

The Case of Elim Mission 'Massacre' During Zimbabwe's Liberation War: Will the Truth Ever be Known?

by

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Abstract

The article argues that most general texts on Zimbabwe's war of liberation have accounts of the killing of eight missionaries and four of their children at Emmanuel Secondary School on June 23, 1978 which incident has been referred to as the Elim 'massacre'. However, thirty-nine years after the incident the truth has remained hidden and unknown because no hard evidence has been cited by commentators or historians to support their conclusions. Hence, this article seeks to probe the evidence that is cited in some of the general historiographies on Zimbabwe's war of liberation, and makes the case that the truth may remain buried in the unsorted ZANLA records or has vanished altogether with the destruction of Rhodesian military records.

Introduction

This article interrogates the evidence that has been used to identify the perpetrators of Elim mission 'massacre'. This event took place during the war of decolonization when Africans in Rhodesia engaged in an armed struggle against the white colonists. Attempts to achieve independence through constitutional means had come to naught because the white settlers stood in the way of independence for the Africans. Africans to the north of Rhodesia in Zambia, Malawi, Kenya and Tanzania had been granted independence in the early 1960s and the Africans in Rhodesia had hoped for the same. The white Rhodesians declared independence from Britain in November 1965 thus underlining the fact that they were not prepared to give independence to the Africans. Most of the black nationalists were incarcerated by the white government of Ian Smith, who was the Prime Minister of Rhodesia. It became very clear to the Africans that they had to resort to an armed struggle against the recalcitrant white Rhodesians to gain independence.

The leadership of the two liberation movements namely the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) and the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) who had survived arrest initiated the armed struggle from exile. From the mid-1960s the armed wings of the two nationalist parties waged a war of liberation against the white Rhodesians. The two armed wings were the Zimbabwe African People's Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA) and the Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (ZANLA). The two liberation armies were based in Zambia and infiltrated into Rhodesia from this sanctuary. It was after Mozambique gained its independence in 1975 that ZANU and its liberation army (ZANLA) moved out of Zambia and established their base in Mozambique. The theatres of operation for the two liberation armies became clearly defined as they infiltrated into Rhodesia from different host countries. ZANLA's area of operation covered the whole of the eastern part of Rhodesia whilst ZIPRA's covered mainly the north-western part of Rhodesia. It was commonplace that civilians in the rural areas, where most of the fighting took place, were murdered and the fighting factions denied responsibility and blamed the other. This was the case with the Elim Mission incident which occurred in the battlefield that pitted the Rhodesian security forces against the ZANLA guerrilla fighters. This event that took place in 1978 has been cited to have epitomised the brutalities associated with this kind of war. Writing in 1982, Caute, a journalist-cum-author wrote that on the night of 23 June 1978 violent death came to Elim Pentecostal mission when eight missionaries and four of their children were savagely murdered.¹ The two adversaries in this part of Rhodesia namely the Rhodesian security forces and the ZANLA forces blamed each other for the killings

The Rhodesian security forces and ZANLA recorded their activities during the war. Rhodesian military records are said to have been either destroyed or spirited to South Africa in 1980.² The wartime Rhodesian military records in South Africa have been made accessible largely to researchers who are sympathetic to the white Rhodesians.³ The truth from these documents will forever remain hidden because no one among the writers would want to tarnish the name of the glamorised Rhodesian regime forces. ZANLA's war records are kept at Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) headquarters in Harare and have not been opened up to the public because access to them is still somehow restricted.⁴ Most of ZANLA's war records have not been sorted out and properly catalogued. Once the process of filing ZANLA records has been completed and full access is granted to the public perhaps then the truth may come out. This is only if a group of the ZANLA forces was responsible. In circumstances of this nature the validity of oral testimonies may be questionable because these could have been manipulated to advance certain positions. Documentary records from each of the warring parties could unlock the mystery of who between them had the missionaries' blood on their hands.⁵

Many 'dirty tricks' that were committed by units of Rhodesian armed forces might not have been recorded. The 1975 Indemnity and Compensation Act gave the Rhodesian security forces the *carte blanche* to kill with impunity.

Among the units of the Rhodesian security forces, suspicion fell on the Selous Scouts largely because they were dispensers of 'dirty tricks' during the war and after the war they showered themselves with accolades for having used these 'dirty tricks' successfully.⁶ The Selous Scouts were able to achieve their goals when an operational area was temporarily banned or "frozen" to all other Rhodesian army units for the sole reason that the former were disguised as ZANLA guerrillas and in danger from the other units.⁷ My contention is that even if no record of the killings was made, available Rhodesian military documents could indicate for example that the area around Elim might have been "frozen" during the time of the massacre. This could provide a lead to the perpetrators of the murders. On the other hand, ZANLA commanders were obliged to produce field reports but sometimes they did not compile these reports but information in some of the reports might provide clues to implicate them if they were responsible. Whilst there are strong possibilities that reports from both camps could have been censored and destroyed chances are that some of the reports might have survived. These could possibly provide leads to the culprits.

Examination of Literature on the Elim Massacre

Existing literature (which is very limited) that has focused on the killing of the missionaries at Emmanuel Secondary School in the Vumba Mountains has come mainly from white Rhodesians and their sympathisers.⁸ This section aims to subject these to scrutiny and interrogate the evidence that was used to conclude that ZANLA forces were responsible for the brutal murder of the missionaries. This literature could have drawn from sources that were part of the avalanche of propaganda that was peddled to depict ZANLA forces as "terrorists" bent on committing acts of brutalities.⁹ However, the involvement of academics in this debate makes this discussion not only appropriate but relevant.

Caute, who has paid some attention on the Elim event, showing sympathy with the white Rhodesians said that the testimonies of black teachers and pupils at Elim Mission were unanimous: the killer gang had identified themselves as ZANLA freedom fighters.¹⁰ He proceeded to mention that Elias Chikashana, Deputy Headmaster and Andrew Tinonesana, a teacher, giving evidence to the inquest on 21 August, recalled how six guerrillas in balaclavas had arrived at the classrooms at about 8.30 in the evening and had marshalled all 250 pupils for an open air meeting.¹¹ The school must close, they had said in Shona, 'Because the fees go to the Government which uses the money to buy ammunition to kill us'. The use of the evidence from testimonies of teachers and pupils at the school given at the inquest to conclude that ZANLA forces were responsible lacks credibility largely because Rhodesian Selous Scouts also disguised themselves as ZANLA forces.

The other issue is that the inquest happened when the war was still raging on and it was unlikely that any contrary evidence from the pupils and teachers would have been made public. For this reason the pronouncements by the deputy headmaster and the teacher during the inquest would not deserve to be taken as serious evidence. It is no wonder that academics have ignored this as evidence to blame ZANLA.

Caute revealed that two visiting Tory MPs, John Stokes and Ivor Stanbrook were taken to Grand Reef Base, a Rhodesian Air force camp just outside Mutare on 11 August to be shown two bodies of dead guerrillas.¹² A diary belonging to one of the dead men named as Luke Madjuimbo recalled that two ZANLA sections had taken part in the Elim 'massacre' and named the respective section leaders. A page in the diary read:

Friday 23 June is the day near Matundo Camp in Zimunya district. Time of operation: from 6.30 to 9 pm.... . Total number of comrades who were there, 21. There followed a list of items 'captured' such as cassettes, screw drivers, sheets, money."We killed 12 whites including four babies as remembrance for Nyadzonia, Chimoio, Tembwe and in Zimbabwe massacres". One of the visiting British MPs declared that after twenty years at the English Criminal Bar, he felt entirely satisfied by the evidence presented them.¹³

Caute revealed that the names of the section commanders of the ZANLA forces which were responsible were mentioned in the diaries. If the names had been made public these could be useful to corroborate what could be gleaned from ZANLA archival documents and oral testimonies of the local population. Caute's sources on the diaries were most likely Rhodesian military authorities because Martins and Johnson writing in 1981 earlier than Caute pointed out that Rhodesian military authorities claimed that war diaries were found on the bodies of two dead guerrillas detailing the killings.¹⁴ Caute also depended on reports from the Rhodesian print media because his list of the missionaries who were murdered was sourced from *The Sunday Mail* edition of 25 June 1978.¹⁵

Although Caute depended on Rhodesian sources it is clear that he had a penchant for citing diary entries of murdered guerrillas as evidence because on the St. Paul's Musami incident of 6 February 1977 he also quoted a diary entry of a dead ZANLA man as evidence.¹⁶ This practice of citing diaries as evidence was favoured by Rhodesian military authorities because they thought this would give weight to their conclusions. The capture of these diaries sometimes provided the Rhodesian army with useful information about ZANLA forces but in cases where identity of those groups responsible for the murder of missionaries was an issue, lies were peddled and such diaries were never shown to the world.

Caute did not question the reliability of the evidence of diaries at all and he clearly demonstrated where his sympathies lay and his bigotry found expression in the stereotype clearly brought out by what he said about the killings at Elim. It looks like he arrived at his conclusions before he interrogated the available evidence. He wrote:

The scene encapsulated almost every nightmare white people had ever entertained about the barbarities of primitive Africa; rape, the bayoneting of a tiny baby, banana skins scattered about as a sign of apish brute indifference. Only one legendary horror was withheld: the victims had not been eaten.¹⁷

Godwin and Hancock, authors of a 1995 book on Rhodesia during the war, exonerated the Selous Scouts and declared that a ZANLA group was probably responsible for the murder of six women, three men and four children at the Pentecostal School in the Vumba.¹⁸ These two authors pointed out that they were assured by members of the Rhodesian political and military hierarchy, including those who regularly practised "dirty tricks" that the Rhodesians were not responsible. The reliability of these assurances from Rhodesian military and political leaders raises questions in these circumstances.¹⁹ These leaders were enmeshed in the whole matrix of propaganda that went with the war and possibly had not shed off this characteristic whatever time they gave their assurances. Godwin and Hancock suggested that in the absence of other evidence they were inclined to accept that a ZANLA group was responsible.²⁰ The two authors could have indicated that the issue still remained a mystery in the absence of incontrovertible evidence rather than suggest that ZANLA was responsible.

The fact that Godwin and Hancock did not mention the names of the members of the political and military hierarchy who exonerated members of the Rhodesian security forces makes this evidence tenuous. Worse still, throughout the war Rhodesian security forces never admitted responsibility for any "dirty tricks" in Zimbabwe and it would not be surprising when they denied any role in the Elim massacre.²¹ Godwin and Hancock ignored the evidence given by Caute of African teachers and students who at the inquest of 12 August in which ZANLA guerrillas were alleged to be the perpetrators. This speaks volumes about the credibility of Caute's evidence which the two authors could have pursued and mentioned. Godwin and Hancock did not provide any valid evidence to resolve the mystery that has shrouded the Elim massacre.

The most interesting evidence was provided by Maxwell, an academic who has carried out research in that part of Rhodesia where the Elim Mission murder happened. He contributed a chapter in a book on the incident and claimed that he got evidence from Peter Griffiths which implicated ZANU's fighters for the murder of the Elim missionaries and members of their families.²² Maxwell wrote:

That shortly after the war had ended, eight members of the platoon responsible for killing missionaries at Elim were in a camp at Entumbane. Together they experienced a vision in which they saw the cross and the hand of God coming against them in judgement. Seven of them immediately left the country and enrolled in Bible Colleges in East and West Africa, whilst the eighth not having a passport joined a Pentecostal Bible College in Harare. The platoon commander had left Goromonzi at the age of fourteen to become the youngest platoon commander in the operation zones under the *chimurenga* name of Devil Hondo (War Devil). His pseudonym was Gary Hove. Gary Hove met with Griffiths and expressed great concern about the relatives of the Elim martyrs. A ninth member of the platoon screamed and cried for mercy when a pastor was preaching at a rehabilitation centre for ex-combatants in Troutbeck. He told the pastor that he was one of those responsible for the killing of the Elim missionaries.²³

On hearing the case of the vision, Peter Griffiths is said to have made arrangements to meet the platoon commander who headed the group of ZANLA forces who committed the murder at Elim. The platoon commander of the group that committed the murder was said to have operated under the *chimurenga* name of Devil Hondo which name Maxwell tried to translate to War Devil. These names were not meant to be translated because their meaning lay in the language used, whether English or Shona, and one is perplexed as to why Maxwell made an attempt to translate the name.

Maxwell indicated that testimonies of the African students and staff present at the school at the time of the massacre, point to ZANLA.²⁴ Maxwell did not explain why these testimonies made valid evidence. He further suggested that the strongest evidence came from the guerrillas themselves. This evidence was based on the vision that some of the ZANLA forces responsible for the Elim massacre experienced. Maxwell accepted this on the grounds, as he said, that there were many other examples of other cases of comrades who converted to Christianity perhaps as a way to atone for the 'crimes' they committed during the war of liberation.²⁵ He even mentioned the case of 160 whites who were in the same predicament and turned to religion. Maxwell's evidence seems to be the most recent and is cited as the closest to resolving the issue of the perpetrators but beyond the vision no corroborative evidence is provided. For example the names of guerrillas who operated in the vicinity of Elim Mission would be known to the local population and could be used against the names Griffiths could have got from the platoon leader he interviewed.

Maxwell also relied on Cate whose evidence has been discussed and questioned earlier on in this article. Maxwell applauded Cate for what he labelled a vivid description of the scene after the massacre. By applauding Cate's description of the murder, Maxwell shows that he is also guilty of the stereotype that only ZANLA forces could commit such a crime?²⁶

Griffiths told Maxwell that the Chimurenga name of the platoon commander was Devil Hondo and that he went by the pseudonym of Gary Hove.²⁷ Notwithstanding that the Chimurenga name and pseudonym meant the same thing there was no attempt to explain the ambiguity created by having two names by one ZANLA cadre.²⁸ If Griffiths had recorded Gary Hove's real name further interviews of him could be carried out and the solution to the case would be found. Caute could have noted the names of the leaders of the ZANLA group said to be responsible for the killings from the diaries and these could be checked against records from ZANLA documents or from testimonies of the local population. Maxwell did not corroborate Caute's evidence on diaries nor did Godwin and Hancock also comment on Caute's evidence. These disjointed ZANLA-incriminated descriptions of the Elim incident do not help in unlocking the logjam of who the perpetrators of the killing of the missionaries in the Vumba were. It is clear that Maxwell as well as Godwin and Hancock depended on some of Caute's evidence on the Elim massacre but failed to develop on it.

Maxwell alerted us to Griffiths's claim that he was told by an official in the British Foreign Office called Patrick Laver that Robert Mugabe had "unofficially" apologised for the massacre.²⁹ Mugabe was said to have further stated that he had called the platoon commander back for disciplining but the guerrilla in question had refused to return. Maxwell said that Caute also made the same point that Mugabe apologised in 1978. Maxwell might not have been aware that from time to time during the war members of the Military High Command visited the war front to assess developments and address challenges that confronted the cadres in the field.³⁰ Mugabe was indeed commander-in-chief of ZANLA troops but he did not concern himself with these operational issues of the guerrillas. One guerrilla commander who operated in the Bikita Detachment, Sub Shumba, had a number of charges laid against him and was withdrawn from the field.³¹ The charges against Sub Shumba were not as grave and serious as was the murder of missionaries and their children but was successfully recalled to the rear. Evidence from ZANU's war documents show that Mugabe and other politicians were based in Maputo and their link to the fighting cadres was through the ZANLA High Command whose headquarters was at Chimoio which was close to the battle zones in Zimbabwe.

Selous Scouts were fingered for the murders by especially the liberation movement but the silence of Ron Reid-Daly in Peter Stiff (1982) in which the role of the Selous Scouts is glowingly narrated leaves readers wondering.³² At least there is mention of the massacre but no attempt is made to clear the name of the Selous Scouts. Ellert, who served in the British South African Police in Rhodesia for sixteen years, had this to say about the Selous Scouts in his book:

The Scouts operated with the simple credo that the ends justify the means, and shrouded in secrecy, the unit developed a sinister reputation and to this day their war-time exploits remain secret.³³

The point that Ellert was making was that the role of the Selous Scouts in the 'horrors of the war' in which they might have been involved would remain a secret. This would include the Elim mission killings if they were involved. To exonerate this unit of the Rhodesian army forces becomes difficult in these circumstances. Ellert however pointed out that there was no clear cut proof that the Selous Scouts were ever involved.³⁴ In the same breath, Ellert indicated that guerrillas got medical supplies and other forms of assistance from mission stations. Such assistance was willingly provided and a number of clerics were severely punished by the Rhodesian government.³⁵ The balance of probabilities, Ellert has suggested that there were few guerrillas who wanted to harm missionaries.³⁶

Martins and Johnson subtly dismissed both the Rhodesian military authorities' claim that there were details of the Elim killings on war diaries found on the body of two dead guerrillas and the testimony of one African who said he had served with the Selous Scouts to a team of four lawyers from the International Association of Democratic Lawyers implicating security forces.³⁷ The dismissal is evident when the two authors pointed out that the brutal massacre issue was never solved though each side claimed the other was responsible.³⁸ Their inclinations was however towards blaming the Rhodesian army on the grounds that many missionaries supplied guerrillas with food, medicine and medical care and were generally sympathetic, and were a more obvious target for the Rhodesians than the ZANLA forces.

Who Could Have Been Responsible? ZANLA Forces: The Possibility

The avowed enemies of ZANLA forces were the Rhodesian colonial government and security forces as well as all those who collaborated with them. African peasants who chose to collaborate with the Rhodesians and worked against the liberation forces also became enemies of ZANLA forces and the war witnessed the execution of such people.³⁹ If missionaries decided to connive with Rhodesian security forces against the liberation forces they faced the wrath of the ZANLA forces. Missionaries could refuse to co-operate with freedom fighters and since it was not practical to be neutral during the war such missionaries were viewed with suspicion by the guerrilla forces.⁴⁰ If the missionaries at Elim mission possibly refused to co-operate with ZANLA forces they became potential targets.

There has not been any evidence that has confirmed or indicated that the Elim Mission missionaries ever refused to work hand in hand with the guerrillas. Maxwell wrote that the Elim missionaries received a letter from guerrillas telling them to clear out.⁴¹ In the absence of the reason for ordering the missionaries to leave the mission the authenticity of such a letter would be doubted and if it was made available it could help solve the mystery. It is my contention that if ZANU guerrillas were responsible for the murder on the pretext that the missionaries refused to co-operate with them such a report could be available among the many documents housed at ZANU (PF) headquarters. The execution of those missionaries or rural people who refused to co-operate with the guerrillas and connived with the Rhodesian security forces was viewed as 'revolutionary justice'. For that reason the ZANLA forces who could have been responsible would not have hesitated to write a report of the incident.

Maxwell alleged that the missionaries' relations with the guerrillas were mediated by the African population.⁴² He proceeded to point out that it was possible for the missionaries to be sold out by staff members, students and locals from outside the school.⁴³ Maxwell never attempted to state why the missionaries would be sold out. In most operational zones guerrillas had direct contact with missionaries and once affable relations had been established *vanamujibha* could be sent to the missionaries with letters of requests.⁴⁴ Missionaries became alive to attempts by these intermediaries to create a wedge between them and the guerrillas and they did not hesitate to request to meet with the guerrillas. The Rhodesian Ministry of Information and Immigration published a booklet titled, *The Murder of Missionaries in Rhodesia*. This book catalogued incidents in which missionaries were killed during the war and in all instances the guilty tag was attached on the ZANLA or ZIPRA liberation fighters. Most writings on the Elim Mission 'massacre' has drawn from this booklet. The Ministry responsible for the publication of this booklet was the key propaganda instrument of the Rhodesian government. Therefore the proposition that the ZANLA forces murdered the missionaries at Elim becomes questionable.

The Rhodesian Security Forces-The Possibility

Clashes between the missionaries and the Rhodesian authorities were a common occurrence during the war. Donal Lamont and Janice MacLaughlin were two missionaries who were deported from colonial Zimbabwe when it became clear to Rhodesian authorities that they supported the ZANLA liberation forces. Most literature on Zimbabwe's liberation war has pointed to the affable relations that obtained between the missionaries and the liberation forces.

Missionaries provided logistical support to the fighters in the bush especially food, clothing and such items like cigarettes and watches. It became known to the Rhodesian security forces that missionaries met no mishaps in the operational zones because they were generally on good terms with the ZANLA fighters. This exposed the missionaries to odium from the colonial forces.

The missionaries also assisted the liberation forces by securing provisions for the latter on behalf of the rural people. One committee member told me how they collected money in the villages to buy provisions for the comrades and how the priest at Bondolfi Mission would go into Masvingo town to get provisions for them.⁴⁵

The possibility that the Selous Scouts could have killed the Elim missionaries has been discussed. The Rhodesians in general and the army forces experienced frustration during the war particularly when they saw that they were failing to rein in the rural people. They could vent their frustrations on the white missionaries who they felt deserved to be punished for the 'crime' of being on good terms with people they viewed as terrorists. The Rhodesian forces were also infuriated by the fact that missionaries survived in the operational zones and for this reason could react by killing them knowing fully well that the propaganda machinery at their disposal would blame the ZANLA forces. Caute revealed the behaviour of one Special Branch officer towards Father Prosser, who was the Principal of St. Augustine High School near Mutare. The young officer sneeringly described all missionaries as Marxists and Communists and asked Father Prosser if he had done anything for Rhodesia.⁴⁶ Such behaviour by the members of Rhodesia's army forces did not help their case of refuting the responsibility in murdering the white missionaries at Emmanuel Secondary School in the Vumba.

Conclusion

The Zimbabwean war of independence is replete with a number of 'mysteries' which have not been unlocked or resolved. These 'mysteries' included the murder of non-combatants who of course became victims in this guerrilla war which not only pitted the Rhodesian security forces and the armed wings of the liberation armies but involved them. Among the civilians were the rural African population who included the peasants, rural businessmen, and professional people like teachers, health workers and agricultural workers. White or African missionaries at rural mission posts were potential victims and hence during the war dead bodies of missionaries were found and none of the fighting forces claimed responsibilities. The murder of white missionaries and their children at Elim Mission is one such unresolved mystery.

Tempers ran high when such incidents happened and unsubstantiated charges were made. The mysteries were used as propaganda material when the adversaries blamed each other for killing allegedly innocent civilians. Academics can take up the challenge to unravel the 'mysteries' by way of their investigative studies.

The culprits, who committed the murders at Elim Mission, have not been conclusively identified. The evidence that has been cited by those who have written about this event has not been convincing. The murders could have been committed by the Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (ZANLA) guerrilla fighters or by one of the units of the Rhodesian armed forces.

Endnotes

¹ D. Cauter, *Under the Skin: The Death of White Rhodesia* (Evanston, 1983),

² N. Bhebe and T. Ranger, eds, *Society in Zimbabwe's Liberation War* (Harare, 1996), 3

³ Ron Reid-Daly made this admission in his tribute to Andre Dennison who commanded 2 RAR 'A' Company during the war.

⁴ I was given permission during the period September 2008 to August 2009 to access ZANLA archival documents for my Doctor of Literature & Philosophy (History) studies which I am still pursuing. I however could only access documents that had been sorted and filed.

⁵ The possibility of censoring what documents to make available to researchers should not be lost sight of.

⁶ See Ron Reid-Daly, *Selous Scouts: Top Secret War* (Albertyon, 1982)

⁷ H. Ellert, *The Rhodesian Front War: Counter-insurgency and guerrilla war in Rhodesia 1962 to 1980* (Gweru, 1989), 117

⁸ There has not been any literature from African authors on the incident.

⁹ Among these were Rhodesia Ministry Information, Immigration and Tourism publication, 'Murder of Missionaries in Rhodesia.'

¹⁰ Caute, *Under the Skin*, 256

¹¹ *Ibid*, 256

¹² *Ibid*, 257.

¹³ *Ibid*, 257.

¹⁴ D. Martins and P. Johnson, *The Struggle for Zimbabwe*, (Harare 1981), 282.

¹⁵ Caute, *Under the Skin*, 255.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, 94. At St.Pauls' Musami seven Roman Catholic missionaries were murdered on 7 February 1977 and a similar debate raged on and those responsible have not been identified up to now.

¹⁷ Caute, *Under the Skin*, 256

¹⁸ P. Godwin and Hancock, I. 'Rhodesians Never Die': *The Impact of War and Political change in White Rhodesia c1970-1980* (Harare, 1995), 225.

¹⁹This would be as good as accepting say denials from guerrilla leaders as well. This flies in the face of scholarship.

²⁰Godwin and Hancock, 'Rhodesians Never Die' 363.

²¹In their attempts to eliminate ZANLA guerrillas the Selous Scouts employed methods that resulted in the death of the civilians. These constituted some of the 'dirty tricks' they became notorious for. Ellert said that poisoned clothes killed both guerrillas and the rural Africans. Selous Scouts also poisoned drinking water resulting in the death of especially the ordinary people.

²² Peter Griffiths was the headmaster of Emmanuel Secondary school at Elim but at the time of the massacre he was on leave and was not at the place. Griffiths claimed to have got this information from the interview he held with the ZANLA platoon commander of the group that was responsible.

²³D. Maxwell, 'Christianity and the War in Eastern Zimbabwe: The Case of Elim Mission', in N. Bhebe and T. Ranger, eds. *Society in Zimbabwe's Liberation War* (Harare, 1996), 84.

²⁴ Maxwell, 'Christianity and the War in Eastern Zimbabwe', 69. Maxwell interviewed only one Colin Kahuni and Griffiths in 1991. It seems these testimonies were gathered by Griffiths.

²⁵ *Ibid*,

²⁶The description is quoted above on page 9 of this article.

²⁷ Maxwell, 'Christianity and the War in Eastern Zimbabwe', 84.

²⁸ Both Maxwell and Griffiths perhaps believed that liberation fighters had chimurenga names as well as pseudonyms. No evidence point to this.

²⁹This came from endnote 56 in Maxwell, '*Christianity and the War in Eastern Zimbabwe*'.

³⁰ Minutes of High Command meetings include reports of visits to the front by the military hierarchy.

³¹ ZANU Archives: File: Department of Information and Publicity, Chimurenga Defence Operation, Security and Intelligence Report, 20 June 1979.

³² P. Stiff, *Selous Scouts: Top Secret War* (Johannesburg, 1982).

³³ H. Ellert, (1989). *The Rhodesian Front War: Counter-insurgency and guerrilla war in Rhodesia, 1962-1980*. (Gweru, 1989), 91.

³⁴ *Ibid*, 118.

³⁵ Bishop Donal Lamont and Sr. Janice MacLaughlin were the most celebrated clerics who were ultimately deported by the Rhodesian government for their apparent support of the liberation forces.

³⁶ Ellert

³⁷ Martins and Johnson, *The Struggle for Zimbabwe*, 282.

³⁸ *Ibid*, 282.

³⁹Several executions of these people by ZANLA forces appear in field reports compiled by the commanders.

⁴⁰ At Gokomere High School 16 kilometers north of Masvingo there was a white priest by the name of Joseph Huber who called guerrilla fighters terrorists and did not hide his hatred of the freedom fighters and expressed this in his religious lessons. Such missionaries who found it easy to work with the Rhodesian forces could be killed by the liberation forces. Father Huber however survived the war.

⁴¹Maxwell, 'Christianity and the war in Eastern Zimbabwe', 69.

⁴²*Ibid.* 67.

⁴³ *Ibid.* 69.

⁴⁴ The author recalls the several times when guerrillas sent him to Bondolfi Mission in 1978 with letters to the nuns making requests for provisions especially food stuff.

⁴⁵ Interview with Freddy Chenjerai on 11 Aug. 2009 at Munongo, Masvingo

⁴⁶ Caute, *Under the Skin*, 313.