



**GUARDIANS OF  
WHITE POWER  
the rhodesian  
security  
forces**

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**Contents**

Introduction	i
Military spending	1
Conscription	1
Mercenaries	3
The Security Forces	4
Control and Direction of the War	5
The Army	5
The Police	10
The Guard Force	12
The Air Force	12
The Rhodesian Arms Industry	14
Africans in the Security Forces	15

## INTRODUCTION

The character of the security forces in any transition from an illegal Rhodesia to an independent Zimbabwe has been a crucial feature during the succession of talks which have taken place during the past few years. This paper is an attempt, for the first time, to present a comprehensive picture of the existing security forces of the illegal regime which it is hoped will enable those concerned to reach judgments on the various proposals being made for the future of Zimbabwe.

In November 1977 the leader of the illegal Rhodesian regime, Ian Smith, announced that he was now prepared to open negotiations with African nationalist organisations on the basis of 'one man, one vote'. He explained his decision on the grounds that other 'safeguards' existed besides the qualified franchise which has been used for so many years to preserve the powers and privileges of the white minority. These alternative safeguards, he maintained, would be sufficient to retain white confidence in the event of an 'internal settlement'.

There is no doubt whatsoever that in this reference to 'safeguards' the Rhodesian regime's security forces were uppermost in Mr Smith's mind. Ever since Cecil Rhodes' Pioneer Column raised the British flag on the site of modern-day Salisbury in 1890, the white minority has ultimately relied on superior force of arms to maintain its control of the country. For years the Rhodesian security forces have been responsible for enforcing a mass of racist and exploitative laws and practices and for suppressing African opposition to colonial rule, both peaceful and latterly through the armed struggle. Possession of their own police force, army and air force is in fact one of the things which always distinguished Rhodesia's white settler population from Britain's other colonies in Africa. The Rhodesian security forces today are in a very real sense the basis of white power.

It can be safely predicted that if there is any area in which the regime will not be prepared to compromise it is that of its security forces. Since the publication of the British White Paper in September 1977 spokesmen for the regime, including senior army commanders, have expressed their deep-rooted opposition to any dilution of the army and police in the event of constitutional change. The proposals in the White Paper (*Rhodesia – Proposals for a Settlement*, Cmnd 6919, September 1977) relating to the regime's security forces versus the liberation army have been vehemently criticised by, among others, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, P K van der Byl, and the Commander of the Army, Lt Gen John Hickman, despite their comparatively restricted nature. (As the Anti-Apartheid Movement has pointed out in its analysis of the White Paper, *Rhodesia: What Chances for a Settlement? – a critical commentary on the White Paper*, the Anglo-American proposals are seriously lacking in that they envisage crucial pre-independence elections taking place in much the same climate of martial law and political repression as exists at the present time under the regime, through the substantial retention of the white-controlled security forces throughout the transitional period.)

The facts and figures relating to the Rhodesian security forces which follow are those of a regime that is totally committed to war. Through its punitive attacks on neighbouring African countries, as well as on its own black population, its intrinsically aggressive and violent character should have become obvious to all. As the liberation war has developed, more and more whites have been called up for increasingly lengthy periods of military service, while more and more stringent security measures have been enforced throughout the country in an attempt to crush popular support for the armed guerrilla struggle. The distinction between the civilian and the military aspects of the regime has become so blurred as to be virtually meaningless in the eyes of the African majority.

The Smith regime is currently facing a situation in which administrative control of very large areas of the country has been effectively lost to the liberation forces of the Patriotic Front. The security forces have lost the strategic initiative and are engaged in a defensive and holding operation – the regime itself admitted six months ago that there were at least 3,600 guerrillas inside the country. Regime officials are only able to penetrate into rural areas accompanied by large detachments of heavily armed troops and in landmine-proofed armoured vehicles. White civilians can only travel, if at all, under the protection of



## MILITARY SPENDING

The Smith regime is currently spending well over £½ million a day on fighting the guerrilla war. Defence and security spending have risen dramatically since UDI and have nearly trebled over the last three years. Estimates of expenditure tabled in the Rhodesian House of Assembly in July and relating to the financial year to 30 June 1978 were as follows:

- Defence:** Rh\$141.8 million, an increase of 44.9% over 1976/7. The Defence Vote breaks down into: Army Rh\$107.8 million; Air Force Rh\$28.6 million; Guard Force Rh\$5.2 million. The Air Force estimate includes Rh\$3.7 million for security airfields.
- British South Africa Police:** Rh\$55.6 million (up 14% on 1976/7).
- Combined Operations Headquarters** (established early 1977): Rh\$202,000 (includes the salaries of the Minister and Commander of Combined Operations).
- Defence Procurement Fund:** Rh\$27.49 million.
- Treasury:** Rh\$16 million allocated to a national scheme for making-up the pay of men on call-ups.
- Ministry of Roads:** Rh\$7.5 million allocated to special road and bridge works in the operational areas.
- Prime Minister's Office:** Includes Rh\$4.3 million for 'special services', believed to cover items such as the operations of Special Branch II of the Rhodesian police. Special Branch II are a 'dirty tricks' unit, believed to be responsible, for example, for the kidnapping of Dr Edson Sithole, then Publicity Secretary of the ANC, in 1975.
- Compensation for 'victims of terrorism':** Rh\$5 million.

These sums together amount to at least Rh\$263 million, representing about 32 per cent of total estimated expenditure for the year 1977/78. In September 1977 a further Rh\$15 million was allocated to defence and security spending in a supplementary vote. This extra money was to be included in the Treasury vote as a reserve and distributed to other departments as required.

Massive expenditure on 'protected' and 'consolidated villages' is not included in the list above. Further items of a security nature may be concealed in the allocations voted to other departments and ministries, while there are other costs which are directly attributable to the war: for example, that of re-routing imports and exports following the closure of the Mozambique border, and rebuilding bridges, power lines, railways, roads and other strategic targets attacked by guerrillas. Resources are also clearly being made available by the regime for overseas mercenary recruitment.

While security expenditure is a massive burden on the white Rhodesian economy, it has been partially compensated for by stringent cuts in spending in other departments.

Simultaneously with the announcement in February 1978 that agreement on the constitution for an 'internal settlement' had been reached with the three African parties involved in settlement talks, the Smith regime approved further substantial increases in its current budget for defence and security.

## CONSCRIPTION

Out of Rhodesia's white population of 268,000 (277,000 in 1976), probably around 80,000 are males of over school age. Under present legislation the overwhelming majority of these are liable for some form of military service. All white, Asian and Coloured boys in Rhodesia are required to register for national service within 30 days of celebrating their sixteenth birthday, and from that time are only allowed to leave the country with special permission from the authorities and after completing special 'entry-exit' cards. To ensure that nobody escapes the call-up net, the regime has instituted a system of periodic employer returns, whereby firms and businessmen are required to submit full details of all their white, Coloured and Asian workers to a 'Directorate of Security Manpower' in Salisbury.

For purposes of conscription into one of the six arms of the security forces (Army, Air Force, Police, Guard Force, Internal Affairs and Prison Service) the male non-African population is split up into four age bands as follows:

- *18-25 year olds*: required to complete 18 months full-time national service, followed by a number of years of 'efficient part-time service' as territorials. A system of indefinite call-up introduced for the under-25s in May 1976 has since been replaced by 'periodic' call-ups under which the men are conscripted for several months at a time. In practice, they are called up virtually continuously, the majority to infantry units.
- *25-38 year olds*: beginning in January 1977, all men in this age group without an existing service commitment have been liable to 42-day periods of service alternating with 42 days off. To cope with the war's growing demand for infantry power, increasingly large numbers of men in this age group are being posted to army units rather than to the police or guard duty in protected villages as in the past.
- *38-50 year olds*: conscription for the over 38s was introduced at the end of February 1977, when a re-registration exercise for this age group got under way. They are now liable for at least 10 weeks' service a year. The regime indicated that men in this age group without an existing service commitment would not be deployed on active service but would be used for protective duties with the police, guard force or internal affairs. This undertaking has been abandoned as the war has escalated. (Over 38s in the top medical fitness category are now automatically posted to the army.) Call-ups started at the beginning of June 1977 and were expected to make a further 12,000 men available for the war effort.
- *Over 50s*: no compulsory commitment but many white men, some well into their 60s and even 70s, serve as part-time reserves in the police force as home guards, on convoy duty and so on. There are likely to be increasing efforts to encourage them also to volunteer for the guard force and internal affairs.

It is extremely difficult for young white men to avoid doing their stint in the security forces. Exemptions and deferments of service are only granted in the most exceptional circumstances and for a maximum of 90 days per man a year. Conscientious objectors who refuse to respond to their call-up papers are liable to prison terms of several months, followed by conscription on their release. Under the National Service Act of 1976, it is an offence to suggest to anyone that for religious reasons or otherwise they should not undertake national service. Certain categories of persons who in the past were exempt from military service, such as civil servants, MPs, judges, priests and nurses, have also become liable for registration under the terms of this Act, which came into force in September 1976. Under new Emergency Regulations introduced in June 1977, it has been made for all practical purposes impossible to avoid military service by challenging a call-up in a court of law. Deferment of national service for university students was abolished in September 1977. Any further measures to extend the call-up can do little more than close a few loopholes. Speaking in August 1977 the regime's Minister of Combined Operations pointed out that 'we have pretty well scraped the bottom of the barrel as regards European involvement in our security operations'. (*Rhodesia Herald*, 10.8.77)

During 1976 the regime began to give active consideration to the possibility of conscripting certain categories of Africans for military service, and provision for this was built into the National Service Act. The prospect of calling up men who might well have friends and relatives in the guerrilla camps and active sympathisers themselves with the armed liberation struggle forced the authorities to proceed with caution, and nothing concrete emerged for nearly a year. Under an amendment to the National Service Act gazetted in August 1977, however, African doctors were made liable for military service and a number were told they must join the army from January 1978. Conscription for African trade apprentices was announced in February 1978.

The gradual extension of conscription to more and more categories of people, and for longer and longer stretches of duty, has undoubtedly been the last straw for many whites. Families have chosen to emigrate rather than see their sons killed in the bush, or their husband's career ruined by constant interruptions and absences. The working of the call-up has developed into a bone of contention between the political establishment and business community, who have seen senior executives and skilled industrial workers

conscripted for menial tasks in the lower ranks of the armed forces. The 38-50 age group, in particular, has played a key role in fighting Rhodesia's 'sanctions war'. In February 1977 criticism of the regime's decision to extend conscription to this age range forced the resignation of the Minister of Defence and Coordination, Reginald Cowper. He was not replaced directly, but a new Ministry of Manpower, Industrial Relations and Social Affairs was created, headed by Rowan Cronje, whereby responsibility for the call-up was separated from the conduct of the war itself and grouped with that for commerce and industry.

## MERCENARIES

It is wrong to think of foreign mercenaries as a new phenomenon in the Rhodesian context. The regime has for many years expended effort and resources on recruiting immigrants, particularly from Britain, into the armed forces and police. Before UDI, of course, this was perfectly 'legal'. Many of the regime's leading military commanders today, not to mention members of the ranks, have backgrounds of service with the British army and experience of British counter-insurgency tactics in arenas such as Malaya.

A typical article in the Rhodesian *Financial Gazette*, for example, commented that:

'Rhodesia's fighting forces stand to gain from the dissatisfaction with life in the British Army which is running rife amongst the eighteen thousand plus men stationed in and around Belfast.

'With the stringent cutbacks in military appropriations under Britain's Labour Government, more and more men are finding that an exciting global career in Her Majesty's Armed Forces is now no more than a mirage, and, at best, a squalid beat-bashing job in the back streets of Northern Ireland.

'For officers and men of action, the tedium of this unwanted job and public disdain for their efforts, are forcing more and more regular troops to look abroad for a natural continuation of their military careers....

'Other members of the British Armed Forces are finding that at the end of their nine-year contract term, they either face redundancy or a further signing-up period of up to 21 years in an Army that has largely become meaningless. For many, the only alternative is to seek fame and fortune overseas.

'A staff sergeant in the para-engineers who was faced with this prospect recently decided that enough was enough. A few weeks ago, when his contract with the British Army ended, he caught the first plane to Salisbury in order to join up with the Rhodesian Army. Even though this meant a drop in rank to sergeant, he was happy for he was able to feel that he was fighting for a worthwhile cause and had an opportunity to use his military expertise to best advantage.

'When spoken to in Salisbury this week, he confirmed that there were large numbers of men in Northern Ireland in the same position as himself who were coming to the end of their contracts in the British Army, and saw no future ahead of them.

'Nearly all of them were looking to Rhodesia as an opportunity to persevere in the career they had set their hearts on many years before Britain lost its will to maintain a proper standing army.'

(*Rhodesian Financial Gazette*, 29.7.77)

The regime denies that foreign nationals in its security forces are mercenaries, on the grounds that they receive the same pay and serve under the same conditions as Rhodesian troops. However, they arrive in Zimbabwe through well-established mercenary recruiting networks and for the same motives as mercenaries anywhere else in the world. Those who have been in Zimbabwe for some years may well have taken out Rhodesian citizenship.

Western intelligence sources have estimated that there are upwards of 1,500 foreign nationals serving in Rhodesia, but the figures may in reality be much higher than this. In February 1978 Mr Joshua Nkomo, co-leader of the Patriotic Front, accused the Smith regime of having recruited some 11,200 foreign mercenaries, including 4,500 South Africans, 2,000 British, 2,300 Americans, 1,000 French, 600 Israeli commandos and an unspecified number of Portuguese and West Germans. (*Guardian*, 7.2.78) Foreign mercenaries have acquired a reputation for callousness exceeding even that of white

Rhodesian troops. A report in the London *Times* of 23 April 1977 claimed that foreign mercenaries 'have been guilty of crimes which decent white Rhodesians would never commit. Some of them are criminals capable of mindless violence. A favourite sport is reported to be kaffir hunting, the indiscriminate shooting of blacks'. The behaviour of mercenaries has been particularly notorious in units such as the Selous Scouts and Grey's Scouts, where lack of supervision and disciplinary control gives ample scope for individual 'initiative' and indiscriminate brutality.

## THE SECURITY FORCES

According to the International Institute for Strategic Studies in London, the Smith regime's armed forces had a potential strength of up to 111,550 men and women in September 1977. Between 10,000 and 15,000 of these are African. The remainder are drawn from a total white, Asian and Coloured population of just over 300,000. While not all of those liable for military service are called up at any one time, the figures illustrate the stark reality of a minority that is totally mobilised for war. The armed forces are made up as follows:

Army	regulars	5,000
	conscripts (full-time national servicemen)	3,250
	Territorial Force (those who have completed national service and have no other military commitment)	55,000
	Reserve Holding Unit (men over 38)	3,000
Air Force		1,300
British South Africa Police	regulars	8,000
	reservists	35,000*
Guard Force		1,000†
	<i>Total</i>	<i>111,550</i>

(From *The Military Balance 1977/78*)

Notes: \* The size of the white police reserve may well be diminishing rapidly as police reservists over the age of 25 are being transferred to the territorials

† This is probably an underestimate — see below

Employees of departments such as the Ministry of Internal Affairs (responsible for African administration in the Tribal Trust Areas) and workers engaged on road construction and security fencing in the operational areas, who do not feature in the above table, are nevertheless armed. In Internal Affairs a new grade of African 'District Security Assistants' was established in 1976, who receive four weeks' training in counter-insurgency techniques. 'Administrative Reinforcement Units', introduced in June 1977 to restore order in areas where local African councils and chiefs have been attacked by guerrillas, have also had a military training.

In fact virtually every adult male white person in Rhodesia today is armed and capable of shooting to kill. The distinction between 'civilian' and 'military' is mainly of relevance as a propaganda weapon in the hands of the regime. Permits for guns and ammunition are freely available to whites, and few would contemplate travelling far without a weapon at their side. In the cities too it has become a common practice for white adults and children to learn how to handle a gun. In the countryside white farmers have turned their homes into fortresses protected with sandbags, floodlights, electrified security fencing and sophisticated electronic alarms. In the event of any guerrilla attack all white residents in the area are 'buzzed' through an 'Agricalert' radio system, through which immediate contact can be made with the local police station and Joint Operational Centre.

Many white farmers have employed British and other overseas mercenaries as vigilantes and 'home guards' on their property. In July 1977 the type of protection afforded to members of the security forces under the Indemnity and Compensation Act was extended to white farmers and their employees under a provision of the Emergency Powers Act. In other words, they have been granted official sanction to shoot and kill in defence of their

property, in the knowledge that their victims have no means of legal redress. White farmers also receive special help from the regime in equipping themselves with weapons, and most possess substantial private arsenals of rifles, pistols and submachine guns.

Another indication of the way in which preparations for armed conflict have spread beyond the Rhodesian security forces as such is in the growth of private security firms providing armed guards for private houses, factories, industrial installations etc. The number of guards, many of them Africans, employed by security firms has risen from 800 to 3,500 in the last ten years.

## **CONTROL AND DIRECTION OF THE WAR**

Since September 1976 overall control of the regime's counter-insurgency operations has been vested in a 'War Council' presided over by Ian Smith himself. This body, intended as a small, streamlined group equipped to meet at short notice and to take quick decisions, has, it is believed, enabled Smith to exert a much greater personal influence over the conduct of the war. Besides the Prime Minister, the War Council has consisted of the Ministers of Defence, Law and Order and Internal Affairs, the Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Office, the Secretaries for Internal Affairs and to the Cabinet, and the commanders of the various security forces.

At the regional level, security force initiatives are coordinated through a 'Joint Operations Centre' (JOC) comprising senior representatives of the main military divisions – army, air force, police and internal affairs. In March 1977 a system of 'combined operations' was set up in which the army takes precedence over the other services and is given priority in the deployment of conscripts.

A new Cabinet post of 'Minister of Combined Operations' was created to take overall responsibility for coordinating the civilian war effort with that of the military. Roger Hawkins, until then responsible for Transport and Power, Roads and Road Traffic, and Post and Telecommunications, was appointed to this new Ministry on 7 March 1977 and took his seat in the War Council as its deputy chairman.

On 23 March Ian Smith announced that it had been further decided to appoint a Commander, Combined Operations, who would be responsible to the Minister of Combined Operations and through him directly to the Prime Minister, but authorised to exercise command over all elements of the security forces and civil agencies involved in the war effort. Lieutenant-General Peter Walls, formerly Commander of the Army, was appointed the first incumbent of this new post, with Air Marshall M J McLaren as his deputy.

In September 1977, on the appointment of a new cabinet following the August general elections, Smith announced that the Combined Operations and Defence portfolios were to be combined under Minister Roger Hawkins in a further attempt to streamline the war effort.

Up until recently the Smith regime maintained for propaganda reasons that the situation in Zimbabwe was not one of war and that the activities of the security forces were first and foremost a police operation against 'criminal elements'. With the formation of the Combined Operations system it has, after 13 years of armed struggle, officially accepted that a war exists.

## **THE ARMY**

The International Institute for Strategic Studies estimates the strength of the Smith regime's regular army at about 8,250, including 3,250 conscripts (*The Military Balance 1977/78*). The numbers could be greater than this in practice due to continuing overseas recruitment of mercenaries and the regime's efforts to attract more Africans into the armed forces.

There are five main fighting units within the regular army:

### **Rhodesian Light Infantry (RLI)**

The RLI, nicknamed 'The Incredibles', was formally established in February 1961 and first saw action as part of a Federal force on border control duty between what was then Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia) and the Congo (now Zaire). In 1964-5 the RLI's role was switched from that of a conventional army, deploying troops en masse, to a commando unit, deploying 'by the best means available to do a clandestine job' (*Rhodesia Herald*, special supplement: 'Focus on the RLI', 24.7.75). Companies became known as 'commandos', privates as 'troopers' or 'troopies'. National servicemen can opt to serve their call-ups in the RLI, where they are known as 'riflemen'.

The RLI prides itself on being one of the most effective counter-insurgency units, trained and adapted to bush warfare, in the world. In February 1977 the regime claimed that a total of 29 members of the RLI had been killed in action since the onset of the armed struggle, while the regiment had accounted for the death of 'hundreds' of guerrillas.

The RLI comprises a single battalion of about 1,000 men, all of whom are white, divided into three commandos and a support group. The support group operates in many ways as a commando but concentrates more on mortars, reconnaissance and tracking. It is kept on immediate standby to back up other troops in a contact ('Fighting Forces of Rhodesia', No 3, Salisbury 1976).

The RLI is believed to contain a large number of overseas mercenary recruits. According to Private Lawrence Meyers, an American who deserted from the RLI in January 1977, about 30 per cent of the Rhodesian regular army have been recruited overseas. This could well be the proportion in the RLI.

### **Special Air Service (SAS)**

An elite, all-white paratrooper unit with close links with its British counterpart. The size of the unit is treated as classified information by the regime but it is believed to number about 300 men divided between three squadrons. The SAS is the most extensively and diversely trained in the Rhodesian army. Selection courses are held at Inyanga, followed by a total of three years' training in free-fall parachuting, tracking and bushcraft, advanced signals, demolitions, handling canoes and boats, diving, physical fitness, first aid etc. Fluency in an indigenous language is a further important part of the qualifications. The Rhodesian SAS is believed to include a large proportion of foreign nationals, including former officers of the British SAS.

### **Selous Scouts**

The Selous Scouts, an elite tracker unit now believed to comprise as many as 1,000 men (with Africans in the majority), are by far the most notorious unit within Rhodesia's armed forces. They have been dubbed the 'SS' after their initials, a reference to the secret police of the Nazis, and are widely believed to be responsible for a whole series of atrocities committed in the name of the guerrilla fighters to discredit the national liberation movement. The Scouts have gained a reputation as the most ruthless and committed among a number of security force units specialising in intelligence-gathering and clandestine paramilitary operations.

It would be a mistake, however, to view the Selous Scouts as fundamentally different from the rest of the Rhodesian security forces. The extensive publicity given to the Scouts over the last year or so has served the purpose, from the Rhodesian army's point of view, of diverting attention from other security force units which in practice operate along similar lines – the SAS, Police Support Unit etc. Members of the Selous Scouts have frequently been recruited from the SAS and their tactics in the field are often inseparable.

The Selous Scouts were formed in February 1973 from an original Tracker Wing of the Rhodesian army based at Kariba and take their name from Courtney Selous, the chief tracker and guide for the white settlers who colonised Rhodesia in the late 19th century. Their commander, Major Ron Reid-Daily, served with the British Special Air Service in Malaya. Officially their main function is to seek out and assist the security forces to destroy guerrilla units, a task at which they are claimed by the regime to have been extraordinarily successful. During the first four years of their existence the Scouts are alleged to have been responsible for 1,205 guerrilla deaths, for the loss of only 10 of their own men. Like Special Branch II of the Rhodesian police the Selous Scouts come under the direct control of the Prime Minister's Office.

As an independent unit the Selous Scouts are not accountable to the Joint Operational Command (JOC) system controlling the rest of the security forces. The Scouts operate in

a highly secretive and clandestine manner and do not discuss their operations with other members of the security forces. In each JOC district certain areas are 'frozen' for a period in which the Selous Scouts have complete control to operate as they wish, while other sections of the security forces stay out. This method of operating gives the Scouts ample scope to undertake independent initiatives of the most ruthless kind, with no effective disciplinary control.

Selection standards for the Scouts are among the highest in the world: out of every 100 volunteers (many of them already serving in other regular units) who apply for each 35-day selection course, only about 15 make the grade. The unit is believed to include a number of former members of the DGS, a vigilante force that operated in Mozambique under Portuguese colonialism and established a reputation for extreme brutality, together with American Green Beret veterans from the Vietnam War. The Scouts' tough image and their stress on self-sufficiency and personal initiative may well have been a particular attraction to foreign mercenaries from the United States, Britain and elsewhere. Their main training area is said to be at Wafa Wafa, a remote bush camp on the shores of Lake Kariba, where the men are rigorously drilled in bush survival, tracking, physical fitness, free-fall parachuting, skin-diving and martial arts, in addition to being skilled marksmen. The Scouts' headquarters at Inkomo Barracks outside Salisbury also has facilities for up to 100 men to be trained at any one time. The Scouts' headquarters is totally sealed off from other units quartered at Inkomo, in keeping with their clandestine way of operating.

According to Edward Kazembe, a Selous Scout who deserted to join the guerrilla fighters and was interviewed on the Maputo radio programme 'Voice of Zimbabwe' in November 1976, 'one of the special tasks of the Selous Scouts was to go to the operational zone disguised as freedom fighters [and to] try to find out how the freedom fighters get their support from the masses. Then they go back and tell the security forces... Another task was to kill the local people in order to discredit the Zimbabwe People's Army.' (*BBC Monitoring Service*, 26.11.76)

Africans, who would obviously be far better equipped for this kind of operation, are believed to outnumber white Scouts in the unit by four to one. In September 1975 it was reported that black members of the Selous Scouts had qualified as parachutists and would be deployed in the front line. Despite denials from the regime there is ample evidence that African members not only of the Selous Scouts but also of other security force units such as the Rhodesian African Rifles do regularly masquerade as freedom fighters to confuse and intimidate the local people.

Spokesmen for the regime have themselves admitted that the Scouts have been used for 'hot pursuit' and intelligence-gathering missions into neighbouring African countries. The Scouts are believed to operate in Mozambique and other countries by entering in small reconnaissance groups and staying in the country for lengthy periods at a time in advance of units of the regular security forces. In January 1977 a Captain in the Selous Scouts, Robert Warracker, was shot down over Mozambique while on what is presumed to have been a covert reconnaissance mission. He and two members of the Rhodesian air force were flying in a Canberra jet bomber over Mozambique's Gaza province close to Rhodesia's south-eastern border when they were hit by a FRELIMO ground-to-air missile. In other 'hot pursuit' missions the Scouts are believed to have been responsible for the abduction of Ethan Dube, a prominent ZAPU official, from Francistown, Botswana, in October 1974 and to have been involved in the massacre of 800 Zimbabwean refugees at Nyazonia camp in Mozambique in August 1976.

Spokesmen for the national liberation movement have accused the Selous Scouts of the killings of white missionaries as well as of African civilians. Apart from their headquarters at Inkomo, the Scouts are believed to have camps at Bindura and Mount Darwin in the north-eastern operational area, where Africans have been tortured during interrogation. The Scouts are reputed never to bring back prisoners from raids into Mozambique and Botswana, however — suspects and others captured for intelligence-gathering purposes are interrogated and then disposed of in the field.

Both the Selous Scouts and certain members of the Rhodesian Light Infantry are trained on rifles and machine guns characteristically used by guerrillas of the liberation movement and can opt to use them in action in preference to the heavier normal issue equipment. Yet the claim that white missionaries and others have been killed by bullets from guerrilla weapons has been used on several occasions by the regime to 'prove' that the liberation movement was responsible.

### **Grey's Scouts**

In July 1975 a new unit within the Rhodesian army, known initially as the Mounted Infantry, was given the official go-ahead. The Grey's Scouts, a mixed force of regulars, national servicemen and territorials, a third of whom are reported to be black, are a revival of a cavalry unit last seen in action in Rhodesia in the 1890s when it helped to crush the resistance of the Shona and Ndebele people to white colonialism. Horses are used for speed and endurance in tracking down guerrillas and are trained to ignore firing at close quarters. The unit, whose size is secret but which was reported at the end of 1976 to number about 250 men and to be expanding rapidly, has its headquarters, along with the Selous Scouts, at Inkomo Barracks outside Salisbury (*Daily Telegraph*, 13.12.76).

### **Rhodesian African Rifles (RAR)**

The RAR, along with Rhodesia's regular police force, is the basis of the Smith regime's claim that the war against the national liberation movement has nothing to do with racialism but is a struggle by black and white together against 'communist insurgents'. It is an all-African regiment staffed by predominantly white officers with an overall strength of upwards of 3,000 men. In recent months the regime has made considerable effort to expand the number of African regulars in the security forces. A second RAR battalion of around 1,200 men, based in the Fort Victoria area, was formed in 1975 and a new barracks to house recruits for both 1st and 2nd battalions was opened at Balla Balla, 50 miles south-east of Bulawayo, in July 1976. Plans to raise a third battalion were announced in the first half of 1976 and 800 recruits were reported to be nearing the end of their training in November 1977. A fourth battalion is due to be formed in 1978. According to the white commanding officer at Balla Balla, between 500 and 600 recruits were waiting in reserve at the end of 1977, due to begin training at any time. The African troops' training programme has already been cut from six to three months in an effort to accommodate them (*Johannesburg Star*, 5.11.77; *Guardian*, 20.8.77; *Daily Telegraph*, 18.11.77).

Africans were first recruited for regular army service during World War I, when a Rhodesian Native Regiment was raised for the campaign in German East Africa. This was subsequently disbanded but was revived in 1939 as the Rhodesian African Rifles.

The regime's reliance on backward tribal sentiment in recruiting for the RAR and the racialist assumptions of the white military establishment are apparent from the following extracts from an official publication:

'A hundred years ago the Matabele warrior enjoyed a reputation as a fighting man that was second only to that of the dreaded Zulus of Natal, which was not to be wondered at since most of the blood in his veins was of Zulu origin. In those days his main weapon was the stabbing assegai and his uniform a skin kilt and a plume of ostrich feathers.

'Today that man's descendants, in the camouflage uniform of the modern soldier and armed with an automatic rifle, is maintaining tribal tradition by playing a valuable and effective role in the battle against his country's enemies, the terrorists... The white soldier is perhaps more sophisticated and better at physical training, but the African, thanks to his traditional way of life, is more at home in the bush and can walk long distances without tiring. They are thus ideally suited to counter-insurgency work.

'They have a real loathing for the terrorists... There can only be one fate for such vermin — elimination. Rhodesia's black soldiers are busy doing just that.'

(*Fighting Forces of Rhodesia*, No 3, Salisbury 1976)

Recruiting has always been most successful among African families with one or more members already in the army, and in certain parts of the country with a tradition of army service, particularly in the Fort Victoria area. African unemployment is clearly another important factor. (See also section below on 'Africans in the security forces'.)

A number of other units within the regular army are actively deployed in the front line. In October 1976 the Rhodesian Artillery was declared a corps in its own right and authorised to form a regular troop. The troop was reported in January 1977 to be up to half strength. (Up to that time, apart from a small training force of regular servicemen, it had relied solely on national servicemen and territorials.) Officially the artillery use old World War II 25-pund (88mm) field guns but they have been reported also to possess some 105mm cannon.

The **Rhodesia Armoured Car Regiment** is used extensively on reconnaissance and border patrol and has played a key role in the regime's attacks into Mozambique territory. In its present form it dates back to 1972, though its original predecessor, the Southern Rhodesia Reconnaissance Unit, was first established in 1939. Due to their superior speed (about 100km an hour) armoured cars are, according to the regime, 'capable of knocking out any known tank at anything up to 1300 metres'. They have less firepower than a tank but require less maintenance and are much cheaper. 'They guard vital installations and their firepower can be used to demolish enemy strong points. At the same time armoured cars can easily switch to a conventional war role – reconnaissance, destruction of enemy vehicles, deep penetration behind enemy lines, delaying actions to cover withdrawals, and the disruption of an enemy on the run.' (*Sunday Mail*, 13.11.77)

Other counter-insurgency roles include curfew patrols, crowd dispersal, road blocks, cordons and escort duty on civilian and military convoys. Armoured cars are frequently sent into the Tribal Trust Lands to 'show the flag', ie they have a comparable intimidatory function as low level fly-pasts of jet bombers.

The Armoured Car Regiment is surrounded by tight security. One type of armoured vehicle in use cannot be named and photographs are strictly forbidden. The vehicles in use have in fact been developed by Rhodesian technicians using standard vehicle chassis as a base. The Hippo, a large troop carrier built high off the ground to withstand landmine explosions, is also used in South Africa. The Leopard, Rhino and Hyena are further models. British-made Ferret scout cars are used as back-up. (Many other military, official and civilian vehicles are armoured to withstand landmine explosions.)

The commanding officer of the Armoured Car Regiment is Major Bruce Rooker-Smith, a former officer in the British 17th/21st Lancers with experience on British Centurion tanks. The regiment has its own headquarters where regulars, territorials and national service volunteers undertake a total of 49 weeks' training (*ibid*).

Two other divisions which have assumed a fighting role as the guerrilla war has escalated are the **Engineers Corps** (specialists in mine warfare and detailed to drive landmine detector vehicles, besides responsibility for roads, bridges and other construction works in the operational areas) and the **Military Police** (deployed in the front line in recent years over and above their normal functions of crime detection and vice control within the ranks).

Back-up services to the fighting units are provided by various divisions – catering, supplies, transport, signals, arms maintenance, medical etc – of the Rhodesian Army Services Corps.

### **Rhodesia Women's Service**

Women were first recruited as volunteers into Rhodesia's regular army and air force in July/August 1975. In theory the posts available are open to women of all races but, of the first 2,000 applicants, only two came from Africans. Women regulars are trained to take over clerical and administrative jobs behind the lines to release more men for active service but they are all taught the techniques of counter-insurgency operations and given practical weapons training. Women have been accepted as full regulars on the same terms of rank, conditions and pensions (but not salaries) as men, with effect from 1 July 1977. In March 1977 there were about 280 members of the Rhodesia Women's Service.

### **Territorial Forces**

Apart from the regular army, around 15,000 members of the territorial force (mainly reservists in the 25-38 age group) are estimated to be called up on active service at any one time. In fact many territorial companies now in the field are seriously undermanned due to the white exodus from Rhodesia over the past year or so. The potential strength of the territorial force has been expanded to 55,000, comprising eight battalions of the Rhodesia Regiment, each with an establishment of 1,000 men and support units. There is also a Reserve Holding Unit of 3,000 men in the over-38 age group (*The Military Balance 1977/78*).

National servicemen (18-25 age group) may be integrated into units of the regular army or deployed on active service in one of three Independent Companies.

### **Intelligence and psychological warfare**

The Rhodesian Intelligence Corps (RIC) operates as a separate unit within the army. RIC

officers take part in routine meetings of the Joint Operations Centre (JOC). Conscripts may be posted to the RIC as to other army units.

The **Department of Psychological Warfare** was set up by the regime in early 1977 as a new undertaking separate from the rest of the security forces. Its first Director is Major General Andrew Rawlins, formerly in charge of the protected village programme as Commander of the Guard Force. As well as having responsibility for the regime's scare tactics and intimidation techniques in the operational areas, the Department is believed also to be involved in undercover work abroad.

## THE POLICE

### British South Africa Police

This was the first uniformed force to be set up under white colonialism in Rhodesia and is today the Smith regime's largest single fighting force with a potential strength of around 43,000, including reservists. The BSAP constitutes an integral part of the Rhodesian security forces. It is a heavily armed paramilitary body and plays a crucial role in counter-insurgency operations.

In 1889, 500 men were recruited by the British South Africa Company as a private police force to help consolidate its occupation of Mashonaland. In 1903 large numbers of Africans were recruited for the first time. Up to 1954 the BSAP were trained both as policemen and soldiers and doubled as an unarmed civil police force and a standing army. While these military functions were relinquished at the time of Federation, they have since been resumed as the armed struggle has escalated.

About two-thirds of the regular BSAP, overall strength 8,000, are African. Up until 1976 the highest rank held by an African was that of sub-inspector. In September 1976 the Minister of Law and Order informed the Rhodesian House of Assembly that African sub-inspectors were being invited to apply for the rank of patrol officers. African sergeant-majors (one rank below sub-inspector) would also be eligible to take the necessary tests. Twenty-three Africans were appointed as patrol officers in October 1976. Black recruits for the regular BSAP undergo 18 weeks' training on a starting salary ranging from Rh\$768 to Rh\$936 per annum (*Sunday Mail*, 2.10.77). There is also an African Police Reserve, for which recruits are given 10-day instruction courses and earn Rh\$1.30 a day when on duty plus rations, increasing to Rh\$1.80 when on active front-line service with the Police Anti-Terrorist Unit (PATU) (*Sunday Mail*, 13.11.77).

As with the army the regime has stepped up its efforts to recruit Africans into the BSAP. A special recruiting drive was launched in Bulawayo in October 1977 and from there to other parts of the country.

White members of the BSAP today are actively deployed in the front line under the aegis of the **Police Anti-Terrorist Units (PATU)**. PATU was started as a reconnaissance unit in the early 60s by Superintendent Bill Bailey, a veteran of the British Army's long-range desert group which operated behind enemy lines during World War II. He was assisted by another British ex-soldier, Reg Seekins, who had also served in the Western Desert in the Special Air Service under Colonel David Stirling. Each PATU 'stick' consists of four to five men and usually includes one African policeman. It operates as a highly mobile independent and self-sufficient unit, staying out in the bush for several weeks at a time. Whereas PATU's original role was restricted to patrolling the borders and collecting intelligence from the local population, it has since developed along combat lines. A stick's mission, like that of the Selous Scouts, is nowadays to 'seek and destroy'. Since 1973 conscripts have been allowed to complete their national service in the BSAP as an alternative to army training, so that each PATU stick is likely to contain a mixture of regulars, reservists and national servicemen. More recently this has been phased out as national servicemen in the 25-38 age group have been transferred to territorial army units. The men are taught bushcraft, close-quarter combat, all aspects of small arms combat, map-reading, tracking and first aid. New sticks can be formed in a few weeks, according to the regime.

Apart from PATU, the BSAP possesses a number of 'elite' units for special and clandestine operations:

The **Police Support Unit (PSU)**, known as the BSAP's 'mailed fist', are a highly-trained and relatively highly-paid unit of light infantrymen who operate deep in the war zones, very much on the lines of the army's Selous Scouts. Most of the men and some of the

junior drill instructors are black but the unit also includes white regular policemen and national servicemen. In 1974 the PSU was believed to comprise 30-40 whites, including a number of ex-Congo mercenaries, and around 300 Africans. It has since become increasingly involved in the guerrilla war.

The PSU evolved from the Askari platoon, an all-African unit whose original function was to guard Government House and perform various ceremonial duties. During the unrest of the early 1960s, however, the Askari platoon supplied troops as armed back-up for the police and became known as the Support Unit.

Nowadays each PSU is highly mobile, going out into the bush for six-week stretches during which the men act on their own initiative and must be completely self-sufficient. They are armed with light machine guns and FN rifles and each troop — in which Africans outnumber white personnel by about eight to one — has its own transport. PSU instructors, many of whom are ex-British army regulars, are trained at the army's School of Infantry and units often team up with army or air force personnel in the field. The current overall strength of the PSU is concealed by the regime.

The Special Unit, a little-known group, was reported to have been established in the first half of 1975 to counter urban guerrilla warfare. In October 1976 the Special Unit was reported to comprise 30 men in the Salisbury area, two of whom were black. Members are regular policemen specially trained to tackle marksmen hold up in office blocks or other urban premises. The men use helicopters for roof-top landings and are armed with pistols, submachine guns and automatic shotguns. Plans of all buildings in Salisbury are available to the police on microfilm (*Johannesburg Star*, 16.10.76).

### **Criminal Investigation Department (CID) and Special Branch (SB)**

Both the CID and the SB are heavily involved in counter-insurgency work although their activities receive very little publicity. They are responsible, for example, for completing cases for prosecution under the Law and Order (Maintenance) Act — ie interrogation of captured freedom fighters and others suspected of assisting the armed struggle. It is undoubtedly within the ranks of the CID and SB that some of the most sophisticated techniques of torture and intimidation are put to use. Both units have important intelligence functions and make use of an extensive network of African informers.

The Special Branch, which concentrates almost exclusively on political work, has been for many years in the forefront of the regime's attempts to suppress the liberation movement. The SB has its own interrogation centres and operates independently of the main police force. Its members are universally feared, hated and despised by the African majority for their brutal behaviour.

Members of the CID, which includes both whites and Africans, are drawn from the regular BSAP on the basis of at least 12 months' service. Once confirmed within the CID a member will remain in the Department for the rest of his service, which will include periodic duties with the Special Branch. Provincial Criminal Investigation Officers commanding the provinces of Mashonaland/Salisbury, Midlands, Matabeleland, Manicaland and Victoria are directly responsible for the Special Branch functions within their areas and double as Provincial Special Branch Officers.

Members of the police may be seconded to Special Branch II for special security duties. Special Branch II, a highly-paid and extremely secretive organisation, in fact falls outside the ambit of the regular police force and is believed to be under the direct control of the Prime Minister's Office. It possesses a substantial number of civilian-registered vehicles and operates in a clandestine way along the lines of the Selous Scouts. Special Branch II is generally believed, for example, to have been responsible for the kidnapping of Dr Edson Sithole, at that time Publicity Secretary of the ANC, in October 1975. Nothing further has ever been learnt with certainty of Dr Sithole's fate and he is by now almost certainly dead. SB II has bases all over the country and its headquarters was reported in 1976 to be inside the Signals Headquarters at Bindura (*Africa*, February 1976).

### **The Police Reserve**

It has been the convention for many years for adult white men who have completed their national service to become police reservists. The size of each division within the Police Reserve is classified information, but total potential strength is around 55,000 (see also above). The vast majority of reservists serve in the Field Reserve where they function, in theory, as an emergency force. Reservists are divided into three age ranges: in 1976 men under 35 were required to do a minimum of 56 days' duty annually, normally broken up into four 14-day stints; 38-50 year olds serve one 14-day stint, while the over-50s have no

compulsory commitment and are mainly used for convoy duty and mounting guard on white-owned farms. (These are minimum tours of duty – reservists are likely to serve for far greater periods in the present situation.) A Women's Field Reserve was started in 1960 and supplies volunteers to take over police station administration while male police are on active military duties. Women reservists are taught to use firearms up to FN level. An African Field Reserve was also set up in 1960 and is deployed in administration, catering, transport etc, but also supplies PATU members. About six per cent of the total reserve force, both men and women, serve on a more regular basis in the 'A' Reserve, where their duties are to all intents and purposes identical to those of full-time policemen, and the rank structure mirrors that of the regular force. 'A' Reservists must complete a minimum of 16 hours unpaid duty per month: the majority do much more. The Police Reserve also includes an Air Wing of light aircraft, responsible for reconnaissance and courier work (*Johannesburg Star*, 10.1.76).

Men in the over-50s age group and those classified as medically unfit for full-time active service may serve as volunteers in the Police Special Reserve, a kind of home guard of between 4,000 and 5,000 men operating chiefly in the major urban centres. The unit was revived in 1974 after lying dormant through the '60s to cope with undermanning in urban areas caused by the deployment of regular and field reserve police in the war zones. Special Reservists, who by definition are physically below par, are equipped with old-fashioned .303 rifles to counter urban guerrilla activity. The recent extension of the call-up to men in the 38-50 age group has meant that many Special Reservists have been transferred to the Police Field Reserve. The size of the Special Reserve is likely to be considerably reduced as a result.

The BSAP's heavy involvement in the war has produced a situation in which the 'normal' functions of maintaining law and order are carried out by elderly reservists or quasi-official units only loosely integrated into the police command structure. One response of the regime to the deteriorating security situation in urban areas, for example, has been to recruit local unemployed Africans in the townships into plainclothes Crime Prevention Units. CPUs are armed and appear to operate in the townships as unsupervised gangs of thugs. They have probably been responsible for instigating a number of cases of 'faction fighting' used by the regime as evidence of dissension within the national liberation movement.

## THE GUARD FORCE

In December 1975 the regime announced that overall responsibility for the euphemistically named 'protected' and 'consolidated' villages – the fenced concentration camps set up in the war zones – was to be transferred from the Ministry of Internal Affairs to the Ministry of Defence. A new unit, the Guard Force, has been set up as an autonomous section of the armed forces and since July 1976 has been responsible for the control and administration of protected villages. It is reported to be the fastest-growing section of the security forces. By the end of 1976, 2,500 African recruits had completed four weeks' military training in anti-ambush drill, mine detection and weapons use, and provision had been made for a further 500 Africans to be trained each month at a base outside Salisbury. Whites, particularly those in the older age groups, are also called up for service in the Guard Force, normally to be trained as 'keep commanders'. Each protected village is guarded by a force of about 20 African troops led by one or two white keep commanders.

As an alternative to the Guard Force a protected village may also be controlled by a contingent of African 'District Security Assistants' from the Ministry of Internal Affairs led by a white national serviceman. In either case the African inmates of the fenced camps are supervised day and night by fully armed troops who, far from 'protecting' the residents, are known frequently to abuse their position.

## THE AIR FORCE

Possession of an air force, even if outdated, has enabled the Smith regime to mount devastating bombing raids not only on alleged guerrilla bases inside Zimbabwe but also on neighbouring African countries, notably Mozambique. Planes dating back to pre-UDI days have been especially adapted for bush warfare by Rhodesian technicians – for example,

by mounting air-to-ground rockets beneath the fuselage – and their destructive power should not be underestimated. An official publication from the regime describes the tactics employed:

‘As a result of the close liaison between the Rhodesian Army, the British South Africa Police and the Rhodesia Air Force, countless terrorist encampments have been destroyed during the past 12 years. The system in general works this way, ground or air forces locate the intruders, and when necessary, call for air support. Within a very short time the aircraft are there swooping in with cannon and rocket fire, and bombs if these are required.’

(‘Fighting Forces of Rhodesia’, Salisbury 1976)

In fact there is abundant evidence that in many cases the ‘terrorist’ encampments are simply African villages. Speaking in the Rhodesian House of Assembly in July 1976 the regime’s Minister of Defence and Foreign Affairs, P K van der Byl, warned that ‘if villagers harbour terrorists and terrorists are found running about in villages, naturally they will be bombed and destroyed in any manner which the commander on the spot considers to be desirable in the suitable prosecution of a successful campaign... Where the civilian population involves itself with terrorism then somebody is bound to get hurt and one can have little sympathy for those who are mixed up with terrorists when finally they receive the wrath of the security forces.’ (*Parliamentary Debates*, 2.7.76)

A type of napalm, sprayed from the air, has been used both in attacks inside Zimbabwe and against Mozambique since at least 1976. Called ‘Frantam’, it is manufactured from exclusively Rhodesian materials.

The air force also plays a key role in the regime’s counter-insurgency operations by ferrying troops to the war zones, supplying units in the field with ammunition and food, carrying out aerial reconnaissance and evacuating security force casualties.

The Rhodesian air force today has a greater percentage pro rata of manpower and equipment in the operational area than any other branch of the security forces. Its overall strength is 1,300 regular personnel. According to the regime the main aircraft in use are as follows:

- **Hawker Hunter fighters** adapted for ground attack using rockets, bombs and cannons. Maximum speed: 730 mph. Ferry range: 1,800 miles.
- **De Havilland Vampires**: Armament potential: cannons, rockets and bombs. Maximum speed: 520 mph. Maximum range: 1,200 miles. Capable of bombing raids but also used for jet training. Some of the planes date back to 1956.
- **Douglas Dakotas**: transport and supply squadron, particularly used for transporting paratroops.
- **Aermacchi/Lockheed Trojans**: obtained by the regime in 1967 in a sanctions busting coup. Armament potential: rockets, machine guns, teargas, parachute flares. Maximum speed: 125 mph. Maximum range: 600 miles. Used primarily for offensive troop support but also for casualty evacuation, transport work and aerial reconnaissance.
- **English Electric Canberras**: light bomber squadron. Armament potential: 8-10,000 lb worth of bombs. Maximum speed: 420 mph. Maximum range: 2,500 nautical miles.
- **Percival Provists**: acquired in 1955 and used primarily for training purposes. Armament potential: machine guns and bombs. Maximum speed: 200 mph. Maximum range: 400 miles.
- **Sud-Aviation Alouette Helicopters**: play a key role in bush warfare through their ability to transport troops over short distances at speed and to land them in tactical formation ready for immediate action. Also used for casualty evacuation. Mounted with heavy machine guns or 20mm cannons and capable of devastating air attacks. A number of Alouette helicopters and pilots were left behind by the South African government when several thousand paramilitary South African Police were officially withdrawn from Rhodesia in 1975. It is believed that further helicopters have been supplied by South Africa since that time. According to the International Institute for Strategic Studies the regime possessed 48 combat aircraft and 55 Alouettes in 1977 (*The Military Balance 1977/78*).

Precise statistics are virtually impossible to obtain because the regime obviously makes every effort to conceal both losses due to guerrilla action and new additions to the air force obtained via South Africa and from Western suppliers. In April 1977, for example, the *Guardian* reported that the Smith regime had obtained 12 Mirage fighter jets and a number of brand new Alouettes, together with British-made jeep-mounted recoilless rifles and mortars, from South Africa. In the last couple of years the US firms of Rockwell International and Lockheed Aircraft, for example, have also been accused of supplying military aircraft indirectly to the Smith regime via Italy and South Africa, while French-built Cessnas have reportedly reached Rhodesia via a Spanish company (*Guardian*, 11.12.77). There have, in addition, been a number of reports over the last two years that the regime is constructing at least four new security airfields at strategic locations around Rhodesia, of a sufficient size and equipped to take the heaviest bombers and transports. US technicians have been reported to be assisting with these projects.

It is clear that despite international economic sanctions the Smith regime has consistently managed to obtain supplies of arms, ammunition and equipment and spare parts, for both its air force and the rest of the security forces. While its Western allies have naturally been hesitant about supplying conspicuous items of equipment such as tanks or fighter jets, other forms of help have been forthcoming. Speaking in February 1977 the regime's Minister of Defence pointed out that 'we are able to get what we need in the way of arms and munitions. We have access to overseas markets for these commodities. Frankly, we frequently receive offers for the provision of materials which we are unable to take up simply because they exceed our basic requirements, so I can assure you that under present circumstances with the channels that do exist, Rhodesia could continue ad infinitum.' (*Rhodesia Herald*, 15.2.77)

## THE RHODESIAN ARMS INDUSTRY

Rhodesia is developing a sophisticated arms and munitions industry in response to the white public's demand for guns and ammunition of all descriptions. Concerted efforts have been made to develop locally-made substitutes for expensive and scarce imported weapons. At least six types of 9mm semi-automatic machine pistol, modelled on the Israeli Uzi, are now being produced in Rhodesia for sale to the white public, with a number of further prototypes in the pipeline. The guns are designed for easy handling by persons unused to weapons and according to early market research reports have been proving particularly popular with white women and middle-aged people living in 'sensitive' areas. Rhodesia's white civilian population is the most heavily armed in Africa and possibly even in the world.

Besides meeting its own security needs, Rhodesia is becoming an exporter of arms, primarily to South Africa but also to Western European and American countries via agents in South Africa. The South African and Rhodesian authorities collaborate closely on such matters of defence and security. In the military sphere there has evidently been cooperation in the design, manufacture and supply of the Hippo armoured vehicle — a heavy troop carrier designed to withstand landmine blasts in the Rhodesian context but also used by the South African riot police in Soweto and other townships during the 1976 uprisings.

- **The LDP machine pistol** was announced in November 1976. Reported to have been designed by immigrants to Rhodesia from the arms industry in Britain. Weighs 2½-3kg. Capable of firing 25 9mm rounds in quick succession held in one hand. Production commenced in Salisbury early 1977. Sold through authorised arms dealers in Rhodesia at around Rh\$165. Distributed in South Africa and from there exported to Western European and other countries by Dirk Stoffberg, an arms dealer in Johannesburg. Stoffberg, who previously worked for the Iranian government, has offices in Britain, Australia, Germany, Brazil and Saudi Arabia. (*Sunday Mail*, 28.11.76; *Sunday Times*, Johannesburg, 29.5.77; *Sunday Times*, London, 15.5.77)
- **The 'Rhozi'** — based on the Israeli Uzi commando assault weapon. The Uzi itself is currently being manufactured under licence in South Africa.
- **The 'Rhogun'** — broadly similar to the Rhozi and currently in full production by an engineering firm in Bulawayo. Awarded a certificate of satisfactory prooftesting by the South African Bureau of Standards in May 1977. Has been evaluated for

use by the security forces. Will sell for around Rh\$230 (compared with up to Rh\$800 for imported weapons exchanged in private sales).

- **The R-76** – a 9mm semi-automatic pistol first reported to be on display in a Salisbury gunsmith in April 1977 and made available to the public later that year. Similar to the Uzi but smaller. It employs the same blow-back action as the World War II Sten Gun. Designed for women in particular. (*Rhodesia Herald*, 8.4.77; *Rhodesian Financial Gazette*, 23.9.77)
- **The 'Cobra'** – a 25 round 9mm semi-automatic which went on display at the Bulawayo Armoury (Pvt) Ltd stand at the Trade Fair Rhodesia in April 1977. Came on to the market in November 1977 and is being manufactured by the Stellyte Arms Co (Pvt) Ltd of Bulawayo, a new company set up for the purpose. Representatives of international arms manufacturers in North America, South America and Europe are reported to have expressed interest in manufacturing the weapon under licence. It is made entirely of Rhodesian materials and retails around Rh\$230. It is also to be exported directly to South Africa. In its civilian version the Cobra is a semi-automatic weapon but there is also an armed services version designed for selective fire and capable of firing 450-500 rounds a minute. (*Rhodesia Herald*, 12.4.77; *BBC Monitoring Service*, 10.5.77; *Rhodesian Financial Gazette*, 16.9.77)
- **The 'Mamba'** – an automatic pistol weighing just over 1kg and taking 15 rounds of 9mm parabellum. Optional magazines take 20, 25, 30 or 40 rounds. A joint Rhodesian/South African venture – parts manufacture to be done in Rhodesia and South Africa with assembly in Rhodesia, and output split between both countries. To be marketed in South Africa through Paramount Arms, Johannesburg. Patents have been applied for in South Africa and West Germany. (*Financial Mail*, 1.4.77; *Rhodesian Financial Gazette*, 23.9.77)

A further version, the 'Barad', was reported at the end of 1976 to have been designed in Fort Victoria by a young Israeli immigrant to Rhodesia, Yoram Sharar. Comes in two versions, a shotgun and a handgun. (*Rhodesia Herald*, 7.12.76)

(Under the Firearms Act members of the white Rhodesian public are not allowed to buy fully automatic models. However, a spokesman for the Firearms Registry stated in November 1976 that 'for people living on farms, the position might be different. It might be possible to get permission for possession of a fully automatic weapon through the Prime Minister's Office.' [*Rhodesia Herald*, 1.12.76])

Ownership, control and development of the Rhodesian arms industry is in the hands of white private enterprise. The firms manufacturing the new weapons operate independently and there is no national coordinating body or armaments corporation on the lines of South Africa's ARMSCON (*Rhodesian Financial Gazette*, 12.8.77). The arms industry would remain unaffected by proposals such as those incorporated in the British White Paper for the reorganisation of the regime's security forces.

## AFRICANS IN THE SECURITY FORCES

The Smith regime has always used the existence of black regular troops in the Rhodesian army and British South Africa Police as evidence that the liberation struggle does not command the support of the majority of Rhodesian Africans. Recruiting of Africans for the security forces has been considerably stepped up in recent months and reports have appeared in Rhodesian, South African and British newspapers of 'queues' of black volunteers at military camps and of their keenness to fight the 'terrorists'. The willingness of what is in fact a tiny fraction (less than 0.3%) of the total African population to fight on the side of the white minority is obviously a powerful propaganda weapon in the hands of the regime and it is important to understand the reasons behind it.

It is difficult to reach a precise figure for the number of Africans currently serving in the Rhodesian security forces (largely because the statistics are disguised by the regime for its own purposes) but it is probably in the region of 10-15,000 men on front-line service, with others in noncombatant roles. (Three thousand plus in the RAR with a further 1,000 (est) in the Selous Scouts and Grey's Scouts – the expansion of the RAR to four battalions would, according to the regime, raise the ratio of black to white personnel in

the regular army from around 2:1 to 3:1; 6,000 (est) in the regular BSAP with a further contingent serving in the African Police Reserve. Africans also serve in the Guard Force and as District Assistants and District Security Assistants with the Ministry of Internal Affairs – see above under the section on **The Security Forces**.) The frequently repeated claim that up to 80 per cent of the regular army (eg *Daily Telegraph*, 18.11.77) and a comparable proportion of the police are black glosses over the fact that because Africans are not liable for conscription they constitute a small minority within the security forces as a whole (potential strength up to 111,550 men).

The Rhodesian army is organised on racially discriminatory lines with inferior pay and conditions for black soldiers. In April 1977, for example, it was reported that a black sergeant in the army was receiving Rh\$86 a month plus food and accommodation for his family, while a white enlisted national serviceman, just out of school, received Rh\$201 a month. (*Johannesburg Star*, 23.4.77)

Up until very recently Africans were not permitted to rise above the rank of NCO or Warrant Officer, regardless of length of service. As part of the regime's attempts to be seen to be moving towards an 'internal settlement' and in an effort to counter black desertions from the army, it was announced in March 1976 that commissioned ranks would in future be opened to Africans and in June 1977, 13 black soldiers, all of them with at least 10 years' service, were commissioned as lieutenants. (For details of opportunities for Africans in the police force, see section above on **The Police**.)

Asian and Coloured members of the security forces, although liable for conscription on the same terms as whites, are also treated less favourably. There have been reports of attempted strike action by Asian and Coloured troops and undoubtedly there is considerable dissatisfaction and alienation from the regime. A Rhodesian Front MP reported to the House of Assembly in October 1977, for example, that Coloured troops had expressed a number of grievances. They were denied opportunities to join the regular forces and were given only five weeks' training. The highest rank a Coloured man could achieve was that of Warrant Officer (*Rhodesia Herald*, 6.10.77). A few weeks after these remarks a petition signed by about 500 Coloured national servicemen was presented to Lord Carver on his arrival in Salisbury, protesting against conscription of the Coloured community (*Rand Daily Mail*, 21.11.77).

The loyalty and discipline of African regular troops are also without question major sources of anxiety for the Rhodesian military establishment. It is impossible to say how many members of the RAR have deserted: some certainly have, either to join the forces of the liberation movement or possibly to turn to 'freelance' operations of one kind or another.

While black regular troops are paid lower wages than their counterparts in the RLI, it is important to realise that army service is still one of the financially most rewarding forms of employment for Africans in Zimbabwe. In 1977 the average wage of a black worker was Rh\$43 a month; that of an agricultural labourer was Rh\$17. (This is according to the regime's official figures; in practice there is evidence that wages in agriculture and other economic sectors are even lower.) The comparable figures for African troops in the regular army and police were of the order of Rh\$60-80 a month (see above). In addition, black regular soldiers receive free housing, free or cheaper education for their children, and have access to vastly superior medical facilities.

Apart from the constant incentive of a relatively well-paid job, recent reports indicate that local chiefs and headmen in the Tribal Trust Lands (all of whom are appointed and paid by the regime, have powers of arrest, trial and punishment of those under their jurisdiction and whose party, the Zimbabwe United People's Organisation [ZUPO], was set up with official backing and is one of those involved in 'internal settlement' talks with the regime) are increasingly involved in mobilising African recruits for the security forces (see, eg, *Daily Telegraph*, 18.11.77). There are indications that a strong element of press-ganging may be involved. According to the *Guardian* of 23 December 1977, for example, 'young African men with urban jobs need a detailed letter from their employer to avoid being

coopted into the depleted labour forces of the district commissioner (ie the Ministry of Internal Affairs whose African employees include armed guards at 'protected villages') while on leave in the rural areas. There are few African males of fighting age left in the reserves and those need to be able to show, to either side, a very good reason for being there.'

There is further evidence that Africans may now be being persuaded to volunteer by the argument that what they are joining is not the old-style Rhodesian army or police force but the basis of a new 'Zimbabwe Liberation Army' incorporating nationalist guerrillas. Guerrillas captured by the security forces may also be given the option of changing sides or facing trial and possible execution.

In another significant recent development the regime has been taking steps to integrate certain sections of the security forces. In addition to opening junior officer ranks to African regulars (see above), some units have undergone joint training. A passing-out parade of troops of the Rhodesia Regiment (white, Coloured and Asian territorials) held in Bulawayo at the end of November 1977, for example, included black fellow-trainees drawn from the RAR. A police passing-out parade in Salisbury on the same day included both black and white recruits for the first time (*BBC Monitoring Service*, 1/3.12.77). African and white troops are sharing the same billets and messes under the new dispensation (despite opposition from white regulars), although salary scales remain discriminatory. Under the Electoral Amendment Bill, tabled in the Rhodesian House of Assembly in November 1977, the regime has also decided to extend the vote to Africans over the age of 21 who have completed not less than 12 months' service with the security forces (including the Guard Force, Prison Service, district assistants and district security assistants, as well as police and army) since January 1973 (*Sunday Express*, Johannesburg, 18.12.77; *Johannesburg Star*, 12.11.77; *Rhodesia Herald*, 2.11.77).

What the regime has in effect been doing is to project a 'multiracial' image for the police and army in preparation for an 'internal settlement'. There is evidence that much behind-the-scenes lobbying of the African organisations involved in the 'internal settlement' negotiations has been going on while the talks have been in progress. In October 1977, for example, a group of 60 white and African businessmen, including members of nationalist organisations, were invited to attend a seminar at the Monomatapa Hotel in Salisbury, staged jointly by the Rhodesian army and the Rhodesian Promotion Council as part of a Council programme to introduce 'businessmen and opinion leaders of all races to the complexities of the country's economy and institutions'. Major General Derry MacIntyre, the army's Chief of Staff (Administration) impressed upon his audience that the Rhodesian army was apolitical and had no intention of leaving just because of a change in government (*Sunday Mail*, 30.10.77).

Such cosmetic changes as have taken place in the Rhodesian security forces, however, can never fully disguise their crucial role in maintaining the white minority in power. In the months to come, and assuming the reported agreement on an 'internal settlement' begins to be put into effect, their function will be to defend and enforce that agreement through terror, intimidation and military might.

**The Anti-Apartheid Movement  
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