After Zimbabwe’s Fast Track Land Reform: Preliminary Observations on the Near Future of Zimbabwe’s Efforts to Resist Globalization

Bill Derman, Professor of Anthropology, Michigan State University & Professor II, Department of International Environment and Development Studies, Norwegian University of the Life Sciences, Ås, Norway

Abstract
Zimbabwe’s fast track land reform has generated significant attention in southern Africa and beyond due to its speed, scale and the forced displacement of land owners and farm workers. Less attention however, has been paid to the broader framework which has been used to support this rapid and often careless transformation of rural Zimbabwe. Land reform is a means not an end. It is a means to address issues of inequality, historical injustices, inefficiencies in production and distribution, poverty in communal areas, et al. In sum, land reform provides the means to achieve complex goals to make life better for some people without harming, certainly not in the longer term, the productive base of a national economy. While arguments for land reform have been well-articulated including resisting globalization and western domination, the national government and ruling party of Zimbabwe have not directly expressed their views of what Zimbabwe should be like following its land reform. It is a surprising silence given the importance that the land issue played in the constitutional referendum of 2000 and the following parliamentary and presidential elections and the growing economic crises in Zimbabwe. In one effort to examine the potential consequences of fast track land reform, Sam Moyo and Paris Yeros in their recent book suggest that Zimbabwe is on the cusp of a national democratic revolution. In contrast, this paper examines the little that is known about the vision for Zimbabwe’s rural areas in the government owned press and statements by the ZANU-PF political leadership. It asks what are the most likely potential paths given the rich historical, legal and ethnographic literature on rural Zimbabwe? It examines what we might expect in the context of what we know about the ruling party and how the state has acted in the recent past toward its communal and resettlement areas. It will also consider what class forces will be like in the contemporary period and therefore why there will not be any ‘revolution’ but rather the continued impoverishment of rural families unless they have wage earners abroad. It is argued that fast track land reform has diminished rather than expanded the possibilities for a genuine transformation of rural society. In turning its back upon the multiple changes in production, distribution and consumption that have characterized Zimbabwe since 1990, ZANU-PF seeks a repeasantized and politically loyal subject population that will not contest the party’s nationalization of key national resources for its own benefit.
Without doubt, our heroes are happy that a crucial part of this new phase of our struggle has been completed. The land has been freed and today all our heroes lie on the soil that is declaration. Their spirits are unbound, free to roam the land they left shackled, thanks again to the Third Chimurenga.¹

Robert Gabriel Mugabe

Gone are the days when Africa produced tragic revolutions. We have to defend our policies and pursue them unhindered. Africa for Africans!

Robert Gabriel Mugabe²

President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe in these declarations asserts that ‘his’ fast track land reform program which has taken 11 million hectares of mainly white-owned commercial farmland and redistributed it to rich and poor black Zimbabweans, has ensured the success of his revolution. This revolution, which began in the anticolonial struggle against Rhodesia, has seen multiple difficulties since achieving power in 1980. For many, the idea that the same man and party have stayed in power using most available state powers to do so is enough to discredit the revolution. Yet, for others, the land reform demonstrates, perhaps, that the revolution can yet be saved under the 1960s banner of ‘agrarian transformation’ or peasant revolution.

To Europe and America, Mugabe is a dictator who has ‘grabbed white-owned land’ and destroyed the economy. To the Zimbabwean, the country and proceeded to resolve the national social question. Land redistribution to black economic empowerment. Mugabe is the biblical priest whose honour is in his own village, and not in the West where he is roundly damned. (Baffour Ankomah New African June 2005: 20)

The dramatic events in Zimbabwe since 2000 have had the outcome of re-raising the land and associated class, race and gender issues to a heightened concern, again. And left unstated and unexamined is agrarian life post land reform. How will it be reconstituted? To what measure and to what extent has Zimbabwe's rural population been able to participate in the formulation of policy alternatives? Can the Zimbabwe public be assured that the redistribution that has taken place has been fair?

¹ Posted to the web August 9, 2005 Harare Address by President Mugabe on the commemoration of Heroes' Day at the National Heroes' Acre yesterday from the government’s daily newspaper, The Herald.
². Quoted from President Mugabe’s speech commemorating Zimbabwe’s 25th independence day.
Land reform has returned to prominence not just in Zimbabwe but also in Southern Africa more generally. South Africa has just completed a ‘land reform summit’ (July 2005), and the process of land claims by black Africans against white African commercial farmers has intensified. In Namibia, the government remains highly frustrated by white farmers blocking land reform. The Namibian, South African and Zimbabwean governments are proceeding with land reform for various reasons but all in the name of historical injustice that saw the rightful owners of land dispossessed by colonialism. While ownership or access to land is not a recognized human right in rural areas, it is often essential for rights to livelihood and the achievement of other recognized economic and social rights. Land is also a central resource to be distributed and redistributed by the state. In addition, African identity in general has been associated with land. Part of the rhetoric in Zimbabwe has rested upon ‘land for the landless’ and the implicit idea that whites should not own African land. Very often the ‘facts’ of the matter are not important. Thus Zimbabwe had distributed far more of commercial farmland than either Namibia or South Africa a decade after independence. (See Table I for a comparative look at Zimbabwe’s greater progress in land reform compared to Namibia and South Africa.)

In the context of multiple and contradictory claims to land through market and customary rights, land reform has become a prism through which to explore the different interpretations of the character of the emergent nation-states in Southern Africa. Zimbabwe has been a focus of major international controversies and vigorous internal debates on land reform, human rights, civil rights, violence, and economic decline. Zimbabwe has been subject to multiple international sanctions and in turn the
government blames international sanctions and drought for the depth of its economic difficulties. The former 5,000 or so white farm owners owning 29% of Zimbabwe’s land area have been reduced in number to 400 now owning approximately 1% of the land. (See Table 2 for land divisions after the fast track land reform). How will this process be described and understood? Will President Mugabe and the ruling party be described as transforming Zimbabwean history or will they become known for destroying a vibrant economy and producing a dictatorship?

The argument has certainly begun. There has emerged a new, according to Terry Ranger (2005), patriotic historiography. Ruling party intellectuals are in control of virtually all media including television, radio and newspapers. With control over the major news sources they are active in producing new historical interpretations privileging some voices while silencing others. This includes reducing the struggle for liberation to the land issue while ignoring many of its other dimensions. The history insists that the ruling party has always had the interests of the Zimbabwean people at heart and the sole vehicle for expressing them.

How will ‘fast track land reform’ be understood? Are Sam Moyo and Paris Yeros (2005) correct that there has been a land occupier’s social movement that portends, if handled correctly, a national democratic revolution? Will Zimbabwe serve as the warning bell for South Africa to rapidly achieve its own land reform (Bernstein 2005; Cousins 2004, Hall 2004, Hall, Jacobs and Lahiff 2003; Lahiff 2003)? Can it be successfully argued that the land reform has been so fundamentally flawed and unjust that it should be undone or is it the case that no matter how unjust it will become the new starting point for all new policies and programs? Or has the mishandling of land reform in Zimbabwe made further land and agrarian transformation more difficult? Other questions include: What care and thought has been given to the necessary provision of inputs (seeds, fertilizer, pesticides, post-harvest care, marketing, credit, extension) that characterize contemporary agriculture? What strategies have been adopted to cope with the multiple issues in the communal land (see below)? What land tenure system(s) have been crafted to replace the older divisions of commercial, communal, resettlement and urban or will the nationalization of land remain?

Zimbabwe accentuates deep theoretical and political differences in understanding and explaining postcolonial Africa. Zimbabwe’s independence in 1980 negotiated after a bitter armed struggle for

---

8 It is unclear why Ranger is so gentle in his attempt to deconstruct the propagandistic and racialistic revision of Zimbabwean history.

9 See the concluding essay by the agricultural economist Michael Roth in Delivering Land and Securing Livelihood: Post-Independence Land Reform and Resettlement in Zimbabwe edited by Michael Roth and Francis Gonese. Harare and Madison, WI: Centre for Applied Social Sciences, University of Zimbabwe and Land Tenure Center, University of Wisconsin, pp. 381-393.

10 It is interesting that many defend Zimbabwe on leftist grounds while 80% of the population divides less than 20% of its national wealth.
independence serves as a real and imagined beginning for debates about the postcolonial state. There has been the celebratory literature including how marxist guerrillas and spirit mediums worked together (Lan 1985), the popular and progressive nature of the revolution (Martin and Johnson 1981), and how the land reform of 2000 continues revolutionary ideals (Moyo and Yeros 2005). There has been an equally intense discussion on reassessing issues of violence and the state under the ruling party due to the Zimbabwean army campaign against a Matabeleland under suspicion that there were links between the apartheid regime in South Africa and dissidents from the Zimbabwe African People’s Union (ZAPU) (Alexander, McGregor and Ranger 2000, Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace 1997). The initial policies of racial reconciliation have disintegrated in the most recent series of elections including one referendum, two parliamentary and one presidential election (Hammar and Raftopoulos 2003; Raftopoulos and Savage: 2004). In a return to the use of state violence, the ruling party ZANU-PF claims that it is simply continuing the liberation war (the chimurenga as it is known locally) because of continued colonial efforts to re-subjugate Zimbabwe. In a sharp reversal of international engagements, the ruling party has returned to the tropes of colonialism and race combined with a ‘selective rendition of the liberation history deployed as an ideological policing agent in the public debate” (Raftopoulos 2004: 160). President Mugabe and the ruling party claims to be the unsuccessful victim of destructive policies from the United Kingdom, Tony Blair, globalization and the United States. Zimbabwe’s rulers take pride, if not delight, in resisting the current trends of good governance, human rights, and a free media, in order to promote their version of a revolution. The central argument in defending the revolution has been to resist western efforts to protect the former white landowners and re-establish Zimbabwe as a colony of the UK.

Recently, there have been many discussions about how to move forward from what are now termed the ‘facts on the ground.’ This refers to the large numbers of new settlers and new owners on the former commercial farms. This is the question raised by Sam Moyo and Paris Yeros who argue that fast track land reform can result in a successful national democratic revolution. They use a fairly straight-forward marxist analysis integrated into a nationalist agenda, which they merge into a ‘national’ democratic revolution. Their helpful suggestion that we need to consider the facts on the ground leads to a series of questions? If most former commercial farms are given to village-based small-scale farmers will Zimbabwe be repeasantized? What would be the place of the ruling party? What social, political and economic relations would we expect? What have been the features of resettlement programs in the past so that one might be able to better understand this vast new program? What have we learned from the numerous studies of Zimbabwe’s communal areas? What vision of a repeasantized Zimbabwe has been expressed by its political leadership and how does this

Insufficient attention has been paid to the prescient work of the late Dr. Masipula Sithole whose book Struggles within the Struggle written in 1979 indicates how little revolutionary ideals were applied during the long struggle and how much of it was about power.
fit with Moyo and Yeros’? Are there contending visions of what rural Zimbabwe could be like and in particular what has been the vision and strategy of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) have?

This paper is organized in the following fashion: In part I, I provide a brief summary of some issues surrounding issues of land distribution, redistribution and production. An account of landlessness in the Mid-Zambezi Valley Development Project serves as an historical example, which provides a window into consistent state policies and actions. Section II briefly considers resettlement history. This has been a neglected history in the debates about the best ways to carry out land reform. Zimbabwe’s communal areas, where the majority of Zimbabwe’s still live, are considered in light of the land reform in Section III. The last substantive section, IV, explores Zimbabwe post fast track. Lastly, I briefly speculate on the likely outcomes of these intertwined processes. This paper can only be highly selective. Zimbabwe has been one of the best studied countries in Africa and one can barely do justice to such a rich literature in such a short piece.

I. Land Distribution, Redistribution and Production

Zimbabwe’s historic economy has become a shell of itself. Tobacco production has plummeted, maize production has been dramatically reduced, industry linked to agriculture has almost disappeared, and fuel shortages - including diesel, gasoline and kerosene - have become legion while tourism has suffered from what the government describes as “negative publicity.” The leading export crop, tobacco yielded 55 tons for the international market in 2005 compared to 240 prior to fast track. There is widespread hunger and malnutrition with very little current information due to government efforts to prevent unhindered surveys of food availability and malnutrition, especially among children. There are between 1.9 - 4 million food insecure people from this September

---

12 The MDC has split into two competing parties and it’s too early to say if they will both continue.
13 As Alexander writes "Highly intrusive state intervention into the ways in which Africans live and farm has long been a defining feature of agrarian reform in colonial and post-colonial Zimbabwe." (2000: 133)
14 The phrase “Zimbabwe formerly the bread basket of Africa” is patently untrue. In good times it exported maize. One doubts that tobacco exports could have been seen as the breadbasket.
15 No government and very few Zimbabweans have attacked the idea that a leftist state should be producing such a destructive crop.
16 According to the Famine Early Warning Network in their most recent update October 12, 2005 they state the following: Maize seed, fertilizers, fuel and spare parts for farm machinery are likely to be in serious short supply in the 2005/06 cropping season. Seed companies in Zimbabwe estimate that as of August 2005, they held in stock a total of 26,000 MT of maize seed. Prior to 2000, Zimbabwe used to use about 36,000 MT of maize seed and produce enough to feed the nation and export some maize to other countries. Assuming national maize yields will approximate those attained by communal farmers in the 1990s and the national maize grain requirements are about 2 million MT, close to 56,000 MT of maize seed will be required in the 2005/06 agricultural season. The fertilizer companies told the a parliamentary committee in early August that they had no fertilizer stocks, and hardly any production of the commodity was taking place because of lack of foreign currency to import the required raw materials. In the 1990s Zimbabwean farmers would use an average of about 400,000 MT of fertilizers, about 40 percent of which was used for the maize crop. National fertilizer production
through the next harvest in March 2006. In addition, there are somewhere between three to four million people who have left Zimbabwe since 2000.

Analysts differ on the roots of Zimbabwe’s economic decline. The local economist, Eric Bloch who writes a weekly column for the Zimbabwe Independent - a courageous independent weekly - has always argued for prioritizing market-based solutions to capital formation, investment and agriculture. Other scholars, like Patrick Bond writing from a revised marxist perspective emphasize the dominance of financial power throughout Zimbabwe’s history. Both agree however, that the ruling party, ZANU-PF has always had center-right political leanings while “disguising its persistent authoritarian tendencies with leftist rhetoric.” (Bond 1998: 457)

The overall economy of Zimbabwe has been contracting according to the World Bank, International Monetary Fund and independent observers. Estimates vary and it is difficult to actually provide accurate figures due to high levels of inflation. The hyper inflation charactering the Zimbabwean economy continues to push the cost of living beyond the reach of most households. In July 2005 alone general prices levels leapt by a massive 47 percent. The Consumer Council of Zimbabwe (CCZ) monitors monthly food and non-food basket for low-income urban households of six stood at Z$5,401,440 in July 2005, marking an increase of 27 percent from June 2005 level of Z$4,247,808. At the end of September 2005 the cost of the CCZ basket had soured to Z$9.6million. In February 2006 it stands at Z28, 000,000. Not only do consumers have to contend with exorbitant prices of basic commodities and services but they also have to grapple with rampant shortages of basic food stuffs such as maize meal, salt, sugar, cooking oil and flour. (Food Security Alert, FEWS, October 12, 2005)

All of Zimbabwe's rural populations are affected by this dramatic economic decline. Neither large nor small farmers can obtain necessary inputs, they cannot count on the availability of fuel, they find transport too expensive if available, the quality of roads has declined, they cannot save money to purchase inputs because of inflation, etc. In addition are all those with a foot in farming but who have lost their jobs that contributed to their farming. Other than for a few at the top, the current economic decline has caused enormous suffering and it is not to the credit of pro-peasant writers like Moyo and Yeros to ignore.

capacity cannot meet this demand in the time left even if adequate foreign currency is made available to import the critical inputs. Furthermore, it is highly unlikely that adequate foreign currency to import the required fertilizers could be secured if none could be availed for the raw materials.”

The gains that had been made in the fight against inflation throughout 2004 and the first quarter of 2005 continue to be reversed. The Central Statistical Office (CSO) measured an annual rate of inflation that stood at the unprecedented level of 623 percent in January 2004, but had gone down to 124 percent in March 2005.
Up until 2000 there were three pillars of Zimbabwe’s economy: they were agriculture (food and non-food, export and domestic consumption), manufacturing and tourism. (See Table III for a detailed listing of land categories and ownership.) All three are in disarray. Almost everyone can agree that Zimbabwe’s economy has disintegrated, poverty has dramatically increased, public services like urban sanitation, water supply, public health, medicines, et al. have become both very expensive if available, and there are serious shortages of key consumer items. Most academics both within and without Africa while acknowledging the role of structural adjustment programs, the west’s general role toward African nations and more recent economic and political pressures against Zimbabwe, have laid the present crisis directly at the feet of the leadership of the ruling party with support from the state apparatus of the police, the military and the paramilitary. There are very few former international supporters of Zimbabwe who continue to support the ruling party and its policies. The most important qualified exception has been the African National Congress in South Africa and especially its president Thabo Mbeki.

Having provided a brief background to the current crisis I will briefly discuss the historical context of resettlement.

II. Resettlement

Resettlement, villagization (in South Africa called ‘betterment’) have long been part of the development arsenal first of colonial administrators and then of newly independent states. In Zimbabwe it took the form of the deliberate rationalization of black African rural areas through production, settlement and grazing in Zimbabwe’s reserves. In Zimbabwe this policy was initially labeled centralization under an American agriculturalist named E.D. Alvord. As Donald Moore comments the categories of residential (homes), arables (fields) and grazing areas

...became the holy trinity of colonial land-use planning. Centralized linear settlement grids, usually straddling dirt roads, divided common grazing individual farmers’ fields. (2005: 81)

These goals began to be implemented in the 1930s and continued to be the lynchpin of the resettlement villages following independence. The interpretation remained the same: a plot of a

Since then inflation has risen sharply to 360 percent in September 2005 and is now at 782% in February 2006.

18 The ruling party has created forced education programs for youth and a youth militia. It is called the National Youth Service but it serves to educate youth in the ZANU-PF history of Zimbabwe and with the opposition party as traitors. On the streets, the youth militia are popularly known as the Green Bombers and they enforce party edicts, and during elections to control the vote especially in rural areas.

19 There is not the space here to explore why and how policies and programs unthinkable in South Africa are
certain size would be allocated to a head of household (usually male), a homestead would be demarcated in a centralized area and the grazing area for the village would be along a nearby river or stream with cultivation banned along the water way. Settlers held permits to reside in the new villages and did not have rights of ownership.

These processes of rural centralization and organization were carried out in select communal areas and were the basis of the Native Land Husbandry Act of 1951. While the NLHA was resisted in many areas, it was implemented in others. Following independence in 1980 this model became the basis for the most frequent form of resettlement during the 1980s.

How resettlement was actually carried out has been described by Kinsey, Spierenburg, Moore, Derman, Drinkwater, et al. Unlike the current Fast Track there were multiple, if not always successful, components. They consisted of utilizing land in the former commercial farm lands and instituting the centralization process described above. While there were many successes with the program (Kinsey 1999, 2003, 2004), it was characterized by inflexible planning and state control. There was an insistence that all resettled farmers had the same amount of land no matter what their capabilities. I carried out a study of one large resettlement project in two communal areas in the eastern Zambezi Valley (Derman 1997a and b) known as the Mid-Zambezi Rural Development Project lasting from 1987-1995. As in much anthropological research the rhetoric and practice surrounding development projects and programs are very different than the lived reality for its participants. There is not space here to provide a detailed account of this resettlement project but only to state its primary goals:

The project originated from a land-use plan carried out by the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO) to spur development in the valley after the eradication of the tsetse fly.20 One of a series of proposed projects, this one was named the Mid-Zambezi Rural Development Project (MZP). The initial project's goals were to protect the fragile ecology of the valley and to raise the standard of living of its residents. In addition, Government of Zimbabwe (GOZ) added a goal to settle 3,000 new families in the project area. These households were to come from over-crowded communal areas and to be settled between the Musengezi and Manyame Rivers. These families were to form some 130 villages of between 20 and 25 households each depending upon the availability of water supplies. In addition, the project was to provide support both to new and old residents through the

---
20. The European Economic Community had a major project in newly independent Zimbabwe to eradicate the tsetse fly from the entire length of the Zambezi Valley through a program of aerial and ground spraying combined with control of livestock and wild animal movements. This program has greatly reduced the numbers of tsetse but due to no spraying in Zambia and Mozambique and other factors, tsetse and bovine trypanosomiasis are still present in large parts of the valley.
construction of clinics, roads, schools and boreholes. In short, the project was designed to accommodate both the planners' and consultants' views of the best way to develop the Zambezi Valley and also Government's resettlement and land-use goals and policies. Thus the MZP project included a resettlement component and an equity component. All households were to receive an equitable 12 acres of land for cultivation and one acre for a residential plot. However, they would have to be resettled in those areas designated arable plots and residential stands by government planners.

Ironically, as the MZP was implemented there were already more people living in the valley than the project planned for at the end of the time of the project’s beginning. Thus, quite quickly the issue became landlessness or dispossession for those already living in the valley that refused to follow project guidelines. The following also provides an example of why any observer needs to carefully consider the GOZ’s use of the term ‘landless’ as well as Sam Moyo’s discussions of squatters.

In 1992 I worked with one District Councilor who was willing to speak out openly and forcefully against certain aspects of the Mid-Zambezi Project. He took the courageous stand of attempting to have his constituents refuse to take up their arables and residential plots until all people in his ward received land. This was because there were not enough places in his ward for all the people who were already living there. He argued that the MZP was creating landlessness where landlessness had not previously existed. The Councilor attempted to determine how many people were left without land when arables and residential plots were pegged within his ward. He then presented his numbers to District Council and to the Project Resettlement Officers. These numbers were disturbing enough that a Commission of Inquiry was formed that then attempted to determine the degree of landlessness in the project. The commission included a member of the secret police (the Central Intelligence Organization (CIO), the Chairman of Guruve District Council, the District Chairman of the dominant political party, ZANU-PF, the Project Manager of the Mid-Zambezi Project, and the District Administrator for Guruve District (a central government appointee).

21. In addition to assisting him with this project, I also attempted on my own to determine in selected villages the numbers of people without arables. I did this by doing a complete census of four villages (which did not include people away who felt that they had rights to land) and asking if they had received an arable. Unfortunately my sample was biased by working in one Village Development Committee where the villages had refused entirely to accept the area demarcated for them. Thus only 60 households of 500 had at the time of writing received project land. This story of resisting project pegged land will also be elaborated in describing the politics of resistance to “development” and in the work of Marja Spirenburg (2005). The Ward Councilor has, like so many others in the Valley, died from Aids.

22. This was a process involving national, provincial, regional and district government. It was not one in which I could appear without an invitation. The committee did not ask for what we would term “expert” witnesses, or any witnesses for that matter.

23. While two districts are included in the MZP - Muzarabani and Guruve - the question of residents losing land was not raised in Muzarabani. According to my best estimates, approximately one-third of residents in the project portion of that district were forced to move from their homes. Many did find new lands in Masiwo and Chitsungo Wards.
The actual process followed by the committee revealed how unwilling the political leadership was to reconsider the project’s consequences. The Committee met in each Village Development Committee (VIDCO) calling by arable number the households that had been allocated land there. Each household head or representative had to appear and present his national identity card that listed his district citizenship. If the household head or an appropriate representative was not present he was given two weeks to appear at District Council to demonstrate their papers were in order or else he would lose his land. Following all arable holders, those who were citizens of Guruve District without arables were asked to present themselves. After they presented themselves and their problems, non-Guruve citizens were asked to appear. It was never the case that one needed to have a Guruve resident card to be living in the valley or to be assigned land by the project. This was a new condition, which served to make the problem of landlessness go away. Thus, aside from the usual difficulties of knowing that a meeting was being called, being clear on why it was being held, and what it meant to appear, there was the generalized insecurity produced by the presence of the CIO and the widespread fear of non-Guruve residents to be identified to higher levels of government and therefore did not appear. As I expected, the numbers of landless "discovered" by the Commission was much less than those found by the Ward Councilor. The Commission concluded that there was no problem of landlessness. The established valley government authorities had out-maneuvered the District Councilor.

However, the story is not yet finished. The processes described in Part IV by which residents and local leaders disregard project procedures means that there is an increase, rather than a decrease in "landlessness" which now is termed a problem of "squatters" rather than of landlessness. This shift in terminology acknowledges the presence of large numbers of people who are not living within demarcated areas. By terming them squatters it delegitimizes their presence in the project area and legitimizes actions to evict them. "Squatters" are a very diverse group composed of recent migrants from other communal areas, as well as long-term residents who did not receive project land, and family members of residents returning to the valley. Ironically, the intent of having a greater balance between numbers of people and the valley’s ecology has been further disrupted by unemployment, and expulsion of farm workers. Thus, there are many new residents in the valley who have obtained land through multiple channels.

24. Land was allocated by household head that were assumed to be men unless the woman was a widow. If the woman was a widow the project and the local leadership determined if she had young children and was physically capable of managing twelve acres (a criterion not used for male household heads). If she was too old, or had adult children then she was allocated two and one-half acres. However, these two and _ acre plots had not been allocated as of September 1994. In principal divorced women were not eligible since it was assumed they were to follow customary practice by returning to their father's or relative's homes although some divorced
Current resettlement models include the same Model A now called A1 and a commercial model called A2. The A2 model was intended for those with the means to run a smaller but viable commercial farm. In addition, not included in the resettlement figures, are those former white-owned farms whose ownership was transferred to powerful black Zimbabweans including ministers, generals, mayors, etc. The transfer of land has been dramatic. This is indicated in Tables 4. The figures are drawn from a Presidential report led by Charles Utete and these figures themselves have not been independently confirmed.

We lack good empirical studies on the newly resettled commercial farms. What we now have are general statements based upon national and often unreliable statistics and the accounts provided by different individuals. We have the longitudinal studies carried out by Bill Kinsey and others using his data attempting to assess the outcomes of resettlement for its participants. These were relatively encouraging until 2000 (Kinsey 2003). The initial period of rapid land reform attempted to provide land for those who would only be full-time farmers. My own fieldwork and that of many others has demonstrated that Zimbabwe’s rural peoples were highly dependent upon diverse livelihood strategies which included full and part-time wage employment and remittances from kin. To be successful small scale producers of tobacco and cotton required sources of income to buy the necessary inputs, for example.

To large measure the resettlement areas have become like the communal areas. Hulme et al. have found that there is little difference between formal (government organized) and informal (settler search) as well. This raises the possibility discussed below that the A1 fast track land reform areas will become like Zimbabwe's communal areas.

The Farm Workers:

Any effort to present land reform in Zimbabwe as a transformative and progressive step founders on an analysis of Zimbabwe’s farm workers. Poorly paid farm workers were the largest sector of formal paid labor in Zimbabwe until fast track. Yet they were completely neglected in the resettlement plans. My introduction to commercial farm workers was unusual. I was carrying out one of my early field trips to the Mid Zambezi Project when I saw a tractor pulling a trailer filled with women and children at sunset one evening. The trailer carried casual workers to the nearby cotton plantation owned by the Agricultural Rural Development Authority, a parastatal that had succeeded the older Tribal Development Corporation (TILCOR). For planting, weeding, and harvesting the ARDA plantation relied on relatively few permanent staff and large numbers of women hired at minimum wage (or women with influence did manage to obtain full twelve-acre arables).
below) and no benefits. The person who transported them was the local Rural District Councilor who received a sum for each laborer he carried to the fields along with reimbursement for fuel and tractor maintenance. This enabled him to spend his days at the District Council owned beer hall. My second encounter was also on an ARDA cotton farm where there was no source of water for the farm workers. They had to bring their own since the ARDA bowser that brought water to the permanent employees did not always arrive. I provide these two examples for government labor practices as examples that they were typically no different than the ones described for white farmers. Labor practices were fairly consistent for Government parastatals, black farm owners and white farm owners. But, it has been virtually impossible to discuss the class issues rather than racial ones in contemporary Zimbabwe.

For many years in discussions of commercial farms they were presented as empty spaces with little or no attention paid to the work forces that made them profitable businesses. If attention was given, it was simply to point to exploited labor with little or no analysis. There were approximately 350,000 black farm workers in Zimbabwe prior to the land occupations. The farm workers were principally dealt with as enemies by those who carried out the land occupations since they were viewed as not supportive of ZANU-PF policies in general and overly connected to whites. As the farms were first occupied and then the owners driven off, the farm workers often resisted these take-overs. Often they were successful in literally forcing the occupiers off the farms but typically they returned with reinforcements, weapons, police and local political personalities (Holtzclaw 2004). Needless to say this defense of employment by workers was not appreciated. Farm workers lost their homes, their work, as well as their farmer-funded schools and their clinics. Moyo and Yeros comment that

> The case of farm workers has presented analytical and empirical difficulties, given their dual ‘identity’ as migrant workers (national and foreign) and communal area farmers. Prior to fast track the large-scale commercial farming sector (LSCF) employed 350,000 workers, of whom 75 percent were of communal-area origin. If we were to add official fast-track figures of declared ‘farm workers’ and fieldwork estimates of farm workers applying for land as ‘landless peasants’ via communal areas, it is probable that they account for 5 percent (or 8,750) of total beneficiaries.” (2005: 196)

Their view that the farm workers were confronted by ‘landless workers’ (2005: 191) downplays the role of the CIO, the regular police, ZANU-PF officials, and hired youth. In addition, there is substantial evidence that many communal area residents went to the commercial farms looking at their prospects for obtaining land but then returned home stating that the land was only for the powerful and

---

25 The exact numbers can never be known since they varied by year, by farm and by permanency of employment.

26 Heather Holtzclaw (2005) has produced an excellent thesis on farm worker involvement in resisting the farm
party people. (Campbell and Sithole: 2004; Derman field notes, 2004). Moyo and Yeros criticize the farm workers’ union The General Agriculture and Plantation Workers' Union (GAPWUZ) for having focused on the ‘reformist workerist’ issues of wages and conditions of employment rather than seeking repossession of the farms. Even so, GAPWUZ was powerless to defend the interests of farm workers in face of farm occupations and resettlement. To this day, most displaced farm workers have received no government assistance; their children provided with no education, their homes destroyed if they lived on farms. No resources and no programs were made available to assist them in this very difficult transition. Moyo and Yeros do not have an easy place for farm workers in their vision for rural Zimbabwe beyond that they will remain cheaper labor for new farmers or else communal area farmers.

Arguably the most vulnerable of Zimbabwe's population, farm workers and their families, have been dispossessed of their livelihoods while receiving very little land through resettlement. No resources and no programs were made available to assist them in this very difficult transition.

Under Fast Track the government reports that 127,000 households have been resettled in the A1 model and 7,260 on the A2. In sum virtually all commercial farm land has been redistributed with virtually no effect upon the communal areas. According to Sachikonye (2205: 38) there are 249,000 people who remain on the waiting list for A1 farms and 99,000 for A2 model land. In short, less than one-half of those applying received land although many of those who received land had not been on any list. (See Table V for a summary of the new land divisions.) In the next section we discuss what have been termed communal areas.

III. The Communal Areas

Communal areas and peoples represent the majority of land and population. Historically, they have been the "site" of most social science research in Zimbabwe. These rich studies have illuminated various dimensions of complex rural economies, ecological tensions, land conflicts, class formation, ethnic conflicts, and violence. After all, the Rhodesian state had forced many communal area residents into keeps or strategic hamlets in an effort to end the armed struggle against the colonial state. The communal areas were defined post-independence as sites of underdevelopment. They were categorized as places that required sustained government attention to overcome the dual legacy of colonial rule and underdevelopment. Resources flowed into education, health clinics, agricultural research and extension, except in Matabeleland which saw the national army suppressing the population as mentioned above. Even after the withdrawal of the national army and the unity agreement, there were fewer resources made available to Matabeleland.
Why the ruling party continued the construction of communal tenure despite its colonial roots remains a puzzle. In the 1980s government shifted land allocation to District Councils but in the late 1990s returned more and more powers to government sanctioned chiefs. Current systems of land allocation are unclear thus permitting substantial manipulations and politicization. Despite the current emphasis upon resettlement and white-owned land, most land conflicts prior to 2000 took place within communal areas. There were multiple causes ranging from inheritance conflicts, boundary conflicts between newly organized Village Development Committees, conflicts between customary authorities and local political units.

The 1980s saw serious debates on what should be done with the communal areas. The government of the day launched a Communal Lands Development Plan (1985) led by Dr. Chitsike then Permanent Secretary to the Ministry of Lands, Resettlement and Rural Development, commissioned the Commission of Inquiry into the Agricultural Industry (1982) under the leadership of the sociologist Dr. Gordon Chavunduka. Both reports focused on conditions in the communal lands and the need for their centralization. Neither addressed if nor how resettlement of large-scale commercial areas would or could overcome what they saw as the obstacles to agricultural modernization. Lionel Cliffe in a FAO report from 1985 foresaw little benefit in centralization and argued that such policies were a distortion of genuine agrarian reform in the large-scale commercial farming areas. In what was thought to be a definitive effort to resolve what to do with the communal areas, Dr. Mandivamba Rukuni an agricultural economist partly trained at Michigan State University headed the Commission of Inquiry into Appropriate Agricultural Systems in 1994. The commission made significant recommendations for all tenurial systems in Zimbabwe. The Report was highly critical of the national government in several dimensions. For our purposes three points are critical: 1. The report found that there was no coherent government policy and commitment to support agricultural and rural development in the communal areas comparable to the support given the large scale farm sector during the colonial period. They argued that increased access to land and support services was the only sure way to stimulate the rural economy and reduce poverty; 2. With respect to resettlement areas the report observes that most rights on Resettlement Land are for the Minister and not the land user while there is a lack of empowerment of local institutions and farmers due to centralization of power, function and budget within central government, and 3. That large scale farms should be reduced in size through permitting subdivision of farms, land tax, and limits to farm size in highly productive areas. They argued for freehold land tenure for all commercial farms of all sizes.

---

27 Once again, we do not have an accurate up-to-date assessment by independent researchers.
28 “The Commission found overwhelming evidence that the most serious land conflicts today are within Communal Areas. The conflicts have been exacerbated by the acute breakdown in administrative structures and the erosion of authority and responsibility.” (ALTC: 23)
29 The Commission noted that the national government in 1994 had no data base or administrative capacity to analyze, formulate strategy or implement policies effectively in the large scale farming areas (Volume I: 102).
The Commission provided little or no support for the national government’s effort to reorganize (villagize) the communal areas. It moved away from fixed ideas about either private or communal land tenure noting that most communal farm land and residential land was held under (ironically) ‘traditional’ freehold. While Chitsike argued (as had many before) that only full time cultivators should have land in communal areas this was never implemented. It was fiercely opposed by communal area residents. With respect to communal areas Terry Ranger wrote in 1993:

Like most others, I have been reduced to watching the plan {reorganization of communal areas} unfold in press reports so as to seek to guess how government intends to revolutionize peasant society. It has become clear that government backs the technocratic solutions of villagization and consolidation with the necessary reallocation of land that these entail. (2003: 379)

The large and diverse ethnographic literature on the communal lands since independence has illuminated the poverty of many areas but also the dynamism of the peasant/farming sector despite its neglect by central government. There were many new crops introduced, investments were made in agriculture, new models of production have been tried while livelihood strategies were expanded. The reality remains that even with most large scale commercial farm land nationalized by the state the situation in Zimbabwe’s communal lands is worse now than at any time since independence. Worse is not easy to quantify since so little information is now collected but it includes child malnutrition, life expectancy, AIDS, hunger, poverty levels, difficulties in transport due to massive fuel shortages, etc. The notion that rural Zimbabweans were not integrated into the national economy is false. Depending upon the area, many people also worked on the former commercial farms and have lost either income or markets or both. The loss of jobs in urban areas has led to the loss of incomes for investment in family health, education and investment. In short, there has been a dramatic escalation in households’ vulnerability and poverty. In addition, the extraordinary rates of inflation over the past five years so that 1 U.S. dollar is now worth over 100,000 Zimbabwean dollars rather than the 24 in years 2000 prior to Fast Track Land Reform. This has meant that rural people cannot keep money since it loses value so quickly; they cannot plan on how to purchase agricultural inputs because they have no idea about what will happen to prices nor can they save the money since it too quickly becomes valueless. The primary viable livelihood strategy is to leave Zimbabwe and find employment in neighboring countries and earn income in currencies that keep pace with the Zimbabwe's dollar's devaluation. In a brief comment upon the communal areas by the Presidential Land Review Committee on the implementation of the Fast Track Land Reform Programme (known as the Utete Report): states that
...decongestion had not significantly taken place in the communal lands. This situation had been worsened by some land reform beneficiaries who maintained dual homes i.e. both in the communal areas and in the new resettlement schemes owing to the uncertainty of tenure referred to earlier. (Volume I: 56)

This is the context in which Moyo and Yeros suggest that there is a ‘land occupation movement’ that succeeded in compelling the expropriation of over 90 percent of commercial farmland. It is a movement, they assert, that was led by war veterans and supported by the party, the police and the military. This has removed, in their view, the formerly race-based class struggle. This one presumes means that now the struggle will be between peasants and workers and the new black bourgeoisie that has taken over large numbers, if indeterminate, of former white-owned farms. According to them, Zimbabwe risks falling

.....into a process of re-compradorization and recolonization under a dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, and ultimately the failure to fulfill the developmental potential of the new agrarian structure. (2005: 194)

They contend that the process has led to the repeasantization of Zimbabwe. In their view, the government’s priority should be agricultural reconstruction with an industrial emphasis upon producing for the home market, not for export. The success of such an effort will founder if the rural/urban divide is not repaired. In other words, to seek what they term the semi-proletarian unity in opposition to a bourgeois dominated state.

Resisting the repressive tendencies of both central and local government and advocating the entrenchment of a redistributive framework of national resource allocation should remain the priority for advancing the national democratic revolution. (2005: 201)

Other possibilities like a military coup and outright military rule, civil war, intensification of repression are not considered in this 21st century reinterpretation of marxism. A close look at the Communal Areas indicates that they have been neglected in terms of economic and social development. The problems identified in the range of reports from the 1980s and 1990s have not been solved. However, the Zimbabwean peasantry especially the Shona-speaking members were singled out to support the ruling party in the series of elections beginning in February 2000. It was they who were characterized as being the loyal base. Nonetheless they were not taken for granted as Western, Central and Eastern Mashonaland populations were subjected to sustained violence and intimidation by the ruling party, the youth militia and the police in a successful effort to prevent the opposition party, teachers, university personnel, etc. from having a real debate about political directions. The
effort led by President Mugabe to have the Movement for Democratic Change viewed as traitorous and under foreign allegiance appears to have been successful. However, the question of the peasantries’ future, the directions of policy, and how rural populations would benefit from fast track were not addressed. How the party views its rural population was partly addressed in a surprising fashion in Operation Murambatsvina.30

Part IV. Operation Murambatsvina

While President Mkapa of Tanzania has launched a program led by Hernando de Soto to support the property of the poor, he has also praised President Mugabe for land reform and housing demolitions. Thus while de Soto argues in support of formalizing the poor’s assets, the Zimbabwe government has just destroyed them.31 In a surprising nation-wide operation beginning in May of 2005 and to some measure not finished, the Zimbabwe government decided to remove all illegal structures and to end all activities at undesignated areas. In practice, informal settlements, markets, and business activities (including tuck shops, market stalls, etc.), which were all the assets of the poor, were destroyed. Businesses and homes were often burnt to the ground either by the police or soldiers or by residents themselves who were ordered to do so. No alternative homes or business places were provided. This led to a massive migration of people carrying all their belongings to whatever they could find shelter. The scale has been massive.

Mrs. Anna Kajumulo Tibaijuka the United Nations Special Envoy on Human Settlement Issues led a team to assess the situation. Her team estimated that 700,000 people lost either their homes their businesses or both. The precise details are not important for this paper except to cite the report in which the UN envoy stated:

Operation Restore Order, while purporting to target illegal dwellings and structures and to clamp down on alleged illicit activities, was carried out in an indiscriminate and unjustified manner with indifference to human suffering, and, in repeated cases, with disregard to several provisions of national and international legal frameworks.

And reinforcing a line of argument that I have tried to make in this paper Operation Restore Order

...turned out to be a disastrous venture based on a set of colonial-era laws and policies that were used as a tool of segregation and social exclusion. (2005: 7-8)

30 This term has been translated as ‘social cleansing’, ‘remove the filth’ and ‘restore social order.’
31 I am not supporting the Tanzanian or de Soto approach. For a new excellent critique from a South African perspective see Cousins et al. 2005
In 1993 when I was working in the Zambezi Valley I met the director of the Mid-Zambezi development project. He was racing around trying to find some food and shelter for around 25 families who had been forcibly removed from the Porta Farm outside Harare and were dumped in a remote area of the resettlement project where there were unoccupied residential and fields. Porta Farm had been created by the government to rid Harare of unsightly squatter settlements because of Queen Elizabeth’s visit in 1990. The settlement became virtually permanent until June 28, 2005 when the entire settlement (including homes, schools, a clinic, small businesses) is destroyed. 12,000 people are left homeless some of who are dumped at another farm and left to sleep out in the open in the middle of Harare’s winter.

The UN envoy touched however, on a critical issue. The government assumed that to be a real Zimbabwean one must have land in the rural areas. The expectation as stated by government was that those living illegally in the cities should return to their rural homes. What then is the vision that the ruling party has of its own citizenry? Are real Zimbabweans rural and does that happen to be coincident with urban citizens voting overwhelmingly for the opposition party? This question cannot be answered for the moment.

In terms of Murambatsvina itself, once again there is both a history and a pattern. Using force against one's own population without provocation has many colonial echoes. To blame the poor and the traders for their own situation and deliberately violating land use and other laws renders invisible the government's own set of failures. The Zimbabwe government takes no responsibility for any of its own actions that have created such a large informal sector even though it has overseen the loss of hundreds of thousands of formal sector jobs and has been unable to even come close to meeting housing demands. Lastly, to deprive people of their homes and livelihoods and children of their schools in the midst of Aids seems like the actions of a regime at war with its own population, not one ready to oversee a transition to a national democratic revolution.

There have been many efforts to understand the reasons why the government would act in such a forcible, visible way despite international sanctions and criticisms of the government. It’s also clear that most government officials did not know of the plans although they were carried out with precision by the police and army. Perhaps the most plausible account comes from the Nigerian based New Africa magazine, which has long been supportive of virtually everything that the ZANU-PF Zimbabwe government has done. Its editor, Ankomah, was in the country recently as part of a delegation of journalists assessing Murambatsvina's hastily arranged successor "programme", Operation Garikai/Hlalan i Kuhle which translates as Rebuilding and Reconstruction. Based upon his discussions with the political leadership Ankomah wrote that the "New African can now reveal that the operation was the brainchild of Zimbabwe's intelligence community, which felt it had to move quickly to nip in the bud a Ukrainian-style revolution (or street protests) then being planned in Zimbabwe and funded by the same Western countries who paid for Ukraine's so-called "orange revolution." The article was surprisingly reproduced by the state-controlled Herald this week. Somehow, Zimbabwe's Central Intelligence Organisation, got wind of the impending operation and panicked. They decided simply to disperse the slum dwellers. Due to the rushed response, many Cabinet ministers and key government officials who would have normally been privy to such an operation were kept in the dark. Wherever the origins may lie, it demonstrates once again the governments’ continued actions against its own poor.
The differing analyses of Zimbabwe’s land reform have broad implications for how to think about new agrarian dynamics in Zimbabwe. Moyo and Yeros envision this time as pivotal in terms of whether or not workers and peasants will lead a democratic national revolution against the comprador aspirations of the new [black] agrarian bourgeoisie and the aspirant middle classes, who are advocating the return to neoliberalism and narrow liberal democratic reforms. (2005: 200)

Moyo and Yeros desire a new Zimbabwe where production becomes oriented toward domestic industrial and agricultural consumption. The emergent class structure consists mainly of peasants (semi-proletariat), proletariat in transition (former commercial farm workers), small capitalists and/or middle peasants, large capitalist farmers and corporate capitalists. Clearly the largest percentages will be of workers and peasants but Moyo and Yeros are noticeably silent on how they are to be mobilized to defend their own interests and to direct state policy. It seems they want to promote the future agrarian revolution without undertaking a serious analysis of the ruling party’s rural strategies since independence.

Moyo wrote in 1995 that

One of the most enigmatic issues surrounding African nationalism, including Zimbabwe’s own brand of it, is the unspecified nature of land tenure patterns envisioned for the future. In spite of the numerous critiques of African land policy, which forewarn of either the emergence of ‘the tragedy of the commons’ or the widespread commoditisation of land, African governments have been unwilling to formally declare private land tenure systems or to merely legalist these where they seem to have emerged illegally. (1995:268-69)

He goes on to observe that African governments to survive politically have had to satisfy the private land-owning aspirations of the emergent black bourgeoisie while at least claiming that there is land access for all. But, and here is the rub, the decade of the 1990s placed emphasis upon genuine participation by the poor, partnerships with civil society, support for social capital and linking the rural poor to the dynamic sectors of the economy. This has broad implications for the design and implementation of land reform programs independent of narrow political and/or economic interest by those holding the reins of power.

33 Horace Campbell, another marxist analyst, sees the potential for a revolution in the struggle against Mugabe and the ruling party. He argues for a new politics based upon the transformation of the education system that values African knowledge systems (2005).

34 This is also the case for Moyo who has written two books on the land question but without a searching analysis of power that to large measure has determined land issues in Zimbabwe as elsewhere.
According to Bruce Moore (2001) and many others, the poor require access to power, to knowledge, and alternative courses of action (2001: 3). In Zimbabwe, as elsewhere the state and/or the ruling party control the key institutions. In my research experiences working throughout West, Central and Eastern Mashonaland provinces I found no evidence that the ruling party was interested in the poor. Indeed, it was the reverse. The poor were not permitted to represent and protect their interests because the party controlled all organizations.\(^{35}\) Until 1999 there was no opposition party. The violent election campaigns of 2000 and 2002 ensured that there was to be no alternative form of representation than the ruling party.\(^{36}\) The crux of the matter rests on how one analyzes ZANU-PF and how they have exercised power. In addition, within the emergent class framework of Moyo/Yeros whose interests have they represented? In my estimation, ZANU-PF has been built upon a version of crony state capitalism. Since the growing economic and political crises the party has relied upon providing resources to supporters to stay in power. When the resources were insufficient they used organized and systematic violence. Rob Davies has stated quite clearly:

\[\text{Its [government's] policies have created the conditions for rentier capitalism, creating greater incentives for rent-seeking and speculation than for accumulation of productive capital. This has created the environment in which self-privileging individuals are able to appropriate the language of nationalism and anti-imperialism for self-aggrandizement. (2005: 40)}\]

In the use of land redistribution to win the elections of 2000 and 2002, there was little or no attention paid to how Zimbabwe’s small-scale farmers and/or peasants were actually making do. They are, as discussed earlier, embedded in a whole array of off-farm economic activities because farming alone will not support families or households.\(^{37}\) Harare has long been described as a bedroom city precisely because of its multi stranded rural links. These links have been dramatically reduced due to the massive economic crises and inflation. In fact, I wonder if and how Moyo's and Yeros' class categories can account for rural peoples in the midst of an enormous poverty trap intensified due to the Aids epidemic and the collapse of a public health system. The continued survival of many rural families, not unlike many other African nations, rests upon international employment and the flow of hard currency into the country.

\(^{35}\) Arguably the water reform process created new institutions outside of the party’s control but these have come to an end (Hellum and Derman 2005).

\(^{36}\) There are large numbers of sources documenting the violence. Unanalyzed however, has been why and how ZANU-PF orchestrated violence was so successful. For a complete series of accounts of violence see the Zimbabwe Human Right NGO web site, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch Africa, the International Crisis Group and other international human rights organizations.

\(^{37}\) An unexamined arena of large-scale commercial farming was the degree to which they actually were at the center of a range of commercial activities including transport, butcheries, bottle stores, et al.
The degree to which rural peoples can organize depends upon seeing realistic possibilities for change. My last visits to rural areas, unlike other ones, were characterized by despair. It is virtually impossible for any meetings to take place due to the presence of war veterans, youth militia, the police and the repressive legislation which blocks all meetings deemed political under the Public Order and Security Act. Members of MDC are often considered traitors and thus the rural teachers who had formerly served as important communicators of MDC ideas have become silent or else moved to urban areas. Hunger and famine are widespread.

Under such conditions household survival takes precedence since even relatively wealthy peasants - those with cattle or a cash crop - have difficulty maintaining their standard of living. The vast exodus of rural and urban Zimbabweans to South Africa and elsewhere has meant the loss of labor. Communal and resettlement areas already suffered from labor scarcity due to Aids and migration.

Land tenure changes and security are a necessary but insufficient condition for the restoration of rural livelihoods. The emphasis upon land alone in the absence of supporting structures and policies promised too much and achieved too little. The methods of land acquisition, settler selection and provision of settlement support were changed to a completely government-driven approach so as to ensure the rapid completion of all tasks while waiting for some future time to provide infrastructural development. In the subsequent five years efforts have been distorted to provide scarce resources to only the most powerful.

The goals of land reform, the means and processes to achieve them reflected the political nature ZANU-PF ruled Zimbabwe. Since the state has remained highly centralized, inflexible, and representative of narrowly based interests then it is difficult to envision any turning point as envisioned by Moyo and Yeros. In addition due to the bases of power held by ruling circles, they have and will continue to distort explicit goals of the land reform to address poverty. The ruling party has departed for at least a decade to address poverty in Zimbabwe. The political base of the ruling party depends upon holding the reins of power while distributing state wealth then there will be no resources to rebuild the rural sector. For example, much of the irrigation infrastructure on the former commercial farms has been destroyed. Because the rural population and/or peasants can only be represented through state-determined and recognized organizations than their interests will not be actualized or accomplished.

Up until now, the Movement for Democratic Change has dramatically under appreciated the nature of agrarian relations and production in Zimbabwe's communal and resettlement areas. They have held to a modernist vision of agriculture combined with titling. They do not provide a real rural alternative and they have not articulated how an alliance with peasants, farm workers, and small-scale farmers
could lead to policy alternatives to ZANU-PF. Still, urban youth whose parents still live in the countryside, form the backbone of MDC. These youth disillusion by unemployment, the constriction of democratic spaces, and faced with a bleak future challenged ZANU-PF. Rather than blame the IMF or World Bank, these youth directly blame the political leadership who have remained virtually unchanged since 1980.

V. Conclusions

Zimbabwean agriculture remained globally competitive through 2002. It was rooted in tobacco but supplemented by growing horticulture and wild life. In addition, there was a strong market for domestically produced maize, cotton, and other crops. Zimbabwe's industries although growing more fragile were linked to agriculture. Zimbabwe's peasants had long been transformed into a dynamic subsistence and commodity producers. Farm workers were the largest formally employed sector. Rather than frame economic and political policies that would build on the strengths of Zimbabwe's rural economy, ZANU-PF chose the fast-track land reform, which would effectively nationalize all commercial farmland and drive white-farmers off their land and their farm workers as well. Because of the rapidity and scale of this effort, no resources were in place to permit long-term continuity in farm operations - most significantly in terms of irrigation, seed production and farm equipment. Little care was taken toward protecting international markets. What followed were an expression of greed and the use of political connections, which meant that land for the landless, or the poor remained a slogan and had little or nothing to do with what happened. It remains naive and obscure to argue that this will lead to a national democratic revolution without specifying what forces (organized or unorganized) could achieve such an outcome.

Rather, the outcomes of a narrow overly political land reform have further immiserated Zimbabwe's peasantry and farm workers. However, because of the war veterans and party's control of rural areas, they were effectively no-go areas for Civil Society Organizations and the Movement for Democratic Change. MDC banked on electoral victories to replace ZANU-PF in power, a strategy that has failed. Prospects for alliance between workers and peasants as envisaged by Moyo and Yeros seem as remote now as before. The degree to which there has been a consolidation of ZANU-PF with the emergent class of what Mamdaza has called the ruling petit bourgeoisie remains unclear. In the late 1990s it seemed that a new group of business owners and were bankers, close to the party but seeking legitimate businesses were emerging. However, with the loss of party control over some new businessmen, political discipline and adherence to the party line became mandatory, again. This parallels the economic decline that has jeopardized new business.

38 It is important but there is not space here to assess the fairness and legitimacy of the elections held since 2000.
The scandals of land reform itself continue. There will be another more land audit (around the fifth), which will, once again, indicate that many political leaders were appropriated farms without regard to qualifications, capacity or whether or not they already had one. It is unlikely that without the de facto one party state that they will hold together as a class. Their prospects for progressive change seem remote for the moment despite the courage of those in opposition. The split in the Movement for Democratic Change leads to the conclusion that they can no longer accede to power. Perhaps, and this can only be speculative is that a new grouping within ZANU-PF beholden to the African National Congress will take the reins of power after Mugabe's passing from the political stage. But that of course is another, even more speculative paper but one can assume, as perhaps does Moyo and Yeros, that the question of rural livelihoods and well-being will not be primary on their agenda. In my view, it is far more harmful to portray a neutral Zimbabwean state and government that can be pushed to the 'real left'. ZANU-PF has permitted no social movements that have acted against the very narrow interests of Zimbabwe's rulers.

To return to the original question there clearly are the 'facts on the ground' which refers to the resettlement of Zimbabwe's former large-scale commercial farming areas. However, it is not just these populations that constitute ‘the facts.’ It is unlikely that many of those people who have moved on to the former large scale commercial farms can or will be removed. The idea of the President that 'his people' will now be happy because they have received land refers to those few who have actually benefited from Fast Track. Those who could have benefited and would have done so had the larger economy remained healthy have faced greater difficulties than they ever could have imagined. Fast Track didn’t have to be done the way it was. As one of my colleagues was fond of saying to make and omelette you have to break an egg. Of course. But questions about how many eggs, what kind of an omelete, who gets to eat the omelette and how many hens had to be killed are ruled out as unpatriotic. The conditions of Zimbabwe's rural populations in the communal areas, the newly and formerly resettled areas have destroyed a great deal of Zimbabwe's infrastructure along with trust of government. It is unlikely that the living standards enjoyed by the vast majority during the hardship years of the 1990s will be restored anytime soon.

To the extent that we move beyond the ideological debate over Zimbabwe and judge a land reform by its success in diminishing or ending poverty and by decreasing inequality, Zimbabwe's land reform has been an overwhelming failure. The lessons to be learned are many but that is the subject of another paper.

The problems and abuses have been well-documented by a wide range of observers and human rights groups.
References

Alexander, Jocelyn
2000 The Enduring Appeal of 'Technical Development' in Zimbabwe's Agrarian Reform in
Land Reform in Zimbabwe: Constraints and Prospect edited by T.A.S. Bowyer-Bower and

Bernstein, Henry
2005 Rural Land and Land Conflicts in Sub-Saharan Africa in Reclaiming the Land: The
Resurgence of Rural Movements in Africa, Asia and Latin America edited by Sam Moyo and

Bond, Patrick
1998 Uneven Development: A Study of Finance, Development, and Underdevelopment. Trenton:
Africa World Press

Bond, Patrick and Masimba Manyanya

Bryceson, Deborah

Bryceson, Deborah
2000 African Peasants' Centrality and Marginality: Rural Labour Transformations in
Disappearing Peasantries? Rural Labour in Africa, Asia and Latin America edited by
Deborah Bryceson, Cristobal Kay and Jos Mooij. London: Intermediate Technology

Campbell, Horace
2003 Reclaiming Zimbabwe: The Exhaustion of the Patriarchal Model of Liberation. Claremont,
South Africa: David Philips Books.

Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace
1997 Breaking the Silence, Building True Peace: A Report on the Disturbances in Matabeleland

Cliffe, Lionel

Cousins, Ben
2003 “The Zimbabwe Crisis in its Wider Context: The Politics of Land, Democracy and
Development in Southern Africa.” in Zimbabwe’s Unfinished Business: Rethinking Land,
State and Nation in the Context of Crisis edited by Amanda Hammar, Brian Raftopoulos,

Cousins, Ben, Tessa Cousins, Donna Hornby, Rosalie Kingwill, Lauren Royston and Warren Smit
2005 Will formalising property rights reduce poverty in South Africa’s ‘second economy’?
Questioning the mythologies of Hernando de Soto. Programme for Land and Agrarian
Studies Policy Brief No. 18. Capetown: PLAAS.

Davies, Rob

Derman, Bill


Derman, Bill and Francis Gonese


Derman, Bill and Anne Hellum


Drinkwater, Michael

1991 *State and Agrarian change in Zimbabwe’s Communal Areas.* London: MacMillan

Hall, Ruth


Hall, Ruth, Peter Jacobs and Edward Lahiff


Hammar, Amanda, Brian Raftopoulos and Stig Jensen (editors)


Hellum, Anne and Bill Derman


Holtzclaw, Heather


International Crisis Group


Kinsey, Bill


Lahiff, Edward


Lan, David

1985 *Guns and Rain: Guerillas and Spirit Mediums in Zimbabwe.* Los Angeles and Berkeley: University of California Press

Martin, David and Phyllis Johnson


Moore, Bruce


Moore, Donald


Moyo, Sam

1995 *The Land Question in Zimbabwe.* Harare: SAPES Books


2004 “African Land Questions, the State and Agrarian Transition: Contradictions of Neoliberal Land Reforms.” Ms.

Moyo, Sam and Paris Yeros


Palmer, Robin

Parliament of Zimbabwe


Phimister, Ian and Brian Raftopoulos


Raftopoulos, Brian

2004  *Nation, Race and History in Zimbabwean Politics* by Brian Raftopoulos in *Zimbabwe: Injustice and Political Reconciliation* edited by Brian Raftopoulos and Tyrone Savage: Capetown: Institute for Justice and Reconciliation

Rutherford, Blair


Sachikonye, Lloyd


Sithole, Bevlyne, Bruce Campbell, Dale Dare and Witness Kozanayi


Sithole, Masipula


Solidarity Peace Trust


Spierenburg, Marja


Tibaijuka, Anna Kajumulo

2005  Report of the Fact-Finding Mission to Zimbabwe to assess the Scope and Impact of
Operation Murambatsvina by the UN Special Envoy on Human Settlements Issues

United Nations Development Programme

Walker, Cheryl
2002 “Land Reform in Southern and Eastern Africa: Key issues for strengthening women’s access to and rights in land. Harare: Food and Agriculture Organization. Mimeo

Zimbabwe, Government
1994 Report of the Commission of Inquiry into Appropriate Agricultural Land Tenure Systems

Zimbabwe Government, Utete Report (Two volumes)

Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum

Zimbabwe Institute