

Information handed to those attending the Chatham House meeting on 31st January 2013 by the Zimbabwe Vigil

- Open letter to Chatham House from the Vigil (<http://www.zimvigil.co.uk/the-vigil-diary/470-open-letter-to-chatham-house--zimbabwe-vigil-diary-26th-january-2013>)
- Article from SW Radio Africa: 'Concern as land grab chaos 'swept under the carpet' (<http://www.swradioafrica.com/2013/01/29/concern-as-land-grab-chaos-swept-under-the-carpet/>)
- MDC calls for an urgent land audit (<http://www.mdc.co.zw/index.php/news/42-rokstories/2164-mdc-calls-for-an-urgent-land-audit.html>) □

Statistics from Eddie Cross, MP, MDC Policy Co-ordinator General

From: EG Cross

Sent: Monday, January 28, 2013 7:55 AM

To: 'Zimvigil co-ordinator'

Subject: RE: Land Reform in Zimbabwe Revisited: A Qualified Success? | Chatham House: Independent thinking on international affairs

- The great majority of the farms taken over are derelict – buildings stripped and vandalized with no significant farming going on.
- Farm production continues to decline and this year will be no different. Total production in both commercial and communal areas are now 70 per cent down on 1997 levels. This year we will import 60 per cent of our maize, 98 per cent of our wheat, 70 per cent of our milk and milk products and most of everything else. Only two industries have more or less maintained their position – cotton and tobacco, both as a result of strong support by international companies who contract farmers to grow these two crops. Soybeans are also contract farmed and production is about half of what is required.
- From an employment perspective commercial farmers employed 350 000 people – maintaining a population of some 2,1 million. Agriculture contributed 60 per cent of all industrial raw materials, half of total exports. Current employment is about 60 000, exports about 12 per cent of national exports and about 15 per cent of the raw materials going to industry. It is

impossible to check the figure used for A1 settlers of 168 000 families, but this still comes nowhere near the figures given by the authors.

Letter to the UK Guardian from Ben Freeth, author of 'Mugabe and the White African', in response to their piece on the book

From: Ben Freeth
Sent: Saturday, January 26, 2013 12:22 PM
To: 'reader@guardian.co.uk'
Subject: Letter to the editor

Dear Sir,

I am writing in response to Jonathan Steele's article of the 23rd January regarding the "good news from Zimbabwe" in relation to agriculture.

Mr. Steele quotes from a new book which asserts that agricultural production in Zimbabwe "is now back to the levels of the late 1990s." He praises the authors because "they have the courage to criticize Amnesty International for exaggerating the plight of the farm workers."

With approximately 1.7 million people needing to be fed – partly by the British tax payers - yet again in Zimbabwe in 2013, why does Mr. Steele not try to account for the factual discrepancy? If production was really back to where it was in the late 1990s, Zimbabwe would be exporting food rather than needing food aid.

Is it ethical in the British journalistic world to quote propaganda that is not factual – and praise the propaganda writers for their courage? If it is, I would suggest Zimbabwean and British journalistic ethics are perhaps very similar.

Maybe Mr. Steele would like to come on a tour and see with his own eyes what is happening on the ground. I would be very happy to take him to Mount

Carmel Farm where we were evicted from 3 years ago by a “new farmer” [an octogenarian former Cabinet Minister] – to see our burnt houses, our broken tractors, our looted sheds, our dying orchards and our victimized farm workers.

**Yours sincerely, Ben Freeth
[author of “Mugabe and the White African”]**

Comments by Ben Freeth and Glyn Hunter (co-author of ‘Voices of Zimbabwe: the Pain, the Courage, the Hope’) on assertions made by Hanlon in an email to the Vigil

1. Hanlon: “Rather we accept the view of the war veterans that they were leading an occupation *in opposition* to Mugabe and his elite clique. Thus it is essential to separate the land reform from Mugabe.”

▪ Hunter: *How would he explain the fact that many of the so called war veterans were ferried to the farms in*

government vehicles and that they've had the full support of the police? There is masses of material that links Mugabe and his elite clique to the farm invasions. To believe otherwise – if they do, is naïve in the extreme. And if this is the case, they haven't done their homework.

- Freeth: *The invaders were being paid at the DA's*

offices. □ Mugabe deliberately defied all court orders because the invasions were just □ “a little crime of trespass” in his words. Police were instructed not to react. □ He allowed people to get away with invading the supreme court during a land case and getting all white judges to resign so that he could replace them with faithfuls like Chidyausiku – the former AG and a former ZANU PF MP who he knew would take farms where Gubbay

would not.□ Mugabe also openly and vocally defied the SADC Tribunal.□ To say he wasn't leading the invasions is ridiculous.

2. Hanlon: “It seems pointless to campaign to give the land back to white farmers.”

- Hunter: This is a ridiculously simplistic statement. It doesn't consider property rights, BIPPAS, the various inclusive solutions proposed by the CFU – or the fact that close to 2 million people are in dire need of food aid.

- Freeth: It does not consider international law and international judgments either.

It is also a racist statement as is the title of the book. They need to take into account that 80 percent of farms were bought by whites after independence with certificates of no interest and paying transfer duties to the Zimbabwe Government. Either there has to be compensation or restitution otherwise the land will remain dead capital for evermore and nobody will invest in it or produce anything significant on it. □ □ □ □

3. Hanlon: “But there are now a million people working formerly white land, and they and their families would resist any attempt to displace them now.”

▪ Hunter: *He fails to mention how many people were displaced.□ And how effectively are these new people “working”*

the land? □

- Freeth: He fails to come clean and say the million people on the farms are mostly ex farm workers – living in penury.

Other useful information

Good faith: Zimbabwe's obligations under international law to acquire land and pay just compensation by Dale Dore – 29th January 2013 – <http://www.sokwanele.com/good-faith-zimbabwe-obligations-under-international-law-acquire-land-and-pay-just-compensation>

Chatham House Information

Written by Administrator

Sunday, 03 February 2013 15:11 - Last Updated Sunday, 03 February 2013 15:11

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