

INTERVIEW WITH TAPSON MAWERE



Chief ZANU Representative No. America

The following interview was recorded on March 6, 1977 by the ZSC. Many events since have made some of the answers a bit outdistanced by events, but they contain much that is very important.

Q. What are the most important developments on the diplomatic front?

A. I think that the most important development was that the Front Line States have resolved to support the Patriotic Front. And their support was reinforced by the Organization of African Unity-Liberation Committee. This is very useful, because now the support can be channeled directly to the organizations that are fighting in the country.

Q. What appears to be the strategy of the new Carter Administration?

A. The new Carter Administration has an economic "solution" which is very injurious to our revolution. In other words, the Carter strategy is to establish a neo-colonialist government in Zimbabwe. We are anti-neo-colonialist, and therefore we are definitely against that strategy.

Q. Does South Africa look as if it will push Smith, or is there a possibility that it will intervene as the war heats up?

A. South Africa is not going to push Smith at all. In fact, I wouldn't be surprised if the South African army may be slowly being filtered into Rhodesia to support Smith.

Q. Is there any evidence of this so far?

A. There are rumors. But Vorster has told the Carter Administration that he was not going to "twist Smith's arm".

Q. Has Smith had any success in his "internal settlement"? For example has ANC or Sithole responded to his overtures?

A. I don't think they have. He cannot have any success at an internal settlement, at this point, because these organizations don't have any real support. They do have support of the bourgeoisie, but they are a minority compared to the 77% of the peasants or rural population who are solidly behind the liberation movement.

Q. How do you evaluate Smith's announced plans to change some of the discriminatory legislation?

A. Smith is trying to lure most of the Africans into thinking that he is definitely in the mood for change. And he can then say, "Give me time. I am trying. Given the time, we will be able to make the required changes." But they are coming too late and they are offering too little. Twenty years ago those reforms would have been very useful, but today they are too outdated. Especially if you realize that the ZANU position is that land is a free gift of god and we are fighting to liberate the land and deliver it to the people. We are not going to buy it off the settlers. That is against the fundamental policy of ZANU.

Q. How do you evaluate the various atrocity stories attributed to ZIPA in the western press?

A. First of all, the reporting itself is very racist, because, the murder of seven missionaries—I'm sure it's a tragedy—happened, but we cannot forget that in the same week there were forty African civilians who were murdered by the Smith regime, and there was no reporting on those forty. There was so much widespread reporting on the seven, simply because they were white! Secondly, the Roman Catholic Church as a whole, has an adverse relationship to the Rhodesian government, for two or three reasons. One reason is that the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace compiled two booklets which exposed atrocities committed against the civilian population by the Smith Rhodesian forces, and the Rhodesian government was very displeased by that exposure. Secondly, the leader of this Commission, Bishop Lamont, wrote a letter to Prime Minister Ian Smith indicating that the Rhodesian government was illegal, and that therefore the Church should support the liberation movements, because they represented the majority aspirations of the country. And in fact he instructed all Catholic Mission stations to provide material support to the freedom fighters, in the form of medical treatment, as well as food or clothing. And then, because of this letter,

Bishop Lamont was arrested and sentenced to ten years imprisonment. His appeal was to take place a week after this massacre of the missionaries. The Catholic Relief Services donated material support to the equivalent of \$250,000 in the form of food, clothing and medicines last September. So we can see that the relationship between the Catholic Church and the freedom fighters is a friendly relationship. The freedom fighters would have no reason to bite the hand that feeds them. And at the same time the Rhodesian government would have every reason to try to sever this relationship, because the government will always try to discredit the freedom fighters so that they cannot get support from the masses or whatever other groups do give them support. It is also a well known fact that the Rhodesian army has Black soldiers who are Rhodesian, and some Black soldiers who were in the Portuguese army in Mozambique and Angola, and with these have set up special units, in fact they call them Selous Scouts. They are assigned to commit certain atrocities among the civilians. This one is only one such act. Because, from all accounts, this murder was committed by such units which is government sponsored. So that the murder was committed by the government itself, and not by the freedom fighters.

Q. Can you explain briefly what role the USSR, as well as China and Cuba are playing in relation to the liberation struggle, either diplomatically, politically or militarily?

A. You see, the concrete situation in Southern Africa at the moment has to be understood, in that the colonial rule is imposed and maintained by the western countries. Africa on the whole was colonized by either Britain, France, Germany or Belgium, and so forth. So that the struggle at the moment is for taking that colonial yoke off Southern Africa. And, that yoke is still maintained by Ian Smith in Rhodesia and Jon Vorster in South Africa, and all those who support them. Which is the western countries, with the United States as the major partner in that alliance. Now, I would group all these as belonging to the enemy camp: the Rhodesian government, the South African government and their supporters, the US, Britain, France, Italy, West Germany, and even countries such as Japan, Iran, Israel, Brazil, and Saudi Arabia which channel arms, are also in that one camp, the enemy camp. Then countries which support liberation movements would be the Organization of African Unity, which is comprised of almost all, if not all, of the African independent states. And then, the socialist countries. In that group you would find also the Soviet Union, China,

Cuba, and Eastern Europe and so forth. They are in the supportive camp. It is true that there are contradictions within this supportive camp. But we don't want to lose sight of the fact that the principal contradiction is between the Zimbabwean people and the enemy camp.

Q. Could you talk some about any concrete latest developments in their roles? For example, it's known that the Soviet Union formerly only supported ZAPU. Do they now support the Patriotic Front or ZIPA, are they giving any aid, etc.?

A. The OAU Liberation Committee has taken the position that all support should be channeled through them, and then transmitted to the liberation movements. And hence, the bilateral support has been minimized. I don't know if there is any really major bilateral support in terms of arms or so forth (from the USSR to ZAPU). There could be, but I think, by and large all support is going to ZIPA.

Q. How is the Patriotic Front holding up, and what are its prospects?

A. Yes, the Front is still holding very well; in fact, it has been able to hold longer than we expected. And we hope it will continue to hold out. The prospects of its staying together look good, particularly, as it is very likely that there will be another round of talks. And I'm sure that the Patriotic Front is willing to stick together. There are no indications that it is in danger, but then, you know, the whole situation in Zimbabwe is very fluid, and anything can happen.

Q. How does ZANU evaluate itself in the Patriotic Front? For example, does it consider itself the vanguard party? And, in relation to that, how does ZANU want solidarity to be organized internationally? For example, is it sectarian for the ZANU Solidarity Committee to say "the liberation struggle led by ZANU" or have things changed enough to require us to say, "the liberation struggle led by the Patriotic Front"?

A. I think, as of now, certainly ZANU is the vanguard of the liberation movement in Zimbabwe. And I think it is perfectly correct for anybody to talk of "the liberation struggle led by ZANU". I know a lot of people wouldn't like to say that because they consider that sectarian, but I think it is correct to say facts as they stand. We are very happy if our partner ZAPU can escalate fighting, you know, we like anybody who is willing to fight. In fact, it is through sharing in the struggle, through fighting together, sweating it out that we can even have a more real unity, because then we will have the same goal, the



same direction. And I can hope that maybe such a time will come. But, at the moment, from all accounts, ZANU is the spearhead, is the spearhead of the liberation movement. And it would be correct for support committees to do more to support what ZANU is doing, because to support ZANU is to support the cause of Zimbabwe, the Zimbabwean people.

Q. From what you know, has Jason Moyo's death weakened the radical sector in ZAPU? Or had any effect on the Patriotic Front?

A. The death of Moyo was very tragic to us all. On the face of it it has weakened the radical element in ZAPU, since I think that he was most instrumental in bringing about the Patriotic Front and making it stick out through the trying days of Geneva. But on the other hand, if rank and file members of ZAPU saw that he was killed by the enemy because he was taking a radical position, then it must mean that that radical position is correct. In this way it may have strengthened the radical element.



Q. What is the significance of what has been reported in the western press as the recruitment of ZAPU army, or is it recruitment in the name of the Patriotic Front and ZIPA?

A. Well, as it was reported in the papers, it was that the children were recruited by ZAPU. And that they are going to join a ZAPU army. It has the effect that ZAPU is definitely building up a separate army from ZIPA. It also means that people in the country are very highly conscious now if 400 children can just leave as a bloc to join the liberation movement. It is also a sort of underscoring of the fact that the government seems to be somewhat weak, because 400 children—these are not really kids, you know some of them are high school boys and girls—they cannot be marched 10, 12, 15 miles by only 4 people if they were unwilling. If they were unwilling, they would have run away, some of them definitely would have run away. And then if they were also coming from a community which was not supportive I believe the community would have alerted the government. And the government would have done something. My belief is that there could have been some people anyway who indeed alerted the government. But the government is so weak now that we know of many cases where the government is alerted of such a thing, and they are afraid to go because of the ZIPA army which has scored over them so many times.

Q. Since the release of ZANU political leaders from Zambian jails in October has ZANU as a political party undergone any political readjustments or selected a new leadership, etc., or are there any recent developments in the party?

A. Well the release of the leaders and the High Commanders from Zambian jails has reinforced ZANU tremendously. So it definitely has gone through a new adjustment, renewed strength: at the moment it is just working so well, because of this renewed strength.

Q. Militarily, many people expected more dramatic developments during this past rainy season. Have they in fact been happening, and simply suppressed by the Rhodesian and western press? or have the guerillas in fact met some setbacks such as the raids into Mozambique by Smith forces?

A. Well, the guerrillas haven't met any setbacks at all. There have been tremendous successes by the freedom fighters, by the way. Although, of course, they are not reported by the western press. We know that Smith's forces will always report their very scarce successes, which are few and far between. But they do not report the successes of the freedom fighters. In other words they try to destroy the morale. But right now, I would say that easily three fifths of the country is literally under the control of the freedom fighters.

Q. What are the immediate prospects on the military front? Is it expected that there will be a dramatic upsurge, or a slow accumulation of forces? The western press for example in several articles has shown its amazement that there has been no urban "terrorism" yet, etc.

A. Well, it's not going to be dramatic, it's not going to be that dramatic. We don't intend to be that way. Whatever step we will take it will be sure footed, and well planned. It is very important that we don't act as they expect us to act, otherwise we will be falling into their trap. We know that the time is coming soon when we have to resort to the occupation process of cities. I do not see that we should play urban guerrilla. I think the cities should be taken by a definite process which is sure. You know, it has to be sure to win.

Q. What are the main tasks that anti-imperialists and progressive people in the US can do to help the liberation of Zimbabwe?

A. The number one task is exposing and opposing neo-colonialism. I know most of the progressive and revolutionary groups in the US do understand very well the difference between a colonial situation and a neo-colonial situation. But I think the majority of the people don't understand that. I see a lot of people very excited about the possibility of granting majority rule in Zimbabwe under moderate Black leaders. Which really means introducing a neocolonial government in Zimbabwe. A lot of people I meet are quite pleased about that. Now, as far as our effort is concerned, our goal will not have been achieved if we ended up with a neo-colonial government.

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We are anti-neo-colonialist, and we have to accomplish that. ZANU's program, in terms of lessons we have learned elsewhere, is that we should accomplish this goal all at once. It should be the government of the people of Zimbabwe, and establish the system that we have ourselves to establish, that is socialism in Zimbabwe. It should be done all at once. So we are looking for the political support in that area, in an attempt to explain in some greater detail what is meant by neo-colonialism. I have a feeling that it is not understood. I am not underrating the intelligence of the people of the United States; most of them do understand. But probably it has not been clarified enough so that a lot more can appreciate that it is a just cause to fight against neo-colonialism, as it

is a just cause to fight against colonialism, as it is just to fight against imperialism. It is very important for people to understand that and support the effort against neo-colonialism.

Now the next, is of course, you know, the material support. Support for the freedom fighters themselves: they need material support, they need money, they need clothes, food. But also the civilians who fall victim in any military situation, they also need material support.

And lastly, any way of information dissemination, any available information, if it can be disseminated to as many people as possible so that they know the concrete situation in Zimbabwe, know exactly what's happening, and so forth.

'NO' To Anglo-American Neo-colonialist Plans!



Africans in Zimbabwe protest continuation of apartheid.

Following is an excerpt from a speech by Robert Mugabe, Secretary-general of ZANU and co-leader of the Patriotic Front, given at the UN Conference on Southern Africa, held in Maputo, Mozambique, during the week of May 17, 1977.

We categorically say "NO" to the internationalization and Americanization of our situation. Our resistance to direct US participation in any Zimbabwe constitutional conference does not in any way stem from hatred for the Americans. On the contrary, Americans are not different from other people. There are some good as well as bad Americans, just as there are some good and bad people in any other society. Our opposition to direct American involvement in our affairs is that, by accident of history, we have been colonized by Britain. We did not like it, we still do not like it, and we will never like it. But we cannot change this reality, that Britain is the colonial power in Zimbabwe. As the colonial power, therefore, Britain alone is duty-bound to discharge its colonial responsibility, and not shift that responsibility onto the Americans and to other Western countries. It is not by any means suggested that in discharging this colonial responsibility Britain should not marshal support from or coordinate its activities with its allies. Britain is free to use American pressure, or pressure from any of its circle of friends. But this can only be done informally behind the scenes, but never formally, and should not appear at the conference table.

If the current Anglo-American initiative on Zimbabwe should see the light of day, its sponsors should seriously be guided by the views of the Patriotic Front. The Patriotic Front's position is very clear. First, Britain must recognize that the Geneva affair is dead, that the death of Geneva also means that the ground-rules and the participants at Geneva have disappeared with it. The new British initiative must therefore have new ground-rules and new participants. And if it is to take place, it must be recognized that it is taking place at a stage when war has escalated.

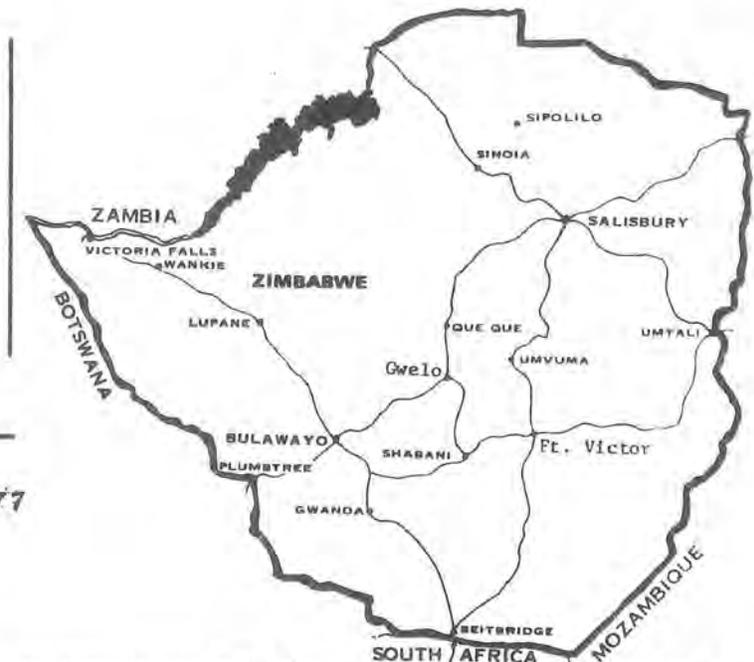
Secondly, Britain must recognize that Zimbabwe is at present engulfed in a war situation. The two parties are Britain, as the colonial power, and the Patriotic Front, representing the African masses. To solve this war situation, only the warring parties must come to an agreement. In this connection the British government stands on the one side and the Patriotic Front on the other. Britain must accept the reality that any constitutional conference is in reality a peace attempt, a peace conference involving the warring parties.

Thirdly, there must be an unqualified transference of power. There can be no half-measures. The transfer of power must be complete and total. The people of Zimbabwe have not shed their precious blood for the last decade in order to achieve a false type of independence that lends itself to manipulations by powers with vested

interests. Finally, Britain must prove her capability, indeed her determination, that, after the conclusion of a constitutional conference, she will implement the agreement that will have been reached.

It is not our intention to discourage those who pursue peaceful means to resolve the Zimbabwean problem. We recognize their right and freedom to exercise their minds to make all necessary attempts. On our part, however, the fact that there is a war raging in Zimbabwe means any talk of peace must necessarily be talk of the war and of removing the very causes that have given rise to the existing conflict.

courtesy WBAI-FM



THE OBSERVER, SUNDAY 13 MARCH 1977

Did Smith men kill the priests?

from DAVID MARTIN in Lusaka

LEADING members of the Catholic Church in Rhodesia are expressing serious doubts as to whether a retired bishop, five nuns and five priests who have been murdered in recent weeks, were all killed by guerrillas, as Mr Ian Smith claims.

A Catholic Justice and Peace Commission source in Salisbury said in a telephone interview last week: 'It is improbable that the guerrillas would have killed all these missionaries. You would be wise to pursue the question—and, believe me, the future will probably prove you right.'

A spokesman for the Jesuit Order, three of whose priests were killed in the attack on St Paul's Mission near Musami, 30 miles north-east of Salisbury, on 6 February, said: 'If I were you I would keep on fishing.'

'People should keep an open mind as we do about these claims,' said a spokesman for the Gwelo diocese in Central Rhodesia, where the last missionary, 38-year-old Spanish-born Father Jose Rubio, was murdered on 28 February.

Father Rubio was dragged from his car by five armed men near Bangala mission and apparently beaten to death. A young African boy travelling with him was told to go away. The Gwelo diocese spokesman said the boy did not know whether the five men were guerrillas or not.

The unit is thought to have at least 400 men, with a ratio of four blacks to each white. All the men are volunteers from regular units, and they include British, American, German and French soldiers.

Refugees massacred

Their commander, Major Ron Reid-Daly, denies that they pose as guerrillas. But reliable sources in Salisbury say the Selous Scouts have been responsible for raids into Mozambique, including one on Nyazonia camp last August when United Nations officials say more than 800 unarmed Rhodesian African refugees were massacred.

All but one of the priests in whom I spoke stressed that their African congregations were convinced that the killings were being carried out by the Selous Scouts, an élite counter-insurgency unit formed in 1974.

The Gwelo official said: 'The African people fear the security forces more than the guerrillas because of what the security forces do. There is no doubt about that. Whenever the security forces appear they run away because they know of all the beatings and killings that go on.'

The Selous Scouts have recently been conducting a public relations exercise in an attempt to combat claims that they killed the missionaries.

On that occasion, while the unit was pulling back 30 miles to re-cross the Rhodesian border, 10 civilians whom they encountered were shot dead. One was a Spanish priest of the Burgos Order.

Fifteen months ago in Salisbury a former senior officer of the Rhodesian Army told me categorically that the Selous Scouts were operating what are known as 'pseudo gangs'—black troops dressed in guerrilla uniforms and armed with captured weapons sent to kill civilians so that it would appear that the guerrillas were responsible.

The Bishop of Umtali, the Right Rev. Donal Lamont, recently sentenced to a year's imprisonment for failing to

report the presence of guerrillas, is another who questions the regime's claims. 'Can we presume it was guerrillas who killed them?' he asked in an interview.

He recounted an incident involving one of his priests: 'I had a visit from one of my African clergy who reported that he was terrorised by European members of the security forces. They said to him: "You'd better watch out. One dead missionary is as good as a 100 dead terrorists to us."'

There are inexplicable aspects to all the missionary deaths. The first to die was the Reverend Kuwama, of the United Methodist Church, who was killed with his wife in crossfire between security forces and guerrillas, a communiqué said. But the magistrate at the subsequent inquest noted that there had been no 'contact' in that area on that day.

On 5 December, the retired Bishop of Bulawayo, Adolf Schmitt, with Father Possenti Weggarten, principal of

Regina Mundi secondary school at Lupane, and Sister Maria Francis van der Bergh, also of Regina Mundi, were stopped on the main Victoria Falls road, asked for money and shot. Sister Ermenfried Knauer survived and said the lone gunman was a 'terrorist.'

A man was subsequently captured and was alleged to have admitted killing the three Catholics and other people. Sister Ermenfried, Church sources say, recognised this picture in a newspaper as the killer. But she was never asked to pick him out on an identity parade.

The man was later transferred to Victoria Falls and escaped from the police station there. The *Rhodesian Herald* reported that he had been handcuffed and had leg irons fitted in his cell. On 9 January, when officers went to serve his breakfast, he burst past them. Leapt over nearby garden hedges and disappeared.

On 6 February at Musami mission four nuns and three Jesuit priests were killed by a group of 12 armed men. Father Dunstan Myerscough survived and, again, he said the killers were 'terrorists.'

Catholic sources say Sister Ermenfried and Father Myerscough both genuinely identified the killers as 'terrorists' because of the way they were dressed and armed. But, and this particularly applies to the Musami massacre, some priests feel that it can almost be ruled out that the attackers were guerrillas.

In the case of the Musami mission and the murder of Bishop Schmitt, the source said the killers did not behave like guerrillas. Usually, he said, guerrillas gave eyewitnesses reasons for the killing, for example that the victims were Government informers.

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