



Catholic voices of the voiceless: the politics of reporting Rhodesian and Zimbabwean state violence in the 1970s and the early 1980s

Timothy Scarnecchia

Prof T Scarnecchia, Department of History, Kent State University, 305 Bowman Hall, Kent, Ohio 44242-0001; E-mail: tscarnec@kent.edu

First submission: 20 October 2014

Acceptance: 21 March 2015

Some of the worst atrocities of state violence perpetrated by the Rhodesian state were published and disseminated around the world in 1975 thanks to the Rhodesian Catholic Bishops' and the Catholic Commission on Justice and Peace's links to human rights organisations in London. In contrast, when the Zimbabwean state carried out similar atrocities against civilians in 1983, the Catholic Bishops and the Catholic Commission on Justice and Peace decided to cooperate internally with a Government of Zimbabwe (GOZ)-led commission announced to investigate claims against government soldiers rather than press the case internationally. The Catholic Bishops and the Catholic Commission on Justice and Peace also interacted with foreign diplomats to help assuage their concerns over the security situation – most notably media reports of civilian massacres and torture – from the Midlands and Matabeleland provinces during Operation Gukurahundi. This article investigates some of the rationale for a different approach in the early 1980s based on changing alliances and allegiances of these Catholic organisations with the Rhodesian and then Zimbabwean state. This article forms part of a series of articles exploring how Zimbabwean and non-Zimbabwean actors rationalised the Gukurahundi period.

The contributions of Catholic organisations and individuals in Rhodesian and Zimbabwean history have been impressive, particularly in terms of bringing to light the abuses experienced by individual civilian Zimbabweans since the early 1970s during the Liberation War, and then after independence, reporting the abuses of civilians by Government forces during the Gukurahundi period (1982-1987), and again during the political violence that accompanied the elections in 2000 through to the violent presidential run-off election campaign in 2008 (CCJP [1975] 1999).¹ In a country where both the Rhodesian and Zimbabwean governments and those who opposed them have had particular interests in hiding human rights abuses from public view, and in particular from international attention, the documentation and information gathered by Catholics and other religious and civil society organisations continue to play a central role for those looking toward future justice, as well as for historians.

The Gukurahundi period, which started in early 1983 and covered different phases of intensity until 1987, shifted the geographical areas of abuse from the Northern and Eastern provinces that had seen the worst forms of abuse during the Liberation War to Bulawayo, the Midlands and Matabeleland provinces. Here again, Catholic Bishops and others in the church would be a key voice in both protesting and documenting the state's abuses of civilians. It may even be possible to say that the Catholic Bishops and the Catholic Commission on Justice and Peace (CCJP) helped force the Zimbabwean government's decision to pull the Fifth Brigade back, however temporarily, and limit its continued campaigns against civilians in April 1983, given the Catholic organisations' potential to invite international scrutiny and attention to the situation. This attention was created in part by the Catholic Bishop's Pastoral Statement for Easter 1983 and the response it received from Prime Minister Mugabe. However, the CCJP did not publish first-hand accounts of state violence in the early 1980s as they had done in the mid-1970s. There were many reasons for not publishing the testimonies at the time, including fear for the safety of informants and for those who made such reports public. In addition, the relationship between the Catholic Bishops and ZANU-PF remained conciliatory at the time, and the creation of an international campaign

1 An earlier version of this paper was presented at the North-Eastern Workshop on Southern Africa (NEWSA) in October 2014. I would like to thank the NEWSA participants for their comments; Robert Gordon, for his encouragement to delve further into this topic; Shari Eppel and Wendy Urban-Mead, for their helpful comments on earlier drafts, and the two anonymous reviewers, for their very helpful comments and suggestions on an earlier draft. I would also like to thank Dr Hazel Cameron, for generously sharing copies of the FIOA files she obtained from the US State Department that are cited in this article. This article is dedicated to the memory of Wilf Mhanda who passed away in 2014 and Terry Ranger who passed away in 2015. Their own very different forms of intellectual dissent will be greatly missed.

centring on the torture and killings of civilians by the Zimbabwean government only three years after Independence would jeopardize these good relations built during the war years. Another plausible reason was that there was already a great deal of international press coverage of the abuses carried out by government forces in early 1983 (Phimister 2008), and, as discussed below, the Catholic Bishops and the CCJP were, in fact, at times trying to downplay the claims in some of this international media coverage. The CCJP would only release the data collected during this early stage of the Gukurahundi to the public 14 years later, in 1997, for a number of reasons discussed below.

When discussing the question of 'silences', the historian must tread carefully, because pointing out a silence in one aspect of testimonies may overshadow the more strategic ways in which actors were actually very vocal on the same issue in another venue or with another audience. Therefore, it must be stated upfront that to question why the Catholic Bishops and the CCJP did not deploy victim and witness testimonies in early 1983 in the same way they had in 1975 does not preclude or exclude the use of such evidence for different purposes in the later period. Even though there are important differences in the Catholic leadership's approach toward the state in the two periods, the more important and useful parallels revolve around the keeping of records and interviews to document state abuses in all three periods (the Liberation War, Gukurahundi, and twenty-first-century political violence). A key question for scholars and activists then, is that many of the personnel in the church, who witnessed and documented this violence, also remained in Zimbabwe after 1980 and continued to have the institutional memory of both pre- and post-Independence periods. In talking with such individuals, I found that they carry a heavy burden of witnessed or retold violence that is reflected in their individual and collective memories. In turn, this heavy burden presents particular problems for a history of each period. How each phase of Rhodesian and Zimbabwean political violence reinforces and reinterprets the memories of individuals becomes a difficult knot to untangle for historians, and makes the use of these sources – even the extent to which it is possible to view these sources as a reflection of a collective memory – much more difficult, considering the forty plus years of such comparable violence in Rhodesia and Zimbabwe (Sachikonye 2011). As European Holocaust scholarship has shown, the ability to translate the voices of those who were victims, witnesses, or perpetrators in such traumatic periods from a collective memory into a historical memory – one that historians are more comfortable presenting – is extremely complicated and mediated by the politics of memory in both the past and the present (Confino 1997, Crane 1997, Novick 2000). Gukurahundi histories are similarly difficult to evoke, decipher, and transmit without taking into account the considerable power the concept of Gukurahundi represents in

Zimbabwean politics. All the more difficult is to incorporate the particular local memories and personal histories of those who were involved, as these are often easily excluded, forgotten, or at the worst, trivialised when the Gukurahundi as a concept is mobilised in contemporary Zimbabwean politics.² Given this difficulty, I have tried to approach Gukurahundi from the margins of the events themselves. I am certainly not an expert on this period or the events that constitute the trauma of the Gukurahundi. Instead, I am trying to piece together an answer to the very large question of why the international actors, particularly the Western world now known as the 'international community', but in the early 1980s known perhaps as the 'human rights community', to a very great extent were silent on the seriousness of the Gukurahundi and failed to come to the defence of those who were the victims of these state crimes. My first inroads into better understanding this period and topic has been to look at recently released Western diplomatic evidence, in order to better understand how Western powers incorporated the Gukurahundi violence into what I called the 'rationalizing of Gukurahundi'. Given Cold War interests, the Gukurahundi violence became an inconvenient truth that had to be explained (Scarnecchia 2011). The most convenient rationalisation was that South Africa's destabilisation was behind dissident activity in the Midlands and Matabeleland provinces and, therefore, Robert Mugabe and the Zimbabwean military were justified in using violence to defend the new nation from South African aggression. The story, of course, is much more complex and, as more primary source evidence is released, a fuller picture tends to confirm what opponents of ZANU-PF have argued for many years, namely that the ruling party took advantage of international goodwill and Cold War military support to use the presence of South African armed dissidents to punish civilians in these provinces for their support of ex-ZIPRA dissidents and, as time went on in the 1980s, to destroy ZAPU's base of support in these regions, the traditional strongholds of ZAPU support.

This article uses diplomatic sources from the American Embassy in Harare to discuss the role of the Catholic Bishops and the CCJP as mediators between the first-hand reports of the murders of civilians in the areas of Operation Gukurahundi in early 1983, and the questions and concerns of international supporters of Mugabe's new government. In order to better understand this role, I first examine the radical critiques the Catholic Bishops and the CCJP presented to the international community in 1975, during the Zimbabwean Liberation War.

2 For critiques of such use, see Eppel 2005, Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2012, Muzondidya & Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2007.

1. The man in the middle (1975)

Before examining the 1983 period in more detail, it is important to understand that the Catholics in Rhodesia, at least some of them, took a radical position *vis-à-vis* the Rhodesian war in the mid-1970s. For this purpose, it is helpful to look to Bishop Donal Lamont, who came to Rhodesia in the 1950s and who would ultimately become the Bishop of the diocese of Umtali (now Mutare). His autobiographical account in *Speech from the Dock* (1977) helps to show why he became such a champion of African rights in Rhodesia, and then a supporter of the Liberation War efforts in the mid-1970s. Bishop Lamont would continue to criticise the Rhodesian state in the 1960s, but it was his participation in Vatican II and his own tough criticisms of the link between Catholic missionary work and repressive governments in Latin America and Africa that pushed him to a relatively more radical position *vis-à-vis* African liberation. Returning to Rhodesia, Lamont worked with the CCJP, which had been previously founded by Sister Mary Aquina and Mr Christopher Bishop, and helped publicise the CCJP's documentation of human rights abuses carried out in Southern Rhodesia. (Linden 1979: 217.)

For Bishop Lamont and others, the counter action to the fear of an anti-church communism, that had gripped many white Catholics with fear after Independence in Mozambique, was for the Catholic church to take a more proactive role in representing the voice of the Africans who were most vulnerable to communist influence. In April 1975, Lamont wrote the introduction to the CCJP's influential report, *The man in the middle*, published in London, which gained the attention of the international press. The report revealed the extensive torture used by the Rhodesian Security Forces and police to obtain information from civilians about guerrilla activities.

As would be expected, the Rhodesian state and media heavily criticised Bishop Lamont and the CCJP's decision to publish *The man in the middle* in London: "The Church has a duty to say what in its opinion is right and what is wrong. It has no right to present biased, one-sided, dangerous documents in the name of justice".³ As argued below, the Zimbabwean state and state-controlled media would respond in a similar fashion to Catholic Bishops' statements during 1983.

Before turning our attention to 1983, it is instructive to consider an example of the type of evidence the *Man in the middle* and *Civil war in Rhodesia* made public. In the latter, there are several examples of first-hand accounts by victims of Security Forces torture and beatings. One example is that of three brothers from the Chiutsi family, who were held in custody for 11 days at a government camp. One of the brothers, Erasmus, was killed and the surviving brothers, Amos

3 Originally The Sunday Mail, 18 June 1975, quoted in CCJP [1975] (1999): 5.

and Peter, told their story to the CCJP, which then reprinted it in full in their much-publicised reports (see CCJP [1975] (1999): 13-5). The two surviving brothers describe their ordeal and that of their brother Erasmus who was tortured and beaten to death. One of the brothers, Amos, describes being brought into a tent after hearing his brother cry out “Mandiuraya” (You have killed me). Their brother Erasmus was interrogated by a “Mr. Kruger, another European and African police and soldiers”. Now the same men asked Amos similar questions about why and how his brother had aided the “terrorists in the their village”:

They started beating me about the head. The European said, ‘Tell the truth.’ I said again, ‘I know nothing about this.’ They then tied my feet with a chain (marks visible on left ankle) and my hands with a rope; they blindfolded me with the thick piece of cloth. They made me lie down (belly up) and pulled down my shorts and pants. They took off my shirt. I was naked. They said, ‘Tell the truth before we really beat you.’ I said ‘I know nothing. This is the truth.’ One of the soldiers burnt me all over my body, on my head between the hair, on my belly and lower abdomen, on the knee caps and elbows. They kicked me with their boots in the back, on the shoulders and in the stomach. I was crying with pain. I tried to say, ‘I really know nothing’, but they kept beating me. (Marks and welts were clearly visible. A medical examination was carried out on the day this statement was taken).

Amos then testified how over the next five days, he and his brother Peter were given work to do at the camp, such as collecting firewood and water, while their brother Erasmus continued to be beaten and chained at his feet. On the following day, when he was going to fetch water,

I was called by a solder to the big tent. I was told ‘We have called you to tell you that your brother Erasmus has hanged himself.’ They showed me the dead body and asked, ‘Is this man your brother?’ I said, ‘Yes this is my brother Erasmus.’ I saw a shoe string around his neck. I could not see the rest of his body which was in a plastic bag.

The report goes on to tell how Erasmus was an outstanding character in the Catholic community, how he had been a catechist and had just returned from choral singing courses at a nearby mission before he was arrested. He had also given US\$75 to the first brother released “to make a marriage payment for the woman he was soon to marry”. To send home the cruelty of the Rhodesian forces to villagers and their families, the report ends by describing how Officer Kruger (also identified by his police number) brought Erasmus’ body to his parents’ home: “Mr Kruger offered two dollars to the father of the deceased and said: ‘If

you have any complaints you must come to me at Nyamahoboko. I can help you.' The family felt deeply insulted by this gesture and has kept the two-dollar note 'as a witness against Kruger.'" (CCJP [1975] (1999): 13–5). Such evidence, of which the story of these three brothers is just one example, had a powerful impact, and the way the CCJP was able to contextualise the good standing of the victim in the Catholic community makes the example all the more powerful, as does their telling the story of the parents' disbelief and anger when Officer Kruger returned Erasmus' body with a two-dollar note.

2. The Gukurahundi period

The Catholic Church in Zimbabwe had benefited from the foresight of Bishop Lamont and others in terms of supporting ZANU and ZANLA, in particular. After ZANU–PF's victory in 1980, the Catholic Church was much more likely to be viewed as an ally, or at least a force that had been on the 'right side' of history during the Liberation War. Unlike Bishop Muzorewa's United Methodists, who were seen as collaborators with Smith by association, the Catholics now had 'their man' in power. The honeymoon would not last long, however, as the Catholic Bishops would prove to be some of the strongest critics of the Zimbabwean government deployment and use of government troops against civilians in the Gukurahundi operation.

American diplomatic records from 1983 and 1984 are useful for discussing how the Americans perceived the role of the Catholic Bishops and the CCJP. Both groups were considered important by the American diplomats, as they had helped to inform the diplomatic corps based in Harare of what was happening in the areas where the Fifth Brigade operated. The Americans, like the British, were still very supportive of Mugabe during this time. But reports of the atrocities and killings of civilians became known quite soon after they began, in particular through the reports in the *Guardian* [UK], but also through coverage by the major newspapers in the US (Davies 1983a, 1983b, Meldrum 1983), and so the American diplomats wanted the Zimbabwean government to quickly change course on Operation Gukurahundi in order to rescue Mugabe's and his government's international reputation. There is, therefore, perhaps an overly optimistic interpretation of the role of the Catholic Bishops and the CCJP's power in the American files. Nevertheless, these files do help situate the importance of the Catholic voices during the Gukurahundi and to establish the extent to which the Catholic Bishops and the CCJP hoped to use their internal influence with Mugabe and ZANU leaders to stop the worst of the violence. This, of course, had not been the case in the 1970s with Smith's Rhodesian Front and the Catholic Bishops, hence the need to develop an external and international campaign in 1975.

On 29 March 1983, the American Ambassador, Robert Keeley, sent the text of the Catholic Bishop's Easter Pastoral Statement entitled "Reconciliation is still possible", signed by six Bishops, to Washington (see US Embassy 1983a). The US Embassy had obtained an advance copy. The Pastoral statement starts out by complimenting the GOZ for efforts at reconciliation to date, but it also claims that the GOZ "... must also remember to preserve the ethnic rights of the minorities within its borders". The document attempts to strike a balance between indicating that dissidents were responsible for numerous deaths and destruction of property, and that the Catholic Bishops support the right and need for the GOZ to restore order:

We entirely support the duty of government to maintain law and order, even by military means. What we view with concern are the many occasions on which certain influential people have inflamed the situation by their words, instead of seeking to pacify it.

We entirely support the use of the army in a peace-keeping role. What we view with dismay are methods that have been adopted for doing so. Methods which should be firm and just have degenerated into brutality and atrocity. We censure the frightful consequences of such methods.

At this point, the pastoral statement becomes direct in its accusations against the state and army:

Violent reaction against dissident activity has, to our certain knowledge, brought about the maiming and death of hundreds and hundreds of innocent people who are neither dissidents nor collaborators, we are convinced by incontrovertible evidence that many wanton atrocities and brutalities have been and are still being perpetrated. We have already forwarded such evidence to government.

These brutal methods will have the opposite effect to what the government is intending to achieve. It seems to us that it is again the unfortunate man-in-the-middle who is being crushed in this operation more even than the dissidents or their collaborators. But one thing is certain: violence such as that being perpetrated by a certain group of the army breeds bitterness, feelings of hatred and desire for revenge, which may lead to more violence in the future. Reconciliation and unity of hearts and minds could never be achieved by crushing innocent people: "You cannot reap figs from thistles (Matt 7:16)".

The statement then goes on to remind the GOZ that the Bishops had already warned them that the indemnity regulations issued in July 1982 may have given

certain units of the Security Forces the impression that they are above and outside the law. "Some of such units are reported to assert that they are responsible to no one but the Prime Minister alone." These were very serious words and their placing the responsibility directly on Mugabe in all of this would have been clear. They ended the statement with a request of the GOZ "to put an immediate stop to these excesses, and to appoint a judicial Commission charged with the responsibility for establishing the truth, apportioning blame and distributing compensation, so that justice may be seen to be done and honour saved." The document was signed by "P. Chakaipa, H. Karlen, T. Chiginya, A. Muchabaiwa, I. Prieto, H. Rector [Reckter], P. Muthone [Mutume]" (US Embassy 1983a).⁴

The US embassy reported on a response, dated 30 March, to the Bishop's pastoral by Nathan Shamuyarira, then Minister of Information, in the ZANU-PF controlled *Herald* newspaper. In the full text of Shamuyarira's reply, he sounded much like the Ministers in Smith's government and the Rhodesian media in their response to *The man in the middle* in 1975. Minister Shamuyarira went on to attack the Bishops for their statement:

All the citizens of Zimbabwe, especially the poor peasants and workers, deserve to be protected by the government from gangs of armed men in the pay of enemy forces. They will be protected by their army and not by the bible or the bishops. The pastoral statement is utterly one-sided and in fact on the admission of some of the authors of the statement, was formulated in response to the prodding and promotion from foreign interests, and groups hostile to Zimbabwe. It is couched in intemperate language. Some of which is obviously directly borrowed from the fabricated reports of the hostile foreign press. [...] In fact, as is well-known, some prominent churchmen unashamedly collaborated with the colonialists, thus indirectly helping to prolong the agony our people had to endure until the victory of our liberation struggle.

Ambassador Keeley commented on Shamuyarira's criticisms of the Bishops' statement by arguing that "[i]t appears that the GOZ is retreating even further into its own 'laager' and showing itself less and less willing to listen to reason, even when called on to do so by respected members of Zimbabwean society". Keeley also stated that he hoped "... the government investigations of the CCJP report yield some visible evidence of army brutality, and that the culprits will be brought to book publicly" (US Embassy 1983a).⁵ As discussed below, the promise of GOZ investigations and justice would turn out to be empty promises, and,

4 Last two names misspelled in original; correct spellings added in brackets.

5 Last two names misspelled in original; correct spellings added in brackets.

by mid-1984, neither the Americans nor the Catholic leaders put much faith in justice being served. For the remainder of 1983, however, the existence of the Commission to investigate Gukurahundi crimes seemed to help placate more criticisms from the Church and the American diplomats. Mugabe's response to the Bishop's Easter pastoral should have been an indication of how little influence the Catholic leadership would ultimately have in stopping future developments in Operation Gukurahundi.

On 6 April 1983, President Mugabe responded strongly to the Bishops at a meeting of religious leaders in Harare. Keeley sent his own account of Mugabe's speech to Washington, DC (see US Embassy 1983b). After describing the dissident situation as "a situation no government and no sovereign state can tolerate", Mugabe

... vowed that the GOZ would proceed with ever-increasing vigor to crush the dissidents, adding that "my government has full moral – not to say political and constitutional – authority to wipe out this scourge [...]". It was therefore "shocking [...] reprehensible" that "others, with scarcely any real knowledge of the situation we face and with dubious credentials (in) the liberation struggle, should presume to lecture us ..." Included in 'this band of Jeremiahs', Mugabe placed "reactionary journalists, NGOs of doubtful status ... and sanctimonious prelates."

Mugabe challenged the religious leaders in attendance to produce evidence of any of them having criticised "ZAPU and its dissidents ... as violators of human rights and perpetrators of crimes". He concluded his speech with a theme that was shared by the Smith regime and that would become a hallmark of strategies used by Mugabe in the 2000s, by saying that the statement was "more for the consumption of the international gallery than for our national consumption". He said that some of those who had been critical had admitted to having received "external pressures to speak out", and asked if they were merely "megaphonic agents of their external manipulative masters." This speech by Mugabe is fairly well known among Zimbabwean historians, but what is perhaps less well known is that, according to Keeley, there was a response to Mugabe from one of the Bishops. During a question-and-answer period after his speech, which was closed to the press, Mugabe,

listened without comment to a long and rather passionate statement by Bishop Henry Karlen of Bulawayo, one of the signatories of the pastoral statement. Karlen said that he and his diocese had in fact spoken out about dissident violence many times, despite the PM's assertion to the contrary, and that he was moved to criticize the GOZ security forces because 'my Diocese was bleeding.' He agreed

that the GOZ has the right and duty to maintain law and order, but not at the expense of the very law and order they sought to uphold. He again urged the GOZ to work vigorously toward reconciliation among all the people of the country.

Ambassador Keeley ends his comments, "His [Mugabe's] stiff tone in response to the Pastoral statement and his sneering reference to 'sanctimonious prelates' may well stick in the craw of some churchmen who felt their pastoral statement to be balanced and moderate in tone" (US Embassy 1983b). Still, the American Ambassador also believed that the Catholic Bishops and the CCJP had been instrumental in getting the Fifth Brigade to retreat in April 1983, a belief supported by later evidence collected by Auret in her work on the CCJP. She (Auret 1992: 208) describes how the Fifth Brigade was deployed from Gokwe into the Midlands province in mid-January

... to rout out the dissidents in Nkayi, Lubane, and Tsholotsho districts of Matabeleland North. This sweep ended with the searches of the western suburbs of Bulawayo by combined elements of five brigade, one brigade, and the police, the first of March. Although elements of the 5 Brigade remain stationed at certain locations in Matabeleland north province, we have heard that the majority of the brigade has now been pulled back to the Midlands. There were a large number of credible reports of brutality by Five Brigade during this six-week sweep. The first accounts of this brutality were given by Joshua Nkomo in his January 28 Press conference and they were repeated and enlarged by Nkomo and other ZAPU members during the parliamentary debate on the issue the first week of February. Later appeals to the GOZ, mostly made outside the glare of press coverage, came from the Catholic Bishops, the Catholic Council [sic] for Peace and Justice, and various other missions. [...] After initially dismissing these allegations of brutality as the product of Nkomo's 'power-hungry' mind, or as the result of a 'western-dominated media campaign to discredit Zimbabwe', the GOZ appears to have taken the allegations somewhat more seriously.

Keeley refers to the meetings with Church leaders where Mugabe

... promised that there would be an investigation by the GOZ into the allegations of brutality, and the results would be made public. (Comment: The pull back of the Five Brigade from Matabeleland, if it has in fact occurred, can be seen as part of the GOZ efforts to rein in the troops. In addition, and this was never publicized, the Prime Minister sent several ministers and senior military commanders to talk to the fifth brigade command to get them to bring their troops under better discipline) (US Embassy 1983c).

Further evidence that the Catholic Bishops and the CCJP had helped influence the GOZ's decision to order the Fifth Brigade to pull back comes from meetings between Mike Auret and a US Congressional Delegation (CODEL) who travelled to Harare in August under the leadership of Howard Wolpe. Wolpe was a Congressional representative from Michigan who would go on to have a significant role in US Congressional anti-apartheid legislation (sanctions) later in the mid-1980s. Wolpe met separately with Mugabe and with Auret of the CCJP, and the responses from both to Wolpe's questions seem to capture well the different faces of a mutual attempt to downplay the Gukurahundi violence, given what was considered by all as 'bigger stakes' in the success of the new nation in face of South African destabilisation.

When Congressional representative Wolpe met with Mugabe, he heard a story of how the ex-ZIPRA and 'super ZAPU' dissidents were formed. Mugabe described the problems with military reintegration and the ways in which Joshua Nkomo's former ZIPRA army did not turn in weapons as expected, but rather kept "arms caches in ... 25 strategically located ZAPU-owned farms". Mugabe describes these weapons, as "... arms the Soviets sent in to Zambia for ZAPU after the elections", thus implying a Cold War plot to overthrow his democratically elected, pro-Western government by the Soviets and Nkomo. This then justified, in Mugabe's words, the sacking of "Joshua Nkomo, Josiah Chinamano, and Joseph Msika from government" and the arrest of "the ZAPU military leaders, Dabengwa and Masuku". Mugabe then suggests that the current dissidents consist of some "2,000 former ZIPRA deserters from the national army, but 10,000 remain and Mugabe is pleased they remained committed to the government". These 2,000 ex-Zipra deserters are then blamed for a series of crimes in Matabeleland" (US Embassy 1983e).

Mugabe then turned the conversation to South African destabilisation, telling Wolpe:

The SAG was not friendly – it hasn't learned the lesson that peoples can coexist. The SAG is trying to destabilize the region, he said, and cited Angola and the SAG-sponsored NRM bandits in Mozambique. As far as Zimbabwe is concerned, the SAG is trying to take advantage of the problems in Matabeleland by sending in agents calling themselves 'Super ZAPU.'

Mugabe also refers to the attacks on the oil pipelines from Mozambique by the South Africans:

The GOZ has appealed to the US and Britain for help in curbing the SAG, but the SAG continues its attacks. These SAG activities worry Mugabe a great deal. He sees them mounted out of a SAG desire to

see Zimbabwe fail. 'We give no excuse, we provide no base for the PAC or ANC.' Mugabe believes the U.S. could be helpful by using its influence to curb the SAG's destabilization campaign.

Mugabe ends the meeting, thanking Wolpe and the US for continued support

and cited the US as a friend and largest donor ... Congressman Wolpe responded emphasizing that good U.S.-Zimbabwe relations are to our mutual benefit. 'We, too, want to see Zimbabwe succeed.' He then thanked the Prime Minister for the historical overview and for putting into context recent developments. Responding to Mugabe's comments about negative press reporting, Wolpe said peace is not news and that the press does not have the necessary perspective. He praised the embassy's reporting as balanced and said one of his CODEL's objective in visiting was to help narrow the gap in perceptions. 'We will leave excited and enthusiastic.'

Both Wolpe and Mugabe thanked each other at the end of the meeting, with Wolpe "wishing Zimbabwe all the best", and Mugabe asking the CODEL "... members to 'go preach our gospel'" (US Embassy 1983e).

Perhaps in part to do with the Congressional Delegation's visit, news came from Harare on 24 August 1983 to Washington that the Fifth Brigade had been withdrawn from Matabeleland. The bearers of this news to Ambassador Keeley were Mike Auret and Bishop Patrick Mutume. Keeley explains that the information had been "corroborated by the British defence adviser, Col Anderson, and other contacts" (US Embassy 1983d). Keeley then gives a rationale for why there continued to be media stories about Fifth Brigade atrocities. "It is understood that these are new reports of old news. In some instances journalists newly-arrived in the area pick up the same stories others have already reported, in other cases local residents who remain exercised about events in February or March revive the stories when interviewed" (US Embassy 1983d). Keeley also reports of the retraining of "several officers [of the Fifth Brigade by BMATT] this was done at the request of the ZNA, to assure uniform competence in all Brigades" (US Embassy 1983d). While this would be reassuring, it also has implications for BMATT's role in Fifth Brigade actions after this date.

Representative Wolpe, along with other Congressional representatives, met with Mike Auret from the CCJP and Bishop Patrick Mutume, on 16 August 1983. Wolpe began by asking about the Catholic Bishops' and the CCJP's responses to the media reports of 'dissident activity and violence in Matabeleland' that had been reported in the American press earlier in 1983. Auret describes the efforts of the Catholic Bishops and the CCJP to influence the government once reports of state violence became known. He said the first time they intervened was in

September 1982, when reports of police brutality first surfaced. Auret had met with the Prime Minister then and, according to Auret, "The P.M. had responded well [...] to their presentation" (US Embassy 1983d).

In December 1982, during the holidays, dissident violence had escalated: "Fourteen or fifteen people had been killed during bandit attacks on buses, trains, and shops, and as a result the GOZ sent in considerable military strength to deal with the problem. In the January-March period of this year, the CCJP received a number of reports of excessive violence by these military units" (US Embassy 1983d). After giving this background, Auret then went on to downplay the media reports. "Mr. Auret emphasized his view and that of the Commission [CCJP], that the media had 'seriously exaggerated and tremendously overstated' the number of such reports. He stressed that the events took place in a small portion of the country and were mainly isolated incidents" (US Embassy 1983d). Auret then goes on to explain how the CCJP met with Mugabe on 28 March to express their latest concerns to him, while at the same time they advised the Bishops' conference to speak out about the violence.

Even though the GOZ response to the Pastoral was very negative, Mr Auret emphasised that it had had no effect at all on the excellent status of relations between the government and the Church. He had, on several occasions since March, spoken with a number of Cabinet members about security concerns, and had never noticed any antagonism or anti-church sentiment on their part. After the publication of the Bishops' statement, the situation in Matabeleland 'had improved radically, dramatically', according to Auret (US Embassy 1983d).

When the Congressional delegation asked about the reliability of the statistics being used to describe the number of civilians killed to date, Auret downplayed the large numbers that had been reported in the media.

In reply to a question as to the number of persons who had been killed during the disturbances in Matabeleland in early 1983, Auret replied that the number of 2,000, frequently cited by the press, was exaggerated. The CCJP, which takes great pains to verify precisely and report of death by name, place, and date, had not yet reached 500 confirmed deaths. Asked how this was broken down by race, Auret noted that 37 White farmers or miners had been killed in Zimbabwe (since Independence) as opposed to approximately 200 during the struggle for independence. As to how many of the dead were killed by dissidents as opposed to the army, he felt it was very hard to say, since dissidents frequently wear the same uniforms and carry the same weapons as the soldiers. This was because they had, in many instances, deserted from the army, or been in the guerrilla army before Independence (US Embassy 1983d).

Bishop Mutume was similarly cool in his responses to the Americans, telling them that the reason white farmers and isolated villagers were now attacked by dissidents had to do with the presence of the ZNA in the area, making it difficult for dissidents to attack government property and infrastructure. "The Bishop stressed the human tendency to exaggerate events in the immediate aftermath: this had perhaps been the sources of some of the wild exaggerations in the media about the situation in Matabeleland" (US Embassy 1983d). These responses reinforce the need to see the Gukurahundi as an example of state violence that unfolded over time, and that with hindsight helps explain the silences after violence. Later in the same meeting, a Congressional staffer asked Auret and Bishop Mutume for a more accurate estimate of the numbers of those killed since early 1983. Auret's answer this time was perhaps less guarded, as he replied that "nobody has any real idea of how many people died: the area was sealed off by the army; there was a curfew, and the press was barred". He did, however, reiterate his earlier point that there was "the tendency to exaggerate figures in circumstances as this" (US Embassy 1983d).

As the meeting ended, Mr Auret offered his views on Zimbabwe, "describing the National reconciliation policy as implemented by the government as a modern-day miracle in Zimbabwe". He also

noted that the Prime Minister had assured the CCJP that the reports of the atrocities in Matabeleland would be investigated, and in the last few days the Church had noted several cases of soldiers being tried, and convicted, on cases of robbery, murder, and rape. Only twice during the entire UDI period had active-duty soldiers been tried in this manner, and he felt it this was very encouraging news. His outlook for the future was absolutely positive, provided the GOZ is allowed to find its way without negative interference from the outside (US Embassy 1983d).

Such views lend weight to the perception that CCJP leaders such as Auret were willing to come to the defence of Mugabe and the GOZ when dealing with American politicians, because they knew that negative news would both hurt America's resolve to continue being the largest source of development aid to Zimbabwe, and that any negative news shared with the Congressional delegation would likely leak out to GOZ officials, and this would destroy the good relations Auret and others believed they had with Mugabe and the GOZ in 1983.

Auret described the 'negative side' where the

main problem is the threat from South Africa. The struggle inside South Africa for that country's freedom will be a long one, and will affect Zimbabwe. The policy of apartheid cannot allow a stable,

Black-run government, stable race relations, or economic success in Zimbabwe. There has been clear evidence that the South Africans were involved in attacks on the Beira-Mutare pipeline running through Mozambique, upon which Zimbabwe relies for its fuel supplies. In addition, Zimbabwe's economy is dependent on export routes through South Africa. This potential for disruption was of considerable concern to him, Mr. Auret concluded (US Embassy 1983d).

Auret's thinking on South African interventions and destabilisation was similar to that voiced by Mugabe to Wolpe in their meeting. And such views fit well with Representative Wolpe's own view that apartheid South Africa was the real threat in the region, not Mugabe and ZANU.

In February 1984, the American Embassy would report back to Washington news of many more casualties related to Operation Gukurahundi. This time the source of the information was a team of foreign journalists who were able to visit Matabeleland for three days in late February 1984. The stories they brought back to Harare and shared with Western diplomats were much more dire than the situation as reported in August 1983, as the GOZ and the Fifth Brigade had begun a new campaign in the affected provinces and this time they were using food aid as a weapon. In their interviews with 'Catholic Church sources', they learned that there was "no food entering the curfew area" and that "the GOZ had been systematically slowing the distribution of maize meal supplies to Matabeleland for some months. Now, however, it was denying it to some areas". The journalists "were shown a letter by senior officials from several churches in Bulawayo dated February 13 to Prime Minister Mugabe and President Banana. It asked them to take steps to alleviate the food shortages and to curb government forces' excesses against the Ndebele. So far, the church leaders have received no reply" (US Embassy 1984b). This is evidence, again, that the Catholic Church (and others) were using what goodwill and leverage they had with ZANU-PF rather than using international connections to call attention to the situation. Of course, their talking to reporters and showing them their letters to the government demonstrated their frustration by February 1984 with the GOZ response to their requests.

Perhaps the most important piece of news from this trip of journalists was that one of the reporters had obtained an interview with then retired ZNA General Mike Shute, who was serving on the commission established by Mugabe in June 1983 to investigate the Fifth Brigade activities in 1983. Shute told the reporter that he

believed that approximately 30,000 Ndebele have been either abused or killed by the government forces in the past year. Shute

stated that the inquiry Commission was so overwhelmed with reports of atrocities during the brief period of time its members held interviews in Bulawayo that the Commission had closed down for the time being (US Embassy 1984b).

Most significant here for the Americans was this new number of 30.000 victims coming from a reputable source. This would catch the attention of the State Department, and requests were made for further confirmations of such numbers, as these kinds of numbers would likely put Zimbabwe's substantial US Foreign aid at risk. Interestingly, the evidence such numbers were allegedly based on had been collected by the GOZ Commission that Auret and the others had hoped would force the GOZ and the Fifth Brigade to stop the violence. Shute also noted that he doubted whether the findings of the Commission "will ever be made public – as promised by Mugabe – because of their controversial nature" (US Embassy 1984b). Shute was correct on that note, and to this day the findings of the commission have not been released.

A month earlier, in January 1984, Senate Foreign Relations Committee staff members had met with Josiah Chinamano, a long-time nationalist politician and the 'acting head' of ZAPU, as Nkomo was out of the country at the time. Responding to their questions about the Chihambakwe Commission--led by chairman Simplicius Chihambakwe, Chinamano predicted that "the Commission won't amount to much, since the GOZ had stacked the cards against a fair report" (US Embassy 1984a). He described how four of the five members were "ZANU loyalists", and how they were never sworn in. He also criticised the process used to collect testimonies: "The Commission had refused to interview people in the rural areas, instead requiring them to travel to Bulawayo. Once these people return to their villages, their lives are in serious danger, and no letter of immunity from prosecution will protect them from a bullet" (US Embassy 1984a).

It is an interesting question then, in terms of the theme of silences after violence, to consider why the Catholic Bishops and the CCJP decided to work internally as a pressure group on the GOZ rather than to publicise the testimonies and evidence it collected during the first year of Operation Gukurahundi. It also leads to the interesting question as to why the extensive CCJP co-written report, *Breaking the silence*, was not released until 1997, some 13 years later. Why the hesitation and delays, whereas only eight years previously, in 1975, the CCJP worked with the CIIR to report Rhodesian atrocities internationally? The evidence from the US Embassy would seem to corroborate with Auret's own account that the Catholic Bishops and the CCJP thought that they had a better chance of stopping the violence by working within the system as Zimbabweans, rather than further alienating Mugabe and others who were already accusing them of working for outside forces, especially apartheid South Africa.

Michael Auret reflects on the question of trust and friendship in his 2009 autobiographical account in which he rightfully focuses on his relations with Robert Mugabe. Auret confirms the idea that the CCJP had built a great deal of trust with Mugabe and others in ZANU over the years; so their first inclination was to report directly to the government in the hope of having an impact in both stopping future violence by the Fifth Brigade and in bringing some kind of justice to the victims of these acts. Auret describes the first meeting between himself and Mugabe in March 1983, following the publication of the first CCJP report on atrocities. In addition to Mugabe, Ministers of State Security, Mnangagwa and Defense Sekeramayi were in attendance. Auret (2009: 81–2) writes:

They sat silent and grim-faced throughout the meeting. Mugabe heard our concerns and as we were talking he paged through our report. I thought that I had read in his eyes that he believed, perhaps for the first time, that something very serious was happening in Matabeleland. In retrospect, I now believe that he was realising that we, the church representatives, had discovered the truth of what he was doing and that he knew that the church could become a problem he would have to face some time in the future.

After this first meeting and the release of the Bishop's Easter pastoral, there was, as Keeley suggests, a positive response in terms of slowing down and, in fact, stopping the worst of the violence. However, as Auret and others note, "it was a very brief respite and then murderous actions continued" (Auret 2009: 82). Both Michael Auret and Diane Auret describe the intensive and often dangerous work done by CCJP and other religious groups to collect data during these years. Again, much of the earlier collection of evidence was motivated and inspired by the promise of the Chihambakwe Commission. The Commission began collecting oral testimonies in January 1984. Auret (2009: 84) describes how "[t]he committee set aside a paltry four days to take evidence in Bulawayo, but it was so overwhelmed by the numbers of victims wishing to tell their story that it was forced to return the following month to continue the process."

One of the main catalysts for the release of the CCJP Gukurahundi report in 1997, *Breaking the silence*, developed out of the collaborative efforts of a Bulawayo-based legal aid group led by lawyer David Coltart, who was then involved with the Bulawayo Legal Projects Centre (BLPC) in the early 1990s. Working in the most affected areas of the Gukurahundi, Coltart and others realised that they needed to systematically collect data on the atrocities, even if the government was not going to offer any compensation or restorative justice. Over the next six years, the lawyers association and the CCJP worked to collect evidence from victims and witnesses (Sawyer 2007). In his 2006 autobiography, Geoffrey Nyarota, a prominent Zimbabwean journalist who worked for the main

newspaper in Bulawayo at the time, the *Chronicle*, defends the newspaper's lack of coverage of the Gukurahundi by explaining "the government had enforced measures to ensure there would be no free dissemination of information relating to Fifth Brigade activities. Journalists, both local and foreign, risked dismissal or deportation, perhaps even arrest or death, if they entered the curfew areas in pursuit of a story (Nyarota 2006:139). The fear of targeting those who made such atrocities public must have also been great for the Catholic church members at missions, and the ability to stand up to the government to provide evidence of torture and civilian killings took great courage. In the *Breaking the silence* report itself, mention is made of the fear that informants' identities might be leaked, which led to the decision to omit the names of many of the 1000 recorded cases. "There is one, recorded instance of a person being murdered subsequent to making a phone call to Bulawayo reporting atrocities, and other instances in which people were detained and tortured after making phone calls, and told this was the reason for the detention; concern for the safety of informants was very real" (CCJP [1997] 2007: 16).

After it appeared in 1997, *Breaking the silence* shows again the important role of Catholic missions and hospitals in recording the details of the tragic events of this period:

Strict curfews prevented the movement of all civilians in Northern Matabeleland during parts of 1982 and early 1983, and in Southern Matabeleland in early 1984. This meant that resident mission staff were among the few who observed closely and recorded the unfolding of events during these years. They also made strenuous efforts at the time to protect people and to bring an end to the atrocities (CCJP [1997] 2007: 14).

Highlights of the CCJP archive include, according to the report itself,

Seventeen very detailed statements, sworn and witnessed in front of lawyers, which were prepared for the Government Committee of Inquiry in alleged atrocities by security forces in 1983 and 1984 [...] Detailed hospital records from mission hospitals [...] A significant database, known as 'Matabeleland Case Files', listing names and other details of approximately 1000 victims. ... Letters written by priests at the various missions, recounting their horror at what they were witnessing and appealing for intervention and help. [...] Many other letters from Catholic priests or parishioners appealing for help in locating missing family members, or dealing with other atrocities. [...etc...] Taken together the CCJP raw data amount to well over 1000 pages providing a comprehensive record of what happened in those years (CCJP [1997] 2007: 14).

The type of evidence included in the *Breaking the Silence* report provides ample evidence of how the Fifth Brigade and other government troops used tactics that were similar to those used during the war. An account given by a 31-year-old man, interviewed on 8 March 1984 (an interview like most that took place after Auret's meetings with the Americans), makes the point that witnessing assassinations was a form of psychological torture. The man describes a *pungwe*-style event organised by soldiers:

When we joined the gathering we were made to run around while being beaten; others were beaten lying down. There were men women and children who could roughly fill two and a half buses [200?]. The soldiers hit us with mopane sticks and kicked us with their boots.

The soldiers were speaking Shona and through an interpreter they were saying, 'You support dissidents'.

We were being beaten at the shop from about sunrise until 10 am. Then afterwards we were all taken behind our houses to a spot about 100 metres away where there are two mopane trees and we were made to sit down. The soldiers asked for two picks and two shovels and they were brought to them. While some were being beaten, others were told to fight each other while at the same time being beaten by soldiers. Others were laying down while being beaten.

As this was going on soldiers were selecting six young men at random. Three were put on one side and three on the other side of the crowd. Two soldiers then shot dead the three in one group, and two other soldiers shot dead the three young men in the other group. The other men and women and children who were sitting down were asked to sing while soldiers went among them beating them up. We were singing things like 'Pasi loNkomo, Pambili loMugabe.' ['Down with Nkomo. up with Mugabe'] Some songs were in Ndebele and others were in Shona.

The respondent then gives the names and ages of those who were shot, including his 24-year-old brother: "[...] I dug the grave in which my brother was buried – two faced one side and the other in the opposite direction. The graves were shallow, about thigh deep. They were buried in their clothes [...] We covered the graves after which we were made to join the others in the singing while being beaten."

The report points out that similar experiences during the Liberation War, of witnessing executions, had shown that "survivors of such multiple abuse were

all found to be suffering from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder: the same would be expected for 1980s survivors” (CCJP [1997] 2007: 322).

4. Conclusions

The point of the above discussion is not to paint Mike Auret, Bishop Mutume, or others as somehow naively working to cover ‘the sins’ of the early ZANU-PF government. It would be anachronistic to do so. And given the similarities between the events of the early 1980s with those of the 2000s, it is often inviting to make such direct comparisons, which compound the difficulties of seeing the Gukurahundi period as a series of events containing periods of relatively calm that were then punctuated by new tactics used by the GOZ. By looking at the evidence from this period as it unfolds, we are less likely to make quick judgements, and see that in early 1983, on the part of the CCJP and the Bishops, discretion was indeed the better part of valour. But then, as events began to show that pressures from the CCJP and the Bishops were not stopping the redeployment of the Fifth Brigade, or the use of new tactics by the GOZ, and that the GOZ commission of enquiry was not going to make a difference, these groups began to become more vocal. All the while they were still collecting evidence of abuses against civilians. Shari Eppel, who has studied the Gukurahundi period perhaps more thoroughly and carefully than anyone, recently explained this dynamic by emphasising that, in 1983, many people including those in the CCJP did not understand the full extent of the Gukurahundi violence:

As I recall, it was the Bishops who wanted to give Mugabe the benefit of the doubt. Nobody knew the scale of what was happening until we did the 1990s research - this also needs to be remembered. Mike [Auret] met personally with Mugabe in 1983 to present their findings at that time, and was given the impression by Mugabe that he was shocked and hearing about the excesses for the first time. 5 Brigade was withdrawn shortly after CCJP visited him in 1983 - and was retrained. As I have noted elsewhere, what you saw was 5 Brigade on a learning curve of how to get more clandestine with each passing year. They went from massacres in the village setting, well witnessed, in 1983 Jan- April, to a new strategy in Jan-April 1984 - starvation via curfews and translocation of citizens to detention centres such as Balagwe - there were many others too. Once more - outrage from the Catholics and some others, once again 5 Brigade withdrawn. Then redeployed ahead of the 1985 elections, and this time - disappearances. ... trying to track what happened to individuals when and where, each year is harder to track in terms of actual

outcomes and knowing where remains are now. The detention centres of 1984 created anonymity of those there – people saw others killed but did not know names, and therefore very hard to count how many exactly, as eye witness accounts could be overlapping because of the namelessness of victims [...] Of course, the disappearances of 1985 created worse dilemmas.⁶

In his autobiography published in 2009, Mike Auret himself gives a great deal of thought to this very question: should he and others have seen the writing on the wall? And if so, when? While illustrative of one of the key dilemmas when moving between collective memory and historical memory, this question is not the point of this article. What is more central here is the need to avoid casting blame onto particular groups or individuals for what may appear to be 'silences', but to explore how and why these individuals and groups, who were, in fact, risking their lives, were also willing to risk the goodwill they had built up during the Liberation War to negotiate directly at the highest levels in ZANU-PF, in order to try and influence events and stop the killings of civilians.

The counterfactual is also important in this regard. While it was beneficial for the CCJP to release evidence of Rhodesian crimes against civilians to an international audience in 1975, as such a narrative fit well into a growing international commitment to ending the Smith regime and an emphasis on human rights as a way of building international condemnation of the Smith regime, the same cannot be said of the international response to state crimes in Zimbabwe in 1983. As Phimister (2008) points out, the Western media was surprisingly well informed about the atrocities early in 1983, and given more powerful Cold War and Regional interests, the lack of international response was all the more telling. While it is possible to see the ways in which the international community 'rationalised' Gukurahundi so as to protect ZANU-PF and Mugabe in the context of the Cold War in Southern Africa, it is also important to remember that the non-state actors, particularly the anti-apartheid movement and those who remained in solidarity with Southern Africa's historical liberation movements, were no more willing to consider, at that time, the initial Fifth Brigade atrocities as anything more than 'the lesser of two evils', given the assumption that Zimbabwean forces had been drawn into the conflict by South Africa's Super ZAPU and other destabilisation efforts (Scarnecchia 2011, Phimister 2008). Similarly, with all the coverage of Fifth Brigade atrocities in the Western media, there was very little outcry from either government or non-governmental groups for justice for the victims and an ending of the violence. In such a situation, perhaps the Catholic Bishops' and the CCJP's belief that more good would come from internal pressures on the GOZ was

6 Shari Eppel, personal communication with author, 23 October 2014. See also Eppel 2005, 2013.

warranted. Nor could it be reasonably argued that, had Auret and Bishop Mutume taken a more alarmist line with Wolpe and the other American representatives, the outcome would have been any different in terms of continued US support for Mugabe's government in 1983. Wolpe and others were locked in a battle with conservative politicians such as Senator Jesse Helms over US support for South Africa, and from Wolpe's position, a strong and successful Zimbabwe was more important than holding Mugabe accountable for the state crimes of Operation Gukurahundi. Wolpe would have likely returned to Washington to "preach our [ZANU's] gospel" as Mugabe had requested in their August 1983 meeting.

Given all of these factors, it may be possible, as these histories shift from collective memory to historical memory, to see the strategy as one of applying whatever pressure they had on ZANU in 1983 to stop the violence, knowing full well that the Bishops' pastorals and the CCJP's statements would reach the international community, even if they did not seek such publicity as they had done in 1975. In addition, they may have been willing to deflect international criticisms of Mugabe and the GOZ in 1983 in order to possibly gain more influence with ZANU leaders to stop the violence. That this strategy did not, in fact, stop the next wave of violence in early 1984, but rather changed the strategy of the Fifth Brigade, does not in itself lessen the impact of the CCJP's initial response to the violence, nor can the weight of actions after 1983 be used anachronistically to assess the costs and benefits of actions during 1983. As evidence from 1985 demonstrates, Auret spoke out bluntly against GOZ violence at a private meeting attended by diplomats and the international media prior to the 1985 elections. The new American Ambassador, David C Miller, noted that, although Auret was aware of the fact that his criticisms would leak to the international media, he still chose to speak out about the violence against opposition politicians and their supporters in a private forum. "Auret displayed the courage of his convictions in speaking so forcefully in public, and may suffer criticism from Mugabe or the GOZ as a result" (US Embassy 1985).

What is most important to consider is the contingency of diverse interests and powers that created the room for Mugabe and others in ZANU-PF to treat the suppression of ZAPU and the dissidents within a process not unlike the guerrilla war itself – where both the Rhodesian government and the guerrilla forces had used tactics similar to those used in Operation Gukurahundi. For the US, it was the need to make 'constructive engagement' work that softened the criticisms of Mugabe's internal strategies. For the UK and Thatcher's government, it was the need to maintain the perception that Zimbabwe and the rise of a 'pro-Western' Mugabe was a major foreign policy victory that kept them from being more critical. The benefits from British training of the newly integrated ZNA, and continued arms sales to the GOZ also weighed heavily on any consideration of British censorship

or reductions in development aid to Zimbabwe in the early 1980s. For the Catholic church, or more precisely the Bishops' Council and the CCJP, it was the continued sense that their support of ZANU and assistance to ZANLA during the war had given them influence in the new government that can most likely be viewed as the motivation to cooperate with ZANU to bolster the government's international image during 1983. The knowledge that too great a criticism of Mugabe and his colleagues could very well lead to a reversal of racial reconciliation and the strong role of the Catholic church in many aspects of society meant that it was best to try and solve these issues internally rather than to expect international support, as the CCJP and the Bishops had effectively done in the 1970s. Much more work needs to be carried out on this topic, and likely, as more evidence surfaces, it will be possible to see how the Catholic leaders shifted their tactics by early 1984. Similarly, the history of the collection of individual stories and evidence by the CCJP and others that continued well beyond the early 1980s, and the roles of many more individuals who risked their lives to collect such evidence or those who provided their own stories, still need a more expansive historical treatment. At the same time, the *Breaking the silence* report and the other publications by Catholic voices in Zimbabwe will remain major contributions to any future reconciliation and restorative justice in Zimbabwe.

Bibliography

- AURET D (1992) *Reaching for justice: the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace looks back at the past twenty years, 1972-1992*. Harare: Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace.
- AURET M (2009) *From liberator to dictator: an insider's account of Robert Mugabe's descent into tyranny*. Cape Town: David Phillip Publishers.
- CATHOLIC COMMISSION FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE (CCJP) ([1975] 1999) *The man in the middle: torture, resettlement and eviction*. (Includes the Civil War in Rhodesia Report). London: Catholic Institute for International Relations.
- CATHOLIC COMMISSION FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE (CCJP) ([1997] 2007) *Breaking the silence, building true peace: a report on the disturbances in Matabeleland and the Midlands, 1980-1988*. London: Catholic Institute for International Relations.
- CONFINO A (1997) Collective memory and cultural history: problems of method. *American Historical Review* 102(5): 1386-403.
- CRANE S (1997) Writing the individual back into collective memory. *American Historical Review* 102(5): 1372-85.
- DAVIES N (1983a) Mugabe stops the talk and starts to kill. *Guardian*, 7 March.
- DAVIES N (1983b) The massacre that misfired. *Guardian*, 23 March: 15.
- EPPEL S (2005) Gukurahundi: the need for truth and reparation. In: Raftopoulos B and Savage T (eds) *Zimbabwe: injustice and political reconciliation*. Harare: Weaver Press.
- EPPEL S (2013) Repairing a fractured nation: challenges and opportunities in post-GPA Zimbabwe. In: Raftopoulos B (ed) *The hard road to reform: the politics of Zimbabwe's global political agreement*. Harare: Weaver Press, pp. 211-50.
- LAMONT BISHOP D (1977) *Speech from the dock*. Suffolk: Levin Mayhaw.
- LINDEN I (1979) *Church and state in Rhodesia, 1959-1979*. Kaiser: Grunewald.
- MELDRUM A (1983) Fear continues to rule in Matabeleland. *Guardian*, 5 July: 7.
- MUZONDIDYA J AND NDLOVU-GATSHENI S (2007) 'Echoing silences': ethnicity in postcolonial Zimbabwe, 1980-2007. *African Journal on Conflict Resolution* 7(2): 257-97.
- NDLOVU-GATSHENI S (2012) Rethinking Chimurenga and Gukurahundi in Zimbabwe: a critique of partisan national history. *African Studies Review* 55(3): 1-26.
- NOVICK P (2000) *The Holocaust and collective memory: the American experience*. London: Bloomsbury.
- NYAROTA G (2006) *Against the grain: memoirs of a Zimbabwean newsman*. Cape Town: Zebra.
- PHIMISTER I (2008) The making and meanings of the massacres in Matabeleland. *Development Dialogues* 50: 199-218.

- SACHIKONYE L (2011) *When a state turns on its citizens: 60 years of institutionalized violence in Zimbabwe*. Johannesburg: Jacana.
- SAWYER E (2007) Gukurahundi in Zimbabwe – A speech given at Chatham House, September 4, 2002. <<http://www.davidcoltart.com/2007/09/gukurahundi-in-zimbabwe-a-speech-given-at-chatham-house-london/>>
- SCARNECCHIA T (2011) Rationalizing Gukurahundi: cold war and South African foreign relations with Zimbabwe, 1981-1983. *Kronos* 37: 1.
- TODD J (2007) *Through the darkness: A life in Zimbabwe*. Cape Town: Zebra Press.
- UNITED STATES EMBASSY, HARARE (US Embassy) (1983a) Telegram to Secretary of State. 29 March. FIOA Case No F-2-12-29009 Doc No C05256645.
- UNITED STATES EMBASSY, HARARE (US Embassy) (1983b) Mugabe criticizes Bishops' statement. 6 April. FIOA Case No F-2-12-29009 Doc No C05256649.
- UNITED STATES EMBASSY, HARARE (US Embassy) (1983c) The current security situation in Zimbabwe. 28 April. FIOA Case No F-2-12-29009 Doc No C05256659.
- UNITED STATES EMBASSY, HARARE (US Embassy) (1983d) CODEL Wolpe meeting with Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace. 24 August. Case No F-2012-29009 Doc No C05256703.
- UNITED STATES EMBASSY, HARARE (US Embassy) (1983e) CODEL Wolpe: Meeting with Prime Minister. 19 August. Case No F-2012-29009 Doc No C05256697.
- UNITED STATES EMBASSY, HARARE (US Embassy) (1984a) Staffdel Christenson and Stetson had met with Josiah Chinamano. 25 January. Case No F-2012-29009 Doc No C05256748.
- UNITED STATES EMBASSY, HARARE (US Embassy) (1984b) Atrocities and food shortages in Matabeleland. 28 February. Case No F-2012-29009 Doc No C05256769.
- UNITED STATES EMBASSY, HARARE (US Embassy) (1985) Justice & Peace Commission decries pre-election violence. 29 March. Case No F-2012-29009 Doc No C05256920.