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Choric Narratives of the Chimurenga: Comrades Chinx's and Manyika's Psalms of the Zimbabwean Third Chimurenga (Land Reform Programme)

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Abstract

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This research analyses selected revolutionary songs by two former guerrillas of Zimbabwe's 1970s struggle for independence in the context of the Third Chimurenga of 2000 and after. These songs are looked at in connection with their multifaceted roles: to celebrate the revolutionary path of ZANU PF; to justify the Land Reform Programme (Third Chimurenga); to scoff at critics of the process of land repossession; to re-orient the youths (born-frees) towards ZANU PF ideology as manifested in the Third Chimurenga and to whip all Zimbabweans in tune with this ideology. The research acknowledges that song can be used as part of propaganda machinery, besides its aesthetic value. The research used content analysis of the selected songs, participant observation of gala and rally performances by Chinx and Manyika, respectively. Attendees of both gala and rally performances were also interviewed. The interviewees lauded the two artists for standing by the party and country in the face of negative publicity from within and outside the borders of Zimbabwe. The paper recognises that singers just like writers, do not operate in a vacuum and so are inexorably found taking a particular political stance. Though as acclaimed mouthpieces of all and sundry, it would be expected that singers take a more objective view of the socio-economic and political or historical dimensions of a country.

Keywords: Chimurenga, Third Chimurenga, Choric Narrative, Pungwe, Gala, Rally

Introduction

This paper analyses selected revolutionary songs by former guerrillas of Zimbabwe's liberation struggle, Comrade Chinx (Dickson Chingaira) and Comrade Eliot Manyika (late Member of Parliament and former Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front [ZANU PF] Political Commissar) in the context of Zimbabwe's land reform programme of 2000 and after. It examines how their selected songs can be viewed as choric narratives or psalms (spiritual praises) of both the process of the Third Chimurenga and its heroic agents. Taking cognisance of the fact that the Third Chimurenga (also known as Fast Track Land Reform) was a highly controversial programme

(Raftopolous, 2009), researchers want to assess why and how Chinx's and Manyika's songs were harnessed in the service of the ZANU PF-led government's propaganda and ideological dissemination. Mangan (in Mackenzie, 1986:115) has observed the symbiotic relationship between propaganda and ideology where "propaganda can be a powerful tool of ideological persuasion propelling man [and woman] into action." This research is interested in the form and content of the resurgent wartime 'hymns' by Zimbabwe's chief liberation 'psalmists'. This research **analyses** two 'compositions', each by Chinx and Manyika. The word 'compositions' has been punctuated because the selected songs are re-appearing, in

a re-mixed form, more than two decades after their first communal performance during the 1970s war of liberation. One wonders why they are being revived in an independent 21st century society at all or whether the circumstances promoting their current singing are similar in any way to those of colonial Zimbabwe, hence the interest in the content and form of the songs.

Theoretical Framework

From time immemorial, music or song discourse has been an integral calculus in the matrix that begets nationhood and political vibrancy. From the Bible, songs were used to psychologically and spiritually gird the various generations of Israel into pugnacious warriors of faith. In fact, the Bible goes to the extent of devoting a whole book to the hymns or songs called Psalms, contributed by “David, Asaph, the sons of Korah, Solomon, Moses, Heman, Ethan, and a handful of anonymous authors” (Maxwell, 2007:665).

If one delves lightly into the life experiences of King David, one would acknowledge how he resorted to psalms during different moments: praise to God’s grandeur; supplication when in dire moments of insecurity; entreating God’s wrath to befall his enemies.

In the African realm, traditional court bards have employed song and poetry to both praise and censure kings and leaders while during the 1960s anti-colonial years, contemporary song and other arts have been used to reaffirm African culture, challenge white domination as well as forge unity and nationalism (Finnegan, 1970). According to Kwaramba (1997), in the African society, song and music help to shape social relationships, act as history reservoirs and a condensed expression of a people’s experience. This research should therefore reflect how Chinx’s and Manyika’s songs and music transmit to the youths and ordinary members of society what exponents of the land reform programme feel, and how much song and music really reveal the true character and ethos of the party. Gwekwerere (2010) who has recently researched on Zimbabwean music has shown how song and music have been used to comment and interrogate political and social

reality, especially from a religious point of view. In addition to religious songs that tamely raise grievances about price rises and shortages, Zimbabweans have been used to song and music that specialise in social protest and commentary such as Thomas Mapfumo’s and Leonard Zhakata’s. The interesting thing is that there have been singers who have both appreciated Zimbabwean history, criticised the status quo and corruption as there have been others such as Chinx and Manyika, who have openly praised the ruling party. All this tends to point to the purposefulness and communicative intentionality of song. While research has covered musicians such as Thomas Mapfumo, Oliver Mtukudzi (Kwaramba, 1997), Leonard Zhakata (Gecau, 2001) and gospel musicians (Gwekwerere, 2010), post independent musicians of the Third Chimurenga have not been analysed. Zindi (2003:6) believes that music, through song’s lyrics, is “the strongest social weapon for fighting any battles” because it is the most “direct” and “influential” form of expression. It would be useful to look at how Chinx and Manyika make use of both direct and subtly influential language in their songs to discuss and constitute the Third Chimurenga. Zindi (2003:6) further claims that music has “retained its basic characteristics of attracting millions of people through its forceful, powerful, sensual and emotional appeal during periods of festivities, war, peace, storm and stress.” During the Third Chimurenga (war for land) the rally and the gala presented themselves as the arenas to discuss and vindicate the stormy question of land repossession basing on the past. However, Taylor (1976) stresses that history cannot be looked at from the perspective of one version of the past. Paradoxically, the Third Chimurenga was so politically embroiled that the intentionality of song and music were called upon to persuasively transmit the argument to both local and international audiences.

Considering the fact that Chinx is a former guerrilla and singer of Zimbabwe’s 1970s liberation force and that Elliot Manyika was not only a ZANU PF Member of Parliament, but the Party’s powerful Political Commissar, their songs and their individual roles can be best understood in a context where there is “... appropriation of expressive forms by the state

and the application by the state...of oral forms to particular purposes” (Furniss and Gunner, 1995:4). This implies that the state and governments appreciate the potency of song and art and may therefore patronise popular singers and encourage patriotic singers in order to positively project their programmes and thus garner support. Furniss and Gunner (1995) have also argued that the state can manipulate song and other oral performances to establish and maintain control over citizens in much the same way citizens can use song to express resistance or to articulate opposing views. Experience in Zimbabwe, Tanzania and elsewhere has shown that African songs are largely spiritual, even those about political resistance (Mlama, 1995; Gwekwerere, 2010). This installation conceives of Zimbabwe’s Chimurenga resistance songs as hymns or psalms principally because of the religious and spiritual impetus behind the said musical pieces. The Zimbabwe liberation struggle of the 1970s, it is acknowledged, was driven by a spiritual energy, hinging on the firm belief that the spirits of the legendary Chaminuka, Nehanda, Kaguvi and Mukwati could help direct and protect the freedom fighters (Bhebe and Ranger,1995).

Even Zimbabwean fiction writers, in their bid to re-vitalise one of the most heart-rending chapters in Zimbabwean history, chronicle how the freedom fighters would sing revolutionary songs during all-night political vigils (pungwes) prior to any political lectures. Glimpses of these chronicles come from Shimmer Chinodya’s *Harvest of Thorns*; Alexander Kanengoni’s *Echoing Silences* and *When the Rain bird cries*; Isheunesu, Valentine Mazorodze’s *Silent Journey from the East*; George Mujajati’s *The Rain of my Blood*, among others.

Justification of Study

Away from fiction, veterans of the 1970s liberation war interviewed by the writers of this paper prior to carrying out the study singled out Chinx and Manyika among the chief musicians during the guerrilla operations. One interviewee, a wizened grey-haired man with a scar on his head he alleged was induced by a shrapnel from a skirmish with the Rhodesian Front soldiers, emotionally stressed that once

Manyika piped a tune, his sonorous voice would send a thrill through the spines of his fellow comrades-in-arms. The effect of this would be to embolden them to fearlessly confront the machinery of the Rhodesian Front. This position suggests that music has both a tranquilising and hypnotic effect. Indeed, what the ‘vakomana’ or ‘boys’ (as the freedom fighters were affectionately called) had to contend with required a high degree of valour and daring, hence the role of Chimurenga songs. Chinx is better known for singing “ *You better carry our message to the Queen, Prince Charlie.../That we are an independent country*” while Great Britain’s Prince Charles was symbolically lowering the Union Jack on Independence Day, 18 April 1980, Harare. The research, however, analyses these songs in a context of their resurgence, revival and remixing twenty years after the Second Chimurenga that brought political independence. The paper analyses the form, content and technique of these songs as performed at recent political rallies and the lately introduced musical galas.

The Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (ZANLA), the military wing for the revolutionary Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU PF) was threatened with total annihilation by the Rhodesian Front. Accordingly, there was need to harness mass nationalism, in keeping with Mao Tse Tung’s communist credo that ‘the people are the sea and the fighters are the fish’. Song discourse thus came in handy to mould a nationalist and patriotic front. At the same time, new recruits had to totally forget about home, to gear themselves towards the risky, brutal and unknown world of war, something achieved through the lyrics of the song “Amai nababa” (Father and Mother).

Amai nababa

Musandicheme

Kana ndafa

Nehondo

Ndini ndakazvida

Kufira Zimbabwe

Pamwe chete

Nevamwe.

Kumbira kuvadzimu

Ufambe zvakakanaka

Kanawapinda musango

Sango rineshumba

(Father and mother

Do not mourn for me

If I die

In the war

I deliberately and willingly decided

To die for Zimbabwe

Together

With others

Beseach the spirit mediums

For a safe journey

When you enter a forest

A forest full of lions).

Alongside the songs to gird the recruits for the risky war, there were also tunes meant to counter the Rhodesian Front's propaganda offensive, as well as those which revered the first secretary of ZANU PF, Robert, G. Mugabe. Of note, the researchers glimpsed a video clip of ZANU PF of 1976 featuring a political conscientisation meeting. The meeting is invigorated by "Beautiful Zimbabwe", a song which ends with a verse that gives reverence to the ZANU PF stalwart:

Long live comrade Mugabe

We shall ever remember

Long live comrade Mugabe!

Within the confines of this struggle were songs which touched on the main thrust of war:

political independence and land. Here, Chinx and Manyika featured. Equally, the quest for a united Africa, an Africa that recognises its unique identity, featured in some of the lyrics of the day.

Prelude to the Third Chimurenga

1979 saw the deliberations to end the liberation war and chart a new destiny for Zimbabwe at the Lancaster House Conference in Britain. This monumental event was immediately followed by elections and the political tide tilted, ushering in a new Zimbabwe with Robert Gabriel Mugabe of ZANU PF as Prime Minister in 1980. One of the most remembered political speeches of recent times is Mugabe's reconciliation speech offered on Independence Day, 18th April 1980, a speech which called for peaceful co-existence between formally belligerent blacks and whites. One thing Mugabe's earlier rule managed to do was to retain most of the land in the hands of the whites. Twenty years later, the defender of peaceful co-existence was fed up with what he termed the Whiteman's ingratitude evident in their refusal to support the active resettlement of landless blacks. Hence, his call for the once-and-for-all-solution to Zimbabwe's land question, the Third Chimurenga land occupations (Mugabe, 2001).

After 1999, the geo-political terrain of Zimbabwe began to experience a new turn. Earlier on, ZANU PF was the unquestioned super house, but the emergence of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) under Morgan Richard Tsvangirai shook the stronghold of ZANU PF, threatening to totally stump off the political baobab of Zimbabwe. According to many political commentators such as Meredith (2008), ZANU PF decided to embark on what is now called the "Third Chimurenga".

A moment of great disquiet to ZANU PF was the rejected Referendum, alongside the 2000 Parliamentary elections where MDC harvested many seats. The ZANU PF veteran himself, confessed during an address to his ardent followers, "Our party should never again be caught unprepared by the political upstarts in our midst" (Mugabe, 2001:72). The ZANU PF

veteran's tone against MDC has had to be echoed by sympathisers of the party. It is in this context that Chinx and Manyika feature prominently. The national broadcasting corporation, on its own side, in-cooperated the voices of the psalmists through radio, television and beaming gala performance. According to Moyse (in Masunungure, 2009:44) the media environment in Zimbabwe during the period of the Third Chimurenga, particularly in the run-up to the 2008 harmonised elections was tilted in favour of ZANU PF which enjoyed " a de-facto monopoly of the airwaves, which ZANU PF relentlessly exploited to malign the political opposition and critics." Political songs, music and jingles took centre stage with Chinx's and Manyika's songs constituting the bulk of the music consistently played over these stations, thereby stimulating the researchers' interest to analyse these songs. One may wonder why Zimbabwe's electronic media has had to be partisan, but Gibbons (1996:11) says: " The mass media are not just neutral observers but are major participants in politics in their own right, locked into competition with other powerful ideological agencies."

Whether the political fabric that Chinx and Manyika seem to be upholding is the best for Zimbabwe and African democratic governance is a question of great debate. For example, the buzz word of ZANU PF's political rhetoric has been 'sovereignty'. To Rousseau (1968) sovereignty cannot be 'transferred' from people to the state; rather the state had to constitute the 'general will'. In Zimbabwe's Third Chimurenga context, one may wonder whether the ZANU PF driven sovereignty thrust constitutes the general will of all Zimbabweans. And song and music, especially by Chinx and Manyika, seemed to repeatedly assault the intellect and emotions of the citizen both at the rally and the gala.

Further dimensions on the contentious plain of the political matrix which Chinx and Manyika vociferously support emanate from critical perspectives on governance by Locke (1988) and Kant (1964). Locke (1988) contends that civil government's mandate is to protect individual rights, including rights to life, liberty, private property, from interference and

potential threat. Here, the tempest-tossed environment of the so-called Hondo Yeminda (land wars) where property rights of certain people, alongside rights to life and liberty were negated, makes the jingles of Chinx (Hondo Yeminda) more of a nihilist call. Kant (1964) for his part, blatantly says there is no justification for an authoritarian state. Thus, the semblance of a reign of terror characteristic of the Third Chimurenga during the period 2000 to 2008 inclines towards what Kant (1964) disparages herein. The research is interested in how Chinx's and Manyika's songs assist in making people, especially Zimbabweans, accept as normal, actions that in other places may be viewed as lawless.

In light of the foregoing stand points, the psalms of Chinx and Manyika beg a deeper analysis on both form and content, to establish whether the two selected Chimurenga psalmists are only bent on propagating ZANU PF ideological ethos.

Methodology

The researchers chose participant and non-participant observation whereby music was analysed both in context of performance and as independent verbal texts. The music gala and political rally provided contexts from within which researchers studied the communicative function of Chinx's and Manyika's music. Through participant observation at such gatherings, researchers would assess the actual performance of song and music with specific attention paid to the non-verbal and paralinguistic behaviour of both musicians. At the music galas, the researchers looked at how Chinx's music helped propagate political messages and ideology. At the political rallies, the researchers sought to establish how liberation war songs by Manyika contributed to the atmosphere and mood there. Researchers also repeatedly played Chinx's and Manyika's songs with the objective of critically analysing the songs. Through content analysis, researchers would be able to assess the music for both content and form. Two long music pieces each by both singers were closely examined.

To balance researchers' subjectivity with an objective view, the researchers went on to interview 5 former liberation war participants and 5 'born-frees' (people born after independence in 1980) each, for both political rallies and music galas, to give a total of 20 interviewees. Convenience sampling was used. From the rally participants, researchers sought their opinions on the relationship of song/music and past and contemporary politics and from gala attendees, their opinions on the place of galas in national politics. The desire to comprehend the intention of the performing singer and the understanding of the attendees necessitated that we analyse both music and performance in the context of its performance.

Content Analysis of "Maruza Imi" and "Hondo Yeminda" in Context of Gala performances.

The music gala is a phenomenon introduced at the turn of the millennium whereby several music groups performed music to thousands of entertainment starved urban dwellers and the youth for free. Chinx was a regular performer at these galas where he appealed to the youths, "born frees" both intellectually and emotionally. Like any nationalist narrative, Chinx's songs have heroes, villains, betrayers and the undecided characters. In both songs, Chinx presents the black Zimbabweans as the protagonists and the whites as the antagonists. In his conception, however, there are black people who still do the dirty work for imperialists, notably characters in opposition parties. In "Maruza Imi" and "Hondo Yeminda" Chinx concretises the ZANU PF belief that the history of Zimbabwe is a history of war and that war in Zimbabwe has always been over land. Both songs by Chinx celebrate, encourage and justify those great wars (*hondo*) while dissuading Africans from collaborating with whites. Zimbabwean war is interpreted as a three-step phenomenon: the First Chimurenga fought by Zimbabwe's ancestral founders, visibly led by Mbuya Nehanda, Kaguvu and others against the pioneers; the Second Chimurenga led by the 20th century nationalists against Ian Smith's regime leading to 1980 independence; and the Third Chimurenga beginning 2000 and spearheaded by former veterans of the Second Chimurenga against

former white farmers and their local and international supporters resulting in the return of the land to its rightful owners.

"Maruza Imi" (You Have Lost) is a mocking song by defiant Zimbabweans addressed to the white coloniser, the 'outsider'. It opens with a declarative statement that sarcastically tells the whites to beware the Zimbabwean people's blazing Chimurenga war which led to their independence. The whites have lost. Originally sung at the height of the then still undetermined 1970s war, the song was a motivational call to freedom fighters and peasants alike, to strengthen themselves and to stick to their resolution of victory at all cost or as Malcolm X would say, by any means necessary. Even before the blacks had won the war, they were already celebrating the defeat of the white men. This was despite the Whiteman's superior war machinery and a formidable air force feared by the Frontline states. But why would, twenty years after independence, Chinx still sing about this war? Though it has been altered, the song's content remains basically the same. It is still political, historical, both nationalistic and Pan-Africanist in nature.

In "Maruza Imi" Chinx *re*-narrates and *re*-chronicles the scramble for Africa and Zimbabwe in particular. The Pan-African stance where the African stands against the European is invoked when the singer laments that colonialists came from as far afield as Britain, America, Canada and France to wrestle the African lands. Chinx shows the unfairness of such an imperialistic move and banks on a people's hatred of being dominated by foreigners. Through resilient self-sacrifice, the Africans fight and win independence against these imperialists but Africans remain economically dependent and sidelined, basically because they don't own much land, hence the need to continue the war cycle. In the song, the material motive for colonisation is seen as poverty and hunger in the West from where "vakatandaniswa nenzara" (where they were chased by hunger and poverty) to seek refuge in productive Africa where, instead, they harass the Africans, in total disregard of God and nature's allocation of different continental spaces. The song emphasises the traditional

binary differences between Africa and the African native on one hand and Europe and the coloniser on the other. Africa is seen as prosperous, rich with excess food as opposed to poor Europe and America. But Chinx fears that despite their education, the Africans have to be reminded that Africa is theirs by birthright and destiny and that therefore, it is natural to call for the exclusion of foreigners more so because these colonisers are morally bankrupt cheats.

Commenting on the duplicity of the European forerunners such as missionaries, concession seekers and adventurers, the song laments how the well-received hunters had betrayed the Africans for their hospitality. In the song's narrative, Selous (Fredrick Courtney) stands as representative of all that is British-colonialist such as lying, chicanery and cheating. Selous, the hunter, had begged for permission from African chiefs to hunt because he was hungry only to prove that his ulterior motive had been to scout the Zimbabwean landscape and spy on behalf of the British South Africa Company (BSAP), hence Chinx's retort: *Vavhimi vavo vanaSelous vaiongorora mugariroka weveZimbabwe nenzira Dzokuzopinda nadzo mangwana hama dzakeka dzaitvera (Their hunters such as Selous scouted and spied on African ways and plotted on the paths to invade the country).*

The song extends the imperialistic treachery by its attempt to contextualise the contemporary contestations over land. How Zimbabweans were cheated of their lands by European front men and heralds is reiterated in the song. The song reminds contemporary Africans of the imperialists' propensity to employ front persons the Africans might not suspect in the same manner their ancestors had not suspected white missionaries and hunters. In the 21st century Zimbabwean discourse, such people are neo-colonial agents, sell-outs and lackeys. Such people call for sanctions and 'destruction of own homesteads'. Despite that chicanery and machinations, the song persists, the imperialists have lost all the wars because the people's war is irresistible, echoed in, "We brought the Union Jack down!" The flag is a synecdoche of British colonial rule and its lowering thus signifies the end of 100 years of domination.

An important technique Chinx utilises on stage is the performative style. Halfway through the song he redirects his address and message to an important target of his song, the youthful members of his audience, who, according to his tone, are wont to be attracted by Western culture and values. The moral of the song is to advise the youths against manipulation by Western imperialists. He sings about how people should resist being used as unwitting agents of imperialism and conduits of Western cultural values including gay and lesbian rights. The song is apparently used to appeal to Zimbabwean conservative culture and morals and to popularise Robert, G. Mugabe's peculiar but unshakeable anti-gay stance. In today's era where minority rights debates are being given audience globally, the Zimbabwean president interprets gay rights as some of the values imperialists want to impose on weaker nations of the South! According to Mugabe, gays are worse than dogs and pigs which can distinguish between male and female. The song picks this up and plays upon the Zimbabwean youths' unclear moral stance to propagate the view that any support for Westerners is synonymous to calling for male-male marriages in Zimbabwe.

All the same, according to the song, these whites have refused to co-exist alongside blacks and their "unrepentant" and selfish manner has been demonstrated in their inflating of the prices of white farms in order to frustrate government's desire to buy land to resettle landless Africans and thereby frustrate the willing-buyer, willing-seller initiative agreed at Lancaster House Conference.

"Hondo Yeminda" which is a sequel to "Maruza Imi" also celebrates war. However, this time the war is more specifically about the land repossessions that started in the year 2000. The process known as the Fast Track Land Reform, Third Chimurenga or jambanja in Zimbabwe was known internationally as Mugabe's ill-advised land invasions. It is believed exponents of the programme were spurred by fear of personal loss and humiliation and also fear of annihilation at the possible loss to the MDC (Masunungure, 2009). There is no gainsaying that there was violence, intimidation and chaos during that period, a period that ushered in the worst

inflation record in the world where prices in shops could be changed three times a day for the few goods available and as a humorist quipped 'people were even employed to change price tags'. A teacher's salary that reflected three trillion Zimbabwean dollars fetched ten South African rand (10ZAR) or US one dollar on the black market. However, it is undeniable that Mugabe's bold move was also a bold righting of a historical imbalance where a minority 4000 whites owned the largest hectareage of prime land while more than eight million Zimbabweans crowded on poor overused lands. While previously most of these Zimbabweans expressed little hunger for land, the problems of ESAP and general unemployment made the appeal for land more real and irresistible. Thus, ZANU PF propaganda for land and its being the basis of the economy fell on a number of ready ears. However, there were still those who expressed reservations on the manner of land acquisition. It was especially for such doubting Thomases that the song's message was targeted.

As a historical narrative "Hondo Yeminda" attempts to lyrically put the land reform programme in Zimbabwe into a proper and sympathetic perspective. Assuming a nationalist, historian and didactic stance Chinx begins by contextualising the land issue. Chinx takes upon himself the task of vindicating the proponents and undertakers of the land reform programme in the context of vilification and demonisation by Britain and her Western allies (Mugabe, 2001; Meredith, 2008). The song is therefore a moral, cultural and political justification of the programme. It describes the war as spontaneous and huge- a people's war about repossession of their ancestral heritage. As a historical chronicler, Chinx once again sings about the need to unwaveringly take a position. The rhetorical question " War has spread wide in Zimbabwe, what shall I do?" is answered by the decision to join on the side of the winning heroic majority. He urges people to consider these land repossessions as a just struggle for what belongs to the people. The song necessarily pleads for people, both in Zimbabwe and internationally, to understand the just cause of these so-called racist land invasions. He goes back in history to demonstrate the white person's cruel and

violent conquest and subduing of the African owners of the land. The song reminds the people of the defiant, never-say-die attitude of the Zimbabwean people. Though the white conquered, they never got the Zimbabwean's full subservience, hence the continuous war dispute over land, reflected in the lyrics:

*Panguva yaana mbuya Nehanda vanamai
naanababa vairobwa Havaiswera vose
vaivhimwa Vakomana navasikana vaitsvakwa
Nepamusana pekuti varamba kudzvanyirirwa
Nepamusana pekuti varamba kudzvanyirirwa
Panguva yacho hondo yanga yatandavara
serunyemba.(Even in the times of Nehanda's
uprising, Mother and Father were beaten.
They could not spent time together because they
were hunted like animals. Boys and girls were
being sought. Simply because they have resisted
oppression. Simply because they have refused
British rule In those years war had spread
countrywide).*

The juxtaposition of the 1896 First Chimurenga uprising, the 1970s national liberation war (Second Chimurenga) and the 2000 and after 'land wars'(Third Chimurenga) puts them into both a narrative and historical continuum. This cross examination of the three Chimurenga dispensations in the song is necessary in the crusade of opening the eyes and minds of the young, the so-called 'born-frees' who might not have understood the violence on the former white farmers. The song presents the Zimbabwean people as prey to the colonialists' predatory 'hunter' instincts and therefore Zimbabwean people's behaviour today should be understood as not simply retribution but justice.

The song shows how the blacks heroically reject the vulnerability tag. They defy and rebel. Through hyperbole, the song says the war had entrenched its budding shoots and spread across the land defiantly like a creeping bean plant. In the Shona tradition, an African bean's spreading shoots is an expression of defiant colonisation of space and an expression to say that "I am here to stay." The song further expresses and reinforces the brave response of the Zimbabweans to the claustrophobic and suffocating colonial environment that had made normal socialisation of children impossible and

unlawful. *Our ancestors fought and our parents liberated us and what should we do? Return to thralldom?* By analogy and justification the hardships suffered then and the contemporary hardships are no different. Such suppression and oppression could only be broken by organisation, resilience and fortitude. The colonial institution was so life-denying, painfully segregatory and inhibiting that the oppressed black had to put aside their differences, sit down, plan and execute war. For instance, the song says, it was a crime for a Zimbabwean to wear a watch, tie, walk on the pavement or express excitement. So, it was against this racist, oppressive institution that the first and second generation fighters had stood up for ordinary Zimbabweans to enjoy independence. *These are the people*, the song says, *who do not want to share the Zimbabwean riches available in the soil together with original sons of the soil. These are the people who are being asked, during this new phase of the war, to let Africans come and stay alongside them but respond with a call for sanctions, demonisation and isolation of our nation and head of state.*

Like in “Maruza Imi”, half-way through the agitative song, Chinx turns his attention to the youths and performatively addresses them. His tone and vocalics take a dramatic turn. He begins in a conciliatory, motivating and didactic tone by suggesting that because they did not experience the war of liberation, their behaviour is understandable but they still need to be educated on Zimbabwean history and experience of colonialism and exploitation by the West. He challenges the youths to answer the question, “If you, our children, call yourselves ‘born-frees’ what ‘born-types’ are we, and how should we feel when what we fought for is being threatened?” Through a manipulation of vocalics, tone, poise, inflection and movement on the stage, Chinx manages to catch the attention of the jumping, swearing, yelling and fist-punching gala attendees. He goes on to endear himself with the audience through code-switching and code-mixing while addressing the youths at the galas. In this position, he leads the listeners along a Pan-African and anti-neo-colonial diatribe stretch. Taking an essentialist Pan-African posture, Chinx draws a line between Africans and

whites, patriotic Africans and sell-outs. He looks at all Europeans as enemies or “devils” who can never love a black person but are only interested in exploitation of Zimbabwe/Africa’s resources. He advises the youths to stop playing with the treacherous, evildoers who would do everything to trick the youths into betraying their nations. In that case, the song is ideologically imbued in the ‘them’ and ‘us’ binariness which will be very unforgiving for any one of the ‘us’ fraternising with the ‘them’ imaged as Satan of the ‘barbed wire’ tail.

Content analysis of “Mbiri yechigandanga” and “Sorry yaya ya” in the context of rally performances

Post colonial ZANU PF’s political mass mobilisation and ideological orientation has largely centred upon the ‘rally’. The rally is whereby multitudes are gathered, whether voluntarily or by subtle coercion, to be addressed by key political figures campaigning for votes. Just as was the case during the 1970s wartime pungwe meetings, song discourse prepares the required mood and tone, while at the same time also coming in as a clincher to hammer home the propagated ‘gospel’.

In respect to the Third Chimurenga dispensation, Eliot Manyika’s psalms stand out among various choric narratives that have tried to ‘whip’ everyone in tune with ZANU PF’s ideological thrust. In this part, two songs performed by Manyika during rallies in Gokwe and Bindura during the run-up to the 2000 and 2002 Parliamentary and Presidential elections, respectively, have been analysed. These are: “Mbiri yechigandanga” and “Sorry yaya ya” respectively, though other attendant pieces have had their lines referred to here and there, notably: “Nora”; “Sheera”; “Musha une mabhunu”; “Mudzimu”. “Mbiri yechigandanga”, as a title can be transcribed thus: “mbiri” translates to “renowned for” or “popularity for”, “ye” is a prefix for “of” while “chigandanga” translates loosely to “the guerrilla tactics of chimurenga war” or revolution. Accordingly, the title affirms ZANU PF’s outspoken and unveiled pride in their violent revolutionary ethos. The song starts from the Party level:

ZANU PF (*chimes Manyika*)

Mbiri yechigandanga ndombiri yatinayo (notoriety for war is what marks us, the backing vocals come in)

Muno muZimbabwe (Here in Zimbabwe)

Muno muAfrica (Here in Africa)

Muno muSADC (Here in SADC)

Muno munyika yose (here in the entire world).

Accordingly, therefore, Manyika extols the revolutionary tincture of ZANU PF as a perfect model and exemplar globally. From party level, Manyika focuses upon the First Secretary and Party stalwart, Robert Gabriel Mugabe as a key revolutionary figure not only in Zimbabwe or in Africa, but in the entire world. Such then is the grandeur of the party leader that all and sundry whose souls are soaked by the sonorous baritone of Manyika find themselves ‘enchanted’, if not hypnotised by the magnitude of ‘Cde’ Mugabe’s revolutionary credentials.

Since revolution is by nature violent, critics of ZANU PF have bemoaned Manyika’s song (*Mbiri yechigandanga*) as a blatant acknowledgement of the party’s violent disposition. This lamentation has even reached the pitch of a dirge considering songs like “Nora”, “Sheera Mabhuzu mana” and “Musha Une mabhunu”, all of which suggest that ZANU PF does not condone “sell-outs”, whom they, as a revolutionary party, would ‘bomb’ and kill them, as echoed in “tibhombe” (so that we bomb them) in “Musha une mabhunu” (A homestead hosting Whites/Boers).

To make the choric narrative very appealing, the jingles, the guitar, the drum, as well as the dance style, usually the kongonya dance akin to that of 1970s pungwe nights, are infused. This appeals to the youth, most of whom have joined the crusade to popularise both ZANU PF and its political guru. At the same time, song is precluded by chants of slogans “Viva ZANU PF, Viva!” intoned by the ecstatic rally attendees. Accordingly, an atmosphere pregnant with anticipation is created, soon to be heightened by the song performance.

“Sorry yaya ya”, a song that filled the airwaves during the early 2000s first phase of the Third Chimurenga was also belted out at rallies. The song goes thus:

Sorry yaya ya sorry (backing vocals)

Mabhunu (Manyika)

Sorry yaya ya sorry (backing vocals)

Maruza

(Very sorry to you white imperialists

for you have lost the war)

The song categorically and mockingly expounds the land ‘grabbing’ or ‘re-acquisition’ characteristic of the land war (*Hondo yeminda*) popularised by Chinx. At the same time, it scoffs at Tony Blair (British Prime Minister then) and the entire Western community before it zeros upon opposition leader Morgan (Morgan Tsvangirai), all of whom Manyika says have lost on land (*minda*), mines (*migodhi*) and votes (*pavhoti*).

Contextualised within the confines of the *jambanja* or *hondo yeminda* (land war) period, “Sorry yaya ya” by Manyika epitomises the tone of Chinx’s “Maruza Imi”. In either case, both artists take the mould of nationalists whose supreme agenda is to help prop the battered and bruised image of ZANU PF, amid the escalating siege from a host of enemies, both within and outside Zimbabwe. The spirit of resilience, fortitude and tenacity akin to the 1970s war period is revitalised at rally points by the Chimurenga psalmist.

One is left to question why Manyika for his part, takes a lofty tone in praise of the Chimurenga victory as he intones in “Sorry yaya ya.” One equally marvels at the apparent bold affirmation of ZANU PF’s revolutionary credo as enshrined in “*Mbiri yechigandanga*” as if meant to scoff at the opponents and critics of ZANU. Indeed, this position of a firm undaunted stance that is anti-West has tolled at every other political rally of ZANU PF. The same spirit oozes from the collection of speeches that characterise the inception of the Third Chimurenga chronicled in *Inside the*

Third Chimurenga (2001) by the ZANU PF 'demi-god' as some have come to regard Mugabe.

In echo to the spiritual tinge of the Chimurenga, "Mudzimu woye" appeals to the spirits of Chaminuka and the departed heroes to intercede on behalf of ZANU PF. This psalm, belted out at rallies of the early 2000s brings back memories of the spiritual impetus of the Chimurenga. The artiste's sombre voice, his gesticulations, alongside his contorted face which gazes in space, apparently beseeching those in the heavens, enthral the audience, leaving them spellbound with a sense of the ever present glare of guardian spirits (midzimu) of the land of Zimbabwe.

Having psyched his audience, Manyika then takes his hero and political icon to even higher pedestal than the mortal plane when he calls "VaMugabe mudzimu wedu" where now the ZANU PF foremost figure is thrust to the dimension of a national spiritual leader and ancestor. This technique, though hyperbolic, has the effect of deifying the ZANU PF leader as 'the' leader par excellence. In fact, the run up to the December 2011 ZANU PF national congress has seen many rallies unanimously declaring that the guru (Cde RG Mugabe) is the undisputed candidate for the proposed 2012 elections. Such is the position of the ZANU PF chief that leaves one marvelling at how he has been able to retain that pole position as the party's true revolutionary leader.

Discussion

One striking characteristic of Chinx's and Manyika's songs is that they are reinvented versions of the old communally owned war songs. In that latter sense they belong to the oral art genre, which critics such as Finnegan (1970), Kabira (1992) and others have seen as mouthpieces of the powerful. Africa's experience of anti-colonial struggles has shown that contending sides have relied heavily on song to mobilise support and castigate opponents. According to Mluma (1995:23) oral art which includes song, poetry and dance "may exhort people to demonstrate strength, courage, and prowess and yet lull others into humility and silence before dominant powers." In the

context of the 21st century government spearheaded Third Chimurenga, the old songs now appear expertly remixed and sung to the accompaniment of modern guitar, drum and piano. They are technologically engineered, produced and found in today's sophisticated compact disc, CD-ROM, video and DVD and others. In such ubiquitous forms, these choric narratives and psalms of the Third Chimurenga are useful in mobilising a nationalist feeling, thinking and mood toward that government programme, especially among the youths who did not experience the liberation struggle. Song is thereby used as a cultural propagandist weapon to counter Western disseminated views about a sovereign state's policies by vesting in the heroes of the Third Chimurenga the defence of their ancestral heritage, the land.

This research contends that the dominant purpose of Chinx's and Manyika's songs has been to celebrate Zimbabwe's revolutionary history, her heroic people and mighty leaders. This has however, been through an exclusionist embracing of one party, ZANU PF, and a pooh-poohing of other parties, particularly the MDC, censured for courting foreign support. At the height of the Third Chimurenga, Mugabe said, "Zimbabwe needs ZANU PF and not sponsored and unprincipled and counter-revolutionary political parties. *Zimbabwe ndeyeropa. Sibokumbula igazi lama qawe*" (Zimbabwe was won through bloody war, the precious blood of our remembered heroes) (Mugabe, 2001:81) Following this stance, therefore, Chinx and Manyika recite, vindicate and glorify this history of defiance, resilience and revolution. Chinx and Manyika stand as vigorous party chanters and chroniclers and are very useful in the process of narrating the birth of the nation as a feat accomplished by the ZANU PF party and therefore a heritage that party will forever defend. In their songs, the nation is imaginatively moulded as one with identifiable heroes, makers and detractors. The songs present Chaminuka, Nehanda and Kaguvi as the ancient heroes and founders of the nation, now spiritual ancestors, and Mugabe as the divinely ordained new ancestor and courageous defender of the nation. For instance, the song "Mudzimu Woye" mournfully pleads with ancestral spirits, Chaminuka and Nehanda, to guide and bless

the living, especially Mugabe so that he wins elections and rule uninterrupted. Both singers, therefore, complement each other in a hero-worshipping bordering on cultism reminiscent of the Messiah mentality that obtains in some Pentecostal churches or that which threatens a repeat of what happened in Zaire under Mobuto Sese Seko.

On the other hand, the songs present Zimbabwe's enemies as both foreign and local. While Britain, the former coloniser, and her Western allies are the major opponents of the Third Chimurenga, they work with local stooges to frustrate ZANU PF-led government policies. Mugabe complains that "our enemies and their local lackeys are hard at work, employing every trick in and out of the book to defeat and reverse land reform by ousting ZANU PF from power" (Mugabe, 2001:103). Tsvangirai and his MDC party are therefore projected as anti-people in that they oppose ZANU PF, a party that is currently involved in righting a historical land injustice under the auspices of the spiritual leaders of the nation. However, Meredith (2008:191) views the Third Chimurenga as a campaign to win the Presidential elections of 2000 under "the pretext that the revolution was under threat from an array of forces" and that the MDC was a manifestation of "the resurgence of white power". Chinx's and Manyika's song and music, by praising the people's heroic role, their strength and their leaders' heroic martyrdom were, therefore, means of providing acceptable discourse for the land reform programme to all Zimbabweans.

The gala and the rally

The gala and the rally in 21st century Zimbabwe act like Summerfied's music hall in 19th century jingoist England, being 'founts of patriotism'. Zimbabwe's gala and rally have an equally intoxicating force like England's music hall, a:

potent educator transmitting this mob
passion throughout the country by way of
the artist who conveys by song or recitation
of crude notions upon morals and

politics, appealing by course
humour exaggerated pathos to the
animal lusts of an audience stimulated
by alcohol into appreciative hilarity
(in Mackenzie, 1986:17).

The researchers attended gala sessions and political rallies between 2000 and 2007. In Zimbabwe, galas were introduced to complement political rallies at the turn of the century when the then Minister of Information and Publicity, Professor Jonathan Moyo embarked on an indigenous, cultural crusade, passing a number of laws in his ministry. His vision was to counter the dissemination of Western cultural values spread through Western media. He also felt current Zimbabwe Broadcasting content was biased toward westernisation hence introduced what was known as 75% local content programming on national broadcasting stations. This saw the emergence of a number of local music groups and the emergence of computer assisted musicians known as 'urban groovers' consisting mostly the born-free component. For these so many emerging groups to get more airplay, they had to play revolutionary songs. On the other hand, the ordinary person was entertainment-starved, not affording to buy any CD nor attend any music show because the times were hard. The Ministry of Information and Publicity 'solved the problem' through the introduction of various gala sessions.

Whereas political rallies were not apologetic about their political propagandist motive, even though they also relied heavily on modern guitar music to support oral performance and sloganeering, the gala acted in a more subtle manner. The gala music sessions were held as part of commemorations of national holidays such as Heroes' Day gala, Independence Day gala, Unity Day gala, Mzee (Simon Muzenda) Bira, Mdhala Wethu (Joshua Nkomo) gala and many others. On such occasions, the Ministry invited several music groups, traditional choirs/groups and sometimes, music bands from 'friendly' countries to perform throughout the night in something reminiscent of the Second Chimurenga war punghwes (political

meetings/rallies). The galas were held in provincial sports stadia and people attended free of charge. The result was to have so many people at the same venue in a spirit of apparent unity and oneness of purpose regarding the nationally and culturally significant commemoration that marked Zimbabwean history of nationalism. The shows were broadcast live on national television and radio throughout the night, thus making the whole nation, who had only one television station, a captive audience like one at a rally. It was observed that Chinx was usually given the opportunity to perform on stage around 9 pm, a time when most people had either entered the stadium or, if at home, were still actively watching television in their sitting rooms. Chinx had before him, therefore, music-excited attendees whom he could politically influence through song, music and dance just as Manyika and his band would politically entertain the rally goers between bouts of political speeches.

The galas and rallies proved Chinx and Manyika as established musicians who know how to mix instruments and political lyrics and have commanding performance. The most appealing of their techniques, particularly Chinx's, is the infectious gyrating kongonya dance, imitated by most attendees. This dance, kongonya, is a popular wartime dance that uses generous shaking of the waist and buttocks as defiance to colonial administrators' suppression of the so-called licentious African dances.

As for Chinx, halfway through each song, he comes forward to the edge of the stage so that he stands directly before and above the audience. In the home TV, Chinx looms large before the viewers whom he also directly and simultaneously lectures and chides in his songs. He wears a sombre, grave face and assumes a parental conversational attitude. Most youthful gala attendees acknowledge that apart from their entertainment value, being well arranged with moderate guitar beats, drum and fusing piano sounds, Chinx's lyrics are politically instructive. The songs bring to the audience, in a close and memorable style, the heroic history and experience of the people of Zimbabwe not found in the history textbooks. One female gala attendee acknowledged, " Truly, here is a revolutionary, a fighter we have known ever

since, teaching us in a manner our teachers have been hesitant or afraid to. He teaches us that foreigners are no good and can never really be trusted, especially from imperialist nations like Britain."

Another kongonya-fond dancing member expressed his appreciation of Chinx's educating performance thus: "This is music about our heritage and culture and Zimbabwe has a revolutionary and spiritual heritage. Who does not want a piece of land in his own country? Who wants gays and sell-outs to tell us how to rule ourselves?"

At the rally Manyika has the advantage of a powerful public address system and amplifiers. He also comes down from the podium to mingle with the kongonya dancing party supporters thronging the rally venue. An interviewee said " Because of the noise, song and dance that come with Manyika's "Nora" and "Mbiri yechigandanga", songs which compel even the Honourable vice-president to sing and dance, everyone finds him or herself being part and parcel of emotional singing." A rally attendee from Gokwe district, who claimed to have once operated with Manyika said " *Muchinda uyu haana kuchipa...Paarova Nora, ndabva ndaona tiri musango...*", translating to " This guy is a professional..When he sang 'Nora', I began to feel as if we were back in the bush, fighting...". These excerpts reflect that the interviewees were not only entertained and impressed, but were spiritually transported to the heat of the war, thus made to empathise with Manyika's and Chinx's call for 'patriotism'.

Conclusion

Chinx and Manyika are second generation participants of the 1970s Chimurenga war who have looked back to that specific war and even beyond to the 1896 First Chimurenga for inspiration in their desire to explain the meaning of the on-going Third Chimurenga to the modern-day young people of Zimbabwe. In that mission, they necessarily use the song form to justify Zimbabwe's belated fast track land redistribution and explain that the hardships Zimbabweans face under sanction- induced

shortages today are no different from the colonial hardships.

Overall, Chinx's and Manyika's songs have impressed interviewees for their foregrounding and commemoration of Zimbabwe's revolutionary history. Both singers have used song to propagate cultural nationalism, to inspire revolutionary patriotism, to scrounge support for the party and, above all, to vindicate an otherwise internationally vilified government's land reform programme. Chinx was particularly commended by interviewees for his appreciation of the hybrid nature of the 'born-frees', seen in his mixing of the English and Shona codes, each representing diametrically opposing contexts though the question still remains how best to reconcile the two. For instance, how can you make one who was not around during the war believed? And is it a crime to have a cynical and apathetic attitude towards the struggle which one never experienced and whose grand benefits have always eluded one, especially in inflation ravaged environment where the ordinary majority are suffering while the elite party members are benefiting? All songs appear as mixtures of lamentation, incantation, exhortation and celebration as singers attempt to find the best voice and words to hammer their revolutionary, anti-colonial gospel. While Chinx takes the stance of a proselyte in his denouncement of Western values in order to woo youngsters to the party, the too-bellicose Manyika seeks ancestral spirit inspiration in order to violently exorcise the home, country and person of any 'anti-people' ingredient. Manyika's songs openly call for bloodshed, even that of fellow wayward countrymen while Chinx's songs desire re-education, especially of the youth.

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