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# IMPERIALISM, THE 'FRONTLINE' STATES AND THE ZIMBABWE 'PROBLEM'

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## I. INTRODUCTION

This paper is a brief outline of a larger work at present under preparation.<sup>1</sup> The work seeks to explain the so called "Zimbabwe Problem"<sup>2</sup> as essentially an imperialist problem. To that extent, perhaps, the title under which this work appears is a little misleading in that it suggests that imperialism is extraneous to the "problem".<sup>3</sup> Briefly, the "Zimbabwe Problem" expresses itself in the ever-sharpening contradiction in colonial Zimbabwe between imperialist domination on the one hand and the resistance to it by the oppressed and exploited people of Zimbabwe on the other. This is a contradiction which arises wherever there may be imperialist domination; and therefore not only in colonial Zimbabwe but also in Southern Africa as a whole and indeed the world over. As such, the anti-imperialist struggle being led by the National Liberation Movement in Zimbabwe must be viewed firmly within the context of the global struggle between imperialism and socialism.

But within this basic framework of analysis, an attempt is made to identify the particularities of this global struggle in the Zimbabwe colonial situation. The emphasis, however, is upon the main features of the imperialist strategy in Zimbabwe, particularly in the last decade during which significant victories have been scored against imperialism, mainly in Indo-China and Africa (Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique and Angola); and against which background the National Liberation Movement in Zimbabwe has grown in strength and is now posed for victory. A central theme - perhaps more implicit than explicit - in this work is the development of the National Liberation Struggle in Zimbabwe: from a position of apparent weakness in which imperialism for a long time maintained the initiative and even attempted to resolve the "problem" in its (imperialist) favour; to one of real strength wherein the possibility of a neo-colonial solution becomes increasingly remote.

The work also examines in some detail the U.S. policy in Southern Africa, particularly as outlined in the National State Security Memorandum of 1969, the NSSM 39.<sup>4</sup> But the impact of this policy for the National

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Liberation Struggle in Zimbabwe is highlighted in an analysis of the "detente" exercise of 1974/75; and in the context of the various modifications to the Option Two<sup>5</sup> policy in the last decade. In this respect, the origin and role of the "Frontline" states of Africa is examined and explained against the background of the developing National Liberation struggle in Zimbabwe.

This brief paper does not, however, seek to analyse in detail all these factors. Rather it is intended to provide the basic framework of the study at present being undertaken, with a view to provoke interesting discussion and draw constructive criticism which will aid the author in the final presentation of the work. But against the background of the Lancaster House Constitutional Conference on Zimbabwe (1979), this paper also attempts to highlight the following major themes of the work.

1. The historical and socio-economic bases of the Zimbabwe "problem": a brief analysis of the nature of imperialist domination in Southern Africa, and thereby indicating the reasons why settler colonialism in Zimbabwe - and much more so in South Africa - represents colonialism par excellence.

2. The imperialist political strategy in Zimbabwe whereby, pretending to be an impartial arbiter (i.e. wishing to appear expancous to the "problem"), imperialism seeks a kind of a semi-neo-colonial solution on the basis of a political "compromise"/"settlement" between the white settler bourgeoisie (as well as the whites in general) on the one hand and the African nationalist petty bourgeoisie (as well as the blacks in general) on the other. This strategy is both a response to the peculiarity of a colonial situation (in Zimbabwe) which does not allow for the conventional neo-colonial solution that evolved in most of Africa; and a reflection of the extent to which imperialism itself is almost inextricably part of the "problem".

3. The Zimbabwe National Liberation Struggle which, aided by the Socialist bloc, the OAU (and the frontline states) and indeed by progressive forces the world over, has intensified and sharpened the principal contradiction between imperialism (and white settler) domination on the one hand and the oppressed and exploited African masses on the other. In short, whatever the outcome of the London Constitutional Conference, there can be no lasting "compromise" between the white settler bourgeoisie and the Patriotic Front - least of all as long as the white settler state (the army, the police, civil service, etc,) remains intact and continues to be serviced by imperialism. Conversely any attempt to resolve the Zimbabwe "problem" must begin with the destruction of the white settler state. Given the increasing

involvement of the South African State in the Zimbabwe "problem" one might suggest that this "problem" and its resolution must be viewed within the context of the defeat of imperialism in Southern Africa as a whole.

It is hoped, therefore, that this brief analysis will engender a greater understanding of the historical reality that the Zimbabwe Liberation Movement seeks to transform.

## II. AN ANALYSIS OF THE NATURE OF IMPERIALISM IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

Our definition of imperialism is within the Marxist framework and lists the following as essential in characterizing this stage of capitalism:

- 1) The gap in economic development between the industrialized Western (and European settled) countries and those restricted to primary production. The gap is widening under continued imperialist domination.
- 2) The export capital from the more developed countries to the less.
- 3) The division, especially in the late nineteenth century, of territories throughout the world by the more developed nations as part of the rivalry and competition for strategic and economic advantages. This competition for colonies led to two world wars.
- 4) The further concentration and centralization of capital and the integration of the world capitalist economy into the structures of the giant U.S. based multinational corporations or integrated monopolistic enterprises. These multinational corporations not only accelerate technological change but also control trade, prices and profits.
- 5) The decline in the period since the Russian Revolution of 1917 of national rivalries among the leading capitalist countries as an international ruling class is consolidated and constituted on the basis of ownership of control of the multinational corporations; and as the world capital market is internationalized by the World Bank and other agencies of the international ruling class.
- 6) The evolution of global imperialist foreign policy which corresponds to the global interests and perspectives of the multinational corporations.
- 7) The intensification of these tendencies (outlined in 4, 5, and 6, above) arising from the threat of world socialism to the world capitalist system.

For the purposes of this analysis, however, emphasis is placed — though not in isolation from all other features outlined above — on the foreign

policy of imperialism. That is, on the means whereby the more economically developed nations seek to maintain and extend their political, military and economic hegemony over the less, especially in the current phase of the struggle between world socialism and the capitalist system. Ever since the Russian Revolution of 1917 when the first socialist state was born (and hence also the birth of this current struggle), the major objective of imperialism--led by the U.S.—has been to try to prevent the world capitalist system from contracting. To this end, and as part and parcel of the imperialist structure of exploitation and domination, imperialism—and particularly the U.S. itself—has a complex strategy, including, to quote the Nixon Doctrine, "regional and defence arrangements which provide and take advantage of shared responsibilities".<sup>6</sup> among the capitalist countries and their outposts.

In examining the nature of imperialist domination in Southern Africa in general, and in Zimbabwe in particular, an attempt is made to explain the historical phenomenon of white settler colonialism as a particular expression of imperialist domination; and as colonialism par excellence. The main distinguishing features—as compared, for example with colonialism in Africa as a whole—are characterized as follows:

- a) the historical development of the Southern African region in which South Africa and (colonial) Zimbabwe have, partly because of their attractive natural resources (land, minerals, labour, etc) and partly because of their geographical position in the path of the imperialist<sup>7</sup> expansion from the Cape northwards, became the main focus of imperialist operations in the continent of Africa;
- b) the (consequent) white settler population which grew pari passu with the process of colonization; and
- c) within this entire colonization process, the interaction between imperialism in its most aggressive form and its ideology of white racial supremacy.

All this resulted in the development, particularly in South Africa and Zimbabwe, of a virulent form of racism as expressed in the rise of the white settler—or apartheid (in the case of South Africa) as a special form of it—State which is able to use the racial ideology to mobilize all white classes behind it in the process of exploiting and oppressing the African people. But this, in turn, raises two inter related questions which are important for this analysis.

The first concerns the particular nature of the relationship between imperialism and the white settler colonial state with regard to both the

accumulation (and appropriation) of surplus within that colonial situation and in neighbouring territories; and the role of the white settler state in this case the South African one—as, to quote Barry Cohen and Mohamed El-Khawas, part of "a series of sub-imperial centres which would serve as junior partners to sustain regional political and economic 'stability'"<sup>8</sup> on behalf of the imperialist system. In short, we shall examine the theory of "sub-imperialism" as it is applied to the South African State in its relationship with U.S. imperialism, and assess whether this theory has any utility in explaining the current configuration of the struggle between world imperialism and world socialism.

The second point concerns an enquiry into the nature of the relationship between the white settler state, the consequent development of the social formation in this colonial situation, and the implications of all this for the process of decolonization. The discussion on this point will also be brief.

The main purpose of raising both these questions, however, is to underline the close relationship between imperialism and racism; and how this relationship inevitably acts upon and assigns a complex character to both the development of the National Liberation Struggle and the National Question in Zimbabwe, Namibia, and particularly in South Africa. The main argument herein is that the white settler colonial situation has constituted—and continues to do so—very favourable conditions for the imperialist super-exploitation of African labour in particular and material resources in general. Thus, contrary to the imperialist (and liberal) myth which views the phenomenon of racism in Southern Africa as extraneous to the economy, racism—particularly as it is expressed through the operations of the economy and through the repressive white settler state apparatus—is an effective instrument in the exploitative process. Hence imperialism profits directly from apartheid and white settler colonialism in general; and at a greater rate than elsewhere in Africa and, perhaps, in most of the world.

The State is in essence, as Lenin pointed out "inevitably the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie";<sup>9</sup> and following on this definition of the State, Nabudere has emphasized that the "imperialist bourgeoisie and white bourgeoisie in South Africa stand out as the economically dominant class, whose interests the South African State serves".<sup>10</sup> But it should always be borne in mind that both South Africa and Zimbabwe, the white settler state has, using the racial ideology of white supremacy, successfully mobilized all the whites—the bourgeoisie, petit bourgeoisie, working class and the

so-called "poor whites"—behind it; and all whites in general assist in the fulfilment of the functions of the white settler state. At the risk of labouring the point, it should be added that the white working class in Southern Africa is the most reactionary component of the white settler element, and constitutes the main force in the repressive white settler army. All this is in spite of the fact that the imperialist bourgeoisie is the beneficiary in the entire exploitative and oppressive machinery of the white settler state; and in spite of the fact that the white working class—although in part enjoying some of the surplus appropriated from black labour—is objectively also exploited by capital and constitutes the cannon fodder of the white settler army in the anti-guerrilla war.

It follows, therefore, that decolonization in Southern Africa (in this context, South Africa, Zimbabwe and Namibia) must necessarily involve a direct onslaught on, and the destruction of, the white settler state. On a more practical level, it is evident that the struggle in Southern Africa has begun precisely at the level at which exploitation and oppression are most acutely felt and visibly seen as being meted out by the white settler—i.e. the immediate enemy. In particular, the Zimbabwean combatants and the mass of the people have begun to comprehend the nature of imperialism as the main and ultimate enemy only in the course of this anti-imperialist armed struggle. This is evident in a variety of ways which are now the subject of discussion among combatants in the field and among the mass of the people in the camps and liberated areas: the military support (Mirage jets, helicopters, mercenaries, etc.) which the imperialists give the white settlers; and the close alliance between the South African and Rhodesian settlers in the anti-guerrilla war in Zimbabwe.

From the above account, it is evident that the very nature of this white settler colonial situation precludes—theoretically but more so practically, in the foreseeable future—the National Liberation Movement uniting within its ranks any of the white classes, least of all the white working class. Yet it is only the National Liberation Movement spearheaded by the African peasants and workers, that must in the foreseeable future, remain the main driving force of change in Southern Africa. But the main point that will emerge within this analysis is that an attack on white settler colonialism—or, if one chooses to call it "sub-imperialism" in the context of South Africa—is an attack on imperialism itself. The destruction of the apartheid state and the white settler state in South Africa and Zimbabwe respectively will amount to such a socio-economic and political transformation within which

it will be possible to create a socialist society. The following discussion will elaborate this assertion.

### III. THE DEBATE OVER THE CONCEPT OF SOUTH AFRICAN "SUB-IMPERIALISM"

Ruy Mauro Marini was, perhaps, the first writer to use the concept of "Sub-imperialism" within the Marxist framework in his account on "Brazilian Sub-imperialism".<sup>12</sup> Marini's definition of sub-imperialism is essentially "the form which dependent capitalism assumes upon reaching the Stage of monopolies and finance capital."<sup>13</sup> But within the context of the overall imperialist strategy of trying to contain revolution and so keep the capitalist system intact, Brazilian sub-imperialism represents the counter-revolutionary role that Brazil plays in Latin America on behalf of the U.S.<sup>14</sup> Viewed in this context, it is not surprising that the concept of "sub-imperialism" came to be applied in a similar characterization of South Africa. Thus in their "Introduction" to the Kissinger Study of Southern Africa, Barry Cohen and Mohamed A. El-Khawas describe South Africa's role as a "sub-imperialist" force in Southern Africa in the following statement:

"The significance of American involvement in Southern Africa can only be fully grasped by considering the role of the U.S. as the ultimate power and protector of a global imperialist system. The system must be maintained against any erosion--i.e. revolutionary challenges; otherwise the necessity for American monopoly capitalism to maintain its control over resources and markets--actual and potential--will be undermined. Furthermore, the Nixon Doctrine envisages a series of sub-imperial centres which would serve as junior partners to sustain regional political and economic "stability"--a disarming euphemism for the perpetuation of the local status quo. Given these conditions, the U.S. could not ignore certain global realities when it formulated its Southern African policy".(14)

Both the economic and strategic considerations underlying, and objectives inherent in this U.S. policy have been outlined not only by these two authors but by several others.<sup>15</sup> We shall comment on them briefly in the following pages in a general consideration of the current imperialist strategy in Southern Africa. But here it is important, within the context of this discussion on "sub-imperialism", to outline the South African Government's foreign policy in Southern Africa during this period following the NSSM 39 document. We shall try to analyse briefly the South African Government's response to the U.S. policy; and assess whether or not this U.S. imperialist strategy could have been effected



without the South African Government's compliance as part and parcel of the imperialist machinery for trying to contain revolutionary change in the world.

Several works<sup>16</sup> have already outlined South Africa's foreign policy in Southern Africa and in the African continent as a whole. But Ann and Neva Seidman have described the South African Government's response to the new situation—particularly following the Portuguese coup of 1974—as containing "two primary thrusts":

first, it sought to extend its diplomatic outward reach' in an effort to achieve its own version of 'detente' with its black neighbours to the north. Envoys were sent to all nations that had shown any signs of willingness to open dialogue with South Africa. Prime Minister Vorster, himself, flew to Ivory Coast for secret talks with President Houphouët-Boigny and Senegal's President Senghor. He repaid a visit President Banda of Malawi had made some years before to South Africa. He was invited to Liberia by President William Tolbert. Secret negotiations were initiated between Vorster and President Kaunda of Zambia.<sup>17</sup>

As the Seidmans' emphasize, the goal of the South African Government's "detente" initiative was to lessen tensions "generated by the struggles of the national liberation movements for an end to colonial and white minority rule in Southern Africa. Given this perspective, the official South African outward reach towards detente is clearly designed to undermine and if possible, destroy those struggles...."<sup>18</sup>

We should observe, however, that the force of this first thrust of South African type "detente" gradually decreased with the intensification of the armed struggle in the 1970's; and became relatively insignificant ever since the victories of FRELIMO and MPLA in Mozambique and Angola respectively. The apparent lethargy of the National Liberation Struggle vis-a-vis apparent white settler "invincibility" in Southern Africa in the 1960's had led the stronger of the African States to issue the moderate and conciliatory (with both imperialism and white settler colonialism) Lusaka Manifesto (1969); and the weaker ones into open cooperation with the South African Government under the foolish rationale that such cooperation would bring about "change of heart" in white settler colonialism. As we shall argue below, it was the intensification of the National Liberation Struggles in Southern Africa which in fact bolstered the diplomatic leverage of the African states in their deliberations over the white South; and certainly, these liberation struggles gave rise to the "frontline" State lobby that is today the guiding force of African diplomacy in Southern Africa, if not in the entire African continent. But as will also be argued below, the basic economic,

political and military weakness of most of these "frontline" states has at times meant that the foreign policy of most of these states has tended to operate within the ambit of the imperialist strategy in Southern Africa.

To sum up the first "thrust" of the South African Government's policy, however, two major observations can be made. First, the South African State has the capacity for effective counter-revolutionary action in Southern Africa. It is well equipped economically and militarily for this role; and while the demise of the South African State is a foregone conclusion within the context of the current anti-imperialist struggle in Southern Africa and the world over, "Boer" power still remains a formidably threatening power. We have to recall its role in Angola a few years ago (1975); and expect that it will intensify its counter-revolutionary efforts in both Namibia and Zimbabwe, including possible military intervention--in the latter country--surpassing that of the Angola period and with far more serious implications for the Southern African region. In short, the importance of this (counter-revolutionary) role of the South African State cannot simply be subsumed beneath an overall policy of imperialist aggression, as Comrade Nabudere implies when he says "it is the U.S. imperialists running all over, telling Vorster and Smith what to do".<sup>19</sup> Furthermore, this is in spite of the second point we wish to make about the South African Government's policy in Southern Africa: namely, that although sometimes in (secondary) contradiction with that of the U.S. and imperialism in general, it is ultimately an instrument of the overall imperialist counter-revolutionary offensive. But the study of imperialism and indeed the actual practice whereby it can be defeated certainly involves examination of the particularities of imperialist domination. It must involve trying to determine and recognizing as of some significance within an overall understanding of the phenomenon of imperialism and the need to counter it on an international scale,

- a) the nature of the relationship between imperialism and the dominant states within a region of the imperialist system; and
- b) the nature of the relationship between imperialism and local collaborationist class forces.

For people involved in the actual struggle this means the need to make a careful class analysis as a basis for determining the revolutionary potential of each class. This, of course, does not preclude entering into a "united front" with all patriotic forces but it does not mean, as might be implied from Comrade Tandon's analysis,<sup>20</sup> that a "united front" must be maintained

at all costs as long as imperialist exists, and certainly not when some of these "patriots" petty bourgeoisie are already "in the laps of imperialism".<sup>21</sup> It might be too pertinent to observe here that the present "united front" in Uganda will become increasingly precarious—if it has not already—as the petty bourgeois agents of a defensive imperialist strategy rush back home. No doubt our progressive comrades will soon find it necessary to mobilize their own base at the exclusion of some of their "patriots" if they are to strengthen their initiative and lead Uganda to Socialism.<sup>22</sup>

However, to return to the question of the South African Government's policy in Southern Africa, its second "major thrust" is to strengthen ties with the powerful Western nations—especially the U.S.—in a kind of an 'anti-communist crusade'. This aspect of the South African Government's policy is already in the above commentary which emphasized that this policy must ultimately be seen as part and parcel of the imperialist policy of trying to contain revolutionary change. What would be emphasized here is a point already mentioned in the previous section of this paper: namely, the extent to which imperialism profits on the structure of racism in the white settler states while at the same time being forced—by the overall consideration of their global strategy particularly as it applies to Black Africa—to express "public opposition" to racism. The main implications of this policy are discussed elsewhere in an account of the Option Two policy;<sup>23</sup> and the extent of U.S. (and other capitalist countries) investment in Southern Africa has been well documented.<sup>24</sup> What remains to be said—and will be elaborated in a following section of the paper—is that with the general advance of the struggle in Southern Africa, the imperialists are finding it increasingly difficult to reconcile the apparently contradictory lines of their Option Two policy:

In essence, the U.S. policy has been fundamentally contradictory since it has apparently tried to strike a balance between conflicting and irreconcilable objectives of African and white-minority ruled states.<sup>25</sup>

It is a dilemma which has been enhanced by the struggle; and it is a crisis (within imperialism) from which imperialism "cannot meaningfully extricate itself either in the short or long term".<sup>26</sup>

The main criticism of the concept of "sub-imperialism" as it applies to the South African State is that it implies that the latter is autonomous. But such criticism<sup>27</sup> of the concept has been levelled mainly at those writings (on South Africa) which have either assigned a "national" character to capital<sup>28</sup> in South Africa or asserted that the latter is an "independent state and not a

colony".<sup>29</sup> For indeed there is adequate evidence that the nature of the multinational operations in Southern Africa as a whole preclude the existence of South African "national" capital to the extent that it can be independent of international capital as a whole. Certainly it would be odd to assert that South Africa is an "independent state" when the African people as a whole remain denied of the basic democratic rights; and when it is evident that the National Question in South Africa is not resolved.

Yet, it should also be stated that these two ideas (of "national capital and South African independence) are not necessarily central to the concept of "sub-imperialism". Therefore, the other criticisms (see below) levelled at the concept of "sub-imperialism" arise not so much from what the latter concept is supposed to mean than from the meaning these critiques choose to attach to it. Of course, the critics can always reply that they are allowed this latitude by the general imprecision with which the concept is used by the analysts; and this is one reason why we still refer to it in inverted commas. For example, let us take two papers which have either used the concept explicitly or implied in the content of their analysis. On the one hand, for John Coles and Robin Cohen "sub-imperialism" indicates a measure of independence for the South African State policies from that of imperialism as a whole. Yet even here there is chronic contradiction: South Africa has been strengthened by the link with imperialism and yet this has also "helped South Africa to develop so remarkably and have reduced its critical dependence on the west and allowed it greater autonomy."<sup>30</sup>

On the other hand, Comrade V. Nyathi has selected the basic features that constitute imperialism within the Marxist-Leninist understanding of the phenomenon, and then went on to attempt to identify these as they might apply to what he calls "South African Imperialism". For Him:

"the dynamics of South African imperialism are need of raw materials, capital accumulation pressure, and market problem. Along with these dynamics we also discussed the economic mechanisms (export of capital and import of labour—being the major ones, export of mining inputs (sic!) fertilizers to Swaziland, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Mozambique, Angola and Namibia) of South African imperialism."

He concludes this characterization with a discussion of the "political and military mechanisms (superstructural mechanisms)" of this "South African imperialism".<sup>31</sup> But while the latter concept might suggest—on a theoretical level, perhaps—an autonomy for the South African State from the imperialist system, as a whole, both the direction of his analysis and his concluding

statement would dispel this impression and suggest a tendency towards the subscription to the concept of "sub-imperialism".

"Since we have seen that South African capitalism is not independent it automatically follows that the status of South African imperialism vis-a-vis North Atlantic imperialism is that of dependent imperialism—sub-imperialism (peripheral imperialism) like Brazilian imperialism. Its role, therefore, within the framework of North Atlantic imperialism is a supplementary one; it helps to sustain North Atlantic capitalism (central capitalism). Its superstructural mechanisms (colonial administration in Namibia and military involvement in Angola, Mozambique and Zimbabwe) also protects North Atlantic imperialism. It is for this reason that the North Atlantic countries like France and Britain supply South Africa with military equipment so that she can effectively defend their economic interests in those Southern African countries which are still under white regimes. It becomes clear that the struggle against South African imperialism is a struggle against North Atlantic imperialism".(32)

In concluding this discussion on the concept of South African "sub-imperialism", we make the following observations:

- 1) That despite its relative imprecision, the concept of "sub-imperialism" is nevertheless the best that could be used to characterize the South African State's role (as a counter-revolutionary force) within the overall imperialist objective of mainly (in Southern Africa)
  - a) super-exploiting African labour; and
  - b) undermining the national liberation struggles in Namibia, Zimbabwe and within South Africa itself.

The role of South Africa in effecting this strategy on the regional level cannot be subsumed beneath the overall world imperialist strategy, even though it is part and parcel of the latter. Furthermore, this role has over the years assumed a special character as indicated in the Angola crisis (when South African troops tried to subvert the revolutionary process) and as is likely to be underlined in Namibia and Zimbabwe.

- 2) It is true that one could use, as Comrade Nabudere has done, the concept of "semi-colony"<sup>33</sup> to describe the South African state as a "sub-form" (to use another of Comrade Nabudere's terms). But it is also clear that the concept of "semi-colony" is either just as imprecise, does not—as it is used by Comrade Nabudere, adequately describe the role of the South African State as outlined in this entire section, or both.

- 3) Yet there appears to be no crucial reason why the concept of "sub-imperialism" cannot be used as meaning a "sub-form" of imperialism; but still dependent upon, as an appendage of, and as part and parcel of, imperialism.<sup>35</sup> This is certainly the meaning we attach to the concept of "sub-imperialism"; and precludes inferring "autonomy" of the South African State nor capital being "national" within the confines of the latter.
- 4) But we should, within an attempt to make the concept more precise, always emphasize that South African "sub-imperialism" is historically based: in that the South African hinterland was the first area in the South African region to experience European occupation and the subsequent imperialism domination ever since 1652 to the present day. Furthermore, that the creation of the Union of South Africa in 1910 was a reflection of the acute importance that imperialism by this time attached to South Africa, particularly in the course of the industrialization process triggered by the discovery of gold and diamonds in the nineteenth century. At any rate it was this advance in the discovery and exploitation of mineral resources that laid the basis for the subsequent economic dependence on South Africa of the neighbouring territories. Equally, it is this economic dominance which accounts for
  - (a) the continued and intensifying interest in South Africa on the part of imperialism as a country offering among the most favourable conditions for the super-exploitation of labour by capital; and places the South African state in a special relationship with the U.S. and other Western European capitalist countries in the joint venture to maximize the process of surplus accumulation and appropriation in Southern Africa as a whole; and
  - (b) the military and political strength of the South African State, a factor which is both sustained and reinforced by the factors in (a).
- 5) Finally, the general characterization of "sub-imperialism" offered here must dispose the other criticisms levelled against this concept. In short, it cannot now be claimed that the concept of "sub-imperialism" as presented here confuses the "main enemy" which is imperialism;<sup>36</sup> nor that it "arises from a misconception of the nature of finance capital as a product of the process of concentration and centralization of capital",<sup>37</sup> nor that it is "an inversion of the nature of struggle leading to the oversimplification of the process of domination and that of liberation".<sup>38</sup>

The brief account (above) on the development of the struggle is testimony that the South African combatants are aware of the main enemy; though there is no necessary relationship between a theoretical recognition that imperialism is the main enemy on the one hand and the certainty that the theoretician will act accordingly in practice. As for the suggestion that the National Liberation Movement must not alienate the white workers;<sup>39</sup> we also concede this theoretical construct which cannot be challenged in the interests of internationalism. But it should be noted that the nature of the social formation in white settler colonial situation has already resulted in the alienation of the white worker to the point that it is inconceivable that the latter will in the foreseeable future realize that the struggle is in his interests. The white worker, we would conclude, will be liberated from his "alienation" only in the destruction of white settler colonialism.

#### IV. TOWARDS AN UNDERSTANDING OF WHITE SETTLER COLONIALISM IN ZIMBABWE

The foregoing discussions has gone a long way to anticipate that on the nature of white settler colonialism in Zimbabwe. Furthermore, we have in another work,<sup>40</sup> attempted to analyse the development of the social formation in colonial Zimbabwe. The main features of our analysis for this work can be summarized as follows.

First, the relationship between South African "sub-imperialism" and white settler colonialism in Zimbabwe. This relationship exists on both theoretical and practical levels. The theory of "sub-imperialism" does help us to conceptualize white settler colonialism as colonialism par excellence, as already outlined in the opening pages of Section II above. But this also suggests that South African "sub-imperialism" is also a form—albeit a special one—of white settler colonialism. The distinguishing feature in the phenomenon of white settler colonialism as it is expressed in the two social formations respectively is obviously the overall dominant position in the South African State in the Southern African region. But on a practical level, it is evident that South Africa "sub-imperialism" has historically been the main life-line of the white settler State in Zimbabwe, particularly in the period subsequent to UDI (1965). The supportive nature of South African "sub-imperialism" to the white settler colonial state in Zimbabwe is particularly economic and military. This point has already emerged in the foreign analysis of South

African "sub-imperialism"; and receives extensive treatment in most recent accounts on the relationship between these two white settler states.<sup>41</sup> But it has also been noted above that imperialism as a whole demonstrates an almost irresistible confidence in white settler colonialism as an area for intense investment. The reasons for this have also been outlined in the foregoing pages: namely (a) the general character of the colonization process within which the White Settler element was a dominant and important feature; (b) how this in itself was a reflection of the economic importance that imperialism at the outset attached to these areas as rich in material and human resources; (c) and how the concentration of white settlers together with the eagerness to make quick profits gave rise to the racist white settler state; and (d) in turn created the conditions and provided various facilities favourable for the super-exploitation of labour and the exploitation of the natural resources of the country.

This acute interest in and commitment to white settler colonialism on the part of imperialism is certainly the basic reason for the continued existence of the white settler state in Zimbabwe; and altogether reflects the fact that imperialism is almost inextricably part of the "problem". It explains why the imperialists found it convenient to grant "responsible government" status to the white settler state (1923) refused to intervene against UDI (1965), broke sanctions against the settler regime in the subsequent years and continue to reinforce the white settler state both economically and militarily. A number of recent studies have shown the dominant role that finance capital has played in the development of the colonial economic structures in Zimbabwe, ever since the inception of the colony to the present day.

The Centre of African Studies, University of Eduardo Mondlane produced a study some three years ago which inter alia revealed that:

"the imposition of sanctions did not seriously hamper economic development within Rhodesia. This is clearly indicated by the fact that, after some initial years of adjustment, from 1967 onwards up to 1974, the economy expanded rapidly, with GDP constituting as much as 21.9 per cent in 1973. Manufacturing increased by 94 per cent in volume in the period 1964-73. This was the fastest growing sector, and in 1973 it constituted 25 per cent of GDP as against 19.7 per cent in 1965. Within this sector metal and non-metallic mineral products tripled in output over ten years and textiles rose by 175 per cent. The expansion was based on processing primary output and import-replacing consumption output. Mining expanded by 200 per cent in output from \$53.5 million in 1965 to \$165 million in 1974. Agriculture also went up ... Considering the fact that mining is completely foreign owned and



manufacturing predominantly so ... we can infer that international capital has poured large investments into Rhodesia in this period. Net capital inflow for the period 1965-73 equalled \$174.6 million with its highest level in 1973 at \$51.3 million. Thus, again, the expansion in Rhodesia was the result of foreign capital and of further immigration which increased the settler community by another 25 per cent."(42)

The advance of the liberation war has undermined white settler "confidence" and so increased the exodus rate of the white population, particularly in recent months. But it is generally true that the demise of the white settler state is not too imminent. This is evidenced both by the general run of economic life; and the fact that the imperialists continue to invest in the country. A more recent study, The Economic and Social Survey of Zimbabwe,<sup>43</sup> confirmed the investment pattern outlined in the Maputo Study; and revealed the immense concentration of finance capital as reflected in the presence of in the country of more than 150 major foreign companies and hundreds of their subsidiaries or associates. Furthermore, the study also revealed the immense industrial—and indeed entire economic—infrastructure that has developed over the years as a result of this concentration of finance capital. Both studies, however, indicate that this economic structure of colonial Zimbabwe has important implications for the process of decolonization and underlines the central position that a future Zimbabwe occupies in the future historical development of Southern Africa. As has already been mentioned, the latter point will be raised in the concluding pages of this paper. But we must now proceed to consider the first point which concerns the second main feature of white settler colonialism in Zimbabwe.

An important feature of the economic development of colonial Zimbabwe is the nature of the class structure that emerged in the course of it. This class structure has been the subject of analysis by a number of writers.<sup>44</sup> But what we wish to emphasize here are two main ones which relate immediately to the present analysis.

- a) The extent to which the nature and impact of the development of white settler colonialism pre-empted the development of an African bourgeoisie of any significance;
- b) "determined that even the African petit bourgeoisie would consist mainly of the educated elements";<sup>45</sup>
- c) caused the most serious impoverishment of the peasantry; and
- d) the development of a disorganized and incoherent African wage earning class.

In another work, we have attempted to show the relationship between on the one hand the class nature of the African petit bourgeoisie whose (African Nationalist) ideology is a reflection of the dominant influence of the capitalist (and Christian) ideology; and the relatively slow development of an "ideology of Liberation" in National Liberation Movement in Zimbabwe on the other.<sup>46</sup> The implications of this are obvious and deserve special attention in any consideration of the "Zimbabwe Problem". But here we must also consider the implications of the nature of the white settler ideology that developed as a consequence of the interaction between imperialist domination and the racial ideology of white supremacy. This is the extent to which:

- a) The white settler state develops—in the course of the colonization process—a distorted and even unreal conception of the historical reality as one wherein Whites are to rule forever and the Blacks to be dominated perpetually; and
- b) Mobilizes all the white classes behind this ideology to the extent that the level of differentiation among these classes can only be in the objective sense. It certainly precludes the white working class developing the "class for itself" ideology. If anything the white classes as a whole tend to express the "class for itself" ideology en bloc. That is, as a racial ideology which has a strong economic basis.<sup>47</sup>

To this feature of white settler colonialism must be added a third one, and suggest that the white settler ideology itself has become an important factor in feeding the white settler intransigence to decolonization. For example, those who have lived in colonial Zimbabwe will have noticed how the white settler State has, through this ideology, led almost the entire white society into believing its own lies: about history, about the world, about the nature of the war that is posed to shatter these myths. It is, perhaps, an indication of the strength and importance of this feature of white settler colonialism that most white settlers will realize that they have lost only when they have actually lost. The implications of this are illustrated in a general discussion of the (forthcoming) London "Constitutional Conference" on Zimbabwe in a subsequent section.

But in mentioning white settler intransigence to decolonization, we must go on and discuss the last general feature of white settler colonialism in Zimbabwe. The basis of the white settler intransigence can be understood best as one of the contradictions arising out of the nature of imperialist

domination. Mention has already been made on the fact that white settler colonialism pre-empted the development of a viable African bourgeoisie. This means that in practice the transfer of property and wealth—and indeed political power itself—from the white settlers to the Africans becomes a real difficulty, even assuming that the white settlers wished to enter into the decolonization deal. Thus, it is true that many white settlers wishing to leave Zimbabwe in the wake of the intensification of the war have found it difficult to sell their large properties (estate farms, large mansions, business, etc). At first this was due to the Land Tenure Act which strictly prevented Africans from acquiring property in "European Areas" which, needless to say, are the very wealth of the country. But the Land Tenure Act has become gradually modified to allow finance capital to ensure continued profit-making at least in real estate and general property speculation. Yet not many Africans have found themselves with the resources to avail themselves of this opportunity, to use Tandon's phrase, "hurl"<sup>48</sup> themselves into bourgeoisie ranks. There has, of course, been a determined effort by international capital to create an African comprador "class in preparation for establishing a group of the petit-bourgeoisie to defend their interests".<sup>49</sup> But because of the general white settler intransigence to change, this process has not been successful.<sup>50</sup> Thus the Maputo Study noted,

"Interestingly, promotion has only been in the areas of personnel and public relations, thus presenting a facade of multi racialism to help control workers' demands and prepare for the formation of a new neo-colonial state after independence.(51) Technical and management skills remain with Europeans so that control must remain with international capital after the fall of the Smith regime".(52)

But white settler intransigence has also been strongly against development of an African bureaucratic petit bourgeoisie.

"A pattern in many neo-colonial African states is the growth of this class fraction to dominate the state apparatus as a means of consolidating itself as a class and ensuring its hegemony over the peasants and workers. The number of Africans actually now in this group of the petit-bourgeoisie is very small. UDI reduced the number of Africans in the State administration from 1652 in 1965 to 802 in 1969.

The policy of the Smith government was clearly stated by Ministers of Public Services in December 1973: The mere possession of an academic qualification is not in itself a criterion for appointment to any job.... We have to consider the suitability of the candidate, bearing in mind

certain factors. Perhaps the most important single factor so far as the public service is concerned is loyalty to the State.... Secondly, the national security."<sup>53</sup>

Against this background of this white settler intransigence which persists even to this day, it is not surprising that even the African petit bourgeois followers of Bishop Muzorewa are increasingly becoming disgruntled with the new "Zimbabwe-Rhodesia". As will be suggested below, there is indeed more reason than meets the eye for the Bishop to feel frustrated at Smith's refusal to change the name from "Zimbabwe-Rhodesia" to "Zimbabwe".<sup>54</sup> But even if Smith conceded this point, white settler power remains a reality in colonial Zimbabwe this minute.

#### V. SOME REFLECTIONS ON THE RELATION OF FORCES IN THE ZIMBABWE "PROBLEM"

We now illustrate this latter assertion in a general discussion on the relationship of forces between imperialism, white settler colonialism, the "frontline" states, and the Patriotic Front. But before assessing this relationship in the context of the (forthcoming) London "constitutional Conference" it might be useful to highlight some of these forces individually.

i) The political strategy of imperialism (in Zimbabwe) (i.e. the means whereby it maintains and seeks to reinforce its system of economic exploitation). According to this strategy, the "Zimbabwe Problem" is viewed as merely a race problem: that is, that racism is extraneous to the system of economic exploitation; and that the "problem" can therefore be resolved through "constitutional" arrangements designed to strike a compromise between white settler colonialists and African nationalists, in the interests of imperialism. This has been—and continues to be—the basic feature of the British (and of their imperialist allies) policy on Zimbabwe, ever since the first London "Constitution Conference on Southern Rhodesia" in 1961 to the London "Constitutional Conference on Rhodesia" in 1979. Analysts of the Zimbabwe situation have generally overlooked an important aspect of this imperialist strategy and simply classified it as an attempt to create neo-colonialism in the conventional sense of the term as it pertains in most of decolonized Africa.<sup>55</sup> Yet, as the following account illustrates, the imperialist decolonization strategy in Zimbabwe involves a significant departure from the conventional neo-colonialist one. Thus on the basis of the 1961 Constitution, the "Six Principles"<sup>56</sup> which were first outlined in the Tiger Talks in 1966 and the 1979 Constitutional provisions,<sup>57</sup> "Black Majority Rule" has assumed

the following meaning for the imperialists: Theoretically a political government by the Africans but with "constitutional safeguards" for the white settler element.<sup>58</sup> But although the latter safeguards have neither been fully defined nor their political (and economic) implications ever fully discussed, in practice they would mean:

- a) the retention of white settler economic power as a safeguard for the continued efficient exploitation of material and human resources; and
- b) consequently, retention of such military (i.e. a significant component of the white settler army and Police) and administrative (i.e. a significant section of the present white settler civil service, technical and managerial staff) machinery as would inspire the "confidence" (and "maintain the high standards") of both the white settler element itself and the imperialist world as a whole.

As has already been pointed out above, this feature of the imperialist strategy—i.e. that of seeking what one might term partial neo-colonialism in Zimbabwe—has been a constant one ever since 1961, though it finds the most explicit expression in Kissinger's Option Two (the so-called whites are here to stay)<sup>59</sup> policy on Southern African referred to above.

In the context of the London Constitutional Conference, this must explain why the British developed cold feet when it was suggested - by the "frontline" state Presidents - that the white settlers could be bought out by imperialism providing a billion dollar fund. For the British Government to accept this suggestion at this stage would be tantamount to sacrificing its trump card in the negotiations. Only through continued white settler presence — and a strong one at that — can imperialism hope to pressurize the Patriotic Front into a "compromise settlement" within which it is hoped that the emergent government will safeguard and respect existing property relations in Zimbabwe. A white exodus (supported by a billion dollar fund) would in the long run cost the imperialists far much more than the billion dollars in the likely event of a radical government coming to power. Thus, almost in anticipation of a Constitutional Conference on Zimbabwe, the imperialists — particularly the British rulers — have sought to maximise the white settler and South African "sub-imperialist" stance on the question of a "settlement", as a bargaining counter against the Patriotic Front. Thus ever since the demise of the Anglo-American proposals of 1977, the British (and their imperialist allies) embarked on a clandestine programme of reinforcing the military capability of the white settler state in Zimbabwe. This is intended to create the impression that the

white settler element in Zimbabwe — and indeed in Southern Africa as a whole — has a "permanent" role to play in any "settlement" of the "Zimbabwe Problem". It is significant, therefore that ever since the demise of the Anglo-American proposals of Zimbabwe in 1977, the white settler colonialists — with imperialist and "sub-imperialist" support — transformed the war into a new stage marked by increasing barbarity against both the Patriotic Front and the "frontline" States. It will be recalled that after one of the first incidents — Chimoio Massacre (November 1977) — that marked this turn in the war, British Foreign Secretary David Owen commented that this was evidence that the Smith regime was not a spent force. This was evidence, he added, for a need of a negotiated settlement. Ever since that time, the British government has been actively — but clandestinely — behind the "internal settlement" with a view to strengthening their bargaining counter in anticipation of another conference. As has already been adequately stressed above, the British government will therefore, try at the London Conference to "arbitrate" between the two "equal" forces in the "Zimbabwe conflict" with a view to striking a "Compromise".

But this raises another point which should be borne in mind in analysis of the "Zimbabwe Problem". This is the need to emphasize the secondary nature of the contradiction between imperialism and white settler colonialism over the question of decolonization. This is the contradiction that is often highlighted in some avowedly Marxist analyses of Zimbabwe: namely, that while imperialism is seeking a neo-colonial solution the white settlers are vehemently against it. The white settlers are indeed against any form of colonialism; but the imperialist have gone a long way to accommodate this white settler intransigence. Of course, one cannot rule out absolutely a military intervention on the part of the imperialists in a bid to install an African neo-colonialist regime. But there is little to suggest that this is a possibility in the foreseeable future. Lastly, it would be dangerous — and highly incorrect, of course — to regard the Smith-Muzorewa regime as neo-colonialist. The following pages underline that white settler colonialism in Zimbabwe remains a reality.

ii) The rule of the "frontline" states: illustrating how the political strategy of the imperialist—i.e. viewing the "Zimbabwe Problem" as purely a racial problem—has occasionally coincided with the anti-colonial strategy of both the conventional nationalist in Southern Africa, including the O.A.U. in general and some of the "frontline" states in particular. Reference has already been made to the moderate and objectively reactionary nature of the

Lusaka Manifesto. But our point here is underlined by the fact that Nixon himself described the latter document as a "statesmanlike document";<sup>60</sup> and then went on to try and use the African states—particularly the "Frontline" states—within the framework of the Option Two policy:

"Broader association with both black and white states in an effort to encourage moderation in the white states, to enlist the cooperation of the black states in reducing tensions and the likelihood of increasing cross-boarder violence, and to encourage improved relations among the States in area."<sup>61</sup>

This policy continues in Southern Africa.

In another paper,<sup>62</sup> we have shown that this tendency for African Nationalism (as an ideology) to view the Southern African situation as purely a race problem (to be resolved by replacing the White rulers with Black ones) is a serious ideological deficiency. It is an ideology which has strong historical roots, and must, in the final analysis be attributed to the nature of white racial oppression and exploitation in Africa, ever since the slavery period to the present day. It has been the banner of the anti-colonial struggle and constitutes the ideological base of neo-colonialism in Africa. But it is important to note how and why it is bound to be untenable in the Zimbabwe situation wherein the white settler colonial situation has precluded a neo-colonial solution. The following section is therefore an analysis of the relationship between imperialism and the "frontline" states of Southern Africa, showing (a) how the tendency, by the majority of the leaders of the "frontline" states, to view the "Zimbabwe Problem" as purely a racial problem has meant that at one level, and a significant one for that matter, these states have become an agency through whom the imperialists seek to contain the National Liberation Struggle; and (b) why it is ultimately impossible for countries which, as is the case with the majority of the "frontline" states, are themselves not liberated (because under imperialist domination) to liberate others. However, the nature of white racism—and the persistence and intransigence of white settler colonialism—South Africa has compelled the "frontline" states to increase support to the armed struggle. Equally, as the struggle has intensified the "frontline" States as a whole find themselves increasingly unable to influence—consciously or unconsciously—the National Liberation Movement into compromising with imperialism. But white settler colonialism can only end with the victory of the National Liberation Movement; and we argue that, because of the nature of the contradictions in the Zimbabwe situation, this precludes neo-colonialism. Already two of the

"frontline" states—namely Mozambique and Angola—have emerged out of revolutionary armed struggle. Certainly, however, the liberation of Zimbabwe—and eventually also Namibia and South Africa—will be accompanied by momentous changes throughout most of Africa. In short, Southern Africa is undergoing a revolution which many of those who purport to be in support of it are ideologically precluded from understanding its full import.

iii) The development of the National Liberation Struggle in Zimbabwe in the course of which imperialist strategy outlined above has increasingly become exposed. Thus the African National Movement had almost settled for the constitutional arrangement offered by the imperialists in 1961; and a section of it would appear to have succumbed to the "detente" manoeuvre of 1974/75, while a good number of so-called African Nationalists have settled even for the "internal settlement". But in the following section we show how the Patriotic Front stands firm against imperialist manoeuvres in Zimbabwe. Furthermore, it is in the course of the intensification of the armed struggle that the Zimbabwean combatants and their mass base have come to understand the nature of imperialism. In particular, that the imperialists can claim commitment to genuine decolonization while in fact arming and conspiring with the white settlers in a determined effort to achieve a "settlement" that will leave the system of exploitation intact. Thus arises the dilemma for the imperialists: that they are opposed to racism while in fact profiting on racial domination (which allows for the super-exploitation of African labour) in colonial Zimbabwe (and in Southern Africa in general). In recent years, therefore, the opposition by the imperialists to racism in Southern Africa has increasingly appeared to be a mere window dressing; their economic (e.g. sanctions busting) and military (e.g. the increasing number of mercenaries) dealings with the white settlers increasingly exposed.

The relationship between all these forces outlined above can now be illustrated with brief notes on the London Constitutional Conference.

## VI. THE LONDON CONSTITUTIONAL CONFERENCE (1979):

The Commonwealth Heads of State Conference held in Lusaka, Zambia, in August, 1979, concluded its deliberations with an agreement that Britain would convene another "Constitutional Conference" on Zimbabwe. This agreement was hailed by most observers as a great diplomatic coup by President Nyerere of Tanzania and his fellow African Commonwealth Heads of State, namely the other leaders of the "Frontline" States, Presidents Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia and Sir Seretse Khama of Botswana; and including External Affairs



Commissioner Major-General H. Adefope of Nigeria (another African State which in recent years has assumed an important role in the affairs of the liberation struggle in Southern Africa). But these African leaders had begun their diplomatic offensive in the previous months since the "April Elections" (1979) which gave birth to a so-called "Zimbabwe-Rhodesia". The latter occasion, it should be remembered, gave momentum to the attempt, by the new Conservative Government in Britain, to recognize the Smith-Muzorewa regime as a fait-accompli. The failure of the British government to give reality to the latter objective should be attributed to a combination of:

- a) the general advance of the National Liberation Struggle in Zimbabwe against which the demise of the Smith-Muzorewa "Transitional Government" appeared more imminent than its friends (including the British government itself) had either expected or anticipated; and
- b) the diplomatic offensive - against the Smith-Muzorewa "Transitional Government" and in support of the Patriotic Front—by the "frontline" states, the Nigerian government and the Organization of African Unity as a whole, supported by socialist and progressive forces the world over.

Thus, in spite of the well-orchestrated spate of imperialist propaganda designed to prop up the Smith-Muzorewa regime and its "Zimbabwe-Rhodesia" creation, the "Frontline" States (and other supporters of the Patriotic Front) were able to:

- i) propagate (through their media and embassies) both the military successes of the Patriotic Front and the conflict within and around the Smith-Muzorewa "Transitional Government"; while simultaneously according and promising increasing material and moral support to the Patriotic Front.
- ii) increasingly show that black "Prime Minister" Muzorewa was no more than a puppet in the hands of real white settler power;
- iii) achieve overwhelming agreement among the O.A.U. Heads of State at the Summit in Monrovia (July 1979), not to recognize the Smith-Muzorewa "Transitional Government" while affirming their recognition of the Patriotic Front as the sole and legitimate representatives of the people of Zimbabwe.
- iv) threatened, particularly so on the eve of the Commonwealth Conference itself, to create a diplomatic furore (including, the possibility of

severing diplomatic relations with Britain and in the case of Nigeria, and Tanzania, withdrawing from the Commonwealth altogether) if the British government dared to recognize the Salisbury "Transitional Government"; and the Nigerian government also threatened to impose trade (particularly oil) boycott on Britain.

- v) ensured that there was a basic agreement, among the Commonwealth Heads of State, at least not to recognize the Salisbury government.

Besides these above mentioned factors which might be regarded as the catalyst, there were two other issues which created the basis for the Thatcher government's decision not to recognize the Salisbury regime—i.e. by agreeing to convene a constitutional conference involving both the latter regime and the Patriotic Front:

- a) The now "traditional" British policy on Zimbabwe as outlined above.
- b) The U.S. policy on Zimbabwe and Southern Africa as a whole: while this is no different from—and indeed guides—the British policy, it lays greater emphasis on the international nature of the Zimbabwean (and Southern Africa) situation. Any settlement of the "Zimbabwe Problem" must satisfy both the Patriotic Front and Africa as a whole; and thus contain Soviet (and Socialist) influence in the world. Southern Africa must be retained within the imperialist fold; the imperialist fold has to be prevented from contracting. Given the escalation of the guerrilla war (including, it is believed, CIA intelligence reports indicating that the Smith-Muzorewa regime was untenable even militarily)<sup>63</sup> and Africa's (particularly the "Frontline" States') hostility to the "April Elections" and to the new "Zimbabwe-Rhodesia", the U.S. government decided to withhold its recognition of the Salisbury government. Ultimately, it would have been surprising if the British government were to embark on a course of action contradictory to that of the leader and custodian of the imperialist system. The military implications for such a defiant policy on the part of Thatcher could be detected in the N.A.T.O. statement warning the British government against recognizing the Smith-Muzorewa "Transitional Government".

In short, the British government's decision to convene a "Constitutional Conference" on Zimbabwe (1979) represented an attempt to arrest the positive advance of the National Liberation struggle in Zimbabwe by a re-dedication to the "traditional" policy on Zimbabwe. This observation leads us to raise a basic question inherent in the above account. To what extent can the "Frontline"

States (and the O.A.U. in general) be considered a determinant force in the Southern African situation? For their part, President Nyerere and his African colleagues at the Commonwealth Conference (1979) believed no doubt that the British decision to convene the constitutional conference took the wind out of the sails of the "Transitional Government"; and so strengthened the diplomatic and political position of the Patriotic Front which appeared in decline ever since its failure to disrupt the "April Elections" satisfactorily. Yet the only significant aspect of the "diplomatic coup" by President Nyerere and his colleagues is that it only served to remind the British ruling class (and its imperialist allies) of its "responsibilities" in Zimbabwe. Accordingly, both President Nyerere's statement at the beginning, and the final communique at the end, of the Commonwealth conference in Lusaka (1979) was an acknowledgment—objectively speaking—of the imperialist strategy in Zimbabwe.

It was a return to the "six Principles" first outlined in the Tiger Talks of October 1966 but with President Nyerere and his colleagues now strongly endorsing the sixth principles: namely that a "settlement" of the "Zimbabwe Problem" must involve safeguards for the white settler minority. As the conservative British magazine, The Economist, commented on the Commonwealth Conference:

"The prospect of agreement had arisen dramatically after the speeches on August 3rd by President Nyerere and Mrs. Thatcher. They were similar enough to be almost interchangeable which may be a reflection on the usefulness of Lord Harlech's recent wanderings. Mr. Nyerere, for the first time in public, agreed that the white community's acceptance of majority rule in Zimbabwe was an advance; he did not rule out reserved seats for minorities, even out of proportion to the numbers involved..."(my emphasis)(64)

One might conclude that the diplomacy—and indeed the "foreign policy"—of President Nyerere and his African colleagues has, in this case at least, operated within the ambit of the political strategy of imperialism in the Zimbabwe situation. Mention has already been made in the foregoing pages about the coincidence between this political strategy of the imperialist on the one hand and the anti-colonial strategy of African states on the other, particularly in the tendency to regard the "Zimbabwe Problem" as purely a racial one. But one might also raise serious questions about the possibility of an independent foreign policy on the part of any neo-colonial state. Of course, it is often expedient for the imperialists to perpetrate the myth that African states have a determinant role to play in world affairs; and in this respect Kissinger made the famous "African problems must be solved by Africans" speech in Lusaka in 1976. This myth has

helped to conceal the full import of the Option Two policy. For as long as the African States appear to have a crucial say in the affairs of Southern Africa, imperialism can utilize this to effect their political strategy. In overall terms, however, imperialism hopes by perpetrating this myth of African independence and autonomy in world affairs, to de-emphasize the basic global contradiction between imperialism and socialism. The African states must be "saved" from—i.e. prevented from becoming socialist!

The belief that the "frontline" states have a determinant role in the Zimbabwe situation has also fed the speculation that the London Constitutional Conference will reach a settlement of the "Zimbabwe Problem". The Patriotic Front, so this argument goes, cannot afford to defy the "frontline" states who, it is concluded from the agreement at the Lusaka Conference, have already put the stamp of approval on a compromise solution. Equally, ultra-leftist commentaries have poured scorn on the "frontline" states as a whole, and dubbed the Patriotic Front's decision to attend the London Conference as reactionary and "selling out" to the imperialists. All this must be examined against the objective relation of forces in the Zimbabwe situation; and in the context of the historical development of the struggle itself.

One would like to begin with the contention that the role and decision of the "frontline" states at the Commonwealth Conference in Lusaka is a reflection of their objective weakness—both economically and militarily—in the struggle between imperialism and socialism. As has already been outlined above, this objective weakness is reflected in the nature of their diplomatic relations with imperialism; and also in their limited military and economic viability vis-a-vis the white South which is fortified by the imperialists themselves. Of course, two of the "frontline" states—namely Mozambique and Angola—have the ideological infrastructure and the history of their liberation struggle behind them to sustain them in their determination to back the Southern African Liberation struggle until final victory. But it is nevertheless generally correct to say that the "frontline" states as a whole are not strong enough, both economically and militarily, to bull-doze the white South. As has already been pointed out, their strength—however limited—is within the diplomatic field wherein they can, at least at this stage of the struggle, embarrass the imperialist over the latter's association with the white racists. In as far as the imperialists would like to argue that they are opposed to racism, they are thus put in the increasingly untenable position of trying to reach a "settlement" which is not overtly pro-white settlerism in Southern Africa. In this respect, it might be argued that a great difference between open recognition of the "Transitional

Government" by the imperialists; and the present situation wherein the position of the Smith-Muzorewa regime is weakened and the imperialists put on the defensive. An open recognition of the Smith-Muzorewa regime, it might be argued, would have immediately led to the attempt by the imperialists to make a reality of "Zimbabwe-Rhodesia". The Patriotic Front would eventually win, but in a situation wherein it would first have to recover the initiative, the cost would have been very high.

At any rate, it is clear that the diplomatic leverage of the "frontline" states is dependent upon the performance of the Patriotic Front in the battlefield. It is inconceivable that the "frontline" states would have had to compromise—consciously or unconsciously—with imperialism if the Patriotic Front had successfully disrupted the "April Elections" and created an altogether new situation. They are very sound reasons underlying this failure, of which the main is the considerable strength of the white settler army in the urban areas of Zimbabwe. Controlling as they do the media and actively supported by the imperialist press and radio, the white settlers were able to magnify the urban turn-out at the election and conceal the fact that the rural area is virtually under guerrilla control. But the escalation of the war in the period-subsequent to the "April Elections" and the gradual exposure of the "Zimbabwe-Rhodesia" bluff, was only part of the mounting evidence that the guerrillas were closing in and winning the confidence of the people.

Accordingly, not only the convening of the London Constitutional Conference but also the Patriotic Front's general standpoint in the course of the same conference would appear to bear out the contention, that "By virtue of its established military and political position the Patriotic Front has become the sole, legitimate and authentic representative of the people of Zimbabwe, without whose consent no settlement of whatever kind could ever succeed".<sup>65</sup> By convening the Conference, the British Government and its friends conceded that there can be no settlement of the Zimbabwe question without the Patriotic Front. Immediately, this put a lie to the imperialist propaganda of the previous months, whereby it was argued that the April Elections had created a new situation, that it had brought about genuine "Black Majority Rule", in the form of Muzorewa and his fellow collaborationists. Thus, it is significant that the so-called "Black Majority Rule" Government has now agreed to disband and prepare for a "more genuine" election with a view to bringing about a "more genuine" "Black Majority Rule" government. By its conduct at the London Conference—particularly over the land question—the Patriotic Front has shown that it is the only true representative of the masses of Zimbabwe. On

the other hand, Muzorewa has been exposed for the puppet that he is, with his masters even acknowledging this in their own paternalistic way; "wet putty", as Smith called him.

The Patriotic Front's presence at the London Conference has been dictated by the concrete realities of the regional and international politics of which the Zimbabwe Liberation Struggle is an integral part. But it has in the course of this conference strengthened its position both internationally and nationally: by helping to expose the imperialist machinations—as revealed by the British Government's conduct at the Conference—most of the Zimbabwe masses and other exploited and oppressed people the world over; and by undermining the reactionary nationalists at home. At any rate the Patriotic Front has lost nothing in attending the London Conference: if there are to be fair and free elections, all the indications are that the Patriotic Front will win; and if there is a breakdown in the London "Talks", the war will continue until final and inevitable victory for the liberation forces. But there can be no solution of the Zimbabwe "problem" which does not involve the liberation forces.

Yet the events of the London Conference put faith to the view that the "frontline" states are determinant force in the resolution of the Zimbabwe "problem". Reference has already been made to their diplomatic leverage exercised through support of the Patriotic Front and the liberation struggle in Southern Africa in general; and in exposing—at times much to the embarrassment of the imperialists—the racist dimension of the imperialist strategy. Yet all this appears determinedly limited against an increasingly defensive and aggressive imperialist strategy, as recent events will show. Presidents Nyerere and Kaunda appeared to score a diplomatic victory when, it is argued, they convinced the British Government to convene the London Constitutional Conference; and when, it is also argued, they coerced the Patriotic Front to attend that Conference. But the Presidents have had little or no influence on the essential developments of the conference and appear helpless against a British Government determined to have its way. More recently, we have seen the foreign policies of Zambia and Tanzania—with respect to the Zimbabwe question—reduced almost to mere moral pleas for "fairness" from the British imperialists. But as President Nyerere himself admitted,<sup>66</sup> the British Government—and imperialism in general—is, in the final analysis, more concerned about the position of the South African State than about the "frontline" states, in the attempts to resolve the Zimbabwe "problem" in its (imperialism's) favour. Accordingly, and with active imperialist support no doubt, the South African state has been carrying out its "sub-imperialist" role in the region.

South African military operations are not only designed to destroy the rear bases of the liberation struggle in Southern Africa as a whole, but also to "destabilize" these frontline states themselves. In the final analysis, only the intensification of the liberation struggle and not appeals to the imperialist sense of morality—will put an end to all this. In short, the national liberation struggles of Southern Africa constitute the origins and bases of the frontline states as a factor in African and international affairs.

## CONCLUSION

This brief analysis has sought to explain the historical reality of the Zimbabwe situation; and so helped expose the imperialist ideology whereby the "Zimbabwe Problem" so called is viewed as purely a racial conflict between "Whites" and "Blacks", and over which the imperialists are the impartial arbiter, extraneous to the "problem". The historical and socio-economic bases of this "problem" have been outlined; and the manner in which this "problem" will be resolved has also been sketched briefly. In particular, the "problem" can be resolved in the defeat, by the liberation forces, of imperialism. But this must begin with the destruction of the white settler colonial states. Whatever the case, the history of the struggle precludes any kind of lasting compromise between the white settler bourgeoisie and the African workers and peasants. There can be no real change—i.e. no settlement of the "problem"—as long as the white settler state (army, police force, civil service, etc) remains intact.

## FOOTNOTES:

1. The research for this work began two years ago in Botswana.
2. Often called the "Rhodesia Problem", the term "Zimbabwe Problem" has over the years assumed meaning against the background of successive abortive attempts to reach a "negotiated settlement".
3. In other words, the title should more appropriately read "The 'Zimbabwe Problem'". This was the title under which the verbal presentation of an abridged version of this paper was made as a ZANU(PF) contribution to the "Seminar on Liberation Struggles in Southern Africa, Latin America and the Middle East" which was held under the auspices of the International Relations Association, University of Dar es Salaam, 25, August, 1979.
4. For details of this see Spokesman Books, The Kissinger Study of Southern Africa (1975). The main provisions of the NSSM 39 document and their policy implications outlined by Ibbo Mandaza. "Know Your Enemy: Imperialist and Sub-Imperialist Operations," Public

Lecture delivered at the University College of Botswana in March 1977 and published in Botswana in March 1977 and published in Heritage (Journal of the History Society, U.B.S. Gaborone, 1977) No. 2. There are numerous other works on the subject of U.S. Policy in Southern Africa. For example: W. Pomeroy, "The 'New' US Policy in Africa," The African Communist, No. 6.

A. Seidman, "U.S. Multinational Corporations in South Africa", Journal of Southern African Affairs, Vol. 1, Special Issue, October, 1976.

A. Lake, The 'Tar Baby' Option: American Policy Toward Southern Rhodesia (New York, 1976).

5. Ibid.
6. Cited in the "Introduction"—to The Kissinger Study of Southern Africa—by Barry Cohen and Mohamed A. El-Khawas, p. 16.
7. Here we imply the three successive stages of capitalist imperialism as outlined for example in Dan Wadada Nabudere's Political Economy of Imperialism (Dar es Salaam-London 1977): (i) mercantile imperialism (ii) free trade imperialism; and (iii) modern monopoly imperialism. All these cover the modern history of Southern Africa, from 1652 when the first Europeans arrived at the Cape, to the present.
8. Op. cit. p. 8.
9. The State and Revolution, Selected Works, Vol. 2.
10. D.W. Nabudere, "Imperialism and the South African State", p. 27.
12. Monthly Review, 23, 9.
13. Ibid, p. 15.
14. For example, this was the interpretation of it emphasized by Roberto Vendrell (of the Montenero Peronist Movement of Argentina) in a general acceptance of the utility of the concept of "sub-imperialism" at the "Seminar on Liberation Struggles in Southern Africa, Latin America and the Middle East", International Relations Association, University of Dar es Salaam, 25 August, 1979.
14. Op. cit., p. 8.
15. See, for example, Ibbo Mandanza, op. cit., Ann and Neva Seidman, US Multinationals in Southern Africa (Dar es Salaam 1977); and see also note 4 above.
16. In addition to those referred to in notes 4 and 15 above, see also, for example: T. Shaw, "International Organizations and the Politics of Southern Africa: towards regional integration or liberation?" Journal of Southern African Studies, Vol. 3, No. 1, October, 1976; D. Hirschmann, "Southern Africa: Detente?" in Journal of Modern African Studies, Vol. 14, No. 1, 1976; Various (authors),



"Southern Africa and US Policy in the 70's", Issue, 5, 3, 1975; First, Steele and Guernsey, The South African Connection; R. Molteno, Africa and South Africa: South Africa's Outward Looking Policy. At the IDEP Conference (University of Dar es Salaam, December, 1975) on "Social and Economic Trends in Southern Africa", several authors dealt with this question in general; while others wrote on the subject of South African Sub-Imperialism. The following are the more significant in both categories: L. Cliffe, "Patterns of Collaboration and Conflict with South African sub-imperialism"; V.M. Nyathi, "South African Imperialism in Southern Africa"; S.A. Shah, "South African in Southern Africa and the Strategy of Imperialism," Z. Cervenka, "Western Europe and 'Detente' in Southern African"; John Coles and Robin Cohen, "South African Sub-imperialism".

17. Op. cit., pp. 2-3.
18. Ibid., p. 3.
19. Imperialism, The Social Sciences and the National Question.
20. "The Role of Transitional Corporations and Future Trends in Southern Africa."
21. Ibid. p. 399.
22. The case of Lule, of course, shows the dangers inherent in an ill-defined "united front"; and the Angola case as a whole shows how a "united front" precariously created had to break asunder with the revolutionary wing taking the initiative.
23. See, for example, Ibbo Mandaza, op. cit.
24. The best in this category are: Ann and Neva Seidman, US Multinationals in Southern Africa; and D.W. Nabudere, "Imperialism and the South African State". op. cit.
25. B. Cohen & M.A. El-Khawas, op. cit. p. 5.
26. D.W. Nabudere, "Imperialism and the South African State", p. 1.
27. The main Critiques of the concept of "sub-imperialism" in this respect are: D.W. Nabudere, in both his "Imperialism and the South African State" and Imperialism, The Social Sciences and the National Question; Yash Tandon op. cit.; and Omwony-Ojwok, "The National Question and Revolution in South Africa", Paper presented at the Southern African Universities Social Science Conference (SAUSSC), Lusaka, 1979.
28. Mainly the four authors, Robert Davies, David Kaplan, Mike Morris and Dan O'Meara in their article "Class Struggle and the periodization of the State in South Africa" R.A.P.E. No. 7, Special Issue on South Africa. The four authors are treated to a vitroilic attack by Nabudere in his paper cited above. But the criticism of these four would also apply to John Coles and Robin Cohen, op. cit.

29. This in fact a quotation, from the ANC (South Africa) paper (pp. 5-6) presented at the "Seminar on Imperialism and Revolution in Southern Africa" at the University of Dar es Salaam, January 17-19, 1975.
30. Op. cit., p. 29.
31. Op. cit., p. 32.
32. Ibid., p. 38.
33. "Imperialism and the South African State", p. 31.
34. Ibid.
35. Note Comrade Nabudere's reference to "sub-form": "We can identify within the capitalist state the republic and monarchy as forms of State. But within these forms we have "sub-forms". It is for this reason that within the imperialist republic/monarchy, which extends its rule over other countries you have within this imperialist nexus colonial semi-colonial and neo-colonial states quite apart from independent sovereign states which are enmeshed in this imperialist net of domination" (Ibid.).
36. This is one of the main criticisms levelled by both Comrades Tandon and Nabudere in their works cited above.
37. M.L. Baregu, "Notes on General Features of the National Liberation Movements", Paper presented at the "Seminar on National Liberation Struggles in Southern Africa, Latin American and the Middle East", International Relations Association, University of Dar es Salaam, 25 August, 1979, p. 6.

See footnote 38 next page

38. Ibid. It would not be too unfair to note that on this occasion of the seminar Comrade Baregu finally conceded that the concept of "sub-imperialism" has "utility" though it is imprecise on the "theoretical level". We concede that it is imprecise and emphasize its "utility" for the analysis of Southern Africa.
39. D.W. Nabudere, "Imperialism and the South African State", op. cit., p. 38.
40. Ibbo Mandaza, Education in Zimbabwe, "Economic and Social Survey of Zimbabwe" (A Patriotic Front Project), Geneva, 1979, esp. Chapter 2.
41. See for example the works listed in note 4 above.
42. Zimbabwe: Notes and Reflections on the Rhodesian Question (Maputo 1977), pp. 7-8.
43. This is an on-going Patriotic Front Project under the auspices of UNCTAD, Geneva. As the Report is not yet published, it is not possible to quote from the works of other researchers in this project without these individuals' permission. In general, however,

the "Social and Economic Survey" does provide the basis from which the Patriotic Front can go on to improve and begin to design a future social and economic policy.

44. See in particular: Giovanni Arrighi, "The Political Economy of Rhodesia" in G. Arrighi and J. Saul, Essays on the Political Economy of Africa, (New York 1973); Kenneth Good: "Settler Colonialism in Rhodesia" in African Affairs, 73, 190 (1976) "Settler Colonialism: Economic Development and Class Formation"; Ibbo Mandaza, op. cit., "White Racism, Black Nationalism and Marxist Ideology in Southern Africa", Paper for the African Association of Political Scientists (AAPS), Rabat, Morocco, September 1977, and "White Settler Ideology, African Nationalism and the 'Colour' Question in Southern Africa, 1900-1976" unpublished D.Phil Thesis, Department of Politics, University of York.
45. Ibbo Mandaza, "The Dialectical Relationship Between Society and Education: The Case of Zimbabwe", Paper presented at the Southern African Universities Social Science Conference (SAUSSC), Dar es Salaam, JUNE 23-27, 1978.
46. Ibbo Mandaza, Education in Zimbabwe, op. cit., esp. Chapter 3.
47. For a detailed account of the White Settler ideology, see Ibbo Mandaza, White Settler Ideology ... op. cit.
48. Op. cit., p. 399.
49. Zimbabwe: Notes and Reflections on the Rhodesian Question, op. cit. p. 36. See also Ibbo Mandaza, "White settler Ideology..." op. cit., esp. Chapter 11.
50. Ibid.
51. In our analysis we differ from this conclusion indicated in the words underlined (by me). This might indeed be true objectively in terms of the likely result of this process, but the restriction of promotion in areas of "personnel" and "public relations" is a reflection of the tendency whereby the white settlers have always tried to monopolize certain professions while leaving others open (Ibbo Mandaza, "White Settler Ideology..." op. cit., Chapter II). Besides, "personnel" and "public relations" are areas which as early as the late '50's were already held by some Africans, particularly in large companies many of whom have a large number of African employees. We would agree with the view that the ostensible objective in this policy—then as now—is to "control workers' demands" using their "own people".
52. Again, we would differ with the assertion contained in the underlined (by me) line. On the contrary, this tendency is a reflection of the white settler determination to monopolize certain of the key professions. This is a tendency hardly congenial to the interests of international capital; and certainly contradictory to the major neo-colonial strategy which is to man the key posts with Africans (with black faces!). There would, of course, be a measure of difference between giving these key posts to (white) representative of international capital; but this is the potential danger—or the real

unlikelihood of it ever happening—in leaving white settlers in such positions. Our view would tend to be strengthened by the discussion that follows.

53. Op. cit., p. 34.
54. News Bulletin, Voice of South Africa, 30th August, 1979.
55. See, for example, our comments in notes 51 and 52.
56. Briefly these are:-
  - 1) Unimpeded progress to majority rule to be maintained and guaranteed.
  - 2) Guarantees against retrogressive amendment of the constitution.
  - 3) Immediate improvement in the political status of the Africans.
  - 4) Progress towards ending racial discrimination.
  - 5) Any basis proposed for independence must be acceptable to the people of Rhodesia as a whole.
  - 6) Regardless of race, no oppression of the majority by the minority or of the minority by the majority.(Keesing's Contemporary Archives, p. 21755A.)
57. Daily News (Tanzania), 15 August, 1979.
58. As The Economist, the imperialist magazine, noted: "Rhodesia-Zimbabwe's new constitution, it is true, is a zebra-like curiosity, with wide stripes of continuing white influence superimposed, for a time, on the principle of black majority rule. But it has always been the aim of British policy (and of American Policy too, since the Americans have had one) to bring Rhodesia to independence on a way that keeps a place for the white community. This requires a transition that will reassure white as well as black". ("Towards recognition" May, 26, 1979).
59. NSSM 39, p. 66.
60. Keesing's Contemporary Archives, p. 23888.
61. NSSM 39, pp. 66-70.
62. Ibbo Mandaza, "White Racism, Black Nationalism..." op. cit.
63. Newsweek, 5-11 May, 1979 pp. 22-25.
64. "All's Well that ends well", 11 August, 1979.
65. "Statement of the Basic Political Position of the Patriotic Front" Dar es Salaam, 20 August, 1979.
66. Daily News, 13 November 1979.