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**PRIME MINISTER
ADDRESSES ZIMBABWE
ECONOMIC SOCIETY
SEPTEMBER 8, 1980**



ZIMBABWE

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The following is the text of a speech by the Prime Minister, Mr. Robert Mugabe, when he opened the Economic Symposium held by the Zimbabwe Economic Society at the University of Zimbabwe on September 8, 1980.

I regard it as indeed a great honour to have been invited by the Zimbabwe Economic Society to open its Economic Symposium.

Only a week ago, I had the privilege of opening what proved to be an exceedingly successful Economic Resources Conference, organised by the Zimbabwe Promotion Council. Admittedly the themes and objectives of the two conferences are different, for whereas the Zimbabwe Promotion Council sought, through the agency of its conference, to attract private investment in order to induce economic expansion, growth and development, your society, appears aimed at creating a pool of economic ideas which might well become to government a dependable intellectual resource in the formulation of its economic policy. In both cases, however, the interest is the same.

It is as explicitly economic as it is national, and, being national, underlines the implicit desire of groups of nationals committed to the success of our newly acquired independence to consolidate that independence and ensure its irreversible success.

I am greatly impressed by your assortment of speakers, several of whom come from other African countries and are thus in a position to lay their own experiences at our disposal. There is, however, the unfortunate absence of economists or participants from socialist countries outside Africa, a fact which might restrict the orientation of the views and ideas emanating from this symposium nevertheless, my government looks forward to the conclusions of the symposium with great interest.

As my party, the Zimbabwe African National Union of the Patriotic Front, set out to participate in the March elections, it enunciated the guiding principles of its general economic policy as the translation of people's political power into people's economic power on the basis of socialist principles.

The political history of this country, beginning with European settlement in 1890, going up to 1979, has been one of continual conflict between two forces diametrically opposed to each other. The conflict situation arising as it did from the phenomenon of

imperialism and colonialism, was built around a matrix of contradictions so highly antagonistic that they exploded into one of the bloodiest protracted wars Africa has experienced. What was this matrix of contradictions and how did it operate?

True to Karl Marx's postulation, imperialism and colonialism in this country, were certainly the political instrument or modality of extending capitalism to our region. Accordingly, in 1890, Southern Rhodesia became the territorial property of a company — the chartered British South Africa Company — the sovereignty of Britain being more theoretical and nominal than practical and effective. The newcomers, all of European extraction, except their wagon drivers and house-servants, from the very onset sought to maintain a separate racial and social identity progressively perpetuated and entrenched by a protective political, economic, legal and social system which, as it yielded maximum advantages for the white minority settler group, created maximum disadvantages for the black majority community.

The seizure of political power institutions, and physical instruments of power, reinforced the configuration of separate relationships of white black, ruler and subject, commercial farmer and peasant farmer, master and servant, the bourgeois class and the working class, and generally the rich and poor, with a line clearly drawn between them.

By 1979, when the Lancaster House Agreement, which produced our Independence Constitution, was worked out, the national liberation war had been raging for nearly 15 years as a deliberate means of solving these contradictions and bringing political power into the hands of the people. If the minority white community were to be transformed into non-racialists and cease to be masters and to enjoy the exclusive monopoly of wealth and control over the country's natural resources, and if the blacks were to cease to be racial inferiors, emerge from the status of impoverished peasants and workers and begin to enjoy an equitable distribution of wealth and ownership of the country's resources and means of production, we reasoned as revolutionary nationalist leaders that only a national armed struggle could do it.

But we also reasoned that there would have to be stages in the continuous process of liberation until economic liberation was achieved.

The first stage in the process of searching for a permanent solution to the contradictions that had combined in creating national grievances was that of reformist nationalism of the 1950s, which was characterized by predominantly non-violent means.

The second stage was that of revolutionary nationalism, beginning in the 1960s and characterized by armed struggle and which in turn produced the third stage of national independence.

The third stage is thus one of political power or the national democratic stage, placing the physical instruments of power democratically in the hands of the people through their properly elected government. It is my belief that all national forces committed to our national independence and democratic system be united regardless of their political and ideological differences.

This third stage, which has yielded the instrument of national independence, must now lead us to the fourth economic stage, when economic power should rest in the hands of the Zimbabwean people. I am sure it is this stage, which is as much the concern of this symposium as indeed it is the concern of my government. My government has already stated that its ideological direction, as it sets in motion the socio-economic process of the current stage, is decidedly socialist.

The rationale of our socialist thought and our motivation are simple to understand. Nature has placed at the disposal of man, that is, the whole of mankind, the natural resources of the entire world within his reach. Indeed, even the Bible informs us (Genesis 1) that after God had created heaven and earth, the grass, trees, the birds, the great whales, cattle and other beasts and creatures, He finally made man and gave him dominion "over the fish of the sea and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle and over all the earth, and every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth."

It is men together who have dominion over natural resources. Our concept of socialism thus recognizes this phenomenon of collective ownership of the country's resources. Indeed, our own African tradition of communal ownership of the land, forests, rivers, game, birds, fish and other natural things, does no less and is similar to the Biblical view. In fact our collective tradition precedes by centuries the socialist or communist theory of Karl Marx.

The matrix of our historical contradictions did not vanish into thin air as of midnight, April 17, this year, we pulled down the Union Jack and hoisted our multi-coloured national flag to signal the advent of Independence. What the reality of independence has so far done to us is to affect the relations of political power and transform them in favour of the broad masses of Zimbabwe.

What the reality of independence has not done, and is yet to do, is affect socio-economic relations so they too can transform in favour of the majority of our people.

For, if that does not happen, our society shall remain stuck with the socio-economic injustices and imbalances of our colonial past, together with their ugly contradictions and antagonisms, colonialism, in those circumstances, will only have let go its political reign while still holding fast to its economic reins.

President Julius Nyerere has, in his usual humorous manner put the position dramatically as he writes on "Third World Negotiating Strategy" in the *Third World Quarterly* of April, 1979:

"The Imperialists may have said, when they colonized us, that they wanted to Christianize us; some said they wanted to civilize us. But the real reasons were different. Those reasons became apparent when they discovered that it was cheaper to have the colonies govern themselves. You did not have to pay the governors and the civil servants. They could pay their own presidents, their ministers and civil servants, while you controlled the economy. It was much cheaper than having an army and governors stationed in the colonies. Once the Imperialists discovered this, it was not very difficult for them to concede independence." (Vol. 1, No. 2.)

In circumstances in which political independence becomes an end in itself and loses its socio-economic goals, then the successors to the colonial governments become the unwitting (sometimes certainly witting) watchdogs of insidious colonial interests. Such successor governments, although constitutionally sovereign, are indeed neo-colonialists because they are either oblivious to the socio-economic needs of their people, or consciously or unconsciously allow the constraints of the colonial past to effect the direction of their policies.

My government is obviously not prepared to be a colonialist watchdog, witting or unwitting. We are not prepared that the final objective of our political struggle be the mere attainment of independence and the hoisting of a new national flag.

Rather, our total commitment is to the attainment of social and economic goals through the instrumentality of our independence and the ideological modality of socialism, which alone we believe can yield the greatest social good to the greatest number of Zimbabweans. Independence thus offers the physical political-power instrument, while socialism gives us the intellectual and theoretical framework for the direction or orientation of our policies and programme.

Our socialism, we have already acknowledged, derives its basic thought and principles from Marxist-Leninist philosophy and the principles and social practice of our traditional society not at variance with them. Further, the application of our socialism, we admit, cannot develop deep roots if it were to take the form of an imposition, nor would it acquire any meaningful perspective if it were to ignore the historical and environmental factors.

Here I am in perfect agreement with that illustrious hero of the Yugoslav revolution and anti-Fascist and anti-NAZI resistance, the late President Josip Broz Tito, a great socialist leader of all time who espoused the basic principles of Marxist-Leninism in the context of historical and prevailing Yugoslav circumstances. Tito who, before he died, had become a personal friend, was a realist. He wrote as follows on the subject of self-management in the process of transforming the Yugoslav socio-political system:

“A truly new socio-political system does not emerge as a new and complete one, nor does it stem merely from a scientific theory, no matter how close to the truth it may be. The new society grows from the old one and gradually transforms it in terms of its basic social and legal relations, but cannot immediately change in it certain material conditions and relationships resulting from historical development of the material and spiritual forces of a country.”

(Socialist Thought and Practice, Belgrade, Issue No. 6, June, 1980.)

It is this same realistic persuasion which has led my party and government to take cognizance of the historical development of our society and boldly to recognize the reality of free enterprise, contradictory though this may seem to our basic principles of socialism, as an unavoidable current economic phenomenon in the initial developmental stages of the process of social transformation we envisage.

But this should not be taken as authority or licence for private enterprise to romp unbridled and proceed on an exploitative course, as happened over the last 90 years of settler, racist rule.

Definite governmental controls to reduce inequity and orientate private enterprise in the direction of state objectives, without inhibiting expansion and development, are obviously a necessary instrument of ensuring that individual interest is reconciled with public interest. Some aspects of these policy regulatory measures will soon be enunciated in an economic policy statement.

At a time when our main concern is the resettlement of our peasantry, the rehabilitation of our economy and social services, we have determined that any measures disruptive of the economic infrastructure must at all costs be avoided. Our socialist thrust will thus restrict itself for now to the area of land resettlement and organization of peasant agriculture. Here we intend to correct with speed the historical injustices and imbalances in the distribution of land between the white commercial farmers and the peasantry by reapportioning to the latter a large percentage of the land now in the hands of the former, most of which is underutilized.

Work on the restoration of social services — education and health — and of re-invigorating them has already begun in earnest. The role of education in the formation of skills cannot be over-emphasized. Government will accordingly give this social service special attention for many years to come.

While private enterprise in commerce and industry, mining and agriculture, has been recognized, it in turn must accept certain responsibilities as part of its contribution to the common good. One of these responsibilities is that of raising the standard of living of the worker, as well as his skills, through organized training facilities. The role of the worker in private enterprise must

be accepted on a mutually beneficial basis with all the dimensions enunciated by Government, covering:

- (a) Wages and conditions of service;
- (b) Organization of worker committees;
- (c) Training facilities;
- (d) Participation in decision-making;
- (e) Participation in ownership through share-holding;
- (f) Insurance and pension systems.

The resettlement and rehabilitation programmes are mainly corrective in their thrust, so they can provide us with a sound socio-economic springboard for a global developmental plan, which should aim at short-term, medium-term and long-term targets. The formulation of this plan is now under way and should be ready for adoption by government before the next fiscal year. That development plan must take careful cognisance of the unfortunate duality of our socio-economic system comprising, in the words of the recently published United Nations economic and social survey, *Zimbabwe — Towards a New Order*, "two economic sub-systems, two societies, two consumption patterns and life styles . . ." (page 25). It must then proceed, sector by sector, to establish the popular needs and ride roughshod over the racial phenomenon so as to emerge with a plan capable of liberating the economy from a one-sided racial control.

The problem of economic dualism is a characteristic not only of our national economy but also of the present international system. The Third World countries are up in arms because the 'haves' of the world community are paradoxically also the Oliver Twists, who insist on having more, on being more highly developed than developed, at the expense of the developing countries which are showing no sign of ever reaching Rostow's take-off stage.

The Commonwealth heads of government who met in Lusaka in August last year and passed a communique which led to the Lancaster House Conference, also agreed to set up a group of 8 to 10 experts from Commonwealth Countries, "to investigate and report on the factors inhibiting structural change and sustained improvement in economic growth in both developed and developing countries". The experts were also to "assess the importance of and the relationship between possible constraints, such as protec-

tion and adjustment policies, inflation, subsidies both on production and exports, fluctuations in commodity prices, availability and cost of energy resources, including oil, and factors inhibiting investment, transfer of technology and international flows of official and private resources". (The World Economic Crisis, Commonwealth Secretariat, preface).

This assessment and evaluation of the problem — or is it problems — was to be followed by recommendation of specific measures which developed and developing countries might adopt in reduction or elimination of the constraints. The exercise was embarked upon as a preparation for the Special Session of the U.N. General Assembly, from which we have just come.

Now that our country is independent and has become a member of the Commonwealth and the United Nations and is about to become an associate member of the EEC under the Lome Convention, it is necessary that we know and appreciate the world context into which we have gained entry. We are going into economic and trade relations with developed and developing countries. We are currently searching for the accommodation of our beef, sugar and other products in the Common Market, as we, at the same time, are making appeals for grants, soft loans and investments. As a Third World Country the constraints analysed and evaluated by the Commonwealth experts in terms of their sum total effect upon economies will no doubt soon catch up with us.

Michael Manley, the Prime Minister of Jamaica, I am sure speaks for all the Third World countries when in his article, "Third World Challenge: The Politics of Affirmation", he says in his usual frank and aggressive mood:

"Today, faced with 400 million people on the verge of starvation and more than a billion deeply trapped in poverty, every one a potential producer and consumer, there is not one developed country in the world that is contributing as much as 1.0 per cent. of its gross national product to overseas assistance. The U.S. itself has seen its contribution fall from more than 2 per cent. to 0,2 per cent." (Third World Quarterly, Vol. 11, No. 1 (Jan.) 1980, page 40).

Earlier in the same article, Manley refers to the need to close the gap between the rich and poor nations, a problem we have here on a national level and might now be compounded by the

international problem we are inheriting as a developing, and so a poor (though not poorest) country. On the question of closing this gap between developed and developing nations, Manley says, "we are casualties of a war between giants." We are caught, he says, between the ever-rising price of oil and the prices of imports from developed nations, "which continue to dance their inflationary jig". He holds that it is unrealistic to speak of closing the gap between rich and poor nations without discussing the need for substantial transfers of resources from developed to developing countries to enable them to develop structures designed to produce reasonable economic opportunities and balanced rewards.

I agree with Manley, in toto. I would, however, add that between themselves, developing countries are yet to do their best in creating regional systems of co-operation, reciprocal trade and assistance.

This is why our new Republic of Zimbabwe is keen to play its part in making the proposed regional economic grouping of the nine, possibly ten, southern African countries work as an effective, economic, regional entity.

Whatever the problems with which we are bound to be faced in our international economic relations, our determination to make maximum use of our own resources remains. In the end, this is bound to be our salvation. However, all development must follow a definite, well-plotted and well-envisioned direction towards the satisfaction of the vast needs and aspirations of our people. As a government, we need all available economic binoculars as we survey the national road. Will this symposium provide us with any pair? I look forward to receiving them.

Once again may I thank you for inviting me to open this symposium. May I say to all your foreign guests how warmly we welcome them to this our newly independent country. I wish them a very happy and rewarding visit.

I now wish to declare this symposium open. I wish you all a great success.

