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# DISCUSSION PAPERS

(ZII) ZIMBABWE INSTITUTE OF DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

(1) ZIMBABWE

**Zimbabwe's Agrarian Reform Process:  
Lessons or Domino Strategies?**

Sam Moyo

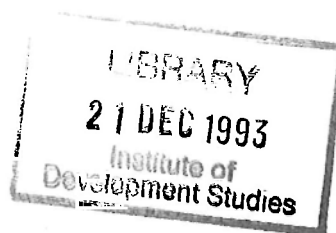
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P.O. Box 880 HARARE

**DISCUSSION PAPER**

Number 12



**ZIMBABWE'S AGRARIAN REFORM PROCESS:  
LESSONS OR DOMINO STRATEGIES?**

by  
**Sam Moyo**

**ZIMBABWE INSTITUTE OF DEVELOPMENT STUDIES  
HARARE, 1991**

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P O Box 880

Harare

Zimbabwe

First Printing 1991

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Printed and published in Zimbabwe

The author, Sam Moyo, is the head of the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development at ZIDS. However, the views and opinions expressed in this paper are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of the institute.

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# INTRODUCTION

## Introductory Remarks

It is becoming increasingly fashionable to proffer all kind of lessons for a post-apartheid South Africa, not the least since the independence of Namibia in 1990 and as the geo-political colour of Southern Africa shifts under the new wave of peace initiatives throughout its formerly radical territories. Due to the crucial role played by the agrarian question in Zimbabwe's liberation struggle and the apparent "agricultural success" and related political calm that has marked the first 10 years of transition, as well as due to the existence of certain agrarian structural and socio-political "similarities" between Zimbabwe and South Africa, the former's experience has received post-apartheid prognostic attention. The usefulness of such comparative analysis depends, however, on the degree to which the Zimbabwean case is adequately portrayed and on an appropriate appreciation of the context before 1980 and during the last decade.

## Some Theoretical Considerations

Perhaps the main problem for comparative research is the fact that post-facto analysis of Zimbabwe's agrarian experience exhibits methodological ambiguity over the reasons behind the present outcome of a rather "limited" and "unresolved" agrarian question. The main lines of argument have tended to be:

- "Radical" Western scholars have shifted their paradigmatic leanings on the centrality of ideological "maturity" in the wake of disaffection with the limited degree of socialist reforms in Southern Africa. Formerly preoccupied with ordaining the nationalist movements as revolutionary or "radical" (due to the protracted armed struggle and other factors) and hence anticipating socialistic reform, analyses moved towards:
  - first a dissection of the "underdeveloped" consciousness of Zimbabwe's peasantry (Ranger 1983);
  - then to the identification of the pristine weaknesses of "cultural nationalism" in various ethnographic regions (Ranger 1989), including the over-determining but negative effects of the "spirit mediums" during the struggle (La 1987); and
  - finally the total rejection of "revolutionary" practice among Zanu forces due to their over-reliance on compulsory mobilisation (Kreiger 1988).

Some Zimbabwean scholars in turn (for instance, I. Mandaza, 1986) instead have painstakingly emphasised the nationalist character of the struggle and the constraints of a white-settler neo-colonial state, as crucial factors in explaining present limited economic reforms.

- Yet another wave of scholarship has focused on rational choice and theoretical adumbrations providing positive and negative assessments of the Zimbabwean state. These tend to be voluntaristic approaches which ascribe to the Government of Zimbabwe (GOZ) a large degree of relative autonomy in decision-making during the 1980s:
  - For some the GOZ has acted in a "statist" fashion side-lining the interests of peasants and workers (Cliffe and Stoneman, 1989), bearing little concern for the problems confronting the peasantry (Ranger, 1989), using pre-1980 technical approaches (Drinkwater, 1988) and neglecting peasant experiences and knowledge (Wilson, 1988). While the agrarian strategy and choices made by the post-1980 state are indeed crucial, the imperatives on the state to adhere to its own agreed upon settlement of the Zimbabwean independence question tend to be given footnote and insignificant relevance by scholars, in contrast to the prominence that the GOZ has given this factor as a "constraint".
  - Rational choice theorists have also neglected broader macro-economic and political issues. Additionally, most such works, by isolating land redistribution out of context, tend to ignore the effects on state agrarian reform choices of a range of critical factors such as: large farmer pressures, lack of donor support for land reforms and the economic costs of South African destabilisation, the financial costs of defending Mozambique, the costs of reducing South African control of Zimbabwe's economy (e.g. state purchases of related investments and transport redirection), as well as the costs of the GOZ's preoccupation with social services development.
  
- Indeed, most writers tend to lack an appreciation of the precise nature of the administrative and technical issues within the Lancaster House Constitution framework, which created obstacles for agrarian reform, including:
  - the role of the independent judiciary,
  - the negative tactics of organised farm lobby (overlooked by Bratton 1987 and Skalnes 1989),
  - the perverse and restraining effects of land-use and environmental ideology (Moyo 1989, Weiner 1989),
  - black interests in landed property, and
  - the use of "counter-reforms" or communal area development as a palliative against redistribution and hence cooptation of the "middle-peasantry" (Moyo 1986).
  
- Significantly, the debate has tended to forget the history of the pre-negotiation period, if not an outright under-estimation or refutation of the geo-political manoeuvres and pressures exerted, in particular by the American and South African states, for the type of negotiated settlement achieved, under British "skilful" management. Consequently, scholars tend to depreciate the regional stakes involved in the specific Zimbabwean "experiment": that is to set up a "multi-racial", "democratic" and non-socialist state in settler Africa. In this context, the "lessons" for South Africa and Namibia began during the mid-1970s within the "cold war" setting.

The methodological problem therefore is how to synthesise this wide range of nuanced and particularistic interpretations of Zimbabwe's experience in order that meaningful learning occurs in Southern Africa.

### **Purpose of the Paper**

The aim of this paper therefore is to provide, in the first part, a background to the pre-independence context and issues raised prior to the Zimbabwean settlement, identifying the nature of the land issue negotiated during Lancaster House and then detailing the nature of the Lancaster House agrarian deal. The second part of the paper brings forward some critical issues in the Zimbabwean agrarian question, demonstrating therein the character and basis of the model in order to provoke the debate on the South African agrarian question. Thirdly, the paper presents and assesses land policy issues as they have been raised by Zimbabwe's Government in 1991. A final broader conclusion on the regional context of Zimbabwe's agrarian question completes the paper.



## ZIMBABWEAN LESSONS OR DOMINO STRATEGIES?

As far as the agrarian question is concerned, a series of studies have appeared recently (e.g. Weiner 1989, Levin 1989, Daphne 1988, etc) providing us with a variety of "lessons" and general advice based mainly on, among other experiences, the Zimbabwean experience. There are differences among such observers: there are those who see Zimbabwe as a positive model to be emulated, especially those who idolise the bi-modal agrarian process, while others would consider the experience a "petty-bourgeoisie" sell-out. In general, however, most the post-facto commentary has tended to be particularistic in its conception of the Zimbabwean model, such that an overview of agrarian reform is necessary for a meaningful debate to commence. It is also politically useful to take a broad look at Zimbabwe's last 16 years in order to identify some of the political and economic interests that may be motivating various parties pushing for South Africa's "normalisation".

### Domino Strategies

By 1980, following the various debates and manoeuvres to produce a "different" settlement from the Kenyan experience, whereby the whites should play a more active role in the economy, Zimbabwe had assumed a broader status of providing the preferred example for political change in Southern Africa. In American circles an influential person, somewhat dissatisfied with the low level of proposed American aid to Zimbabwe, put it thus:

The extent that the new government of Prime Minister Mugabe in Zimbabwe can provide opportunities for their people, which makes it possible to satisfy the legitimate aspirations of the African masses while at the same time creating conditions which facilitate the attention of the white minority, should significantly strengthen the forces of peaceful change in South Africa.

But if the Government is unable to satisfy the legitimate aspirations...and if chaos and confrontation should erupt it will probably only strengthen the feeling in white South Africa that this is what will await them if some form of equitable power-sharing arrangements are established there as well (pp. 1-2).<sup>1</sup>

### Geo-Political Lessons for South Africa

Some of the more specific lessons Mr Vance and others identified were that:

- A peaceful, democratic means of transition from white minority rule as opposed to war was possible (p. 3), where the "interests of all" are protected (p. 5).
- Zimbabwe at the time was not "beholden" to any foreign power (p. 3) and that Mr Mugabe "...wants nothing to do with the Soviet Union" (p. 8).

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1 C. Vance, "Aid to Zimbabwe": Hearing before the sub-committee on Africa of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, 96 Congress, Second Session: September 23 1980.

- That among alternative paths Zimbabwe had chosen to build on a free democratic and mixed economy in the face of the "opportunists and ideologues who would claim their day" instead of attempting the "disastrous" by experimenting with a Marxist model. It was also felt that the leadership of Zimbabwe had "...a pragmatism and African nationalism (which) far outweigh(ed)... (their) Marxism" (p. 12).
- That "Mr Mugabe's objective (with the many refugees) is to put them on a farm to cultivate, but that means the necessary equipment, tractors and other agricultural equipment..." are required. That "this experiment of majority rule with the protection of the white interests is a very, very bold experiment. The disaster that occurred to Mozambique because they threw out the Portuguese...influenced Mr Mugabe to realise that it was a great mistake not to give the white population a real opportunity and a real basis to be prepared to stay and give their lives to the development..." (p. 6). That while he (Mugabe) has a Marxist philosophy, however, "...in the administration of Zimbabwe he is a pragmatist and his pragmatism leads him to the conclusion that the large ranches should be retained, industry developed and private enterprise should be encouraged to enter the country" (p. 6).
- There was "...an opportunity of seeing he (Mugabe) develop a great country which can influence the whole future of Southern Africa... Should it fail...there is no doubt that the Russians can and will move in" (p. 7). Thus it was considered that Zimbabwe was "...in a position to use our (American) money in such a way that they can become an important factor in helping the development of the whole of that region" (p. 10).
- That the chances of "...a self-proclaimed Marxist who ultimately would like to establish a one-party state...to implement the kind of political and economic policies...antithetical to our own values..." was unlikely (p. 8).

In general, this broad exemplary role prescribed by the US officials for Zimbabwe seems to have been understood more in journalistic rather than academic circles. Moreover, little has been made of the American admissions that they were providing "token" aid to Zimbabwe contrary to the "substantial assistance" implied by American support for the Lancaster House negotiations (p. 12) and to the importance they attached to a Zimbabwean model to be bequeathed the region. In fact, the "Kissinger billion" peddled around 1976 and the "Zimbabwe Development Fund" of 1977 were all part and parcel of "building" this model: hence the "...commitment to assist Zimbabwe if a certain result was achieved...namely a democratic transition to majority rule ...in ...a pluralistic society" (p. 4).

In this vein it is significant that some American scholars (e.g. Carl Eicher) have extolled the positive agrarian model of Zimbabwean reform particularly the institutional benefits of technology transfer from large to small farmers. Others, however, extol the positive role that the large farmer lobby has had on agricultural policy-making in general, and its influence on small farmers (Bratton 1985, Skalnes 1989, etc). In fact, local observers have been amazed at the soft line taken by the World Bank/IMF on parastatals in Zimbabwe agriculture: as if to suggest that marketing boards can work well in a bi-modal agrarian structure, if only they could cut their deficits.

Much of the writing on "lessons" for Namibia and South Africa, however, tends to select a few specific lessons from the agrarian experience of Zimbabwe, which can be replicated or avoided. Weiner, for example, warns about the pervasive nature of the

settler farmer ideology, the prospects of a differentiated peasant arising out of agricultural growth and the need for democratic forms of large-scale production (1989). Levin and Neocosmos (1989) seem to feel that there has been no real agrarian question in Zimbabwe (presumably since 1980) given their definition, which allows for such a question only where there is extreme overt oppression. Daphne (1989) sees Zimbabwe as providing an example of a "popular or revolutionary government" carrying out agrarian reforms for "social justice and transformation" and "socialisation of the countryside" but limited by "economic and other constraints". Daphne also notes the immense support given to peasants and that this succeeded in terms of maize deliveries and that the worker-peasant problem was being tackled by land allocation policies. The absence of effective rural organisations is cited as a problem for reform (Daphne p. 52), while others (Bratton 1986) see the existence of such local organisations in Zimbabwe as an asset.

In general, however, it seems that the "lessons" debate has so far tended to obscure the full context of Zimbabwe's agrarian problem and to conceal some critical processes in the land reform experience, particularly the broader impact of the limited land reform programmes on rural poverty and unemployment. We now reflect on some specific issues arising out of the pre-1980 experience.

## PRE-1980 SOUTHERN AFRICAN GEO-POLITICAL MANOEUVRES

It will be recalled that by 1976 when the notorious "Tar Baby" project of Kissinger was set in motion, the basic Western political framework was to avert the foreboding communist threat. Socialist ideology in Southern Africa had been spawned by the continuation of colonialism in the region, and was led by a series of "radical" liberation movements. In the wake of the Indochina defeat, US foreign policy was "...characterised by the centralisation of authority under this (Kissinger) "warrior professor" and the subordination of regional perspectives to a focus on comparative US and Soviet willpower" (Rossiter p. 48). The specific policy framework which saw the white regimes as being "there to stay" and that any solution had to be sought through them, was somewhat also premised on the whites being supportive of a US comparative advantage in the region. This policy, contained in the notorious "Option 2",<sup>2</sup> was intended to develop diplomatic rapprochement with the whites and provide them material support, and also proposed to increase economic support to the majority-ruled states to soften the "diplomatic impact of the new policy" (Rossiter p. 49). By 1976 (24 September), Smith under pressure from Vorster, in league with Kissinger, had publicly accepted to negotiate a transition to majority rule (*Ibid*, p. 58).

During the Carter administration, while overall US goals did not change so much, there was a more "aggressive" and "business-like" drive, "using a wider peace-keeping arsenal" to develop Southern African resources and supplies to the US (Palmberg 1977). South Africa was now more clearly seen as the "banker and industrialist" of the region. South Africa was to be persuaded, using the "under-consumption" thesis, to unleash forces of change towards black participation in the region's economy, in order to open up the market of 200 million, just as the removal of racism in the US had taught (Palmberg, 1977). The attitude was that American business could benefit from this, in an arena where the US was not as influential as the British, Portuguese and South Africans. Furthermore, a solution was crucial for access to the mineral supplies of the region, as well as to maintain the geo-strategic control that was being lost to the Soviets via Angolan and Mozambican independence.

The net geo-political result of the period up to 1981 was to establish the US as a major actor in what was formerly not their zone of influence. This was done by using "...foreign programs as an inducement to buy a seat at the table...", and using such a purchase "...as ballast for a tilt towards the white-ruled states in other aspects of Southern African policy...". Moreover, the USA and South African whites had a "...mutual desire to stabilise..." the region against Soviet influence and "...to expand commercial and financial relations of US and South African public and private sectors" (Rossiter p. 69).

Of specific interest to the Zimbabwean agrarian debate, however, is that by the time negotiations began, the question of completely buying out the white settlers was somewhat over-shadowed by the desire to keep white settlers actively involved. (Palmberg 1979). Diplomats had learnt lessons from the former Portuguese colonies,

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2 NSSM; 39 of 1969.

where all obstacles to implementing radical change had been removed by settler withdrawal. A plan to evacuate white Rhodesians to Bolivia had been exposed and was now seen to be counter-productive to Western hegemony.

But with the former Portuguese territories almost firmly in the "socialist" cradle and the Zimbabwean liberation movement now seen to be under the tutelage of the independent socialist Mozambique, the need to organise a counter social force became all the more important.

It was contended then that, if Zimbabwean peace was negotiated and American aid mobilised to resolve what was seen as a land/settler problem (Palmberg, 1977), then the socialist threat could be averted especially if this was backed by other tactical activities. It was through this Kissinger initiative that American aid to the sub-region, especially to Zambia, was greatly increased. Project hunting techniques by USAID as well as a desire to play a donor leadership role in Zimbabwe made it easier to absorb somewhat gerrymandered financial allocations in Southern Africa (Rossiter, 1988).

The "Kissinger billion" was "...to provide for governmental purchase and redistribution of large white-owned holdings of fertile farmland, an essential component of national reconstruction in a country where the white 4% of the population occupied most of the commercially viable land".<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> C. Rossiter: *The Bureaucratic Struggle for Control of US Foreign Aid: Diplomacy vs Development in Southern Africa*, 1988.

## NEGOTIATING "PRACTICALLY"!

Having secured the negotiations process, various tactics were deployed by the British and Smith regime to foreclose a radical agrarian reform process. Before the actual negotiations (between 1978 and 1979) the Muzorewa/Smith regime commenced a cooptation process whereby middle and upper class suburban land and related finance were opened to blacks, white freehold farmland was also available for purchase, wage-foods were made cheaper and a land distribution programme (of a total of 4 million hectares) was announced.

The basic negotiating strategy was to table a draft constitution which would secure advantage for the whites by granting unhindered citizenship rights to them, including the post-UDI immigrants; a Bill of Rights which precluded the expropriation of private property; secured freedom of expression, including the creation of separate discriminatory schooling; freedom of movement internally and externally - guaranteed by dual citizenship; a restricted presidency or executive powers, disproportional white parliamentary representation, protection of civil servants' employment and security of white pensions.<sup>4</sup> On a more broad level, a clause was installed: that 10 years were required to amend the constitution. Meanwhile, the independence of the judiciary was expected to guarantee white protection.

Some of the negotiating tactics used included:

- Speedy attempts to bulldoze certain issues with insufficient data and detail available on the part of the Patriotic Front.
- The threat to remove sanctions, as a carrot for Muzorewa's constituency (both Rhodesian and British business interests were targets for this), since many Tories believed that sanctions were an instrument supportive of the Patriotic Front.
- Promises of financial and technical support in the resettlement process: the British and Americans being the main promisers.
- The exaggerated emphasis placed on the need for international recognition of the settlement, rather than the evolution of a constitution based on a popularly elected assembly.
- The preclusion of any military integration on armies or "radical changes" in Zimbabwe before a free and fair election, as the Muzorewas had confidence they could win a significant majority.
- An appeal to the PF not to rush for land redistribution without adequately studying the situation. Resettlement was only to occur when "...carefully prepared and implemented to avoid negative effects on production".

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4 Patriotic Front Statement of 8/10/79; RBK, p. 1110.

- Questions of principle were neutrally presented as a means of protecting every person's rights, regardless of the iniquitous basis of ownership of property, resources and administrative control.
- An appeal to retain administrative experience in the future government, to guarantee their pensions, positions and citizenship protection. This had pervasive and salient implications for the nature of reforms that could be implementable: in terms of technique and operations.
- Ensuring an independence of the judiciary and relieving the Prime Minister of full control over the defence forces, police and public service.
- A wide-reaching principle of compensation for any transgressions of property rights and the justiciability of same.

These tactics were applied at various stages of the negotiations but became more obvious during the final phase when the proposed draft constitutions were presented by the British. Of interest was the hasty acceptance of the draft proposals by Muzorewa, who suggested that the Patriotic Front was being given a negotiating advantage, since the moral basis for continuing sanctions did not exist any more.

In the end, the constitution that carried the day retained most of the entrenched positions that the British had proposed. We shall look at this in more detail in the next section.

## LANCASTER HOUSE AGRARIAN DEAL

### Introduction: The 1980 Context

The settlement in Zimbabwe resulted in the coming to power of a "socialist" government, which was restrained from major changes by the Lancaster House Agreement. The former Portuguese colonies were all into their efforts of socialist agrarian experiments, based mainly on the nationalisation of land and its transfer to state enterprise and cooperatives. Well-known forms of destabilisation and counter-insurgency, as well as difficulties of a broader economic nature, led to a generally "unsatisfactory" agrarian result there. In narrow evaluative terms, many observers felt that either "statism", tactlessness and lack of revolutionary consciousness led to a misguided application of socialism in Mozambique. The ruling forces were considered to be drunk from their victory and oblivious of emerging internal problems due to an over-dependence on a narrowly based "vanguardism". Even an unresolved "national question" was belatedly cited by friends and foes alike as leading to the Mozambique "catastrophe". The same MISTAKES were not to be repeated by a liberated Zimbabwe!

### Lancaster House Constitution Agrarian Restrictions

Restrictions on agrarian reform were contained in Chapter 3 of Zimbabwe's Constitution dealing with "The Declaration of Rights", especially in Section 16 which provided that:

No property of any description or interest or right therein shall be compulsorily acquired except under the authority that:

- requires the acquiring authority to give reasonable notice of the intention to acquire the property, interest or right to any person owning the property or having any interest or right therein that would be affected by such acquisition;
- requires that the acquisition is reasonably necessary in the interests of public safety, public order, public morality, public health, town and country planning, the utilisation of that or any other property for a purpose beneficial to the public generally or to any section thereof, in the case of land that is under-utilised, the settlement of land for agricultural purposes;
- requires the acquiring authority to pay promptly adequate compensation for the acquisition;
- requires the acquiring authority, if the acquisition is contested, to apply to the General Division or some other court before or not later than thirty days after the acquisition for an order confirming the acquisition; and
- enables any claimant for compensation to apply to the General Division or some other court for the prompt return of the property if the court does not confirm the acquisition and for the determination of any question relating to compensation and to appeal to the Appellate Division.

This, of course, could only be fulfilled in the context of an independent judiciary.

Additionally, it was required that the law on acquisition may provide that a court may "...in fixing adequate compensation, ignore any reduction in the value of such land, interest or right resulting from any unusual or extraordinary circumstances existing immediately prior to such acquisition". Even under emergency or disaster it was held



that the above provisions could only be contravened where: reasonable notice of acquisition was given, affected persons would be enabled to object in writing to such acquisition, it would still be required of the acquiring authority to apply for legal entitlement within thirty days, enables the General Division to be satisfied that acquisition was justifiable in such an emergency or disaster, requires return of property when possession is no longer justifiable, prompt payment of adequate compensation for possession or for failure to return and/or damage to the property and enablement of claimants to apply for compensation.

Specific provisions for the nature of compensation were also made in respect of "loss of ownership or enjoyment of a piece of land or a substantial portion thereof". This entailed unhindered remittability of compensation within a reasonable time for individuals who are "citizens of or ordinarily resident in Zimbabwe", as well as for companies or shareholders.

In general, the right to private property was protected even in terms of other laws which make provision for THE estates deceased settlement, tax or rates compensation and penalties for breach of other laws. Forfeiture for land dereliction was also circumscribed. It was, however, accepted that contravention was allowed only for as long as was necessary for the purpose of the conservation of natural resources of any description or for "...agricultural development or improvement which the owner or occupier of the land has been required and has without reasonable or lawful excuse refused or failed to carry out". The President's rights in respect of acquisition and interests related to minerals or water (underground or public) were also circumscribed as to their contravention of the basic provision above.

These provisions applied to "pieces of land registered as a separate entity in the Deeds Registry" only, although "tribespeople" were protected separately elsewhere. The Constitution also protects freedom of movement throughout Zimbabwe to the extent that any other law makes provision for "...the imposition of restrictions on the acquisition or use of land or other property in Zimbabwe", or through restrictions on residence within the Tribal Trust Lands of persons who are not tribespeople... for the protection of tribespeople's well-being". It further stipulated that most such restrictions would need to be reasonably justifiable in a democratic society. The repeal or amendment of the Declaration of Rights was also proscribed in the sense that both would not apply to "...the compulsory acquisition of property ...or rights therein...", and in general these could only be changed through a constitutional Bill permissible only after 10 years.

The Lancaster House constitutional agreement expired in April 1990, opening up the land policy framework of the GOZ particularly in terms of:

- The constraint on the right to nationalise land.
- The constraint on forms of compensation for land acquired.
- Generally, the question of rights to private property in land.

The fact that the GOZ had the option to assert these rights, although certainly not to be assumed as a foregone choice, meant that agrarian reforms could be undertaken on a less costly and swifter basis. In essence, the revival of the agrarian debate in 1991 was a test of how far and in what direction the GOZ would go.

One fundamental point about "Lancaster House" is that it is not conceptually new to Zimbabwe, while the similarities with Kenya's settlement are striking. The similar points are:

- In both cases the constitutions through an entrenched Bill of Rights underguards the sanctity of private property in general, while singling out land for special protection, given the settler character of the then "colonies". This protection seems to be targeted at the more fundamental protection of capitalist relations: a point which the liberation movements agreed to in spite of their socialist or Marxist-Leninist principles. The latter point makes Zimbabwe quite different from the former Portuguese colonies, as they had no commitment to a mode of production other than their espoused ideology.
- The concepts of landed property in both countries were based on the Torrens System, which not only guarantees title in registration but also guarantees the "deeds", a fact which makes for the indefeasibility of the solum: This would ensure the legal standing of land owners to claim compensation for damage, at a justified rate and with immediate payment for land at a considerable percentage above market prices (in forex), if and when ownership rights were "taken" away.
- The settlement allowed for non-racial access to private landed property, setting the framework for aspirant black "middle classes" to also acquire private landed property - creating at least interest in it and sowing seeds for the desegregation of the liberation movements' "interests".
- The Constitution was agreed upon with promises of financing by the British and Americans and supported indirectly through World Bank support of credit schemes: a further commitment of the state and "black" agrarian interests to back up the constitutional agreement.
- Moreover, the Constitution, in recognition of previous land tenure legislation and acquisition modalities, accepted the dual system whereby "Tribal Trust Lands" were to be held in so-called "communal" ownership, under the trusteeship of chiefs: a situation which in Zimbabwe was later changed (1982) to allow for the introduction of guardianship by District Councils.

The land acquisition modalities in Zimbabwe were modified slightly by 1986 to allow the GOZ first option to buy land on offer and to acquire land deemed to be underutilised, albeit through complicated criteria of measurement of same and a cumbersome process of GOZ claims on such lands.

Such amendments to the Lancaster House constitution, however, continued to pose serious difficulties for land transfers during the decade given the aforementioned blocked clauses. Thus the land question under the Lancaster House terms has had the ideological and legitimising function in its entrenchment of capitalist theory of law and development over a 10-year period.

That is, the constitution was meant to create an environment in which private enterprise would have the fullest expression: be it for emigrating whites, remaining whites and/or emerging black agrarian interests. Land inequities could only be addressed via markets through the costly and due legal process. Critically, this process protected all private

land owning races, leaving the GOZ with only moral persuasion and political discipline (e.g. the Leadership Code) to "limit" land ownership among its "mass" membership.

So what has been Zimbabwe's experience within these agreed upon constitutional policy constraints? The next section addresses this issue within the broader context of agrarian reform as opposed to focusing mainly on land redistribution.

## **SOME KEY ZIMBABWEAN AGRARIAN EXPERIENCES: 1980-1989**

### **The Broad Ideological Framework**

The new socialist GOZ now hamstrung by the Lancaster House Agreement and wisened by the "lessons" set out to construct a "mixed" agrarian structural framework: based on the tolerance of a variety of "systems of production" ("small" and "large" commercial production, peasant/communal production, state farms, out-growers) different land tenure regimes (private, state and so-called communal ownership) and the participation of both state and private (including foreign) enterprises in marketing (the former of a subsidised loss-making outputs distribution and the latter of a profitable inputs distribution). Foreign investment, apart from South African capital, was to be welcomed although the state would move through a transitional period towards a transformation which would increase state ownership of the means of production, increase the distribution of land and other resources, promote the role of cooperatives, etc. This was summed up in the Growth with Equity strategy.

### **Macro-Economic Aspects**

The macro-economic framework was to encourage export-led growth and forex-earning, correct and indiscriminate prices for all farmers to stimulate output as a major policy instrument, a continuance of the traditional markets structure (access to state credit, private finance, services and infrastructure and declining urban food subsidies) with an extension (not reallocation) of these to the peasantry. While labour minima and practices were to be regulated, the factor of labour substitution (capital intensification through machinery imports and local means) was to be unregulated except circumstantially - where forex did not permit and land use and/or land markets were to be uncontrolled. Much of this was entrenched in the Bill of Rights' limitations to nationalisation of land in particular, and reflected a reconciliation posture.

GOZ expenditures were greatly skewed from the start by large allocations to defence, first as part of the demobilisation and integration exercise and then as costs for the defence of trade routes through Mozambique. Educational services took up the second largest allocation, while a significant capital outlay was made throughout the period on either buying out South African-owned firms in various sectors or rescuing closing down mines and firms in the first four years and increasing recurrent allocations were targeted for drought relief. A range of large social projects also took their share of the Budget. Much of this occurred in the context of a rather low economic growth rate following the initial consumer-led boom, characterised by minimal private sector investment growth with high state absorption of "excess liquidity". Foreign financial flows were lower than anticipated, with a level of unfulfilled land acquisition finance promises. Budget balancing and comparatively higher consumption-oriented spending became the norm for most of the years, while the economy generated employment at levels below the population growth rate.

## **Land Policy Issues in the 1980s**

The question of private property in land was, however, to bedevil the state at various levels. The rush for land among the emerged and emerging black bourgeoisie (of which there are perhaps about 400 in the large category of 1 000 plus hectares, and over 8 000 in small-scale averaging over 150 hectares and the few thousands richer peasants with over 10 arable hectares) became the Achilles heel of land policy formulation and the pronounced socialist ethic (Leadership Code). The latter by 1985 had recognised private landed property rights among leaders but limited them to 50 acres. This was despite the fact that such limited rights were now only being thus vested in wealthy blacks aggrieved by a sort of racial discrimination in rights to private land which whites had enjoyed for the past 90 years. The right to private landed property was, however, widely contested among the rich peasantry (many cooperators and individually resettled) who now claimed insecurity of tenure and disadvantaged access to credit from both state and private lending institutions.

And if private property could be held in LSCF and SSCF areas many could not appreciate why settlers had to be tenants to the state or why "master" and other emerged farmers in so-called (but hardly) communal land (ownership) areas could not also acquire deeds and/or permits for land on which they essentially have exclusive rights - barring absolute legal control. Moreover, the youth in most land-short areas had now limited rights to any land, as did most unmarried women in spite of the age of majority, divorce rights and some sort of inheritance rights. The increasing number of landless and destitute men and women, most of whom depended on the patriarchic benevolence of kin and with scanty chances of wage employment, swelled the potential for communal labour abuses. All this contradicted the mixed tenure framework which in practice granted access and security to a few - with gross inequalities of land. Even the state forests and national parks (vast expanses of land benefiting the state coffers and private hunting, tour and poaching operators - in the name of sustained resource management) themselves alienated the neighbouring peasantry.

## **Resettlement and Peasant Improvement Programmes**

The GOZ purchased at high cost 3 million hectares of mostly marginal land from the LSCF, to settle about 52 000 households, constituting 30% of initial targets. This made a slight dent on the still unequal agrarian structure, amidst land hunger; with approximately 200 000 households living on the extreme margins. Some approximately 150 000 peasant households in higher potential dryland areas, in the vicinity of LSCF infrastructure and services, and with resources for production took advantage of the new policy incentives (e.g. access to AFC credit facilities) to produce the acclaimed surpluses of maize and cotton. A few more peasants have since produced some tea, sugar, burley tobacco, wheat, etc. Productivity of maize and cotton rose, while more recently the resettled have begun to produce fair outputs per hectare on previously uncropped land. Cumulatively, however, these gains reached less than 30% of the peasantry and would require heavy investments in irrigation, credit, extension, infrastructure and technology if they are to benefit the landless thousands, assuming they are not resettled on better lands.

## **Socialist Projects**

The ruling party's ideology is socialism, based on Marxist-Leninist principles. But its practical implementation has been limited to collectives and state farms acquired on a willing-seller willing-buyer basis. These constitute less than 5% of land and even less in terms of numbers of people involved, and with little preferential resourcing except for the state farms. The collectives' efforts were generally unsatisfactory in terms of outputs, land utilisation, crop diversity and productivity, management (capacity/effectiveness), cohesion and influence on policy and services, until much later when the performance of a few improved - a bit too late to counter a rising negative propaganda which saw such failure as natural. The fact that state resources and services were minimal and that a few donors (some with nebulous experience on collectives) were the mainstay of the collectives' resource base - in an unstructured and unprotected process - as well as the fact that the recruitment of membership was amongst the somewhat disadvantaged (since most of the liberation movements' leading cadres were absorbed in the state or private sector) meant that this experiment was tried with the weakest links and least investment. Rather, state farms and the middle peasantry received most support, while the LSCF retained its structural advantages and generally obtained most of the policy edges it lobbied for.

## **Financial Redistribution**

Investment in irrigation or other land production-enhancing resources could have alleviated the pressures on the peasant land and on state land policy shortcomings, as a temporary (15 years) solution. However, such efforts remained minimal with less than 2% of peasant lands irrigated. They have also been explained away by environmental and high overhead costs arguments - as if the alternatives are not politically risky. In broad terms, peasant agricultural growth has been financed mainly through the expansion of state market facilities, some new transport infrastructure, some credit and quite substantially through own savings or remittances, while donors have played a key financing role in peasant markets and services expansion. As stated elsewhere, less donor finance or state borrowings were used for irrigation or land redistribution, concentrating instead on other aspects such as health, drinking water and education.

A few pilot projects for growers of tea, wheat, tobacco and sugar have also since been financed (for less than 3 000 peasants) by state borrowings and private agri-business firms. But it is fair to say that the LSCF had benefited immensely also from donor funding of milk technology and transport (NORAD and DANNIDA), the bulk of the revamped beef marketing, slaughter and disease protection infrastructure (EEC), farm machinery commodity import programmes (USAID) - albeit the peasant counterpart funds benefit from this) and credit from the AFC (from multilateral financing).

This suggests that potential benefits to peasants were directed to the already big farmers, hence the agricultural credit for its funding absorptive capacity. As earlier stated, the agricultural sector has remained one of the lowest recipients of state recurrent (14%) and to some extent capital expenditures - more so if we remove food subsidies as a net urban consumer benefit. Based on present financing patterns, totally new borrowing and grant sources would be required to mount a massive land purchase and peasant improvement programme.

## **Local Government, Land and Resources Control**

Any form of political settlement of the agrarian question resulting from negotiations would have had to be sold, if not only to the new administration, but also to the local communities in their given (or even radicalised) local level power structures and land rights ideology. Thus at independence, as during the colonial period and the struggle, the nature of local government, forms of rural mobilisation and the context of participation in decision-making were crucial. Generally, local administration, land access and use management, local financial and labour contributions to development and democratic practice and aspirations were critical issues to account for concretely at the community level. This, of course, required a clear political programme and organised social forces for its implementation.

Thus the system of local government was itself modified, as part and parcel of an attempt to reassign responsibility for land allocation and local level participation in decision-making within the rural areas. For six years two separate systems operated: one for the LSCF based on its rural councils involving local intensive conservation area committees and with a system of finance from assets and services rates payments as well as the organised fund-raising of the local Commercial Farmers' Union branch.

The other was the District Councils of communal areas based mainly on government sectoral development grants (schools, water, roads, etc) and a form of household tax-development levy which it has been impossible to collect - not surprisingly given the low incomes of peasants. People have also been mobilised to contribute in kind through labour for the construction of schools and various other projects, e.g. roads, bridges, dams, etc.

Village and ward development committees were created, the former representing 100 households with the youth and women represented by a member each in the five member committees. Chiefs were no longer to play a major role in decision-making except eventually in the community courts, while the councils advised by the VIDCOs allocated land, thus stripping chiefs of the essential basis of their powers.

The system seemed, however, to be unable to fully undermine the patriarchal basis of society, providing equal decision-making powers to women and youth and an elected rather than kinship-based local authority power structure. The chiefs soon received renewed and recognised roles in these committees around 1988. Their adjudication reigned in the face of a rather limited development of VIDCOs, the conflict-ridden councils as well as the general leadership role ascribed to chiefs in the councils and committees. Moreover, the youth and women, who were excluded from the land, continued to trek to the towns. Main issues of land allocation and GOZ services and materials inputs remained within the power frame of the elders, master farmers and influential lineage groups; these being also the source of local electoral support mobilisation.

The local leaders continued to build exclusive tenure on the best and larger proportions of land and with master farmers continued to lead farmer groups, which received most of the available services and to direct the rural allocation of state resources.

Thus the local government and social mobilisation formats somewhat reinforced the power of traditional and farm modernising local leaders while concentrating on issues of GOZ service delivery, land use reorganisation, health and educational information and infrastructure building, and the maintenance of order (e.g. with squatters and related contraventions) rather than creating any strong and independent agenda for land reform or serious policy lobby for the structural re-allocation of national resources.

### **Class Formation, Ethnicity and Regional Inequity Issues**

As could be envisaged under a variety of landed property systems, uncontrolled limitations on access to private and state credit, a loose Leadership Code and the variety of legal protections to access to and use of private property, the variety of class origins among leaders, wide differences in land quality and quantity of the Tribal Trust Lands and Purchase Areas and the unequal spatial (provincial and ethno-regional) distribution of infrastructure and resources potential, a basis for agrarian class differentiation was well laid out for the black populace in tandem with the broader LSCF framework. The LSCF were differentiated anyhow, mainly between the large estates of local and transnational firms *vis-a-vis* the settler farmers now turning into companies - the latter with different land-holding size and enterprise types. The black monied and perhaps "connected" groups just before and after 1980 entered the race for commercial farms, while others gained from incentives as available. The class of land-owners and secured leases have thus increased in numbers and force. These are yet to be well documented in terms of their specific class characters.

The ethno-regional dimension of agrarian class formation has still to be openly discussed. On the basis of the spatially unequal land resources and infrastructure distribution, which coincides with provisional boundaries containing various social groups, there is a general ethno-regional differentiation of class formation. Largely on the basis of subjective discourse, it cannot be overlooked that there is, in fact, some public perception of ethno-regional inequity in levels of current agrarian and general rural development benefits. This derives from the fact that certain regions consistently produce more surpluses while others suffer from periodic droughts, have less or more land hunger, more or less water resources and so forth.

These perceived differences in ethnic gains remain, until open discussions and debate expose the exact nature, specificity and causes of such differentiation. Needless to say, it is and remains feasible for some in the current state of discourse to attribute such differentiation mainly to post-1980 political outcomes and to ferment these into a problem of the post-independence national ethnic power balancing.

Encouragingly, there is no clear-cut formalised ethno-regional political party as most parties are mixed. But the class character of the extant parties also remains mixed, although the tendency seems to be that quite many of the landed blacks are in positions of seniority. The white landed classes, on the other hand, were generally CAZ based with a few scattered between ZANU-PF, ZUM and as independents.



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## THE NATURE OF WHITE INFLUENCE

The nature of the post-1980 "white involvement in the economy", as was aimed for prior to negotiations, is of particular interest in assessing the Zimbabwean model. The main point is that while acceding to some quantitative losses in land, the LSCF had dynamised its quantitative participation through gains in the land markets, increased factor substitution, land use re-orientation, reinforced control of pricing and market policy and resources and the elaboration of its policy lobby and own technical services machinery.

True to form, the concentration of the better lands among now only 4 500 LSCF farmers increased, with those who went into exile having received handsome incomes from whole farm sales at market prices. The state belatedly tried to control both sales to other LSCF farmers and the prices by legislating for its right of first purchase, but this was rather too late as most of the sceptic sellers had done so in the first few years. And due to these sales and the existence of the state as a certain and very willing buyer, land prices were constantly on an upward spiral. The state could no longer afford this land acquisition enterprise, which was misled by statically estimated land purchase costings and promises of finances by later apprehensive donors.

Meanwhile, still about 40% of LSCF lands are not fully utilised at all, while EEC beef markets and aid have encouraged an extensification of prime land use. Environmental ideology further justifies extensive land use in the LSCF and on land under resettlement as well as exerting land pressure on the peasantry to re-organise land use (demarcations, reduced livestock and crop intensities, conservation measures, controlled grazing and cropping, etc). And through this ideology of sustainability the state owns and uses about 14% of the land under national parks which tend to border with tsetse fly-infested areas and acts as a buffer for the so-called communal areas. The question of land extensification through wildlife ranching also began to create new conflicts over the aesthetic precedence that nature was to take over poor blacks.

Relatedly, LSCF employment capabilities have yet to return to their 1976 levels - a trend which they could only achieve with full land utilisation spurred perhaps by land taxes and market control, reduced capitalisation tendencies and perhaps labour-absorbing cropping and labour incentives or subsidies. These kinds of market interference - inimical to the current structural adjustment frameworks - could only be matched or bettered in employment generation by land redistribution.

It seems that in the final analysis after a few years of specialist lobby and application of the technical and administrative skills from "within the state" agrarian and related ministries, the Commercial Farmers' Union (CFU) has consolidated its own lobby capacity by utilising most former civil servants. The major lobby focus has been on prices, and it still uses the input and output structures of the large farmer. Negotiations for forex and input allocations are still carried out much in relation to the LSCF needs first, since they are adequately represented on the main agricultural boards, research institutions and on various committees. They have an elaborate media machinery in the form of special farmer magazines and a prominent section in a leading non-state-owned newspaper. In some respects, they have been the main beneficiaries of donor support to agrarian parastatals - since they are the main users of the such services.

The CFU has a staff and officers complement of close to 100 organising technically for the LSCF on a commodity and issues basis. In some fields their access to technical skills for negotiations surpass those of the GOZ, whose salaries are not the best. They also have access to private capital, services and skills which make them a difficult match on a legalistic basis in almost any sphere of agricultural lobby. This, of course, could be balanced by a greater GOZ investment in related skills, research, information and administrative capacity - if these were to be applied to a careful assessment of the real economic value of the LSCF enterprise.

Some voices have been organised and heard at the local level, but these have hardly been nationally coordinated and when they have been (e.g. by the Association of District Councils, the National Farmers' Association of Zimbabwe, etc.) they tend to be ineffectual, playing second fiddle to either the CFU and other urban-based lobbies, or to their sectoral ministerial patrons.

Things have not been always so "hegemonic" for the local elites, the capitalists and the state for there have been pockets of resistance in various regions: although these have not taken on a scale and intensity that has seriously challenged the rural and national power structure to any significant extent. Moreover, the inherited law and other forces (various property security schemes, the police, etc.) tend to have been deeply reinforced through the incorporation of demobilised ex-combatants and new unemployed youth (brigades, support units, etc.) into an effective and well spread property defence system. Except for some sporadic so-called dissidence an intact and safe system has thus evolved.

The so-called squatting and poaching problems have continued unabated in spite of forced removals and the use of ex-combatants to police state land resources. Livestock rustling, illegal grazing, fence-cutting and other transgressions seem hard to mitigate through various means other than the proccurance of mass secured access.

## THE EMERGING PRE-1991 AGRARIAN POLICY TENDENCY

### Re-introducing Agrarian Reform "Rhetoric" or Policy Shift

To the surprise and chagrin of some observers, particularly in the media, the second quarter of 1989 saw distinctly increased debate on the redistribution of land and problems of resettlement in Parliament, speeches by politicians, various seminars, the media and new studies. This came after a relatively distinct lull in public debate on land. The main issues raised were that more land should be made available by the LSCF, through the GOZ. *The Financial Gazette* (a private sector media "voice") and the LSCF generally reacted that land was available on the market, but expressed fears that government did not have a coherent "land policy" - especially on how settlers use land and fairplay in land acquisition (*Fingaz*, August 1989). Additionally, they suggested that the GOZ was politicking over land during the election year (*Fingaz*, 1989) at a time when its popularity had been waning (Hawkins, Facts, etc, September 1989): as if to say the issue was not political anyway. It was also suggested by the CFU that the debates should be held in a cool and calculated manner with due consideration given to the interests of all (*Fingaz*, September 1989).

The question remained, however, whether any meaning could be ascribed to that flurry of debate. Was it a promising activity determined to seize new opportunities or a "hot-air-releasing" conjuncture foreboding anticipated demands - from the expiry of constitutional constraints? Methodologically, would analysts not be falling prey (as before), to relying on stated policy, speeches and "radical" posturing as a means of identifying prospects for revolutionary change? Alternatively, was the future success of land reform to be based on the quality of speeches, the legalistic framework of the discourse or the level of visible resources which could be applied for a new reforms? And, did the discourse in 1989 show any signs of policy shift or continuity of principles applied during the 1980s?

More fundamental was the question: to what extent did the state-led debate adequately represent the real social forces struggling for land reform? In the following section we assess some of the apparent tendencies in the re-introduced agrarian debate during 1989.

### Land Redistribution: Policy-Making Dilemmas

When GOZ in 1989 reaffirmed its desire to get more land from the LSCF, there emerged a definitively prescribed "ruling number", albeit not a time-based target, in terms of the quantity of land to be acquired and households to be settled. This number, which was

also the one targeted in 1982 - a total maximum of 162 000 families requiring a further 6 million hectares - was then estimated would cost the GOZ Z\$600 million (Karimanzira D, *Fingaz*, August 1989).<sup>5</sup>

In terms of the rationale for agrarian reform, it appeared that the GOZ had resumed the moral and equity logic, as noted in its desire to acquire land on behalf of the people, its vision of national interest (President Mugabe, *Fingaz*, August 1989). There was some economic connotation in the rationale, as reflected in growing concern over "...huge lands held for speculation..." (*Ibid*) and about the need to overcome the LSCF's management constraints in using land, and passing it on to those who could use and need land, such as the unemployed (Chidzero, *Fingaz*, August 1989).

It also seems, however, that morally the issue of maintaining the right of citizens to own land as private property would be an accepted principle (President Mugabe, *Ibid*), as it has been before - at least in the LSCF areas - even if ceilings on quantity owned may be considered. Moreover, land which was then being used would not be the first segment to be purchased (*Ibid*), reflecting continuity in the strategy of going for underutilised land. In 1989, the selection of economically strategic land out of the whole pool of Zimbabwe's land appeared to be less desirable on economic grounds, even if administrators raised the need for large blocks of land.

A third policy debate continuity was the reaffirmation of the principle of paying for land on a land market basis, even if legislation would encourage sales, as could be gleaned from references to purchasing costs (*Ibid*, Karimanzira and Mugabe) and the fact that even the costs had already been worked out. This is of interest because the issue raised by some that the land belongs to the people anyway (e.g. by Nkomo) was not generally accepted by the leadership.<sup>6</sup> These inclinations reinforced the fiscalistic framework within which land redistribution had been undertaken in the past: an approach which made available finance and immediate returns and outputs to land the determining factor as opposed to the broader economic rationale and long-term returns to land distribution.

When assessed closely, in terms of the then available 1989/90 budgetary allocations, it could be seen that only \$14 million had been allocated for land purchase. Even if we optimistically added 50% of the donor allocations relevant ministries had for land purchase as well as the GOZ's own total vote of credit (Z\$47 million), the grand total for land purchase amounted to only Z\$61 million. These amounts barely constituted 10% of the publicly announced sums required to purchase the required amount of land. Thus, even with further donor matching funds it would take at least 20 budgetary years to acquire land and settle those targeted above. On the basis of own resources and the current pattern of donor funding levels, therefore, it is clear that an even slower pace of

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5 Minister Karimanzira suggested that: The GOZ will try to settle the 75 000 families it had targeted for in the current plan period (1986-1990) by 1991 which will bring the total land transferred to peasants to slightly around 7 million covering a grand total of 125 000 families by 1991. The balance of families are to be resettled later on 2 million hectares to be acquired at an unspecified date. This process, it seems, will have to be accomplished in stages beginning with the resettlement of already acquired but unallocated land (amounting to 500 000 hectares) because of resource constraints and other difficulties. The emergent policy framework is therefore one of a continued slow and cautiously planned land redistribution process.

6 Nkomo, *The Herald*, July 1989, and others.

land redistribution than had so far been experienced, was the most that could be realistically expected.

This could only be achieved by new policies that drastically altered land prices, and new levels of sympathetic donor commitments to Zimbabwe's land redistribution needs or a new level of GOZ borrowing not specified in that year's Budget. Things could also be accelerated if, as was stated then by the President (*Fingaz*, 1 September 1989) the GOZ borrowed from the LSCF itself - by paying later (on as yet unspecified terms) - as it was suggested had happened in other land reforms (Kenya, Latin America). It should be remembered, however, that Zimbabwe's case was not a tenancy reform case, where output would remain the same and that the GOZ had practised whole farm purchasing, while people have not up to now been paying for the land (rents or purchase on credit). The land acquisition costs, it was assumed, would have to be borne wholly by the state unless it changed its land ownership policy.

During debate some still considered that other support policies (extension, marketing, credit, irrigation, etc.) should make up for the peasantry's shortfalls in land transfers. However, it was clear that the overall budget for agriculture was nominally lower in 1989 by Z\$89 million, while subsidies were to be further reduced and, parastatals expected to be cost-effective especially in their charges for services. At any rate, donors seem to be on the run south - to Namibia and even the Lusophone countries - believing that Zimbabwe was doing well, so that little new aid would be forthcoming.

An underlyingly clear thrust in the continuity of GOZ land policy debate was also detectable in the legalistic approach suggested: that legislation would have to be passed by Parliament where difficulties in land acquisition were encountered.

The GOZ, interestingly, also made overtures to the LSCF to come forward with land, especially underutilised land (President Mugabe, *Fingaz*, August 1989) while it continued to hesitantly consider land taxation (Chidzero, *Fingaz*, August 1989). More recently, the sentiment has been raised that the CFU should set up a fund for land purchase, to assist the Government inasmuch as the former colonial master provides aid.

On the implementation of the resettlement programme the GOZ emphasised its commitment to a carefully planned process, not as in the heydays of "accelerated" resettlement, implying a slow process. More critically, however, the reason given was that the relevant ministry lacked resources, as evident in the Budget, particularly the stated shortage of planning person power to the tune of less than 50% of requirements (Karimanzira, *Fingaz*, August 1989). Furthermore, planning was to be constrained by the need to link resettlement planning to communal area re-organisation planning (*Ibid*), an exercise which all agree is not only technically formidable but politically difficult and time-consuming: sharing resettlement planning resources with such an effort thwarts the resettlement programme. The GOZ, however, also stated its intention to replan first the "accelerated schemes", as they needed to be upgraded since they lacked services and infrastructure (*Ibid*). This simple planning problem, coupled with the not so good performance of many schemes, led to greater implementational caution and the adoption of a more practical pace.

Another difficult issue for the GOZ was the fact that the current Land Acquisition Act provided it with only 30 days to react to land sale offers: this sometimes found the GOZ without money or the flexibility to react (*Ibid*).

Altogether, therefore, it seems that both the 1990 elections and the expiry of the Lancaster House Agreement had spurred major debate by the GOZ on agrarian reform policy. The GOZ's public posturing since 1989 had certainly highlighted agrarian reform as one of its major preoccupations, competing closely until the first half of 1990 with the economic structural adjustment programme.

The political high ground that the land issue occupied in 1989 prompted, for instance, the British Government through its High Commission to request clarification on threats of land seizure (BBC, 18 August 1989): the GOZ response through President Mugabe was that the acquisition of land would be compensated, although the willing-seller element will seize to be a condition. He went on to ask the CFU to cooperate by providing information on amounts of land available for sale, the amounts of underutilised land, the number of absentee owners and about those owning more than one farm in order, presumably, to set the framework for future land acquisition. The ball was thus thrown back to the CFU by the state on land availability and levels of utilisation in order to do justice to the people's demands. The moral force of the land issue, however, did not evoke much compliance from the CFU. The CFU remained arrogantly adamant by not coming forward with concessionary proposals for a new land policy, their emphasis being a critique of the resettlement programme and the need for qualified settlers.

### **The New Land Policy**

In mid-1990, the GOZ eventually announced a radical land policy in the form of principles (see Table 1) and by amending the Constitution to allow for land block acquisitions of up to 5 million hectares, for the GOZ to set land prices, to remove the willing-seller-willing-buyer clause, to remove the foreign exchange payment requirement on appropriated land and to allow the GOZ more time to buy and compensate for land. The GOZ promised to introduce a land tax, to select qualified farmers, and to review the overall land tenure system. Furthermore, the state defended black capitalist farmers, indicating that it would, in fact, provide them with financial and technical support. Broad undefined principles were also flagged: that one person would be allowed one farm, maximum farm sizes would be determined, foreign owners would have to convert to leasehold with some exceptions, while land use inspection would be stepped up to ensure full land utilisation.

The aspects which entailed constitutional amendment, however, required that a new land acquisition Act be promulgated in order to guide implementation. This has yet to be agreed upon within the GOZ, let alone debated by the public. Moreover, most of the policy issues announced have yet to be fully articulated as formal policy, such that comment on them at this stage tends to be speculative.

The reaction of the CFU was to raise international concern on Zimbabwe's new land policy via the Press, and a highly publicised CFU meeting and through a formal statement rejecting most of the government's provisions. Press reports suggest that in the end the CFU had to write a letter to donors at Zimbabwe's structural adjustment consultative meeting in Paris, disavowing their disagreements with the GOZ, while it is understood that Zimbabwean industrialists have not been impressed by the CFU's confrontational attitude towards the GOZ.



The problem remains that little open debate is now being held over how to formulate the above principles into implementable policies based on an adequate treatment of Zimbabwe's specific land problems. It is, therefore, necessary to review the substantive issues that underlie the new policy.

# LAND POLICY ISSUES SINCE 1991

## Introduction

Having reviewed Zimbabwe's agrarian reform experience up to 1990 and presented an overview of the new policy, we now discuss the critical land policy issues underlying Zimbabwe's present Land Reform Proposals. Some of these issues arise out of public debate, GOZ rhetoric, policy statements and on-going policy dialogues between the GOZ, interest groups, experts and financiers.

Zimbabwe's recent land policy formulation debate has been informed by a variety of types of problems, namely:

- Moral and/or normative concerns over equity.
- Land resource use efficiency concerns.
- Land markets efficiency concerns.
- Socio-political balancing: lobby and land demands.
- Implementation and technical efficacy problems.
- Macro-economic cost-benefits of previous land reform.

These six areas of concern over land, as elaborated briefly below, also translate themselves into specific land policy issues as shown in Table 1.

## Moral and Equity Issues

Historical grievances over land alienation, the political emasculation this entailed and the obvious resultant iniquitous distribution of land and access tended to fuel nationalist sentiment during the liberation struggle and post-colonial development efforts. Furthermore, the extreme poverty and underdevelopment of communal areas and a growing unemployment problem suggest a redeeming role to be played by land redistribution, given low overall economic growth.

In this context, the need for justice and equity to be seen to accrue from independence have led to various apparently rational policy formulations pertaining to land redistribution, such, as:

- The necessity for the State to secure legislative rights to acquire land on behalf of the people and to redistribute land to the needy.
- The need to regulate farm sizes: to ensure viability in terms of farm maxima and minima.
- The need to limit the number of farms owned by individuals.
- The curtail absentee ownership.
- To exclude foreign ownership.

Table 1  
ZIMBABWE'S NEW LAND AND POLICY PROPOSALS (1990)

ISSUE	POLICY AREA	SPECIFIC POLICY PROPOSALS
I Moral and Equity Concerns	1. Legislative Facility	a) Constitutional Amendments b) Land Transfer Approval
	2. Farm Size Regulations	c) Amount of land required (No. in need) a) Maximum, b) Minimum farm size
	3. Ownership	c) Number of farms per farmer a) No absentee landlords b) No foreign company owners c) Promote large black farms
II Land Resource Use Efficiency	1. Land Use Regulation	a) Inspect under-utilisation b) Amount of land available; unused
	2. Land Tenure Systems	a) Mixed tenure: indiv., state, co-op; extend freehold into CAs? b) Administration - decentralised allocation (excluding chiefs?)
III Land Markets Efficiency	1. Land Markets and Control	a) Setting land prices b) Institute a land tax c) Capital gains taxation d) Sub-division encouraged
	1. Resettlement Land Access	a) Skilled small-scale farmers b) Create Black LSCF c) Women's access to land
IV Socio-Political Balancing: Lobby and Demands	1. Acquisition Approach	a) Designation of blocks b) LSCF sub-division(?)
	2. Smallholder Farming Systems alias "Resettlement Models"	a) Subsistence orientation vs commercial (high-value) crops b) Mixed crop-livestock vs charity from livestock to specialised crop(?) c) Wildlife models in LSCF vs peasant farmers d) Sub-divisions
VI Macro-Economic Policy Aspects	1. Financing for Resettlement	a) Settler purchase(?) b) Central Govt. Fiscal Purchase/Targets c) Donor funding
	2. "Replacement" of LSCF output	d) Local Govt - land tax finance(?) e) Social/infrastructure costs sectorally accounted.

### **Land Resource Use Efficiency**

Evidence indicates that land under-utilisation has ranged from 30 to 60% of arable and grazing land. Therefore, the need to improve land resources use through redistribution tended to provide solid technical grounds for reform. This has also been based on experiences suggesting the tendency of peasants to use all available land under land supply constraints. The observed land unit productivity increase that followed reforms elsewhere also justifies the Zimbabwean one. Given maize and cotton production growth in communal areas since 1980, the potential for improved land utilisation through peasant access to land and support services gave credence to the above perception.

It has also been argued that peasants require less capital and foreign exchange for given amounts of output, even if there may be difficulties in the short to medium term for peasants producing some specialised crops. Specialised cropping would thus require larger production investments to enable peasant responsiveness.

Additionally, large-scale farmers have been accused of land use "extensification", through the use of prime arable land for beef and wildlife. Thus they are sacrificing national land use efficiency for micro-enterprise profit optimisation, given existing capital constraints to enduse expansion. Game ranching, for instance, secures individually large rates of return to minimal capital investments for those farmers who already possess large tracts of underutilised land even in the marginal agro-ecological zones.

These considerations have not only strengthened the rationale for land redistribution, but have also led to related new policy specifications such as:

- Monitoring and regulation of land use.
- Land taxation as a means of lowering prices and forcing land sales.

### **Land Market Efficiency**

It has also been argued that given the settler political economic principles of Zimbabwe, which over-protected white enterprise through subsidies and the foreclosure of black competition, the land market has been highly inefficient. The issue raised is that a "free" private land market, which allowed for sub-divisions but adequately taxed land on the basis of economic rent (beyond services levies), would tend to allow for rational land use and agricultural resources allocation, and hence a broader participation of blacks in the land market.

This argument arises because there are currently no real land taxes; there exists administratively controlled land sub-divisions (meant originally to protect "white" land against black tenancy), unregulated land use and the absence of incentives for optimal land use. In Zimbabwe, private land acquisition based on expropriation by the whites is argued to have served the interests of white farmers rather than to optimise land and agricultural resources utilisation. These are seen to have created distorted land markets, thus excluding potentially efficient blacks, due to the latter's limited access to capital and the white domination of financial markets. Therefore, (a) land taxes, (b) land

sub-divisions, (c) land price controls and (d) capital gains taxes are seen to be effective tools for re-introducing land market efficiency. These, in the long run, are expected to lead to the facilitation of land redistribution, through increased land supply and lowered overall land prices.

In essence, land market efficiency is also expected to reduce the costs to the state of direct land acquisition while also allowing for more private land acquisition as a form of redistribution at no cost to the State.

### **Socio-Political Balancing**

Given the widespread ideological orientations of social forces with the state and in society, as well as the existence of so-called "traditional" power socio-political structures, socio-political aspects of land tenure and land administration have tended to raise specific problems for the land reform process.

Moreover, the fact that the state inherited land (for forests, parks, urban municipalities, and under farm leasehold) and agricultural production enterprises, enabled the Government to consolidate its socialist orientation towards state property. This meant that Zimbabwe inherited a variety of tenure systems: freehold, state ownership, state and private leasehold and so-called "communal tenure".

To balance various political interests these systems were retained, while resettlement augmented the state-held leasehold land, even if settlers did not pay rents. But, in spite of demands from *kulaks* and communal area-based businessmen for freehold land there (especially at "Growth Points"), the state has been reluctant to overhaul communal tenure on a massive scale. Any attempts to create freehold tenure in communal areas would at any rate involve huge administrative costs (surveying, registration etc), apart from evoking as yet unclarified sentiments over access to existing communal area land. Some have argued that, given land shortages and current land control and inheritance practices, there exists a *de facto* private land ownership pattern in communal areas. They also argue that as long as it is a secure tenure there is no need to register private land property there.

Recent accessions to leasehold and finally freehold at Growth Points in communal areas have allowed for limited freehold within the so-called "traditional" socio-political setting. This concession is linked to the black business advancement lobby which in the framework of Zimbabwe's structural adjustment programme perceives land as a critical element for access to an already biased finance market dominated by white and foreign businesses.

Altogether, while land tenure is actively under review it is generally believed that a mixed tenure pattern is necessary to balance the current diverse socio-political interests and demands, given the relatively "blurred" class question among black social forces. Indeed, the rise of an ideology of business indigenisation or black economic nationalism, as espoused by various political organisations (party, Parliament, the Indigenous Business Development Centre and the emerging black commercial farmers association), tends to have an omnibus view over property relations in land. There exists no rural lobby which clearly calls for full and equitable land distribution.

A problem still remains over the decentralisation of land allocation within the communal areas. The Land Act arrogates overwhelming powers to central government over specific land allocation and use decisions (unlike in freehold areas), even though

district councils have the stated power to actually allocate land. The removal of land allocation powers from chiefs, who are still considered influential in local level decision-making, raises doubts on the political feasibility of land policy processes. Given certain patriarchal tendencies, moreover, women are seen to be the most disadvantaged: particularly widows and divorcees.

A final yet crucial socio-political aspect, which relates to the technical efficacy of land redistribution, is the question of which categories of the poor should gain access to redistributed land. It was formerly argued that on social grounds the poorest, unemployed, displaced and ex-combatants are the most deserving, given their need but also for political balancing purposes. More recently, it has been argued that economic criteria need to replace the more social orientation of resettlement, via the selection of trained/skilled farmers, suggesting that the pace of land redistribution should be regulated by the pace of availability of such farmers and finance. This places the emphasis on resettlement as a process of large white farmer "replacement" in production terms (crop output mix), rather than as a redistribution problem for equity and social justice.

### **Implementation and Technical Efficacy**

As quantified later, the performance of the resettlement programme tends to raise policy questions concerning the technical efficacy of the programme, particularly its implementation. Predicated on the assessment of resettlement gross output and type of products, productive land utilisation, settlement costs per capita, debate over the technical efficacy of resettlement models (as planned farming systems) as well as the financial, administrative and technical capability of relevant institutions, have become central issues of contention.

While a few recognise that planning and currently used models, inherited colonial assumptions and politically contrived resource constraints on the peasantry (such as maximum land required per household, capital access for inputs and equipment and support services), most policy-makers, planners and the public have debated basic resettlement assumptions and models as truisms. Therefore, production constraints and limitations on resettlement schemes, resulting in its semi-subsistence orientation and focus on staple food production, have not been viewed as a problem to be reviewed through more appropriate modelling and, requiring new investments on existing schemes. A self-fulfilling prophecy of the inherent inadequacy of small farmers *vis-a-vis* large farmers thus tends to receive technical credence, even if the quality of most resettlement land and infrastructure are not conducive to high-value crop production. In this vein the main solutions advanced have tended to focus on the "selection" of better trained or qualified peasants, rather than on increased investment on schemes.

Current thinking on new resettlement models tends to favour efforts to evolve livestock schemes and to intensify land utilisation through smaller land allocations. Little has yet been proposed by Government on irrigated schemes, high-value crop schemes, optimal mechanical power-based schemes, and the injection of medium to long-term credit and support services.

Given the limited technical institutional resources available to the State and even anti-intellectual attitudes among some elements in Government, insufficient debate on alternative resettlement models or farming systems research has resulted. The few

related experiments by some NGOs and alternative programmes proposed by the new local policy researchers are yet to be given serious consideration (if at all), under present "budget balancing" macro-economic thinking.

Centralisation of land reform implementation within two sectoral ministries (Agriculture and Local Government), with little clout over macro-economic planning and resources allocations, small budgetary allocations to agriculture and limited administrative capacities have also imposed severe limitations on land reform. Rather than attempt to shift the balance of power within central government planning and provoking greater assignment of resources towards land reform implementation, Zimbabwean land policy formulation has tended to accept that the pace of land reform should conform to the limitations on Central Government administrative capacities. Furthermore, rather than decentralising the planning (technical and administrative) aspects of land reform, increasing local participation and generating a variety of resettlement models and implementation strategies, the tendency has been to concentrate policy decision-making at the central level. Thus the new land policy proposals tend only to be *debated in perspective* at their legislative phase, rather than prior to Cabinet approval, nor are the implementation Bills under consideration (e.g. Land Acquisition) being openly debated.

### Macro-Economic Aspects

A final major problem with formulating land policy issues concerns the macro-economic positioning and impact of the land redistribution effort. Currently, the approach used in costing resettlement ascribes total scheme costs from various sectoral budgetary outlays, and land costs to an aggregated resettlement budget. Thus market prices of land ( a major cost item amounting to about 50% of costs so far - out of \$100 million spent), are added with social services (schools, clinics, etc. at 30%) and infrastructure and other development costs (at 20%) are viewed as a total cost over 10 years of land redistribution. While each of these cost elements agglomerated from individual schemes is problematic in its own right the total resettlement budget has been utilised to argue that resettlement has been a strain on the fiscus.

It can be argued that the costs of social services and infrastructure applied to resettlement would normally be borne by the sectoral ministries of Education, Health, Water, Transport, etc, of a post-colonial government anyway, as does occur within communal areas. Appropriate financial reporting would *ipso facto* reduce the real costs of land redistribution by appropriate amounts.

Land purchase costs are problematic, first due to speculative pricing under pseudo-monopsonistic conditions, as recognised by the Government of Zimbabwe, via proposals to set prices and, the intention to institute land and capital gains taxes. Such high land pricing has buttressed the argument concerning the fiscal costliness of resettlement and led to budgetary restraint against land reform. Even donors agreeable with market prices, and upon whom financial dependence has been placed for land acquisition, have been restrained by these somewhat distorted land acquisition prices.

Moreover, in the absence of a "real" rural land tax rate, there is no fund from which some land purchases and infrastructure development could be financed: Hence, the systematic over-dependence of central government on a budgetary allocation process

for land acquisition. This has led to the exaggerated emphasis on fiscal constraints to land redistribution.

Additionally, if land redistribution is considered to be the "price" for a negotiated independence settlement and ensuing political stability, as well as protecting other private investments, it is not unreasonable to suggest that Z\$300 million over 10 years is a pittance. Would war reconstruction costs and an elaborate security apparatus to defend land hunger not cost much more? The trade-offs between land acquisition and budget balancing are the static abstractions which distort the land policy debate.

However, if the above is not convincing, land purchase costs could still (have been), in a mixed land tenure system such as Zimbabwe, be partially borne by settlers over long-term payment periods using appropriate mechanisms. This issue is germane since "qualified" settlers are now to be recruited for resettlement, as invariably these tend to be found among the "wealthier" rural population segments. Extending freehold land-holding to another eight million hectares under the current and proposed resettlement schemes would significantly dent the ideological or political character of Zimbabwe, since these lands are already under LSCF freehold, and long-term leases are under consideration for the resettlement programme.

Partly because of both the current resettlement costing approaches used and the economies of scale desired in implementing the programme within the existing land reform institutional set-up, the issue of large land block acquisition features prominently in the new land policy.

Administrative and technical efficiency, and cost-effectiveness are expected to be realised *only* from resettling people on large designated blocks in contrast to resettling them on scattered farms. Furthermore, a top-down administered state resettlement scheme requires blocks as opposed to private resettlement initiatives based on scattered sub-divisions of unused land. The latter has been rejected due to anticipated land price usury, in the absence of a land tax.

In fact, both block and smaller private land redistribution schemes could be undertaken concurrently with large farmer in-filling into sub-divided farms which could more fully utilise farms of appropriately 500 ha (in NR II and II). However, the preference for large blocks requires immediate large financial outlays, which circularly reinforces the fiscalist argument against land reform. Surely, the "pilot" implementation of a comprehensive land transfer process with elements of state and settler finance, state and locally regulated private administration (involving sub-divisions) of transfers, is practicable. Such a process could use land taxes and capital gains taxes as incentives and controls for appropriate land supply. Moreover, a pilot scheme could generate new ideas for refining the new policy proposals and assist in the design of resettlement.

A final but publicly compelling macro-economic argument against land reform is the expected negative impact of LSCF displacement on output and foreign exchange earnings. Assuming that peasants cannot "replace" large farmer output, it is currently estimated by the CFU that the country could lose output worth Z\$500 million, comprising also a foreign exchange loss of Z\$450 million in exports, if five million more hectares were redistributed. Furthermore, it is estimated that resettling the remaining 110 000 people targeted would cost Z\$1 billion, which is not available in the relevant sectoral budgets. Allocating such monies is also expected to have downstream effects such as the opportunity costs of alternative investments that could create new



employment. Moreover, it is suggested that many jobs would be lost from the current large farm sector.

There is, however, lack of agreement over the accuracy of the above estimates, given that the broader land policy could lead to fuller land utilisation within those LSCF areas not targeted for resettlement, especially through large farm sub-divisions and "in-filling" by the newly *bought-out* large farmers. Furthermore, increased crop production would result from settlers in favourable agro-ecological regions. Land reallocations between commercial and peasant farmers in practice actually take time to implement and thus "losses" (if any) would not be immediate. Over time, resumed large farmer production in new areas and new forms of production in future resettlement areas, could actually lead to increased overall production. The efficacy of the land transfer exercise would therefore be crucial. The macro-economic arguments assume all land transfers and resettlement take place at one stroke in time.

Indeed, a related macro-economic intrigue currently raised is that subjective fears over the proposed land designation for purchase, could lead to the lowering of property values, leading further to the reduction of bank collateral values resulting in negative effects on agricultural credit markets. Private sector economists advancing these arguments present little data to support their apparently logical concerns, while we would argue that existing monopsonistic financial credit markets enable potential political-economic collusions towards realising an artificial "credit-crunch".

Moreover, property values are unlikely to fall below their "replacement values", given government's use of and stated commitment to use existing real estate practices in farm valuations. It can be expected that speculative "market values" of land would decline if both a real land tax and a land price-setting regime were put into effect. The need to close the gap between "replacement" and "market" values of land *per se* could be addressed first through the land disincentive and capital gains tax incentive, based on a professional land valuation system, which accountably provides indices for both land and income tax assessments. While transparent and credible arbitration over land pricing may indeed be necessary, it is doubtful whether the courts would realise different land value assessments from those derived through an integrated rural tax system involving: farm income tax, land tax and property valuation indices. Large farmers will have to accept the broader taxation familiar to "free land market" systems.

The above issues therefore demonstrate the particularistic framework within which past and currently proposed land reform policy have been enacted in post-independence Zimbabwe. Essentially, the experience shows how the settler factor has been unable to accept free market ideology in its totality, while pushing for the retention of economic and property privilege. The state on its part has assigned itself full jurisdiction over land policy in a centralised manner, basing its rationale more on nationalism and administrative facility, rather than on the popular programmes of the free market. We now conclude this paper with an overview of the agrarian question in Southern Africa.

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

The broad trend in Southern African agrarian change is the move towards expansion of "bi-modalism" with some differences in policy instruments used, in the extent of absolute land privatisation and the degree of land alienation and deprivation. It also seems that most of the states are determined to improve the small farmers' food grain (maize in particular) production capacities through the spread of hybrid maize and agro-chemical technologies, applying the accumulated research and extension experiences gained from Zimbabwe's "bi-modalism", and encouraged by SADCC's "food-security" programmes on research, storage and training. Complementarities in SADCC agricultural production orientation and trade are yet to emerge, perhaps after this phase of experience emulation centred on Zimbabwean coordination and general infrastructure expansion.

All these countries face, however, some form of a wage-price determination and unemployment crises related to the low value of small farmer food production, low labour absorption of their crops and a low farm-wage structure based on cheap mining and industrial labour rates, characteristic of the major urban centres in the region as well as on the low absolute value of administered wage-goods markets. This reflects the historical fact that the large-scale commercial farming sectors of Zimbabwe and South Africa have grown from "protected infancy: through large inputs and financial subsidies - not recommended for the SADCC countries by financiers - into a resource-favoured high-value commodity producing sub-sector.

The lesson here may therefore be that "bi-modalism" may only prosper with a fair degree of subsidies especially of large farms, as these may "exit" (sell-out) with gain, as well as through some degree of market protection as sub-sectoral "cannibalism" among commonly produced commodities (e.g. maize in the 1930s and small grains and cotton after 1985 in Zimbabwe) is easily realised. But which nation does not subsidise or protect agriculture in this world? It is a matter of which categories of farmers or agro-industry and services gains. Can the political muscle of SADCC be applied to a revision of structural adjustment policy frameworks in the interest of agrarian "bi-modalism"? A dilemma exists on how to retain a small profitable large-scale farming sector and viable peasants without subsidies.

The nature of the South African liberation question, the economy, state, class configurations and forces, the current geo-political and global pressures have both specific and general features, which make it meaningless to abstract from Zimbabwe any specific lessons. The general and specific issues are to be settled by those actively engaged in liberating that country and as an outcome of their collective struggles and dialogue. It is for them to read the nature of those experiences, especially that of Zimbabwe, and to apply this to their concrete liberatory praxis, not for others to proffer lessons.

My own view of the global imperialist strategy is that it aims at weaning the mounting and organised struggle of the movement, through a deal which may provide access to state control and black equal participation in the economy, including the spread of incentives to "smallholders" and some black large-scale commercial farmers, but without denting the structural pattern of ownership, nor the basic capitalist logic of that economy

- with an elaboration of the agricultural supply-side for world markets and sustainably cheap food and related wage-goods.

The rationale for this kind of approach is to sustain the strategic mineral supplies and to magnify the Southern African markets targeted by TNCs based in South Africa and Zimbabwe. South African agriculture has a regional role that has always been attractive even if not competitive in terms of its subsidisation *vis-a-vis* other countries. But the land question there may be the crux of any political settlement, even if it temporarily requires greater agricultural trade with the rest of SADCC.

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