

media may not be necessary, however. As the Mazda advertisement in *Paratus*, the SADF sponsored journal, states:

Mazda is not alone. *Paratus* is not alone. The media have been captured through advertising interests. The images of militarism in the media are indicative of the alliance between the military and monopoly capitalism.

The 'total strategy' has unveiled the mask which blames apartheid on Afrikaners and not capitalism. The rule of capital depends on stability and limited reform. The military is a prime agent of that reform: it not only protects capital but aims to shape an ideologically conducive environment for a class alliance which would sanction that reform. □

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am indebted to Don Pinnock for his critical comments on an earlier draft of this paper.

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5. These books have been disseminated worldwide by paperback publishers. The films are mentioned here because, although not produced by South African companies, they were partially financed by South African capital and used South African locations, Defence Force personnel and equipment.
6. *Rand Daily Mail*, 20 September 1979.
7. *Sunday Express*, 30 March 1980.

by C.M. BRAND.

"THEY AREN'T READY FOR IT"

(Edited from a talk given to the Association for Sociology in Southern Africa, Hammanskraal, 1983).

My starting point is the great dread of whites before independence of Zimbabwe crumbling into ruins "like other African countries": of milk no longer being delivered, of telephones ceasing to work, of having to queue for everything . . . etc.

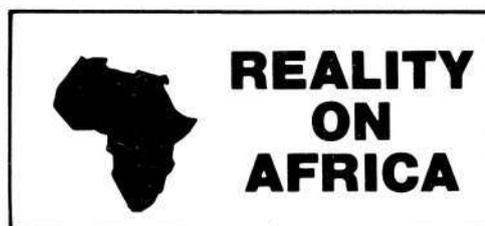
There is in fact more queueing in Zimbabwe now than before; and the telephone system is less efficient. In investigating the causes of this inefficiency, I want to focus particularly on manpower shortages (the so-called "skills crisis") and to a lesser extent on shortages of goods and equipment. I intend to suggest that the 'skills crisis' is partly the result of a self-fulfilling prophecy dating back to before independence.

MANPOWER DEMAND

Shortages — even of manpower — usually have their origins in changes in both demand and supply. Independence often brings with it a phenomenal increase in the demand for services (and hence for personnel) and for certain goods. In part the reason is demographic: the sheer number of people who previously had no, or very limited, access to these services and goods, and are now in a position to avail themselves of them.

The removal of past discrimination improves access for the less privileged (even if grave inequities remain). Attempts at integration often show up how grossly unequal the previously separate facilities were, and how great the financial cost is of bringing them on to a par with each other, since the pressure is usually to 'equalise up'. However, the opening of previously segregated facilities often means that they become severely crowded. In hospitals and public offices, for instance, queueing becomes the order of the day, since everyone prefers the better, formerly

segregated facilities, and staff and equipment are hard-pressed to cope. This is nothing new for blacks who have generally been accustomed to queueing at overcrowded and understaffed establishments. But whites, who previously



had more-or-less exclusive use of the best facilities, stand aghast! They attempt to create new expensive private facilities, which run counter to the government's wish to advance socialism. There are other reasons too for an increased 'popular' use of services and facilities. One is that the institution of certain free services leads to an explosion of demand which was not entirely foreseen. This has happened in health and educational services. The systems can hardly cope. In just over three years total school enrolment in Zimbabwe increased more than three-fold, from just over 800,000 to 2½ million. Pharmaceutical firms are not geared to provide for the increased demand for drugs. Facilities are hopelessly inadequate and shortages occur. Appropriations for departments or contingencies prove inadequate, and often cumulative cost-implications are not foreseen.

When the government over-commits itself, however, it is usually not staff who are cut (since with the pressures for employment this might have undesirable political implications) but allocations for goods and equipment. The increased staff find themselves without the necessary

means to do their job, and the result is often frustration. Just after the 'Year of the Disabled', for instance, hospitals do not have funds to provide crutches for everyone who needs them, let alone wheel-chairs. (And the IMF has dictated that government expenditure must be cut to reduce the budget deficit.)

INCOMES

Increased incomes of the lowest-paid workers — due to the establishment of minimum wages — also increase popular demands, and larger numbers of people moving into the middle-class bracket mean that consumption patterns change and that more can afford services for which a fee is charged. In food, the consumption of bread (which in replacing traditional diets has questionable health benefits) and milk (undeniably beneficial) increases rapidly, often outstripping available local supply. Precious foreign currency has to be diverted to import additional wheat, for example, even while plenty of maize is available. (The government engages in barter deals through the UN World Food Programme).

'Conscientization' and communication also stimulate demand. Government claims, promises, and information, made and given to increase its legitimacy, make people more aware of what is, or should be, available, and encourage them to claim it.

MOBILITY

Increased mobility, both vertical and horizontal, also increases demand, for black skills especially. Africanisation and 'affirmative action' — to redress some of the inequities resulting from past policies — require more trained blacks, and more blacks with advanced skills and experience. These are in short supply. Often candidates are drawn from sectors in which there is a larger pool of high skills — for instance teaching — thus aggravating the position in such sectors which are themselves expanding. 'Peter is robbed to pay Paul' in manpower terms.

The rapid resignation of whites calls for more blacks to fill their positions; and the lure of the private sector, which offers greater benefits and higher salaries, creates problems in the public sector. (The Chief Industrial Relations Officer and Registrar of Trade Unions — a key figure in the implementation of new government policies, and a respected nationalist-out-of-exile with a salary of possibly \$18,000 to \$19,000 p.a. — is recruited as a personnel manager by a mining company having difficulty in negotiations with the government over retrenchment of workers, at a salary of something like \$25,000 p.a. and a house and a car).

The commitment of the government to the transformation of society also creates demand for personnel. New policies spawn new government programmes, which create new departments, which need new staff. The drive for Co-operation calls immediately for 50 Cooperative Development Officers with supporting staff . . . again intentions and promises create demands.

MANPOWER SUPPLY

The links of problems of demand with problems of supply should already be evident. It must be noted that general shortages of skills date back to well before independence. Surveys in the seventies indicated shortages (of both blacks and whites) in many professional and technical categories. These had their origins in two inter-related factors; first, discrimination, with effective restrictions on the recruitment of blacks into certain ranks or positions (for instance

apprenticeships) and second, a reliance on ready-made and cheap skills-from-abroad, in the form of white immigrant artisans.

The lack of blacks in certain fields was sometimes due to security or political considerations (no policemen, district administrators, army officers etc. above a certain rank) and often also due to prejudice. Whites often believed that blacks couldn't do certain jobs ('they can pass the theoretical exam, but give them a screwdriver and tell them to fix that thing and they won't know what to do') and refused to appoint them, or accept them, as colleagues, or have them promoted, because 'they won't be able to cope'. Sometimes this was also conditioned by an unwillingness to associate on an equal basis or share facilities (toilets!) with blacks. This led to the relative or sometimes absolute exclusion of blacks from certain jobs or skill-levels. The consequence was that at independence when there was an immediate demand for many skilled and experienced blacks, there was a severe shortage in many areas — telephone technicians, motor mechanics, fitters and turners, etc. The first black magistrate in the country was not appointed until shortly before independence.

FOUR STEPS

Four kinds of steps were taken to alleviate the situation. The first was the appointment of foreign-trained Zimbabweans returning from exile. (There were substantially more Zimbabweans who had graduated abroad — perhaps more than 6,000 — than had graduated from the local university — somewhat over 2,000). Second was the rapid promotion of local blacks, sometimes "over the heads" of their former white seniors or superiors. (Within a few years a sergeant rose to the position of Commissioner of Police.) The Ministry of Manpower Planning and Development, apart from launching a major manpower survey to verify what the skills situation looked like, also launched a skills upgrading exercise to register those — after trade tests if necessary — who had acquired the necessary proficiency through experience. The third step was the launching of various crash training programmes, some full-time, such as for magistrates, and some mainly in-service, like the ZINTEC teacher education programme. Where all three of these steps proved inadequate to fill all the gaps, the government resorted to the recruitment of expatriates, such as teachers from Britain, Canada, Mauritius and Australia, railway technicians from India, engineers from Britain, and so on.

WHITE REACTION

Whites reacted to all these developments in different ways but principally by withdrawal — into the familiar networks of white colleagues; into the private (from the public) sector, where they are in greater demand, feel more secure, and have better promotion prospects, or into foreign parts by emigrating. The greater the number of whites who left a specific situation (because they were unwilling to work under blacks, or to be superseded, because they felt socially uncomfortable, or because they foresaw "chaos" or a "decline in standards") the more pressure there was on those who stayed, especially the whites. There was psychological pressure in the fear of being "swamped" but also pressure of work because of rising demands and understaffing. Often most of the remaining few whites also decide to "throw in the towel" and leave. Sometimes blacks also leave into the private sector because of the increased pressures. Thus from a surplus of black nurses there is now a shortage in government hospitals, but nursing agencies are booming. So instead of a progressive

socialisation of certain work spheres, private capitalist-backed initiatives flourish, contrary to the government's intention. The measures outlined have made a considerable reduction in the skills shortage and will in time probably solve the problem in large measure, in combination with the regular training programmes already undertaken in tertiary and other institutions. The problems are therefore largely the problems of transition. Nonetheless they are real. And the short term measures themselves (and the reactions of whites) create a further series of political, technical, professional and social problems which I can only illustrate selectively with a few examples.

GROUPS

The strategies outlined create four groups in public employment: local blacks of long standing, local whites of long standing, blacks returned from exile, and expatriate professionals. Politically there is, of course, the hangover and mistrust between whites on the one hand and blacks on the other, deriving from the past and the war in particular. Immediately after independence one found in fact two networks in each government ministry which hardly overlapped. One consisted of the "old" whites who continued operating largely as before, and the other of the "new" blacks who were eager to institute changes but first had to get acquainted with the machinery and gain experience. Decision-making power in the end lay largely with the latter; and this made the whites, who often did not know what was going on, feel that they were superfluous and working in a vacuum. It encouraged them to leave the service.

But there were also underlying tensions between, on the one hand, the former exiles, some of whom went into the top jobs after absences from the country of fifteen years or more, and, on the other, the blacks who had remained behind. The former were often more closely linked with the

party leadership, and felt that their ideology was correct, suspecting the latter of having collaborated with the old (white) regime and having "sold out" rather than supported the liberation struggle. Those who had remained behind again felt that they had borne the brunt of the suffering while others had "run away" to study or live in comfort in foreign cities.

ADJUSTMENT

Socially all these groups had to get to know and accept one another. Many expatriates in particular take a long time to adjust to African conditions, and a few just leave after a few weeks. With both former exiles and expatriates the problem arises of the recognition of foreign qualifications. "British" standards are still largely required in Zimbabwe. With practitioners trained according to varying standards in highly diverse systems from East to West and South, professional acceptance and recognition pose major problems. Local practitioners and their professional associations often look down their noses at these Pakistani/Bulgarian/etc./etc./trained . . . , and are reluctant to cooperate in helping them to adjust, or if necessary in upgrading their training. The former exiles and expatriates often feel snubbed.

Although Zimbabwe has generally coped fairly well despite these problems, there is no question that efficiency has suffered to some degree in some spheres, because of manpower (and equipment) shortages created by increased demand in the face of reduced or changed supply of skills.

Other factors not discussed here also affect efficiency; but I have mainly tried to show how the assumption of many whites before independence that "blacks can't do it" had contributed to the skills shortage at independence. The inability of whites to adjust to the situation aggravated the problem and affected efficiency, enabling them to turn round at the end with the self-fulfilled prophecy: "I told you so: they can't do it." □

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