

Globalizing Land and Food in Zimbabwe: Implications for Southern Africa

CAROL THOMPSON

Abstract: For political and economic crises as severe as Zimbabwe, domestic causes are central, but the conflict in Zimbabwe is not simply internal; it is regional and international and in that sense, it is a post (political) apartheid struggle. Taking an international perspective, this article delineates the context and the constraints on any government, labor or farm leaders in Zimbabwe, as they face enormous problems for land and economic reforms to provide food security. The first section gives the historical context of the current land transfers, analyzing that reliance on the market has not been the pattern of land reform in developing countries until the 1980s. Further, the study discusses how this market approach to land allocation and food production in Zimbabwe has been intensified by neoliberal policies, including both structural adjustment programs and recent international trade instruments. The conclusion analyzes alternative policies for food security which exist in the region, yet cautions that those policies conflict with dominant international agendas.

For political and economic crises as severe as Zimbabwe's, domestic causes are central. Yet the conflict in Zimbabwe is not simply internal, it is regional and international. In that sense, it is a post (political) apartheid struggle. Analyzing the international context of the crises is not to deny the importance of national policies necessary for the long term stability of Zimbabwe and of southern Africa. As the new Africa Union proposes, change must emerge from internal strengths and resources.¹ Taking an international perspective, however, delineates the context and the constraints on *any* government, labor, or farm leaders in Zimbabwe, as they face enormous problems for land and economic reforms.

Harsh as it was to eradicate political apartheid in southern Africa, involving many deaths and torture, those involved thought it would be relatively easy in comparison with eradicating economic apartheid. They knew that this struggle would be very long and very brutal. By focusing on the international, this analysis raises the question whether any elected government in Zimbabwe can implement reforms, without equally fundamental change in policies of dominant powers, such as the United States and Europe.

The first part of the paper reminds us of the historical context of the current land transfers, suggesting that the market approach to land reform (willing seller-willing buyer) is new. Reliance on the market for landed property transfers was not the pattern of land reform in developing countries until the 1980s. To summarize one example of the role of powerful

Carol B. Thompson, Professor, Political Economy, Northern Arizona University, has written on Southern African food security issues since 1980. With three books and numerous articles on SADC (Southern African Development Community), she has been a consultant to UNICEF, SADC, the Governments of Zambia and Zimbabwe, and numerous international development agencies on agriculture and trade issues.

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international actors, the paper discusses how the US goal of land reform in developing countries over the past decades furthered US national interests. Today, the dominant US interest in relation to land transfers is to affirm the global market as the most efficient allocator. The study discusses how this market approach to land allocation and food production has been further intensified by recent trade instruments, such as the US Trade and Development Act (2000), the WTO (1995), and the EU/ACP Cotonou Agreement (2000).

For Zimbabwe, land hunger, along with the economic structural adjustment program (ESAP), intensified real hunger. Again, focusing on the international constraints for meaningful post (political) apartheid reforms in Zimbabwe, today and in the future, is not to minimize the role of domestic corruption and political patronage play in increasing inequality. Without addressing the persistence of economic apartheid in the region and inequalities of ESAP, however, the current debates remain ahistorical. Reliance on the market for development in a region still struggling to integrate hostile, violent parties and implement precarious peace accords (Democratic Republic of the Congo and Angola) abrogates basic neo-liberal economic theory. It is difficult to rely on the market as an efficient allocator even in a post-conflict zone (the rest of the region). Other threats to southern African food security are also discussed. The conclusion suggests alternative policies for regional food security.

International analysts frequently reiterate that the government of Zimbabwe has had 20 years to promote land reform, but only engaged seriously in 1998. They then write it off as an election ploy, during the first parliamentary elections in 2000 and then presidential elections in 2002. Land, however, will always be an election issue, no matter who runs, and not only in Zimbabwe, but in other southern African countries such as Namibia, South Africa, Mozambique, Zambia, and Malawi, until the colonial legacies are fully confronted and rectified according to the demands of the people.

Part of the legacies is the unfulfilled commitments of the United States and United Kingdom. As the US Secretary of State, in 1976 Henry Kissinger promised ZANU (Zimbabwe African National Union) and ZAPU (Zimbabwe African People's Union) US\$ 1-1.5 billion to "facilitate economic transition," including land transfers, as part of the agreement to end guerrilla warfare.² To date, the United States government has delivered zero for land reform. The United Kingdom's role is almost the same, making promises and delivering very little. The Lancaster House constitution did not permit the Zimbabwean government to pursue any land reform that was not willing seller-willing buyer. The government could not even visit the vast estates, such as that of the Anglo-American Corporation, without permission of the owner of the land, to assess what was utilized or unutilized land. Therefore, how could it tax underutilized land in the 1980s--ask the corporation to self-assess?

Because much of the land was in the hands of those with close links to apartheid South Africa (in 2000, the Oppenheimers still owned 960,000 hectares in Zimbabwe), it would have been extremely dangerous to take land except on a willing seller basis. During the 1980s, apartheid commando raids came regularly, all the way to Harare. Zimbabwe was fully involved in assisting the Government of Mozambique in resisting apartheid-supported Renamo, in the Beira Corridor and elsewhere. Making policies to take land from even absentee owners would probably have provoked more commando raids, if not outright invasion. The attacks continued even after Nelson Mandela was released from prison and almost to the time of South African

elections. Therefore, international analysts should also discuss how Zimbabwe had only six years -- from 1994 until 2000 -- to approach land reform seriously, before the June 2000 parliamentary elections. As South Africans can attest, six years is not long for fundamental reforms.³

During the 1980s, however, land reform was quite successful, a fact also not well acknowledged during this current crisis. Although falling short of unrealistic targets, by 1990 the government had purchased and redistributed an impressive 3.3 million hectares to 52,000 families. Kinsey reports from a study of over fifteen years that resettled households doubled their cultivation; values of livestock, crop production and cereal stocks were all higher and more equitably distributed in resettlement areas than in neighboring communal lands.⁴ Potts reported a survey of adult landless migrants recently arrived in Harare in 1994 in which "the voices of the people...were loud in their praise for the program, which was perceived to deliver many benefits."⁵ During this time, large estates went to political cronies (estimates vary widely), but what was redistributed to needy farmers did increase quality of life. This relative success, however, probably increased expectations for land among Zimbabwean destitute. In addition, because of the willing seller-willing buyer requirement, seventy percent of the prime land was untouched.⁶

The strict requirement "willing seller-willing buyer" is quite new in the history of land reform, from the 1980s:

Perhaps no other policy issue is more susceptible to shifts in ideology and the balance of political power than the transfer of land property rights....Since the end of the Second World War, we have witnessed two contrasting shifts....The first occurred between the late 1940s and the early 1980s, which I call the decades of the poor peasants and the golden age of genuine land reform. During this period, leaders of most developing countries found it necessary -- after gaining independence -- to redress past wrong-doings, including colonial land tenure....Since the early 1980s, there has been a steady shift away from government-implemented redistributive land reform toward reliance on the formal credit market and on landed property transfer, freely negotiated in the open market.⁷

In another study of thirty countries, it appears that only two countries relied solely on markets for land reform in the twentieth century: the Republic of Ireland and Zimbabwe until 1997.⁸ Reallocating land following "willing seller-willing buyer" criteria is a new demand. A quick review of US policy toward land reform, to focus on one major international player, affirms that the market was a minimal factor.

For the famous land reform successes of Japan, Taiwan and South Korea -- still held out as a model to southern Africa-- an occupying force financed and enforced the reform. The US provided dollars in Japan, Taiwan and South Korea to purchase land, and the US army entered some estates to encourage the landlord to leave, when the foreign exchange allocation was insufficient. For Japan, General MacArthur sent a directive to the Imperial Japanese government to develop plans for a redistribution of land to tenants, with Allied headquarters supervising both the planning and the execution of the reform....the timing and thoroughness of the occupation's reforms gave it a peculiarly American quality....The Sino-American [in Taiwan] connection was never closer than in the execution of the vast land reform that preceded one of the most rapid and dramatic agrarian advances in modern history.⁹

Land to the tiller in Taiwan was also financed by the US, a policy used to reduce the power of indigenous feudal landlords by the newly occupying forces of Chiang Kai-Shek.

In South Korea, American responsibility for land reform was also direct. MacArthur's military government in Seoul, following policies similar to Tokyo's, issued "a series of ordinances equivalent to a 'home act' for Korea, fixing rents and setting up a 'land to the tiller' program. The US Army itself distributed land to 29 percent of the farm households in South Korea."¹⁰ Removal of feudal relations in South Korea provided livelihood to previous tenant farmers, and their new ability to sustain themselves was a major deterrent to the spread of communism from North Korea. The US foreign policy goal was to stop the spread of communism and land reform was but one instrument used.

In Central America, US policies toward land reform have been much more variable, while quite consistent in promoting US interests. As Theisenhusen points out, "At one time or another in Latin America, land reforms were meant to serve opaque and less frequently articulated ends: strengthen capitalism, neutralize *campesinos* as an oppositional political force, win votes, fend off extremist ideologies, provide an effective counterinsurgency tool, and foster social stability needed for a secure investment environment."¹¹ In El Salvador, for example, with the assistance of US advisors "to help pacify the rebellious countryside," twenty five percent of agricultural land was reallocated to tenant farmers. The second phase to reallocate another fifty five percent was never implemented, "due to opposition from the traditional oligarchy and changing US priorities."¹² One could summarize the US commitment to land reform in Central America as dependent upon whether it furthers US security and economic interests.¹³ Similar to southern Africa, recent US policy toward land reform in Latin America encourages market exchange, but "no evidence exists in contemporary Latin America of land market reforms that have fundamentally altered patterns of land ownership despite recent efforts."¹⁴

Remembering the history of land in the US is important as well. Because Native Americans would never have been "willing sellers," for as in Zimbabwe, land is not a commodity to them, it was stolen. Not just once but several times. For example, the Din (Navajo) are back on their indigenous land, but then had the misfortune of the US finding uranium on it. As that mineral became strategic for national security in the 1930s, the Din had their land exploited once again. Today, the National Congress of American Indians are trying to stop the proposed Arctic oil drilling. Tom Goldtooth of the Indigenous Environmental Network called the attempts to drill for oil "an act of colonial terrorism against a people [Gwich'in]." He asks for the public to "to stop this axis of evil -- oil industries and governments who work together expanding their oil frontier, destroying forests, wetlands, coastal plains."¹⁵ Since 1996, three hundred thousand Native Americans have joined in a class action suit against the US Secretary of the Interior for the mismanagement, over decades, of \$10 billion of royalties for natural resources on native-owned land.¹⁶ Native American land in the US has been stolen in more than one way, over centuries.

For the US as an international actor, policy toward land reform in other countries reflected US national interests, as perceived by the government at the time. The US intervened to implement reforms in Asia, to encourage starving peasants to turn from communism. But if the peasants wanted US corporate land, for example, in Guatemala and Nicaragua, the US responded violently -- with the same goals of protecting US interests. The national interest

today is to promote 'free' markets as the most efficient means of allocation. This policy, however, ignores vast inequalities between seller and potential buyer -- in ability to set prices, bargaining, access to credit -- as well as the tradition of communally owned land in much of southern Africa.

Because land reform involves the rich and powerful losing some of their resources, historically, land has most often been devalued or taken by direct confrontation and force.¹⁷ It would be highly desirable in this new century that southern Africa could find a new way. But the policy of "willing seller-willing buyer" cannot be the way in a post (political) apartheid region, mainly because the arithmetic does not add up: the governments simply do not have the funds and the international community has also not provided funds. At the famous land conference of 1998 in Harare, the international donors pledged \$17 million out of an estimated need of \$40 billion.¹⁸ In the discussion of land reform over the last decade, donor pledges have not come close to the \$40 billion estimated costs. Any government in Zimbabwe will also not have that amount of funds-nor will the equivalent needed be available in South Africa or Namibia.

Treating land as a market issue ignores that land involves systems of social and cultural relations that reflect heritage. Current land distribution within several countries of southern Africa is a legacy of apartheid, which makes it an equity issue -- in the fullest sense. It is also a development issue. The South African Charter on Land and Food Security, written by 73 South African NGOs is explicit: "...if land reform were left entirely to the market, little if any reform would take place...land reform policy must be driven by the principles of social justice and basic needs as opposed to market forces." The South African National Land Committee agreed, "the market is not a solution for a fair land distribution after apartheid.... markets are never truly free."¹⁹ Equity and development were two important goals to deter the spread of communism in rural South Korea, Taiwan, and Japan. Today, however, the goals have changed. For the powerful international players, such as the US, priority is given to an unfettered reign of the global market.

The amount estimated varies, but whatever is used, it is enormous. The latest estimated cost to the southern African region for eradicating political apartheid is \$115 billion, which is being paid for by southern Africans.²⁰ As the US is regularly reminded today by Europe, assisting Japan and Germany after 1945 was a way to rebuild, not only the war-torn economies but democracy. The US is told, this is an important lesson for Afghanistan. Doesn't the same apply to southern Africa? Why is it that the subjugated people of the region are required to pay the bills of white supremacists -- aided and abetted for many years by American and European corporations?

Not all of the debt of southern Africa is from apartheid, neither is all of it from corruption. After the HIPC (Highly Indebted Poor Countries) debt relief from the IMF/WB, Mozambique is still paying twice in debt servicing what it spends on health care and Tanzania will be paying about 1.7 times annually (\$150 million).²¹ The other two of the four southern African countries eligible, Malawi and Zambia, face the same burden under HIPC. UNCTAD (2001) advocates:

The HIPC initiative continues to suffer from shortcomings, including...inadequate debt relief.... Consideration should be given to the suspension of debt payments by all African HIPCs without additional consequent interest obligations until final agreement is reached on debt

reduction, also to be extended subsequently to non-HIPC countries found eligible for debt relief.

A mystery for southern Africa is why it has been given this bitter post (political) apartheid fruit to swallow. Without writing off the debt, elections become an exercise. For the elected government must serve the interests of international finance, not of its own electorate. Having fought and died for access to education and primary health care, southern Africans instead are now paying the debt incurred to overcome apartheid. That kind of "victory" does not foster democracy, for the elected government has no ability to manage its economy.

Along with debt come economic structural adjustment programs (ESAP in Zimbabwe or SAPs in general). In 1990 when Zimbabwe signed on to the program, the number one government expenditure was education, defense number two, and health care three. The IMF required user fees for rural clinics and primary education in 1992, during the worst regional drought of the century.²² The impoverishment of Zimbabweans under ESAP is now well documented.

Perhaps the most graphic depiction of the harshness of structural adjustment comes not from the statistics but from the people themselves. In focus groups involving 675 participants in all eight provinces, the opinions are vivid. ESAP was described as a predatory animal, such as the lion or hyena "who targets unfit animals, which they first isolate from fit ones.... ESAP killed the happiness that came with independence." Participants also referred to ESAP as "...pests, grain weevils, which destroy what they did not assemble in the first place; pests therefore deserve to be destroyed. ESAP took away what the country had established through political independence (e.g. progressive education policies); it should thus be eliminated."²³

Zimbabwe recorded impressive achievements in decreasing crude death rates (from 10.1 to 6.1/1000) and infant mortality (from 86 to 61/1000 births) while improving life expectancy (55 to 59 years) and adult literacy.²⁴ Expenditures in health rose throughout the 1980s, reaching 3.1 percent of GDP in 1990 (The WHO recommends at least 2.5 percent of GDP be allocated to the health sector of developing countries.) The health delivery system was "turned on its head" with the majority of funds going to rural clinics and district, not urban, hospitals. Primary education was free and compulsory, with special emphasis for sending girls to school. From independence in 1980 until 1985, more children went to primary school, than during 90 years under the white minority rule of Southern Rhodesia.

Under ESAP, expenditures on health and education fell throughout the 1990s Real per capita recurrent expenditure by the Ministry of Health and Child Welfare, from 1991-1995, of about 40 percent, with recurrent expenditure on primary and secondary education declining by 30 percent.²⁵ By 1996, the health allocation of the budget was only 2.1 percent of GDP, at a time when the HIV/AIDS pandemic was devastating the young productive workers. Where the majority of the people seek health care (80 percent), the rural clinics and district hospitals received less than 49 percent of the public health budget.²⁶ The total education allocation declined from 6.3 percent of GDP in 1986/87 to 4.8 percent in 1999. The drop-out rate for girls is higher than for boys.²⁷

What is not so well documented is that ESAP encouraged the large scale commercial farmers (LSCF) to grow export crops for the global market and less food crops for the regional market.²⁸ Perhaps in macro-economic terms, the trade-off worked. The LSCF grew export crops (tobacco,

cotton, paprika, flowers and game meat) for export earnings while the smaller farmers increased their production of maize, sorghum and groundnuts. Yet drought (almost annually in some part of Natural Regions IV and V) and floods (1999) hit the small scale farmers the worst, reducing food security. Further, seeing good pasture go for game meat for overseas consumption or government preserves being sold to private (often foreign) tourist firms did not endear poor peasants with the ranchers and tourist operators.²⁹ UNCTAD has found that SAPs can hurt small scale farmers: "Sub-Saharan Africa suffers from structural handicaps that are impossible to remove or reduce through the standard policy reform programs. There are indications that some ingredients of reforms have actually aggravated constraints on the growth of smallholder production."³⁰

For most Zimbabweans, their identities are still linked to their home villages. Historically families survived colonialism (and the 1992, 2002 droughts) by having some members remain in rural areas and others work in town. During drought, the city-based relatives sent cash to the rural family. During periods of less employment, rural relatives provided food or work for the unemployed family members. ESAP brought not just a period of unemployment but a decade of misery. Relatives did not have enough land to sustain a household. The historical land hunger, and very real actual hunger, became worse as people tried to survive by selling commodities in informal markets.³¹ Even urban Zimbabweans still know how to grow food, as a quick glance in any township will demonstrate. The director of SeedCo estimated the maize production on minuscule urban plots would be about 50 tonnes/ha if the same labor intensity (constant vigilance) and inputs were used on a hectare plot.³² It is only in recent times that people in "born townships" (established in early 1920s) refuse to go home to the rural areas. Many Zimbabweans are genuinely land-hungry -- they know how to farm and desire small plots of land. Urbanization in Zimbabwe has not followed the US pattern of cutting all links with the rural community.

As is predicted by the theory, ESAP benefited the wealthy first, with the goal they would invest in growth in Zimbabwe. ESAP encourages production for the global market, not the regional or national, even for food security. Yet these two goals of structural adjustment do not take into consideration a post-conflict society, where factors of production are highly inequitably distributed. Benefiting the very few, who have already been historically advantaged, may not be conducive to political stability. 'Structurally adjusting' an economy in the post (political) apartheid era should probably begin with adjusting (transforming) the apartheid economic structures and relationships, not only as an issue of justice but as one of economic development. The market privileges the privileged, who can take advantage of new market 'opportunities.' El-Ghonemy sees the international insistence for market-based land reform as part of the same package with structural adjustment programs:

I have serious doubts with regard to a short-term land policy shift, because market-based reforms of land tenure arrangements are held in bondage by the present economic reforms and foreign debt crisis, and because countries are busy privatizing all economic activities.³³

The WTO and the USA Trade and Development Act (the old AGOA) further assist the privileged, by requiring "national treatment" of foreign firms. If a foreign corporation wants to buy land in Zimbabwe, the government is supposed to treat it equally to any Zimbabwean request. If a foreign corporation wants to sell seed or access the national gene bank, it is

supposed to be treated equally to SeedCo. Without prior transformation of apartheid economies in southern Africa, this requirement is unfair. Southern Africans know well the results of off-shoring profits made from the natural resources of the region and their sweat -- not simply since the WTO was formed in 1995, but since the landing of van Riebeck. Southern Africa is well integrated into the global market but not as a partner, not even a junior partner. New trade instruments, such as the USA Trade and Development Act, are blocking even junior partnership status, for the governments cannot require joint ventures, but rather, must give equal rights to foreigners enriched from African soil -- while those who elected the government remain in poverty.

A major threat to food security, therefore, is loss of sovereignty over food production. By allowing the global market to determine production, an agriculturally rich country like Zimbabwe will produce flowers and fruit for Europe during its winter. Reducing subsidies for small scale farmers growing food (and raising interest rates) renders them vulnerable to the global market. Worse still, such decisions about agricultural production are ones neither the US nor the EU has been willing to relinquish to the global market. Before the WTO in 1989, for example, the US rate of farm subsidies stood at 25 percent, yet by 1999, it remained 24 percent. During the same period, EU supports were 44 percent of gross farm receipts in 1989 and 49 percent in 1999.³⁴

The first five years of the WTO was so disappointing that President William Clinton admitted just before leaving office (December 2000): "If the wealthiest countries ended our agricultural subsidies, leveling the playing field for the world's farmers, that alone would increase the income of developing countries by US\$20 billion a year." During the Clinton years, however, the US spent an average of US\$14 billion per year on farm support.³⁵ The 2002 Bush plan offers subsidies of \$15-17 billion per year over five years. It guarantees 80 percent of qualified farmers' income, no matter what they grow and offers further incentives for conservation.³⁶

The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) of the EU is changing from a system of price supports to a system of direct aid to farmers. This approach being allowed under the Blue and Green boxes of the WTO.³⁷ However, it still highly distorts EU prices, undermining the development of value-added production in southern Africa. For dairy, cereal, beef, and sugar, EU prices will remain below world prices, allowing them to compete unfairly within SADC (Southern African Development Community) countries, or elsewhere, against southern African producers. For example, subsidies of EU-produced sugar makes their chocolate candy cheaper in South Africa than the domestically produced chocolate, in spite of the efficient South African sugar industry. There were almost no imports of chocolates in 1997 in South Africa, but by 2000, imports accounted for 11 percent of the chocolate market. In contrast, tariffs on the sugar content of value-added foods in the EU prohibit South Africa from competing in the EU market.³⁸ DanChurchAid found that about 46 percent of income from split peas of Danish farmers came from EU subsidies. Danish suppliers, therefore, could offer pre-cooked split peas at half the price of African growers' pulses. ³⁹ By 2007-08, the chocolate and split pea stories will be similar for wheat, maize and barley. The threat is so serious that there has been a technical committee for wheat established under the SADC Trade Negotiating Forum. The after-taste is not sweet, but bitter, for once again southern Africa is required to do what the more powerful and more wealthy will not do in liberalizing agriculture.⁴⁰

Other international threats to food security in southern Africa include monoculture. At one time, over 3000 species were used as food by humans, but now we rely on about 30 staple crops.⁴¹ Yet there are 2000 indigenous food crops in Africa: sorghum, millets, bambara nuts, many tuber and root crops, fruits, marula, baobab. Botswana alone has 250 plants which are used specially as "famine food." Various kinds of African "spinach" (e.g., *amaranthus* spp = mchicha) are called the "poor man's meat" because they contain so much protein and lysine. Crops that are considered "marginal" provide a wealth of nutrition, such as pumpkin, of which one can eat the fruit, seeds, leaves, and flowers, for essential vitamins and oils. SADC is working on reviving indigenous plants as food, not willing to let monoculture take over. Dr. Marandu of the Tanzanian National Plant Genetic Resources Centre points argues, "Tanzania has about 150 food crops; we need to focus [research] on the so-called marginal food crops, such as bambara nuts, cucurbits (cucurbitaceae - gourds, squash), finger millet (makes excellent nutritious breakfast porridge)."⁴²

Any shift in choice of crops, to respond to an international market rather than a regional one, involves more than a simple substitution of one product for another. These processes are not socially or geographically neutral. Where traditional food crops are being displaced, so too are small-scale food producers:

The effect of substitution [to monoculture of a few crops on a large scale] is to undermine the livelihood of much of the rural population and to decrease the availability (and increase the price) of basic staples for the bulk of the population. This conversion process exacerbates the growing food and economic crises in developing market economies and will continue to do so unless effective policies are adopted to counteract this course.⁴³

It is up to Zimbabweans and southern Africans to decide how to encourage growing varied food crops, as well as how to maintain indigenous definitions of food -- inclusive of many more crops than those valued by the international market. Maintaining biodiversity in food production protects local food security.

Another long term threat to food security in southern Africa is the patenting of plants and seed, now practiced regularly in the US -- and being extended globally by the WTO. This approach allows the biotechnology corporations to devalue what they do not have -- biodiversity. Improving a plant variety in the field is not patentable, but "natural." This approach sets monopoly value on what corporations do have -- biotechnology. If a corporation inserts one gene (not to improve the plant variety, but to make it resistant to a pesticide), it can be patented. Southern Africa expertise about its plants -- for nutrition and medicine -- is so valued that the knowledge and bio-resources are being stolen by the wealthy. Zimbabwe has had to threaten more than one international law suit. Patenting of indigenous plants privatizes knowledge, and requires the original innovators to pay royalties for use of their own resources.

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Along with the patenting of plants is the planting of genetically modified seeds (GMOs) in southern Africa that are open-pollinated varieties. Every SADC country has signed the Biosafety Protocol, but national decisions about the use and proliferation of GMOs will soon be irrelevant. Open-pollinated varieties of GMOs are growing in northern Natal. Pollen from them could contaminate crops in Swaziland, Botswana, Mozambique and Zimbabwe. The wind stops at no protest. It is strange that the international community, which is so upset about forced

seizure of land, has not mentioned forced seizure of seed. Open pollinated GMOs contaminating others' fields are as much a breach of property rights as farm invaders burning crops. The invader here is silent, but the results are just as devastating. It is very important to sanction violent farm invasions. Why is it not equally important to protest, and stop, GMO invasions of others' property?⁴⁵ Biotechnology may be the savior of the 21st century. What is not acceptable is the theft of plants and knowledge, either literally or by the destruction of indigenous crops by genetic pollution. The international standard of "GMO free" for global trade has been redefined, and "GMO free" labels now mean that 'only' 2 percent of the grain shipment is GMO. This change in definition is recognition that the corporations are defying others' property rights through contamination.

In the most profound sense, only peace in Angola and the DRC will bring food security for all in the region. War and chaos weaken a government and a region so they cannot demand fair prices for natural resources. Instability is profitable to the outsider who continues to receive the minerals. The wars in Angola and the DRC were not post-colonial or post-apartheid wars but rather were more similar to colonial wars. Foreign interests in the DRC, for example, are interested in obtaining coltan or lumber or apes for the cheapest possible price. They do not want to pay for labor or for replacing the lost resources. They do not want to pay taxes.⁴⁶ If all that can be erased by forced labor and by a few bribes, then the wars continue. The current history of the eastern Congo or Angola reads very much like *King Leopold's Ghost*, and like those times, some Africans are also profiting.⁴⁷ But the source of the exploitation is the insatiable appetite for corporate profits. Profit could be made on Congo lumber or Angolan diamonds fairly traded, but not so much in so short a time. Perhaps the next UN report will better expose the American and European firms who buy the plundered goods. Peace is a prerequisite for regional food security.

Current land seizures in Zimbabwe are condemned because they not only abrogate basic rights but because they threaten the whole region's food security. A broader perspective raises the issue as to whether long term regional food security is possible without land reform in Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa, especially if large estates occupying the best land in all three countries continue to produce for a global market and are allowed to off-shore profits. Further, it is not efficient to source food from thousands of miles away, when the region can easily be food self-sufficient and have enough land left over for cash crops. Finally, those who preach the efficiency and freedom of the market for agriculture do not practice free trade. What alternative policies are there for food security?

Land has not been entirely commodified in Zimbabwe and redistributed land will go partially into title deeds, but there will also be communal land and state land. A major study by United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) demonstrates the dire consequences of the simplistic "solution" of title deeds:

Available data indicate increasing inequalities, and *falling food production and average daily calorie consumption per person in most sub-Saharan African countries where ownership of communal lands has been privatized*. Empirical evidence also suggests that most of the buyers of land are politicians, senior government officials and urban land speculators, all of whom know the law and registration procedures, and have contacts with credit institutions and land surveyors (emphasis added).⁴⁸

This paper proposes that the current international demand of "willing seller-willing buyer" is not feasible, given apartheid debt. It has not been implemented far and wide across the world because it is too costly. For such a policy to be implemented, the international community would have to forgive Zimbabwean (and South African) debt and still provide funds for the land purchases. Otherwise, only the privileged will be able to acquire land. Presenting an elected government of Zimbabwe with only one option, and one that is not even remotely feasible, intensifies the conflict, instead of providing a solution.

Contrary to the principles of SAPs, the state will have to play a major role both in land reform and in food security for the foreseeable future. "Market forces" are very much that in southern Africa: forced markets. The US and the EU constantly criticize each other for not having free markets in food production because of increasing subsidies. As shown in statistics above, both are right. Perhaps a new policy approach could be that until and unless the two leading food exporters, US and EU, open their food production to global market forces, then southern Africa need not practice free trade in agricultural commodities, need not follow the demand for "national treatment" and need not respect patents on plants and seed. We could call for a moratorium on such provisions of the WTO, the USA Trade and Development Act and the Cotonou agreement.

In addition to questioning the internationally accepted approach to land reform and the internationally advocated total market liberalization, southern Africans challenge the policy that food security will be provided by trading a few commodities on the global market. One pillar of southern African food security is the production of grains for the regional market, stored for ready availability in times of crisis. SADC has been coordinating this effort since the 1984 drought. Another pillar, most often ignored by the North, is the production of biodiverse food crops by small scale farmers, including urban agriculture in countries like Zimbabwe and Tanzania. Time and again, when the first pillar has buckled, as in the drought of 1991/92 and in Zimbabwe today because of political oppression, it is the second one which keeps people alive. SADC officials and NGOs in the region are trying to strengthen this pillar.

SADC members have several projects which value indigenous knowledge of small scale food production -- from farmers' schools, farmer directed research projects, local seed banks and seed distribution, to alternatives to chemical fertilizers and pesticides.⁴⁹ To give just one example, small scale farmers directing research agendas has been successfully pursued in Tanzania, and the goal is expansion of this approach across the region by SADC/ICRISAT. In 1999/2000, farmers in Arusha and Kilimanjaro districts directed research requests to relevant Tanzanian research institutes. Thirty research projects reflected well the priorities of the small scale farmers: improved multipurpose trees, intercropping of maize/pigeonpeas (black-eyed peas), use of local resources as mineral supplements for livestock, integration of protein-rich fodder crops, improved vegetable varieties for lowland conditions, use of indigenous cover crops to improve maize yields, and screening of natural pesticides.⁵⁰

These and other farmer-directed projects operate on the principle that small-scale farms producing diverse crops provide more food security in southern Africa than international markets provisioned by industrial agriculture. This study is suggesting that this second pillar of food security may soon be toppled by international trade regimes and by patenting of

plants/seeds. Genetic pollution by GMOs also endangers locally developed strains of maize and soya.

Addressing the international context for the current Zimbabwe crisis does not minimize the importance of the domestic causes of the crisis. An international perspective does turn the focus to continuing constraints on change in Zimbabwe, even after internal political transformation. As discussed above, these constraints are severe and antithetical to the interests of the majority of the Zimbabwean people. As the international community engages to assist Zimbabweans in transforming their political and economic relations, that community is also responsible for addressing international exigencies which will impede any Zimbabwean political leaders in pursuing national interests for transfers of land, for multiple regional markets, and for regional food security. By ignoring the global constraints, international actors set up a situation in which it will be difficult for any elected government to rule. Alternative policies exist in the region, but they conflict with dominant international agendas. This source of crisis is as important to address as internal ones. The stakes are high, nothing less than the long-term viability of the political economies of Zimbabwe and southern Africa.

Notes:

1. Unemployment is over 60 percent and those living in poverty are 80 percent of the population. The drought of 2001-2002 brought severe hunger conditions to millions, especially harsh on those with no access to health care. Starvation, however, did not reach the levels predicted by international agencies, mainly because of assistance to the most destitute by their extended families. See Financial Gazette at www.allafrica.com for current updates.
2. New York Times, 5 May 1977.
3. VanZyl et al, pp. 730,737.
4. Kinsey 1999, 2000; Adams and Howell.
5. Potts, p.131.
6. Moyo 2000a, p. 36
7. El-Ghonemy, p. 1.
8. Moyo 2000a, p. 30.
9. Montgomery, p.117.
10. Montgomery, p.118; Ravenholt, p. 53.
11. Thiesenhusen, p. 172.
12. Barraclough, p. 32.
13. Brockett, pp. 198-99; Dorner, pp. 7-8; Schlesinger and Kinzer; Thiesenhusen, 1995.
14. Carter and Barham, p.1143.
15. Carrera; see Potter.
16. Associated. Press, 13 February 2002.
17. Geisler; Dorner.
18. The Farmer, Harare, 17 September 1998.
19. IFAD, p.43.
20. Modoerin and Wellmer.

21. Madakufambu, pp.123-24.
22. Thompson.
23. Nyathi and Makoni, p. 7.
24. Dhliwayo, p. 7 .
25. Dhliwayo, p. iii.
26. By 2000, the bankrupt government allocated even less of a declining overall budget to rural clinics, only 20 percent. Spending on preventive health care fell from its peak of 15 percent of the total health budget in the mid-1980s to 9.9 percent for 2001. By 2001, about 3000 Zimbabweans were dying of AIDS per week, in an estimated population of 11 million. (Rene Loewenson, "2001 Health Budget: Enough to make you sick," Herald, 21 November 2000.)
27. Dhliwayo,pp.6-7;Poverty Reduction Forum, p.36.
28. See Moyo 2000b for one of the few thorough studies.
29. Moyo 2000a, p. 8.
30. UNCTAD, 2000, p.61.
31. Chattopadhyay.
32. McCarter.
33. El-Ghonyem,p.21; see also Whiteside,pp.20-21; Acevedo,pp. 209-31.
34. Support rates are reported as producer support estimates, or PSE, which indicate annual subsidies -- from consumers through prices and from taxpayers through budgetary payments -- to support agricultural producers. The PSE is reported as a percent of gross farm receipts. (OECD, 2000).
35. Guardian Weekly, UK, 18-24 January 2001.
36. New York Times, 18 October and 2 November 2001.
37. The WTO allows exceptions to its resolution for no subsidies and no tariffs on agricultural products. The most renowned is the Green Box, which permits exceptions for environmental reasons. The Blue Box allows direct payments linked to factors of production but not to price or output volume. Given reforms in US agricultural policy, the Blue Box almost exclusively benefits the EU.
38. European Research Office, p.17; Goodison, p. 3.
39. European Research Office, p.23.
40. South African agriculture, for example, after rapid and extensive deregulation, has lower levels of subsidization than Australia or New Zealand, traditionally the lowest agricultural subsidizers in the world. Van Zyl et al., p. 737.
41. Nchimbi, p.83; Shackletons and Cousins.
42. Marandu.
43. Barkin, Batt, deWalt, p. 24.
44. Mushita and Thompson.
45. The Food and Allied Workers' Union (FAWU) in South Africa is demanding a ban on the production and sale of GMO foods. Business Report , Johannesburg, 28 January 2002.
46. United Nations, Security Council.
47. The Farmer (Harare, 4 September 2001) reports that the Zimbabwe army and ZANU business interests, under the name of the Congolese Society for the Exploitation of

Timber (SOCEBO), have a concession to log forests in a DRC area about ten times the size of Switzerland, raising about US\$150 million over three years. The concession is ostensibly to pay for Zimbabwe's defense of the DRC. The purchaser is African Hardwood Marketing of the UK and their potential buyers are the EU, especially France. Environmental groups, Global Witness and Friends of the Earth, are opposing the plans.

48. El-Ghonemy, p. iii.

49. Sithole; Marandu; Matowanyika.

50. SADC/ICRISAT, pp. 4-5.

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