

# Zimbabwe: Paradise lost?

By Terry Leonard  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

**HARARE, Zimbabwe** — On manicured private school grounds, white boys dressed in white play cricket, a gentleman's game meant to instill a sense of fair play.

The sport and its traditions are a link to the Old World and the old ways. It is a hand-me-down from colonialism and white rule, a genteel reminder of the days when whites built themselves a paradise in Africa.

With gun and law, whites disenfranchised blacks, took the continent's riches and prospered on the toil of poorly paid black workers and miners.

Now, a generation after Africa's great rush to independence, paradise is far less certain.

Many whites contributed greatly to Africa's development, spreading literacy, medical knowledge and technical skills. But those who stayed on wonder if they have a future in Africa, or more precisely, if their children do.

"I think as far as my generation is concerned, we are here to the bitter end," said David Irvine, who inherited a 15-acre chicken farm and built it into a 10,000-acre agricultural empire outside Harare, Zimbabwe's capital.

"We have a high standard of living, a good life," Irvine added. "Certainly I see a future for us here. Whether my son will be here in 30 or 40 years, I don't know."

Formerly white-ruled Rhodesia, Zimbabwe gained independence in 1980 after a seven-year bush war that ended with about 170,000 whites fleeing. That leaves about 100,000 whites in a country of 10.5 million people, still enough to wield influence.

A key issue now is that while whites no longer rule any country in sub-Saharan Africa, they keep a firm grip on much of Africa's wealth, ensconced inside their gleaming office towers and behind the high walls of comfortable homes.

Today many black Africans find liberation a hollow promise without economic power.

Questions about who has money, who doesn't and who is to blame are stoking age-old fires of racial tension, resentment and hate.

"It seems the white man is saying that the blacks should always feed from the white man's plate," said Phillip Chiyangwa, head of Africa

Action Group, a militant black empowerment organization that sometimes resorts to threats of violence against whites in Zimbabwe.

Africa, he argues, is a black continent, a place where blacks deserve not just a piece of the pie, but the lion's share.

"Whites are as welcome as any other people as long as they realize they are in somebody else's country," Chiyangwa said.

Whites whose families have lived in Africa for generations, some since the 1650s, bristle at that kind of talk.

"We are a little anxious when the government refers to indigenous as meaning only black people," said Nick Swanepoel, the white president of the Commercial Farmers Union in Zimbabwe. "After independence, massive amounts of whites left the country. Those who stayed generally had the country at heart."

Whites came to Africa from all over the globe, but during the heyday of settlement and colonialism they arrived chiefly from England, France, Belgium, Portugal, Germany and the Netherlands.

The colonial powers divvied up Africa and imposed their own languages, customs and architecture. Ties to the old world are still strong.

The most common criticism of white Africans is they live like expatriates in their own countries.

"That feeling of being part of a nation just isn't there," said Danny Meyer, the white president of the Zimbabwe National Chamber of Commerce.

Most African whites live in exclusive white suburbs, join posh private clubs and go to private schools and hospitals. They depend on black workers to help them make money and clean their homes, while the black population needs the jobs offered by white businessmen.

Most blacks regard white Africans as a "necessary nuisance," said John Makumbe, a black political scientist at Zimbabwe University.

"They have focused on making money rather than on governance or social integration. But that focus has created employment, and nothing is as good as distributing economic development as employment," he said. "In Zimbabwe, whites are part of the solution, not part of the problem."

South of the Sahara, whites are only a minuscule and shrinking part of the population. In most countries, they

are much less than 1 percent.

Despite their tiny and diminishing numbers, whites are the frequent targets of black political leaders eager to play the race card to disguise their own problems and failures. Since whites once ruled Africa with an iron fist, there is an audience ready to blame them for every failure.

"A black man sees the white man did better and is doing better. He says it is because I am black and because he is white," Makumbe said. "We have had the whites to blame for every ill. Now, there are so few whites left we can't blame them for everything that goes wrong."

In Kenya, for example, there were 60,000 whites in the country at independence in 1962. Today there are only about 40,000 out of a population of 26 million, and about 90 percent are expatriates rather than Kenyan citizens.

White Kenyans are "an endangered species," said John Githongo, the associate editor of the business monthly Executive in Kenya's capital, Nairobi. They are leaving not because blacks are chasing them out but because they see their futures elsewhere, he said.

In Zimbabwe, for the first time, there is a feeling among many of the whites who stayed after black rule that there is no future.

"Verbal attacks on whites by the government of Robert Mugabe have become really pronounced over the last three years and have served to polarize the communities," Meyer said.

Many Zimbabwe whites who sent their children abroad for education or work experience are encouraging them not to return, he said. Some are so determined they sold family businesses to give their children less incentive to come home.

Only in South Africa do whites live in significant numbers. There are more than 5 million, or about 14 percent of the population of more than 40 million, and they hold most of the economic power.

"Whites have concluded they don't have a future in Africa, but in South Africa it is different," Makumbe said. "There are not such numbers leaving. Their role in political life gives them a future. There has to be a future for them in South Africa."

Countries such as the Ivory Coast and Nigeria in West Africa, Kenya in East Africa and Zimbabwe in the south have erected some barriers to

whites in the economy. There is a push to force companies to hire blacks at the expense of whites.

Zimbabwe and South Africa also are studying plans to redistribute lands held by whites to black farmers.

But many blacks in West Africa complain their leaders favor whites in a lingering vestige of colonialism. Wealthy blacks educate their children, take holidays and get medical treatment in Europe or the United States.

In some countries, preferential hiring of blacks and efforts to redistribute land seek to rectify inequities caused by white-rule. Whites fear that black governments, for political expediency, will go too far and deny white children a future.

Nelson Mandela, South Africa's first black president, counters that governments must take some action to balance the ledger.

"Apartheid and other colonial societies in Africa vested power, wealth, skills and comfort within white minority communities," he said. "It is natural that liberation should entail a protracted process of spreading these advantages — of building a better life for all."

Perhaps it is a sign of the times that years after Rhodesian whites' bloody resistance to majority rule, their last white leader, Ian Smith, looks to South Africa and sees in one black man the last best hope for African whites and racial harmony.

"Fortunately, they have a Mandela," Smith said. "My God, I wish we had a Mandela. He is Africa's first statesman."

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# Education fails boys

By Gerta Guest  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

**DETROIT** — Black boys are being destroyed in public schools and think that scholastic achievement is for whites, says a Chicago-based consultant.

Jawanza Kunjufu, speaking Saturday at the National Alliance of Black School Educators' conference in Detroit, encouraged black educators to develop teaching styles that can lure black boys back into classrooms and school books.

"There's an anti-intelligence culture among our black children," Kunjufu said. "They think that acting smart is acting white... Then how do our children act black?"

He said teachers are competing with athletics, drugs and rap music when they try to convince black boys that scholastic achievement is worthwhile.

"Our boys and girls are not convinced there's a rainbow at the end (of school)," Kunjufu said.

Nearly 6,000 educators from across the country were expected to attend the 24th annual three-day event. The conference ends Sunday

Genita Pacely, principal of Arroyo High School in San Lorenzo, Calif., said black kids who made the honor roll at her school were ashamed at first.

But then the school began offering something called the Renaissance Roll that's possible for every child to make. Depending upon their achievements, they get gold, silver or white cards that allow them to receive free goods from local businesses.

"These kids are into instant gratification. You can't lure them in with this, 'You'll get something later,' stuff," Pacely said.

Kunjufu said black boys especially need to be taught to read, adding that 91 percent of black males in prison cannot read past the sixth-grade level. He encouraged teachers to use more interactive methods to keep them interested.

Roudell Kirkwood, associate principal at Hamilton High School in Sussex, Wis., agreed with Kunjufu that America's public schools are failing black males.

His answer is to get adult black men involved in mentoring youth.


"We have to give them the same opportunities we give to all other males. Let them play the piano. They don't only have to be sports icons," Kirkwood said.

Other ways to make public school programs more relevant to black boys, Kunjufu suggested are:

- Mandatory training seminars for teachers of black males.
- Role model program reaching out not only to white collar males, but those with blue collar jobs as well.
- Moratorium on placing black boys in special education classes unless they have a physical disability.
- Increasing the number of black teachers.
- Establishing a Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. classroom where boys can learn to resolve conflicts without violence.
- Establishing a Malcolm X classroom where boys who are expelled or suspended will spend time with strong, black males for a "scared straight" curriculum.

"I want you to deprogram your kids by teaching them being smart isn't being white," Kunjufu said.

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