

ORGANIZING FOR CHANGE

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Eddison Zvobgo, Zimbabwe Minister of Local Government and Housing, and Minister in charge of district administration, talks to Clyde Sanger about the broad lines of Government and ZANU party policy for resettlement and development.

Reports: What is the basis for reconstruction and development in the countryside in the years ahead?

Zvobgo: "In most of the districts — and I am talking of all the 56 districts in the country — we have our party structure so solidly in place that we can now move forward to utilize this structure for development. Our organizational structures have, in fact, become the government. Now what we ought to do is to utilize that machinery, bring it into the purview of the law, so that the district councils — which are now simply party — can become the organization of district administration throughout the country."

Reports: Do you see quite a large movement of people going back to the land?

Zvobgo: "We see the return of refugees coming from outside, together with the domestic refugees who left the rural areas, plus a half-million people who have been incarcerated in the Protected Villages. All these people must find a place to resettle and rebuild in the rural areas."

"It would be a mistake simply to let everybody scatter around and build all over the place in some haphazard fashion. We would like to settle whole communities on the land, so that they can begin collective agriculture where they could maximize the social services that government can assist with — you know, like putting up a school, a clinic, having a reticulated water supply . . . and shops moving in, and industry setting up in these areas of population concentration, to create new growth points throughout the country."

"There are two approaches. We are democratizing the institutions in the urban areas. We will incorporate all African townships into the municipalities by statute this June, and then have

municipal elections this October. They will produce majority rule in all urban areas.

"And on the rural scene, in the so-called Tribal Trust Lands (TTL), we are



Eddison J.M. Zvobgo

dismantling the old structure where the District Commissioner was judge, jury, and administrator all rolled into one. By April 1981, we are going to have committees elected by the people, and they will be running their own day-to-day affairs, officially as organs of the State."

Reports: What are the main problems that must be tackled?

Zvobgo: "We think that many of our people are anxious to settle on the land and work. We have lots of work in the TTL simply to repair the ravages of war. We have to build new dip tanks because we lost more than 70 percent of our herd. Cattle became the greatest casualty in this war. We must rebuild our herds because we don't want to find ourselves in a beautiful and rich country like this having to import meat."

"We have tsetse fly and mosquito problems in many areas: we have to

have volunteer teams move in to do that. We have also to get hundreds of thousands of people to participate in the roadbuilding. We, as you know, mined roads in the TTL. You cannot use them, so we simply have to build new roads in order to make sure that our people can continue to travel throughout the country.

"Then the schools: we need something like 11 000 teachers just to reopen the schools. Many of these teachers had drifted into industry, others had joined other government departments. There is a crying need out there, and we are going to launch a campaign to persuade all those who have been teachers in the past to come back to the profession. They are here — it is just a question of being able to bring them together. We will reopen all the schools within a year. And we must go back to the old courses that were being offered: for example, farming."

"Also, I think our university has got to become national. We intend to get the university to recognize that the current agenda calls for mass participation in development. The university should be the leader in the acquisition of skills by our people."

"Study is very important — mass literacy programs, for example. What we call the "Each one each day teach one" program, where everybody who can read and write accepts that he or she owes something to other people, and each day if you are a party worker you have to spend an hour, two hours, teaching some other person to read and write. We believe that is a part of typical "Mugabe day", which takes up six hours of study, six hours of work, six hours of revolutionary practice. What we call revolutionary practice is doing something for somebody for nothing."

"We want to transform this country literally into one school every night. Politics as well as some academic studies. It is important that politics is taken into every home because unless people know what we have been, they are not going to be able to know where we are going." □