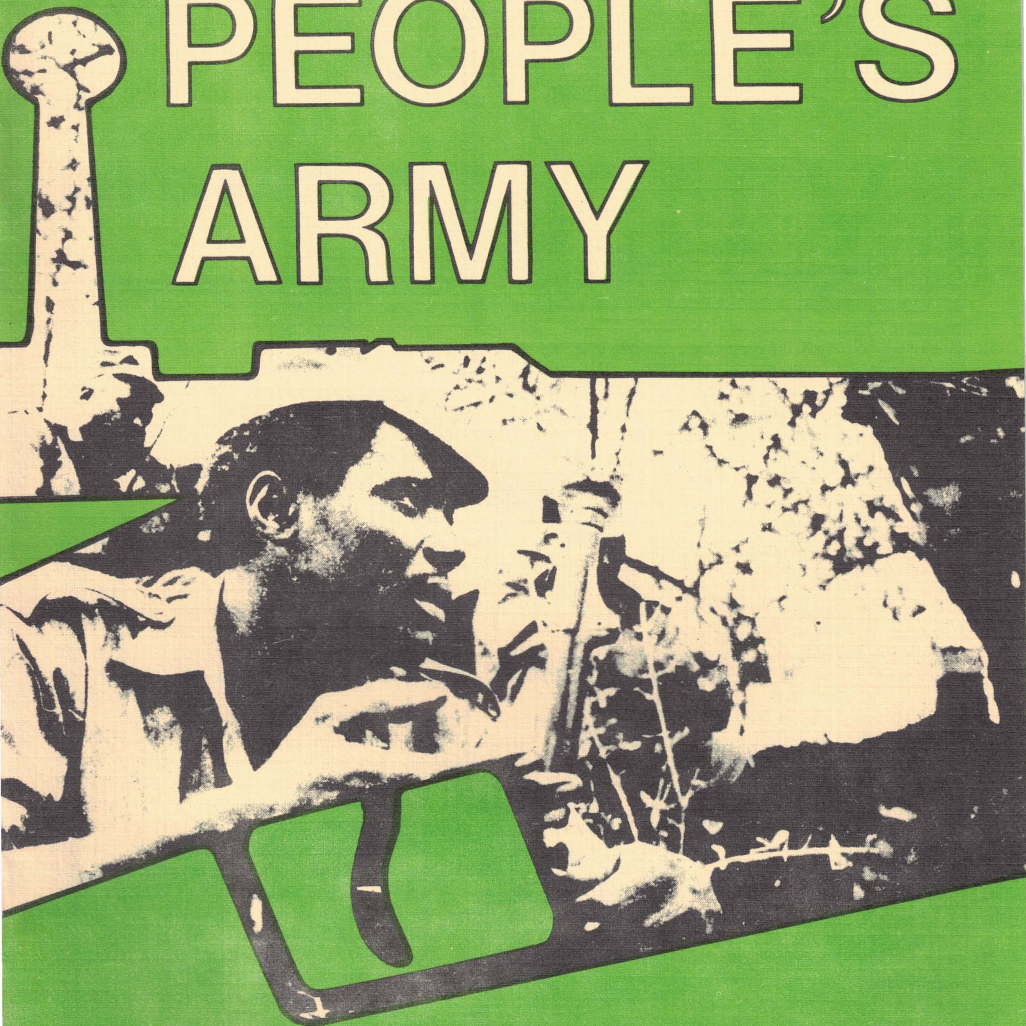
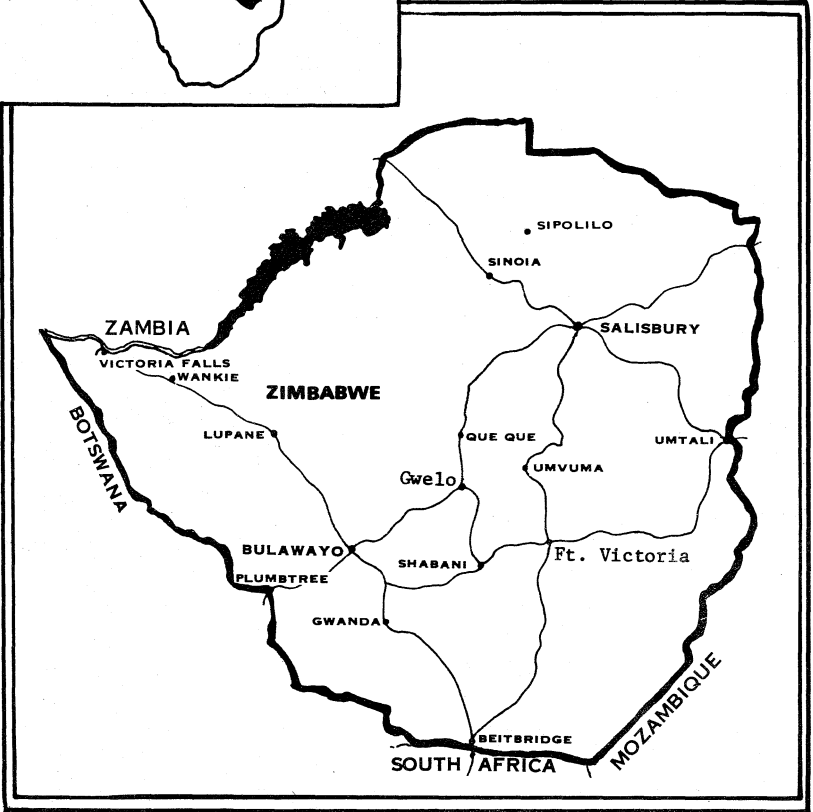
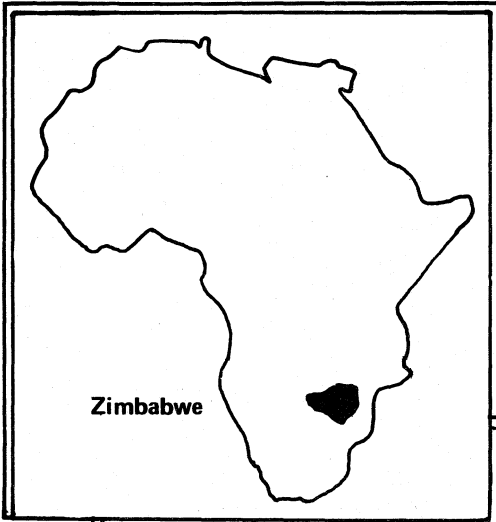


ZIMBABWE PEOPLE'S ARMY



The First Published Statement by ZIPA,
the New Zimbabwe Liberation Force

ZIMBABWE



Introduction

For years black Africa played only a peripheral role in the designs of US foreign policy. Concerned Americans complained about the absence of a coherent Africa policy and African diplomats openly resented the lack of US attention while Henry Kissinger shuttled to and fro in other parts of the world and showed little apparent interest in the affairs of the continent. After all, American economic interests in Africa were limited and politically, according to the Secretary of State's National Security Study Memorandum of 1969, capitalism had things well in hand. Neocolonialism was at its strongest, the Soviets had little influence and the colonial and white minority regimes in the South were there to stay - or so it seemed.

Last week Kissinger ended his first African "shuttle," the Pentagon is complaining about "Russian infiltration" and colonialism has been eliminated. With the political and military defeat of the US-backed forces in Angola earlier this year and the consolidation of revolutionary regimes in that country and Mozambique, the anti-imperialist trend in southern Africa is now stronger than ever. And it is spreading rapidly; guerrilla war and riots are threatening the racist status quo in Zimbabwe (Rhodesia), Namibia (South West Africa) and South Africa where \$1.5 billion in US investment through three hundred American corporations belie the official US "abhorrence" of apartheid. African peoples' aspirations for liberation are today endangering capitalist and "free world" hegemony. That is the source of this sudden American concern.

Zimbabwe, where two hundred seventy thousand Whites under the leadership of Ian Smith precariously rule six million Africans is now the weakest link in the oppressors' chain. The Smith regime unilaterally declared its independence from Britain in 1965 in order to preserve the system of white privilege and has since then been subject to sanctions which have considerably eroded its economic strength. Rhodesia's isolation increased dramatically with the 1974 collapse of Portuguese colonialism and the subsequent independence of neighboring Mozambique. As the sun thus began to set on the system of minority rule, even the South African government, Smith's staunch ally, began to apply pressure on the intransigent settlers to defuse a potentially explosive situation which could set off the apartheid powderkeg, as well.

Organized Zimbabwean resistance to the settler regime goes back twenty years. Several mass organizations led by Joshua Nkomo were successively banned before the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) went underground to launch sporadic sabotage and guerrilla campaigns in the 1960's. A split-off from ZAPU, the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) also worked clandestinely inside the country and was responsible for the first effective and sustained guerrilla campaign, 1972-1974, which shook the Smith regime. Nevertheless, the lack of unity among the Zimbabwean nationalist leaders and their isolation from the masses of their people - many were in jail, others in exile - contributed to the longevity of settler rule. The 1974 merger of

the various organizations into the African National Council (ANC) under the presidency of Bishop Abel Muzorewa was an attempt to overcome such differences. Unfortunately, it amounted to little as the intrigues and maneuvering of the past persisted and the political leadership proved incapable of pursuing the armed liberation struggle, the only means to effectively end white minority rule.¹

The formation of the Zimbabwe People's Army (ZIPA) by the guerrillas of the former ZANU and the former ZAPU has now taken the Zimbabwe liberation struggle to a higher stage. By carefully nursing the initial, frail unity among the militants, by rebuilding the liberation army and launching a tremendous guerrilla campaign that presently covers most of the country, ZIPA has put the initiative back in the hands of the Zimbabwean people. Over the past eight months the liberation struggle has taken new dimensions through ZIPA's advances. This interview with Comrade Machingura by the Mozambique Information Agency of the FRELIMO government gives us a glimpse of the nature of these advances and the organization behind them. It makes clear that lessons have been drawn from the past; that the separation between political and military leadership is in the process of being superseded and that the time for nationalist "personality politics" is gone. The liberation struggle is a class struggle: "We are fighting against a system that they (the Smith regime) are perpetuating and defending. If any Zimbabweans collude with them, . . . we shall make no distinctions on the basis of color."

This, of course, meets the challenge of "the Kissinger plan" head on. To the tune of \$2 billion in "aid" and investment, the US, Britain and their allies want to bail out the reticent settlers and turn Zimbabwe into a neocolonial paradise. The plan was designed to attract the "acceptable" leaders among the nationalists, stop the armed struggle and isolate the revolutionary elements of the liberation movement. But the momentum of ZIPA's offensive has put the movement in a position of great strength and has enabled the former ZAPU and ZANU to completely reject Kissinger's scheme and form a "patriotic front" under the joint leadership of Joshua Nkomo and Robert Mugabe. Though their exact relationship to ZIPA remains unclear, the dynamic of the armed struggle is clearly moving the Zimbabweans toward a decisive level of unity.

The struggle for Zimbabwe has repercussions far beyond southern Africa. Imperialism is fighting its rearguard battle on the sub-continent because it can ill afford another setback on the heels of Indo-China. The liberation of these former reservoirs of international capitalism will have, in the long run, a profound negative impact on the economies of the industrialized metropolises and will help create the conditions for higher levels of class and anti-imperialist struggle here at home. That is why Kissinger went to Africa. The struggle in Zimbabwe therefore becomes our struggle. With imperialist involvement increasing it is urgent that we raise the demand: "HANDS OFF ZIMBABWE!" while following the internationalist example of countries like Cuba and Mozambique in extending to our struggling Zimbabwean comrades political and material support as Comrade Machingura requests.

October 9, 1976

Liberation Support Movement

1. See "Zimbabwe: Untangling the Web" in *LSM NEWS*, Vol. 3, No. 2, Summer 1976 for a more detailed exposition.



ZIMBABWE PEOPLE'S ARMY

**Interview with ZIPA Deputy Political Commissar
Dzinashé Machingura by the Mozambique
Information Agency, 22 September 1976**

Q. What is the Zimbabwe People's Army and how was it formed?

A. The Zimbabwe People's Army is a product of the voluntary merger of the military wing of the former ZANU (ZANLA) and the military wing of the former ZAPU (ZIPRA). It was formed for the purpose of rescuing the Zimbabwe liberation struggle from the chaotic situation that had been created by the ANC leadership. It is an armed body of men, which was formed for the purpose of resuming the armed struggle, intensifying this armed struggle and carrying it to its logical conclusion and finally establishing a just and popular socio-political order serving the interests of the people of Zimbabwe.

After the Lusaka agreement in December 1974, the four nationalist organizations fighting for the liberation of Zimbabwe came together under one umbrella, the ANC. But in the course of time, the leadership which was formed at that time through the Lusaka agreement failed to organize itself in negotiating with the Smith regime and failed to set in motion machinery that would prosecute and realize the liberation of Zimbabwe through armed struggle.

After the fighters had realized the incompetence of the ANC leadership they took it upon themselves to organize themselves, to reconstitute themselves into an army that would fight for the independence of the Zimbabwe people. The combatants from both former ZANU and former ZAPU agreed to form a joint military command that would lead the armed struggle. After this agreement they approached the Liberation Committee of the Organization of African Unity and the front-line Heads of State, who appreciated and actively supported this joint military command.

The joint military command was formed on the understanding that the liberation of Zimbabwe could only be realized through an arduous armed struggle; secondly, on the understanding that the traditional political leadership of Zimbabwe had divided the people of Zimbabwe. And it became quite clear to us that if we were ever going to be able to prosecute a successful armed struggle we could not be a party to either of the two rival ANC factions, the Muzorewa faction or the Nkomo faction. We realized that the time for personality politics had long passed. It was this approach to politics which had divided the Zimbabwe people.

Q. Is ZIPA only an army, or does it have a political structure and leadership?

A. ZIPA is an army in the traditional sense of the word. But ZIPA is a unique and revolutionary army in the sense that it has a strategic role of transforming itself into a political movement. The ZIPA structure accommodates the shouldering of both

the military and the political tasks of the revolution. We have, within the ZIPA structure, a political department exclusively charged with the responsibility of shouldering the political tasks that are normally shouldered by a revolutionary political organization.

In the history of revolutionary struggles we find examples that closely approximate our own situation. For example, in the course of their struggles, at one time or another, depending on the stage of their revolution, the political leadership was identical to the military leadership of the organizations fighting for freedom in China, in Cuba, in Korea, in Vietnam and in many other countries.

But we have to establish a formal political structure in order to give better political direction to the armed body that is now fighting inside Zimbabwe. And moves to do this are already well underway, moves to transform this organization into a revolutionary vanguard for the people's struggle.

Q. What are the political goals of the struggle? For example, ZIPA is fighting for freedom but how do you define this freedom?

A. We are not mercenaries. We are not simply soldiers. We are political soldiers. We are fighting for clearly defined political objectives. Our political goal is to overthrow national oppression in Zimbabwe, to put an end to the system of exploitation of man by man within Zimbabwe and to create a system that will serve the people of Zimbabwe. When we say that ZIPA is fighting for freedom we mean that ZIPA is fighting for political freedom. By political freedom we mean that ZIPA is fighting for the political rights, the economic rights and the cultural rights of the Zimbabwean people; to put the Zimbabwean people in a position of authority and in a position of dominance in these spheres. Through realizing the people's democratic freedoms we release and set in motion the innovative and creative potential of the masses of Zimbabwe.

Q. Has it been possible to establish liberated or semi-liberated zones in Zimbabwe?

A. We can say that at this stage we have managed to establish semi-liberated zones in the sense that, although the political and administrative infrastructure is not yet fully organized, the enemy has no control whatsoever in these areas. The masses are fully mobilized and organized, and are fully behind the armed struggle that is now being waged by the freedom fighters. We also feel that establishing liberated areas at this stage would be presenting the enemy with many targets vulnerable to air strikes.

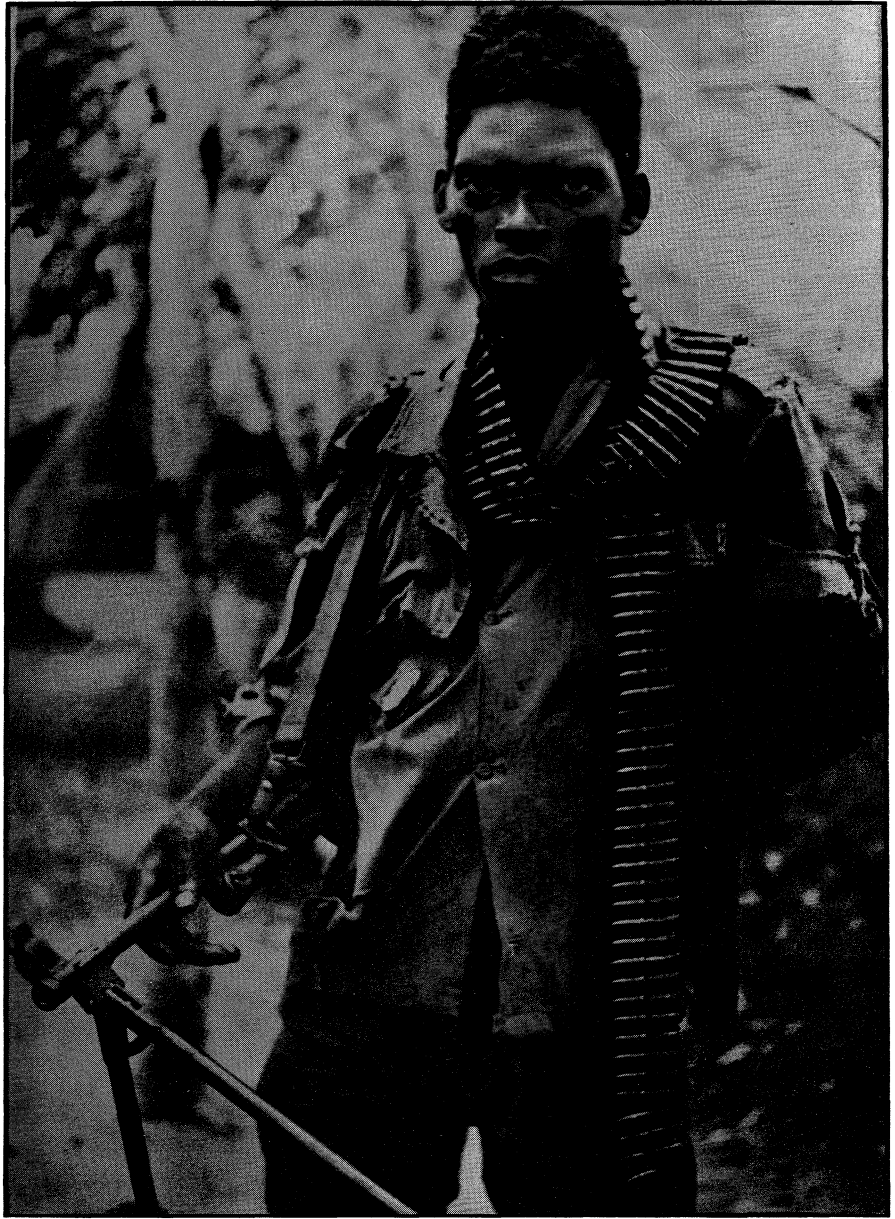
Q. How far has ZIPA gone in organizing a political infrastructure inside Zimbabwe to mobilize the people?

A. The masses are organized in units and they are democratically conducting their day-to-day business under the leadership of ZIPA. In each unit we have a section of dedicated people and we have also managed to establish mass organizations - for students, for children, for women, peasants and workers.

Q. Does this political structure extend into the cities?

A. Our strategy has been that of fighting from the countryside, encircling the cities. As far as the rural areas are concerned, this structure is quite organized. But because of the existing conditions it has not been possible for these organizations to come out into the open in the cities. They are still clandestine. But they are there.

Q. What about the possibilities for urban guerrilla struggle?



Freedom Fighter/ FRELIMO Photo

A. We do not conceive of urban guerrilla warfare as being divorced from the guerrilla war we are carrying out in the countryside. Urban guerrilla warfare can only play a supplementary role to the guerrilla operations organized in the countryside.

Q. But are you considering the possibility of that kind of action?

A. We do not rule it out.

Q. What does ZIPA see as the objective of the recent Rhodesian massacre of more than 670 Zimbabwean refugees at Nyazonia in Mozambique?

A. Principally, to internationalize the conflict. They hoped that the People's Republic of Mozambique would react rashly and invade Rhodesia, which would have created a pretext for Smith to call for support from his Western allies.

At the same time the attack was also aimed at creating a rift between FRELIMO and the Zimbabwean freedom fighters. It was meant to show that by supporting the Zimbabwean freedom fighters and accommodating Zimbabwean refugees the Mozambican government is actually inviting attacks by the Smith regime. The idea was to force the Mozambican government to oppose the guerrillas by creating the idea that in an all-out-war between Mozambique and Rhodesia, the young People's Republic would stand to lose.

Q. The regime regularly claims that the freedom fighters have committed atrocities against the African population. What do you have to say about this?

A. The Smith regime brands us as terrorists, therefore they have to find something to justify this definition. But we are a people's army. We are not terrorists. Civilians are not the targets of our attacks.

However the Smith regime itself has organized the Selous Scouts to carry out atrocities against the people while masquerading as freedom fighters. This is widespread, but not so much in the semi-liberated zone, because we are in control there and the masses can clearly distinguish the true freedom fighters from the sham freedom fighters of the regime.

Q. Many Zimbabweans are fighting in the Smith regime's army. Why, and what is ZIPA's attitude to them? And are any of them deserting to join the guerrillas?

A. It is true that thousands of Zimbabweans are fighting in the racist regime's army. This is because of blackmail and conscription. The people are blackmailed into serving the Smith regime in search of social security. They want to guarantee the security of their families. They want to earn a livelihood and have no alternative, with all other employment opportunities denied them, but to serve within the racist army. It has also become clear of late that the Smith regime is actually conscripting Africans into its army by force.

ZIPA's attitude is that those who join Smith's army are misguided Zimbabweans. They need to be doubly liberated. First they need to be liberated from the national oppression. They are oppressed just like any other Zimbabwean. Secondly, they need to be liberated from the oppression they suffer within the racist army. They occupy an inferior position in the racist army. So we sympathize with them. Our struggle is to liberate all oppressed Zimbabweans in Zimbabwe today.

Recently the number of deserters from the racist army joining the ZIPA ranks has risen to astronomical proportions. Hundreds and hundreds of them come to our ranks. Some of them with their weapons.

Q. You said the black soldiers in the Rhodesian racist army are discriminated against. In what way?

A. About a couple of months ago the Smith regime published the report of a commission of inquiry into racial discrimination. This revealed quite candidly that the African soldiers in Smith's army occupy a very inferior position in the sense that up to now none of them has risen to the position of an officer, all of them are either non-commissioned officers or simply privates. So this in itself is tantamount to exploitation.

In addition, there is racial discrimination within the army itself. Some facilities that are available to Whites are not available to African soldiers. And also European private soldiers do not show respect to their seniors who are Africans.

In the Rhodesian racist army today, the most dangerous tasks are assigned to the Africans and, in most cases, the African soldiers are used as minesweepers and as reconnaissance personnel for the racist army. But, of course, the racist army also mistrusts the African soldiers very much. They doubt their loyalty. As such they cannot give them freedom of action to organize action against the guerrillas. They can only work under the supervision of their white superiors.

Q. How does ZIPA define the enemy? What is the target of the freedom fighters' bullets?

A. A clear understanding of the character of our society, the nature of our revolution and the fundamental contradiction in our society is essential to the definition of the enemy. Our society is essentially a colonial society and as such we have to wage a national democratic revolution to overthrow national oppression. This national democratic revolution will serve to reconcile the principal contradiction in Zimbabwe which is characterized by the domination and oppression of the vast majority of the Zimbabwean people by a small, minority, racist, reactionary clique of Whites.

From this we can say that all those who are opposed to the liberation and the independence of the Zimbabwean people are our enemies. These comprise the Smith racist regime and the imperialist powers that back it, puppet Africans serving the Smith regime, and all those who are opposed to the independence of the Zimbabwean people. The target of the freedom fighters' bullets is the system of exploitation and the capitalist enterprises and armed personnel which serve to perpetuate it.

Q. It is clear that since the beginning of this year the ZIPA forces have stepped up the armed struggle. Has this been done only in terms of the geographical area affected by the war, that is to say, is it only a matter of extending the war to a wider area, or has the war been intensified in the sense of achieving higher combat effectiveness?

A. It is true that there has been considerable expansion of the geographical area covered by our guerrilla struggle. But the quantitative growth of the war has also given rise to the qualitative development and transformation of this same war. This has become necessary in accordance with the changes in the enemy's situation. The enemy is now generally on the defensive. The enemy has now employed the strategy of not dispersing its forces, so as to minimize the danger of ambushes on patrols and to minimize the dangers of surprise attacks on small encamped units without permanent fortification. This has forced the enemy to concentrate its forces in large fortified camps and to deploy its forces in big convoys. To continue the war we have to develop it to a stage of attacking the garrisoned enemy and to raise the level of tactics to ambushing large enemy convoys. Therefore there was an imperative need for a qualitative change in our struggle. This we have realized and carried out through operating in bigger military units, which has been possible because of the qualitative development of the consciousness of the masses, who are serving as our camouflage, as our intelligence system and as our quartermasters.

Q. But hundreds of thousands of people have been moved into concentration camps in Zimbabwe. This must create problems when the people want to help the guerrillas. How do the fighters and the people deal with this problem?

A. Mass participation and mass support in guerrilla warfare is an indispensable condition for victory. It is the strategic aim of the Smith regime, like its predecessors in Vietnam, Mozambique, Angola and other countries, to try to isolate the guerrillas from the masses by establishing concentration camps, the so-called "protected villages." However, the Smith regime has now overtaxed its manpower to such an extent that it doesn't have adequate manpower to police the concentration camps. So there are always loopholes.

Our struggle is a popular struggle, and it enjoys abundant support from the broad masses of the Zimbabwean people. We have a fairly large army, which runs into thousands. Without the support of the masses it would be very difficult to maintain such a big army. We get food, clothing and whatever kind of assistance we need from the masses. Some governments find it a burden to maintain an army only half the size of ours. But we are capable of maintaining this army because of the support we get from the broad masses of the people.

Q. The Smith regime's war communiques announce their casualties in terms of one or two deaths in an action. They have never admitted losing more than five soldiers in a single day. Does this bear any relation to the real situation?

A. Not at all. It is merely a camouflage to disguise their losses. If they were to admit the truth it would demoralize their supporters and their fighters. So they try as much as possible to minimize their losses and at the same time to exaggerate those of the guerrillas.

Q. There have been some reports about Israeli military cooperation with the Smith regime. Have you any concrete information about this?

A. It is not only the Israelis who are cooperating with the Smith racist regime in oppressing the Zimbabwean people. There are a large number of mercenaries from a variety of Western countries who are actively assisting the Smith regime in oppressing the Zimbabwean people. So we don't see this in isolation. We know, we have evidence that there are mercenaries from Israel and many other countries operating with Smith against us.

Q. Does ZIPA today have any relationship to the traditional nationalist organizations of Zimbabwe?

A. ZIPA is not in negation to the former traditional organizations in Zimbabwe. What ZIPA aims at is assimilating, synthesizing and espousing the progressive revolutionary content of these former organizations.

Q. What is the basis of disunity among the former leaders of the nationalist organizations? Is it tribal, political or what?

A. As far as we are concerned, the basis of disunity among the former leaders of the nationalist organizations is political ambition and power struggle, though this might manifest itself as tribal differences or political differences. Tribal, in the sense that in creating a power base they seek to place people belonging to their own ethnic group in key positions, in strategic positions, so as to prepare a secure power base which serves as a springboard to gain political ascendancy. This disunity also manifests itself politically, inasmuch as they put forward political slogans to try to win the support of the broad masses of the people. But we should emphasize that their differences are essentially not ideological at all. Ideologically they belong to the same camp.

Q. An economic plan has been drawn up with the collaboration of the United States

government concerning economic guarantees for settlers after the formation of an African government in Zimbabwe. What are your views on this plan?

A. First of all, this so-called economic plan is a direct result of the intensification of the armed struggle in Zimbabwe. The United States and other imperialist powers see their interests threatened and they are determined to stamp out the revolutionary flame before it is too late. The so-called economic plan aims at creating a socio-economic climate conducive to the continued exploitation of the Zimbabwean people under "majority" rule.

We are totally opposed to the so-called economic plan. It falls far short of our objectives. We are not fighting for economic or political reforms. We are fighting for the total transformation of the Zimbabwean society.

To us the economic plan is doubly ridiculous. First, the United States wishes to pay compensation to the racists for the termination of their exploitation. Secondly, the United States purports to be supporting the struggle for majority rule, while the US government itself is oppressing millions and millions of people in its own country. They would do better to make use of the money in alleviating the economic burden of the broad masses in their own country, who live a life far worse than that of Rhodesian Whites.

Q. Do you think anything will come out of Kissinger's and Vorster's "shuttle diplomacy" in Africa?

A. They are definitely "shuttling" with a purpose, working out a plan to sabotage our struggle. We think they will produce some formula aimed at containing the struggle. But we are prepared for them and we are quite sure that whatever they do will fail. All their schemes will be stillborn.

Q. What is ZIPA's attitude toward elements in the traditional leadership of the Zimbabwe nationalist movement who compromise themselves by supporting imperialist plans to continue the system of exploitation after majority rule?

A. We are not racialists. We are not fighting against the Smith regime simply because they are white. We are fighting against the system that they are perpetrating and defending. If any Zimbabweans collude with them in oppressing the Zimbabwean people, we shall bundle them together, we shall make no distinction on the basis of color.

Q. There is a great deal of international support for the Zimbabwean liberation struggle. What form would you like to see this solidarity taking? What material support do the Freedom Fighters need and how should it be channeled?

A. We would like to see this support encompassing primarily political support and moral support, material support, financial support and diplomatic support. The material support we receive from the international community should serve to create a material base for self-reliance within our own army. We would like to receive more arms, training facilities as long as they help us to be more self-reliant. As far as support for our struggle is concerned, because of the geographic and strategic location of Mozambique, we would appreciate it if all aid was channelled through Mozambique to the fighters.

Among our material needs is medical aid. The need for medicines has been compounded by the development of the war inside Zimbabwe. We need medicine not only for the fighters, but also for the masses who are in our operational area. The Smith regime is no longer servicing them with any medicine. We are catering for their medical needs. What we would like to receive in this field is medicines to cure the common diseases suffered by our masses in the operational areas; diseases like malaria, diarrhoea, cholera and many others.

We would also like to have support for educational facilities. We have young people who need to be educated since they had no opportunity for this in our country.

"The target of the freedom fighters' bullets is the system of exploitation and the capitalist enterprises and armed personnel which serve to perpetuate it."

"The United States and other imperialist powers see their interests threatened and they are determined to stamp out the revolutionary flame before it is too late. They aim at creating a climate conducive to the continued exploitation of the Zimbabwean people under 'majority rule.' "

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