



Written by [Bruce Walker](#) on July 31, 2012

New York Times Sees “Golden Lining” in Zimbabwe’s Brutal Marxist Rule

Lydia Polgreen of the [New York Times](#) recently suggested that the long and bloody rule of Zimbabwe’s Marxist boss Robert Mugabe may have a “golden lining” for citizens of that benighted country. In an incredibly violent continent, Mugabe stands as one of the worst rulers. Some estimates put the number of Zimbabweans killed by his thugs at around half a million. Critics of Polgreen’s article ask how the torture, enslavement, and murder of millions and the impoverishment of one of the formerly most prosperous nations on the African continent — previously known as Rhodesia — can have any “golden lining.”



Breitbart.com notes,

How could there be a “golden lining” in all this murder — even genocide — and destruction?... Well, apparently out of the ashes of a country, the genocide of hundreds of thousands, and the human rights violations of millions more, the fact that a few thousand small farmers have risen up to some modest success raising tobacco is somehow a great triumph.

In a Friday, July 20 piece, Lydia Polgreen is all excited over this year’s tobacco crop haul of 330 million pounds of the golden leaf (hence the “golden” lining).

Of course, this is down from the 522 million pounds that was realized in the year 2000, but it’s better than nothing, one supposes. The fact that these farmers may have been diverted from food production to cash crop farming needed by the kleptocratic government to raise scarce foreign currency is one upon which the *Times* does not care to dwell.

But Breitbart.com points out that even Polgreen’s own announcement of success is “prefaced by the horrors”:

Before Zimbabwe’s government began the violent and chaotic seizure of white-owned farms in 2000, fewer than 2,000 farmers were growing tobacco, the country’s most lucrative crop, and most were white. Today, 60,000 farmers grow tobacco here, the vast majority of them black and many of them working small plots that were allotted to them in the land upheavals. Most had no tobacco farming experience yet managed to produce a hefty crop, rebounding from a low of 105 million pounds in 2008 to more than 330 million pounds this year.

The success of these small-scale farmers has led some experts to reassess the legacy of Zimbabwe’s forced land redistribution, even as they condemn its violence and destruction.

But as Breitbart.com points out, “The fact that a handful of black farmers are finally learning how to farm by hit-and-miss tactics, and finally making some profits from their labors, cannot transcend evils



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that brought them to this accidental success nor does it detract from the horrors that still embroil Zimbabwe in misery.”

Polgreen seems to follow in the tradition of another *New York Times* writer, Walter Duranty, who while in the Ukraine during the enforced starvation of millions of Ukrainians — when cannibalism was common, the whole countryside was deadly silent as every creature was killed and eaten and all vegetation, whether healthy or not, was devoured — steadfastly denied that Stalin and his Bolshevik henchmen were exterminating millions. His reporting for the *New York Times* earned Duranty a Pulitzer Prize.

There is another similarity between Polgreen, Duranty, and other *New York Times* writers and political elites: They pretend that Marxists such as Mugabe, Lenin, and Stalin acquired power by overthrowing authoritarian governments. But in the case of Mugabe, he would never have come to power at all had not the political establishment in 1980 compelled the government of Rhodesia, as it was then called, to hold elections amid terrorism and threats. It was this election which put Robert Mugabe, the Marxist boss of Zimbabwe, in power.

In fact, Mugabe did not replace a white government. Conventional history is that the ascension of Mugabe, a black liberation politician, was the consequence of a successful overthrowing of white rule. Rhodesia had declared independence from Great Britain in the mid-1960s. The democratically elected government (when the franchise was largely white) moved to end racial differences in Rhodesia, which never had apartheid or the sort of commitment to white rule which was the policy of the Nationalist Party in the Union of South Africa.

In this regard, the British whites in Rhodesia were much more like the Union Party of South Africa, which represented the English voters just as the Nationalist Party represented the Afrikaaner Dutch immigrants. The white Rhodesians were also much like the whites in Kenya, who continued to live peacefully in the nation after independence and played a major role in the life of the nation, even when blacks completely controlled the government.

Bishop Abel Muzorewa was the first black prime minister of Rhodesia, and Josiah Gomele was its first black president. Both men had been put into office by an overwhelmingly white electorate under an agreement which would make white Zimbabweans a permanent minority of the electorate and in both houses of the national legislature.

Colonial rule leaves few good options, and the African continent was scattered with horrors such as the Nigerian civil war, the UN’s bloody intervention in Katanga, the long war between Marxists and freedom fighters in Angola, and the ghastly regimes of brutal Marxists in Uganda and Ethiopia, among other nightmares.

Prime Minister Muzorewa and President Gomele, although strongly in favor of black rule, were not Marxists committed to perpetual internal wars against notional enemies. These men were adamant in demanding that Britain and the rest of the world not accept Rhodesian independence unless blacks were granted the right to govern the nation.

Both black men rejected violence and terrorism, however, and their reputation as honorable men committed to a reasonable transition of power which respected the rights of white Rhodesians was such that when the matter was put before the voters, who were white, these white voters overwhelmingly supported the new constitution as well as the election of both Muzorewa and Gomele.

Robert Mugabe, whose Marxists did not gain power in this election, demanded new elections and with



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the help of pressure from the United Nations and the British government, a snap election was held and after a campaign of threats and terrorism, Mugabe's party won. During the last 32 years, he has remained the iron-fisted ruler of Zimbabwe.

Those familiar with the history of Russia can see the parallels. History classes and television documentaries often speak of the "Russian Revolution" as what put Lenin in power in 1917. However, readers of *The New American* doubtless know better. The overthrow of the Tsarist government led to the rule of Aleksandr Kerensky, the first post-Tsarist head of government in Russia. There were competing political parties, of which the Bolsheviks were only one of many. In the single free election, the party of Lenin received about one quarter of the vote. Lenin and his Bolsheviks seized power in a junta and made the establishment of their rule the principal goal. The Marxist rulers of Russia, like the Marxist rulers of Zimbabwe, never allowed other political parties to compete for power.

Such historical facts seem not to bother the *New York Times* at all.

Photo of Robert Mugabe



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