

POLICY STATEMENT No. 14

**THE CONSTRUCTION OF
SOCIALISM IN ZIMBABWE—
PRIME MINISTER**

JULY 9, 1984

ZIMBABWE

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Inaugural address by the Honourable Prime Minister, Comrade R. G. Mugabe, on the launching of a series of lectures on 'The Construction of Socialism in Zimbabwe' organized by the Zimbabwe Institute of Development Studies (ZIDS), Monday 9th July, 1984.

I regard it as indeed a great honour to have been asked to deliver the inaugural address to the series of lectures on the subject of **The Construction of Socialism in Zimbabwe** being launched by the Zimbabwe Institute of Development Studies (ZIDS).

The decision by ZIDS to launch this lecture series deserves to be commended and it is to be hoped that these lectures, whose major objective is to expose researchers and indeed the wider public more systematically to the practical aspects involved in the implementation of social transformation, will achieve their aim. It is equally hoped that the lectures will lead to a public discussion of socialism and, therefore, to a greater awareness and consciousness of it.

These lectures should, more particularly, achieve the principal objective of initiating discussion and interaction between policy-makers and the ZIDS researchers so that their ideas and hence their role can assist in the process of national development and transformation.

Allow me now to turn to the subject of my discussion, **An overview of the Construction of Socialism in Zimbabwe.**

At its inaugural Congress of May 1964, ZANU unanimously adopted a Constitution which had as one of its principles the establishment of socialism in Zimbabwe, in the event of ZANU assuming power in the country. However, at Chimoio, following the restructuring of the Central Committee in 1977, the restructured and extended Central Committee unanimously adopted scientific socialism, based on Marxist-Leninist principals, as its guiding philosophy for the transformation of our socio-economic system.

Indeed, in 1980, our election manifesto clearly showed the ideological direction our policies would take in the event of an election victory coming our way. In brief, my Party and Government have opted for socialism and not capitalism. It is on that basis that we are determined to proceed to reconstruct society. It is on that basis that we seek to forge new social relations governing not only the members of our society but also that society and the natural resources which sustain it, as well as the modalities employed for their exploitation. But the question may legitimately be asked, why socialism and not capitalism?

Such a question necessarily invites one to examine and compare the qualitative worth of the two philosophies and thus begs for an evaluative answer.

The social ethic that bids us not only to live together but also binds us one to another in the given environment of our village, the district, the province of the state to which we belong, is also an equation of our humanity, for it relates us one unto another, and so as equals we relate to our land, to our trees and forests, to the birds and animals of those forests, to the vast pasturelands, to the mountains and hills, to the rocks and minerals, to the rivers and their fish, to the fountain springs and their cooling water, to our beetles, our bees, our caterpillars, crickets, grasshoppers, to all insects edible and non-edible.

These God-made or nature-made phenomena are ours together. For anyone, therefore, to claim their ownership in the environment in which we are equals is to resort to a mode of self-aggrandizement, which is as much a vitiation of the social ethic of equality as it is a blatant usurpation of the right of others, and in that situation others who constitute the greater part of the whole. It is as if the part had claimed the right to be the whole and the particular had supplanted the universal.

Why should an individual or group of individuals claim the right of ownership of our natural resources to the exclusion or detriment of the rest of others?

I have often quoted the Bible, at Genesis I, perhaps to the chagrin of many Christians, in vindication of the right of man, every man (and women of course, for weren't we in the Garden of Eden together?) to the use and exploitation of natural resources - our God-given wealth. I find my views on this subject in very interesting coincidence with those of Mwalimu Julius Nyerere who says on 'National Property':-

'The second form of wealth - the rain and land - is simply God's gift to his living creation. There is no human effort involved in the rain we get. Both the idle and diligent workers receive equal amounts of it. Equally, there is no human effort involved in land. All human beings, be they children brought up in poor or rich families, or belonging to sinners or saints, or even those whose parents are either slaves or free men, were born to find land in existence. They can neither add to it nor reduce its extent. It is God's gift, given to all His creation without discrimination.....'

Mwalimu Julius Nyerere then proceeds to state that when ever a man 'uses his intellect, his health and his ability to make anything, that thing

becomes his property' (Julius K. Nyerere: Freedom and Unity [*Uhuru na Umoja - A Selection from writings and speeches, 1952-65, Dar-es-Salaam, O. U. P., 1966, p53.*])

Indeed, when an individual expends his own labour and energy in exploiting any natural resource at his disposal, provided others are also entitled alongside him to similar exploitation of that resource, **then the product of his labour must morally be his, and he is fully entitled to use such product to his own benefit or in any other manner of his choice.** On the basis of this moral reckoning, workers, wherever they are engaged in productive activities or processes, are certainly entitled to the fruits of their labour. But greater justice or equity can, however, only prevail if the workers also become the owners - equal owners - of the means of production.

-Socialism thus rests fundamentally on the principle of morality. It is a moral question first and foremost. **The difference between socialism and capitalism is therefore the difference between equality and inequality, between equity and inequity and justice and injustice. Fundamentally, it is really the difference between morality and immorality.**

To clarify our view of the two systems, the question may be posed whether it is fair that society should stand deprived of the ownership and control of its resources as that ownership and control vests in the hands of a few individuals.

Surely, our own political history, with the obnoxious system of land deprivation and concentration of resources in the hands of a racial minority very familiar to us, demonstrates vividly the injustices that attend the capitalist system.

The social ethic that constitutes the basic norm of the morality of socialism rejects outrightly the concept of individualism that seeks to prosper at the expense of society.

To avoid situations of exploitation of man by man, socialism emphasizes the collective nature of man and its philosophy thus subordinates the interests of the individual to the common or general interests of society.

Society in interacting with its environment for its own sustenance, becomes as much affected by it in its evolution and development as the environment itself is affected by society's own moulding and shaping of it in order to make it more responsive to man's ever growing needs. Socialism provides in that evolving process a valid social basis on which society can interact with nature to the best advantage of all its members so that the exploitative situation Fidel Castro describes in his 'Speech at the

Meeting Commemorating the XXVth Anniversary of the Attack on Moncada Barracks' is avoided. He says:-

'What makes today's people privileged in comparison to those of other periods is the fabulous possibility they have for controlling Nature and charting their own social development for the first time. This is precisely what makes some of the economic, social and political forms that still persist in many parts of the world such a great crime; it is what may give the will of the peoples and men's actions and struggles to change their lives their highest moral meaning and what gives the concept of revolution its fullest significance.'

Fidel Castro, Current Problems of Undeveloped Countries - Selection of Speeches Oficina de Publicaciones del Consejo de Estado, La Habana, 1979, p176.

He then goes on to describe, in his characteristically vigorous and vivid manner, Cuba's colonial past which, although sounding more gruesome than our own, is certainly reminiscent of it -

'We also had our masters. Our Indian forebearers even had their exterminators; our African fathers their slave owners; the descendants of both and of the masters, as well as colonizers; the Cuban people, already constituted as a nation, their neo-colonizers; our workers and peasants, their exploiting capitalists and land-owners; our black population and our women, their discriminators; our children, illiteracy, hunger and disease; our adults, ignorance and unemployment; our old people, neglect and oblivion. Such were the injustices; and such, the struggles.....'

(p176)

Castro further goes on to say,

'It was the period, the objective conditions in society and in the world, that made us Marxist-Leninists, internationalists, socialists, communists.'

(p177)

It was, indeed, because of our own experiences in Zimbabwe under capitalism and the colonial system which it sustained that we came to realize the evils that go with the system. **It was also because of our full assessment of the virtues of scientific socialism as an opposite system to capitalism that we later decided to base our socialist philosophy on Marxist-Leninist principles.**

Capitalism did not only plunder our land and other natural resources thus impoverishing our peasantry and making vast communities landless, it also turned a substantial percentage of the population into a poor wage-worker class. In our situation, therefore, the workers and peasants are the two classes of the community whose interests remain paramount in the furtherance of the cause of social justice and equity under our philosophy of socialism.

If the social ethic of the equality of man in relation to his environment and to the means he should employ in exploiting it for his benefit is to have full expression in our own circumstances, then we must examine both the prevailing wage-worker situation and the condition of the peasantry.

For 90 years, as capitalism took various forms of manifestation, either through the emergence of commercial farming enterprises under the Land Apportionment Act 1930 or the Land Tenure Act of 1969, or through the establishment of manufacturing enterprises in the industrial sector, or through the founding of several mining enterprises, new production relations, completely alien to the production relations of our traditional society, were created.

Not only was the new phenomenon of master-servant relationship now introduced, but also introduced as an aspect of the capitalist system was the complete ownership of land, manufacturing enterprises, and mineral and other resources, by a few people (whether these were individuals or companies) at the expense of not only those who provided their labour at these enterprises but of the whole African community, once the collective owner of those resources.

At no time had our society agreed to sell to foreign capital or to the new usurping settlers the country's natural resources. The new environment now meant that a wage-earner was to be subjected to a process under which his own labour would be creating what Karl Marx called 'surplus value' to the advantage of the entrepreneur at his expense. 'The capitalist,' says Marx,

'does not produce a commodity for its own sake, nor for the sake of its use-value, or his personal consumption. The product in which the capitalist is really interested is not the palpable product itself, but the excess value of the product over the value of the capital consumed by it.'

Karl Marx: Capital - A Critique of Political Economy, Vol. III, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1959, p41.

The evil or immoral feature of the production relations in such a situation is not that there is the element of surplus value or profit per se, but that the entrepreneur and the employees or workers are not equal - the one having the monopoly of the means of production and thus justifying his claim to the profits made.

Where correct production relations exist, then the worker is both owner of the means of production and owner of the surplus value earned from his labour. In those circumstances, he also becomes the earner of his profits. Surely, that is a more equitable, more morally sustainable, and more socially uplifting, situation than the former which is a selfish, exploitative and morally unjustifiable position.

I am sure we would now appreciate why in 1848 Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels in their **Manifesto of the Communist Party put up the now famous slogan, 'Workers of the World Unite. You have nothing to lose but your chains.'** Indeed, as long as capitalism, thrives on profit and, of course, it cannot survive without it, the exploitation of the worker is bound to continue.

Whereas the worker, in the sense of a wage-earner in an industrial enterprise, is a new feature to our traditional society and whereas his misfortunes are those of a new situation superimposed on our old society, the plight of the peasant is in a way different. In respect of the worker, a new environment was created for his exploitation. In the case of the peasant, the old environment had been diminished in inverse proportion to the rise in population.

Where abundant land, arable and pasture, had previously existed, with thick forests, rivers, and other resources prevailing throughout the country, most land, and the most fertile for that matter, had been forcibly acquired. The native reserves or tribal trust lands created now stood, in contradistinction to the new world of commercial farming enterprises as economically depressed areas acting as a labour reservoir.

Thus on the one hand, you had land-rich commercial farmers, and on the other an impoverished and land-hungry peasantry. This disparity created its own antagonism.

These two were the most completely unacceptable socio-economic situations we inherited at the time of independence and on the basis of which other disparities, like those in respect of education, health and residential facilities, were based.

It is, therefore, these two principal situations, namely that of the exploited worker and that of the impoverished peasant, which must constitute the focus of our planning.

Our initial plan, *The Three Year Transitional National Development Plan* July, 1982-June 1985, was our first attempt as a new Government, at a people-oriented programme of social transformation aimed at creating a new social order. We state in Vol. I, para. 3.9 who of the Plan, that

'throughout history it is the people who have constituted a dynamic motive force behind material, cultural and social development. The people are both the object of our socialist policies and the means with which we achieve those policies.'

We proceed to elaborate on this aspect of the people-oriented nature of our social philosophy as follows:-

'As long as the ownership of and control over the means of production continue to be in the hands of the privileged groups in society, the bulk of the people are destined to remain mere wage-earners to be exploited and manipulated at will by the bourgeoisie. It is therefore imperative that the people who constitute the revolutionary force which charted the course of our political history be fully liberated to chart once more the course of our economic history. It is they who must provide the motive force for change.' (para. 3.9)

What we mean here is that man in our society, but man in the collective sense of his togetherness with other members of his society, must be master of his destiny. In the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, this principle is the basis of the Juche philosophy propounded by Kim Il Sung. Muhammad al Missuru, in his book *Kimilsungism, Theory and Practice*, quotes Kim Il Sung as follows:-

'In a nutshell, the idea of Juche means that the masters of the revolution and the work of construction are the masses of the people and that they are also the motive force of the revolution and the work of construction. In other words, one is responsible for one's own destiny and one has also the capacity for hewing out one's own destiny.' (p19).

This whole principle of mass involvement in the process of socialist transformation runs through the works of Kim Il Sung. Indeed, Volume I of his major works is devoted to the illustration and elaboration of the Juche Idea in the Korean Revolution.

The view that the people be active and collective participants in the socialist process is, indeed, echoed in every socialist country. Erich Honecker of the German Democratic Republic (G.D.R.) in the 'Report of the Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany to the 10th Congress of the SED' states:-

'In an unprecedented manner the great community of the socialist countries has made it clear that socialism, and socialism only, means material security. Everybody has access to the highest level of education. The right to recreation and appropriate health is concretely guaranteed. Uncertainty and anxiety about the future have lost their social roots. Under real socialism, peoples determine their own fate. Citizens have an increasing share in the management and planning of public affairs. Above all the young have clear prospects and ample opportunity to take an active part in shaping the present as well.' (p22).

In Yugoslavia, the phenomenon of mass involvement in the social process translates itself into the socialist principle of self-management propounded by J. Tito. In a biography entitled, *In the path of Tito* Vilko Vinterhalter, the author, reveals what he calls 'the correctness of Tito's thoughts' as contained in the 'Programme of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia' which states the following about a commune:-

'A commune is the basic politico-territorial organization of self-management of the working people and the basic socio-economic of the inhabitants of its territory.

".....As in a commune the working people are at the same time also producers, consumers, and the bearers of the efforts in the process of building up production forces and the general material standard, a commune represents also the basic social community in which the individual and the collective interests are adjusted to each other....."

I am sure enough has now been said about the masses as a motive force of a socialist revolution. But I thought our picture would not be complete unless one or two other references were made pertaining, firstly, to the situation in China and, secondly, to that of the Soviet Union. Even as far back as 1934, when the Red Army was locked in battle against the Kuomintang, Mao Tse-Tung, addressing the Second National Congress of Workers' and Peasants' Representatives in Kiangsi Province, had this to say:-

'The principle governing our economic policy is to proceed with all essential work of economic reconstruction within our power and concentrate our economic resources on the war effort, and at the same time to improve the life of the people as much as possible, consolidate the worker-peasant alliance in the economic field, ensure proletarian leadership of the peasantry,

and strive to secure leadership by the State sector of the economy over the private sector, thus creating the pre-requisites for our future advance of socialism.'

Mao Tse-Tung: Selected Works, Vol. 1, Peking, Foreign Languages Press, 1975, p141.

With references to the role of the people in the revolutionary process, I distinguished above the working class and the peasantry as the two main classes of our society which must receive our revolutionary focus. In the early days of attempts to consolidate the Russian Revolution, we discern this focus. Lenin, referring to a Party Congress Resolution which emphasized the unity of the workers, the peasants and soldiers, as 'the basis for the success and strength of the Russian Revolution', urged that unity be a firm stand against 'the bourgeoisie, or capitalists, and the landowners.' *Lenin, Collected Works, Vol. 25, Moscow, Progress Publishers, 1964, p88.*

The question now arises, how far the organization of the workers and peasants, as full participants in the socialist revolutionary process in Zimbabwe, has taken place?

I must hasten to remark that a socialist revolution is not a one-day wonder. True, the Party I lead has adopted the philosophy of socialism based on Marxist-Leninist principles and thus has recognized the role of the workers in alliance with the peasants to lead the necessary revolution. Every socialist revolution differs from another, not so much in its goals and qualitative content, as in the manner, mode, pace and time of its implementation, depending always on the concrete circumstances of the environment of its operation. And even where a given developmental stage has been made, still the next stage must take into account the factors already prevailing. Read Todor Zhivkov's 'Report of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist party to the Twelfth Congress and the Forthcoming Tasks of the Party' (*Sofia, March 31, 1981*).

Having examined our economic situation in the light of the circumstances we have inherited, it became clear to us that a number of factors had first to be fulfilled if socialist transformation were to be launched with full force. The following programmes thus became necessary:-

- The Party had first to be well organized structurally and qualitatively so that a high level of ideological consciousness would prevail within it. The Party has to remain in the vanguard of our revolution and give policy direction to Government. A programme to develop Party

cadres with a high political and ideological level of education is underway.

- The workers had also to be structurally organized into their trade unions and the unions into a single national trade union movement. At the same time, at all work places workers' committees and works councils were to be established. The education of the workers, so they could become more aware of their rights and conscious of their historical role, was to be undertaken by the trade union movement and at work places through their workers' committees. In the interests of the welfare of the workers, minimum wages had to be prescribed.
- The peasants, on the other hand, needed to be resettled and rehabilitated after the liberation war. At the same time, a start had to be made in organizing those of them willing to be persuaded to form cooperatives. Several of these cooperatives have been launched despite the immense problems they have had to face, which include lack of skills, lack of managerial and administrative ability, and lack of financial and capital inputs. But these initial hurdles are being attended to.
- The Government was to examine priority areas for the establishment of state enterprises as well as for state participation in existing enterprises across the economic sectors. A good beginning has already been made and a faster pace will no doubt be followed in future.
- In the area of social services, education, health and social welfare, an increase in facilities became an urgent priority as Government adopted the policy of free education and free health service at given levels, while making secondary education accessible to all children. In this area some good work has been done.

May I, in conclusion, reiterate that only through socialism based on Marxist-Leninist principles can we achieve true social justice in our society. May I also finally re-emphasize that in the process of constructing socialism, the full involvement of the masses, as led by the alliance of workers and peasants in the vanguard leadership of the revolution, is absolutely necessary.

I equally would want to repeat that over the last four and half-years circumstances were far from ripe for a full-blooded revolutionary thrust, but that preparatory work has begun for the revolution to encompass a much broader area and assume a faster pace in the future. But if the future is to see a greater pace in the unfolding of our socialist revolution, the Party must assume its proper historical role by being accorded that place in our society in which 'all economic and social organizations and institutions of the State' will, as Nicolae Ceausescu says, come 'under its political control and act in a single manner for building the socialist system.' (*Nicolae Ceausescu, The Growing Leading Role of the Romanian Communist Party in the Present State, Bucharest, Meridiane Publishers, 1982, p13*).

This situation is only possible when a one-party State democracy has been established.

