

ZIMBABWE: A POLITICAL
BALANCE SHEET
Part I: Consolidation and
Integration

by J. Gus Liebenow



Robert Mugabe has guided Zimbabwe skillfully and judiciously into majority rule. Now other problems face the post-revolutionary government: urban and rural violence, exodus of white talent and capital, and dissension within the bipartisan coalition.

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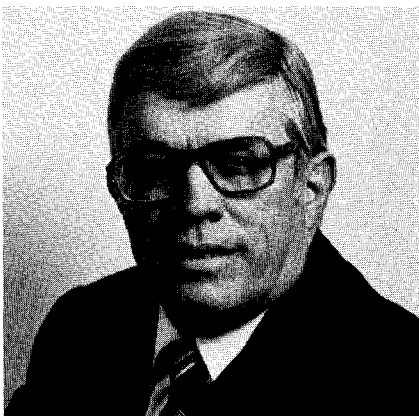
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Media reporting on political developments in sub-Saharan Africa all too often suffers from a lack of historical and sociological perspective. In few places has this been more obvious than in coverage of Zimbabwe, which achieved its independence April 18, 1980. Formerly Rhodesia, the country became the focus of world attention during the bitter 7-year war in which liberation forces under Robert Mugabe and Joshua Nkomo sought to end the 92-year domination of 7 million blacks by a white minority of roughly 250,000. More than 25,000 Africans and several hundred whites had lost their lives before international pressure brought the parties to the negotiating table. Under skillful British prodding, a settlement was put together at Lancaster House in London during the waning days of

December 1979. The Lancaster House agreement temporarily re-established the British colonial authority, which had been shed in November 1965 when the Rhodesian Front Party of Ian Smith opted for a "unilateral declaration of independence" (UDI) for the white minority. The 1979 settlement set in motion a military cease-fire and paved the way for an internationally supervised election to determine which party or parties would lead the new country at independence.

The incongruity between the news coverage of postindependence events and the actual situation was readily apparent to me during a visit to Zimbabwe in mid-1980. This is not to suggest that the reports had been falsified. There have indeed been incidents of urban and rural

violence; much white talent and capital has left the country; Prime Minister Mugabe's government has had difficulty resettling over a million wartime refugees; the concept of multiparty democracy in Zimbabwe is being challenged; and the leadership has been unable to convert former guerrilla fighters into soldiers quickly for a unified defense force. These are real problems, and the Mugabe regime recognizes them as such. The relevant question, however, is "*compared to what?*"

If one is properly to assess the state of affairs in Zimbabwe after ten months of independence, then the pessimistic reporting of today must be measured against the dire predictions of irresolvable turmoil that

Lowering the British Union Jack at Independence, April 18, 1980.



followed UDI in November 1965. Informed observers then were predicting that the wave of independence sweeping East and West Africa in the 1960s would stop dead, short of the southern "white redoubt"—that is, South Africa, South-West Africa (Namibia), Portuguese-controlled Angola and Mozambique, and Rhodesia. In the last case, the great disparities in power and control over resources, it was argued, inevitably subordinated the black majority to white minority rule. It was alleged, furthermore, that the ethnic, ideological, political, and personality cleavages within the black leadership cadre were so deep that the majority was incapable of mounting a concerted liberation effort. Moreover, many observers predicted that, if push came to shove, the apartheid regime in South Africa would come to the rescue of the beleaguered white Rhodesians, the price for support being imposition of an even more oppressive form of racial discrimination. At the other extreme, it was asserted that a black victory and the subsequent expulsion of white settlers would leave chaos in its wake, with the black survivors backsliding into ancient animosities among the Mashona and Ndebele and fighting over what remained of a decimated economic and social order.

Not one of these predicted extremes has materialized. Despite isolated cases of violence since independence, and the February 1981 clash between former guerrilla forces of Nkomo and Mugabe quartered near Bulawayo, peace has returned to Zimbabwe. Some whites have left or are leaving, but most have remained. Instead of a program of revenge and recrimination against white settlers and rival black leaders, Robert Mugabe has sought reconciliation in economic, social, and political matters. Mugabe's long-time nationalist rival, Joshua Nkomo, serves in his Cabinet, as do two whites. Mugabe sits in the same Parliament with the two bitter opponents who preceded him as Prime Minister: Ian Smith and Bishop Abel Muzorewa, who headed a white-supported government in 1979.

The moderate nationalistic policies Mugabe pursues in foreign affairs today must also be read against past

predictions. It was assumed, for example, that the Zimbabwe struggle would eventually become the focal point of regional, continental—even global—confrontation. Indeed, these predictions were partially realized late in the war when the white-dominated regime began bombing bridges and railroads leading to guerrilla sanctuaries. In some cases the Rhodesian troops penetrated deeply into Angola, Mozambique, and Zambia, the "frontline states" which, along with Tanzania and Botswana, provided concerted support to the liberation efforts.

Predictions of global confrontation reposed on the fact that military support for the guerrillas came primarily from the socialist bloc. The Chinese supplied Mugabe's Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (ZANLA), based in Mozambique, while the Soviet Union supported the rival Zimbabwe African People's Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA) of Nkomo, which operated out of Zambia. Iraq, Libya, and other socialist states were also involved. The prophecies of American intervention were based on U.S. strategic and mineral interests in Zimbabwe and southern Africa generally. However, memories of Vietnam and the abortive C.I.A. efforts in Angola, in which President Ford backed the losing side, reinforced the Carter administration's support of human rights and liberation efforts against right-wing pressures for direct intervention or recognition of the Smith-controlled Muzorewa regime. On balance, the skillful diplomacy of U.S. Ambassador Donald McHenry contributed substantially both to the negotiated settlement at Lancaster House and to enhancing America's image in Black Africa. Moreover, contrary to predictions that the victory of Mugabe—an avowed socialist—would deliver Zimbabwe to the "Red" camp, the Russian presence in Zimbabwe at this writing has yet to be asserted, and Chinese efforts appear now to be largely economic in nature.

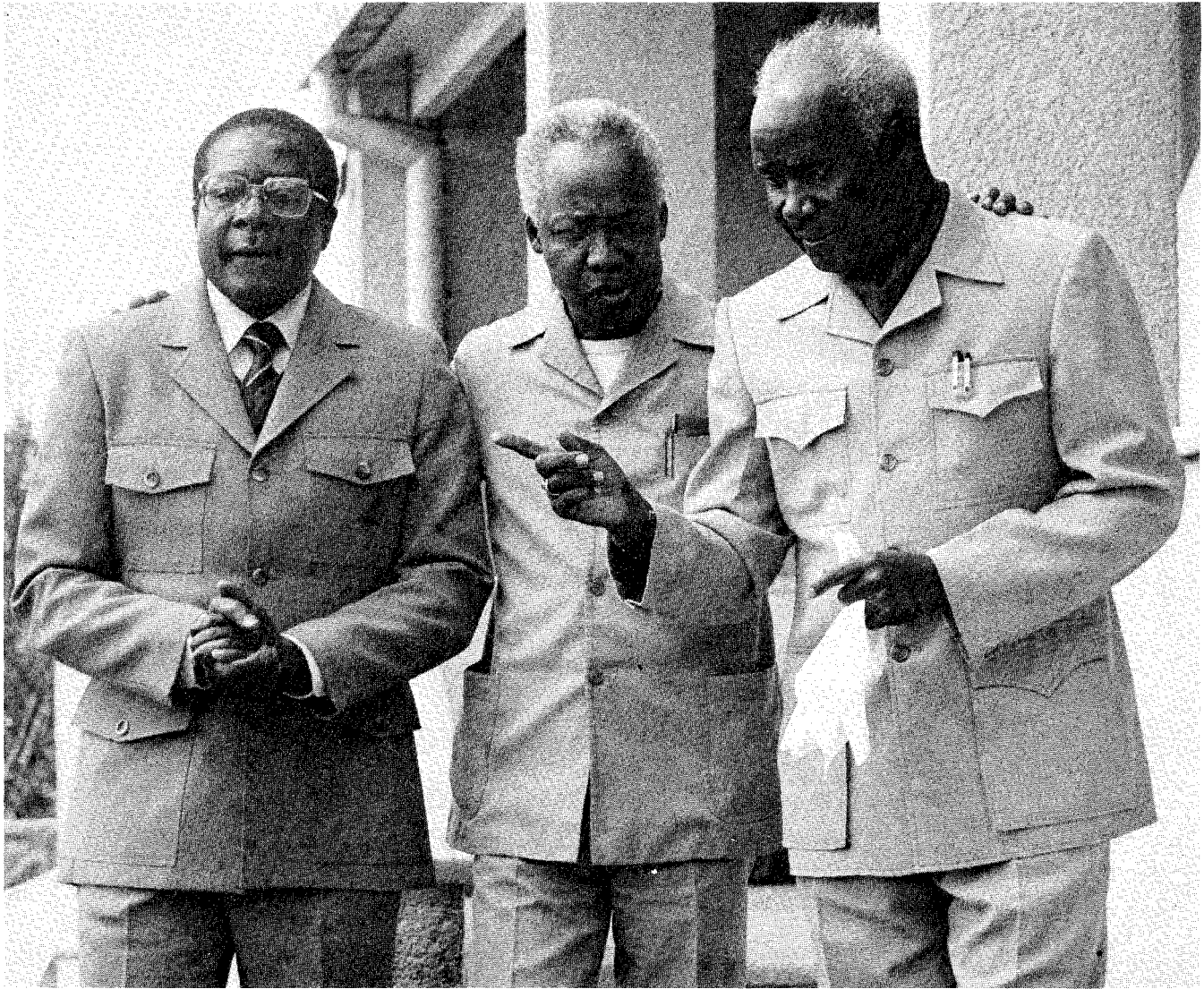
Similarly, the difficulties the Mugabe government has encountered in obtaining foreign loans and grants should be compared to the 15-year United Nations' economic boycott of Rhodesia. Then, the white regime's only economic contact with the outside world was covert trade through South Africa, for

which the Smith regime paid an enormous price. (During the boycott, the only currency into which the Rhodesian dollar could be converted was the South African rand.)

Indeed, Zimbabwe is doing better than anyone had a right to expect, a view I share with other recent scholarly visitors. Much of this cautious optimism centers on the creative personality of Robert Mugabe. Far from being the obstinate and doctrinaire radical leader depicted by his critics during the war, 55-year-old Mugabe has emerged as a refreshingly mature statesman. Already enjoying influence beyond his country, Mugabe was lionized by the other heads of African nations during his inaugural appearance at the Organization of African States summit meeting in Freetown in July 1980, and he received elaborate coverage from the American and foreign news media during his New York United Nations appearance when Zimbabwe was admitted as the 153rd member. Within central and southern Africa, moreover, there is growing sentiment that Mugabe and his country should become the new focal point for regional economic and political cooperation to counter South Africa's growing grip over its northern neighbors.

The transformation in attitudes toward Mugabe is nowhere more striking than in the words of praise uttered three months after independence by his most intransigent wartime antagonist, former Prime Minister Ian Smith. The white Rhodesian and South African portrayal of Mugabe as a wild-eyed revolutionary is daily belied by his fastidious attire, his calm and deliberate manner during press conferences and in other public forums, and in his ability to comprehend complex governmental problems and articulate his positions on them in a convincing fashion. Although the term "charisma" has been much abused, there is little doubt regarding the depth of the empathetic bond between the Zimbabwean leader and the majority of his people.

The conciliatory policies Robert Mugabe has pursued are all the more remarkable when one considers his personal history. During Ian Smith's rule, the former schoolteacher's political activities cost him



Prime Minister Robert Mugabe (left) with two other Frontline leaders, President Julius Nyerere of Tanzania and President Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia.

ten years in detention—without benefit of a trial—then five years in exile after he had escaped to Mozambique, where he personally directed the liberation efforts of the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU). Despite his repeated insistence on his commitment to socialism, Mugabe has liberally blended Marxist teachings with traditional African values and inherited Christian experience (he is a practicing Catholic) to produce a kind of Christian democratic socialism. His policies and acts since independence provide no sign that his espousal of socialism constitutes a threat to freedom of enterprise in Zimbabwe or support to Soviet

expansionist goals in southern Africa. Called by some a “Black Tito” because of his skill in negotiating between bitterly hostile groups and his ability to subordinate ideology to practical politics, he has been able to bridge the political, ethnic, and racial gaps separating him from his wartime opponents and to transcend differences among his erstwhile political allies, such as the Reverend Ndabaningi Sithole and, especially, Joshua Nkomo of the Patriotic Front (ZAPU), the former Zimbabwe African People’s Union. (During the campaign for the February 1980 elections, both ZAPU and ZANU appropriated the Patriotic Front label, afterward becoming

known as PF (ZAPU) and ZANU-PF respectively; details are given in Part II of this *Report*.)

Ironically, this transformation in the international perception of Mr. Mugabe’s talents as a leader may constitute his greatest liability. Unrealistic expectations of immediate success have been imposed on him to resolve the resettlement problem, demobilize the former guerrilla forces, and reconstruct the economy. The current expectations of his overseas former critics are almost the inverse of the earlier predictions of disaster. Given the nature of modern communications, moreover, Mugabe is obliged to

wrestle in a goldfish bowl with his problems. Every new act, each new policy statement, the arrival of every important visitor from abroad, all appear to raise either new fears or new hopes. It is for this reason that contemporary events in Zimbabwe must be viewed in their broader historical and sociological context.

Mugabe's Economic Strategy

Much of the attention since Mugabe's surprising victory in the February 1980 elections has focused on economic strategy. It appeared to be an insurmountable task to satisfy simultaneously the needs of the impoverished, land-hungry masses, the desires of the white farmers and businessmen for continued prosperity, and the concerns of the international investors and entrepreneurs who seek a stable environment for their commercial pursuits. Mugabe's use of socialist rhetoric in describing programs for reconstruction and development pleased the blacks but disturbed almost everyone else. What many external critics failed to realize was that the socialist idiom was a political necessity for Mugabe: after all, China and the Soviet Union had provided the principal military and economic assistance to the Zimbabwe liberation forces in Mozambique and Zambia. While the United States and other capitalist-oriented states in the West had provided significant diplomatic support, their economic gestures consisted largely of promissory notes, to be honored once the cease-fire had been secured. Excepting Botswana, all the frontline states were committed to some form of socialist development. Indeed, there are few leadership groups on the African continent that have boldly espoused the tenets of free enterprise capitalism.

External pressures aside, there are other reasons why Mugabe might logically have been expected to embrace socialism. The system of white settler exploitation against which black Zimbabweans rebelled had been based upon a "robber baron"-style capitalism. Although, in fact, the colonial government during more than 90 years had been the main provider and protector of white economic privilege in Rhodesia, the settlers had constantly paid lip service to free enterprise, market determination of prices, and

other facets of capitalist ideology. Furthermore, the caste-like distinctions erected to separate the white minority from the black majority easily lent themselves to Marxian analysis of class conflict as a necessary step on the path to socialism.

Indeed, violence was a persistent element in white/black relations from the outset of the colonial era. This was most evident in the settler confiscation of land, a cardinal target of the revolutionary ideology. The 3 to 5 percent of the population which was white occupied roughly 50 percent of the land inclusive of most of the arable soil and known mineral deposits. The 95 percent of Zimbabwe's citizens who were black were thus left to occupy the poorer land, to migrate to work at the mines or white-owned farms for wages, or to drift to the cities as part of a growing mass of unemployed. Many blacks were compelled to leave the country in search of wage labor in order to have the cash needed to pay their taxes and meet their material needs. It was thus logical that a victorious black party would take steps to recapture land from the whites. While not ruling out the continuation of some form of private freehold or even a return to traditional usufruct, it was assumed that some variety of national ownership or collective operation of farmland was required to accelerate African farm production. The fact that ZANU had successfully experimented with collective farming in Mozambique during the war enhanced this expectation.

Similarly, the Mugabe group had set as a goal achieving a more equitable distribution of educational and medical services, of employment opportunities in both the public and the private sectors, and of other government services, for the inequities were legion. In contrast to the well-staffed white hospitals, for example, most African hospitals in the cities were overcrowded and substandard, while rural medical services for Africans were almost nonexistent during the war. Black leaders were especially galled by the Smith regime's educational policies; "Equality" meant that the government allocated revenues in equal portion for the education of the white minority and the black majority. The Smith regime can

claim little credit for the fact that Zimbabwe at independence had a remarkable cadre of educated blacks prepared to assume the responsibilities of government. Most current Cabinet members and other senior officials had survived on foreign scholarships while receiving their wartime education in Britain, the United States, Eastern Europe, or other African countries. Hence it was natural to assume that a Mugabe government would give high priority to such populist demands as free or low-tuition education, extension of rural medical services, subsidized urban housing and other programs of a socialist nature.

The disposition to pursue the path of socialist development was thus compelling. Moreover, Mugabe wanted to satisfy not only the legitimate material hopes of his war-weary people but also the fiery demands of those ZANU-PF leaders who sought rapid and radical re-ordering of the inherited colonial economy. Quickly, however, Mugabe came to appreciate that aspirations had to be tempered with recognition of realities—not all of them negative.

First, the returned exile group acknowledged that they had inherited a fairly healthy economy. Despite racial injustices, wartime devastation—particularly in the rural sector—and privations resulting from the United Nations' sanctions, the white-controlled Zimbabwe economy had survived the war in relatively good shape. The global isolation of Rhodesian whites had compelled the Smith regime to become self-sufficient in many areas and had accelerated exploitation of mineral resources. Independence had also coincided with a dramatic rise in the price of gold, which once again had become Zimbabwe's leading export earner. Even petroleum purchases had become relatively less troublesome: the ending of sanctions meant Zimbabwe could buy oil at OPEC prices rather than on the higher-priced spot market. Zimbabwe's other energy needs, moreover, were being met in great part by the production of electrical power at the huge Kariba Dam complex, constructed during the period of settler domination. Finally, the end of the war meant that the

shorter routes to the sea through Maputo or Beira would again be available. Indeed, the obvious health of the Zimbabwean economy led one recent Zambian visitor to complain to me about the sacrifices his country and Mozambique had endured to secure Zimbabwean liberation. "Now that the war is over," he stated, "the Zimbabweans have the prosperity and the well-stocked shops, while we have soaring inflation and food shortages."

From the steady influx of foreign businessmen and investors to Salisbury, it has become apparent that many foreigners are interested in contributing to the further economic growth of the country. Hence, the Mugabe government has come to appreciate that a precipitous ideological assault on the white-controlled private sector would have immediate and long-range consequences for blacks and whites alike.

Second, Mugabe's group recognized the need for caution in its approach to the critical area of food production, which is both a domestic and a regional concern, since Mozambique, Zambia, and other neighbors already face the prospect of food rationing. Internally, Mugabe's ideological options have been limited by the need to provide food not only for the settled population but also for 35,000 former guerrillas and more than a million civilian refugees or displaced persons.

For cultural reasons as well as the consequence of discriminatory settler or colonial policies, the majority of the 700,000 black families engaged in agriculture pursue subsistence cultivation in the less-developed Tribal Trust area. In contrast, some 80 to 90 percent of the 2.5 million tons of food and other cash crops produced in Zimbabwe is grown on the highly capitalized farms belonging to roughly 7,000 white settlers. Historic injustices aside, the Mugabe regime recognizes that the white-controlled agricultural sector is efficient. It could, if properly nurtured, continue to keep Zimbabwe self-sufficient in food production and also make it a regional granary. One further reason for caution in disturbing the status quo is fear that the two-year drought, which has already reduced stocks of maize, the dietary staple

for most Zimbabweans, will continue.

A conservative approach for the export market is also apparent inasmuch as the production of cotton, tobacco, and other agricultural earners is largely in white hands. The situation with respect to mineral production is similar: foreigners—many of them white South Africans—provide close to 70 percent of the investment capital. Indeed, the diversity of mineral production—gold, asbestos, chrome, nickel, copper, coal, tin, iron, silver, and cobalt—is one of the principal strengths of the inherited colonial economy, insulating Zimbabwe against the shock of drastic fluctuation in world prices for any single commodity. If Zimbabwe wishes to enjoy a continued flow of Western investment capital, a favorable balance of trade, and employment for black mine laborers, Mugabe will probably be obliged to soft-pedal any discussion of nationalization. He has already had to avoid imposing further limits on repatriation of investment earnings. Mugabe's appointment of internationally respected Bernard Chidzero as Minister of Economic Planning and Development has been of great help in winning external investor confidence.

While the pressures for rapid Africanization of the mining and business enterprises as well as of the public bureaucracy have intensified, it is difficult to overcome in one year the neglect of nine decades. The token changes introduced during the brief Muzorewa period did little to alter the fact that Africans had been systematically denied the opportunity for education and managerial positions. While the Mugabe regime has opted for now to depend on the talents, skills, and "institutional memory" the European bureaucrats have tended to monopolize, programs for Africanization of the bureaucracy have been accelerated, and the high salaries, generous pensions, and other perquisites formerly enjoyed by expatriates and local white bureaucrats are being curtailed.

Finally, Mugabe's economic thinking is reputedly influenced by what happened in Mozambique after that former Portuguese colony expelled its alien talent and embarked pre-

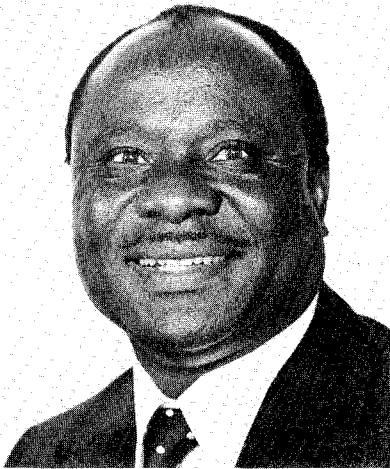
cipitously on a course of radical socialist development. Although there are of course many complex factors involved in the case of Mozambique, the socialist experiment there has been marked by severe food shortages, inefficiencies in the operation of ports and railroads, and serious balance of payments problems. Indeed, anticipating the July 1980 state visit of President Samora Machel, thoughtful commentators in Salisbury observed that while Zimbabweans owed much to Mozambique for its military support of liberation, the new nation should look to Kenya or Malawi for its models of economic development.

Still, the rhetoric of socialism persists, as when Mugabe in mid-July stressed his intent to create worker committees in virtually all enterprises, on the Yugoslav model. The workers' involvement in decisions directly affecting them would foster a sense of identity with the enterprise, thereby enhancing production. In the same interview, however, Mugabe said he did not anticipate nationalization of private industries unless they were being badly mismanaged.¹

The 1980 Budget Speech

In a political system which emulates the British parliamentary model, the reading of the annual Budget Speech is a moment of great significance. The speech not only reveals the financial health or weakness of the nation, but it also enunciates the government's economic philosophy, spelling out unambiguously its plans with respect to taxes, new projects, and programs. It is a blueprint for action. In cases where the government commands a solid majority in Parliament, one may assume that subsequent legislation will fairly closely adhere to the rhetoric of the Budget Speech.

The reading of the first postindependence speech by Finance Minister Senator Enos Nkala was awaited anxiously. ZANU-PF radicals of the left and extremist white settlers and businessmen on the right made dire pronouncements in anticipation of decisions on how the Z\$1.4 billion (U.S.\$1.82 billion) was to be distributed in the first peacetime budget. Such an aura of mystery and majesty had accumulated that Mugabe and his chief ministers even



Senator Enos Nkala, Minister of Finance.

cut short their visit to Botswana, where they had attended the funeral service for Sir Seretse Khama, in order to be present for the budget reading.

The budget, read before Parliament July 24, 1980, revealed Robert Mugabe to be a master politician. In a remarkable balancing act, the budget seemed to have something for everyone. While proclaiming socialism, the announced program for development came out only

slightly left-of-center of Roosevelt's version of New Deal capitalism during the American depression. Without disappointing his strife-weary black constituency, it nevertheless attempted to make life under a black majority government palatable to even the most conservative whites.

It was, as advertised, a "people's budget," in that it attempted to satisfy some of the populist demands of those who had given Mugabe his decisive electoral victory. Some of the greatest increases in governmental spending over the preceding Muzorewa-Smith budgets were in social services. Education, which accounted for Z\$184 million of the total, was up 53 percent, a giant step toward the achievement of Mugabe's goal of free primary school education. Funding for the Ministry of Health was up 55 percent, to Z\$83 million, and one-fourth its allocation was earmarked for rural medical services. Although projected expenditures on government housing increased more than 65 percent (from Z\$32 million to Z\$53 million) and funds for housing loans eightfold, Senator Nkala stressed that the housing shortage was "not merely a government

problem," and that individuals and private employers had obligations in that area. Furthermore, in a gesture to please low-income blacks, the sales tax was removed from many basic commodities such as milk products, fish, and kerosene for lamps.

The more ardent socialist critics within ZANU-PF were disturbed by the cautious approach to land acquisition and distribution: only Z\$34 million had been allocated. Since the Lancaster House agreement barred confiscation and pledged the new government to purchase land from the present owners at mutually agreed upon prices, the process of redistribution was bound to be protracted. Nkala noted frankly that the government still expected the British and American governments to deliver on their pre-Lancaster pledges (of the Callahan-Kissinger era) to fund the land purchase scheme. The slow pace of land acquisition also had its impact upon other postwar problems, such as the demobilization of ZANLA and ZIPRA guerrilla forces and the resettlement of refugees. The cost of clothing, housing, feeding, and

View of Salisbury, capital of Zimbabwe.



maintaining the former guerrillas in the assembly camps contributed substantially to the apparently high level of expenditure for the military. Defense, for example, included maintenance of ZIPRA and ZANLA forces in the rural development project called "Operation Seed." Thus, in the future a good portion of the 16 percent of the current budget allocated to defense could be re-directed to social services.

The reaction of the white community upon whom Mugabe depended for continued economic growth was positive. White leaders in and out of government were encouraged by Senator Nkala's support of a mixed economy and his statement that "I would like to think of our socialism as Zimbabwe-oriented and not as an alien prescription."² Instead of the confiscatory personal and corporate income taxes the whites had feared, the Mugabe budget seemed to rely on deficit spending to achieve his populist goals. Several white businessmen at a Rotary Club meeting repeated to me Senator Nkala's comment that "the object of the system is not to bring everyone down to a lower standard of living but rather to achieve greater equality by raising the living standards of the poorer sections of the community."³ One white editor commented that: "Instead of following the usual socialist trend of taking a larger slice of the national income cake through greater direct taxation [Nkala] has given us the incentive to bake more cakes."⁴

Although there were explicit warnings to local whites and foreign businesses to include more blacks in their operations and to underwrite black entrepreneurs, there was general relief among the whites that these developments would be propelled by preferential tax treatment. Representatives of the Chambers of Commerce, the Commercial Farmers' Union, and even Rhodesian Front members of Parliament praised the budget speech. One M.P. commented: "If that is how the Minister is going to handle socialism...I must say it is a very good brand."⁵

The Nkala Budget Speech was equally buoying to the spirits of European, American, Japanese, and other foreign investors. Although some restrictions on the amount of

dividend earnings that could be remitted to some nonresident shareholders would continue, there were no ceilings on the size of corporate dividends, and there was movement in the direction of unfreezing funds that had been blocked at the time of UDI. Despite the government's preference for "localization" of business, moreover, there was explicit acknowledgment that foreign skills would for the time being have to make up for severe shortages of artisans, technicians, and engineers in both private industry and parastatal organizations.

The general euphoria regarding economic growth—which could reach 6 percent by the end of 1981—must be tempered by the realization that the sudden importation of manufactured goods will contribute substantially to a rise in inflation and a serious balance-of-payments problem for the new regime. Economic growth will also hinge upon the ability of the new government to resolve its other domestic and foreign problems.

Demobilization and Integration of the Guerrilla Forces

One of the keys to the success of Mugabe's economic programs is the question of the demobilization and integration of the former guerrilla forces into the national armed forces. The 34,000 wartime freedom fighters (roughly 22,000 in Mugabe's ZANLA and 12,000 in Nkomo's ZIPRA) have constituted a significant manpower pool which, if provided with land and otherwise usefully employed, could advance reconstruction goals. Conversely, if not employed or if their aspirations are not satisfied, they could become a source of great political and social instability. Behavior of the former guerrillas, moreover, directly affects the ability of Zimbabwe to attract foreign investment and trade and to convince international monetary agencies and foreign governments of Zimbabwe's stability.

The task of military integration which Mugabe inherited from the Lancaster House agreement is almost without precedent. It is as if Marshall Tito at the end of the Second World War, had been required to amalgamate his own Partisans, the Chetnik guerrilla forces of Mihailovich, the remnants of King Peter's regular army, the surviving

Nazi collaborators, and the various ethnic secessionist groups into a single Yugoslav national army. In some respects the racial, ethnic, ideological, and technical problems facing Mugabe are even more complex. Individual military experience and skills range from a full exposure to the mechanization and technology required for modern warfare down to the kind of bootstrap survival tactics which characterize hit-and-run guerrilla operations.

For the immediate future the largest element in the new Zimbabwe Army may continue to be the remnants of the Rhodesian military. At the height of the war the white-controlled security forces numbered close to 75,000, including regulars, conscripts, and about 22,000 reservists. The white presence was further maintained by 8,000 paramilitary police, 35,000 police reserves, and 10,000 auxiliaries.⁶ What was not always apparent in the external reporting of the war was that 85 percent of the security forces were black. Despite fears that ZANLA and ZIPRA fighters might seek recrimination against the black soldiers who had served in the Selous Scouts, the Grey Scouts, and other units which had fought so effectively against Zimbabwe liberation, the integrated units have functioned smoothly. Indeed, the Mugabe government used former security force personnel to assist in training and integrating the ZANLA and ZIPRA troops into the new Army, and it was soldiers of the former Rhodesian African Rifles that restored order in the Bulawayo area in February 1981 (discussed below).

Although some white officers and enlisted men have remained in the postwar Army, roughly half by the end of 1980 had already returned to civilian life. All-white units such as the Rhodesian Light Infantry have been disbanded. The status of the career white soldier, however, unfortunately was linked to the continuing presence of one man—Lieutenant-General Peter Walls. Walls had commanded the Rhodesian troops during most of the war. It was he who had convinced Ian Smith and Abel Muzorewa during mid-1979 that victory on the battlefield could not be achieved and that a negotiated political settlement would be the only way to end

the war. For his role in ending the hostilities, Robert Mugabe retained General Walls as Commander of the Joint High Command for one year. Walls' primary task was overseeing the training of former freedom fighters and the molding of ZANLA, ZIPRA, and the former Rhodesian forces into a single unified Army. In July 1980, however, Walls suddenly announced his decision to retire early, amid rumors that he felt his task had been hampered by bickering among the ZANLA and ZIPRA leadership in the Joint High Command. The decision to resign was immediately clouded by indiscreet remarks he made regarding Mugabe's leadership ability during an interview broadcast by the BBC. In that interview he acknowledged that in March 1980 he had recommended to the British interim government that a "pre-emptive coup" be undertaken to void the results of Mugabe's electoral victory. Although Walls charged that Mugabe's adherents had engaged in armed intimidation, this was not substantiated by the team of international observers. On the basis of these incidents, Walls was immediately dismissed from command by Mugabe. The harsh words which accompanied this action were bound to affect the attitude of the white career soldier. The position of the white soldier was further undermined by reports that the South African government was successfully luring away white soldiers with offers of cash and other benefits to fight on the Namibian-Angolan border.⁷

Charting the future of the remaining ZANLA and ZIPRA forces is far more problematic. During the cease-fire, most of the former liberation fighters were housed in tents and other crude shelters at assembly points, their disposition uncertain. Mugabe had promised that any freedom fighter who opted for a career in the new unified Army of Zimbabwe would be permitted to do so, a decision made without regard for cost or needs of a peacetime army. Consequently there was no internal pressure for the former guerrillas, many of whom had been recruited when they were very young anyway, to return to their homes. The comradeship of the military had—as one Zimbabwean official suggested—provided an "almost womblike protection

against the vicissitudes of postwar civilian life." Many fighters were pessimistic about the ability of the new government to deliver on its promises to provide land and jobs. Most realized, too, that they were at a disadvantage in terms of education and skills compared to the returnees from abroad or to the black civilians who had accumulated education, experience, and seniority in jobs under the Smith and Muzorewa regimes. Thus, staying in the military might be a comfortable option. Barracks were not readily available, however, and most freedom fighters until mid-1980 continued to live at the assembly camps in very unsatisfactory circumstances.

The Mugabe government's demobilization plan focused on channeling the former freedom-fighters into agriculture, hoping thereby to maintain self-sufficiency in food production. The plan also capitalized on the symbolic significance of land reform in sustaining the revolutionary dialogue. The latter objective would be further enhanced if land allocation to demobilized troops was done on a cooperative rather than an individual basis. ZANU-PF leaders had high hopes that they could replicate in independent Zimbabwe their fairly successful efforts at collective farming in Mozambique during the war. By July 1980, two units of former guerrillas had been demobilized in order to farm collectively. In other cases the government has promised to provide seed, tractors, and other equipment as incentives to veterans to convert to cooperative farms a number of former European-managed estates, which had the advantage of efficiency of scale. To the great disappointment of the more ideologically inclined ZANU-PF leaders, however, both demobilized veterans and civilian refugees preferred either outright private ownership or a reversion to traditional tenure. Even on collective farms, the veterans requested that a portion of the collective land be reserved for private cultivation by the farmer and his dependents.

The government has also attempted to encourage former freedom fighters to seek other forms of civilian employment, including wage labor on white-owned farms and in the mines. Indeed, until very recently 75 percent of the African mine labor in Zimbabwe was from

Malawi, Zambia, and other African countries, and even during the war, many of the significant jobs were held by the 40 percent who were white or foreign black.

Other vocational outlets exist, but most require substantial training. There has been, for example, a proposal by the Medical, Dental, and Allied Professions Council that a training program be created to direct former combat medics into health careers. The additional medical assistants would facilitate the reopening of the rural hospitals and clinics closed during the war.

Housing and caring for former guerrillas awaiting integration into the national Army remained major problems in mid-1980. The miserable condition of facilities in the cease-fire assembly camps had contributed to the boredom and aimlessness which manifested itself in violence. Recent efforts to relocate the former guerrillas in regular barracks or in unused housing estates near urban areas were justified as a "half-way house" approach to civilian reintegration, but the policy also aroused opposition. Civilians in the adjacent urban areas—both black and white residents of Salisbury, for example—protested the relocation of 17,000 still-armed troops in the vacant houses in the Chitunwiza area. Drunkenness among many former guerrillas awaiting training and assignment had become almost a way of life. Uncertainties about land allocation, about the prospects of disability benefits to wounded fighters, and about the course of domestic politics (particularly with respect to the minority Ndebele in ZIPRA) frustrated government attempts to collect weapons in a central armory. Thus, shooting sprees within the camps had become commonplace; black and white farmers alike had complained to the government about attacks on unarmed civilians by soldiers and about former freedom fighters squatting on privately owned land.

The greatest disturbances of domestic peace, however, have occurred in the Bulawayo area, which is in the heart of the Ndebele homeland that gives Nkomo his greatest support. Over 3,000 ZIPRA and ZANLA forces fought a pitched battle there in November 1980.

Before the dust had settled over 50 persons had been killed and hundreds wounded—including many civilian bystanders. A repeat of the Bulawayo conflict occurred in February 1981 and not only involved many more soldiers and civilians but also lasted over a week. The violence, which was touched off by an argument in a beerhall, left an estimated 100-300 dead and several hundred people homeless. The latter incident—which some foreign journalists rashly depicted as a “civil war”—was a serious threat to Mugabe’s policy of racial and ethnic reconciliation as well as to his program of military integration.

The significant difference between the November and February disturbances was that the latter was not limited to the ZIPRA and ZANLA forces quartered in the Bulawayo suburb of Entumbane. Rather, it included members of three of the newly integrated Army units (the 12th, 13th, and 41st Battalions) stationed at Connemara near Gwelo. Although the unit commanders were not implicated in the violence, it was clear they had lost control of their troops. Confronted with apparent ethnic and factional conflict within the ranks, the Mugabe government elected to use force in putting down the rioters—ironically, the specially trained black troops of the First Brigade (the former Rhodesian African Rifles), who were still largely under the command of white officers. To the relief of the Mugabe regime, order was restored within 24 hours.

The rioting was clearly a setback for the military unification program, giving credence to the skeptics who had contended that the four- to six-week crash training courses were inadequate to build unit loyalty and discipline. Use of the First Brigade gave comfort to Mugabe’s domestic critics and set off rumors that some 4,000 holdovers from the Smith army would be kept separate from the integrated units to serve as Mugabe’s “Praetorian Guard.” (The latter is unlikely, as such institutionalization would undermine Mugabe’s legitimacy with his supporters.)

The February events in fact gave Prime Minister Mugabe another opportunity to turn disadvantage to advantage by beginning in earnest

to disarm ZANLA and ZIPRA troops. Indicating its intention to back its demands with stern measures, the government wisely disarmed Mugabe’s own ZIPRA troops in the Bulawayo area before the more apprehensive ZANLA forces were ordered to comply. Second, Mugabe used the uprising to placate the local civilian population who had objected to the quartering of former freedom fighters in urban areas. Abandoning the argument that exposure to urban life would assist in the readjustment of former guerrillas, after order had been restored, the separate ZIPRA and ZANLA forces were each moved to new rural locations, 20 miles (in opposite directions) from Zimbabwe’s second-largest city.

The three integrated battalions involved in the violence were dismantled and the ringleaders were court-martialed. The government then advanced the pace of integration efforts, on the theory that the continued presence of former guerrilla troops was a primary obstacle to real peace. At the time of the February riots they still numbered over 22,000 (roughly 14,000 ZANLA, 8,000 ZIPRA). The new integration plan called for creation of roughly three new units each month through August 1981, a difficult but not impossible task.

Rural areas where ZIPRA and ZANLA forces retain power have also resisted the re-establishment of civilian courts and new, national administrative structures. The Mugabe government has attempted to curb ZANU-PF “kangaroo courts,” which mete out justice on ideological or factional grounds, and the guerrilla committees which “screen” returning refugees for their respective loyalties to ZANLA or ZIPRA, as farmers attempt to resume cultivating their vacated lands. Armed committees in several locations have organized residents into political cells and have engaged in illegal action to halt government vaccination campaigns and to control government and mission schools. Having had little support from civilian government during the war, the guerrilla units have found it difficult to surrender territorial control now that peace has arrived. It was this continued defiance of authority that obliged the Mugabe regime to

extend the laws and decrees introduced by the Smith government under the wartime State of Emergency.

Beyond the financial and racial problems just outlined, integrating the two guerrilla forces and the remaining elements of the Rhodesian security forces into a unified army implies overcoming ideological, ethnic, and factional obstacles. Many of the liberation forces have received their military training from Libyans, Yugoslavs, and others who were ideologically committed to more revolutionary socialist objectives. This accounts in part for the internal demands that Mugabe proceed more quickly to create a Marxist state in which vestiges of white privilege have been eliminated. It is from this quarter, too, that Mugabe has been urged to ignore the Lancaster House pledge that Zimbabwe not be used as a staging area for the continuing military campaign against white racism in the Republic of South Africa.

Although the troops committed to a revolutionary program are probably a minority, the potential for disruption of Mugabe’s policies of moderation and reconciliation may be considerable. This has already been demonstrated with respect to Yugoslav-trained police who had to be pointedly reminded by Minister of State Emmerson Mnangagwa that they “had no right to participate in politics and were to obey the command structure they had inherited from the former government.”⁸ Even more significant were disruptions caused by Libyan-trained guerrilla troops at Assembly Point X-ray near Mtoko, 90 miles from Salisbury. Clashes with the police and escalating demands for better quarters at Point X-ray compelled Mugabe in September 1980 to make his first visit to a cease-fire assembly camp. Indeed, uncertainties regarding whether the reception would be hostile or friendly led the government to shroud his visit in secrecy.

The greatest obstacles to integration, however, have been ethnic and factional. In many cases the two overlap, although this was blurred in the early stages of the war when each of the political groups, including those of Muzorewa, Sithole, and

Chirau, had their own security guards and military wings. Bishop Muzorewa, according to one estimate, had close to 20,000 armed troops in his Pfumo Revanhu ("Spear of the People") group. While the leaders of the frontline states convinced ZANU and ZAPU to cooperate politically and diplomatically in a united Patriotic Front during the war's final stages, they never succeeded in creating a common military command. It was not merely the personality conflicts between former political allies—Mugabe and Nkomo—or even the ideological differences between the two parties that prevented a military merger. Rather, it was that Nkomo's PF (ZAPU) drew its primary support from the Ndebele and the Kalanga, whereas ZANU-PF was most firmly rooted among the Mashona. While the ethnic lines were not rigid, as evidenced by the fact that many in the Karanga clan of the Mashona-speaking people were opposed to Mugabe, the correlation between factional and ethnic cleavages has nevertheless frustrated integration of ZIPRA forces into the unified Army.

ZANU-ZAPU cooperation had fallen apart even before the independence elections. Despite gestures in the direction of coalition government, Ndebele leaders have been stung by persistent attacks on PF (ZAPU) leadership by Mugabe's lieutenants. Fearing that their minority status would compel them to accept less important roles in the unified Army, ZIPRA units sought to remain intact in the assembly camps. Mutual distrust at the military leadership level intensified with Peter Walls' departure. In searching for his replacement, it was apparent that neither Dumiso Dabengwa nor Lookout Masuku of ZIPRA would be acceptable to ZANLA, and the vocal partisanship of Rex Nhongo (as well as his alleged acts of violence against civilians) had made him anathema to both Ndebele and white Zimbabweans. Nevertheless, after the first three months of independence, the pace of integration quickened, and was accelerated still further after the riot in February 1981.

Refugees and Resettlement

The future of the former guerrillas may be at the core of the rehabilitation problem, but it is only part of

the broader resettlement issue. Roughly 1,200,000 people—approximately one-seventh of the black population—were dislocated during the 7 years of war. Aside from the underutilization of their talents, the plight of the refugees has contributed to political instability and been an enormous drain on the limited resources available for education, health, and other public services. Depopulation of rural areas, moreover, threatens the new government's ability to maintain self-sufficiency in food production and to grow the export crops required to improve Zimbabwe's balance of payments. As Mr. D. Chefeke, the Zimbabwe representative of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), indicated to me in an interview in Salisbury:

The most important problem for us is to get people resettled in time for them to have their crops planted for the next harvest. If that does not happen, not only the refugee problem, but the economic survival of the country might be threatened. This country has been a food exporter in the past, but the second year of drought in a row has compelled us to import maize and other foodstuffs.

Beyond the immediate practical dimension of rural resettlement, getting people back to the countryside has ideological consequences for the continuing revolutionary struggle. As Movan Mahachi, the Deputy Minister in the Office of Land, Resettlement, and Rural Development pointed out to this writer in July 1980:

Unless we deal—and deal quickly—with the question of land redistribution, the very legitimacy of our government is at stake. It was to correct the iniquitous land distribution that led many black Zimbabweans to take up arms against the white settler minority. We cannot fail them. We cannot long continue with a situation in which the people who lost the war still have the land and those who won the war do not.

Conflict over land ownership and use has been at the heart of white/black relations since the initial point of contact between the agents of Cecil Rhodes and the tribal residents of Zimbabwe in the 1880s. Over the years the white minority

managed to bring the best land under their control. Epitomizing the distorted settler idea of "equality," the Land Tenure Act of 1969 (which was built on the 1923 Constitution and subsequent legislation) reserved 45 million acres of land for the 250,000 whites and an equal number of acres for the 7 million blacks! In qualitative terms the discrepancies were even more glaring. The sectors reserved for whites had not only the best soil and the most dependable rainfall but also the tracts known to have significant mineral resources. As noted earlier, the majority of African cultivators lived in the Tribal Trust areas, where land was allocated under rules of traditional tenure, based on usufructory right of occupancy. Cultural preference for subsistence agriculture as well as restrictive colonial legislation excluded most Africans from participation in cash crop production. Therefore, solutions to the refugee problem must be those which bring about the qualitative changes in black agriculture which are needed if blacks are to control the country's economic destiny.

Only about 260,000 of those dislocated by the war were refugees in the strict sense of the UNHCR definition—that is, fugitives from their country of citizenship or normal residence. Although most of the external refugees living in Mozambique (the major host country) or in Botswana, Zambia, and other African countries fell under the jurisdiction of the UNHCR, the care of the refugees was shared by church groups, international voluntary agencies, and both European and African governments. The frontline states in particular found their meager resources considerably strained by the refugee presence, but they accepted the burden in the name of African brotherhood. At times the refugee camps posed special security problems: during my visit to Botswana in 1977 a local official indicated that order was maintained among the 2,000 or more Zimbabweans in the refugee camp near Francistown only because the UNHCR team rigorously screened the refugees politically so they could physically segregate supporters of Mugabe, Nkomo, Sithole, and Muzorewa.

The UNHCR has assumed a major role in the repatriation and resettlement

ment of refugees under the cease-fire agreement worked out at Lancaster House in which UNHCR was charged with assisting the return of refugees of voting age so that the strength of the various competing parties would be properly reflected in the preindependence elections. That was no easy task. On the one hand, the refugees were suspicious of the UN effort and resentful of the bureaucratic red tape and delays; on the other, the Muzorewa government obstructed UNHCR efforts, charging that Patriotic Front supporters were actually guerrillas in disguise, infiltrating the country in order to continue the armed struggle. Officially only 35,133 refugees were processed by the UNHCR at the 7 receiving camps set up near the borders during the cease-fire, but it was estimated that many more refugees had returned of their own volition.⁹

The UNHCR mandate was extended to cover the repatriation and internal resettlement through the first year of independence. The return of refugees in the postindependence period has proceeded by fits and starts, reflecting the harvest season or the ending of the school year in the host country or the beginning of the planting cycle in Zimbabwe. The tempo of flow has also been influenced by reports of rural unrest and the prospects for securing land. In July 1980, for example, just when the UNHCR officials felt that repatriation from Mozambique was tapering off, a new group of 700 persons appeared at the border one day seeking relocation support. Although UNHCR experience in Zaire, the Sudan, and elsewhere is helpful, in many respects the situation in Zimbabwe is sui generis. The Z\$110 million allocated to UNHCR and the additional Z\$30 million from the Food-for-Peace Program has hardly been adequate for the task.

The size of the external refugee group has been swollen by domestic displaced civilians, who fall into two distinct categories. The first are the families who were removed from their isolated rural homesteads and concentrated into the so-called "protected villages." Nominally, the villages were designed to protect the "loyal" blacks (which the whites

euphemistically called them) against guerrilla raids. The unstated purpose of the villages, however, was to divide the African population politically and to deny the guerrillas access to the civilian "sea" in which they might find food, information, and moral support. The "protected villages" gave the Smith and Muzorewa regimes the propaganda weapon of appearing to act in the

interests of the black majority against a dissident, disruptive minority. Upward of 600,000 black civilians had been herded into the "protected villages" and separated from their homes, fields, and livelihood. Many were forced to sell their cattle at a loss or turn them loose in the hope of retrieving them later. Health conditions in the villages, as Minister for Health Dr. Herbert



Refugee family awaiting food at UNHCR camps.

Ushewokunze pointed out in July 1980, were deplorable, cholera, diphtheria, and kwashiorkor being rife (over 40 percent of the children suffered from malnutrition).¹⁰

Re-establishing these rural peoples was no simple matter of removing the guards and tearing down the fences around the protected villages at the end of the war. Many of the villagers needed rehabilitation assistance since their farms had reverted to bush, with wild pigs and baboons running rampant. Those abandoned houses the soldiers did not destroy, the termites did. Hoof-and-mouth and other livestock diseases had become endemic in the deserted areas. Getting people to return to their homes was a difficult task. Many had to be convinced beyond doubt that rural violence had subsided and that the guerrilla committees had been curbed. Others had found the inconveniences of village life balanced by the availability of crude amenities and recreational outlets not available in the home area.

The largest block of displaced persons, however, were the 400,000 or more rural-to-urban migrants who sought safety or jobs in Salisbury, Bulawayo, and other urban areas as the hostilities escalated. As individual migrants, they were often expected to fend for themselves. The central government was concerned about the prosecution of the war; while the white-controlled local councils had revenues sufficient only to handle the needs of the more settled urban population. In the absence of regular jobs as well as welfare programs, theft often became the sole option for feeding and clothing oneself and one's family. The International Red Cross, which had assisted in providing food and clothing to over 60,000 migrants during the war, ceased its support at independence.

Faced with the prospect of limited help from government or international voluntary agencies, many urban drifters since independence have taken matters into their own hands. Some have left the squalid refugee camps set up along the perimeters of urban areas and squatted in abandoned housing estates or in recently completed low-cost government housing. Some squatters, such as those in

the Chirambahuo camp near Chitungwiza, demonstrated against the requirement that prospective tenants make a deposit and provide proof that they earn at least Z\$100 a month.¹¹

Evidence that the Mugabe government recognized the desire of many rural migrants to remain in towns was reflected in the eightfold increase in funds allocated in the first budget for general urban development and high density housing. Even more than those in "protected villages," the urban drifters appreciated the availability of shops, schools, and clinics in the cities and townships. Some had acquired a stake in urban life through the accumulation of seniority in a civil service job or through marriage ties. Moreover, the informal urban communication network daily confirmed rumors of food shortages and violence in the rural areas, reinforcing their decision not to return.

Land Acquisition

As noted, the Mugabe regime did not wish in the short run to undermine the efficiency of white agricultural production. Yet it recognized that, in the long run, the key element in resettling the refugees and halting the urban drift is the redistribution of white-owned land to black cultivators. Dealing with this emotion-laden, ideologically significant problem was not easy.

First, the Lancaster House agreement obliges the government to refrain from confiscation of white farms. Actual purchase has to be on terms mutually acceptable to the government and the owners or heirs. Thus, the government is prevented from arbitrarily correcting the historic injustice which saw Europeans acquire tribal land, by seizure or purchase for a nominal sum, during the 90 years of colonial rule.

Second, the government is obliged to leave out of production land which has been abandoned by departing whites or is under absentee South African ownership. One estimate is that 11.6 million acres—roughly a fourth of white-owned land—falls into this category. Ultimately, under the pressure of meeting food needs, the government may be able to give the appearance of respecting freehold

titles by offering a take-it-or-leave-it purchase price for uncultivated or abandoned land.

Third, the government lacks the funds for any massive land purchase program at this time. Although the 1980 Mugabe budget in this category constituted a 266 percent increase over the feeble efforts commenced under Muzorewa, it amounts only to Z\$34 million and is set out to cover both acquisition and rural development. Clearly the Mugabe government had high expectations that Great Britain and the United States would provide the major funding for land repurchase. Unfortunately, these expectations were based largely on the negotiations of the Callahan-Kissinger period, when the Western powers seemed intent on "buying the peace." The advent of the Thatcher government in Britain and the conservative turn in the U.S. Congress under Carter and now Reagan changed prospects considerably. The British in 1980 did set up a matching fund program and the first allocation of Z\$80 million had been earmarked by the British for that purpose. American funds, however, are to be directed to rural redevelopment rather than land acquisition. The amount and character of Anglo-American aid in this area compelled one Zimbabwean official to complain that "We're being offered a Band-Aid when the patient is suffering from internal hemorrhaging!"

Finally, serious efforts to prevent direct action by landless Zimbabweans in resolving their problems are bound to put the government in an untenable position with its more ideological supporters. Indeed, plans for an orderly rural settlement are being challenged, much the way urban squatters have moved into vacated housing estates. One example in the eastern highlands found Senator Rekayi Tangwena, the 70-year-old Chief of the Tangwena people, giving open support to the movement of his people into vacant portions of the 16,000-hectare Gaeresi Ranch. Claiming that this was the land of their ancestors and that they had actually squatted on it until the beginning of the emergency in 1971, the Tangwena people have dotted the pineforested slopes with plastic shelters referred to elsewhere in Zimbabwe

as "*tangwenas*" (in recognition of the long history of these people as squatters); granaries and chicken coops are further signs that they intend to stay. The government has found it difficult to turn aside their requests for tractors, seeds, and farm implements so they can farm more efficiently near the graves of their ancestors.¹²

As has been true of demobilized veterans, civilians being repatriated in the rural area are reluctant to move into cooperative farming ven-

tures. As one Zimbabwe official stated to this writer:

Our people accept the idea of socialism in terms of better distribution of wealth. But when it comes to land, they exhibit the "Polish peasant syndrome." Each person wants his little plot of land to cultivate for himself and his family. Considering that many of the white landowners are asking us to purchase land at three times the fair market price, we cannot afford to have the land utilized strictly for subsistence cultivation.

We have a serious educational problem in that respect. Perhaps we have to begin slowly, by setting aside common grazing areas for livestock and establishing common marketing facilities. But we want to avoid the extremes both of a return to traditional agriculture as well as the dehumanizing experience of agro-business as it is practiced in the United States.

(February 1981)

[Photos courtesy of the Zimbabwe Ministry of Information and Tourism]

NOTES

1. *Rand Daily Mail*, July 18, 1980.
2. *Salisbury Herald*, July 25, 1980.
3. *Ibid.*, July 27, 1980.
4. *National Observer*, July 25, 1980.
5. *Salisbury Herald*, July 25, 1980; July 30, 1980.
6. Richard W. Hull, "The Continuing Crisis in Rhodesia," *Current History*, vol. 78 (March 1980), p. 108.
7. Reported by Carl Rowan, *Washington Star*, August 20, 1980; and *Rand Daily Mail*, July 19, 1980.
8. *Bulawayo Chronicle*, July 18, 1980.
9. See Roger J. Southall, "Resettling the Refugees," *Africa Report*, November-December 1980, pp. 748-752.
10. *Bulawayo Chronicle*, July 18, 1980, p. 1.
11. *Salisbury Herald*, July 30, 1980.
12. *The Sunday Mail*, July 20, 1980, p. 9.