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Sommario/riassunto	Zimbabwe occupies a special place in African politics and international relations, and has been the subject of intense debates over the years. At independence in 1980, the country was better endowed than most in Africa, and seemed poised for economic development and political pluralism. The population was relatively well educated, the industrial and agricultural bases were strong, and levels of infrastructure were impressive. However, in less than two decades, Zimbabwe was mired in a deep political and economic crisis. Towards the end of its third decade of independence, the economy had collap