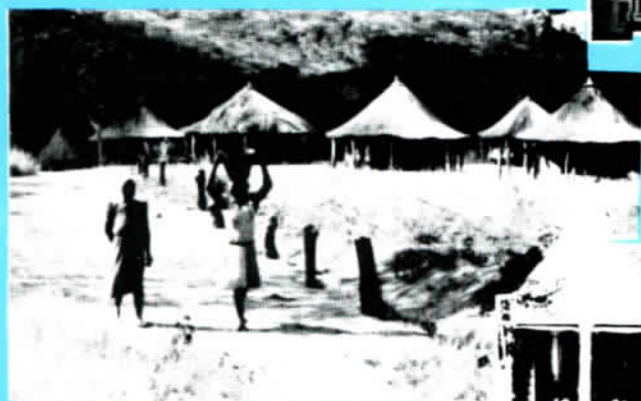
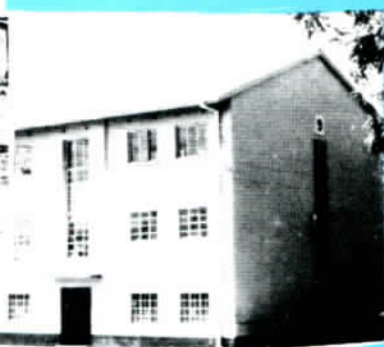




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# Number 7

# 1984

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The focus of this, our seventh issue of The Journal on Social Change and Development deals with housing, resettlement, and squatting in Zimbabwe. The articles concerned with these topical and controversial subjects provide questions and suggestions on how best these issues could be resolved. This resolution however, must be in such a way that it will be part and parcel of the development strategy towards the establishment of socialism in the country.

Socialism cannot be achieved without everything being people oriented, that is democratic, involving the actual participation of the masses of workers and peasants from the planning stages to the organisation, implementation and evaluation stages. Socialism cannot be established and built without the full participation of the people right from the moment their government takes over the reins of power and through the planned phases of the transitional period to developed socialism. The transitional period must, according to plans, eliminate the private ownership of the means of production. This must take place in all spheres of life, including housing, land reform and resettlement. Anybody who thinks that socialism is established from above still has, at best, a long way to go; at worst, he means to confuse the working people on behalf of capitalism, particularly the multinational corporations.

For the working people capitalism has failed to build enough houses. This can easily be seen in countries like Britain, Holland, France, West Germany and Italy, where people have to resort to squatting to get a shelter over their heads. Of course there is no capitalist who has no house. All capitalists live in houses with all the facilities of a modern house. This is clearly seen here in Zimbabwe too, where the capitalist class had never run out of houses, but the workers in factories, mines, shops, farms, etc. lived in overcrowded houses in townships and in shanty huts of plastic sheeting, grass and pieces of sheet metal. Many townships houses had no internal water system and no internal toilets. This is still the case today. Travelling along any major road from Harare one sees hovels in which the farm workers are still forced to live, and there does not seem to be a change for the better on the part of the employers.

The other badly affected group of workers are those employed by hotels. Some of these workers live in barrack like conditions, and others in hovels, even directly behind the sparkling clean hotels where they spend very long hours working for very low wages.

As for the resettlement programme in Zimbabwe, that is the backbone of our land reform policy, it needs to be part and parcel of a plan to transform land ownership and use along socialist lines. This can only be effectively achieved through state farms and co-operatives. The state needs to take advantage of every opportunity to take over any farm whose capitalist owner intends to sell or is outside the country. Such farms remain as productive state farms employing wage workers, especially the youth, or they are turned into co-operatives. Socialism can never be achieved without the state dominating in all the sectors of the economy. Co-operatives alone, or with a very low state participation, can never achieve socialism, they have never done so in any country.

In this issue we carry an article showing two types of land reforms - one is that of El Salvador, initiated by the USA and its puppets, and the other is that of Nicaragua which was initiated by the people and is now part and parcel of the revolutionary government in that country. We hope we in this country will learn from these two experiences, and others not mentioned. There are no two ways about it, and no other alternatives; land reform is either for the capitalist class or for the working people.

Talking of socialist transformation of agriculture, it needs to be borne in mind that alone, it is not enough. For socialism to be achieved the State must take over the other sectors of the economy, that is, all the pillars of the economy must be taken over by the State. In other words, manufacturing, mining, engineering, chemical production, banking, etc. must be taken over by the State, or dominated by the State until the State and co-operatives eventually push out private ownership in these sectors and sub-sectors. For any country to develop at all, the manufacturing sector must dominate the economy - agriculture cannot be the main sector of the economy if we are to develop at all. Therefore the resettlement programme, based on agricultural production as it is, cannot manage to accommodate and give employment to the millions living, and those yet to be born in the rural areas. We need to be thinking about State and co-operative large-scale agro-industries and other industries in or near resettlement areas taking over the manufacturing and financial sectors in towns, along with the mining sector, which is already part of the rural areas.

Of course all this needs to be accompanied by appropriate education and training policies, programmes and plans that will eventually reduce to the minimum the dependence on foreign experts of all sorts. To be a developed country also means to rely on the local manpower for any economic venture we want to embark on.

N.C.G. Mathema  
Issue Editor



This photo and cover photos by Min. of Information



# RESETTLEMENT: THE SETTLERS' VIEW

by Bill Kinsey

Observers of agrarian reform and rural development since independence have sometimes had to content themselves with deducing the content and possible effects of government programmes from the lofty rhetoric contained in policy pronouncements. Nowhere has this been more true than for the resettlement programmes which, like bulldozers working in a drought, have been wreathed in clouds of dust that are both a sign of intense activity, and that conceal much of the true nature of the activity going on beneath. In part, this obscurity is deliberate and attributes to the politically sensitive character of resettlement. In part also it reflects a pre-occupation, manifest until recently, with the purely technical aspects of relocating very large numbers of people. But further, the obscurity is an indication of reluctance in some quarters to explore openly critical social and economic dimensions of resettlement. Such reluctance should however, be unnecessary, as resettlement is probably the major social experiment in Zimbabwe today; making it work should command the attention and collaboration of the best minds in the country.

As yet, however, interested observers have been given no feel for the more human dimensions of resettlement. Statistics, yes, but humanity, no. Who are Zimbabwe's post-independence settlers? What motivated them to opt for resettlement? What is life like for the early pioneers in this new and massive exercise in restructuring rural society? Fortunately, work done by local academics is beginning to shed some light on these questions.

Surveys among settlers who moved onto settlement schemes in 1980 and 1981 show that the majority of settlers come from the old reserves, and that many of them, depending upon the area of the country, moved onto schemes almost directly from the "keeps" in which they had been "protected" during the war. Significant numbers - up to forty per cent in some scheme villages - also come from commercial farm labourers stranded when farms were abandoned or sold by their white owners. But the pattern is diverse: settlers number among them former soldiers, ex-combatants, clerks from the cities, painters, miners, returned refugees, bakers, teachers, mechanics, artisans, storekeepers, domestic servants, and many more. Even more diverse is the set of skills settlers collectively bring with them to their schemes; blacksmithing, building, agriculture, poultry keeping, well digging, welding, brick-moulding, teaching, metal-working and the like. Many settlers' backgrounds however, reveal few if any skills of obvious value in their new lives on the schemes; and government services will have to be prepared to offer considerable training and advisory services if these settlers are to be equipped with essential skills.

## REASONS TO RESETTLE

Settlers surveyed worded the factors influencing their decision to be resettled in more than 25 different ways, but most of these reasons can be related to a desire for more arable and grazing land to support their families. Few set-

tlers could have been described as landless in their home areas, and on average, moving onto a settlement scheme roughly doubled the area of arable land they cultivate as well as improving the quality of land. There are strong indications that settlement farmers are not simply replicating the subsistence farming systems of some communal areas, for some two-thirds are growing crops they did not grow before, usually cash crops.

There are settlers, however, who chose to relocate for different reasons. For example, there are those who moved in order to leave behind the grief and painful reminders of those who died in the war. Indeed, one is struck by the burden of the war that settlers as a group carried. Perhaps a third had their houses and crops destroyed and their cattle killed or stolen. Others, though, gave up poorly paid jobs in the urban areas or elsewhere in anticipation of doing better for themselves on the land. There are also settlers whose motive was to escape the restraints of the traditional system of authority operating in the communal areas.

In their first year, settlers faced a host of problems, including clearing of land, moving onto their land late and having to build houses in the rains, while trying to get a crop planted, building new schools, wild animals eating crops, lack of infrastructure and finally drought - the one theme which dominates any discussion with settlers. Yet most say they have come to feel at home on their schemes, despite early difficulties. In enumerating their current problems after more than two years on their schemes, settlers almost unanimously identify four major, interrelated problems: hunger, drought, illness and poor, nonexistent, or dirty water supplies. Nearly four years after the land was purchased for resettlement, several of the earliest schemes still have yet to have satisfactory water supplies provided. As a consequence many settlers are being forced to use contaminated surface water sources. Health problems result and are compounded by the fact that many clinics built in resettlement areas have never opened, in part due to the water supply problem.

Only about half of settlers belong to any type of organisation within their communities, partly because in the haste to get large numbers of settlers relocated, promoting this type of activity was relegated to a relatively low priority. Village assemblies are the most common community organisation, and emphasis is currently being given to linking these to scheme-wide area boards, through the intermediate-level regional grouping of villages, clustered around a shared primary school. This approach parallels the structure of local government which does not yet operate in settlement schemes. Another approach taken recognizes the vacuum created by the lack of local governing institutions, and attempts to link the scheme to the party in neighbouring areas through a hierarchy starting with village based cells, and leading upward to branches and eventually to district and provincial levels. A smaller

proportion, about one third, of settlers, actually participate in community work. The figure would probably be higher but for the fact that such efforts have yet to be organised in many areas, and that families still have much work to do simply to establish themselves. There is, however, a powerful streak of "Each for himself, and God for us all" sentiment among settlers.

#### SUPPORTING SERVICES

Settlers are provided with an impressive quality of supporting services. All settlers surveyed receive regular visits from Agritex staff, usually at weekly or fortnightly intervals, and the assistance and advice offered appear to be both timely and germane. Veterinary services on the other hand, are less uniformly provided, but then, contrary to the assumptions of the planners' models, many settlers have no access to cattle or other stock. Very few settlers have attended farmer training courses and most who have, did so before they joined their scheme. The coverage of village health workers seems to be very good, and most settlers have frequent contact with the VHW, usually in village meetings. The effectiveness of this coverage may need examination, however, as numbers of VHWs are unable to identify kwashiorkor a condition not uncommon in 1984, when they see it or to advise on its causes and appropriate treatment.

Well over half the settlers surveyed were receiving official drought relief (in the better parts of the country) in early 1984, but this consisted only of variable amounts of maize grain and an infrequent allocation of salt. Significant numbers of settlers have sent their children to relatives because they can no longer feed them, and some settlers have left schemes altogether because of food shortages. The most common complaint is hunger, and drought.

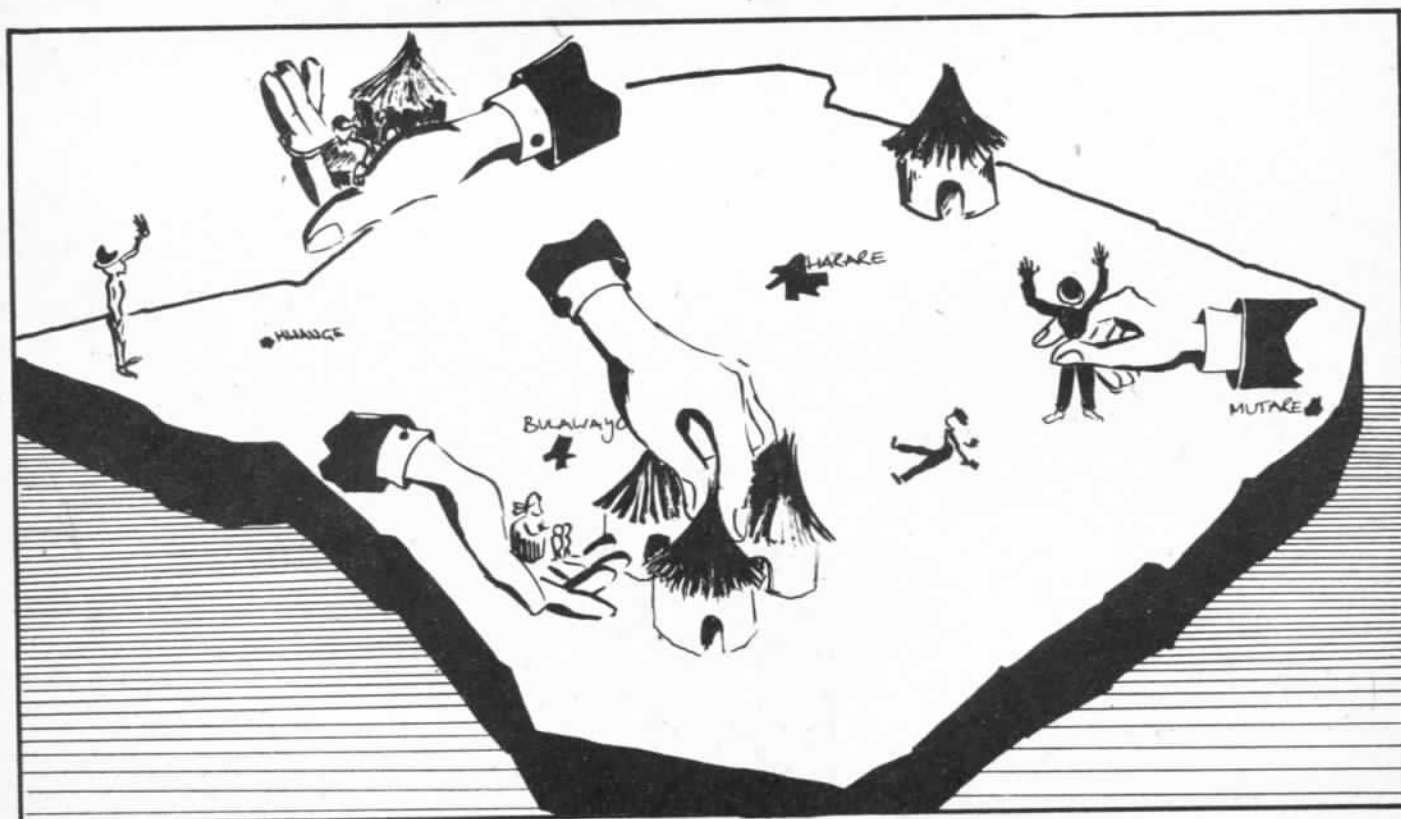
Looking toward the future, most settlers conceptualize success in terms of becoming more mechanized and prosperous farmers. Interesting-

ly, however, the majority do not conceive the farming on settlement schemes will provide a future career and prosperity for their children. Most would prefer their children to follow non-agricultural careers, but the range of career preferred is three times as large for sons as daughters! Moreover, most settlers would prefer their daughters to pursue the traditional careers outside farming; teaching and nursing.

#### VIEW OF RESETTLEMENT

Overall, how do settlers themselves rate the resettlement experience? The programmes are clearly regarded as a mixed blessing. More people cite ways in which their situation has got worse than ways in which it has improved, and more feel their family is worse off than those living off the scheme. The drought theme returns again, and farmers are extremely apprehensive about repeated defaults on loans. Such concern is fully justified, for the average settler carries a debt burden of nearly \$1,000, some two and a half times his planned annual income target. Resettled farmers also slate the absence of infrastructure and the lack of a social spirit. Moreover, now that the planning teams which laid out the land are long gone, it is clear that a struggle for land is emerging within the settlement themselves as the powerful and aggressive poach land from their neighbours. Boundary disputes are becoming more and more common and threaten the time and energy of officials who could be better occupied elsewhere.

These transitional difficulties notwithstanding no more than five per cent of settlers say they would return to their home areas if given a chance. And it is remarkable how often the word "happy" comes up in conversation with settlers about their feelings for the new life on resettlement schemes. While large numbers are reserving judgement, it is only the end of the drought they await to confirm whether they have made the correct decision or not.



The drought has caused great difficulties for many people who were moved onto resettlement areas. In spite of the setback in production, most settlers say that they are happy with their decision to move to a new area.

# SQUATTING

## a problem or a solution ?

by Diane Patel  
Sociology Dept. University of Zimbabwe

In the past, few governments have paid serious attention to the plight of the urban poor but more recently, the accelerated rate of urbanisation in the developing world and the fact that the urban poor constitute between 50-75% of the population of many of the cities in the developing world has led to reassessment of the situation.

The colonial legacy which the Government of Zimbabwe inherited was one of a low rate of urbanisation of the country's black population. The proportion of the total black population that was resident in the urban areas for seventeen years prior to 1979 was approximately 15%. In 1979, there was a rural to urban influx of some 600,000 displaced people because of the liberation war; some have subsequently returned to the rural areas but many have remained.

The relatively low rate of urbanisation in the past of about 4.6% has been primarily the result of the colonial Government influx control legislation such as the Land Tenure Act 1969, the Urban Areas Accommodation Act and Registration Act 1946, and the Vagrancy Act 1960, which enabled authorities to control the flow of blacks entering the towns. In this way the growth of large shanty towns, or squatter settlements, which are frequently characteristic of cities of the developing

world, was prevented. The basic policy was to regulate especially the flow of male migrants according to the availability of employment and prevent the accumulation of a large body of unemployed who were perceived by the colonial local and central authorities as a threat to civil peace in the urban areas. However, with the intensification of the liberation war, the implementation of influx control broke down. The Land Tenure Act 1969, and the Urban Areas Accommodation and Registration Act 1946 were repealed in 1979, but the Vagrancy Act 1960, which empowers local authorities to send back to the rural areas people who cannot prove that they are gainfully employed or formally registered urban residents, still remains.

**380,000 low-income  
housing units are required  
in the next 10 years.**

### URBAN MIGRATION

From 1976 onwards, squatter settlements started to develop, with the number of residents increasing as the years went by, and there was and is, also considerable overcrowding in the high density areas and in the domestic workers' quarters of the low-density suburbs. The Zimbabwe Government's priorities lie in integrated rural development projects with the aim of redistributing resources to the majority of the population and increasing the country's agricultural base, but despite this, there are reasons to believe that Zimbabwe will experience an accelerated urban growth rate of between 7 and 10% per annum. The main reasons are; the partial removal of influx control measures; the migration to urban areas of families of "single" males, which families had previously remained in the rural areas because of legislative restriction, and for economic reasons; the pressure of population on much of the communal lands; the average monetary incomes in the urban areas are much higher than in the communal lands and opportunities are perceived by the migrants to be greater in the urban areas, and the impact of the drought in the rural areas, which despite the Government's drought relief programme, is causing people to leave the land. Therefore the urban population is going to increase regardless of the availability of job opportunities. Thus, if the inherited racial structure of the towns and cities is not going to be replaced by an equally glaring and unacceptable class structure, then urban policy will require a greater focus on the plight of the urban poor.



Daily chores, such as cooking and washing, can become burdensome tasks if one has no permanent place to live.

photo by The Herald.



The current backlog of municipal housing has been estimated from municipal waiting lists to be over 62, 000 units. These official studies have shown that some 380,000 low-income housing units are required in the urban areas of Zimbabwe during the next ten years. This is a conservative figure because these official estimates do not take into account those who for various reasons are not registered for housing, the unemployed, and many of those in the informal sector. In the past, the existing municipal housing stock has served as a relatively "elastic" source of supply, absorbing people through increased overcrowding. However, overcrowding has reached a stage where the existing housing stock cannot absorb additional people, and this manifests itself in the growth of squatter settlements.

#### REMOVING SQUATTERS

Since independence there has been persistent attempts to remove urban squatters. Almost immediately when the new Government took office, attempts were made to clear the squatter camp in Mbare Musika in Harare. People were exhorted to return to the rural areas - a few went, but many were urban dwellers of long standing who wished to remain. Some families were accommodated in very overcrowded conditions in former "single" men's hostels, while other families were moved further away from the road, out of sight from the main public highway.

Chirambahuyo, a squatter settlement in Chitungwiza, housing some 30,000 people, also fell victim to the demolition squad. The self-built houses were razed to the ground without any compensation being paid to the occupants for the labour and capital invested in providing themselves with shelters. The occupants were offered ultra-low-cost houses in Chitungwiza, but firstly few could afford the approximately \$14 a month payments, and secondly, these houses were generally not as large as the houses which people had built for themselves to house their families and their lodgers. Many people resorted to squatting elsewhere, some in the Mayambara settlement in Chitungwiza which was later to be bull-dozed.

Recently, in several developing countries, governments and city authorities have recognised that bull-dozing squatter settlements means the destruction of valuable housing stock and exacerbates housing shortages by reducing the supply of houses that the poor can afford. Particularly because even when the demolition of squatter settlements is followed by the relocation of the urban poor in housing projects on the periphery of cities, the urban poor usually cannot afford them; even if they can afford these houses there is poor access to potential sources of income as well as basic urban services.

In Zimbabwe, there has been the learning experience of "Trashville" in Harare, where government officials moved the squatters from the municipal rubbish pit in Mbare to site and service housing in Glen View, only to find that the people who were removed returned to the rubbish because this was generally their only source of livelihood. Realising this, the officials then relocated these people in the hostels in Mbare which had been converted to family accommodation. This provided them with cheaper accommodation nearer their source of income.

When the government was confronted with an estimated 50,000 squatters in Epworth the decision was taken to upgrade and develop the area. Many of the settlers in Epworth were squatters from previous settlements that

the government had been chasing around the city. Hopes raised that the Epworth decision meant a change in policy towards squatters, were quickly dashed when, by far the greatest purge on urban squatters came in the nationwide "Operation Clean-up". In late night and dawn raids, the police and army arrested squatters throughout Harare and took them to Chikurubi prison, their homes were burnt or bull-dozed. The squatters were eventually released on condition that they did not squat again and the government continued its policy of ordering the people who had land in the rural areas back to the rural areas and sending others to rural resettlement schemes. This solution appears unrealistic in a year of severe drought. Furthermore, many of the squatters are long term urban dwellers, employed or self-employed, who through lack of an affordable alternative housing solution, are forced to squat.

## Squatters are their own best planners...

#### THE GOVERNMENT'S APPROACH

The government's approach to the urban squatters appears to result from a mixture of national pride and concern with health hazards, visible productive activities and reducing criminal elements. This mixture of motivation now replaces the colonial racial exclusiveness as a reason for insisting that if the poor cannot afford to live in the city, then they must return to the rural areas. This ultimately results in the demolition of squatter settlements and a return of the people "to the land". This mixture of motivation in the government's urban policy wrongly assumes that a "slum phenomenon" will be the

(continued on page 9)



The squatter camp at Musika, Mbare before "Operation Clean-up".  
photo by The Herald.

# AFFORDABLE HOUSING STANDARDS NEEDED

by D.J. Inglis

With the lifting of restrictions at the end of the war, the individual was faced with new freedoms and choices in a context of rising expectations of a new social order. The opportunities of resettlement areas, of wage jobs in the cities, of loans for development at home in the communal lands, have been weighed up by thousands of people all over Zimbabwe against the risks involved. Each person makes his own choice. Each choice is based on rational economic assessment. With the drought of the past few years, that choice for many, has been one of economic necessity, and the choice has been to go to the cities to look for wage employment.

The risks of moving to the city are increased with the world recession and the decline in job opportunities. The country is in flux, people are on the move, and the key to improvement would seem to be mobility - the ability to get up and go at the hint of an opportunity to work and earn a decent living.

In this context a house is a liability. A house that requires a large proportion of an insecure income, that is located miles from the job opportunities, and which delays relocation to fit in with a new job, is a hindrance to personal development.

Studies in South America have shown that urban migrants are reluctant to leave ancestral lands, but are driven to the cities by economic need. Their first priority is good access to job opportunities. Having secured a job, their next priority is for security, represented by a small piece of urban land. After this, the people push for provision of adequate services which they cannot provide themselves - clean water, and schools to secure their children's future. The need for a house is a very low priority.

The specific pattern of urban migration and resettlement in Zimbabwe is not yet clear, but in that it is a common phenomena of all developing countries, one can assume that it is a shared human experience.

## **Slums, squatter settlements, vagrancy, and prostitution are consequences of economic need.**

One can conclude that people move to the cities reluctantly from economic necessity; that slums, squatter settlements, vagrancy and prostitution are consequences of economic need and not an inherent weakness or wickedness in the people and that people's own aspirations and sense of self-respect will ensure that they build the best possible environment with the resources at their disposal.

This is not to deny that there is a need for built houses and that the cities of Zimbabwe do not have an established urban

population who would regard a house as their top priority. Rather that government's role is to assist the people in this process of consolidation and development by providing the separate components of housing that people can use and assemble themselves according to their own priorities. This results in a partnership for development, with the government providing only those components that people cannot provide themselves.

By contrast, governments of developing countries have tended to ignore this settlement process of the people and taken a statistical approach. Civil Servants with secure jobs (often from a middle-class background) have defined the situation by their own needs - a built house. Policy becomes one of matching numbers of built houses with numbers of houses needed.

### SETTING STANDARDS

A house is seen as a service to be provided by the State, the recipient as a consumer who gets a prepared consumer product. Minimum standards are set to safeguard social and health values. This planning approach is borrowed from industrialised countries where sufficient wealth is assumed to exist, to be able to provide for all, with a shift in the level of taxation of the productive sector and a redirecting of subsidies.

Applied to developing countries with a limited productive sector, the State either builds houses to standards affordable by middle to upper income groups, or subsidizes a very few houses for low income people at the expense of the masses. Without subsidies the onus of meeting required standards falls on the citizen. The low income person who receives a high standard house could well be trapped in a cycle of poverty, unable to meet other needs from his monthly wage packet, unless he "sells-out" to higher income groups and becomes a tenant in his own home.

Conversely, the low income person who cannot afford the required house standard is denied access even to a piece of land, let alone basic services. Consequently, those who cannot afford required standards are forced into rented accommodation. As demand grows, the rent for even one room becomes beyond the means of the average low-income person and squatter settlements start springing up. The living conditions for the low-income group become far worse than if there had been no standard set at all.

A country that cannot subsidize housing must set its standards at a level that is affordable by the majority. This means setting standards for those components that the government provides, to ensure that all people get equal access to that resource. The irony of the standards issue is that the more socially concerned the government, the more likely it is to deny its people adequate housing by setting its standards too high.

Zimbabwe is in the process of defining those standards. It has followed the pattern of most of the countries of the region at



independence. Housing is seen as a service to be provided by government. Standards have been set at a minimum house size of four rooms, plus a bathroom with full waterborne sewage, water piped into the house, a minimum stand of 300m<sup>2</sup> and car access to all stands. All costs are coverable from the beneficiary, whether through loan repayments, rates, or taxes, as the government recognises that it does not have the resources to subsidise extensively.

### BUILDING BRIGADES

Inherent in the housing policy is a broad approach to method of construction, including building brigades, self-help and co-operatives, in an attempt to make the standards affordable. The setting up of brigades is a recognition that conventional house construction by contractors cannot give the required standards cheaply enough. Brigades, by being involved in material production and house construction, are intended to provide houses at cost by cutting out the profit element of the contractor, and thus building much more cheaply.

The first indication is that houses built by brigades are cheaper, but they are still beyond the means of low-income people. One of the first successful brigade construction programmes in KweKwe has a monthly payment of \$54. A beneficiary would have to earn over \$200 per month to afford this payment, based on the rule of thumb that people can spend 25% of their monthly salary on accommodation.

Brigades have not yet been implemented extensively enough or long enough to establish whether the KweKwe and other brigades can get over the inherent problems of a direct-labour "public works department" construction operation, with its lack of incentives and safe jobs, and lower their costs to serve the poorest 50% of the population who earn less than \$150 per month.

Although brigades have been set up to replace contractors, the two methods belong to the same definition of the housing problem, in that of numbers of houses to be built. By contrast, the other two methods contained in the present housing policy are far more radical solutions to the situation. Aided self-help, and co-operative programmes, fall within the definition, not of housing as an end-product with the people as passive recipients, but as a development process in which the people are active agents in determining their own lives.



The Ministry of Construction and National Housing is at present implementing a number of pilot projects to test out the self-help process, and is developing guidelines for its implementation by local authorities. The essence of aided self-help is that a government with limited resources concentrates its efforts on those components of the housing process that the people cannot provide themselves. Apart from spreading resources more equitably to the mass of the people, it limits the debt burden and allows in the low income people. Most significant however, is the flexibility offered by treating each housing component independently of the others. If a land shortage is the major blockage in housing supply, then government can act to free land. If land is readily available, services or building material loans might be the obstacle. Each one can be acted on independently. The beneficiary who already has serviced land might just want a material loan. Many people have the resources to build a complete house, but lack the land on which to build.

The system is flexible for the individual as well. With the essentials of security provided by a piece of land, he can determine his own priorities. He can use all his resources for house construction or can forego the extra room for a few years if he sees education or health needs for his children as better routes to development.

Self help is not a means of cutting costs for government at the expense of the people, although it has been used for that purpose in some other countries. Rather it is a process of development that regards the people of a country as a resource rather than as a liability.

### CONDITIONS DETERIORATING

In most developing countries the policy of public house construction programmes has been found to solve only part of the problem. Although adequate housing has been universally recognised as a basic human right for more than a quarter century, the overall living conditions for more than 1000 million people are deteriorating alarmingly. Today one quarter of the world's population live in extremely unhealthy conditions. Approximately 100 million people have no housing whatsoever. In the cities of the developing world, 50% of the inhabitants live in slum and squatting settlements. In most of these cities 50-75% of the people cannot afford to buy any kind of house, even the cheapest.

In an attempt to face up to this alarming situation facing the whole international community, the United Nations has declared 1987 the "International Year of Shelter for the Homeless", to generate a programme of action for the future. It is based on an awareness, amply documented, that the poor will build the overwhelming majority of the housing they need, by themselves, as they always have done.

The question remains as to how typical Zimbabwe is as a developing country. Four years after independence, having inherited one of the most developed infrastructures in Africa, and relatively small urban populations, it certainly is not typical. However, some disturbing trends can be detected. The continuing world recession, combined with severe drought of the last few years must be viewed against a population growth rate of 3.2%. The urban growth rate is already 7.5%. While the demand for housing is increasing, the Ministry of Construction and National Housing had its budget for housing for 1983-84 cut from \$59.5 million to \$19.5 million, a consequence of less resources available to government, but also less priority to housing relative to other sectors of government spending.

With limited resources it would seem that the path of socialist transformation is not to build houses as a service for the people. Rather, the government will need to mobilise as many resources as possible, provide certain components where necessary, and trust in its own people to act in partnership to build up the housing stock of the nation. Ultimately, good housing will depend on a restructuring of the productive sector of the economy to achieve a more equitable distribution of incomes rather than on house building programmes.



# WOMEN AND RESETTLEMENT

by Susie Jacobs

Women constitute the great majority of the rural population in Zimbabwe. The resettlement programme, therefore, should have significant effects upon these "farmer housewives". However, women and women's interests are not always considered an integral part of the resettlement programme. In fact, it could be said that women have been defined out of, and marginalised from resettlement.

Firstly, this takes place with regard to access to the programme. Women cannot fill in resettlement application forms in the same way as men. Traditionally in Zimbabwe, widows have been allowed to hold land (if there is no male claimant) and widows are allowed to fill in the forms. But otherwise women cannot apply unless they are considered to be "heads of households". On the face of it, this may sound fair. But who is a "head of household"? In Zimbabwe, women are not usually defined as household heads, unless they are divorced or there is no adult male actually present, even on a temporary basis. So even when a husband works as a migrant labourer and the women and children remain on the land, the man is usually seen as "head". The head of any household is really a matter of people's perceptions, that is of ideology - and is not a fixed, given thing. Technically, women should be able to fill in the forms, as there is no government regulation against it. But customary definitions of women's role and status operate so as to exclude them.

In some areas people are not being allowed to resettle unless they have a certain amount of property, e.g. cattle, a scotch cart, a cultivator; and can achieve a certain level of productivity. Again, this almost automatically excludes widows and other female farmers, since women on their own are generally poor. Another factor is that those considered for resettlement vary in practice from District Council to Council, and from one Resettlement Officer to another. So some may allow "marginal" cases of divorcees and unmarried family heads, while others may not.

This exclusion of women is related to one of the aims of the resettlement programme: to resettle family units or, as it is said, to reunite families. This is in many ways a laudable aim and is one which most rural women in Zimbabwe would support. The desire for normal family lives and the end to the migrant worker system is real; however, it may be double-edged for women. Because "worker-peasant" men have had to be away for long periods in

the year, women's burden of work in communal lands has generally increased. But at times their scope for decision-making and for personal autonomy has, as well. As some preliminary research indicates, men are likely to reassert any control lost over production, over decision making activities, and over women's action when they are actually present in the household.

Also, the terms in which the idea of reunification has been phrased indicates that women are likely to be marginalised. The ZIMCORD document, for instance, writes of encouraging "dependents" to settle near "bread winners". Here, dependents are assumed to be female and breadwinners male. So peasant women's status, already low, could be further reduced to that of housewives looking after full-time male peasants.

## RESEARCH NEEDED

How are different models of resettlement likely to affect rural women? Little research has been carried out on this topic; what there is, is fragmentary. So the following consists of suggestions about the likely direction of changes:

As noted, men are required to stay on resettlement schemes with their wives and children. (Although it seems that some settlers do not abide by this requirement and remain in town, leaving the wife(ves) to farm, as before.) There have already been changes in the sexual division of labour due to migrant labour, resulting in women shouldering most of the burden of work. Men's presence will almost certainly mean some further change in the sexual division of labour, but exactly what this will be remains to be seen. One report says that, at least in the short term, women's burden of work is increasing due to the load of establishing new farms. It is likely in general, that women's labour will be very heavily utilized in resettlement areas. For similar reasons, it may be that women come under pressure to bear more children, as middle peasants, ones who are mainly self-sufficient but do not hire labour, usually have to rely on the labour of family members. There have also been some changes in crops grown, in resettlement areas, and women's crops such as groundnuts, are not being grown. This, of course, deprives women of one of their few independent sources of income.

Another change occurring is that people will be separated from their extended families. This should not necessarily be viewed as a lamentable disintegration of the family. Bill Kinsey's study in Umfurudzi, for instance indicates that, for better or worse, many men and women are relieved to be freed of such ties with the obligations they impose. On the other hand, people were aware that obligations extended families impose, also mean that they provided help in times of need. Such "relative isolation" probably does mean that families, whether polygamous, or monogamous, will become more private and inward-looking. So it seems that women, especially older women, are becoming more isolated on Model A Resettlement schemes. Whether they are able to counteract this by forming strong ties with neighbours remains to be seen.

It would be comforting for socialists to be able to point to cooperative resettlement as a panacea for these problems faced by rural women. But some of the problems of Model A Settlement are repeated in Model B. Technically women are admitted as full members to cooperatives. But in practice, this is not always the case. Again women are sometimes considered as part of a unit, of which the husband is the head and primary member. Little research has been done on this in Zimbabwe, but the experience of co-operatives in other developing countries indicates that women do not automatically become equal within them. In spite of official commitment to female equality in countries such as Vietnam and Mozambique, women are often relegated to the sphere of subsistence production in the form of the family garden plot; they are deemed to have sole responsibility for housework and childcare, and they tend to be excluded from decision-making and management.



Although many women support themselves and their children on what they earn from farming, they have no decision making power, and are not recognised as "head of household".

Photos courtesy Min. of Information

However, there is room for cautious optimism. If women are admitted to co-operatives as full members, or even if their labour input is considered separate from their husbands', then they may gain a measure of economic independence. Also, the collectivised control over the means of production in co-operatives is likely to give wives more room for manoeuvre. Women's labour and reproductive capacity is less likely to be so closely controlled by husbands, as it seems they are in Model A Villages. If co-operatives do not offer any automatic route to equality, they at least offer such a possibility.

## Squatting (continued from page 5)

automatic result of allowing the poor to live in the city. This assumption rests on a policy of not providing viable alternatives. Generally people do not live in a degrading environment through choice, but if the opportunities to improve the environment are not within the limit of the poor, then they have no choice. The lack of success of replacement of settlements with rehousing schemes, together with the discovery of the potential for self-help and community participation among the poor, has stimulated the development of policies of upgrading existing settlements in other parts of the world. Such community participation approaches can be seen as reorganising the distribution of power and resources in favour of greater equity for the poor. It must be remembered that squatters are their own best planners; they site themselves near various resources, usually income earning opportunities, but also water, or schools, or in certain inconspicuous marginal areas in cases where governments are intolerant towards squatters.

In Zimbabwe, hopefully, upgrading of squatter settlements will become the norm in the future rather than the exception, as in the government's decision to upgrade Epworth settlement. Furthermore, on a limited housing budget, the best the government can do in terms of providing alternative housing schemes for the urban poor is the aided self-help sites and services schemes. Although the government is currently adopting this sites and services approach, its specifications for the development of these sites, such as the development of a four-roomed core in eighteen months, is not affordable to the poor.

What is required is basic sites and services with few developmental constraints. This will end the destruction of the property of the poor, and the discrimination against them in terms of access to urban resources and will go some way towards closing the greater class divergence that will otherwise emerge in our society.

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# HOUSING CO-OPS

Those people with no houses need to be encouraged to form housing co-operatives or some other type of self-help groups. Objectives of housing co-operatives may involve land acquisition and development, project planning and design, purchase and transport of building materials, house building, savings and loan recruitment or administration, and maintenance of dwellings. Housing co-operatives can be established for one or more objectives and dissolved afterwards, for example, after completing construction or repayments of loans, or they may continue to operate indefinitely.

Housing co-operatives can ensure inexpensive accommodation for the working people, who are socially the most needy part of the population. These co-operatives can also protect workers and peasants against unfavourable conditions in the sphere of housing. Experience in the socialist countries, for instance in Czechoslovakia, shows that in the period of transition from capitalism to socialism and during the further development of a socialist society, the aims of housing co-operatives are to help society in solving the housing problem, to stimulate the citizens' interest in the economic administration and maintenance of the housing property.

The construction of houses by co-operatives can be done in two ways: house construction through contractors; or through co-operative self-help, with members' active personal participation in the actual work. The houses or dwellings constructed by, and for members of a housing co-operative can be collectively, or individually owned.

For all types of co-operatives, the six co-operative principles are essential. These principles are: (a.) open membership, (b.) democratic control; (c.) payment of limited interest on capital; (d.) the economic results arising out of the operations of a society to be distributed to members in proportion to their trade with the society; (e.) provision of education for members, officers, employees and the general public; (f.) co-operation among co-operatives nationally and internationally. Co-operative principles

are opposed to all forms of exploitation of person by another, and any form of domination of the enterprise by one person or a group of persons. Private companies are based on the exploitation of workers, and they are dominated by those who own more shares than others.

All co-operatives are supported by the Government in Zimbabwe. They are all registered by the Department of Co-operative Development in the Ministry of Lands, Resettlement and Rural Development. The registration procedure starts from the province (the department has offices in all the provinces), not from the head office.

## SELF-RELIANCE IS ESSENTIAL

The ministry of National Housing and Construction is charged with the responsibility of providing technical, administrative, financial and training assistance to housing co-operatives. However, it is important for those who want to form housing co-operatives (or any other type of co-operatives) to bear in mind that self-reliance is fundamental in all co-operatives. People must not form co-operatives thinking that the Government will give them money simply because they are a registered co-operative. Financial help from outside each co-operative must not be the foundation of any co-operative, except under very special conditions; as in Model B Resettlement Schemes, where collectives are given an establishment grant by the Government.

Each co-operative therefore, must be able to stand on its own feet, otherwise there is no need to form it. What this means is that before people can apply for registration of their co-operative, they will have understood what their problem is, and how they will finance the solution to the problem. They will have understood the need of a proper manager and the need for keeping books.

The country needs housing co-operatives, which together with the state and local authorities will eventually solve the housing problem.

1 A GROUP OF NOT LESS THAN 10 PEOPLE DECIDE TO FORM A HOUSING-CO-OP



2



THEY GO TO THE PROVINCIAL OFFICE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT.

THEY GET ADVICE AND WILL BE TOLD IF THEIR CO-OP WILL BE ABLE TO FUNCTION ON ITS OWN.



3

COMPLETE APPLICATION FORM AND SUBMIT BY LAWS



THE REGISTRAR GIVES THE RECOGNITION.

4



5

THE GROUP IS NOW OFFICIALLY A CO-OPERATIVE.

# Housing: not just a 3rd World problem

Finding adequate housing for a growing population is not just a problem of the Third World. Many industrialised countries, particularly in Europe, also struggle with housing problems. Where countries are small, cities can expand only at the expense of precious farmland. Money may be available but space near work and transport is not.

This is especially true in the Netherlands, which has over 14 million people crowded into a land about one sixth the size of Zimbabwe. In the Netherlands intensive agriculture is practiced, providing work and food for the population. Farmland cannot be used to expand cities. There has been some attempt to build high-rise apartment blocks, but they quickly become plagued with crime and vandalism.

The largest city in the Netherlands is Amsterdam. It is one of the most densely populated areas in the world. Houses in the historical centre date back to the 17th century, and every attempt is made to keep them in livable condition. Families, particularly those of migrant workers, can live crowded into one small room. The housing list is up to five years long, and then the most needy cases are taken first. If you are in a city-owned house with your family you may be asked to leave when your children are grown in order to make room for more needy cases.

Yet one sees many houses standing empty right in the heart of Amsterdam. They are being left for speculation by the owners, often getting more and more run-down as time passes. The owners don't want to spend the money to keep them in livable condition, they are only holding them until the value of the land goes up and they can sell them for a huge profit.

There are over 10,000 urban squatters in the city of Amsterdam. They live in these empty houses and warehouses which are being left for speculation. The squatters repair the houses and may even have to install their own water and electricity to make them livable. These are people who believe it is



In The Netherlands squatters have organised into support groups to help defend their rights to use houses which would normally stand empty.

their right to have a place to live, and that this right should not be taken from them by capitalist landowners. Although they may respect the right of people to own private property, they feel that private property rights must be sacrificed for the good of the people as a whole.

The squatters have organised themselves into support groups. These groups advise on legal procedures, help with water and electrical installation, and when necessary, defend the residents against police eviction. The organisation came spontaneously from the need of the people, without any hierarchy of leadership, or political party. They are associated with many other progressive movements in the country, and even publish their own newspaper.

## SQUATTERS RESIST POLICE

There have been times when the squatters have come up against police directly, such as in 1980, when hundreds of squatters turned out to defend a house which was occupied for several years by squatters. They prepared themselves with gasmasks, helmets, and batons, knowing what to expect from the police. A police radio tap warned the group of the time the police would come for the eviction. Mobilised through a telephone network, hundreds of people were at the scene when the police arrived. They proceeded to tear up sidewalks, which are made of cement blocks, and build a barricade. The resistance continued throughout the weekend, with the squatters effectively holding off police. Finally on Monday morning the mayor called in 1,000 national guard troops with tanks and helicopters to remove the squatters. There was nothing the squatters could do but surrender under such military aggression. The resistance did however prove their unity, and obtained sympathy from many other citizens.

Throughout the year similar resistances were undertaken, including the take-over of a new apartment complex that was being rented at exploitative prices. In that incident 2,000 national guard troops were called, with sharpshooters and water cannon. The sight of such aggressive police action caused a riot.

Recent developments have gone against the squatters in Amsterdam. Lawyers are finding more and more loopholes in the laws which protect squatters, and thus are able to get them evicted more easily than in the past.

The law states that when ownership changes hands, the new owner has the right to evict the tenants (a similar law exists in Zimbabwe). Some owners now put ownership of the house into a holding company, which changes ownership in name only, and thus they can evict the squatters. Another change in the law makes it possible for squatters to be arrested for burglary, even though the house may have been empty. In the past when a conflict between owner and squatters arose, the city may have stepped in to buy the house, then rented it to the squatters. Now, with the economy doing poorly, few houses are being bought by the city. There is also new legislation pending that would make it easier for landlords to let buildings stand empty.

All of this repression has taken its toll on the squatters movement. As one activist said, "You get tired of getting up at five in the morning to go and defend a house. You have to have another life besides squatting". Yet the unity of this mass movement shows that people can act by themselves to get what they need, even though it may at times involve civil disobedience, and conflict with the police. Whether or not it will eventually be squashed by the landowners with the aid of the government and the police is yet to be seen.

# ARMAMENT OR DEVELOPMENT?

"EACH GUN THAT IS MADE, EVERY WARSHIP LAUNCHED, EVERY ROCKET FIRED, SIGNIFIES IN A FINAL SENSE, A THEFT FROM THOSE WHO HUNGER AND ARE NOT FED, FROM THOSE WHO ARE COLD AND ARE NOT CLOTHED."

-Dwight Eisenhower

While Ronald Reagan has cut the development aid package to Zimbabwe, along with many of his own country's social benefits, he has asked Congress to increase the defense budget to 135 billion dollars. This is the highest amount in history, and it should be noted, comes at a time of peace in the US.

The US military budget increase is just one of the many examples of the growing militarisation of the world. An unofficial estimate of current world military spending sets the sum of between \$510 and \$630 billion. This estimate is about 15 to 20 times greater than the amount of money spent on official development aid.

Yet, it is not only the production of arms, that is alarming, but also the world resources, the human energy, and the scientific research that goes with the complex industry of making war. The world's regular armed forces employ 25 million people (about 60% of them are in the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation). Between 4 and 6 million people are engaged directly in the production of weapons. Almost 6% of the world's petroleum, along with 11% of the total consumption of copper is used for military purposes. 25% of the world's research is for military use. There are an estimated 500,000 scientists and engineers involved in research and development in the military establishment.

Let's take a look at who benefits from the production of these arms, who the consumer is, and how it affects the developing world.

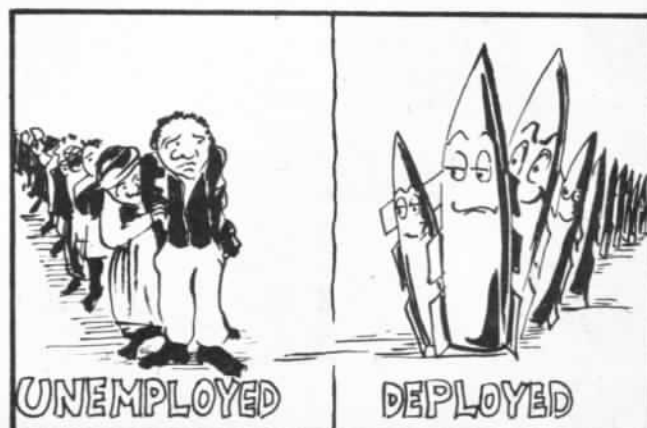
There are four countries which produce most of the world's arms. They are the USA, the Soviet Union, France, and the United Kingdom. These four account for 80% of all exported arms. The major importers are the Mid-East countries, which account for half of all military spending in the developing world, followed by Southeast Asia and the Far East, then the African nations and Latin America.

Many people in the industrialised nations will argue that arms production gives employment to their own people. Yet research in the US has shown that a billion dollars spent on defense would create 76,000 jobs compared to 80,000 created if the money were spent on health programmes, and 104,000 if it were spent on education. The industry can create shortages of scarce resources in the civilian sector, as well as absorb scientists and engineers into their system because of the higher wages the military can offer. Most jobs in the labour sector of the military go to highly skilled white males, while it is the unskilled females and minority group males who are the most in need of work. It has also been shown that when more money is invested in military, less is available to the civilian sector, thus causing a credit squeeze. This all shows that the argument that the weapons industry is good for the economy is highly debatable.

As for the consumers of weapons, one can note that between 1945 and 1976 over 120 armed conflicts took place in the Third World, while during the same time the countries which manufacture the weapons have been in states of peace, aside from their own military interventions in affairs of the Third World. This shows that most military equipment is being used in the developing countries. The military expenditure of developing countries reached \$81 billion in 1981 as compared to \$33 billion in 1972. This is money which a developing country could much better use for health and education programmes, if it did not need to defend itself from imperialist aggression and internal destabilisation caused by outside interference.

With a stockpile of nuclear arms which can "over-kill" the entire world several times, one can openly criticise the super-powers for going ahead with increased militarisation, as the rest of the world sinks deeper and deeper into poverty. This is a distorted use of world resources and comes from the attempt of the industrialised countries to make themselves islands of peace and prosperity in an ocean of world turmoil. The problem is that it just won't work. We are no longer dealing with nations that are months and even years away, but minutes away in terms of the power of destruction of our weapons. We are a world intertwined in economies, and dependant on each other for resources and technology. Cutting military expenses alone cannot bring a stop to the battle between East and West, and between North and South. It will take much more, but at least it would be a start in getting priorities right.

adapted from IDOC Documentation Service n. 8-10 1983





# INAPPROPRIATE TECHNOLOGY

Government say they believe in promoting rural industries, "appropriate technology" and such catchphrases, but what happens?

When Mutoko Council primary schools are to build latrines, an instruction is issued that all the pits are to be reinforced to a depth of 15 feet with concrete rings delivered by the Ministry of Construction from Harare, 150 km. away. That costs a lot of money for transport, but it does not provide much work for the builders of Mutoko. The job could be done with brick, which would cost less, and employ local builders. They might even have the sense to know when the pits do not need reinforcing, as when they are dug in the rocky soil of Nyamazizi. Not doing unnecessary work would save more money.

When Mhondoro Council want to build staff-houses, they buy prefabricated units from a firm in Marondera, 150 km. from Mubaira where the houses are being built. This costs a lot of fuel for transport, the materials are more expensive than local brick, and once again, the builders are deprived of possible work.

Some claim that government departments which are centralised in Harare and do not have contact with the people at the grass-roots in the areas where these jobs are to be done must work in this way; if they left it to local people who they cannot check up on, there might be abuses, corruption, and misuse of public money. But why has the people's government let itself become so isolated from the people?

Would it be so risky or expensive to trust the people on the spot? Murewa District Hospital spends \$ 20,000 per staff house they build, because they follow government procedures. A mission hospital in Murewa District builds similar staff houses for \$ 10,000, employing local builders and using good quality materials, not all local. An adequate job could probably be done even cheaper than the mission hospital does it, so it should be easy to find a way for the council to waste less of the people's money.



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# THE ROOTS OF PROSTITUTION

The rounding up of people in November 1983 was officially said to be necessary to rid the country of beggars, prostitutes, and squatters. People were outraged by the violation of civil liberties, particularly those of people who were forcibly removed to a remote underdeveloped part of the country for "rehabilitation". It would be interesting if the public could know what this "rehabilitation" exercise entails and what skills and education are being imparted to these people.

Throughout the history of our country, squatters and beggars have always been harassed by different regimes. Some people became squatters when their land was declared "white" by legislation. All regimes have tried to push indigent people out of towns and cities without actually considering why these people left rural areas. Some of them are urban-born and raised and have been unable to make a living in towns. It is apparent that both urban and rural areas have economic and social characteristics that render it difficult for people to earn their living. What is interesting though, is the difference in treatment between rural and urban squatters. The rural squatters are numerically and politically more difficult to deal with and they have been dealt with on a "softly-softly" basis compared to their urban counterparts.

On the issue of women who were detained on the allegation that they were prostitutes, there was evidence of ignorance of the way Zimbabwe's economic life was structured. When Zimbabwe was colonized, large numbers of men were put into compounds on farms, mines and households of white settlers. This situation gave rise to sexual practices such as bestiality (sex with animals), rape of the few women who were daughters and wives, and other female relations of compound "boss boys", and homosexuality. All these practices were punishable by law. Settlers preferred convict labour, and there was an incentive for rigorous investigation and punishment of people convicted for sex-related crime so that more labour could be procured without the payment of wages by settler employers.

all women are disadvantaged  
by the lack of jobs  
and income.

On the part of women who were marginalised by loss of land rights and other misfortunes such as infertility, they had no alternative but to go and work on farms and mines as prostitutes so that they could survive. It must be borne in mind that at the beginning of colonisation, settler households did not employ women so that even the domestic sector was closed to women. It was only later in the process of capitalist development that women had some opportunities to make a living in wage employment.

Settler men also needed sexual gratification since they, at times, did not all bring their women. They had liaisons,

and workers who were domestics or compound overseers also helped to procure black women for their white employers. Black workers also paid prostitutes in order to get sexual gratification on the enterprises characterised by big male population and a few women.

The settler authorities encouraged the development of prostitution in the compounds because the women involved helped to provide better meals and personal services to alienated labour so that the health and productivity of labour could be maintained. There was also a feeling on the part of settlers that black women in compounds helped to prevent sexually deprived male workers from raping white women who were wives of the white male settlers. During "Operation Clean-Up", similar sentiments were expressed by some men who said that prostitutes should not be arrested because they act as a buffer between lusty men and "decent" women who are too good and pure to have sex with their men.

## WOMEN USED AGAINST WOMEN

On the mines, settlers tolerated prostitution because a lot of men who needed to get money to pay taxes found the availability of women an added incentive to go to mines and towns. This situation created the stereotype that town women are prostitutes. Black workers also found it attractive to renew their contracts and stay on in their employment if there were women for sex. This situation was favourable to employers who wanted to stabilise labour and cut costs that would be incurred in hiring and training new workers. In some cases African women were given the power to examine any new women who wanted to stay in the compound for venereal diseases. This was another strategy for using women to keep each other in line and safeguarding their interests and those of capital at the same time. Women divided in this way could be easily ruled.

In "Operation Clean-Up", the police used women to point out other women purported to be prostitutes. Obviously, there is a lot of potential for abuse of such a system where people can victimise those they hate by labelling them prostitutes and having them arrested. What was ignored was the fact that all the women, i.e. the prostitutes and wives, were disadvantaged by the lack of jobs and income that would allow them to look after their families. The married women are forced to resort to the police to arrest other women, even if this strategy may not make the husbands bring home their pay. The husbands often get too small a wage anyway so that there is a circle of deprivation between husband, wife, and the other women the husband consorts with. These deprived people then turn to attacking each other even if this may not result in higher wages for the husband, more jobs for the women, or more skills, and education for them all.

In Zimbabwe, as colonisation and capitalism developed, so did the number of destitute people. The very division of labour between sexes, and town and country, made rural areas the repository for destitute people, the majority of whom are women, and towns as areas for wage earners, the majority of whom are men.

are men. The Rhodesian regime recognised that adultery and prostitution were built into the socio-economic system whereby men stayed for years in towns with short visits to rural areas and women stayed for years in rural areas. Both men and women necessarily would be sexually frustrated. Men would be in a better position to pay for sexual services while women had neither the money or socio-cultural backing to do the same. In view of this, the Rhodesian regime only criminalised the more obvious manifestations of the pathological socio-economic system, namely, soliciting. It was realised that various means of prostitution were built into the economy, based on migrant labour, and inequality in the capitalist system.

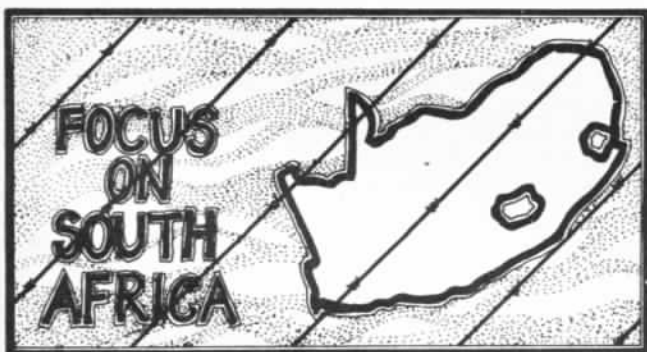
#### FAILURE IN THE ECONOMY IS AT FAULT

The action taken by the government ought to be viewed within the context outlined here. It took a stance that prohibited the practice of prostitution. That kind of stance is enforceable only where the state can control the life of all of its citizens strictly, surveil and punish anybody who infringes these moral precepts. Clearly, this is not possible or desirable in Zimbabwe. With the lack of better job opportunities, for all citizens, particularly women, the enforcement of such prohibitionism will only drive prostitutes underground and make them subject to even more exploitation by the police, the customers, etc. This stance could actually promote the development of organised prostitution with its attendant problems of corruption of law enforcement personnel and judicial officers. Prostitutes would be forced to engage pimps, hotel and nightclub owners, etc. to cooperate in prostitution for a cut in fees. Given the fact that our ailing economy is acting as a pimp already, official solutions and responses need to go beyond ideas of chucking prostitutes into prisons. Imprisonment does not give people jobs, or education. It only marginalises those who are caught and makes it impossible for them to get jobs in the future and get out of prostitution. Where there is no machinery to rehabilitate prostitutes by giving them jobs and skills the state only exposes them to even more exploitation.



This is not meant to glamourise prostitution. It is hard on a person's health, self-respect, and mind. It only aims to point out that the structure of the economy and society makes prostitution very probable and acceptable as a way of earning a living. Prostitution in Zimbabwe is evidence of the continuing failure of the economy to provide means of earning a living that are dignified and satisfying. The practice has its roots in history and the conditions that generated it still exist. People still see others in the same society enjoying sumptuous living standards, especially in consumption and they try to procure the same for themselves. No wonder then, that moral injunctions against prostitution are less restrictive.

To conclude, the roots of squatting, begging, and prostitution need to be understood so that responses like "Operation Clean-Up are not repeated".



South African foreign policy in Southern Africa has displayed a fine blend of economic coercion and military force. In the days of "detente" in the mid-70's Premier John Vorster tried to use South Africa's strong economic base to buy stability in the region. Through promoting prosperity in the region he hoped to weaken radical forces. Today however, the Botha-Malan regime argues that South Africa should keep its neighbours economically and politically cowed; that the temptation on the frontline states to seek economic assistance elsewhere should be weakened, and that whatever means necessary should be used to achieve these ends.

While military aggression has dominated South Africa's destabilisation policy, economic pressure on neighbouring states has continued. P.W. Botha's (unsuccessful) attempts to form a "Constellation of States" have been aimed at breaking the moves towards greater economic independence on the part of the nine SADC countries. Indeed, South Africa's attempts to give KaNgwana and Ingwana to Swaziland, can be seen at least partly as an attempt to woo the conservative Swazi leadership to the constellation idea.

## Hell-bent on Destabilisation

Zimbabwe has been hard hit by South Africa's destabilising intentions. Soon after independence, SA terminated its preferential trade agreement with Zimbabwe. Then, late in 1982, 80 trucks and diesel engines carrying maize and fuel to Zimbabwe were withdrawn. At the same time, the fuel supply line from Beira in Mozambique to Zimbabwe, was blown up by SA backed terrorist forces. The result of this dual attack was massive fuel shortages during the packed holiday season.

#### SUPPORT FOR TERRORIST ORGANISATIONS

The Beira fuel-line attack is just one example of the way in which SA uses surrogate terrorist groupings to destabilise the frontline states. One of the most significant of these is the Mozambique National Resistance Movement (MNR), originally formed by the Rhodesian SAS, but since 1980 allegedly financed, armed, and trained by the SADF at a base in the Eastern Transvaal. The MNR currently has a force of about 10,000 and during the last year it managed to cause severe damage in central and southern Mozambique. However, major FRELIMO offensives during the first half of 1983 have





projects, the Benguela Railway will be opened, the mineral and agriculturally wealthy southern province will be opened for development, and with US negotiations, foreign loans and aid will be easier to procure.

This then, is another example of the way SA has been able to block progressive development in Southern Africa, attempt to break down support for genuine liberation movements, and force its own demands through brute military power.

#### THE DESTABILISATION OF SOUTHERN AFRICA

The picture presented is entirely negative. Yet, amidst all the gloom, there are still some signs of hope - notably, the paths of change followed by a few of South Africa's neighbours. So I would like to conclude by quoting from Samora Machel, a man who has made more significant contributions to peace and constructive change in Southern Africa, than any other individual. In a speech to Magnus Malan's allegations that South Africa was being destabilised by its neighbours Machel said:

"A few days ago the South African regime alleged that Mozambique is threatening it by concentrating sophisticated weapons on its border. What are those sophisticated weapons that the regime is referring to?

"We do not represent a threat to anyone, neither militarily nor economically. No sensible person could think that an underdeveloped and poor country like ours with so many wounds of war still bleeding, could threaten the sovereignty, territorial integrity or stability of any state, especially a power like South Africa.

"In fact, the only thing the regime has to fear is our example. This, yes. What is the sophisticated weapon that the regime refers to? The answer is the work we are doing. What is this work?

"Giving worth to women as mothers, as wives, as educators as companions and comrades, the example of protecting them and loving them as symbols of affection and peace, as the guarantors of future generations

"This is what South Africa fears. The sophisticated weapon is making the home the centre of fulfilment, and not as in South Africa, a prison and a guarded residence.

"This sophisticated weapon is having children as the only privileged sector of our society, keeping the best for them keeping the most beautiful for them. It is surrounding children with love and affection, innocence, and happiness, and not as in Soweto, making them targets for police brutality and murderous weapons.

"The sophisticated weapon is the people's right to create their own history by directing their own destiny, by exercising their sovereign power.

"In short, the sophisticated weapon that really threatens apartheid is the alternative of civilisation that our society now represents."

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# Land Reform: Liberation or Pacification?

Most Third World countries depend mainly on agriculture to produce such wealth as they have. A change towards a socialist form of society therefore demands a change towards a socialist form of land ownership. Land reform is essential to socialist transformation.

But not all land reform programmes are socialist. There can be "land reforms" that are designed to prevent a transition to socialism. So, if not all land reforms are good, how can we tell the good from the bad?

We should ask three important questions about any land reform:

- who set the reform going, and who is carrying it out?
- why is the programme being carried out?
- who benefits from the land reform programme?

Since 1979, there have been much publicised land reforms in two neighbouring Central American countries, Nicaragua and El Salvador. Since both these countries are much in the news, we know that the situation in El Salvador is very different from that in Nicaragua, so we would expect that "land reform" will mean different things in the two countries. In fact, we do find that in each country, different groups initiated the land reform programme, their motives were different and the results of the change were different.

El Salvador is involved in a war between the Farabundo Martí Liberation Front (FMLN) and a military government strongly supported by the USA. The liberation front are fighting against an oppressive system under which 14 families controlled the Salvadorean economy. Many peasants are reduced to working as sharecroppers on large estates owned by these 14 families, which means they pay as rent a fixed proportion (50% in some cases) of every crop to the landlord, or are forced to work on these estates.

Land is a vital issue in the struggle for social justice. In fact, a moderate civilian/military government in El Salvador proposed land reform in 1979, but shortly after that the ruling group moved their position further to the right, and all the civilian members left the government junta. But land reform was still on the programme of the FMLN freedom fighters, so the US advisers who had been called to help the military regime against the FMLN decided that there should be a government sponsored land reform programme. Of course, the US government does not want to see the workers who cultivate the land actually controlling that land, but they do hope that if they can give away just enough land and under conditions most favourable to themselves, they can form a class of rich peasants who will side with US interests against any real revolutionary force.

This is, in fact, what they tried to do. They even took some fairly large slices of land from the 14 families, because their support was not so important for preserving the position of US companies and US military bases in the region, as was the support of a new urban middle class. The 14 families must agree to form an alliance with this middle class, from which many army officers come, and with selected rich peasants, if they are to survive. The USA is not really interested in which group of exploiters inside any country is on top, as long as the country can be controlled by the USA.

In fact, although 40,000 of the population were landless in 1975 and the number of landless was increasing rapidly, only 5.8% of rural families had gained anything by the land reform up to the end of the year 1982. 33,000 peasant families were removed during the "reform" from the land they occupied, while only 29,261 peasant families were allocated land under the programme, so it has increased the number of landless peasants. Even those who have been allocated land have not been given it free, so they cannot claim to own their land, very few have been given title deeds, and the vast majority have large debts to pay to complete the purchase of "their" land before they can really call it their own. If they start out saddled with debts of this kind, they will always remain in debt and will always be under the control of the banks and financial institutions which give them loans.

## NO LAND FOR FREE

But for peasants who have been "given" land, the cost is even higher than this. They are also expected to pay by serving in the militia of the military dictatorship. Any peasant who refuses to serve when he is conscripted is likely to "disappear" at the hands of the government death squads. Naturally, most peasants find it wiser to escape into the hills and the jungle at the first sight of the military.

If a class of rich peasants is formed, it will still not be a class of free small farmers, but will always be dependent on those who really control the economy. They will be reminded of this by the allowances made even when large owners were dispossessed; the owners were allowed to keep 180 hectares with all the equipment and infrastructure on them. Naturally they chose

## In El Salvador only 5.8 % of rural families are better off as a result of land reform.

to keep the most developed part of their estate, and all the equipment, so the old owners are still a much more privileged class than the new settlers. This is a long way short of the people's control which the freedom fighters proclaimed.

In fact, the USA tried to carry out a similar land reform in Vietnam, and there is no reason to expect it will work any better in El Salvador than it did there.

## NICARAGUA

In Nicaragua, land reform has been a part of the effort to transform society since the Sandinista Front overthrew the dictatorship of the Somoza Family in 1979. In fact, it had already started in liberated areas before the Sandinistas took over the government. The take-over of the land was started by workers and peasants themselves. During the liberation war they occupied the estates which had been ab-



andoned by the landowners. By the time the dictatorship had been overthrown, 20% of the arable land in the country had been abandoned by the big landowners and resettled by the farm workers and landless peasants.

Later, when the Sandinista Front had become the government, all they had to do was to pass laws confirming the right of these new settlers to their land and another law requiring that the big landowners must rent any land they were not using to workers and peasants who would farm it, for a fixed low rent. This controlled rent would be two or three times less than the commercial rate of rent on land, and much better for the peasant than sharecropping.

Thus in Nicaragua, land resettlement was started by the people themselves, with the help of the freedom fighters of the Sandinista Front. The government's part, when the Sandinistas became the government, was merely to regularise the changes that had been made by the people, and to provide help for them to make the most profitable use of their newly acquired land.

New settlers are encouraged to form co-operatives, so that up to the end of 1982, 62,359 peasants had become members of 3,820 co-operatives. This means that an average co-operative has 16 members, which makes it small enough to be really controlled by its members. This is in line with the desire of the farmworkers and peasants organised in their unions, and they are the real originators of the land reform. They even draw up lists in each area of farms which should be taken over. If an owner seems to be trying to decapitalise his farm by removing his equipment and assets, the workers and peasants, supported by their unions, occupy the land knowing that the government will support their action.

The Nicaragua government provided the infrastructure for profitable use of the land by the new settlers. A body called the Area of Public Ownership (APP) has been set up to provide services to resettled peasants and their co-operatives, and to employ workers to grow cash crops. It has even been able to give some land to formerly landless or seasonal farmworkers for them to grow their own food.

Through the APP, the alliance between peasants and workers is built up and they begin to administer the means of production by themselves.

The differences between the approaches of the two countries are apparent at the most simple level: in El Salvador, only 5,8% of rural families are better off as a result of the land reform programme, if you consider them better off when they have been given poor land, in remote areas, so that it is difficult for them to raise any crop on the land, difficult to get seed, fertiliser, and difficult to get any cash crop that they might raise to market. They usually do not own the land outright, but have it on a 30 year mortgage so that a young family being resettled will spend most of their lives paying off their debt before the land is really their own. On the other hand, in Nicaragua, resettling farmworkers means giving them better land than they had worked before, and giving them full ownership from the start. Government is busy providing the services which are needed for them to make the best use of the land; roads, health clubs, education, subsidised inputs of seed and fertiliser, technical help and advice, loans, help with marketing crops, and help in setting up viable co-operative enterprises. This adds up to the creation of a reformed sector of the economy, to which 23,8% of rural population belonged by the end of 1982, and which is increasingly controlled by the people.

In El Salvador, since the extreme Right gained strength in the elections of March 1982, the land reform has been slowed down; it may not have been a great reform, but it offered more than the extremists in power want to give away.

In Nicaragua, the land reform process has been gaining speed. Twice as much land was redistributed to workers and peasants between July 1982 and March 1983 as in the previous nine months and the rate at which large estates are taken over was expected to increase even more through the rest of 1983. The reform will continue to accelerate until Nicaraguan society is transformed, unless it is stopped by US military action.

-adapted from ENVIO, published by the Instituto Historico CentroAmericano, Managua





## VAGRANCY

When government spokesmen had to justify the recent police raids that sent large numbers of women, "suspected prostitutes" and some squatters of both sexes off the streets of Harare, they appealed to the Vagrancy regulations. In spite of the women having been released, there are several worrying aspects to these regulations.

Most countries have laws to deal with vagrancy, but none of them can produce a satisfactory definition of what vagrancy is. In our own law, the Vagrancy Act of 1960, the description takes eight paragraphs, each of which represents an example of some kinds of vagrants, until the eighth says a vagrant is "any person who is unable to show that he is living by honest means and has a settled way of honest living". That is to say, if you are accused of having no honest means of making a living, you must prove yourself innocent to be discharged. This is bad law.

These serious defects; vague definition, and forcing the accused to prove his innocence, are not the only faults in our regulations. The Act of 1960 was amended by Presidential decree last year, and the decree of 1983 restricts the rights of a person arrested for vagrancy even more than the colonial law of 1960 did.

The decree changes the previous law in these ways:

1. although the original law allows a police officer to arrest any suspected vagrant without warrant, it did provide that the suspected person should appear before a magistrate or district commissioner within 48 hours; the new regulations allow the person to be held for five days before appearing before a new kind of official, the rehabilitation officer.
2. the rehabilitation officer may be anyone appointed as such by the Minister of Labour and Social Services: no qualification is required by the decree.
3. while any policeman may still arrest anyone on his own initiative as a suspected vagrant, that person must appear before a magistrate or district administrator as the earlier law lays down: the new regulation only applies if an order for the arrest has been signed by somebody of the rank of section officer or higher.
4. under the old law, the magistrate or DC had to complete his hearing of a case and decide whether the person arrested is or is not a vagrant within 28 days. The new rehabilitation officer is only required to decide this "after due enquiry", which can take as long as he likes: no time limit is laid down.
5. under the old law, the person arrested could appeal against the magistrate or DC's verdict to the President; now all appeals must be to the Minister of Labour, Manpower Planning and Social Welfare.

It seems from a reading of the new decree, that either the old procedure or the new may be followed, i.e. if a policeman

picks you up because he thinks you are a vagrant, you must still be brought before a magistrate or district administrator within 48 hours and he must decide within 28 days whether you are, in fact a vagrant and if so, sentence you, or if the policeman arrests you on the written authority of a higher police officer you may be taken to a holding centre (which need not be a prison) and must be brought before a rehabilitation officer within 5 days; he must decide whether or not you are a vagrant and sentence you, but he may take as long as he likes about this. In either case, if you want to appeal against the sentence you must appeal to the Minister responsible for social services. However, we are led to believe that the new procedure will be more common. Will this be an improvement or not?

It seems bad that, where the judgement on whether a person arrested is a vagrant or not was previously made by a magistrate, who had been trained in the legal and political system of the country and given some instruction on the people's rights, this judgement is now made by an official who does not need to have this kind of background, and could be just anyone chosen by the Minister. It is bad that this decision is not made any more according to the accepted procedure of the courts.

It is bad that a person can be held for an indefinite period of time before any judgement is passed on an accusation of vagrancy, which is not even a crime in itself, and the law does not provide for appeal to any other authority while the arrested person is awaiting this judgement. In an extreme case, the rehabilitation officer might hold a person in a holding centre for any length of time he chose by claiming that he had not completed his enquiries into that person's case. We can hope that this would never happen, but the law provides no guarantee against it.



Different people argue different ways as to whether the new appeal procedure after conviction is better than the old or not. Some say that, since it should always be possible to appeal against any sentence to an authority other than that which imposed it, the new system is bad; appealing against the decision of an official appointed by the Minister responsible for the social services, to the Minister responsible instead of to the President, brings the court of appeal nearer to the person making the appeal. Against this, one could point out that both the President and the Minister are so far from the ordinary poor citizen who might be held on accusation of vagrancy, that the difference between Minister and President brings no benefit to him or her at all.

It is most disturbing that a citizen can be held in custody for a period or temporarily banned from specified towns just because he cannot prove to officials of one government department that he or she is "living by honest means and has a settled way of living", or that, in the extreme case, he or she can be locked up indefinitely without recourse to anyone outside the department which ordered his or her confinement. The old procedure had some of these undesirable features, but did provide some means of recourse to the courts and to an independent final court of appeal (the President), and so did not do so much harm to the victim's rights. The new system aggravates the evils that existed in several areas of legislation by the colonial regime and made individual ministers virtual dictators in certain fields.

This is more disturbing because in this case the victims are the poorest and least powerful members of society, those whom our government claims to make special efforts to protect.

It is possible that government officials have made mistakes in drawing up these regulations by making false conclusions from a comparison with African traditional legal procedures. In traditional society, the chief did appear to have the sort of absolute power that these regulations vest in the minister responsible for the social services. However, a chief was always closer to his people than is a minister in a sophisticated modern government. However oppressive the chief might have wanted to be, he could not force the majority of the people to accept a decision which they saw as opposed to justice or their own basic rights. They could refuse to carry out his orders or resist the order, or remove the chief. A modern government minister is much more powerful and remote from the people than a traditional chief could ever be. Therefore it is important that the legal system should provide methods by which the people can protect themselves against the misuse of power by administrative officials. These vagrancy regulations do not provide such protection.



## Capitalism Doomed

In the last issue we discussed labour power and the idea of surplus value which it creates. In this issue, we will continue to look at the Marxist analysis of capitalist society.

To Marx the changes that take place in society (such as the development of socialism) are a result of the working of the economic forces of society. It is the Marxist philosophy that gives us a tool for the analysis and interpretation of history. The way men earn their living—the mode of production and exchange—is the basis of every society. Likewise the ideas which each society has about right, justice, education etc. are all suited to the particular stage of economic development which that particular society has reached. Now what is it that brings about social and political revolution? Is it simply a change in men's ideas? No. For these ideas depend on a change that occurs first in economics—in the mode of production and exchange.

Man progresses in his conquest of nature; new and better methods of producing and exchanging goods are discovered or invented. When these changes are fundamental and far-reaching social conflicts arise. The relationships that grew up with the old mode of production have become solidified; the old ways of living together have become fixed in law, in politics, in religion, in education. The class that is in power wants to retain its pow-

er and comes into conflict with the class that is oppressed and exploited. When those dominated and exploited by others can no longer continue under such conditions, the result is a revolution, the oppressed liberate themselves.

It is through this approach to history that Marxists are able to understand the transition from feudalism to capitalism, and the impending transition from capitalism to socialism/communism. Because of their scientific approach to the study of history, Marx and Engels were able to see the bourgeoisie in a progressive role. It was through the bourgeoisie that society moved from feudalism to capitalism. But after some time, the bourgeoisie became a reactionary class.

Why did Marx and Engels believe that capitalist society would be burst asunder? Why did they believe that the forces of production would be hemmed in and prevented from developing by the relations of production?

### SOCIALIST PRODUCTION VS. CAPITALIST APPROPRIATION

Marx and Engels, as far back as 1848 analyzed capitalist society and pointed to certain characteristics within capitalism that would spell its doom. They pointed to:

- the growing concentration of wealth in the hands of a few
- the crushing of the many small producers by the few big ones.
- the increasing use of machinery, displacing more and more workers, and creating an industrial reserve army (those who are made jobless);
- the increasing misery of the masses;
- the recurrence of periodic breakdowns in the system, each crisis more devastating than the last;
- the most important contradiction in capitalist society—the fact that while production itself is becoming more and more socialised as a result of collective labour, appropriation is private. Labour creates, capital appropriates. Under capitalism creation by labour has become a joint undertaking, labour working together produces, but the products of labour are taken by the owners of the means of production.

Marx and Engels saw the above contradictions leading to the establishment of a new and harmonious society; a society in which the ownership and control of the means of production would be transferred from the hands of a few capitalist owners to the many proletarian producers.





# women's action group formed

Are prostitutes "psychologically borderline personalities... encumbered by a litany of behavioural deficits (sic) and a perverted sense of morality"? This is what was maintained by Dr. Sam Chibatamoto writing in The Herald on 9th February.

That prostitutes are inherently evil is a widely based view. The Women's Action Group questions such beliefs. It relates prostitution to the real social and economic conditions which disadvantage women in Zimbabwe. It has found that prostitution stems in most cases, not from personal defects, but from desperate economic need.

W.A.G. was formed when women of all races came together in November 1983 in response to the mass arrests of women in the "clean-up" of women, vagrants, and squatters which the Government mounted towards the end of last year. The group is engaged in on-going investigations into the causes of prostitution. On Sunday, 27th February, it held a day of discussion where papers were presented on how the position of women in Zimbabwe relates to prostitution.

To make a thorough examination of the position of women, it was necessary to look at many areas which at first sight might not seem to be related to prostitution. Closer examination, however, revealed strong connections between prostitution and socio-economic conditions, sexuality in the family, violence towards women, land legislation, and the vagrancy laws.

The round-up of prostitutes was motivated in part by the strong feelings of rural women against prostitution. It was necessary to examine the situation of rural women to discover the reasons for their attitudes. It is well-known that black rural women are largely denied access to land and labour; to some extent this situation preceded the colonial era. Women had access to land only through men, but usually had use-rights of fields and crops for themselves. Colonialism heightened the existing division between men and women and further dispossessed women.

For instance, the 1957 Land Husbandry Act had unseen effects upon women. In the Mangwende area alone, 60% of men were disinherited of their traditional land rights. When their husbands lost their land, women lost the limited traditional rights that had been theirs. Fragmentation of the land into plots assigned to the use of women was no longer possible.

The migrant labour system established by the colonialists over Southern Africa heightened still further the sexual division of labour. Women were left in the rural areas to survive by subsistence farming while the men were taken into the mines and into urban employment. The men were paid meagre wages, sufficient only to support themselves, since it was comfortably assumed by the colonialists that the women could feed themselves.

As a result, it has come to be expected by men in general that what they earn in the town is mainly, sometimes exclusively, theirs. The feelings of rural women about this situation are reflected in statements such as these, made to a member of W.A.G. several weeks ago:

"In the fields all the acres are given to men, but the men are not in the fields- they are out drinking beer."

"Men spend all their money on beer. They go to booking rooms and spend their money on prostitutes."

"Women do all the work, but they cannot make plans." (meaning that they have no say in what happens to the profits of their work, which are usually appropriated by the men.)

Rural women resent both their exclusion from a share in their husbands' income and the lack of control that they have over the profits of their work. They also fiercely resent the drain on their husbands' income that prostitution represents.

Another important factor, not often recognised, is that women live lives of sexual deprivation while their husbands are away. And while women are heavily punished for adultery, under the double standards of sexual morality there are no such sanctions against men - they can behave as they like with impunity. One rural woman was quoted as saying that it was not uncommon in her area to hear men say that they must keep their wives in a perpetual state of pregnancy or lactation in order to keep them under control. With such attitudes, child-spacing programmes have little chance of success.

Rural women often perceive urban women as being better off than themselves and also as "immoral". This latter feeling is probably rooted in the fact that the first urbanised women were indeed mostly prostitutes, encouraged into the towns and mining areas by the colonialists to keep the male workers happy. Perhaps there is a general feeling that respectable women do not belong in the towns, which might account for the indiscriminate rounding-up of women during the "clean-up". Two professional women were told as they were bundled into the truck, "So you earn your own money, do you? Let's see how you spend it in Chikurubi".

Despite what rural women believe, female participation in the formal sector is as low as 2% and there are very high levels of female unemployment. The situation of urban women is in many ways similar to that of the rural women. Inheritance laws and custom, together with dispossession of the land, have created a set of circumstances under which many women on their own find it impossible to survive. In the rural areas the widowed, divorced, childless and deserted are often deprived of any means of livelihood. In the towns, given the illiteracy rate among women and their lack of skills and training, their main means of survival is through men, either through marriage or some more informal arrangement, which inevitably includes prostitution.

Women's Action Group will be holding a two day seminar in April during which these and related topics will be discussed. Persons interested in joining W.A.G. can write to the group at Box 5 Harare.



# Nicaragua

Nicaragua: Triumph of the People by George Black, sheds some light on one of the country's most notorious dynasties - the 43 year old dictatorship of the Somoza family of Nicaragua - which came to power under US patronage and built a distorted capitalist family. The US right to intervene directly in the sovereign affairs of Nicaragua to install the dynasty was part and parcel of an American imperialist pattern which had shown to be fruitful in Cuba and Puerto Rico (1898), Honduras (1905), Panama (1908), continued with the disastrous invasion of Cuba (1961), and has recently intensified with the invasion of Grenada (1983). This armed aggression was executed in the time honoured phrases, to "protect American lives and property".

Many facile explanations of a dictatorship tend to portray it as either a one-man show or a lawless and ruthless band of killers. George Black shows in his lucid narration that such explanations do not get at the heart of the power structure. While a dictator may be the centerpiece and main architect of that particular regime, there are also other chief instruments of control, such as terror (police, army, informers etc.) "the behind the scenes internal backers", and foreign props.

Greedy Government and military officials wanting to monopolise and aggrandize form a mafia style strong-arm organisation to consolidate profitable rackets in the hands of a few officials. The most important "internal behind the scene backers" and beneficiaries of dictatorship include a core of well entrenched and organised businessmen. In Nicaragua, the Somoza dynasty (Somocismo) became the most appropriate tool for sustaining the power of private enterprise and itself acquire dominance within the ruling class.

In collusion with the internal base of support are foreign benefactors who pump in hard cash and military hardware. For Somocismo US patronage was sufficient. However, in the African context, a vast array of ideologically diverse foreigners prop a dictatorship, largely because most of African dictators are unpredictable and demanding puppets. The capitalist war industry is willing to supply the sophisticated military equipment only if these dictators can pay for it, and usually they cannot.

Dictatorship has become a workable form of capitalism, but also an excellent instrument politically convenient to assume the old US role of regional policeman. For instance Somoza offered troops to fight in Korea (1950), and an airbase from which the Bay of Pigs attack against Cuba was launched (1961). Again a parallel can be drawn to the African context: when Shaba Province in Zaire was overrun, for instance, the Moroccan monarch sent troops, and when Hebre needed props, Zaire sent troops to Chad (1983).

This book is not merely a narration of Latin America's first successful revolution since Cuba, but also the first major

study on the Sandinista Revolution. It focuses on the years of armed struggle against Somocismo and the consolidation of the July 1979 victory. In this fascinating book, the author handles also the major tasks and pre-occupation of the past Somocism FSLN Government. A crucial aspect that is treated in the book is the question of unity during the post-independence era, which stood well the test.

Equally pressing for the new government during its early days was the critical question of what structure of popular power and democracy should evolve. The Sandinista Government on assuming power made no pretence of creating an apolitical military and police force. Their training intermingled with constant political education which aimed at building an awareness of class character of the army and the police.

A major aim of the government since its ascension to power has been to articulate and improve the relationship between the masses and the state, to such a point where popular demand and state policies can converge. This quest has been characterised by the improvement of the capacity of the mass organisations to identify and condemn cases of unilateral Government decisions, and by the institutionalisation of constant dialogue, and mass scrutiny of future ministerial decisions.

The mass organisations have been encouraged to transform their previous role of attacking the state to radically new tasks, and interlock around common political objectives.

The political morality and legitimacy of a government is often expressed and derived from its conception of democracy, which for the Sandinista, cannot be confined solely to the political sphere, nor to the participation of people in elections. In other words for the FSLN, democracy neither begins, nor ends with elections, but the participation of people in the political, economic, social and cultural affairs of their society, and it is only a myth to reduce it to the status of elections.

The concern of the FSLN leadership in demystifying political leaders, is one aspect of a sustained drive to create a revolutionary morality. The revolution's legitimacy has to be proved by demonstrating its moral superiority over the previous regime. However the crucial point, which the Sandinista Government emphasizes, is the devastation which abuses, and failure to acknowledge abuses, can have on the relationship between people and the leadership. Popular support and moral authority has to be constantly renewed.

The achievements of the Sandinista revolution, more than the labels attached to it, make it relevant to the under-developed countries national liberation struggles, and make the book well worth reading.

## Struggle in Angola

"THE PROBLEM IS THAT THERE IS TRIBALISM AND TRIBALISM. THERE IS LEGITIMATE TRIBALISM, WHEN THE TRIBE IS DEFENDED AS IT DESERVES, AND THERE IS ILLEGITIMATE TRIBALISM, WHEN AN EFFORT IS MADE TO IMPOSE THE TRIBE BEYOND THE RIGHTS IT DESERVES."

Mayombe was published in Portuguese several years after the liberation struggle was ended in Angola at the wish of Angola's first president, Agostino Neto. It was felt that this book discussed a problem that all of Africa faces, a problem that is often overcome during the struggle for liberation, only to rear its ugly head and cause divisions once the struggle is over. Mayombe deals openly with the age old problem of tribalism, a problem not only found in Africa, but throughout the world.

The book is set in a guerilla camp on the Mayombe River in Angola during the years of the liberation war. The comrades

at the camp come from various tribal and racial groups, with varying educational backgrounds. The two main characters are Fearless, the commander and a sort of revolutionary father figure whom some of the comrades accuse of being an intellectual; and the commissar, Joao, his protege. Both are sincere socialists, and concerned with the implementation of their ideals.

Much of this book consists of dialogue between various members of the camp. They discuss problems of revolution, theories of socialism, and personal philosophies on life itself. At times the discussions seem a bit too formal, too well thought out, and too dogmatic, but they serve to bring up almost every conflict that could occur within the revolutionary movement. The main story is interrupted from time to time with glimpses into the different personalities involved. These personal monologues provide the different views of the situation at the camp, especially in feeling each comrade's special allegiance to his particular tribal group.

While the comrades are suffering in the bush, the Command is in the base at Dolosie having a good time, spending money which should be spent on their food, and in general selling out ideals for personal benefit. The Command's doom comes when he has an affair with the Commissar's fiancée. The affair not only becomes a heart-rending experience for the Commissar, but leads to a confrontation between himself and Fearless and to his maturing into a position of leadership. The affair gives rise to discussion about the place of women in African society.

The book's main fault is that one gets no real feeling for the characters involved. One sounds like the other, expressing varying views, but in the same manner, which comes off a bit flat. However, the importance of the issues discussed along with the honest way they are handled makes up for the flaws in literary style, and makes *Mayombe* well worth reading.

*Mayombe* by Pepetela. Published by Zimbabwe Publishing House.

## Magazine Launched

The Training Aids Development Group (TADG) has recently launched a magazine called *Read On...*. This magazine is intended for people with limited reading skills - that is those who managed to do a few years of school. However, this does not mean to exclude the educated from the readership.

*Read On...* carries a variety of stories which are educative and challenging, for example, "The Workers' History of Zimbabwe". Many books have been written about Zimbabwe, but few of them talk about followers, and not leaders. They highlight farmers, and factory owners, and not the people who actually do the work. The workers have not been credited on the important role they played in Zimbabwe. This story tries to give the workers' history in brief. The article also reminds people that it is them who built the country to what it is today, and not what people were led to believe, that the settlers were the ones who developed Zimbabwe. It is a living fact that without the labour provided by the people, we would not be talking about any development at all.

The magazine touches on another useful and important issue of our daily life, that of form filling. I wonder how many of the people who design different forms for various purposes ever think of the people who use those forms. Filling forms has become a daily task these days. When you need to bank money to get a birth certificate, a passport, or a house to live in, you must fill in forms, but for the common man filling forms sometimes requires a dictionary. The language in most forms is difficult to understand, to say the least.

# Read on...

Number 1, 1984.

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Who controls football? ..... Co-ops  
Cartoons ..... Talking about perms  
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There is also an interesting article on drug taking. Health experts say that people react differently to different kinds of medicine. This fact cannot be over-emphasized. People should take medicine according to doctor's prescriptions. Medicine should not be shared or passed on to another person although the illness might appear similar. If more articles of this kind appear regularly, this magazine could play a big role in society. One criticism however, is that the message is conveyed negatively, as "don't" do this or that, instead of in a positive way, of "do" this and that. People welcome any advice that comes in a suggestive and positive way.

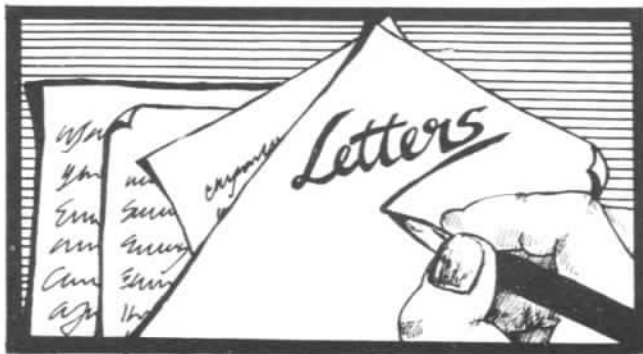
Many newspapers are published and many books written which fall short of the reach of the common citizen as far as language is concerned. *Read On...* is bridging the gap. It is down to earth, and speaks to the common man.

*Read On...* is fuelling the transformation to socialism by encouraging co-operatives and giving people a chance to air their views on any topic of interest.

Published by TADG, a collective non-profit organisation, *Read On...* sells for 20 cents and is available through Grassroots Bookstore and distributors.







## HOUSING PROBLEMS

Dear Editor

Seeing as your issue deals with housing, I would like to make my comments on the housing situation in the avenues, and low density suburbs.

First of all, in spite of rent controls, rents on privately owned houses have nearly doubled in the last few years. Market value for almost any house is now a minimum of \$300, where three years ago these same houses were rented for \$150. When you rent a house it is very difficult to find out what the previous tenant paid. It's not the same as in a block of flats where you can ask your neighbour what he is paying. If you do find out that a rent increase has been made without authorisation, the landlord will just refuse to rent to you. Few people realise that once they sign a contract, and then find the rent has been increased, that they are not obliged to honour that contract because the landlord has broken the law.

There are also times when a landlord will claim the house has been sold, only to get new tenants in at a higher rent. Anyone in this situation should ask to see the bill of sale, and talk to the new owner before giving up his home.

Then there is the problem of exploitative rents. In spite of an incredible shortage of flats, there is an entire block of flats on the corner of Baines Av. and 7th Street that has been standing empty since it was built because they rent for over \$500 a month. It is probably providing a nice tax write-off for the owner. Why can't the price on these flats be controlled?

Finally, there are so many houses and blocks of flats being bought up for office use, not to mention embassies.

I realise that living in the avenues is still easy compared to the over-crowded high-density areas, but just a little more regulation could stop the situation from getting worse.

Name supplied.

Dear Editor;

One undesirable feature of colonial town planning was the isolation of the poorer part of the population in "townships" where they were far from their places of work, from other sections of the population, and from the cultural and recreational facilities that should be available for all.

A visitor returning to Harare after an absence of ten or twenty years would conclude that this system was unchanged, although some of the black population are no longer isolated in this way.

New high-density suburbs are built in remote places like Glen View, or planned even further from the city. When high officials are asked why this is done, they talk of the centre of the city moving westwards, to somewhere near Heroes' Acre.

Now while we respect Heroes' Acre and all it stands for, we cannot expect the city's factories or major shops to move westwards with the people. There are people who live in Glen View and work in Msasa or further away now; if new building continues to spread west instead of using the vast empty spaces near the city centre, more people will suffer this kind of hardship.

Name supplied.

## THE PARTY

Comrades;

The article on the Party and Socialism in your last issue was very interesting, but it raises a few practical questions.

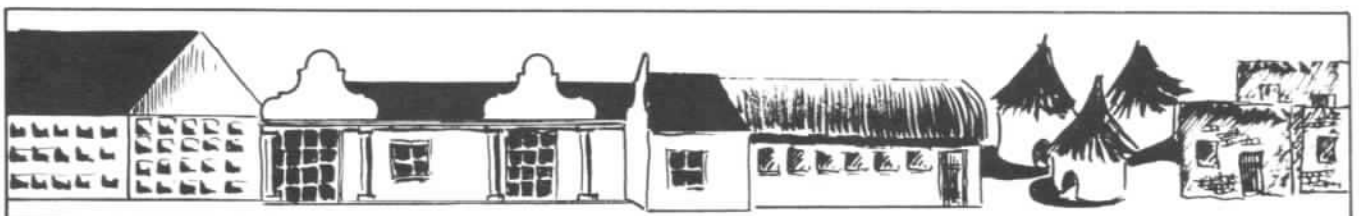
The most important question arises when we see countries where a vanguard party has taken over and the vanguard become the sole judge of who is to join their party and what is true socialism. How can we be sure that they will never become corrupt? If they claim to be the only judges, who will save them from error?

A vanguard who become a power elite can hardly expect to remain true to their ideals. One does not become an "expert" in socialism or Marxism by isolating oneself, but by sharing in the people's struggle and one cannot remain an "expert" if one is separated from the realities of the peoples' struggle.

A luta continua!  
Leo Bronstein

## FUTURE FOCUS

Our next issue, due out in June will focus on the role of the State in Socialist Transformation. We welcome contributions from our readers, and any suggestions as to topics they would like to see examined.



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