

RHODESIA: WHO ARE THE MURDERERS?



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Open most British newspapers and you will get the impression that, in Rhodesia, a gallant band of basically fair-minded, if somewhat misguided, white settlers are fighting off bloodthirsty and unscrupulous 'terrorists and murderers'.

What's really going on?

In September 1976, Ian Smith, the illegal regime's premier, claimed to have accepted the principle of majority rule. Yet Rhodesia's white minority—3 mere 277,000 in a population of over 6½ million—are still firmly in power. They continue to enforce minority rule on the majority, and in order to do so they employ increasingly violent methods.

● Regime allegations

Claims made by the regime and its security forces alleging that guerrillas are responsible for the atrocities have been given wide coverage, whilst the substantial evidence that Smith's troops are themselves responsible for such acts is covered scantily, if at all. The Selous Scouts, a 'special mission' squad comprising black and white troops, are widely believed to be responsible for the whole series of atrocities.

Edward Kazembe, a former Selous Scout who deserted, says the Scouts frequently disguise themselves as guerrillas and perpetrate atrocities with the specific aim of discrediting the guerrillas. Other deserters from Smith's forces have confirmed these reports.

Whilst most of the British media uncritically accept and repeat the claims of the regime, they virtually ignore the reign of terror which the white minority has imposed. It is vitally important that British people should know the facts.

● Illegal hangings

On 17 January 1977, the regime announced that it had hanged 8 young Africans, most of them barely out of their teens, in Salisbury Central Prison.

Since UDI at least 300 British subjects have been sentenced to death in Rhodesia, by a regime which is illegal and has no right even to put people on trial, let alone take their lives.

Since April 1975, the regime no longer announces when hangings have been carried out (with the exception of the eight mentioned above), and even the next of kin have not been informed. Up to that date at least 60 people had been illegally hanged, the majority for political offences.

During 1976 alone it has been estimated, from the limited information the regime releases, that a further 64 people were executed.

In Britain these continuing hangings are virtually ignored by most of the media, while the British Government for its part seems particularly unconcerned to save the lives of its subjects, who are being illegally murdered in Rhodesia. Specifically, it has refused to state publicly that the executions amount to murder and that those responsible should be brought to justice.

● Illegal courts

At least 875 people are known to be serving sentences, imposed illegally, for political offences against the regime. Drastic legislation has recently been introduced setting up impromptu courts in remote areas and allowing the accused little possibility of an adequate defence.

● Detention without charge

Well over 1000 people are being held in prisons and detention camps without charge, trial or prospect of release for their opposition to the regime. Many of them have been held in the appalling conditions of detention for over a decade.

● Concentration camps

Almost half a million people have been forcibly removed from their homes and lands and locked into fenced camps, guarded by armed troops and termed

'protected villages' by the regime. Constantly guarded and allowed out only at certain times to tend their fields and livestock, these rural people have had their lives and already meagre economies devastated.

● Curfews

Curfews are in operation in many parts of the country. The number shot by the regime's troops for breaking the curfew now runs into hundreds. Parents in curfew zones warn their children not to return home if they are caught out herding cattle or collecting firewood at dusk but to hide themselves in holes in the ground until morning.

A leaflet distributed by the regime warns residents in the Eastern part of Rhodesia:

- 'If you see security forces, do not run. If you run away we will think you are a gandanga and we will shoot
- 'If you move outside your kraal at night or before noon you will be thought to be a gandanga and shot
- 'Drivers of vehicles that do not stop when ordered to do so by security forces will be thought of as gandangas and shot.'

● Scorched earth

A further extension of the regime's concentration camp and curfew policy has been the confiscation or destruction of any material which might assist guerrillas. Livestock and crops have been destroyed, water supplies poisoned and forests defoliated.

Schools, missions and shops have been closed down, and recently medical posts have been closed in remote areas.

The facts of life for black Zimbabweans in 1977 are ample proof, if any more was needed, that the white minority has no intention of willingly giving up its power and privileges—and that it is prepared to use whatever violent methods are required to prevent majority rule.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- *Campaign to stop illegal hangings. Write to your MP demanding Government action to stop hangings by the illegal regime, and in particular that it should declare that these executions amount to murder and those responsible will be brought to justice when the opportunity arises*
- *Help counter the distorted picture given in most of the British media. The AAM has material available which sets out the facts; including a recent document delating Repression in Rhodesia*
Help
recent document detailing Repression in Rhodesia. Help spread the facts.
- *Join the Anti-Apartheid Movement and help fight white minority rule in Southern Africa*

For information about Southern Africa and AAM campaigns, write to the Anti-Apartheid Movement
89 Charlotte Street, London W1P 2DQ (Tel 01-580 5311)

Membership Form

Annual membership fees, including a subscription to *Anti-Apartheid News*, are: £3, £2 for students and apprentices, 50p for pensioners.

I wish to join the Anti-Apartheid Movement and enclose £.....

Name.....

Address.....

.....

..... Tel No.....

Please return this form to the Anti-Apartheid Movement 89 Charlotte St London W1P 2DQ