



Power Corruption in Es'kia Mphahlele's Chirundu (1979)

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Abstract

African politicians and writers were together in the fight for the sovereignty of their countries but soon after the independences, they parted. The point is that African politicians, who took over from the colonizers, disappointed their people by their governing system, which was characterized by power abuse, corruption, dictatorship, ignorance of their populations' expectations, injustice and immorality among other vices. Instead of really serving the masses, the new rulers were serving themselves. Thus, many novels appeared in the sixties and the seventies in which African writers criticized the disappointing behaviour of postcolonial African political leaders. One of these novels is Es'kia Mphahlele's Chirundu (1979) where the author also denounces colonial rule. From a postcolonialist perspective, the paper explores power corruption in Mphahlele's Chirundu. Based on postcolonialism, racism, sociology and culture as theories, the study will analyze on the one hand the denunciation of colonial rule and on the other hand the disappointing behaviour of African postcolonial rulers and its causes.

Keywords: African Diaspora; Pan-Africanism; Identity; Belonging



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Keywords : power ; corruption ; postcolonialism ; writers ; politicians ; masses.

Introduction

United in the fight for political freedom from the colonizers, African writers and politicians drifted apart soon after the independences. The latter, having taken over from the white rulers, simply disappointed their people who hoped that the advent of indigenous governors would be synonymous with the beginning of a period of freedom, prosperity, happiness and dignity for all Africans on the continent. But the governed did not delay in seeing that those they thought would give them better living conditions were not better than their predecessors. This because the new rulers turned out to be 'opportunists' who practised corruption, dictatorship, illegal enrichment, abuse of power as their mode of governance. Besides, this way of governing led to the division of African societies into two groups : the well-to-do ruling class on the one hand and the poor masses on the other hand.

Yet, few novels such as Wole Soyinka's *The Interpreters* (1965) and Chinua Achebe's *A Man of the People* (1966) have been written to denounce the betrayal which African populations are victims of through the disappointing way African political leaders ruled their newly independent countries. This tight-lipped silence of African writers has caused Soyinka to lament "*the failure of the African writer as a writer.*" (Nwaegbe, 2013 :147). His appeal to his peers has resonated well, for it has resulted in the publications of Ayi Kwei Armah's *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* (1968), *Fragments* (1970), Yambo Ouloguem's *Bound to Violence* (1971), Kofi Awoonor's *This Earth My Brother* (1971), Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *Petals of Blood* (1977) and Es'kia Mphahlele's *Chirundu* (1979) among other literary texts that address the issue. All these novels in addition to Soyinka's *Madmen and Specialists* (1971) and *Season of Anomy* (1973) criticize post-colonial African political leaders for ignoring their people's expectations.

This article is going to focus on *Chirundu* where Mphahlele presents a fictional country in central Africa but which, in reality, corresponds to Zambia. Through this novel, Mphahlele denounces not only the colonial system but also the behaviour of African postcolonial political leaders who, after getting to power, became corrupt. They disappointed their people by ruling almost like their white predecessors, by putting forward their personal interests and not working for the improvement of their people's socio-economic conditions. Dr. Taleb Bilal Eli observes that:

The people who now ran the government were actually on the other side. These ruling elites have been preoccupied with holding power for the purpose of self-enrichment, not for the advancement of their people. Once they replaced the colonial rulers, they became just like them.¹

As for George Ayinttey, just the white faces were replaced by black faces.² One may wonder why the leaders of African nationalist movements, once in power, betrayed the masses by their mode of governance. From a postcolonialist perspective, the paper explores power corruption in Mphahlele's *Chirundu* (1979). Postcolonialism is "*a theoretical approach in various disciplines that is concerned with the lasting impact of colonization in former colonies.*"³

Leaning on postcolonialism, racism, sociology and culture as theories, the study will analyze on the one hand the denunciation of colonial rule and on the other hand the disappointing behaviour of African postcolonial rulers and its causes.

The Denunciation Of Colonial Rule

It is mainly through the hero of the novel (Chimba Chirundu) that Mphahlele denounces colonial rule. When Chimba first speaks out, he makes it clear that his goal is to fight a ruling system of the British. Thus, he is determined to stage a crusade against the colonizer's law which provides that the Ordinance supersedes native customary law. He addresses his lawyer : "*Look, Mr Clare, your people colonized this country and imposed their laws on us. Now the Ordinance supplants native customary law. And yet the British kept the tribal system alive so as to govern through chiefs and kings. Isn't that contradictory? I'm out to fight a system.*" (9). Actually, the Minister of Transport and Works, Chimba, is standing trial after being charged with bigamy crime for having deliberately married two women under the Ordinance. This is the last manifestation of his opposition to colonial rule before he is sentenced to twelve months of

¹ Taleb Bilal Eli, "Post-Independence African Literature and the theme of Disillusionment : Reflections on Achebe's *A Man of the People* and Armah's *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*," 2020 www.xajzkjdx.cn/gallery/53-june2020.pdf

² Quoted in Taleb Bilal Eli. Ibid.

³ Postcolonialism. <https://www.google.com/search?q=postcolonialism+definition>

imprisonment. Anyway, he does not care, for he knew the outcome of the trial beforehand and he will continue his struggle once he comes out of prison.

The south African expatriate, Dr Studs Letanka sees Chimba as a victim in this trial. According to the Pan-African and socialist Letanka, among the systems which the colonizers ruled the natives by, some are wanted and the others are not. The Ordinance which is the cause of Chimba's indictment is one of the unwanted systems. Whereas the native customary law allowed polygamy, the Ordinance denied men the right to keep more than one wife. Besides, the absurdity of this British law dwells in the fact that men used to marry more than one wife and this practice did not pose a social problem. Letanka observes:

Our fathers and their fathers before them kept more than one wife, they flourished. Here comes a man who trips up on British law that says you cannot own more than one wife under an Ordinance handed down in writing by our British fathers. Their Christian church condemned our fathers' customs. (98)

The protagonist is brought to justice because he wants to put an end to this lack of respect for the natives' customary law on the part of the British. He wants the white rulers to give customary law the same importance as their own law.

Chimba's disapproval of the colonial system goes back to his teaching years. As a teacher in a secondary school in Kapiri, he first criticized the content of the educational system. In effect, while explaining a history lesson to a seventeen-year-old schoolgirl, Tirenje, who will later become his wife, he tells her :

The British have waged too many wars for us to bother about this single one. What is it to us? But we must know these things. The syllabus says we must, Amen. [...]. Here we are learning about the American Revolution and our children do not know where our people came from, how great they were once. (15)

Here, Chimba is pointing out the irrelevance of the curriculum which is taught to indigenous students. Hence, the necessity to reform the curriculum. In this regard, he approves the proposal of his former teacher in Principles of Education, the Irishman Hugh Corkery, whom he respects for his humility : *'If I were to run an educational system on this continent,' Corkery said, 'I'd begin where your elders*

left off, and I would be guided by their wisdom in deciding what to put into a curriculum.' (29)

Also, the hero resolves to fight the missionaries who lead the educational system for "*their religious inanities,*" (28) for causing many social problems by converting natives into Christianity. For example, Philomila Tsoukala (2013) states that:

The possibility of conversion had significant, unintended distributional consequences. Previously polygamous men now had to choose one formal wife, leaving pauperized polygamous wives in their wake. Jurisdictional conflicts between African courts and colonial courts ensued.⁴

Among the victimized polygamous families, is Chimba's. His father, Chirundu, has been converted by the missionaries. Chimba shows the negative consequences of his father's conversion into Christianity : "*In 1938, they captured him, baptized him and something in him was laid to rest forever, or chained or just killed outright. They told him he could not keep two wives.*" (35). So he abandoned his first wife and remarried the other (Chimba's mother) according to his new religion. Chimba who was six and his mother were baptized the same year. One can sense the hero's bitterness when he remembers that, after their conversion, they were told that they were cleansed of their sins.

Another bad effect of Chirundu's conversion is that the man's behaviour towards his family became tyrannical : "*He laid down restrictions. He commanded us to pray morning and night, go to three church services every Sunday. Boarding-school discipline had none of the sting and blistering rub my father's had. My mother must have looked like a Hebrew woman, so I imagined.*" (35). When the woman had enough of it, she simply packed her things and went back to her people for good, after telling her husband these words : "*It is enough Chirundu, enough that I have borne you three sons. But this kind of life is not for me. My ancestors have not yet forsaken me.*" (36). This was after Chimba, their youngest son, had qualified as a teacher. Chirundu will not even bring back his wife and his justification is : "*I cannot turn back to my old ways.*" (36).

⁴ Philomila Tsoukala, "Colonial and Postcolonial Constructions of Family Law," 2013 <https://family.jotwell.com/colonial-and-postcolonial-constructions-of-family-law/>

Those are among the reasons why Chimba did not miss the superintendent of his school, Noah Hackett, when the latter summoned him in his office for having made the nineteen-year-old schoolgirl, Tirenje, pregnant. Mr. Hackett wanted to compel Chimba to marry Tirenje in order to conceal the “*premarital pregnancy and make it look decent.*” (18). Not only did the protagonist refuse but this was an opportunity for him to pour his bile against Hackett and his people as well: “*I have seen your church, Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, Anglican, Roman, kick our people around on charges of so-called immorality.*” (18). The teacher goes on to denounce the dishonesty of the missionaries: “*I’ve seen you missionaries hold court and conduct a witch hunt to seek out the scapegoat where the headmaster or principal or even one in your position was your billy goat.*” (19). As Hackett expects Chimba and his people to be grateful to the missionaries for building schools to educate them, the protagonist tells him that Africans are far from being the beneficiaries of colonization. If anything, they are the losers:

You should know the money the colonial government pays you and the teachers comes from our sweat and labour in the copper mines. What your church overseas sends you is blood money. The English people have been kept in comfort and wealth because of the raw materials they have been carting out of African soil – (19)

Chimba also criticizes the colonial rule through the racist and unfair attitude of the British administration and the mining companies towards the African mine workers in the forties and the fifties. Whereas these companies gave white south African expatriates very good wages, they would not raise the low salaries of the African workers: “*The British administration and the mining companies were tough on the workers. South African whites had been recruited by the hundred, and it was their high expatriate wages that made the companies reluctant to improve the lot of the African worker.*” (37). This reminds of the attitude of the Todd regime in the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland towards the railway men in 1956 when these workers went on strike to demand better wages. Not only were they not satisfied but worse, “*they were forced back to work at gun point by the Todd regime.*”⁵ It is noteworthy that the Federation, also called Central

⁵ T. H. MOHIBE, “Zimbabwe: African Working Class Nationalism, 1957-1963,” 1996
https://hdl.handle.net/10520/AJA03790622_66

African Federation, regrouped Northern Rhodesia (Zambia), Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) and Nyasaland (Malawi) and lasted from 1953 to 1964.

Had they not been dispossessed of their land, many of the mine workers would have been spared the racial discrimination and the socio-economic precariousness which they are victims of from their white employers. This is another aspect of colonial rule which Mphahlele attacks in his second novel: the confiscation of the indigenous people's land by the colonizers. Chimba's nephew, Moyo, informs:

The whites had taken most of the best land when England began to rule our country. We used to learn in primary school that only nine per cent of our country was fit for farming. The rest was poor soil, the tsetse fly made cattle farming impossible. If a man did not go to the copper mines, he had either to go and work for a white farmer or try to fight with the soil on his munda to yield food. (110)

Moyo's parents are among the ones who went to work on the white man's farm and with their experience there, Mphahlele shows how much this migrant labour was exploitative for the black people. Moyo's parents left their village, Kazembe, and settled in Bisa where they worked on maize and dairy farms, hoping that they would save enough money to go back to Kazembe and rebuild the fallen walls of their homestead. For five years of hard work, they did not achieve their goal and their economic situation did not improve either. They had to go back home. If they had been fairly paid, they would not have been so poverty-stricken as Moyo describes: "*One season we had food, another season we lived on charity or my mother grew pumpkin which she bartered for sorghum or maize.*" (122). Moyo observed his mother without being able to change the course of things: "*My mother was beginning to drag her feet around the homestead.*" (122). She died at age forty-five and her husband joined her nine months later. Chimba is deeply affected by the death of his sister but he understands that it is the logical sequence of the plight which his people are confronted with and to which the colonizers have contributed greatly:

The only thing that soured life a little for me and Tirenje was the news that my sister, Moyo's mother, had died, after a brief illness. Brief? I don't know. My people have been sick so long, oh so long. Forty-five seems a

crucial age for us. Droughts, poor soil, mine labour – just the day-to-day effort to live – have burned us up.
(46)

Through Letanka, Mphahlele also decries the racial discrimination in the habitations and in the educational system but also the financial exploitation of the native servants by their white employers during colonial days. In effect, in the course of a drive around the townships of the capital, Studs Letanka makes Moyo and his friend, Sikota, discover two types of habitations in the suburbs: the good houses for the white people with big yards and “*servants galore they could keep for very little money – there are three of these suburbs – see the streets are clean, see the avenues of trees, the parks...*” (139). Then, Letanka shows the two young men the International School where only foreign children used to go. It is important to remind here that when Moyo’s parents were working on the farms of the Whites in Bisa, they were obliged to send Moyo and his sister back to Kazembe for schooling because the “*schools in Bisa were only for the children of white farmers.*” (121). There are also the poor houses “*where the Africans were tucked away – in City Council houses – two-roomed boxes as you see –*” (139). Therefore, the colonizers not only lived apart from the natives and created schools where indigenous children were not allowed to study but they exploited their black servants as well.

After having denounced and fought British colonization, Chimba and his people have got political independence but it is as if there was not any change, as if their country was still ruled by the British colonizers.

The Postcolonial Rulers’ Disappointing Behaviour and Its Causes

In colonial days, Chimba and his comrades in the National Alliance Party (NAP) waged a campaign against colonial rule and joined forces with the masses, particularly the workers’ unions, to fight for political independence from the British. But when they took over from the white rulers and tasted power, they distanced themselves from the masses, ignored their expectations, betrayed them by their attitude, which reminds of the famous remark of John Dalberg-Acton: “*Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely.*”⁶ In addition to this sentence by Lord Acton to explain the change in the Minister Chimba and the other members of the executive, there is also the fact that the new governors

⁶ Letter to Bishop Mandell Creighton, April 5, 1887, Transcript of, published in *Historical Essays and Studies*, edited by J. N. Figgis and R. V. Laurence (London: Macmillan, 1907)

are influenced by their predecessors who put their own interests before those of the indigenous people. Crawford Young, in his book *The African Colonial State in Comparative Perspective* (1994),

... finds that tax burdens on small farmers, workers and other colonial subjects far exceeded any reciprocal investments in public goods, while the bulk of the money was allocated toward maintaining the colonial government. In parts of West Africa, the tax burdens on farmers were so high in the 1930s they created a cycle of poverty and debt that keeps their descendants poor today.⁷

The protagonist and his fellow governors too privileged their socio-economic comfort over the improvement of the daily lot of their populations, as it will be shown below.

While he was teaching, Chimba fought for the material and moral interests of teachers in the latter's organization. This organization was just one among other associations in which the natives stirred in order to better the living conditions of the workers in particular and those of the masses in general. Chimba's nephew, Moyo, as a member of the executive of the Transport Workers' Union, is fighting for the same cause. Now Chimba is the Minister of Transport and Works and paradoxically he cautions his nephew, Moyo, against "*getting mixed up in strikes.*" (25). So Moyo reminds him: "*Did asibweni caution himself like this when he was in the teachers' organization?*" (25). The Minister's justification is that they were fighting a colonial government. However, the point is that even with the government led by former nationalists, the socio-economic situation of the workers is still not improved. The hero, who was among those who used to shout: *Kwacha!* – *wake up, it's a bright new day*, leaves Moyo speechless when he tells him: "*Leave all this foolishness, these trade union slogans are stupid.*" (26). It goes without saying that the young man is baffled by such a change in his uncle. Moyo would certainly not be baffled by this change in the politician if he knew that Chimba does not go by morality in politics. For him, in politics,

⁷ Quoted in Brandon Kendhammer, "A Controversial Article Praises Colonialism. But Colonialism's Real Legacy Was Ugly," 2017 <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2017/09/19/colonialism-left-behind-a-long-legacy-most-of-it-bad/>

"You've got to be bold enough to lie, and when you are found out be bold enough to say 'Ladies and gentlemen, the circumstances are now different.'" (12).

Worse, Chimba opts for dictatorship as the appropriate political regime for his people whom he underestimates. To hear him speak now, one sees that he does not have a better consideration than the colonizers towards his people: *"Our people need a tough hand... democratic rule doesn't work, they can't manage such a principle, they're waiting to be led or misled."* (26). It should not then be surprising that a journalist is fired for having simply suggested that the norm be respected in Chimba's trial by the authorities concerned: *"The editor of Capricorn, the government-owned paper, suggested that the Minister be suspended until the end of the trial should determine his guilt or innocence. The editor was sacked; Chimba kept his post while on bail."* (6). The non-suspension of the Minister and the sacking of the editor illustrate the dictatorial governance of the regime. One ought not to expect either the protagonist to resign because he is preoccupied with enriching himself and not bettering the living conditions of his people: *"Politics is my life. I don't have more than a teacher's certificate. The only thing I could do professionally if I were kicked out of politics would be to teach. Who wants to sink so low in income after a good government job?"* (12). It is very telling that he says *were kicked out*, which means he does not plan to leave politics on his own volition. He illustrates thus the observation of Wyk (2007: 5) that: *"In many of African countries, leaders enjoy political power as a means of accumulating wealth."*

In light of his previous fight in the teachers' organization, Chimba should see Moyo differently. Alas! He resents him, regards him as an enemy and tells people that his nephew is ungrateful to be among the leaders of the strikers after he had financed the funeral of his mother and had helped him get his present job. Moyo's question to his aunts, Tirenje and mai wamung'ono, shows that the Minister is in the wrong: *"Must I accept low wages and other bad things because the Minister is my uncle?"* (85). If Chimba is annoyed with Moyo, he is more so with Studs Letanka who has taught Moyo the trade union movement and whom the protagonist accuses of having influenced the young man. Yet, he, Chimba, has also been influenced by his former teacher in Principles of Education, Hugh Corkery: *"The Irishman had sown the seed, and now dialogue was becoming more and more difficult between me and my father."* (30). But according to the

hero of the novel, by going on strike, the workers prevent the government from meeting the expectations of the people. That is why, like Moyo, Studs is at a loss:

... what does a worker do who finds that the politicians who were the backbone of the unions, and used them too for a broad national front for self-rule – what does a worker do when he finds after independence that the same politicians, now in government, resent his demands for better working conditions and wages? What does he do when he's accused of being responsible, of subverting the cause of nation building?
(98)

The current authorities' renunciation of their belief in trade unionism is further stressed by Dr Letanka when he declares that: "*The boys in power tell the people not to make trouble – not to harass them in the great work of nation building. They tell labourers not to strike and disturb the economy – it's unpatriotic.*" (101).

Whereas the people are still affected by poverty just after colonial period and the political rulers try to dissuade labourers from striking in order to improve their lot, the Vice President, for his part, makes merry with other government people: "... *the Vice President, too – invites big government people to his estate for Sunday picnic lunches and champagne. Around a pool no one swims in.*" (5-6). Besides, Ministers and Permanent Secretaries use official vehicles beyond 5 p.m. to go to night clubs, bars, their concubines. Had it not been for Chimba who wanted to revenge himself, the President would not have reprimanded them. In effect, after Chimba's wife and his concubine, Monde, quarrelled, some members of the Cabinet were talking behind the protagonist's back and amusing themselves. To get back at these officials, the Minister of Transport sacked some of their drivers and suspended others. Chimba blames these workers for driving their bosses to those pleasure grounds. Not only did he bring thus the President to reprimand the guilty officials but he also caused the Transport Workers' Union to go on strike for their colleagues to be given back their jobs.

The disappointing behaviour of those who govern the country is also conveyed through the Minister of Agriculture who rapes Joyce Mackenzie in his office. His act is all the more discouraging as he is "*highly respected*" (48). Although the Englishwoman lodged a complaint to the police, the scandal was hushed up by

the President and the then Minister of Internal Affairs, Mr Chimba Chirundu. In fact, Joyce was given five hundred pounds and compelled to leave the country. Chimba's successor too decides to expel a Namibian doctor for having "*refused to perform an abortion on a female friend of a Minister.*" (66). In this case, the current Minister of Internal Affairs confides in Chimba that he is being pressured by the Ministry involved and by the President so as to expel the physician. The regrettable attitude of the members of the executive can be seen through the fact that the guilty Minister and the Minister of Internal Affairs want to force someone to commit a crime but also through the head of state who once again is not on the side of the victim.

The other victim of a government official is the black American wife of the Minister of Education. As the man and his wife did not get along, the Minister wanted the lady out of the way as well. Once more, it was Chimba's successor whom the unhappy husband asked to repatriate the woman. She was coerced into leaving the country but this after she had told the journalists "*at the airport that she was being sent out.*" (51). In all the three cases, there is a blatant abuse of power and these repetitive abuses of power push Chimba to interpellate his colleagues during a meeting:

Are we going to use political power to solve our own domestic problems? If so, what is going to happen to government? Are we also going to use government as a cover for graft, bribery, brothel practices, as in so many countries of the western world where so much crime is institutionalized? (66)

Chimba has done well by including himself in the interpellation because he is as corrupted by power as his colleagues. His political position brought him to feel that he needed a city woman, one who is more sophisticated than his "rural" first wife. Thus, he met Monde and stayed with her in the city without telling his wife. Because of his new love relationship, he deserted his wife and children and stayed four months without sending them money. Worse, he caused the two women, when they met, to quarrel bitterly for him and he rejoiced in it. In effect, he had wished this quarrel to happen in order to convince him that he is loved by two women, which made him feel "*rich, increased.*" (44).

Instead of putting an end to the separation of the country between the rich ruling class and the poor masses which was created by the colonizers, the latter's

successors continue it. The International School – for foreign children and Kabulonga are illustrious in this respect. The children of Cabinet Ministers go to this school where fees are so high and which is “*supposed to give a first-class education.*” (139). In the meantime, the children of the ordinary citizens go to public schools, which does not leave Letanka indifferent: “– *why create a school that sets children of rich folks apart from the rest?*” (139). The reason these officials invoke so as to justify the fact that they do not send their children to public schools is: “*the teaching there is poor, the classes crowded.*” (139). But they are responsible for the deplorable situation of the national public schools, for it is their duty to provide all the children of the country with good study conditions. This divide in the educational system still prevails in most of African countries and is one cause of the problems of public education. Because their children do not study in public schools, the political authorities will not give priority to solving the problems of public education.

As for Kabulonga, it is the location “*where the rich ones, the Cabinet Ministers, the company directors etcetera live.*” (149). Chimba lives there too. The Ministers do not want to send their offspring to the schools to which the ordinary citizens' children go. They do not want to live together with these citizens either. From this angle, they are just like their white predecessors, to the great disappointment of the masses.

Conclusion

Es'kia Mphahlele, in *Chirundu*, has denounced the negative aspects of colonial rule in a fictional central Africa country which makes one think of Zambia. This denunciation is made mainly through the hero of the novel, Chimba, and to a lesser extent through Moyo and Letanka. One of these negative aspects is the curriculum which is taught to the indigenous students. According to Chimba, it is irrelevant and must be reformed so as to suit the real needs of the learners. He also attacks the missionaries for having created many social problems by converting the natives into Christianity. Converted men could no longer take more than one wife and those among them who already had two or more wives had to choose one and abandon the others, which caused the dislocation of many families. Chimba condemns the British for unfairly taking his people's raw materials to Europe as well. For him, this is the reason why the English have been kept in wealth and comfort. He does not fail either to criticize the racist and unfair attitude of mining companies towards the black workers. These companies would

not improve the lot of the black workers by raising their salaries while white south African expatriates were paid high wages.

The other negative aspect of colonial rule which the protagonist denounces is the fact that the registration of a marriage under the British Ordinance annuls customary marriage. Furthermore, it is not possible for a man to take more than one wife under the Ordinance. This system bothers Chimba and he wants to fight it. To him, the colonizers must give customary marriage the same value and the same respect as those granted to the Ordinance. Polygamy is a local value in particular and an African value in general. Therefore, he does not see why the colonizers will not recognize it. So, he deceives the marriage officer and manages to marry a second woman under the Ordinance. Even if his first wife sues him for bigamy crime, he refuses to give up his second wife. Consequently, he is sentenced to twelve months of imprisonment, which has not surprised him because he already knew the outcome of the trial. Moyo, for his part, points out the confiscation of his people's land by the English. His parents had to leave their village of Kazembe for the white man's farm in Bisa because the colonizers had taken most of the best land. As for Letanka, he denounces the racial discrimination in the suburbs' habitations characterized by good houses for the Whites and poor houses for the Blacks on the one hand, and the financial exploitation of the native servants by their white employers on the other hand.

Mphahlele has also shown how the indigenous politicians who fought colonial rule became corrupt once in power. Thus, Joyce Mackenzie, the Namibian doctor and the African American wife of the Minister of Education have been victims of power abuse from Cabinet Ministers who have got away with it. Also, some Ministers and Permanent Secretaries use the administration's cars beyond working hours to go to bars, night clubs and their concubines. Chimba condemns all these acts during a government meeting and yet he is as corrupt as his colleagues. And his abandonment of his first wife and the children but also his responsibility and satisfaction in the quarrel between Tirenje and Monde are illustrious examples in this regard:

Was I myself untainted? Did I look at Tirenje and Monde from a position of power? I was not sure, I was not sure, how does one know about these things when you have not planned them from the beginning, when

you are obeying the orders of a passion too fiery, too powerful for you to even try to analyze? (67)

This is more a confession than a question.

Besides, Chimba used to be in the teachers' organization and now that he is the Minister of Transport and Works, he finds that trade unionism is *foolishness* and resents his nephew for being one of the leaders of the Transport Workers' Union. Worse, he opts for dictatorship which characterizes the governance of the regime. This regime will not better the lot of the workers and tells them not to strike, not to make trouble because this will slow down nation building. At the same time, the Vice President makes merry in his estate with government personalities through *Sunday picnic lunches and champagne. Around a pool no one swims in.* Finally, instead of setting up a completely different governance system focused on improving the social conditions of their people, they continued the colonizers' system of separating the country between the rich and the not rich. Kabulonga and the International School are examples which illustrate this separation.

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