As AFSC's Southern Africa International Affairs Representative, Edgar (Ted) Lockwood carries responsibility for writing reports, initiating conferences, seminars, and personal contacts that support the work of the member nations of the Southern Africa Development Coordination Conference (SADCC) in fostering greater regional development and economic cooperation. To be included on the mailing list, write to AFSC, Africa Programs at 1501 Cherry Street, Philadelphia, PA 19102. Contributions to defray mailing and duplicating costs are welcome.

NOTE: The text of this letter refers to two political parties, both named ZANU. ZANU-PF (Patriotic Front) refers to the ruling party headed by Prime Minister Robert Mugabe. ZANU refers to the minority party, headed by Ndabiningi Sithole, which split from ZANU-PF prior to the independence. UANC, the United African National Union, headed by Bishop Abel Muzorewa, and ZAPU, the Zimbabwe African Peoples Union, headed by Joshua Nkomo, both minority parties, are also mentioned.

Dear Friends,

A politician I once knew used to say, "There is nothing I hate more than surprises." Surprises can be nasty shocks to our preconceived notions. They illustrate our inability to read how others, especially those of another group, another race, another class, are actually feeling and thinking. But surprises can also be happy surprises when things go much better than we could have imagined they would.

Zimbabwe's elections had both kinds of surprises. The nasty shock was Ian Smith's winning of 75% of the 20 "white seats" in Parliament, a win that has caused more explanations, letters to the editor of the Harare Herald and general furor than any topic in a long time. The happy surprise was that, contrary to all expectations, the elections themselves were held in a relatively calm and peaceful atmosphere. But they were followed, unfortunately, by ugly violence against black minority parties in the Harare townships. The
elections have been still viewed as a relatively fair and free test of how voters feel.

**Smith's Last Hurrah**

People all over town are asking themselves, "How did Smith win 15 seats? It's incredible." Here we have a man who carried on in the Parliament as if nothing had really happened in 1980, confrontationalist with Government -- the epitome of unreconstructed white settler racism -- so much so that Government stopped talking to him four years ago. Business and commercial interests who saw that they had to influence government no matter what they might think of socialism were alarmed, and Smith's own party, the Rhodesia Front, later the Conservative Alliance, suffered defections. Eleven of the party split from him, abandoned the confrontational style and settled down for a kind of "constructive engagement" with government. Some served in ministerial positions: for example, Chris Anderson, Minister of Public Service, and John Landau, Deputy Minister of Trade.

The twenty "white" seats were imposed by the Lancaster House Constitution as a way to preserve white settler interests, at least for a time. The twenty members are to be chosen only by Whites, Coloureds and Asians. This patently racist provision can be changed at any time by a 100% vote in Parliament or after 7 years by a 70% vote.

Last year, the Herald called these 20 seats "an anachronism" of little significance and Smith's party "a relic". "The CA stands for a past that can never be."

By June 1985, however, the Herald had changed its tune. On June 13th, it editorialized that the choice of the white electorate was "almost as important as that of Black voters." When it became clear that Smith had won 15 seats, the Herald trumpeted "BETRAYED!" The Financial Gazette (the Wall Street Journal of Zimbabwe), which had predicted that the Independents, would win 18 seats and Smith only two, was flabbergasted: "We were so wrong that we must symbolically offer our head on the block."

**How did Smith win? Liberal apathy?**

One explanation is that the Independents never clearly distinguished themselves from Smith. They refused to come out strongly against him as a racist ideologue or a man dreaming of a revival of white supremacy. Instead, they contented themselves with echoing some of his themes. The principles they announced in December were clearly conservative:

- opposition to the one party state
- promotion of private enterprise and opposition to socialism
- non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries, especially South Africa; i.e., no anti-apartheid action that would jeopardize business
- representation of "white interests" and the "white community"
Chris Andersen, who had been the Independents' leader, disagreed with what he saw as a swing away from accommodation and communication.

Ian Smith, on the other hand, claimed that he was the great communicator with the government, that he was for black majority rule and integration. He was for "compromise, not confrontation". What he was opposed to was a one-party state dictatorship led by a Communist (Mugabe). He claimed that the Independents betrayed him, his party and "white unity". He deplored the alleged drop in "standards". He was not against integration; whites were emigrating because the quality of the schools white kids went to was falling. Health care was deteriorating; so was law and order.

For many liberal whites there was little to choose between Smith and the Independents, eleven of whom had formerly been Rhodesia Front party politicians.

Less than half of those whites eligible to vote actually registered to do so, either out of apathy or because they did not believe in voting on a racist roll. And although the rules were relaxed to permit any one with a national registration card to vote, only 33,734 valid votes were cast. (The White, Coloured and Asian population is estimated to be in excess of 110,000 persons.)

How Did Smith Win? Organization versus Complacency and Incompetence

If the liberals were apathetic, the Conservative Africa of Zimbabwe (CAZ) was not. Unlike the Independents who refused to organize themselves into a party or do such fundamental things as grassroots canvassing, the CAZ was off the mark early. By October 1984, they were claiming that they had influenced 16,000 whites out of a total of 22,000 to register.

The Independents, who had won all three recent by-elections, were complacent. They scorned professional advice and the counsel of academics. They seemed not to consider their options carefully.

Smith mobilized the elderly and the infirm and provided motor transport for them. He has a certain charisma that brings an emotional response from those whose racism may be cloaked in eternal verities: preserving, undiminished, the privileges of the past without loss or accommodation to the new reality of African political power. Bill Irvine, the leader of the Independents, had "all the charisma of an undertaker", according to one commentator, "no match for good old Smithy".

Chris Andersen, who ran an extremely well organized and professional campaign as an independent Independent, won going away over P. K. van der Byl, Smith's clever propagandist. And, in Hatfield, Highlands and Mazowe Mutoko, the Independents would have won had there not been more than one Independent in the field who, therefore, split the vote.
What Now? The white liberals fear disaster ahead.

There is a strong feeling among some whites that disaster has now struck. Dr. Bob Nixon, an Independent who lost in Bulawayo, recently addressed an open letter to Smith: "You have set us firmly on the path of destruction, once more on the altar of your own ego." A white commentator in the Herald, Philip Nolan, was even more scathing: "We have committed suicide out of fear of death." He called Smith a "malevolent presence" and "the most destructive of politicians."

The Sector Representation Group, comprised of old and ineffective white liberal opponents of Smith, put out a paper that declared that Smith's win had:

-- upset the confidence of black leadership in the loyalty of whites
-- incurred the wrath of the ruling party
-- endangered the stability of the economy in that no political appointments would henceforth go to "able and deserving" whites
-- encouraged false hopes of divide and rule
-- encouraged the possibility of an illegal end to the Lancaster Constitution

Two liberal lawyers began a petition campaign to do away with the white seats right away.

What Now? The government's reaction.

The Mugabe government is prepared to use Smith's victory to consolidate its grip on state power by excluding whites, unless they can prove they are not racist. The Prime Minister's final rally at Highfields on July 1st indicated that he was in no mood to make excuses for the white electorate or tolerate further racism:

"The whites are still, therefore, by and large the racists of the past. They have not changed in any way and so, today, I wish to promise to all of you, the African people of this country, that never again shall we be deceived.

"...things are going to be very hard going for the racists of the country, very hard going indeed. We will not allow any racists to enjoy the comforts of this country."

Evidence that the Prime Minister meant what he said was not slow to come. In retaliation for the whites' vote for Smith and particularly in view of the support given to Smith by rural constituencies, he replaced Denis Norman, the widely respected Minister of Agriculture and a white commercial farmer, with Moven Mahachi, a member of the ZANU-PF politburo. Norman was not reappointed to the Senate and has now returned to private life. He was never prominent in party politics, but was regarded as a reasonable and non-racist man who could act as a special liaison with white commercial farmers who the Government felt were indispensable to the country's food production.
There is understandable but misplaced anger among whites of liberal bent that Norman has now been punished for something for which he is not responsible. A close friend, a loyal white Zimbabwean, told me:

"I felt guilty after Smith's win and I could understand the Prime Minister's anger. But now what he has done has relieved me of my guilt. He has pushed us all into the laager."

I say his anger is misplaced because this view fails to take into account ZANU-PF's strategic need to consolidate and unify the country under its own party leadership. Smith's win is a convenient peg on which to hang something that Mugabe may well have wanted to do for quite other reasons. He has merged the Ministry of Agriculture, which was historically a fiefdom of white commercial farmers, with the Ministry of Lands, Resettlement and Rural Development, which promoted African rural development, and put it under the direction of a man who is a sincere, dedicated and able socialist.

Norman's replacement by Mahachi does not mean that the government is going to change its policy of encouraging white farmers to stay on. It could mean that this government will try to crack down on some of the bad labor conditions on the farms. It will certainly mean at least a modestly increased resettlement program and perhaps greater helps for the cooperative movement.

Recently, I asked the vice chairman of the Simukai Collective Cooperative if he thought the Prime Minister was going to punish the white farmers for voting for Smith. He said:

"No way! That's just political talk. These people are experienced. They know how to do things. They have helped us a lot; lent us equipment, helped us with advice. No way is he going to get rid of them."

Pleasant Surprises: A peaceful poll.

There has been a widespread fear throughout the country that the common roll election would be marred by violence. Senator Todd had suggested a two-year postponement in order to let matters grow calmer. The government, however, felt that need to consolidate its growing strength and demonstrate its overwhelming popular acceptance. Delay might mean more, not less, violence. And so Parliament was dissolved in May, meaning elections would have to be held within four months. In early June, President Banana named July 1st and 2nd as the polling days.

To be sure, there were glitches due to inexperience. The registers of voters were hard to handle. Some people had identical names. Constituencies had been changed around by the Delimitation Commission, which had to complete its work in only a month after being handed the computer printout of registered voters. In the end, the government decided to let any one vote who had a national registration (ID) card. In some places, the lines of people waiting to vote stretched for several kilometers. But people were patient and the scene was miraculously peaceful.
In 13 constituencies out of 80, there were so many voters that the number of people voting was not only larger than the number of registered voters, but also larger than the number of voters allowable for any constituency under the Delimitation Commission's rule. Each constituency is theoretically supposed to contain an equal number of voters, but there can be variations of 20% up or down from the norm. No constituency was supposed to have more than 44,552 constituents. But in Makoni East, Naomi Nhiwatiwa won 51,772 votes out of 54,478 cast. And in Gokwe East, where ZAPU posed more of a challenge, Byron Hove won with 45,423 out of 57,506. (The figures represent legitimate votes and mean that the constituencies were two big to fit the Commission's rule.)

The election proved not only to be peaceful but popular. Zimbabweans stood tall and proud that they had showed the all-too-critical world that Zimbabwe would and could do things right. The Sunday Mail said, "There could be no fairer elections." It was a "splended precedent".

And then disaster struck.

The Nasty Aftermath to the Happy Surprise

No sooner had the election results been announced, showing that ZANU-PF had won 63 seats, an increase of six over the previous term, than ZANU-PF women and youth took to the streets of Harare's outlying African townships and in Chitungwiza, a small city which lies 20 kilometers south of Harare. They visited the homes of minority party members, demanded the house keys, and proceeded to ransack the houses, dump all the possessions outside, and lock the house up. A number of people were assaulted, and at least four people were killed, including the ZAPU candidate for Parliament from Dzivarasekwa.

Although many families took refuge in police stations, the police took no action to stop the mobs from their rampage. The civil defense, Red Cross and Salvation Army did nothing to intervene in what was seen as a political fracas. It was only when senior party officials came on the scene and pled for calm and an end to violence that the sacking of minority houses and the violence against minority party members ceased. While 31 arrests have been made, the action amounted to locking the barn door after the horse has been stolen.

In the wake of the riots, Bishop Hatendi of the Anglican Church called Zimbabwe a sick society:

"Our independence marked the birth of a new national identity with special emphasis on respect of human dignity..."

"Unfortunately, we did not prepare ourselves for the transfiguration — how to celebrate victory and live a victorious life, as well as how to accept defeat and then accept integration.

"We desperately need the healing of memories... we have not set aside a day to repent, bury the past and to enact a new convenant."
In an article, Machingambi Nyamutake pointed to something more specific; "the total absence of Government authority -- no exaggeration -- in those areas for three days". After watching the thuggery going on in Mufakose, he called senior civil servants, who gave him no satisfaction. He said they had no conscience.

All of this has been seen before. It happened in Midlands in June of 1984, when the police stood by while mobs burned and looted over a hundred presumed ZAPU homes. The same thing had happened in December in Beitbridge when ZANU-PF youth attacked ZAPU officials' property.

There is a widespread belief that the youth and the women were not simply perpetrating spontaneous mischief and retaliation, but that certain party officials and government ministers may in fact have encouraged it. There are even some who would argue that the Prime Minister himself may have set a tone when he declared after the election that when a pumpkin is rotten we must pluck it up by the roots.

The Not So Surprising Results -- ZANU wins but the Nation stays polarized.

When the results of the elections were announced, it was clear that ZANU-PF had won a modest increase in its mandate. Its popular vote amounted to 77% of the total as against 63% in 1980. It won 63 seats out of 80, while ZAPU's seats were reduced to 15. Muzorewa's 3 seats were eliminated and it looks very much as if he and his party are finished as a political force. (One seat, Kariba, is still undecided because of the death of the ZANU-PF candidate.)

When one looks at the results, one is struck by the regionalism of the vote. ZANU-PF had hoped to win some seats in Matabeleland. The Prime Minister had toured that region making major speeches and pointing to boreholes drilled, schools built and so on. ZANU-PF ran Callistus Ndlovu in Plumtree hoping that the fact that he had broken from Nkomo would deliver that area. Mugabe predicted that "We will shake Nkomo." He said 65 seats was the absolute minimum ZANU-PF would win.

In the event, ZAPU held onto its popular vote. It got 86.5% of the vote in Matabeleland South, as it had in 1980. In Matabeleland North, ZAPU actually increased its popular share from 79% to 82.5%. ZANU-PF won an increased share of the votes only at the expense of UANC and Sithole's ZANU group. Callistus Ndlovu got less than 3% of the vote. Enos Nkala, another ex-ZAPU man, did little better.

On the other hand, ZAPU's support in the Midlands went down by almost a half, from 27% to 14%. In Mashonaland West, where ZAPU had had 13.3% in 1980, it got only 3.4% of the vote.

How to Explain the Results.

While everyone agrees that the process of voting itself was free and fair, there is a good deal of reason to question whether the preceding campaign was equally fair. The government had all the prerequisites of office to
It knew when the election would be held, but the minority parties did not. The daily newspapers, which are theoretically independent, gave a great majority of their column inches to ZANU-PF. Whatever the Prime Minister said was given front-page, top-story coverage. What Nkomo said was often on the front page, but never in equal prominence. Television, on the other hand, did give equal interview time to the parties. The government kicked off its campaign by announcing a wage increase of up to 15% with emphasis on low wage earners. It promised new development projects and a step-up in resettlement schemes. It promised new housing. Most of these tactics are expected of any incumbent.

The more difficult aspect to evaluate is the charge by ZAPU that the party was denied equal campaigning rights. According to Joseph Msika, secretary general of the party, ZAPU was regularly denied permission to hold meetings in Mashonaland Central and East, and only a few meetings were allowed in Mashonaland West. ZAPU did have a rally in Harare's National Sports Centre, but had to pay a large sum for it. ZANU-PF Youth Brigades, he claimed, regularly disrupted meetings and rallies as the police stood idly by.

Msika alleged that polling agents had harrassed ZAPU people in Rusape, Masvingo, Mutare, Chiweshe, and Kwekwe. But he said that the ZAPU people were, in fact, not intimidated and voted as they felt in the polling booth.

ZANU-PF, on the other hand, has blamed its relatively poor showing in Matabelan on the intimidation of dissidents. This may have been the case in some areas, such as the area west of Beitbridge. But most of the repressive action was on the government side. The widespread killings by the Fifth Brigade and other troops in 1983, the use of food as a weapon in 1984, and the “disappearances” of 1985 evidently simply hardened the political allegiance of the affected people to ZAPU. In my judgment, the decision to get tough on ZAPU was not only a major tragedy, it was also a major political mistake.

Conclusions: Where does Zimbabwe go from here?

I don't expect any major surprises. Things will go along as they have been. The cabinet has been reshuffled, with Chris Andersen the only white member. All ZAPU-affiliated people have been dropped, including Daniel Ngwenya, who was governor of Matabeland North, and Jane Ngwenya, Deputy Minister of Labour and Manpower. From now on, all civil servants will be expected to join ZANU-PF and will probably do so as a matter of insurance.

There have been a couple of notable changes. The most of important of these involves the naming of Enos Nkala as Minister of Home Affairs, the ministry in charge of police matters. Nkala is from Matabeland. He split away from ZAPU and Nkomo in 1962, and he is widely disrespected in Matabeland as a divisive and inflammatory speaker. The man he replaces, Simbi Nnubako, is a capable lawyer and has a reputation as a very decent man. Nkala has already shown that he intends to be tough by threatening to ban ZAPU and by taking away Nkomo’s bodyguards and personal weapons.

Prime Minister Mugabe says he will step up the drive toward socialism and the one-party state. But there is no reason to suppose something drastic like...
nationalizing the industries and banks, which are more than 70% foreign-owned, will take place in the immediate future. (Only 1% of industry is presently nationalized.)

With employment in the formal sector falling by .5% a year and mechanization of agriculture on the commercial farms also decreasing employment, the government is desperate to find some means of employing young people. There are now 81,400 students in Form IV, which is the point at which people take "0 level" exams. An "0 level" pass is regarded as a key to formal sector employment. But neither the formal sector nor the government is doing any hiring to speak of. By 1990, there will be 267,677 students in Form IV.

It is probable that the government will crack down on racism in employment as never before and make much more serious demands on industry to take in more Africans. The role of expatriate whites will be severely questioned, particularly if they are doing no training of understudies.

As for the "white" seats in Parliament, my hunch is that the government will wait until 1987, when they can probably find the 70 votes to do away with these seats legally and within the Constitution. While Mugabe has said that this "dirty" Constitution must be cleansed of its racist provision, he has not said when. It is possible also that the government might ask for a 100% unanimous-consent revision, doing away with the white seats and using the vote as a test of which whites are racists and which are not.

The fact is that the creation of a one-party state in Zimbabwe is inevitable. Smith and Nkomo are heroes or villains of the past, whichever way one wants to look at it. Both are over 65. Soon, they will be gone and when they are, there will be no ready successors to fill their charismatic roles.

What could happen is greatly accelerated white flight, but emigration has slowed down. In fact, skilled whites are returning, about 400 in the first five months of 1985. It is conceivable, but not likely, that the new turn of events could reverse this trend. There are a great many whites who find Zimbabwe a lovely country. Some had gone south to look for jobs, failed to find them, found inflation in South Africa puts housing beyond them, and the looming crisis reminiscent of the bad old days in Rhodesia. They are prepared to live with Mugabe's brand of pragmatic socialism. The living is, in fact, "easy" for them. Most of this new generation of whites simply want to get along. If Mugabe succeeds in alienating this group, it will be too bad.

What could happen also is a greatly increased repression of ZAPU, including its banning. That seems unlikely, but it could happen, particularly if South Africa steps up its support for ZAPU dissidents.

What I pray for is a greater spirit of tolerance and understanding among all of us who care for this good land and want to see it solve its problems in a spirit of understanding and a desire for unity. It may well be that the churches can play a role in nurturing this kind of spirit to rise beyond partisanship, retaliation and vengeances, beyond tribalism, regionalism and narrowness. There are moves toward the churches convening an Ndaba, or conference, for this purpose. It is an enterprise worth supporting.