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**DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY AND INTERNATIONAL
STUDIES**

**THE POLITICS OF THE WORK PLACE: A HISTORY OF LABOUR
UNIONISATION IN ZIMBABWE'S RAILWAY SECTOR, 1980-2017**

By

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Honours Degree in History and International Studies**

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DECLARATION

I, Faustina Nyakurwa, hereby declare that this research is my own work except where sources have been acknowledged .The work has never been submitted, nor will it ever be submitted to another University or college for the awarding of a degree.

Signed.....

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DEDICATION

This piece of work is dedicated to my Mom and Dad, and siblings. I would like to say, thank you for the foundation you laid for me as well as the financial commitment throughout all my academic endeavours.

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ABSTRACT

The history of labour and unionisation in the railway industry in Zimbabwe can be traced back to the colonial period. As the railway industry was established, it became the nuclear for trade through transport as the country is landlocked. In the colonial era, the industry's labour composed both the whites and Africans and the organisation and operation was discriminatory in nature which paved way for the rise of unions. The study focuses on several factors which compelled Africans to engage into unionisation in the post- colonial railway industry of Zimbabwe. Labour movement however, after independence was a continuation of the scheme which had started in the colonial period. Several efforts were made by both the unions and the NRZ Company to improve the plight of workers. The study therefore also focused on the nature and operation of unions making an assessment of their effectiveness in the railway industry. There are several factors which also affected the operation of the industry which adversely affected workers' welfare. For a detailed research, archival sources were used to trace the historical development of the railway industry and the early labour movements. Interviews from pensioners, and workers of NRZ as well as stakeholders in the railway industry complemented the research.

ACRONYMS

ARWTU	–African Railway Workers Trade Unions
AIPPA	–Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act
ADB	–African Development Bank
BSAC	–British South African Company
CIO	–Central Intelligence Office
ESAP	–Economic Structural Adjustment Program
GNU	–Government of National Unity
GPA	–Global Political Agreement
MMD	–Movement for Multi-Party Democracy
NRZ	–National Railways of Zimbabwe
PDA	–Preventive Detention Act
POSA	–Political Order And Security Act
RAWU	– Railway African Workers Union
SMU	–Social Movement Unionism
USAID	–United States Aid International Development
ZANU-PF	–Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front
ZCTU	–Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions
ZFTU	– Zimbabwe Federation of Trade Unions

INTRODUCTION

The railway industry during colonialism and the post-colonial era was greatly associated with unionisation. Some of the labor unionists evolved to become political leaders. A number of researches have been carried out looking at the occurrence and nature of labour movements in the railway industry and the main area of focus was the colonial period.

The railway industry is highly labour intensive and this defines the activities and level of unionisation within the industry. The development of the railway industry in the country can be traced back to the initial phases of colonisation. As soon as the settlers established themselves in Rhodesia, farming and mining began to take place and there was need for transportation of the produce to South Africa and other neighbouring countries and also across the country. This resulted in the need for railway infrastructure.. There were high considerations for establishment of railway for the mining and agricultural produce. In brief, the first construction of a railway line was between Fonteville, Mozambique and Umtali, Rhodesia in 1893 and subsequently from Vryburn, South Africa to Bulawayo in 1893¹. The railway line between Harare and Bulawayo was completed in 1902. There followed a series of establishments following the settlements across the country for mining and agriculture as alluded above.

These developments as highlighted above meant that there was need for workers within this labour intensive industry, hence there was massive recruitment of “blacks” for the railway industry. As has been highlighted above, the nature of the duties within the industry and the treatment that the workers within the industry were receiving created a lot of friction between the management and the workers. In the colonial era inequality between the blacks and whites in every aspect at workplace greatly compelled African to engage into unionization. In the post-

colonial period, the difference of grades (technical and non- technical), deteriorating working conditions, poor wages compelled workers to be associated with unions. This resulted in the formation of labour unions across the railway industry.

Labour and unionisation in Rhodesia became a much more formidable force which resulted to nationalism in the country as unionists became nationalists concerned with decolonising the country. Even post-independence Zimbabwe, unionisation became so much pronounced that it degenerated itself into political platforms giving birth to massive opposition politics in the country.

The post- colonial government soon after Independence in a bid to improve the status of workers in the railway industry initiated various mechanisms. Such initiatives included housing schemes which both men and women managed to own after NRZ sold houses to them. There was also a system of improved accommodation where there were given houses with better standards. Pension fund was another scheme which man and woman at the above of 65 gained depending on the period which have been served and the levels they have been working. In health sector NRZ had hospitals with doctors and nurses that provided medical services to its workers. After independence the issue of race improved black workers managed to take part in technical work.

Statement of problem

The railway industry in Zimbabwe was characterised with labour unionisation and frequent strikes by the employees in the railway industry. The post-colonial railway industry was facing a lot of challenges in terms of operations which undermined production. This caused deteriorating relations between the employer and the employees, as workers were on the disadvantage side

witnessed by the challenges they faced. This research`s main focus is to understand the dynamics between labour and unionisation in the railway industry post-colonial era.

Research Objectives

- To understand the causes of labour unionization in the post-colonial Zimbabwe rail industry.
- To establish the effects that the unionization has on the productive side of the railway industry in post-colonial Zimbabwe.
- To critically analyze the extent to which the labour movements offered an emancipatory struggle against the dwindling worker rights in the railway industry in the post-colonial period Zimbabwe.

Research questions

- What caused the unionisation of labour in the railway industry in post-colonial Zimbabwe?
- What effects did the unionisation of labour create in terms of production in the railway industry in post-colonial Zimbabwe?
- How successful was the labour unions in improving workers` rights in the railway industry in the post-colonial period Zimbabwe?

Historical Background

The colonial railway industry was the backbone of the county`s economy through transportation of goods which stimulated trade. The high level of operations was a function of a performing economy as the manufacturing industry was “still” functioning to give boost to the rail industry.

In this regard, there were a number of unions within the railway industry and these unions can be traced back to the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. There was a union representing the North Rhodesian railway black African workers and also one for Nyasaland. According to Saunders Unionisation of labour was through the Railways African Workers Union (RAWU) that was representing the black African workers within the railway industry employed by Rhodesian Railways². The workers union was a merger between the African Railways Workers Trade Union (ARWTU). One point of interesting nature is that RAWU was under the flagship of Joshua Nkomo as the Secretary General and Ndabambi Dlomo(President).These unionists latter became formidable nationalists. Thus discussing the labour movements in the railway industry without a mention of the historical perspectives is not enough to give the picture it deserves. Therefore, even looking at the manifestation of the unionisation and labour unions in the railway industry in the post-colonial period, they had their roots in the colonial era. Raftopoulos states that in 1980 when Zimbabwe attained its independence, RAWU was renamed to Zimbabwe Amalgamated Railways Workers Union (ZARWU) which remained till present.³

The development of the railway industry provides a good platform for understanding labour movements and unionisation. From the colonial period the understanding is that the unionism was associated with nationalism and it degenerated into the fight against neoliberalism and political authoritarianism in the post-colonial period. There was a proliferation of a myriad of challenges both in the socio-political and economic domains in Zimbabwe which resulted in an economic meltdown. Zimbabwe was then coming to be in a crisis over the years since the attainment of independence.

Literature Review

Early labor movements in the post-colonial Zimbabwe

A number of researches have been carried out with regards to labor and unionisation in both colonial and post-colonial periods. Raftopoulos asserts that, the labour movement was organisationally weak upon independence, and numerous wildcat strikes in 1980-81 were harshly crushed by the Zimbabwe African National Union government under Robert Mugabe⁴. Cohen and Manion is of the view that Labour had played an important role in the liberation struggle in Zimbabwe, yet tensions with the nationalists over its organisational autonomy remained and spilled over into the post-colonial period, with the nationalist regime co-opting the labour movement into state power in order to curb its autonomy and force conformity to the party-defined project of national liberation⁵. The six union federations were soon merged into the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) in 1981. Dansereau is of the view that ZCTU's relationship with the regime was paternalistic in nature, with ZANU claiming to protect workers and their rights, instituting a minimum wage and employment protections⁶. Despite a number of such progressive measures, including impressive public spending on health and education, massive oppression of opposition was prevalent.

According to Hood the early ZCTU was rife with 'corruption, embezzlement, maladministration and authoritarianism, and this was met with much dissent from amongst the workers and affiliate unions, leading to the eventual collapse of this early labour centre⁷. The 1985 ZCTU Congress called for greater autonomy from the regime and by 1987 a new leadership had emerged from labour centre affiliates; this included Secretary General Morgan Tsvangirai from the mines and President Wilson Sibanda from the railways, who moved ZCTU towards increasing autonomy and critical distance from the regime⁸. In particular, the new labour leadership facilitated a

restructured labour centre and a growth in affiliates which enabled ZCTU to engage in a strong anti-capitalist critique of the Mugabe regime's move towards liberalisation in the latter half of the decade¹⁹.

Saunders state that the early 1990s witnessed noticeably higher levels of labour activism than seen at the end of the 1980s, with at least 184 incidents of activism from 1990-97 compared to 38 between 1985 and 1990¹⁰. According to Raftopoulos the labour movement became increasingly bold in its opposition to ESAP, arguing it led to 'permanent joblessness, hopelessness and economic insecurity', yet grassroots anger did not automatically translate to mass action and ZCTU was beset with organisational weaknesses¹¹.

Alexander view that ESAP saw a fundamental restructuring of the Zimbabwean state, economy and society, with the welfarist economic policies of the 1980s swiftly replaced by a neoliberal package of trade liberalisation, deregulation and public sector restructuring, including large cuts to the health and education budgets leading to below-par growth, high unemployment and soaring poverty rates.¹²

Dansereau note that whilst Zimbabwe's economic problems can be traced back to its colonial legacy and earlier neoliberal involvement in the 1980s which caused Zimbabwe's foreign debt burden to rocket, it was the turn to ESAP which catalysed the full-scale collapse of Zimbabwe's economy¹³. Matombo and Sachikonye argues that the keenly felt impacts of ESAP upon workers and their families led the 1990s to become 'a decade of unprecedented industrial and social action'¹⁴. Labour movement activism during the 1990s represented the full fruition of the two key trends noted in civil society opposition in the 1980s: the connection between labour and

other civil society groups, and the growth of governance concerns in labour's agenda alongside traditional socio-economic issues

Bond argues that in November 1997 the Zimbabwean dollar depreciated in value by 74 per cent in four hours, reflecting a deepening economic crisis and growing unrest in Zimbabwe. ZCTU's increased organisational capacity and facilitation of an empowered rank-and-file formed a central nexus in the explosion of mass actions from 1996 to 1998¹⁵. According to Gwisai ZCTU organised numerous strikes throughout 1997, attended by approximately 1,073,000 workers, culminating in a two-day general strike starting on December 9th, 1997¹⁶. It was the largest mass action seen in Zimbabwe, and the threat it posed to the regime was underscored by police brutality in Harare and a vicious attack on Tsvangirai in his ZCTU offices.

Sources and Methodology

The research used qualitative research method in the study. It is a constructive research in discussing the development of the labour unionisation in the railway industry. Sources consulted in this research were written records which included both primary and secondary sources comprising, scholarly research papers, Archival sources, Journals, newspapers and books.

Archival sources, that are books, government reports and gazettes, were essential as they have first-hand information on the policies and initiatives regarding labour unionisation in the railway industry from the colonial period to the post-colonial era. These collections are mainly found at the Harare National Archives of Zimbabwe. These sources offer a first-hand insight to the topic as they are essential to the unfolding of history.

Secondary sources which include published and unpublished materials were consulted. They also bridged the gap from where primary sources left. They strengthen the argument as published

sources are considered to be a work effort by scholars who would have combined all the necessary information needed to come up with a research paper on the development of labour and unionisation in the railway industry. In this case they assisted in scaffolding the research on some of the necessary information which may be included. As such, unpublished sources such as seminar papers, dissertations were used for clarity and diversity purposes. They added information and insights to the researcher. These sources work interchangeably so as to fill gaps that had been left out.

Interviews played a pivotal role to the research. The interviews were conducted from mainly former workers, pensioners of National Railway of Zimbabwe who witnessed the establishment of the railway industry, the nature of the duties within the industry and the treatment that the workers within the industry were receiving which resulted in the formation of labour unions across the railway industry. Interviews are efficient for they allow the interviewer to address any misunderstanding and to ask for clarity. They also enable the respondent to answer as fully as possible.

Dissertation Layout

Chapter1 focuses on the historical developments in the railway industry in Zimbabwe prior to the independence of Zimbabwe. This section traces the development of the railway industry in Zimbabwe and labour recruitments in this particular time period and also the welfare of workers by the employers in the railway industry.

Chapte2 explores the continued rise of labour unionisation in Zimbabwe in general and the continued rise of labour unionisation in the post-colonial period. The chapter also focuses on the

welfare policies of the industry, how it provided housing, workers' rights and the issue pension fund in the railway industry.

Chapter3 examines the post-2000 developments within the railway industry with regards to labour and unionisation within the industry. The chapter also focuses on the movements within the railway industry during this period, the labor laws and the developments along these laws, the multi-currency and stabilization of the economy, the scope and nature of labour unionisation within the railway industry and lastly the prevailing trends in the railway industry.

Chapter4 looks into the issues of regression, progression of labour and unionisation within the railway industry looking at the achievements, failures of attaining the intended goals of unionisation.

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CHAPTER 1: EMERGENCE OF THE RAILWAY AND THE LABOUR QUESTION IN COLONIAL ZIMBABWE

1:1 Introduction

This first chapter of the research looked at the colonial Rhodesian railway labour systems. This chapter provides footage for the research to be anchored on. The chapter looked at labour and employment in general in Rhodesia focusing on the railway industry in Rhodesia, its administrative establishment, labour procurement, the reasons for the establishment of the railway network across the country and the rise of labour unionisation in the industry up to independence.

1: 2 Development of the railway industry in Rhodesia

Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), is a landlocked country. Hamer asserts that the geographical location required a more efficient and convenient transport systems in order to reach the outside world.¹ The British South Africa Company (BSAC), a company which played a pivotal role in the occupation of Zimbabwe thought of developing a railway system which was to benefit the colony. This meant that towns and farms in which the settlers had settled were to be connected. ADBZ highlighted that the railway system served as a primary conduit for agricultural and natural resources².

Following the failure of the minerals revolution in Zimbabwe (1890- 1900), the white settlers shifted their focus to agriculture. However some mines were also established where minerals were available. This meant that colonial Zimbabwe's economy was characterized by both agriculture and mining. According to Maruve for trade purposes, a viable transport system was required.³ Birney is of the view that, the railways in Zimbabwe were pioneered by the British South Africa Company, which teamed up with other limited liability companies to construct and

operate across the country.⁴ The first colonial era railway line ran from Bulawayo to Salisbury and proceeded to Umtali(Mutare) into Beira. From fort Victoria, another railway was established which passed through Lalapanzi to “Dhabuka” and joined the Salisbury- Bulawayo lane. Another railway was also established in the south- eastern area Rutenga and Chiredzi. The railway company later split into two companies and renamed the Rhodesia Railways and the Mashonaland Railway Company.

In 1937, the Mashonaland Railway Company was taken over by Rhodesia Railways Limited. The new entity owned and operated most of the railways in Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), in Northern Rhodesia (Zambia) and in the Bechuanaland Protectorate (Botswana) except the 10 km track from Mutare to the Mozambican border, the branch track from Somabula to Shangani and a small section at the Beitbridge border post with South Africa.⁵ In 1949, the Southern Rhodesia government purchased all the shares in Rhodesia Railways Limited transforming it from a private to a public company, and renamed it Rhodesia Railways.

According to Raftopoulos during the Federation of Southern Rhodesia and Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland (Malawi), from 1953 to 1963, the administration of the railways became the responsibility of the Federal Government, with 60% owed to the Southern Rhodesian Government, 25% to the Northern Rhodesian Government and 9% to the Railway Pension Funds.⁶ The Federation split up in 1963, and Northern Rhodesia gained independence and changed its name to Zambia and the Southern Rhodesian Government made the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) in 1965. The two governments agreed to split the railways. Smith postulated that the Rhodesia Railways Act was established in 1972 to create Rhodesia Railways⁷. This was further amended in 1979 in anticipation of the independence of Zimbabwe

to create the National Railways of Zimbabwe (NRZ). Botswana Railways (BR) was created in 1986 and took over the Botswana-based railway infrastructure and operations from the National Railways of Zimbabwe on 1 January 1987. Smith goes on to say that BR's system maintains 888 km of 1.067 m narrow gauge track that runs essentially along its south-east section connecting the border of Botswana and Zimbabwe through Francistown and Gaborone to the border of Botswana with South Africa⁸. The opening of the Beitbridge Bulawayo Railway (BBR) in Zimbabwe in 1999 resulted in a major drop in the volume of freight transit and income for Botswana Railways, since the link to South African ports was shortened by this new entity. This new railway will become a part of NRZ in 2029. As a response the BR has been considering the construction of a direct line to Zambia, bypassing Zimbabwe, to regain income from transit freight from Zambia and Zaire (Botswana Railways, 2006)

The railway in Zimbabwe is critical transportation mode for the mining, agricultural and manufacturing industries in the country. The main mining products are coal, chromium ore, asbestos, gold, nickel, copper, iron ore, vanadium, lithium, clay, tin, platinum group metals and numerous metallic and non-metallic ores; the main agricultural products are maize, cotton, tobacco, wheat, coffee, sugar cane, peanuts, sheep, goats and pigs; and the main production industry products are steel, wood products, cement, chemicals, fertiliser, clothing and footwear, foodstuffs and beverages. This mode of transport was considered cheap as it would carry many goods at a particular time.

The National Railways of Zimbabwe has connections with the South African Railways at Beitbridge, with the Botswana Railways at Plumtree, with the Zambian Railways and eventually with the Democratic Republic of Congo through Victoria Falls. There are also links with

Mozambique Railways through Machipanda and Chicualacuala. It is linked with members of the Southern African Railways Association.

1:3 Labour and employment in Rhodesia

The colonization of Zimbabwe brought rapid industrialisation. Colonies had the responsibility to produce food and related items for Europe during the world wars. There were adverts of land and good settlement in African colonies and this necessitated a massive influx of whites from Europe to Africa. This meant that there was need for more labour to work in the mines and agricultural sectors which were being established by the white settlers. Mlambo noted that, most of the jobs which were considered 'technical' or highly mechanized was a privilege of the whites and blacks offered non- technical manual labour.⁹

Colonial administrators passed several laws and engaged into various activities so as to compel Africans to work in the mines, industries and the established farms. The creation of African reserves, introduction of a cash economy, and imposition of the hut tax forced Africans to work. Bolze asserts that in the railway industry labour was collected when the rail was being established from the local people at the particular time.¹⁰ As much as there were labour laws during the colonial regime, the laws were for protecting the whites. Such establishment as Rhodesia Iron and steel Company meant that there was need for the establishment of both a mining town and railway construction to transport the coal produced. This meant that there was need for more labour in Rhodesia. Thus labour supplies in Rhodesia alone was in short supply hence labour had also to come from as far as Nyasaland, as Rhodesia was the center of development. According to Bond and Saunder in the 1950s, there were 609 953 Africans working for the whites and out of the number, 300 178 were locals, 42 253 from Northern

Rhodesia and 132 643 from Nyasaland and 132 218 were from Portuguese East African countries and the remainder from other countries.¹¹

The growth of towns and industries resulted in whites having huge tracts of land and build better big houses using cheap labour. On the contrary the African was living in squalid conditions. According to Brand these conditions were not a worry for the regime but looking closely, this would lead to massive labour unionisation and a chain of strikes for better working and living conditions which latter generated into nationalist movements which disposed government from power.¹²

Matombo and Sachikore argue that during the tenure of Sir Garfield Todd, there was the introduction of minimum wage to Africans and it increased from 4.10 to 6.15.¹³ To show that the settler regime was so labor naïve, the Prime Minister and the labour Minister were fired from the jobs because of that increase. The whites did not favor that development and in other words, they would have wanted the labor to be virtually free of charge. The survey of 1960 considered that the African was being paid enough. The survey did not look and the workers as family units but rather in singular forms.

1:4 The rise of labour unionisation in Rhodesia

Education

Lack of education resulted in the blacks seeking employment in the white farms and industries. The whites feared that educating an African would create a challenge for the government hence there was limited education that was being offered to the blacks. Percy asserts that the tactics used by workers were continued but they were more organised and more effective to the workers.¹⁴ It can be noted that the period also produced a significant number of educated leaders.

Their education helped them to conscientise their fellow workers on their social, economic and political rights. These people were enlightened and they had to fight for permanent residence towns.

Inequalities at work

The challenges that bedeviled black worker during the colonial period were so many and these were largely emanating from the inequalities which existed between the black African worker and the whites. Because whites occupied administrative and white collar jobs meant that blacks were the ones occupying the hard labor or rather the physical work. In this regard, Raftopoulos to argue that it could have been better if the blacks received commensurate salaries and wages.¹⁵ This was however on the contrary. Thus the issue really was a challenge to the black worker community.

Further to the inequalities at work places, Mapira is of the view that the black workers were staying in squalid homes in Mbare, Highfield, Mabvuku in Harare and such like houses outside Harare.¹⁶ This was not good enough as these homes were only meant for bachelors. The whites had no understanding of family virtues for the blacks as well as the regard for extended families. As such, the whites had better accommodation in areas like Eastlea and Lochinvar in Harare and the separatist policies made sure that there was no mix between the two races. This, according to Alexander, was an anathema for unionism as blacks, whenever, they would convene either for social issues or otherwise, the next discussion was ill-treatment at the hands of the whites.¹⁷ As such, labor unionisation became so apparent during this phase.

Repressive laws outside the work environment

One of the critical issues which led to the rise and continued increase in labor activism during the colonial era was a myriad of colonial repressive laws which were put in place by the government as a measure to continue with their dominance. Danserueau is of the view that, there were quite a number of laws which were passed and these laws, as much as they were not directly linked to labor or industry, they had a ripple effect on the worker.¹⁸ Hence workers unionized in order to get rid of these repressive laws. Throughout the 1930s a number of laws were passed and these laws were all meant to secure the position of white supremacy. One of such laws was the Land Apportionment Act which basically barred Africans from owning land outside the reserves. This had a ripple effect on the worker as they were now being dislodged of their land. Another critical issue that should be understood in this discourse is the African ownership of land and the value the African place on a piece of land. Thus the land apportionment act was nothing short of a fueling point to the rise in labor unionisation in order for some of these repressive laws to be phased out. The same can be said of the Land Husbandry Act of 1951.

Further to that, in the 1950s, as a result of a thousand nationalistic activities, a number of other laws were passed as a measure to increase the white power against the rising nationalist waves. These laws included the Unlawful Organisations Act (1959), Native Affairs Amendment Act, Preventive Detention Act (PDA). All these laws were meant to destabilise and neutralise the occurrence of both strikes and nationalist movements in the colony. As much as the government of Sir Gaffield Todd tried had to put in place reforms to address the disparities between the blacks and the whites, it was not enough but it was a form of new opposition from within the white community. These laws made Todd very unpopular and subsequently his fallout.

1:5 Labour movements in the railway industry in colonial Zimbabwe

The colonial railway industry was characterized with higher level of operations as evidenced by the huge volumes of both cargo and passengers. Muzondidya asserts that, the high level of operations was a function of a performing economy as the manufacturing industry was “still” functioning to give boost to the rail industry.¹⁹ In this regard, there were a number of unions within the railway industry and these unions can be traced back to the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. There was a union representing the Northern Rhodesian railway black African workers and also one for Nyasaland. Raftopoulos postulate that from the period 1949- 1967 there was a formidable Railways African Workers Union (RAWU) that was representing the black African workers within the railway industry employed by Rhodesian Railways.²⁰ The workers union was a merger between the African Railways Workers Trade Union (ARWTU) and the RRAEU. He goes on to say that RAWU was under the flagship of Joshua Nkomo as the Secretary General, Ndabambi Dlomo(President) and Knight Marimbe as Vice General Secretary.²¹ These the people who would the struggle against black oppression. They later became nationalists of caliber. Hence distancing labour movements and politicisation becomes a nullity.

Discussing the labour movements in the railway industry without mentioning of the historical perspectives into the unionisation is basically a fallacy. Even when looking at the manifestation of the unionisation and labour unions in the railway industry in the post-colonial period , one has to borrow much of the themes of the movements and ideologies from the colonial era. In 1980 when Zimbabwe attained independence, RAWU was renamed to Zimbabwe Amalgamated Railways Workers Union (ZARWU) which remained till present. According to Maruve ZARWU was a union which encompassed both technical and non-technical workers in the railway

industry.²² It was there to represent workers and to see that the workers got their proper justice. Maruve goes on to say that the railway workers then formed Railway Artizen Union after technical workers wanted their grievances to be differentiated and addressed differently as non-technical workers due to the sense that the technical works they were on top of non-technical workers and they did not want their issues being addressed by the lower grade.²³ Furthermore, working conditions ended up the technical and non-technical workers being differentiated accordingly buy their Unions who represented them. The railway workers thought it was a good idea to have different unions because before the split they were lamped in the same dish whilst they felt that they were different.

Muzondidya state that the fall of white rule in Rhodesia was largely a result of failure of the government to implement labor laws and address the workers' wages which were not as good as they should have been given the labor intensive nature the industries were.²⁴ The railway industry was one such an industry which provided nationalism movements as evidenced by the leadership of Nkomo who later was given the title "father Zimbabwe" because of the role he played in the fight for struggle. Right through the 1920s to the Universal Declaration of Independence by Smith, whites enjoyed a number of privileges at the expense of blacks.

1:6 The employer-employee relationship during the colonial period

Brand argues that, the relations which existed during the colonial era between the employer and the employee was that of Master/ Servant relationship.²⁵ This can be evidenced by the passing of the Master Servant Ordinance Act of 1901. Within the industry, the whites would hire, dismiss and retrench workers as and when they wished because they were protected by the laws of the day. In the early days, these measures would suffice because there was lack of education on the side of Africans, but in the later stages, there were a number of changes hence the rise of

unionism. according to maccandless an employee was guilty of a criminal offense and liable to a fine of z\$8 or, in default of payment, to imprisonment with or without spare diet, for a period of a month.²⁶

this was for absenting himself from the workplace without the permission of the employer or if he was abusive or insulting in language to the employer, the employer's wife or children. a worker could also be jailed for failing to report to his master, if he was a herdsman, at the earliest opportunity, the death of animals.

offenses under the act did not have the effect of terminating the contract. maccandless points out that the employee was bound to return to his employment after complying with the terms of the punishment to serve out the unexpired period of service.²⁷ in addition, after having been imprisoned, the employee was obliged to work for his employer for a period equal to the period of imprisonment. on a second conviction, the employee was liable to imprisonment for a period of two months in solitary confinement with or without spare diet.

the inequality of the bargaining process was cemented in a provision of the act, which made it an offense for any person to persuade or endeavour to persuade any servant to depart from his service or work, or to return his work to his master before the same is finished. so repugnant was the system that as late as 1975, a high court judge remarked the following. according to bond and saunders "the procedure and punishment and even the fact that a servant, as defined, renders himself liable to prosecution at all, places this act into the category of drastic or archaic legislation."²⁸ the judge quoted a magistrate as reporting the following. "a perusal of the record held revealed that in 1974, prosecution in terms of the master and servant act accounted for

approximately one-tenth of the cases heard at karois alone and that 90 percent of those convicted were first offenders unable to pay the fines imposed, and as a result were committed to goal.”

According to Raftopoulos the legislation was tailored in such a manner that instead of championing the protection of employee’s rights, especially over unfair and arbitrary dismissal, it created a system where the voice of employees was not heard in the decision making or in the determination of contractual terms and conditions.²⁹ When Zimbabwe attained its hard won independence in 1980 after a long protracted struggle, the government had to make swift efforts to address those colonial imbalances inherited from the colonial era. Oppressive laws had to be replaced by a system seeking to give both capital and labour equal strength in the management of labour relations.

1:7 The rise of nationalism in Rhodesia: a labour perspective

The situation facing nationalism as an emerging African ideology in the 1950s and 1960s was desperate. MacCandless states that

communities were dislocating with new ones emerging especially because of the post Land Apportionment Act evictions (post-1930); the Land Husbandry Act; the increasing rural-urban migrations; the developments of the Federal era where the politics of ‘racial partnership’ of the UFP regime increasingly wedged the gap between ‘modern’ Africans (the ‘Master farmers’, the educated elites and other groups of Middle-class Africans) and ‘traditional’, poor (mainly rural dwellers) Africans.³⁰

Most chiefs had lost their legitimacy as traditional leaders and there was enormous leadership vacuum. Urban associations were developing but with diverse interests that further divided people into smaller fragments.

Bond and Saunders argue that the state was becoming increasingly authoritarian and at a time when a façade of racial harmony was being advocated by the advocates of racial partnership – which would have made the new African elites play second fiddle to the white liberals.³¹

Following the failures of black leadership in the 1940s strikes, most black elites were becoming

more and more confused ideologically and also divided not only between the old and new guards but also between emerging radicals and the moderates. For this reason, the formation of the first nationalist-like organisation, the SRANC was initially unplanned but a response to the general feeling that the social and political situation was simply getting out of hand. The old ANC, formed in the early 1950s was moribund and the Youth League of Harare was not truly national. In fact, there had not been any way hitherto, to unite political and social movements in Harare and those in Bulawayo.

Because of the situation at hand, there was need to conjure up strong ideological appeals to justify nationalism. There was need for a written pro-nationalist history and also something that would be politically mouth-watering and emotionalizing to the people. The rise of the new academic African history with its slant towards the notion of ‘usable past’; the literature written by the African educated elites; and the newspapers owned by White liberals and Africans were all very important in arousing popular African political consciousness in this period.

1: 8 Conclusion

The purpose for the historical development of the railway industry in Zimbabwe was as result of the landlocked nature of the country, the growth of farms and mines which resulted in the need for a viable transport initiative to foster trade. Railway industry is labour intensive. The colonial regime introduced some law which compelled Africans to work. The plight of Africans at workplace resulted in the establishment of unions which represented African workers’ interests and unionist movement ended up as a nationalist movement.

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CHAPTER 2: LABOUR MOVEMENTS AND THE PLIGHT OF WORKERS IN THE POST- COLONIAL RAILWAY INDUSTRY.

2:1 Introduction

This chapter looks at the dynamics of labour movements in the railway industry in the post-colonial Zimbabwe with specific reference to the continued rise of labour unionisation. Given that labour movements in the colonial period were not only or rather labour movements but more of political movements, the expectation was to see a decrease in labour strikes and related cases. Albeit the attainment of independence in which the labour movements played a critical role for Independence, the expectation was to see a change in both conduct and organisation of these unions. However, the contrary relatively existed. This chapter traced the labour dynamics in the early stages of independence before the turn of the 21st century.

2:2 Labour movements in the post-colonial Zimbabwe: A colonial continuation or new dispensation?

One thing that should be understood in the discourse of labor movements in Zimbabwe is the role that labor played in the Independence of Zimbabwe. Saunders states that labor played a very crucial role in the liberation of Zimbabwe.¹ As has been highlighted in the previous chapter, labour was at the center of liberation of Zimbabwe given the nature of the economy of Rhodesia. Rhodesia relied heavily on agriculture and mining and these sectors were highly labour intensive². The intensity of operations therefore meant a great number of employees as underscored in the preceding chapter.

However, in 1980 Zimbabwe attained Independence and soon after the attainment of independence, there were wildcat strikes in 1981-82 which Raftopolous stated that there were ‘testing waters’ for the new government³. He goes on to say that , in the post-colonial period,

there were tensions with nationalists over the organisation and autonomy of the labor movement especially given that now all unions of the colonial period, six of them were now bundled into one, that is Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions(ZCTU) in 1981.⁴ In the context of federation of unions, the regime wanted to neutralize the opposing forces complimenting labor unionism. For the new government, the best solution was to come up with one a union which they could co-opt into state power in order to curb autonomy thereby forcing conformity to government defined goals of neo-liberalism. The relationship that existed between the new government and trade unionism was paternalistic in nature. Government by then was very keen to protect the interests of workers and subsequently this can be witnessed by the massive investment in public education and health and other related social services. Alexander highlighted that the government to this effect protected worker rights through the introduction of minimum wage, employment protection and related incentives in order to control the existence of labor movements in the country.⁵

Despite these incentives and investments in public health, education and other social services by the government, labor movements continued to be on the rise. Dansareau argue that the government used violence against dissent and potential opposition which resulted in the famous Matabeleland massacres “Gukurahundi”⁶. These government measures of curbing and thwarting opposition had a direct impact on labor movements throughout the country.

In 1987, with the signing of the Unity Accord, there was new order which meant a change in a lot of things since there was the joining of two major political parties in Zimbabwe. According to Matombo and Sachikore the nature of state hegemony over labour was not monolithic since there was limited opposition then.⁷

Dansareau notes that it should be understood that ZCTU in its infancy was marred with a lot of challenges which included corruption, embezzlement, maladministration and authoritarianism.⁸ The authoritarian nature in ZCTU, non-transparency, as highlighted above coupled with the subsequent non-address of workers' plight in industry specific sectors led to the collapse of ZCTU.⁹ Thus, in 1985, ZCTU advocated for more and more greater autonomy from the regime and in 1987, there was new leadership at ZCTU of Morgan Tsvangirai representing the mining interests and Wilson Sibanda from the railways and their move was for the promotion of ZCTU to be more autonomous in operations, being virtual detached from the government. Given the rise of Sibanda to the helm of ZCTU it meant a lot in terms of the railway industry. He was an astute leader who had championed the cause of workers in the railway industry for sometime. According to Sithole labor movement from this stage started to be more radical and critically distancing itself from the government by pressing more on labor reforms¹⁰. The new leadership at ZCTU then called for more reforms from within and thereby increased affiliation. According to Raftopoulos the growth in affiliation by small and industry specific unions meant that ZCTU was becoming more anti-capitalist critique of Mugabe regime.¹¹

This marked a genesis of new labour movement dynamics in the post-colonial Zimbabwe. This was in fact the birth of strong activism and political opposition in Zimbabwe. Muzondidya underscored that the seeds of opposition was evident in the early stages of new ZCTU under Tsvangirai and Sibanda.¹² Early struggles were being witnessed and were championed by the labour movements. In 1988 to 1989 there was widespread student rising against corruption and these risings received enormous support from ZCTU leadership specifically Tsvangirai.¹³ This clearly marked the break between government and labor center. The support that was given to the students by ZCTU indicated warning signs as the labor movement was now broadening scope

beyond shop floor and workers to encompass such other movements as student's activism and civil society. According MacCandless as a follow up, ZCTU's campaign against corruption and the creation of one party state by ZANU in 1990 clearly indicates a formidable opposition mulling.¹⁴ Thus the notable forms of activism in the next decade was purely labour attached.

Labour movements in the post-colonial Zimbabwe was more or less a continuation of the colonial labour movements though the scope and application and organisation was the difference and defining element. The colonial labour movements were nationalistic in nature and fought colonial government repression. This was almost exactly the same with the post-colonial movements in the later stages. The early stages in the colonial period as highlighted above was more aligned to the government and so much devoted to government calls because of their paternalistic nature of their relationship. However, the latter stages of labour movements degenerated to equate to the colonial labor movements as evidenced by their fight against government and government policies. In a nutshell, it can be highly emphasized that the post-colonial labor movements were more of a continuation of the colonial labor movement set-ups.

2:3 NRZ and Workers' welfare

Accommodation

Matondo states that the National Railways built houses for their workers. Every town had railway houses which were being used by the railway workers for example in Harare, Bulawayo, Masvingo, Chegutu, Mutare, Rusape to mention a few.¹⁵ They also had houses for their emergency staff who worked under workshops, signal electricians and radio signals. During the colonial era the houses were owned by whites and coloured people especially those in houses in Eastlea and Lochinvar but blacks had no permanent residence. Maruve pointed out that after

independence when the white settlers moved, during the time of the late Innocent Chikore who was the Minister of the Local Governance the workers fight for the houses to be sold to them.¹⁶ Around 1988 after the struggle of having permanent residence the houses were sold to the National Railways workers. He also viewed that the management sold the houses depending with grades for instance those who were officers managed to have houses in Eastlea and those who worked under technical work were given in Lochinvor and other grades in Rugare. There was also a system of improved accommodation were there were given houses with better standards. According to Maruve the house that he is living in Lochinvar is for the National Railways and he managed to buy it in 1988.¹⁷

Pension

National Railways of Zimbabwe was one of the best organisation when it comes to pension funds to its workers. Taruvinga asserts that he joined the National Railways of Zimbabwe after he realised that the NRZ pensioners live a decent life after they retire.¹⁸ He goes on to say that the National Railways of Zimbabwe still have the pension funds although it's now facing challenges. For instance due to economic challenges in this era at times the pensioners does not served what is due to the pension fund. The employees went on pension fund at the age of 65 and above depending on the period which have been served and they were given their pensions depending on their position or levels they have been working. Normally they allowed workers who served for a period of 10years and if it's less than 10 years they were given accordingly.

Health and Welfare

The National Railways of Zimbabwe after independence in terms of welfare provided better services to its workers. According to Masveure National Railway of Zimbabwe had hospitals with doctors and nurses that provided medical services to its workers.¹⁹ He goes on to say that

workers were encouraged to join what was called provident fund which was a funeral policy which covered the employee and the immediate member of the family. The company could assist workers with transport and it can be said that if it was a natural death they could arrange the funeral.

Race and Rights

The issue of race played a crucial role from the Rhodesian Railway system up to the post-colonial period. According to Murray the white working class in the railway industry used a system which was known as colour bar. It was a system in which black workers in the railway industry were denied access to the same rights, opportunities and facilities as white people.²⁰ It can be noted that the railway work was a mass of prohibitions in which the magic word was don't.²¹ Mangana asserts the issue of racism played a crucial role whereby black workers were the ones who practiced non-technical work whilst the whites practiced technical work.²²

2:4 Organisation of labour movements in the post-colonial Zimbabwe

As has been highlighted above, the changes to the labour unionisation in Zimbabwe via the changes at ZCTU, meant that a lot of other structural changes were imminent. Within the railway industry, a number of railway workers unions emerged and were all affiliated to the ZCTU. This was attached much to the autonomous nature that ZCTU was. In the 1990s there was growth and increase in the levels of unionism and activism. In the period 1990- 97 there were widespread occurrences of activism as evidenced by approximately 184 strikes, demonstrations and related activities. This was a figure quite higher as compared to only 38 which occurred between 1985-90.

The stance and increase in labor activism was necessitated by the Economic Structural Adjustment Program (ESAP) which in fact collapsed the economy of Zimbabwe. Saunders

highlighted that the labor movement underscored that ESAP led to ‘hopelessness, economic obscurity and joblessness’.²³ The railway industry, as a parastatal was also highly affected by ESAP and this was the beginning of major problems which crippled the organisation. Railway workers had unionized themselves to lobby for their rights with the employer and they knew they had much coverage from ZCTU. However, it should be understood that ZCTU itself had generated itself into the former ZCTU which was being maladministered. Raftopoulos state that the centre union was beset with a myriad of organizational weakness.²⁴ In 1992 there was a very low attendance at one of the organized protests leading to failure of such an event.

Many of the workers had joined the unions but the truth according to Alexander there was limited understanding of what the functions of the unions were.²⁵ Coming from the colonial period, the people needed unions but the understanding and the scope of the unions was limited. Many workers would join the unions but had limited understanding of the achievements which could be made through collective bargaining. The Labour Act of 1992 had tried to deregulate labor relations and constraining union power both in collective bargaining and shop floor.

This was quite evident in the railway industry. As has been given above, the railway industry was not spared form the challenges of ESAP. Hence Zimbabwe Amalgamated Railways Workers Union (ZARWU) which represented a number of affiliates of the railway industry in the post-colonial Zimbabwe was faced with overwhelming issues related to labor within the railway industry.

The early organizational failures which were quite prevalent in Zimbabwe saw the labour leadership in dual processes of consolidation with ZCTU becoming identical to the Social Movement Unionism(SMU).²⁶ Thus the union was degenerating into a force by strengthening

structures and capacitating memberships. Thus building of structures meant the involvement of rather the casting of nets much deeper and wider.

Yet on the railway front, the labor movement organisation was the same. The unions were against the ballooning number of directors at the firm and this they alleged that was draining the already struggling firm. As much as there was one general manager at NRZ, there were quite a number of hidden directors sucking the organisation. There were basically three unions representing workers in the railway industry and these three were affiliates of ZCTU hence the pressure that was felt at ZCTU.

2:5 Labour policies in the post-colonial Zimbabwe and effects on railway employees

Quite a number of post-colonial labour policies were in place for the protection of both the employer and employee. Post-colonial Zimbabwe first had the Labour Relations Act of 1992 which was later changed to Labour Act(28:01). There have been a number of debates surrounding these laws. Smith argued that the labour laws in the post-colonial Zimbabwe were much more skewed towards the employee and were more of protectionist in nature against the employers.²⁷ Other sections of the scholarly review and practitioners argue on the contrary. However, one would want to argue on the neutral standpoint to state that neither of the protagonists benefited from these laws. This look into the post-colonial labor laws helps in understanding the discourse of labour movements and labor organisation in the period.

The argument that would want to be discussed first is that the labor laws were not beneficial to both the employers and employees. This viewpoint has found a number of supporters given the nature of issues and scope of coverage within these laws. The laws have been argued to have been rigid for both the employees and employers. This has been argued to have contributed to

the fall of a number of industries. In the railway industry with NRZ and BBR this point of perspective can be taken to mean a lot as both they were affected by these salient labor laws.

On the contrary, it can be seen that the laws were protectionist of the employee. Fast forwarding to 2015, the same laws were applied and saw companies firing employees based on a clumsy clause which gave employers more rights over the employees. According to Smith, “ the labor laws in the country are so skewed to the extent that an individual can go to the courts and be given the entire chunk of a company, in the process rendering thousands of his fellow workmates jobless”.²⁸ Such mistakes can be seen in the downfall of such stalwarts as Steel Net, Cairns, and General Bolt.

In this regard, the Zimbabwe labour policy landscape had been blasted by many for being silent on a number of things. The employers in Zimbabwe had the power to hire but that power becomes limited in the case of relieving the same employee of his/her duties. This has been argued to be in the contrary to the developments in the developed countries. In such developed countries, the employers can hire and fire depending on the assessments of business viability. However, this was contrary to the developments in Zimbabwe. In this regard, it can be seen that NRZ was carrying a huge chunk of unproductive labour but the organisation can do little to reverse that given the nature of the labor policies. In 2015 only the company had the green light to fire the employees basing on the 2015 ruling which gave employers discretionary rights to terminate contacts by giving three months’ notice. Thus the failure by parastatals can also be directly linked to the failure of labor laws to address the disparities and gaps in the policies and also policy inconsistencies.

According to Dube the Amalgamated Railways Workers Union highlighted recently that it is being owed more than \$470 million by NRZ and this figure speaks volumes.²⁹ Thus the protests, demonstrations and strikes by the railways can be stated to be a function of a non-functioning organisation. This in effect meant that the labor laws were promoting laziness.

However, these policies should not just be taken in isolation. Zimbabwean labor policies have much borrowing from the colonial labour laws and common law. In 1905, the Master and Servant Ordinance were enacted and this was a more repressive piece of legislation which was meant to protect and promote white supremacy. Thus the liberation struggle itself was more or less a fight for repealing of such legislations.

The labor laws in Zimbabwe from the turn of the millennium was a mixed bag as it was both a fallacy and a fantasy to both the workers and the employers. As was presumed within the employers circles, the labour laws were more protectionist of the employees and the employees circles viewed the labour policies as privy of the employers. This contributed immensely to a number of challenges within the discourse of labour in the country. Thus, in the railway industry there was a myriad of stalemates in terms of bargaining powers as employees felt the employers were “more equal” than them on the bargaining table.

Quite interesting is the debating on the landmark ruling of 2015 by the High Court after the Zuva Petroleum Case. The ruling gave employers the “right” to dismiss or terminate contracts of employees giving them a three month notice and the termination was without benefits. This case scenario provided a new dispensation to the labor discourse in the country. Many organisations soon after the ruling started to fire their workers on the pretext of the ruling. This, according to sources, resulted in the loss of jobs for over 9000 employees within a very short space of time.

Though workers tried hard to fight for this ruling, precedence had already been made and unfortunately, most of the affected employees were those with the parastatals. Saunders argues that the ruling made employees very vulnerable and given the economic meltdown in the country, it meant a continued soaring livelihood of people.³⁰

However, government had to stop the firing of employees based on the ruling and new interpretation of the labour act. It can be argued that this was a relief to the workers especially in parastatals and quasi-government institutions. Looking at the railway industry in this regard, more than 223 employees were fired from employment based on this ruling.

The labor laws of the country are not aligned to the prevailing situation in the country and there is limited harmony between the laws in the country. Labor and unionisation continued to take toll during this period especially in the railway industry. All the unions within the railway industry took turns to take the employer to court to reinstate the fired employees and to make their demands addressed.

2:6 Factors undermining the Railway industry

When Zimbabwe gained independence in 1980, it took over most state-owned enterprises and the National Railways of Zimbabwe was one of them. The National Railways of Zimbabwe did not make any changes to the systems that were in place because it simply adopted the standards and routing systems that were previously in place. Evidence shows that adopting the standards and routing systems that had been left in place by the previous government helped the present government in managing the operations of the railways system effectively and efficient, that is, from 1980 to 1990.³¹ This is clearly substantiated by a summary report done by the Africa

Development Bank (ADB) which stated that “in 1990, the total amount of freight carried by rail was 14.3 million tons, which translated into a capacity utilization rate of about 80 percent”.

During the 1990s, however, the NRZ began to experience problems and this was mainly because of the Economic Structural Adjustment Programs (ESAP) that Zimbabwe had adopted. MacCandless state that these programs saw the truck haulage sector as being a substitute for the railroad sector because one of the requirements of ESAP was to cut down on government spending.³² Since NRZ is a parastatal, budget cuts were made, hindering it from functioning effectively and efficiently to its full capacity. There might also have been efficiency shortcomings in NRZ that made ongoing investment choices harder to secure. The ESAP was clearly a major factor but it did not help that many parastatals were poorly run.

Additionally, other factors the NRZ did not have any control began to emerge during the 1990s, for example, the oil pipeline that was constructed between Harare and Mutare, which adversely affected the operations of the NRZ because it was a major income generator. Also, ZISCO STEEL began to face problems and this had a major blow on NRZ as it was reliant on transporting steel domestically and regionally. According to Dansereau in the early 2000s, socio-economic and political changes began to surface and this saw the downward spiral of the economy.³³ This greatly affected the NRZ which was already facing challenges from the ESAP era. During this same period, commercial farms were being invaded for land redistribution and this also affected the NRZ because the commercial farmers formed a large clientele.

Most importantly, the elections in 2000 were so chaotic that they had a trickle-down effect on the NRZ which recorded massive losses in 2001. These losses saw the NRZ operating mostly within the confines of its borders. The number of import and export operations declined significantly

and this resulted in less train mileage and tonne per kilometre. To add weight to this argument, Mbohwa notes that “the number of passengers transported declined by 14.9% from 1999 to 2000 and the net tonne-kilometres by 24.1% during the same period, reflecting the immediate chaos during the 2000 parliamentary elections”³⁴

During the economic crisis, many key sectors of the economy, for example the mining sector, supported the NRZ through the challenges they were facing by providing capital to maintain some the locomotives and wagons that serviced them. The mines did this so as to keep their operations flowing since there were no alternatives to best service them. Most importantly, from the period of 1990 to 1999, IMF and the World Bank assisted the NRZ with finance and the running of the parastatal.

There have been many attempts to revive the NRZ but the continuous interference by government has seen many of these attempts failing. A report by the USAID and World Bank provides evidence to show that NRZ was financed in 1990 for Regional Transport Development II Project in an attempt to revive and expand existing railway infrastructure and networks. However the project failed due to continuous management changes which frustrated the investors of the project. More recently the Chinese diplomatic efforts and Chinese investors have made far-reaching proposals on investment in mining and rail transport.

2:7 Conclusion

The chapter traced the developments in the post-colonial railway industry looking at the workers plights from the period 1980 to 2000, NRZ and workers welfare and how it promoted housing, workers’ rights and pension fund. The chapter also traced continued developments in the

unionisation of labour in the post-colonial Zimbabwe looking at labour policies in the post-colonial and the effects on railway employees and the organization of labour movements.

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CHAPTER 3: LABOUR UNIONISATION IN THE 21st CENTURY: 2000- 2017

3:1 Introduction

This chapter focused on the post 2000 developments within the railway industry in Zimbabwe. To have a better understanding of the phenomenon, a number of sub-themes were developed looking at the issue. Within this section of the study, the political economy of Zimbabwe was discussed. The chapter further highlighted the movements within the railway industry during this period, the labour laws and the developments along these laws, the multi-currency and stabilization of the economy, the scope and nature of labour unionisation within the railway industry and lastly the prevailing trends in the railway industry.

3:2 Dwindling economic situation in Zimbabwe

Scooner asserts that Zimbabwe has long been considered a country in crisis, It stands at 173 out of 187 on the Human Development Index, and the social, economic and political rights of its population have been repeatedly disregarded.¹ Dorman view that Zimbabwe's entrenched economic crisis saw inflation peak at 231 million per cent in 2008; poverty is endemic and approximately 3 million people, or a quarter of the population, have emigrated abroad.² Attributing the blame for this situation and understanding how such a crisis arose is a complex task worthy of considerable analysis in its own right, but for the sake of this dissertation two concepts will be utilised as representing a duo of malignant forces largely responsible for the problems facing ordinary Zimbabweans.

The new millennium witnessed a deepening economic crisis in Zimbabwe, aided and exacerbated by the twin forces of political authoritarianism and neoliberalism. However, whilst these two forces had previously acted in concert, by the end of the 1990s they began to diverge. MacCandless states that the decisive break occurred in February 2000, when pushed by the

pressure created by the NCA, the regime held a referendum on its own amended constitution which continued to shore up the power of the presidency.³ The regime's constitution was defeated by 55 percent to 45 per cent; representing its first defeat in a national poll and the clear electoral challenge posed by the MDC. He goes on to say that in response, the regime shifted towards anti-imperialist rhetoric, land reform and repression of the opposition as it attempted to assure its political hegemony.⁴ Political polarisation led to further division between urban and rural struggles whilst creating the perception of two competing blocs in Zimbabwean politics and society.

According to Matombo the labour multitude's radical dual-agenda against both neoliberalism and political authoritarianism therefore became more problematic, as these two malignant forces had now diverged to some extent and retrenched a polarisation which appeared to split rights-based and redistribution-based struggles.⁵ The central role of the rank-and-file and the labour multitude has been emphasised, and this chapter will therefore consider the extent to which ZCTU leadership encouraged or disempowered the labour multitude in its struggles against both political authoritarianism and neoliberalism within the polarisation of the 2000s.

3:3 Labour movements in the post 2000 era and the railway industry

After the year 2000, with the formation of MDC, it became very apparent that labour movements was the order of the day fighting for both political polarization and neo-liberalism forces coupled with aftermath of ESAP. As has been noted above, the dwindling economic situation and the forces of political polarization and neo-liberalization in the country provided an impetus for continued labour movements in the country.

MacCandless argues that polarisation in Zimbabwe saw an exponential increase in state repression against opposition forces.⁶ According to Pollack the state has been fundamentally restructured and militarised, with any civil or public servants deemed supporters of the opposition threatened, removed and replaced commonly by military personnel whilst the Central Intelligence Office (CIO) has meted out ‘detentions, beating and threats’ against opposition figures, including labour leaders.⁷ Continued mass activism by the labour multitude became increasingly problematic, with successive legislation including the Political Order and Security Act (POSA) and the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA) in 2000. It used to prohibit labour forums and meetings, restricted access to and presentation of politically volatile information and legitimise the arrest, detention and torture of numerous opposition activists. Pollack states that Such activities continue under the power-sharing government.⁸ Zimbabwe’s laws already made it practically impossible for legal strikes to take place, but the systematic violence enacted during the 2000s has worn down the opposition with mass activism only seeming to increase the severity of the regime’s response, resulting in a loss of impetus behind mass activism and a drop in attendance levels. By the mid-2000s therefore, ‘the public strikes and stay-aways deployed so effectively in the 1990s became much more difficult to organise’ and the labour movement appeared to have lost much of its impetus.

Furthermore, the regime’s authoritarian tendencies also extended to more insidious attempts to fracture the opposition movement. Raftopoulos view that in 2000, the Zimbabwe Federation of Trade Unions (ZFTU) was registered by the regime as an alternative labour centre, intended as ‘a vehicle for anti-ZCTU campaigning from within labour’s ranks.’⁹ Pro-ZANU-PF figures had been evident within ZCTU (Rich Dorman 2003), and ZFTU was able to create a number of splinter unions despite its reliance upon state funding and weak shop-floor presence. The possibility of

even a small minority of the rank-and-file turning towards authoritarian government to appease their grievances reflects the very real need for ZCTU to ‘prevent both externally and internally induced fragmentation and to maintain internal cohesion’. According Raftopoulos whilst ZCTU has certainly weathered the threat of the ZFTU, remaining by far the largest labour centre and the largest civic organisation in Zimbabwe, a contested leadership transition at the 2011 Congress saw ex-President Lovemore Matombo set up an independent ZCTU Congress, creating a rift within organised labour.¹⁰ The internal factionalism apparent within the ZCTU is indicative of the pressure that political authoritarianism has created, widening internal fault-lines through consistent violence and ongoing crisis. He goes on to say that, however, rank-and-file support has remained with the official congress under Japhet Moyo, and Matombo’s case for unfair dismissal was roundly dismissed by the High Court, who ordered him to desist referring to his splinter-union activities as ZCTU.¹¹ Internal labour cohesion has therefore remained relatively resolute, represented best in labour’s unified condemnation of the 2008 Global Political Agreement and the power-sharing government. Considering the interdependent relationship of the ZCTU and the labour multitude, this maintenance of solidarity within a strong labour centre is particularly important.

3:4 Multi-currency system and stability in Zimbabwe: Revival or Stagnation for Railway Industry

The multi-currency system that was brought by the Government of National Unity (GNU) in 2009 provided a sigh of relief to most industries in Zimbabwe. The argument that therefore follows under this discourse is whether the multi-currency system was for the revival or rather continued stagnation or continued dwindling forces for industries in Zimbabwe. The moment brought relief to Zimbabwe’s mounting woes which were characterized by ballooning inflation

levels and soaring economic situation. The multi-currency system brought with it a myriad of changes within the economic landscape.

However, according to Ranger the GNU was short lived in relation to the economic turbidity which was prevailing in Zimbabwe.¹² In the context of the railway industry in Zimbabwe, the multi-currency system had little to offer. Given the precariousness of the industry and the nature of operations, it was a good development but there was need for a longer period of stability than a 5 year period. In the GNU period, prioritization was done and the railway industry was not as prioritized as other industry could have been. As such, the industry only received a near boost owing to the “rise” in production in other industries. However, Sachikonye asserts that it should be stressed that politics still played part in the capacitation of the railway industry in Zimbabwe in the post 2000 era.¹³ Given the fact that the finance portfolio was being held by the opposition incumbent Biti, and the railway was headed by ZANU-PF stalwarts such as Air Commodore Karakadzai meant a stalemate in terms of reviving the railway industry. Thus, looking at the situation in the railway industry during the GNU, little changes could be seen. Only that there was near stability in other sectors meant a stagnant situation for the railway industry in Zimbabwe. One respondent highlighted that,

The railway industry is in itself a complex industry which needs much capital. The railway industry is a function of the performance of other industries and the non-functioning of these other sectors mean the non-functioning of the industry also. In the GNU, less was done and this can be attributed to loss of confidence by the public to use our services.¹⁴

The statement above is just a buttressing factor to the already discussed point of the nature of the industry. Though there was an improvement in terms of cargo, the passenger train remained a challenge. People now preferred the use of other convenient transport systems such as buses,

kombis and so forth as compared to rail. As a result road was the most preferred as compared to rail.

All these issues and factors contributed to increasing woes for workers. Workers within the railway industry, instead of seeing an improved situation, it was the same old story. In actual fact, their monthly dues remained lagging behind and months increased. Some even lost their jobs in the melee. The multi-currency system in Zimbabwe was a good move to the country in general but to the railway industry it provided less expected results. Maybe it was because of the different political affiliations altogether. But as will be discussed below, the question will be why if the railway unions were affiliated to ZCTU yet MDC had occupied the critical ministerial positions.

3:5 Politicians or Labour Unionists?

There has been a production of more politicians than labour unionists in Zimbabwe. In this context, Raftopolous argued that there labour unionists were made finer and resultantly, because of the nature of the prevailing situation, unionists generated themselves into politicians.¹⁵ As has been discussed above, Zimbabwe was experiencing phenomenal challenges both politically and economically and as such, it could well be understood that those unionists who stood for worker rights were seen as politicians and they themselves would generate themselves into such.

Whilst the social-democratic stance of the labour leadership has been well-documented, ZCTU statements indicate very real concerns regarding the possibility of an inchoate neoliberalism which could reach full fruition if the MDC gained power – a narrative with precedence in the labour-backed Movement for Multi-Party Democracy (MMD) in Zambia. By only 2001, the ZCTU Congress under the new leadership of Wellington Chibebe was already warning the MDC

not to forget labour's role in its formation, and he further lamented the MDC's rightward shift and the demotion of prominent unionists in 2007. Bond and Saunders viewed that in response to the MDC's rightward shift and the regime's relative 'normalisation' with global capital, 2003-2004 saw further mass actions with ZCTU 'pressing demands for social and economic rights' and 'mapping out policy terrain and strategies that are independent of, and on occasion at odds with, those of the MDC—notably on issues of economic policy'.¹⁶ They go on to say that establishment of the Labour and Economic Development Research Institute of Zimbabwe (LEDRI) in 2003, has seen ZCTU advocating for an interventionist 'developmental state' encouraging 'development based on the sharing of resources, equality and solidarity' backed by 'a dynamic, participatory and radical democracy built from below' illustrating the leadership's continued emphasis on participatory policy.¹⁷ The labour leadership has not been radicalised, yet a division between its social-democratic ideology and the more free market oriented social-liberalism of the MDC is evident, standing in stark contrast with suggestions of a labour movement co-opted into the MDC's agenda.

These ideological divides were facilitated by labour's continued institutional autonomy from the MDC. Meetings of the ZCTU congress in the early 2000s witnessed heated debates about labour's relationship with the MDC, culminating in a decision to work cooperatively but retain labour's 'own institutional personality and autonomy'. This can be evidenced in labour's collective bargaining and negotiating strategy, with ZCTU negotiating independently with both the MDC and the Mugabe regime, and even continuing to engage with the state during the frequent break-downs in ZANU-PF-MDC negotiations in the early and mid-2000s. Ncube notes that such engagement is not evident within the rest of the MDC's civil society allies, who have followed a strategy of 'outright non-engagement'.¹⁸ Consistently over-emphasising the negatives

of the regime whilst failing to grasp opportunities for positive engagement, resulting in an abysmal lack of policy influence and entrenching polarisation . In following an autonomous route, ZCTU has maintained its commitment to offering alternative economic policies notably to the left of the MDCs, reflecting labour's attempts to transcend the polarised politics of post-2000 Zimbabwe.¹⁹

Despite this, ZCTU has maintained its position within the MDC fold, participating in the 2008 People's Charter initiative alongside the MDC and urban civil society groups, providing strong input on debt, labour and economic injustice alongside the governance concerns emphasised. According to Sadomba this cooperation reflects labour's continued commitment to its dual agenda of socio-economic and political/civic rights concerns developed during the 1990s, supporting the democratising impulses of the MDC against the political authoritarianism of the Mugabe regime, whilst also opposing its nascent neoliberalism.²⁰ However, the Global Political Agreement (GPA) of 2008, which installed the power-sharing government, was strongly resisted by ZCTU, who argued that this pact between politicians would not create a people's government and decried the decision to delay a participatory constitutional process until after the creation of the ZANU-PF-MDC government. ZCTU's continued commitment to pro-poor, participatory practice and policy has clearly not been matched by the MDC, who earned the chagrin of numerous civil society groups for 'betraying the struggle for a democratic social change'. The labour movement has therefore revealed itself to maintain a dual agenda that transcends the ascension of the MDC into government, nullifying suggestions of a regime-change mentality, and evidencing continued de-polarising, emancipatory potential within the independent labour movement.

=Furthering the discussion above and contextualizing it to the railway industry in Zimbabwe in the post 2000 era, it can be easily understood that the railway industry was much more affected by the ESAP and that's where most of the woes within the industry began. Thus most of the employees within the industry were retrenched and others dismissed. Pollack note that alone and the need for the state/government which was more unitary and polarized to create an opposition free country meant that any movement in the labour side especially with the formation of MDC meant a challenge for the government.²¹ Thus in the railway industry the rise of such names as Simango, Dzvetera, Dube and many others becomes a huge question for discussion.

The labour movement played the central role in the establishment of the MDC. ZCTU had been charged with facilitating the rise of a political party, and its offices and regional centers were soon being utilised as 'de facto MDC provincial structures'. A number of ZCTU leaders transitioned into the MDC leadership, with Morgan Tsvangirai taking the reins at the head of the new party, signifying his long dominance of the urban labour coalition. The 'facilitative role' played by the union bureaucracy was bolstered by the rank-and-file who, having driven the impetus behind a new party, created grassroots party structures in the factories, helping to ensure widespread support for the MDC among the labour multitude. However, this institutional closeness also led to perceptions of an 'organic link' between the two institutions, with polarisation entrenching the idea of the labour movement as forming part of a homogenous MDC bloc.

However, to argue that these labour unionists just generated themselves into politicians would be an understatement to the cause. Given the nature and scope of events within the industry and the labor movement in Zimbabwe, it was quite evident that whosoever could be a leader of a labor

union would become somehow a politician as he/she would become an enemy of the state. Further, the support that these leaders would get from the MDC movement was considerably enough to make the leaders politicians more than labour unionists leaders. According to Mafudze,

Zimbabweans, by nature of their challenges, problems, crisis, have been turned into politicians. If you would want to understand this issue, just gather around three or so people, the discussion no matter the subject matter, it will turn political somehow. With regards to labour unionists, the issue is basically a matter of back up. Where these unionists were backed made them politicians.²²

The point being made here is the idea that the back up by the MDC to labour movements meant in most cases that leaders were becoming more and more aligned to politics. Workers' rights were infringed, working conditions not commensurate with standards, pay was eroded by hyperinflation and these contributed to the change in discourse.

The fact that the labour unions were now a function of political polarization sums much in this discourse. Looking at the issue more closely enlighten oneself in this regard. Tapfumaneyi postulated that,

Having one union (ZCTU) as a backbone of MDC and another as a ZANU-PF stronghold man that we had more politicians than unionists within the rank and file of these union movements.²³

The discussion here becomes more interesting and mind opening. ZANU-PF's need to create a one party state and polarization of the labor movements can thus be argued to be the reasons for turning workers and unionist into politicians. However, the question still becomes but why politicians made from the labor movements were opposition politicians? According to Garikayi:

MDC was representing the will of the people and workers felt their rights were being infringed and it was the only hope. Thus it was very easy for any union affiliated to ZCTU to have its members as forerunners of MDC²⁴

However, another school of thought argued that the formation of a ZANU-PF affiliated labour union was just a clearer sign that the matter was now more beyond the labour movement but rather of counter and counter strategies by the parties. MDC would have ZCTU as its pillar and ZANU-PF had its own pillar which would counter the issues advocated by the ZCTU.

In a nutshell, it is quite plausible to argue that there was more of politicians more than labour unions in Zimbabwe. The creation or rather formation of a pro-government/ZANU-PF labour union meant that politicians were thrown into the fray of labour movements.

3:6 Conclusion

This chapter focused on the post 2000 developments within the railway industry in Zimbabwe. Pursuant to that, a myriad of factors were discussed under this chapter, including the discussion on the political economy of Zimbabwe, movements within the railway industry, the post-colonial labour laws in Zimbabwe, scope and nature of labour unionisation in Zimbabwe.

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CHAPTER 4: ASSESSING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE LABOUR UNIONISATION IN THE RAILWAY INDUSTRY

4:1 Introduction

The chapter focused on tracing the success story of labour unionisation in the post-colonial period in Zimbabwe. To this end, the chapter looked at the issues of deracialisation of the work place, minimum wage at work places, the emergency of socialist and privatization policies, mismanagement in the railway industry and how this contributed to continued workers plights in the post-independence Zimbabwe. Further, the chapter explored the regression issues, tracing the success stories of labor movements in the post-colonial Zimbabwe. Various sources were used to gather data and these include archival sources, books and primary data from respondents.

4:2 Deracialisation of the workplace

The fight for liberation from the colonial forces was necessitated by the need to address some colonial and racial injustices in a number of areas in the colonial Zimbabwe. There are a number of narratives which relates to these colonial injustices. As has been spelled out above, the rise and continued manifestation of labor movements in the post-colonial Zimbabwe was exacerbated by the need to address these injustices.

Throughout the 1980s and early 1990s, according to Pollack white farmers had been reluctant to relinquish their colonially inherited control over land and there had been little radical reform or structural change in the Zimbabwean economy which had remained in foreign hands.¹ In the absence of concerted pressure for justice and economic reform from the impoverished masses in the 1980s. Brand state that when the economy was performing well and social obligations were being met, both government and privileged whites were lulled into a false sense of political and economic security and did not do much at all during the first decades of independence to address

the inherited racial imbalances in wealth between blacks and whites.² The government's indigenization policies were not coherently defined and were implemented half-heartedly, while many privileged whites, acknowledging their loss of political primacy, focused on maintaining their economic status.

Pollack argues that two decades after independence, there had been little integration in schools, sports, residences and other spaces of social contact. In the urban areas, for instance, some responded to black suburban encroachment by creating alternative spaces where they continued to keep to themselves, retreating from public life.³ In Harare, affluent whites reacted to the post-independence movement of blacks into previously white-only NRZ residents of Eastlea and Lochinvar withdrawing to more exclusive suburbs like Mount Pleasant, Glen Lorne and Borrowdale whilst some of them left the country. MacCandless view that within the railway industry, the situation was the same.⁴ Given that the Rhodesia Railways had built houses for its workers, there have been concerted efforts by the blacks in the railway industry to relocate themselves from the compounds to the white house's especially in Eastlea and Lochinvar in Harare. .

Though the government in the later years after Independence started to rectify some of the colonial injustices by enacting laws and regulations for equality, whites remained at the helm until the economic doldrums of the 90s.

4:3 Minimum wages in the post-independence Zimbabwe

The issue of minimum wage was at the center of strikes and struggles between the employers and employees in the railway industry in Zimbabwe. Given the fact that the colonial systems were established within the racial lines, the wages and salaries were also different as has been alluded

to earlier on. The only time that the issue of minimum wages was really addressed was the time of Sir Garfield Todd in the 1950s but it was not joy to be celebrated as Garfield Todd became so unpopular with other whites because of his stance towards the blacks henceforth losing his post. The post-colonial wage structures were a response to these injustices. The discussion below points to two basic issues within the minimum wages discourse and these are, the collective bargaining and the grading systems in the labour industries. According to Taruvinga,

Collective bargaining in the colonial Zimbabwe was a challenge. Wages, salaries and benefits were determined by the government with limited, if any, input from the worker (blacks). This meant that the determinant of what to get was the government. However, in the post-colonial period, workers' rights were somehow addressed and minimum wage was better in the early years of independence.⁵

4;5 Mismanagement or misplaced priorities in the railway industry

In the Zimbabwean political economy, with independence having been attained, there were new monsters in the form of mismanagement in most of the organisations in Zimbabwe. This section thus looks labor unionisation in the context of mismanaged railway industry in Zimbabwe. Most organisations performed well during the colonial period as compared to the post-colonial period. There are a number of theories which can be used to explain this scenario which might not be highlighted at this point. However, the biggest question that still hangs is whether it was the mismanagement of organisations or rather an issue of misplaced priorities in these organisations. Whatever the answer that can be generated it can lead to an understanding of continued labour unionisation and labour movements within the industries and especially the railway industry in post-colonial Zimbabwe. Mafudze note that,

What is happening to NRZ is a classic case of mismanagement and corruption. You will not be surprised that there are some big fish out there who are using the services of NRZ without paying. If an organisation is not making money the logical thing to do is to

downsize. If this does not work lease to interested players. We have seen this happen with airlines. If still this does not work then close shop. The government can allow indigenous people to buy shares in NRZ and allow the parastatal to be run in a professional manner. What are the policies of contesting parties on this one and many other ailing parastatals? This should be an election campaign issue.⁶

The statement above is quite a loud one in terms of expressing the happenings at the railway company in the Zimbabwean setup. The highlight shows that mismanagement and fraud to some extent have contributed immensely to the plight of workers. As has been indicated above, the management of the railway industry in the colonial period was different from the post-colonial management both in scope, operations, priorities and nature. Many complaints have been raised and these have led to a deadlock between the management and workers for the railway industry in the post-colonial railway industry in Zimbabwe. There have been heated debates when it comes to the issue of workers' salaries and they have blamed to management priorities. Tapfumaneyi state that their plights got increased and diminishing worker rights was a function of management.

In our days railways industry used to be the employer of choice, all young school leavers would "fight" to train as apprentices and tradesmen with this once glorious organisation. More than 90% of industries around Bulawayo revolved around the railways, same as Redcliff town sucked Riscom (now ZISCO Steel) blood to survive. Thanks to your people's party ZANU PF, slowly the wheels started coming off the gravy train as appointments to the highest post of General Manager become political appointees. Populist decisions were made on transportation rates for goods & passengers. Spares procurement & maintenance were forgone and the company coffers started drying up. Mass recruitments and tradesmen were effectively stopped. All the industries directly and indirectly benefiting from the gentle giant started downsizing until most of them shut shop. A number of suburbs around Bulawayo were constructed for railways employees but most of the houses were later sold to sitting tenants.⁷

This statement is a good juxtaposition of the two periods that is the colonial and post-colonial periods in Zimbabwe. To view the increasing labor unionisation in the post-colonial Zimbabwe without the mention of management of organisation would thus be a nullity. In this regard, it can be noted that there has been an increasing levels of political polarization in most parastatals and

related organisation with a number of top management being political appointees for some reasons best known to the politicians themselves. There certainly has been an element of mismanagement on the part of the bosses who have either turned a blind eye to thefts in the system or have watched with folded arms when thieves stripped and paralyzed the electrified section of NRZ. No electric trains in Zimbabwe. In other instances indiscipline & corruption have taken center stage while the top hierarchy has done next to nothing about the developments. Thus mismanagement can be seen to be a contributor to most of the challenges that that have been faced in most organisations in the country post-colonial era. To augment the statements above, Kazunga from a newspaper article argued that,

Management has caused a lot of chaos in the organisation. Employees are waiting with months in salary areas. The employees know that Mr Goche(Former Minister of Transport), Karakadzai and Mpariwa are campaigning for MDC so come the elections Zanu PF will lose. Karakadzai is building a hotel in Zambia that is targeting UNWTO and its almost complete, constructing his private sugar railway line at Nandi-Mkwasine at the expense of NRZ material ,workforce etc that he is not paying for ten months now (since he is part of the sugarcane farmers thereat), he transport coal from Hwange for free to his tobacco farm in Marondera as well as Gushungo Dairy farm. The rest of the business left is taken by his heavy trucks such coal transportation. He was also given money to refurbish fuel tankers by Sakunda but it disappeared. BancABC had proposed to give the company loan upon providing an audited salary wage bill but the GM refused because no external auditing has been allowed since 2008.⁸

He goes on to argue that,

Why did he refused to give BancABC an audited wage bill to assist the company, why didn't Karakadzai fire Bondai after stealing 10 000 pounds, Choto as well was not fired after stealing is that normal. He knew that it would backfire to him as well. Copper wire OCS was stolen who is accountable.⁹

All these points indicate a rot at the railway company and thus the plight of workers would mount in the face of such management practices. Another point for discussion here would be to

look at the phenomenon within the lenses of profitability and operations. According to Raftopolous,

Even if you were to engage the best management team in the world, or from Mars, at NRZ today, it would fail dismally. Historically, the railways in Zimbabwe were not required to make money from their operations. The Railway Act provided for Government grants to enable the railways to provide a cheap form of transport for the primary commodities (minerals & agricultural commodities) which are bulky & low value for the private sector. The road transport industry was regulated to prevent competition with the rail mode & to avoid damage to roads by heavy trucks carrying big axle loads.¹⁰

Looking at this statement, one would have an understanding that the dimension that the railways took was somehow wrong given that it was the cheapest mode of transport. Hence the issues of profitability should not have been taken into play in this regard. This is chiefly the reason why the organisation ended up have more directors than was necessary.

Furthermore, the economic adjustment programme in the post-colonial was wrongly adopted. This provided a different dimension to the management discourse in both the public and private sectors in the country and the railway industry was not spared from the effects. ESAP tried in the early 1990s to remove the railway subsidy without success. Government policy then was to ensure competitiveness of Zimbabwean exports on world markets since the country is landlocked. The Railway Act has never been changed because transport costs to the ports remain a high percentage of the export goods which are in most cases only semi-processed & not finished high value items. Garikayi postulate that,

As a former worker at NRZ, you are not required to make a profit, or even break even in your operations. The Railway Act also requires you to run loss making activities as directed by the Minister to whom you should send the ensuing bill for settlement by Treasury. There is no incentive to perform. Emphasis has historically been put on the role

of the NRZ to train highly skilled journeymen for the parastatal & the rest of the economy.¹¹

As long as the economy was performing, the Railways would operate “normally”. According to Bond once the economy went into recession and Government deficits ballooned, there was little or no funds from Treasury to NRZ for maintenance of railway infrastructure.¹² No money would be forthcoming for maintenance of locos, wagons & coaches either. As the economy “screamed” under the illegal sanctions from the West, the supply of spares & replacement parts particularly for locos was cut off completely. It is at that point that the rail transport monopoly was opened up to allow road transport to compete with NRZ. A non-capitalized NRZ can never be a match for the road transportation. With rail business collapsing, the first victim is salary & wages for the employees. Several restructuring measures have been taken to reduce the establishment from approximately 18 000 in the 80s to about 4 500 around 2013.¹³

According to Sadomba government’s sustained and systematic militarization of parastatals and public enterprises as well as local authorities has contributed a great deal in breeding a culture of patronage, corruption and looting as these institutions are staffed mainly by people who neither possess the requisite qualifications, experience or competence to run them efficiently and profitably.¹⁶ The National Railways of Zimbabwe Act has provisions which empower the Minister responsible for transport to appoint the NRZ Board to which the General Manager reports. It also provides that the government of Zimbabwe shall cover any deficit incurred by the NRZ. The tariff structure is controlled by the Minister and is based on political rather than commercial or economic objectives. It does not relate to costs and this has made it very difficult for NRZ management to make strategic investment decisions. As political control has tightened

in the NRZ it is no longer free to take management actions without government approval. This is worsened by the fact that the Zimbabwean government no longer has the financial resources to compensate the NRZ for losses incurred due to being forced to operate loss-making services. This is despite the provisions in the NRZ Act for compensation for such services. Sadomba asserts that since 2000, the government of Zimbabwe has forced NRZ to provide low-cost commuter services in Harare and Bulawayo, plunging it into cash-flow problems that resulted from having a marginal revenue increase of 375% in 2004 against expenditure increases of 1017%.¹⁴ Poor management of the railways over decades has resulted in high inefficiency and poor rail infrastructure and many customers have switched to road trucks as a more efficient and reliable mode of transport.

According to a World Bank report titled “Zimbabwe Infrastructure Assessment: Note for Roads, Railways, and Water Sectors”, the NRZ suffered an 8 million-tonne slide in freight traffic between 1990 and 2005 due to poor management and government interference in its operations.¹⁵ In 1990, NRZ’s freight traffic was about 14 million tonnes but it reduced to about 6 million tonnes per year during the years 2003, 2004 and 2005 hence precipitating massive losses in revenue. The losses were attributed to low revenue due to capacity constraints, a rigid and inefficient tariff structure, excess staff levels and poor utilization of assets, which mostly reflected on poor NRZ management and the impact of government control on business decisions and tariffs. A strategy for control by the Government of Zimbabwe has involved using security agents, mainly soldiers and police, to man publicly owned enterprises. These personnel have contributed to the high rate of train accidents in the NRZ according to investigations carried out by a government committee in October 2006.

On the issue of mismanagement the National Railway of Zimbabwe management according to Maruve they could not manage to raise enough revenue through business that was available to them hence they ended up failing to pay their workers in time and sometimes getting percentage of their salaries.¹⁷ It had more than 20 000 employees and was one of the most attractive companies to job seekers. Ndebele argues that, following extended years of mismanagement and corruption, the company has been reduced to a shell and is a pale shadow of its giant former self.¹⁸ She goes on arguing that poor policies put in place by government have also accelerated the company's demise alongside many other companies which were vibrant at independence in 1980. According to Ndebele from more than 20 000 employees just 5700 people and it is now saddled with a US\$144 million debt and owes workers more than US\$68 million in outstanding salaries.¹⁹

In addition to the above, the issue of outstanding salaries has been affecting even those who were retrenched after the 3 months' notice. Murave postulated that he was retrenched on the 31 of July 2015 and it's been three years now but he is still on the pay role, the NRZ still owe him.²⁰ It can be noted that they fired workers without salaries which have been back dated for one year and without even terminal benefits. Nsingo argued that NRZ workers based in Mutare and Bulawayo downed tools vowing to continue with the protest until their demands were met.²¹ The demands included payment of outstanding salaries and the ouster of management with blame for the parastatals.

Mukayi a former carpenter with NRZ and a single mother, states that the delay in getting their severance packages is causing various problems for the ex-employees, including failure to provide basic for their children.²² As a result of not getting their terminal benefits from NRZ

families are breaking apart every day, children are suffering. She goes on saying that some women are ending up as sex workers because they cannot let their children suffer. “ I am a single mother, I do not get any maintenance, I have a daughter who goes to school and I have bills to pay so I’m left with little option”²³

Shava noted that former workers with diseases like diabetes and hypertension as well as those living with HIV are also facing problems in accessing medication through NRZ medical aid branch despite the fact that lump sum premiums were deducted from their terminal benefits.²⁴

4:6 Regression or progression: tracing the success story of the labour unionisation in the post-independence Zimbabwe

One of the anchor objectives to this research was the need to understand the success story of the labour movements in the post-colonial Zimbabwe. The issue of regression in the operations of labour movements within the railways industry is multi-fold. Thus this section sought to trace the developments within the railway industry looking at their achievements and failures.

Polarization in Zimbabwe saw an exponential increase in state repression against opposition forces/labour movements in the country.²⁵ The state has been fundamentally restructured and militarized, with any civil or public servants deemed supporters of the opposition threatened, removed and replaced – commonly by military personnel. This could be seen from a number of perspectives as majority of unionists were the ones later evolving to become opposition cadres. The Central Intelligence Office (CIO) has meted out detentions, beating and threats’ against opposition figures, including labour leaders. Continued mass activism by the labour multitude has become increasingly problematic, with successive legislation – including the Political Order and Security Act (POSA) and the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA) in 2002 – used to prohibit labour forums and meetings, restrict access to and presentation of

politically volatile information and legitimize the arrest, detention and torture of numerous labour and opposition activists. Zimbabwe's laws already made it practically impossible for legal strikes to take place but the systematic violence enacted during the 2000s has worn down the opposition with mass activism only seeming to increase the severity of the regime's response, resulting in a loss of impetus behind mass activism and a drop in attendance levels. Thus the success story of labor activism can only be traced along the lines of major opposition political lines. By the mid-2000s therefore, 'the public strikes and stay-always deployed so effectively in the 1990s became much more difficult to organize and the labour movement appeared to have lost much of its impetus.

According to Stanley Abramowitz, an American author,

The unions have all but abandoned the fight for decent working conditions and are now perceived as staunch defenders of the status quo. The unions are as a result increasingly looked at as enemies.²⁶

This observation aptly captures what was/is happening in the labour movement in Zimbabwe. It is believed that for all intents and purposes, trade unionism in the country has become a tool for individuals to gain some measure of political power at the expense of the people they claim to represent. The unions were failing to address the workers' needs yet they were the workers' representatives.

The potential for renewed activism from the labour multitude is further strengthened by significant ties to the union movement in South Africa. As the most dominant economy in the Southern African region, South Africa has long boasted a powerful union movement in the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) which has been politically tied to the ruling African National Congress (ANC) and the South African Communist Party in a Tripartite

Alliance since the end of apartheid. Solidarity with ZCTU has been strong from COSATU who have held numerous protests on the border and sent delegations in 2004 and 2005, both of which were forcibly expelled. COSATU's engagement with ZCTU's struggle was met with ridicule from a South African government that has remained cautiously supportive of the Mugabe regime, reflecting a growing alienation between the labour center and the government in South Africa.²⁷ COSATU's distance from and attempts to pressure the government on this issue is particularly important when considering South Africa's leading role as a mediator in Zimbabwe through the Southern African Development Community (SADC). Furthermore, not only labour but social movements in Zimbabwe have forged ties with South Africa, reflecting 'strenuous...efforts to build regional solidarity amongst trade unions and social movements in solidarity with Zimbabwean counterparts' during the 2000s.²⁸ COSATU has long reflected the SMU model seen in Zimbabwe and whilst labour remains central to South Africa's grassroots activism, it has facilitated ties with a broader labour multitude within civil society, a number of which have embraced Zimbabwe's struggle – most noticeably the Zimbabwe Solidarity Forum in South Africa.

4:7 Conclusion

The chapter focused on highlighting the developments within the railway industry looking at the issues of deracialisation of the railway industry, the issues of minimum wage, the mismanagement which happened within the railway industry and the emergency of socialist/privatization policies in the railway industry in the post-colonial Zimbabwe. Further, the chapter looked at the regression, progression issues, trying to highlight the success, failures of labour unionisation in Zimbabwe.

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CONCLUSION

The historical development of labour and Unionisation of Railway Industry was dynamic. Rhodesia was a landlocked country. For trade purposes the British South Africa Company had to come up with the infrastructure of the railway industry. The development meant that there was need for workers within the labour intensive industry; hence there was mass recruitment of blacks for the railway industry. The nature of the duties within the industry and the treatment that the workers within the industry were receiving created a lot of friction between the management and the workers. Blacks and whites were being treated differently. Africa men and women also received different treatment. Several factors at the workplace resulted in the formation of unions. Unionism was a labour movement at industrial and commercial level but it transformed later to nationalism.

The post-colonial railway industry faced a lot of challenges in terms of operations which undermined production. These challenges had a ripple effect to a number of operations for the railway industry including the payment of salaries and the welfare of employees. This created deterioration relations between the employers and the employees. Unionisation after independence was a continuation of the scheme which began in the colonial period. The issue to do with racism was a thing of the past, but the presence of technical and non- technical derpatemnts as well as different levels at place meant the workers were affected differently and labour unions were formed respectively.

In post- Independence Zimbabwe, unionisation become so much pronounced that it degenerated itself into political platforms giving birth to massive opposition politics in the country . Labour Unionisation therefore can directly link to politics since the colonial period labour movements

became nationalist movements and the post- colonial era it became formidable political party.

All these movements were directly against the governments of the day

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