

## 2. The Ban on the Weekly Mail

During October the Government issued a directive preventing the Weekly Mail from appearing for a month.

On an earlier occasion it issued a similar directive banning the New Nation for a period of three months.

Opening the Transvaal Provincial Congress in November the State President threatened legislation which would force reporters who claimed to have inside information 'leaked' to them by authoritative sources, to reveal who those sources were.

All this adds up to a further intensification of the campaign of threats and legal restriction which has been directed at the Press since this Government first took office forty years ago.

But now it is more dangerous than ever.

For now, more than ever, as our society goes through the agonies and upheavals which, whether Mr Botha likes it or not, are leading inexorably to the creation of a non-racial society here, it is vital that all of us, including him, should know what is happening.

More than any other publication, the Weekly Mail helps us to know.

Closing it down for a month has been an act of extreme stupidity. To close it down for good, a thought very much in the Government's mind we suspect, would be one of lunacy.

In the meantime, in order to help the Mail survive the financial implications of being off the streets for a month, we suggest that any of our readers who have not already done so, take out a subscription now, or order some of the calendars advertised below. □

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The paper for a changing South Africa.

— by Benjamin Pogrund —

## IMPRESSIONS OF ZIMBABWE

Years after the end of Zimbabwe's war of independence, the bodies of victims are still being discovered: not in ones or twos, but in dozens and hundreds.

They are people said to have been killed by the security forces of Rhodesia's white minority government during the 16 years of black guerrilla struggle. The war took a heavy toll: 40,000 people are estimated to have died.

It would not be surprising if the finding of ever-more bodies caused racial rancour, and especially as it is evident that many did not die in battle. Yet it strikes a visitor as a remarkable reflection of the interracial peace in Zimbabwe that the grisly evidence of mass murders is reported so soberly, and does not set off calls for revenge.

Last December, for example, a report in Harare's daily newspaper was worded in these terms: "Poor peasants in Mashonaland Central, which covers most of the former 'Hurricane Operational Area' during the liberation struggle, are planning to reinter hundreds of Zanla combatants buried in shafts and mass graves in the province." Using the same temperate language the report went on to say that the peasants were putting together their "meagre resources" to raise funds for proper burials.

The same approach is no doubt responsible for the continuing presence of the colonial past. Immediately after independence, statues were pulled down and a few street names in the centre of the capital, Harare, were changed. But most streets were left alone so that there are still visible reminders of the heroes of colonial rule. In the town of Mutare, on the eastern border, there is even a Jan Smuts Avenue, named after a South African white leader.



Robert Gabriel Mugabe, first Prime Minister of Zimbabwe.

The tolerance of colonial history can also be seen across the road from the official residence of President Robert Mugabe: there's a large sign on an imposing driveway which says: "Royal Harare Golf Club".

And a bookshop in the town stocks "The Reluctant President", the memoirs of Clifford Dupont, who was president of Rhodesia's illegal white regime, as well as the biography of one of most successful sanctions-busters who sold tobacco in devious ways to the world.

### **LIVE AND LET LIVE**

Mugabe has led the racial live and let live policy. It doesn't necessarily mean much interracial mixing at the social level, but in everyday existence relations between blacks and whites are generally relaxed.

The number of whites has dropped to a third of the 300,000 who were there at the time of independence. They have seen no alteration in their luxurious lifestyle, with many owning imposing houses on large plots of land and with the real wages of their black domestic servants at about the same level as pre-independence.

One sign of creeping change, though, is that in the wealthy suburbs, anything from 10 to 35 per cent of homeowners are now blacks.

The infrastructure, whether electricity, water or roads, is well-maintained. A white professional man notes that, previously, white government officials often had poor qualifications but had extensive work experience; the blacks who have been taking over jobs from them often are highly qualified, with degrees earned at universities abroad, but are having to gain experience on the job.

Whites still dominate commerce while the farms they own produce a high proportion of the country's food. But there is every indication that they pay a price for the good life they enjoy: they must not interfere too much in government; they take part in the government but they must not do so obtrusively and they must remember the fact of black majority rule.

In particular they must remain as silent as everyone else about the darker sides of Zimbabwe: the carrying over, indeed the extension, of the arbitrary powers created by the previous white rulers and now used, it is whispered, for detentions which remain secret; the obedient newspapers, radio and television; the incidence of corruption.

Other problems are also gathering momentum. External debt, the modern curse of the developing world, is demanding ruinous interest payments and the pinch is being seen in the falling ability to buy needed goods from abroad.

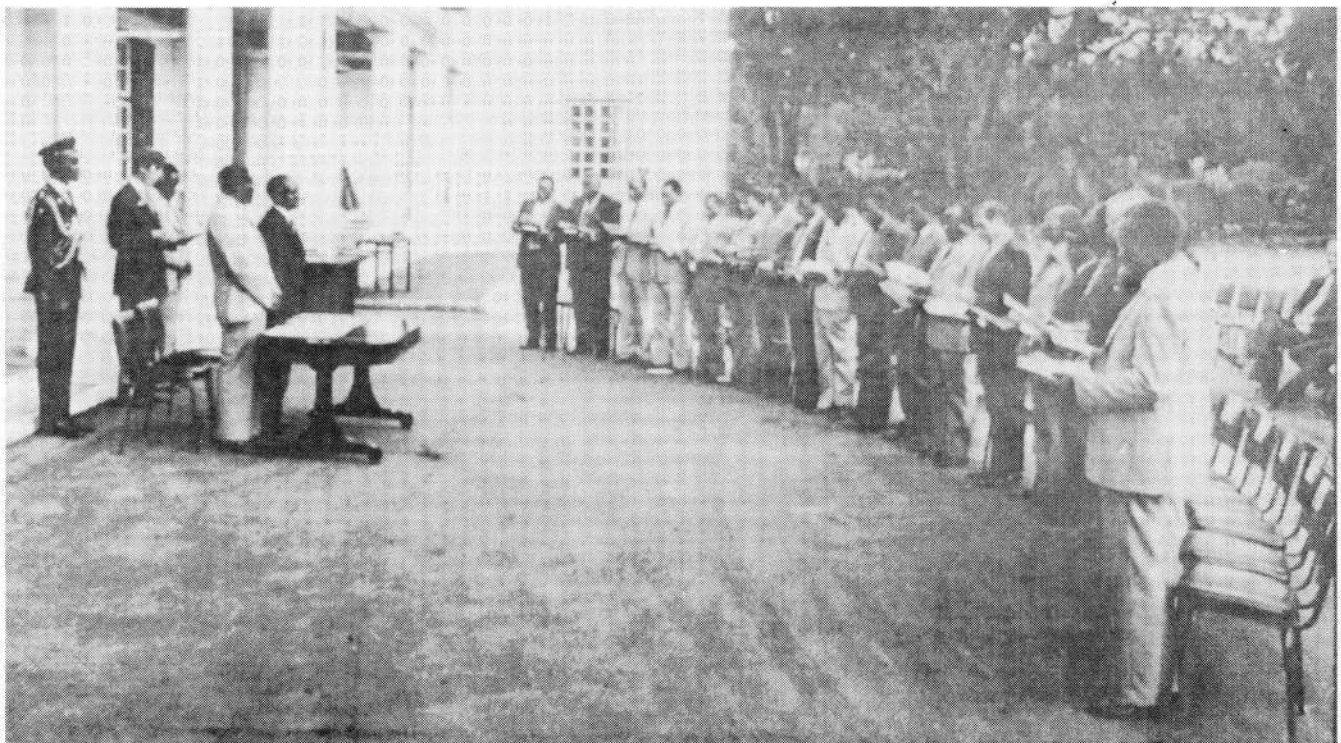
Domestic shortages are seen in queues for bread. The shortage of wheat means that a greater proportion of corn meal is used – with the result that loaves of bread crumble easily and it is best not to cut them for a couple of days after baking. Staples like salt and soap are not always readily available.

Government spending is soaring with a civil service which has probably doubled since independence; the latest Cabinet reshuffle, in January, doubles the number of ministers and deputies to a startling 50 – half the complement of the elected members of parliament. Vastly greater numbers of children are at school – but many cannot get jobs when they complete their education; nor is there any coherent plan for dealing with the rising tide of unemployment.

### **UNITY**

On the other hand, there is no doubt that considerable energy and resources have had to be diverted into ending the violent dissent in the Ndebele area of the country. The unity achieved last December between Mugabe and Joshua Nkomo could contribute to a lessening of tension and a reduced need for draconian detention.

Whether the party amalgamation which took place on January 1, with Mugabe as executive president, is going to help or hinder national unity and the achieve-



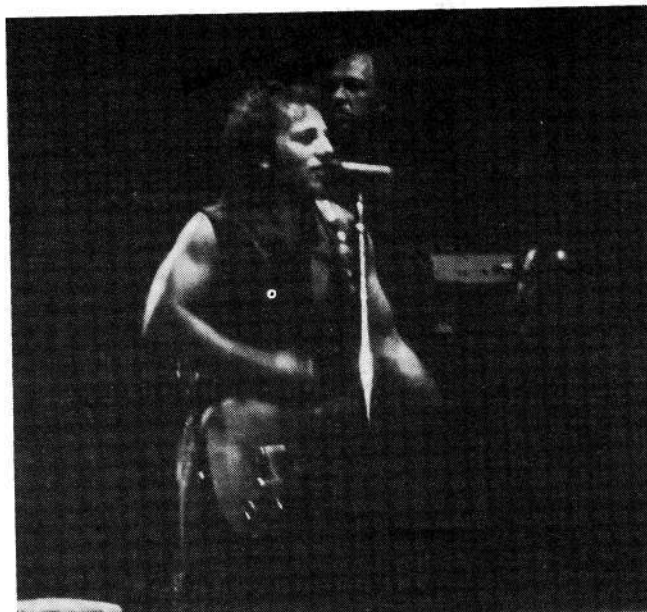
The first government of Zimbabwe.

ment of economic progress, remains to be seen. But a distinction must be drawn between rhetoric and reality: although there has been a lot of talk about a Marxist socialist state it has thus far meant little in practice; and the emotional support for sanctions against South Africa is largely meaningless because the economic interdependence of the two countries puts a low ceiling on possible action.

But Zimbabwe can influence South Africa. Its existence offers a lesson in the meaning of black majority rule. That cheers up blacks in South Africa.

But the effects on white South Africans are less happy: they point fingers at Mugabe because of the roughness with which he has put down dissent and they jeer at his one-party rule; his actions justify their worst prejudices about what happens when blacks take over government.

Of course that's a strange view as it totally ignores South Africa's own lack of democracy. But the bias is so strong that it blinds whites to the benefits of the racial peace in Zimbabwe.



Bruce Springsteen: Human Rights Concert, Harare, Zimbabwe, October 1988

—by Kierin O'Malley—

## SOUTH AFRICAN LIBERAL ECONOMICS AND THE QUESTION OF POWER.

In her comprehensive analysis of the relationship between capitalism and apartheid Merle Lipton not only empirically debunks many of the neo marxist myths reproduced and nauseated by the 'hard'/illiberal left, but her definition of a South African liberal summarizes one of the many dilemmas which currently face the embattled occupants of the 'middle ground' in South Africa. She states that "on economic policy they, ie. South African liberals, range from free marketeers to social democrats".<sup>1</sup>

### LIBERAL ECONOMICS?

In his address at last years Cape Congress of the PFP – published in the January 1988 edition of **Reality** – David Welsh argues "that the gross inequalities of our society will not be overcome by invoking the free market as a panacea" as the free marketeers or right wing economic liberals tend to do, and that social democracy has been described as the liberalism of those who really mean it. Along similar lines Terence Beard in his recent review of *Democratic Liberalism in South Africa* (Reality, March/May 1988) contends that liberals cannot afford not to abandon the pursuit of laissez faire capitalism – placing himself firmly in the camp of left wing economic liberals.

On the other hand free marketeers like Ken Owen and Leon Louw define laissez faire capitalism as the economics of liberalism. Any state interference with the market mechanism and with the production and distri-

bution of wealth is per se unacceptable. Strangely enough the free marketeer, right wing economic liberal view that unadulterated capitalism of the 19th century Manchester school type is an essential and determining element of liberalism is one shared by their arch ideological foes ie. radical or neo marxist scholars and activists in South Africa.

To avoid possible terminological confusion, it is necessary to make the point that labelling free marketeers right wing economic liberals, and welfare orientated liberals left wing economic liberals, has nothing to do with the growing tendency to divide the liberal camp into left wing and right wing liberals. The latter is nomenclature related to entirely different criteria.

Rightwing liberals are means and end liberals who refuse to countenance undemocratic, illiberal and often violent means from the hard left within extra parliamentary folds and tend to accept incremental reform as a viable strategy. Leftwing liberals are those who tend to reject all incremental reform as a hindrance to 'genuine reform', and who experience little problem in justifying illiberal and undemocratic means in terms of democratic, just and equal ends and the pervasive "struggle". It is nonetheless interesting to note that right wing economic liberals have more resolutely withstood what Jill Wentzel has called the liberal slideaway<sup>2</sup> ie. that right wing economic liberals have been less easily enticed by the hard left into adopting illiberal strategies in the struggle for liberal ends.