

# The Roots of Rural Poverty

*in Central and Southern Africa*

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## CHAPTER 9

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### *The Agricultural History of Rhodesia*

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#### *Introduction*

Agricultural history has become decidedly trendy. In 1971–3 general histories of Tanzania, Kenya, Zambia, Malawi, and South Africa were published,<sup>1</sup> while more recently a number of regional studies have appeared, some of which are to be found in this book. This paper endeavours to provide a comparable general study for Rhodesia which may serve, as Ranger's pamphlet on Zambia has done, as a stimulus to further research, particularly at the local level. It is encouraging to note the excellent start already made in this direction in the chapters by Ian Phimister and Barry Kosmin, which immediately follow this one.

The dominant theme of Rhodesian agricultural history is surely the triumph of European over African farmers, and it is with this theme that I shall be principally concerned. The chapter begins with a brief geographical introduction, it goes on to examine the agricultural systems of the Shona and Ndebele of Rhodesia and that of the Europeans of South Africa (which was imported into Rhodesia after 1890), it looks at early African economic responses to the coming of colonial rule, and finally concentrates on the expansion of European agriculture and the decline of African agriculture, and shows how the two were intimately related.<sup>2</sup>

Rhodesia (formerly Southern Rhodesia) is a landlocked country, approximately 450 miles (725 km) long and 520 miles (835 km) wide, covering an area of about 150,000 square miles (389,000 sq. km), or some 96 million acres. It is therefore about half the size of Zambia and one-third that of South Africa. Under the 1969 Land Tenure Act, the land is divided equally between Europeans and Africans, though the latter outnumber the former by some 20:1.

Geographically, Rhodesia is divided into three main regions. Running approximately north-east to south-west through the middle of the country, with an offshoot to the north-west of Salisbury, is the predominantly flat *highveld*, land over 4,000 feet (1,220 m), which forms the watershed between the Zambezi, Limpopo, and Sabi rivers, and comprises some 25 per cent of the country. This is a cool, well-watered, and fertile area which attracted first the Ndebele and later the European settlers. To the west and to the east the land falls away to form the *middle-veld*, between 3,000 and 4,000 feet (915 and

1,220 m), which covers about 40 per cent of the country. This is a more dissected, undulating area than the subdued *highveld*, though in the west it flattens out and becomes remarkably featureless, to the extent that the Victoria Falls railway runs for seventy miles from Gwai to Dett in a perfectly straight line. Many of the 'native reserves' (now 'tribal trust lands') are situated within the *middle-veld*. Finally, beyond the *middle-veld* lies the hot, dry *lowveld*, land below 3,000 feet (915 m), mostly in the Sabi-Limpopo and Zambezi valleys, which constitutes the remaining 35 per cent of Rhodesia. In the Sabi-Limpopo the country is extremely flat, while in the Zambezi it is much more broken and rugged, with precipitous slopes along the escarpment. Neither valley has proved attractive to human settlement and their present sparse populations were probably at one time pushed there by stronger peoples who dominated the *middle-* and *highvelds*. The tsetse fly has been confined to the two *lowveld* valleys and today affects only 10–12 per cent of the country, though in the past it was far more widespread.<sup>3</sup>

The climatic feature which most influences farming in Rhodesia is of course that of rainfall. For over half the year, from April to October, there is virtually no rain throughout the country. Towards the end of the dry season the weather becomes progressively more humid and oppressive until the rains eventually break with devastating force in November. The rain, however, is fickle and deceptive. Only about one-third of Rhodesia enjoys an average annual rainfall of over 28 inches (712 mm), while approximately half the country has between 20 and 28 inches (508 and 712 mm). In general, as one moves from north to south and from east to west, so the annual average decreases, though there are very great regional and annual variations. But the rain tends to come in torrents: 'Over a period of 10 years at both Salisbury and Bulawayo, more than 30% of the total annual rainfall fell at rates exceeding 1 inch per hour. 4 to 5 inch falls during a single storm are not uncommon.'<sup>4</sup> Consequently a great deal of Rhodesia's rainfall—Kay suggests as much as 65 per cent<sup>5</sup>—is wasted in runoff. Some years however the rains fail altogether, drought conditions ensue, church leaders and traditional rain-makers alike pray for rain, and everyone suffers. In other years there is too much rain, and crops are washed away or severely damaged. Farming in Rhodesia is thus a hazardous occupation for everyone; as one European farmer of the 1930s testified with feeling, 'In England there is no real parallel to the ruin that can be caused in Africa by a black drought, or a plague of locusts, or cloud bursts. And when the main crop is a leaf crop, like tobacco, and so exceptionally susceptible, there are occasions when a year's hard work can be wiped out in twenty minutes, as I've reason to know.'<sup>6</sup>

### *The nineteenth century*

A striking feature of many travellers' accounts of East and Central

Africa in the nineteenth century is the evident agricultural prosperity of many—though not all—of its peoples and the great variety of produce grown, together with the volume of local, regional, and long-distance trade and the emergence of a wide range of entrepreneurs. An equally striking feature of accounts written in the 1920s and 1930s is the picture of widespread stagnation and decay which emerges, with a greatly reduced number of crops being grown, with an almost complete cessation of inter-African trade, and with an increasing cycle of rural poverty driving more and more people away to the towns.<sup>7</sup> By 1939 virtually all vestiges of African economic independence have been shattered, African cultivators have become tied to a world market over which they have no control, and a pattern of underdevelopment has been firmly established. Rhodesia is no exception to this general trend.

Three different agricultural systems ultimately came into collision in Rhodesia; those of the Shona, who now comprise nearly 80 per cent of the total population, the Ndebele, who number about 15 per cent, and the European settlers, whose numerical insignificance, at 5 per cent of the population, has been more than compensated for by their economic and political dominance. Each of these systems is examined in turn.

Though there were naturally great regional variations, the Shona were in general skilled agriculturalists, who enjoyed a degree of prosperity which belies the standard, though palpably false, picture of a people utterly demoralized by Ndebele raids. However, Shona agriculture was never entirely secure; it was vulnerable, as David Beach shows in Chapter 1, to *shangwa*, droughts or disasters, which periodically ravaged the country, and against which there was no assured defence, since it was not possible to store surplus grain for more than two to three years. Both their agricultural skill, and their vulnerability in the face of a harsh environment, explain the eagerness and rapidity with which the Shona availed themselves of the opportunity to become peasant producers at the end of the nineteenth century.

'In my opinion', wrote the N/C Umtali in 1897, 'the Mashona works his lands better than any other native tribe I know.'<sup>8</sup> Certainly nineteenth-century Shona farmers produced a wide variety of crops. The basic grain staples were finger millet (*Eleusine coracana*), known as *rapoko* or *rukweza*, and bulrush millet (*Pennisetum typhoideum*), or *mhunga*. Also widely grown were sorghum, *mapfunde* or 'kaffir corn' in white Southern African terminology, especially in the drier areas, and maize, *magwere* or *chibagwe*, which became very popular in the twentieth century. In the wetter eastern districts in particular, rice was grown by the Ndau group of Shona-speakers, though it could also be grown on a small scale in any *vlei*.<sup>9</sup> These staples were supplemented by a variety of fruits, such as pineapples, lemons, and pawpaws, by vegetables, like peas, beans, sweet potatoes, and tomatoes, and by cucurbits, such as pumpkins, marrows, melons, and

cucumbers. In various parts of the country tobacco, cotton, groundnuts, yams, cassava, and sugar were also produced. Further variety was provided by game and fish, and the Shona were excellent hunters and fishermen. Numerous wild foodstuffs were also collected from the plant and insect life. Livestock, an important insurance against *shangwa*, included cattle, goats, sheep, dogs, and fowl. Other activities included the working of iron for agricultural tools and weapons, pottery, wood-carving and the making of cloth, baskets, nets, and mats. Gold had been mined and traded extensively with the east coast in previous centuries, notably between the twelfth and fifteenth, and even though the volume of this trade had declined, the washing of alluvial gold continued and copper was also mined in small quantities.<sup>10</sup>

Long-distance trade routes, while used less extensively than in the days of the powerful Shona states, continued to run north-eastwards towards Tete and the other Portuguese settlements on the Zambezi, and many Shona felt aggrieved when British occupation gradually brought an end to the gold trade with that area. There was also a very great deal of local trade, for example in the Melsetter area between the people of the drought-ridden Sabi valley, who in bad years exchanged salt, dried fish, palm wine, mats, baskets, and cloth for grain and tobacco from the people of the more favoured uplands. Iron tools and pots were bartered throughout the Shona country, and the early Europeans, like modern tourists, were besieged by people offering them a wide range of goods.<sup>11</sup> In short, within the limitations of the prevailing technology, the Shona made intelligent use of their harsh environment, though they never entirely mastered it, and consequently were very responsive to the new markets created by the arrival of the Europeans.<sup>12</sup>

The Ndebele, on the other hand, have usually been categorized as pastoralists, and cattle undoubtedly played an important role in their society. In fact the Ndebele probably elected to settle on the Matabeleland *highveld* precisely because it was free of tsetse fly and was ideal cattle country, and by 1890 they had built up an enormous herd of something in the region of a quarter of a million head. But the Ndebele were not beef-eaters—cattle were killed mainly on ceremonial occasions—and though milk was readily available, this was not in itself an adequate diet.

Thus the Ndebele were in fact, like the Shona, basically agriculturalists.<sup>13</sup> This is scarcely surprising in view of the fact that the Ndebele state was 'a successor to the Shona-speaking Changamire Rozvi state, which influenced it in many ways',<sup>14</sup> and that much of the agricultural work was performed by the incorporated Shona—the so-called *holi*. In a society in which socio-economic differentiation was increasing as a result of contacts with Western capitalism, all the larger villages contained 'a royal field and granary to supply the king with food whenever he visited', while the *holi* 'had to hoe in the king's fields before they were allowed to start on their own'.<sup>15</sup> The

missionary T.M. Thomas, who spent the years 1859–70 vainly endeavouring to convert the Ndebele to Christianity, wrote glowingly of 'gardens full of ripe maize, and various indigenous grains', of 'extensive fields of Indian corn and other cereals', and of some valleys 'converted into the most fruitful gardens'. He also mentioned that in some areas cotton was grown, from which the Ndebele made durable garments, and that he knew of no village without its tobacco garden. In addition to this, the Ndebele evolved a system of underground granaries—later raided by the Europeans—which were well disguised, water- and air-tight, and in which 'corn is preserved sometimes for many years; and in this way the natives have occasionally stored up food enough to keep themselves active during years of scarcity'.<sup>16</sup> One European looter estimated that each granary could hold some thirty 200-lb bags of grain.<sup>17</sup> In October 1887, the concession-hunter 'Matabele' Wilson noted in his Bulawayo diary that 'there is more stuff about the place in the shape of cattle, sheep, goats, eggs, potatoes, rice, groundnuts, sweet potatoes, Indian corn and millet, poultry by the dozen, and milk and beer which the natives bring round to the white men's wagons for sale'.<sup>18</sup>

There is clear evidence too that the Ndebele were not plunderers and economic parasites, but rather were involved in a good deal of regional trade. They provided the main market for the thriving tobacco industry of the Shangwe (Shona-speaking) people of Inyoka, near Gokwe, for instance,<sup>19</sup> they obtained grain from the Ngwato and copper from the Lemba, and also 'had considerable traffic with the Amasili/Masarwa of the edge of the Kalahari, exchanging iron, dagga, spears, hoes, and knives for ostrich-egg-shell beads, ivory and feathers, horns, and skins'.<sup>20</sup> Bhebe observes that 'Periodic droughts were among the most powerful forces that drove the Ndebele into trade relations with their neighbours', and at such times cattle, goats, and beads were sold to the Shona in return for grain.<sup>21</sup> In the early days of Ndebele settlement at Bulawayo, cattle were apparently traded out to the Rozvi in return for young people who were promptly incorporated into Ndebele society.<sup>22</sup> Cattle were also sold to white missionaries, traders, and, after 1890, to the newly arrived settlers.<sup>23</sup>

It was not until twenty years after the white occupation of Rhodesia in 1890 that European farming began to offer any serious threat to African cultivators. In part this was because most Europeans were obsessed with the notion of finding a 'Second Rand', and their energies were directed almost exclusively towards mining; as the *Bulawayo Sketch* put it in 1895, the 'main reason we are all here is to make money and lose no time about it'.<sup>24</sup> Though European farming was slow to develop in Rhodesia, it did however inherit a number of characteristics from South Africa, since the vast majority of the settlers were either South African born, or had spent some time 'down south'. It is therefore worth examining briefly some of the main features of European farming as it grew up in South Africa.

In 1654 the first land grants were made to settlers near Cape Town

to encourage vegetable-growing, and under the Cape Dutch system of land tenure which subsequently emerged, Europeans were virtually given a free hand to peg out their own farms. A tradition quickly grew up whereby when they managed to defeat Africans in warfare, they were allowed to parcel out the lands of the conquered among themselves. The farther north white settlement extended, the larger the European farms became, partly because so much of the land was suitable only for ranching, and a general lack of water necessitated extensive farms if ranching was to be successful. Thus in the Cape interior during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, 'It became an established custom that a man could possess all the land within half an hour's ride, at walking-pace, from his house on the centre of his farm. Thus farms could be spaced out at an hour's ride from one another. The area involved was 3,000 morgen [6,350 acres]<sup>25</sup> per farm. . . . In time the term "farm" and 3,000 morgen of land became synonymous.' In the Transvaal in the nineteenth century, however, square 4,000-morgen farms were found to be more economical than the circular 3,000-morgen farms of the Cape, though here 'horses were sometimes ridden at speeds greater than walking-pace and farms of up to 6,000 morgen were not uncommon'. Such expansiveness was further enhanced by the very African tradition that 'each member of the family was entitled to a farm and a farm was regarded as the birthright of every man'.<sup>26</sup> Afrikaners believed in having large families.

So the white frontier moved northwards, but eventually the seemingly inexhaustible supply of land began to run out and wars were waged on African societies specifically for land. During the 1880s small Afrikaner 'republics' were carved out of Bechuanaland, Zululand, and Swaziland, while new settlements were founded in South West Africa and Angola. Hence it is not surprising that the European pioneers who entered Mashonaland in 1890 were each promised farms of 1,500 morgen, which they were 'to be allowed to "ride off" . . . in the Boer manner',<sup>27</sup> or that the trekkers from the depressed and land-short Orange Free State, whom Dunbar Moodie led to Mafeking in 1892-3, were given farms of 3,000 morgen, as were those Europeans who volunteered to invade Matabeleland in 1893. The 1893 invaders in fact refused to fight for the British South Africa Company, though they were under a legal obligation to do so, until they had been promised land and mineral concessions and a share of the Ndebele cattle.

Before the mineral revolution of the late nineteenth century, 'land was all that South Africa had to offer the prospective colonist',<sup>28</sup> but on that land, to which he had helped himself so liberally, he was as yet by no means the master. Both Bundy and Denoon have clearly shown how, in all four provinces of South Africa, some African cultivators seized avidly the economic opportunities afforded by the expansion of the white frontier and became peasant farmers, producing a wide variety of crops, competing successfully with European farmers, and

winning prizes in competition with them at agricultural shows.<sup>29</sup> As Denoon rightly says, until the early twentieth century 'African peasants were more efficient and productive than white farmers'.<sup>30</sup> They were able to be so despite being dispossessed of much of their land. Some simply bought the land back, others farmed as rent-paying squatters on the millions of acres held by absentee landlords and land companies, while others again, largely in the Orange Free State and the Eastern Cape, became sharecroppers, surrendering half of their crop in return for seed and the use of the land. In the end it was the mineral revolution, which dramatically increased the demand for African labour and offered substantial incentives to European commercial farmers, combined with 'a sustained, several-pronged offensive... launched by white legislators and administrators... against the self-reliance and independence of the peasantry',<sup>31</sup> which ultimately put an end to African agricultural prosperity in South Africa.

### *The era of peasant prosperity, 1890–1908*

Europeans helped themselves liberally to land in Rhodesia. Under the benevolent gaze of Leander Starr Jameson, one-sixth of the entire country, or some 15<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> million acres, passed nominally into European hands during 'the age of the fortune hunters' in the 1890s. Much of this was simply paper alienation, with European 'farms' existing only on the surveyor-general's maps, while nearly two-thirds of this land was in the hands of the same kind of speculative companies which had earlier taken such a stranglehold over Natal. The value of land, it was hoped, would rise as the new colony became more firmly established. Nevertheless the land which the Europeans acquired, but did not immediately occupy, contained a very high proportion of the best land in the country, situated, as most of it was, on the fertile *highveld*.<sup>32</sup>

These 'conquest lands', on which European farming later established itself, were acquired without any regard whatsoever for existing African rights. Virtually the entire Ndebele homeland was expropriated following the defeat of Lobengula in 1893, and because the British South Africa Company assumed, for its own purposes, that Lobengula controlled the whole country, the Shona chiefs were denied the customary privilege of being offered a crate of whisky or champagne and perhaps a small stipend in return for signing away their ancestral lands. It was only after the 1896–7 Shona and Ndebele Risings, and in response to British pressure, that 'native reserves'—another import from South Africa—were assigned throughout the country. The reserves, totalling some 20 million acres, were chosen in an exceedingly haphazard manner, but they could not include any of the conquest lands, nor any land near the existing or projected railways, or lying on the 'Gold Belt'.<sup>33</sup>

There were at this stage numerous obstacles to the development of



European commercial farming: the lack of capital, equipment, and a regular supply of labour, the rinderpest and later the east coast fever which decimated the cattle, and the locusts and drought which preceded the Risings. Moreover, with no mining boom and no railway until the turn of the century,<sup>34</sup> and consequently with a highly limited internal, and a non-existent external, market, the early European farmers were 'subsistence cultivators indistinguishable (by style of life, techniques of production, and crops cultivated) from the African peasantry'.<sup>35</sup> This is nicely illustrated in a report of the Civil Commissioner, Bulawayo, for March 1895, in which he says that only 'about 150' of the 1,070 white farms in his area were occupied and that the white farmers were cultivating only 'about 900 acres', or 6 acres per farm.<sup>36</sup> As one white settler wrote of the 1890s, 'In those days . . . no farmers grew grain, it being cheaper to trade the country's requirements from the natives.'<sup>37</sup>

Early European agriculture was thus little more than market gardening for Salisbury and Bulawayo and the small mining centres. Most 'farmers' were primarily transport riders, storekeepers or traders, who bought—and sometimes stole—food from their African neighbours, while even 'the most elaborate farm consisted of little more than a collection of thatched huts and up to ten ploughed acres of land'. Moreover, not only were the early settlers 'completely ignorant of local conditions and potential for agriculture—but few of [them] had much agricultural background and experience in a practical sense. Even the Dutch Boer trekkers were to experience new hazards and many of them were content to live a semi-subsistence existence rather than actually develop their farms.'<sup>38</sup> Thus in the Fort Victoria district, which was one of the most important European centres in Mashonaland, out of a total of seventy registered farms in 1897, '20 are now more or less occupied being used by traders for grazing purposes and on a few of these 5 or 6 acres of land have been ploughed up', while 'the land owned by Companies is not occupied at all'.<sup>39</sup>

While European farming, such as it was, remained at a subsistence level, African farmers in Rhodesia, notably the Shona, were able to seize the opportunities afforded by the opening of new markets, and to set off 'on the high road to prosperity'<sup>40</sup> and in search of an agricultural security hitherto denied them by *shangwa*. The labour once employed in maintaining defensive positions against raiders could now be turned to agricultural production, while Shona manpower was no longer abducted for incorporation into the Ndebele state. Thus the Shona immediately began producing surplus crops<sup>41</sup> for sale to the Europeans, who numbered some 11,100 in 1901, compared to only 304 in Nyasaland the same year and about 850 in Northern Rhodesia in 1904. Hence it proved possible, and obviously preferable, for the Shona to meet their tax commitments through the sale of foodstuffs and cattle rather than by becoming migrant labourers. Indeed, as Phimister has argued, such was the viability of

the peasant sector at this time that mine wages were forced up from between 5s and 10s per month in 1896 to between 30s and 80s in 1903.<sup>42</sup> As Lawrence Vambe puts it, 'Now that my people were under foreign rule, they believed even more firmly than they had before that self-sufficiency in their own food supplies was essential to their limited freedom. As long as they grew enough food for themselves they were spared the humiliation of working for white men',<sup>43</sup> who had, it should be remembered, so recently crushed the Shona Rising with appalling brutality. This conscious withholding of labour meant that Rhodesian employers were obliged to rely heavily on *chibaro* migrant labour from the north.

So we find that in 1903 African sales of grain and stock, some of which was exported, fetched c.£350,000, while in the same year African wage-earnings amounted to only c. £100,000—£150,000. In other words, agricultural sales comprised some 70 per cent of all African cash-earnings. An indication of the extent to which the Shona were responsible for this situation can be deduced from the fact that in 1902 only an estimated 13 per cent of able-bodied Shona men worked for three months for a white employer, compared to 48 per cent of the Ndebele, and in the following year the figure was c. 20 per cent for the Shona and c. 50 per cent for the Ndebele.<sup>44</sup> The main reason for this difference was that the economy of the Ndebele had been shattered in the 1890s. Their cattle had been destroyed, their land expropriated, and their raiding brought to an end, and hence they were obliged to become wage-earners far earlier than the Shona in order to meet the demands of both tax and rent, which was sometimes as high as £3 per annum. An additional factor was that wages tended to be higher in Matabeleland than in Mashonaland.

Shona prosperity was made possible by a combination of factors. At this time many Shona were still living on the *highveld* within easy access of the main European markets and the line of rail, the population was small, and hence there was no pressure on the land.<sup>45</sup> In addition the opening of numerous small mines provided an increasing demand for food and beer for the mineworkers—mostly foreign migrants forced to come to Rhodesia by the lack of markets and employment opportunities at home—which the Shona were able to meet, and which resulted in increased prices for their produce—bags of maize fetching 30s to 40s at the turn of the century. Also the number of African-owned cattle rose rapidly from an estimated 43,926 in 1901 to 195,837 in 1908, and many people found in the stock trade an easy way of meeting their financial obligations. Thus something of a minor agricultural revolution took place, mirroring exactly the earlier South African experience, with new crops such as market vegetables being grown as the demand arose. Hence 'the Shona responded to the new dietary regulations for the mines introduced in 1907 by growing and marketing more beans and monkey nuts',<sup>46</sup> while the VaShawasha people, helped by the Jesuit fathers of Chisawasha Mission, were 'able to supply Salisbury with maize,

cement, beef, timber and a certain amount of wheat, barley and grapes'.<sup>47</sup> Indeed, some Shona near Salisbury were at this time employing other Africans as wage-labourers for 10s per month, while many of those previously involved in the working of alluvial gold abandoned this 'in favour of meeting the more lucrative demands of an expanding produce market'.<sup>48</sup> In general, native commissioners displayed remarkably little enthusiasm for all this activity, largely because it reduced the labour supply,<sup>49</sup> but perhaps also because, like their counterparts in Nyasaland and elsewhere, they 'preferred the warlike noble savage to the passive unmanly farmers'.<sup>50</sup>

Even the doubling of the hut tax from 10s to 20s in 1904,<sup>51</sup> while it meant that the African contribution to the revenue increased from 27 per cent to 41 per cent, failed to curb this expansion.<sup>52</sup> This was certainly facilitated by the fact that the Shona faced no real competition as yet from European farmers. Arrighi estimates that in the 1903-4 season, European holdings 'accounted for approximately 5 per cent of the total acreage under cultivation and for less than 10 per cent of the total marketed output'.<sup>53</sup> Most European farmers found it far more profitable to trade in African produce than become producers themselves and, in the Marandellas district at least, they relied upon their tenants to grow sufficient maize to feed their 'foreign' labour force.<sup>54</sup> All this explains why the BSA Company and the white landlords, *bona fide* and absentee, were perfectly happy to allow the Shona to remain where they were, and why there was no concerted attempt to push them into the 'native reserves'.<sup>55</sup> After 1908, however, things began to change.

### *The white agricultural policy, 1908-14*

In South Africa, it was the mineral revolution which ultimately led to the impoverishment of the African peasantry. In Rhodesia, paradoxically, it was the absence of such a revolution which had much the same effect. In 1907 a party of BSA Company Directors came to Rhodesia,<sup>56</sup> toured the country, and decided that the time had come to put an end to the myth of the 'Second Rand'. The myth had persisted for so long partly because mineral exploitation had been severely hindered by the Risings of 1896-7 and by the South African War of 1899-1902, which had cut Rhodesia's rail links to the south.<sup>57</sup> The end of that war was followed by a brief mining boom, but this collapsed in the financial crisis of 1903-4. The Company then made tentative inquiries into land settlement schemes elsewhere in the empire, and set up its own Land Settlement Committee in 1905, before sending out its directors two years later. The directors, no doubt influenced by contemporary imperial policies in Kenya, concluded that it was essential to diversify the economy, and that the best way of doing this was to encourage European farming, thereby promoting greater economic self-sufficiency, cutting the import bill, and raising the value of land and providing more traffic for the

railway, both of which, at the time, were owned by the Company. This 'white agricultural policy', as it was called, which began in 1908, was ultimately to affect radically the position of Africans on the land.

There were various aspects of the new policy. To begin with, an Estates Department was set up in 1908, designed specifically to promote European settlement and deal with all applications for land, while an information office, under a superintendent of emigration, was opened in London with a branch in Glasgow, and two agents were sent to South Africa to publicize Rhodesia at the leading agricultural shows there. The Estates Department 'possessed a fairly numerous staff, including an engineer, a citrus adviser and land inspectors'.<sup>58</sup> The type of immigrants it sought were people 'endowed with capital and experienced in farming on the African highveld. In addition they had to be loyal to the British connection.'<sup>59</sup>

Also in 1908 the Department of Agriculture was reorganized and a first director of agriculture appointed. He was Dr E.A. Nobbs, a trained scientist from the Cape—previous officials had been amateurs—and he was responsible for stimulating a great deal of agricultural research, much of which was published in the pages of the *Rhodesia Agricultural Journal*. A number of specialists were appointed to the Department, including a botanist, an entomologist, a chemist, an agriculturist, an irrigation engineer, and a tobacco expert. An experimental station and farm were opened near Salisbury, and a bevy of visiting experts were encouraged to come and offer their advice. The Department was thus in a position to place a wide range of extension facilities at the disposal of the new European farmer, and in 1910 it took over the grading of maize for export, a job previously undertaken by railway officials. Some idea of the extended scope of the Department may be gauged from the fact that its annual average expenditure rose from £10,065 in the years 1903–4 to 1908–9, to £22,476 in the period 1909–10 to 1913–14.<sup>60</sup>

The BSA Company itself began to develop an interest in tobacco and citrus, and in ranching. It used its Central Farms, near Bulawayo, Gwelo, Marandellas, Sinoia, and Umtali, to familiarize new immigrants from Britain, who had to possess a minimum of £700 capital, with the problems of farming on the Rhodesian *highveld*. A Land Bank was set up in 1912 with a share capital of £250,000, to make credit facilities 'available for persons of European descent only'.<sup>61</sup> The Bank gave loans of up to £2,000 for the purchase of farms, livestock, and agricultural equipment, and for improvements such as fencing, irrigation works, etc. The loans had to be repaid, at 6 per cent interest, within ten years. The Bank was of crucial importance in helping new European farmers to establish themselves on the land. Its success led white farmers elsewhere, notably in Kenya, where one was not established until 1930,<sup>62</sup> to demand something comparable. Such facilities were not available to African farmers in Rhodesia until 1945.

In addition, the minimum price of ranching land was reduced, until

1912, to about 8<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>d per acre, while agricultural land was reduced to 3s 9d. This compares with the 1904 average prices of 34s 4d in the Orange Free State, 33s in the Cape, 28s 6d in the Transvaal, and 25s in Natal,<sup>63</sup> while land along the Northern Rhodesian line of rail was fetching between 3d and 8d per acre at this time.<sup>64</sup> Also a much simpler form of land title was issued, rebates of between 20 and 30 per cent on the purchase price were granted in the event of positive improvements being made to the land, a concession claimed in practice by an 'infinitesimal' number of farmers,<sup>65</sup> and the Mines and Minerals Ordinance was revised so as to restrict the privileges of prospectors on occupied farms,<sup>66</sup> an interesting comment on the state of the mining industry.

From the Company's point of view, the results of the white agricultural policy were quite encouraging. In the years 1908–14 over 5<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> million acres of land were sold, and the 1911 census revealed a total of 1,324 European farmers, compared to only 545 in 1904, while the number of occupied farms rose from 301 in 1904 to 2,042 in 1914, when some 183,407 acres were said to be under crops. By 1912, according to van Onselen, 'commercial agriculture was sufficiently profitable to draw capital previously employed in mining', while 'after 1912 most of the mines' food requirements were met by European commercial agriculture'.<sup>67</sup> For the most part, the new European farmers concentrated on the production of maize and tobacco, and on cattle-ranching.

Initially the Europeans obtained maize seeds from African farmers, and soon they were growing maize throughout much of Mashonaland 'with some success, but in a primitive and extensive fashion, so that the European yields were little better than those of the African peasant farmers'.<sup>68</sup> In particular the 'Gold Belt' areas, which were opened up to white farmers in 1903, were used for maize production. Maize was initially grown, by African labour rather than machinery, to feed African labourers at the mines, but it began to be exported in quantity for the first time in 1909. Production rose dramatically from 45,815 (203 lb) bags in 1903–4 to about 180,000 bags in 1906–7 to 634,133 bags in 1913–14. Exports, mostly to Britain, rose from 11,442 (200 lb) bags in 1909 to 202,105 bags in 1914, and some indication of the extent to which it 'caught on' can be gauged from the fact that an estimated 78 per cent of European land under cultivation in 1924 was devoted to maize.

Tobacco, which was ultimately to develop into 'the mainstay of European farming and a major support of the Rhodesian economy', was, like maize, widely grown by Africans before the European occupation. It had the attraction of offering a quick return for capital invested—a necessity if new immigrants were to be attracted to Rhodesia—and of being best grown in the previously neglected sandy soils, so that 'the Company would now be able to sell many farms which had hitherto attracted few buyers'.<sup>69</sup> The BSA Company did a great deal to stimulate its production. It appointed a tobacco expert,

G.M. Odlum, to the Department of Agriculture and sent him off to study tobacco-growing in America, Turkey, and Greece, whence he returned with fourteen Greeks, who were to assist in the development of turkish tobacco.<sup>70</sup> European farmers began to grow the crop avidly, especially in Mashonaland, and production rose swiftly from 132,210 lb in 1909–10 to about 2,240,000 lb in 1912–13. The following year, when 3,061,750 lb were grown, 'over-production brought chaos to the industry and for several years it floundered'.<sup>71</sup>

Cattle-ranching, which began to expand over much of the Matabeleland *highveld*, also owed its origin to African initiative, though in this case the Europeans simply stole the bulk of the Ndebele cattle after the war of 1893, and subsequently added to this haul by acquiring much of the herd looted from Mpezeni's Ngoni in Northern Rhodesia in 1899.<sup>72</sup> The 'indigenous' cattle were, according to a visiting professor from Edinburgh University, 'remarkable for their hardiness and ability to keep their flesh during the long dry season when pasturage is poor, but are very small in carcase'.<sup>73</sup> This was confirmed in the drought of 1912, when, as the CNC Mashonaland noted, 'the superiority of the condition of the native stock, as compared with the better breed animals owned by Europeans, was most marked'.<sup>74</sup> The local cattle were in fact upgraded by crossing with bulls imported from Northern Rhodesia, Nyasaland, and South Africa, which helped to add weight and quality to the existing durability.<sup>75</sup> Some 33,000 head of cattle were imported in the years 1909–13, and the number of European-owned cattle rose sharply from 38,611 in 1907 to 341,878 in 1914. Experts came from Texas, and a number of ranching companies began operating on a large scale, for, as the handbook for prospective settlers put it, 'while 15,000 acres is taken as the minimum area suitable for ranching, opportunities exist for the establishment of large ranching concerns (involving 50,000 acres and upwards) for those possessed of the necessary means'.<sup>76</sup>

All this activity inevitably gave rise to conflict and competition between European farmers and the Shona and Ndebele. European maize production posed an obvious threat to African peasant farmers, and European tobacco was grown predominantly on the sandy soils which the Shona had long favoured.<sup>77</sup> Indeed, in 1908 the CNC Matabeleland noted of new settlers, 'In selecting their land they have naturally been guided by the number of natives located thereon, whose knowledge of the productive powers of the soil must necessarily be the best guide'.<sup>78</sup> Similarly, as the number of African-owned cattle more than doubled, from 195,837 in 1908 to 406,180 in 1914, this led to tremendous competition for grazing lands with the Europeans, whose own cattle were increasing even more rapidly and whose number exceeded the number of African cattle for the first time in 1919. This competition was especially fierce in Matabeleland, where the land was drier, and the European farms larger, than in Mashonaland. Thus Europeans began to challenge Africans for markets,<sup>79</sup> for cattle and for land; the BSA Company was

at this time endeavouring to extract the choicest pieces of land from the 'native reserves' and make them available to incoming settlers.<sup>80</sup> So began what Marshall Hole aptly called 'the squeezing-out process'.<sup>81</sup>

Prior to this rapid expansion of European farming, white landowners had very little reason to turn Africans off their land, since they could extract from them crops, rents, or labour, as desired, and since African farmers were playing such a vital role in food production. But by 1914 the situation had begun to change. Because European agriculture was labour- rather than capital-intensive,<sup>82</sup> and because 'the sight of white men, and even more so white women, performing heavy, unskilled manual labour is one that is generally repugnant to most Rhodesians and South Africans',<sup>83</sup> the white farmers needed black labour. Here they came into competition with the mines, which were also labour-intensive, and which could generally afford to pay higher wages. The demand for labour indeed grew very rapidly. 'In 1905, it was calculated that Southern Rhodesia needed no more than 25,000 labourers all told,' writes Philip Mason, but 'by 1910, the mines alone wanted 39,000 and the farmers another 23,000.'<sup>84</sup> The white farmers needed large supplies of seasonal labour—at precisely the time when local Africans needed to tend to their own crops. They thus found themselves in much the same position as white farmers elsewhere in Africa, heavily reliant on migrant labour from depressed areas, and demanding a reduction of African land holdings and a tax mechanism which would effectively compel local Africans to work on their farms.<sup>85</sup> This was not going to be easy, for the Shona 'developed an almost universal anti-farming mentality which considered that a Shona... had sunk very low, socially and economically, if he worked for a white farmer'.<sup>86</sup> In response to this refusal to work, and in order to reduce the competitiveness of African farmers and cattle-owners, the European farmers began to impose high rents and other burdens such as dipping fees, and to evict Africans from their farms and push them into the reserves, which were situated farther away from the main markets.<sup>87</sup>

Thus in 1909 the BSA Company, in the teeth of Native Department opposition, imposed a £1 rent on unalienated land; in 1910 landlords, when obliged under the Private Locations Ordinance to pay a licence for each of their adult male tenants, promptly raised their rents; in 1912 a number of Matabeleland ranching companies subjected their tenants to grazing fees; in the same year, when an outbreak of east coast fever imposed restrictions on the movement of cattle, some landowners raised their rents, and others, rather than pay for dipping tanks, ordered African cattle-owners to quit, which was an impossible demand at such a time; in 1913 some European farmers refused to allow Africans who had been evicted from other farms to move cattle across their land, so that the Africans were obliged to sell for whatever they were offered; and finally, in 1914, compulsory dipping, at 1-2s per head, could be 'applied in any area where this was the

wish of the majority of farmers'.<sup>88</sup> By 1923 three-quarters of all African cattle was being compulsorily dipped. This plethora of impositions naturally provoked hostility. The rent on unalienated land caused 'great dissatisfaction' and was 'extremely unpopular' in Melsetter,<sup>89</sup> while in Bubi news of the grazing fees was greeted 'with a storm of protest and angry feelings', and the people complained eloquently that the landowners 'will be taking money from the flies in our kraals next; better be dead than pay such demands'.<sup>90</sup> But this was just the beginning.

### *The economic triumph of European agriculture, 1915-25*

A major concomitant of the expansion of European farming was the growing clamour for 'segregation' which arose in the decade 1915-25, a clamour in which the European farmers assumed the dominant role. The question hinged on the old Cape clause, introduced into Rhodesia at British insistence in 1894, which stipulated: 'A native may acquire, hold, encumber and dispose of land on the same conditions as a person who is not a native.' The law was not at all popular with white Rhodesians, and the Company managed to prevent it becoming effective through the simple expedient of refusing to sell land to Africans, and the vast majority of European farmers did the same. The result was that by 1925 only fourteen farms, totalling 46,966 acres, had been sold, seven to black Rhodesians and seven to black South Africans, mostly at inflated prices.<sup>91</sup>

The kind of segregation which the European farmers wanted was of a limited nature, confined to the *ownership* of land, for, as one of the country's leading white farmers put it, 'wholesale segregation of natives was an impossible proposition, because it would affect the labour supply and labour was essential for the development of the country'.<sup>92</sup> European farmers were strongly opposed to the emergence of an independent African landowning class of commercial farmers for two basic reasons. In the first place they objected to Africans as neighbours. As labourers or rent-paying tenants they were of course welcome, for they were beholden to the European farmer and could be evicted by him at will, but as landowners they would have to be treated, legally at any rate, as equals, and this was something which would cut right across Southern African racial prejudices.<sup>93</sup> Perhaps more important, if Africans 'invaded' the European farming areas, they would, by and large, be tilling the better soils and have equal access to markets, and hence be in a strong position to compete with European farmers. Indeed the white farmers were afraid that as the African earning capacity increased, so more and more Africans would be in a position to buy land, and they wanted the law changed before this could happen.<sup>94</sup> On the other hand, the Native Department and the missionaries were afraid that the existing trend would continue and that Africans would ultimately be left with no land at all outside the reserves. These conflicting fears for the



future helped bring about a divergence of opposites, the end result being the Land Apportionment Act of 1930 which set aside 7½ million acres of 'native purchase areas', within which Africans alone could purchase land, with the *quid pro quo* that they could no longer buy land in the better-situated European areas.<sup>95</sup>

The decade of the segregation debate witnessed a further expansion of European farming and a not unconnected dramatic decline in African agriculture. Though European production fell during the First World War, when many farmers were on active service,<sup>96</sup> there was a post-war boom as new settlers arrived and an increase in mining activity created a larger internal market for agricultural commodities. Then came the recession of 1921-3, caused by a combination of external and local factors, which hit Africans far harder than Europeans, but this was followed by a period of renewed expansion as the new settler government, which took over from the BSA Company in 1923, did all it could to encourage the further development of European agriculture.

Thus the average annual expenditure of the Department of Agriculture rose from £33,468 in the years 1918-19 to 1922-3, to £75,636 in the period 1923-4 to 1928-9. The number of European farmers increased from 1,324 in 1911 to 2,355 in 1921, while altogether some 8½ million acres were alienated to Europeans in the period 1915-25, which brought the total European area up to just over 31 million acres, or a third of the entire country. This was sometimes very striking, as at Lomagundi in 1920, when the native commissioner reported: 'Land has been taken up in all directions and the European population has practically doubled itself.'<sup>97</sup> The price of land rose to an average of 7s per acre in 1920, and some of the absentee landlords took advantage of this and began to subdivide their huge estates and to sell off parts to the new immigrants. Finally, the new government greatly increased the amount of money devoted to road building and maintenance in the major white farming areas, in an endeavour to expand the existing infrastructure.

European agriculture continued to be dominated by maize, tobacco, and cattle. Maize production fluctuated a good deal, rising from 914,926 (203-lb) bags in 1914-15 to a peak of 1,505,580 bags in 1922-3 and then falling to 1,068,904 bags in 1924-5. Maize exports rose from 346,855 (200-lb) bags in 1915 to a peak of 774,449 bags in 1923 and then dropped to 383,338 bags in 1925. After the collapse of tobacco through overproduction in 1913-14, the industry slowly recovered and production rose from 426,423 lb in 1914-15 to a record 5,659,809 lb in 1925-6. The number of European-owned cattle continued to rise sharply, from 394,856 in 1915 to 1,006,086 in 1925, while African-owned cattle increased similarly from 445,795 to 1,095,841 in the same period. This twofold increase naturally intensified the racial competition for grazing lands. An export market was opened up to Johannesburg in 1916, and cattle exports rose from 12,928 in that year to 72,738 in 1926, by which time Southern

Rhodesia was exporting to South Africa, the Belgian Congo, Mozambique, Britain, Germany, and Northern Rhodesia, with South Africa taking some 80 per cent of the total. Exports at this time were greatly helped by the low railway rates prevailing as a result of the shipment of substantial quantities of Katangan copper to Beira over the Rhodesian railways.<sup>98</sup>

Thus European farming emerged from its pioneer period to a position in which it was firmly established as a central sector of the Rhodesian economy, with its members occupying strategic positions in government and in parliament.<sup>99</sup> As might be expected, this increasing success gave rise to a good deal of aggression towards Africans living on European land. The British High Commissioner for South Africa, Athlone, who visited Rhodesia in 1926, noted that the great majority of European farmers demanded excessive grazing fees and 'made considerable profit out of the unfortunate natives'. He observed that as dipping was compulsory, 'the temptation to make exorbitant profits in this way must be difficult to resist'.<sup>100</sup>

Relations were particularly bad in the Insiza district, between Bulawayo and Gwelo. In 1918 the local native commissioner remarked that 'The eagerness of some land owners to make a profit out of the [Compulsory Dipping] Ordinance—either by charging high dipping fees or by increasing the rent charges to cover the cost of constructing tanks, has left a very bad impression on the natives.' The following year he mentioned the case of one farmer who 'captured 70 head of native cattle . . . trespassing on his farm'<sup>101</sup> (not on cultivated land) and charged the owners of the cattle an ox valued at £5 and £4 in cash'. The N/C commented, 'When farmers descend to such contemptible methods of enriching themselves at the expense of ignorant natives, it is not surprising if the natives do retaliate by burning farms out, but unfortunately decent farmers suffer in the process of retaliation, as when once a grass fire is started there is no saying where it will end.'<sup>102</sup> In the face of such evidence it is scarcely surprising that most Africans should feel that 'the white Rhodesian farmer . . . represented the worst in European racial feelings. . . . He was harsh, domineering, unfair, inhuman and took the law into his own hands when dealing with Africans, some of whom felt that they were placed in the same class as the cattle or even lower.'<sup>103</sup>

It is against such a background of racial hostility that one needs to look at the impoverishment of the African peasantry in Rhodesia. The remarkable prosperity enjoyed by many Shona farmers in the early years of the century was brought to an end by a combination of factors. Primarily, African farmers faced the full blast of competition from heavily subsidized European farmers while simultaneously being pushed away from easy access to markets, a process greatly facilitated by the work of the 1914–15 Native Reserves Commission, which reduced the reserves by a million acres and took from them much of the best land within easy reach of the main centres.<sup>104</sup> In addition, Africans were confronted with an ever-increasing number

of costly dues—taxes, rents, dipping and grazing fees, etc.—at a time when their own appetite for consumer goods was on the increase. The end result was that when they were no longer able to sustain themselves and purchase their requirements from the sale of their agricultural produce, they would be forced to 'become wage-labourers.

It was inevitable that European and African farmers would come into open conflict, and the conflict would probably have occurred earlier than it did but for the intervention of the First World War, which led many Europeans to abandon their farms and presented Africans with an opportunity to sell maize and cattle at rising prices. This situation lasted until 1920. Then came the slump of 1921–3, which, in Arrighi's words, 'radically altered the position of the African peasantry in the structure of the Rhodesian economy'. In 1920, Africans sold some 198,000 bags of maize at 10s per bag; in 1921 they sold 43,600 bags at 5s—a drop in earnings from about £100,000 to under £10,000. Similarly, in 1919 they sold some 20,000 head of cattle at £7 to £8 each, while in 1922 they sold practically none.<sup>105</sup> On top of all this, prices were rising fast. Between 1914 and 1920 the cost of ten types of goods widely purchased by Africans rose on average by 165 per cent, while African wages went up by only 13 per cent in the same period.<sup>106</sup>

Thus Africans were forced out on to the labour market, and many employers, especially the farmers, took advantage of the situation to reduce wages, in some districts to as low as 5s. Many tenants could no longer afford to pay the rents and other fees demanded by their landlords, and since the price of maize and cattle had fallen so low, there was far less incentive to remain close to the main markets. Hence there was, in the Chief Native Commissioner's words, 'a continual stream' into the reserves,<sup>107</sup> with probably over 60,000 moving in the period 1915–25; and 'Once the migration had taken place, the future ability of Africans who had migrated to obtain their cash requirements through the sale of produce was, of course, jeopardized.'<sup>108</sup> This was because of the greater cost, and difficulty, of marketing their produce from the 'native reserves',<sup>109</sup> which by now were beginning to show distinct signs of overcrowding.

The movement of thousands of Africans into the reserves obviously aroused a great deal of resentment. The situation was particularly critical in Matabeleland, where, as Governor Chancellor confessed, 'there is undoubtedly cause for complaint'.<sup>110</sup> To be turned off a farm in central Matabeleland often entailed a trek of fifty to a hundred miles to the nearest reserve, which was usually deficient in water supplies, and many Ndebele whose homes were on the *highveld* succumbed to malaria when they moved to the lower, fever-stricken areas.<sup>111</sup> It was in such circumstances that Nyamanda, the eldest son of Lobengula, and his cousin Madhloli Kumalo, who had both been evicted several times from farms in the past, gained considerable support in their campaign to restore the Ndebele.

monarchy and establish a 'National Home', where all the Ndebele might settle and be free from the exactions of European farmers, who, as one Minister of Agriculture had the grace to admit, 'have ever so much more land than they... can profitably make use of'.<sup>112</sup>

### *The political triumph of European agriculture, 1926–36*

In the period 1926–36 European agriculture was remarkable more for its political than its economic successes. The momentum of previous years was not maintained, and the great Depression of the early 1930s, which drove many white farmers off the land in Kenya, Nyasaland, and Northern Rhodesia, threatened the political and economic hegemony of the white Southern Rhodesian farmers and workers, and produced a series of demands for total segregation and non-competition between whites and blacks, which the new Huggins government of 1933 did its best to meet. The Depression indeed left a deep scar on the consciousness of European farmers, for it was they who provided the largest single group amongst the ranks of the unemployed whites,<sup>113</sup> and many more were only rescued from this fate by a combination of loans from the Land Bank—amounting to over one million pounds in 1934—and a three-year moratorium in 1933 on all instalment payments for farms.

The comparatively static nature of European agriculture in this period is illustrated by the number of Europeans employed in the industry, which rose from 3,995 in 1926 to 4,172 in 1931, and then dropped to 4,009 in 1936. This was in spite of an increase in the annual expenditure of the Department of Agriculture from £91,874 in 1928–9 to £262,957 in 1936–7. Tobacco enjoyed another brief boom, following an increase in imperial preference, and production soared from 5,659,809 lb in 1925–6 to over 19 million lb the following year and 24,943,044 lb in 1927–8. But once again, as in 1913–14, Rhodesian tobacco growers had over-reached themselves, for the overseas market was saturated, vast unsaleable stocks accumulated in British warehouses, the order books were closed and a great many tobacco farms were abandoned, with some 700 producers, three-quarters of the total, eliminated. As the official history of the industry puts it, 'Nearly all the progress of the previous ten years was wiped out in one season.'<sup>114</sup> In response to this collapse, cigarette manufacturers began making a determined, and successful, attempt to penetrate the local African market, to the exclusion of the traditional 'Inyoka' tobacco. But immediately there followed a slowing down of mining and industrial activity within the country, and in 1930 South Africa decided to impose a quota system on duty-free tobacco from Rhodesia. These factors, plus the coming of the Depression, resulted in production dropping to 8,644,390 lb in 1930–1, before picking up again to 22,401,707 lb in 1935–6. In 1936 the Tobacco Marketing Act introduced greater government control over the industry, with the compulsory registration of all growers,

and by giving the minister powers to fix minimum prices, to regulate production, and control exports.

A similar pattern can be observed in regard to the maize industry, where production rose from 1,393,654 (203-lb) bags in 1925–6 to 1,985,848 bags in 1935–6, and exports rose from 434,592 (200-lb) bags in 1926 to 745,010 bags in 1930. But by the beginning of 1931, with the export price falling from 11s to 3s 4d, most European maize-growers were facing bankruptcy.<sup>115</sup> Many increased their acreages in an attempt to offset falling prices, but this led to rampant soil erosion, while their economic plight was worsened by increasing competition from African growers. The government promptly came to their rescue with the Maize Control Acts of 1931 and 1934, which will be examined shortly, but whose main effect was to keep European maize-growers on the land, though prices remained low. In 1936 maize exports totalled 396,000 bags.

Though the numbers of African-owned cattle continued to increase, from 1,197,466 in 1926 to 1,547,623 in 1936, European-owned cattle showed a decrease for the first time, dropping from 991,216 to 753,419 in the same period, as many white ranchers attempted to jump on to the tobacco boom, or switched to dairying or cotton-growing. In 1930 an export market to Britain of chilled and frozen meat was made possible by Rhodesia Railways' acquisition of nine refrigerator wagons,<sup>116</sup> but almost immediately an outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease resulted in a two-year embargo on all agricultural exports, with the exception of tobacco and citrus. All in all, 'the early thirties were years of severe stress and strain for the hard-pressed Rhodesian farmer'.<sup>117</sup>

How did the white Rhodesian farmers react to such stresses and strains? As one might expect, they called upon the government to bale them out and to assist them 'to achieve a return large enough for them to continue farming and live according to "civilized standards"'.<sup>118</sup> Such standards could only be maintained in normal times by paying extremely low wages, and during the Depression many farmers simply stopped paying their African workers altogether.<sup>119</sup> Like European farmers elsewhere at this time, they raised the spectre of African competition,<sup>120</sup> and feared that unless they were protected from such unfair competition, the country would 'surely revert to a native State, as is happening in Nyasaland'.<sup>121</sup> That such fears were taken seriously even at the Colonial Office can be seen from a decision in 1933 to forbid the British Central Africa Company to grow maize in Nyasaland in case this should result in competition for the tottering maize industries of Southern Rhodesia and Kenya.<sup>122</sup> So the European farmers, whose 'methods of cultivation remained inefficient' according to Gann,<sup>123</sup> demanded greater government participation in production and marketing, which resulted in the setting up of Tobacco and Dairy Control Boards and the passing of Maize Control Acts. Moreover, like the Kenya settlers, they resented the very limited attempts by government to encourage African agriculture.<sup>124</sup>

In 1934, for example, they successfully campaigned for a reduction in the number of African agricultural demonstrators being trained—for a short while the government imposed a complete standstill on training—and in Fort Victoria, where the demonstrators had helped African farmers to grow maize successfully for the first time, E.D. Alvord, the American ex-missionary who was in charge of the demonstration work, was shunned and treated as a pariah by the Europeans whenever he went to town.<sup>125</sup> Alvord took the view, in words which were neatly excised from one of his annual reports, that European farmers who could not stand African competition 'would do the most good for Rhodesia by moving out'.<sup>126</sup>

Perhaps the best illustration of the way in which European farmers sought to protect themselves is provided by the Maize Control Amendment Act in 1934. The Act was highly complex, but broadly speaking it 'discriminated in favour of the small white as against both the larger white and the African grower'.<sup>127</sup> It proved in fact to be a good deal more detrimental to African farmers than similar, and contemporary, pieces of legislation in Kenya and Northern Rhodesia.<sup>128</sup> The pro-settler Governor, Sir Herbert Stanley, pronounced himself 'not a devotee of the principle of maize control, but I regard its introduction . . . as a necessity if European maize farmers . . . are to be kept on the land'.<sup>129</sup> The African maize-growers of the Belingwe district found, however, that whereas they had previously managed to sell some 10,000 bags a year, after the Act they were able to sell none at all.<sup>130</sup> In Mazoe, Africans had once sold maize locally at 6s to 7s per bag; after the Act they were obliged to carry it long distances and sell at 2s to 2s 6d. Not surprisingly, a meeting of the Mazoe Native Board in 1934 expressed its 'grave dissatisfaction' and even became 'somewhat unruly'. One speaker asked, 'Why does the Government do everything to help the white farmer and nothing to help us? . . . The Government is killing us by this Act which we do not understand. It is made to do good to the white man and harm to us. . . . Why are not our Native Commissioners consulted before things like this happen and why are we also not consulted? This thing is not fair. It is put on us by force.'<sup>131</sup> The local N/C wrote that 'never before during my 30 years service in this Department have I heard natives express themselves so strongly or so openly display a spirit of antagonism to any law as they did to the Maize Control and Cattle Levy Acts'.<sup>132</sup> The antagonism was clearly justified, for even the ultra-conservative Chief Native Commissioner, C.L. Carbutt, who wanted to dispatch all 'advanced natives' to Northern Rhodesia, concluded that 'it is quite impossible for Natives to benefit in any way' from the Act,<sup>133</sup> while his successor, Charles Bullock, made it clear to Stanley that 'he disagreed entirely with the principle of maize control, and that he had no confidence in the fairmindedness of the Maize Control Board'.<sup>134</sup> A Government report of 1944 was even more scathing:

It is difficult to conceive of a principle more inequitable or dangerous than

that of deliberately paying to the better-off producers of a State more for a product than is paid to less well-off people in the same State for the identical product. It is the antithesis of assistance according to need and of the universally acclaimed principle of raising rather than depressing the lower classes.<sup>135</sup>

Maize Control was perhaps the most vivid example of the impact of the Depression on African peasant farmers, though the Europeans also successfully pressed the government 'to decrease the Native production of wheat'.<sup>136</sup> Rather more sober, but none the less revealing, is Arrighi's estimate that whereas in 1903 some 70 per cent of African cash-earnings had come from the sale of agricultural produce, by 1932 the proportion had slumped to below 20 per cent.<sup>137</sup> As Carbutt put it, 'From the Natives' personal point of view, the situation is very harassing: he cannot sell cattle: he cannot get cash for his maize . . . and he has great difficulty in obtaining employment, and when he does get it, it is at a reduced rate of pay.'<sup>138</sup> Increasingly, Africans sought refuge in the reserves, whence they were 'encouraged' to move by the Land Apportionment Act, which envisaged that, with certain minor exceptions, only labour tenants would be allowed to remain on European land after 1937, and by the attitude of most European farmers, who, with their farms at a standstill, often changed labour into rent agreements in search of easy cash but in contradiction of the aims of the Act, and who also demanded that Africans be evicted from unalienated land to make way for future settlers. What was particularly galling about such evictions was the tiny proportion of European land which was actually being put to good use<sup>139</sup>—14 out of the 31 million acres of European land in 1925 were lying unoccupied—and the fact that so much of the land from which Africans were moved lay idle and unused, as happened also in Northern Rhodesia during the 1930s.<sup>140</sup> Thus, in the Mtoko district, 'covetous eyes are always cast on the mile after mile of vacant land from which the Natives have been turned off in the past'.<sup>141</sup>

But the reserves were no escape, even though one did not have to pay rents or grazing fees, for, as Alvord put it,

the greatest handicap to our efforts to introduce better methods of tillage among reserve Natives is the lack of marketing facilities. In many areas it is impossible for Natives to sell for cash, and they are forced to take salt or cloth for their grain, or they cannot sell it at all . . . [this] imposes a hand to mouth existence upon him under which he cannot progress.<sup>142</sup>

At least 50,000 people were moved into the reserves in the 1930s, with the result that they became increasingly overcrowded and overstocked—in some districts of Matabeleland in particular there was an acute shortage of land—and since it was no longer possible in many areas to live off the land, people were forced to turn to wage

labour, and by 1932 over 80 per cent of African cash-earnings was coming from this source. Thus a process of involution, of gradually falling productivity, modelled closely on the South African pattern, was set in motion. The government's attempts to 'develop' the reserves could do little to alleviate the situation.<sup>143</sup> Even when the demonstrators achieved successes, there were problems. Thus in Fort Victoria, prior to Maize Control, 'the demonstration work was really going ahead in leaps and bounds, and in certain areas the demonstrators were unable to cope with the large numbers of Natives interested in the better methods of farming'. But after the Act all this stopped, and the people asked 'Why should we grow crops and sell them at less than we used to?', and complained, 'Yes, we told you when you first brought demonstrators on to the reserves that they had come to try out the land, and later the Government would either take it or our crops.'<sup>144</sup> An identical feeling was expressed at Matobo where, as a result of the Act, Africans could no longer sell their surplus maize, and the Native Board 'wanted to know why Native Demonstrators had been sent into the Native Reserves to teach them modern methods of growing maize'.<sup>145</sup> It cannot have been an easy question to answer.

### *Conclusion*

Thus, by the end of the 1930s, the agricultural economy of the Shona and the Ndebele, like that of the Kikuyu and most South African peoples, had been destroyed. The struggle between 'the European farmer seeking to reduce the African to a proletarian and the African seeking to retain the maximum amount of economic independence'<sup>146</sup> had been won conclusively by the Europeans. Even the 'native purchase areas', supposedly set aside for the benefit of 'progressive' African commercial farmers, revealed a picture of utter stagnation, as the majority of farmholdings passed into the hands of urban workers, who simply followed the European tradition of buying land for their retirement, and were therefore little more than 'weekend farmers' at best.

The reasons for the European triumph fall into three broad categories. In the first place, after 1908 European agriculture was heavily subsidized while African agriculture was utterly neglected.<sup>147</sup> Potential European farmers were wooed in Britain and South Africa, were offered training on arrival, received Land Bank loans to help establish themselves, and had a wide range of extension facilities placed at their disposal. Moreover, with control over the land came, in varying degree, control over labour, and the ability, after 1920, to rely on cheap supplies of labour was a fundamental prerequisite for the success of European agriculture.<sup>148</sup> Shona farmers, who had clearly demonstrated their potential in the early colonial period, were afforded no such assistance. A Rhodesian governor of the 1940s admitted that 'insufficient money is spent in the Reserves', and that



the number of Europeans attached to Alvord's staff before 1939 had been 'almost ludicrously insufficient'.<sup>149</sup> In the financial year 1940-1, £14,107 was voted for the 'development of agriculture in native areas and reserves', a sum which, as Lord Hailey observed, 'seems somewhat exiguous compared with the £208,217 provided in the Vote for European agriculture'.<sup>150</sup> After the Second World War, Africans received a slightly larger slice of the cake, but the £2 million spent on African agriculture in the years 1945-6 to 1953-4 pales into insignificance beside the £12 million voted to the European sector.<sup>151</sup>

Secondly, the competitiveness of the African peasantry was reduced by increasingly forcing them off European land, either by direct eviction or by imposing such a battery of financial and other burdens that they elected to go. Once settled in the reserves they could aspire to be little more than subsistence cultivators<sup>152</sup>—and migrant labourers, prepared to work for the prevailing low wages. Those who remained on European farms, as either labour- or rent-paying tenants, were obviously in no position to compete with their landlords. Thirdly, as if the earlier financial discrimination were not enough, came the repressive legislation of the 1930s, born of a fear of competition. The Land Apportionment Act of 1930 legally demarcated the European area for the first time—the Europeans got 48½ million acres, or half the country—confined African purchasers to separate and largely non-productive areas, and endeavoured to pack as many Africans as possible into the reserves, leaving behind only labour tenants.<sup>153</sup> The Maize Control Amendment Act of 1934 discriminated blatantly against African maize-growers and effectively undermined the work of the agricultural demonstrators. Finally, the Industrial Conciliation Act of 1934 most skilfully imposed an industrial colour bar in the towns, and so placed yet another obstacle in the path of African advancement. The white farmers and workers, having obtained this position of strength, concentrated thereafter on maintaining it at all costs.

Thus the marked European prosperity of the post-1945 period was achieved, as in South Africa, as a direct result of African poverty.<sup>154</sup> In the years 1937-58 the volume of European agricultural output increased by 259 per cent and its value, thanks almost entirely to tobacco,<sup>155</sup> by over 1,000 per cent,<sup>156</sup> and the industry, now at last highly capitalized, appeared to have reached the stage of self-sustained growth, only to be hit drastically by the international sanctions imposed since Rhodesia's illegal declaration of independence in 1965. African productivity meanwhile limped behind, barely able to provide for the rapidly growing population, which was eking out a living on increasingly overcrowded and deteriorating reserves,<sup>157</sup> and being forced to seek work in the towns, where they were harried by the notorious pass laws, paid, housed, and fed as single men, and denied the opportunity to lead a normal family life—the social costs of urban development being borne by the rural

areas. For black Rhodesians, therefore, the essential reality of Huggins's 'two pyramids'<sup>158</sup> consisted of rural poverty and urban insecurity. This position still obtains in September 1976, though there are at last clear signs that the period of European dominance is drawing to a close.

## NOTES

1. J. Iliffe, *Agricultural Change in Modern Tanganyika*, Historical Association of Tanzania Paper No. 10 (Nairobi, 1971); R. van Zwabenberg, *The Agricultural History of Kenya to 1939*, Historical Association of Kenya Paper No. 1 (Nairobi, 1972); T.O. Ranger, *The Agricultural History of Zambia*, Historical Association of Zambia Pamphlet No. 1 (Lusaka, 1971); M. Chanock, 'Notes for an Agricultural History of Malawi', *Rural Africana*, 20, 1973, 27-35 [revised for this volume]; C. Bundy, 'The Emergence and Decline of a South African Peasantry', *African Affairs*, 71, 285, 1972, 369-88.
2. I am greatly indebted to, and have borrowed much from, the oft-cited G. Arrighi, 'Labour Supplies in Historical Perspective: A Study of the Proletarianization of the African Peasantry in Rhodesia', *Journal of Development Studies*, 6, 1970, 197-234.
3. J. Ford, *The Role of the Trypanosomiases in African Ecology* (Oxford, 1971), 283-366.
4. B.N. Floyd, *Changing Patterns of African Land Use in Southern Rhodesia* (Lusaka, 1961), 43.
5. G. Kay, *Rhodesia: A Human Geography* (London, 1970), 16-17.
6. L. Hastings, *Dragons Are Extra* (Harmondsworth, 1947), 129. A contemporary agreed that 'within a few minutes a valuable crop of tobacco may be destroyed by wind and hail'. R. Hoare, *Rhodesian Mosaic* (London, 1934), 92. The agricultural economist Yudelman noted that 'in common with many other parts of Southern, Central and East Africa, Southern Rhodesia does not have a well-endowed agricultural resource base. More than 75 per cent of the country is subject to conditions that make crop production a risky venture.' M. Yudelman, *Africans on the Land* (Cambridge, Mass., 1964), 34.
7. See, for example, Iliffe, *Agricultural Change*, 33; W. Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (London and Dar es Salaam, 1972); and also many of the chapters in this book.
8. National Archives of Rhodesia, N 9/1/3, Report of the N/C Umtali for the year ending March 1897. Note: all archival sources refer either to the National Archives of Rhodesia or to the Public Record Office, London. The PRO files contain the prefix CO or DO and consist of original correspondence belonging to the former Colonial and Dominions Offices.
9. The much travelled F.C. Selous wrote of Chief Mtoko's area in north-eastern Mashonaland, 'His people are wonderfully well supplied with all kinds of vegetable food and in no part of the country have I seen such fine rice as is here grown of very large grain and beautifully white.' Hist. MSS SE 1/1/1, Selous to Colquhoun, 25 January 1891.
10. R. Summers, *Ancient Mining in Rhodesia*, National Museums of Rhodesia Memoir No. 3 (Salisbury, 1969); I.R. Phimister, 'Alluvial Gold Mining and Trade in Nineteenth-Century South Central Africa', *Journal of African History*, 15, 1974, 445-56; I.R. Phimister, 'Pre-Colonial Gold Mining in Southern Zambezia: A Reassessment', *African Social Research*, 21, 1976, 1-30.
11. See Chapter 10, I.R. Phimister, 'Peasant Production and Underdevelopment in Southern Rhodesia, 1890-1914, with Particular Reference to the Victoria District'.
12. This account is based on a number of sources, the most important of which are: Chapter 1, D.N. Beach, 'The Shona Economy: Branches of Production'; J.K. Rennie,

- 'Christianity, Colonialism and the Origins of Nationalism among the Ndau of Southern Rhodesia, 1890-1935', PhD thesis, Northwestern University, 1973, 46-54; W. Roder, *The Sabi Valley Irrigation Projects*, University of Chicago, Department of Geography, Research Paper No. 99 (Chicago, 1965), 42-72; H. Kuper, A.J.B. Hughes, and J. van Velsen, *The Shona and Ndebele of Southern Rhodesia* (London, 1954), 24-8.
13. For a recent reassessment of the Ndebele, see J. Cobbing, 'The Evolution of Ndebele Amabutho', *Journal of African History*, 15, 1974, 607-31; J. Cobbing, 'Historical Materialism and the Nineteenth Century Ndebele', University of Rhodesia, Political Economy Research Seminar No. 11, 1974.
  14. D.N. Beach, 'Ndebele Raiders and Shona Power', *Journal of African History*, 15, 1974, 634.
  15. Kuper, Hughes, and van Velsen, *The Shona and Ndebele*, 56.
  16. T.M. Thomas, *Eleven Years in Central South Africa* (London, 1873), 81, 84-5, 92, 180, 189-90.
  17. N. Jones, *Rhodesian Genesis* (Bulawayo, 1953), 116-17. Interestingly, in 1912-13 the new Bulawayo railway station was built 'on the site of the kraal of one of Lobengula's crack regiments and underground storage bins for their grain were found when the foundations were being excavated'. A.H. Croxton, *Railways of Rhodesia* (Newton Abbot, 1973), 115.
  18. Jones, *Rhodesian Genesis*, 23.
  19. See Chapter 11, B.A. Kosmin, 'The Inyoka Tobacco Industry of the Shangwe People: the Displacement of a Pre-Colonial Economy in Southern Rhodesia, 1898-1938'.
  20. Cobbing, 'Historical Materialism', 8; N. Sutherland-Harris, 'Trade and the Rozwi Mambo', in R. Gray and D. Birmingham (eds), *Pre-Colonial African Trade* (London, 1970), 253-4.
  21. N.M.B. Bhebe, 'Ndebele Trade in the Nineteenth Century', *Journal of African Studies*, 1, 1974, 89.
  22. Beach, 'Ndebele Raiders', 638.
  23. P. Stigger, 'Volunteers and the Profit Motive in the Anglo-Ndebele War, 1893', *Rhodesian History*, 2, 1971, 15-17.
  24. *Bulawayo Sketch*, 20 July 1895. Quoted in H.A.C. Cairns, *Prelude to Imperialism* (London, 1965), 228.
  25. One Cape morgen equals 2.11654 acres.
  26. A.J. Christopher, 'Land Policy in Southern Africa During the Nineteenth Century', *Zambezia*, 2, 1971, 3, 4. See also A.J. Christopher, 'Government Land Policies in Southern Africa', in R.G. Ironside (ed.), *Frontier Settlement* (Edmonton, 1974), 208-25; W.K. Hancock, 'Trek', *Economic History Review*, 10, 1958, 331-9.
  27. A 1/2/4, Harris to Colquhoun, 20 September 1890.
  28. Christopher, 'Land Policy', 7.
  29. Bundy, 'The Emergence', 372-86; Chapter 8, C. Bundy, 'The Transkei Peasantry, c.890-1914: "Passing through a Period of Stress" '; D. Denoon, *Southern Africa since 1800* (London, 1972), 128-35.
  30. Denoon, *Southern Africa*, 61. Dr E.A. Nobbs, Rhodesia's first Director of Agriculture, 'held the opinion that the native methods of cultivation were frequently of a high order, and enabled a crop to be produced under drought conditions when a large European acreage would have failed', while two vastly experienced native commissioners, J.W. Posselt and 'Wiri' Edwards, believed that 'as far as their own crops are concerned, I do not think we can teach the Natives anything. The excellence of their crops around tree stumps is indisputable', and while 'Native methods of agriculture may be primitive in our eyes . . . we must remember that they are the results of many generations of experience gained by their forefathers in agriculture, with the implements at their command'. F 35/2(25), Memo by Jennings, 1927; S 138/10, N/C Charter to CNC, 23 September 1925; S 235/503, Report of the N/C Mrewa for the year 1925.
  31. Bundy, 'The Emergence', 383.

32. R.H. Palmer, 'War and Land in Rhodesia in the 1890s', in B.A. Ogot (ed.), *War and Society in Africa* (London, 1972), 85–107; R.H. Palmer, 'Johnston and Jameson: A Comparative Study in the Imposition of Colonial Rule', in B. Pachai (ed.), *The Early History of Malawi* (London, 1972), 293–322.
33. Palmer, 'War and Land', 97–102. Two totally inadequate reserves, the Gwaai and Shangani, were assigned to the Ndebele in 1894, following their military defeat. For this and other aspects of land policy, see R.H. Palmer, *Land and Racial Domination in Rhodesia* (London, 1977).
34. Bulawayo was linked by rail to South Africa in 1897, Salisbury to Beira in 1899, Bulawayo to Salisbury in 1902, and Bulawayo to Victoria Falls in 1904. See Croxton, *Railways*.
35. Arrighi, 'Labour Supplies', 209.
36. British South Africa Company, *Report on the Company's Proceedings and the Condition of the Territories within the Sphere of its Operations, 1894–5* (London, 1896), 67; Stigger, 'Volunteers', 14.
37. Jones, *Rhodesian Genesis*, 116. A government report of 1961 noted that 'Native agriculture was of great importance to the European settlers at this early stage, as the Natives supplied them with their grain and vegetable requirements for much of the year, and, in addition, native cattle formed the basis of many new European-owned cattle.' Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, *An Agricultural Survey of Southern Rhodesia, Part II, Agro-Economic Survey* (Salisbury, 1961), 14.
38. D.N. Beach, 'The Rising in South-Western Mashonaland, 1896–7', PhD thesis, University of London, 1971, 291; M.G.B. Rooney, 'European Agriculture in the History of Rhodesia, 1890–1907', MA thesis, University of South Africa, 1968, 73. 'The majority of the so-called early "farmers" were employed solely in transport-riding—their farms merely serving as bases where they maintained a rough homestead and kept a few spare oxen.' Rooney, 'European Agriculture', 70.
39. DO 119/520, *Gazeteer by the C/C Victoria*, 11 November 1897; DO 119/586, *Report of the N/C Victoria for the year ending June 1900*.
40. British South Africa Company, *Reports on the Administration of Rhodesia, 1898–1900* (London, 1901), 199. Cited also in Chapter 10, Phimister, 'Peasant Production'.
41. In 1903, the missionary A.S. Cripps noted that Shona farmers would 'produce in good seasons a great surplus of grain for trading'. South Africa, *South African Native Affairs Commission, 1903–5, Vol. V* (Cape Town, 1905), Written reply by A.S. Cripps, 1903, 320.
42. Chapter 10, Phimister, 'Peasant Production'; Arrighi, 'Labour Supplies', 228 n. 14.
43. L. Vambe, *An Ill-Fated People* (London, 1972), 176. Even the BSA Company, noting that the acreage under cultivation in Mashonaland in 1898–9 was estimated to be 542,700, compared to 236,186 the previous year, observed 'It is obvious that the natives now plant crops for sale, and are not content, as formerly, to grow merely sufficient for their own consumption.' British South Africa Company, *Reports, 1898–1900*, 179.
44. Arrighi, 'Labour Supplies', 229 nn. 30 and 31.
45. In 1903 the N/C Lomagundi noted that 'The native by having a sufficient area of land to raise more than sufficient crops for his own consumption, absolutely free of all rent or tax on it, is in the position of an independent landed class', while in the same year the N/C Makoni observed that 'at present the Natives living in these Reserves cultivate as much ground as they please, the products of which are in excess of their consumption and the large remaining surplus they sell to the traders in order to meet their Hut Tax and by this mode of living the average Mashona does not require to look for work'. N 3/6/3, N/Cs Lomagundi and Makoni to CNC Mashonaland, November 1903.
46. J.M. Mackenzie, 'African Labour in South Central Africa, 1890–1914 and Nineteenth Century Colonial Labour Theory', PhD thesis, University of British Col-

- umbia, 1969, 208. 'Between 1890 and 1912 much, if not most, of the fresh produce requirements of Rhodesian mines was supplied by the competitive local black peasantry.' C. van Onselen, *Chibaro: African Mine Labour in Southern Rhodesia 1900-1933*, (London, 1976), 42.
47. Vambe, *An Ill-Fated People*, 149. Mission stations not infrequently acted as a stimulus to agricultural innovation.
48. Phimister, 'Alluvial Gold Mining', 454.
49. 'The natives today are cultivating twice the amount they did when we came to the country', wrote 'Wiri' Edwards in 1906; 'and so long as the land is unlimited and they have a market for their produce, will the labour supply suffer.' In 1898 the N/C Malema welcomed a swarm of locusts as 'not an unmitigated evil, for a really abundant harvest of kaffir corn and mealies would probably have the effect of reducing the number of Native labourers 50 per cent'. N 9/4/19, Report of the N/C Mrewa for the month June 1906; NB 6/4/2, Report of the N/C Malema for the month November 1898.
50. M.L. Chanock, 'The Political Economy of Independent Agriculture in Colonial Malawi: The Great War to the Great Depression', *Journal of Social Science*, 1, 1972, 117.
51. 'At present the paltry sum of 10s per hut is so easily earned it will never induce them to work', wrote the N/C Makoni in 1903. N 9/1/8, Report of the N/C Makoni for the year ending March 1903. The BSA Company had wanted the tax increased to £2, while some white employers thought £4 would be a more suitable amount, but the British Resident Commissioner vetoed these proposals.
52. Hut tax receipts rose as follows: 1897-8, £35,638; 1898-9, £73,122; 1901-2, £92,415; 1904-5, £176,538. The £200,000 level was reached in 1909-10, £300,000 in 1925-6, and £400,000 in 1937-8.
53. Arrighi, 'Labour Supplies', 209.
54. R. Hodder-Williams, 'The Development of Social, Economic, and Political Attitudes in a European Community, 1890-1968' (draft thesis).
55. The N/C Victoria noted in 1899 that 'this district is very much depended on for grain and if the natives were shifted into Reserves from farms whenever the farmers were unreasonable the supply would be greatly interfered with'. N 9/4/4, Report of the N/C Victoria for the month July 1899. Cited also in Chapter 10, Phimister, 'Peasant Production'.
56. They came to Rhodesia partly in response to settler complaints that the administration was favouring the miners against the farmers unduly, and that land settlement was being discouraged by the high price of land.
57. Phimister makes the point that by 1894-5 Rhodes, at least, was under no illusion about Rhodesia's mineral potential, and that the Jameson Raid and the other political disturbances which followed 'were in a number of respects a direct consequence of the failure of the "Second Rand" to materialize between the Limpopo and the Zambezi'. I.R. Phimister, 'Rhodes, Rhodesia and the Rand', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 1, 1974, 75.
58. V.W. Hiller (ed.), *A Guide to the Public Records of Southern Rhodesia under the Regime of the British South Africa Company, 1890-1923* (Cape Town, 1956), 224.
59. R. Hodder-Williams, 'Afrikaners in Rhodesia: A Partial Portrait', *African Social Research*, 18, 1974, 616.
60. The various statistics dotted about the rest of this paper have been taken largely from official sources; I shall not reference each statistic. See Southern Rhodesia, *Official Year Book of the Colony of Southern Rhodesia*, Nos. 1-4 (Salisbury, 1924, 1930, 1932, 1952); Southern Rhodesia, *Handbook for the Use of Prospective Settlers on the Land* (London and Ipswich, 1924); H. Weinmann, *Agricultural Research and Development in Southern Rhodesia, 1890-1923*, University of Rhodesia, Department of Agriculture, Occasional Paper No. 4 (Salisbury, 1972); H. Weinmann, *Agricultural Research and Development in Southern Rhodesia, 1924-1950*, University of Rhodesia, Series in Science 2 (Salisbury, 1975); Kay, *Rhodesia*.
61. S 138/21, Manager, Land Bank, to CNC, 3 September 1926.

62. R.M.A. van Zwanenberg with A. King, *An Economic History of Kenya and Uganda 1800-1970* (Dar es Salaam, 1975), 209, 288-9; R.M.A. van Zwanenberg, *Colonial Capitalism and Labour in Kenya 1919-1939* (Dar es Salaam, 1975), 20-6.
63. R. Hodder-Williams, 'The British South Africa Company in Marandellas: Some Extra-Institutional Constraints on Government', *Rhodesian History*, 2, 1971, 56 n. 85.
64. R.H. Palmer, 'Land in Zambia', in Palmer (ed.), *Zambian Land and Labour Studies, Vol. 1*, National Archives of Zambia Occasional Paper 2 (Lusaka, 1973), 57.
65. Department of Lands, Memorandum on Land Settlement Policy (mimeo., 1925), 9.
66. P.F. Hone, *Southern Rhodesia* (London, 1909), 290-7.
67. van Onselen, *Chibaro*, 41-2.
68. F. Clements and E. Harben, *Leaf of Gold: The Story of Rhodesian Tobacco* (London, 1962), 51.
69. Kay, *Rhodesia*, 113; Hodder-Williams, 'The British South Africa Company', 51.
70. In connection with the Greeks, Odium cabled the Director of Land Settlement, 'Kindly request that farmers and others treat them with consideration, for they are not quite Barbarians, many of them being very nice people. None of them speak any language other than Greek, but they have books and will soon learn.' Hodder-Williams, 'The British South Africa Company', 52.
71. Kay, *Rhodesia*, 46.
72. As the official handbook for prospective settlers nicely observed, the large number of African cattle existing in 1890 'was reduced to a small fraction' by 'lung-sickness, rinderpest and war', adding that 'the great bulk of our European-owned cattle is derived from native breeds'. *Handbook, 1924*, 30.
73. Weinmann, *Agricultural Research, 1890-1923*, 108.
74. *Report of the Chief Native Commissioner Mashonaland for the Year 1912* (Salisbury, 1913), 3.
75. As one white Rhodesian rancher recalled, 'My scheme was to start with native stock, acclimatized to local conditions, and cross them with fairly decent bulls; and later to cross the progeny with first-class Aberdeen-Angus beasts. It was a slow way of beginning, but the only sound one. By the third or fourth generation the herds would be fully graded up to type, yet retain the indigenous stamina; and the grazing of their forebears would "tame" the land into fit conditions to carry good stuff.' W. Robertson, *Rhodesian Rancher* (London and Glasgow, 1935), 13.
76. *Handbook, 1924*, 14.
77. R.H. Palmer, 'Red Soils in Rhodesia', *African Social Research*, 10, 1970, 747-58.
78. NB 6/4/9, Report of the CNC Matabeleland for the month September 1908. Cited also in Chapter 11, Kosmin, 'The Inyoka Tobacco Industry'.
79. Chapter 11, Kosmin, 'The Inyoka Tobacco Industry'.
80. Palmer, *Land and Racial Domination*, 83-7.
81. A 3/15/11, Hole to Milton, 26 November 1909.
82. Hodder-Williams notes that 'The survey of farmers in the Marandellas District carried out by Company officials in 1914 makes abundantly clear the poverty of capital assets. A single wagon and a couple of ploughs, normally only single disc ones, represents the average; a maize shelter, some oxen and a few milking cows, tack for the oxen and a collection of small tools made up the inventory. This meant that most of the cultivation was done by hand'. Hodder-Williams, 'The Development'.
83. L.H. Gann, *The Birth of a Plural Society* (Manchester, 1958), 141.
84. P. Mason, *The Birth of a Dilemma* (London, 1958), 225. For two sharply differing discussions of the labour question at this time, see J.M. Mackenzie, 'African Labour in the Chartered Company Period', *Rhodesian History*, 1, 1970, 43-58; C. van Onselen, 'Black Workers in Central African Industry: A Critical Essay on the Historiography and Sociology of Rhodesia', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 1, 1975, 228-46.
85. In Nyasaland between 1901 and 1921 Africans who did not work one month in the

year for a white employer were taxed at double the rate of those who did, a measure introduced at the insistence of the white planters of the Shire Highlands, who habitually paid very low wages.

In Matabeleland in 1912, the Rhodesian Landowners' and Farmers' Association passed a resolution pointing out that 'the present system of exploiting natives squatting on private lands for an annual rental per head is the principal cause of the labour trouble', and demanding that the Private Locations Ordinance be amended so that all African tenants should show that they were 'contributing towards the economic development of the State by working for an employer for at least six months in every year'. *Bulawayo Chronicle*, 2 February 1912.

86. Vambe, *An Ill-Fated People*, 219.

87. One white farmer acknowledged that the reserves 'did not offer the same facilities for getting rich rapidly that much private land offered. They were mostly so situate that grain would have a smaller value, and the opportunities for selling beer—a very important source of income—would be much curtailed.' *Bulawayo Chronicle*, 2 February 1912.

88. Weinmann, *Agricultural Research, 1890–1923*, 111.

89. N 9/1/12, Report of the Acting N/C Melsetter for the year 1909.

90. A 3/15/12, N/C Bubi to CNC Matabeleland, 13 November 1912.

91. Palmer, *Land and Racial Domination*, 279–82. Compare this figure with the 1,548 registered African landowners holding 191,466 acres in Natal in 1907, and the paltry 4,383 acres held in freehold and 1,180 acres held in leasehold by Africans in Nyasaland in 1925.

92. R.A. Fletcher, in *Bulawayo Chronicle*, 7 October 1910.

93. 'Segregation is necessary because fundamental race difference exists; and herein lies the core of the matter', wrote Sybil Bowker in 1920. S. Bowker, 'A Scheme for Segregation Areas', *Contemporary Review*, 117, 1920, 548.

94. In Natal, writes Welsh, 'It is clear that the colonists favoured segregationist ideas not because Africans were "barbarous", "primitive", or "savage" but because a significant group of Africans no longer conformed to those stereotypes and claimed admission into the upper caste.' D. Welsh, *The Roots of Segregation* (Cape Town, 1971), 321.

95. Palmer, *Land and Racial Domination*, 131–94.

96. An estimated 64 per cent of European men between the ages of fifteen and forty-four were away on military service, with the result that many farms were temporarily abandoned.

97. N 9/1/23, Report of the N/C Lomagundi for the year 1920.

98. S. Katzenellenbogen, 'Zambia and Rhodesia: Prisoners of the Past. A Note on the History of Railway Politics in Central Africa', *African Affairs*, 73, 290, 1974, 65.

99. In 1930, thirteen of the thirty members of the Legislative Assembly were, or had been, farmers, while all Rhodesian Prime Ministers with the exception of the first, Coghlan (1923–7), and the majority of cabinet ministers, have been farmers. The Rhodesia Agricultural Union, which by 1918 embraced 46 affiliated associations with some 1,200 members, held annual congresses which were well attended by government ministers, and whose resolutions carried considerable weight. M.C. Steele, 'The Foundations of a "Native" Policy in Southern Rhodesia, 1923–33', PhD thesis, Simon Fraser University, 1972, 35; E. Mlambo, *Rhodesia: The Struggle for a Birthright* (London, 1972), 20, 41 n. 1; D.J. Murray, *The Governmental System in Southern Rhodesia* (Oxford, 1970), 63.

100. DO 9/3, Athlone to Amery, 15 October 1926. The following year, the N/C Umtali cited the case of a white farmer who had built a dipping tank for his tenants' cattle in 1918, charged 3s 6d per head per annum compared to 1s in the reserves, and 'today he owns 200 head, all of which he got from the natives for fees, with the exception of 18 head'. F 35/26(5), N/C Umtali to CNC, 1 February 1927.

101. In 1914 the N/C Bulalima-Mangwe wrote that 'the excessive fining of natives for trespass is a common practice in this District, and a source of considerable revenue to

- many of the white inhabitants. . . . It seems that natives are afraid of many people here, and are very chary of bringing cases against white people, however much their rights are infringed. . . . Much of the trouble arising from alleged trespass is due to the fact that landowners do not take any steps to demarcate their boundaries, so that neither natives, nor anyone else knows where they are. It is thus possible for unscrupulous persons to make a living out of the trespass laws, and instead of their being a protection, they become an instrument of extortion.' N 3/7/2, N/C Bulalima-Mangwe to CNC, 14 January, 11 February 1914.
102. N 9/1/21, Report of the N/C Insiza for the year 1918; N 9/4/37, Report of the N/C Insiza for the month September 1919.
103. Vambe, *An Ill-Fated People*, 219. Even Gann and Duignan admit that 'the frontier farmer's racial outlook was usually of the harshest. . . . The pioneering period saw a great deal of cruelty, for on the farms and in the mining camps the white boss was usually a law unto himself. Insults and beatings went unpunished; manslaughter or even murder earned derisory penalties. White juries were notoriously unwilling to convict whites for crimes committed against blacks.' L.H. Gann and P. Duignan, 'Changing Patterns of a White Elite: Rhodesian and Other Settlers', in Gann and Duignan (eds), *Colonialism in Africa, 1870-1960, Vol. 2: The History and Politics of Colonialism, 1914-1960* (Cambridge, 1970), 108.
104. Palmer, *Land and Racial Domination*, 104-30. Thus, for example, Msana reserve in the Salisbury district, which the Commission reduced by half, was said to be 'ideal farming country as there is plenty of water and rich red soil also a good class of sand soil'. Hist. MSS HO 7/2/1, Holland's Diary, 21 May 1915, 4.
105. Arrighi, 'Labour Supplies', 216. In Gwanda, where Africans owned some 30,000-40,000 head of cattle, this was 'their principal source of income, hence their chief means of paying rent and taxes, and for purchasing supplies'. L 2/2/122, N/C Gwanda to S/N Bulawayo, 22 July 1919.
106. *Report of the Chief Native Commissioner for the Year 1920* (Salisbury, 1921), 5.
107. N 3/24/36, CNC to Secretary, Department of Administrator, 22 March 1923.
108. Arrighi, 'Labour Supplies', 217.
109. Arrighi points out that 'it was generally recognized that grain crops could not bear the cost of more than 15 miles of ox-wagon transport when railway costs were to be added'. Arrighi, 'Labour Supplies', 215.
110. CO 767/2, Chancellor to Thomas, 24 September 1924.
111. ZAH 1/1/4, Evidence of C. Bullock to Land Commission, 17 June 1925, 1407-13.
112. Hist. MSS NE 1/1/2, Downie to Newton, 2 November 1925.
113. 'In Salisbury to-day', wrote Rawdon Hoare in 1934, 'the majority of [African] hotel and household servants can be seen riding expensive bicycles, dressed in attire of the latest fashion, while many white men, on account largely of the tobacco slump, plough their way on foot along the dusty roads.' Hoare, *Rhodesian Mosaic*, 65-6.
114. Clements and Harben, *Leaf of Gold*, 114. Hoare, passing through Headlands, between Salisbury and Umtali, in the early 1930s, noted 'On either side stretched abandoned lands, cultivated and prosperous before the tobacco slump four years before. Here and there among the kopjes stood houses, fallen and decayed, once the homes of planters who had left them to the mercy of the elements. No sounds of life could be heard, the gay prattle of native labourers having long since departed from those melancholy fields.' Hoare, *Rhodesian Mosaic*, 130.
115. In 1934 Hoare wrote that 'Maize land had always been considered a good investment, so the slump of 1930 was a great shock to the country as a whole. £3 and £5 an acre had been paid for a maize farm in the past; today, even at 30s an acre, they would prove difficult to sell.' Hoare, *Rhodesian Mosaic*, 55-6.
116. Croxton, *Railways*, 172.
117. *Agro-Economic Survey*, 17. One positive development at this time however was the introduction by Rhodesia Railways of a road motor service. The first, in June 1927, ran 'from Sinoia to Miami, seventy-two miles away, the centre of the mica mining



- district. Within two years no less than fifteen road services to feed the railway had been started, of which eight were subsidised by the government to serve developing areas. Motor lorry services were a completely new feature of life in Rhodesia and quickly proved of immense value in helping farmers to market their produce and obtain their supplies. . . . The Road Motor Services played a very important role in opening up promising farming country and in providing cheap transport for both agricultural and mining produce, so bringing extra traffic to the rail system.' The mileage of these services rose from 266 in 1927 to 1,626 in 1937. Croxton, *Railways*, 158-9.
118. Murray, *Governmental System*, 80.
119. In 1931 there were 357 convictions of Europeans for this crime, compared to 217 in 1913, B.A. Kosmin, 'Ethnic and Commercial Relations in Southern Rhodesia: A Socio-Historical Study of the Asian, Hellenic and Jewish populations, 1898-1943', PhD thesis, University of Rhodesia, 1974, 120.
120. As Jack Woddis has observed of European farmers in general, 'Even with the best lands in their possession they have had to be constantly subsidised and aided by governments, and "protected" against African competition by the introduction of various restrictions or limitations on African agriculture, and by the introduction of various discriminatory measures in favour of the European farmer.' J. Woddis, *Africa: The Roots of Revolt* (London, 1960), 8. Similarly, Barber concludes that in Rhodesia 'European agriculture has . . . been made a sheltered industry'. W.J. Barber, *The Economy of British Central Africa* (London, 1961), 24.
121. Southern Rhodesia, *Report of the Committee of Enquiry into the Economic Position of the Agricultural Industry of Southern Rhodesia* (Salisbury, 1934), 30. Evidence submitted to the Committee demanded that 'all natives farming in European areas should be removed to the native areas' at once; that no native-produced article should be sold in the European areas and *vice versa* except under permit'. *Report*, 27.
122. CO 525/147, Minute by Shirkdale, 20 January 1933. In Kenya in the 1930s the colonial government 'used every possible means at its disposal to maintain European farming in existence'. van Zwanenberg with King, *Economic History*, 209.
123. Gann, *The Birth*, 149. This was confirmed by Governor Rodwell, who wrote in 1930 that many European farmers were 'at last awakening to the necessity of proper methods of fertility, rotation and green manuring, but the awakening has come too late. Thousands of acres of the best soil in the Colony have been robbed of their productivity and the owners cannot face the expenditure necessary to restore it.' This was especially so since many maize farmers 'are at the end of their resources and are being carried by the Bank'. DO 35/370, Rodwell to Thomas, 17 October 1930.
124. M.P.K. Sorrenson, *Origins of European Settlement in Kenya* (Nairobi, 1968), 236.
125. E.D. Alvord, 'Development of Native Agriculture and Land Tenure in Southern Rhodesia' (unpublished, 1958), 20, 27.
126. S 138/72, Alvord to CNC, Draft Annual Report for 1928, 14 January 1929.
127. L.H. Gann, *A History of Southern Rhodesia* (London, 1965), 298. For a detailed study, see C.F. Keyter, 'Maize Control in Southern Rhodesia 1931-1939: The African Contribution to White Survival', MA thesis, University of Rhodesia, 1974.
128. van Zwanenberg, *Agricultural History*, 21; K. Vickery, 'Aspects of Plateau Tonga Economic History', in R.H. Palmer (ed.), *Zambian Land and Labour Studies*, Vol. 3, National Archives of Zambia Occasional Paper 4 (Lusaka, 1977), 70.
129. DO 35/842, Stanley to Macdonald, 6 April 1937.
130. S 1542/N2, Report of the Belingwe Native Board Meeting, 13 May 1937.
131. S 1542/N2, Report of the Mazoe Native Board Meeting, 12, 19 June 1934.
132. S 1542/N2, N/C Mazoe to CNC, 12 July 1934. The Cattle Levy Act increased slaughter fees from 2s 6d to 10s which, in conjunction with low prices, acted as a strong deterrent against Africans selling their stock.
133. S 1542/M2, CNC to Huggins, 7 February 1935.
134. DO 35/842, Stanley to Harding, 21 July 1937.

135. Southern Rhodesia, *Report of Native Production and Trade 1944* (Salisbury, 1945), 62.
136. S 1542/A4, Secretary, Rhodesian Wheat Growers' Association, to Director of Native Development, 4 June 1935.
137. Arrighi, 'Labour Supplies', 216. Ranger writes that 'The 1920s saw the triumph of European agriculture over African.' T.O. Ranger, *The African Voice in Southern Rhodesia* (Nairobi, 1970), 112.
138. S 1561/38, CNC to Secretary to Premier, 2 September 1931.
139. The 1934 Committee was 'satisfied that one of the major causes of the position of the industry is the ownership of land heavily mortgaged and greatly in excess of what the farmer can productively use'. *Report [on] the Economic Position of the Agricultural Industry*, 25. This was especially the case in Insiza, where the N/C regretted that 'Large tracts of land are held by Europeans but nothing is being done with it. . . . It seems to me', he added, 'that some of the land now held by Europeans should be given to the natives who will use it, whereas the Europeans have held the land for years without making any use of it.' Hist. MSS AT 1/2/1/11/4, N/C Insiza to S/N Bulawayo, 19 May 1936.
140. Palmer, 'Land in Zambia', 60-2.
141. S 235/514, Report of the N/C Mtoko for the year 1935.
142. 'Report of the Agriculturist, Native Department, for the Year 1934', in *Report of the Chief Native Commissioner for the Year 1934* (Salisbury, 1935), 18.
143. As the Official Year Book was careful to point out, 'The aim of farming demonstration on native reserves is not to stimulate high production of staple cash crops, but to teach the native farmer how to get good returns from his labour. . . . No individual can be permitted to go extensively into the production of money crops, wear out the land and crowd out other individuals who have a right to an equal share of the land.' *Official Year Book, 1932*, 674.
144. S 1542/M2, Assistant Agriculturist to CNC, 19 January 1935.
145. S 1542/N2, Report of the Matobo Native Board Meeting, 14 June 1937.
146. Iliffe, *Agricultural Change*, 13.
147. It is true that in the 1920s the BSA Company grudgingly condescended to sink a few boreholes in some of the more arid reserves. It had declined to do so earlier on the grounds that Africans in the vicinity should bear the cost, a somewhat curious attitude to adopt since the basic idea was to open up uninhabited areas for settlement.
148. 'The difference between the cost of production and the yield of our maize crop is well known to be small', wrote the Auditor General in 1927. 'Without our native labourer is it not probable that the wealth produced by the maize farmer would not have been produced at all? And though the margin of profit in regard to Tobacco is far higher, would it not be most seriously affected by the substitution of white for native labour if indeed it would be possible to grow the crop at all?' S 480/148, Auditor General to Colonial Secretary, 3 January 1927. I am indebted to Ian Phimister for this reference.
149. DO 35/1169, Baring to Machtig, 15 June 1943; DO 35/1162, Baring to Machtig, 21 October 1944.
150. DO 35/825, Draft Confidential Report by Lord Hailey on Southern Rhodesia, August 1941.
151. H. Dunlop, *The Development of European Agriculture in Rhodesia, 1945-1965*, University of Rhodesia, Department of Economics, Occasional Paper No. 5 (Salisbury, 1971), 59. The discrepancy in Land Bank loans was much greater. In 1945-55, the first decade in which Africans were able to get loans, less than seventy farmers received a total of under £6,000; in 1958 outstanding Land Bank loans to European farmers totalled nearly £6 million. Yudelman, *Africans on the Land*, 102, 158.
152. For an interesting example of Rhodesian African farmers dramatically increasing their production by leaving the crowded reserves and moving to Northern Rhodesia, see R.J. Mutsau, 'The Shona and Ndebele Settlements in Kabwe Rural Area, 1953-63', in Palmer (ed.), *Zambian Land and Labour Studies, Vol. 1*, 41-7.
153. In 1936 Huggins told the Legislative Assembly that 'If eventually it is found that

there are so many natives and so little water and we cannot pack the natives into the area set aside under the Land Apportionment Act, it will have to be amended' and a little more land provided. Southern Rhodesia, *Legislative Assembly Debates*, 16, 28 May 1936, col. 2428.

154. Bundy concludes that 'the emergence and decline of the peasantry was a necessary component of, and not separate from, the process of capitalist development in South Africa—that the structural underdevelopment of the peasant sector was the other side of the coin of capitalist development in South Africa'. Bundy, 'The Emergence', 388.

155. 'The value of Rhodesia's tobacco sales rose from £3.9 million in 1945 to £29.5 million in 1960.

156. Yudelman, *Africans on the Land*, 90.

157. So much so that by 1968 only an estimated 13 per cent of African agricultural production found its way into the money economy, compared to 92 per cent of European production. A.J. Christopher, 'Land Tenure in Rhodesia', *South African Geographical Journal*, 53, 1971, 47–8.

158. Huggins's two-pyramid policy envisaged that in the 'African areas' the African 'must be allowed to rise to any position to which he was capable of climbing... every step of the industrial and social pyramid must be opened to him except only—and always—the very top'. In the 'European areas' however, the African should 'merely assist, and not compete with' the European. Thus 'The interests of each race would be paramount in its own sphere.' Huggins, quoted in R. Gray, *The Two Nations* (London, 1960), 152.