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The 1987 Zimbabwe National Unity Accord and its Aftermath: A Case of Peace without Reconciliation?

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Introduction

When Zimbabwe attained independence in 1980, socialism was dominant in the Third World and the ruling party embraced this doctrine as its governmental ideology. Socialism was viewed as the most appropriate method for achieving socio-economic equity, justice and prosperity. The recently ended war had caused massive destruction of infrastructure and the population had swelled beyond the capacity of the existing facilities. In the aftermath of the struggle for independence, the government had to move fast in dealing with the popular demands that informed the struggle. Anyang' Nyong'o (1987:18) aptly noted that:

It was observed that the appropriate response to popular demands was developed; that development could be planned for; that planning essentially involved the optimum utilisation of available domestic and foreign resources to achieve certain growth targets; and that for the majority of popular masses to benefit, these growth targets had to be in the rural areas, hence rural development.

All sections of society were to contribute to development under the tutelage of the socialist state. The immediate post-colonial era witnessed phenomenal growth. Many schools, clinics, veterinary and crop marketing facilities were constructed, uplifting the standard of living of the general populace. However, in the political arena, the dispensation that emerged had no room for diversity. Zeleza (1997:412-13) observed that: