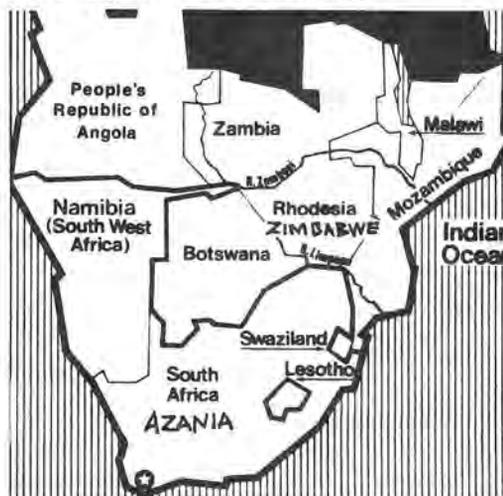


What's At Stake In Zimbabwe

By all accounts, the conference in Geneva on Zimbabwe is bound to collapse in failure. And all the participants know it. Why are they there, and what are they going to do next? The reasons why all the different participants are at Geneva reveal the history of Zimbabwe in the last few years.

Why is the US Government at Geneva (even if unofficially)?

Until recently, the US Corporations and government have operated under a policy (spelled out in National Security Study Memorandum 39) that was based on the premise that Blacks in Southern Africa could never come to power through armed struggle. The white governments of South Africa, Rhodesia, South West Africa, Mozambique and Angola were there to stay. The US Corporations and government could protect its economic, political and military strategic interests by pushing for greater co-operation between the Black states of Zambia, Malawi, Lesotho, Botswana and others and the white regimes, hoping to lessen tension and guerrilla activity, and to gradually push moderation of white supremacy in the white-run states.



But in April 1974, under the mounting pressure of the liberation wars in its African colonies, the Portuguese government was overthrown, ushering in a decolonization process that led rapidly to liberation in Mozambique and later in Angola. This was not planned for by the US government.

Along with Mozambican liberation, a process of growing liberation war inside Zimbabwe from 1972, under the leadership of ZANU and its army, ZANLA, had been inflicting serious damage on the Ian Smith regime. This led the US and South African governments to adopt the notorious "detente"

scheme, whose main purpose was to destroy ZANU-ZANLA and negotiate "Black majority rule" that would be under their economic and political control. They tried to get this through especially in late 1974 and early 1975, before Mozambique could become a sound base for ZANLA. However, in spite of severe repression by Zambia (which until this time had been the guerrilla fighters main base area), ZANU-ZANLA survived and moved all its forces to Mozambique by December 1975.

Responding to the betrayal by political leaders in exile, ZANU-ZANLA formed a joint military front with ZAPU troops, under the name of the Zimbabwe People's Army (ZIPA). In January 1976, ZIPA stepped up the armed struggle inside Zimbabwe, which had ebbed during the period of massive attacks on and conspiracies against ZANU-ZANLA. In the spring of 1976, the joint military front broke down, ZAPU returned to Zambia; ZANU-ZIPA continued and intensified the offensive from Mozambique. It was this pressure from the renewed armed struggle, and the changed balance of forces in southern Africa caused by the final liberation of Mozambique and Angola, that led Kissinger, fronting for the monopoly corporations, to more actively pursue a negotiated settlement in Zimbabwe.

Kissinger met with the British Foreign Minister (now Prime Minister) Callaghan and worked out a proposed plan for settlement. He also met with the Prime Minister of racist South Africa, John Vorster, to coordinate strategy and pressure Ian Smith to negotiate. As the uprising in Azania (South Africa) was sparked in June by the Soweto events, it spread throughout the country and severely destabilized the racist government. Thus, Vorster was more inclined than ever to push Smith to a peaceful settlement. So Kissinger went to Pretoria, met Smith, and got him to agree to his plan for "majority rule."

The US corporations and the US government know they cannot stop the armed struggle, but they hope they can negotiate a new moderate black government to be the cover for fighting against the guerrillas.

Why is Smith at Geneva?

The main reason Smith is at Geneva is not pressure from Kissinger, but pressure from the armed struggle led by ZANLA from 1972 and intensified by ZIPA in 1976. With the independence of Mozambique, ZIPA has a firm rear base, and Mozambique closed its borders to Rhodesia, intensifying the effect of international economic sanctions. Smith especially feels the time pressure imposed by the rainy season offensive (which has just begun).

What is the Objective of Imperialism at Geneva

The basic objective is to preserve US-British corporate interests and white Rhodesian economic

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and political control of Zimbabwe. Further, it is the cornerstone of the US corporations new strategy in southern Africa since the liberation of Mozambique and Angola made the premises of NSSM 39 outdated. We must not look at Zimbabwe in isolation.

What is the new US Corporate/Government Strategy for Southern Africa?

Neo-colonialism in Zimbabwe and Namibia: The US and the multi-national corporations want a quick transfer of power to black "moderates" who would serve their interests, transforming direct colonies into indirect neocolonies. To cement this economic and political subordination, the corporations want to compensate the white colonialists in Zimbabwe for the land they stole from the Africans, but in the form of a loan to the Black government. With this plan the Black government of Zimbabwe would have to compensate white farmers, white civil servants and the Rhodesian and multi-national corporations for any claims of losses incurring as a result of Black majority rule. This loan would immediately shackle the new government, never allowing an independent and self-reliant economic and political development.

Apartheid in South Africa: The South African government, by playing a role in forcing Smith to negotiate, hopes to improve its image with black Africa, thereby making its continued existence more secure. Also, with South African economic investment and eventual total economic and political domination, Azanian guerrillas will be denied base areas in these countries. This lessening of the pressure on the South African government will allow it to try to ease tensions within that country, by eliminating some of the "petty-apartheid," and pushing Bantustans (like Transkei which received "independence" last month) to create a small black elite with some stake in preserving apartheid.

Strengthen Existing Neocolonialism: The US corporations with their subimperialist partners in South Africa, want to utilize the economic dependence of Zambia, Botswana, and (to a lesser extent) Tanzania to promote the "moderates", down-

play armed struggle, and generally push the "detente" game with Pretoria. They want to split these countries from the more radical Mozambique and Angola in order to break up the united strength and to isolate the radicals.

Counter-revolution and Destabilization: The US has not given up hopes to destabilize, and hopefully overthrow the radical regimes in Mozambique and Angola (as well as Guinea-Bissau). Also, throughout Africa, it wants to subvert various regimes that pose problems to imperialism: Republic of Guinea, Tanzania, Somalia, Nigeria, Benin, Peoples Republic of the Congo, Uganda, Libya, etc.

The Kissinger Plan

The Smith regime agrees to "majority rule" in two years. The two-year black/white transitional government, through its structure, will ensure that whites will control all decisions and the two basic components of every state apparatus: army and police. White farmers and industrialists will be compensated for the stolen African land and resources, to the sum of 2 billion. The guerrilla war and the economic sanctions will have to be stopped upon the formation of the transitional government.

Formation of the Patriotic Front

ZIPA responded by totally rejecting the Kissinger plan as a basis for negotiation, saying that the only thing they wanted to negotiate was the the terms of immediate surrender of the white regime, and the transfer of power, especially the army and police, to the black government representing the guerrillas.

On October 9, 1976, ZANU and ZAPU formed a Patriotic Front on the political party level, to go along with the attempts to create a military front earlier. The Patriotic Front has certain perspectives and demands that clash fundamentally with the Kissinger plan. It has said that the only question for discussion at the conference is the immediate transfer of power from the colonial authority, Great Britain, to the people of Zimbabwe, and has explicitly rejected the Kissinger plan as a basis for negotiations. It has reiterated its commitment to armed struggle as the fundamental form of struggle,



which would not be given up until power was transferred to the people of Zimbabwe.



Why the Patriotic Front?

ZANU and ZAPU have not operated in a voluntarily formed united front since ZANU was formed. In the first days following the announcement of the Kissinger plan, the differences between the two movements had been clear. In an interview with Newsweek(10/11/76), Josiah Chinamano, Vice-President of ZAPU, was willing to give up the demand for universal franchise("A common voting roll for whites and blacks with a qualified franchise for the blacks must be worked out, provided of course it gives the blacks a majority."), and the demand for the dismantling of the repressive police and military apparatus that has murdered peasants, razed their villages, and uprooted the people. Chinamano: "There are whites the African people would be happy to see run defense and police."

As opposed to this neocolonial attitude, Robert Mugabe of ZANU had stated, "Police and the army must fall into our hands....the people cannot trust a settler army even if the first minister is black." Dzinashé Machingura of ZIPA had said, "Our society is essentially a colonial society and as such we have to wage a national democratic revolution to overthrow national oppression.... The target of the freedom fighters' bullets is the system of exploitation and the capitalist enterprises and armed personnel which serve to perpetuate it...We are not fighting against the Smith regime simply because they are white. We are fighting against the system that they are perpetuating and defending. If any Zimbabweans collude with it in oppressing the

Zimbabwean people, we shall bundle them together, we shall make no distinction on the basis of color." Clearly, Chinamano of ZAPU and and Mugabe Machingura represent different lines. Why then the Patriotic Front?

We believe there are two reasons. This is a crucial point in Zimbabwean history. The Smith regime is sure to end very soon, if not by negotiations, then on the battlefield. At this juncture, the Zimbabwean people want the different movements to work together and smash the racist, capitalist system in such a way that it does not survive in any form. So it is necessary for a revolutionary movement to ally with other groups.

The second reason is that Western imperialism is looking for ways to impose a neo-colonial solution and stop the armed struggle. A sectarian line on the part of a revolutionary movement makes it easier for the West to find Black leaders to accept its neo-colonial plans. If that happens, if for instance ZAPU accepts the Kissinger plan, a civil war is unavoidable. Thus it is the duty of a revolutionary force to ally with less developed forces so that a "divide-and-rule" strategy cannot work. When the revolutionaries work sincerely in such an alliance, they are able to win over the support of the rank and file of the other groups; then, even if leaders such as Nkomo or Muzorewa sell out, the masses can see clearly that ZANU-ZIPA is the only sincere movement.

The correctness of the move to form the Patriotic Front has been proved in Geneva. The imperialists have for a month been unable to find a buyer for their plans. It is probable that, but for the presence of the Mugabe delegation, some version of the Kissinger plan would have been implemented by now.

What Next?

It is clear that, with the conference due to end by December 20, it is going to achieve nothing. When the participants return home, what are they going to do?

ZANU-ZIPA's Plans

ZANU-ZIPA have already stated what they are going to do. The rainy season has started; so has their military offensive. The armed struggle has not paused for the Geneva talks and will continue until victory is won.

Smith's Plans

The Smith regime cannot continue as is presently structured. It depends for its survival on the South African, British and the US ruling classes. This support will disappear unless the color of the regime changes from white to Black(Not that the West cares about racism; rather at this point the Western corporations realize that white control is too blatant, that their interests can only be protected by a "cooperative" Black elite.). So Smith has already stated that if the Geneva talks fail, he will unilaterally implement the Kissinger plan. However, he needs some Blacks to do his bidding. Clearly, he has to find someone who has been at Geneva. Judging from his speeches, he appears to be making

overtures to Muzorewa and Sithole. If Smith succeeds in this plan, the way will be clear for the South African government and the West to recognize and support the neo-colonial regime; sanctions will be violated openly; military aid will flow in; ongoing mercenary recruitment in Europe will be used to create a "multinational" army, perhaps under British control, which will defend the neo-colonial regime, crush popular resistance, and battle the guerrillas.

A second alternative for the white regime is to make no changes. Even though the racist settler colonial system is dispensable for western capitalism, the whites in Rhodesia are so racist that they may well decide to fight it out. Even though South Africa has been pressuring the Smith regime, it cannot abandon the Rhodesian whites; the whites in South Africa are no less racist and will force their government to support Rhodesia.

The West, the US corporations and government in particular, can respond in one of three ways. One is to support the white regime overtly, but this is not practical since the Black and progressive movements in the US will not allow it to happen. A second way is to act neutral and support the white regime covertly, as the US has been doing all these years, but that will not be enough since ZANU-ZIPA is steadily gaining on the battlefield. A third way is to develop a rival army to ZIPA. The liberal bourgeoisie in the US can be expected to initiate such a move. Senator Dick Clark of Iowa said recently that the US should support African guerrillas if the Geneva talks fail. Thus, a US-backed "liberation" army, as in Angola, is not unlikely.

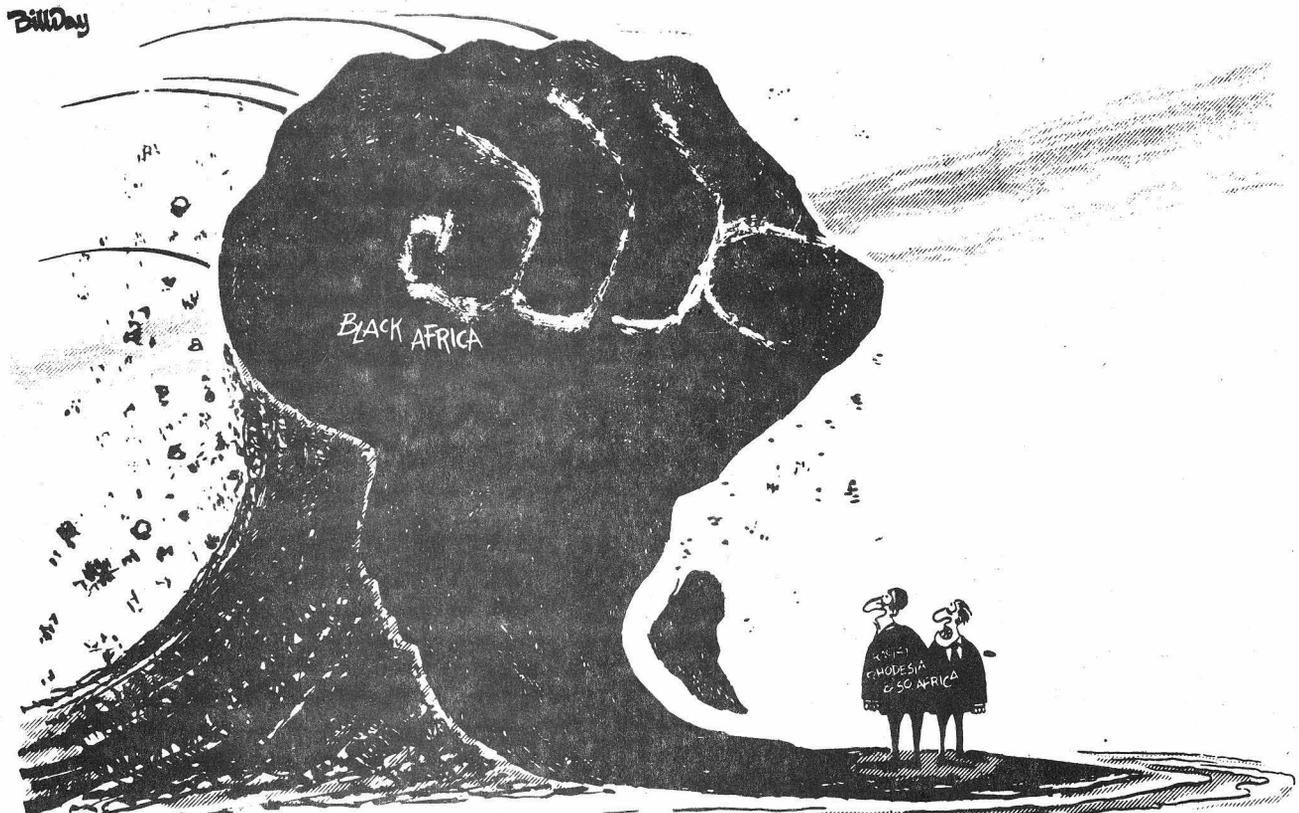
Regardless of what the Smith regime does, the US government knows that ZIPA is the only force that can and will defeat US imperialism in Zimbabwe. All the African countries are now behind ZIPA; the Organization of African Unity(OAU) channels all aid to ZIPA. The main goal of the US government is to undermine this support. Already, the US government is pressuring African countries to cut off aid to ZIPA and to have the OAU prohibit direct aid from individual African and non-African countries to ZIPA. It is a prime task of the left in this country to oppose any move by the US government to weaken support for ZANU-ZIPA or to promote a rival army.

Muzorewa's Plans

Besides ZANU-ZIPA, the only mass movement in Zimbabwe is ZAPU. Individuals such as Muzorewa have no mass base in the country. When the press in this country reported that hundreds of thousands greeted Muzorewa when he landed in Salisbury, it failed to report that the masses were shouting slogans in support of ZANU-ZIPA and the armed struggle. Everyone knows that Muzorewa has little to do with the guerrillas; the massive rally was merely a legal way to express solidarity with the guerrillas.(Manchester Guardian,10/4/76) Through Muzorewa has no mass following, he may be of some value to Smith in implementing the Kissinger plan.

ZAPU's Plans

What about ZAPU? Unlike ZANU-ZIPA, ZAPU represents many different class interests; if Chinamano represents a nascent African bourgeo-





sie, there are also patriotic and militant elements. At different times, ZAPU has practised armed struggle. The Soviet Union has for many years provided material aid to ZAPU; at the same time, Nkomo has made overtures to the Western elites in the past two years. Since the Geneva talks began, Nkomo has become very militant; his aides have been talking about armed struggle and about support from socialist countries. It is clear that ZAPU has no clear line.

After Geneva, ZAPU may decide to continue with the Patriotic Front and merge its presently inactive army with ZIPA. This will be a welcome development and will certainly make difficult, if not impossible, any US ruling-class plans for a rival African army.

However, it is also possible that ZAPU will decide to launch an armed struggle on its own, perhaps from Zambia. Such a development has dangerous possibilities: the Angolan experience may be played out once again; many Zimbabweans will perish in the ensuing civil war. ZIPA is clearly aware of these dangers and has, since its formation a year ago, done its utmost to forge unity with ZAPU. Even though ZIPA is made up predominately of ZANU forces, ZIPA projects itself as the unified army of ZANU and ZAPU. In late September, Machingura of Zipa stated, "ZIPA is a product of the voluntary merger of the military wing of the former ZANU called ZANLA and the military wing of the former ZANU called ZANLA and the military wing of the ZAPU called ZIPRA." By its actions, ZIPA is facilitating a merger of ZAPU into itself. We hope that ZAPU will decide not to launch a separate armed struggle; such a move can only play into the hands of imperialism at a time when imperialism is on the verge of defeat in Zimbabwe. We also hope that the Soviet Union will not help such a move; in this respect, it is encouraging that Soviet arms are said to be being delivered to ZIPA in Mozambique.

Solidarity In the U.S.:

We in the US must prepare for these eventualities, and probabilities. We have to organize mass support for ZIPA and all the liberation movements in Southern Africa, and oppose all schemes of the US Imperialists to create divisions within the liberation movements.

US imperialism is our enemy too. It lies at the root of class exploitation, national and racist oppression, and male supremacist oppression in the US, and is our common enemy. That is why a victory for ZIPA is our victory, because it help to weaken and destroy our common enemy, bringing closer our liberation.

On this basis we must rally the largest support that we can in demonstrations, publicity, and attacks on the US imperialists. We must also raise concrete material support for the fighters in Zimbabwe: medical aid, money, and other useful things.

At this point the struggle in Southern Africa, especially Zimbabwe is at the center of the world anti-imperialist struggle, and we must make it a priority to support it.

Whatever the various forces do, one thing is certain. ZANU-ZIPA will triumph in its armed liberation struggle and smash the racist regime and all neo-colonial plans.

Victory to the armed Liberation Struggle led by ZIPA! Down with the Neo-colonial Kissinger Plan!!!!



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