

Transforming Settler States: Communal Conflict and Internal Security in Northern Ireland and Zimbabwe



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the problem, but there is much more work to be done to move toward meaningful remedies.

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Transforming Settler States: Communal Conflict and Internal Security in Northern Ireland and Zimbabwe.

By Ronald Weitzer. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990. 292p. \$29.95.

How can ethnically divided societies become genuine democracies after decades of conflict? Weitzer marries a Weberian conception of the state to the new institutional literature and then compares the evolution of the security services in Rhodesia/Zimbabwe and Northern Ireland in search of an answer to this question. Weitzer argues that a necessary-but-not-sufficient condition for a successful transition is that their internal security bureaucracies can be professionalized and rendered "ethnically" neutral to a significant degree. Weitzer sees the security apparatus as the core of the settler state, which by its very nature rests on physical coercion of an indigenous population. Only a security apparatus subordinated both to law and to the civilian parts of the state can generate enough legitimacy among the population (particularly formerly oppressed ethnic groups) to allow consent to prevail over coercion as the major determinant of people's behavior. To the extent that the new security services do not approach this Weberian ideal type of a neutral, rule-governed bureaucracy, they either can be turned against some new population or will not be able to generate legitimacy and consent from the population. Weitzer's argument thus addresses issues familiar to those studying democratization in Latin America and Eastern Europe, as well as more traditional students of state building in decolonizing areas.

In both of Weitzer's cases, genuine democracy remains a distant goal. In Zimbabwe, the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) under Robert Mugabe simply appropriated the old security apparatus wholesale, replaced whites with Shona tribesmen loyal to ZANU, and then used the security system to destroy the rival Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU), which was associated with the minority Ndebele tribe. Mugabe's party merely changed the ethnic composition of an ethnically dominated state. In Northern Ireland, the collapse of the (Protestant) settler state's control over Protestant militants and hegemony over the minority Catholic community led the British state to usurp the Protestant state's security functions. In this situation, both communities ended up distrusting the security services. This made any transition to a locally controlled state security service impossible, even though the security apparatus was partially liberalized and bureaucratized.

The strength of this book lies in its discussion of the legal and institutional trajectories of the security apparatus in these two countries. Weitzer nicely situates this

discussion in the origins of the collapse of the two settler states, showing how the security services won an increasing but counterproductive autonomy from civilian control. But this discussion reveals the implausibility of successful and peaceful liberalization of the security services.

First, Weitzer argues that the security systems' personnel themselves increase ethnic discord by eliminating legitimate channels for dissent and militarizing the state's responses to extralegal ones. He argues that a dialectic of repression and resistance soon transforms the relationship between the security services and the state. As resistance increases, the civilian (but settler-dominated) parts of the state grant extraconstitutional powers to the security services and waive any efforts at oversight. Precisely this phenomenon suggests the impossibility of reforming the security apparatus. As these services generate newer and harsher responses to indigenous resistance groups, they become increasingly *debueraucratized*. Standard operating procedure gives way to a desperate search for spectacular one-shot "solutions" engineered by highly trained and essentially lawless commando forces like the Selous Scouts and the Special Air Service. Indeed, as the Birmingham Six trial showed, this lawlessness can metastasize back into the metropolitan state itself.

Second, in settler states with a low ratio of settlers to indigenes, the settler population in its entirety often *is* the state and (particularly through obligations to serve in the reserves) the military. This was certainly true in Rhodesia (5% European), and almost true in South Africa, where Afrikaners are primarily employees of the state and state-owned corporations. "Decommunalizing" the security services here implies a wholesale attack on one community's employment, which that community can be expected to resist. Weitzer's discussion of the transition from Rhodesia to Zimbabwe shows just how unusual and *accidental* the preservation of the white-dominated security services during the transition was. Because all the participants anticipated a victory in the 1980 election, they all tried to preserve the security services they assumed they would inherit. A more cautious approach to the negotiations would have dictated a preemptive "defanging" of those services, particularly by the minority whites and ZAPU.

Despite these flaws, Weitzer helps focus attention on a crucial internal determinant for successful liberalization and democratization. His analysis is particularly useful to students of South Africa, where the security services' role in fomenting tribal conflict and its connections to different political parties make clear the costs of having an uncontrolled state-within-a-state. It will also be useful to students of the (former ?) Soviet Union, where Russian "settlers" are a potent political and demographic force in many of the new republics.

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