The Daily Telegraph (4 March) suggests that current events cast doubt on the wisdom of the Lancaster House Settlement. Big Flame readers may also— from a different angle— be wondering just what is going on in Zimbabwe and whether we were wrong to support the Patriotic Front during the independence war.

TWO EVENTS DOMINATE the news. President Mugabe’s visit to London on 20 January, and the wave of repression and murder sweeping the rural areas of Western Zimbabwe which forms the basis of the ZANU-PF base for ZAPU, the party Nkomo heads. But with the visit to London and the publication of facts about the Mugabe Government— as constituted by the Lancaster House Settlement and under tightening economic and military pressure from South Africa— the ZANU regime has made a mass exodus of capital and has been unable to satisfy any security needs or resistance.

In these circumstances, a witch-hunt organised by the state and backed by the international community in Zimbabwe. By all accounts, the situation in Matabeleland is grim. In January—after months of kidnapping and murder—the 5,000-strong Fifth Brigade was sent to the area after other army units had failed to maintain law and order. Those detained before the legal process from ZIPRA, the current wave of violence has reached Matabeleland, many have deserted. The Fifth Brigade consists entirely of 25% supporters, trained by North Korean instructors.

Their efforts have been concentrated on a direct military confrontation with ZIPRA insurgents who may be very well armed and trained and eager to exterminate their possible supporters. Permission has been given on behalf of the Mugabe government to burn ZIPRA villages. The government spokesmen are telling the Mugabe. The ZIPRA must be liquidated. Previously, their interest was directed at "bandits", but now they can be called "band", but now they can be called "bandits".

The government has ordered and backed thousands of troops to round up people for conscription into the army, and to take cattle from Matabeleland to Masvingo. The troops are then to dig trenches and fire barricades.

One party

According to the opposition newspapers, the main political parties in Zimbabwe— ZANU and ZAPU— have been ordered to merge, and the name "Mugabe" has been adopted. The ZANU-PF and ZAPU officials have been ordered to travel to South Africa for a "national conference" to discuss the "national crisis".

This will be the third such conference in the last year. The previous two were convened by the government and were dominated by ZANU-PF officials, who were given virtual carte blanche to dictate the agenda. The third conference has been advertised as a "national conference of all political parties".

Our role

During the war of independence, there were two main reasons why socialist states supported the Patriotic Front. First, we knew that a victory for the Patriotic Front meant greater hope for black people in Zimbabwe, South Africa, Namibia, etc. Second, the Patriotic Front was described by a Telegraph leader as "a forceful force for social change in South Africa".

But within that solidarity movement, some of us also knew that the victory was unlikely to bring an immediate struggle for social change, which is why our hope would remain unfulfilled. We also knew that a black national government was a possible outcome. Unlike the SACP, we have to be careful of solidarity movements that are just a facade behind a facade.

In coalition Britain can't change the course of events in Zimbabwe. Nor do we expect a new government of the ZANU/PF leadership to do much to bring about social change. There are no real signs of such a change in South Africa.

Greg Derry

The Socialist Forum for Southern Africa published in its newspaper, the "Socialist Forum," has been foreclosed developments inside Zimbabwe at the expense of real political analysis. On 30 January the forum was founded in London. For details contact 01-897-5306

IT IS NEARLY 3,000 people are being held without trial. Some have been held for more than three years. They have been charged with various serious but unproven charges, all of which have been changed over time. We have no information on how long the case have been held on these charges, but investigations have been placed in the capital of Zimbabwe.

The trial of former Prime Minister Robert Mugabe and former President of Zimbabwe, Robert Mugabe, was held on 14 April. The trial was held in a special courtroom. The proceedings were televised live on national television. The trial was held in Harare, the capital of Zimbabwe. The trial was held at the end of April, and the sentence was imposed on 14 April. The trial was held at the end of April, and the sentence was imposed on 14 April.

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