

---

Interview: Joseph Msika

---

# Zimbabwe Vice President Defends His Nation Against British Slanders

*Zimbabwe Vice President Joseph Msika was interviewed by Lawrence Freeman by telephone to Harare, on Nov. 29.*

**EIR:** I understand that you are the person overseeing the national settlement of lands in Zimbabwe. I have read that the first phase of the project — approximately 3.4 million hectares of land — was distributed to 72,000 families, and that over the last year or two, you've entered into Phase II, which has also been called the "fast track." Could you tell us what has happened on the last settlement, since this has been such an important issue, discussed in the international press?

**Msika:** Yes, the question of land, as you are aware, is a resolution of our liberation struggle, where we had to resort to the use of arms to get the whites here to accept that there was a need to share land. They have taken the land of our forefathers forcibly, with no compensation whatsoever, removed them from all productive use, into non-productive land, where there was low rainfall and poor soil. This, we had to live with for over a decade, during the colonial era. And our people here tried to fight for it, and because they used stones and axes and spears against guns, they were subdued. But as the new generation came up, we started formulating the idea that we have got to fight for this land; and we dedicated ourselves to sacrifice our own life if necessary, in order to bring this land back to its owners.

We did that, and at the end of the liberation struggle, we were forced to go to London for talks with the British government. In talking to them, we insisted that, unless we agree on the land redistribution, there will be no end to this conference. And this question of land almost broke the Lancaster House constitutional conference. We were flown back to Africa, where we met with the front-line states' leaders, like [Tanzania President Julius] Nyerere. They persuaded us to compromise. We went back to the U.K. We then said, "Okay, what is your position with respect to this question of land?" They said, "You go and start having land redistributed, on [the basis of] 'willing seller, willing buyer.'" We knew very well, that the whites here would not part with their land. That's when we got the number that you were quoting, in those years. We got over 3 million hectares; we settled 72,000 families, and so on. And that was all.

Now, the British, at Lancaster House, had promised that if we are going to have ten years of "willing seller, willing buyer," at the end of the ten years, they would come with a

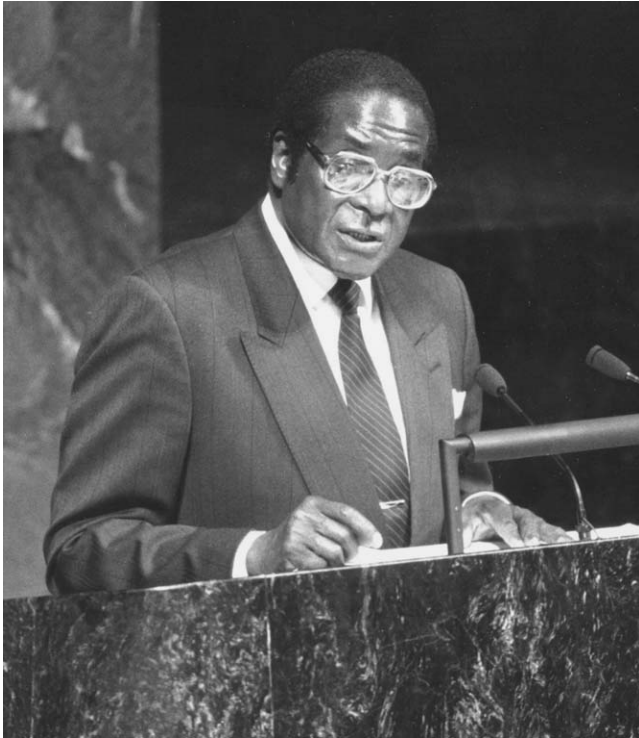
package; and there, the Americans said that if the British agreed, they would support it. I must say, the Americans still stand on that today; but the British are now prevaricating, they are turning and twisting, they don't want to come up — instead, they have now infiltrated our nation; they are working now to bring out a puppet kind of opposition, which used to be the Labour Organization, led by a man called Morgan Tsvangirai. And this man, at the formation of this organization, was whisked to South Africa, where he attended [a meeting of the] South African Chamber of Commerce, where a blockage of investment in Zimbabwe was advocated. From there, he was flown to London, where the so-called MDC [Movement for Democratic Change] was hatched, by people like [R.A.C.] Byatt, [Baroness Lynda] Chalker of Wallasey, John Collins, Chester Crocker, Evelyn de Rothschild, [Lord] Geoffrey Howe, [Lord] Douglas Hurd, and many others. They signed a note calling on Zimbabwe to have acceptable election strategies. Tsvangirai was one of the signators. We are aware of that, and that's why we say this so-called opposition was not a genuine Zimbabwe opposition: It was hatched in the U.K.

**EIR:** Could you say what the situation is, currently, on the "fast track" land program?

**Msika:** We then started on this land distribution. We had not then brought up the "fast track." We just wanted to distribute land. We sat down, worked out a criterion. We said, "Since there are people in this country with more than 5-8, up to 18 farms — one person, or one company — we have this criterion: Only land belonging to absentee landlords, to people with more than one farm — we are going to have their land acquired for settlement. If a person has one farm here, we are not going to take his farm." We agreed with the white farmers here; we agreed with the non-governmental organizations here. They said we should talk to ambassadors and commissioners overseas. We did that; we agreed. They said we should now call for an international donor conference; we did. We put our case there, and it was agreed upon, that it was fair and reasonable, and that everyone should support it.

**EIR:** What year was that?

**Msika:** 1998. We then thought it was going to go through. To our surprise, the farmers, who had earlier on agreed, went behind our back, and went to use the courts. Through the



*Zimbabwe's President Robert Mugabe addressing a session of the United Nations General Assembly.*



courts, they blocked over 1,000 farms that we had identified for the settlement. This is what was the beginning of the problem. The people who had fought for land—the ex-combatants, and the peasants who want land—got angry, and were annoyed. They said that now, in anger, they were going to go into the farms, as a protest of what the whites had done. This was the beginning of people going into the farms.

I must admit, when they went into the farms, now, they didn't follow what we had planned. But our action was [to say], that the rural people had gone into the farms; we accept that it's a protest; there must be no violence; there must be no interference with the farmers; there must be peaceful staying there, in your protest. As far as we are concerned, it was just a protest. But then, at the end of it all, the whites acted violently. That's why, in certain cases, although we had said there was not going to be violence, there was a bit of skirmishing here and there. But we quickly stopped that, because we knew that if there was violence, it would be blamed on us, and not on the people who are instigating it.

At the end of it all, we then decided, that in order to solve this situation—the courts had said we should forcibly remove these groups from the farms—we realized that if we removed these people from the farms, by sending police, or any group of people who were going to forcibly remove them, there was going to be bloodshed between our police and the ex-combatants. And we thought it would be very foolish to do that. They only [way] we would deal with it, was to allow these people to stay there: When we acquire the farm, we

remove them from where they are not supposed to be, and settle them where they ought to be. We did not get the cooperation of the white farmers on this.

Then we decided to have the “fast track,” to enable us to shift these people as quickly as possible, to the farms that we would have acquired by “fast track.” And again, the white farmers did not cooperate; and they, persistently, wanted to cause trouble. We warned them: “There is no going back on this question of farm resettlement. It's a right of the people of Zimbabwe; they went to war, blood was spilled, and they sacrificed their lives, and all that. So, we are not going to give up land.” And as I speak now, we are not going to give up this land. We are going to continue to settle people, whatever happens, because this question of land is not a legal issue: It's a political issue.

**EIR:** How many farms have been taken over, and how many families have been resettled on them, in the last year or two, since 1998?

**Msika:** We have taken over 2,000 farms. The question of how many families, since it is a “fast track,” we are working on that just now. Because what we are doing—in “fast track,” we estimate the number of people that are going onto a farm. But we realize, also, that the farm has got to have a sustainable carrying capacity. We revisit now, and make sure that the right number of people who should go on this farm, are on the farm. And this is the exercise we are carrying on now. But we have settled people in excess of 100 farms—acquired, settled, and not contested; and the number of families we have yet to determine, because it's a fast track.

**EIR:** Two thousand farms in the entire period, or just in the last couple of years?

**Msika:** In the last couple of years we have identified more than 2,000 farms, yes, but we have not finished settling people on them. We have settled people on about 200 farms.

**EIR:** I have three questions related to that. Are the white

farmers being paid anything in compensation? Is there farm machinery, irrigation equipment, tractors being given to the families that resettle, so that they can be productive on the farms? And also, I've read allegations that the farms are going to ministers of the government, and not to the people.

**Msika:** Okay, I'll start with the first one. Farms that we have acquired, we have put the people there, the peasants. These peasants are being selected by the local leadership: the chiefs, the headmen, the councillors, and the governor, at the provincial and district level. They select people of their own choice, who come from the congested areas. That's number one.

Now, you are saying that we are giving ministers, and other high-placed people, and so on and so forth? We are not giving any ministers or civil servants, or any such middle-class people [land] on this particular scheme. This is a resettlement. We call it "model A," for congested people, in what we call the communal areas—what the regime used to call reserves for black natives. Now, this is where we are getting the people we are settling now. But, when we finish, when we have covered sufficient mileage on these people, we realize that there cannot continue to be a monopoly of white people on commercial farms. We intend settling people—anybody who wants a farm. We know, according to our history, this means the Vanderbildes, Mr. Becker, and all the ministers [of the previous regime] got farms. Some of them still have them today, and nobody raised eyebrows. And if we now resort back to these commercial farms, anybody who has an aptitude for farming, who wants to farm, will get that farm. And that kind of a program, the commercial farming program, will be what we call, full cost effective. That is to say, people will be enabled to acquire land, but will pay a deposit, and they will pay money every year, on which they will agree with the government, and that money will go to purchasing the land. At the end of it, after they've paid for their land, they will get their title deed. We have two programs going parallel.

You talk of us giving irrigation schemes, and facilities for farming—yes, we are trying. There are some Zimbabweans, black and white, today, as I sit in my office, who have made a proposal to create a bank where we can give people facilities to borrow money. We have agreed in principle; we are discussing it. If that works, then we'll be able to give people money, to enable them to farm productively. But, as we are now, we don't have such resources. We are putting people on the farms; we are helping them through our District Development Fund, to plough one hectare per person, and we are also using another organization—we call it the Agricultural Rural Development Organization—both of these organizations exist to plough for the people, and we are trying to give these people a package of seeds, and a little bit of fertilizer, to help them, but they should fend for themselves, as much as possible.

You are also talking about the compensation to the white farm owners. We settled; we compensated the farmers, but we realized that because the British were not forthcoming with what they promised—the package they promised, into which we were going to put our own portion, and then we

realized that theirs was not coming—then we said, we don't have the resources; we are not going to compensate for land—although we wanted to compensate, but we don't have resources. But what we are doing, we are going to compensate for improvement. If a person has built a dam; if a person has built barns for tobacco, or something like that, which he has developed toward agricultural development, the government is going to pay that as compensation, not for the soil, until and unless resources come from outside. We are not refusing to pay, but we are saying, we don't have resources—on our own, we may not pay.

**EIR:** Some of the land in Zimbabwe is owned by some of the large cartels that are connected to the British oligarchy—what we call the Club of the Isles in our magazine—such as Anglo American, and others; they own land, and I assume, own mining and valuable resources in mineral wealth, in Zimbabwe as well, which is not just agricultural land. Are there any plans for some of these lands, or these resources, to be turned over to the Zimbabwe government?

**Msika:** The question of investment, we are not touching. We are inviting people to come and invest in mining, and in other investments, and what have you. But on the question of land, as you rightly say, Anglo American has a lot of land here. Absentee landlords, the aristocrats of the United Kingdom, still have land here, and this is why they are doing everything to frustrate this program, because they have interests here, against the interests of the people of Zimbabwe. And we are saying—that land, where Anglo American for instance, through Lonhro, they [own what are] called the Charter Estate, 18 farms consolidated into one farm.

**EIR:** How many acres?

**Msika:** A huge, huge tract of land for one company, when black Zimbabweans do not have even an acre to eek a living out of. Now, we are saying: That is immoral; it will not be allowed. It doesn't matter how much we are called to pay for this, even if it means paying with our lives—we will fight it out, and we can't allow that situation to continue.

**EIR:** So your plan, as I understand it, is that you are going to take some of the land that is used, and give to people strictly for agriculture, but you are not going to touch the land that has mining and other mineral wealth on it. Is that correct?

**Msika:** Yes, that's correct. We are not going to touch land which people have taken for investment. As a matter of fact, we are calling on more people from outside to come and invest in our country. We realize that on our own, we cannot develop this country as we want to develop it. So, we are asking outsiders to come in, and invest. If they invest, and we give them a certain area of reasonable land to build their businesses, or anything like that, we have no quarrel with that. Our quarrel is with the land that was forcibly taken from our people by colonial people. I have a document here, where land was taken by colonial settlers, and their reason for taking this land is

because they are better people; they come from a better civilization. And they say that this is their reason for taking this land. So, we can't allow that to go unchecked.

**EIR:** The founder of *EIR*, Lyndon LaRouche, has forecast that this current financial system, dominated by London and Wall Street and the International Monetary Fund, is on its last legs: It's going to collapse in the very near future. What he has said is, "Don't try to save this bankrupt financial system; let's have a New Bretton Woods, which would have all of the countries of the world, including Africa and Asia, in a community of principle, to develop the people, the citizens of their countries." This would require massive infrastructure development, in Asia, Russia, and throughout Africa—north-south and east-west railroads, pipelines, electricity grids. Do you see the potential for Zimbabwe and other countries to join in this New Bretton Woods, as a way to, finally, break the lock of colonialism?

**Msika:** As I said before, we will have to carefully study and analyze such moves, to see if they are in the interest of our own economy. We'll not rush into condemning this in favor of that, and so on. But, what you have said is true. The Western countries are not working in order to assist in developing the underdeveloped countries. Look at prices. We grow very good agricultural crops here. Tobacco—we don't determine the price. We have a very good cotton fiber here—we don't determine the price. We have got good mineral resources—we don't determine the price; they determine the price. And usually, in determining that price, they don't take into account the inputs that we use, in producing these minerals, these agricultural crops. They don't care about the inputs that we put there. They don't let their price reflect our inputs. They just announce what they think is the price, and that is it, take it or leave it.

That is not in the interest of developing countries, for sure. If we get a grouping of countries that is advantageous to our own country, we will look into it; we will carefully consider it.

**EIR:** I would like to move to the political sphere. The MDC, the opposition political group, headed up by Morgan Tsvangirai—they were recently in the United States, I understand, hosted by the International Republican Institute, to meet with Congressmen. And I believe Tsvangirai met with Assistant Secretary of State for Africa Susan Rice. They're advocating actions against Zimbabwe, and against the present Mugabe government; it appears they are trying to overthrow the government. In October, Tsvangirai is reported to have said, "We should violently overthrow the government." There was just an election. The opposition did win many seats in the Parliament. Why are Tsvangirai and the MDC working with the United States and others to overthrow this government, when they pretend that they want a peaceful change through the parliamentary system?

**Msika:** The so-called MDC is not a genuine Zimbabwe party. Since 1980, we have had . . . many other parties, genu-

ine Zimbabwe parties. We are a multi-party state. But this so-called MDC is not a genuine Zimbabwe party. This party was hatched from outside Zimbabwe, by people who want to create a puppet regime, that they can tell what to do. A regime that will agree to be told by Western whites, particularly from the United Kingdom, what policy to pursue. A regime that will want to insist on the status quo.

You know, that from Europe—Germany, France, and so on—there was a land-redistribution program at one stage of their history. But not in Britain. In Britain, the land is all for aristocrats, and they want *us* to emulate that kind of a thing. We will not do that.

They don't want our President, comrade [Robert] Mugabe, because he's a man of principle. He's a man who is carrying out a program based on our revolution, the gains that we have fought for, that we have promised people during the fighting. That is what we are trying to implement. They don't like that. We know that they are doing everything possible to topple our government. But let me tell you, they'll have to work very much harder to do that. They may be surprised that they failed to do so.

We have just had a bi-election, which we have won against this sell-out, puppet, so-called opposition party.

**EIR:** In the elections, earlier this year, for Parliament in Zimbabwe, there was tremendous scrutiny by various countries around the world. There were delegations that came in to monitor the election, from within and without Africa. Everyone who was there and is honest, admits that there was a fair election. The opposition did win some seats, and now there is a government to go ahead. But in the United States, we are now in the 22nd day after our elections, and we have not picked a President. There are allegations by both Democrats and Republicans—

**Msika:** It is very interesting.

**EIR:** —of vote fraud. How do you, as a senior politician from Zimbabwe, look at the U.S. election?

**Msika:** First of all, let me say that the external forces that are against us—I don't want to say that all Americans are against us; I've been in America, myself, three weeks ago. I've seen, surprisingly, some people that really support us there. But the majority of them don't support us. The British are leading all that campaign against us, being supported by certain personalities in the United States.

They had predicted that, in the elections we held in June, the opposition party was going to win a landslide majority. They had predicted that, because they poured in a lot of resources, they organized the campaign, their headquarters was in South Africa—we know it all, now. And they had organized the farm workers; they had done all sort of things, to make sure that the whites, and those puppets of theirs, were going to win the June elections. But they dismally failed, as far as we are concerned, if you take into account the efforts they put [in], they failed to achieve their goal.

Now, they were accusing us, for lack of a parliamentary system that will bring about free and fair elections. Now, listen: We have been holding elections since 1980; this election here, was our fifth election. And all our elections since 1980 (every five years we hold elections), the international community were coming here as observers. And at the end of all four elections we held, they said the elections were free and fair. No violence. They were carried out freely and fairly. And the people of Zimbabwe expressed their views, and elected their own government.

This time, they came in predicting violence, predicting all sorts of things: To their surprise, except for what was instigated by their agents a few weeks before the elections, there was no violence. We realized that if you allowed violence, it would be deliberately hatched out, so that they could not support the election as free and fair, and therefore cause problems here. We realized that, and we pleaded with our people: Never mind what happens! If necessary, turn the other cheek; don't respond in violence. And I'm glad to say, our elections were free and fair, and they said it themselves—they pronounced it.

You are asking me what I think about America's elections. All I can say is, that I'm surprised to hear what I'm hearing about the American elections, of people who think they are holding the democratic pattern for the whole world, and that they know better, how to organize elections. And up to now, they have not clearly announced the results of their elections—how many days now?

**EIR:** 22 days.

**Msika:** That is very surprising. We realize that election democracy is a process. There was no democracy in Rhodesia. There was no free play in Rhodesia. There was no human rights in Rhodesia. There was no rule of law in Rhodesia. We have introduced all these things. And we realize that democracy is a process. We perfect it as we go forth. And we intend to go about it like that. We have never said we are perfect.

**EIR:** Is there anything else you want to say to the American public?

**Msika:** We are a young country, a developing country. We have set ourselves to correct the ills of the colonial era. We have established a democratic, young state; and we don't deserve the treatment we are getting from certain individuals in the Western world. We want to develop, as Zimbabwe, on a non-racial basis, where people of different ethnic groups, across the color line, can live together happily. We have established, since 1980, a peaceful country, with stability, and we would like to sustain this stability. Please, people from outside, don't come and give us your evil thoughts. We want to live together as a people of Zimbabwe, whether white or black. As long as you respect our laws here, you have a home, which will be the envy of our enemies, if we are allowed to pursue our own policies as we see them.

## LaRouches in Budapest, Invited by Hungarian Freedom Fighters

by Birgit Vitt

At the beginning of December, American economist and statesman Lyndon LaRouche and his wife Helga Zepp-LaRouche, founder of the international Schiller Institute, were invited to Budapest, the capital of Hungary, to commemorate the tenth anniversary of Schiller Institute activities in Hungary. LaRouche spoke at a seminar which was organized by Dr. Tibor Kovats, representative of the Schiller Institute in Hungary.

Dr. Kovats was a founding member of Pofosz, the organization of political prisoners, in Hungary. Pofosz represents those courageous people who participated in the famous 1956 uprising. In this function, Dr. Kovats was the first foreign guest from the former East bloc who visited Lyndon LaRouche in prison during his political incarceration. On Oct. 23, 1990, Zepp-LaRouche was invited by Pofosz to speak at the occasion of the first celebration of Hungary's national holiday, Oct. 23, after the demise of communism in Eastern Europe. Since that time, the relations between the Schiller Institute and Hungarian patriots have intensified. Mr. and Mrs. LaRouche, on this visit, had discussions with politicians, scientists, and representatives of church organizations. The Prime Minister of Hungary sent greetings welcoming the Budapest event at which LaRouche spoke.

Hungary, as one of the so-called transition countries, is a victim of International Monetary Fund austerity policy. The living standard of the majority of the population is very low. The inflation rate of 10%, and rising costs for telecommunications, electricity, and other services, are hard to bear. The domestic industries have either been bought up in large chunks by foreign investors or have ceased to exist. Stock markets are collapsing. As result of the war in former Yugoslavia, Hungary has been economically damaged. The government coalition of the liberal-conservative party FIDESZ-MPP, and the Small-Holder Party, FKGP, is straddling all chairs politically. In addition, the country is shaken by scandals. Because of its very close ties to the United States (Hungary is a NATO member), Hungarians reacted to the election crisis in the United States with *Schadenfreude* (gloating), but at the same time expressed their concern about the future.

So, the thoughts and policy proposals of Mr. LaRouche find an open ear in sections of the Hungarian political and economic elites. Guests at the seminar came from embassies, were representatives of political parties and economic institu-