in PVs were delivered under unhygienic conditions. C. Makudo pointed out that:

Life for pregnant mothers was very difficult. We faced a lot of problems. Clinics in Mount Darwin had closed down and because of the curfew system it was impossible to go to far away hospitals such as at ST Albert’s Mission. There were also a lot of restrictions on our movements and it was difficult to seek medical help. We had to resort to traditional medicine.¹²

Infants were tremendously affected physiologically and emotionally when the mothers were affected. Young children did not have the cognitive capacity to understand the problems associated with living in a keep. Therefore, the mother was key in the way and the manner children in PVs survived. Informants who were infants during the liberation struggle in Keeps did not know what was happening. These testimonies were based on hearsay. The mere fact that

¹⁰ CSVR Quoted by L. Sachickonye, When a State turns on its Citizens, pp. 5.

¹¹ Although there are no statistics to quantify the number of children who died in PVs. Testimonies in all Keeps confirm that this was the case.

¹² Interview with C. Makudo, Ex-Inmate, Mount Darwin, Rushinga, Mount Darwin, 07-04-12.

these children lacked the cognitive capacity to judge and narrate their experiences does not mean that life in the Keeps was acceptable to them. These were affected more by food shortages and the collapse of the health system. It is also important to note that infants who were staying with their mothers in PVs were less affected than those who lost their mothers. From the time of birth children have an emotional attachment to their mothers and their survival and needs are satisfied by their mothers.

Children in infancy are ego-centric and regard their mothers as a source of all their needs. Many children who were separated from their mothers in PVs were frightened by the absence of their mothers. Studies of children who lost their mothers in the war situation showed that those are children are traumatized for life.¹³

5.3 Effects of Violence on Young Children.

The effects of violence on young children were different from the problems faced by infants, because they understood what was happening and have sad memories of PVs. These children witnessed violence in various ways. They witnessed their brothers, sisters, mothers, fathers and relatives being brutalized. They saw dead bodies of people they did not know. These young children were aware of the problems associated with life in PVs. The burden of young children increased as they were affected by problems which affected infants and toddlers such as food problems, starvation, access to health facilities, malnutrition etc. Therefore, I argue that as the child grew older, the burden increased in PVs.

¹³ Various studies on the effects of violence on infants confirmed that losing a mother in a war situation tremendously affect children for life.

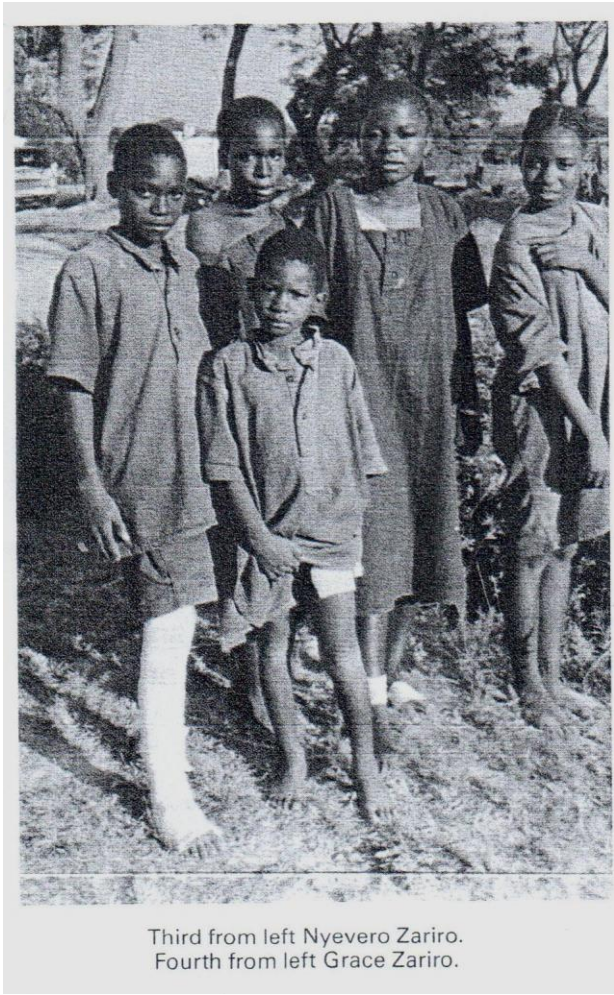
Witnessing death haunted children in PVs in various ways. Testimonies from children who were mature enough to understand what was happening demonstrated that these children had bad memories of violence. These children witnessed death of people who were close to them. S. Gatawa, from Madziwa, pointed out that:

My first encounter with death was in 1976 soon after we had been put into the keeps. We had gone to school inside the keep. We saw some cars with soldiers and helicopters flying around Mount Goora. We could hear gun shots and bombing around the mountain area. We heard that a number of people were missing from their keep. The next day we were not allowed to go outside the keep. Everyone was ordered to go and see dead bodies of our friends. There were several dead bodies of people we knew. I had never seen a dead person. I was terrified and afraid. Soon after the shooting incident we all stopped going to school. It was unsafe to do so.¹⁴

Witnessing friends and relatives being killed has terrible effects on young children. Psychologically, the children are traumatized. Those children who lost their parents were more traumatized than other children who had the support system of their parents. Although all people who witnessed death were haunted by this harrowing experience, it should be noted that witnessing death affected children differently. Those children who witnessed their parents or a parent dying were more vulnerable and exposed to danger. The death of parents meant there was no one to provide food and comfort for the children. Gatawa also highlighted that he started to experience nightmares as he would visualize dead people in his sleep.¹⁵ Therefore, children who witnessed death developed sleeping problems and the unavailability of counselling services worsened their troubles. The sight of victims of violence who were injured by Security Forces haunted children in PVs. See picture below of victims of violence:

¹⁴ Interview with C. Gatawa, Ex-Inmate, Madziwa Secondary School, 19-04-12.

¹⁵ Ibid.



Third from left Nyevero Zariro.
Fourth from left Grace Zariro.

Source: NAZ, CCJP, Rhodesia. The Propaganda War.

Children in PVs were haunted by disturbing thoughts of bombing by the Rhodesian Security Forces. These unpleasant scenes were entrenched in the minds of children for life. The regime forces were determined to instill fear in the minds of inmates of PVs to stop them from supporting guerrillas. They displayed killed guerrillas in PVs and forced the young children to see those dead bodies. Mr. Gatawa noted that children in Keeps were terrorized by the displaying of mutilated bodies of guerrillas and *mujibhas* killed by security forces.¹⁶ To make matters worse

¹⁶ Ibid.

the regime forces ordered the people not to bury the bodies. Therefore, decomposing bodies were displayed for days. It needs to be noted that such a psychological campaign was designed to intimidate and traumatize the inmates of PVs.

Young children in PVs were also haunted by guerrilla violence against assumed collaborators. The guerrillas held public trials where those labelled as “enemies” or “sell-outs” were subjected to beatings or executions. These were conducted during all night *pungwes* (night vigils) and people were at times asked to do the beatings and to sing. Most of the people who were labelled as sell-outs, had children and relatives inside the Keeps. P. Taranga, testified that:

The guerrillas were very cruel. At one time a father to our friend was accused of being a sell-out. He was brought to a *pungwe* where his own children were ordered to beat him until he died. They were told not to cry or show any sympathy towards their father. It was so bad for these children to kill their own father. They all disappeared soon after the incident. We never saw them again.¹⁷

Guerrilla violence was also very ruthless with regards to perceived enemies. Although most of the guerrillas interviewed denied the prevalence of violence and coercion, Ranger noted that:

Coercion was more widely used, threats were more likely enforced and the categories of people who were potential targets expanded. All Africans indirectly involved in European institutions might become victims of coercion if they failed to respond to no-violent appeals to co-operate with guerrillas.¹⁸

In the eyes of the children, the guerrillas and the regime forces were two sides of the same coin. Lloyd Sachikonye pointed out that:

There was a great deal of violence exercised by guerrillas against collaborators of regime forces as well as against civilians among the African rural population. The violence was

¹⁷ Interview with C. Taranga, Ex-Inmate, Mount Darwin, Rushinga, Mount Darwin, 07-04-12.

¹⁸ T. O. Ranger, *Peasant Consciousness*, p.104.

gruesome and brutal as that used by regime forces ...Guerrilla methods of coercion caused fear and trauma among the civilians but also the wider rural population.¹⁹

Children in PVs who were too young to understand and make sense of guerrilla violence against their parents, friends and relatives were confused. They perceived guerrilla and security forces violence as senseless and meaningless. Violence against the people by either side brought anger and pain. In Mount Darwin, Mafuta was accused of being a sell-out and the guerrillas cut his tongue with a sharp knife. He was unable to talk and was a source of anguish every time children saw him.²⁰ Mutilation traumatized both the victims and the people around them. Such gruesome tactics planted seeds of bitterness, anguish and suspicion. Therefore it needs to be noted that violence by both guerrillas and regime forces left a legacy of violence which was and is pervasive.

Witnessing political violence which was both brutal and savage affected the emotional development of young children in many respects. Psychologically, these children suffered as they were haunted by fears, trauma and depression. To them the time in PVs was a time of suffering and violence. Children were caught up in the middle of a vicious political contestation for the hearts and minds of inmates of PVs.

Young children who were inmates of various PVs were denied proper and meaningful education during the liberation struggle for Zimbabwe. Although the Rhodesian government argued that schools remained operational in PVs, it is critical to note that in most PVs there were no schools whatsoever. Children inside keeps were forced to drop out of school. The closure of

¹⁹ L. Sachickonye, When a State Turns on its Citizens, pp. 5.

²⁰ Interview with Taranga, Ex-Inmate, Mount Darwin, Rushinga, Mount Darwin, 07-04-12. This was confirmed by Professor Chigora who was an inmate in Keep 7 in Mount Darwin. He is now a lecturer at MSU.

schools had short term and long term negative effects on children. The most immediate consequence of the closure of schools was boredom. In the long run, the closure of schools created a “lost generation”. The lives of many children across Rhodesia where PVs were established were ruined forever. These children were socialized into many illicit activities in order to survive in PVs. These activities were detrimental and harmful to their lives and affected their development in many ways. Children in PVs were forced into prostitution, stealing, lying, selling sex, smoking, drinking, killing etc.²¹ All these vices had terrible effects on the lives of children in PVs.

Educational activities in PVs were disrupted as both guerrillas and security forces attacked children and teachers and schools in PVs ceased to be safe havens for children. In Mount Darwin most schools were burnt or destroyed once they were suspected to have been used by guerrillas as shelters. Children and teachers were abducted. The guerrillas also intimidated children and teachers. This forced many schools to close in Mount Darwin. It was also unsafe to go to school when there were alarming reports of attacks on schools by Rhodesian forces. Children in PVs were denied the right to access education.

Young children in PVs were also subjected to deprivation as a form of torture and this had terrible effects. Deprivation represents extreme stress meant to cause discomfort or pain. In most cases, children in the PVs were not allowed leave out PVs when there was no food or water. For example, in Chiweshe inmates of Keep 14 were not allowed to leave the Keep for three days. Young children under such circumstances suffered tremendously as they had to go without food

²¹ Ibid.

because most inmates did not have firewood and water for cooking.²² Deprivation affected young children in various ways. Hunger traumatized these children tremendously because of food embargos and curfews. In some cases water and food were distributed to inmates but in very small quantities. Depriving inmates of food had adverse effects on the growth and development of children. Many children perished because of starvation and hunger in PVs. Although, there are no statistics regarding the number of children who died because of hunger and malnutrition, it is important to note that inmates of Keeps across Rhodesia confirmed that infant mortality rates were very high.

5.4 Effects of Violence on Teenage Children

(a) Children and Insecurity in Protected Villages

Teenage children were affected differently by life in PVs in comparison with other children. They were exposed to violence from both guerrillas and Security Forces. Both groups abused, recruited, and enlisted these teenage boys and girls in Keeps. Both female and male teenage children were exposed and subjected to various types of violence. They were forced to take part in the war. It will be demonstrated that at times the problems they faced were gender specific. Teenage children were exposed to insecurity and were tortured, physically beaten, psychologically traumatized, and exposed to sexual violence. The security of children in any war situation depends not on themselves but on adult members of the community. Children's security is interdependent and therefore children's needs in a war situation and in PVs were different from the needs of children outside the Keeps and not affected by conflict.

²² Interview with G. Chiteya, Ex-Inmate, Chiweshe, 09-01-14.

There are various reasons explaining why children suffer more than adults psychologically in a war situation. Children are physically, emotionally, cognitively and socially too weak to deal with challenges associated with violence. Because of their age, children lack coping mechanisms to deal with war-related stress. The most immediate problem faced by children in PVs was their failure to understand why they were forced to abandon their homes and forced to live in the Keeps. The forced removals and the violence associated with the scorched earth policy unleashed by the Rhodesian government, psychologically traumatized children. The forced removal of people from their homes into PVs was strange and degrading to children who found themselves inside PVs. PVs became centres of fear, pain, violence, death, hunger, homelessness, restrictions and other evils.²³ Older children who were forced out of schools and driven into PVs have a lot of memories about PVs. S. Ngwenya, from Madziwa, pointed out that, “My older children had difficulties understanding why they had to abandon their homes to go and stay where there were no homes.” She noted that, the majority of children kept hoping that one day they were going to return to their homes. When they discovered that the return was nowhere in sight, children became restless.²⁴

Insecurity was one of the major problems faced by children in PVs. These did not offer any form of safety. Children inside PVs were directly and indirectly exposed to organized violence. Lack of safety resulted in children inside PVs suffering from psychological trauma and physical injury. They were subjected to horrifying and traumatizing experiences. For example in

²³ The majority of informants described PVs as institutions of violence and suffering and pain. PVs were associated with pain, violence and suffering.

²⁴ Interview with S. Ngwenya, Ex- Inmate, Madziwa, Madziwa Secondary School, 18-11-12.

Mozambique the forced relocation of peasants into strategic hamlets (*Aldementos*) entailed the introduction of the scorched earth policy in *Cabo Delgado*. According to Isaacman,

“...thousands of peasants were herded into villages encircled by barbed wire. The people were ordered to enter the *aldementos*. They were given short notice to settle. If they failed to heed the warning they were automatically considered terrorists and the troops had been instructed to kill all of them.”²⁵

Whole villages in both Mozambique and Rhodesia were burnt and destroyed. These were horrifying experiences to children who witnessed various acts of violence.

Watching whole villages being destroyed and burnt had numerous psychological effects on children in various PVs in Rhodesia. K. Nyamaropa described the situation at that time as “horrific and terrifying”. He said that: “I felt powerless and useless because there was nothing I could do to protect myself and my brothers and sisters. I kept on thinking about it but I had no solution.”²⁶ He described this as “heart-breaking and painful”. He added that, “We all watched our homes being burnt and destroyed. To make matters worse the soldiers were beating people and threatening us”²⁷ Threatening to kill or beat young children psychologically traumatized them in many ways. Victims of political violence displayed a number of symptoms such as crying, insecurity, and lack of concentration. Nyamaropa also recounted that, “We were forced to accept an abnormal life. We were also forced to live in fear and the sight of soldiers and DAs frightened us.”²⁸

²⁵ A and B. Isaacman, Mozambique. From Colonialism to Revolution, Zimbabwe Publishing House, Harare, 1983, p.11.

²⁶ Interview with K. Nyamaropa, Ex-Inmate, Honde Valley, 03-04-13.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

The destabilization and the uprooting of inmates of PVs from their homes was a terrifying experience for children. It ripped apart communities so that these could no longer provide a secure environment for children. Family and community social networks are fundamental for children to develop to their full potential. Safety is key in the lives of children, and the establishment of PVs brought insecurity that tremendously affected the development and behaviour of children. The establishment of PVs made it difficult for parents, families and communities to protect children from violence, abuse and neglect. Children's security is dependent on the ability of the community to provide security. When communities are ravaged by conflict and ripped apart, children are exposed and their vulnerability increases.

According to the CCJP:

... In Chiweshe TTLs ..."Keep 15" ...On Tuesday, 31 December 1974, Mrs. Kaviya and her daughter Tendayi went to the fields. Whilst Mrs. Kaviya was weeding, Tendayi was washing some clothing in a nearby stream. At about midday two shots were fired...the other struck Tendayi on the shoulder penetrating her arm. Some soldiers came and took them both to a nearby hospital...²⁹

The shooting incident did not only hurt Tendayi but many other children in "Keep 15." Children who witnessed the incident had to deal with the horror they witnessed. Children in Keep 15 and many other Keeps who saw their friends being shot or killed lived in fear and were gripped by an element of uncertainty. Such acts of violence were not isolated but were a common feature in Rhodesia. In one of the PVs in Mazoe another incident took place:

The Shopo Protected Village is in the Mazoe District. On the 12th of December 1974, 3 young brothers went to the gate of the Protected Village to identify themselves and go out into the land. Their names were Cosmas, Weston and Kudakwashe. Weston, the eldest was aged 15. While their identities were being verified Kudakwashe leant against a bench on which a gun was placed. The gun fell to the ground. The District Assistant, an official

²⁹ NAZ, CCJP, Man in the Middle, p.3.

of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, was annoyed and told Kudakwashe that he was going to shoot him. He cocked the gun and pointed it at him. A shot went off, Cosmas and Kudakwashe died.³⁰

There was wanton killing of people, which engendered a deep sense of insecurity. The element of insecurity in PVs across Rhodesia undermined the survival and development of children in many respects. Children in PVs felt unsafe and unprotected as their purported protectors were in fact the perpetrators of violence. They became increasingly vulnerable because they were unable to protect themselves as the state was victimizing them instead of protecting them. Witnessing violence had deep rooted psychological, emotional and behavioral consequences. “Witnessing violence makes children feel unsafe and live under threat. Some developed anxiety having difficulties in sleeping and others show signs of depression.”³¹

Watching the destruction of their homes when PVs were established left deep emotional scars in the minds of children. In most cases the establishment of PVs was associated with the destruction of homes, for example in Mount Darwin in 1972 a DC arrived in the village and addressed the people. He said, “You people harbor terrorists so today we are going to destroy your villages. We do not want to hear any instances of terrorists in this area. We won’t allow you to build these houses here again.”³² All this had terrible effects on the children. Destruction of homes also destroyed children’s communities. The uprooting of children made them homeless, destitute as they lost their friends and their dreams were shattered.

³⁰ Ibid.

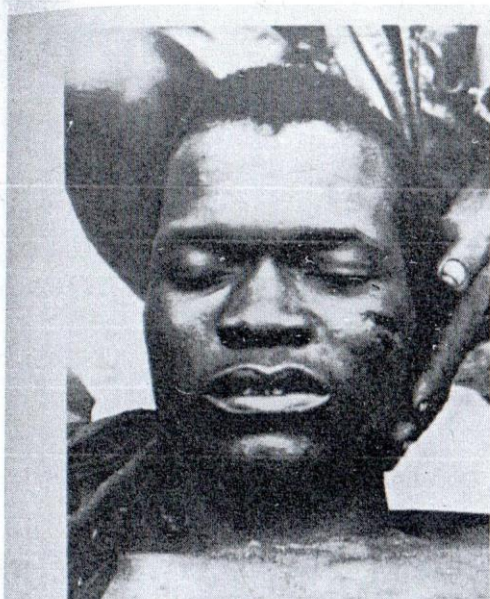
³¹ Interview with K. Nyamaropa, Ex-Inmate, Honde Valley, 03-04-13.

³² NAZ, CCJP, Man in the Middle, p.5.

(b) Psychological Torture and Children

The Rhodesian government employed various strategies to terrorize the black population in general and children in particular. These measures were employed to isolate the guerrillas and to demonize them. Various forms of psychological measures were used such as, displaying mutilated corpses of guerrillas, displaying photographs of dead guerrillas, issuing threats warning the people not support the guerrillas, distribution of crude leaflets, etc. All these measures affected children in one way or the other. Such strategies affected the development of children in PVs.

Soon after the establishment of PVs in Mount Darwin the government adopted a very horrible strategy to spread fear among the inmates of PVs. Mutilated corpse of alleged guerrillas were displayed. The pictures below shows it all:

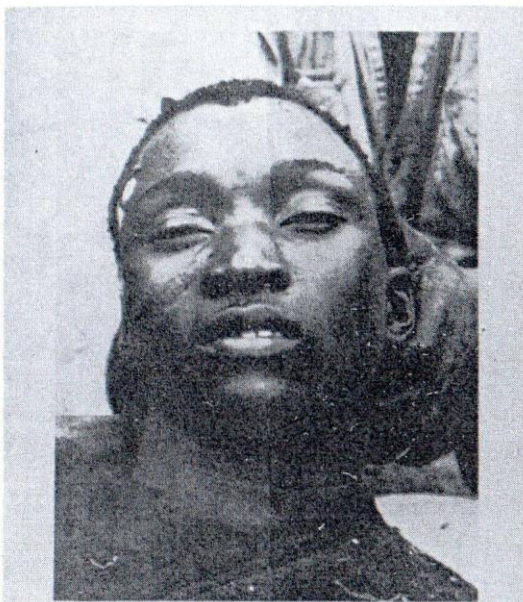


DAMATSANGA SERESTA
MARIKO KRAAL



DAMATSANGA SERESTA
MARIKO KRAAL

Mr. Seresta Damatsanga of Mariko Village



KUFAMHANDU JIM
JENGAMVURA KRAAL



Mr. Jim Kufamhandu of Jangamvura Village

Source: NAZ, CCJP, Rhodesia. The Propaganda War.

All inmates of PVs were ordered to take turns to view the mutilated bodies. This had terrible effects on many children. J. Bveke, who was an inmate at Keep 6 in Mount Darwin, noted that:

I was a young boy aged 10 years at that time. It was a taboo to view dead bodies in our culture. Whenever, there was a death in the family we were prevented from seeing the dead. When we were moved into keeps dead bodies were brought into the keeps for all to see. The bodies would be displayed for two or more days. We had no houses, so we will be seeing the dead body all the time. We were so scared and frightened. Seeing a dead body without a limp or a hand was hard for all the children.³³

This was a form of mental torture which affected children's emotions. Many children in PVs became emotionally unstable and displayed anger and hatred. Many lost respect for human life. As death became a way of life to the children. J. Bveke, also noted that the behaviours of many children were affected tremendously. Serious fighting became a common feature in PVs in Mount Darwin.³⁴ Therefore, it is prudent to note that the psychological warfare employed by the Rhodesian regime affected the lives of children who were inmates of PVs.

The Rhodesian Security forces also distributed photographs of mutilated corpses accompanied by threats, warning the black population that if they co-operated with guerrillas they would be killed. The photographs were shown to children and adults inside the Keeps. The Rhodesian Security forces argued that this was meant to warn the inmates of PVs not to support terrorism. DAs also argued that this was designed to protect the inmates of PVs from both terrorists and from being punished for supporting terrorism.³⁵ However, such tactics did not protect children in PVs, but rather exposed them to violence and terrified them. T. Chironga

³³ Interview with J. Bveke, Ex- Inmate, Rushinga, Mount Darwin, 07-04-12.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

noted that, “The pictures were not good for us at all. They frightened us and we now feared the DAs. We thought they were going to kill us all. We were not safe in the Keeps.”³⁶ She also noted that many children in the Keeps had nightmares and hallucinations after viewing the pictures. Some had difficulties in sleeping.³⁷

One of the most distributed pictures was of an alleged guerrilla leader called Mao. The pictures of a mutilated corpse with head and bodily injuries and the words “Mao wafa” or “Mao is dead”³⁸ were distributed in many Keeps. These gruesome pictures were meant to instill fear, to intimidate and torment inmates of PVs to prevent them from supporting terrorists. Many children sustained permanent mental scars. Children who were inmates in various Keeps across Rhodesia suffered from anxiety and depression. Former inmates from Keeps in Mount Darwin noted that, children in Keeps showed many signs of sickness and the war situation made them more vulnerable. There were neither medical facilities nor hospitals to assist the sick.

The Rhodesian government was also engaged in the publication and distribution of propaganda leaflets designed to discredit the guerrillas. The leaflets directly attacked the guerrillas and all this had horrible consequences on inmates of PVs who were the intended targets. This form of violence is what Slavoj Zizek referred to as invisible violence, which is equally devastating. He also noted that there is symbolic violence that is embodied in language.³⁹ The leaflets portrayed the guerrillas as “mad-dog communist terrorists,” and “evil communist camp instructors.” Guerrillas were described as “*Gandangas*” by Rhodesians. They argued that

³⁶ Interview with T. Chironga, Ex- Inmate, Rushinga, Mount Darwin, 06-04-12.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ NAZ, CCJP, Rhodesian Propaganda.

³⁹ S. Zizek cited by S. Ndlovu-Gatsheni, Do Zimbabweans Exist, p. 119.

the “*Gandangas*” were not Freedom Fighters but anarchists and terrorists without political agendas.

Although the effectiveness of such psychological tactics remain debatable, it is important to note that the leaflets affected the well-being of children in PVs. Their sight was a constant reminder that violence and death in PVs were around the corner. S. Kondo, from Mount Darwin, who was still a child and could not read noted that “The pictures were frightening and the leaflets distributed were a reminder that the government will kill you if you support the guerrillas. Even people who could not read or write knew that these were messages of death.”⁴⁰ Therefore, the leaflets were a source of pain and terror to many vulnerable children who had witnessed death or experienced violence. To children the threats by the Rhodesian government were real because they had witnessed the death or disappearance of their loved ones.⁴¹ Under such circumstances children in PVs felt exposed and vulnerable. All this affected the psychological and emotional development of children.

(c) Physical Torture and Children

When the Rhodesian government discovered that *mujibhas* and *chimbwidos* continuously supported the guerrillas by assisting them in various ways, it adopted a ruthless strategy when dealing with them. The government enacted various pieces of legislation to protect government officials who were perpetrating violence especially in PVs. According to the CCJP:

Reports of torture at the hands of government security forces continue to be the rule rather than the exceptionunder the provisions of the Indemnity and Compensation Act, a soldier or other government official can torture or kill a prisoner and the matter cannot

⁴⁰ Interview with. S.Kondo, Ex-Inmate, Dotito, 03-04-12.

⁴¹ Ibid.

be brought to court if the Minister certifies that the action was committed in good faith to suppress terrorism or to maintain public order.⁴²

The security forces used various ways of torturing teenage boys and girls in PVs to force them to provide information by causing extra pain. The table below shows the types of torture and their prevalence in PVs.

	Type Of Torture	Low Prevalence Rate	High Prevalence Rate
	Towel and Hose Method: Towel is put in their faces and water is sprayed into their noses and mouths		✓
	Nakedness – Victims are stripped naked and beaten		✓
	Suffocation: The head is dipped into a bucket full of water		✓
	Severe Beating with logs and large sticks, fan belts		✓
	Pouring Boiling water on		✓

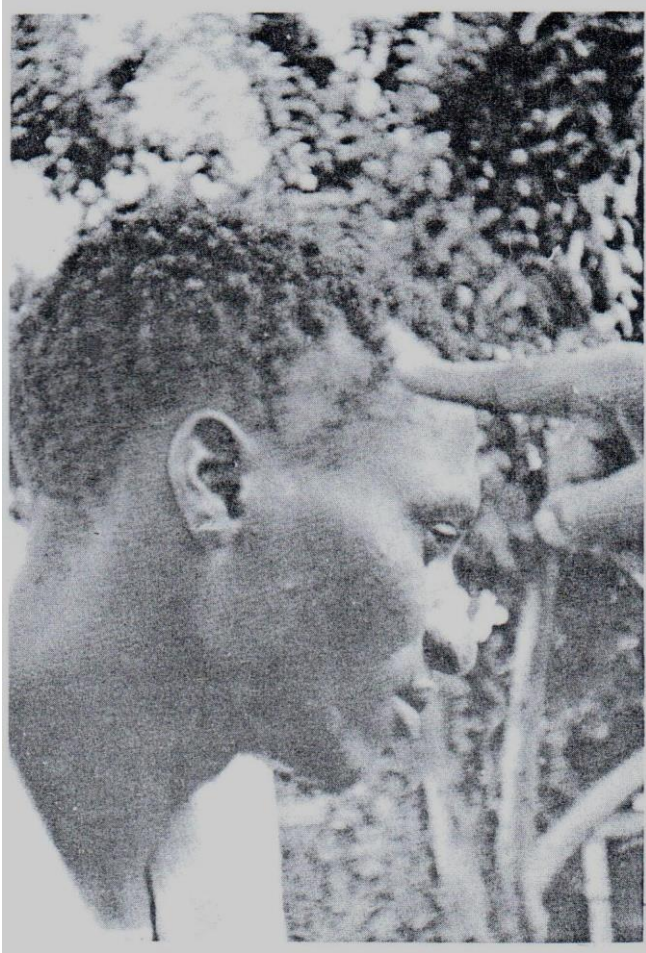
⁴² NAZ, Rhodesian Propaganda.

	the feet		
	Electrical Torture connecting an Electrical device to ankles		✓
	Shooting		✓
	Burning Plastic: Burning plastic bags would be dripped on the body of the victim		✓
	Beating the soles of the feet		✓
	Banging head on the floor or wall		✓
	Chopping off limbs	✓	
	Beatings while being suspended		✓

Source: Informants From various Keeps.

Children in PVs either suffered the physical torture or witnessed it. Teenage girls and boys were targeted and interrogated using various methods to obtain intelligence on the movement of

guerrillas. At times teenage children had their hair pulled out as a way to force them to provide information. See picture below:



Source: NAZ, CCJP, Rhodesia. The Propaganda War.

In Mount Darwin, in 1976, the security forces rounded up people in Chidzanga Keep 14. A teenage boy was picked out and asked to tell them where the guerrillas were. When he professed ignorance, he was beaten and running water was poured into his mouth and nose through a hose. This was repeated several times until the boy admitted that he had seen the guerrillas. When the

boy failed to explain why he never reported the case to the DAs he was further beaten. When the boy failed to provide adequate information, he was further beaten for lying.⁴³

Two teenage girls were captured attempting to smuggle food outside Keep 12 in Mount Darwin. They were severely beaten using logs. They were further stripped naked and sticks were pushed into their vaginas. One of the girls sustained serious injuries and died a few days later, while the other disappeared and was never seen again.⁴⁴ Such callous and degrading methods of torture did not only affect the victims but also affected all the children who witnessed such horrible scenes. The incident left emotional scars which many claimed were still haunting them. Most of the interviewed informants displayed deep-rooted hatred towards the Rhodesian government and whites in general. Some became emotionally charged or even cried when relating the painful experiences they underwent or witnessed in PVs.

In Mtoko, there was a landmine explosion near Dendera Protected Village. The SFs shot and killed two *mujibhas* and injured quite a number of them. It was announced that the *mujibhas* were mingling with terrorists. The soldiers told the people that mingling with terrorists referred to people found near the place where a land-mine had exploded. The security forces also argued that the people were responsible for laying the landmines. They also threatened that, they were going to shoot all the people who were attending *pungwes* outside the PVs.⁴⁵ Those who sustained gun-shot injuries were traumatized and felt helpless. The helplessness haunted children

⁴³ Interview with Z. Gumbeze, Ex-Inmate, Dotito, Mount Darwin, 03-04-12 .

⁴⁴ The incident where two girls attempted to smuggle food from the keep and were caught by the DAs was confirmed by many informants in Mtoko. This terrified and dehumanised the community in general and women in particular. The ruthlessness and callousness displayed by the DAs horrified and tormented young inmates in PVs.

⁴⁵ Interview with T. Gozi, Ex-Inmate, Kotwa, Mtoko, 01-02-14.

since they knew that their lives were endangered. The sustained scars were a threat and a reminder that the soldiers had the power to kill them any time they deemed necessary.

In Madziwa TTLs, Tinotenda Gurure and his five friends were coming from the fields returning to Keep 7 when they were abducted by the SFs. They were accused of being Curfew Breakers, taken to a nearby stream and forced to drink water. Anyone who stopped drinking the water was beaten-up. They were further forced to lie facing upwards while the Rhodesian soldiers jumped on their stomachs forcing the water through the mouth. They were also subjected to thorough beatings using logs.⁴⁶ These harrowing experiences caused deep emotional distress and pain. This form of torture had devastating effects on the children who lived a terrible life full of fear.

(d) The Psychological Effects of Landmines on Children

A disastrous consequent for war on children ... and the greatest scourge of modern-day warfare is the indiscriminate use of landmines. The use of landmines is cowardly, not only because they kill and maim the innocent, but they also lead to malnutrition and starvation as people are unable to farm land that has been mined. Often the land is mined deliberately to prevent the cultivation of food crops. Landmines are especially lethal because, even after the war and demobilization of the military, they continue to wreak havoc.⁴⁷

During the liberation struggle for Zimbabwe both the guerrillas and the RSFs used landmines. These had disastrous and devastating consequences on the African people in general and children in particular. What is disturbing is the fact that the victims of the indiscriminate use of landmines were generally civilians and particularly children. The RSFs used landmines to prevent guerrilla

⁴⁶ Interview with T. Gurure, Madziwa Secondary School, 19-11-12.

⁴⁷ R.H. Thomas, "Rehabilitation and Empowerment of the Victims of War and Violence in Southern Africa" in UNICEF, *Transcending the Legacy. Children in the New Southern Africa*, UNICEF, 1995, pp. 161-170. Also see a Report by UNICEF, *Children on The Frontline*, UNICEF, 1987, Where there a detailed reports of the terrible effects of violence on children in Southern Africa.

infiltration and guerrilla movement inside Rhodesia. The RSFs also mined areas around abandoned fields near people who were now in PVs to prevent guerrillas from accessing food, and areas around abandoned homes to prevent guerrillas from using them as shelter. Therefore, most areas outside PVs were mined by either the regime RSFs or guerrillas. Most roads around PVs were mined by guerrillas to prevent regime security forces from accessing TTLs. The guerrillas also used landmines to isolate the regime forces by creating bad blood between the soldiers and the people. Paul Moorcraft and Peter McLaughlin noted that:

Knowing that the Rhodesian forces usually reacted to landmine incidents by firing to their flanks in case there were ambushes as well and often simply at the nearest kraal, they planted landmines near villages which wavered in their support. The Rhodesian forces' reaction often pushed these villages finally into guerrilla camp.⁴⁸

Therefore, it is crucial to note that both the guerrillas and the security forces used landmines and these had terrible effects on adult civilians and children, who often sustained disabilities and injuries.

Children in PVs were more exposed to landmines than all other vulnerable groups since they were responsible for cultivating abandoned fields to fight against hunger and food shortages which were two major problems. Therefore, children were forced by circumstances to go to the fields, even when they knew that the fields had been mined. J. Bveke pointed out that, "There was no choice. If we stayed in the PVs we were going to die of hunger. There was no food. We had to go and work in the fields."⁴⁹ Children thus went out to the fields fully knowing that there was a possibility that they would not return. Many children died in Mtoko because of landmines planted in the fields by the RSFs, while many others were injured and sustained permanent scars.

⁴⁸ P. Moorcraft and McLaughlin, The Rhodesian War, p.35.

⁴⁹ Interview with J. Bveke, Ex- Inmate, Rushinga, Mount Darwin,07-04-12.

Broken limbs and hands were a source of pain and all this negatively affected children in many ways. The picture below testifies that children were injured by landmines in areas outside PVs. The girl in the picture lost her leg due to landmines. This affected the victim and the other children in the area who witnessed such painful episodes.



Source: NAZ, CCJP, Rhodesia. The

Propaganda War.

Children were also forced to leave the Keeps to protect their crops from wild animals and from cattle and to look after their cattle and goats. Many children died from mines while herding cattle. Although they knew that the fields were dangerous, they had no option. Bveke noted that, “Death was everywhere, people were dying inside PVs because of hunger, malnutrition, even gun shots, landmines beatings or diseases. We were helpless and defenseless.”⁵⁰ The indiscriminate use of landmines resulted in many children becoming victims.

Landmines not only killed the victims, some were maimed, some lost their sight, and others lost hands or limbs. Landmines also affected survivors who were traumatized by witnessing the deaths of their loved ones knowing that they could also become victims one day. Graca Machel concluded that, “Of all the threats that war poses to children, few are more insidious than landmines.”⁵¹ Children were also more vulnerable to landmines than all other inmates because they were responsible for looking for firewood and providing water. The Rhodesian forces also planted landmines at wells and other sources of water targeting guerrillas. Most PVs were overcrowded and had no trees, so children were forced to go out looking for poles for the construction of houses inside PVs. Therefore, children were forced out of PVs by circumstances and in so doing endangered their lives. Life for children who were inmates of PVs was at risk and quite a number perished or were maimed by landmines.

Life inside PVs was also restricted and confined yet children by nature love to play. There was no space for children to play inside PVs. In addition, the DAs were also constantly harassing inmates of PVs and that forced children to visit their traditional playing grounds and play areas.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ G. Machel, The Impact, p.105.

Children also enjoy roaming freely, playing games, hunting or fishing. Therefore, many children were victims of landmines planted either by the Rhodesian Security forces or the guerrillas. The planting of landmines in areas accessed by children caused untold suffering. Life to children in PVs was unbearable and associated with suffering, misery, anguish, boredom and death.

Children were also victims of landmines in many areas in Rhodesian TTLs. The Rhodesian soldiers and the guerrillas always hid them and they were not visible. As such many children unsuspectingly stepped on the mines. Many children were also killed by landmines because children by nature are curious. Some children were attracted by the colours of these lethal devices and wanted to pick them up as toys.⁵² Children were the most vulnerable group in areas where landmines were used during the liberation struggle.

In Mount Darwin soon after the people were forced into PVs, the Rhodesian government planted landmines in the fields and near the homes of the displaced people. S. Makudo pointed out that:

Two days after the people had been moved into the keeps, all young boys were sent to cut down some poles for constructing new huts. Three young boys were killed by a landmine explosion and one was badly injured. The injured had one of his legs amputated. Incidents like this were common and most of the casualties were children.⁵³

Testimonies of survivors of the landmines showed that the emotional scars sustained by children have not healed. As Makudo was recollecting these painful memories, he was showing signs of anger, anguish and pain. He also revealed that these horrific experiences continue to haunt the survivors of violence. Further, he pointed out that many of his age mates who had direct

⁵² Interview with J. Bveke, Ex- Inmate, Rushinga, Mount Darwin,07-04-12.

⁵³ Interview with Mr. S, Makudo, S, Makudo, Ex-inmate, Dotito, Rushinga, Mount Darwin,06 07-04-12.

experiences of war and violence suffered from the after-effects. To the survivors, Keeps were a constant reminder of the death of their friends and relatives. He noted that children who survived the violence and witnessed their friends dying still suffer from flashbacks.⁵⁴ The ordeal of witnessing their friends dying was traumatizing and many suffered from recurring nightmares.

Although it is difficult to accept or deny the after-effects of the dreadful experiences, many people who were children and survived the violence linked the current political violence in their areas to their experiences in the liberation struggle. Many explained that the guerrillas were the ones who saved them from the jaws of death in the Keeps and anyone who does not support ZANU PF is an enemy who should be killed. Makudo, notes that:

The liberation struggle taught us to know our enemies and our liberators. Anyone who betrays the liberation struggle should be killed. The war taught us to be vigilant and aggressive against our enemies, in politics if you allow your enemies to get to you, you will be killed. Anyone who does not support the cause of war wants another war and we cannot allow that to happen.⁵⁵

The above testimony shows that life in the keeps changed the world-view of the victims. In their eyes, there are enemies and comrades/friends. In many areas studied across the African continent, victims of violence show signs of aggression, stubbornness and a general violent behaviour. The South African Weekend Star concluded that:

A tragic fact is that yesterday's horrors are now haunting the tomorrows of more and more South Africans. For every victim ... deeply, vicariously affected. No one in the crowd that witnessed murder or necklacing goes away unscathed. Some can cope better than others, but all take with them a cancer more pervasive than the original ailment ... It is the ripple effect, the psychological aftermath, that is really creating a nation in trauma.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid

⁵⁶ Weekend Star, Johannesburg, 5-6 November, 1994.

One of the tragic effects of the use of landmines by both the guerrillas and the Rhodesian soldiers was the disruption of agricultural activities. The Rhodesian forces intentionally mined the fields to deny the guerrillas of access to food and water. They wanted to prevent the peasants from producing food for the guerrillas. They were also laying mines in and around the fields and homes of inmates to make it impossible to return to their former homes. The guerrillas, on the other hand, laid mines in the roads, cattle dip tanks, bridges and buildings where colonial officials were housed. The planting of landmines endangered the lives of people who lived near the guerrilla's targets. Whenever there were landmine explosions in Mount Darwin, the DAs would impose a week or a two week 24 hour curfew.⁵⁷ This disrupted all agricultural activities, and crops were destroyed by wild animals and cattle. All this had a toll on children in PVs who had no food. Some children even died because of starvation related diseases.⁵⁸

Children who suffered physical and the psychological violence considered themselves enemies of the Rhodesian regime. R.H. Thomas also concluded that:

In conventional warfare, anti-personal and other landmines are used primarily against military targets, but in recent guerrilla wars in various parts of the world, including Southern Africa, civilians were also considered legitimate targets... The intention is to intimidate civilians and inflict misery and suffering in their daily lives.⁵⁹

Children were either victims of mines deliberately planted by the Rhodesians or they were victimized when they became intended targets. Moorcraft and McLaughlin say that, "Increasingly, non-combatant supporters (*mujibhas*) often laid mines, and land mine blasts

⁵⁷ Interview with Mr. S, Makudo, Ex-inmate, Dotito, Rushinga, Mount Darwin, 07-04-12.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ R.H. Thomas, "Rehabilitation and Empowerment of the Victims of War and Violence in Southern Africa" in UNICEF, Transcending the Legacy. Children in the New Southern Africa, UNICEF, 1995, pp. 161-170.

became one of the most serious problems for the Rhodesian forces.”⁶⁰ The belief that children supported terrorism led the Rhodesian government to deliberately target civilians. Moorcraft and McLaughlin also noted that the Rhodesian forces, “In turn sowed thousands of mines along guerrilla infiltration routes into Rhodesia inside neighboring countries.”⁶¹ The adoption of a more ruthless and radical approach resulted in the victimization of children in the process. As the number of civilian casualties increased, the number of military casualties increased. Peter Stiff who was a member of the notorious Selous Scouts provides the following statistics:

Vehicles detonated 1, 276 mines inside Rhodesia. Of those, 927 blasts involved mine protected vehicles carrying a total of 5,830 passengers, of whom 91 were killed and 1,311 injured. There were 349 blasts involving unprotected vehicles which were carrying 1,453 passengers, of whom 331 were killed and 575 injured.⁶²

The above statistics demonstrate that landmines were the most deadly weapons of this conflict, causing many military and civilian casualties. The increase in military casualties resulted in the increase of civilian casualties. Children were the most victimized group and the most group at risk. It is also disturbing to note that children suffered physically and psychologically as most hospitals outside PVs had been closed. The closure of hospitals meant injured children had to travel long distances over a long period of time on foot and could only travel during the day because of the curfew systems. Therefore, many people died or were disabled because of the indiscriminate use of deadly weapons by both Rhodesian forces and guerrillas.

⁶⁰ P. Moorcraft and McLaughlin, The Rhodesian War, p.35.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² P. Stiff, Taming the Landmines, Golago Publishers, Alberton, 1999, pp.5-22.

(e) Children Witnessing Organized Violence.

Children who were inmates in PVs across Rhodesia who survived the liberation war had to deal with the horrors they witnessed. Graca Machel pointed out that, “Children spared the direct experience of violence in armed conflict still suffer deep emotional distress in the face of death or the separation of family members and the loss of friends.”⁶³ Studies of children who witnessed death and violence showed that the majority of such children suffer from “High War Zone Stress.”⁶⁴ Children in PVs witnessed deliberate executions, violence, beatings, shootings, torture, arrests and disappearances. Machel pointed out that:

In Rwanda, a survey in 1996 found that 96 percent of children interviewed had witnessed violence; 80 percent lost a family member; 70 per cent have seen someone killed or injured. These experiences can destroy a child’s world and leave emotional scars that last a life time.⁶⁵

Witnessing death was a common feature in PVs. Many of the inmates who were children saw people being killed either by the Rhodesian Security forces or by the guerrillas. Executions by both sides were usually done at public meetings to instill fear in the minds of survivors and prevent them from supporting their enemies. According to Pamela Reynolds who wrote a book on the traditional healers and children after the liberation struggle for Zimbabwe:

Of the 35 children (aged eight to seventeen) interviewed about their experiences during the war, 24 said that they had seen people being killed. They saw people being burnt, people drowned in rivers (their legs tied together), people buried alive, people shot, and people accused of being witches killed. One child saw his grandfather beaten, others saw

⁶³ G. Machel, The Impact, p.105.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

houses burnt down or were forced to watch soldiers of the Rhodesian Security Forces burn the bodies of comrades. Five of the children said they had been beaten by soldiers.⁶⁶

The description by Reynolds confirms the notion in most areas where PVs were located that the security forces were responsible for most of the violence witnessed in TTLs in Rhodesia. The guerrillas interviewed also argued that, there was no way the fish would be against the water when it depends on the water for survival. They also argued that, they were fighting a “people’s war and the people voluntarily co-operated and supported them.”⁶⁷ On the other hand, Paul Moorcraft and Peter McLaughlin argued that:

Rhodesian propaganda often spoke of an indiscriminate reign of terror inflicted on the African population by the guerrillas. There was indeed a deliberate reign of terror ... “Collaborators” or “sell-outs” were brutally murdered, or mutilated, and often whole households or kraals were destroyed ... The guerrillas perpetrated several large scale massacres of farm workers and the tactic was highly effective in denuding farms of their labour.⁶⁸

The debate on who the major perpetrators of violence were remains unsettled. I will not dwell much on the use of violence and coercion. It is worth noting that both the guerrillas and the Rhodesian security forces used violence. The only difference is in the extent and magnitude.

While some scholars might wish to regard children in the liberation struggle for Zimbabwe as part of the conflict and as perpetrators, it is valid to note that children were victims of violence because of their age they should be considered as victims. Children neither organized violence nor planned it. Violence was planned and used by those who had a political agenda. Therefore, children who perpetrated violence should also be treated as victims of political gladiators who

⁶⁶ P. Reynolds, Quoted in a report by UNICEF, Children on the Frontline, UNICEF, London, 1998, p.26.

⁶⁷ Guerrillas believed that the African people supported them through and through and that coercion was never used to force people into supporting the liberation struggle.

⁶⁸ P.Moorcraft and McLaughlin, The Rhodesian War, pp.35-45.

used children to attain their political agendas. Children because of their age do not have the capacity to deal with emotions associated with violence. To children, violence during the liberation struggle was meaningless. According to Reynolds, children testified that:

I saw people killed for doing no wrong.” “People were killed for no apparent reason.” “I saw people killing for nothing. They were just shot like animals.” During the war there was mass slaughter of innocent people and people were beaten for no just reason.” “People were killed unnecessarily for no reason – merely because so-and-so said he or she was a sellout or a witch.⁶⁹

In Mount Darwin children were exposed to violence and many witnessed various forms of violence. For example, the bombing incident at Muzinde kraal in Mount Darwin, soon after establishment of PVs. The Rhodesian Security Forces, in a bid to force people into PVs bombed the village. The bombing incident resulted in Tatenda Sikereta who was ten years old, having her leg amputated and her brother sustaining serious injuries to his hand hand.⁷⁰ These children were forced to live and accept violence as a way of life. Violence became a daily occurrence. Children under such circumstances developed a sense of insecurity, fear and anxiety. Many children who witnessed the bombings in Mount Darwin testified that they developed some sleeping difficulties and experienced nightmares. Makudo pointed out that, “At times children would cry in the middle of the night in their sleep while others would find it difficult sleeping especially in the open.”⁷¹

Children who survived violence developed some psychological problems. An informant testified that, “At times I had trouble sleeping and dream about soldiers killing and shooting

⁶⁹ P. Reynolds, Quoted in a report by UNICEF, Children on the Frontline, UNICEF, London, 1998, p.26.

⁷⁰ NAZ, CCJP, Man in the Middle, p.4.

⁷¹ Interview with Mr. S, Makudo, Ex-inmate, Dotito, Mount Darwin,06-04-12.

people”⁷² It is important to note that organized violence is associated with a sustained climate of fear amongst the affected victims. Straker who studied South African school children affected by the township violence concluded that, “The persistence of fear was a result of decades of organized violence.”⁷³ It is also critical to note that the Rhodesian Security forces used various military strategies to terrorize whole communities and prevent them from supporting the guerrillas. Although no clinical psychological examination took place soon after the war, this does not trivialize the dreadful and horrific scenes children witnessed during the war.

5.5 Sexual violence and children

Sexual violence had devastating consequences on the inmates and victims of PVs in various ways. Victims of sexual violence, especially teenage girls, were devastated by sexual attacks. These girls felt unsafe, vulnerable, exposed, unprotected, exploited, insecure and empty. A victim of sexual violence in Dotito testified that, “I felt used, useless and hopeless. I had no reason to be alive. I lost my womanhood to our enemies. Above all, the community never saw us as victims but as prostitutes.”⁷⁴ Victims of sexual violence were emotionally and psychologically traumatized and brutalized. Ticket and Putman concluded that, “Sexual abuse of children is associated with a range of physical, social and emotional impact.”⁷⁵ The abuse of children therefore affected their development and lives in various ways. These victims lacked the capacity to emotionally cope with the sexual attacks.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ N.Straker, cited in CCJP and LRF, Breaking the Silence, pp. 170-185.

⁷⁴ Interview with T. Choto, Ex-Inmate, Dotito, Mount Darwin, 04-04-12.

⁷⁵ J.Ticket and D Putman Cited in CCJP and LRF, Breaking the Silence, pp. 180-190J.

Victims of sexual violence suffer in various ways. Graca Machel rightly pointed out that:

Sexual violence and exploitation had devastating impact on physical, psychological and social development. Women and girls often suffer in silence after the trauma of sexual violence and exploitation, fearing reprisals from those who attacked them or rejection by their families.”⁷⁶

Physically, victims of sexual violence sustain scars as rape is associated with force and brutality. Psychologically, rape torments victims in many ways. Socially victims lose faith in communities that have been ripped apart by war and can no longer provide safety and security to the weakest members of the community. Many studies on sexual violence confirm that victims of sexual violence usually lose faith and trust in themselves, their communities and even the future. This destroys their self-confidence. Therefore, the lives of many victims of sexual violence were ruined forever.

Victims of sexual violence usually suffer in silence after the horrific sexual encounter, often to avoid being rejected by their families. Graca Machel concluded that, “Such is their humiliation and anguish that many withdraw into their shell of pain and denial.”⁷⁷ Suicidal cases of teenage girls and women in Keeps across Rhodesia were a common feature. The trauma associated with suicidal rape victims does not necessarily vanish when the victims die. Death affects and traumatizes families, friends and mates. Therefore, war time rapes have ripple effects in affected communities. The world Health organization (WHO) confirmed that, “... rape victims are at especially high risk for suicide.”⁷⁸

⁷⁶ G. Machel, The Impact, pp.105-110.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ UNICEF, The State of Word's Children, , UNICEF,New York, 1996, pp. 7-15.

The birth of a child is usually associated with joy, but children who were born out of rape in PVs were sources of anguish and sorrow. Victims of sexual violence were not assisted by their parents or by the community at large. Lack of community support tormented victims as they knew that they were on their own. The social disruption caused by the uprooting of people and dumping them in PVs resulted in the break-up of the extended family system. Miss G. Manana pointed out that “Even if your relatives were there in the Keep, they were pre-occupied by their own survival. There was a total breakdown of social ties and relationships.”⁷⁹

Therefore, these teenage mothers found out that being pregnant under such circumstances was unbearable and difficult. Miss Manana, pointed out that, “Life was further worsened by the fact that there was no food and other basics for newly born babies. We all know that pregnancy was unbearable.”⁸⁰ Economic problems haunted pregnant teenage girls to the extent that the majority of them took their lives. A sizable number died attempting to terminate pregnancies because of the problems inside PVs.

Victims of sexual violence in most cases contracted STIs. Once it became public knowledge that they had been infected, these victims were stigmatized and isolated. This stigmatization traumatized rape victims in many respects. STIs ruined many marriages and affected the health of the victims. Some victims were not treated because of the war situation and death was the end result. Sexual violence in a way brought shame and at times death to the victims. The fact that there were no medical facilities such as clinics and mission hospitals in most TTLs since they had been closed worsened their plight. As such most victims and even

⁷⁹ Interview with G. Manana, Ex-Imate, Dotito, Mount Darwin, 04-04-12.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

those who witnessed the brutalization of teenage girls suffered Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

One of the most dreadful effects of sexual violence was the permanent physical damage to sexual organs. The use of premeditated torturing methods which involved pushing sticks in vaginas of victims had both physical and psychological effects on the victims. Somnier and Genefke who looked at the psychotherapy for victims of torture concluded that, "Torture and repressive violence are specifically targeted at individuals and groups with the specific intention of causing harm, forcing compliance and destroying political will..."⁸¹

It is also important to note that sexual violence was not only targeted against teenage girls and women. Teenage boys and men were also subjected to sexual violence. For example, ten young boys from Keep 14, in Mount Darwin, were suspected to have planted landmines. They were severely beaten and given electric shocks to their testicles to force them to confess and tell the security forces the place where the guerrillas were located.⁸² All this had psychological terrible effects on the victims. According to A. Reeler:

The deliberate infliction of harm seems to place torture in the distinct form of stressor, and the specific purpose behind torture, make it very different from random violence or catastrophe, whether natural or man-made ... violence is decidedly purposive, with the aim of systematic destruction of an individual...⁸³

⁸¹ F.Somier and I. K. Genefke, "Psychotherapy for Victims of Torture," British Journal of Psychiatry, Vol 149, 1986, pp. 323-329.

⁸² Interview with Mr. S, C. Makudo, Ex-inmate, Rushinga, Mount Darwin, 06 07-04-12.

⁸³ A.P. Reeler, Assessmet of consequences of Torture and Organised Violence: A Manuel for Field Workers, Amanni, Harare, 1990, pp, 1-10.

Conclusion

It has been shown that the establishment of Keeps affected inmates in various PVs across Rhodesia in many ways. The effects differed in many ways but all children, whether they were very young or teenagers, were negatively affected. Life in Keeps affected the physical, psychological and emotional development of infants. Food shortages, violence and the collapse of the health sector tremendously affected young inmates of PVs. Teenage inmates were subjected to various types of torture. For example, the Rhodesian regime's forces systematically tortured teenage girls and boys to obtain information. According to Fay Chung, Pedzisai, a teenage girl aged 14, was arrested by the Rhodesian forces who suspected her of sending food to the guerrillas. She was tied by her ankles and hung in a tree upside down over a bucket of water, where she was dipped repeatedly to force her to release information. She also highlighted that the RSFs tortured enemies using electric wires attached to sexual organs which caused permanent physical and mental damage.⁸⁴ Such gruesome torturing methods caused psychological trauma and the victims sustained permanent injuries and scars. These physical and psychological scars are testimonies of violence against unarmed children by the Rhodesian forces. PVs were not secure and safe havens for the full development of children.

⁸⁴ F. Chung, Re-Living The Second Chimurenga, p.141.

CHAPTER SIX: THE HUMANITARIAN DIMENSION OF LIFE IN PROTECTED

VILLAGES

Introduction

The establishment of PVs in Rhodesia created a humanitarian crisis which threatened the health, safety and wellbeing of inmates in general and children in particular. It was a man-made hell which prevented vulnerable groups especially women and children from accessing their fundamental needs, such as food, clean water or safe shelter. The humanitarian dimension of PVs has elicited numerous views from colonial historians, nationalist historians and the African people. Colonial historians and government officials believed that PVs were properly planned and implemented by the government and as such the inmates were well looked after and provided with all basic necessities. They dismissed claims that PVs were a disaster of major proportions from a humanitarian perspective. Government officials, colonial historians and journalists believed that PVs were humanitarian centres established for the good of the African people. Humanitarian organizations, and many African people regarded PVs as “man-made hells” which brought misery and untold suffering to the inmates. The humanitarian situation in PVs is characterized by claims and counter-claims as the two sides attempted to prove their own positions. This chapter therefore seeks to capture the history of PVs from an insider’s perspective. It will be demonstrated that inmates in PVs lived in extreme poverty without access to basic needs such as food, clean drinking water, sanitation, electricity and access to education and hospitals. As a result children suffered tremendously. It will be demonstrated that PVs were characterized by a humanitarian crisis of major proportions.

6.1 Children and Accommodation Crisis in Protected Villages

The establishment of PVs was associated with the destruction of houses of inmates of PVs. Once the houses were burnt down, the owners were forced and moved into Keeps with no alternative accommodation. Accommodation was inadequate, unsuitable and whenever provided it was meant to deceive rather than help the inmates. The racist government wanted to foster the mentality that it was a humanitarian government with the plight of the people at heart. Therefore accommodation when provided was window-dressing meant for political mileage and not to alleviate the plight of inmates of PVs. For example, in the Zambezi valley where the first PVs or cages were established, more than 8, 000 people were moved into small corrugated iron shelters in “fenced-in areas.”¹ As the people were forced into the cages and their villages were destroyed, the vegetation was defoliated and the land adjoining the border was declared out of bounds. The movement of such a large group of people into an area without providing adequate accommodation created a humanitarian crisis.

The corrugated iron shelters comprised of was a small single room given to each family in the Keep. The iron shelters were inadequate for the displaced people. This meant that a large number of people were homeless and had nowhere to sleep or to put their belongings. This was inconsiderate on the part of the Rhodesian government which demonstrated that they were not concerned about the plight of the in-mates and their welfare. The homeless inhabitants were living in the open fields which was both degrading and horrific, to say the least. What made the situation worse was that the people were evicted and forced into the PVs during the rainy season. This created a humanitarian disaster of major proportions. Inmates including young children

¹ IDAF, Zimbabwe, p.47.

were living and sleeping in the open. One former inmate pointed out that, “Life in the cages was horrible and unbearable. We had no accommodation and for some time we lived in the open. The whites treated us like wild pigs”² These sentiments captured the sentiments of most of the inhabitants of PVs.

It needs to be noted that the provided accommodation was both inadequate and unsuitable for human settlement. The corrugated iron shelters were very hot during the day and very cold at night. They were described as “ovens during the day and freezers at night.”³ Therefore, even the few families who were allocated these facilities were also homeless as they could not spend the day or night inside these structures. Young children were living in the open and without shelter above their heads. This created many challenges for these children. The failure by the Rhodesian government to provide accommodation had many after effects on children. Physically, lack of accommodation causes discomfort. Psychologically it is unbearable and uncomfortable and is a health hazard. Children by nature deserve proper care and to dump them into an open field was dehumanizing.

It is important to note that the unsuitable accommodation was not meant for children. Children in any society do not have the powers to determine how resources and accommodation are allocated. Elders and parents occupied these iron structures while children slept in the open. Therefore children suffered because of lack of accommodation and also suffered because they were children and powerless. Children’s experiences were not similar to the experiences of adults.

² Interview with Chief, Madziwa, Ex-inmate, Madziwa, 20-02-14.

³ Ibid.

The lack of proper planning by the Rhodesian government when Keeps were established had disastrous consequences on the inmates. The government was more concerned with the survival of the racist regime and not on the welfare of the African people. This is demonstrated by the way Keeps were established in Chiweshe. On 15 July 1974, an announcement was made that the people of Chiweshe were going to be moved into Keeps. Many if not all people took it as a joke or a bad dream as they could not understand how they were going to live in an open fenced enclosure. This was taken as a threat by the people who believed that it was impossible to live in the open like wild animals.⁴

On 25 July the people in Chiweshe were ordered by the government to pack all their belongings and put them into lorries to their new homes. Mr. Chinovava pointed out that many people took it as a joke or a dream.⁵ The people of Chiweshe were shocked when the following day they were subjected to violence and forced into the lorries which dumped them in an open area where they were allocated small pieces of land of fifteen square meters. The allocated ground was declared their home.⁶ The people were ordered to start constructing their homes inside the fence. The way Keeps were established in Chiweshe and in all other areas demonstrated that the Rhodesian government was uncaring and not interested in the survival and wellbeing of the inmates.

The government was not concerned about the humanitarian crisis it had created in Chiweshe after of the establishment of PVs. The failure by the government to plan for the

⁴ Interview with A. Chinovava, Ex-Inmate, Chiweshe, 06-01-2014.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

provision of basic provisions like shelter meant that the government had actually planned to make the people of Chiweshe suffer. The crisis in Chiweshe was confirmed by a local doctor, Dr Hill, who pointed out that:

The villages nearest to us are just being dumped in the middle of a mealie (maize) field...no shelter or poles for them to build the huts they need... It is like picking up animals and moving them from one field to another.⁷

Many inmates from Chiweshe described PVs as “paddocks”. The description as paddocks reflects that the people of Chiweshe strongly believed that the Rhodesian government treated them like animals and not human beings. The description demonstrates that Keeps were not fit to be for human habitation as there were no houses for the survival and the wellbeing of the inmates. For children who were sleeping in the open, these were paddocks.

The establishment of Keeps in Mudzi also created a series of crises. The news of the establishment was first announced by the District Commissioner who visited Chief Chitsungo, Chief Chirinda, and Chief Mushuwari.⁸ The DC gave the people of Mudzi a month’s notice to erect shelters for themselves in the prescribed areas. By the beginning of November there were no structures as ordered by the DC. Several reasons have been advanced to explain the failure by the people to put up some structures for themselves.

The most important reason was that the people of Mudzi were reluctant to abandon their homes and move into these Keeps. One angry informant summed-up the feeling of the people by saying that, “It was impossible for us to build our own prisons.” To do that was a way of

⁷ NAZ, CCJP, Man in the Middle, p. 10-15.

⁸ Interview with T. Dapi, Ex-Inmate, Mudzi,20-06-14

approving the Rhodesian mentality that black people were animals”⁹ Many villagers believed that if they refused to co-operate the programme would be abandoned altogether. Therefore, the refusal was a way of protesting and demonstrating that the people of Mudzi were not happy with the proposed move. To me, this explanation is more convincing than all other explanations which have been advanced to explain the failure by the people of Mudzi to co-operate with the colonial government in the establishment of Keeps. Therefore, the people in Mudzi never saw these villages as PVs but as centre of oppression.

The second explanation by both colonial and African people from Mudzi was that the guerillas had warned the people against such a move. To colonial officials, this was one of the methods used by terrorists as an intimidatory tactic to force people to support the communist ideology. It was argued that anyone who co-operated with the colonial officials was considered a sell-out of the liberation struggle. Although the guerrillas used such tactics to cripple government policies, it is difficult to judge whether the “intimidated” people were in the first place interested in moving into the “Keeps”. It is important to note that even up to today the people of Mudzi have generally agreed to disagree on the importance and validity of the reasons behind the refusal to move into PVs. It needs to be underlined that at the time the people of Mudzi were forced into the PVs, there was no shelter for the people. The people were forced to abandon their homes and move into confinement in a fenced open space and to construct their shelters. In the meantime they would sleep in the open and it was in the winter month of June. M. Mapisa, noted that, “By the end of June, only a few people had managed to erect some structures”.¹⁰ One of the reasons why the people of Mudzi refused to accept the warning by the government was

⁹ Ibid

¹⁰ Interview with M. Mapisa, Ex- Inmate, Mudzi, 20-06-2014.

highlighted by Mavis Mapisa, who did so by asking a very simple, but difficult question to answer. She asked:

Have you ever seen a normal person leaving his home to stay in a bush where there are no houses, no toilets, nothing? Is it not a sign of madness to do that? Don't you think that the government was taking us for fools? Are they not the white people who used to think that blacks were dogs?¹¹

The above sentiments capture the mood of the people of Madziwa at the time of the establishment of PVs. To the people of Mudzi, Keeps were not wanted at all. They had no kind words for a government which forced them to live in the open in the middle of the bush during a cold season. The lack of shelter for the inmates made life unbearable and unsuitable inside PVs. Young children, the sick and old men and women were forced to sleep in the open. This did not only physically affect them but it also dehumanized them. The unavailability of accommodation created a series of crises for the inmates in general and children in particular.

While many downplayed the role of by guerilla intimidatory tactics in preventing the people of Mudzi from constructing some shelters and moving into Keeps as instructed by the DCs, it is important to note that the tactics were effective in some cases and the guerrillas were against the movement of people into PVs. What is fascinating is that the guerrillas did so not necessarily because they so loved the African people. Like their enemies, the guerillas were not happy with the movement for military reasons not necessarily humanitarian ones. Former inmates of PVs confirmed that comrade Simukayi, Gamba, Takashinga and Zvenyika visited the area soon after the announcement and warned the villagers against co-operating with the government and moving into Keeps. They threatened to destroy all would be sell-outs and their sympathizers in dealing with imagined and real sell-outs. On the very day the DC made his

¹¹ Ibid.

announcement, the guerrillas invited the villagers to the home of a local shop owner who was labeled as a sell-out. He was beaten to death in full view of all the people who came for the *pungwe*. They categorically stated that the people were not supposed to co-operate with the regime.¹² While the majority of the people were not happy with the proposed move for personal reasons, there were some who were prepared to move but were not prepared to cross the path of guerillas.

The warning by the guerillas contributed tremendously in preventing the people from moving into PVs. One former inmate summed-up the dilemma which many villagers faced by claiming that:

We were prepared to comply with the government directive but not at the expense of exposing ourselves to the wrath of the guerillas. The guerillas were ruthless and merciless when dealing with sell-outs and no-one was prepared to take such a risk. I am not saying we wanted to move because there was nowhere to move to. To move into a bush and abandon your home was not an option. Some people had well-constructed homes.¹³

A number of conclusions can be drawn from the above statement. The Mudzi people were faced with a dilemma. There was no option as either way, they were destined to suffer. Many felt hopeless and powerless. For adults, the most immediate option was to run away but children had no control over their lives and had no option but wait and see how things were going to unfold. Children were haunted by an element of uncertainty. The fear factor was one, but not the only reason for the failure by the people to do as the DC has demanded. It needs to be noted that the people were not moving because they were happy to do so. Again it was the fear factor which could have pushed the people to comply. The Rhodesian security officials were notorious for the

¹² This was confirmed by informants in Madziwa who witnessed the incident and were in PVs.

¹³ Interview with T.Mutumba, EX-Inmate, Mudzi, 20-02-14.

way they dealt with suspected sympathizers of terrorists. Whole villagers were burnt in Mutumba village for allegedly supporting terrorist activities. As such, the people knew that the Rhodesian Security Forces and guerrillas were ruthless and brutal when dealing with adversaries. This was graphically captured by Tinotenda Mutumba who says that, “The people of Mudzi were burning at both ends.”¹⁴

In Mrewa the people of Maramba under Chief Chirinda and Pfungwe under Chief Chitsungo were given a month’s notice by the DC in June 1976 to construct some shelters in the prescribed areas. It is important to note there were no PVs in Mrewa but there were Consolidated Villages. These were areas where people were moved into confinement and surrounded by DAs who guarded the occupants to control their movements and isolate the guerrillas. These confined areas had one entrance gate manned by DAs who controlled the movement of people inside and outside the confined area. The large scale movement of people into these villages created a humanitarian crisis in Mrewa as the inmates were frog marched into an open area.

The Keeps in Mrewa were unpopular for of many reasons. One of the major reasons was that these were overcrowded and there was no accommodation for the inmates. By the time these people were forced to move into the Keeps, there was no shelter even though the DAs had given them a month’s notice to erect some structures in the designated areas. To most villagers, these forced removals were not acceptable. They were not happy to leave their old homes and go and stay and sleep in the open. The government used forces to drive the people into the Keeps against their will. Gwashure, a former inmate of these Keeps pointed out that, “The soldiers were beating

¹⁴ Ibid.

us like cattle or wild animals. In fact it was worse than that, I had never been subjected to such humiliation and brutality before.”¹⁵

The uprooting of children from their communal environment exposed them to many risks. The lack of accommodation had profound impact on their lives, survival and development. Mr. Gashure noted that the creation of Keeps resulted in deep rooted and long lasting catastrophic effects on children. He pointed out that:

The creation of keeps tremendously affected children’s lives extensively and pervasively. It made the children homeless. Without a home we became wild animals. We were packed into a paddock without any shelter like animals. This brought a lot of misery and extensive suffering.¹⁶

Life in PVs was unbearable for children who were homeless and staying and sleeping in the open. Sleeping in the open destabilized children and undermined their security and everyday life. It is important to note that shelter to children does not only provide a roof over their heads, but also gives children a peace of mind and an identity. A home is a family institution which provides psychological, physical, social and religious comfort. The creation of PVs interrupted the predictability and structure of day-to-day life. This also disrupted the care giving relationships and support networks which existed in the villages that were destroyed when Keeps were created.

The lives of children in Mrewa were dramatically altered by these displacements. The majority of the displaced and uprooted were children and women. Protected villages were established in the forest where there was no shelter for vulnerable children. This made the displaced children more vulnerable than ever before to the vagaries of weather conditions. The

¹⁵ Interview with S. Gwashure, Ex-Inmate, Mrewa, 02-05-2014.

¹⁶ Ibid.

people of Mrewa were uprooted in June during the winter season when it was very cold. This demonstrates that the Rhodesian government was not concerned about the welfare of children and other vulnerable groups who were sleeping in the open. Children's diseases became the order of the day. Flue and colds were a common feature during the winter period.¹⁷ What made these children suffer most was the fact that hospitals in PVs were closed and those who turned to traditional herbs were not allowed to freely move out of the Keeps. Chibuwe who was a mother with three children inside the Keeps highlighted that:

Life in keeps was hell. As mothers we watched our children dying inside the Keeps. We were walking dead as every mother wants to protect her children. Now we had no power and control over our own children. We could not even control our lives. We were robots as we were told when to go and come back by abusive DAs.¹⁸

The failure by the government to provide accommodation had multiple effects on children. Lack of shelter created other problems for the inmates. Although some managed to erect huts made of grass and poles after displacement, they soon found that these were far from suitable for human habitation. The shelters were constructed under duress and the grass and the poles were difficult to find because of the overwhelming numbers of people in need of them. Most of the shelters were made of grass. These dilapidated structures were also too small to accommodate large families. Overcrowding became another major problem. One former inmate had this to say, "We were living like rats packed-up in a hole"¹⁹. PVs had profound catastrophic effects on the inmates in general and children in particular. Overcrowding in these slums further created many

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Interview with R. Chibuwe, Ex-Inmate, Mrewa, 23-01-14.

¹⁹ Ibid.

problems. The uprooting of children deprived them of warmth and loving care and all this had a terrible effect on their development and security as they had no sense of belonging.

On 2 November 1974 the people of Madziwa TTLs were unrooted and forced into the so-called Keeps. According to Weinrich 16, 500 men, women and children were resettled in ten Keeps. The people of Madziwa were resettled in an area without any form of shelter. As if that was not enough, about 250 people who were earlier resettled were further displaced and moved 470 miles south to Beitbridge. The government justified the second airlifting of the Madziwa people by arguing that they had continued to support the guerrillas with food. At that time the majority of people who were forced to relocate to Beitbridge were children. Weinrich says that of the 250 people moved, 182 were children, 47 were women and 21 were men.²⁰ The above statistics therefore confirm that the majority of inmates in the Keeps were children. It also confirms the fact that the Keeps affected children more than all other vulnerable groups.

The failure by the Rhodesian government to make a distinction between children and other civilians is disturbing. This demonstrated that the government deliberately targeted children who were the majority of the displaced victims of war. The unleashing of violence against children and their communities created a humanitarian crisis. This demonstrates that children in PVs were the principal victims of the Rhodesian counter-insurgency military strategy. Young children were the hardest hit when they were uprooted from Madziwa to Beitbridge. On their arrival in the new area, they were dumped where there were no shelters. Life for the inmates and children of PVs was unbearable as they could not construct any structures for various reasons. Weinrich wrote that, "The local District Commissioner and the white farmers near Beitbridge were also unhappy

²⁰ A.K H. Weinrich "Strategic Resettlement in Rhodesia," Journal on Southern Africa Studies, 1976, pp. 206-211.

about the move because they thought that the presence of people who had been moved because of their support for guerrillas would bring terrorists to their very doors.”²¹

The plight of children was exacerbated by the fact that the displaced people from Madziwa were resettled among the Shangaan ethnic group. Weinrich postulates that, “...the Shangaan, a very different tribal group ... did not like their new neighbours”²¹ This made it almost impossible to erect some structures for the inmates bearing in mind that their crops and homes were destroyed by the government before they were forced to relocate to Beitbridge. The inmates did not have basic necessities like axes to cut down poles for their huts. The displaced people had to live in the open like wild animals. The conflict between the white farmers and the Shangaan and the inmates of Keeps made their lives unbearable. The inmates were a banished community in the midst of a forest without help from the government and from the local community. Therefore, the history of the Madziwa people in Beitbridge is a history of suffering and is different from the experiences of all other inmates of Keeps who were resettled in areas near their homes and with their Chiefs and relatives. The displacement of children from Madziwa to Beitbridge left 182 children stranded in an unsafe and isolated environment with no access to humanitarian assistance.

The establishment of PVs in Honde Valley marked the beginning of a bitter liberation struggle for the people. Schmidt aptly captures this by noting that, “For the inhabitants of Honde Valley, the Chimurenga began when their suffering became unbearable... when they were resettled into Protected Village ...”²² Plans for the establishment of PVs in Manicaland

²¹ Ibid.

²² H.I. Schmidt, Colonialism, pp. 12-35.

commenced in April 1974 when the Rhodesian government instructed the DC to identify sites for PVs. The DC for Honde Valley, Peters, believed that, “The Honde Valley represented one of the most valuable areas of Rhodesia. We simply can’t afford to lose this area and we won’t.”²³ What is important to note is that while the government was busy planning to set-up PVs in the area, the African people were not aware that the government wanted to put them behind the fences. To the people of Honde Valley, PVs were an “ambush” as the villagization programme was begun without consulting the local people. Many locals confirmed that they only saw a lot of movement and soldiers in the area without suspecting that they wanted to establish a Keep.²⁴

What is important to note here is that the young and old in Honde Valley were not consulted, let alone informed, that they were going to be moved into Keeps. Therefore, right from their inception PVs were never accepted, understood or liked by the people of Honde Valley. The establishment of PVs in Honde Valley was named Operation “Rivet.” DC Peters argued that:

Together with the army, the police and the Minister of Water Development, Roads, Health, African Education and the Veterinary Department, it is our intention to forcibly relocate the civilian population in the protected villages where they will be programmed to adapt to a new, though somewhat restricted way of life.²⁵

It is critical to note that Operation Rivet from the beginning go was not a humanitarian exercise. It was a military operation which disregarded humanitarian concerns. From 1977 to 1978, sixteen PVs were established with an average of 1 500 to 3 000 people. PVs such as Zindi, Rumbizi, Sagambe, Sachisuko, Pimayi, Mandeya, Fenga, Ruda, Hauna, Mutasa, Sahumani,

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Informants noted that PVs were established without their knowledge.

²⁵ Ibid.

Honde, Samaringa, Gatsi, Samangu and Moyoweshumba were created.²⁶ The establishment of PVs in all these areas created many problems for the people who were forcibly evicted from their homes and dumped into Keeps. The plight of inmates of PVs in Rhodesia remains a debatable issue. Colonial officials like DC Peters believed that PVs provided safety, comfort and peace against bands of wandering terrorists.²⁷ However, the manner in which the operation was conducted and implemented demonstrated that the opposite was true. According to Chief Sagambe, “The whole exercise was far from being peaceful. Rhodesian soldiers rounded up villagers at night without notice. Those who attempted to resist were beaten thoroughly with logs and butts of guns.”²⁸ The rounding up of people at night demonstrates that the Rhodesian government was waging a war against the people, and that PVs were never a welcome development. The diabolical nature of how it was implemented demonstrates that inmates were destined to suffer inside the Keeps.

The Rhodesian Forces also used a scorched-earth warfare strategy. This unorthodox strategy involved destruction of all valuable goods, burning down of homesteads and destruction of all foodstuffs. This was confirmed by many inmates of PVs in Honde Valley. Tonderai Mapuranga pointed out that, “The coming of Keeps was a horrible experience. We were ordered by the soldiers to move out of our houses and move into Keeps at short notice. Our houses were burnt with all our belongings and clothes, food and everything was burnt”²⁹. Another former inmate also pointed out that the Rhodesian security forces made them homeless and destitute.

²⁶ NAZ, Umtali Post, 13 -04-71.

²⁷ H.I. Schmidt, Colonialism, pp. 12-35.

²⁸ Interview with Chief T. Sagambe, Chief, Ex-Inmate, Honde Valley, 02-03-14.

²⁹ Interview with T. Mapuranga, Ex-Inmate, Honde Valley, 04-03-14.

She pointed out that, “Protected villages made us vagrants and turned us into animals.”³⁰ The villagers were driven into Keeps with guns pointed at them and threatened with shooting for any slight form of disobedience. R. Sahumani noted that, she had not seen or experienced such a callous and difficult moment before.³¹

The Rhodesian Forces also went on to burn and destroy all shelters. Three arguments have been advanced to explain the destruction of shelter. Colonial officials claimed that this was done to deceive guerrillas into believing that the people of Honde Valley were not happy to be moved into Keeps. It was suggested that, this was a political gimmick meant to hoodwink the guerrillas into believing that the African people supported the terrorist activities. This, to me is a fallacy and was the belief of the colonial officials and not the real reason. Secondly, it was argued that this was conducted to discourage the people of Honde Valley from returning to their homes and abandoning the Keeps. Lastly, it was suggested that houses were destroyed so that the guerrillas would be denied any form of shelter and food. I find the two last explanations more convincing and historical. However, the reasons for the destruction were not important and the destruction cannot be justified. Therefore, the point remains that villages were burnt and the people were made homeless.

In my view the first reason was more of a scape-goat than anything else. This was designed to cover up the disapproval of PVs for their military convenience and benefit. It was not their concern or motive to make the guerrillas happy, but rather to weaken them militarily by depriving them of shelter and food. The other two reasons were convincing and genuine as the

³⁰ Interview with B. Moyana, Ex-Inmate, Honde Valley, 04-03-14.

³¹ Interview with R. Sahumani, Ex-Inmate, Honde Valley, 03-03-14.

soldiers wanted to isolate the guerrillas and to deprive them of any form of military, moral, financial, or other form of help from the people. It is clear that the Rhodesian government was only concerned about its survival and not the catastrophic effects PVs had on the inmates. It can be argued that “The history of the people of the Honde Valley is a history of suffering.”³² However, it would also be accurate to conclude that the history of children in Honde Valley is a history of “Extreme suffering.”³³ Children in this area, unlike their fathers, mothers and relatives who fully understood what was happening, did not understand why their homes were destroyed and why they were driven into paddocks at night. The humanitarian crisis associated with the destruction of homes created long lasting bad memories. Sahumani recalls that, “We witnessed violence and we survived violence, we experienced violence from the whites who treated us worse than wild pigs”³⁴

The flight of the majority of adults into Mozambique and other places as refugees compounded the plight of children. Most male adults fled to Mozambique and it was only young children who failed to run away for one reason or another, in the end they found themselves in these Keeps. Lack of accommodation meant that children had to construct their own structures with old women and pregnant women. Therefore, the construction process took longer than expected. Meanwhile, children were sleeping in the open trying to come up with some sort of structure.

³² H.I .Schmidt, Colonialism, pp. 34-40.

³³ Interview with R.Sahumani, Ex-Inmate, Honde Valley, 03-03-14.

³⁴ Ibid.

The dilapidated structures constructed were of poor quality, made of poles and dagga. Munodawafa noted that, “One night one of the poorly constructed huts fell in the middle of the night. This housed more than ten children. Children woke up to find themselves in the open without a roof over their heads. There was pandemonium as most children suspected that the DAs had bombed their hut.”³⁵

This confirms the fact that the effects of the establishment of PVs were horrendous in many ways for children. Shelter was not only essential as a form of accommodation, but provided safety for children. Children were made vulnerable as they were separated from their communities which had provided security and comfort. Children’s experiences inside the Keeps were worsened by disturbing images of the destruction of their homes when PVs were established. The establishment of PVs created new terrible problems for the children. One former inmate captured this by noting that:

Life in keeps was horrible. In my life I had never imagined sleeping in the open like wild animals. We had never imagined that one day our houses would be destroyed. Accepting the fact that our homes were no longer there as they had been destroyed was unbearable. Now we had no home. We saw our homes in flames and at first it was like a dream. Life was meaningless to us.³⁶

Most children developed psychological problems because of the harmful experiences they went through when their homes were set on fire. It is beyond any reasonable doubt that most of the children developed psychological problems. What worsened the situation was the fact that there were no facilities to confirm this and there were no mechanisms put in place by the Rhodesian government to alleviate the plight of these children behind the fence. It was even

³⁵ Interview with C. Munodawafa, Ex- inmate, Honde Valley, 04-03-14.

³⁶ Ibid.

difficult for parents of these children to observe any behavioral changes in children because of the war situation. Survival became the major preoccupation in PVs. The children suffered silently and endured the psychological trauma during and after the liberation struggle for Zimbabwe. It also needs to be pointed out that the Rhodesian government was not concerned about the welfare and well-being of inmates as military considerations took precedence over all other considerations. Eleanor O’Gorman captures this by noting that:

In their intention and effect, the PVs can be viewed as...state political violence in the liberation war. They marked the complete invasion of people’s lives through surveillance so as to depoliticise the population, transform and disorientate ‘normal’ life and destroy community and social relations so as to render them ineffective for political mobilisation by guerrillas. This policy of counter-insurgency effectively transformed the normality of rural life...³⁷

The creation of PVs led to the destruction of homes which were not only providing shelter but served many other purposes. Homes are critical for socialization and survival. Homelessness tragically shatters lives of children as they are confronted with an array of hardships at a tender age. This violated the rights of children in Southern Rhodesia who deserved to have safe and secure homes. These new huts were not homes as children and their parents were dumped in an open space. As if that was not enough, the environment was militarized and characterized by harassment and brutality.³⁸

6.2 Children and Food Crisis in Protected Villages

The destructive tendencies that preceded the movement of people into Keeps were meant to deprive the insurgents of both cover and food. It is crucial to note that there were food crises in the Keeps caused by a combination of multiple factors. Firstly, the creation of PVS involved

³⁷ E. O’Gorman, *The Front Line*, p. 31.

³⁸ Interview with T. Matope, Mrewa, Ex-Inmate, 27-01-14.

the relocation of Africans to designated areas far away from their homes and fields. The proximity to their fields was not a priority in the establishment of PVs. The inhabitants in TTLs were not consulted and their views were neglected in the establishment of PVs. This was confirmed by former inmates of the Keeps who were just informed to move into PVs without knowing why they were moving into the Keeps. They were also haunted by the fact that they did not know whether they were going to return to their homes or not and when. The inmates of Keeps were not allowed to go back to their homes as most of these areas were declared 'no go areas' by the DCs. Curfew regulations barred the villagers from going back to their fields. The inmates were not able to protect their crops from wild animals and cattle, especially at night. Lastly, the conflict situation in war zones disrupted all agricultural activities.

The harassment by both guerrillas and SFs made it difficult to carry out agricultural activities. All these factors contributed in one way or another in the dwindling of food reserves. It is important to note that children in PVs were not only under threat from violence by both SFs and guerrillas, but hunger was also a major problem. The food security and nutrition situation caused by acute food shortages affected children who were inmates of PVs. The lack of interest and commitment by the Rhodesian government in providing food for the inmates made lives unbearable inside the Keeps. These inmates, did not have access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that met their dietary needs and food preferences. In most cases the government provided food supplies at the establishment of PVs but this was not enough. These food handouts were reduced at times and finally withdrawn. The withdrawal resulted in household food insecurity as these had no access to food in sufficient quantities and quality for family members to enjoy a healthy and active life. Food deficiency and unbalanced diets resulted in malnutrition affecting

the inmates of PVs in general and children in particular. This had catastrophic consequences for the health and development of children.

Children were the worst affected in times of food shortages because of their physiology, age and development stage. Malnutrition was rampant in many PVs in Rhodesia despite the fact that the colonial government always denied it. In 1977, World Vision published an article confirming that there was starvation and multiple deaths of children in Chiweshe.³⁹ This was confirmed by Dr. Watt who visited Howard Hospital and discovered that a lot of children had red hair which confirmed that they were suffering from malnutrition. Many of the children in the area had their hair cut and were taken to Howard hospital.⁴⁰ This was also confirmed by students from the University of Rhodesia who wanted to conduct a sociological and medical survey in the area.⁴¹ World Vision claimed that there was starvation and alarming malnutrition in Chiweshe which was also responsible for the deaths of old people and children in the area.⁴² These claims were also confirmed by many informants who pointed out that death of young children was a common feature inside these Keeps. Headman Nzvimbo, argued that:

Many people lost their children inside the keeps because of hunger and food shortages. These children were starving to death as they became very thin until they died. There was no food for inmates in PVs as our crops were destroyed by wild animals and cattle when people were forced to move into Protected Villages. Whenever we tried to bring food from the city, it was confiscated by the DAs. Food from outside was not allowed into the Keep. The situation was horrible as many people were starving to death while there was

³⁹ NAZ, World Vision, Feb 1977.

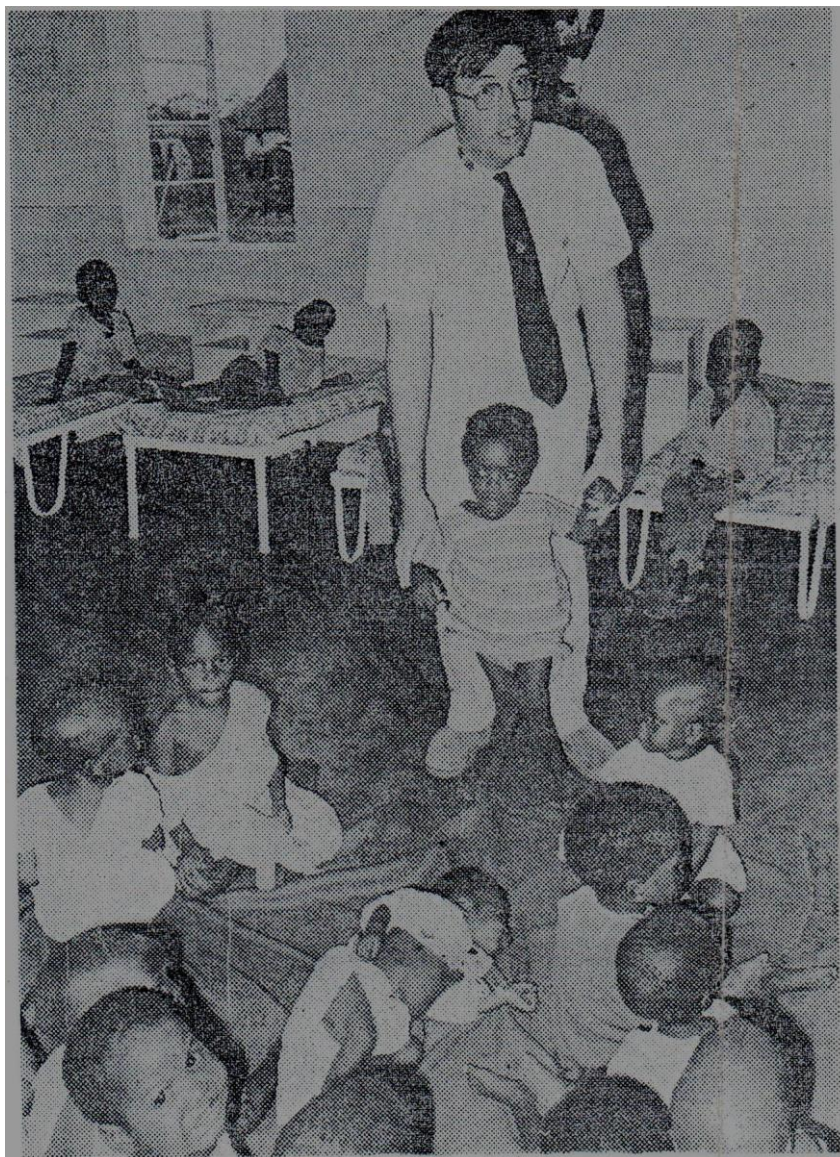
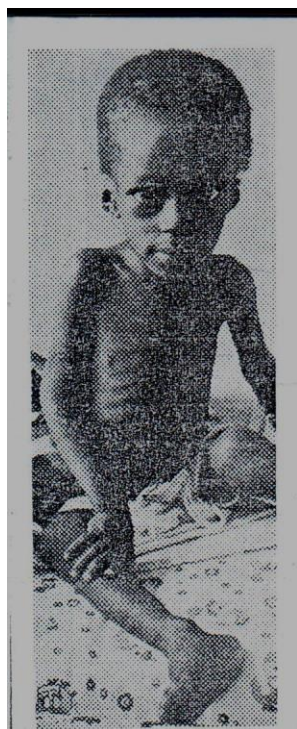
⁴⁰ NAZ, The Rhodesian Herald 6/7/77.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

no help coming from the Rhodesian government. The whites were happy to see our children die of hunger.⁴³

The pictures below clearly demonstrate that children suffered from malnutrition in PVs.



Source: Rhodesian Sunday Mail 06-03-77

⁴³ Interview with Headman S. Nzvimbo, Headman, Ex-Inmate, Nzvimbo Village, Chiweshe, 08-01-14.

The Emergency Relief Committee also noted that there was a health crisis in Chiweshe. It reported that:

... The situation is dismal. A graph showing the incidence of malnutrition amongst children brought into the hospital shows alarming increase since the people were put in the wire. Old people are suffering from malnutrition as well as dying of starvation. ... The village had 50 others and 267 children in for periods of up to 3 weeks. Enteritis is killing children in large numbers...⁴⁴

Despite the existence of overwhelming evidence to confirm that starvation and malnutrition was a reality in Chiweshe, the Rhodesian government vehemently refuted these claims and the Rhodesian Herald was used as a tool to misinform the world about the plight of the inmates of PVs. Government officials claimed that the medical facilities in the area had not recorded any sign of unnatural death. They also claimed that, “There is no starvation in Chiweshe.”⁴⁵ Some colonial officials argued that, “Malnutrition and disease had been a constant element in rural black life for numerous decades.”⁴⁶ Even some Africans who worked for the colonial government went on to portray the image that all was well inside the Keeps. Lucy Made and Patricia Mauno claimed that, “Many mothers do not realize their children are suffering from malnutrition, but it is wrong to say people are starving to death here. I’ve never seen anyone starve to death... in many cases it is the fault of mothers that their children are malnourished...”⁴⁷

⁴⁴ NAZ, Emergency Relief Committee Report on PVs.

⁴⁵ NAZ, The Rhodesian Herald 6/3/77.

⁴⁶ NAZ, Rhodesian Medical Reports.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

Colonial officials tried their best to deny the fact that PVs were associated with massive suffering and humanitarian crisis. For example, the DC of Honde Valley wanted to portray a picture that PVs were established to avert the suffering of Africans in his area. He noted that:

Up until earlier this year the situation was that Honde Valley was to a large extent over-run by terrorists. The entire economy of the valley had virtually collapsed, and we had lost the ability to govern or administer. The terrorist was in a situation where he was carrying out administration of his own type. He was running clinics of a various nature in the various kraals, all schools had closed... so we realized that in order to begin to govern again, not only did we have to have population control, but we had to largely utilize our resources to maximum advantage and get the terrorists on the run. So starting from February this year we began a massive programme to try and programme the people, or should we say prepare them, for removal to the PVs, starting in March we started to remove the people forcibly into the protected villages...⁴⁸

There are various points to note from the statement by the DC about the inmates of PVs in Honde Valley. The DC acknowledges that the people were forced into the PVs against their will. Thus, the herding of people into PVs involved use of violence, destruction and burning of food reserves. It also meant the people of Honde Valley were driven into PVs with very little food and had no time to harvest their crops. It is critical to note that the people were forcibly resettled in March when they were about to harvest their crops. This means the inhabitants of Honde Valley went into PVs with very little food reserves and because of curfew regulations, their crops which were about to be harvested were abandoned. It is also clear from the above statement the PVs were established for military reasons and not humanitarian reasons as claimed by colonial officials. This also demonstrates that PVs were established without proper planning and without basic infrastructural requirements for the survival and wellbeing of the inmates.

Although colonial officials wanted to depict hunger as a natural phenomenon in pre-colonial and colonial Rhodesia and that they were not responsible for the shortages and malnutrition, it is

⁴⁸ NAZ, *The Rhodesian Herald* 3/7/77.

clear that food shortages in PVs were not natural but a man-made disaster. The forced removal of Africans into PVs created a major food crisis. Colonial officials also wanted to create an impression that “The village programme never contributed by any means to malnutrition problems, affecting young children...”⁴⁹ Although it is difficult to prove that malnutrition was not a common problem before the villagization programme, there is also no evidence to prove that it was a problem. In history lack of evidence is in this case considered as evidence. The evidence on the ground is that the creation of PVs was responsible for the food shortages and caused massive malnutrition on the part of many children inside the so-called PVs. Mathias Chitauro of the Chiweshe Residential Association, aptly captured this when he pointed out that, PVs were responsible for the misery of the inmates. He noted that:

People in protected villages are living by the grace of God... there were cases when protected villages had to stay closed for two or more days while crops in the fields remained unattended, with domestic and wild animals destroying them... The people in the villages were now poorer than they were before the establishment of the villages...⁵⁰

The Minister of Internal Affairs, Musset, confirmed the government’s lack of concern by stating that, “The prime objective of a protected village is the separation of the terrorist form the tribesmen. Everything else is secondary...”⁵¹ Therefore the suffering and malnutrition inside the PVs was not a priority of the government. The Rhodesian government was obsessed with its own survival and not the survival of the inmates. This mentality was emanating from the colonial mentality that the African people were less human and that colonialism was supposed to last forever. A colonial official once argued that the terrorists were without agenda and therefore

⁴⁹ NAZ, The Rhodesian Herald 26/7/77.

⁵⁰ NAZ, BBC,14/6/77.

⁵¹ NAZ, Rhodesian Herald, 25-09-77.

should be destroyed. He said that “they (the terrorist) could not organize a football match, let alone a revolution.”⁵²

The precarious situation inside PVs was highlighted by various individuals and organisations but all were ignored by the Rhodesian government officials. In 1974 Brother Fedelis Mukonori of the Roman Catholic Church investigated the plight of the inmates in the Chiweshe PVs and he revealed that, “Conditions inside the Keeps were appalling and there were massive food shortages.”⁵³ Although the government denied the allegations, these reports were also confirmed by independent medical doctors who attended to people in the PVs. They pointed out that the people were not coming for treatment and were saying that, “they may as well die than live in such hell”. They also confirmed that malnutrition and near starvation were common.⁵⁴ To colonial officials such as the Minister of Internal Affairs, Musset, “Protected villages protected the people from the “terrorist onslaught.”⁵⁵ It is however interesting to note that the Rhodesian government was the one engaged in the slaughter of the African people. The introduction of collective fines in areas where PVs were established created a humanitarian crisis of major proportions whenever there were terrorist attacks as cattle which belonged to the African people were confiscated, mills were closed and houses were burnt. All this resulted in food shortages and malnutrition inside PVs.

It also needs to be highlighted that the Security Forces and the DC who implemented the program of PVs were more concerned about the success of the program than anything else. They

⁵² D. Auret, Reaching for Justice, p.65

⁵³ Ibid. p.68.

⁵⁴ Ibid. p.67.

⁵⁵ NAZ, Rhodesian Herald, 23-08-78.

were not concerned about the welfare of the inmates. This was confirmed by the DC of Honde Valley, Harrison Peter, who pointed out that:

We think the primary success has been achieved. We think the primary success can be related to the concerted effort by all branches of the security forces working as a team and through population control that is the movement of the population in protected villages by using whatever methods were available to us and so isolating terrorist from his new supply source.⁵⁶

Large quantities of food stuffs were destroyed and burnt in a bid to ensure that the terrorist had no access to food. This had catastrophic effects on the inmates of the PVs who were also forced to relocate without sufficient food stuffs to sustain themselves inside the Keeps. Hunger was a major problem faced by all the inmates of PVs but it affected children more than all other inmates. The destruction of food crops worsened the miserable plight of displaced children. Therefore, it is important to note that although children inside PVs in Honde Valley and in all other PVs were not the targets for the destruction of food crops, they were the main victims because of the fact that children lacked the capacity to come up with coping mechanisms under such difficult circumstances. What worsened the plight of children was that the parents of these children were powerless to help their traumatized children. This was confirmed by Maria Mwayera, from Honde Valley, she was a mother in the Keeps. She confirmed that, "Hunger was our number one enemy. Our children were crying for food but we were powerless to do anything"⁵⁷The destruction of family and community structures which helped children in times of war worsened the problems and challenges which were faced many children inside PVs across Rhodesia. Life behind the wire was a nightmare for all the children who were inmates of PVS because of the use of hunger as a political weapon to weaken and punish political enemies.

⁵⁶ H.I. Schmidt, *Colonialism*, pp.40-67.

⁵⁷ Interview with M. Mwayera, Ex- inmate, Honde Valley, 03-03-14.

Although the Rhodesian government vehemently denied that there was hunger and malnutrition in PVs, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) donated tonnes of full cream powdered milk for inmates of PVs. N. de Rongemont, the representative of the ICRC pointed out that milk was a necessity in PVs. He said that milk was used mainly for undernourished mothers, the sick and aged victims of the conflict.⁵⁸ Although the, ICRC provided some humanitarian assistance to alleviate the plight of the inmates the assistance provided did not do enough to assist inmates of PVs. Powdered milk that was provided was not enough to help the hungry in PVs. Many inmates confirmed that they took the milk but remained hungry. Some inmates were skeptical about the intentions of the Rhodesian government in providing milk to people who were its victims and perceived supporters of the terrorists. Informants from Mrewa and Chiweshe refused to take the milk because they suspected that it was poisoned.⁵⁹ The proliferation of the use of landmines in the war zones hindered the smooth distribution of the milk. The Rhodesian Ministry of Health tasked to distribute the milk was not there to serve the interests of the inmates but the interests of the racist government. As such, hunger and starvation remained problematic despite efforts by the ICRC to assist inmates of PVs.

It is also important to note that the failure by the Rhodesian government to acknowledge that there was hunger in PVs worsened the plight of hungry inmates. Government officials argued that PVs were not responsible for the escalation of malnutrition and starvation. One colonial official in a bid to deny the fact that the Rhodesian government was responsible for the

⁵⁸ The Rhodesian Herald 10/3/77

⁵⁹ There was a lot of suspicion within PVs as the people believed that the Rhodesian government wanted to kill all the African people. The people never believed that the government could support any programme beneficial to the people.

hunger in PVs pointed out that, “This was the case even when they were in their old homes.”⁶⁰ To me, this sounds more like a scapegoat and nothing else. The fact of the matter was not about the food crisis before the establishment of PVs, but that there was no food for the inmates of PVs.

While there is no debate on the fact that there was malnutrition inside PVs, there is a lot of debate on whether PVs caused or contributed to malnutrition. The Rhodesian government officials wanted to portray the myth that malnutrition was a common feature in Africa and as such PVs only contributed to an already looming food crisis in African communities. However, there is overwhelming evidence that PVs contributed in causing malnutrition which affected many young people who were inmates of these Keeps. A Rhodesian official in 1977 argued that, “The villagization programme has also contributed to... but by no means caused the malnutrition problem ...”⁶¹ Such an assertion was designed to portray PVs in a positive way and hide the truth. It needs to be categorically stated that PVs disrupted agricultural activities wherever they were established and consequently it is wrong to believe otherwise.

The fact that PVs intensified the food crisis in African communities was confirmed by Mathias Chitauo of Chiweshe, who stated that, “The people in the villages were now poorer than they were before the establishment of the villages ...” There is overwhelming evidence to confirm that there was grinding poverty in PV across Southern Rhodesia as confirmed, by many

⁶⁰ NAZ, Rhodesian Herald, 16-09-78.

⁶¹ Forty Misery was one of the PVs in Mount Darwin. To the inmates this was the hub of human suffering. Inmates were abused by DAs and their rights were violated in many respects. They were denied food, water, shelter and other basics. They gave the Keep the name Forty Misery to depict the extent and magnitude of the suffering of the inmates. The former inmates believed the DAs in that Keep were the most cruel and heartless than in other Keeps.

informants. Food became scarce for the majority of the people and this had terrible effects on children.

In some cases the Rhodesian government played politics and pretended to be interested in the welfare of the African people at the time of the establishment of PVs by providing food. The inmates of PVs in the North-Eastern border, Mkumbura and Kanyemba, were given about 5kgs of maize meal per family, per month for two months. Many informants complained that the way the food was distributed was a cause for concern. The food was distributed with a lot of strings attached. Those who were considered friendly and useful to the DAs were the first beneficiaries. Informants of the DAs on guerrilla movements were rewarded with more food.⁶² This created a fertile ground for the proliferation of lies as inmates wanted to access the scarce and precious food hampers on offer. As such, the crude manner in which the food was distributed was a source of conflict inside PVs. Those who were labeled as sympathetic to the guerrillas were punished and denied these food hampers. Therefore, it is fascinating to note that the food provided was not for humanitarian reasons, but to solicit information on the movement of terrorists. Hunger in this case was used as a political weapon.

Inside Moyoweshumba Keep, in Mutasa, inmates were forced to abandon their farming activities during the planting season. According to the DC for Mutasa, Alex Bundock, more than 5 000 people were moved into PVs during the rainy season. This was the planting time and inmates were forced to abandon their crops and homes. He pointed out that, “The PV construction programme had to go on despite the rains” and added that “The terrorists don’t stop

⁶² Informants confirmed that food was distributed unfairly in PVs as those considered as enemies were denied food. The use of hunger as a political weapon to punish inmates was inhuman and heartless. It was also against the law of war which prohibits the use of food to punish war victims. The DAs also confiscated food from outside PVs, this resulted in food shortages and created a humanitarian crisis.

operating while the rains are on and neither must we.”⁶³ This demonstrates that PVs were established against all odds and without taking into consideration the plight of the affected people. Inmates of Moyoweshumba were frog marched into the keep during the planting season and were not allowed to return to their homes to continue with their farming activities. PVs were in this case a source of food insecurity.

In African societies cattle provide milk, meat, hides and are a source of relief at difficult times. The establishment of PVs was associated with the loss of cattle in one way or another. In some cases the establishment of PVs coincidentally happened at a time when there were outbreaks of cattle diseases. In Chipinge, there was an outbreak of foot and mouth disease and the government banned the sale of cattle in 1977. As if that was not enough, people were not allowed to eat the meat. To make matters worse there was a drought. The inmates of newly established villages were also misled by guerrilla propaganda to believe that the white people and the government manufactured the disease to make the people suffer because they supported the liberation struggle. The burning of cattle dying from the disease led many to believe that the Rhodesians were behind all these problems. Mangeza pointed out that:

“This was a sad development in our lives and the DC for Chipinge Mr. D. du Ploddy made things worse by failing to explain why our cattle were being shot and burnt.” We were not allowed to eat the meat or sell our cattle. We were starving and had no money to buy food. Our children were hungry and the majority had kwashiorkor, their hair was red.⁶⁴

The food crisis also worsened because the Rhodesian government banned the sale of cattle from areas such as Manzivire, Garahwa, Chipinda and Chisumbanje. Cattle movements were also

⁶³ NAZ, Rhodesian Herald, 12/3/78.

⁶⁴ Interview with A. Mangeza, Ex- inmate, Chipinge, 14-06-13.

restricted and all this was difficult to comprehend for most inmates who had been forced into PVs. Mr. Itayi Chitiyo of Garahwa Village noted that:

Life in the keeps was horrible. There was no food, milk or meat. We were not allowed to sell our cattle in order to buy food for our children. Our children were getting thin and dying of starvation. The white people were evil and they prevented us from going out of the keeps to grow our crops. Keeps were designed to make Africans suffer and die of hunger and diseases. The DA and his people made the situation worse by playing music while our children were hungry. They were celebrating the death of our children.⁶⁵

The above sentiments reflect a number of things to be noted about life in the PVs. There was an element of hostility towards PVs. There was also an extreme degree of suspicion by inmates towards the government. All government efforts aimed at preventing the spread of the disease were received in bad light. The attitude towards PVs in Chipinge was negative. The use of intimidation and threats towards the inmates by colonial officials without explaining why the people were not allowed to sell their cattle was a major source of conflict between the people and the colonial administration represented by the DAs.

The displacements associated with the establishment of PVs stressed the capacity of the inmates to provide adequate food. The availability of food and children's access to it became highly uncertain and unpredictable. Families were disoriented, dismantled, displaced and disturbed by the war situation, and this reduced their ability to provide adequate food for children. The provision of food for children became a secondary issue and "tomorrow's business" as violence associated with the displacement intensified in the process of the establishment of PVs. The insecurity associated with a war situation turned people's priorities upside down. Life in PVs was associated with an element of insecurity and uncertainty. The scarcity of food accelerated and exacerbated the suffering of children. The forcing of inmates out

⁶⁵ Interview with I. Chitiyo, Ex- Inmate, Garaha Village, Chipinge, 14-06-13.

of their homes destroyed food reserves and the capacity of individual family members to ensure the availability of food. This reduced the ability of mothers to provide food for their children. The situation inside PVs was associated with a wide range of problems which increased children's vulnerability to malnutrition and food shortages.

The demographic patterns in PVs clearly demonstrate that life in PVs was transformed and agricultural practices were changed. Agricultural practices increased the burden for women and children as most men either abandoned their homes because of the escalation of violence or became migrant labourers. While the burden of looking after the family was now in the hands of most women, the physical aspect of crop production became the burden of children. Child labour in agricultural activities became the norm. Children were organized by women and the burden of planting, weeding, harvesting of crops and tending cattle fell on the children. Agricultural activities became their preoccupation and responsibility. While many gender scholars such as O'Gorman says that PVs increased the burden for women inside the Keeps⁶⁶, I strongly believe otherwise. There is need to revisit such an assertion. Women became new family heads with the responsibility of organizing child labour, household tasks and agricultural tasks but not always directly responsible for planting, weeding and harvesting of crops. This was confirmed by Tatenda Gobvu, who was an inmate in Honde Valley. She pointed out that, young children were the ones usually allowed to move out of the Keeps in times of total curfews and they had to work in the fields and look after the cattle in the absence of their parents.⁶⁷ The closing of Keeps by DAs for days was a common practice across Southern Rhodesian to prevent the guerrillas from accessing food and information from the people. While I do not intend to downplay the role

⁶⁶ O'Gorman, *The Frontline*, p.110.

⁶⁷ Interview with T. Gobvu, Ex-Inmate, Honde Valley, 02-03-14.

played by women, it is important to note that although children and women in most cases worked together in the fields, women had power to control labour and resources. It is therefore prudent to conclude that the burden on women's shoulders was in many cases transferred and off-loaded onto children who needed protection and care from their parents at all times.

Many inmates confirmed that they survived on wild fruits and only had one meal a day.

Josephine Matewe from Chiweshe revealed that:

We used to survive on wild fruits in the morning or porridge without sugar. Fruits such as mazhanje were mostly eaten by inmates for survival but when there was a curfew, life was very hard. As children we knew it was dangerous to go out into the bush but hunger was pushing us. At times the DAs would prevent us from going out and we will spend the whole day without eating anything. We used to survive on one meal a day. Life was very hard in the keeps. Inside the keeps there were no trees and as such there were no fruits.⁶⁸

In Chiredzi, inmates of Keeps also faced hunger as a major problem. Mufuriri pointed out that, "Life was very hard inside the Keeps. We had no food as our maize was destroyed by baboons and cattle. In most cases we were not allowed to go to our fields."⁶⁹In Mount Darwin in PVs such as Nyamanza, Chidzanga, Chibwe, Pfunyanguwo, Chironga, Nhembire, Kondo, and many others dotted across the area, food shortages were worsened because of the prevalence of a twenty-four hour curfew system in the area. Chipu Nehwande pointed out that:

Our fields were far away from the keeps and every time we went out weeding we will come back late and find the gate closed. The DAs would interrogate us late into the night claiming that we were washing or cooking for the terrorists. They would only allow a few trusted individuals out of the keep for days. We had poor harvests because our crops were not well looked after. At times our crops were destroyed by wild animals. At times when one of the inmates is suspected or seen to be in contact with the guerrillas the keeps were closed for days. The DAs used to confiscate food from people at the gate. Once your food was taken away you would not get it back. The DAs were very powerful as they had

⁶⁸ Interview with J. Matewe, Ex-Inmate, Chiweshe, 06-01-14.

⁶⁹ Interview with A. Mufuriri, Ex- Inmate, Chiredzi, 11-06-14.

powers to take away our food. Visitors to the keeps were not allowed even to bring bread for their children and wives.”⁷⁰

DAs in Chiweshe, Shamva and Mazoe also introduced some insensitive measures to control maize. Inmates were not allowed to take more than one bucket to grinding meals. Extra buckets were confiscated by the DAs.⁷¹

All these measures made life in PVs unbearable. The capacity of families to provide food for their children was highly affected. The government believed that all these measure were designed for the people to stop supporting terrorism. The Prime Minister of Rhodesia, Ian Smith, argued that all this was necessary for all those who supported communists to come to their senses. To him all this was meant to prevent terrorism and communist encroachment and the preservation of Western civilization in Rhodesian.⁷²

The DAs in Chiweshe, Shamva, Mazoe, Centenary and many other areas further punished very young children by starving them. Prohibition laws were introduced which prevented women from taking food to the fields. Women with young children visited the fields with their children but without any supplementary food. The plight of children was worsened as they had nothing to eat for the whole day. This even affected breast-feeding mothers’ capacity to provide milk for their children. In most cases fields were located far away from the Keeps, making it impossible to come back for lunch and go back to the fields. Matewe highlighted that, “We used to go to the fields early in the morning and come back in the evening with our children on our backs. Our

⁷⁰ Interview with T. Nerwande, Ex-Inmate, Mount Darwin, 03-04-14.

⁷¹ Former Inmates from Chiweshe, Shamva and Mazoe confirmed that maize was confiscated by the DAs as they were not allowed to have any maize considered to be excess.

⁷² I. Smith, Colonialism, pp. 242-247.

children were very thin because of the shortage of the food. Most of the children had red hair an indication that they had kwashiorkor”⁷³

Life was terrible for these children who only had dirty water to drink and no food. This clearly demonstrates that the DAs were uncaring as children even in a conflict situation should be fed. Hunger haunted these young children who did not understand or know why they had to starve. While the Rhodesian government contributed largely to the misery and hunger in PVs, it is important to point out that the guerrillas were also responsible though to a limited extent for food shortages in Keeps. The guerrillas burned down huts in PVs across the country especially in Mount Darwin, Mrewa and Mtoko TTLs on several occasions. This was confirmed by a spokesman for the Rhodesian Ministry of Internal Affairs who claimed that one weekend 10% of some 200 PVs were partially or totally burnt down by terrorists.⁷⁴ PVs were destroyed in Mount Darwin, Chiweshe, Chitsatso, Bheke, Chironga, Dzenga and Nembire.⁷⁵ While the reasons behind the burning down of PVs remain a contested terrain among historians, the effects were not controversial. There is no doubt that the burning down of PVs had detrimental effects on all the inmates in general and children in particular. The destruction of homes involves the burning down of all food reserves for the inmates. This worsened the plight of all inmates. The destruction further worsened an already horrible and terrible situation. Chibwe, pointed out that “The DAs destroyed our crops when Keeps were established and the guerrillas burnt our villages when we were in the Keeps”⁷⁶. It can be concluded that the guerrillas worsened food shortages

⁷³ Interview with J. Matewe, Ex-Inmate, Chiweshe, 07-01-14.

⁷⁴ NAZ, The Rhodesian Herald, 10/10/77.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Interview with P. Chibwe, Ex-Inmate, Mount Darwin, 07-01-14.

and were partly responsible for hunger and starvation inside the PVs. Many NGOs and Churches who visited the Keeps confirmed that starvation existed in the Keeps including World Vision and the Salvation Army. In 1977, Stanley Mooneyham, the President of the World Vision, visited Chiweshe and concluded that there was an alarming increase in malnutrition and that people were dying of starvation and that children were dying of enteritis in large numbers.⁷⁷

All this was rejected by colonial officials who continued to manufacture propaganda to deny the fact that there was starvation in Keeps. Strong, a colonial official, admitted that there was starvation in the Keeps but went on to claim that, “The reason that starvation and malnutrition in the protected villages is increasing is that the food in the field is either being stolen by the terrorists or it is given to them by the tribesmen under intimidation.”⁷⁸ Although the guerrillas forced villagers to give them food or at times took it by force, this was not primarily responsible for the hunger and starvation in PVs. This contributed to food shortages, but the main reason for the crises in the Keeps was the establishment of these Villages.

It is critical to note that guerrilla demands worsened an already bad situation. After the establishment of PVs in Chiweshe and Honde Valley, guerrillas continued their operations and demands that inmates of the Keeps should continue to provide them with food. Many inmates from those two areas confirmed that the guerrillas made food demands which increased their burden. Chibwe, from Honde Valley, pointed out that, the guerrillas worsened their plight by demanding good food and chickens from incapacitated and suffering inmates who had very little food. She also noted that those who failed to provide food were taken as enemies of the

⁷⁷ NAZ, *The Rhodesian Herald*, 27/2/77.

⁷⁸ NAZ, *Rhodesian Herald*, 19-10-77.

liberation struggle and sellouts.⁷⁹ Some inmates believed that the guerrillas who insisted that the inmates provide meat at all times for their meals were not different from the Rhodesians.

The demand for meat and the rejection of vegetables continues to generate a lot of interest and debate. Supporters of the liberation struggle for Zimbabwe and guerrillas argue that the waging of the liberation struggle required people to make sacrifices and that the demand for meat was not because the guerrillas were insensitive or selfish. Gweme, who once operated in Chiweshe, Mtoko and Mrewa as a freedom fighter stated that there were dos, don'ts and taboos to be religiously followed during the Zimbabwean war in order to win. He said that it was the spirit mediums and not the guerrillas who prescribed such taboos and these spirit mediums were local people and not guerrillas. He noted that there was need for all Zimbabweans to sacrifice for the Zimbabwean liberation war to be won and inmates of PVs made their contribution whilst the guerrillas sacrificed their lives to liberate Zimbabwe.⁸⁰ While these sentiments were shared by many former freedom fighters and their supporters, some former inmates described guerrilla food demands as selfish and extortion. Whether these demands were right or wrong, the fact remains that these demands strained the capacity of inmates to provide food for the children who faced starvation.

Young children failed to understand why at times they were prevented from eating food when they were hungry. Struggling families had to reserve some food for the guerrillas so as to avoid being labeled sellouts. This was confirmed by T. Rwafa who was an inmate at Maripfonde Keep, in Mount Darwin. She pointed out that, "Feeding the guerrillas was a very difficult task

⁷⁹ Interview with J. Chibwe, Ex-Inmate, Honde Valley, 04-03-14.

⁸⁰ Interview with Cde F. Gweme, Southview, Gweru, 12-02-2012.

bearing in my mind that they had to buy all the food stuffs and that the guerrillas only ate meat.”⁸¹ She also pointed out that there came a time when it was a real burden to feed the guerrillas because the food was scarce and expensive.⁸² PVs were therefore, associated with human suffering, food shortages and violence to the detriment of the wellbeing of the weakest members of any society.

The food crisis was worsened by the fact that families inside the Keeps could not produce their own food, even vegetables. The inmates had to purchase almost everything without sources of income. It was not even possible for people from outside the Keeps or as far as Harare to bring food into the PVs. The DAs banned the transportation of food in or outside the PVs. Inmates were only allowed one bucket of maize for a month or more. The DAs had powers to confiscate food from outside the Keeps. This was done without considering the family sizes.⁸³ In Uzumba families were forced into PVs without even considering their numbers. This was confirmed by the Mrewa Catholic Centre in 1975 which provided some very critical statistics. The statistics below demonstrate that a large number of people were driven into the Keeps without proper planning for agricultural purposes. These people were dumped in an open area where it was impossible to practise any farming activities. The large number of people inside the Keeps in Uzumba never accepted the Keeps as their homes. They regarded the keeps as “muwaya” (inside the wire),⁸⁴ and to them the Keeps were no different from the jails. This disrupted their traditional way of life and agricultural practices. The use of coercion and not

⁸¹ Interview with T. Rwafa, Ex- Inmate, Rushinga, Mount Darwin, 05-10-1407-04-12.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Confirmed by inmates from Uzumba who were inmates of keeps where there were numerous problems because of the establishment of Keeps.

persuasion made Keeps resemble jails in many ways. All this to the inmates demonstrated that Keeps were “jails” and the people never accepted them as their homes.

Inmates from Uzumba also confirmed that it was difficult for them to engage in agricultural activities because of the restrictions imposed by the DAs. Once inside the Keeps, they were subject to strict control and their movements were restricted. Whenever, the inmates of Keeps in Uzumba were going out they were screened and receipts for local taxes were at times used as a passport to go outside the Keep. Failure to produce such receipts resulted in large numbers of people being detained inside the Keeps for weeks at the expense of their crops outside the Keep.⁸⁵

The statistics below demonstrate that PVs in Mtoko were overwhelmed by the number of inmates who were dumped inside the wire without providing any basic necessities. The large number of people forced into keeps created a humanitarian crisis.

NAME OF KEEP	No. OF KRAALS	NO. OF FAMILIES
1. Chitimbe	12	600
2. Marembera	7	550
3. Magunje	10	500
4. Kaseke	8	450

⁸⁵ Ibid.

5. Nhakiwa	12	600
6. Rukairo	12	600
7. Manyika	12	600
8. Mukwe	10	500
9. Musanhi	9	450
10. Marose	7	350
11. Mashambanhaka	12	500
12. Katiyo	6	300
13. Nyagande	6	300
14. Mayema	6	300
15. Chipfunde	9	450
16. Rudairo	13	650
17. Marove	8	400
18. Chidodo	9	450

Source: Mrewa Catholic Centre

20 November 1975 at NAZ

At times the gates were closed all day to prevent inmates from going out for reasons best known to the DAs. M. Katiyo pointed out that:

All agricultural activities came to a standstill because of the establishment of keeps. Once reports of terrorist activities in our area reached the ears of the DAs, our keeps were closed for days. At times inmates were forced to provide unpaid labour for the DAs to cut grass or to dig refuse pits for the colonial officials. At times gates were closed and all the people forced to attend meetings by the DC or DA on how bad terrorists were. Sometimes our houses were searched and any food deemed excess was confiscated by the DAs to prevent guerillas from accessing food. Life in the Keeps was terrible. It was worse than being in jail.⁸⁶

There is overwhelming evidence that there were food shortages in PVs in Rhodesia. In 1978 Mr. W. B. Chiompaka Chirambasukwa who was a Member of Parliament (MP), made the following remarks about the food situation in Muzarabani, Sowe, Hoya, Bare, Gweshe, Kasuwa, Rugare, Mudzengerere, Vitirino, Hwata, Gutsa, Gonono, Chitsingo and Matsiwo PVs. He noted:

At the top of the grievances of the people in Protected Villages is the question of food. To the people's dismay maize grain is no longer given regularly or adequately. Half of a 20 litre tin of cooking oil is used to measure the amount of grain rationed to each family per five week interval by rationing officials. No salt, beans or groundnuts are rationed or relish, and no reason was given for the stoppage and for the cut of mealie grain... unlike the usual home situation where tribesmen could hunt game, milk their cattle, catch termites and grasshoppers, grow pumpkin vegetable, wild vegetable (derere) or even town vegetables, kill their cattle, goats, sheep or chicken for meat and trap birds – such foods are a specialty and are rare in the Protected Villages. They are hardly permitted to go out fishing, for reasons well known authority fears. While this is part of the food problem, this also explains the reason for the widespread outbreak of diseases and ill-health⁸⁷

It is clear that the food provided by the government in the form of maize was for political expediency and not to help the inmates of Keeps. It was a strategy to portray the myth that the

⁸⁶ Interview with M. Katiyo, Ex- Inmate, Mrewa, 26-01-14.

⁸⁷ NAZ, Ms 308/40/7 Report by W.P. Charambasukwa, MP, A Look at the Protected Villages and Consolidated Villages of the North Eastern Districts Part of Nemaikonde Constituency.

racist government in Rhodesia was a caring government wishing to assist inmates inside the Keeps. It is critical to note that it was the same government which manufactured these food crises and then masqueraded as a government of good Samaritans assisting people affected by this man-made disaster.

Food shortages inside PVs had detrimental effects on children because:

Children's needs and aspirations cut across all ideologies and cultures. The needs of all children are the same: nutritional food, adequate health care, a decent education, shelter and secure and loving family. Children are both our reason to struggle to eliminate the worst aspects of warfare, and on best hope for succeeding at it.⁸⁸

There was overwhelming evidence to prove that children in Keeps were thin and Mrs. J. Nzvimbo described them as "moving skeletons with red hair" confirming that the children had kwashiorkor.⁸⁹ Kwashiorkor was mainly caused by insufficient supply of food.

It has also been demonstrated that food in most keeps was insufficient because of a combination of factors such as the collapse of the agricultural sector since inmates of Keeps were forced to abandon their fields, food rationing, loss of cattle which were a source of milk and meat, the enforcement of the curfew system, and the devastation caused by the planting of landmines by both guerrillas and Rhodesian soldiers. Food shortages in Keeps were caused by the introduction of Keeps and got worse because of guerrilla activities. Josephine Nhongo-Simbanegavi pointed out that "... the people had been made to leave behind their food reserves,

⁸⁸ G. Machel, *Impact*, p.13.

⁸⁹ Interview with J. Nzvimbo, Ex-inmate, Nzvimbo, 08-01-14.

which had then been burnt. Compounding these food shortages, shops had been closed, and even basics like salt were unavailable.”⁹⁰

6.3 Children and Health Crisis in Protected Villages

Health conditions in Keeps were deplorable and there were outbreaks of water-borne diseases such as typhoid, diarrhoea and cholera. Hygiene conditions were deplorable as there were no toilets and health facilities. Uncovered shallow pits used as toilets increased the spread of diseases such as malaria. Many children and inmates perished as the colonial regime turned a blind eye on all the problems. Mr. Chitauro, spokesman for Chiweshe villages explained the horrible conditions inside the Keeps by testifying that:

The health of our people is in great danger. The crowding of the people in the keep does not allow them to make the area tidy every time. The whole family is to live on a 15 square metres piece of land with all the property that the family might have, a toilet pit also as well as fowl run etc. The very shallow toilet pits uncovered on top make the villages place a great danger to public health. Out of these toilets the big green flies come out and get on the food stuff and some even in water containers as well as in milk pots... Due to the wet ground mosquitos are found in big numbers in most keeps, they breed easily and very quickly in these toilets and some pools of standing water found everywhere in the keeps. As a result diseases like Typhoid, Diarrhoea and Malaria have broken out in great number of cases.⁹¹ (sic)

The establishment of Keeps worsened the plight of children in Rhodesia health-wise. The colonial government had largely neglected the health of the African people for a very long time during the colonial period. In most TTLs the health of the African people was a priority and concern of Mission hospitals. The establishment of PVs resulted in the closure of most mission hospitals and this endangered people’s health in general and children in particular. African people were driven into PVs in large numbers without taking into account the health of the

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ NAZ,CCJP, Man in the Middle,p.10.

inmates. Children in the Keeps were more susceptible to disease and malnutrition because of their vulnerability. Therefore, the establishment of PVs was a major public health hazard that deserves serious historical attention. Although it is problematic to statistically prove that greater numbers of children died from malnutrition and diseases than due to violence in PVs during the liberation struggle for Zimbabwe, there is evidence that this was the case. This was confirmed by T. Chikomba, who was a mother in one of the Keeps in Honde Valley, who pointed out that, “Our children died from diseases brought by these cages and not guns.”⁹² Although, this was the general trend in most Keeps, it is crucial to note that the health situation was not homogeneous and the situation differed from PV to PV. Although children in different Keeps faced different problems, the common feature was that they all had health related problems. Children in Keeps in Rhodesia were principal victims of the Rhodesian counter-insurgency strategy. This was confirmed by the CCPJ which concluded that, “The new government programme has shattered the African’s well-organized family and social system, and has disoriented and alienated the local population.”⁹³ A political scientist pointed out that, “It is no exaggeration to call them concentration camps. They are rural slums – overcrowded, without basic facilities and unhealthy.”⁹⁴ The government could have done much better as inmates were forced to relocate without health facilities. Keeps simply alienated the people by taking away their autonomy and forcing them into undesirable lifestyles without basic facilities.

The way Keeps were established laid the foundation for a looming health crisis. For example, on 8 March 1973, the Rhodesian government, in an attempt to instill fear into the

⁹² Interview with T. Chikomba, Ex-Inmate, Honde Valley, 04-03-14.

⁹³ NAZ, CCJP, *Civil War in Rhodesia*, pp. 4-10.

⁹⁴ ZANU PF Archives, Protected Villages

people and demonstrate that acts of terrorism will be dealt with ruthlessly, declared to the people of Chiweshe TTLs and Chesa Purchase Area that, “All schools, churches, stores, petrol stations, grinding mills, hospitals, and clinics were shut ...”⁹⁵ This happened after the government had closed St. Albert’s Mission claiming it was a terrorist base. The hospital was closed on the basis that, “The missionaries are fluent in the local language and are in contact with Africans every day. With the amount of subversion going on in that Reserve, the missionaries and Africans working there must have heard something about terrorist activity in the area”⁹⁶ This had multiple consequences on children who were deprived of medical healthcare, food, schools and also suffered from malnutrition, diseases and violence.

In most cases the inmates were driven in an area where there were no toilets. The lack of toilets was not only a health problem, but it was also a social problem. The lack of toilets dehumanized the inmates who were forced to relieve themselves in open areas in-between houses. For example, inmates of Makaha PVs were faced with piles of human waste every morning. Annatoria Mahamba pointed out that, “The situation was unbearable and horrible. At first it was difficult to eat because of the sight and smell. The smell was bad.”⁹⁷ The situation was worse for young children who did not understand what was happening. Mahamba also noted that, “Young children would soak themselves in human waste if you left them unattended.”⁹⁸ This pathetic situation was not only a health hazard but it was also unbearable. Bro. Fidelis Mukonori of the CCJP, pointed out that the situation was appalling. He stated that, “There was

⁹⁵ NAZ, The Rhodesian Herald, 24/2/73.

⁹⁶ NAZ, Rhodesian Herald, 07-12-77

⁹⁷ Interview with A.Mahamba, Ex- inmate, Mrewa, 27-01-14.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

no sanitation, and at night the people, afraid to move away from where they were sleeping, used the area adjacent to their sleeping place”. He went on to say, “The stench from the lack of sanitation was unbearable, and as there was a hot wind constantly blowing there was no escape from the smell.”⁹⁹ The smell made it difficult for the inmates to eat their food. Mahamba painfully recalled that the Keeps traumatized them as they were made to eat food in the sight of their own faeces.¹⁰⁰

The lack of sanitary facilities increased the risk of communicable diseases. Many children in Chiweshe, Honde Valley, Chiredzi, Madziwa and many other PVs perished, because of the diarrhoea pandemic. Inmates from Chiweshe confirmed that time and again children were dying from running stomachs and the illness was spreading from one village to the other. Diarrhoea was easily spread across the keeps because of the use of shallow toilet pits uncovered on top. Green flies known as “green bombers” carried the disease from one village to the other.¹⁰¹ There was an outbreak of diarrhoea in Chiredzi in 1978 which resulted in many children perishing inside PVs.¹⁰² Inadequate healthcare, an unhealthy environment and insufficient access to hospitals and clinics were the main reasons why diseases claimed the lives of many people in general and children in particular. The war situation in Rhodesia resulted in many areas being sealed-off from the outside world and in the process cutting off any form of aid. This demonstrates that life in PVs was unbearable and unacceptable.

⁹⁹ P. Auret, Reaching for Justice, p.67.

¹⁰⁰ Interview with A. Mahamba, EX- inmate, Mrewa, 27-01-14.

¹⁰¹ P. Auret, Reaching for Justice, pp.67-80.

¹⁰² NAZ, Rhodesian Herald, 25-07-77.

In Chiweshe, 48,960 people were uprooted and resettled in 21 protected Villages. For three days the people were put under curfew and not allowed to go out of the Keep. Since there were no toilets, the people used the open space for defecation. As more and more people were dumped into the Keep, their maize, ground nuts, blankets and other belongings were dumped on human waste.¹⁰³ The inmates of PVs were devastated by such a horrible experience. Madzima believed that, “The DAs did not regard us as human beings. They thought we were pigs which eat their own waste. Life for us was hard.”¹⁰⁴ This demonstrates that the Rhodesian government was not concerned with the welfare and wellbeing of the inmates. Most inmates strongly believed that the establishment of Keeps was a way of punishing them.

Thousands of villagers were forcibly driven into Keeps at Msengezi, Gutsa, Hoya and Makumbura in 1973. The mass population removals were associated with destruction of homes, schools, hospitals and granaries. These were destroyed to prevent the guerrillas from making use of them and preventing the inmates from returning to their old homes. Sanitary facilities were lacking and an African freelance journalist was sent by Reginald Shay to Gutsa PVs to assess the situation. The journalist emerged with photographs and information confirming that children were overcrowded and living in insanitary conditions.¹⁰⁵ The plight of children in these cages was worsened by the fact that health facilities in the area were closed at the time of establishment of the Keeps. Poorly equipped clinics were in operation without qualified nurses or doctors. Maria Msengezi who was one of the inmates in Gutsa Keep pointed out that, “A lot of children died and no-one cared. There were no drugs in the clinics and most of the qualified nurses

¹⁰³ R. Weinrich. “Strategic Resettlement in Rhodesia,” p.214.

¹⁰⁴ Interview with E, Madzima, Ex- inmate, Chiweshe, 09-01-14.

¹⁰⁵ H. Ellert, *The Rhodesian War*, p.49.

deserted the area when the war became hot.”¹⁰⁶ It was difficult for nurses to continue to operate in the Keeps because of the war situation and the introduction of the curfew system by the Security Forces who shot curfew breakers time and again. According to the CCJP, “As the war became more intense the Rhodesian authorities dealing with the civilian population became more violent and the distinction between armed insurgents and defenseless civilians is blurred.”¹⁰⁷ The Rhodesian government announced from time to time that, “The health situation in most Keeps became deplorable for the reasons that the health facilities which were opened in PVs were understaffed and underfunded.”¹⁰⁸ Children in need of medical treatment were neglected for a number of reasons. It was no longer safe to visit clinics far away from the Keeps because of the curfew system. Vaccination programmes against diseases such as measles were disrupted. The planting of landmines by both guerrillas and the SF sealed off most TTLs from medical assistance from humanitarian organisations. Areas around Keeps were unsafe and even roads to PVs were mined, worsening the situation.

A large number of children who were victims of landmines died in most cases because of lack of medical help and facilities. The collapse of the health service delivery meant that there were no clinics to alleviate their suffering. The SF also politicized the health service delivery. Howard Mission in Chiweshe was closely monitored and doctors and nurses were given strict instructions not to treat anyone suspected to be a terrorist or those injured while assisting terrorists. This transformed health centres into military camps. It also disrupted the smooth running of the few medical points which remained operational inside PVs. Most nurses and

¹⁰⁶ Interview with M. Msengezi, Mrewa, 27-01-14.

¹⁰⁷ NAZ, CCJP, Civil War in Rhodesia, pp. 41-45.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

doctors moved to other areas because the war situation was unbearable. Some were shot on sight by the SFs as curfew breakers.¹⁰⁹

The use of chemical warfare by the Rhodesian RSFs in Mukumbura TTLs affected many PVs. There was an outbreak of mysterious deaths which were believed to have been caused by eating poisonous vegetables contaminated by chemical defoliants used to clear the bush along the Mozambique border. This programme code named “Cordon Sanitaire.” was extended to the Zambezi Valley in an attempt to destroy “all vegetation to deny cover and food to the insurgents...”¹¹⁰ The spraying of the poisonous chemical resulted in the outbreak of a strange illness which caused children to shake violently and sometimes to die.¹¹¹ The effects of such a deadly disease were confirmed by many health experts who visited the area and attributed it to the spraying of vegetation from the air with defoliations. This was also confirmed by inmates of PVs in the Zambezi valley area who believed that the Rhodesians wanted to kill all the black people by using chemical warfare. Irene Gutsa argued that, “The whites wanted to kill all the people by spraying our vegetables and vegetation. Many young children who did not understand what was happening died. It was terrible...”¹¹² Although, the Ministry of Health attempted to deny the involvement of the government in such callous acts by stating that, “That an illness has been identified but the actual cause was not finally proven... there is no evidence to connect the spraying with the outbreak.”¹¹³

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ H. Ellert, The Rhodesian War, pp. 50-55.

¹¹¹ NAZ, CCJP, Man in the Middle, p.9.

¹¹² Interview with I. Gutsa, Ex-Inmate, Mrewa, 27-01-14.

¹¹³ NAZ, CCJP, Man in the Middle, p.9.

A number of conclusions need to be deduced from that statement. The government admitted that it had carried out some destructive measures to destroy the vegetation. The government also confirmed that a strange illness was haunting the inmates of PVs. Indirectly these two confirmations indicate that the government was responsible for the loss of lives of innocent children and other unarmed civilians in Mukumbura and the Zambezi Valley. It is also critical to note that the Rhodesian government had a long history of using chemical warfare as a counter-insurgency strategy. The Rhodesian government was simply following the example of the American army which used the highly toxic herbicide “Agent Orange” during the Vietnam War.¹¹⁴ This biological warfare had horrendous effects on innocent civilians. Thousands of people perished in slow and lingering deaths in Vietnam. It has also been confirmed that the devastating effects are still felt even today as newborn children in the affected areas are born with ghastly deformities.¹¹⁵

The apartheid regime in South Africa also utilized a chemical and biological programme named “Project Coast” to ensure the survival of “... the God blessed apartheid state”.¹¹⁶ The Rhodesian government believed that, “all is fair in love and war.”¹¹⁷ The Rhodesians argued that they were fighting a war of survival against a Marxist organisation backed, clothed, fed, equipped, armed and financed by the Communist bloc.¹¹⁸ Therefore, an attempt to deny that chemical warfare was used in Mukumbura and the Zambezi Valley is misleading and unjustified.

¹¹⁴ J. Parker, Assignment. Selous Scouts, p. 155.

¹¹⁵ Ibid

¹¹⁶ Ibid. pp. 155-200.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

There was a strong connection between the spraying of chemicals and the outbreak of a deadly disease which claimed the lives of many innocent young children.

In a bid to eliminate enemies without taking any blame, the Rhodesian government adopted some desperate measures. The Minister of Defence, PK van der Byl, Professor Bob Symington and unnamed senior army officers formed a plan to eliminate guerrillas using poisons and toxins such as barium salts, sodium salts, fluorophosphates and monofluoroacetic acid in 1974. The CIO Director, General Ken Flower, approved the project to poison the enemy by all means necessary.¹¹⁹ The Rhodesians decided to poison clothing, tinned food, and packed food, medicines in liquid form, cigarettes and bottled items. The list of poisoned items included, canned beef, beer, sweets, mealie meal, biscuits, tinned jam and bottles of brandy. The poisoned goods were delivered to many areas where there were PVs such as Mrewa, Mtoko, Mount Darwin, Chiredzi, Makonde and Mudzi.¹²⁰ There is a lot of documented evidence to prove that there were several guerrilla victims of this biological warfare. However, many villagers and children were also victims. Many informants confirmed that there were many mysterious and violent deaths in many Keeps across Rhodesia. T. Matope revealed that many children in Mrewa died after bleeding profusely from their noses and vomiting.¹²¹ Many civilians and children were victims of this callous Rhodesian biological and chemical warfare programme.

As more and more guerrillas became victims of food and clothes poisoning they devised strategies to minimise this scourge. The guerrillas made it mandatory that all tinned food should

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Interview with T Matope, Ex- Inmate, Mrewa, 27-01-14.

first be eaten by locals who were mostly young boys and girls (the *mujibas and chimbwidos*).¹²² The use of children to test whether the food was poisoned or not resulted in many children eating contaminated food stuffs. The scarcity of food made these experiments very attractive to children, but the consequences were devastating. The use of biscuits and sweets on the list of poisoned items also confirms that the Rhodesian government was deliberately targeting young children. Many children unsuspectingly consumed the food stuffs and died. The unavailability of medical facilities inside the Keeps made life for most children who were victims of food poisoning very difficult.³¹ Survival chances for children once they consumed contaminated food were almost non-existent. The situation was worsened by the fact that the Rhodesian government denied any responsibilities with regards to the poisoning of food. To those who were children inside the Keeps, the use of such dirty and brutal warfare strategies was inhuman, unfair, callous, heartless, unjustified and criminal. In this regard both guerrilla and RSFs hands were not clean. This also brings in another dimension to the discussion on the uncaring nature of guerrillas who used children to test for food poisoning. This confirms that the guerrillas were first and foremost concerned about their safety and survival only.

In a bid to eliminate ZANLA guerrillas in 1977, the Selous Scouts Reconnaissance Troop team (SSRT) discharged cholera bacterium into water tanks at Malvern and Madulo Pan in Mozambique. This resulted in an outbreak of vomiting and diarrhoea among FRELIMO and ZANLA guerillas.¹²³ The symptoms like watery diarrhoea, vomiting, muscular cramps, dehydration, kidney failure and collapse were observed and noticed in Matibi 11 TTL and Chilongo, in Chiredzi. The RSFs also placed cholera bacteria in water in the Ruya River on the

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ J. Parker, Assignment. Selous Scouts, pp. 155-160.

eastern border with Mozambique.¹²⁴ Many children consumed the contaminated water and died in large numbers. Children, unlike adults, did not understand why water sources they had used for ages were now dangerous.

6.4 Children and Educational Crisis in Protected Villages

One of the greatest challenges faced by children within PVs was the closure of schools, which forced many to drop out of school. Many children were uprooted from their homes which were close to their schools, demonstrating that educational rights of children were never a priority of the Rhodesian government. All this compounded the African education crisis which had been going on for decades because of colonial neglect. Life in PVs was also not conducive for children to continue to go to school. Children's lives were disrupted because of these forced relocations. Restrictions within the Keeps also made it impossible for children to attend school. The curfew system, the violence, the hunger and the war situation were a threat not only to the educational needs of children, but even their survival. The closure of schools made children the principal victims of this diabolical counter-insurgency military strategy. It is important to note that establishment of PVs only worsened the educational system which was suffering from an appalling legacy of colonial institutional neglect.

The history of children as victims in the liberation struggle for Zimbabwe has largely been characterized by a systematic pattern of neglect. Children in most studies are mentioned in passing as if their experiences were not important. The war affected children in schools in various terrible ways and there is a need for a serious interrogation of their experiences to appreciate the fact that those below the age of eighteen were principal victims of the war. Even

¹²⁴ Ibid.

some prominent historians like Ngwabi Bhebe, barely focused on the effects of war on the education of children. To Bhebe, the abduction of the Manama students by ZIPRA guerrillas was a “dramatic episode”¹²⁵ yet it was a tragic episode. Janice McLaughlin also mainly focused on the Catholic Missions in Southern Rhodesia during the liberation struggle and only mentions children in passing. McLaughlin although not mainly concerned about the plight of children provides a starting point. She chronicles the 5 July 1973 abduction of children from St Albert’s Mission by ZANLA forces. On that fateful day 291 children from the mission were abducted by a group of guerrillas led by Thomas Nhari. Students from the primary and secondary schools were abducted and frog marched into the Zambezi Valley.¹²⁶ The abduction had terrible effects on children who had never been exposed to such violence. According to McLaughlin, Israel Chizeya, who was in form II came face to face with the guerrillas for the first time. Chizeya says that, “... They were heavily armed, since it was our first time to see them, most of us felt very uneasy.”¹²⁷ This demonstrates that the abduction of children by guerrillas was a common practice despite the fact children were terrified by such experiences.

It is important to note that the abduction terribly affected children in many ways as it was associated with violence, anguish, trauma, pain, and psychological torture. The plight of captives worsened when the Rhodesian security forces launched a rescue operation attacking the guerrillas with aircraft and ground forces. Children were now caught-up in the cross-fire. Although there were no documented casualties during the cross-fire after the St Alberts abduction, the experience was horrifying and traumatic to children in many ways. It was the first

¹²⁵ N. Bhebe, The ZAPU and ZANU, p.171.

¹²⁶ P. Moorcraft and P. McLaughlin, The Rhodesian War, p. 90.

¹²⁷ Ibid,p.93.

time for most, if not all, students to witness the death of a person in a war situation. The death of Sigauke who was one of the guerrillas haunted the abducted children, as did the death of Hedrick Mandebvu who was accidentally shot by a Rhodesian soldier. One of the abducted students Chizeya, noted that, “This brought lots of panic and terror among us.”¹²⁸

The St Albert’s debacle wreaked havoc in the lives of children in all schools across Rhodesia. The abduction showed that children were vulnerable and not safe during the liberation struggle. This also demonstrates that the guerillas were more concerned about their motives and not the lives and education of the children. The conduct of the Rhodesian security forces also does not in any way mean that the rescue operation was a benevolent gesture by a benevolent government. In both cases, military considerations came first and the plight of children and their education was not considered. This exposed children to extreme brutality and violence. It also demonstrates that children were not spared or protected even in PVs. The abduction of St Albert’s children was unjustified, intolerable and unacceptable. The abduction haunted not only those who were at the school but even those in other schools. Schools were no longer safe havens for children.

The abduction of students by ZANLA guerillas was not an isolated incident. Not to be outdone, ZIPRA guerillas also used the same *modus operandi* on 30th January 1977. This involved the capturing of 500 to 700 people, mostly children, from Manama.¹²⁹ The abduction haunted the victims and those who remained behind. Miss Mabuwa who was only 14 years old noted that, “People started crying when they were informed that they were being taken to

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ N. Bhebe, The ZAPU and ZANU, p.171.

war.”¹³⁰ It is disturbing to note that the implications of the abduction on children and their education has largely escaped the attention of most historians. Bhebe argues that, “The Manama abduction was a shattering and shocking experience for the Evangelical Lutheran Church, both from the parents and the ecclesiastical authorities.”¹³¹

The effects of the abduction were felt more by the children than anyone else. The “abduction was a shattering and shocking experience” for the children who had been abducted. Although these children were not abducted from a Keep it is important to note that these two case studies demonstrate that the education of children in Rhodesia was affected and disrupted by the liberation struggle for Zimbabwe and there is need for serious historical research on the subject to fully understand that life behind the fence arrested the physical, psychological and intellectual development of children.

The establishment of PVs resulted in the militarization of TTLs and both the guerillas and the RSFs became more and more brutal in a bid to win the war. The people of Tanda TTL were given notice to move into PVs in 1977. When they refused, on 4 July 1977, the SFs burned down six villages namely Dzikiti, Shuwa, Ngurunde, Mufunde, Charambudza and Huta. More than 60 families and approximately 2, 880 people, mostly children, fled into the bush where there were no houses, schools or any other facilities.¹³² The war situation in most TTLs affected the education of most children and as such the plight of children in the Tanda TTLs was not an isolated incident. This was a common problem which affected many children in Rhodesia,

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² NAZ, CCJP, Civil War in Rhodesia, pp. 3-14.

creating a generation of uneducated citizens. The effects of educational disruption had lifelong terrible consequences.

The establishment of PVs in Muzarabani, Sowe, Hoya, Bare and Gweshe, also resulted in the closure of many schools. St Alberts and Mukumbura Secondary Schools were closed at the height of the liberation struggle.¹³³ Children in the schools were forced out of school without any solution in sight. The Rhodesian government only declared that the schools should be closed. Children from such schools were doomed and faced the dilemma of not knowing what to do next. Gweshe, who was a student at the time, had this to say:

The Rhodesian government on 19 February 1973 closed both the primary and secondary schools. We could not understand why the schools were closed as it was in the middle of the term. Everyone was ordered out of the schools that very day. Most of the students were stranded as they did not have pocket money to use for transport back home. It was a sorry sight. Some cried, others walked out of school with their bags but not going anywhere. Some expected the declaration to be revoked the next day. We asked the teachers and all had no answer. They also did not know why the school was closed. They told us that no reason was given. Two days later when we expected the school to be opened, we found the school fenced with barbed wire. Our future was doomed.¹³⁴

The closure of schools in most Keeps disrupted the education for most children. In Chiweshe 47 schools were closed because the people were uprooted and forced into PVs.¹³⁵ Children from those 47 schools terminated their studies. The closure of schools had disastrous consequences on children. The closure of schools and the establishment of PVs signaled the beginning of a horrendous war and the militarization of TTLs. Militarization of PVs was associated with the introduction of the curfew system. Children's movements out of the Keeps was controlled and restricted. Nyakudya pointed out that, "Life in the keeps was horrible. We were confined inside

¹³³ Interview with. T. Mzengezi, Ex- Inmate, Mrewa, 28-01-14.

¹³⁴ Interview with I. Gweshe, Ex-Inmate, Chiweshe, 06-01-14.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

the keeps at times for days. It was dangerous to go out. Life was hard and we were not allowed to go to school and even play”.¹³⁶ Confining children to PVs robbed them of their childhood. This also brought enormous suffering to children whose education and lives were disrupted. This had lifelong implications on children.

Schools such as Mount Selinda and Chikore in Chipinge, were closed. The Rhodesian government attempted to encourage primary schools to remain open but the war situation made it impossible for children to continue attending school. The closure of schools turned school children into child labourers as children were forced to go and work in the tea estates. This was confirmed by Matsaira from Mount Selinda. It was very hard for children in the Keeps and it brought hunger, suffering and lifelong poverty. He claimed that:

I wanted to go to be a teacher or a policeman but the war shattered my dreams. Schools were closed and that was the end of everything. I and other young boys became highly active *mujibas* and the war situation forced us to take drugs. It was impossible to remain sober when death was the order of the day. We began to do many things school children should not do. It was impossible to go back to school after years of indulgence and taking drugs. Some of my friends even died in the war. The war changed our lives forever. I hate the Whites for making our lives miserable. Life in the keeps was terrible and it affected our future tremendously.¹³⁷

It needs to be noted that wherever PVs were established children were affected in many ways. The above testimony illustrates that the establishment of Keeps affected children in a number of ways. Children were caught-up in a war situation and survival became an immediate priority over everything else. PVs transformed the lives of children and created a militarized and violent environment. To children whose lives were affected by war PVs brought violence, bloodshed,

¹³⁶ Interview with Mr Nyakudya, Ex- Inmate, MSU, 20-01-13.

¹³⁷ Interview with T. Mutsaira, Ex-inmate, Chipinge, 15-06-13.

misery, and the closure of schools, harassment, hunger, homelessness, despair, anger and many evils.¹³⁸

The environment in the Keeps was not conducive to meaningful education. Testimonies from all areas where PVs were established confirmed that PVs exposed rather than protected children. The vulnerability of children was increased, not diminished. The vulnerability had catastrophic consequences on the lives of children and their future. Matsaira also noted that, “Keeps increased vulnerability to guerrilla and state brutality on children.”¹³⁹ He pointed out that, “The Rhodesian soldiers wanted us to provide information on guerrilla movements and believed that children had no capacity to lie or mislead them.” The guerrillas also considered children as useful informants least suspected by soldiers. Therefore, the battle to control and manipulate the lives of children became highly intense, further exposing children to violence and war and not education. Both guerrillas and Rhodesian Security Forces used intimidatory tactics to force children to be on their side. The tactics used by both groups removed children from schools and brought them to the battle front. Thus, attending school was no longer possible for children.

The terror, brutality and killing of civilians by the Rhodesian army disrupted the African education in many TTLs. The Rhodesian soldiers demonstrated that they were not protecting black civilians, especially in PVs, and placed little value on this matter. On 11 May 1977, 35 civilians, mostly women and children, were killed in cold blood by the Rhodesian Forces. The tragic incident took place at Dabwa Kraal of Ndangwa TTLs, in Chiredzi and 31 people were

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

seriously wounded.¹⁴⁰ Although the RSFs attempted to pass on the blame and accuse the guerrillas of committing the acts of violence, there is overwhelming evidence to prove that the Rhodesians were responsible for the crimes against humanity. They even attempted to hide behind the finger and claimed that, the civilians were “killed in the crossfire.”¹⁴¹ They also argued that the killing of civilians by the security forces was “unfortunate and inevitable in fighting of this nature”.¹⁴² Life in most TTLs became unbearable and robbed the children who were inmates of the opportunity to grow-up in a peaceful environment and enjoy childhood. It became impossible for children to go to school or for meaningful learning to take place in schools located in war zones. Both school children and their teachers were terrified by the war situation. Mano, who was a teacher at Nzvimbo Primary School, in Chiweshe, described the situation as “unbearable as the security forces were targeting and killing anything black that moves.”¹⁴³

The killing and targeting of school children became a common occurrence and this pushed many children out of school. On 18 April three children and a teacher at Kandeya were killed by RSFs.¹⁴⁴ The SFs attempted to cover-up the incident by claiming that the terrorists had rounded-up the pupils at the school and moved them to the centre of the school ground teaching them communist propaganda. They argued that they were attempting to protect them from a communist on-slaught. Jenni Kadenga, Zeketia Zvekure, Raphinos Zariro were killed and

¹⁴⁰ NAZ, CCJP, Rhodesian Propaganda, p.2-5.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Interview with Mr. M. Mano Former Teacher, Nzvimbo, 07-01-14.

¹⁴⁴ NAZ, CCJP, Rhodesian Propaganda. p.2-6

Nyevero Zariro, Grace Zariro, Jane Kujinga and Sara Mutsauri were injured,¹⁴⁵ demonstrating that African children in Rhodesian schools were more vulnerable and exposed to violence than ever before. The children who were massacred were inmates of Kandeya PVs. This shows that children were unprotected in PVs in Rhodesia.

The use of violence on unarmed civilians and defenseless children cannot be justified. It demonstrates the recklessness and brutality of the RSFs. Lieutenant Colonel French of the RSFs, attempted to cover-up the incident by claiming that, “They don’t like to see innocent civilians killed whatever the circumstances.”¹⁴⁶ The RSFs also worsened the situation by failing to show remorse over the incident by claiming that, there was “no alternative but to open fire.”¹⁴⁷ This clearly demonstrates that the legitimization of violence in war zones made life very difficult and it was impossible for children to continue attending school.

The war situation turned schools into battlefields in TTLs where PVs were established. In Madziwa in 1978, five guerrillas were ambushed by SFs who opened fire and the guerrillas did the same near Madzokere School. Within hours helicopters were shelling anything within the vicinity. The school buildings were shelled and children ran in all directions for cover.¹⁴⁸ The incident resulted in many children sustaining injuries physically and psychologically. The violence traumatized children and impacted their lives negatively. The methods adopted in Madziwa by the RSFs to eradicate guerrillas wreaked havoc on the lives of African people in general and children in particular. Villages were burnt, crops were destroyed, the school was

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Interview with, I. Kotwa, Kotwa, Mtoko, Ex-Inmate, 30-01-14.

bombed and buildings destroyed. Nothing was spared or protected and even churches were set alight.¹⁴⁹ This brought fear, trauma and uncertainty in the lives of children. This was confirmed by Chitemo whose leg was amputated after stepping on a landmine. She pointed out that:

My life was turned upside down by the White soldiers. I lost my leg in 1978. I suffered and I am suffering for being black. I was young and I did not know what was happening. All I remember is that I suffered tremendously after I was injured and made useless. I cannot do anything for myself. My life was destroyed. I cannot walk and I am uneducated. The whites should have killed me. My sister was made blind and she died soon after the war.¹⁵⁰

The use of landmines disrupted the education of African children in Rhodesian TTLs. This had terrible effects on innocent children who were victims or witnessed their parents or friends being targeted and victimized. African education came to a standstill in TTLs in areas where PVs were established. All this had long lasting horrible effects on the lives of those who were young, those who needed and required protection.

Conclusion

It has been demonstrated that children faced a number of challenges which were specific to them in PVs. Children lacked the capacity to develop coping strategies to alleviate their plight. Therefore, the history of children in Keeps is a history of suffering and anguish. It is a history of vulnerable children who suffered silently because of the escalation of violence and the militarization of areas where Keeps were established in Southern Rhodesia. The humanitarian

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Interview with N. Chitemo, Victim of landmines, Kotwa, 30-01-14.

dimension of the liberation struggle for Zimbabwe has largely been forgotten historically speaking. Both female and male children faced accommodation problems. Children slept in deplorable conditions and sometimes in the open. The regime never provided any form of accommodation to displaced inmates in most Keeps and in the Zambezi Valley where some structures were provided, they were not habitable. Food problems also made inmates of PVs miserable. Inmates who were children suffered from a number of diseases due to malnutrition, and unhygienic conditions inside PVs. Therefore, life for all inmates and for children in particular, was a nightmare.

CONCLUSION.

The foregoing narrative has demonstrated that Keeps were established by the colonial government in Rhodesia for military reasons. They were designed to isolate the guerrillas and to deny the guerrillas access to information, food, clothes and recruits. Therefore the humanitarian reasons advanced by the government were embedded within colonial discourse meant to disguise the real reasons which led the government to adopt them. The Rhodesian government argued that PVs were established purely to protect the African people from terrorists, but such arguments were meant to mask the true reasons behind their establishment and are not historically valid. The Rhodesian government was not invited by the African people to establish PVs: they were initiated and introduced in an attempt to stop the spread of guerrilla activities and stop the African people from supporting the guerrillas. Therefore, the government introduced Keeps to protect the Rhodesian government and not the people in TTLs. The inmates who were children in PVs also never felt protected inside Protected Villages. To them Protected Villages were “punishment enclosures.”¹⁵¹

The claims by colonial administrators and officials that the people in TTLs invited the government to establish PVs were designed to misled the international community into believing that the Rhodesian government was a benevolent. Myths and official propaganda were manufactured to legitimise the forced removals, destabilization and destruction associated with the establishment of PVs. PVs were not humanitarian centres and the Rhodesian government never wanted them to be humanitarian centres. They were first used in Malaya, Vietnam and in various countries in colonial Africa as a military strategy and not a humanitarian strategy.

¹⁵¹ J. Nhongo-Simbanegavi, For Better, p.14-55.

Therefore, the claim that PVs were established for humanitarian reasons is a weak and porous argument which is based on propaganda and is historically baseless and malicious. The manner in which the African people were forced into PVs without notice, the burning down of houses, the violence and loss of property clearly demonstrates that Keeps were not established to assist the African people but to prolong the life span of the Rhodesian government and destroy the spread of the liberation struggle for Zimbabwe.

The African people and children in PVs had a negative attitude towards Keeps. To them Keeps were, concentration camps, jails, cattle pens, misery centres, rubbish pits and dumping sites where the African people were unprotected. The political surveillance which involved registration of all inmates, the control of every departure and entrance out of or into the Keep and the curfew system made many informants conclude that Keeps were worse than colonial jails. They argued that unlike prisoners who were arrested, tried and convicted if guilty, inmates of Keeps were subjected to harassment, violence or even death at all times in Keeps. Although the majority of informants noted the existence of guerrilla violence and coercion, they maintained that these were not the reasons behind the establishment of Keeps. They argued that the government never wanted to protect them and that they never felt protected inside PVs. The establishment of Keeps was associated with loss of freedom, disruption of communal ties and networks, destruction of property, lack of food, closure of schools, stores, grinding mills and burning down of crops and houses. Regime forces committed various atrocities in the name of suppressing terrorism. According to Mtisi, Nyakudya and Barnes, “These brutalities were a last

gasp measure by the Rhodesian forces in intimidating the rural population to stop assisting the guerrillas, a case of depriving “the fish of the water.”¹⁵²

The establishment of PVs affected the lives of both male and female child inmates in various ways. It has been established that female children faced more numerous problems than their male counterparts. Female children were sexually abused and exploited by both guerrillas, Rhodesian Security Forces and DAs. At times bodies of female inmates were targeted for political expedience and survival. Teenage inmates were also impregnated, infected with STIs and made to suffer. These inmates were dehumanised and humiliated by the unavailability of basic medical provisions such as sanitary pads. The plight of adolescents who had children in Keeps was a nightmare to both the mothers and their children. However, this does not suggest that male children were spared inside the keeps. They also suffered in various ways as they were recruited by the guerrillas to provide information and intelligence to them. All young teenage males were considered as *mujibhas* by Rhodesian Forces and were harassed and tortured.

Children who were in various Keeps across Rhodesia were affected physically, psychologically, emotionally and intellectually, in various ways. Children who were in Keeps were subjected to “High War Zone Stress” as they witnessed various forms of violence all the time. It has also been highlighted that to many survivors of the liberation struggle memories of the war are memories of violence. An interviewee who witnessed violence and quoted by Alexander, McGregor and Ranger testified that:

They didn’t just burn homes but “if you tried to get your property out, they’d take those things from you and put them in the fire; they didn’t just kill suspects. They killed

¹⁵² J.Mtisi, M.Nyakudya and T. Barnes, “War in Rhodesia,1965-1980,”in B. Raftopoulos and A.S.Mlambo, (ed) in Becoming Zimbabwe, Weaver Press, Harare, 2009, p.150.

donkeys, the goats, even the chickens.” Beating to extract information on the whereabouts of guerrillas, or simply on suspicion that a home had hosted guerrillas was common and, again, even extreme. The DSAs were the worst. They beat people to death in public places. Wherever they found a suspect at stores, schools, boreholes-they’d call people to come and watch.¹⁵³

The Rhodesian Forces and the guerrillas conducted deliberate massacres, executions, beatings and torture to eradicate support for their opponents. This left permanent mental scars in child inmates which traumatised them during and after the liberation struggle. The lack of a national programme to rehabilitate and reintegrate children who were inmates in Keeps and who experienced violence affected their lives permanently. I strongly believe that the culture of political violence in Zimbabwe today is a by-product of the past. Sabelo Ndlovu–Gatsheni vividly captures this and argues that:

... Violence has compromised the prospects of building a happy nation. Violence thwarted the chances of building a democratic and human rights sensitive society. Violence has taken the form of a culture rather than being an isolated and episodic phenomenon... it has also been embodied in colonial and nationalist monuments as part of the celebration of heroism and sacrifices ...¹⁵⁴

It has also been demonstrated that Keeps were associated with a humanitarian crisis as many children perished from hunger and starvation. They also perished because of diseases associated with food shortages, such as kwashiorkor and malnutrition. The lack of medical facilities also worsened the plight of inmates and children in Keeps. Food shortages were common as the government destroyed crops and animals of inmates of PVs to prevent the guerrillas from accessing food. Children in PVs were also affected by various diseases such as bilharzia, scabies, malaria and diarrhoea. These water-borne diseases were mostly prevalent

¹⁵³ J. Alexander, J. McGregor and T.Ranger, Violence and Memory, pp. 152-3.

¹⁵⁴ S.J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni, Do Zimbabweans Exist? p. 191.

because of the poor sanitation and overcrowding in Keeps. There were also no toilets and the inmates used open pit latrines thus compounding the health crises.

This thesis gave inmates who were below the age of eighteen years a platform to give their narrative about life in Keeps during the liberation struggle. The lack of a rehabilitation programme for children who needed extensive psychological and practical support had terrible lasting effects on the former inmates. Many informants displayed signs of mental instabilities characterized by distrust, despair, anger, resistance and loneliness, demonstrating that the aftermath of the liberation struggle for Zimbabwe is still haunting them. It needs to be noted that the establishment of PVs transformed, destroyed and disoriented the lives of many inmates especially those who were children. This thesis demonstrated how both colonial and nationalist historiography excluded children who were inmates in PVs. Therefore, the Zimbabwe liberation story has not been fully told without capturing the experiences and plight of child inmates of PVs. Historical writings largely excluded children's lives and history as if they were not found in Keeps.

The manner in which life in Keeps came to an end differed from one child to the other and from one area to the other but the lack of a rehabilitation mechanism in the immediate aftermath of the war was a common feature. From 1977 ZANLA forces mounted attacks on PVs especially in Mrewa, Mtoko and Mount Darwin, boasting that these were meant to "liberate" the inmates from the PVs. In 1978, ZANLA reported that, in their operations in the Takawira Sector and Tete Province, "People in 9 of the 10 PVs in the area were freed when the PVs were destroyed."¹⁵⁵ The guerrillas argued that they wanted to resettle the people in their former homes. At the same

¹⁵⁵ ZANU(PF) Archives, File Operations MMZ(Tete Province) 2 January 1978.

time the Rhodesian troops were intensifying the destruction and bombings in those areas making it impossible for the “liberated” people to return to their former homes. The former inmates ended-up leading nomadic lives and roaming the forests. Life continued to be unbearable and Nhongo-Simbanegavi pointed out that:

...The “liberated” were forced to live just as if they had returned to the Stone Age: with no shelter, no food, no clothes and no blankets. There were no medicines to treat the large numbers who fell ill, and these, under the circumstances, grew daily. The conditions were sub-human... the situation for the “liberated” populations deteriorated, death from malnutrition and under-nourishment occurred at an alarming rate.¹⁵⁶

The liberated inmates who were mostly children, women and old men were not properly reintegrated back into their communities even up to the time of the ceasefire. The “liberated” former inmates lived in caves and this affected them tremendously.¹⁵⁷ For those inmates who remained in the PVs up to the period of the ceasefire and independence, there were also no rehabilitation, reintegration, or reconciliation programmes. The former inmates of PVs simply returned to their former villages to rebuild their homes which had been destroyed by the liberation war.

¹⁵⁶ J. Nhongo- Simbanegavi, *For Better or Worse*, p. 116.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.* See NAZ, Rhodesian Herald, 09-10-77.

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