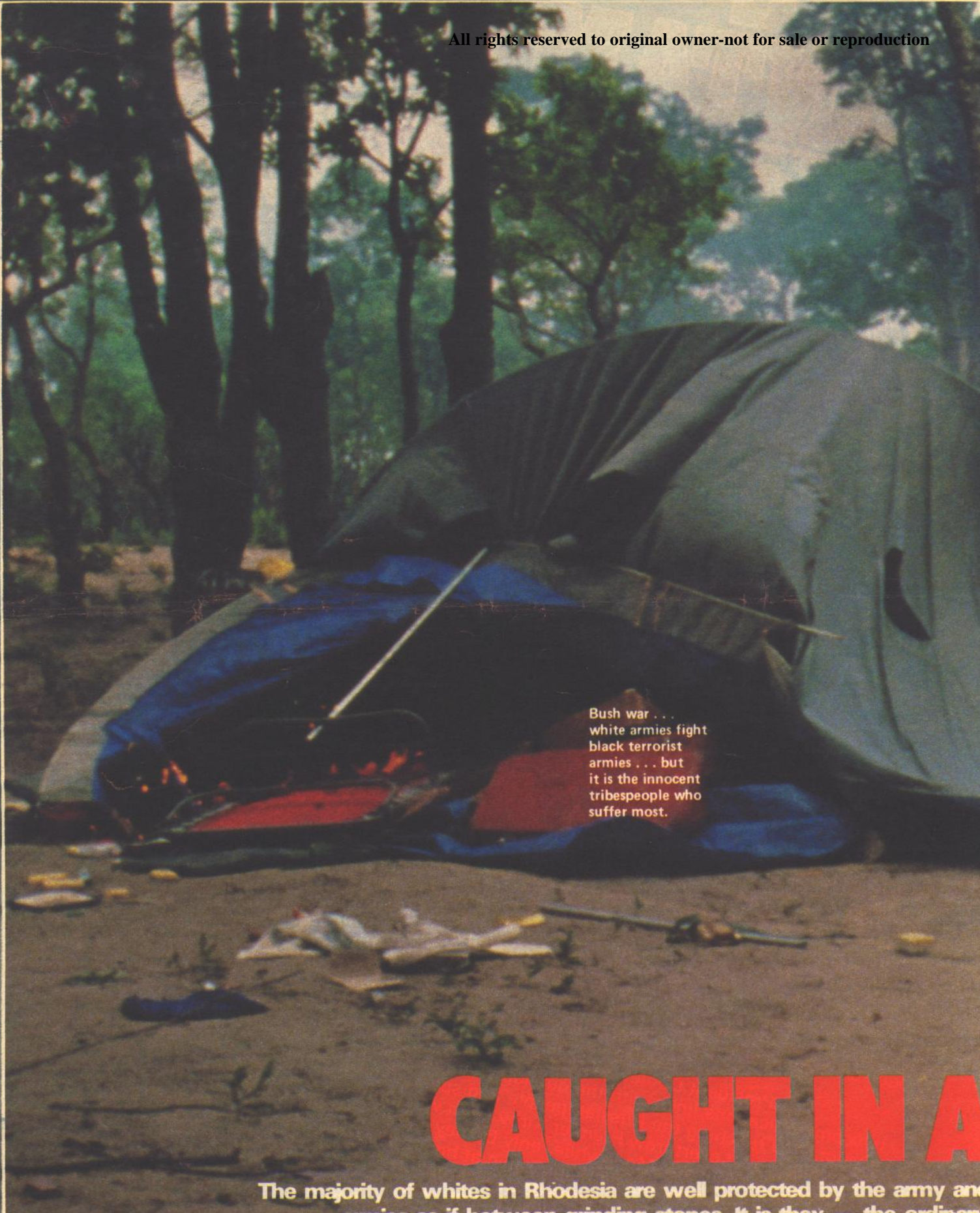


# RHODESIA On The Rack

associated press

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Bush war . . .  
white armies fight  
black terrorist  
armies . . . but  
it is the innocent  
tribespeople who  
suffer most.

## CAUGHT IN A

The majority of whites in Rhodesia are well protected by the army and  
armies as if between grinding stones. It is they — the ordinary  
have suffered most of all. And an end



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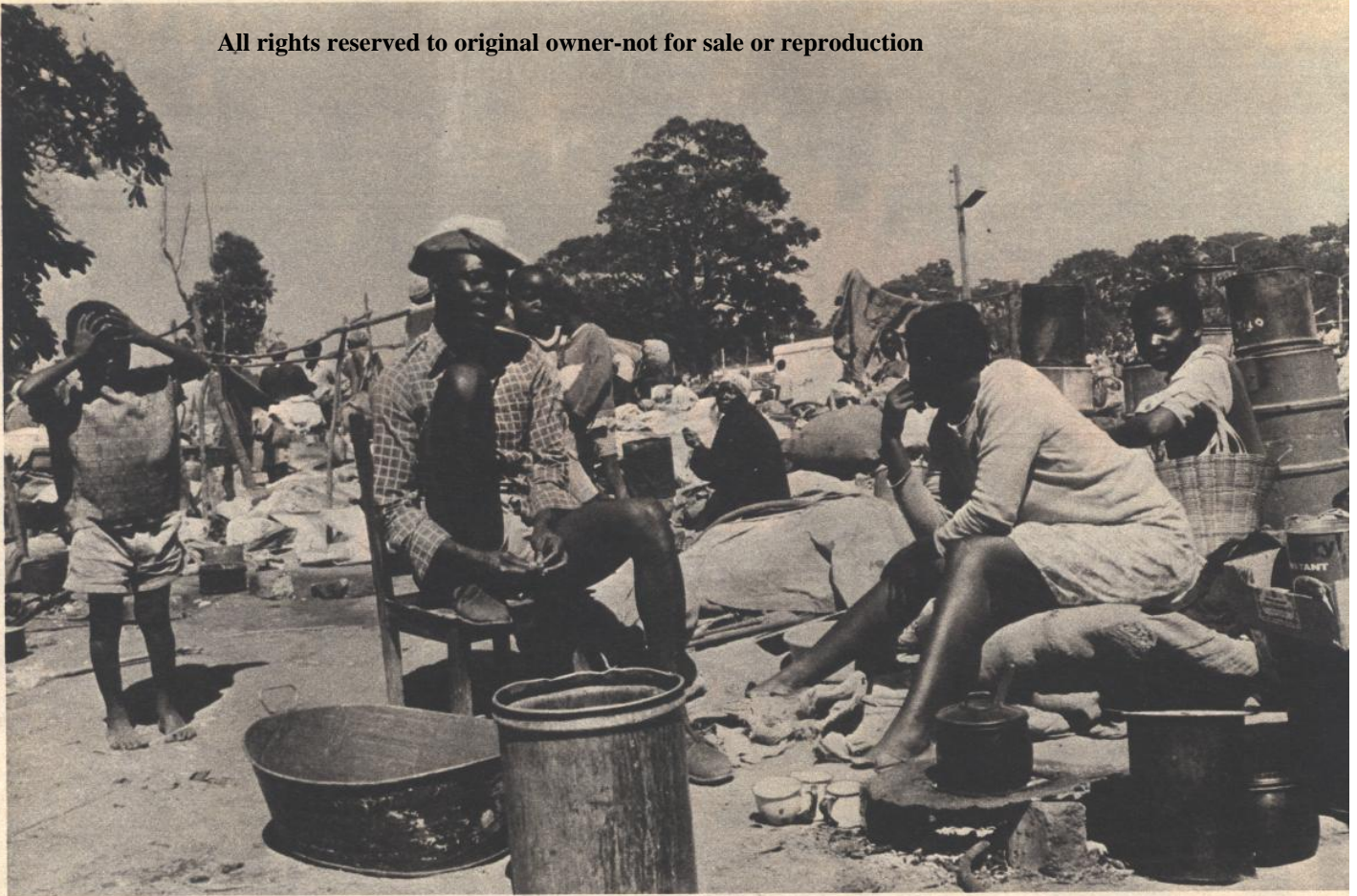
# DEADLY CROSSFIRE

by  
NICHOLAS  
MOSLEY

police. But the blacks in the Tribal Trust Lands are defenceless, caught between rival Africans in the bush — who have borne the brunt of the war, it is they who to their agony seems nowhere in sight



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As the war escalates thousands of refugees pour into the cities. At this makeshift camp in Salisbury's Harare Township there are about 4 000 refugees. More arrive each day.

I HAD been travelling in Rhodesia for no more than a week when it seemed to me that the central tragedy of the war was one that was given almost no attention — the fact that it is the ordinary Africans of the countryside who are suffering most; not the armies of either the government or the terrorists.

They play a stalking game, seldom coming into direct confrontation with each other; and not yet, for the most part, the whites. Although casualties in outlying districts are steady and farms are burned down, the majority of whites are well protected by the army and police, and themselves form a home-guard army with good weapons and *esprit de corps*.

But the blacks in the Tribal Trust Lands are defenceless and have had structures of group-loyalty taken away. They are caught between rival armies (I often heard this phrase in Rhodesia) as if between grind-stones.

I went to some Swiss missionaries on the edge of a Tribal Trust Land. The majority of black Rhodesians (about four million) live in these lands, which constitute about half the country.

It is these areas that the terrorists dominate. They come down from the hills at night and hold meetings with the villagers to indoctrinate them and to tell them what help they, the terrorists, require; and to punish anyone who does not obey.

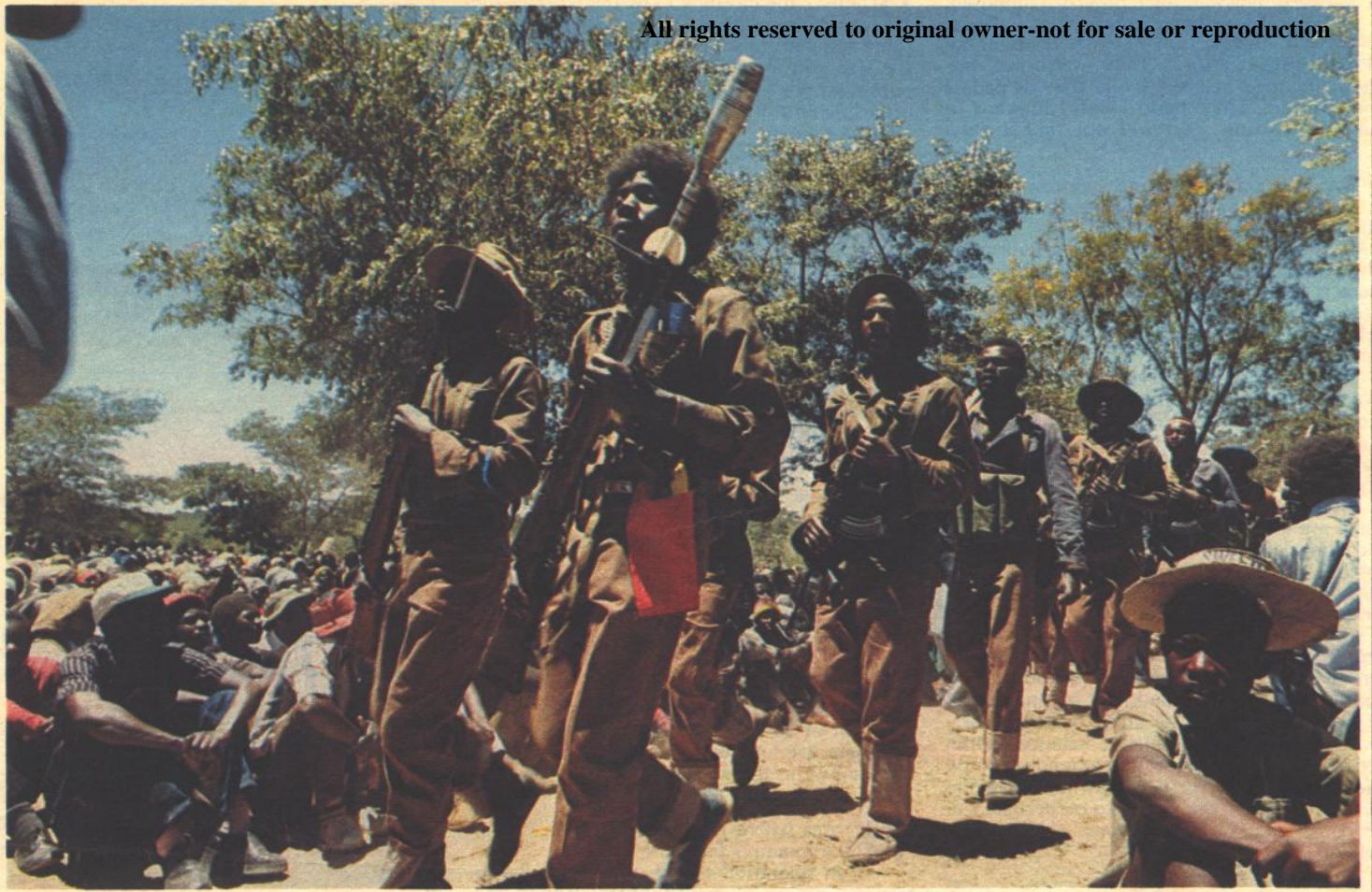
The army and the police make brief incursions during the day to pick up anyone who they think may be helping the terrorists or



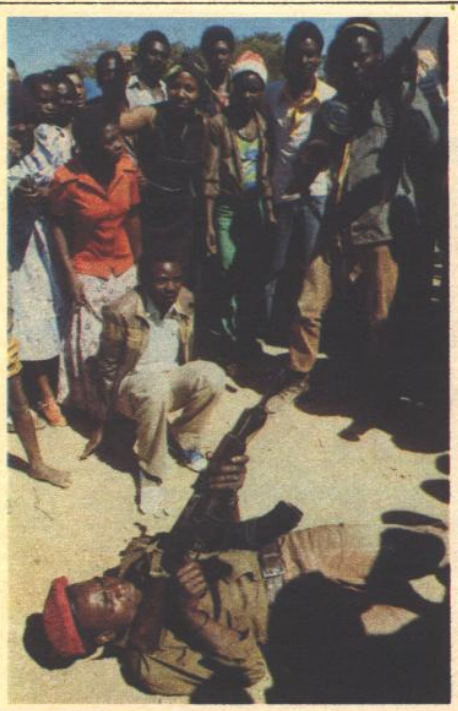
Welcome to Guyu . . . welcome to a world of barbed wire and curfews. The Rhodesians have used "protected villages" both to protect tribespeople from the terrorists and to prevent them aiding the insurge



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Auxiliaries on parade in a so-called "free" zone. Several of these men were once terrorists.



A former terrorist lays on a weapons demonstration at a village run by "auxiliaries" — bands of tribesmen and ex-terrorists charged with keeping law-and-order in the area.

might betray them; and to punish anyone who does not obey.

**T**HE only white men who live and move habitually in these areas are missionaries. I had spoken earlier to a Jesuit, who said: "Once a few journalists went in; now it's not worth it."

Eighteen Roman Catholic missionaries have been killed by terrorists in the past two years and 13 have been deported by the government. He added: "That's not a bad balance."

I asked the Swiss missionaries if they would take me into the Tribal Trust Land. The Father-in-charge was at first understandably hostile. He said it would be dangerous for a strange white man to go in.

The missionaries were tolerated because the terrorists knew them. I might endanger anyone who was seen with me, and anyway no African would talk with me because they were too terrorised.

But he had agreed, I said, that this was the central tragedy of the war. Millions were affected: how could suffering be alleviated, sympathised with even, if nothing of it were known?

The Father-in-charge, a tough, relentless Swiss rather like an Israeli general, smiled so that his face lit up like that of a crocodile. He said: "You think information does good? Well, there is no good without risk."

He took me to Father X, who ran a parish inside the Tribal Trust Land. (I undertook to

mention no names of people or of places).

Father X was another grizzled Swiss who wore an open-necked shirt, dark glasses and a beret, and chain-smoked cigarettes.

He lived in a village just off the main road.

**W**HEN I arrived, there was an African woman washing up after lunch; she wore an amazingly elegant red dress.

She shook hands and children from the village came to shake hands. They had the extraordinarily sophisticated manners that Africans always seem to have in the bush.

It was true, Father X said, that conditions farther in were appalling. The gangs were in the hills and they depended on the local people for food, drink, blankets. Especially, they put pressure on the girls.

I asked about the indoctrination the terrorists gave to the people in the meetings at night.

"Oh, songs and slogans — Down with so-and-so, Ahead with so-and-so — you know, the usual Marxist intellectual argument." There was another huge smile like a crocodile.

We drove in Father X's small car through the dazzlingly green Rhodesian countryside. Among the trees at the side of the dusty road were villages of traditional round mud-and-thatch huts with an occasional tin-roofed store. Children ran out as Father X's car passed.

The mission station at M was about an hour's drive inside the Tribal Trust Land. There were brick and concrete buildings between



trees. Everything was quiet, orderly, composed. I was introduced to other Swiss Fathers: there were five or six — teachers, builders, agriculturists, pastors. They welcomed me. Their quietness seemed to be that of people under strain. They said — But you want to talk to Africans. You will not find it easy.

I WAS introduced to an African school-teacher. We sat outside beneath a tree. His wife came to join us.

The teacher told me: "This is a poor area, where people grow maize and vegetables, and there is much unemployment. Often families do not have as much as the three Rhodesian dollars (about R3,30) required to send their children to school.

"Children do come to school, but they stay away when there are rumours of any trouble. Trouble means incursions of army or police. Today, for instance, there was an army spotter-plane overhead, and hundreds stayed away from church.

"It is true there are these gangs in the hills. Some are loyal to a particular political leader and some are not. It is true that sometimes terrible things are done, and there is some private settling-up of old scores. But people are more afraid of the army and police.

"But the worst thing about this war is that people are learning to trust no one; anyone can be a spy. If a person is questioned and does not talk he may be killed by one side; if he does talk he may be killed by the other.

"Once there was a delicate balance of life, it depended on loyalty to the extended family and tribe. Now terror is everywhere. It seems to be the aim of the armies to perpetuate this terror so that ordinary people shall remain helpless."

I WENT to tea in the African teacher's house. There were two rooms and a kitchen, much like Father X's. The table was meticulously laid, with bread, and fried eggs in a bowl.

The daughter of the house came with a basin of water and knelt down first in front of me and then in front of her father for us to wash our hands. I felt that nothing of what had been said perhaps mattered as much as this — the breaking of bread between strangers in a difficult world.

At six o'clock darkness came and I was told there was a curfew. Anyone seen outside his house was liable to be shot. A man on a bicycle had been shot the previous night.

I asked who by. I was told: "But that is the point: how can we know?"

In daylight there was the green and gold African landscape again, with trees dotted like hairs on a huge skin and people going about their business quietly.

I was approached at breakfast by a very old Father who said: "That conference of Ian Smith's (when he returned to Rhodesia from America) will never be shown on British television!" I asked why not. He said: "With the British Government taking its orders from Moscow?"

I said: "You know that's not true!" He said: "Well, the British back the guerrillas, the guerrillas are Marxists, Marxists take their orders from Moscow."

I said: "There are many kinds of Marxists." He said: "They are all against God."

Other Fathers came to explain: "We have different sorts of political opinion here, but we all work together for the good of the people."

DURING the morning I saw the schools, the workshops, the irrigation scheme. It became apparent that I was visiting something of the size and indeed the nature of an English public school — bungalow classrooms, work-rooms, laboratories, set out like a diagram on a military map.

In the sixth-form classrooms there were boys working for the equivalent of A-levels in physics and chemistry and geography (equivalent to first year studies at a South African university). The classes were quiet and enapt; this was perhaps the difference from an ordinary school; people were learning as if their life-blood depended on it. I was taken aside by the chemistry master who showed me the emptying shelves of his store.

He said: "How can I teach chemistry without chemicals and equipment?" I said: "Is the shortage due to the war?" He said: "To the war, and because we in the country do not have strings to pull like the people in the towns."

He was a young, passionate African with bright eyes — a sort of guerrilla for matters of the mind. He showed me his books which were falling to pieces.

He said: "This is war; we get no books; they call them luxuries."

I had come into the Tribal Trust Land to try to find out — what? — what lay within the stories of terror? The stories were true, of course: but I had found that to people who live surrounded by terror, the impact of it need not be so important as their efforts, if it lets them live long enough, to carry on learning and by this to defeat it.

THE area where I had been was more than 160 kilometres from the border.

In operational areas the signs of warfare were more evident: soldiers went to and fro in armoured cars and most white men and some white women (though no civilian

peter chappell/sipa press



Class



Force of the future in Rhodesia? Or cannon-fodder? Black schoolchildren in a protected village. The teacher lost his leg as a result of a war wound.



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different kind . . . women terrorists in training in Zambia.



The inevitable result . . . Rhodesian soldiers regard the body of a dead terrorist.

Africans) carried guns.

But there were none of the huge scars of modern war, which are caused by artillery. And in all modern war the enemy is seldom seen in person.

I gave a lift to an African soldier of the Rhodesian African Rifles. He said that in three years' service he had been in only five ambushes, and only one of his colleagues had been killed. The "ters" just fired a few shots, and ran away.

And when he was out on patrol, he said, and even when he and his men knew where the enemy was, the terrorists, when they came upon them, would just seize some villagers for protection and then disappear into the bush.

I said: "But you open fire." He said: "Of course."

I said: "But it's difficult to distinguish between who's a terrorist and who is not?"

He agreed — as everyone in Rhodesia seemed to do without saying much more about it — Oh yes, it's the ordinary people who get hurt in this war: not the army, not the gooks (he was the first person I heard use the word gooks).

In the cross-fire, a lot of innocent people get killed.

In the circumstances, it is not hard to see why. Or even to point a particular finger of blame . . . except at those who use defenceless human beings as living shields.

I asked the soldier, when he got home after the war, did he think there would be any trouble for him because he had been a soldier? I had been told by whites that all returning blacks who had fought for the government were likely to be killed.

He said no. He had been told there would be good training schemes for Africans.

**T**HE place to which I was heading was Penhalonga, near Umtali, by the border with Mozambique. Here there was another mission, run by the Anglican Community of the Resurrection.

Although this was in an operational area, there were no restrictions on my getting there as it was in white-designated land. There was only the danger of an ambush, or a land-mine, once I got off the tarred road.

In operational areas it has been government policy to herd Africans into "protected villages" or "keeps" — huge areas surrounded by a wire fence, where villagers are both protected from terrorists and prevented from giving them aid.

One protected village near Penhalonga was about 800 metres in diameter and contained several thousand people. There was a central tower with earth works for the district assistants or African guards.

The inmates had been given just a sheet of plastic and a few sticks with which to build huts like igloos.

Some sort of subsistence life had sprung up: there were stalls by the entrance selling food. Food was not provided by the government, but by charitable organisations, notably the international Red Cross; also friends and relatives from the town could come to the gates by bus.

The inmates could go out to their farms by day, but they had to be back before dark or they were likely to be shot.

Most farms, however, were too far away: and even on those nearby, the cattle had usually strayed, the crops had gone wild and property had been plundered by roving gangs or by baboons. No unauthorised person was



allowed inside a protected village.

**S**T Augustine's School at Penhalonga was like the one in the Tribal Trust Land — 550 boarders, boys and girls, and 300 pupils in the primary school.

I asked if I might speak to some of the sixth-form boys and girls. The principal said he would ask them.

Five boys and three girls came to my room after dark. They were, as always, gentle, age-old, elegant. We drank coffee. I talked about myself. I said I was a novelist; what novels should be trying to do was to describe what life was really like, which was often different from what people imagined it to be.

Was there anything they would like to ask me, before I asked about them? They said: did I think there would soon be a change of government in England?

I said I did not think it would matter much if there was. I asked: did they approve of Dr Owen, then?

They watched me carefully. I wondered if they were anxious about committing themselves: then I realised that I had asked a question to which they thought the answer was so obviously yes.

**I** ASKED: after the troubles, what sort of government would they like? One that gave them freedom as it was understood in England, or one that gave them freedom from uncertainty?

They said — or rather two or three of their spokesmen said: a strong central socialist government.

Did they not think this might entail a curtailment of liberties?

They said: in Africa, the form of democracy they were used to was that of a strong central government. Later, they could learn about liberties.

Did they not think that the tribal factions into which their political parties were split would mean that no one party government

could be formed without much bloodshed?

They said: it was just because of this factionalism that a strong central government was necessary.

Did they admire Mugabe: (I had been told most African intellectuals were followers of Mugabe.)

They said: perhaps — or anyone who could form a strong, central, united government.



*Missionaries pay the price of their faith . . . memorial service for British missionaries and their children butchered at Elim last year.*

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# NEW Freshen-up

**THE GUM THAT GOES SQUIRT**

**Freshen-up**  
gum with liquid breath fresheners  
With a liquid centre for extra fresh breath

Freshen-up freshens breath with a tingling liquid centre. One bite squirts refreshment all over your mouth. For extra fresh breath and flavour. Peppermint, Spearmint or Cinnamon.





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It is easier to talk about politics to Africans of the towns: but still not always easy to make sense.

I talked to a lecturer at the University of Rhodesia who backed Mugabe openly. Mugabe operates ZANU from Mozambique (military wing ZANLA). He has proclaimed himself a violent Marxist — and indeed recently has talked about a death-list for government supporters.

But, the lecturer explained, the fact that Mugabe calls himself a Marxist does not, of course, imply he is a Marxist: he is talking from Mozambique, where people all call themselves Marxists. They have to, in order to get aid.

The lecturer said that once he gets out of Mozambique he will be the best man to rule Rhodesia because he is a strong man, and moral.

I talked to a local organiser of ZUPO, the party of Chief Chirau, one of Ian Smith's partners on the executive council of the transitional government.

The organiser said his leader was the best man to rule Rhodesia because he was a strong man, and moral.

The African soldier I had given a lift to was a supporter of the UANC of Bishop Muzorewa — another of Ian Smith's partners.

It was the bishop, he said, who was offering training schemes to Africans:

"What is the point of my owning a car if I do not know how to work it?"

But would it be only the followers of the bishop, if he got power, who were offered training schemes and cars? I asked. We settled that the bishop was a strong man, and moral.

THE local organiser for ZUPO took me to one of the shanty towns on the outskirts of Salisbury where refugees have come in from the war. They, like people in protected villages, live in plastic igloos.

I went to the township where the organiser for ZUPO lived. With his wife and a small child and younger brother, he lived in a one-roomed house the size of an average bathroom, and cooked on a one-burner paraffin stove. For this he paid eight dollars (about R10) a month. He was a cheerful, dedicated young man.

In addition to the terrorist armies of Nkomo and Mugabe, I said, there were the private armies of Muzorewa, Chirau and Sithole. Was the fact that in African politics there were so many parties and splinter groups the result of tribalism, or of the fact that no one had clear-cut policies?

He said: after majority rule, it will be all right.

We went to a beer hall between the township and the shanty town as it was getting dark. It was a Saturday night: the local thick, frothy beer was being drunk in half-gallon pots. The uproar was enormous. Again, I seemed to be the only stranger for miles. I thought. But is it true that in politics it doesn't matter what is said?

THE stories in the papers, as always, were of violence in townships and shanty towns; of people being stabbed; of robbery with the excuse of politics and the war.

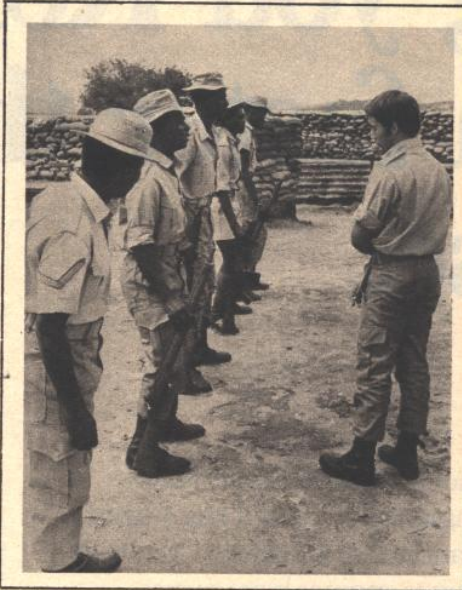
There was a gang of squatters just outside Salisbury who had been seen winding barbed wire round the ends of wooden clubs. When asked what they were doing they had said: "learning to teach people how to vote."

And yet it was the blacks who were optimistic about the outcome of politics in Rhodesia.

Over and over again I heard: "When white

rule truly goes, it will be all right." It was the whites who forecast chaos; endless battles between rival armies.

In the beer hall the barman seemed to be objecting to someone's presence again. But then it was only that the ZUPO organiser was carrying his year-old baby, thus contravening a licensing law.



Learning to defend themselves... 18-year-old white Rhodesian Mike Ingam trains blacks at a protected village.

ONE day I had lunch with an African businessman — the only black Rhodesian on the management side of a multinational corporation. He said it is true there are skirmishes now between rival armies; individuals and random gangs take advantage of the war.

But he said that economic considerations will be stronger when black rule finally comes; when Africans have proper economic opportunities.

I said: but what of the whites? He said: "If it's true that whites are accustomed to think in terms of violence, then we must show them something different."

In my hotel room with its air-conditioning and iced water and piped TV I read in the local paper an advertisement for an American film: "Nauseating! Revoltingly gruesome! See a close-up of a man whose skin has been flayed from his body, leaving only a bloody mess!"

One of the worst legacies that Europeans seem to have bequeathed to Africans is a form of political behaviour that demands subtlety but offers only a gross sort of language to go with it.

The language of Western democracies is still that of abuse: political parties exercise themselves by slanging one another. This custom is controlled by the further custom of it's all being a bit of a game. But Africans do not have this further custom; and perhaps they do not want the first.

THE businessman also said: "What exactly do you British and Americans think the

present political problem is? You want an all-party conference. All right, call one — it doesn't matter who does not come.

"You want elections. Then just organise them — it doesn't matter how few people vote. Just pick on one man who seems to have come out on top — it doesn't matter — well, perhaps it does — but anyway, then back him with everything you've got."

But in the meantime, when I am on my own the question comes in: in whose interests would it be, after all, among the people in power, for the war to stop?

The black leaders of the transitional government are earning big salaries. Muzorewa was in London promoting the sales of his book; Sithole has lectured in Europe.

Of the external leaders, Nkomo goes to and fro from Moscow and Mugabe is reported to have been around the world in the last few months.

When majority rule comes only one party is likely to be on top. And where will members of the others be?

RHODESIAN politics is like a juggler keeping all the balls in the air at the same time. When the act is over, all the balls except one or two will be on the ground.

But in the meantime there are people being killed and mutilated in the countryside; children dying of malnutrition and measles because doctors and nurses cannot get in.

It is they, the majority, who would wish the war to stop. But they are like the blood-cells of the juggler; about which he does not care, until he is exhausted.

And what advantage will it be to the whites when the war is over? When majority rule comes down?

One sign of the fact that the whites no longer have any clear idea of winning the war is that the government is packing up its policy of protected villages.

In areas in which the army can no longer keep control it is being explicitly agreed with the terrorists that if they keep order, the army will not molest them. These areas are known as frozen or "free" zones.

It is almost as if the whites are saying: look, cannot the whole war be frozen? We have always been good at war. Was it not the reason why so many of us left England, to get away from the horrors of peace-time?

Next Week: The War Rhodesia Cannot Win



Education must continue... although many rural schools have been closed by terrorist activity.



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## RHODESIA On The Rack CONCLUSION

# THE FINAL CHAPTER

by CHARLES NORMAN

On the 20th of this month, white Rhodesia is due to become black Zimbabwe — provided they can get anybody to agree on the name. But what then? An escalation of the terror war? Peace, prosperity and international recognition? Or the holocaust of civil war?

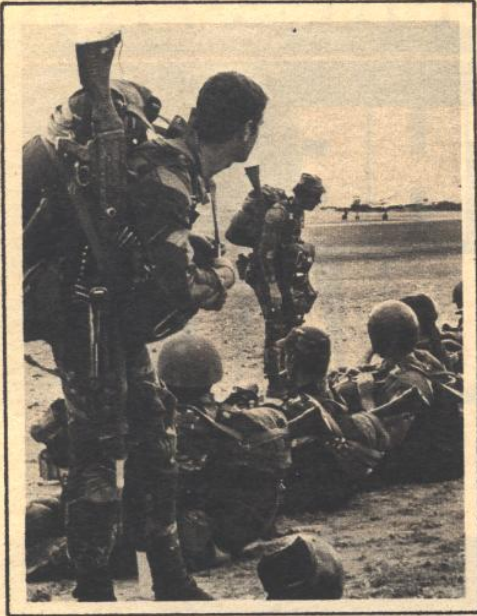
**E**VER since the Pioneer Column crossed the Limpopo nearly 90 years ago, white Rhodesians have lived by a philosophy of "next year will be better."

It is a principle that has sustained them through Matabele and Mashona rebellions; through epidemics of malaria and sleeping sickness; through drought and flood, and, in more recent times, through a debilitating seven-year terrorist war.

But time has run out for white Rhodesia. There are no more next years, there is only this year. And if the social experiment being tried in Rhodesia this year fails, then there

◀ Police search debris after a Salisbury bomb blast. Will urban terrorism replace terror warfare if civil strife comes to Rhodesia?





Meanwhile . . . the war goes on.

can only be chaos.

On the 20th of this month a black man is due to become the official leader of the country which less than a century ago Cecil John Rhodes saw as a link in his dream of British domination from the Cape to Cairo.

To the 250 000 whites still living in Rhodesia, the move to black rule will precipitate a difficult period of transition, of trying to erase attitudes of racial superiority which are ingrained.

And in their own way the country's six million blacks will find the transitional period just as traumatic; it is as difficult for them to stop calling the white man "boss," as it is for

the white man to stop calling them "boy."

**A**LL the same, the die is cast. Although nothing is impossible in the Alice-in-Wonderland world of Rhodesian politics, the march to majority rule on April 20 now seems irreversible.

In an attempt to halt the terrorist war and put the country back on its feet, Premier Ian Smith has backed down and accepted what he once said would not happen "in my lifetime — or in a thousand years."

Accepted, that is, with certain provisions, for although the country will be headed by a black man after April 20 (barring some unforeseen eventuality; the bewilderingly confusing constitution of the transitional government virtually guarantees that 28 seats in Rhodesia's 100-seat Parliament will be filled by whites.

That Smith's three black co-leaders in the provisional government accepted this proviso is a concession to the fact that although whites comprise only some five percent of the population, they hold the technical and financial expertise necessary to keep the country running.

In theory, the three black and one white leader of the provisional government will take their respective parties to the polls in an atmosphere of mutual goodwill. The losers will cheerfully shake the hand of the winner, then step out of the limelight to give him a clear field in the job of uniting the country.

**N**ONE but the most naive, however, believe that things will go quite that smoothly.

Each of the three black leaders, to begin with, is convinced that his party will win the election. Two of them obviously must lose it,

▼ *Guard Force militiaman in the Shamva district. Will he end up fighting his own kind in a civil war?*





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william higham



*Bale Out! RAR troopers on simulated contact training.*





Shattered luxury coach after a terrorist ambush between Kariba and Salisbury.

and white Rhodesians are wondering uneasily what direction the disappointment of the losers might take.

It's difficult to predict just which of the black co-leaders in the transitional government will win the election, for they are totally different characters with widely diverse backgrounds, who appeal to completely different sections of the African community.

Chief Jeremiah Chirau, for example, is a traditional leader, most at home in the tribal areas with his three wives, 12 children and vast herds of cattle.

Head of Rhodesia's Council of Chiefs, he has in recent years even gone as far as hiring a British public relations firm to improve his image. But he is still seen as a political dodo; a good, tough, honest, hardworking leader at village level, but naive and hardly aware of

the world outside Rhodesia, definitely not equipped to lead an independent Zimbabwe to a place in the international community.

**B**ISHOP Abel Muzorewa is a man who came to politics by accident, as a "caretaker" leader while the major nationalist leaders were imprisoned for some 10 years by the government after the inter-party faction fights in the early Sixties.

The idea was that the little bishop would step aside as soon as the "true" leaders were free to assume their rightful positions once more. But by the time that happened the bishop had built up a huge following in his own right, was rather enjoying the role of national political leader, and declined to leave the centre stage.

The bishop's star has slipped somewhat in recent months as several ill-considered, and often contradictory, statements have reduced his image of open-mindedness to one of indecisiveness. Some former supporters now consider Muzorewa a weakling. But he still has considerable backing.

The background of the Reverend Ndabingi Sithole is perhaps the most "professional" of the three black transitional government leaders. He has been a nationalist since the early days of black consciousness, has served 10 years in detention for his political activities, has travelled the world, and is by far the most articulate of the three.

**W**HEN I spoke to him in his sparse office one floor above Salisbury's teeming traf-

*In the midst of war, little boys play at . . . war.*



William Higham





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*Convoy escort between Biet Bridge and Fort Victoria.*



fic, he would fix his attention on me when I asked a question, but on my tape-recorder when he answered it, as though the recorder was alive.

The effect was disconcerting, but some of the things he had to say about the direction that Zimbabwe would take under his rule made comforting listening for white ears.

On the relationship of an independent Zimbabwe with South Africa, Sithole says: "We want a good-neighbour relationship with South Africa. It must be remembered that we are landlocked and that we depend on South African harbours. We are economically, culturally, historically and geographically linked with South Africa.

"As far as South Africa's policies are concerned, well, even in Waterfalls, where I live, there are some neighbours I don't like. But we live side by side, none the less — they tolerate me, and I tolerate them."

I put it to Reverend Sithole that a policy of friendliness towards South Africa would not endear him to some of his northern neighbours.

"I must make it quite clear," he replied, "that we don't intend Zimbabwe to become an ideological experimental station for other countries; we don't intend to be duplicates of other people, we intend to be ourselves. Therefore we are not going to be told by any country what friends we shall have and what enemies we shall have.

"WE realise there are certain emotional stances which have been taken against South Africa, but we are not interested in those. We are only interested in the realities of our own situation.

"After all, Mozambique has very good economic relations with South Africa. So have many other African states, and I'm sure that if we succeed, it should open a new policy towards South Africa."

Would an independent Zimbabwe allow the establishment of base camps by organisations hostile to South Africa?

"We have had enough of our people dying in this country, and intend as far as possible to prevent this happening in future."

While in detention, Reverend Sithole was convicted of plotting to assassinate Ian Smith. Before losing command to Robert Mugabe he openly boasted of being commander-in-chief of the terrorist forces. I asked him what had happened to change him from a man of war into a man of peace.

"I HAVE not really changed, this is the point. I started off believing that by talking with whites we could see peacefully that the aspirations of the African peoples for one-man, one-vote were recognised. But over the years I became convinced it was very difficult for whites to give up white privileges.

"So I started the armed struggle. I was very militant, not for its own sake, but for the sake of making it clearly understood that we were very serious about majority rule.

"As soon as Mr Smith conceded the principle of majority rule on the basis of one-man, one-vote, I was perfectly satisfied. And although I was imprisoned for ten years for my nationalist activities I don't feel any bitterness — because those things for which I have been fighting for so many years are now being realised."

Although a year has now passed since the formation of the transitional government, the terrorist war in Rhodesia continues, led at a safe distance by Messrs Nkomo and Mugabe. I asked Reverend Sithole why he thinks these two have declined all invitations to join the

transitional government.

"BOTH Nkomo and Mugabe know they don't have any support of substance internally, so they dare not come in because they know they will lose a straight election.

"They would like to frustrate the democratic process while they are building up arms, until they feel they are strong enough to march into the country and take by force what they cannot win at the ballot box.

"That is why Nkomo has openly said he is going to make the polling booths his main target.

"I can't see them coming in at all now, because now they are so afraid for themselves. They know they have aroused and deeply embittered the people; they are physically frightened to return to the land of their birth."

Nevertheless, the terrorist war goes on. I asked Reverend Sithole how he thought this problem would be solved.

"Once we have our first general election, based on one-man, one-vote, in which all those from the age of eighteen upwards will participate, and in which three million Africans will vote for the first time, then the problem of UDI will be resolved. UDI will be reversed, African majority rule will be established; this in itself is going to disarm Nkomo and Mugabe.

"Obviously they are going to do everything they can to wreck the election, but we are going to get it through, make no mistake about that."

ALTHOUGH Reverend Sithole would like to dismiss Nkomo and Mugabe lightly, it is not as easy as that.

The fact is that the terrorist war has escalated since the interim government was formed, with large areas of the country now under martial law. The shadows of Joshua Nkomo and Robert Mugabe loom darkly over the country's borders from next-door Zambia.

Officially co-leaders of the Patriotic Front, but in fact leaders of opposition parties with very real differences between them, Nkomo and Mugabe also "know" they are the "real" choice of the people.

For the moment they work together — although their terrorist armies have clashed on several occasions, both inside and outside Rhodesia — but few believe this state of affairs will continue.

As soon as they stop needing each other, Nkomo and Mugabe will be at each other's throats.

Because the truth of the matter is that black politics in Rhodesia has become very much a tribal affair. And it is a factor which whites fear and which black politicians try to play down. But it's real, it exists.

It wasn't always so. In the late Fifties and early Sixties Joshua Nkomo was the undisputed black leader of Rhodesia's African people. Ndabaningi Sithole was his deputy, and it was when these two parted company that the tribal factor began to creep in.

Sithole's Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) became increasingly aligned with the Shona tribespeople in the northern part of the country, while Nkomo's Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) became accepted as the voice of the Ndebele — or Matabele — peoples in the south.

Today each of the many political parties in Rhodesia has a strong tribal base, and it is this fact that makes whites apprehensive. In particular, they fear the traditional Matabele-Shona hostility.

When the white settlers arrived in the 1890s the warlike Matabele tribes — who had themselves only been in Rhodesia some 30

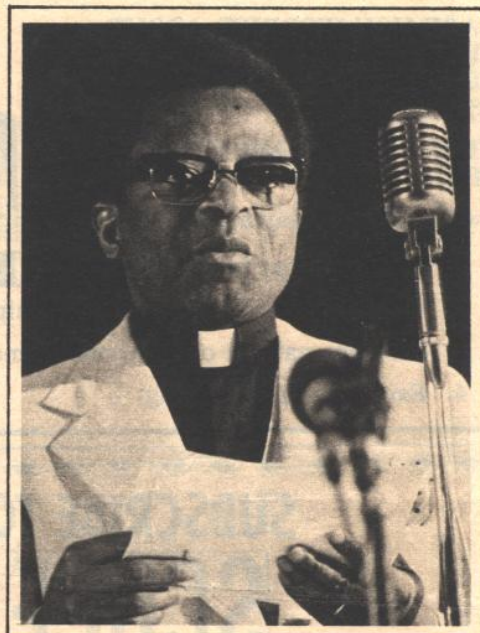
years after fleeing the Boers in the Transvaal — already dominated the more numerous but peace-loving Shonas, raiding them at will for cattle and women.

Today the Shonas are more politically active than their ancient enemies, and it seems likely they will control most levels of any black government in Rhodesia.

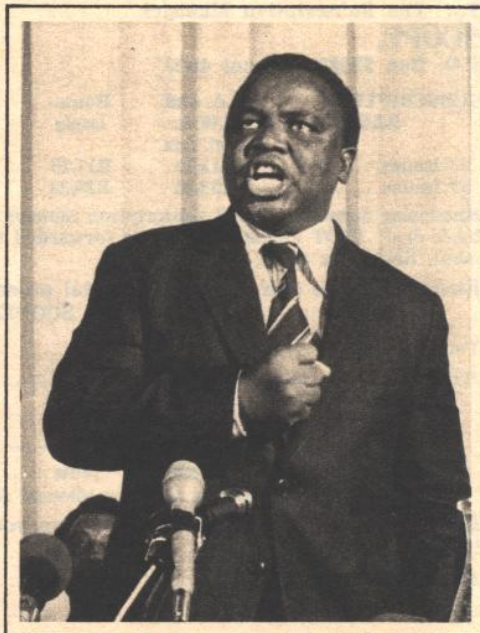
Will the Matabele accept political domination by a people they still regard as inferior? Not a chance, say people in the know, and it is here that the real danger lies.

As far as the rest of the world is concerned, Rhodesia has been fighting a racial war these past years. With sad irony, the seeds of a far more real racial war may well be lying and waiting to germinate with the coming of independence.

It will be a racial war that, if it happens, will have nothing at all to do with colour... but with inter-tribal hatred and mistrust.



Bishop Abel Muzorewa... some of his former supporters now consider him a weakling.



The Reverend Ndabaningi Sithole... "We want a good-neighbour relationship with South Africa."

SARAH WOOD DART/REUTERS

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