

New Anti-Zimbabwe Front Is Created, as British Oligarchy Shows Its Hand

by Dean Andromidas

Zimbabwe's President Robert Mugabe has been ridiculed for declaring that he refuses to allow Zimbabwe's land to be owned by "remote control from the [British] House of Lords." Nonetheless, a new anti-Zimbabwe front group has been organized to fight the country's land redistribution policy, by the very same "hereditary lords" who directly control the lands from thousands of miles away.

On July 10, the Zimbabwe Farmers Holiday Trust Fund was organized, in cooperation with the the British Country Landowners Association and the Scottish Landowners Federation, with the stated aim of helping commercial farmers in Zimbabwe take a holiday with their kith and kin in Great Britain. According to a spokeswoman for the Country Landowners Association, this is to allow the commercial farmers and their families to escape from "the great stress they have been experiencing since the land seizures by the Zimbabwe government" began. The fund is needed, the association claims, because Zimbabwe farmers do not have foreign exchange to spend in Britain.

An investigation by *EIR* has revealed that the project was organized in coordination with the Zimbabwe Democracy Trust (ZDT), the organization which stands at the center of the Anglo-American operation to overthrow the ZANU-PF government of President Mugabe (see *EIR*, May 12, 2000, p. 54). *EIR* has documented that the ZDT represents the highest levels of the Anglo-American policy establishment, including such unelected democrats as Lord Peter Carrington, the business partner of former U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger; Chester Crocker, former top U.S. State Department African specialist in the Reagan-Bush Administrations; and Lord David Steel, speaker of the Scottish Parliament, leader of the British Liberal-Democratic Party, and a key player in the operation to overthrow President Mugabe.

The initiator of this new front group is George Campbell-Johnston, a business consultant, who recently told a journalist that he started the organization because he himself owns a farm in Great Britain, he once lived in East Africa, and is a humanitarian. He has also been a member for 25 years in the London-based Southern Africa Business Association (SABA), whose members include some of the major backers of the ZDT.

Among the SABA members is Anglo American Corp., the world's largest mining company. ZDT patron Crocker sits

on the board of directors of Minorco SA, the Luxembourg-based holding company of Anglo American. The ZDT trust fund is managed by Maitland Trust, which is a subsidiary of the South African law firm Webber, Wentzel, and Bowens, whose major client is Anglo American.

Another member is African Lakes Corp., a plantation owner, whose major shareholding is linked to speculator George Soros. It has been buying privatized plantations throughout southern Africa, and land holdings in Zimbabwe. It stands to profit from the overthrow of the ZANU-PF government.

The merchant bank N.M. Rothschild is also a member of SABA; the bank's chairman, Baron Evelyn de Rothschild, signed an open letter, initiated by Lord Carrington, to the *London Times*, denouncing the Mugabe government. Moreover, Sir John Collins, a founder and patron of the ZDT, is a non-executive director of N.M. Rothschilds.

Among other SABA members are Her Majesty's Crown Agents, and the Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corp.

Campbell-Johnston revealed that he is in constant touch with the ZDT and opposition forces in Zimbabwe.

Landed Oligarchs Behind the Trust

The other organizer of the Zimbabwe Farmers Holiday Trust Fund is David Wolesley Brinton. Brinton, who is originally from South Africa, is based at Castle Kennedy, Stranear, Scotland, and is the "land agent" for the Earl of Stair, one of the largest landowners in Great Britain, with, in 1994, no fewer than 110,000 acres in the United Kingdom. As land agent, he manages the Earl's 43,672-acre Scottish estate, with its 42 tenants.

Brinton recently indicated to a journalist that there was more involved in the Holiday Trust Fund than just affording an opportunity for a "holiday." "I'm afraid that eventually you will be seeing these farmers sending the wives and children here [Britain] while they do what they can to hang on to their farms," he said.

This can be taken as a warning that the situation in Zimbabwe could take a radical turn for the worse.

The Holiday Trust Fund will be cooperating with the Country Landowners Association (CLA), which represents 50,000 landowners who own 60% of the countryside of England and Wales, and with the CLA's sister organization, the

Scottish Landowners Federation, representing the owners of 60% of the Scottish countryside. These are not to be confused with U.S.-type farmers' associations. Rather, they are dominated by the Landowners Group, which comprises the top 20 landowners, all of whom are landed aristocrats, including the Earl of Stair and the Prince of Wales.

While Brinton maintains that the Holiday Trust is his own initiative, a look at the Earl of Stair brings us into the epicenter of the British landed hereditary oligarchy. This underscores that the issue regarding Zimbabwe for the oligarchy, is not "democracy," or even the overthrow of President Mugabe *per se*. Their agenda is land. For them, land is power, a power they have held for hundreds of years. It is the essence of the British monarchy and its Empire to this very day. A brief look at this oligarchical world reveals that the British did to Zimbabwe exactly what they did earlier to Scotland, England, and Wales.

Cecil Rhodes (1853-1902) and his Charter Company, in "founding" Rhodesia, were implementing the policy of this landed oligarchy, to expand their system of land control on a global scale.

Who Is the Earl of Stair?

President Mugabe has been accused by British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook of mismanaging land reform, by giving land to his "cronies." Well, the Earl of Stair can be called a "crony of the British monarchy," which, as a feudal institution, was built on the distribution of land to its vassals, or cronies. The policy of primogeniture, introduced after the 11th-century Norman Conquest, is still practiced among the British hereditary aristocracy, and is aimed at preserving this monarch-vassal/crony relationship. While the land question in the United Kingdom would make an important article in itself, it is useful here to briefly examine the case of the Earl of Stair to demonstrate the intimate connection to the question at hand: the policy outlook that demands Mugabe's overthrow.

The first Earl of Stair was an early partisan of union between Scotland and England, first under King William, and then under the House of Hanover. In the service of King William, the first Earl of Stair ordered the infamous Glencoe Massacre of 1692, immortalized in a poem by Sir Walter Scott. The massacre wiped out the MacDonal clan, the most troublesome of the Jacobinite clans opposing union with England and Wales. The Earl of Stair ensured that the MacDonal clan would become a bloody example for those contemplating resistance. In his capacity as Secretary of State for Scotland, he wrote orders calling upon his military forces to "destroy them by fire and sword," and that soldiers should not "trouble the government with prisoners." All males under the age of 70 were ordered to be killed. In reality, all males under the age of 82 were killed.

And how did the Earl come to own 110,000 acres of land? Well, by enforcing loyalty to the monarch. The Earl, along

with others loyal to the "dual monarchy," destroyed the old Scottish clan structure, which, although feudal, was in fact a form of communal ownership of the land. Those disloyal "lairds" simply had their estates seized. This was followed by the infamous "Highland Clearances," in which the indigenous peasantry was simply thrown off the land to make way for sheep grazing, totally under the control of the "laird" of the estate (just as was done by Cecil Rhodes in Zimbabwe). This policy continued well into the late 18th century. With the collapse of sheep farming in Scotland at the end of the 18th century, the great estates were turned into "gaming estates," where little, if any, agriculture went on. These "farms" were the models for the private "nature conservancies" that have been created in Zimbabwe and the rest of southern and eastern Africa. At the end of the 19th century, estates of 100,000 to 400,000 acres were not uncommon in Britain.

This is not "ancient history"; these events occurred only in the last 200 years, and correspond to a period when broad land reforms had been carried out in many parts of western Europe, including Germany, France, and the northern countries. Moreover, there has never been land reform in the United Kingdom. The same pattern of oligarchical landownership continues to this very day as existed 200 years ago, and as it exists nowhere else in the world.

Today, 50% of the private land in Scotland is owned by just 379 individuals. In 1994, the top ten landowners, with holdings of 90,000 to 270,000 acres, were all landed aristocrats. The Earl of Stair was number eight, whose 110,000 acres included holdings in England and Wales. Among the others were the Prince of Wales, the Duke of Westminster, and the Duke of Buccleuch.

The largest landowner in the United Kingdom as a whole, is the royal family and the Crown Estate. The former includes the Queen's Balmoral Castle in Scotland, of 56,000 acres, and the Prince of Wales's Duchy of Cornwall, of 140,000 acres (which increased by 20,000 acres only a few years ago). The Crown Estate is the "hereditary possessions of the Sovereign." Although the Queen, as sovereign, is the freeholder of these estates, the profits are paid into the Exchequer. The Crown Estate, which is managed by a board of commissioners and not the government, controls 264,000 acres, including holdings of prime real estate in central London worth billions of dollars. These holdings extend throughout England, Scotland, and Wales. In addition, the Crown Estate owns no less than half the coastline of the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland. That is to say, it controls the foreshore (between the high and low tidal marks) out to the 12 mile limit. No one may fish, moor a ship, or build a pipeline across this area without paying a commission to the Crown Estate. The estate generated a £132.9 million profit last year.

In fact, the concentration of landownership in the United Kingdom is worse than in the former British colony of Zimbabwe, with 0.1% of the population controlling 64% of the land area.

It's All in the Royal Family

The Earl of Stair is typical of the landed Scottish oligarchy, in that many of them are very close to the Queen Mother (Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon), who is Scottish. The current Earl's father, who died recently, was married to the cousin of the Queen Mother, and his sister, Lady Jean Rankin, was "Woman of the Bedchamber to Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother." The men of the family, as in many of the Scottish aristocratic families, have traditionally served as officers in the Scots Guards, one of three "Household Regiments" of the royal family. This same regiment has served as a manpower pool for many of the British mercenary and paramilitary security companies, such as Executive Outcomes, Sandline, and Defence Systems Ltd. The current Earl was an officer in the Scots Guard, as was his father. The latter was also Captain General of the Queen's Body Guard for Scotland.

Several of the Earl's neighbors, also among the British elite, have links to the anti-Zimbabwe campaign.

First, there is the Earl's cousins, the family of Baron Rankin of Bryngwyn. The Baron's younger brother, Sir Alick Rankin, who died last year, had an extensive career in business and was a director of several firms, including British American Tobacco. He had been chairman of Christian Salvesen Ltd., a food distribution firm, the family owners of which also own a 13,295-acre estate in Scotland. Alick Rankin's last appointment was to the board of Anglo American Corp.

Another neighbor is meat baron Lord Vestey, whose multibillion-dollar family company is managed by Sir John Collins, one of the initiators of the ZDT. Lord Vestey also served in the Scots Guards. The Vestey family, which has land holdings in Zimbabwe, has a 86,300-acre Scottish estate.

One of the key organizers of the anti-Zimbabwe operation is Lord Renwick of Clifton, former Ambassador to the United States and to South Africa. Lord Renwick is an adviser to the Hakluyt Foundation, which is in partnership with Kissinger Associates, Inc. Lord Renwick is chairman of Robert Fleming Merchant Bank, which owns a corporate estate in Scotland of 86,900 acres.

And then, there is the Keswick family estate of 22,481 acres. Sir Chippendale Keswick is a director of Anglo American, its sister firm DeBeers, as well as of the Bank of England. His two brothers, Simon and Henry, run the family business, Jardine Matheson, the merchant bank infamous in the history of the opium trade. Sir Chippendale's father-in-law is the 16th Earl of Dalhousie, who, during 1965-92, was Lord Chamberlain to the Queen Mother, and who owns a 47,200-acre spread. The Earl of Dalhousie was Governor General of Rhodesia (1957-63), and is married to the sister of David Sterling, the founder of the elite Special Air Services. The Sterling of Keir family is an ancient Scottish noble family which also had extensive holdings not only in Scotland, but in southern and eastern Africa.

Do the above families own land in Zimbabwe? While *EIR* is pinning down specifics, it is well known that Anglo American has extensive interests in Zimbabwe land, through ownership rights in various agri-businesses. The Oppenheimer family, the founders of Anglo American, has had several of its private ranches occupied by the Zimbabwe War Veterans this year, after Mugabe announced the land reform. In addition, the agri-business industry in general is dominated by large London-based companies. This side of the question would require an article in itself to detail.

Nature Conservancies and the British Landed Oligarchs

But, one of the most important methods of control employed by this oligarchy, is the role of private game parks and private nature conservancies. When commercial cattle ranching in Zimbabwe was no longer profitable, private ranches covering tens of thousands of acres were turned into private nature conservancies, better known as private game parks. As with sheep farming in Scotland, cattle ranches where cleared of domestic livestock and stocked with elephants, black rhino, and other game. Also cleared from the land were the African agricultural workers, who had become as redundant as the cattle.

The three largest of these game ranches include the Save Valley Conservancy, which, at 3,420 square kilometers, is larger than the Kingdom of Belgium. Others include the Midlands Black Rhino Conservancy, of 220,000 acres, and the Malilangwe Reserve, of 105,000 acres. These properties lie primarily adjacent to Zimbabwe's communal farmlands, and would be the first ones targeted for redistribution. Turning them into "nature conservancies" serves to mobilize international public support for what is only one more way of locking up the land from being developed by Zimbabwe.

Central to this operation is the Duke of Edinburgh's World Wide Fund for Nature. As *EIR* has documented in its *Special Report*, "The True Story Behind the Fall of the House of Windsor" (September 1997), the WWF is financed by the European oligarchy, including the Duke of Edinburgh, former SS officer Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands, and Henry Keswick.

Another fund is the Rhino Rescue Trust, which finances training the game scouts, a private army, ostensibly to protect the animals from poachers. According to its 1996 annual report, 350 scouts a year are given commando-type training, complete with automatic assault rifles. The rather secretive trust is run by Count Morris Coreth, and among its patrons are, again, Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands and Lord Carrington, who is also a patron of the ZDT. Others include the Earl of Shelburne, who is close to the royal family and a large landowner in England; the Duke of Wellington; Lord Coleridge; and Peter Cadbury, whose family's chocolate interests dominate the economies of West Africa.