



"There'll be war here," shouted the white truck driver over the engine roar, "but it'll be short. The South Africans with their jets will have Zambia in flames in a day."

The driver of the tandem-trailer rig who had given me a lift from Fort Victoria echoed the sentiments of several working-class whites with whom I spoke in Rhodesia.

He was one of the 250,000 whites there who, comprising 96 percent of the voters list and earning 11 times the income of non-whites, effectively rule over the country's six million Shangaan and Matebele. No blacks there held higher-paying jobs than whites and the truck driver belonged to the class whose jobs would be most threatened by any measures designed to give blacks political equality.

His group, unlike the politicians and senior bureaucrats in Rhodesia, don't speak about "multi-racialism" or the gradual transition to power once blacks become "ready for it."

This stubborn attitude juxtaposed beside the bitter hatred of many of the Shangaan and Matebele for their white "oppressors" leads visitors to expect not a sudden eruption of violence but the gradual escalation of existing guerrilla warfare.

Rhodesians Nov. 11 celebrated the 10th

anniversary of their unilateral declaration of independence from Britain—ironically on the same day as nearby Angola officially received its independence from Portugal.

The collapse of Portugal as an imperial power and the independence granted to Angola and Mozambique during the summer has intensified the desire of Rhodesian blacks to attain the power which whites have shown a stubborn refusal to yield.

A rancher I met there swore his right to the land he had cultivated for three quarters of a century and declared his intention to "defend" it to the death.

A clothing salesman who gave me a drive from Bulawayo said he had moved to South Africa - Rhodesia's sister white supremacist state - because "they know how to keep the kaffirs (a term of extreme disrespect for blacks in southern Africa) under control."

"If they tried anything, they'd be slaughtered. Why do you think they're restricted to locations? This way the (South African) air force can keep them under control—one move and the jets would be there in no time."

The district commissioner at Victoria Falls said whites were prepared to share power with the blacks "as soon as they're ready for it." While white Rhodesians had

accepted the notion of multi-racialism, he said, they would continue to hold power until blacks had been trained to be "responsible, productive citizens."

He did not explain the conflict between this statement and the fact that much more money is spent on the education of whites than blacks.

Another reason why this multi-racialism was taking so long to implement, he said, was because a one man, one vote policy would mean "one man, one vote, once." Majority rule would result in the Shangaan (the largest tribe in Rhodesia) taking over government and dictating to whites and the smaller Matebele group.

He called the international trade embargo against Rhodesia unfair since whites had been there in force for 85 years and had established their right to their land. "It's alright for (Uganda prime minister) Ida Amin to slaughter thousands of his countrymen," he said. "When blacks kill blacks then it's fair but when we try to work out our problems it's called oppression."

The district commissioner said "tribal trust lands" had been reserved for the exclusive use of blacks in an attempt to settle them outside cities in which they would only face unemployment.

No matter how eloquent the argument, however, talks with many whites indicate a stubborn resistance on their part to yield any political power or lower their standard of living. They promise any insurrection will be met with fierce resistance and believe support will be supplied from neighboring South Africa.

The comments of the truck driver reflected this attitude. He asked if the

Prospect of long, bitter confrontation looms in Rhodesia

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