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INTRODUCTION

“The whites who were here were mere actor farmers”

Robert Mugabe, May 2004.¹

¹ Stuart Ramsay, “Interview with Mugabe”, *Sky News*, 25 May 2004.

I.1 INTRODUCTION

This thesis is about the history and politics of white farmers in Zimbabwe. It is an analysis of how they interacted with the state and an assessment of how they competed for access to and control of land and other resources. It will help to explain the context of Zimbabwe's post-2000 land crisis, and to improve our understanding of it. In this respect, it carries significant lessons for white farmers and other key interest groups in Namibia and South Africa as they face the challenges of rectifying similar land and race imbalances.

I.1.1 Reasons for the study

The political crisis in Zimbabwe since 2000 has sparked new debates around land, race and nationalism in Southern Africa. White farmers, nonetheless, remain a neglected area of study, despite their prominent positions in both settler and post-Independence society. Important aspects of their history have been overlooked and under-researched, particularly in the period after Zimbabwe's Independence. ZANU PF's successful stereotyping of 'white farmers' as racist, recalcitrant and resistant to reform continues to distort perceptions about Zimbabwe's land crisis. Moreover, many farmers' perspectives on land and politics remain unheard, and many of their questions unanswered. Rubert (1998: ix), in his study of farm workers, refers to EP Thompson's "enormous condescension of posterity", arguing that the limits and manner of research into that group understated their agency. In a different fashion, contemporary perceptions of 'white farmers' as a homogenous group, be they in academic discourse, in the press, or in ruling party propaganda, suggest that they too may become "casualties of history" in the academic as well as in the literal sense.

White commercial farmers were homogenized in much of the historical analysis, as well as in the post-independence period, and notably in the post-2000 discourse. This is particularly evident when they are viewed through the prism of ‘land reform’ which too often portrays an oversimplified contest between black demand and white resistance. Colonial myths about land and settler history have been challenged by a number of scholars, including Palmer (1977: 1), who pondered whether “the ravages of time and changes of political climate... perhaps will permit future mythologies to have a somewhat firmer basis in reality”. Zimbabwe’s post-2000 climate of historical distortions and regenerated nationalist myths suggest not, which emphasises the importance of fresh, alternative evidence. These factors, combined with my personal experiences with the commercial farming community, form the motivation for my research.

I.1.2 Objectives

The central aim of this thesis is to trace and analyse the relationship between commercial farmers and the state in Rhodesia and Zimbabwe. This dissertation will be the first detailed account of commercial farming politics in Zimbabwe and the first methodical analysis of white farmers, farming leaderships, and their institutional and administrative links to the state during the post-independence period. It aims to improve our understanding of a group that has played an important, but often misunderstood, role in Zimbabwean society for more than 100 years. By grappling with the internal contests and interests of commercial farmers and by positioning their politics within Zimbabwe’s wider political-economy debates, I hope to add another dimension to the literature. My research relies on primary sources that have previously been difficult to access, and the mere presentation of this evidence is a valuable element of the thesis.

Zimbabwe’s experiences since 2000 have shown how the politics of the present can shape and distort interpretations of the past. Government propaganda, drawing on a ‘usable history’, has

placed land at the centre of the political and economic crisis, portraying white farmers as deserving casualties of an inevitable historical process.² Conversely, western media sources have tended to portray all white farmers as innocent victims of political expediency, and have often misjudged and understated the sentimental significance of the land issue.³ These distortions have shaped the way that other groups such as donors, the regional community and the international community have engaged with the land issue, before and after 2000. The realities lie somewhere in between, and are a great deal more complicated, as my thesis will demonstrate.

Ranger (1967b) criticized scholars of Rhodesian history who ignored black people and therefore offered an incomplete perspective.⁴ Scholarly patterns seem to have come full circle now, and the lack of research on whites leaves the recent history incomplete. My work does not focus on black farmers, not because they are less important, but because this research is specifically about the history and politics of white commercial farmers who until recently dominated much of the land and agricultural production. Nor is it about farm workers, who constitute a large and complex study group in their own right, and who are becoming the focus of increasing academic interest. I have not ignored nationalism or small-scale farmers or land tenure but have limited my forays into these topics to retain the focus on commercial farmers.

I.1.3 Questions and Themes

I have used the shifting relationship between white farmers and the state as a framework for the thesis, against which I explore questions of farmer divisions, farming sector profiles and land policy. The perceived homogeneity of white farmers, as a rural bourgeoisie, often shrouded their divisions, particularly when viewed through lenses of land and race, as many histories of settlers

² For an insight into Zimbabwe's 'usable history' see Ranger (2003).

³ Wendy Willem's analysis of western media reporting is due to be completed as a doctorate at the School of Oriental and African Studies in 2006.

⁴ Hodder Williams (1983:1) also cited this perspective in his introduction.

in Africa (Kenya, South Africa and Namibia) have done.⁵ I argue centrally that white farmers, as a community, as an interest group, and as an economic sector, were always divided by their backgrounds, their geographical regions, their land uses and crop types. They were also divided by evolving planes of difference, such as affluence, political ideologies and farm structures. Land policies throughout, in their various forms, have ignored the significance of these divisions, often to their detriment.

Three themes are explored across each chapter: Firstly, I differentiate among commercial farmers to portray the complexity of the sector. By exposing and exploring the multilayered divisions between farmers, their communities and their institutions across time, the rationales behind individual and collective strategies become clearer. The significance and longevity of divisions varied and I explore the manner in which factors of division and unity interacted. I argue that the long and delayed processes of farmer organization and institutionalisation reflected these divisions. The tendency to unite was also a consequence of awareness that these divisions undermined the security, interests, and identities of farming communities.

Secondly, I trace the changing profile of commercial farming over time, to illustrate the evolving structure of the sector and its constituents and to address certain questions: Who exactly were the commercial farmers at any point in time? How did their composition as a community and an interest group change with time? How did land uses, farm structures and regional influence evolve? How did this changing profile affect the collective strategies of farmers and influence their relations with the state and other interest groups? In arguing that they were an evolving group I counter allegations that they were simply unwilling and unable to adapt to post-independence challenges such as land reform. Whilst divisions sometimes undermined the

⁵ For example see Mosley (1984).

power and influence of commercial farmers over the state, internal diversity also provided the flexibility to adapt successfully as a collective alliance.

Thirdly, I explore the evolving relationship between white farmers and the state and the influence of this arrangement on land and agricultural policy. Each chapter scrutinizes a particular phase of the alliance from the peak of its power under a farmer-oriented settler administration in the 1950s through the transition and into the post-Independence era. Thereafter, the alliance weakened as white farmers became increasingly junior partners to the evolving state, before being systematically eliminated after 2000. It is easy to overlook the complexity of the state and its key components, particularly when the focus of the thesis is on the farming sector. I have conceptualized the state in its broadest sense in this thesis, as the ‘apparatus’ of governance, incorporating and encompassing a range of component institutions and interests, whose relative influences vary over time. The changing nature of the state is discussed in each chapter, and in the latter periods I argue that distinctions between the ruling party, the government and the state become tenuous.

The thesis also provides alternative perspectives on salient aspects of the land, race and farmer debate, offering fresh evidence on matters that have been neglected, especially since independence. By exploring the internal politics of farming institutions and the attitudes of different farmers towards reconciliation, and by analyzing debates about the stagnation of post-Independence land reform, land funding, and a perceived ‘monopolisation of the land issue’ by the ruling party, we gain more of an insight into commercial farmers’ perspectives at key junctures – an important, but often absent element of the history jigsaw.

I.1.4 Structure

The thesis is chronologically structured. Each chapter explores a phase of the relationship between white farmers and the state. Chapter One explains the pre-Independence history of commercial farming, its slow institutional development, and its mutually beneficial relationship with the settler state. It also explores the paradox of farmer division and unity, setting up the key divisions among settler farmers, and the manner in which these were overcome. I argue that farmers became organizationally powerful but that their unity was fragile. Their changing profile and that of the state, the economy and the political environment shaped the nature of their divisions. Farmer strategies were often reactions determined by a combination of internal political, economic and social considerations, which explains how they could be united against militant nationalism but divided over unilateral independence.

Chapter Two argues that the liberation war of the 1970s initially united farmers, but then began to divide them as security and economic pressures mounted, prompting strains on their relationship with an intransigent Rhodesian Front. White farmers played a proactive role in the settlement negotiations, ensuring a successful repositioning of the sector across the Independence transition in 1980. Key farmers led the compromise, negotiations and symbolic reconciliation of white interests before, during and after Independence.

Chapter Three provides an insight into Zimbabwe's 'honeymoon' period during the 1980s. The continued alliance between the farmers and the state was largely based on the government's reliance on commercial farmers for food security and foreign currency generation. I argue that reconciliation was partial and incomplete and that the relative power and influence of commercial farmers waned as the ruling party consolidated its hold on state power. The continued social isolation of white farming communities and their reversion to pre-liberation war

community lifestyles encouraged external perceptions of homogeneity. Significant land reforms did not bring the farmers and the state into conflict as they focussed on abandoned land, with full compensation. Renewed focus on production also masked divisions during this period, although the autonomy of the tobacco sector and Matabeleland's experience of political repression illustrated how crop and regional differences could divide farming interests and shape their specific relationships to the state.

Chapter Four explains how the expiry of the Lancaster House Constitution in 1990 and the implementation of a structural adjustment program placed strains on the institutional alliance between farmers and the state. Structural adjustment prompted social financial, land use, regional and institutional divisions among farmers. White farmers were probably more differentiated in their interests at this time than at any stage before or since, but were increasingly united against threats of property seizures. Government moves towards compulsory acquisition of land in 1992, rather than pursuing more consensual alternatives, exposed the fragility of the alliance and prompted a standoff between farmers and the government. Although the CFU retained its organisational unity and influence, its inability to suggest credible alternatives or compromises reflected the waning political legitimacy and adaptability of white farmers as well as their diminishing room for manoeuvre.

Chapter Five argues that by the late 1990s the relationship between white farmers and the state was severely strained, due primarily to a reconfiguration of the state under the pressure of radical black economic empowerment lobbies and the demands of the war veterans. White farmers became increasingly irrelevant to policy making and increasingly inconvenient within the wider political process. The active politicization and racialisation of land isolated, disenfranchised and cornered white farmers. Their defensive and reactive strategies and increasing scepticism of ruling party motives and government capacity fuelled the standoff over land and further

polarised perspectives. The international lending agencies, donor groups and the international community began to distance themselves from government over land policies and the wider economic crisis. Internally the state was divided between moderate and technocratic elements, and an ascending alliance between radical black empowerment groups and war veterans. The 2000 referendum provided and prompted a focus for political opposition, which many farmers supported, amounting to a collapse of the alliance between farmers and the state.

Chapter Six analyses the period after the 2000 constitutional referendum, which marked the ruling party's first popular defeat. The political mobilization of commercial farmers in support of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) provided an 'exit' strategy from the alliance of farmers and farmer organisations with the state. Many white farmers, united in their opposition to government over a range of issues, re-entered the political arena. For ZANU PF, the whole sector became a political threat to be systematically removed from the political playing field. The dismantling of the white farming sector, behind the guise of populist land sentiments, served several objectives: it diffused the political opposition posed by farmers and farm workers, it was a demonstrable move towards popular land policies, and it provided a patronage system with which to retain the loyalty of strategic groups such as the war veterans the security forces and the political elite. 'Fast-track' land reform was one element of a wider set of political tactics involving intimidation, strategic violence and wealth transfer, designed to re-secure the power and control of the ruling party. Subjected to unprecedented political, security and economic pressures, white farmers' strategies began to diverge and white farming communities fragmented. The successive institutional collapses of the farming unions followed similar planes of historical divisions that had hampered white farmer solidarity during the pre-Independence era: political ideology, region, crop type and farm structures.

I.2 RESEARCH METHODS AND SOURCES:

I.2.1 Key Literature

There is an interesting literature on settler farmers during the pre-independence era,⁶ but a notable lack of research relating to their political, social and economic contributions after Independence. By comparison there is a substantial literature on land and other Zimbabwean issues. I have drawn selectively on the secondary literature which has provided a base within which to situate my questions. I have extracted material specific to white farmers from the wider range of related topics.

My approach to the literature targeted three subject areas: white farmers, land and agricultural policy, and wider analyses of the state and Zimbabwean politics. My reliance on secondary literature varies according to the periods under review. Chapter One is based on key published studies. The central chapters reflect a balance of secondary literature and primary research whilst Chapter Six is heavily reliant on press material, interviews, archive sources and a case study, with only brief reference to the limited, but emerging, post-2000 literature.

Some core literature warrants brief discussion. Palmer's (1977) research successfully challenged many myths about early settler land history, illustrating the centrality of land policy within the consolidation of white hegemony. Using archival research it illustrated the controversial methods and means by which Rhodesian patterns of land use and ownership emerged. Palmer and Parsons (1977) developed this further, exploring other sectors to illustrate how land and agricultural policies ensured white dominance largely through black exclusion. Both of these works set a precedent for a substantial body of subsequent work.⁷ Hodder Williams' (1983) analysis of the Marandellas farming district is a rare insight into the history and politics of white farmers and is

⁶ For example, see: Clements and Harben (1967); Palmer (1977); Hodder-Williams (1983); Moseley (1984).

⁷ For example see: Alexander (1993); Phimister (1986 and 1993); Beinart (1984b); Drinkwater (1989).

the closest study to my own. He uses interviews, local knowledge and local farming archives to deconstruct a white farming community, its constituents and its political developments up to Rhodesia's Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI). It gives valuable insights into the divisions and changing profile of the farming community, which I rely on in the first chapter. Rubert's (1998) historical analysis of tobacco farming and wage labour in the Lomagundi and Mazowe districts is a useful contribution to a sparse literature on white farming history.

Godwin and Hancock (1996) offer a detailed analysis of the white community's make up and strategies during the liberation war period and Flower (1987) provides a remarkable account of behind the scenes politics during this era. However much of the literature tends to treat whites as a homogenous group (Caute, 1984). The post Independence literature has similar tendencies. For example, Stoneman et al (1981 and 1988) and Stoneman and Cliffe (1989) adopt homogenous conceptions of 'white farmers' and 'white interests'. Scholars such as Mandaza et al (1986) traced the continuities of 'white farming' interests and 'international capital' and blamed them for the lack of more comprehensive reforms. Herbst (1990) offers a more persuasive assessment of the state, arguing that it was not the power of the farmers that secured their privileged positions but rather the willingness of a powerful state to retain them. However, none of this literature gives us an insight into the politics of the white farmers, their divisions and their strategic choices, which this thesis aims to do.

After 1990, Moyo's (1986, 1994 and 1995) research dominated discussions on land reform. Whilst overstating the unity and intransigence of the white farming sector and exaggerating their role in slowing land transfers, he offers insightful analyses of the interplay between the state and key interest groups, offering persuasive but partial explanations for the land deadlock. Raftopolous (1994) and Raftopolous and Moyo (1995) offered timely analyses of race, nationalism and black empowerment during this period, stressing their significance within a

reconfiguring state. With time, Moyo's (1999, 2003) commitment to popular land reform seems to have clouded his judgement on the land question. His increasingly sympathetic stance towards the ruling party understated the political uses of the land issue and the ruling party's propensity to exploit them.⁸ His interest group analyses at this stage reflect limited insight into the commercial farming sector, as I explore within the thesis. Conversely, Raftopolous (2003a, 2003b) has refined his analyses and critiques of the state within the wider political context in a series of convincing evaluations of interest group politics in the late 1990s.

The post-2000 crisis has prompted a new focus on race issues in Zimbabwe and on the history and interests of the white community.⁹ Hammar et al (2004) offer a variety of insights into the major political transformations since 1999 but do not include any specific work on white farmers. This missing perspective is evident in other edited collections.¹⁰ Renewed interest in other sectors of white society is providing new perspectives on old questions.¹¹ Research on related elements of the land and farming crisis indicates a renewed interest in commercial farming, which is likely to receive more coverage in the near future.¹² Several new undergraduate theses reflect topical interest too.¹³ A flood of official reports by the UN (2002), the ICG (2004), and the World Bank (2004) have attempted to engage with the 'land question' and its history, but do not offer a sustained historical analysis or any new insight into the commercial farming sector. Furthermore, the work by the UN and the World Bank was constrained by a desire to encourage key interest groups back to the negotiating table. The continuing shortage of academic analysis into the white farming sector despite its

⁸ Rich Dorman (2002) reached a similar conclusion on Moyo's recent work.

⁹ For a recent and comprehensive review of relevant literature see Alexander (2004).

¹⁰ For other collections see Raftopolous and Savage (2004) and Lee and Colvard (2003).

¹¹ For example, see Karin Alexander (2003); White (2003) and Leaver (2000).

¹² For example, see Rutherford (2001) and Larmer and Kibble's (2001) work on farm workers. Chitiyo's (2003) analysis of the 'Third Chimurenga' is an interesting insight into the strategies used against white farmers. Hall (2003) offers an early comparison between South Africa and Zimbabwe. White farmers look set to receive more coverage with forthcoming publications by Prof. Atkinson on commercial farms and education systems.

¹³ Block's (2001) BA thesis argues that radical changes were inevitable. Taylor's (2002) BA thesis explores the politics of uncertainty among farmers in Mutorashanga.

disproportionate coverage in the media is an interesting paradox, which my final chapter and its analysis of the collapse of the white farming community aims to rectify.

I.2.2 Research Framework and Fieldwork

To address my questions about white farmers, their politics and internal divisions, their links to the state and their role in the land question, I have used three primary research methods: key informant interviews and discussions, archive investigations and a case-study survey of a selected area. The first two methods were logical starting points for research of this scope and nature. I brought the case study of the Tsatsi-Marodzi district late to the research out of a desire to compare national statistics against a definable area. It was also an obvious source of information given my personal knowledge of the area, its farms and its communities, despite issues of subjective bias, which are discussed below.

I conducted my research during four field trips between 2001 and 2004. Field work for a masters (MPhil) thesis in 2001 helped to establish contacts at relevant institutions such as the Commercial Farmers Union and the University of Zimbabwe, and to familiarize myself with relevant archives. Subsequent doctoral fieldwork included a six-month period in 2002/2003, a three month field trip in 2003/2004 and a final two month trip at the end of 2004.

I.2.3 Key Informant Interviews

My focus on the relationship between farmers and the state requires an understanding of the nature of the leaderships on either side of the alliance. The significance of particular individuals within the traditionally paternalistic institutional arrangements between farming and the state should not be underestimated. I conducted about fifty targeted key informant interviews. These

ranged from one hour to nearly eight hours in the case of Denis Norman, the only person to have formally represented both sides of the alliance, although Dr Robbie Mupawose's move to the private sector in 1987 provided him with experience of different sides. These interviews included two Ministers of Agriculture, ten Commercial Farmers Union (CFU) Presidents, three Zimbabwe Tobacco Association Presidents, two Secretaries of Agriculture, a longstanding CFU Director, various regional farming representatives and other business leaders and academics.

Most key informant interviews were semi-structured around specific questions relating to the informant, and their relevant experiences.¹⁴ Formal, targeted and structured interviews, on their own, can be an inflexible form of research and it soon became apparent that chance meetings and discussions with other actors were a useful source of information. I began to take notes on interesting discussions and informal interviews and have recorded about forty, which have proved to be a valuable source of opinions and perspectives. Interviews and discussions were written up in the field during or immediately after the work. Follow-up questions were usually done by e-mail correspondence.

A third source of oral evidence was used to counter my limited material from the government, ruling party and state after 2000. During a nine-month process of negotiations in 2002/2003, I met regularly with members of local government, the ruling party, war veterans, and senior government officials in an attempt to keep our family farm and business operating. Whilst this information was obtained for other purposes, and must be used carefully, some of these discussions revealed astonishing insights into the nature and direction of land policy and politics in Mashonaland Central after 2000.

¹⁴ See List of Respondents.

I.2.4 Archive work

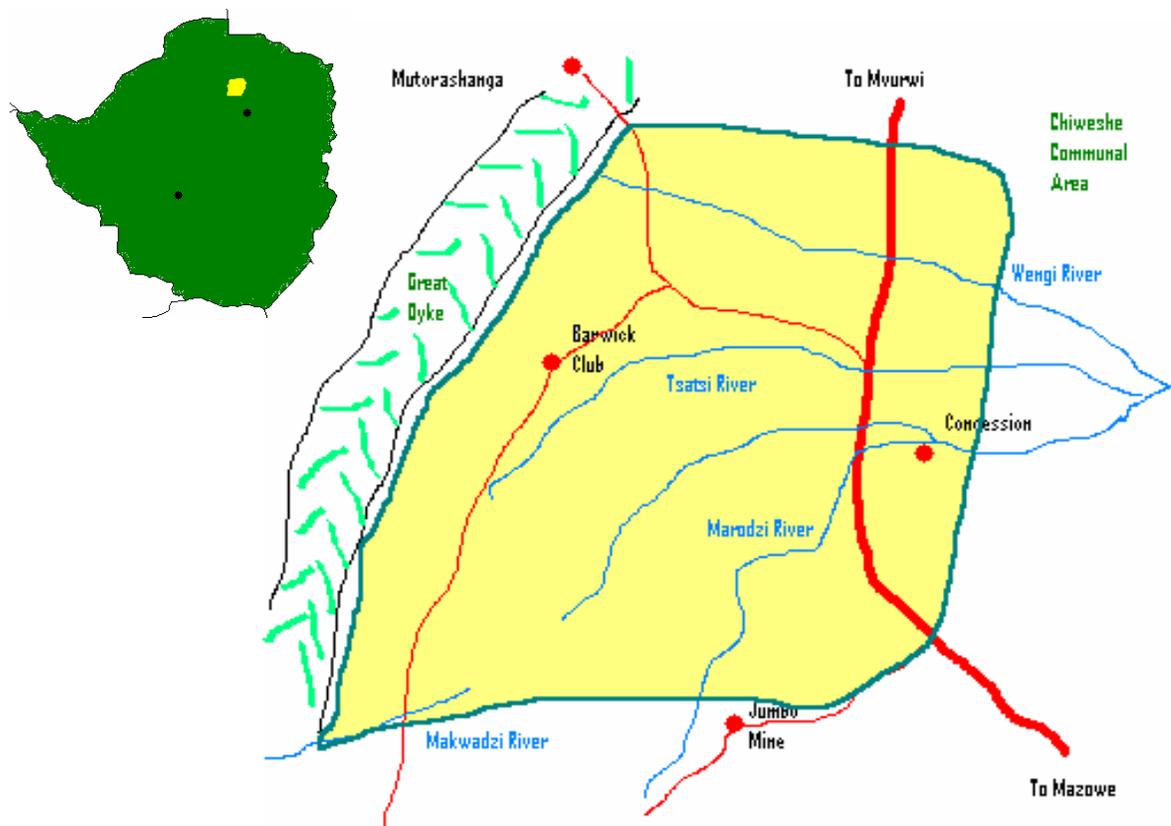
The archives of the Commercial Farmers Union (CFU) contain detailed records of every monthly meeting of the CFU Council, and summarised extracts of the subordinate regional and commodity associations. They also contain comprehensive reports of the CFU's annual congress. These records of policy debates and topical discussions within the commercial farming leadership are a valuable insight into farming politics. I conducted a complete reading of Council Minutes from every meeting between 1972 and 2002, which forms the core of my archive material. I also scrutinized every edition of *The Farmer* magazine between 1975 and 2000 and selectively read the *Tobacco News* for key periods. These two magazines were the respective media outlets for the CFU and the ZTA and a useful source of information on farmer perspectives and farmer politics. The *Rhodesian Agricultural Journal* has formed the basis of many studies in the past, but unfortunately time and resources have prevented me from including it. Likewise, the *Rhodesian Tobacco Journal*, which features in much of the historical secondary literature, has not been used for the same reasons. In both respects I leave myself in the hands of the old axiom: 'one is always more worried about the information that one doesn't have, than the ample information that one does'.

I also conducted selective archive research elsewhere, such as consulting *Hansard's* record of parliamentary debate during the 1992 Land Acquisition Act. The use of archive sources in conjunction with key informant interviews was a useful means of testing information. For example, CFU records provided a detailed information reference base on which to structure questions, and interview responses could often be substantiated or called into question by comparing them to CFU records and other archive sources.

I.2.5 Case Study

I have used my case study as a third source of primary information. Unlike Rubert (1998) and Hodder Williams (1983) whose case studies formed a core of their theses, my case study is of secondary importance to my archive and key informant work and is used as a source of comparative information. My case study is concerned with tracing statistics of farm size, farm ownership, cropping, employment patterns, and how these changed after 1980, during structural adjustment and after 2000. I do not pretend that it is in any way reflective of the national situation – that would counter my differentiation argument. It does however illustrate differences among farmers and offers a unique insight into issues such as the land market, structural adjustment and the direction of fast-track land reform after 2000.

Figure I.1 Map of the Tsatsi-Marodzi Case Study Area



The case study is based on 70 adjacent commercial farms in the Concession district, incorporating the Tsatsi Intensive Conservation Area (ICA) and the Marodzi River Board catchment area, a block that I have termed ‘Tsatsi Marodzi’. My evidence is based on a combination of government documents, the local knowledge of five key farmers, a basic survey form for each farm and discussions with other farmers. It is also based on personal knowledge of the district and its farms – our family farm is included. Appendix I contains a detailed background to the area. It also contains a spreadsheet detailing relevant ownership histories, and information on the topography, land uses and productivity of every farm. A collated summary of these statistics and other relevant information is used in the later chapters.

I.3 RESEARCH DIFFICULTIES AND RESPONSES TO THEM:

This has been a difficult subject to research for three reasons: logistical hurdles, concerns about objectivity, and the credibility, quality and potential biases of material and information used. Clements and Harben (1962: 13) noted their own difficulties in securing information:

many incidents and claims, which have grown to become legends and axioms by dint of repetition from the first printed source, have proved on reference to the rare original documents to be distortions of the facts... although the history of Rhodesia is short, the records of it are often confusingly contradictory.

Rather than expose blatant contradictions, my research has found a divergence of opinions and interpretations. So whilst there have been challenges in procuring material there have been challenges in interpreting it too. I have sought to bolster my argument by using evidence from several sources to improve the robustness of the evidence and my interpretations of it.

I.3.1 Logistical Difficulties

Researching land and white farmers in Zimbabwe between 2001 and 2004 was always worrying, sometimes difficult and occasionally dangerous. ‘Land related’ discussions, questions, or documents in the wrong environment could easily have been misinterpreted, with potentially serious consequences. Hostility towards western journalists peaked during this period and illustrated the restrictive nature of the research environment.¹⁵ Conducting interviews across the length and breadth of the country from Nyanga to Chinoyi, and from Bulawayo to Centenary, often required driving through multiple roadblocks during sensitive periods with ‘land related’ documents and information.¹⁶ Carrying information from key informant interviews had an added concern in that it could have placed respondents at risk, so I was generally cautious about recording, storing and transferring research material.

The politically charged environment restricted my research in other respects too. Many informants within government ministries and local ruling party structures provided reluctant or selective feedback. Other potential respondents were unwilling to talk to me when I explained the nature of my work. This was particularly evident with middle-ranking government informants in the Ministry of Lands and Agriculture in Harare and Bindura. Some were happy to discuss technical elements of land or agricultural policy, but not the political aspects. Agritex officials were happy to discuss agriculture, but not land. Others felt vulnerable or exposed talking to a ‘white boy’ and a few meetings were held in secure locations. The intimidating atmosphere affected both sides of the debate. Many ‘un-evicted’ farmer respondents asked that their views be kept confidential, either to protect their own positions or those of their colleagues.

¹⁵ Such problems are not unprecedented: Palmer (1977: 2) discusses his predicament in Rhodesia in 1964/65, when research for his doctorate was restricted to archival sources because of the hostile research environment.

¹⁶ For example, my vehicle was searched at a military roadblock outside Bindura in October 2002 when I was carrying two folders of confidential government land allocation lists, including beneficiary details. The folders remained in full view on the passenger seat, whilst I was fined for not having a car radio license.

I have limited my use of ‘anonymous’ or ‘confidential’ material because such evidence, for readers, is often frustratingly difficult to substantiate and open to abuse. Some ‘off the record’ information relating to the internal politics of the CFU and the farming community was offered confidentially because of personal loyalty issues between friends or colleagues. In such instances I have tried to confirm, complement and triangulate information using other sources.

Historically, white commercial farming communities have been socially isolated, but their inaccessibility for research purposes is also a feature of the perception of isolation. Sam Moyo (2000) argues that white farmers have been reluctant to share much insight into their *laager*, and that this has discouraged research and researchers.¹⁷ Palmer’s (1967) doctoral research appears to have been restricted by the tensions around UDI. Cauter (1984: 434) described the frosty receptions that he received from farmers who ‘all’ “traditionally longed to shoot or flog (him)” simply because he was a liberal newspaper correspondent. However, other researchers such as Weinrich (1967), Hodder Williams (1983) and Godwin and Hancock (1996) enjoyed unhindered access to farming communities. Von Blankenburg (1991 and 1994) found his farming respondents willing and hospitable and Maposa (1995) secured access to prominent farmers willing to share frank and detailed perspectives. So this ‘inaccessibility’ depended on the nature of the research, the questions being asked and the time and context of their asking. It also depended on the identity of researchers and their agendas, but also on their attitudes and perceptions of being excluded.

During my own research, the willingness of farmers to engage in discussion was overwhelming, because of the timing and probably because of my farming background. Political debate and intellectual discussions were often frowned upon in the social environments of farming communities, yet since 2000 many farmers have sought to understand the political and historical

¹⁷ A *Laager* is an Afrikaans term used to describe the defensive circle of wagons that early trekkers would set up when under attack. It came to symbolise the perceived defensive and introverted mentality of white intransigence during apartheid and minority rule.

roots of the crisis. Most white farmers were forced into urban centres where their sudden abundance of free time prompted unprecedented levels of questioning, discussion and self-scrutiny. Some of my most insightful discussions emerged in informal settings, in unplanned formats. Many farmers actively sought to share personal experiences, and to explore their positions within the debate, to provide a clearer picture of what they perceive as the ‘unseen’ or ‘unexplained’ realities of the crisis. Most realize that documenting their experiences will be an important element of inserting themselves into the history too, like Alexander, McGregor and Ranger’s (2000) respondents in Matabeleland in the mid-1990s.

With a few exceptions, my key informants from the commercial farming sector inundated me with material, documents and information. Farmers from Matabeleland were, without exception, helpful and intent on putting across a distinct position to that of Mashonaland. The internal politics of the tobacco sector was more difficult to infiltrate, with members often wary that my distinction of the ZTA from the CFU, might portray them in a negative light. Many farmers still operating after 2003 were also defensive and cautious about speaking frankly or openly. They argued that security concerns prevented them from talking freely, due to risks of retribution, and some were clearly worried about losing their farms. Although I did not actively seek the opinions of many representatives of the corporate farming sector, discussions with employees often reflected official company responses that they were not interested in politics, and that they were keeping a low profile to protect their investments. In a few instances, as my questions became more insistent or sensitive, often when following up initial questions, some informants retracted their co-operation, perhaps fearing unfavourable portrayal.

Primary sources on the ‘state’ side of the relationship were difficult to secure or difficult to use, particularly regarding issues relating to the ruling party. This gave the thesis a one-sided base of information and material, which I sought to balance with increased reliance on secondary

material, media sources and alternative evidence. Credible insight and analysis into ZANU PF remains sparse, but will be a key requirement for understanding the current crisis in Zimbabwe. However, such research is unlikely to be conducted effectively or written during the reign of the current regime. If and when this research materializes, some of the gaps on the 'state' perspectives of the relationship may be explained.

I have used other research methods and sources in the final chapter. During 2002 and 2003, I spent nine months negotiating sub-division proposals to keep our family farm operating. These negotiations involved hundreds of hours of meetings with police, government and ZANU PF officials at local, provincial and national levels. These discussions offered unique insights into the politics of 'fast track' reform in Mashonaland Central, and much of this evidence was secured in relation to the case study area. Given its ethical concerns and the difficulties of substantiation, I have confined its use to the last chapter and qualified it accordingly.

I.3.2 Considerations of Objectivity

My proximity to the subject and my negative personal experiences over the past five years, along with those of family and friends, raise obvious questions about objectivity. Being aware of these risks has been the first step in managing them. I have sought to minimize the impact of biases by focusing on less subjective issues, such as the intricacies of the relationship between farmers and the state, and the differentiation of the commercial farming community, and to emphasise context by providing a historical account rather than just concentrating on the post-2000 crisis. During my analysis of the post-2000 period, the temptation to homogenize ZANU PF and the tendency to identify nefarious motives behind its strategies was ever present. However, ZANU PF, like the commercial farming group is highly differentiated and constantly evolving. Approaching the question with this realisation has both moderated my natural biases

towards some issues, and been an effective tool of analysis. Moreover, any potential biases should be set against the originality of the subject and the benefits of achieving access to new material. In addition, much of the archive material and oral history from interviews would probably have remained inaccessible to an ‘outsider’ - so whilst proximity to the subject can be a problem, it can also be a merit and perhaps even a virtue.

I.3.3 Credibility of Evidence

In research of this nature, the primary sources used are bound to raise questions about the credibility of evidence. For example over-reliance on CFU archives and oral evidence from farming leaders could present a one-sided perspective on events. My exercise in differentiation does counter this to an extent, particularly within internal farming politics. Complementary evidence from other sources is used to test and improve the ‘robustness’ of the argument. Within the primary evidence there is a regulating comparison between oral evidence, archive material, the media and the case study. In researching disputed or contentious issues I have increased the quantity and variety of sources as far as possible. Interpretation of the evidence is often as important as the material itself. Secondary literature, through the manner and style and circumstances in which it was written, carries biases that often shape the way in which it is subsequently interpreted.¹⁸ Whilst the robustness and variety of evidence must be the foundation of any analysis, it will ultimately depend on interpretation and judgement. Moreover an objective of the thesis is to convey the perspectives of the farmers and their leaders at crucial junctures; that they perceived and understood the situation in specific ways is of importance in itself. The contentious times during which many respondents were interviewed may also have affected the positions they took or the views they defended. Most key informants had specific agendas during the phases under review, and many have been on one or other side of a highly polarized

¹⁸ For example the *Rhodesiana* series of historical texts were written from a settler colonial perspective and are rarely consulted for this reason. Whilst their interpretations may have been shaped by a time and a context they still contain valuable information.

debate. It was important to consider their interests and agendas when interpreting their responses. Consequently, interview technique and structures were important. Planned interviews were preceded by reviews of relevant archive minutes and secondary material. Former presidents of the CFU were interviewed after analyzing CFU archives relating to their terms in office. A detailed record allowed me to prepare questions pertaining to specific events or issues rather than on broader themes. The sensitivity of some material sometimes annoyed or alienated respondents. Potentially awkward or contentious questions were always left to the end of the interview, so that the bulk of the discussion was not jeopardized.

Respondents' views of the past and the present have often been clouded by the political heat after 2000, and influenced their perceptions and opinions of events that happened ten, fifteen or twenty years ago. This in itself tells us something about the subject, the individuals, the communities and the groups being studied. In these instances I have attempted to substantiate the more controversial or contentious responses, with cross-examination in related interviews or through alternative primary sources such as archives. Many of the negotiations between farmers and representatives of the state, in both the settler era and the post-independence era, were conducted through a highly personalized system – through 'chats at the club', often 'off the record'.¹⁹ Consequently, there is a shortage of written or documented evidence relating to certain issues or incidents, such as CFU awareness of Fifth Brigade activities in Matabeleland.

The available documentation used, such as CFU and ZTA council minute archives, reflect the perspectives and positions of the white farming unions. However, these institutions have long histories of active internal debate and the strict confidentiality of official council minutes limited external pressures to distort the record. Internal competition within and between the hierarchies of these institutions ensured the production of meticulous, if sometimes sanitized, official

¹⁹ For example, during the war years RNFU council security briefings were often presented off the record. There are periodic mentions of a 'confidential security file', which has apparently disappeared.

minutes. *The Farmer* magazine and *Tobacco News*, were the official publications of the CFU and ZTA respectively. Both might be expected to carry a pro-institutional line, but their editorial boards endured long histories of conflict with their respective councils, suggesting that journalistic independence, internal debate and accountability existed within the farming institutions, which reflected the range of views among farmers.²⁰

I.4 CONCLUSIONS

By deconstructing the politics and profile of Zimbabwe's white farmers, using original sources, this thesis provides a fresh perspective on a topical debate. Through an historical analysis of the strategic alliance between commercial farmers and the state it offers an alternative perspective to questions of land, race, politics and resources. It also demonstrates the divided and evolving profile of the commercial farming sector. If by the end of the thesis, readers are automatically differentiating and defining between commercial farmers or spontaneously asking 'which white farmers?' then it has achieved an important objective. If my work provokes debate or prompts further research then it has achieved another objective. Some readers are bound to dismiss this as a work on 'white farmers' by a white farmer, but I encourage them to engage with it, so that we can all improve our understandings of a crisis that appears to have been avoidable. Indeed, it is a crisis that seems, particularly at crucial stages, to have been debated, contested, fought for and decided on the basis of distortions and misunderstandings on both sides. If my thesis helps to overcome some of these myths then it has achieved a further objective. Zimbabwe's experiences have particular relevance for scholars of Namibia and South Africa. Although these countries and their land challenges are very different from Zimbabwe's, they exhibit broadly similar questions of land, race and history. Within this thesis there are lessons for their policy makers, their politicians and their commercial farmers.

²⁰ Interview with Brian Latham, Harare, September 2001.

CHAPTER ONE

‘Strength in Unity’: The Establishment, Consolidation and Fortification of Settler Farming 1890 – 1980

*“The conquest of the earth, which mostly means the taking it away
from those who have a different complexion ...than ourselves,
is not a pretty thing when you look into it too much”.*

Joseph Conrad - *Heart of Darkness*

*“There thus grew up not a homogenous class of farmers but a heterogenous
class, divided by length of residence, ability, affluence and national origin”.*

Richard Hodder Williams (1983: 190).

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The Rhodesian National Farmers Union (RNFU) was established in 1942, after more than 50 years of settler occupation. The union's motto, 'Strength in Unity', recognized that the survival of the settler farm sector depended on collective action. It also implicitly acknowledged the difficulties of achieving unity among farmers. The objectives of this chapter are to provide an historical assessment of settler agriculture and its slow process of organization, to examine the foundations of the relationship between farmers and the state, and to identify both the key planes of differentiation among farmers and the changing profile of the settler farming sector.

The first section discusses the establishment of settler farming. The second section examines the organisational formalization of the sector, the increasing power and autonomy of farmers, and the institutionalization of a farmer-oriented administration. The final section explores the shift in the settler administration from post-war 'liberalism' to a rightwing backlash in the 1960s, and examines the role of farmers within this shift. Throughout, I explore the paradox between farmers' differentiation and divisions and the growing power of the sector, arguing that their ability to unite was heavily reliant on the institutional effectiveness of farming unions and on a convergence of interests over key issues.

This chapter relies on a core collection of secondary literature, from which I have extracted material relating to farmer divisions, institutional development and the changing profile of the sector. Several key texts are used extensively: Palmer's (1977) detailed study of early settler land policy; Hodder Williams' (1983) analysis of the Marandellas farming community; Clements and Harben's (1962) biography of the early tobacco history; and Rubert's (1998) updated historical analysis of farm-workers in the tobacco sector.

A wider pre-independence literature on white politics and the settler economy is also used selectively.²¹ Much of this work identifies the institutional strengthening of settler farmers and the state, but only indirectly recognises the internal divisions of the commercial farmers. At times, by reading against the grain, I have used it to show the historical basis of commercial farming divisions.

1.2 THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SETTLER FARMING

1.2.1 Occupation and Early Land Policy

Settler occupation was deceitful, violent, and racist in method, manner and motivation, but was often romanticized in colonial histories.²² These accounts argued that the nature of occupation matched the context of the time, that conditions before white occupation were far from utopian and that ‘frontier’ territories, such as the United States and Australia, experienced more brutal occupations - justifications that were convenient rather than compelling.²³ Revisionists successfully challenged many settler myths, but often created new distortions.²⁴ In the midst of these antithetical mythologies, underscored with their own biases and interests, is a more complicated history of white farmers.

The impact of colonial occupation on land rights and access for blacks was significant. For the most part, land policy was exclusive and repressive. Mashonaland pioneers were promised farms of 1500 morgen (3000 acres), though many sold their properties to Frank Johnson and

²¹ Arrighi (1967); Bowman (1973); Leys (1959); Keatley (1963); Hancock (1978 and 1984); and Mosley (1984) have written on settler politics and economics. Ranger (1967 and 1985), Palmer (1977), Phimister (1988) and Thomas (1996) offer detailed analyses of early occupation and the impacts of white settlement on local communities. Flower (1987) is a fascinating insight into white politics at the highest levels.

²² For example see the *Rhodesiana* collection of publications and the more extensive collection of *Africana* volumes.

²³ Selous (1881 and 1893) documents evidence of widespread grain production, but also writes about vast areas of sparsely populated or uninhabited land.

²⁴ Vambe (1976), Moyana (1984) and Mandaza (1986), offer analyses of settler and imperial domination from the perspectives of the ‘colonized’. For an assessment of the angle of historical texts see Ranger (1967 b).

John Willoughby on the march to Salisbury. By 1891, Dr Jameson, the administrator of the British South Africa Company (BSAC) was parcelling out land to larger companies such as Willoughbys Consolidated, in return for capital (Thomas, 1996: 239).²⁵ By 1892, more than half of all pioneer land rights were owned by speculators. Many were connected to the British aristocracy and floated land companies in London, generating an estimated £20 million of speculative capital by 1896. By 1899 more than half of an estimated 16 million alienated acres was owned by companies, which was widely resented by ordinary settlers (Palmer, 1977: 36).

Land expropriations dominated this period and by the time more formalized administration and settler farming had emerged the legacies of speculation, opportunism, conquest and ‘spoils’ were firmly embedded within patterns of land access, control and ownership. The 1893 invasion of Matabeleland involved the expropriation of millions of hectares of land around Bulawayo. The 1894 land commission allocated the dry and infertile Gwaai and Shangani reserves to the Ndebele which, according to Palmer (1977: 31), “reflected the extremely casual manner in which African interests were regarded by the company”. Following the 1896 uprisings, land policy was used by the BSAC as a tool for settler reward and as a punishment for the Ndebele and the ‘Shona’ peoples. An 1898 Order in Council placed a statutory obligation on the Company to provide enough land for Africans through the designation of native reserves. However, the Native Reserves Commission of 1914/15 consolidated settler occupation of the fertile ‘white highlands’ and confined most reserves to marginal areas.²⁶ In short, the brutality and injustices of occupation and early land policy cannot be underestimated – they overwhelmingly shaped the patterns of political and economic development and have formed the basis of racial confrontations and mistrust ever since.

²⁵ Jameson allocated Willoughby 600 000 acres. Combined with his speculative purchases Willoughby controlled more than 1.3 million acres by 1900 (Palmer, 1977: 36). He was also allocated nearly 9000 cattle by the 1893 Matabeleland ‘loot committee’.

²⁶ See Palmer (1977: Chapter Five). Land selections were often based on soil-type (red soils were favoured by settlers), rainfall and proximity to main roads or railways.

1.2.2 Land Use Differences between Miners, Speculators and Early Farmers

Settler farming was not the primary objective of the BSAC. Southern Rhodesia was occupied as a commercial enterprise, within Rhodes' wider Imperial vision, in which mineral resources were expected to finance an extension of the British Empire. A gold strike in Mashonaland would have balanced Afrikaner control of the Witwatersrand, and a diamond discovery would have ensured De Beers' monopoly. Even among ordinary pioneers and settlers, farming was of secondary interest. A BSAC director, Rochfort Maguire, observed that "when cattle and gold are in competition for men's attention, nobody thinks of cattle" (Thomas, 1996).

Early settler land use and ownership reflected the dominance of mining interests and land speculators. Most food production was done by Africans and the Shona, in particular, exploited these opportunities to cultivate extensively (Phimister, 1988). The absence of Ndebele war parties allowed them to till land that had previously been insecure, and to use manpower previously employed in defence (Palmer, 1977: 71). The Ndebele also produced for settler markets and cash crops allowed Africans to pay 'hut taxes' and avoid wage labour.²⁷

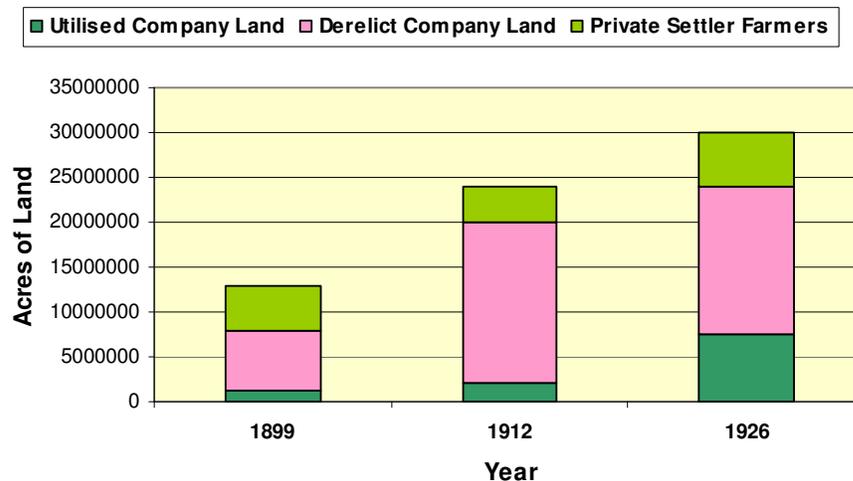
By the late 1890s it was apparent that mineral resources were limited. Earl Grey, a company administrator, suggested that Rhodesia's agricultural prospects looked brighter than its mining future. However, it was only in 1905 that the BSAC board officially questioned the direction of its activities in Rhodesia. Fifteen years of occupation had failed to produce a shareholder dividend. In 1907, after a tour by the BSAC Directors, an official 'white agricultural policy' was introduced and the company expanded its farming interests and established an agricultural research station near Salisbury. To finance agricultural development, a Land Bank was

²⁷ The hut tax was a widely used colonial policy with three advantages for the administrations: it created a labour supply, it generated revenue and it reduced competition for settler agriculture.

capitalized with £250 000 in 1912 (Rubert, 1998: 23). The number of resident white farmers trebled from about 500 in 1905 to nearly 1500 by 1915. European-owned cattle numbers quadrupled, as did maize production by white farmers, whilst tobacco output increased twenty fold. More than five million acres of land was bought and sold between 1908 and 1914 and by 1920 there were 2300 resident white farmers (Palmer, 1977: 90).

With the new found importance and rapid growth in settler farming, came divisions. Conflicts between miners and farmers cemented differences in land uses, and divisions between farmers and land speculators were also conflict prone. Speculative land purchases by the BSAC and other land consortiums, such as Willoughby's Consolidated, preceded most settler farming and dominated land control in terms of quality and quantity. There was a clear distinction between individual farmers on smaller plots and land companies with huge expanses of underutilized land (Phimister 1983: 269). Figure 1.1 illustrates the concentration of land control and underutilisation by large speculative companies, which amounted to an enduring structural difference.

Figure 1.1 Land Ownership and Usage by Large Companies 1899 - 1926



Source: Palmer (1977: 36, 61 and 185); Rukuni (1994)

Rhodes had attempted to reduce speculation in 1898, telling Sir William Milton, the BSAC administrator, that: "The large companies have had enough time, and now the railways are in

they must occupy or abandon”. But the land companies were too powerful and the BSAC dependent on them, as Ranger (1967 a: 341) explained:

Most of the great investment landholdings continued to be unexploited for decades, offering to embittered Africans the spectacle of flagrantly under-utilized land; the companies concerned contained too many influential people whose friendship to the company was valuable.

Many settler farmers viewed the land speculators as a threat, and their land holdings as an underutilized resource that inhibited agricultural development (Rubert, 1998: 5). Company estates were also perceived to ‘tie up’ labour supplies through the provision of ‘squatting’ opportunities.

Early farmers faced a plethora of challenges and difficulties. Most failed for any number of reasons and thus contributed to the impermanence of the sector in these early decades. Thomas (1996: 236-237) described the hardships faced by pioneers in their first year:

With the rains came swarms of mosquitoes and a plague of malaria. ‘Pioneers’ died in their wretched encampments, while new immigrants, trapped between the swollen rivers...wandered ‘like walking ghosts’ until fever or starvation claimed them... forests of crosses sprang up along the river banks and stories circulated of men driven to madness.

Farmers were often the most exposed of the early settlers. According to Clements and Harben (1962: 24, 78, 85), “sickness, hunger and disillusionment” were widespread and there was “an abnormally high suicide rate” among early farmers. Before the 1920s, farming areas were overwhelmingly male-dominated and most farmers would only visit Salisbury once or twice a year. Few farmers had many assets and most “lived in shabby conditions”. There was

widespread bankruptcy after the 1914 tobacco crash and the 1921/22 drought (Hodder Williams, 1983: 45). Pioneering was not a single definable phase, but an on-going process of adaptation to uncertainty and change. The harsh environment selected for certain characteristics among farmers: resourcefulness, independence and perhaps also negative traits such as ruthlessness. Farming depended on access to land and capital, but survival required hard work, personal initiative, ability and luck. Apart from a few speculators or those with existing wealth, affluence was rare until the tobacco boom of the 1940s and 1950s.

1.2.3 Divisions Among Early Farmers

Different land uses between farmers, miners and land speculators often overwhelmed divisions within the farming sector, that were no less significant. These included differences between farms, farming systems and individual farmers. Geography often determined farming systems. Tobacco production came to dominate the sandy granite soils of the 'highveld', and maize the red soils of Mashonaland. Cattle ranching spread through the 'sweetveld' of the Midlands and much of Matabeleland and the Lowveld. Later, most tea, coffee, horticulture and timber production evolved in the Eastern Highlands, whilst the dairy and market gardening sectors developed in the peri-urban areas around major towns.

Within these regions and sectors individual farms differed topographically. Hodder Williams (1983: 162) noted extreme variations between neighbouring properties: "many farms were too rocky, too steep, too dry or too infertile for anything other than low density cattle ranching", while others were well watered with high proportions of good soils. He cites the example of Rapid Farm near Marandellas town, dominated by granite outcrops, steep slopes and wetland vleis, which measured 2250 morgen (approx 4500 acres), of which only 120 morgen (240 acres)

was ‘croppable’.²⁸ Variation in arable proportions between farms was also noted by a land inspector in the 1920s, who stated that in rocky areas or *kopje* country, 4000 acres of land might only yield 400 acres of arable, whereas in flatter areas 900 acres might contain 400 acres of arable (Rubert, 1998: 46). Marginal land was either turned to cattle and sheep production, or left wild. Access to water determined the potential of specific properties. A farm bordering a perennial river enjoyed different cropping prospects to a ‘landlocked’ property. In extreme cases neighbouring farms experienced different rainfall and soil patterns.²⁹ These variations in farm potential shaped the evolution of particular farming systems, and often accounted for organisational, financial and management differences between farmers, particularly as the sector became more sophisticated.

Contrary to stereotype, early farmers came in many shapes and sizes. Clements and Harben (1962: 66) described how ‘adventurism’ and ‘individualism’ were often characteristics among early farmers, which further countered unity and organisation among farmers, as did background and cultural differences. The pioneer column generally consisted of Englishmen and Anglo-South Africans, but influxes of Afrikaners took place soon afterwards. The Moodie Trek of 1892 brought several hundred families from the Orange Free State to the area between Beitbridge and Melssetter, while most of the volunteers and beneficiaries of the Matabeleland invasions in 1893 were Afrikaners. Grouped settlements of Afrikaners emerged, often isolated self-sufficient communities amounting to a visible and significant division among white settlers. Hodder-Williams (1983: 71-73) explained how Afrikaners did not enjoy much of a reputation among the Imperial-minded Directors of the BSAC and how magistrates often dealt with Afrikaners more harshly than with blacks. The Anglo-Boer war reinforced this division.

²⁸ In my Case Study, eight of the seventy study properties were less than 25 percent potential arable and two were less than ten percent (See Appendix I).

²⁹ In the Case Study area, the Garamapudzi River runs along a geological fault line. Soils south of the river are heavy red clays, whilst those to the north are of a sandy granite composition. The Mashawe hills act as a rain trap with the prevailing wind, placing Zanadu, Glenbrook and Collingwood Farms in a rain-shadow, with notably lower average rainfall (20 percent) than farms in the basin above such as Howick Vale.

Clements and Harben (1962: 98) noted that English and Afrikaners did not mix much socially and that their differing stances on a range of issues, such as schooling systems, created stresses within the white community. This distinction carried through into nascent settler politics where Afrikaners were often ignored or disregarded.

The farming sector was poorly organized and institutionally weak before 1920 for these and other reasons. Farming districts were isolated, road and rail infrastructure was limited and communications were poor. The impermanence of the sector was compounded by a tendency among early farmers to switch from crop to crop, whilst markets remained volatile (Rubert, 1998). Farmers' associations and organizations were small, weak and disjointed. Settler farmer representatives were often prominent individuals, some of whom were land speculators themselves, and whose interests often differed from those of their ordinary members. The BSAC had a small agricultural department by 1900 but it was predominantly concerned with company interests. The Rhodesia Landowners and Farmers Association was established in the 1890s, but represented land speculators more than ordinary settler farmers. The Rhodesian Agricultural Union (RAU) was established in 1903 in an attempt to organise settler agriculture and the first edition of the *Rhodesian Agricultural Journal* was published the same year. In 1905, the RAU recommended a centralized tobacco marketing system but the Tobacco Planters' Association was only established in 1910. Its successor, the Tobacco Planters Co-op Society, went broke after the 1914 crash, but re-emerged as the Tobacco Warehouse in 1915.³⁰ Yet unity and organisation were slow to materialise. Clements and Harben (1962: 87) noted how the "bickering which prevailed at farmer's meetings... bedevilled their relationship with buyers". District farming organisations only emerged later. The Umvukwes Farmers and Ranchers Association was founded in 1913, the Marandellas Farmer's Association in 1915, and the Shamva Farmers association in 1917. These groups would meet once a month, mainly for social

³⁰ For more details on the early tobacco sector's organisational challenges see Clements and Harben (1962).

reasons. Farmer numbers increased before and after WW1, but the sector remained impermanent and institutionally immature. By 1920 there were 250 000 arable acres cleared on about 2300 registered farms, and whilst the RAU had 1200 members (60 percent of farmers) these were in 46 affiliated associations. Farmer organization lacked cohesion and remained weak with limited access to, or influence over, company policy.

1.2.4 Farmer Unity and Settler Autonomy

The early farming community was remarkable, not only for its diversity or fragmentation, but for the manner in which these divisions were overcome. It was often the overwhelming influence of more significant divisions that masked internal differences as is well illustrated in the real and imagined aspects of the pioneering experience. For example, Selous (1896: 102) explained how the 1896 uprisings overcame the fundamental cultural division among white settlers:

The remains had been much pulled about by dogs and jackals, but the long fair hair of the young Dutch girls was still intact, and it is needless to say that these blood stained tresses awoke the most bitter wrath in the hearts of all who looked upon them. Englishman and Dutchman alike, vowing a pitiless vengeance against the whole Matabele race.³¹

The shared experience of the uprisings also provided other notions of unity among settlers. Ranger (1967 a: 328-332) noted the growing power of the settler community following the rebellions of 1896 and the manner in which Mashonaland settlers used their common grievances against Rhodes, to improve their representation. About ten percent of the white population was killed during the 1896 uprisings, including many outlying settlers.³² This very real part of the experience provided a foundation on which the mythologies of a settler identity took root.

³¹ Also quoted in Thomas (1996: 308).

³² According to Palmer (1977: 55), 372 white civilians were killed and 129 wounded.

There is the psychological point that by occupying the country themselves, by defeating the Ndebele in 1893 and by crushing the Shona and Ndebele uprisings of 1896-7 at the cost of a good many white lives, the European settlers gained a 'right' to the country in a manner not paralleled in Kenya and elsewhere where 'pacification' was carried out by Government officials and their African auxiliaries (Palmer 1977: 11-12).

Real aspects of these experiences were often exaggerated or glamorized to create a settler identity. The unfortunate fate of the Shangani Patrol, for example, was reconstructed into a heroic last stand that provided Rhodesia with its first white martyrs. In 1896, Rhodes led the relief of Bulawayo, fought in many of the battles against the Matabele, and personally arranged and negotiated the *Indabas*.³³ These involvements placed him at the heart of the experience and conveniently promoted the pioneering image (Thomas, 1996: Chapter 20).

Ranger (1967 a: 323/324 and 341) argues that settler unity and subsequent domination strategies also arose from fear of the natives - a legacy of the 1896/7 uprisings. He writes of the paranoia among settlers, illustrated on a number of occasions between 1898 and 1904 when different areas went into *laager*, often on the basis of rumour.³⁴ The *laager* analogy is a good example of how external views came to perceive unity among white settlers. Internal divisions were insignificant against more fundamental 'external' threats or common differences. For example, divisions between farmers were overcome by the miner 'threat', or by the rural-urban divide, whilst divisions among 'white settlers' were overcome by the native 'threat' and by a growing distrust of the BSAC. But unity also emerged through 'positive' experiences. The call to arms during the First World War had a uniting impact among settlers and farmers. 6000 men out of a white population of 25000 served and 783 lost their lives. 1726 officers were commissioned and 400

³³ *Indaba* is Sindebele for an important meeting or discussion.

³⁴ The *laager* system was developed by Afrikaners in South Africa and involved a defensive circle of ox-wagons.

medals were awarded (Clements and Harben, 1962: 82).³⁵ For Britain, and the settlers, it was a remarkable contribution which influenced Whitehall's leniency towards self-governance, and bolstered the 'heroic' aspects of the settler identity.

Settler autonomy from restrictive company policies emerged early, but was organisationally weak to start with. In 1891, disgruntled settlers formed a 'vigilance committee' under Lionel Cripps, and persuaded Rhodes that compulsory occupation of land and claims in Mashonaland breached their initial agreement.³⁶ Settler volunteers for the invasion into Matabeleland colluded to set the terms of their service. Settler demands for political representation were catalyzed by anger over the BSAC's policies. After the 1896 uprisings Mashonaland settlers turned on Rhodes, blaming him for leaving their families vulnerable (Thomas 1996: 313). After the uprisings a *Rhodesia Herald* editorial in November 1896 unashamedly used this issue to call for settler self-determination:

It is a deplorable fact that the white inhabitants of the country who have shed their blood and risked their lives in fighting the battles of the Chartered company are placed, politically speaking, on a level with the Matabele... and the Mashona (Ranger 1967a: 331).

In 1898, the BSAC's attempts to reduce land speculation and absentee landlordism led to direct conflict with influential settler representatives of the newly appointed Legislative Council. Some of these influential individuals had been elected to the Council on Rhodes's wishes, to reduce Imperial influence and, ironically, the colonial office had consented to the nominations in the hope of reducing company influence. These individuals were drawn from a relatively small but influential group of domiciled farmers who were also land speculators and whose interests were often at odds with those of their ordinary settler farmer members, explaining another element of

³⁵ In 1916 the BSAC Directors agreed to set aside 250 000 acres for ex-servicemen farmers (Hodder-Williams, 1983: 105).

³⁶ Cripps later sat on the Legislative Committee (1914-18) and was Speaker of the Legislative Assembly (1924-5).

institutional weakness. The Legislative Council, established in October 1898, consisted of the BSAC Administrator, the resident Commissioner, five Company members and four settler representatives. In 1899 the Settler Representatives Association appealed directly to Rhodes against their under-representation on council. By 1903 there was settler parity on the Council and by 1908 they held a majority.

In 1907 more articulate signs of settler nationalism emerged. The Mashonaland Progressive Association declared that “We are Rhodesians and Rhodesia belongs to us and we have every intention of developing our country after our own fashion” (Hodder-Williams, 1983: 86). In 1908, RA Fletcher, Chairman of the Bulawayo-based Rhodesia Landowners and Farmers Association, criticized a number of company policies, including the permissibility of black land ownership.³⁷ Labor shortages and a tax on employers in 1911 prompted Fletcher and another farmer, John McChlery, to lead a campaign of civil disobedience. McChlery and Lionel Cripps subsequently came into conflict with the company in 1912 and again in 1916. By the outbreak of the First World War, settlers had formed the Campaign for Responsible Government (later the Responsible Government Association) under Charles Coghlan, who became Rhodesia’s first Prime Minister. In 1918, the BSAC cut back on expenditure and public services such as the mail system, which worsened its popularity among settlers.³⁸

The 1923 referendum on responsible government has been seen as a difference of opinion between land speculators and mining companies (promoting union with South Africa) and settler farmers and traders (calling for autonomy). Loney (1975: 49) argues that “the white working classes and farming interests” led the drive for self-government. However, farmers were divided by region, culture, crop-type and land-use. For a start, prominent settler representatives such as

³⁷ Fletcher became President of the Rhodesian Agricultural Union (1910-14) and Agriculture Minister (1928-32).

³⁸ Company expenditure was reduced after the Privy Council hearing in 1918, which ruled that all unalienated land belonged to the Crown by default (Palmer, 1977: 133-134). The Company was reimbursed £4.4 million for its expenses of administration. In 1923 the Rhodesian government paid the Crown £2 million for the remaining land and the Crown reimbursed the company £1.75 million.

Cripps and Fletcher who were bent on self governance were also land speculators. Afrikaner farmers, mostly producing maize and cattle, favoured 'union' because of cultural ties whilst First World War Veterans did not want British influence diluted by union with the South Africa. Tobacco interests were divided at both production and marketing levels. Following price disagreements with South African based United Tobacco Company (UTC) in 1921/22, the tobacco warehouse co-operative urged their growers to oppose 'union'. They argued that there was more of a future with the European market, and that this could be better achieved through self-government. Established tobacco growers, who had survived the 1914 crisis, preferred 'union' and its implied support for farming.³⁹ These included the larger independent growers who did not wish to jeopardize their contracts with UTC and other buying companies. At the 1922 RAU congress, drought-affected farmers urged 'union' in the hope of attracting support too. Regional locations affected opinions as well. Southern farmers preferred amalgamation with South Africa, and northern areas called for independence. Calls for self-government ultimately prevailed: 8774 votes for 'responsible government' overwhelmed 5989 votes for 'union'. On 23 October 1923 political power in Rhodesia shifted from the BSAC to a settler community of 36000. Although settler farmers are often credited with achieving responsible government, they accounted for about fifteen percent of the electorate and were divided in their views.

1.3 THE CONSOLIDATION OF SETTLER FARMING AND THE STATE

1.3.1 Settler Institutions and the State

Self-Government after 1923 allowed Rhodesian settlers to strengthen the administration to serve their own interests. The BSAC had established a formal administrative system and regular civil service, which the settler government inherited, expanded and redirected towards promoting and

³⁹ In 1914, the BSAC helped some tobacco farmers with loans of livestock, and seed (Clements and Harben, 1962: 81). These arrangements were often based on personal contacts between prominent farmers and officials.

protecting white interests. As settler power grew, so imperial and company influence diminished:

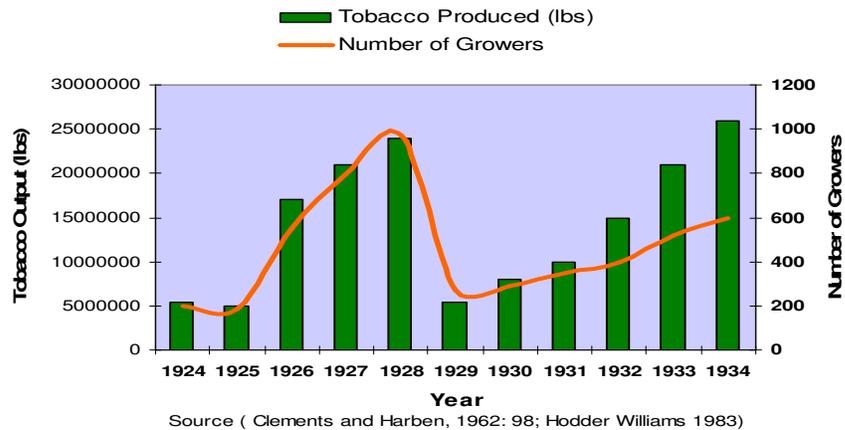
Imperial authorities became increasing spectators of the Rhodesian scene. Armed with the powers of veto, but not of initiation, and hence unable to check the growing political and economic dominance of the settlers (Palmer, 1977: 132).

The formal organization of settler institutions and agriculture set the early state on a farmer oriented trajectory through a mutually beneficial process of exchange and support materially and politically. Hodder Williams (1983: 226) argues that the “interwar period transformed formless company rule to institutionalised, formalized settler rule”. The institutionalization of farming groups on regional and commodity bases, and their growing influence at national level began to unite a differentiated sector in a newly effective manner. Farmers were no longer subject to the limitations that company rule placed on policy. Moreover the presence of key government individuals in farming districts gave farmers a new-found proximity to decision-making. Farmers’ associations were taken more seriously with the influx of World War One Veterans and the organizational efficiency that they brought to these forums (Clements and Harben, 1962). Disagreements at local levels were resolved in local district or regional farmers associations, allowing the RAU to focus on more fundamental issues. Before 1923, farmer unity and organization was undermined by the individualism of farmers, by limited state support for farming, by cultural and other divisions within the settler community, and by the divergent interests of the BSAC and land companies. After 1923 this changed as farming associations and political institutions began to account for, regulate and overcome these divisions.

The experience of the tobacco sector in the late 1920s illustrates how the interests of farmers and the government came together and how institutional advances emerged out of divisions and crisis. In 1924, during a stand-off over low tobacco prices with the United Tobacco Company

(UTC), the new Minister of Agriculture, WM ‘Bill’ Leggate, publicly criticized the monopolistic nature of tobacco buying.⁴⁰ He illustrated how UTC prices were lower than ever, but that their dividends and profits higher than ever. The UTC threatened to sue Leggate and the *Rhodesia Herald* which had published his speech.⁴¹ Leggate simply amplified his criticisms and the UTC was forced to compromise, demonstrating the new found ‘clout’ of the settlers. However, overconfidence among tobacco farmers combined with wild government speculation about tobacco’s potential led to a massive expansion which the market could not absorb. The Tobacco Warehouse took out a loan to prop up grower prices and, in 1927, Rhodesian tobacco piled up in London. Unable to finance the stocks, the Warehouse turned the loan and the tobacco over to the Rhodesian government, which deferred and exacerbated the crisis. In 1928, twenty four million lbs was produced of which less than one-quarter was sold. Most growers were unable to meet their financial obligations and many abandoned their farms. The number of tobacco growers diminished from 987 to 272, and only 5.5 million lbs was produced in 1929 (See Figure 1.2). Less than 40 percent of those in the 1928 electoral register in Wedza and Marandellas were still resident in 1932 (Hodder Williams, 1983:130).

Figure 1.2 Tobacco Grower Numbers and Output Around the 1928 Crash



⁴⁰ Leggate was a former President of the RAU (1919-1920). He was Minister of Agriculture from 1923-1925.

⁴¹ Remnants of Rhodes’s corporate empire held shares in UTC, whilst *The Herald* was owned by the *Cape Argus*- a BSAC concern (Clements and Harben, 1962: 90-95).

Government intervention in 1929, cost the treasury one-third of its revenues, and salvaged less than one-third of tobacco farmers nationally. However it was the boldest decision by the settler cabinet to date and saved the industry. It also laid the way for organizational regulation after the crisis. The Rhodesian Tobacco Association (RTA) was formed in 1929, which facilitated unprecedented communication between government and growers. Clements and Harben (1962: 112 and 113), the industry biographers, explained the mutual benefits of this arrangement, which “controlled the exuberance of the growers... and matched the bargaining power of the buyers”.⁴² The RTA, with state support, began to purchase twenty percent of the crop annually, which it sold at a loss, in the first continuing agricultural subsidy. Commercial agriculture had achieved its hold on the state, whilst the settler state secured its hold on the farmers through control and regulation. By 1934 tobacco production had recovered to a record crop of 26 million lbs, produced by a smaller number of larger-scale growers.

Despite this recovery and significant government support, divisions remained within the sector. Large growers on established contracts with buying companies opposed the 1933 Tobacco Licensing Act because they did not want to be governed by national legislation (Clements and Harben, 1962: 113 and 118). Under the Act, all growers had to become members of the RTA and pay a five percent levy per year. However, within a year or two even the most outspoken critics admitted that the system was working. Other legislation followed: the Tobacco Pest Suppression Act, the Tobacco Research Act of 1935 and the establishment of the Tobacco Marketing Board and auction system in 1936. The RTA independently established the Tobacco Research Board (TRB) at Kutsaga (‘to seek’). Moreover, by the early 1930s:

the industry was now represented in the house of assembly by an aggressive group of farming members headed by Major Hastings (RTA President)... In the Rhodesian

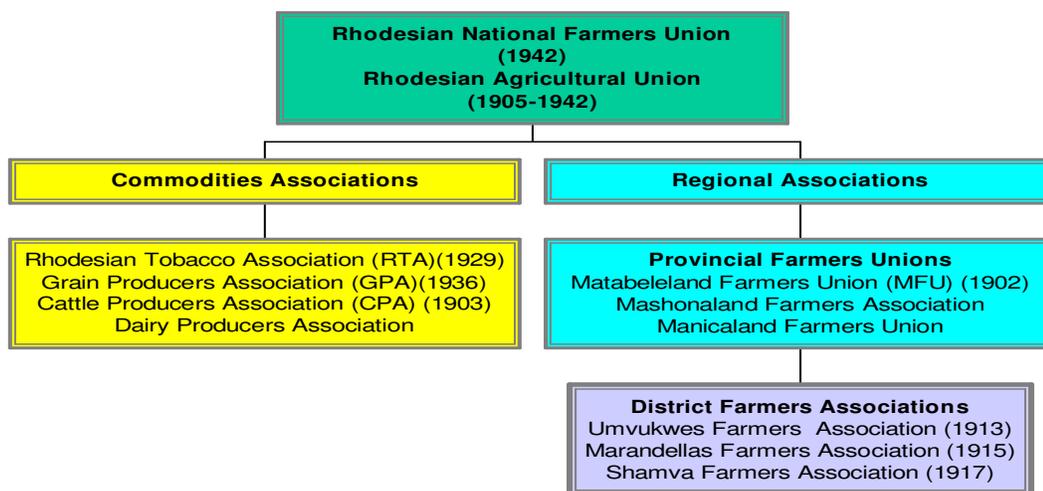
⁴² Marandellas and Umvukwes supported the association, but Shamva opposed it. Although RTA remained a commodity association of the RAU, it enjoyed virtual independence.

Parliament, farming in general and tobacco in particular were to become the chief vested interests and to dominate Rhodesian politics (Clements and Harben, 1962: 123).

Mutual strengthening between settler farmer institutions and the state continued during the following decades. The changing nature of farming leadership at this stage reveals the paternalistic nature of the institutions and the significance of individuals. Major Hastings was a “fiery character... who was prepared then and later to quell fractiousness with his fists” (Clements and Harben, 1962: 113). RA Fletcher was aggressive, intolerant and overtly racist. But with time, as the system began to supercede the individuals, so leadership styles moderated. Major HG Mundy, the Secretary for Agriculture during the 1930s, exhibited a ‘firm but fair’ manner. The role of ‘local notables’ in the Marandellas farming community is well explained by Hodder Williams (1983), who identified prominent local farmers, usually ex-British army officers, with the organizational abilities, and energy to ‘get things done’. He argues that their motivations arose from a Burkean sense of responsibility to the wider community, rather than from self-interest. The ‘effectiveness’ of leadership within the RTA during the 1930s and 1940s was noted by Clements and Harben (1962: 161) and by Rubert (1998: 89).

A formidable support structure for different sectors of organized agriculture emerged, but it was not until 1942 that the Rhodesian National Farmers Union (RNFU) was established. It amalgamated the Matabeleland Farmers Union (MFU) and the RAU, and incorporated the RTA as a commodity branch. Agriculture’s organization took time because of its differentiated structure and participants which Clements and Harben (1962: 82) described as a “slow process of organized unity and agreement”. The RNFU’s overlapping representation of regional sectors and commodity associations ensured that the central council could articulate and reconcile a variety of farming interests, and communicate central policies back to these constituents. The RNFU, the farmers and the state were increasingly able to “exercise power through channels officially dug for the purpose” (Herbst, 1990:21).

Figure 1.3 Institutional Structure of the RNFU in 1942



The farming institutions served as a structure for other aspects of settler society. District level social activities were organized around farmers' meetings and country clubs. Clements and Harben (1962: 148) describe the uniting roles of farmers' wives and the generational integration of children in amalgamating local communities. The self-contained nature of individual farms, often worked against this especially during busy seasons, but nonetheless these rural constituencies took on their own sense of norms and beliefs, and as the permanence of the sector consolidated, they gradually merged into a farming 'community'.

Political institutions, farming institutions and social institutions overlapped. Prominent farmers were often represented on all three. Ed Harben (RTA Vice President), noted sportsman and Wedza Club Chairman, was a member of parliament for the Southern Rhodesia Labour Party (SRLP). Luke Green, a council member of the RAU and the RTA, and Marandellas Club committee member ran for the Liberal Party (LP). Farmers, industrialists and government representatives promoted and protected their overlapping interests, within a grander idea of white hegemony. Every Rhodesian Prime Minister after Coghlan was a farmer and during the first

decades of self-government most MPs were graduates of farming politics. In 1930, thirteen out of thirty members of the Legislative Assembly were farmers, as were most cabinet ministers (Palmer 1977: 137). The post-1923 political establishment was closely linked to the farming hierarchy and vice-versa.

1.3.2 Agricultural Legislation and Policy

After 1923 legislation was introduced to promote and protect white farming interests, often at the expense of black producers.⁴³ The role of the state in promoting white farming was significant: the agricultural department's expenditure on European agriculture increased tenfold over the subsequent decade, whilst it only doubled for black producers (Rukuni, 1994: Chapter Two). The Great Depression reinforced these tendencies. According to Palmer (1977: 195), the policies of the 1930s were largely a group survival response aimed at establishing white hegemony across the economy.⁴⁴ Hodder Williams (1983: 226) claimed "the racially discriminatory legislation of the 1930s owed as much to economic requirements as to racial bigotry". The Maize Control Act (1931) and Amendment (1934) undermined the terms of trade for black producers, and for the largest European growers (Mosley, 1984). Grain was purchased in two pools; one for white growers at forty percent higher than world prices, and another for black growers and larger white producers at world market prices, less export costs (Rukuni, 1994: 23). It boosted settler farmers of all abilities and marginalized black producers who were also increasingly confined to remote and marginal land. A string of legislation followed which centralized control of agriculture through various marketing boards, as illustrated in Figure 1.4.

⁴³ Rukuni (1994: Chapter 2) provides a succinct description of the evolution of agricultural policy and legislation, tracing state support for infrastructure, research, extension and training departments.

⁴⁴ The Industrial Conciliation Act (1934) and its amendment (1945) ensured white guarantees in the work place.

Figure 1.4 Dates of Establishment of Key Agricultural Marketing Boards

Maize Control Board	1931
Dairy Industry Control Board	1931
Tobacco Marketing Board	1936
Cotton Research and Industry Board	1936
Cold Storage Commission	1937
Pig Industry Board	1937
Dairy Marketing Board	1937
Source: (Rukuni 1994: 23)	

By 1940, land and agricultural policies created and enforced a dualist agricultural sector.⁴⁵

Legislative discrimination became an essential element of white domination and survival. If the 1920s had focused on how best to channel black advancement, then the 1930s virtually stopped it altogether, and although the depression fuelled discriminatory legislation, it continued long afterwards. The 1930 Land Apportionment Act (LAA) consolidated white hegemony by apportioning land into European Areas, Native Reserves, and the allocation of seven million acres of unassigned districts to Native Purchase Areas (NPAs). It was probably the most contentious legislation drafted in Rhodesian history: Palmer (1977: 178) argues that “for whites in Rhodesia, the Act (became) something of a *Magna Carta*, guaranteeing the preservation of their way of life against encroachment from the black hordes”. For the black population it guaranteed exclusion from the ‘highveld’ and the agricultural market, forcing many into the labour market. Humphrey Wightwick, an MP in the 1950’s, remarked in Parliament: “to the South of us we have a country which practices a thing called *apartheid*. Here in Rhodesia we do not speak Afrikaans so we pronounce it Land Apportionment Act” (Herbst 1990: 24). The LAA institutionalized a dualist agricultural system within which “whites had a floor which they couldn’t drop through and blacks had a ceiling which they couldn’t exceed” (Brand, 1981: 54).

⁴⁵ In particular, see Alexander (1993); Phimister (1988); Palmer and Parsons (1977).

The LAA was amended repeatedly during the ensuing decades, each time fortifying the position of white farmers (Moyana, 1984: 127).

However while a framework of settler institutions developed, internal differences remained. For example, the 1925 Carter Land Commission, on which the 1930 LAA was based, revealed important differences among 'white farmers'. In particular, the division between large land companies, prominent settler farmers and ordinary family farmers persisted. It also illustrated the varying attitudes among farmers within specific contexts and early signs of an interventionist state. Palmer (1977: 137) argued that "settler political power was a very real constraint" for the 1924 Land Commission as it had been for the 1914 Native Reserves commission, and that it was run by and presented to white farmers.⁴⁶ Hodder Williams (1983:139) suggests that the commission was run first and foremost in the interests of land companies and speculators, who still owned more than half of all private land in 1926.⁴⁷ Prospects of further extensive European settlement were foremost in the minds of both administrators and land speculators.

The view that 'European farmers' supported the commission to retain the best land, to create labour supplies and to ensure racial segregation overlooks the complexity of local contexts. According to Hodder Williams (1983: 122 and 138), many white farmers in Wedza opposed the forced removal of blacks and favoured the handover of underutilized company land to blacks, which the commissioners rejected.⁴⁸ Some members of the white farming community even tried to protect successful black farmers, such as Solomon Ndawa, who grew 500 acres of irrigated wheat. Harry Meade, a Wedza farmer, presented Ndawa's case to the Commission and subsequently "defended him against hostile questioning" by Carter, unsuccessfully in the end.

⁴⁶ 234 Europeans gave evidence to the Commission and only ten opposed segregation. Of the 110 farmers and landowners interviewed, only two opposed it. Of the 1753 Africans interviewed, only seven opposed segregation.

⁴⁷ Of this company land, 7.5 million acres was unoccupied or undeveloped (Palmer (1977: 185).

⁴⁸ He specifically cites the cases of Rhodesvale and Wenimbi Estates (22 000 ha). In both cases black farmers used the help of local white farmers to negotiate land access. Wedza Farmers Association and the Native Commissioner formally noted that blacks moved off Alexandra and Wenimbi estates would have legitimate grievances as they had been there for more than two generations.

The Commissioners were not always sympathetic to white farmers. Palmer (1977: 161 and 168) described Carter as “impatient...over bearing... often guilty of brow beating witnesses”; Taylor was a “lordly, inflexible patrician”. Other white farmers opposed the commission for other reasons, such as the disruptive impact on labour pools or the inconveniences of having to relocate. Like the 1914 Native Reserves Commission, there was an unusual degree of disruption for ordinary farmers compared to larger operators, speculators and companies. Strategic collusion between administrators, land companies and well-connected representatives of the farming community, who were often speculators themselves, dominated the commission in Marandellas at least. It is not clear how exceptional this area was, but the collusion between the state and the different sectors of large scale land users, would have important implications later.

1.3.3 Inter-War Farmer Differentiation

During the interwar period the divisions among farmers based on land use, regions, crop type and background persisted. Afrikaner farming communities remained socially isolated and were often ostracised over issues such as refusal to sign up for the Second World War. Structural divisions between ordinary farmers, farmer-speculators and land companies remained important. As farmer-speculators, such as Cripps and Fletcher who had previously led the RAU, were replaced by ‘local notables’ so attitudes towards land companies at decision-making levels began to change. Active members of the farming communities, such as Colonel MacIlwaine, felt that potential immigrants and younger farmers overseas were being denied opportunities because so much land was tied up in huge estates. Although the Great Depression led to a fall in the price of land, and the transfer of significant quantities, the high concentrations of land ownership among land companies persisted.

New elements of division emerged as the farming sectors and communities became more permanent. Economic and social stratification hardened in most districts. Inter-war farmer incomes varied widely in Marandellas, with the least affluent quarter earning less than £191 per year. Half the farmers earned less than £425 per year and three quarters earned less than £867 per year (Hodder Williams, 1983: 170). Only nine farmers out of more than 200 earned more than £5000 per year. Such differences in wealth divided farming communities. Umvukwes became renowned for its social hierarchy between older and wealthier farming families and newcomers.⁴⁹ The country club bar was even physically divided into ‘owners’ and ‘managers’ sections. Rubert (1998: 43) illustrated the stark variations in scale between tobacco growers. Those that survived the 1928 crash and the depression, with their accumulated knowledge and experience and larger farms and larger credit facilities often claimed local elite status or had it thrust upon them, whilst newcomers were socially and financially cautious.

As farming communities became more settled other social divisions emerged. Clements and Harben (1962: 66) described how neighbouring farmers differed in management styles, ideologies, racial attitudes and farming abilities. Individual differences among farmers are important to note because the undesirable characteristics of certain farmers often stereotyped perceptions of the whole group. Hodder-Williams (1983: 64, 113, 141 and 165) made regular reference to this issue: “some farmers, probably only a small minority, were unquestionably bad employers and their effect would almost certainly have been disproportionate to their numbers”. Better employers enjoyed a surplus of good quality labour, whereas bad employers always had shortages (Rubert, 1998: Chapter Five). Palmer (1977: 147) acknowledged differing attitudes among farmers towards dipping fees and land rents, distinguishing between ‘bad farmers’ and ‘decent farmers’. Farmer attitudes often determined the manner in which African opinions of white farmers varied, which affected the nature of the labour market and the skills pool,

⁴⁹ Discussions with Alec Philp, Barwick, January 2003.

particularly in tobacco farming (Weinrich, 1973: 56-60). Patterns of mutual self-interest emerged; farmers providing better pay and conditions would improve worker output, 'loyalty' and return visits from seasonal workers (Rubert, 1998: Chapter Five).

Differences among farmers continued in the practical farming sense too. There was an enormous variation in productivity and abilities of farmers. Rubert (1998: 21) noted that whilst factors such as land, labour and capital could be similar across farms, "application was down to the individual". Skilled and established farmers became cumulatively affluent and expanded their cropping areas, whereas many new inexperienced farmers struggled on small areas with large debts. Even personality clashes between farmers impacted on local communities. Hodder Williams (1983: 75) detailed a long-standing feud between two neighbours, arguing that they "differed on all matters except public service and hunting".

By the Second World War a more settled white farming community played a more significant role in politics and the national economy, and this increased when farming and mining were tasked with meeting the significant costs of Rhodesia's armed contribution (£10 000 per day).

Like the First World War, this had a cohesive effect on settlers. Rhodesia contributed more men and resources, per capita, than any Commonwealth country.⁵⁰ Settlers used this contribution, as they had done after the First World War, to boost the heroic undertones of the settler identity and image. It also allowed new immigrants to become Rhodesians, which was important because by 1950 more than two thirds of whites were recent immigrants.

⁵⁰ Rhodesia spent about £15 million on military expenditure between 1939 and 1945 (Hodder Williams, 1983: 160). This is the equivalent of about \$2 billion in Net Present Value.

1.4 FARMERS AND THE FORTIFICATION OF THE SETTLER STATE

World War Two boosted the Rhodesian economy and settler unity. The post-war recovery was remarkable and tobacco became the engine of the economy during this period. Between 1940 and 1945 the international demand for tobacco soared and grower numbers increased from 638 to 796 (Clements and Harben 1962: 128). In 1947, the Tobacco Marketing Board appointed a delegation, led by Ralph Palmer (ZTA President), to secure a contract with British buyers, for a guaranteed 46 million lbs per year for ten years, at a guaranteed minimum price that would return 100 percent profits to the farmers. In return, the Rhodesian government pledged to protect British buyers, who were concerned about American supplies due to the strength of the dollar. The manufacturers agreed to the quantity and price in a five-year renewable proposal. It was another crucial moment in farmer-state collusion. According to Clements and Harben (1962: 141 and 145) “the country bumpkins had held their own against the mighty buyers and their industry had come of age”. The 1951 renewal agreement guaranteed a market for 485 million kg over six years. During this period the number of tobacco growers trebled from 900 to 2800 and the area cultivated increased from 75 000 acres to 200000 acres. Before the war, farmers did not contribute much tax, but this trebled as a proportion of national income in the late 1940s (Hodder Williams, 1983: 163). Tobacco became the prop of the Rhodesian economy: it financed mixed farming, built Salisbury and shifted political power from Bulawayo towards Mashonaland.

The output of settler farming increased six-fold between 1945 and 1965 (Mosley 1984). The liberalism of the post-war period fed off the relative affluence and economic recovery. Hancock (1984) and Cauter (1983) draw a link between ideology and class, arguing that liberalism was a luxury for wealthy, established farmers. Similarly, Weinrich (1973: 69-71) argued that levels of education and wealth among farmers often determined their attitudes to black advancement.

This seems to have applied to the concerted attempts to try and establish a black middle class, by

groups such as the Capricorn Society, the Dolphin Club and the Interracial Association of Southern Rhodesia. Their memberships consisted of wealthy, intellectual and liberal whites, including a significant number of prominent landowners and farmers (Hancock 1978).

Other analyses of this period, such as those of Keatley (1963) and Leys (1959), argue that it was hardly worth distinguishing between the narrow range of white political perspectives, which were fundamentally racist in that virtually all opposed immediate majority rule.⁵¹ Even ‘integrationists’ called for gradualism in black advancement, and within this lay cultural and racial condescension. Ultimately, these attempts to build a “buffer” black middle-class were unsuccessful as black and white nationalisms, became more militant and polarised the debate.⁵²

1.4.1 Farmers and the Right Wing Backlash

During the 1930s the system of racial segregation became entrenched. Under protectionist policies settler interests were protected and promoted, generally at the expense of black sectors and generally prioritising farmers. As the economy evolved and developed, so Huggins’ United Party shifted its focus within the white population, aiming to capitalize on the increasing number of white immigrants settling in the towns and villages of rural constituencies. Christopher Worseley-Worswick had canvassed opinion about forming a farmer’s party in 1942, complaining that the UP, of which he was a member, was abandoning its farmer base.

Divergent interests among and between farmers and political parties were vividly illustrated in 1949 when Edgar Whitehead (then Finance Minister) tried to impose a twenty percent tax on

⁵¹ For other analyses of white Rhodesian society and attitudes, see Kennedy (1982), Rogers and Frantz (1962). Leys (1959) offers a rigorous assessment of white politics during this period.

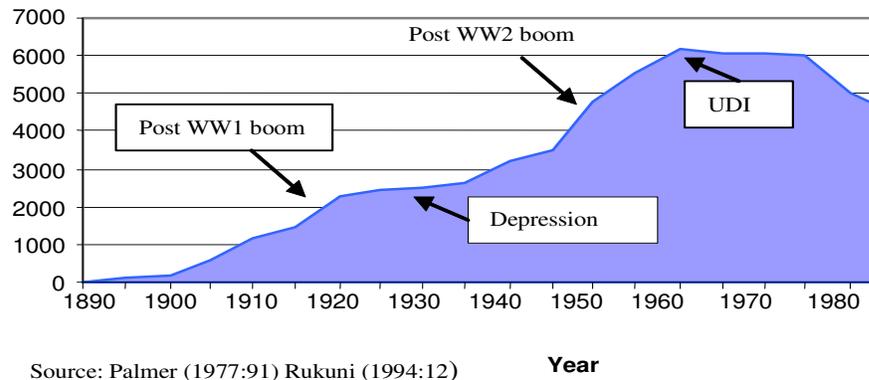
⁵² For further details see Hancock (1978) or Holderness (1985). Stoneman and Cliffe (1989) argue that the failure to establish a black middle class was central to the problem. Arrighi (1970) drew attention to similar interests between black middle classes and whites in the 1950s, but Weinrich (1973) comments on how black and white rural elites remained “remarkably unintegrated”.

tobacco. This was aimed at alleviating the government's balance of payments problem, but was attempted without consulting the tobacco establishment.⁵³ Whitehead and other government figures at the time, including Huggins, Todd and Hatty were all farmers but not tobacco growers and there was envy at tobacco's rapidly growing affluence.⁵⁴ The furious response of the tobacco growers was telling. The RTA rejected the tax and threatened to delay tobacco sales, and secured support from the RNFU, the tobacco trade and the Rhodesian Chamber of Commerce (RCC). They also turned down Whitehead's concession offer of fifteen percent and postponed the opening of the auction floors (Clements and Harben, 1962: 157-158). Whitehead flew to London to seek support from Whitehall but Huggins, meanwhile, backed down in Salisbury. To avoid a political crisis the RTA proposed a compromise levy as a five-year loan to government, to be returned in subsidy or support.

The incident illustrated a gap in state-farmer communications that reflected internal divisions within the farming sector. It also illustrated the power of the tobacco and wider farming leaderships, and their pragmatic stance towards the state. Although Whitehead saved face publicly, his reputation within the tobacco industry was tainted and lost the UP much credibility among farmers, a disability that carried through to the 1958 and 1962 elections. Hodder Williams (1983: 203-205) traced a broader shift in political patterns among farmers in Marandellas after the war, arguing that "the latent racial bias" of the 1930s re-emerged and that there was a steady erosion of unity among the ageing 'notables'. Christopher Worseley-Worswick's continued calls for further protection of white farming interests began to gain support from other prominent individuals such as Winston Field, the ex-RTA President.

⁵³ Whitehead justified the magnitude of the tax on the basis that 100 percent profits were being made off the 1947 London Tobacco agreement.

⁵⁴ Clements and Harben (1962: 155 and 157) argue that many non-tobacco growers had a "misleading picture of the tobacco baron, living luxuriously whilst his assistants and laborers earned a fortune for him in the lands". Such farmers were the exception rather than the rule at the time. It would be another ten years before the great tobacco fortunes were consolidated.

Figure 1.5 White Farmer Numbers 1890 - 1980

Fundamental changes were taking place in the white electorate. For a start the white population doubled between 1945 and 1955 to 150 000. This influx of immigrants continued during the years of Federation (1953-1963) and altered the political balance of rural constituencies, even though immigrants were only allowed to vote after three years of residency. The number of white farmers increased by more than 2500 in the fifteen years after the war. About 500 ex-servicemen were granted farms, but there was a much bigger influx of other farming immigrants from diverse backgrounds. An influx of ex-colonial servicemen from India in the late 1940s preceded the arrival of several hundred farmers from Kenya in the early 1960s. In the 1950s and early 1960s about fifty young French-Mauritian sugar farmers pioneered the sugar scheme in the lowveldt.⁵⁵ During the Congo crisis of 1960, a number of Belgian farmers drove south and resettled in Rhodesia. British immigrant farmers included a mixture of Irishmen, Scotsmen, and Welshmen. European immigrants included Danes, Greeks, Italians, Germans and a significant number of Jews, whilst some Eastern Europeans fleeing the spread of communism, also settled during the post-war period. Many of these farmer immigrants, particularly those from former colonies, brought hardened and cynical attitudes with them and a determination to prevent the ‘submissions’ of India, Kenya or the Congo.

⁵⁵ There is little analysis of this secluded community.

Hodder Williams (1983: 169 and 207) noted the racist prejudices of immigrants and of previously marginalised groups such as Afrikaners, artisans and junior civil servants, and their key role in the swing of the vote. In the 1954 general election Garfield Todd, a missionary-rancher from Matabeleland, won a landslide victory for the UP (Phimister 1988).⁵⁶ Todd's principled reformism, which aimed at moderating nationalism through concessions to African representation became increasingly criticised among whites.⁵⁷ The more Todd conceded and moved to the left the more he was ostracised within the white electorate, uniting moderate and right wing elements against him. In the 1957 Federal election, this shift was clear.⁵⁸ Winston Field won convincingly for the Dominion Party against Evan Campbell, a prominent United Federal Party (UFP) member, who was also a former President of the RTA.⁵⁹ In 1958 Todd was abandoned by his senior Ministers and forced out of the premiership in an internal coup in which he was succeeded by Edgar Whitehead (Leys 1959). Many farmers felt that Todd and the UFP were becoming too liberal and most tobacco farmers remembered Whitehead's role in the tobacco tax crisis of 1949. In the 1958 territorial election the Dominion Party strengthened its challenge by winning thirteen seats versus the UFP's seventeen.

African nationalism was beginning to confront white settler hegemony and was often influenced by other policies. The 1951 Native Land Husbandry Act ostensibly aimed to improve African systems of agriculture in a classical 'betterment' planning exercise. Prescribed policies relating to land tenure, cultivation practices and conservation, through increased state interventions became increasingly intrusive and prompted unexpected reactions and consequences.⁶⁰

⁵⁶ The United Party (UP) became the United Federal Party (UFP) during the mid 1950s, and was represented in both territorial and federal capacities. For a detailed analysis of European politics and the various political parties during this period see Leys (1959).

⁵⁷ For an updated biography of Sir Garfield Todd see Weiss (1999).

⁵⁸ I have purposely avoided becoming embroiled in discussions about Federal politics. For rigorous and timely insights into the politics of the Central African Federation see Leys and Pratt (1960) and Keatley (1963).

⁵⁹ The Dominion Party had been started by William Harper, an ex-Indian colonial official. The party manifesto was profoundly conservative compared to the UFP's. Field later appointed Campbell as High Commissioner to London.

⁶⁰ The 1951 NLHA has been extensively critiqued. See Alexander (1993); Palmer and Parsons (1977).

Alexander (1993: 11) argues that “technical development policies were based on profound misunderstandings of production and ecology in the reserves, often exacerbating problems they were ostensibly intended to solve”.

The provision of farms to World War II servicemen and immigrants led to the expulsion of Africans from absentee landlord properties in the European areas.⁶¹ In the decade after 1945, more than 100 000 blacks were forcibly relocated. Moyana (1984: 137) claims that these combined policies did more to recruit for the nationalist cause than any others.

For many white farmers, resistance to the NLHA was seen as a rejection of goodwill. Even progressive white farmers grew increasingly frustrated with what they saw as the disruption and spoiler tactics of nationalist ‘agitators’.⁶² The violence, strikes and riots of the late 1950s disillusioned many moderates and liberals. Drinkwater (1988) suggests that the right-wing shift within the white electorate spoiled the moderation of the Whitehead government, but there were still tendencies towards compromise within the UFP. The Quinton Report (1960) recommended the repeal of the Land Apportionment Act and the desegregation of land use, under a multi-racial policy of community development.⁶³ This was a last attempt at an inclusive land and agricultural policy and political agenda, but in threatening the basis of white hegemony, became a focus for rightwing sentiments. WH Nicolle, Secretary of Internal Affairs, stated that

there is no doubt that if the Land Apportionment Act was repealed natives would move into European Areas, and in consequence large numbers of Europeans would leave the country, and in consequence property values would slump, and in

⁶¹ The 1944 Land Settlement Act defined three categories of settlers (women, mixed race beneficiaries, and white ex-servicemen) and provided undeveloped Crown land or support to buy existing properties. By 1950, 496 ex-servicemen had been settled on farms. By 1951, about thirty had been ejected, for failing to service their loans or develop their properties.

⁶² Alan Ravenscroft’s scepticism towards nationalism arose from nationalist ‘agitators’ disruption of master farmers in Chiweshe. Interview with Alan Ravenscroft, Concession, September 2001.

⁶³ Jack Quinton, a prominent farmer from Umvukwes, was Minister of Agriculture in the Whitehead government and led the development of the Lowveld and Middle Sabi irrigation schemes.

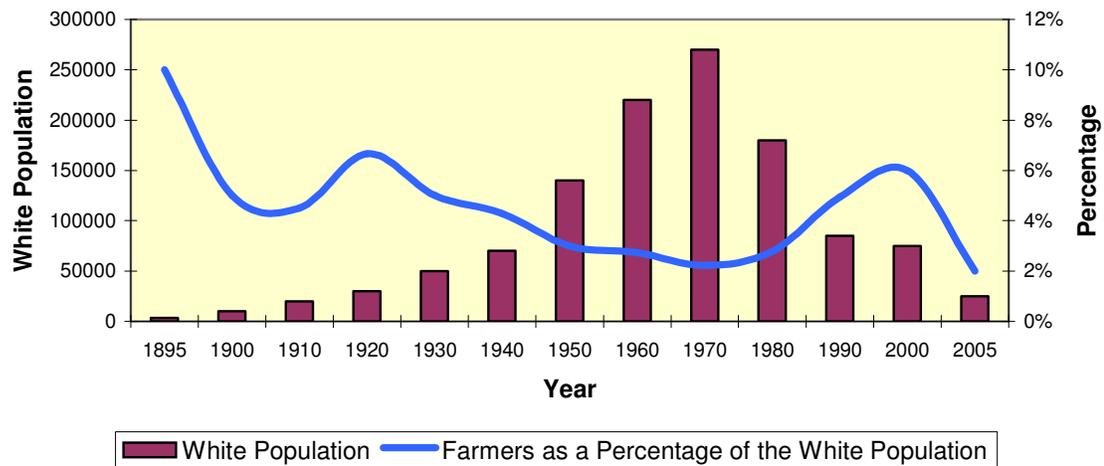
consequence production would drop substantially, and in consequence the economy would collapse (cited in Alexander, 1993: 88).

The UFP's 1961 constitutional provision mapped a gradual route towards majority rule through a qualified electoral franchise. Joshua Nkomo and Ndabaningi Sithole's initial indecisions over whether or not to accept the constitution, led to the breakaway of ZANU from ZAPU in 1963. The comprehensive rejection of the constitution by African voters was based on its refusal to share power quickly enough, but was portrayed by the white right as a rejection of compromise. Nationalist violence and radicalism shook the confidence and commitment of moderates, and liberals and provided right-wingers with more of a platform. Militant rhetoric by nationalists played into the hands of reactionary groups like the Dominion Party. So the hardening of both 'black' and 'white' opinions was a circular, self-perpetuating process moving rapidly towards racial militancy, against which more moderate and compromising elements of both groups became increasingly irrelevant.

1.4.2 Farmers and the Rhodesian Front

Prominent farming interests had increasingly redirected their support away from the United Party during the late 1950s, but the overall drift towards the right gained its momentum from urban white sectors. The proportion of white farmers as a percentage of the overall white population was lowest during this period (See Figure 1.5). Post-war industrialization and immigration increased white numbers in rural towns and diluted the influence of farmers in rural areas.

Figure 1.6 Commercial Farmers as a Proportion of the White Population



Source: Calculated from Palmer (1977: 12 and 91), Rukuni (1994: 12) and CSO census data

The perceived concessions of Whitehead and the UFP among white voters did not help their waning popularity, but it was other policy miscalculations that drove important elements of the farming vote away from the UFP. In 1958 Edgar Whitehead again tried to tax the tobacco sector and again met with stiff resistance from tobacco farmers across the political spectrum. Ed Harben, a left-of-centre tobacco notable, wrote a poem to the *Central African Examiner*, castigating Whitehead and his Finance Minister Cyril Hatty. An extract reads:

tobacco has very near cost you your throne –
 Now for the future what everyone wonders - Is
 ... have you the savvy to leave it alone?⁶⁴

The United Federal Party's support for the 1961 constitutional proposals, including a 'B' voters role, and the repeal of the LAA prompted Ian Smith to resign from the UFP. He persuaded DC Lilford, a wealthy tobacco farmer, and a group of other prominent cattlemen, tobacco men and domestic industrialists to finance a new party, the Rhodesian Front, to keep "Rhodesia for the

⁶⁴ Cited in Clements and Harben (1962, 154 -155).

Rhodesians.”⁶⁵ The tobacco sector’s wariness of Whitehead played even more in favour of the Rhodesian Front when Smith persuaded Winston Field, the widely respected tobacco farmer, former ZTA President, and Dominion Party MP, to lead a conservative alliance in the 1962 election, where the Rhodesian Front won a narrow majority of five seats. In Marandellas, Field won 755 votes versus 688. It was close, but it was a watershed and from then on the Rhodesian Front rode a wave of white nationalism. Moorcroft (1979: 10) quoted Blake:

The Front won over the ‘small man’, the clerks, shop assistants, artisans to whom African advancement presented the greatest threat ... many of the immigrants were people who had left Britain because of their dislike of the labour government.

White groups that had previously been discriminated against, such as Afrikaners and white artisans, grew in confidence. After the RF victory, the Afrikaner community in Marandellas organized a huge celebration braai (BBQ) in the town centre - an unprecedented public gesture (Hodder Williams, 1983: 222). This unity overcame the English-Afrikaner divide for the first time, and an important element of RF strategy was the inclusion and integration of Afrikaners into the ‘white’ community thereafter. The RF’s victory ensured that the race question would be decided through confrontation rather than compromise. The response of UFP members after the 1962 election was telling within the wider political contest. Rather than acknowledging their own mistakes and the significance of isolating the tobacco sector, they argued that the black nationalists’ boycotts of the 1962 election had allowed the RF into power. Flower (1987: 12) argues that 30 000 policemen and their families also played an important role in electing the RF.

1.4.3 Farmers and UDI

Key farming interests helped to bring the Rhodesian Front to power but other groups and issues consolidated the power of the party. The dismantling of the Central African Federation in 1963

⁶⁵ “We Want Our Country!”, *The Times Europe*, 5 November 1965.

and the 1964 Labour party victory in Britain fuelled fears of Whitehall granting immediate majority rule to Rhodesia, which most whites opposed. Harold Wilson's anti-colonial 'socialism' and the Labour Party's active support for colonial independence united a wide array of white Rhodesian opinion against Britain (Moorcroft, 1979:16).

The complexity of farmers' positions are revealed when we examine the question of Rhodesia's Independence. The manner in which it might be achieved deeply divided the farmers and the RF cabinet and in April 1964, Winston Field resigned. Unwilling to confront Britain on the issue of Independence, and in ailing health, he was pressured out by Ian Smith and a hardcore of proponents for independence from within the RF, who then turned on other government officials (Flower, 1987). JH Howman, a champion of community development, resigned and was replaced by William Harper, a strict advocate of 'separate development'. The middle ranks of the civil service were also purged of 'liberals' and 'moderates' and the RF then pushed for Independence and refused to negotiate with the African nationalists.

Bowman (1973) argued that the white community was united on all important fundamentals during UDI, and that the only contention was how to preserve the system, not whether it should be preserved. However the stance of the tobacco sector contradicts this. Clements and Harben (1962: 186 and 217) argued that "the tobacco grower is politically... much more progressive and flexible in his ideas than are his traditional maize (growers) and cattle (ranchers)... he has learnt the facts of life". This implied link between economic self-interest and political sophistication ignores the differentiation within the tobacco sector. Most tobacco farmers had supported the RF under Winston Field, or at least opposed Whitehead, but UDI posed a different dilemma. The potential impact of sanctions was obvious and the ZTA, along with the tobacco buying companies and most international capital, firmly opposed UDI. The five heads of industry: mining, farming, tobacco, commerce and banking, were consulted and all advised against it.

Flower (1987: Chapter Two) argues that virtually every member of the security establishment, including himself advised against it.

For tobacco farmers and international capital UDI was not beneficial, but the wave of white nationalism had taken hold and the Rhodesian Front's propaganda machine played to great effect. The white population had increased to 250 000 by 1964, two-thirds of whom were post-war immigrants and eighty percent of whom were urban residents (Keatley, 1963). To many, UDI was as much a symbolic rejection of Harold Wilson and the British as it was a calculated move for continued white supremacy. The RF's electoral victory in 1965, in which it won all 50 seats, illustrated widespread white support, a lack of alternatives, and the effectiveness of their emerging brand of national patriotism: if you're not with us you're against us. After 1965, thirty percent of Marandellas constituency consistently opposed the RF and its policies. Much of this opposition emanated from farmers in Wedza, who tended to remain loyal to the remnants of the 1950s parties and negate perceptions that the RF was a farmers' party.

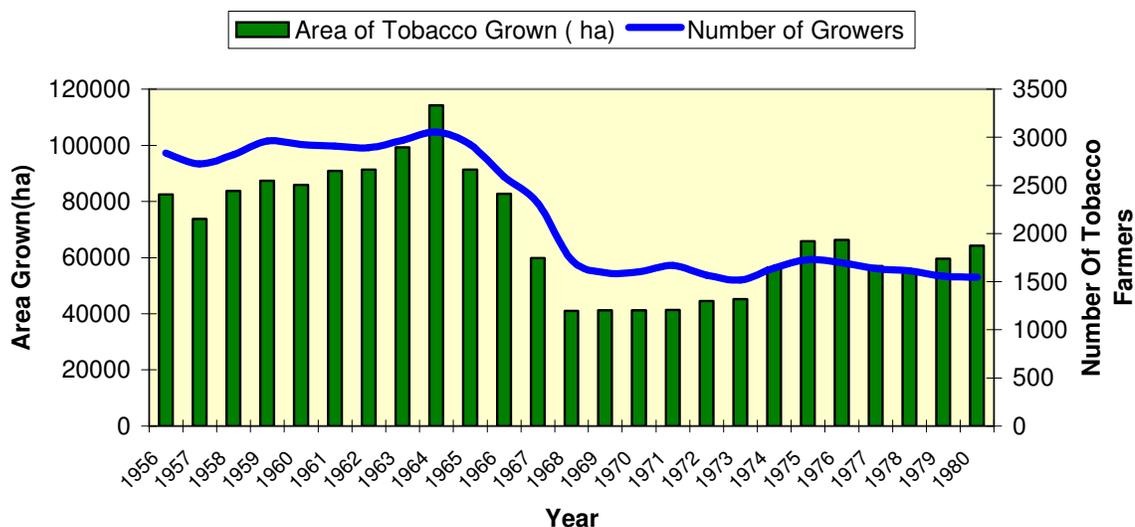
Between 1960 and 1970 farming voters made up a lower proportion of the white electorate than before or since, and yet the Rhodesian Front continued to portray itself as a farmers' party, stressing the significance of the farming community within the myths of the Rhodesian identity. The most vehement and numerically significant supporters of the RF were white artisans, mining officials and employees and the urban working classes who enjoyed privileged protection in the 'skilled' job market.⁶⁶ Stoneman and Cliffe (1989:63) suggest that the degree of racism within this group was higher than in any other sector of the white community, due to their isolation from the black population. Hodder Williams (1983: 226) argues that "during the 1960s, leadership was transferred from the paternalistic British middle classes to more nationalist ideological artisans, which hastened racial confrontation".

⁶⁶ The 1931 Industrial Conciliation Act secured white dominance in 'skilled' and managerial positions.

While some settler farmers were responsible for the formation of the Rhodesian Front's brand of ideology, the majority urban working classes consolidated and perpetuated it. Some farmers used their proximity to the Rhodesian Front to secure advantages in the shortage economy, and with time these diffused to the sector through more general policies and subsidies. Formal imposition of sanctions by the United Nations was only partially effective for several reasons. Rhodesia's strong manufacturing base, developed after the war and during the Federation years, was well suited to the task of import substitution, and the multinational nature of key players allowed them to 'sanctions-bust' effectively. Tobacco generated more than half of Rhodesia's foreign currency throughout UDI and a highly organized cartel smuggled the crop out to various European markets, often disguised as Portuguese or South African produce (Armstrong, 1987).⁶⁷ However, sanctions affected the tobacco sector badly.⁶⁸ After UDI, the UK, Germany and Japan, who normally absorbed 80 percent of the crop, stopped purchasing. Figure 1.7 illustrates how tobacco grower numbers declined from more than 3000 to around 1600, the area cropped reduced from over 100 000 ha to less than 50 000 ha, the volume sold fell from nearly 150 million kg to between 50 and 80 million kg per year. Exports earnings crashed from \$75 million to between \$25 and \$35 million per year (Mbanga 1991: 226-228).

⁶⁷ John Bredenkamp, a former Rhodesian rugby captain, simultaneously smuggled tobacco and supplied arms for the Rhodesian government.

⁶⁸ This was despite massive tobacco subsidies (approximately \$R200 million – 1975 value) being allocated between 1965 and 1975 to keep the industry afloat. Many tobacco farmers switched into other products and tobacco was overtaken by maize and cattle in late 1960s, due to import substitution and quotas (Stoneman, 1981: 137).

Figure 1.7 Impacts of UDI on Tobacco Farming

Source: Mbanga (1990:226/227) and TMB

For most tobacco farmers UDI was the biggest error since 1928. Sandy Fircks, a prominent grower and President of the ZTA during UDI declared afterwards that “Brazil’s tobacco industry would not exist today if it had not been for UDI. This country (Zimbabwe) would be producing 400 million kg (double the 1990 output) per year if it had not been for UDI” (Mbanga, 1991: 181). Ted Jeffreys (RTA President, 1962-65) agreed:

I believe that from the industry’s point of view, UDI was the biggest setback it ever faced. At the time we were poised as second of the world’s leading exporters... in a few years we could have become the world’s leading exporter. All this we lost!

(Mbanga, 1991: 177)

Tobacco farmers close to the state diversified into other import substituting activities. ‘Boss’ Lilford and other prominent growers invested heavily in land and cattle in the lowveld. Tobacco farmers were encouraged to switch to other enterprises, particularly maize, cattle and cotton, which encroached on black production sectors, already under strain from land pressure, the war and the skewed production climate. In much the same way that black sectors had been sacrificed

to ensure the survival of white farmers during the 1930s, so a similar logic prevailed during sanctions. Phimister (1988: 8) illustrates how the burden of UDI was carried by black peasants, citing a subsidy disparity of \$8000 per white farmer versus 60 cents per peasant. According to Stoneman (1981: 139), at the end of the war, short-term credit to 6200 white farmers exceeded \$R150 million, whereas credit to 685 000 black farmers barely exceed \$R1 million. White farmers increased their share of marketed food production from 30 percent in 1960 to 75 percent in 1978. In response to insecurity, the communal goat population doubled between 1965 and 1980 (Stoneman, 1981: 143). According to Riddell (1978a), average real incomes among Africans declined by at least 40 percent between 1948 and 1970 due to overpopulation, land degradation, overgrazing and economic marginalization. Yet the RF government continued to introduce discriminatory legislation. The 1969 Land Tenure Act (LTA) divided the country's cultivable land into two halves. Around 6 000 whites farmed the predominantly more fertile half, in varying degrees of productivity and intensity, whilst about four million blacks were confined to the ecologically poorer half.

During UDI, the state was modified and extended in two ways. Firstly, centralized control and protection of key strategic sectors was modified for domestic dominance and protection. The Agricultural Marketing Authority tightened its control of commodity production, prices and regulation. Secondly, as security pressures mounted so the state became increasingly militarized, and authoritarian, and geared to protecting the variety of white interests.

Distinctions between "metropolitan imperialist" and "settler-colonial" capital, and the argument that the former opposed UDI and the latter encouraged it were overly simplistic (Cliffe, 1981: 16). Domestic metropolitan capital was largely supportive of UDI, or at least tolerant, because of the benefits of operating in a protected import-substituting environment (Hatendi, 1987). South African capital, such as Anglo American Corporation, amounted to a different set of

interests, under a different set of pressures compared to British companies such as Barclays Bank. There may have been a long association between international capital and settler colonialism at strategic levels, but under UDI the balance of decision-making influence shifted towards the domestic capital arena. International capital either exited, conspired or became domestic, and in this way, most foreign capital ended up participating in the war economy (Hatendi, 1987).

The repositioning of the large landowning companies within the Rhodesian Front illustrates this well. As in 1923 they successfully repositioned themselves alongside the new regime and, whilst offering symbolic gestures of disapproval, continued with business as usual, much like Anglo-American in *apartheid* South Africa. Lonrho's investments were a particularly stark illustration. Tiny Rowland's investments into land (including Willoughbys Consolidated) and agricultural interests in Rhodesia during the early 1960s were conveniently timed to reap the benefits of import substitution and protectionism. In 1973, Lonrho was taken to court by the British Government for flouting trade sanctions against Rhodesia. Sir Edward Heath, referring to the management style of the company, described Lonrho as "an unpleasant and unacceptable face of capitalism". Sir Angus Ogilvy, chairman of the board, resigned in disgrace. In response, Rowland threatened to release a dossier detailing other companies engaged in similar activities, many with links to the British establishment. The charges were dropped.

As the Rhodesian state fortified itself, weathered and adapted to the shocks of sanctions so African nationalism grew more frustrated and more militant. The increasing hardships endured by the black population were largely ignored by the Rhodesian Front, and Rhodesia headed towards civil war. The 1971 Pearce Commission was seen by many as the last real chance for white Rhodesia to negotiate a peaceful transition with the nationalists. The British Government, once more under a conservative leadership, supported the compromise proposals and included

the promise of £100 million over ten years to fund land reform of under-utilised areas.⁶⁹ The Centre Party, a liberal coalition joined the RF to campaign for a positive vote – white opinion returned a 98 percent approval. However, whilst the proposals had the right rhetorical mix they were demonstrably vague and lacked a specific timeframe for majority rule. The commission was convincingly rejected by the black population, but for many whites the African National Council’s “de-campaigning” strategies were interpreted and portrayed as a rejection of good will, much like the resistance to the NLHA and the 1961 constitution had been. Sentiments became polarised once more and neither the nationalists nor the RF appeared to anticipate the consequences of civil war, or if they did, they lacked the inclination to avoid it. While much of white Rhodesia united in defiance the nationalists regrouped and prepared for armed struggle.

1.5 CONCLUSION

This Chapter illustrates three aspects of settler farming. Firstly, it shows historical divisions among settler farmers. Secondly, it illustrates the changing profile of the sector over time and the impact this had on divisions. Finally it explores the emergence of a formal institutional structure for representing the interests of white farmers and the growing proximity between white farmers and the settler state.

Control of land secured a position of economic, political and social dominance for a white minority, at the expense of the black majority. The brutal exploitation and repression behind this dominance fostered a deep-seated distrust of the colonial system by most blacks. However amidst these overwhelming injustices there was much complexity. In the patriotic histories of the Rhodesian era and contemporary Zimbabwe alike, stereotypes are convenient but misleading.

⁶⁹ This equates to approximately \$US2 billion at present values.

Multiple planes of difference and division existed within a transient farming sector. Many cleavages among farmers during the post-independence eras have their roots in these formative years. The selection of the Pioneer Column, and subsequent immigrants, may have encouraged certain types of settlers, but the community remained diverse. Hodder Williams (1983: 226), describing the evolving nature of the farming community, argued that “class interests, social deference, imperial vision, ethnic solidarity, and racial fare all played parts at different times... whites were divided over public policy throughout”. I have identified six key planes of differentiation during these early stages: background and culture, class and affluence, farm structure, land use, region, and individual personalities and political ideologies.

The significance of these divisions varied depending on time and the presence of other overriding issues. Although an Afrikaner–English dichotomy was the most dominant cultural division among farmers this was largely overcome during the right-wing shift of the 1960s. The tobacco sector’s distinct history in terms of production, marketing and institutional development prevailed throughout. The RTA was established before the RNFU and with its significant financial resources has always retained its independence. Likewise, Matabeleland’s cattle ranchers always viewed themselves in a separate light to the Mashonaland farmers. The Matabeleland Farmer’s Union remained separate from the RAU for nearly forty years. The husbandry practices and lifestyle of extensive cattle ranching were significantly different from those of tobacco or maize farmers.

Another key structural division throughout was that between family farmers and large land-owning companies, firstly as speculators and latterly as multinationals or corporate structures. Rather than using the evolving institutional structure of organised farming these interests tended to lobby independently through personal contacts with the administration, first with the BSAC, then with the settler state and finally with members of the Rhodesian Front. Divergent political

views among farmers were prevalent throughout the Rhodesian era. So whilst farmers were united in their mounting concerns over militant nationalism they were divided in their attitudes to racial advancement; whilst farmers were united in their contempt for Harold Wilson, they were divided over UDI.

This also helps to explain the paradox between unity and division within the settler farming sector, and the logic of certain strategic decisions at key junctures. The moderating and channelling effect of institutional organization regulated divisions, through improved communications and by shaping a common set of objectives, norms and policies. Settler identities and an emerging sense of community also united settlers through constructed mythologies about the pioneers and Rhodesian war heroes. However, the independent nature of many farmers ensured that there was always a range of political and ideological views among farmers and that personalities often determined the effectiveness of institutional links between farmers and the state.

As the profile of the commercial farming sector changed, so did its relationship with the state. Economic and financial success from tobacco consolidated the political influence of farmers, which shifted towards Mashonaland. Despite their proximity to the state and an instrumental role in bringing the RF to power, farmers were deeply divided over UDI. This illustrates an important point for the rest of the thesis: settler farmers remained differentiated but adaptive, and not always in predictable ways. Nonetheless they operated within a system and structure that had evolved to moderate these divisions and to encourage, and often strategically exhibit, unity to protect their varied interests.

CHAPTER TWO

From ‘Open Season’ to ‘Royal Game’: Transition Politics and the Repositioning of Commercial Farmers 1972-1985

“I repeat, I do not believe in majority rule - not in a thousand years!”

- Ian Smith, March 1976.⁷⁰

“It is perhaps the end of the beginning”

- Ian Smith, September 1976.⁷¹

*“In Zimbabwe, none of the white exploiters will be allowed to keep a single acre
of their land!”*

- Robert Mugabe, October 1976.⁷²

“The wrongs of the past must now stand forgiven and forgotten”

- Robert Mugabe, March 1980.⁷³

⁷⁰ Mugabe, *Smith and the Union Jack*, Interview with David Dimbleby, BBC 2 Documentary, April 2000.

⁷¹ Mugabe, *Smith and the Union Jack*, Interview with David Dimbleby, BBC 2 Documentary, April 2000.

⁷² Caute (1983: 78). This was Mugabe’s public position at the Geneva conference. Also in Zeilig (2002).

⁷³ Extract from Mugabe’s speech of reconciliation (De Waal, 1990: Back cover).

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Robin Palmer (1990) pondered the irony of how white farmers transformed from the material and symbolic targets of guerrilla fighters during the bush war, into members of a 'protected species' within six months around Independence. This Chapter explores this transition, illustrating that it was more gradual and complex, but remarkable nevertheless.

In Chapter One, I traced the racially skewed consolidation of access to resources, particularly land, and how this was achieved through a state shaped and controlled by various white farming interests. Rhodesia's Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) and its implications for continued racial inequalities elicited militant opposition by a nationalist alliance. Civil war, and the repositioning of key interest groups within the Rhodesian state, led to a negotiated settlement and Independence. The objective of this chapter is to examine how white farmers reacted to the pressures of change across their divisions and how they managed to retain their proximity to the state, and their access to land, across this transition.

The 'transition' refers to the period between the escalation of the civil war in 1972 and the first post-independence general election in 1985. There were distinct phases within this period: a myopic defiance across white society; a gradual acceptance of the concept of majority rule; negotiated settlement; independence and partial reconciliation. Most whites perceived these stages as the 'positive' economic and military experiences of the early 1970s, the 'negative' escalation of the war, security and economic pressures, widening divisions within white society, and, finally, a 'wait and see' response to settlement and Mugabe's pledge of reconciliation.

Important questions relating to commercial farmers and their positions within white society during this transition have not been satisfactorily answered. The impacts of the war on farmers,

and their diverse reactions are generally absent in the literature, as is their changing relationship with the Rhodesian state during this period. Because of the central role of prominent farmers in the Rhodesian Front, white farmers were often perceived to have been the first line of defence and the last group to surrender during the war. Most outsiders' perceptions of white Rhodesia were of a minority, uniformly opposing the concept of majority rule in order to preserve a privileged lifestyle, at the expense of the black population. This impression is supported by the Rhodesian Front's (RF) overwhelming electoral victories and representation of itself as the legitimate voice of white Rhodesia. Furthermore, the tendency for whites and farmers to homogenise themselves as part of a defensive strategy within the siege mentality of a 'Rhodesian identity' bolstered external perceptions of unity.

However, this view rests on the assumption that farmers continued to constitute the core of the Rhodesian Front. To look beyond the illusion of a homogenous white island, at internal divisions, has been difficult from many perspectives and undesirable from some, particularly those of nationalists and the nationalist literature.⁷⁴ This chapter illustrates that white politics during the transition were more complex than the contemporary discourse suggests, and that farmers were increasingly proactive in the political process of transition. The identification of such strategies has important implications for the subsequent land debate and questions of farmer resistance during ensuing periods of change and pressure in Zimbabwe.

There is a rich literature on the war and transition period but little focus on white farmers.⁷⁵

Godwin and Hancock (1993) developed Hancock's (1984) analysis of white politics and assess the impact of war and political change on the white community. They delve beyond the cohesive façade of white Rhodesian hegemony and trace the changes of a divided and deluded society, which they argue was initially united by an inability to recognise the inevitability of political

⁷⁴ For example, see Mandaza (1986).

⁷⁵ For example, see Kriger (1988 and 1992), Ranger (1985) and Lan (1985).

pluralism, and then subsequently by a partial ability to adapt to it. Yet within this effort to portray the complexities of white Rhodesia, the varied experiences of farmers are overlooked.

Grundy and Miller (1979) provide a biographical account of commercial farmers during the liberation struggle. Published by the farming press, this is a sympathetic impression portraying a resourceful, courageous, and united community. Cauter (1983: 137) offers a critical perspective on white Rhodesia and commercial farmers but admits that he was “in search of racist infamy”.⁷⁶ Hodder Williams’ (1983) assessment of the Marandellas farming community ends at UDI, whilst Leys’ (1959) analysis of white politics ends pre-UDI. Likewise, Arrighi’s (1981) class analysis of white settler society is not brought through the war and transition. By analysing the politics of white farmers across the transition and the evolution of their relationship with the state, the post-independence position of white farmers becomes clearer. The formation of the Rhodesian state was shaped by farming interests from 1923. Similar patterns of influence continued during the transition and after it, and this chapter explains how farmers managed to reposition themselves successfully within a strategic alliance with the post-independence state.

2.2 THE IMPACTS OF THE WAR

The guerrilla attack at Altena farm in Centenary, on 21 December 1972, was a significant moment in Rhodesian history signalling a shift in guerrilla tactics and the nature of the war. Military experiences of the late 1960s had been limited to a few skirmishes, fought in conventional mode, which Rhodesian forces easily contained. Relatively successful ‘sanctions-busting’ and import substitution sustained a growing economy and confidence throughout most of white Rhodesia. This changed markedly under the pressures of economic downturn and the

⁷⁶ Meredith (1980), Boynton (1994) and Hills (1978 and 1981) lack any rigorous insight into the farming sector, or much analysis of their politics and divisions.

escalation of the war. By assessing the material, economic and social impacts of the war we begin to understand the nature of the role that farmers played in resisting or calling for reform

2.2.1 Increasing Farmer Casualties

White farmers were at the forefront of the war and attacks on other white civilians were extremely rare before 1976. The increasing number of farmer deaths and their share of civilian casualties were important in shifting farmers' attitudes towards compromise and settlement. No white farmers were killed by guerrillas between 1967 and 1972. Seven farmers died in 1973 and six in 1974. Twenty-five farmers were killed in 1975 and thirty-one in 1976. In 1977 there were fifty-five deaths within white farming families and this increased to one hundred and sixteen the following year. During the settlement talks in 1979 there were still eighty farming related deaths, and by this stage most farming families had lost a close friend or relative (Caute, 1983: 43; Grundy and Miller 1979: Roll of Honour; Godwin and Hancock, 1993).

As the war wore on, the number and nature of serious injuries escalated, as did the impact on prominent farmers. Pat Bashford, a wealthy tobacco farmer from Karoi and leader of the opposition Centre Party (CP), who had warned the white community about the dangers of war in 1972, lost his son David on call-up in 1976. Max Rosenfels, longstanding Matabeleland branch chairman of the RNFU, was called out of a council meeting to be told that his son Ian, aged 26, had been shot and killed on their ranch.⁷⁷ The brutal impacts of the war quickly found their way into the highest echelons of the farming community. Approximately 300 farmers or members of their immediate families were killed between 1972 and 1980, which amounted to more than half of white civilian deaths (Grundy and Miller, 1979: Roll of Honour). As in the First Chimurenga,

⁷⁷ Minutes of the RNFU Council Meeting, 29 March 1978.

settler farmers bore the brunt of the cost within white society, which had important ramifications for their identity and claims of legitimacy over land rights.

2.2.2 The Varying Impacts of War among Farmers

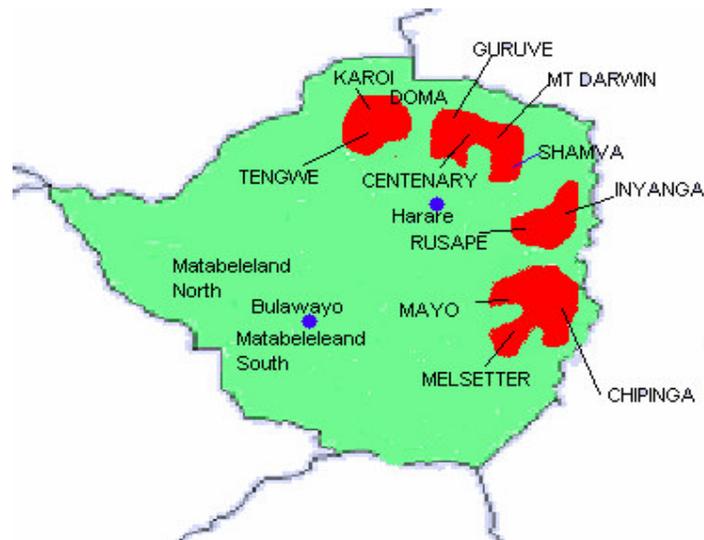
Experiences of the war varied considerably between different farming districts. Centenary, Mt Darwin and Shamva initially suffered the highest numbers of attacks and casualties in 1973 and 1974. Proximity to the border with Mozambique and the remote, mountainous topography rendered them more vulnerable to guerrilla incursions and withdrawals, and attacks spread across the northern districts into Guruve, Karoi and Tengwe. By 1980 these outlying northern districts had lost more than 80 members (roughly ten percent) of their farming communities (Grundy and Miller, 1979: Roll of Honour). Doma farming district was an important exception in the north. Although geographically vulnerable in its remoteness and proximity to the Zambezi escarpment it emerged relatively intact. John Brown claims that this was due to the effectiveness of their local defence strategies based on farmer-organised Area Co-ordinating Committees (ACC):

On reflection we were 'revved' (attacked) far less than we should have been...only two farmers were killed on their land in Doma during the war and out of nearly 100 farms in the area I believe that only two were abandoned by the end of it.⁷⁸

Doma was also a buffer-zone between ZIPRA and ZANLA operational areas which was undoubtedly a contributing factor. By avoiding it the two groups reduced the likelihood of encounters and clashes between them.

⁷⁸ Interview with John Brown, Mt Hampden, January 2004.

Figure 2.1 Farming Districts Most Heavily Affected During the War



In 1976, following the collapse of Portuguese rule in Mozambique, the focus of the war shifted to the eastern districts, which were even more mountainous and accessible from the border. The impact of the war was severe on farmers in Chipinga, Melsetter and Gazaland. Approximately fifty members of farming families were killed in two years, between 1976 and 1978. More than twenty percent of the pupils at the primary school for whites had lost at least one parent by 1978 and only a few farms were still operating by that stage (Caute, 1983: 225 and 271). Twenty-four homesteads had been destroyed in Melsetter and of 105 functional farms in 1976, only eight were still running by the end of 1978. Mayo district, which had nineteen white families in 1976 had been abandoned by 1980, and there were eighty vacant farms in the Rusape-Headlands area (Caute: 260). Conversely, the open countryside of Salisbury South and Darwendale and their distance from the borders and communal areas meant that these areas remained relatively secure. There were less than ten farming victims from areas within a fifty-mile radius of the capital.

Farmers were less likely to abandon properties in vulnerable but affluent tobacco-growing areas, like Centenary and Mtoko, despite being the most prone to guerrilla attacks. Likewise, Joint

Operations Command (JOC) worked closely with the RNFU, and the RTA to ensure that the tobacco sector was protected. Aside from extra government support through the RNFU, which provided 'agric-alert' systems and standard security devices, wealthier farmers were able to afford extra militia and security. In the Eastern Districts, farming enterprises were generally less affluent, apart from some of the larger coffee operations, reducing incentives for farmers to remain in high-risk areas.

As more farmers deserted properties so guerrilla forces had more freedom for movement in these expanding 'liberated' zones, and the local support and morale of remaining farmers was undermined further. So whilst many of the Eastern districts were abandoned, Centenary maintained a critical mass of farmers, and most farms were still occupied by the end of the war. The Rhodesian state attempted to keep farmers on the land using both security and financial incentives. Volunteers from urban areas, known as 'bright lights' would live with remote and vulnerable homesteads, to provide moral and military support. The AFC (Land Bank) introduced a policy of providing young entrant farmers with favourable loans on abandoned farms, often bordering TTLs. These became known as 'buffer farms': by maintaining the 'front line' they shielded established farmers in the midst of the farming areas - occasionally an issue of contention, animosity and division within white farming communities.⁷⁹

According to *Parade* magazine, only seven white farmers were killed on their land in Matabeleland during the war.⁸⁰ This was a result of a conscious ZIPRA strategy to avoid white farmsteads, and limit security force activity, enabling easier infiltration and withdrawal.⁸¹ Grundy and Miller (1979: Roll of Honour) show that Matabeleland lost more than forty members

⁷⁹ Discussion with Cal Martin, Harare, February 2003.

⁸⁰ This is also cited in Alexander (1993).

⁸¹ Ed Cumming and Denis Streak both commented on the relatively 'quiet' experience of ranchers in Matabeleland during the war, because of the ZAPU strategy, which is also supported by Alexander (1991) and Cauté (1983).

of its white farming community – it seems that many Matabeleland farmer casualties occurred on the battlefield and in civilian ambushes, rather than on their own farms.

Experiences of the war also differed between town and country. Grundy and Miller (1979: Chapter 15) mention a distinct rural-urban divide on many of the war issues. Godwin and Hancock (1993: 3 and 115) also draw attention to this:

Salisbury frequently provoked acerbic comment from the rural communities... (and) incidents which happened within an hour's drive of Harare might have been happening a thousand miles away for all that they affected city dwellers...whilst areas furthest from the fighting were the most vulnerable to rumour and susceptible to uncertainty.

Some farming communities were consistently at the 'sharp end' whilst urban areas remained relatively unaffected during the early years. After Independence, Mugabe noted the difference between rural and urban war experiences and paid tribute to the resolve of the rural communities, both white and black:

Let us not forget that it was in the rural areas that the people on both sides in the struggle faced the full onslaught and horrors of war. For neither group was there the comfort of city life; the consolation and certainty of the necessity of life. Indeed the certainty of life itself was often remote (Modern Farming Publications, 1982: Foreword).

Individual farmer's experiences differed considerably too, as did their levels of tolerance. Accordingly, the pace and nature of farmer defiance, resistance and capitulation varied. The war affected and exposed different personal attitudes, which often influenced the behaviour of individuals in unpredictable ways for long afterwards. Chris Kearns, from Mtoko, lost three brothers (Caute, 1983: 41). His enduring racial intolerance and bitterness earned him a

controversial reputation with local communities and government officials.⁸² Max Rosenfels, from Figtree, lost four close relatives, three of them in the last year of the war, but adopted a more conciliatory perspective. He channelled his energy into public service and even became a ZANU PF Member of Parliament after the Unity Accord in 1987.

John Strong's farm bordered the Guruve TTL and was highly exposed, but remained unattacked throughout the war. He thinks that sympathetic local communities diverted guerrilla activity because of his progressive employment style and neighbourliness.⁸³ Farmers with poor race relations or bad management reputations were often identified by farm workers and local communities, and then specifically targeted by the guerrillas.⁸⁴ Godwin and Hancock (1993) and Caute (1983) both explain the attacks on Archie Dagleish and Marc De Borgrave in Centenary as consequences of racist attitudes and insensitive employment styles. Phimister (1988: 10) agrees: "white farmers who were particularly obnoxious neighbours or bad employers were identified by peasants and labourers as specific targets for guerrilla vengeance". Palmer (1977: 246) cites evidence that guerrillas identified unpopular farmers through local villagers and selected their targets accordingly.

However, if this was a formal strategy it was inconsistent. Tim Peech, a 'liberal' farmer from Macheke, was widely known for his progressive views. He had managed to negotiate a peaceful stand-off with the local ZANLA commander in the Mrewa area, but was brutally murdered whilst on a 'peace' initiative in 1978 (Caute, 1983: 260). The progressive nature of other farmers also seemed to count for little with time. Towards the end of the war a number of 'liberal' farmers in the Penalonga area, who had been members of the Capricorn Society and the Centre Party, were attacked by ZANLA troops (Caute, 1983: 384 and 395). These incidents

⁸² This was substantiated in an interview with James Lowry, Wiltshire, February 2002.

⁸³ Interview with John Strong, Harare, February 2002. Strong claims that his family had a long and mutually beneficial relationship with local communities.

⁸⁴ Discussion with Chris Pohl, Harare, December 2003; Interview with James Lowry, Wiltshire, February 2002.

were generally attributed to a breakdown in discipline, but it seems that there were diminishing degrees of selectivity in choosing which white farmers were supporters of the regime and which were not, and whether or not this was relevant. Whilst there may have been distinctions about farmers' attitudes by some guerrillas, being a philanthropic employer or outspoken opponent of Ian Smith was no guarantee of protection in a war that increasingly failed to distinguish between individuals on either side, or those in the middle.

The extent to which farmers tolerated, or may even have helped guerrillas, is difficult to research. Tim Peech illustrated that 'arrangements' between farmers and guerrillas could and did exist - in return for not attacking farmers, ZANLA forces were not 'followed up' by local farmer reaction sticks. Tom Wigglesworth, a farmer from the eastern highlands, sheds light on this issue in his account of being marched to Mozambique by ZANLA captors. During interrogations, he was berated for not helping the comrades (Wigglesworth, 1980: 29-31 and 115). One ZANLA official apparently declared "many white farmers are helping us... you do not believe me. Do you know (interrogator then mentioned the names of five white farmers from the Eastern Districts) ...they are all helping us with food and do not report us. They will not be attacked." He heard this many times during his captivity, which raised questions: "white helpers... farmers...some of them were very vociferous supporters of Smith and the Rhodesian Front...It couldn't be true...or could it?"⁸⁵ Cauter (1983: 299 and 384) makes reference to white farmer's helping ZANLA and even of becoming ZANLA informers, but again names are not mentioned. Garfield Todd on Hokonui Ranch, and Guy Clutton Brock at Cold Comfort Farm, supported and fed liberation forces for more fundamental ideological reasons, but it does illustrate that there were a range of farmers tolerating, aiding or abetting the guerrilla forces. There were strong rumours towards the end of the war, that prominent financiers of the Rhodesian Front, such as DC "Boss" Lilford, were supporting ZANU as an insurance policy.⁸⁶

⁸⁵ Wigglesworth refused to disclose the names of the farmers that he had been given.

⁸⁶ Interview with Costa Pafitis, Thetford Estate, January 2005.

Attacks on commercial farmers were not restricted to whites: Ranger and Ncube (1996: 49) record the targeting of influential or entrepreneurial blacks in rural areas, many of whom ran farms as businesses. Cauter (1983) similarly draws attention to ZIPRA and ZANLA's offensive against rural black entrepreneurs and farmers in Matabeleland North. Phimister (1988: 12) notes the targeted offensive on African Purchase Area farmers by peasants and guerrillas, and on shopkeepers after the internal settlement. Gary Magadzire, President of the AFU, had repeatedly lodged his concerns about the impacts of war on black commercial farmers, who were singled out by guerrillas as collaborators.⁸⁷ Whereas white farmers received significant support from a government intent on keeping them on the land and maintaining their hegemony, including 90 percent compensation for any war related losses, black farmers bore the full brunt of the war, the economic situation and a severely distorted competitive environment.⁸⁸ In much the same way that the costs of the 1930s depression and UDI were borne by black producers, so the costs of the war were largely shifted on to these sectors, a fundamental contradiction of the 'hearts and minds' strategy.⁸⁹

2.2.3 The Breakdown of Farmer Morale

Military 'call-up' was obligatory for all able white males and became an increasingly contentious issue, in which poor administration was exposed and publicly criticized. In a well-known anecdote, a Centenary farmer was sent to Chipinge to guard the property of an owner who had

⁸⁷ Minutes of the RNFU Council Meeting, 27/28 February 1979, para 6.

⁸⁸ The Victims of Terrorism Compensation Act reimbursed farmers for 90 percent of war-related financial losses.

⁸⁹ Based on British counter-insurgency tactics in Malaya, winning the confidence and support (hearts and minds) of rural communities was thought to restrict support for insurgents. An example of counter-productive security strategy were the Protected Villages (PVs). The British used forced villagisation relatively successfully in Malaya, but Rhodesia's PV's had more in common with schemes in Vietnam, China and Mozambique. It was a brutal system in which more than half a million people were forced into 230 compounds, creating over 100 000 refugees (Brand, 1981: 49). JP Wilkinson, Director of Veterinary services claimed that "the whole policy has effectively created a pool of resentment which will inevitably cause the whole population to support terrorists at every opportunity" (Godwin and Hancock, 1993:108). In much the same way that the dislocating nature of the Land Husbandry Act became an effective recruiter for nationalism, so the PV policy encouraged thousands of young men and women to join the guerrilla movement.

concurrently been drafted to Centenary.⁹⁰ Young, un-established farmers in ‘hot areas’ such as Centenary, could not afford the time or the security risk of being off their farms for extended periods and this growing debate is regularly referred to in RNFU council minutes.⁹¹

When the call-up parameters changed in 1977, extending the upper age limit from 38 to 50 and extending the national service requirement from twelve to eighteen months, opposition to the draft also began to emerge from the city, particularly from urban business owners and directors (Caute, 1983: 143). After 1978 it was possible for farmers in ‘hot areas’ to get exemptions, but the increasing strains on manpower and resources reflected widening cracks in the system. The minutes of the RNFU Marondera branch meeting, in February 1978, record that

...there are growing signs of a lowering of morale amongst the farming community. A combination of the ever-increasing security threat, political uncertainty and producer price factors are largely responsible for this state of mind.⁹²

The war experience initially united farming communities, through shared experience and a sense of patriotism and duty. The nature of this solidarity was articulated by Margaret Strong, wife of the RNFU President John Strong, in her address to the RNFU Congress in 1979, when she spoke on behalf of farmers’ wives, describing the changes that the war had brought to their lives.⁹³ Increasing domestic security and practical farming responsibilities had, to a large extent, been assumed by farmers’ wives because call-ups were keeping men away for longer. Most farmer’s wives also ‘volunteered’ for the Police Reserve, which involved administrative duties such as manning radio centres. Caute (1983: 229) compared this to the Israeli conscription of women and noted its ‘bonding’ effects and contribution to the siege mentality in that country.

⁹⁰ This story was substantiated in a discussion with Chris Pohl (Centenary farmer), Harare, 2003.

⁹¹ For example: Minutes of the RNFU Council Meeting, 28/29 June 1977; Minutes of the RNFU Council Meeting, 27/28 February 1979.

⁹² Extract from the Marandellas Branch Report, Minutes of the RNFU Council Meeting, 21/22 February, 1978

⁹³ Margaret Strong’s Address to RNFU Congress, “Zimbabwe Farming Oscars”, CFU (1991).

Margaret Strong also described the mounting burden of stress. The increasing threat of landmines and attacks, the rising incidents of sabotage, the pressure of financial difficulties and intimidated work forces all undermined resolve.⁹⁴ She conveyed how the strains of the war were affecting women, which was then compounding the weariness within farming communities:

the greatest burden that the wives have to bear ...is the burden of worry...an ever present anxiety, never far from the forefront of her mind... and we pray that this war will soon end, and with it an end to all the suffering and bloodshed (CFU, 1991: 35).

Godwin and Hancock (1993) and Cauter (1983) draw attention to increased incidences of alcoholism, social violence and immorality - a general deterioration of behaviour amongst whites. This undermined morale and inevitably led to greater levels of stress-related illnesses within the farming community.⁹⁵ Deteriorating standards of living under these conditions forced most farmers, at varying paces and extents, to realize that a continued defiance was not only impractical, but impossible.

2.2.4 Economic and Financial Pressures

The impact of the economic downturn during the war also influenced the shift from defiance to surrender. Precipitated by the OPEC crisis in October 1973, global commodity prices slumped considerably and the costs of importing petroleum increased sharply. This had marked effects on the Rhodesian economy, which import-substitution could no longer resolve (Hatendi, 1987). The detailed impact of sanctions is difficult to quantify accurately. Isolation may have encouraged economic restructuring and increased import substitution, whilst the motivation of sanctions-

⁹⁴ The intimidation of work forces became a key strategy for ZANLA, who would enter worker villages at night, or issue threats indirectly through the families of farm workers in neighbouring TTLs.

⁹⁵ Interview with Dr Fran Fussell (Farmer's wife and Medical Doctor), Harare, January 2003.

busting activities certainly helped to unite the Rhodesian cause. However, sanctions forced Rhodesia to sell in the cheapest markets and to buy in the most expensive. Over time, import substitution required sustained net imports of raw materials to maintain production (Hatendi, 1987). Rising defence expenditure placed enormous strain on an increasing budget deficit, which when coupled with diminishing foreign exchange earnings, exacerbated a balance-of-payments crisis and forced the impact of the war into every sector, enclave and home in Rhodesia.

Figure 2.2 Defence Spending as a Proportion of National Budget (R\$)

1971/72	8.5%	30m
1972/73	14%	50m
1975/76	20%	120m
1977/78	37%	220m
1978/79	47%	400m

Source: Adapted from Godwin and Hancock (1993); Caute (1983: 40 and 187); *The Military Balance* (1975-1980).

Between 1973 and 1975 short-term overdraft borrowing by farmers increased from R\$79 million to R\$120 million. Stock theft increased markedly: 26 000 head of cattle were rustled in 1977, 40 000 in 1978 and 92 000 in 1979 (Caute 1983: 205). Grundy and Miller (1981) describe burgeoning incidents of on-farm sabotage such as fence-cutting and the burning of crops and tobacco barns. At the 1975 Congress, RNFU President Paddy Miller, who was also MP (RF) for Mazowe, pointed out that whilst yields and prices had fallen, input costs had risen by 43% in 18 months.⁹⁶ This initiated a full-scale debate on the economic, logistical and social impacts of the war. It was the first discussion of its sort in an open forum and led to negotiations for guaranteed producer prices. Significantly, it indicated that farmers were prepared to question the direction of the war and the manner in which it was being run. Ian Smith was the Guest of Honour.

⁹⁶ Minutes of the 1975 RNFU Congress, Bulawayo.

In 1978 the RTA estimated that production costs had increased by 18 percent annually since 1974, compared to a 1.2 percent annual price increment over the same period. The RTA council stated that “the tobacco industry face(s) its gravest economic crisis to date and urge(s) action to be taken to ‘give growers something to grow for’, if they (are) to survive” (Mbanga, 1991: 173). Don Bulloch, RTA President, stated in his 1979 Congress address that “the financial viability of our growers has not in any way improved and many are very much worse off. The number in a critical financial position has grown alarmingly”.⁹⁷ According to Stoneman (1981: 133 and 136) only 2600 farmers (less than half) were profitable enough to pay tax in 1976 and only 1419 in 1977. Riddell (1980) claimed that by 1978 forty percent of commercial farmers were technically insolvent, despite heavy subsidies.⁹⁸

When negative economic realities and financial pressures added to the mounting security concerns of the war farmers, irrespective, of their ideological stances, were less willing to sit back and let events unfold. Despite a variety of farmer positions, the combined factors of security threats, viability concerns and political uncertainty made compromise and settlement increasingly acceptable, and these became uniting factors.

2.3 COMMERCIAL FARMERS AND THE SHIFT TOWARDS SETTLEMENT

2.3.1 The Immobility of Farmer Investments

Godwin and Hancock (1993: 119) argue that central to white Rhodesian resistance was the concern that black rule would threaten a privileged way of life. They describe white Rhodesians as “materialists rather than moral crusaders ... whose version of reality prepared them to enjoy

⁹⁷ *Rhodesian Tobacco Today*, June 1979, Vol. 2. No 9, p 13.

⁹⁸ Tobacco farmers alone were effectively receiving R\$20 million in subsidies every year (Morris- Jones, 1980).

the good and to absorb or deflect the unpleasant”. Economic self-interest as the key reason behind farmer strategies remains a common feature of the literature, but is an inadequate explanation. A fundamental component of farmer resistance to change or ‘defiance’ was the inflexibility of their positions. Unlike many white farmers in Kenya, very few had any form of financial security outside the country, most felt that their skills had limited transferability and many were unwilling to relinquish proximity to friends and family. For many farmers, their farms were their pensions and foreign currency restrictions compounded their immobility, which probably united the broad farmer position more than any other.⁹⁹

Rhodesian defiance before the transition consisted of differing proportions of a variety of factors: blinkered prejudice, suspicion of the British Government, concerns about black rule, resistance to the threat of losing a privileged way of life and concerns about more fundamental social displacement. At this stage factors of unity outweighed any divisive features, explaining the peculiar ability of a disintegrating society to portray itself as a single unit and bolster the illusion of homogeneity from within and without.

2.3.2 Farmer Pro-activity

Direct exposure to the mounting pressures of the war, combined with the growing realisation that the RF was increasingly directionless, encouraged farmers towards compromise. International business and the tobacco industry had always opposed UDI and the resulting economic and diplomatic isolation. However, it was not until farming representatives openly started calling for a settlement that tangible progress began to materialise.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁹ Minutes of the RNFU Council Meetings, 1972 – 1979.

¹⁰⁰ Influential figures such as CG Tracey, a tobacco house owner and sanctions buster played a key role in trying to seek a compromise.

The farming community was always divided on this issue. Most tobacco farmers had opposed UDI, whereas non-exporting cattle and maize farmers did well from it. However, the combination of security and economic pressures placed everyone in a similar predicament and this fostered change. The RNFU's election of John Strong to vice-President in 1974 and President in 1976, by predominantly RF leaning councils, suggested a growing willingness for dialogue and communication. Strong's immediate predecessor was Paddy Millar, the staunch RF Member of Parliament for Mazowe. Strong was relatively young, but renowned as a grass-roots diplomat and a skilled negotiator. According to Denis Norman, Strong's proposer, Vice-President and successor, "he was known as a bit of a lefty by farmers on the right" and his elevation to the RNFU hierarchy caused some consternation among the regional councillors.¹⁰¹ The RNFU council at this stage consisted of a combined structure of regional representatives, and commodity representatives. The former were elected by farmers' associations at grassroots level and, in Norman's view, were generally more right-wing. The latter were elected by the urban-based commodity associations in a relatively progressive environment, on merit rather than sentiment. There were still 'right-wingers' in council particularly among regional representatives and domestic-oriented cattle and grain producers, but the general profile of the farming leadership was undoubtedly moderating.¹⁰² Strong had worked his way onto the RNFU council as Vice-President of the Rhodesia Tobacco Association (RTA) and was put forward by a growing group of young, moderate RNFU commodity councillors, who would play a significant role in agricultural leadership over the next decade.¹⁰³

Strong's journey to Zambia in 1975 with Sandy Fircks (ex-RTA President) to meet President Kaunda demonstrated this new style of leadership. Fircks was outspoken, anti-RF, and had always opposed UDI. He emphasised to Kaunda that the farming community was ready for majority rule and were willing to work with a black government. Fircks also claimed that at

¹⁰¹ Interview with Denis Norman, Sussex, October 2004.

¹⁰² Minutes of RNFU Council meetings, 1975-1980.

¹⁰³ These included: Sandy Fircks, Denis Norman, Jack Humphries, David Spain, Jim Sinclair and John Laurie.

least 70 percent of the farming leadership shared this view.¹⁰⁴ They were even willing to consider land nationalisation under a lease-back system, but warned Kaunda that should wholesale land expropriation take place, they would resist. They were therefore willing to encourage transition so long as they were guaranteed continued access to their land. Godwin and Hancock (1993: 125) argue that “they simply told Kaunda what the business community had been saying for a decade – the wealthier more progressive sectors of white Rhodesia could handle political reform”, with conditions. It also showed that prominent farmers were willing to pursue independent political initiatives.

Strong saw the benefits of lobbying other groups and tabled the idea of a merger with the African Farmers Union (AFU), which represented about 9000 African Purchase Area farmers and more prominent small-scale black producers. AFU President Gary Magadzire had worked closely with the RNFU leaders over issues such as producer prices and formed close ties with Strong.¹⁰⁵ Magadzire was viewed more sceptically by the nationalists after bluntly remarking that their overriding objective was the acquisition of power.¹⁰⁶ He initially rejected Strong’s proposals to amalgamate the two unions, on the basis that there were too many fundamental differences between their agricultural systems and that the AFU preferred a degree of autonomy.¹⁰⁷ The AFU was, however, willing to share a single office block with the RNFU, in the interests of working together. This laid the foundations for the 1982 agreement to form a single agricultural union, which was prevented by the new government.¹⁰⁸

Strong knew there was a consistent danger in getting too far ahead of his council on the reform agenda and recalled some “difficult patches and some extremely difficult moments”.¹⁰⁹ One of

¹⁰⁴ Copy of the Report of the trip to Zambia by John Strong and Sandy Fircks (1975).

¹⁰⁵ Interview with John Strong, Harare, March 2003.

¹⁰⁶ Minutes of the RNFU Council Meeting, 28/29 March 1978: para 36.

¹⁰⁷ Address by Gary Magadzire to RNFU Council, 28th March 1978, minutes of the relevant RNFU council Meeting.

¹⁰⁸ See Chapter 3.

¹⁰⁹ Interview with John Strong, Harare, March 2003.

his first contentious moves as President in 1976, was to proclaim the RNFU's willingness to discuss an inclusive, participatory land and agricultural policy with the nationalists. This created uproar in conservative white circles and prompted several heated off-the-record arguments behind the closed doors of the RNFU executive meetings, in which he was allegedly accused of being a '*kaffer-boetie*', a 'lefty' and even of conspiring with terrorists.¹¹⁰ It is worth noting that there was no formal recorded opposition to his moves within the council and that the *Rhodesian Farmer* carries no record of any internal tensions either. Strong had support and his effective leadership of an RF-dominated council indicates that farming attitudes to the war, towards compromise and towards majority rule were changing.

2.3.3 Farmers and the War State

Stoneman and Cliffe (1989: 17) argue that during the pre-war years there was little distinction between the farmer bourgeoisie and the corporatist state. Most policy was shaped by an old-boy network through "a chat at the club". The settler state had been consolidated by farmer interests, which in turn guaranteed white farmer hegemony. Although UDI and sanctions had, at times, strained the relationship, the only regular public disputes between farmers and arms of the state, were over producer or input prices. At worst Vernon Nicolle would remark: "our relationship with the Ministry is not a happy one".¹¹¹ Civil servants would respond prudently and the matter would subside. According to Ted Osborne such differences involved "more bluster than substance... standard farmer negotiations".¹¹² They certainly did not compromise the longstanding arrangement in which the RNFU and RTA councils joined the RF cabinet on an annual fishing competition (Godwin and Hancock, 1993: 74).

¹¹⁰ Interview with John Strong, Harare, March 2003. This was supported by Denis Norman, Sussex, October 2004.

¹¹¹ Minutes of the RNFU Council Meeting, 2 May 1979, para 9.

¹¹² Interview with Ted Osborne (Secretary for Agriculture 1975-1980), Durban, April 2003. Interview with John Laurie, Harare, March 2003.

However the increasingly autonomous activity of the farmers created frictions between the RNFU and the government. In November 1972, Agriculture Minister David Smith was subjected to what the *Rhodesian Farmer* described as “the toughest meeting of his political career”.¹¹³ Approximately 500 farmers gathered in Umvukwes to debate the financial crisis in agriculture and laid the blame squarely at the feet of his Ministry. The escalation in the war in 1973 resulted in a spate of farmer deaths in Centenary and Mt Darwin, despite reassurances from government that the situation was under control. This prompted severe criticism from farmers at the branch level RNFU meeting in April 1973, in which the competence of the security forces was openly questioned, and the reassurances of the RF were rejected.¹¹⁴ The 1975 RNFU Congress debate sparked more national public criticism of the RF and the number and magnitude of critical remarks in the RNFU council meetings increased. For example, in March 1974 there were: “growing concerns at whether government is doing enough to improve and manage the security and viability concerns of the farmers”.¹¹⁵ By 1977 the Victoria Branch of the RNFU simply submitted a vote of no confidence in the government.¹¹⁶ By 1979, the RNFU council concluded that: “a government could not be expected to legislate against its own ineptitude or any anticipation of an inability to govern and control situations”.¹¹⁷

The RF had been alarmed by Fircks and Strong’s intentions to meet Kaunda, by their willingness to engage with the nationalists, and by the obvious intentions to plan for commercial agriculture under majority rule.¹¹⁸ The RF was also deeply concerned by the growing farmer-led public criticism which emanated out of the 1975 congress debate. David Smith was also alarmed by the RNFU’s increasingly independent lobbying during the settlement negotiations of 1978 and 1979.

¹¹³ *The Rhodesian Farmer*, 10 November 1973, p.3.

¹¹⁴ *The Rhodesian Farmer*, 4 May 1973, p 5.

¹¹⁵ Minutes of the RNFU Council Meeting, 29/30 March 1974, para 24.

¹¹⁶ Minutes of the RNFU Council Meeting, 22/23 February 1977, para 132.

¹¹⁷ Minutes of the RNFU Council Meeting, 27/28 March, 1979, para 23.

¹¹⁸ Interview with Ted Osborne, Durban, April 2003.

Strong and Jack Humphries (RNFU Director) provided the AFU with funding in the late 1970s, to alleviate the constraints on the union and also to establish an alliance as part of the lobbying exercise. This initiative had support from council but met with government resistance at the time: “the Ministry... went beserk...for the simple reason that they had more control over (African) agriculture when the (African) farmers union was financially dependent on government – our move threatened that!”¹¹⁹ Ted Osborne, Secretary for Agriculture at the time, suggested that the RNFU was undertaking roles and initiatives with wider political implications than their mandate allowed.¹²⁰ This demonstrated elements of conflict between and within the institutions of white Rhodesia. The state began to suffer from a crisis of legitimacy as farmers, a traditional ‘cornerstone’ of the state and the Rhodesian Front, increasingly voiced their disgruntlement.

The RF’s agenda, UDI and the deteriorating security situation had moulded the growth, centralisation and authoritarianism of the Rhodesian state. Less obvious, but equally important, were significant power shifts within the white political structure after 1972 – an evolution of power loci within the Rhodesian state. Both the military and civilian bureaucracies initially grew in terms of size and influence and bolstered the commercial farmer position through subsidies and material support. Cliffe (1981: 12) argues that during difficult times there was a blurring between the state and the white farming community and that the *first chimurenga* was doused by mobilizing settlers. To a large extent the *second chimurenga* was also fought in this manner. Keeping farmers on the land was a crucial element of the Rhodesian cause.

Cliffe (1988:321) argues that the political clout of the farmers weakened during the war, based on the assumption that their financial and security positions deteriorated and that, because of their close ties, the weakening of the RF implied a weakening of the RNFU. My analysis suggests otherwise: whilst the RF and the Rhodesian state weakened, the relative power of

¹¹⁹ Interview with John Strong, Harare, March 2003.

¹²⁰ Interview with Ted Osborne, Durban, April 2003.

farmers within the white electorate actually strengthened. Their independent politicking and the increasing criticisms of the various administrative wings of the state were a reminder of the degree of autonomy held by a powerful farmer group, which was clearly losing faith in the ability of the RF to find a solution. The RF had been formed and consolidated as a platform for the protection of white interests, on the basis of close personal ties with members of key interest groups, particularly commercial farmers and domestic capital, but under the pressures of uncertainty about the future, it was difficult to retain these ties exclusively. Big business and international capital had led opposition to UDI and called for settlement throughout, and when the RNFU leadership began to pursue similar strategies, they bore fruit, partly because the state apparatus remained firmly geared towards farmer interests. In this we see a shift in power away from the civilian administration, to a military bureaucracy, towards the farming and business houses.

2.3.4 Farmers, the Rhodesian Front and the Opposition

The prominence of farmers, such as DC 'Boss' Lilford and Lord Angus Graham, in founding the RF was largely responsible for perceptions that it was a farmers' party. However, farmers had dominated the hierarchies of different political parties, including the UFP, and featured across the political spectrum. The Centre Party (CP) was founded by Pat Bashford, a tobacco farmer from Karoi, and led by a group of young farmers and professionals, but had suffered a series of disappointments, including the rejection of the 1969 Constitution and the Pearce Commission (Hancock, 1984: Chapter 5). The party attracted intellectuals, liberals and many of the farmers that had made up the Capricorn Society and the United Federal Party. Hancock (1984) argues that it was an attempt to return to a Whitehead-type administration, that it failed to read the changing nature of the white electorate, and was unable to curb the influence and popularity of the Rhodesian Front.

The founding of the Rhodesia Party (RP) in 1973 by Roy Ashburner, another wealthy farmer from the North East, was an attempt to change the direction of Rhodesian politics and to rescue it from the growing ‘excesses’ of the RF and the Nationalists.¹²¹ The RP portrayed itself as ‘moderate’ rather than ‘liberal’ in the hope of attracting what they hoped to be a sizeable swing vote. This was expected to emerge from the ‘pragmatic’ and moderate sectors of the RF as the pressures of war, economic downturn and diplomatic isolation grew. Farmers such as Oliver Newton, John Meikle and Strath Brown saw themselves as pragmatists rather than liberals, and always insisted on this distinction.¹²² It did not isolate them from the Rhodesian Front’s increasingly narrow brand of patriotism, which totally excluded the CP, but allowed them to distance themselves from the excesses of the ‘hard-line’ elements.

However, ‘progressive’ leadership, seemingly accepted within the farming institutions, was greeted with suspicion within the general white electorate. Alan Savory, a charismatic young agricultural consultant and rancher from Matetsi, abandoned the RF and was elected leader of the RP in 1973. Savory may have understood the political undertones of the day, but not how to articulate them to a fickle electorate and repeatedly upset the RF with his bold predictions of civil war. Savory’s self-righteousness, hot temper and messy divorce were windfalls for the RF propaganda machine which quickly neutralised the political effectiveness of the RP (Godwin and Hancock 1993; Caute, 1983). For all his talents, Savory was a loose cannon and an ineffective team player – both the party’s albatross and its opportunity.¹²³ Savory’s increasingly alarmist, but retrospectively accurate, views went beyond his constituency. His impatience and frustrations with “the narrow-minded delusions of too much of white Rhodesia” took him too far ahead of his potential support base and he lost the RP leadership to the more compromising Tim

¹²¹ Roy Ashburner was a national cricketer and became President of the ZTA in 1980-1982.

¹²² E-mail correspondence with John Meikle, May 2005.

¹²³ Discussions with Tim Gibbs, Oxford, October 2000.

Gibbs.¹²⁴ Savory later returned as leader of the National Unifying Force (NUF), a CP-RP coalition, but again isolated himself in 1978 and was forced to resign.¹²⁵

Caute (1983: 148 and 270) criticised the “minority culture of Rhodesian liberalism” and argues that despite their stated insistence to the contrary “often their faith in African efficiency, tenacity and integrity was minimal”. He also felt that they were utterly powerless and evoked the aura of a group of hobby politicians, who merely dabbled in the political arena (Caute, 1983: 212).

Hancock (1983) also criticised the capacity of the liberal/moderate coalition, claiming that white Rhodesia was divided, but only across a narrow spectrum. Godwin and Hancock (1993:111) argue that the divisions were more significant, but lament the inability of the Rhodesia Party to capitalise on them:

It was obvious that a collective and determined resistance to ‘terrorism’ was not sufficient to unite the farming communities at the ‘sharp end’ ...yet also apparent that a liberal party could not manipulate those divisions by telling some home truths.

While dwelling on the obvious ineffectiveness of white liberals, it is important to understand the ability of the RF to retain support, given their increasingly exposed shortfalls. Many liberal and moderate attitudes hardened as the tempo and brutality of the war increased. After Lady Wilson’s agricultural school in Manicaland was burnt down by “ZANLA thugs”, she grew cynical about the nationalist agenda (Caute, 1983: 224). Likewise, Caute (1983: 395) noted the hardening attitude towards ZANLA in the Penhalonga area, following the murders of several progressive farmers. Alan Ravenscroft, who had his grower support initiatives in Chiweshe sabotaged by nationalist ‘agitators’ in the 1950s, argues that the disruption and targeting of

¹²⁴ E-mail correspondence with Alan Savory, July 2003.

¹²⁵ Discussions with Tim Gibbs, Gloucestershire, April 2002.

Purchase Area farmers during the war, raised his own concerns about nationalist goals.¹²⁶ This response to guerrilla tactics and scepticism of the nationalist agenda, cut across the divisions in white society and prolonged 'white' resistance. The Red Cross rebuked both sides for callousness and degenerating discipline but guerrilla tactics and indiscipline hardened the resolve of many farmers. The targeting of vulnerable homesteads, particularly the elderly, fortified white stereo-types of 'cowardly communist terrorists'.¹²⁷ Caute (1983:253) and Phimister (1988) described deteriorating discipline within the guerrilla armies and particularly ZANLA.¹²⁸ When the civilian airliner *Hunyani* was shot down by ZIPRA guerrillas in 1978, most of the survivors were executed afterwards. Nkomo's televised celebration of the incident sent 'white' sentiment into a frenzy. A gruesome series of mission massacres, particularly at Elim, convinced many whites that a Congo-style collapse was possible.¹²⁹ On one hand this boosted emigration rates, but on another it fortified Rhodesian resolve and support for Smith. This idea of a common enemy slowed the disintegration of white society, increased scepticism of the nationalist agenda and prolonged white Rhodesian intransigence.

Although financially and socially influential, farmers only made up about ten percent of the white electorate during the mid and late 1970s. In many rural constituencies the relatively high proportion of white artisans, miners and civil servants diluted farmer voting. There were approximately 6000 registered white farmers in Rhodesia in the early 1970s and it is difficult to accurately gauge their patterns of political support or apathy. Peer pressure was certainly a factor in many circles. Gyles Dorward, a prominent tobacco farmer, described "an intimidating

¹²⁶ Interview with Alan Ravenscroft, Concession, August 2001.

¹²⁷ Most farmer respondents claim that they perceived the communist threat as a real concern during this period. Guerrilla brutality towards black civilians, which Kriger (1992) cites as a cause of peasant-guerrilla animosity, was seized upon by the Rhodesian propaganda machine. Flower (1987) describes this propaganda exercise, and its clever distortion of real issues. The effectiveness of the campaign within the white population, was based on covering up the controversial tactics of the Rhodesian security forces and in many cases attributing them to guerrillas. Towards the end of the war the guerrilla armies began using similar media tactics in international forums.

¹²⁸ The deterioration of discipline within the Rhodesian Security Forces is also documented. See Moore King (1988).

¹²⁹ Elim Pentecostal Mission in Manicaland was attacked and thirteen members of missionary families, including four children, were hacked to death. Although Mugabe blamed the Selous Scouts for the massacre, Com-Ops claimed that there was indisputable evidence linked to ZANLA forces. Maxwell (1995) supports the latter assertion.

pro-RF atmosphere at Salisbury South... (where) you were either with them or against them”.¹³⁰ Bill McKinney described similar peer intimidation in Matabeleland.¹³¹ Both explained that there was little tolerance of alternative view-points and little distinction between patriotism and being a member of the RF. On the other hand the Mtoko farming district, also a tobacco growing area, consistently voted against the RF throughout UDI (Hancock, 1984). Other districts, such as Mazowe, reflected a more balanced and variable electoral pattern.¹³² Gyles Dorward distinguished between “those farmers taking the pragmatic business angle... (as opposed to) those on the political route”. The RF appears to have sustained its support in those farming districts least affected by the war, such as Trelawney, Salisbury South and Matabeleland whilst those under the worst pressure such as Manicaland, Centenary, Mtoko and Umvukwes were often the most prepared to question the government.

The wealthy mixed-farming region of Sinoia/Umvukwes posed an interesting test in a 1974 by-election following a spate of attacks on farmers in Centenary and Mt Darwin. Angry farmers and the RNFU rejected government’s assurances and publicly questioned the competence of the security forces. It was expected to be closely fought. Es Micklem, a tobacco and cattle farmer, ran for the RF against Strath Brown, the RP candidate, also a prominent tobacco grower. Pat Bashford flew the ‘liberal’ flag as the CP nominee. Accounts of the proceedings, held at Umvukwes Country Club, suggest that Savory was the crucial factor.¹³³ Rather than capitalising on the RF’s defensive stance he outlined a plan for negotiation with the nationalists, making no attempt to window-dress his alarmist predictions for the conservative audience. Godwin and Hancock (1983:110) felt that he “promptly dared (the farmers) to embrace political oblivion”. Savory put the swing vote to flight. Although the RF retained the seat easily, they lost support, winning 53 percent compared to nearly 65 percent at the previous poll. Farmers made up about

¹³⁰ Interview with Gyles Dorward, Harare, January 2004.

¹³¹ Discussions with Bill McKinney, Oxford, September 2005.

¹³² Discussions with prominent farmers from Mazowe (2002-2004) including Alex Morris Eyton.

¹³³ Interview with John Laurie, Harare, March 2003. Interview with Alan Ravenscroft, Concession, August 2001.

one third of the constituency, but were probably responsible for most of this RF defection.¹³⁴

The remaining two-thirds of the vote comprised of white artisans, shopkeepers, civil servants and miners, most of whom lived in the relatively secure towns of Umvukwes, Mutorashanga and Sinoia. As the war dragged on and the ineffectiveness of the opposition became apparent many farmers turned towards the RNFU as an alternative political outlet.

Defiant elements within the RF managed to retain influence even though it grew increasingly clear that a 'no win' war was rapidly degenerating into what Flower (1987) described as a 'losing' war. Towards the end of 1975 there was a strong right-wing move against Smith, orchestrated by Des Frost and Ted Sutton-Price, both urban-based businessmen, with the intention of reverting to an apartheid-style constitution. This incident, at the RF Party Congress in Mutare, involved two consecutive standing ovations, for opposing motions, firstly for Sutton-Price's challenge to Smith and then for Smith's defence - a remarkable shift. Ian Sandemann, a tobacco farmer from Trelawney, led a far right 1978 breakaway move with a group of RF MPs, to try and scupper the internal settlement. With a few exceptions, farmers were generally absent from these far-right moves. Godwin and Hancock (1993: 108) argue that the farming right was pro-Smith rather than pro-RF and applied this to much of white Rhodesian sentiment:

Successive generations ...easily led and even more easily deceived... had voted for heroes rather than policies and, lemming-like, thousands followed their greatest hero-'Good Old Smithy' - into the abyss.

My analysis suggests that it was much more complicated. Farmers, in questioning their financial and security predicaments and challenging the RF, the civilian bureaucracy and the military leadership, were clearly not following anyone. Their historically established 'individualism' and 'self-interests' were beginning to show through the illusions of unity within the Rhodesian Front.

¹³⁴ Discussions with Chris Pohl, Centenary Farmer, Harare, January 2004.

2.3.4 Farmer Initiatives for Settlement

John Strong and his deputy, Denis Norman, demonstrated the pragmatism of the commercial farming leaders, by uniting a powerful but diverse interest group and adapting to the winds of change. Strong's legacy of reformist leadership within the RNFU continued for the next decade. Denis Norman, David Spain, Jim Sinclair and John Laurie were all anti-RF presidents of the RNFU. They were diplomatic, consultative and prepared to implement changes. An influential figure on the executive structure of the farming leadership was Jack Humphries, the director of the RNFU. As a member of the Capricorn Society and a founder of the Centre Party he had been a prominent figure in the evolution of liberal politics. Humphries was respected as a dispenser of wise advice and influenced the young leadership, and through it the RNFU's willingness to negotiate, compromise and reform proactively.¹³⁵

While there were elements of resistance to adaptation, the RNFU leadership achieved what the RF leadership had failed to do: they accepted the inevitability of majority rule, prepared to adapt accordingly, and successfully articulated this to their membership who, in turn, extended a mandate for progressive leadership. This provided a subtle, yet effective and expanding political outlet for farmer concerns in the face of increasing scepticism of the RF, and unattractiveness of the left. The RF, despite its rhetoric, was gradually having to moderate its stance, so that by the time Smith delivered his 'surrender' speech on 24 September 1976, it had violated its key founding principle - adherence to continued minority rule. Smith's capitulation was a forced compromise that implied settlement, which changed the position, outlook and strategies of most interest groups. There was a three-way split within the white community: those still opposed to the principle of majority rule, those proposing it, and a large group still undecided but prepared

¹³⁵ David Hasluck, CFU Director 1983-2003, and Humphries' successor insisted that the successful repositioning of commercial farmers had much to do with the calibre of the leadership during this period. Interview with David Hasluck, Nyanga, March 2003.

to follow Smith in order to 'wait and see'. The relative size of these groups was changing too, as Smith demonstrated in his own gradual shift from defiance, through a phase of indecision towards reluctant surrender. Godwin and Hancock(1993: 152 and 180) describe Smith's evolution from an "unbending supremacist to a clever bargainer" and how Government objectives shifted accordingly, initially towards trying to secure an internal settlement. Smith immediately re-engaged with the British, calling on them to meet their responsibilities in helping to negotiate the transition to majority rule. This realignment served two purposes: firstly, to secure financial guarantees and an influential place at the table during the transition negotiations and, secondly, to isolate the 'external' nationalist groups - whilst preparing the stage for settlement with the 'internal moderates'. From the British perspective, Rhodesia's submission permitted recognition once more. Both Whitehall and Salisbury now shared the common objectives of securing as many guarantees and conditions as possible through a negotiated settlement.

The farmers began to lobby independently to ensure their own position of strength in the settlement. A delegation comprising the 'Five Economic Presidents', including the Heads of Commerce, Industry, Mining, Agriculture and Tobacco, travelled to the Geneva Conference in October 1976. The talks were focused on the Kissinger proposals and although they collapsed, the fringe negotiations between farming and business leaders, the British and some nationalists contributed to the 'success' of the subsequent negotiated transition.¹³⁶ Flower (1987: 173) described the farmer lobbying at the time as "an entirely new development in Rhodesian politics". In effect the private sector by-passed the government delegation and the RF, indicating a shift in white decision-making power towards a growing coalition between foreign capital and domestic farming.

¹³⁶ According to Dr Kumbirai Kangai (Interview: Harare, December 2003) and Denis Norman (Interview: Sussex October 2004), this was the first time that the farmers and the nationalists had a chance to assess the respective land policy visions of the other groups.

Denis Norman was invited to Nairobi during the Geneva Conference, to gain an impression of the Kenyan land reforms. This tour and its timetable were organised and paid for by the British government. Norman was introduced to farming leaders, and the captains of commerce and industry in an exercise designed to convince him that a white community could prosper under black rule.¹³⁷ He was impressed with the system of gradual land transfer and soon afterwards the RNFU published a land policy paper advocating managed market-based reform, which was the first formal promotion of the willing-buyer willing-seller concept.¹³⁸ Strong was invited on an extended trip to the UK in May 1977 during which he lobbied for farmer guarantees. This trip was also a British opportunity to lobby non-RF white interests.¹³⁹

Farming leaders were faced with two options: firstly, to pursue a managed land buy-out with remittable compensation, as in Kenya, or secondly, to keep farming if the conditions allowed. Most farmers considered their farms as their pensions and there was much debate about the transferability of assets as a central clause in the settlement agreement.¹⁴⁰ The leadership felt that their initial responsibility was to those members who wished to stay and to the industry, and that they should therefore encourage the protection of property rights and promote a long-term vision for commercial farming.¹⁴¹ This also suited the British because it was likely to be less disruptive and less expensive.

A whole-hearted drive for compensation by farmers would have destroyed confidence in the farming sector, the economy, and the future of the country as a whole. Some land reform was inevitable and concerns were expressed by the RNFU Council over differences between the proposals of the 'Zimbabwe Development Fund' and the 'Kissinger Trust Fund', and the

¹³⁷ Interview with Denis Norman, Sussex, October 2004.

¹³⁸ Minutes of the RNFU Council Meeting, 25/26 January 1977, para 134 and Paper cyclo no. 8852/11.

¹³⁹ Minutes of the RNFU Council Meeting, 22/23 February 1977, para 129.

¹⁴⁰ Minutes of the RNFU Council Meeting 21/22 February, 1978, para 37.

¹⁴¹ Interview with John Strong, March 2003 and supported by Denis Norman, October 1994.

vagueness of the clauses relating to land policy and compensation.¹⁴² RNFU Council debates also revealed farmer scepticism of British good-will about potential funding. The Sinoia Farmers' Association recorded their concern about the lack of a remittance clause for compensation funds in the ZDF document, whilst drawing attention to the ability of civil servants to receive pensions in foreign currency outside the country.¹⁴³ John Laurie (RNFU Salisbury Branch Chairman) called for an updated and complete property ownership survey and for a Government Fund to be established as an added guarantee.¹⁴⁴

The Salisbury Branch, submitted a supporting resolution the following January which emphasised the same concerns about the flexibility of compensation remittances.¹⁴⁵ Like business, farming wanted a settlement as soon as possible, but only with guarantees. The RNFU produced a pamphlet, effectively an updated version of Norman's land position paper, in response to the Government's white paper, calling for reassurances about property rights, fair compensation and remittance flexibility.¹⁴⁶ Strategic lobbying became a central role of the Union during the transition, and was an important factor in the repositioning of the farmers. As these efforts increased, so the RNFU's close ties to the Rhodesian Front diminished. The farming leadership appreciated the need to shape the path ahead proactively, to protect their members' interests, which Wasserman (1970) identified as a key settler strategy in his analysis of Kenya's white farmers. Godwin and Hancock (1993) argue that White Rhodesia generally reacted to pressures of change by reaffirming the values of the past rather than by adapting progressively. The strategic manoeuvring by the farming leadership counters this and has important implications for subsequent farmer pro-activity, particularly during the 1990s.

¹⁴² Minutes of the RNFU Council Meeting, 24/25 January 1978, para 33.

¹⁴³ Minutes of the RNFU Council Meeting, 25/26 April 1978, para 41.

¹⁴⁴ Interview with John Laurie, Harare, March 2003. Also supported in Minutes of the RNFU Council Meeting, 24/25 January 1978, para 112.

¹⁴⁵ Minutes of the RNFU Council Meeting, 31 Jan, 1979, para 80.

¹⁴⁶ Also cited in Cauter (1983: 130).

2.4 THE POLITICS OF SETTLEMENT

2.4.1 International Pressure

Until 1974, Portuguese colonial control of Angola and Mozambique had provided the settler states of Southern Africa with territorial, military and symbolic support. Mozambique's Independence on 25 June 1975 changed this. FRELIMO's assumption of power increased Rhodesia's isolation, exposed the huge eastern border to strategic insecurity and significantly altered the direction and nature of the war. When South Africa and the United States became embroiled in Angola later that year, Zambia began to actively support the guerrilla movement exposing the north-western border (Stoneman and Cliffe, 1989: 30). In December 1974, Vorster persuaded Smith to release prominent detainees, which boosted the organisational capacity of the nationalists.

Smith's decision to throw in the towel was made for him by the international community. Following the failures of the Wilson talks, the Pearce Commission, the 'railway carriage' talks and ongoing peripheral mediations, Henry Kissinger announced a set of proposals and concurrently turned the screws on South Africa, by implying extended sanctions. Vorster subsequently issued an ultimatum to Smith - without South African military support or trade and energy links white Rhodesia was unable to survive much longer, and clearly already unable to control the pace or direction of change.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁷ For a detailed assessment of regional geo-politics during this period see Johnson (1977).

2.4.2 The Internal Settlement

After reluctantly accepting Kissinger's proposals, Smith regained the upper hand when ZANU and ZAPU rejected them at the Geneva talks in October 1976. Mugabe simply ignored them and Edison Zvobgo, a Harvard educated lawyer, described them as "a load of crap", calling for more fundamental reform 'immediately'. Smith's compromise differed starkly from the confrontational stance of the nationalists and the western media began to demonise Mugabe. Smith took advantage of this to play-off the nationalists and the international community. By reaching consensus with South Africa, the USA, Britain and the internal nationalists, Smith isolated ZANU and ZAPU, portraying them as the 'unreasonable' parties. This laid the foundations for an internal settlement with the 'moderate' nationalists of the UANC, including Bishop Abel Muzorewa, Chief Jeremiah Chirau and Rev. Ndabaningi Sithole, who had lost the ZANU leadership to Mugabe. Smith hoped to engineer a moderate coalition leadership through which to maintain white influence, control and interests.

Having lost the battle to perpetuate white minority rule, they (the whites) voted for a new structure (1979 referendum) which retained their economic control, preserved their jobs, gave them a share of political power and merely removed the legal barriers to black advancement (Godwin and Hancock, 1993: 7).

In return, the moderate nationalists would enjoy some access to power, which the inclusion of the Patriotic Front would have denied them. From the RF's perspective it was a political concession designed to secure an economic one – an exercise to hand over parliament in order to keep the banks. The RF's moves towards internal settlement prompted a breakaway by the far right. Godwin and Hancock (1993: 247) described this group as "real hardliners ... with a flair for the headmasterly lecture, the racial insult and for spotting communist tendencies lurking in a progressive suggestion". Under Ian Sandemann's leadership the Rhodesian Action Party (RAP)

was formed in April 1977, and campaigned for apartheid-style segregation in a last-ditch attempt to avoid settlement, which ultimately failed. By this stage though, even the white urban working classes were feeling the direct effects of war and conceded to negotiation (Meredith, 1979)

The interesting feature of the move is the realisation by the extreme right of the RF that there was now a significant and inevitable shift towards compromise within the party and, more importantly, that their best hope of preventing it lay with the artisans, not the farmers, not business and certainly not with the farming leadership – the RNFU broke their policy of political silence to express concerns that the RAP appeal might scupper the settlement process. The call for settlement thus became a uniting factor. The RNFU officially resolved to express their willingness for a settlement at every opportunity, to all interested parties.¹⁴⁸ RNFU preparations for settlement and compromise were symbolically demonstrated by an official name change to the Commercial Farmers Union (CFU) at the 1979 Congress. British and South African capital also lobbied hard behind the scenes for a compromise.¹⁴⁹ Gyles Dorward, President of the RTA, emphasised the tobacco sector's impatience for settlement.¹⁵⁰ He re-iterated this at the 50th Anniversary Congress in June 1978: "if you want to overcome these problems tomorrow, keep your tobacco men today by resolving your political differences now – Right now!"¹⁵¹ His successor, Don Bulloch stated the following year: "once sanctions are removed every effort must be made to regain our rightful place in world markets, and the sooner the better".¹⁵²

There was probably more consensus between domestic and foreign capital, the RF and the liberals, than at any stage since the 1950s. Business houses had lost faith in the left and were

¹⁴⁸ Minutes of RNFU Council Meeting, 28/29 March, 1978, para 18.

¹⁴⁹ Companies such as Barclays, Anglo American and Lonrho had opposed UDI and despite being forced into managing the war economy, had retained their opposition to the RF. Tiny Rowland, at the same time began negotiating with nationalist leaders in the mid 1970s. His concurrent condemnation of colonialism and sanctions busting activities kept him in favour with both sides. He is credited with helping to facilitate the Lancaster House negotiations but there is little evidence to support this.

¹⁵⁰ Minutes of the RNFU Council Meeting, 27/28 Sept 1977 para 15. Supported in an interview with Gyles Dorward, Harare, January 2004.

¹⁵¹ *Rhodesian Tobacco Today*, June 1978, Vol. 1, No. 11, p 10-11.

¹⁵² *Rhodesian Tobacco Today*, June 1979, Vol. 2, No. 9, p. 13.

now focussed on reforming the RF from within. Hancock (1984) argues that the irrelevance of white liberalism was striking home, and that they were now less interested in opposition politics than in urging Smith towards a settlement. The RF position had moderated and was now virtually identical to 'The Plan' submitted by the RP in 1975. The five economic presidents were also firmly behind the settlement. The business houses rallied with the leaders of farming and tobacco, the centre and the left, to push the RF towards settlement. Farmers were openly active in the promotion and administration of the referendum. RTA President Don Bulloch, urged farmers to "get involved" and Norman, now RNFU President, congratulated farmers on their efforts afterwards.¹⁵³ The 85 percent approval for the referendum was unsurprising given the organisational mobilisation by farmers and business.

Muzorewa won the 1979 elections with a surprising level of support, subsequently contradicted by the overwhelming lack of it in 1980. Nationalist rejections of the legitimacy of the elections were partially based on frustration at not being able to disrupt the process effectively. For the RF, the success of the referendum, elections and partial power-sharing depended on international recognition, firstly to remove sanctions and, secondly, to curb international support for ZANU and ZAPU and their armed divisions, ZANLA and ZIPRA. This recognition did not materialise. Margaret Thatcher, elected in May 1979, rejected the internal settlement on advice from the foreign office – a U-turn on her election pledges, but it was clear that without the inclusion of the PF the deal lacked legitimacy (Stoneman and Cliffe, 1989: 31). Her statement, delivered at the August Commonwealth Heads Of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Lusaka, provoked a furious reaction from the Muzorewa government but continued the gradual process of negotiation and compromise, that finally led to the Lancaster House conference.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵³ Minutes of the RNFU Council Meeting, September 1978.

¹⁵⁴ The RF-controlled *Herald* newspaper pondered whether she was "a labour MP in drag".

2.4.3 Farmer Lobbying and the Lancaster House Conference

Farming and business leaders welcomed prospects of the Lancaster House Conference, simply because it was a settlement. The consensus to negotiate required compromise from all parties, but the outcome generally favoured the interests of whites who wished to stay.¹⁵⁵ Most farmers were concerned about whether they would be allowed to continue farming or whether they would receive remittable compensation. The political options for farmers during this period have distinct parallels with the Kenyan settler experience of the 1960s (Leo, 1984).¹⁵⁶ From the nationalist perspective the objectives of the armed struggle had only partially been achieved. A negotiated settlement prevented a military victory, which radical elements desired, and which many moderates have subsequently lamented.¹⁵⁷ Mugabe yearned to eradicate any vestiges of the previous regime: “we will burn the country to ashes and rebuild it in our own image”.¹⁵⁸

A negotiated settlement restricted possibilities of radical reform, prompting the question as to why ZANU were prepared to negotiate. The reasons appear to be threefold: Firstly, there was pressure from Britain and the frontline states for a settlement, with the threat that material and symbolic support would be withdrawn from an already strained guerrilla war effort. Secondly, after Nkomo’s secret liaisons with Smith came to light, Mugabe realised that he ran the risk of being sidelined and isolated. Thirdly, as Stoneman (1986) argues, the nationalists were not prepared for an immediate and wholesale takeover and did not share clear objectives. They were ideologically inconsistent and, more importantly, lacked the experience or skills for an immediate assumption of administrative power, so a negotiated transition actually suited them.

¹⁵⁵ In Kenya the process generally favoured those farmers who wished to sell up and leave.

¹⁵⁶ Wasserman’s (1976) appraisal traces the interactions between political parties and factions within both settler and nationalist politics, which ultimately led to a negotiated compromise. The less-polarised political environment of Kenya and the close ties between Kenya’s farmers and Whitehall led to a significant land buyout.

¹⁵⁷ Interview with Dr Kumbirai Kangai, Harare, December 2003.

¹⁵⁸ Extracts from Mugabe’s Press Statements at The Geneva Conference, October 1976. Cliffe (1981) and Mandaza (1986), among others, also argued that a military victory would have paved the way for more radical restructuring.

From a British perspective, the negotiations at Lancaster House went remarkably well. The objectives of the conference were to settle three issues: a ceasefire, elections and independence, and a new constitution. Persuading the various stakeholders to the table, keeping them there, and then securing agreement through compromise, was a remarkable achievement. The British team, led by Lord Carrington, managed to deliver what many had predicted would be impossible. Despite Rhodesia's external military raids into Mozambique during the conference, the British, in collaboration with Kaunda and Machel, using funding pledges, assurances and threats, convinced the PF that a settlement was the only feasible option.

An important element of the Lancaster House constitution was the 'Land Clause' in the Bill of Rights, which prevented the wholesale expropriation of farms, limited compulsory acquisition of under-utilised land and guaranteed remittable compensation.¹⁵⁹ The specific protection of white interests grew from the assumption that their bargaining position was about to diminish significantly. The Patriotic Front rejected the land clause in advance and envisaged immediate large-scale reform without compensation. Denis Norman travelled to London in October to raise support for a managed land program based on his 1976 policy paper.¹⁶⁰ This initiative drew criticism from the Zimbabwe-Rhodesian government delegation who felt that a RNFU (CFU) presence was unnecessary. David Smith queried whether there was a lack of confidence in the delegation and asked "whether Mr Norman thought he could do better than himself and Mr Cronje?"¹⁶¹ The CFU's visit was remarkably effective, attracting Anglo-American financial pledges that were later complemented by vague British assurances through Lord Carrington during the conference. Costa Pafitis (Muzorewa's Press Officer) claims that the British guarantees were 'encouraged' by the Nigerian Government, who threatened to nationalise British

¹⁵⁹ Smith and Simpson's (1981) detailed account of the negotiations pays remarkably little attention to the land clause, instead bringing out the significance of the Mugabe-Nkomo split and the pressure of other African states. Likewise Flower's (1987: Chapter Twelve) otherwise detailed accounts make no mention of the land clause, or its significance in the stalemate.

¹⁶⁰ Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 31 October 1979.

¹⁶¹ Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 31 October 1979.

Oil companies if they were not forthcoming.¹⁶² These funding assurances were key in persuading the nationalist groups to drop their opposition to the bill of rights clause.¹⁶³

According to Denis Norman, Josiah Chinamano reassured delegates that if there were sufficient financial guarantees then ZAPU's land policy was directly in line with the CFU's.¹⁶⁴ Both groups could agree, provided there was money, which at a broad level was how the Kenyan settlement had proceeded.

Prior to the conference, the CFU council feared that the government delegation would be too preoccupied with preserving their own interests, such as remittable pension guarantees, to ensure the crucial lobbying for property rights, and Norman again travelled to London, personally attending the conference on the sidelines to ensure that the interests of white farmers were articulated. According to CFU minutes, the purpose of this visit was:

to ensure a representative interest, to clarify compensation and selection criteria, and to alleviate concerns at the 'various' positions of the PF, government representatives and indeed the British government".¹⁶⁵

It was effective and shrewd diplomacy, conducted in the well-organised manner in which the CFU had lobbied for decades and would continue to do for years to come. Norman was asked to put forward a land policy and once more submitted an updated version of the willing-buyer, willing-seller paper, which the final constitution was based on.¹⁶⁶ The Bill of Rights clause protected the interests of the white farming community and restricted the ability of the inheriting powers to deliver much of the land-based expectation immediately, whilst the funding guarantees will remain one of the great unanswered controversies in Zimbabwean history.

¹⁶² Flower (1987: Chapter Twelve) mentions similar Nigerian pressure on American interests.

¹⁶³ Interview with Dr Kangai, Harare, December 2003. Interview with Costa Pafitis, Mazowe, January 2005.

¹⁶⁴ Minutes of CFU Council Meeting, 31 October 1979, paras 6/7. This was confirmed in an interview with Denis Norman, Sussex, October 2004.

¹⁶⁵ Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 31 October 1979, added memo 15.

¹⁶⁶ Confirmed in an interview with Denis Norman, Sussex, October 2004.

2.5 THE POLITICS OF RECONCILIATION

The negotiated settlement was gradual and staged, involving compromises from all parties. De Waal (1990) and Weiss (1994) argue that reconciliation favoured the whites. This may have provided a cornerstone of stability, but enduring land and race inequities remained unresolved. ‘Political neutrality’ had been a guiding principle of CFU policy since the early 1970s, even though their proximity to the RF and the Rhodesian government amounted to an alliance. Their guiding principle to “work with the government of the day” provided a slogan on which to justify their repositioning to an alliance with the Patriotic Front, which was the most visible symbol of settlement for both sides.¹⁶⁷

2.5.1 The White Exodus, Farmer Emigration and Incomplete Reconciliation

The euphoria of settlement masked the fragility of Zimbabwe’s ceasefire. The challenges of merging the inherited colonial state and the nationalist movement were significant and had not been part of ZANU’s envisaged agenda, although it subsequently suited it. The desire for an outright victory had been central to ZANU’s public position - Mugabe had vowed that he would not let the whites keep a single acre of land.¹⁶⁸ He had also threatened to hang Ian Smith from a lamppost in First Street, so to many whites his speech of reconciliation, delivered on 17 April 1980, was unexpected:

If yesterday I fought you as an enemy, today you have become a friend and ally with the same national interest, loyalty, rights and duties as myself. If yesterday you hated

¹⁶⁷ This remained the CFU’s default position particularly during difficult periods.

¹⁶⁸ Extracts of Press reviews from the Geneva Conference October 1976. Cited in Smith and Simpson (1981).

me, today you cannot avoid the love that binds you to me and me to you. The wrongs of the past must now stand forgiven and forgotten (De Waal, 1990).

Denis Norman's appointment as the new Minister of Agriculture was another reassuring gesture to whites, and particularly the farming community. It was engineered by Lord Soames and Norman had initially rejected it – he had still not agreed to undertake the role when it was announced.¹⁶⁹ Mugabe clearly viewed it as a pragmatic, technical appointment and this is reflected in a well-known anecdote. When the Prince of Wales arrived in Harare for the Independence Celebrations, Mugabe introduced him to Denis Norman: “my Minister of Agriculture, who knows nothing about politics”. Prince Charles is said to have countered: “well I sincerely hope that he knows something about agriculture”.¹⁷⁰

Norman's political savvy had already been proven, and he was aware of the implications and responsibilities of his role within a ‘new’ Zimbabwe. In his acceptance speech, on receipt of a farming ‘Oscar’ in 1981, Norman urged white farmers to put their weight behind “the greatest team of all – government... and the greatest captain of all (Mugabe)” (CFU, 1991:40).¹⁷¹ The significance of this statement was its attempt to raise farmer confidence in the new government, implying that it was still lacking. The farming leadership had negotiated the stormy waters of transition and successfully repositioned the commercial farming sector – this was a call for members to follow.

Analysis of the CFU archives and the minutes of council meetings reveal an ongoing tension in which the council was often using its close ties with Denis Norman to manage awkward situations or politicians. At the same time, members of the farming groups had to be managed

¹⁶⁹ Interview with Denis Norman, Sussex, October 2004.

¹⁷⁰ Confirmed in an Interview with Denis Norman, Sussex, October 2004.

¹⁷¹ The Farming Oscars are a somewhat incestuous self-congratulatory award, presented annually to a prominent member of the farming community for contributions to agriculture. The decision panel generally consisted of past recipients, dominated by past CFU Presidents.

in dealing with sensitive 'squatter' problems.¹⁷² The squatting issue highlighted the simmering undercurrents of unresolved 'land' and 'race' issues: a demand for land in the communal areas, varying degrees of concern and resistance from white farmers and, perhaps most significantly, a willingness and preparedness within sectors of the ruling party to encourage land protests and defend spontaneous land occupations. A process emerged in which Sinclair and Laurie were consistently reining in members and concurrently seeking reassurances from approachable members of the government. In this respect Norman provided a useful channel of communication.

Mugabe was being pragmatic in view of the economy's dependence on white farmers, who produced 90% of marketed maize and cotton in 1980 (Stoneman and Cliffe, 1989: 130). Food security and a stable economy countered the very real threat of South African destabilisation. Reconciliation attracted international credibility, which was needed if funding for reconstruction and development was to be forthcoming.¹⁷³ Mugabe's decision to offer the hand of reconciliation overcame profound personal misgivings. He had endured significant tragedies; in addition to ten years of detention and a long exile, he had been prevented from travelling to Ghana to attend the funeral of his son, Nhamo, who had died of malaria. Edison Zvobgo described the toll that this had had on Mugabe, who then survived three assassination attempts immediately before the elections in 1980.¹⁷⁴ Against this his reconciliation must have been pragmatic, conditional and partial.

Enthusiasm for reconciliation varied considerably among other members of the ZANU and ZAPU leadership. 'Moderates', such as Kumbirai Kangai and Edison Zvobgo, seem to have willingly adopted the policy and practised it open-mindedly, quickly establishing ties with

¹⁷² Minutes of CFU Council meetings throughout the 1980's refer to the 'squatter' issue.

¹⁷³ Lord Soames and other African leaders persuaded Mugabe to adopt a reconciliatory stance. Tiny Rowland, the Lonrho chief, is also attributed with moderating ZANU's stance, although little direct evidence is available.

¹⁷⁴ *Mugabe, Smith and the Union Jack*, Interview with David Dimpleby, BBC Documentary, April 2000.

members of the white communities.¹⁷⁵ At the other extreme Enos Nkala and Herbert Ushewokunze regularly vilified whites and other minority groups. Grassroots opinion towards reconciliation is more difficult to gauge but De Waal (1990) implies that there were considerable variations between different regions and experiences.

Degrees of acceptance within the white community also varied. The pattern of emigration suggests that significant numbers of whites were unwilling to accept the prospects of living as a minority group under majority rule. Figure 2.3 shows that about two thirds of the White population emigrated, at an increasing pace, between 1972 and 1985. When Rhodesia became Zimbabwe, South African still provided an ‘exit’ option for the white population. Stoneman and Cliffe (1989: 61) claim that Independence did little to undermine the structure of the settler political economy, but it did displace a lot of whites, both during and after the war.

The white political leadership took on a range of stances towards reconciliation. Ian Smith claimed that he was “overwhelmed by Mugabe’s pragmatism and breadth of vision” and was regularly consulted by the new Prime Minister for nearly 18 months, but continued to criticise majority rule and the deterioration of ‘standards’.¹⁷⁶ According to Denis Norman, Mugabe’s advisors then suggested that he distance himself from Smith as part of the South African diplomatic offensive.¹⁷⁷ PK Van der Byl maintained pessimistic attitudes towards black rule and appeared to adopt a reconciliatory stance in so much as it afforded him the opportunity to remain in the country. For some RF members this was too much: Bob Gaunt bragged in parliament that the Rhodesian Security Forces had never lost a battle or even a skirmish, whilst Don Goddard, a former Selous Scout, apparently urged Mugabe’s ministers to “go back to the bush where you belong” (Caute, 1983: 440). Such incidents may have been isolated but they fanned racial

¹⁷⁵ This assertion is supported by most interviews with members of the farming leadership.

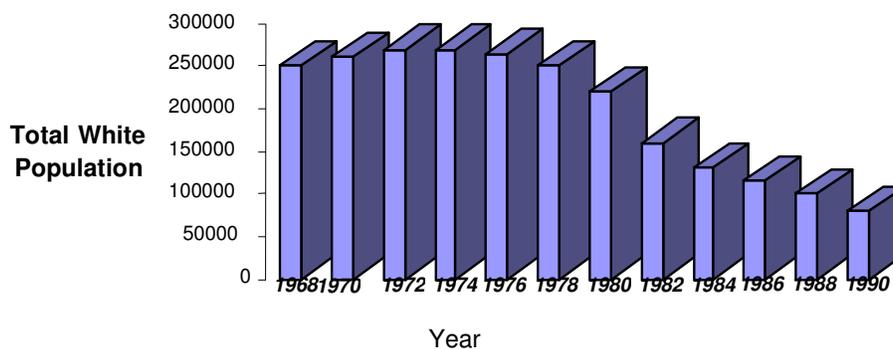
¹⁷⁶ *Mugabe, Smith and the Union Jack*, Interview with David Dumbleby, BBC Documentary, April 2000.

¹⁷⁷ *Mugabe, Smith and the Union Jack*, Interview with David Dumbleby, BBC Documentary, April 2000. Interview with Denis Norman, Sussex, October 2004.

hostility and were seized upon by state propaganda. A rueful John Laurie, former President of the CFU, recently remarked: “ all it takes is one insensitive incident or statement to tar the entire farming community with the same brush”.¹⁷⁸

Other members of the white community chose a similar path to Norman. David Smith, a senior Minister in the Rhodesian cabinet and farmer from Mt Hamden, had defected from the RF, at Lancaster House, and was subsequently appointed Minister of Trade and Industry. Chris Anderson, the prominent lawyer, followed suit and became the First Minister of Justice in the new government. Many prominent members of the white community seemed prepared to give the nation-building project a try, and the new administration appeared willing to let them.

Figure 2.3 White Emigration During the Transition



Source: Caute (1983: 28); Brand (1981:38); CSO.

The changing profile of the white community after Independence has not been analysed sufficiently and attitudes towards reconciliation at grassroots are difficult to gauge. Stoneman and Cliffe (1989: 63) suggest that white artisans were most threatened by racial equality in the job market and constituted the majority of emigrants, many moving to South Africa. Godwin and Hancock (1993), Caute (1984) and Boynton (1994) claim that the ‘die-hards’ and the

¹⁷⁸ Interview with John Laurie, Harare, February 2003.

artisans were the first to leave, implying that the residue of the white population was more moderate. For many Afrikaners, 'returning' south was a better alternative than facing black rule. Liberals, moderates and progressives who had welcomed or accepted the prospects of majority rule obviously constituted a greater proportion of whites that stayed. There is also an interesting comparison in the destinations of departing whites – most moved to South Africa or Australia. Virtually all of Kenya's departing settlers 'returned home' to England (Wasserman, 1977).

Although two-thirds of whites emigrated, the total number of white farmers only decreased by about one-third over the same period. The number of urban-based business owners declined even less. According to Stoneman (1981: 136) at least one-third of commercial farmers were technically insolvent in 1979, and this figure may have been as high as forty percent according to Riddell (1981). For many, the uncertainty of staying was not worth the risk, but conversely, those farmers with valuable properties, assets and investments had an added interest in staying. In my Case Study area the farmers who left were all in financial difficulties - not a single successful farmer 'took the gap'.¹⁷⁹ Interviews suggest that this pattern was consistent across the country.¹⁸⁰ The high proportion of successful businessmen and farmers, among the 100 000 whites who were still resident by 1985, skewed the 'wealth-race disparity' further.

Godwin and Hancock (1993: 250 and 255) felt that white enclaves retained a disproportionate political presence, and a profound commitment to the past. Weiss (1994) accused whites of retreating into their homes and their interests. For many whites life did not change drastically and it was easy to resort to pre-war lifestyle routines between the farm and the country club, or the office and the golf course - in effect, continued social isolation.¹⁸¹ This also encouraged

¹⁷⁹ See Appendix I.

'Taking the gap' was Rhodesian slang for emigrating. Those who stayed perceived it as cowardly and unpatriotic.

¹⁸⁰ Discussions with Bill McKinney, Oxford, September 2005.

¹⁸¹ Weinrich (1973: 45) noted that white farmer social isolation was due more to the nature of their lifestyles than any conscious effort.

external perceptions of ‘resorting to the status quo’. But there was a new element of insecurity and indecision within white communities, which Caute (1983: 439) identifies:

whites now suffered a profound sense of alienation – constantly accused by the government and the media of failing to cleanse their minds of colonial attitudes, of clinging to their privileges, of rejecting the great national enterprise of reconciliation.

The sheer weight of history and the established norms of ‘master and servant’ made it very difficult for blacks and whites to integrate smoothly. Attempts to do so were often awkward, brief and unsuccessful. CFU Council meeting minutes regularly record member concerns about ‘white-bashing’ and calls for reassurance from Government.¹⁸² This indecision and insecurity also exposed an element of expediency within white reconciliation; a ‘wait and see’ approach, of which Caute (1983: 130) was critical:

it seems that Rhodesians are Rhodesians when it suits them, masters of their own destiny like Americans or Australians but something else, hybrids of tenderly ambiguous identity when it no longer suits them.

Godwin and Hancock (1993) support the economic self-interest thesis in arguing that most white interest groups were simply too preoccupied with self-preservation to worry about past political attachments. Boyton (1994) pondered the difficulties of finding any whites in South Africa who had supported apartheid, and argued that this applied to whites in Zimbabwe. The euphoria of independence and the cessation of violence undoubtedly contributed to a moment of national unity, but the underlying disparities and tensions soon resurfaced. Large portions of the white

¹⁸² This is also conveyed in many of the letters to the Editor of *The Farmer* magazine.

population may have gradually accepted the concept of black rule or that changes were afoot, but few appeared to consider the implications of this change or their own responsibilities within it, and as a result there was little attempt to integrate socially or actively overcome other legacies of the race divide.

2.5.2 Fifth Columnism and the 1985 Elections

South Africa's program of destabilisation in the region added another dimension to trans-Limpopo relations. It was designed to ensure that the 'Zimbabwe experiment' failed in a bid to stem the wave of black majority rule sweeping down the continent.¹⁸³ The racial legacy and presence of fifth columnists kept the racial pot simmering and undoubtedly undermined the reconciliation process. The destabilisation policy was conducted in three ways: firstly, a campaign of strategic terrorism including the destruction of military hardware; secondly, the inheritance of Rhodesian support for the Mozambican National Resistance (RENAMO) and their sabotage of the Beira corridor in Mozambique; and thirdly, covert support for dissident activity in the form of a "Super ZAPU" network to inflame the Matabeleland conflict. (CCJP, 1997: 34).¹⁸⁴ By increasing dissident activity and implicating ZAPU, South Africa stoked the flames of the widening ZAPU - ZANU PF rift.

Pretoria's activities exposed the insecurities of the new Zimbabwean government, which often resorted to blaming disgruntled whites. The detention of senior air-force personnel, accused of sabotaging Thornhill Airbase in 1983, was a case in point. Blaming South Africa would have acknowledged an act of war and the last thing the new government could afford was direct conflict with their more powerful neighbour. Mugabe's volatile reaction to British criticism of

¹⁸³ Stiff (2000), Hanlon (1986), CCJP (1997).

¹⁸⁴ These were not new activities and had been conducted extensively in Angola and Namibia since the mid 1970s.

the detentions exposed a deep resentment and he lost much of his reconciliatory moral high ground with the international press (Martin and Johnson, 1985; Hanlon, 1986).

ZANU PF considered the 1985 parliamentary elections as a direct test of the degree of reconciliation adopted by whites. John Laurie, President of the CFU, along with business leaders and key independents, tried to persuade Denis Norman to form an opposition party for white moderates and progressives, to run against the Conservative Alliance of Zimbabwe (CAZ), a reconditioned RF, for the 20 reserved white seats.¹⁸⁵ Laurie envisaged the dangers that a wholesale CAZ victory would have for the fragile reconciliation process. Despite Norman's widespread respect, as both a Minister and Senator, he declined the role. He preferred to remain politically independent on the basis that any perceived politicisation of commercial farming interests might jeopardise their collective bargaining position.¹⁸⁶ In any event, the nucleus for white moderates failed to materialise and the CAZ won 15 of the 20 seats. Despite the low turn out, Mugabe accused the white community of retaining their privileged positions without reciprocating reconciliation.¹⁸⁷

Scathing reports in *The Herald* castigated whites for their unreconstructed racism. The insensitivities of what Laurie termed "an unfortunate error" must be contextualised. In October, the previous year, Mugabe had commented: "Our people have not tried to avenge the past... and the whites are still on top economically and in terms of culture...we are not making them suffer because of their past at all" (Alexander, 1993: 164). This statement captured three important aspects of the incomplete reconciliation, firstly that 'the past' was still very much a key part of the present, secondly, that there was little distinction between whites, and thirdly, that there was a growing intolerance for continued white privilege and economic dominance.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁵ Interview with John Laurie, Harare, March 2003.

¹⁸⁶ Interview with Denis Norman, Sussex, October 2004.

¹⁸⁷ *The Herald* editorial column, June 1985.

¹⁸⁸ Interview with John Laurie, Harare, March 2003.

White liberals and moderates dismissed the CAZ dominance in the election as statistical misrepresentation, which Mandaza (1986) has criticized. Closer assessment of the white voting by Sithole (1986: 90) and Sylvester (1986) suggest that ZANU PF overreacted. The CAZ won 15 out of 20 possible seats. Four seats went to the Independent Zimbabwe Group (IZG), a loose alliance of Independents who, rather ironically, campaigned for the abolition of white seats, arguing that they did not need separate representation. The CAZ won 55 percent of the white votes. A low turn out of 34,041 voters out of a potential 75,000 gave CAZ about 25 percent mandate from the eligible white electorate, which cannot be interpreted as sustained hard-line support for Smith, particularly when compared with his 60-70 percent dominance throughout the 1970s. Furthermore, the results of the white-seat elections were not as damning as ZAPU's decisive electoral victories in Matabeleland and the Midlands, which were a clear rejection of ZANU PF.

The results illustrate two important features of white politics: firstly, the inability or disinclination to find an alternative leader - Bill Irvine, who led the IZG alliance, was an ex-RF politician and therefore unsuitable to lead a new white direction, and secondly, the beginning of a virtual withdrawal of whites from public politics. Many commercial farmers claim that they did not bother to vote in the 1985 elections.¹⁸⁹ Three reasons were offered: firstly, their impact in the significantly expanded rural constituencies would be negligible; secondly, there was a lack of inspiring choice amongst the white leadership in the twenty reserved seats – Sylvester (1986) specifically noted the uninspiring quality of white candidates; and thirdly it was becoming the vogue to adopt a CFU stance of 'apoliticism', to ignore politics and get on with the 'real task' of farming. At this stage there was no significant pro-ZANU support from farmers, as would emerge in the 1990 and 1995 elections, and this appears to be a key issue.

¹⁸⁹ Interviews and discussions with commercial farmers in the case study area, 2002-2004.

Following the election, Mugabe immediately dismissed Norman from the Agriculture portfolio, and John Laurie recalls how he was unable to gain access to the President's office for at least three months.¹⁹⁰ Mugabe wrote to Norman and explained that "obviously the whites have not appreciated what I have done for them, or what you have done for them, and I will therefore give them a black minister".¹⁹¹ These moments of hostile behaviour indicated that the ruling hierarchy did not distinguish between the farmers and the rest of the white community. Rather, they considered the farmers as the unofficial representatives of the white community, probably due to their high profiles and the legacy of farmer leadership in white Rhodesia. Sylvester (1986:252) noted Nathan Shamuyarira's reluctance to distinguish between the IZG and the CAZ. Again however, this action was moderate in comparison to the reaction to ZAPU's victory in Matabeleland, especially after several years of systematic and violent repression.¹⁹² Reconciliation was partial from all sides and, like the defiance and impacts of the war, its nature and scope varied considerably within different groups. This is unsurprising given the magnitude of historical grievances and the perceptions of commercial farmers and businessmen as 'white islands', unable to see their own responsibilities in bridging the racial divide. So although the farmers negotiated a successful repositioning with the new government, this convenient arrangement remained awkward and was constantly being undermined.

2.6 CONCLUSION

The transition from Rhodesia to Zimbabwe was violent, complicated and drawn out. Both sides moved towards a negotiated settlement, in which all parties were required to compromise. The most notable shift among whites was the repositioning of commercial farmers. Autonomous

¹⁹⁰ Interview with John Laurie, Harare, February 2003.

¹⁹¹ Interview with Denis Norman, Sussex, October 2004.

¹⁹² More than 200 ZAPU leaders were detained after the 1985 elections and thousands of people were tortured or forced into exile. Had some of the atrocities of the early 1980s not already been exposed, there probably would have been further retribution (Alexander, 1993: 218).

lobbying by the RNFU and RTA leaders with representatives of the frontline states, the nationalist groups and the British government saw a loosening of ties with the Rhodesian Front. Following Independence, the nationalists inherited a powerful and intact state apparatus in which white civil servants in senior positions enforced a process of gradual reform. They assumed most of the technical affairs of governance, which initially suited ZANU's inexperience.

White farmers suffered some of the worst experiences of the war, but most managed to retain their farms, and as a group they maintained their influence within the evolving power structure. The institutional effectiveness of the RNFU, and certain individuals within it, played an important role. The non-partisan, but increasingly progressive and outspoken RNFU also provided an alternative political outlet for farmers. Contrary to many perceptions, farmers were instrumental in negotiating settlement and compromise. At grassroots level, commercial farmers were the first white interest group to experience and to recognise the forces of change. At institutional level they were the first group to challenge the hegemony of the Rhodesian Front.

The political, economic and security crises of the 1970s exposed, accentuated and created divisions within wider white society. Farmers were initially united through shared experiences, through community security and through a widespread belief, transcending their own political, racial and ideological differences, that they were fighting 'terrorism'. But with time, the war exposed divisions within the farming community at regional, and district levels, as well as on planes of ideology and crop type. Variations in levels of and tolerances to economic and security pressures produced different individual responses.

The pattern of farmer emigration had a significant impact on the profile of the community. Nearly two-thirds of white Rhodesians emigrated but only about one-third of white farmers left during the transition. Farmer emigrants were generally those most exposed financially, those

who had suffered the worst experiences of the war and those most ideologically opposed to black rule. By implication, the remaining farmers were wealthier, less averse to majority rule and less divided. Among the wider white population civil servants, artisans and members of the armed forces accounted for a large proportion of white emigrants, with similar implications for the profile of the community that stayed.

This distinct change in the profile of the white population and the farming community raised the relative incomes and social status of many white families. It also increased the visibility and widened the disparity of wealth in comparison to the black population, with significant repercussions for questions of race and reconciliation. Although compromise and a negotiated settlement provided a basis for reconciliation, political stability and economic recovery, the tensions of unresolved issues remained. These re-emerged within the alliance between farmers and the post-independence state and are the focus of the next chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

Sleeping with the Enemy: The Alliance between Commercial Farmers and the State 1980-1990

“There will be a place for white farmers, who have an important role to play in our new nation...you must go on farming...there is a place for you in the sun”

- Robert Mugabe, 1980.¹⁹³

“I have the privilege – and it is a privilege – of serving in the greatest team of all, the team of government, under the guardianship of the greatest captain of all, (President Mugabe)”

- Denis Norman (Minister of Agriculture), 1981.¹⁹⁴

“This is the best government for commercial farmers that this country has ever seen”

- John Brown (CFU President), 1989.¹⁹⁵

¹⁹³ Extracts from copy of Robert Mugabe’s speech to commercial farmers, Glendale Country Club, June 1980.

¹⁹⁴ Extract from Denis Norman’s acceptance speech on receipt of the 1981 Farming Oscar (CFU, 1991: 40).

¹⁹⁵ Extract from John Brown’s Presidential Address, Minutes of the CFU Annual Congress, August 1989.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter explained the repositioning of white commercial farmers, from a close relationship with the Smith regime to an alliance with the Mugabe government. This chapter analyses the new alliance and provides a link from Independence through to the 1990s. There have been numerous academic assessments of the decade in question, particularly with respect to the state and agrarian change.¹⁹⁶ I am not intend to revise these, but to refine them by adding this analysis of white farming politics.

The continued alliance between commercial farmers and the state is often viewed as a static arrangement, both in terms of its survival across the transition and then its continuation after it. Sylvester (1991) described it as a 'marriage of expediency', Mandaza (1986) declared it an 'unholy alliance', citing the manipulative power and lobbying efficiency of the commercial farmers alongside that of international capital. Analyses of the land agenda by Palmer (1990) and Moyo (1986) also implied that the coalition remained consistently powerful. Moyo (1998 and 2000) subsequently cited it as a key reason for the slow down in land reform. I query this from two perspectives: firstly, by illustrating the dynamic nature of the relationship and secondly, by questioning the relative clout and political legitimacy of white farmers over continued control of land, particularly against the growing power of the party-state.

The first section of the chapter examines land reform in the 1980s: how much land redistribution actually took place, what facilitated it and what stalled it? This illustrates the limited impact between land redistribution and the state-farmer alliance at this stage. The second section explores areas of contest between white farmers and the state including producer price negotiations, farming institution relationships and the 'squatter' issue, illustrating the waning

¹⁹⁶ Herbst (1990) analysed state autonomy, Alexander (1993) assessed the state, agrarian policy and rural politics and Mandaza (1986), Moyo (1995), Bratton (1994), Stoneman and Cliffe (1989) and Kinsey (1983) examined issues relating to the transition and early land reform.

power of the farmers in these contexts. Farmer differentiation is explored as a secondary consideration in this chapter reflecting its relative insignificance during this period. The experience of Matabeleland ranchers during Gukurahundi, and the re-establishing power and autonomy of tobacco farmers are two planes of division considered in more detail. The third part of the chapter looks into the process of power consolidation by the ruling party, and examines why this did not undermine the alliance between farmers and the state.

3.2 THE INFLUENCE OF THE LAND QUESTION ON THE ALLIANCE

Analysis of post-independence land reform provides a context from which to assess whether the farmers had a platform from which to resist further land redistribution. It also provides an important foundation for later chapters. The uneven distribution of land was the most important rallying issue of the liberation struggle and popular expectations for widespread land redistribution were significant at Independence. Sydney Sekeremayi, the first Zimbabwean Minister for Lands, stressed that:

Failure on the part of Government to meet these expectations could well degenerate into a cancer relentlessly eating away the promising foundation upon which all of us are trying to build a genuinely democratic, non-racial and egalitarian society (Alexander, 1994: 331).

Nationalist demands for land reform were significant and have been well analysed.¹⁹⁷ Cultural aspects of land demand and notions of a ‘spiritual attachment’ to the soil were central features of ZANU (PF)’s land lore and rhetoric, and are sometimes underestimated in terms of their symbolism and significance among the rural poor. Physical land pressure was also significant. Zimbabwe’s population doubled from four million to eight million between 1970 and 1985.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁷ For example see: Alexander (1993), Kriger (1992), Moyo (1986), Lan (1985), Ranger (1985), Moyana (1984).

¹⁹⁸ Central Statistics Office (1985), Population estimates 1970-1985.

Compounded by the disruptive and dislocating legacies of the Land Apportionment Act (1931), the Land Husbandry Act (1951) and the Land Tenure Act (1969), land pressure and grievances cannot be underestimated. The protected village scheme and refugee displacements in the war contributed to growing demands for an increasingly scarce resource. Widespread 'squatter' activity was a clear manifestation of this, before and after independence. According to Palmer (1990), population density was three times higher in the communal areas than in the commercial farming areas in 1980. The Riddell Commission (1981) claimed that the communal areas were nearly one million people in excess of estimated resource capacity. National scale assertions are problematic and often misleading, given generalisations about topography, rainfall, soils and 'resource capacity'. An important flaw of land policy in general has been the tendency to discount varying regional pressures for land demand. Whitlow (1980), in a detailed study of specific reserves, estimated that one third of communal areas were under-populated, one third had twice their sustainable populations, and that the final third exceeded that.¹⁹⁹

3.2.1 Land Reform Targets and the Technocratic State

The first attempts at land transfers began before Independence in 1979, in which about 80 000 hectares were resettled (Palmer 1990: 170). About 500 white-owned farms were abandoned during the most volatile stages of the war, which provided a supply of vacant land in 1980, from which to meet the immediate demands of refugees and war veterans. This undoubtedly alleviated any early stand-offs between operating white farmers and the state. Most of this land was located in outlying farming districts such as Melsetter, Mt Darwin and Mayo, and many of the farms bordered Communal Areas which had become increasingly difficult for the Rhodesian security forces to patrol.

¹⁹⁹ Cited in Stoneman (1981: 133).

Moyo (1986 and 1994) suggests that the inheritance of a white civil service ensured a careful and conservative approach to the initial land agenda.²⁰⁰ Herbst (1991) identified this as one of several key factors that determined a cautious start to the program. Limited implementation capacity, limited financial resources and an inherited system of technocratic planning were others. Ted Osborne (Secretary of Agriculture, 1975-1980) argued that the program needed to be pragmatic to meet the multi-faceted requirements of Lancaster House, the limitations of the state apparatus and the spirit of reconciliation.²⁰¹ By account, the Ministry actually rushed its early planning, in order to initiate the program to pre-empt radical land takeovers.²⁰²

The initial beneficiaries of the land reform program were to be those who had been displaced by the war, including war veterans, the landless, the destitute and the unemployed. Formal planning of the land program evolved into a process of amendments, in which the targets became increasingly ambitious. In 1980, Government aimed to resettle 18,000 families on 1.5 million hectares of land in five years. The following year this increased to 54,000 families on five million hectares of land in the same time frame, and by 1983 this target trebled again, to 162,000 families on nine million hectares by the end of three years. According to Dr Mupawose (Secretary of Agriculture, 1980-1987) this figure emanated from the 1982 ZANU PF party conference, where Mugabe simply stated that he wanted the program to be magnified three-fold.²⁰³ After 1985, this target was formally moderated, at the insistence of technocrats, to 15 000 families per year, until the 162 000 families had been resettled on the nine million hectares.²⁰⁴

²⁰⁰ This was reiterated in an interview with Professor Sam Moyo, January 2004, Harare.

²⁰¹ Interview with Ted Osborne, Durban, April 2003.

²⁰² This was supported in an interview with Dr Robbie Mupawose, Harare, January 2004.

²⁰³ Interview with Dr Robbie Mupawose, Harare, January 2004. Supported in Interview with Dr Kumbirai Kangai, Harare, December 2003.

²⁰⁴ Auditor General (1993); Interview with Dr Robbie Mupawose, Harare, January 2004.

The changing goalposts created concerns within the commercial farming sector. Jim Sinclair (CFU President, 1981 – 1983) and Denis Norman (Minister of Agriculture 1980-1985) sought government explanations for the targets, and were apparently regularly reassured by Mupawose and various Ministers, including Nathan Shamuyarira, Bernard Chidzero and Kumbirai Kangai that the program would proceed on a ‘willing-buyer willing-seller’ basis, and that the targets were political rhetoric.²⁰⁵ CFU council minutes from this period suggest that broadcasts and public addresses by politicians advocating a radical land agenda undermined morale significantly and there were numerous calls within council meetings for government to clarify its land stance. One farmer demanded that government “tell us once and for all whether we have a place here, (and) if not... at least be frank so that we can make alternative arrangements”.²⁰⁶ At a meeting with the CFU in 1985 before the general election, Mugabe urged farmers to “feel rooted... stay where you are... you have an important role to play”.²⁰⁷

This was an ongoing process. Feedback from government was inconsistent and often contradictory, particularly when local party representatives were involved. Some politicians continued the fiery revolutionary rhetoric of the liberation struggle, often during speeches in the rural areas, which were then screened on ZBC. There was clearly an element of playing to two audiences, but it also illustrated the dichotomy of ideas pervading the ruling party and the government about how to proceed with land reform. On one hand there was the ‘revolutionary’ camp calling for radical reform, and on the other there was a ‘pragmatic’ camp, consisting of ‘moderates’. The latter group were bolstered by the technocratic members of the state who, at this stage, still retained control of the everyday levers of the land program. The rhetoric may have boosted party morale, but it undermined ZANU PF’s credibility with various stakeholders for different reasons. The targets drew scepticism from donors, which increased subsequently

²⁰⁵ Interview with Jim Sinclair, Harare, February 2003. Interview with Denis Norman, Sussex, October 2004.

²⁰⁶ Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 26 January 1983.

²⁰⁷ *The Farmer*, 11 February 1985, p 11. Also cited in Weiner (1988: 79).

with perceptions about the perceived inability to deliver a functional reform program.²⁰⁸ Whilst the donors and farmers grew sceptical of the magnitude, manner and nature of reform, rural communities complained that not enough land redistribution was taking place and that it was not being carried out on local terms.

Moyo (2000) feels that unwarranted attention has been directed at the inconsistencies of the early land agenda and particularly the targets, arguing that many of the flaws and contradictions were the predictable teething troubles of a new administration, which underestimated the capacity constraints of the exercise. The initial redistribution program consisted of two stages and three basic models, which Kinsey (1982: 92) described as “modest ... in terms of the problem, but ambitious in terms of administrative capacity”. Model A schemes were planned on the basis of a central residential plot and approximately five hectares of arable land with communal grazing rights. Ninety percent of resettlement during the 1980s was conducted on this basis. Alexander (1991: 599) suggested that in Matabeleland “the principle reason behind the tenacity of Model A is its utility in settling squatters”, which applies to the main resettlement areas of Mashonaland and Manicaland too.

About seven percent of early resettlement involved a Model B scheme, based on communal living and co-operative farming. It was designed to accommodate the young bachelors from the disbanded liberation armies, and also acted as an experiment for the ‘socialist transformation of peasant agriculture’ (Kinsey, 1982: 100) The rarer Model C scheme, based on large-scale state farming was also tried, as well as a Model D ‘cattle grazing’ program designed in 1982 for Matabeleland, due to widespread resistance towards the inappropriateness of other models (Alexander 1991: 596).

²⁰⁸ Interview with Richard Lindsay, British High Commission, Harare, September 2001.

There were broad theoretical flaws in the program brought through from the 'betterment' thinking of the colonial era.²⁰⁹ These policies also rested on the legacy of a dualist policy discourse - one set of rules for the white commercial sector and another for the black small-scale sector. Differing opinions within government and the party towards land tenure remained unresolved and were often concerned about losing control, for both reasons of productivity and politics. Granting private tenure would have increased grower autonomy and may have encouraged a politically independent class of rural producer. Technocratic elements of the state were not interested in relinquishing control either. The planned agricultural recovery depended heavily on retaining centralised state control and direction, as in the 1953 NLHA.

3.2.2 The Accelerated Resettlement Program (ARP)

By the end of 1981 it was clear that the initial targets were unrealistic and that the pace of reform was likely to be slower than expected for a number of reasons, including the logistical hurdles of the official program. ZANU PF initiated an Accelerated Resettlement Programme (ARP), whereby 'squatters' were permitted to remain on land they had occupied. This legitimised a random self-provisioning of land on abandoned farms. The lack of official approval or procedural consistency was overlooked, but the bulk of this property was abandoned and therefore largely uncontested by previous white owners. Although such occupations and allocations of land were often haphazard, and outside the control of the official program, they met popular demand and did not threaten other groups and in this way gained legitimacy, acceptance and approval. With time they became more regulated as the resettlement bureaucracy gained capacity.

²⁰⁹ For example see the 1954 Swynnerton Plan in Kenya and the 1955 Tomlinson Report in South Africa and, most applicably, the 1951 NLHA in Rhodesia. See Williams (1982) for a review of the Riddell Commission.

The ARP was initiated as a fire-fighting technique to deal with widespread ‘squattling’, and aimed to meet the immediate demands of as many people as possible, as soon as possible. From the perspective of the state it provided a useful means of diffusing the pressures of expectation. From the perspective of the commercial farmers, ARP initially raised concerns and was labelled “a licence to squat”.²¹⁰ However, it had a limited impact on CFU members and provided a means by which ‘squatters’ could be relocated to abandoned farms thereby diverting pressure from occupied farms.²¹¹ Assurances from government that no productive land would be targeted were supported with evictions of ‘squatters’ from working farms, especially during the early and mid-1980s.²¹² Matabeleland did not experience much ARP, probably due to the lack of permanent squatting tactics. In the same way that ‘squattling’ in Mashonaland often indicated arable shortages, fence cutting and poach grazing in Matabeleland indicated demands for grazing resources. Whereas strategies in Mashonaland and Manicaland worked to secure land quickly for squatters, the tactics in Matabeleland failed, because of the combination of political repression and the ease with which cattle could be driven off land.

3.2.3 Early Land Reform Achievements and Limitations

35,000 families had been settled by 1985 and 54,000 families by 1990 on about three million hectares (Alexander, 1994: 335). Kenya resettled 70,000 families on a million hectares in two decades, although this involved 33 000 in the first five years (Leo, 1984). The Zimbabwean program was therefore a significant achievement, in aggregate terms, and unsurpassed in Africa. However, within the context of the initial targets and the emerging performance results, it was deemed a failure by many groups, including officials in government.²¹³ Implementation problems increased as available land and financial resources decreased. Bureaucratic wrangling

²¹⁰ Minutes of CFU Council Meetings, 1981-1982.

²¹¹ Interview with Jim Sinclair (President CFU 1980-1982) Harare, March 2003.

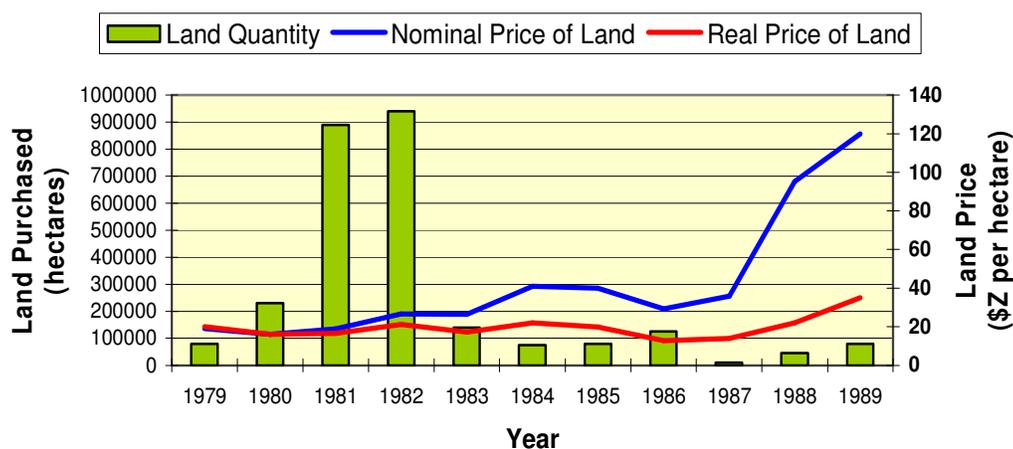
²¹² Interview with John Laurie (President CFU 1983-1986) Harare, March 2003.

²¹³ See *Hansard* debate on 1992 Land Acquisition Act which is analysed in the next Chapter.

between ministries, administrative inefficiency, lack of transparency and consistency regarding settler selection and allegations of more general corruption plagued the program and, as ongoing studies testify, are still being disentangled (Gonese and Mukora, 2002). Kinsey's (1999) analysis of the program countered much of the initial criticism but still identified concerns.

The pace of the program slowed rapidly after the early progress. More than 80 percent of the land purchases for resettlement by 1990 had been carried out by 1984 (see Figure 3.1), yet only half of the beneficiaries had been allocated land by that stage. For significant periods during the 1980s there were sizeable tracts of land which had been acquired by government, but which remained unplanned, unallocated, unoccupied and unproductive. Implementation hurdles, the unwieldiness of the resettlement apparatus, and a combination of other factors were to blame. This supports claims by the CFU, donors and critics that Government has always had excess land at its disposal. Much of this derelict land was situated in regions III and IV, but CFU records suggest that there were a number of acquired properties in Regions IIa and IIb that remained uninhabited and derelict for years.²¹⁴

Figure 3.1 Government Land Purchases and Average Prices Paid 1979-1989



Sources: Adapted from Roth (1990: 26 and 1994: 328) and Palmer (1990: 170)

²¹⁴ During the land identification exercises of 1993-1996 much of this land was cited by provincial and district identification committees. See Appendix IV.

Alexander (1991) draws attention to the problems of resettlement in Matabeleland and how a combination of implementation concerns, drought, the specific nature of grazing systems and the political/military conflict led to vast areas of unsettled state land. In Matabeleland South more than 500 000 hectares was still unsettled in 1993.²¹⁵ In turn, the allocation of this land to senior Party supporters became a key part of the patronage system, particularly in the 1990s, throughout both Matabeleland and Mashonaland.²¹⁶

The wider resettlement program also experienced difficulties. There were reports in the press of settlement schemes experiencing problems, such as credit and input shortages, lack of infrastructure and marketing difficulties. These flaws were acknowledged within official circles, but set against the political benefits of ARP, as Witness Mangwende, Minister of Lands and Agriculture, later commented:

Of course we have all accepted that the first phase of resettlement had its own shortcomings... [It] was meant to address a political reality... we had to give them land irrespective of whether they were productive or not. There was no time to plan, select and train these people... The first phase should not be viewed as a failure, [but] as a political programme that allowed government some breathing space and it achieved peace and tranquillity for the country.²¹⁷

For many white farmers the results of resettlement were generally depressing in terms of output and environmental degradation, fostering concerns about the sustainability of reform.

Commercial farmers who had relinquished property in Mtoko, Mvuma and Matabeleland South all expressed negative perceptions, but with some similar patterns – a few settlers had made a go

²¹⁵ Extract of Senior Minister Msika's speech, Hansard Record of Parliamentary Debate, 11 March 1992.

²¹⁶ See Chapter Four.

²¹⁷ *Hansard*, Record of parliamentary Debate, 11 March 1992.

of it, most had not, and overall the program was unlikely to be sustainable.²¹⁸ David Hasluck summed up the official CFU perspective using reverse logic:

there were no resettlement areas that were unequivocally successful from a production perspective... if there were, they would have been publicised. The system was flawed in a number of ways... we've never opposed land reform, just the methods.²¹⁹

Kinsey (1999) and Moyo (2000b) dispute this and earlier criticism, pointing out that much of the documented failure related to the co-operative Model B system, which only accounted for seven percent of resettlement in the 1980s. ODA reports were influential in shaping perceptions about the initial successes and failures of land reform. Kinsey (2002) also stressed the need to assess resettlement over a longer period, but has subsequently added that his own assessments, over twenty years, have generally yielded unimpressive results with isolated pockets of success. However he stressed that performance depended on a number of social and technical factors.²²⁰ He also argues for the differentiation of resettlement projects and beneficiaries.²²¹

An important government argument for the slow-down in land reform was that political stability inflated land prices, making market-based reform unaffordable (Alexander 1994: 325). Nominal land prices did rise but only really in the last two years of the decade (See Figure 3.1). Real land prices actually remained fairly constant and government purchased the least amount of land when prices were lowest, in 1986 and 1987.²²² Real prices increased in 1989 as a higher proportion of capitalised farms in regions I and II came onto the market (Roth, 1990: 26 and 1994: 328). Although 'white' ownership of total land area had declined to 28 percent by 1990,

²¹⁸ Interview with James Lowry, Wiltshire, February 2002; Interview with Ed Cumming, Barwick, August 2001; Discussions with Ian Nielsen, Harare, January 2005.

²¹⁹ Interview with David Hasluck, Nyanga, March 2003.

²²⁰ This was reaffirmed in an Interview with Bill Kinsey, Harare, February 2003. Also see Kinsey (2003).

²²¹ Also see Maphosa (1995)

²²² Roth (1994) shows that after 1982 government entry into the land market was so limited that it did not influence prices.

compared with 42 percent in 1980, this still included many of the fertile, well-situated areas in better agro-ecological zones. It is important to qualify this assumption too. During the 1980s tobacco farmers re-asserted their position as the most financially successful agricultural sector. Some of the most lucrative tobacco growing areas are Tengwe, Karoi North, Centenary North, Guruve, Selous and Wedza South, all of which have sandy soils in natural region III and are significant distances from major centres.²²³

Weiner (1988: 64) stressed the complex distribution of soil quality due to the variety of parent material. Much of Region IIa in Mashonaland Central and Mashonaland West is heavy red soil, unsuitable for tobacco. Likewise, many of the large corporate farms including the sugar estates in the lowveld and the fruit farms at Charara and Chirundu are situated in Regions IV and V and are heavily reliant on large irrigation systems.

3.2.4 Internal Resettlement

Land demand in communal areas varied considerably in nature and extent. After 1985 the government began to review its agrarian policies and development initiatives shifted towards reviewing techniques and infrastructure rather than securing more resettlement land. Cliffe (1988: 12 and 310) mapped two potential options: a greater provision of capital resources to communal areas, or further land reform. The first prompted a formal policy shift towards 'internal resettlement', whereby broad social, infrastructural and production systems within existing CAs were to be reorganised (Alexander, 1993). Although crop buying points, hospitals and schools had been an important feature of infrastructural development in the early 1980s (Norman, 1986), and an important ingredient in the success of small scale agriculture, internal resettlement involved a more intrusive form of rural reorganisation, including villagisation.

²²³ Agri-Ecological Land classifications running I - V were based on a combination of rainfall, altitude, soil types. See a relevant Map at the front of the thesis (Page VIII).

Cliffe (1988: 319) documents attempts at the consolidation of villages and block farming, which according to the Five Year Development Plan were designed to ease the provision of infrastructure and government services. This was promoted in a direct continuation of top-down betterment planning, despite the glaring failure of the NLHA (1951) on which much of it was based.²²⁴ The reorganisation of farming systems was to include the provision of infrastructure including electricity and communications, and together these were expected to intensify production, foster small-scale industrial development, and encourage economic activity off the land. Like most of the rural planning, it also had administrative appeal in its ability to bring dispersed rural populations under control. It also promised a convenient means of extending the ruling party patronage network, but met with resistance in most areas, particularly Matabeleland. From the perspective of most commercial farmers, ‘internal resettlement’ was desirable. Like the ARP, it diverted attention and resources away from the standard resettlement program and reduced threats of immediate further land expropriation.

Internal resettlement was planned to operate concurrently with land resettlement, but simply replaced the latter in terms of attention and resources, although it too was only implemented to a minor degree. Limited liaison between the programs, added to the complications of multi-ministry involvement and resulted in self-acknowledged administrative confusion.²²⁵ Roth (1992) suggests that political reluctance within the ruling party, and the top-down nature of land administration and control, were key inhibitors to both types of reform. From the CFU perspective, Gerry Davidson described the inter-ministry administrative complications as “bureaucratic inefficiency... and entirely frustrating”.²²⁶ This illustrated a mounting scepticism by the CFU towards government land initiatives and also a ‘homogenisation’ of African

²²⁴ See McGregor (1991), Drinkwater (1989) and Alexander (1993 and 1994).

²²⁵ Interview with Dr Robbie Mupawose, Harare, January 2004. Interview with Dr Kumbirai Kangai, Harare, December 2003.

²²⁶ Interview with Gerry Davidson (CFU Official), Harare, September 2001.

agriculture. Governments land purchases slowed due to a combination of reasons: significant areas already purchased were still to be resettled, the modest performance of resettlement areas encouraged a more cautious approach, as did realisations that the ambitious targets of resettling 15,000 families per year fell short of mid-1980s population growth of more than 20,000 families (equivalent) per year in the communal areas alone (Cliffe, 1988: 314). The much vaunted rise in marketed surplus had in fact been very uneven, and encouraged official thinking towards internal resettlement (Cliffe, 1988: 313). The historical neglect and subjugation of the peasant sector had changed, but a fundamental dichotomy still existed: a state-led prescribed communal tenure program for one agricultural sector and a large-scale private sector blueprint for the other, despite their competition for resources. Within the state-led initiative, two agendas permeated the policies; one politically motivated and the other technically driven, reflecting dichotomised perspectives within the ruling party, the government and the state.

3.2.5 Land Supply and Funding

Stoneman (1988: 45) argued that the conditions of settlement, reconciliation and reconstruction encouraged the government to pursue a moderate land policy:

despite legal ways in which land redistribution could have been brought about without violating the letter of Lancaster House, it can be informed that a political decision was taken not to contest the spirit of the agreement, tied in as it was with the whole complex of aid, trade and investment.

From most perspectives, foreign funding for land reform has been inadequate. The Anglo-American Development Fund, which emerged from the 'Kissinger Billion' proposal never materialised, but this was the only stage at which the detailed costs of a significant land buy-out were discussed realistically. Riddell (1980) estimated that 'fair' compensation for the least

profitable three quarters of white-owned land at 1979 market prices would amount to about \$R750 million (\$US1 billion equivalent).²²⁷ The ‘significant guarantees’ and ‘sufficient funds’ of Lancaster House were vague. Moorcroft (1980: 244) claims that Nkomo repeatedly asked “where is the money going to come from, and how much is there going to be?”, which Carrington met with vague assurances, and reference to “western backed finance” and the British Treasury. Britain’s subsequent pledge of £75 million, was changed to a policy of matching Zimbabwean government input, ‘dollar for dollar’ (Palmer, 1990: 166). Specific obligations were subsequently and repeatedly clouded, by factoring in debt relief. Key informants who were present at the Lancaster House negotiations, from both the government and the CFU, concur that Lord Carrington gave repeated assurances that sufficient land-specific funding would materialise.²²⁸ The PF threatened to walk out of the conference on the land clause and were only persuaded back to the negotiating table on these assurances.

By 1990 less than £30 million had been allocated by Britain, and nothing ‘land specific’ by the United States (Moyo 2000b: 1). The American state department qualified their support for a “broad based ‘agricultural and development fund’ and not for a ‘buy out the whites scheme’”.²²⁹ De Villiers (2003: 7) notes that America promised \$500 million for land purchases, but again, only in verbal guarantees. Washington claims to have supplied \$US350 million in ‘general’ development aid.²³⁰ The republican administration cut American funding following a vitriolic anti-US speech by a Zimbabwean junior minister in 1983, which prompted Jimmy Carter, a former Democratic President, to leave the room. Although the 1981 ZIMCORD Conference drew pledges of \$US 1.2 billion for development aid to be administered over three years,

²²⁷ Riddell (1980) estimated that the whole white farming sector compensation value would be approximately \$R1.5 billion. Problematic assumptions aside, the least profitable half was valued at around \$R400 million on this scale.

²²⁸ Interview with Dr Kumbirai Kangai, Harare, December 2003. Interview with Denis Norman, Sussex, October 2003. Interview with Costa Pafitis, Thetford Estate, January 2005.

²²⁹ This ‘Southern African Aid Package’ was to be ‘between one and two billion dollars’ – significantly vague, both in terms of location and amount.

²³⁰ See State Department website: www.state.gov

including a British-backed land clause to purchase two million hectares of land, only a fraction of this was delivered (Jenkins 1997).²³¹

This compares to a £500 million (1995 base rate) provision by Britain for the Million Acre scheme in Kenya, in which approximately 1.2 million acres was purchased from 750 white Kenyan farmers in the 1960s (Moyo, 2000b:1 and De Villiers, 2003: 7). In Zimbabwe, during the 1980s Britain provided less than ten percent of the Kenyan financial support (adjusted for inflation), to settle double the number of beneficiaries, on nearly seven times as much land, of generally poorer quality. The inconsistency in foreign policy is a significant issue of contention with many interest groups and observers. Although Rhodesia was self-governing as opposed to Kenya's full colony status, the crown's refusal to recognise Rhodesian UDI was an acknowledgement of its Imperial obligations. Wasserman (1976) draws attention to the closer ties of the Kenyan landowners and farmers to Whitehall, arguing that this ensured the success of their lobbying for compensation.

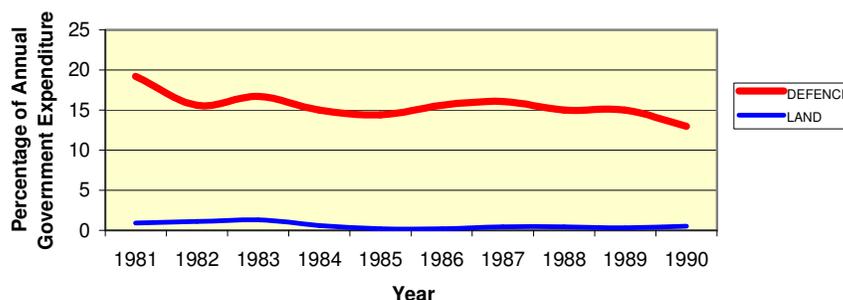
In real terms, land reform in Zimbabwe never commanded a significant proportion of the national budget. Land purchase and resettlement constituted less than one percent of government expenditure in the 1980s and most of this was carried out in the three years after Independence. This starkly contrasts with claims by the ruling party that land has always topped its post-independence national agenda.²³² Conversely, defence expenditure regularly exceeded fifteen percent of the budget and five percent of GDP (See Figure 3.2). Although the merging of the liberation armies, the South African factor and the Beira Corridor justified high military

²³¹ Minutes of CFU Council Meeting, 29 April 1983.

²³² Interview with Dr Kumbirai Kangai, Harare, December 2003. Interview with Dr Robbie Mupawose, Harare, January 2004. Both Dr Kangai and Dr Mupawose acknowledged that the land agenda had been inexplicably set-aside at crucial periods.

expenses during the 1980s, the disparity between land and defence spending became even more pronounced in the 1990s.²³³

Figure 3.2 Defence Expenditure versus Land Purchases as a Proportion of Annual Government Expenditure 1981 - 1990



Source: Masiwa (2004: 6); Mlambo (1999) ;SADCI Working Paper2;

SIPRI Military Expenditure Database www.firsipri.org; The Military Balance (2003-2004: 339-340).

The Mugabe government also argues that the Lancaster House Constitution requirements to pay compensation in foreign currency were a central inhibitor of the land exercise.²³⁴ However, the practical experiences of early reform suggest that this was largely irrelevant and therefore misleading. Mtoko district was wholly targeted for expropriation in the early 1980s, and of five previous farm-owners contacted, none had been compensated in foreign currency, nor did they know of any who had. They were advised by (white) land officers, that they would be wise to accept local currency and relocate, which they all did. The land price at the time averaged about \$Z18 /acre, compared to nearly £20 /acre in Kenya in 1960, or \$US15 versus \$US60 if adjusted for inflation to 1980 as base year. John Laurie argues that the ‘forex clause’ was hardly an issue and that there was never any difficulty in persuading farmers on the open market, to accept local

²³³ Estimated costs of Zimbabwe’s involvement in the DRC after 1998, exceeded \$US1 million per day (UN 2002).

²³⁴ Dr George Shire, a ZANU (PF) spokesman in the UK, cites this clause frequently. This has been actively fostered by ZANU PF and supported by various scholars and institutions (Moyo 1994, 1995 and 2000, UN 2002)

dollars: “after all they were trading farms between themselves in local currency anyway.”²³⁵ The active land market throughout the 1980s is testament to this. It is difficult to ascertain exactly how much foreign currency compensation took place in the broader exercise, but it was likely to have been a minor amount in real and proportional terms, and did not hinder the exercise to the extent suggested.²³⁶

Significant areas of unsettled land during the 1980s suggest that land supply was not a major concern at this stage. Land quality and location became an increasingly prominent issue in the 1990s but it was never clearly or consistently articulated in the 1980s, and the land market was more active in natural regions II and III, than in regions IV and V during both decades. Of the 70 percent of title deeds that changed hands after independence, at least two-thirds were in the Mashonaland provinces (Roth 1994; Moyo 2000; CFU 2000). This is born out by my case study of the Tsatsi/Marodzi district, in which 29 farms changed ownership and of these ten had been bought and sold more than once.²³⁷ Following the 1985 Land Acquisition Act amendment, which gave the state first option to purchase farms offered for sale, more than 1800 farms were bought and sold nationally between 1985 and 1990 and the majority were in the Mashonaland provinces (Roth 1994).²³⁸ In Tsatsi/Marodzi, eleven of the case study farms changed hands during this period, and three changed hands more than once. The CFU claims that nearly 5 million hectares of land were offered to government through the ‘first-option’ system between 1985 and 1997, so there was ample opportunity to pursue a market-based reform program.²³⁹ Cliffe (1988: 315) admits that there was no shortage of available land at this time, but that the

²³⁵ Mtoko farmers also claim that their exodus was involuntary and that many were intimidated and threatened. Interview with James Lowry, Wiltshire, February 2002. E-mail correspondence with Ed Cumming, October 2004. Interview with Ian Nielsen, Harare, December 2004.

²³⁶ Moyo (1995) identifies twelve ex-servicemen farmers who were compensated directly in foreign currency by the British government in 1980, but this was an isolated exercise directly linked to pension guarantees.

²³⁷ Appendix I.

²³⁸ Interview with Gerry Davidson (CFU Official). Members were obliged to file copies of land transfer document details at head office.

²³⁹ Minutes of the CFU President’s Council Meeting, 26 November 1997.

major constraints were “financial and organisational limitations”, mainly associated with elaborate planning of resettlement and the provision of infrastructure and retaining control.

There were other opportunities to secure cheaper land from white farmers. Following the droughts of 1983 and 1987, many commercial farmers were heavily indebted to the Agricultural Finance Corporation (AFC), the successor to the Land Bank (Stoneman, 1988: 45). However, food security concerns were paramount at that stage - the government had been extremely embarrassed at having to import grain from South Africa in the early 1980s – and technically insolvent farmers were supported with roll-over finance. In essence this squandered an opportunity to expand the land market; instead it supported land prices and perpetuated the patterns of land ownership.

Indeed early land policy did not reflect any concerns about land shortages and did not impact on the alliance in any significant way. In practice, if not in rhetoric, there was little direct competition for the same resources. The three million hectares or so acquired in the 1980s was, for the most part, abandoned or underused. Those blocks that were acquired, such as Mtoko and Mvuma, saw acceptable levels of compensation being paid to owners, many of whom relocated. CFU concerns with squatting, ARP and coercive acquisition of some properties were isolated.

3.3 INTRICACIES OF THE FARMER-STATE ALLIANCE

The nature and impact of early land reform does not reveal much about the alliance between white farmers and the state, which is important in itself. To understand it more, we must analyse areas of direct competition, such as producer prices, ‘squatting’, and the leaderships of relevant institutions. The alliance was remarkable given the history of settler farming and the legacy of the war, but a more intricate autopsy reveals the complexity of the arrangement. The inherited

dependence of the new regime on commercial agriculture was critical, in terms of food security, foreign currency generation and employment, and although the alliance fitted the ethos of reconciliation, I will argue that this was a secondary consideration. Commercial farming (Matabeleland aside) flourished throughout the 1980s with increases in both production and foreign currency earnings. In turn, these were rewarded with preferential access to finance, guaranteed producer prices, protection of property rights and measured land reform.

There were underlying tensions within the relationship from the start though, particularly with some sectors of the ruling party, but also with other interest groups that expected and demanded further reform. Many scholars argue that the agrarian policies of the 1980s did not constitute fundamental reform.²⁴⁰ They also argue that the constraints and restrictions of Lancaster House, international capital and the dependency legacy ensured moderate reforms. Weiner (1988) analysed the dualist agrarian policies of ZANU PF and the manner in which they were both a legacy and convenient continuation of the colonial structure, and a product of ideological contradictions within the party, reflecting revolutionary and moderate camps. The concept of growth with equity in the national development plans was a remarkable success in the first few years of independence despite the severe drought of the 1983/4 season. White farmers produced 90 percent of marketed agricultural output at Independence and only 80 percent by 1985 (Weiner 1988: 74). By 1990 this remained at 80 percent, so whereas the first five years of Independence saw marked increases in black farmer contribution the second five years were relatively stagnant.

3.3.1 The Influence of Individuals and Personalities within the Alliance

In previous chapters I stressed the significance of individuals in determining the strategic choices of different interest groups. The importance of key personalities in shaping the nature of the

²⁴⁰ For example, see: Mandaza (1986), Moyo (1986), Cliffe and Stoneman (1989) and Mumbengegwi (1986).

post-independence alliance between the farmers and the state should not be underestimated either. The appointment of Denis Norman, formerly President of the RNFU/CFU, as the Minister of Agriculture in 1980 was Mugabe's most significant gesture of reconciliation to white farmers. For the first time, both agricultural sectors fell under a single Ministry. Norman was tasked with three issues: ensuring food security, bolstering African agriculture, and generating foreign currency earnings.²⁴¹

Dr Robbie Mupawose, Permanent Secretary of Agriculture, 1980-1987, confirmed that food security, small-scale agriculture and foreign currency generation were the key concerns of agricultural policy during the 1980s.²⁴² He acknowledges that this was despite the socialist rhetoric of successive National Development Plans. The rhetorical promotion of a socialist agenda, whilst working quietly through established channels to achieve alternative objectives, has been a common feature of the ruling party's governance. Although Norman lost some of the decision-making autonomy of his Rhodesian predecessors, he still played an important role in articulating farmer demands and ensuring favourable government support. This was demonstrated almost immediately, with the announcement of a favourable maize price for the 1981 season. Successive presidents of the CFU concurred that Norman provided a direct channel of communication and influence on decision-making.²⁴³ The CFU was cautious about overplaying this card however. When Norman was awarded the 1981 Farming Oscar, prominent Chinoyi farmer, Vernon Nicolle, warned the CFU Council against such transparent public support for the alliance.²⁴⁴ Nicolle suggested that it would be prudent to portray a professional distance between the Union and the Ministry.²⁴⁵

²⁴¹ Interview with Denis Norman, Sussex, October 2004.

²⁴² Interview with Dr Robbie Mupawose, Harare, January 2004.

²⁴³ Interview with Denis Norman, Sussex, October 2004; Interview with John Laurie, Harare, April 2003; Interview with Jim Sinclair, Harare, March 2003.

²⁴⁴ The Farming Oscar is an annual award presented to an individual who has performed outstanding services to Zimbabwean agriculture. The recipient is selected by a committee, consisting of senior members of the agricultural industry, and chaired by the CFU Vice President. The list of recipients reveals an incestuous element to the award. An ex-president of the CFU usually receives it every second year, consistent with a standard term in office, whilst

In 1982, Jim Sinclair, CFU President at the time, was named ‘Communicator of the Year’ by Mugabe, another considerable gesture given the extensive levels of restructuring taking place in the civil service. Dr Kangai, Minister of Labour at the time, observed that some members of the ruling party were averse to the high-profile relationship with commercial farmers, and felt that the ideals of the liberation struggle had been betrayed. Sinclair was a consultative leader and appreciated the *real politik* when dealing with government and the ruling party. His appointment to the executive boards of the National Railways of Zimbabwe (NRZ), the Cold Storage Commission (CSC) and the Forestry Commission and his appointment to the Riddell Commission suggest that he was also respected by the new government and by Mugabe.²⁴⁶ Sinclair pushed an ambitious agenda at the helm of the CFU, including an attempt to merge with the black farming unions.²⁴⁷

John Laurie, Sinclair’s vice-president and successor, was widely considered the most effective CFU President since Independence, even in government circles.²⁴⁸ David Hasluck described Laurie as “the straightest of the Presidents... the honest broker of the alliance”. Laurie was probably closer to Mugabe than Denis Norman was, and is said to have been offered the post of Agriculture Minister in 1990.²⁴⁹ Instead, he accepted a number of private-sector directorships.²⁵⁰ Laurie worked with Sally Mugabe on the board of the Save the Children Foundation and became a personal friend of the First Lady and an executor of her will.²⁵¹

every other year a member of the research or service sector gets a look in. It is presented at the Annual Congress and, it was not until 1989 that Dr Robbie Mupawose (Secretary for Agriculture) became the first black recipient.

²⁴⁵ Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 24 June 1981.

²⁴⁶ Sinclair had vigorously opposed the Rhodesian Front throughout the 1970s, as an active member of the RP and NUF, and run unsuccessfully against PK van der Byl in the RF stronghold of Norton.

²⁴⁷ Sinclair also tried to establish a formal lobbying fund for the CFU, which was rejected by council. Interview with David Hasluck, Director CFU 1983-2003, Nyanga, March 2003.

²⁴⁸ Interview with Dr Robbie Mupawose, Harare, January 2004.

²⁴⁹ Interviews with two prominent farming leaders who both wished to remain anonymous.

²⁵⁰ These included Chairmanship of the Beira Corridor Group and a directorship of Standard Chartered Bank.

²⁵¹ Interviews with two prominent farming leaders who both wished to remain anonymous.

Laurie's 'quiet persuasion' and diplomacy in his lobbying with government was effective but the personal trust at the heart of these arrangements deemed them extremely fragile.²⁵² When dealing with 'squatter' problems, he often felt that he ran the risk of losing touch with his members, in much the same way that John Strong had during the reforms of the mid-1970s.²⁵³ By the end of 1984, the effectiveness of communications within the alliance was evident. The CFU organised regular meetings and social interactions with targeted ministers, at which the President, Vice-President and Director would build up personal trust with key individuals.²⁵⁴ When Laurie took office he had 30 ministerial meetings in the first two months, including three with Mugabe.²⁵⁵ At provincial and district level CFU branch chairmen were encouraged to establish ties with District and Provincial Administrators and local party officials. The Midlands branch of the CFU even organised an annual shooting competition against the military hierarchy, but were not entirely oblivious to the irony - the farmers felt that they were better shots, but claim to have let the army officers win.²⁵⁶

The 1985 elections, discussed in the previous chapter, had a distinct impact on the alliance between the farmers and the state. Mugabe dismissed Denis Norman in a cabinet reshuffle and neither the CFU, or the ZTA, had any meaningful access to or dialogue with government for two months afterwards.²⁵⁷ Norman's dismissal was significant from a communication perspective. In the first half of the 1980s the CFU had a direct inroad to cabinet, through Norman; it was led by two effective Presidents and dealt with a widely respected Permanent Secretary, Dr Robbie Mupawose. After Norman's dismissal in 1985, Laurie finished his final CFU term in 1986, and Mupawose resigned later that year. Within the space of eighteen months the three most senior

²⁵² Interview with John Laurie, Harare, March 2003.

²⁵³ Interview with John Strong, Harare, February 2003.

²⁵⁴ Interview with John Laurie, Harare, March 2003.

²⁵⁵ Minutes of CFU Council Meetings, September – December 1983.

²⁵⁶ Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, Midlands Branch Report, 1985

²⁵⁷ Interview with John Laurie, Harare, February 2003.

agricultural officials in the alliance had left office, to be replaced by a non-agricultural Minister, a young, inexperienced Permanent Secretary and a controversial CFU president.

Bobby Rutherford, a farmer and businessman from Marondera succeeded Laurie in 1986. This marked a distinct change in the style of CFU leadership. Farming members knew very little about Rutherford, who had only served one year as Vice-president.²⁵⁸ *The Farmer* magazine published a full-length article about Rutherford in an effort to increase his familiarity among the farmers.²⁵⁹ From the outset Rutherford is said to have vigorously pursued the CFU policy of working closely with government. His ideals were honourable but he had a “remarkable ability to antagonise members”, many of whom felt that he exceeded his mandate. David Hasluck (CFU Director) did not get on with Rutherford, describing him as “a fully paid up member of ZANU with dark political ambitions”.²⁶⁰ Hasluck claims that this was the most uncomfortable period in his twenty years as Director of the CFU.

This illustrated that divisions could and did exist in the highest levels of the farming structures, and directly contrasted the leadership styles and success of Strong, Norman, Sinclair and Laurie who had actively united members. Rutherford was moderated, to an extent, by his Vice-President and successor John Brown. Brown claims that he ran for office reluctantly, on the encouragement of a secret council initiative, aimed at preventing Bud Whittaker from perpetuating Rutherford’s proximity to ZANU PF.²⁶¹ Brown was the first RF-orientated President of the CFU since Paddy Millar in 1974.²⁶² Even so, his scepticism of ZANU PF did not prevent him from declaring at the CFU congress in 1989, that “this is the best government

²⁵⁸ This was following the resignation of Alistair Davies, which prompted Laurie to serve an extra term.

²⁵⁹ *The Farmer*, July 1986.

²⁶⁰ Interview with David Hasluck, Nyanga, March 2003.

²⁶¹ Interview with a senior member of the CFU Council who wished to remain anonymous about this information.

²⁶² Interview with John Brown, Harare, January 2004.

for commercial farmers that this country has ever seen.”²⁶³ It was politicking, but demonstrated a clear strategy to promote close relations within the alliance, despite personal misgivings.

The executive structure of the CFU provides an interesting insight too. David Hasluck assumed the directorship of the Union in 1983 from Stan Ball, who had only held the post for a couple of years after Jack Humphries’ enlightened leadership of the mid and late 1970s. Hasluck was respected by the farming hierarchy for his professional manner and ability to make quick decisions under pressure.²⁶⁴ He was also respected by many of the academics and government officials working on land and agricultural issues.²⁶⁵ This is relevant because he has subsequently attracted sustained criticism from the rank and file in the farming community, especially during the late 1990s.

There are several conclusions to draw from the analysis of the CFU leaders during the 1980s. Most of the farming leaders had been groomed for several years through regional or commodity based positions, and two years of Vice Presidency. Norman, Sinclair and Laurie went to great pains to earn the respect and trust of key government and party officials, as well as their members, which improved communication channels between the farmers and the two key institutions of the state, government and party. Also noteworthy was the distinct anti-RF leaning of all CFU presidents until the end of the decade. Rutherford’s inexperience, unfamiliarity with members, partisan relationship with government and excessive proximity to the ruling party led to isolation from his council and his members, and ushered in the first ‘RF-aligned’ President since Paddy Millar twelve years previously.²⁶⁶ As the next chapter shows, communications deteriorated considerably thereafter.

²⁶³ Extract from John Brown’s President’s Address, Minutes of CFU Annual Congress, August 1989.

²⁶⁴ This was an almost unanimous verdict from all Presidents interviewed after John Laurie.

²⁶⁵ Interviews with Dr Kumbirai Kangai, Dr Robbie Mupawose, Professor Sam Moyo and Professor Mandivamba Rukuni revealed unprompted acknowledgement of Hasluck’s credibility during the 1980s and early 1990s.

²⁶⁶ Denis Norman agrees strongly with this observation. Interview with Denis Norman, Sussex, October 2004.

Leadership profiles within the Agriculture Ministry provide some idea of the personalities on the other side of the alliance. Dr Robbie Mupawose replaced Ted Osborne as Permanent Secretary for Agriculture during civil service restructuring in 1981. Mupawose, a recognised technocrat, had previously chaired the Tobacco Research Board and was well known and respected in farming circles. His impressive academic and administration track record continued during the 1980s in which he maintained an effective channel of communication with David Hasluck and the relevant CFU presidents, and a good rapport with Denis Norman.²⁶⁷ Mupawose resigned in 1987 and followed many of the farming leaders into the private sector, becoming the first black board member within the tobacco industry, as Chairman of Zimbabwe Leaf Tobacco (ZLT). Mupawose was replaced by Dr Boniface Ndimande, from Bulawayo, in the wake of the Unity Accord. According to relevant CFU leaders, Ndimande was not as effective.²⁶⁸

Following Norman's dismissal from cabinet after the 1985 election, he was replaced as Minister of Agriculture by Moven Mahachi, from the Gaerezi valley, who had personally led Mugabe through the mountains to exile in 1975. Hasluck, who married into a farming family from Manicaland, claims to have established an effective working relationship with Mahachi, through their regional ties. Among the other farming leaders, Mahachi was seen as pragmatic and competent. David Karimanzira replaced Mahachi in 1988 after the cabinet reshuffle. If he knew something about politics, Hasluck's opinion is that he knew nothing about agriculture: "a nice man ...but unable to tell the difference between a steer and a heifer".²⁶⁹ These perceptions are important; they imply an attempt by CFU leaders to understand government and the party through individuals, and more importantly they explain the basic dichotomies of perception pervading CFU opinion between 'moderates' and 'radicals' - 'good guys' and 'bad guys' - 'competents' and 'incompetents'. On this basis most Manyikas were considered to be

²⁶⁷ According to virtually every respondent this was a key factor in the alliance.

²⁶⁸ Interview with John Brown, Mt Hampden, January 2004; Interview with Alan Ravenscroft, Concession, September 2001.

²⁶⁹ Interview with David Hasluck, Nyanga, March 2003.

‘competent, moderate, good guys’. This becomes relevant during the 1990s and the land debate when the CFU perceived a sidelining of the ‘good guys’ by ‘incompetent radicals’.

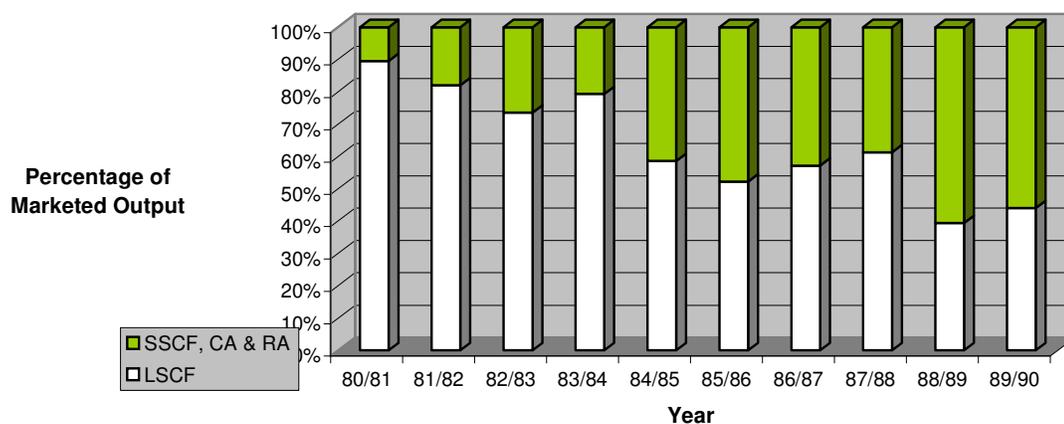
3.3.2 Producer Price Negotiations

Herbst’s (1990) analysis of state autonomy and producer price negotiations in Zimbabwe reveal some key features of the state-farmer alliance during the 1990s. He notes the inappropriateness of Bates’ (1981) model of agrarian politics in Africa, which argues that most African governments tax farmers through low prices in order to transfer resources to the state, industry, and urban consumers. Rhodesian agriculture had generally taxed the small-scale sector to ensure the success of the powerful settler farmers, and subsidised the latter group to encourage their survival. Mandaza et al (1986) suggest that this continued long after independence, but I argue that the power and influence of farmers on the state, began to diminish earlier than this implies.

Guaranteed producer prices were a legacy of the 1930 Maize Control Act and the establishment of the Agricultural Marketing Authority (AMA) in the 1960s. During the early 1970s, the RF’s determination to keep farmers on the land resulted initially in guaranteed prices for crops ‘in the ground’ and by 1975, a guaranteed ‘pre-planting’ price to ensure that enough was actually put in the ground. The RNFU would meet the AMA and the Minister, who would then place the demands before cabinet, which would accept the advice. “If the Minister of Agriculture did not get the price he wanted...he would resign... and he never resigned” (Herbst, 1990: 84). The pricing policy amounted to a huge subsidy, promoting and ensuring the survival of commercial agriculture. Agricultural pricing policy in the 1980s suggests that the CFU lobbied effectively for high prices, through a well-organised structure, citing their indispensability for food security and foreign currency generation. 90 percent of marketed maize was produced by commercial farmers at independence but by the end of the decade more than half was from the small-scale

sector (See Fig 3.3). The initial boost to small-scale agriculture involved the removal of many barriers that had been put in place by the Rhodesian state and the provision of marketing infrastructure such as buying points in the communal areas (Amin, 1999; Norman, 1986).

Figure 3.3 Marketed Maize Outputs by Sector 1980-1990



Source: Adapted from MLARR, and Amin (1999:69)

National food security was the most important agricultural policy consideration during the first three years of independence, and prices were decided accordingly.²⁷⁰ Herbst (1990) demonstrated how price negotiations became increasingly complex as the CFU's influence in price decisions gradually eroded. Initially the Minister would make the decisions on advice from CFU, before being increasingly influenced by the Ministry, then the Cabinet, then the *politburo*, who were eventually making the decisions themselves. This shift in the locus of decision-making suggests a clear movement of political power away from the farmers towards the central echelons of the state and the party. It also reflected the growing strength and legitimacy of the post independence state, and the party within it. Herbst (1990: 88) wrote:

²⁷⁰ Interview with Denis Norman, Sussex, October 2004; Interview with Jim Sinclair, Harare, February 2003; Interview with Dr Robbie Mupawose, Harare, January 2004.

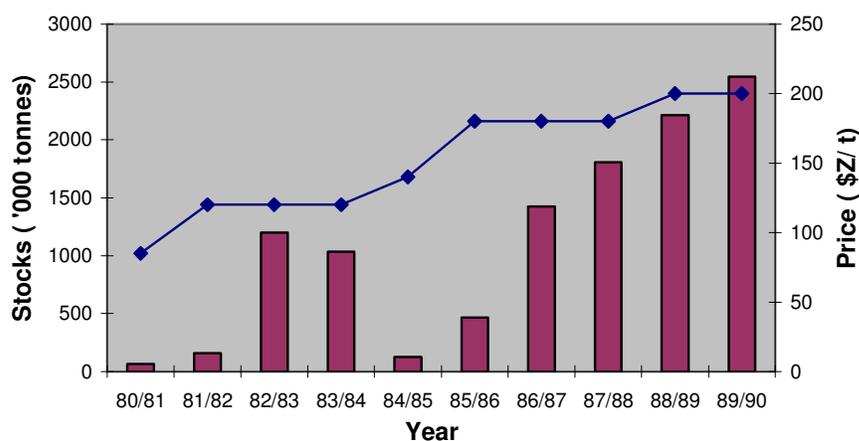
The sophisticated tactic of having the farmers participate in the policy process to provide information, but curtailing their political power, is probably a major factor in government's development of an enlightened agricultural policy

This mechanism also allowed the small-scale sector to benefit from pricing policy, despite their weaker bargaining position. Generous prices offered for *mhunga* and *rapoko* millet, despite overproduction, significant stock-piles and an increasingly limited market, demonstrate that pricing policy could be, and often was, conducted independently of commercial farmer concerns (Herbst, 1990: 97). In 1982/3 the AMA recommended a price of \$130/t for both crops, when maize was \$120/t. Cabinet eventually gazetted prices of \$250 and \$300/t for *mhunga* and *rapoko* respectively, in a clear gesture of support for the small-scale sector. The high prices attracted the interest of commercial farmers, who were informed that large-scale producers would only be paid \$100/t for either crop.

Increasing state autonomy, bolstered by growing party power, was demonstrated even more profoundly by the discarding of pre-planting maize prices in 1982 and by the subsequent discrimination against large-scale maize growers towards the end of the decade (Herbst, 1990: 87-91). Following the price increase from \$85/t to \$120 in 1980/81, which Norman had pushed through an 'unwilling' ministry (of mainly white civil servants) but a 'willing' cabinet, Zimbabwe had built up pre-season maize stocks of more than 1.2 million tonnes by 1983. As Figure 3.4 illustrates, these dropped during the mid-1980s due to successive droughts but had risen again to more than 2 million tonnes by 1990. Consequently, white farmers who grew more than 50 percent of their previous year's output were paid a penalty price of only \$100/t compared to the gazetted price of \$200/t (Herbst, 1990: 91). This two tier pricing system amounted to a discriminatory quota against commercial farmers, who were encouraged away from maize

towards export-oriented crops.²⁷¹ Alongside their declining proportion of maize production, it shows that the food security dependency component of the alliance was weakening. At another level, the price and output patterns demonstrated the effectiveness of incentive-based production systems, which Denis Norman argues were the key to overall success during this period.²⁷²

Figure 3.4 Maize Prices and National Stocks 1980-1990



Source: Adapted from Herbst (1990: 90)

Generous crop prices amounted to huge subsidies, which were compounded by a 'cheap food' policy for consumers. In 1984/85, Z\$128 million was paid through the Ministry of Agriculture as net producer support, whilst another Z\$22 million was paid through the Department of Trade and Commerce to reduce staple food prices to the consumer. Combined, these amounted to nearly half of government subsidies that year and twenty percent of the budget deficit (Herbst, 1990: 104). In present value terms, the amount spent on food subsidies in that single year, an election year, roughly equals the total amount spent on land reform in 20 years.²⁷³ The development expenditure and subsidies of the 1980s were carried out with international borrowing, which contributed to the growing debt and economic crisis (Jenkins 1987).²⁷⁴

²⁷¹ This was also part of structural adjustment policy.

²⁷² Interview with Denis Norman, Sussex, October 2004

²⁷³ This is on the assumption that approximately \$US 150 million had been spent on land reform by 1999.

²⁷⁴ After Independence, Zimbabwe was assessed by the IFIs as being inadequately leveraged and encouraged to borrow significantly (Williams, 1982).

Assessment of the wheat pricing process is more simple. The growing urban population and increasing reliance on bread as a staple diet, called for self-sufficiency and a reduction of foreign currency drainage through costly imports. Wheat was a small but growing part of the food security considerations and, in this respect, amounted to another element of dependency within the alliance. The high capital requirements of irrigated wheat production confined it to large-scale producers who lobbied successfully through the Cereal Producers Association (CPA) for above-inflation price increases throughout the decade.

Cotton on the other hand was an ideal small-scale sector crop, drought resistant and less perishable. By the mid-1980s there were approximately 120 000 small scale producers who, in close alliance with commercial producers and their commodity representatives on the CFU, managed to lobby effectively for good returns. Wiener (1988: 69) qualifies this account, stressing the high degree to which rural Mashonaland benefited, and emphasising how relations between the state and the peasantry varied regionally. Areas of Sanyati and the Midlands also benefited around official cotton centres. When commercial farming organisational structures teamed with small-scale political legitimacy, a very effective interest group emerged.

Sorghum was also a popular small-scale crop due to drought resistance characteristics. Its price was raised well beyond AMA recommendations, particularly during drought years. Stocks rose to more than 100,000 tonnes despite a reasonably constant demand for opaque beer. During the latter 1980s huge quantities of sorghum, *rapoko* and *mhunga* were donated to neighbouring countries to alleviate the stock-piles.²⁷⁵ If the intention was simply to boost the small-scale sector there is a paradox in the case of groundnuts, another popular crop with better food values and a wider range of uses. Despite attempts by Denis Norman to raise the price for three years

²⁷⁵ Interview with Dr Robbie Mupawose, Harare, January 2004. Interview with Dr Kumbirai Kangai, Harare, December 2003.

running, from \$450/t to \$1000/t, cabinet refused, apparently on the basis that ‘groundnuts were primarily a women’s crop’. The price was eventually raised, once, to \$750/t in 1985 - an election year (Herbst, 1990: 100).²⁷⁶ Although there were no direct price controls on tobacco, government retained indirect yet significant influence through the exchange rate mechanism. As I argue in the next chapter, and will show in an analysis of the tobacco sector levy, control of the exchange-rate was the start of a gradual shift from heavily subsidising commercial agriculture to increasingly taxing it.

Despite the organisational structures and experience of the commercial farmers, their bargaining position over pricing policies weakened throughout the 1980s, which suggests that they were losing their proximity to the state earlier than the discourse suggests. Stoneman and Cliffe (1989: 56) claim that white farmers developed a more enlightened self-interest in the new political climate. They argue that the farmers rationalised, released some land and allowed shares of maize and cotton markets. Herbst (1990) argues more convincingly that it was not the power of the commercial farmers that guaranteed their position, but rather the conscious effort by officials in the new state to engage them actively. The nature of power relations within the alliance shifted - commercial farming was now convenient rather than indispensable – influential rather than dominant.

3.3.3 Black Commercial Farmers and the CFU

Bratton (1994) and Moyo (1986 and 1995) drew attention to the emergence of a black commercial farming elite and suggest that their class-alliance with white farmers improved the effectiveness of CFU lobbying. Alexander (1993: 195) argues that “the government’s reluctance to press for further land redistribution was also influenced by the political weight of the CFU...and by the accumulation of land by the ruling elite”. Stoneman and Cliffe (1989: 56 and

²⁷⁶ Interview with Denis Norman, Sussex, October 2004.

62) also consider the “political weight of the (CFU’s) ‘new’ members”. Weiss (1994: front cover) argues that after independence,

... the politics of white privilege disappeared (but) white economic power remained.

Moreover, the arrival of a new black elite spawned by the new order marked the start of a close alliance established between the two power blocs. In effect, this alliance established a single multi-racial elite based upon a convergence of political and business interests.

This alliance was not as powerful as she suggests and the concept of a multiracial elite was misleading – race remained a fundamental divide and increasingly contentious issue. Despite ZANU PF’s ‘Leninist’ leadership code, members of the ruling party did acquire commercial farms during the 1980s and many joined the CFU. Moyo (1986: 188) claims that there were approximately 300 black CFU members including ten cabinet ministers in 1985.²⁷⁷ By the end of the decade there were about 500 members and sixteen cabinet ministers (Palmer, 1990: 174). According to *Parade* magazine, about eight percent of commercial farmland was owned by ‘prominent’ blacks in 1990.²⁷⁸ Two particularly influential land owners were General Solomon Mujuru (Rex Nhongo) who owned several farms in Shamva by the mid 1990s, and Herbert Ushewokunze who also owned properties in the same area.²⁷⁹ Ushewokunze allegedly bequeathed ten properties; one to each of his ten sons, all named Herbert.²⁸⁰

One would expect farm ownership by the political elite and the emergence of a black landowning class to bolster the position of white commercial farmers, as in Kenya. The CFU certainly thought so and adopted a policy of targeted lobbying, the idea being to secure the membership of

²⁷⁷ These figures were confirmed in Interview with Gerry Davidson, CFU Official, Harare, August 2001.

²⁷⁸ “Land plan: New Doubts”, *Parade Magazine*, December 1990, p 23.

²⁷⁹ Discussions with Keith Butler, Colin Huddy (Shamva Farmers), Harare South, August 2001.

²⁸⁰ Michael Hartnack: “The Inevitable Comeback”, *Dispatch Online*, 12 August 2003; *ZWNEWS*, 13 August 2003.

prominent politicians to retain close links to the decision-making locus.²⁸¹ Whether it was effective or not is another question, particularly when considering land policy. Laurie and Brown do not think that CFU membership by prominent ZANU PF politicians improved lobbying power significantly.²⁸² Norman observed that few of the Ministers in question led relevant ministries and that their farms were held for other reasons. The social prestige for which many politicians' farms were acquired, and the fact that none were owner-managers and unwilling or unable to invest capital on these properties, suggests that there was not the same degree of mutual farming interest that Bratton (1990), for example, has claimed.

Most ordinary black commercial farmers maintained low profiles, without getting involved in agricultural politics. New farmers, black or white, lacked the time, resources or experience to successfully enter this arena. At district level, most farmers meetings were held at country clubs, where black farmers often felt intimidated by the socially exclusive atmosphere and cliques of white farming communities: "Mr Harvey noted that black farmers were concerned about social awkwardness after farmers meetings and the cliques that formed at the bars".²⁸³ It was virtually impossible to enter national level agricultural politics without first successfully negotiating this local level. Whilst this process had worked well for the exclusiveness of the commercial farm sector, ensuring that a certain type of 'technically capable' or conservatively groomed leader emerged, it was a barrier to black advancement.

This institutionalised racism carried through into the farming unions. Between 1980 and 1995 there was not a single elected black member on either the CFU or ZTA councils. The exclusiveness and established traditions of these bodies discouraged or prevented black members from making rapid headway into farming politics. Most council members were from well-

²⁸¹ Interview with John Laurie, Harare, February 2003; Interview with Jim Sinclair, February 2003; Interview with David Hasluck, Nyanga, March 2003.

²⁸² Interview with John Laurie, Harare, February 2003; Interview with John Brown, Mt Hampden, January 2004.

²⁸³ Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 26 November 1997.

established farming businesses or families; the structure of both the CFU and ZTA ensured long grooming processes before eligibility to stand for high offices, which in turn were full-time jobs. Only ten percent of commercial farmers were blacks by 1990, and most lacked the confidence, social status or financial clout to challenge white dominance at this stage. Black land-owners, who were politically connected, ambitious and capable, were by and large 'week-end gentlemen farmers' with more lucrative political agendas and constituencies elsewhere.

3.3.4 The CFU and the Black Farmers' Unions

John Strong first attempted to strengthen relations with the African Farmers Union (AFU) in the 1970s and proposed a merger in 1978.²⁸⁴ At the time, Gary Magadzire (AFU President 1975-1996) rejected Strong's proposal on the basis that their constituencies differed too much. However the AFU did accept the offer to use the same premises as a head office. In 1982 and 1983 Jim Sinclair and Gary Magadzire signed a merger agreement, which had the full support of both councils. The move was prevented by government, with reasons given based on the incompatibility of the institutions and the independent roles they needed to play.²⁸⁵ Stoneman and Cliffe (1980: 57) suggest that from the state's perspective "a coalition between commercial and black farmers...could be a benefit... but would strengthen resistance to meaningful land reform". A single union would have de-racialised agriculture at an institutional level and certainly been more difficult to control.

Dr Robbie Mupawose (Secretary for Agriculture 1981-1987) argues that the merger was discouraged due to logistical and administrative concerns rather than political motives.²⁸⁶ Jim Sinclair insists that they were actively prevented from doing so by the Ministry, but felt certain

²⁸⁴ Minutes of the RNFU Council Meeting, 28 and 29 March 1978, para 3.

²⁸⁵ Interview with Dr Kumbirai Kangai, Harare, December 2003; Interview with Dr Robbie Mupawose, Harare, January 2004.

²⁸⁶ Interview with Dr Robbie Mupawose, Harare, January 2004.

that the decision emanated from the *politburo*.²⁸⁷ According to Denis Norman, he was not involved in this negotiation because it had been tasked to his Deputy Minister, Swithsun Mombeshora, by the *politburo*. Norman suspected that Mombeshora had been appointed by the *politburo* to keep an eye on him.²⁸⁸ As a compromise, in the 1980s, a Joint Presidents' Committee was established in which the three representative farmers' unions conferred on issues such as pricing policy, and input allocations. This improved the lobbying ability of all parties particularly with price negotiations. For example, the price incentive-led cotton expansion in Glendale was a successful joint initiative and an example of commercial farmer organisational structures combining effectively with small scale farmers.

The AFU, which became the Zimbabwe National Farmers Union (ZNFU) after Independence, represented about 10 000 small-scale commercial farmers, generally from former Purchase Areas. The National Farmers Association of Zimbabwe (NFAZ) represented approximately one million communal area and resettlement area farmers. In 1980, ZNFU members, making up one percent of black farmers, produced more than thirty percent of marketed output from black sectors (Stoneman and Cliffe, 1989: 59). Cheater (1990) argues that they represented an important exception to the correlation of race and class – an observation supported by Amin's (1999) analysis of peasant differentiation. The institutional and membership differences between the NFAZ and the CFU were more significant, and although the former were powerful in terms of numbers they were weak organisationally. Ultimately there was a merger between the ZNFU and the NFAZ in 1992 – becoming the Zimbabwe Farmers Union (ZFU).

²⁸⁷ Interview with Jim Sinclair, Harare, March 2003.

²⁸⁸ Interview with Denis Norman, Sussex, October 2004.

3.3.5 The Autonomy of the Zimbabwe Tobacco Association (ZTA)

Differences within the commercial farming sector in terms of farm size, region, crop type, management style, business structure and cultural background were considerable. The emigration patterns of certain farmers, and the economic growth of the 1980s veiled many of these underlying divisions including the divergence of the tobacco sector, and the relative autonomy of the Zimbabwe Tobacco Association (ZTA). After 1980 as the tobacco sector recovered it became independent once more and ZTA was often more closely aligned to the trade than the CFU.²⁸⁹

The number of tobacco growers, the area planted and the amount of tobacco produced did not expand as quickly as had been anticipated after Independence. This was due to competition, uncertainty and the difficulty of penetrating markets that had been inaccessible for more than a decade (Mbanga, 1990: 227-228). However after 1981, there was accelerating growth within the tobacco industry and with it internal demands for increased autonomy.²⁹⁰ A growing asset base and diverging investment portfolio transformed ZTA into a significant business interest. The CFU, conversely, had been disinvesting its own large asset and investment portfolio in order to focus on its role as a representative institution. Jim Sinclair sold off ZimNat Insurance Co, the last major interest in 1982, on the basis “that (the CFU) was not a business empire but a representative union for farmers... something which ZTA sometimes seemed to forget”.²⁹¹

The CFU was intent on remaining the overriding voice for commercial farming and opposed calls for independence from the ZTA. This created a heated stand-off in which ZTA threatened to formally ignore their commodity-branch obligations under the CFU constitution. Rather than

²⁸⁹ Interview with Gyles Dorward, Harare, February 2004.

²⁹⁰ Interview with Alan Ravenscroft, Concession, August 2001; Interview with Gyles Dorward, Harare, February 2004.

²⁹¹ Interview with Jim Sinclair, President CFU 1981-1983, Harare, 2003. Supported by Minutes from CFU Council Meeting, 1982.

allow a public rift to emerge, John Laurie and Denis Norman persuaded Sinclair to allow a constitutional change, through which the tobacco growers achieved their autonomy, yet still retained a commodity sector interest on the CFU council. Sinclair remained suspicious of the tobacco sector's selective autonomy and described the relationship between the CFU and ZTA as 'prickly'. Most CFU leaders, including David Hasluck, offered similar opinions. He concluded that the relationship between the two institutions at any one time depended largely on the fortunes of the market place, the political climate and the personalities of the tobacco leadership. Although direct lobbying with government was rare, the ZTA often lobbied indirectly through the tobacco processing industry rather than the CFU, and was clearly the more manoeuvrable institution of the two.

Hasluck observed that if tobacco prices were good, the ZTA remained aloof and reluctant to finance CFU initiatives, even those that may have benefited the tobacco sector. If prices deteriorated or political pressure rose against commercial farmers, then the tobacco sector realigned itself once more with the CFU and used its channels of communication. This has interesting connotations for my observations about farming unity in the face of common threats. John Laurie agreed with Hasluck's sentiments and felt that the ZTA became the most economically self-interested of all the commodity associations. The tobacco industry, through sheer economic clout, through its central role in foreign currency generation, and through its close ties to the trade, had always amounted to an extremely powerful interest group – treading quietly, but using a big stick – and herein continued a fundamental division within the farming sector which often undermined farmer unity and proved an obstacle in the relationship with the state.

3.3.6 White Farmers, Squatters and the State

An important area of contest and conflict, which consistently tested the alliance, was the 'squatter' issue. CFU minutes throughout the 1980s refer regularly to ongoing attempts to resolve squatting problems. These records portray a decreasing incidence of squatting, but an increasing difficulty in resolving cases. Spontaneous land occupations were widespread and significant during the first few years of Independence. The initial phases of land resettlement and particularly the Accelerated Reform Program reduced this pressure by either legitimising land occupations on abandoned property, or by relocating squatters from occupied farms onto land that had been abandoned or purchased by the state. For my analysis, it is important to establish the relative power of the farmers, the squatters and the state. The standard literature implies that squatter power achieved land access early on and then diminished against the growing power of the state-farmer coalition (Moyo, 1995; Alexander, 1993). I argue that squatter power and organisation varied extensively between time and location and, more importantly, that although state power and autonomy grew, relative farmer influence waned. I also argue that this manifests itself more clearly in the 1990s.

The nature of squatting activity varied between survival strategies by particularly disenfranchised groups, to targeted invasions for political purposes and restitution claims. Cauter (1983: 444) described the experiences of Leonard Lyle, a Manicaland farmer whose cattle business struggled with disease and grazing shortages due to 'squatting'. After several court eviction orders were ignored he was told by local ZANU PF officials that "you may have the law on your side but this is a political matter". This example occurred within a year of independence. There were varying but insignificant distinctions between 'illegal' small-scale miners, gold-panners, 'squatters' and 'poach grazers'. By 1984, incidents of squatting, although still prominent, were confined to particular regions: Mashonaland West, Manicaland and isolated

areas of Mashonaland Central. The provincial governments of the two former provinces together recorded squatter populations of more than 35 000 people in the late 1980s (Alexander, 1993:198).²⁹² The Karoi and Mutare districts of the CFU lodged repeated appeals for official assistance to alleviate various squatting concerns.²⁹³

John Laurie, CFU President 1983-1986, described the issue as a “hot coal - nobody in government wanted to pick it up.”²⁹⁴ He used a variety of channels to try to resolve the issue and encountered varying degrees of enthusiasm from different ministers at different times. In his acceptance speech on receiving a Farming Oscar in 1987, Laurie made reference to the frustrations of the squatting issue. In a light-hearted climax to his address, he warned the government officials present that because he was now out of a job, he was considering squatting on their farms as a new vocation.²⁹⁵ The Ministers in question apparently found this hilarious, more so because it captured the inherent sensitivity and inconsistencies in land squatter policy.²⁹⁶

Laurie’s comment illustrated the frustrations felt by the CFU, who were used to getting their own way on most issues, particularly if enough time, thought and effort went into the process. If the nature of the alliance had been as close as assumed and the farmers as powerful as Moyo (1995) insinuates, then more positive responses would have been expected. The ‘political sensitivity’ of land was often cited by ministers as an excuse for inaction over the issue - a tactic which became more prevalent during the 1990s. It suggests that white farmers were increasingly powerless over certain issues, and that the state already enjoyed a sufficient level of decision-making autonomy from the commercial farmers. It is possible to consider the argument from another perspective and argue that an element of state-weakness determined the nature of the squatter issue during the first half of the decade and that state strength determined it in the latter half.

²⁹² This is confirmed in Minutes of the CFU Council Meetings during this period.

²⁹³ Minutes of the CFU Council Meetings (1980-1987).

²⁹⁴ Interview with John Laurie, Harare, March 2003.

²⁹⁵ Speech by John Laurie on the acceptance of a Farming Oscar, CFU Congress 1987 (CFU, 1991).

²⁹⁶ Interview with David Hasluck, Nyanga, 2003.

Alexander's (1993: Chapter 7) analysis of squatting in the 1980s cites the case of 'Masoori' John Heyns and Saurombe West Farm in Chimanimani. She claims that towards the end of the 1980s the effectiveness of squatting declined and they were moved off despite sympathetic press coverage and support from the provincial governor Bishop Joshua Dhube. Cliffe (1988: 323) identifies alliances between the more radical elements of government and the more desperate squatters and suggests locally-centred symbioses. Alexander (1993) suggests that the ultimate eviction of the Saurombe farm squatters was due to the vulnerability and inconsistency of extra-institutional tactics. I do not refute this assessment, but argue that the contest over land was an emerging three-way process (i.e. between squatters, farmers and the state) in which the varied make up of the state is exposed along with the waning influence of the farmers.

In the case study area, Rockwood squatter camp near Concession, Somerset Farm and Ramahori Farm were examples of independent farmer initiatives losing effectiveness in the late 1980s despite supportive court rulings.²⁹⁷ These cases lacked sympathetic press coverage and had less public support from local politicians, but the squatters persevered in returning and re-establishing the camps. Latter attempts at evictions grew increasingly fruitless, with both the police and local ZANU PF structures and the farmers eventually relenting. In two cases local farmers resorted to co-existence strategies, even employing some of the squatters, to try to limit the negative impacts, which in these cases were environmental rather than economic.

Regional contexts differed but the formal ability of commercial farmers to remove squatters diminished over time, both in terms of legal rights and influence. At Independence it was possible for farmers to create and submit their own eviction notices to squatters and, if necessary, the police who were then obliged to enforce them. During this period large numbers of squatters

²⁹⁷ Evidence here stems from personal knowledge of the cases and their histories.

were evicted and often redirected onto abandoned farms under the ARP. The ability of farmers to issue their own notices was retracted by 1983 and Mugabe apparently wanted to be personally informed every time that a squatter eviction took place.²⁹⁸ Farmers were then required to resort to formal court action and this, in turn, became more difficult to secure or enforce. By 1986 there were several outstanding High Court Orders, which were simply being ignored by both the police and squatters.²⁹⁹ Farmers were then obliged to approach squatter control committees, and then local and even national politicians, who often claimed that they were unable to do anything. There were concerted efforts by some officials to remove squatters particularly in some areas of Matabeleland and Mashonaland West, but these seem to have been at odds with populist members of government and the ruling party. Although the incidence of squatters essentially declined over the decade their relative leverage over the state is unclear. The state did not have a clear or consistent policy on squatters and the nature of the issue was determined more significantly by individual politicians in particular areas and the nature of squatter committees.

This deadlock within the politically sensitive contest over land, brings out some of the strain in the alliance between the farmers and the state, and the proximity and complexity of the two institutions. It also illustrates that the relative power relations between the state and the squatters and the state and the farmers, although interlinked, were not interdependent. State power strengthened relative to both squatters and farmers and whilst the effectiveness of squatters to remain on land may have diminished, so too did the ability of farmers to evict them.

3.4 COMMERCIAL FARMERS AND ZANU PF's CONSOLIDATION OF POWER

On the surface, post-independence Zimbabwe appeared to be relatively stable politically, economically and socially. However underlying tensions and divisions periodically revealed

²⁹⁸ Confirmed in an interview with John Laurie, Harare, February 2003.

²⁹⁹ Iron Mask squatter camp in Mazowe became a focal case. Discussions with John Matthews, August 2001

themselves during various stages of the transition. The third objective of this chapter is to position the commercial farmer experience and their alliance with the state within the ruling party's power consolidation process.

Many scholars have identified the long-term ideological contradictions or confusions of the ruling party, its membership and its policies, and also the challenges facing it.³⁰⁰ For example, Alexander (1993: 185) notes that “perhaps more clearly than any other policy, resettlement illustrated the contradictory forces for change and for continuity with which the new government sought to grapple”. Sylvester (1986) argues that ZANU PF's continued socialist rhetoric was a persuasive pretence for both the governors and the governed – one of the myths important to maintaining hegemony whilst it pursued an agenda more accurately described as “a contradictory composite of repressive and liberal nationalist policies”³⁰¹ In essence these appear to have been the complications of attempting to meet the demands and expectations of a range of different interests, both within and beyond the ruling party, by straddling a variety of policy options and ideological stances. However, within this mix there has been a more consistent approach towards achieving hegemony for ZANU PF. After assuming control of the state apparatus, the ruling party embarked on a systematic process of power consolidation. Mugabe's personal ambitions for the creation of a one-party state, which were widely acknowledged during the liberation struggle, subsequently resurfaced during the 1980s (Makumbe 2002).³⁰²

3.4.1 White Ranchers, Dissidents and the Matabeleland Conflict

The Matabeleland saga posed a significant set of contradictions in view of the relative stability and growth of the 1980s and the alliance between commercial farmers and the state.

³⁰⁰ For example: Alexander (1993); Phimister (1988); Sylvester (1991); Makumbe (2002); Raftopolous (2001); Herbst (1990).

³⁰¹ Also cited by Alexander (1993: 161).

³⁰² Interview with Dr David Hatendi, Harare, December 2002; Interview with Brian Raftopolous, Harare, January 2003.

ZAPU-ZANU PF divisions and the return of ZIPRA fighters to the bush marked the start of a violent and brutal process of power consolidation that posed questions about the nature and significance of the alliance between commercial farmers and the state. Whereas ZIPRA had apparently avoided ranchers as targets during the liberation struggle, there were no such incentives after Independence. Gwasela, perhaps the most notorious dissident, regularly distributed a list of his targets, which included Denis Norman (Minister of Agriculture) and John Laurie (CFU President) - both urban-based and in Mashonaland.³⁰³

White ranchers, who had been relatively unaffected during the bush war, became prime targets for dissidents, along with government personnel and property, tourists and missionaries, in a widespread program of destabilisation. Jim Sinclair claimed that 30 CFU members, or members of their immediate families had been killed by dissidents between 1980 and August 1982 (Alexander 1991: 588). More than 50 farmers had been murdered by 1987 in Matabeleland and the Midlands.³⁰⁴ Alexander (1993: 246) argues that, “the political conflict and droughts of the 1980s drove white ranchers from their land far more effectively than the 1970s war.”³⁰⁵

The reactions of ex-ZIPRA cadres to a number of political incidents and repression in the army sparked the initial desertions and dissident activity (Alexander, McGregor and Ranger 2000; Alexander 1998) Thereafter, the situation rapidly complicated. ‘Super ZAPU’, a South African sponsored destabilisation initiative entered the fray and targeted white farmers on the basis that their murders would make international headlines. Martin and Johnson (1986: 61) linked the increase in farmer murders in 1984/5 to increased Super ZAPU activity, though others argue that there is limited evidence to support this (CCJP, 1997: 35). White ranchers were also targeted by ‘pseudo-dissidents’, government sponsored counter-insurgents tasked with increasing

³⁰³ Interview with John Laurie, Harare, March 2003; Interview with Denis Norman, Sussex, October 2003. Both received regular death threats.

³⁰⁴ These include the murder of women and children and the massacre of 16 missionary farmers at New Adams Farm Mission in May 1987.

³⁰⁵ Interview with Ed Cumming, (Ballaballa rancher), Harare, January 2004.

dissident activity, in order to justify the wider campaign of repression by the army. The government's primary objective was to eliminate ZAPU and a clouded atmosphere was conducive to this. The pseudo-dissidents included hit-squads allegedly answering to ZANU PF officials, using the cover of the conflict to settle personal vendettas. In November 1987, following a land dispute with Christian missionaries at New Adams Farm, near Matobo, squatters called in Gayigusu, a suspected pseudo-dissident, and sixteen people were axed to death (CCJP, 1997: 37 and 72). Pseudo-dissidents added another element of insecurity in an already dangerous situation. Ed Cumming, a rancher from Ballaballa, explained:

Initially it (the dissident issue) was a clear cut case of ZIPRA deserters, then the Super ZAPU element came in and this really unseated us –South Africa targeting white farmers – I mean it changed a few perspectives I can tell you...but then again, you weren't sure how much was rumour...and then the rumours that our own government was using counter-insurgency ...and then the proof ... you didn't know who was who, least of all who to trust...well the safest strategy was to trust no one!³⁰⁶

Cumming had regular contact with a dissident known as Morgan. Through this relationship, and his personal knowledge of the Ballaballa area and the nature of several amnesty pardons, he is convinced that the number of pseudo-dissidents was higher than is generally acknowledged. He cites the fact that many dissidents including Gayigusu and Morgan were supplied with government security after the unity accord, to protect them from their own communities.³⁰⁷ “It's one thing providing amnesty, but quite another providing body guards. Other ex-dissidents did not have protection – they didn't need it from their own communities.”³⁰⁸

³⁰⁶ E-mail correspondence with Ed Cumming, October 2004.

³⁰⁷ Interview with Ed Cumming, Harare, January 2003 and subsequent e-mail correspondence, October 2004.

³⁰⁸ E-mail correspondence with Ed Cumming, October 2004.

Some interesting continuities in defensive strategies emerged among farming communities, which can be traced back to the war years. The Matabeleland Branch of the CFU called for increased support in the same way that ‘hot’ districts such as Centenary and Chipinge did during the war. Agric-alerts were maintained, ‘reaction sticks’ were formed and militia were commonplace. Alec Philp a farmer from the Barwick in Mashonaland visited Matabeleland farmers in the mid-1980s and could not believe the difference in lifestyle “they were living under the state of siege that we (Mashonaland) had done during the 1970s”.³⁰⁹ Both Sinclair and Laurie came under extreme pressure from the ranchers for extra support and resources and Denis Norman played a crucial communication role between the farmers and government. Laurie’s initial approaches to government, as CFU Vice President, resulted in the deployment of 500 guards to southern ranches. Even so, many farmers were being driven from their land on the back of death threats or direct attacks. In Matobo district only 9 out of 41 farmers remained on their properties by the end of 1983, in a state of virtual siege (CCJP, 1997: 56). Laurie was concerned that “at several stages we could quite easily have lost Matabeleland, like some districts in the war”. He claims that he was even approached by an anonymous previous president of the CFU who suggested that they abandon Matabeleland and focus on Mashonaland, “where the wealth is”.³¹⁰

3.4.2 Gukurahundi

There are a host of unanswered questions regarding the positions and silences of different groups in relation to the Matabeleland experience, and white ranchers and the CFU are no exception. The Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP, 1997) detailed a systematic campaign of intimidation, torture and killings by government forces against ZAPU, which was framed as an ethnic Ndebele party. The covert training of a Shona-dominated 5th Brigade, by North Korean

³⁰⁹ Discussions with Alec Philp, Barwick, January 2003.

³¹⁰ Interview with John Laurie, Harare, March 2003.

instructors, in Nyanga culminated with an official passing out parade, attended by Mugabe in December 1982. The campaign, named *Gukurahundi* (the wind that blows away the chaff before the spring rains) was tasked with the official political objective to “eliminate... malcontents (dissidents)” and curb dissident activity, which Mugabe claimed was “unleashing a reign of terror” (CCJP, 1997: 44-45). The report conservatively estimated that at least 4000 civilians were massacred, whilst many thousands more were subjected to physical and mental torture. *Parade* magazine estimated that at least 3000 civilians were killed in 1983 alone.³¹¹ Other sources suggest that the number of civilians killed could have exceeded 10 000, with entire families and villages eradicated.³¹² The withdrawal of food aid and drought-relief supplies in Matabeleland South during the severe drought of 1983/84, reduced a population of 400 000 to a state of starvation and desperation – all to flush out an estimated 200 dissidents – illustrating that there was a much wider political agenda at stake (CCJP, 1997: 56).

The contradictions of Mashonaland’s commercial farming peace and prosperity and Matabeleland’s experience of *gukurahundi* are difficult to reconcile, although they are partially exclusive from a geographical perspective. Laurie and Sinclair denied any awareness by the CFU at the time. Denis Norman, likewise, claims that he had no knowledge of the atrocities during the period in question. He explained that his involvement in party politics was limited, and that he never attended a single politburo meeting and only one congress in seventeen years:

I was apolitical and wanted to remain that way. If the CFU knew something about it then they certainly didn’t tell me... when early allegations were made there was a barrage of counter claims...and even when the real evidence began to emerge it was all very clouded... I wasn’t about to ask questions or get involved in something that I knew nothing about.... in retrospect it was obviously all about eradicating ZAPU.³¹³

³¹¹ *Parade*, February 1989.

³¹² See also Rich Dorman (1997).

³¹³ Interview with Denis Norman, Sussex, October 2004.

Within the context of the security crisis, and the regular murders of farmers, missionaries and black civilians by dissidents, the deployment of security forces was initially welcomed by ranchers. Laurie did begin to receive reports from Max Rosenfels (Matabeleland CFU Branch Chairman) that the army was being 'heavy handed', but as had been the case during the bush war, CFU security reports were often offered in confidence, and there is little written evidence of this crisis.³¹⁴ Rosenfels, who speaks fluent siNdebele and who became a ZANU PF Member of Parliament after the Unity Accord,³¹⁵ apparently grew suspicious, due to 'a veil of silence' that fell upon the province, but claims that he was unaware of the scale of the atrocities until later.³¹⁶

Some critics perceive the farmer position as wilful ignorance at best. Peter Godwin, one of the first journalists to expose the atrocities, suggests that the real threat to farmers was always from the dissidents, not from the army, and that they could have turned a blind eye.³¹⁷ He argues that if he was able to access the scene (admittedly at great risk) then surely someone like Rosenfels must have known. Bill McKinney, from Ntabazinduna, admits that he realised what was happening through his workers, but that details and evidence only emerged afterwards.³¹⁸ Ed Cumming claims that some ranchers were more aware than others but that the extent of it only emerged with time.³¹⁹ Furthermore, he stressed the degree of confusion and intimidation around the issue: "it was safest to keep your eyes and ears open and your mouth shut". Initially the purpose of the Fifth Brigade was seen as protecting farmers and rooting out dissidents and, as Stiff (2000) illustrates, even white policemen were involved in manning the curfew roadblocks.

³¹⁴ Interview with John Laurie, Harare, February 2003. Although there are references to a 'confidential file' in the minutes of the 1970s, it seems to have disappeared from the archives.

³¹⁵ Apparently Rosenfels lost credibility with both farmers and locals when he became a ZANU PF MP.

³¹⁶ Interview with John Laurie, Harare, February 2003.

³¹⁷ Interview with Peter Godwin, Concession, November 2002. Godwin also discussed the vested interests of different groups within the debate citing the story of Donald Trelford, editor of *The Observer*. Trelford was forced to resign by Tiny Rowlands, the paper's owner, after he revealed details of the atrocities. Lonrho, Rowlands' company, had close links to Mugabe and ZANU PF.

³¹⁸ E-mail correspondence with Bill McKinney, August 2005.

³¹⁹ E-mail correspondence with Ed Cumming, October 2004.

The entry of Super ZAPU and government pseudo-dissidents redefined the nature of the conflict and confused the security situation significantly.

Denis Streak, another prominent rancher, felt increasingly unable to determine the identity of dissidents and their objectives. He explained that due to their vulnerability, it was safer for farmers to keep a low profile.³²⁰ He also claims that it was easy for ranchers to be totally unaware of events in neighbouring communal areas due to the legacy of sectoral and social segregation and continuing isolation. Under the curfews and quarantining of remote areas such as Nyamandhlovu, Bulilamangwe and Matobo this isolation was comprehensive. The systematic cordoning off of target areas secluded entire communities. Furthermore, stories of the atrocities that did leak out were portrayed by the state-controlled media as dissident activity, which was an effective cover-up strategy in the confused and intimidated areas surrounding the worst affected communal areas. So many questions remain unanswered. Farmer awareness certainly varied and those ranchers that did have insight were clearly powerless to counter it. A more interesting question is how the experience affected ranchers' perceptions of ZANU PF and the state. For many ranchers the use pseudo-dissidents illustrated their own expendability within ZANU PF's wider agenda. This consolidated their mistrust of ZANU PF, the Shona and Mashonaland in general and several argued that they were not surprised by ZANU PF's strategies against white farmers after 2000.

3.4.3 The Unity Accord, Executive Presidency and the One Party State

The suppression of Matabeleland and Midlands regions eventually forced the co-option of ZAPU into a Unity Accord with ZANU PF in 1987. Nkomo's reluctant acceptance of a Vice Presidency was accompanied by a constitutional amendment to introduce an executive

³²⁰ Interview with Denis Streak, Turk Mine, September 2002.

presidency for Mugabe. The increasing centralisation and authoritarianism of the administration indicated moves towards a one-party state. This objective was clearly stated and opposition to Mugabe's absolute consolidation of power emerged from within the party, from senior officials concerned at the collapse of the authoritarian regimes in Eastern Europe. Formal opposition arose during the 1990 election campaign in the form of the Zimbabwe Unity Movement (ZUM).³²¹ Led by Edgar Tekere, a former ZANU PF heavyweight, ZUM capitalised on urban and regional support, disgruntled students and an increasingly critical civil society (Moyo J, 1992). The interesting question is whether there was any farmer support for this opposition, given that the white withdrawal from politics was fairly comprehensive by this stage. Interviews and discussions suggest that there may have been passive opposition against a one party state, but that Tekere's controversial reputation failed to attract active or financial backing from the farming community.³²² Mugabe had publicly stated:

if whites rear their ugly terrorist and racist head by collaborating with ZUM, we will chop that head off... whites who vote for ZUM run the risk of putting their community in danger as soft targets...(we will) clip the(ir) wings (Sylvester, 1990: 395).

Before the election, remnants of the CAZ were accused of forming an alliance with ZUM, but Mugabe concurrently reassured farmers, through the CFU, that this was 'just politicking'.³²³ Most farmers were satisfied with their privileged status and were unwilling to rock the boat. On this basis it was logical to support the Unity Accord and to tolerate Mugabe's extended powers if it protected their investments and maintained their access to land and resources. This was reflected at an institutional level, and Bobby Rutherford's proximity to ZANU PF at the time is

³²¹ ZUM only won 3 seats, but 20 percent of the vote and 30 percent in urban areas, in an election with only 60% turnout (Sylvester, 1990)

³²² Tekere, an alcoholic of unpredictable disposition, had been implicated in the murder of a white farmer after the ceasefire in 1980. He was acquitted on a technicality drawn from dubious Rhodesian legislation.

³²³ Interview with John Brown, Mt Hampden, February 2004.

well known.³²⁴ John Brown, Rutherford's successor, commended the government's pragmatism towards commercial farming, despite personal misgivings.³²⁵ The problematic nature of the CFU's 'apoliticism' reveals itself at this stage: support for the government in return for continuing privileges really amounted to political advocacy and was certainly a conscious strategy.³²⁶ Individual farmer support for the ruling party emerged during this period too - Rutherford was the most obvious example, but most farming districts appear to have had several prominent farmers 'aligned' to the ruling party by 1990.³²⁷ It is difficult to establish the nature and amount of support by these individuals, but it set a precedent for later elections, and one that the ruling party used to its advantage, particularly against other farmers.

3.5 CONCLUSION

The alliance between the commercial farmers and the post-independence state was complex in its practice if not in its rationale. It arose out of a mutual interest to maintain commercial agriculture as the engine of the economy. The new government was influenced by a combination of the Lancaster House agreement and a tangible dependence on the commercial farm sector for food security, foreign currency generation and employment. At the same time the alliance was also convenient: South Africa's apartheid regime posed a real threat and an alliance with white farmers strengthened the Zimbabwean state considerably.

However the nature of the alliance was not static, or particularly strong. It was effective because it was convenient, but during the 1980s the proximity of the commercial farmers to the decision-making process gradually diminished. The historically conditioned institutional proximity between the state and the farmers and the intimate and successful nature of commercial

³²⁴ David Hasluck expressed concerns about the CFU proximity to the state, describing Rutherford as "a card carrying political harlot, who spent more time with government than with his members".

³²⁵ Interview with John Brown, Harare, January 2004.

³²⁶ Interview with David Hasluck, Nyanga, March 2003

³²⁷ In the Case Study area there were at least five farmers known to be full members of ZANU PF.

agriculture's lobbying were continuities of pre-independence arrangements, 'through channels dug specifically for the purpose'. However the politics of producer price negotiations show how Denis Norman was increasingly distanced from agricultural policy formulation, in a measure of weakening farmer influence.

Mass murder in Matabeleland did not get in the way of the alliance between the state and the farmers, or foreign capital: while mutual objectives were reasonably congruent the alliance flourished. The farmers were well-organised, experienced and articulate, but it is easy to exaggerate their relative power and influence over the state on sensitive issues, an error made by the farmers themselves. By 1990, the state was no longer 'of' the farmers or 'by' the farmers: it was conditionally 'for' the farmers, as long as it suited the interests of the ruling party. South Africa's destabilisation policy justified the continuities of many of the security features of the Rhodesian state. An extending patronage system and the 'ZANU-isation' of the civil service centralised and consolidated power. Although secure politically, especially as the apartheid state weakened, the post-Independence state was economically insecure, largely because of excessive government expenditure and international borrowing

Gross agricultural output increased markedly after independence and aggregate production levels by commercial farmers, which had amounted to 90 percent of marketed output at Independence, were still around 80 percent by the end of the decade. Perhaps more significantly, about thirty percent fewer farmers were producing about twenty percent more output on twenty percent less land by 1990. Much of this increase and intensification arose simply because the war was over. The emergence of a black commercial farming group, numbering about 500 by 1990, failed to make an impact on the racial exclusiveness of the sector and its institutions. Although the contribution of small-holder black farmers to marketed surplus increased significantly the dualist structure and nature of the agricultural sector remained intact.

Divisions among farmers were both exposed and masked during this period. Most farmers lapsed back into the social isolation of local communities after 1980 and a pre-Independence 'way of life', which reinforced external perceptions of homogeneity. Financial, cultural and ideological factors were less clear during the 1980s and camouflaged by social isolation and the withdrawal of farmers from active politics. Internally, divisions were masked by a growing confidence by the end of the decade - a false sense of security propagated by the effectiveness of the alliance.

There were other divisions though. Regionally, Mashonaland benefited most from the post-independence economic recovery. This compounded perceptions in Bulawayo and Mutare that Harare was assuming all the benefits of development. Matabeleland's experience of dissident activity and political repression exacerbated these regional divisions. The post-independence recovery of the tobacco sector and the increasing distance from the CFU illustrated the enduring nature of this division, which was influenced by individual personalities, by the market and by the political environment.

Significant advances in land reform did not undermine the alliance, as the state and the farmers were not interested in the same land. Although the 1980s land reforms met some of the immediate political expectations and demands for land, they did not address the economic or longer-term questions of land ownership. The land issue had not been resolved but deferred, and popular nationalist expectations remained unfulfilled.

CHAPTER FOUR

Uneven Ground: The Undermining of the State-Farmer Alliance 1990 – 1996

“The CFU understands and accepts the need for land reform. Such reform should, however be implemented in a manner that ensures land is used on a sustainable productive basis...”

- Alan Burl (CFU President), 11 January 1991.³²⁸

“...time is of the essence and we cannot dissipate this precious commodity by haggling over the peripheral issues of the land question... it seems that we are not being understood... the land question is a time bomb which must be diffused right now”

- Witness Mangwende (Minister of Lands and Agriculture), 12 March 1992.³²⁹

“There is no point in paying good British money to support a catastrophically bad resettlement policy”

- *The London Times*, January 1991.³³⁰

“We will not surrender the people’s rights to a greedy bunch of racist usurpers”

- Robert Mugabe, 1993.³³¹

³²⁸ *CFU Position Paper* presented at the Emergency Farmers Meeting, 11 January 1991 (CFU, 1991).

³²⁹ *Hansard* Record of Parliamentary Debate, 12 March 1992.

³³⁰ Editorial, *The Times*, February 1991. Cited in Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 27 February 1991.

³³¹ *The Farmer Magazine*, 23 September 1993: 1. Quoting ZIANA.

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter Three explored the post-independence alliance between commercial farmers and the state. This chapter examines the undermining of this alliance after 1990 and is structured in three sections. Firstly, I discuss the reconfiguration of the land debate and its interaction with the emerging black economic empowerment movement. Secondly, I explore the impact of structural adjustment and the 1992 drought on the farming sector and the land question. Finally, I analyse the communication breakdown between farmers and the state during and after the passage of the 1992 Land Acquisition Act.

The expiry of the Lancaster House constitution, the implementation of a structural adjustment program and the emergence of the black ‘empowerment’ lobby changed the nature of the land debate. The deadlock in land redistribution in the 1990s is usually attributed to a combination of state apathy and white farmer resistance. Moyo (1994: 1) argues that:

debate has been reduced to a mundane level of opposition politics...opponents [led by farmers] of the land reform programme have been waging a war in the media, skating over the fundamental logic and rationale for land reform, whilst at the same time pretending that ‘everybody agrees that Zimbabwe should have a land redistribution campaign... [and that] the only dispute is how government has handled this complex problem’. Yet most opponents have thus far offered no viable alternative.

Farmer pro-activity had played an important role during the transition settlement of the 1970s so why were they not more proactive in the context of the 1990s, and what was the basis of their perceived resistance? I argue that whilst the state made an error in choosing compulsory land acquisition before trying alternatives, the CFU responded with unhelpful counter strategies. This

period certainly raises the most questions in terms of lost opportunities. Why did the state rush into an impractical land designation process? Less controversial alternatives such as land market interventions may well have avoided the indirect costs of compulsory acquisition, raised funds for the program and automatically selected underutilised land. Why did the farmers insist on ‘willing-buyer willing-seller’ without promoting a compromise such as land taxes? These are the questions at the heart of this chapter and at the heart of the growing strains on the relationship between white farmers and the state in the 1990s.

4.2 RECONFIGURING THE LAND DEBATE IN THE 1990s

4.2.1 The Re-Emergence of the Land Question

During and after the Unity Accord, the consolidation of a centralised, bureaucratic and technocratic administration partially obscured an extension of the ruling party’s power within and outside the civil service. Ideological incompatibilities between the party and the bureaucratic state were increasingly exhibited in contradictions between technocratic agrarian policies and more radical populist calls for extensive land reform. Compared to the relationship between white farmers and the state in the 1980s, communications in the 1990s deteriorated markedly. Farmers misjudged the political debate, partly due to assumptions about their ‘indispensability’, and partly due to the regularity of land and race rhetoric at election times.

Joshua Nkomo told white farmers at the 1989 CFU congress: “The land question in this country sparked a revolution and now threatens to douse the fires of that revolution and start another – this time based on class”.³³² John Brown (CFU President) responded by declaring that it was the best government for farmers that the country had ever seen. Later in the year, Nkomo addressed

³³² Alexander (1991: 604). Also quoted by Terence Ranger ‘Review of the Press’, BZS, 6 June 1989.

a farmers' meeting in Bulawayo where he was asked for reassurances over property rights. When pressed, he lost his temper, smashed a glass of water against the wall, and declared:

Let me make this quite clear. You whites must make sure that you wear pyjamas to bed, because when we chase you out it will be at night and we don't want you running down the streets naked.³³³

Most farmers attributed such outbursts to electioneering ahead of the 1990 elections. However Nkomo's re-tabling of the land question sparked new debate at ZANU PF's 1989 party congress where demands for land reform emerged from black businessmen and elites (Moyo 1994: 2). ZANU PF presented a land report after the congress, which was adapted into a National Land Policy Document the following year. The fundamental goals were: to source a further 5 million hectares to settle another 110 000 families (arrived at by subtracting 52 000 already settled, from the 1982 target of 162 000), to introduce price controls on land, to introduce a land tax, to pay for land in local dollars rather than foreign currency, to introduce a maximum farm size and the principle of one-man one-farm, and to transfer better land (more of regions II and III). According to Alexander (1991: 606):

Commercial farmers reacted angrily. CFU President John Brown commented: 'in my opinion, what is called the New National Land Policy is not yet a policy. It is a number of principles, some excellent, some fair and some downright wrong'.

Brown argues that his concerns were justified because of the 'unrealistic targets', the 'questionable results' of resettlement to date, and the significant areas already acquired that were still unsettled.³³⁴ Significant areas of land (3 million hectares) had been secured in the 1980s, and some was unsettled. Government cited four reasons for the slow down during the second

³³³ Interview with John Brown, Mt Hampden, January 2004; Interview with Alan Burl, Marondera, March 2004.

³³⁴ Interview with John Brown, Mt Hampden, January 2004.

half of the 1980s: political conflict in Matabeleland; world recession and drought; the scarcity and price of land; and insufficiently trained staff.³³⁵ However, Government spending on land diminished significantly during this period and the 1985 Land Acquisition Act, which gave government right of first refusal on all land sold, was scarcely used.³³⁶ Roth (1994a) shows that 1800 commercial farms, amounting to more than 1.5 million hectares, were offered to the state between the 1985 and 1992 Land Acquisition Acts, of which Government purchased less than one-third. Roth argues that the key constraints of the exercise were funding and resettlement capacity, rather than the supply of land. He shows that prices did not increase dramatically in real terms, but that funds allocated for land purchases declined significantly. There was no shortage of land for resettlement in the 1980s. The 1990s were different, with a new set of questions, interests and pressures for land from existing stakeholders, and from an emerging set of new interest groups.³³⁷

4.2.2 Land and Economic Empowerment

Economic growth during the 1980s, was greatest within white-owned sectors due to established advantages in access to resources. In the 1990s a new black capitalist sector developed and promoted an ideology of ‘economic nationalism’. Some members of the ruling elite had accumulated properties throughout the 1980s, and after the Unity Accord competition between elites was generally kept within the ruling party structure. However, a younger generation of black entrepreneurs became increasingly vocal and looked to the state to give them economic opportunities. In return, they were used to extend the reach and influence of the ruling party.³³⁸

³³⁵ For a more detailed analysis of these reasons see Drinkwater (1988: 118-121).

³³⁶ Alexander (1993: 195) cites the labelling of the 1985 LAA as a ‘paper tiger’.

³³⁷ For a start the population in the communal areas had increased by more than 30 percent in the 1980s.

³³⁸ “Sudden flurry to help Indigenous businessmen” *The Sunday Mail*, February 3, 1991. Whereas the Tanzanian state had actively discouraged the emergence of a black middle class, ZANU PF co-opted emerging black entrepreneurs (Bryceson 1990; Rich Dorman 2002).

However, the rhetoric of black economic empowerment, like the rhetoric of liberation and the rhetoric of socialism could be adapted and used to strategic advantage. This was illustrated within the growing ideological support for economic structural adjustments and market liberalisation, in which empowerment was both a means and a goal. In this way economic liberalization became linked to economic nationalism (Raftopolous and Moyo, 1995:17).

Whites were now rare within the public sector, but still dominated the formal private sector, particularly in farming, finance and mining, so black empowerment had broad appeal. CFU minutes from 1991 record that “a huge empowerment boom had awakened throughout many black sectors”.³³⁹ Empowerment could be promoted through radical reforms or through gradual economic linkages. The CFU were aware of these options and their implications. David Hasluck (CFU Director) identified a “difference of opinion in the way forward between the radicals and the gradualists” and noted that the radical path was incongruent with ESAP.³⁴⁰ At this stage senior political figures also advocated gradual transition: Joshua Nkomo during discussions with the CFU explained that: “we have experienced 100 years of tying knots and ... [although there is] little change at the moment, 100 years of knot tying [cannot] be undone in 10 years”.³⁴¹

In 1990, the Indigenous Business Development Centre (IBDC) was launched in a state-supported drive to promote black participation in big business.³⁴² Qualified black executives were promoted ahead of white colleagues and the number of black chartered accountants and lawyers in executive roles increased rapidly.³⁴³ This was slow but generally merit-oriented and mediated by corporate process and structure. Within less formal sectors empowerment was promoted through unofficial means: the waving of taxes and regulations, selective license allocations and

³³⁹ Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 29 May 1991: 3.

³⁴⁰ Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 26 June 1991.

³⁴¹ Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 31 October 1990.

³⁴² “Big Business and IBDC Urged to Work Together”, *The Herald*, 13 June 1991. A parliamentary committee on Indigenisation was formally established. Also see Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 26 June 1991.

³⁴³ Discussions with Andrew House, Harare, December 2004.

relaxed operating guidelines. For small and medium sized black-owned businesses this created advantages against established white competitors.³⁴⁴ It also allowed the ruling party to control the benefits of empowerment, and who they accrued to. Given the dominance of white interests over the agricultural sector ten years after independence, it was the most obvious target for empowerment reform and the idea of promoting black commercial farmers appealed to many members of the elite, who saw opportunities for themselves.

4.2.3 A New Class of Black Farmer

The New National Land Policy distinguished itself from early resettlement by identifying itself as the second phase of land reform: The 1980s had targeted the destitute, the landless and refugees and was focussed on small-scale farming.³⁴⁵ Plans for the 1990s envisaged a commercial farming class as the most desirable beneficiaries, running alongside a continuing program for small scale farmers to be chosen ever more rigorously on grounds of productive potential rather than need. Politicians argued that this met the changing expectations of structural adjustment and empowerment.³⁴⁶ Moyo and Skalnes (1990: 4) noted the shift in government objectives around land from the normative and political towards broader economic goals. However there were contradictions in promoting the two systems concurrently and a lack of clarity on how they would interact and which would receive priority.

Most land analyses of this period, including those by Moyo (1994; 1995) and Roth (1994), understate the differences between potential beneficiaries. There were three distinct categories: land-hungry small-scale producers; aspiring commercial farmers (often master farmers from purchase areas, or people in management positions on commercial farms or graduates of training

³⁴⁴ “Big Business and IBDC Urged to Work Together”, *The Herald*, 13 June 1991; Interview with Dr David Hatendi, Harare, January 2004.

³⁴⁵ Although, the idea of master farmers as key beneficiaries had been promoted in the 1980s the new focus on ‘commercial farmers’ on private tenure was a distinctly different angle.

³⁴⁶ Interview with Dr Kumbirai Kangai, Harare, December 2003.

colleges); and lastly, aspiring commercial farmer land lords - the political elite who were more likely to use land for status or speculative reasons. Official policy held that the first two categories could be resettled complementarily, and largely denied the existence of the third.³⁴⁷

The ZNFU, representing mainly purchase area farmers, emphasized its 'master farmer' heritage and promoted itself as the group best qualified to exploit the opportunities of empowerment.³⁴⁸

The Indigenous Commercial Farmers Union (ICFU) also promoted its members, after being established in 1991 by a group of private tenure black farmers who felt that they were not being represented effectively within the CFU.

The Ministry of Agriculture and technical departments such as Agritex, shifted official objectives towards promoting larger-scale black commercial farming.³⁴⁹ This was based on two broad assumptions: firstly, that resettlement to date had been less than successful in increasing marketed production; and, secondly, that poverty reduction could only be achieved through economic growth, which could only be achieved through increased productivity, which appeared to only be possible through 'proper' commercial systems. Agriculture Minister Mangwende used the impacts of the 1992 drought to justify the policy shift to the CFU, arguing that irrigation and commercial production systems had shown their value, whereas communal areas had suffered a sharp fall in production.³⁵⁰ The new direction was also rhetorically conducive with both ESAP and 'empowerment' - black commercial farmers were expected to benefit from export crops.³⁵¹ While government policy continued to include small scale resettlement alongside it received diminishing amounts of attention, credibility and resources.

³⁴⁷ For example, see Moyo (1994: 22).

³⁴⁸ Stoneman and Cliffe (1989: 59) note how the ZNFU, had promoted itself as an alternative to standard resettlement beneficiaries in the mid-1980s.

³⁴⁹ For example, see the New National Land Policy Paper (GoZ, 1990).

³⁵⁰ Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 26 February 1992

³⁵¹ Interview with Dr Robbie Mupawose, Harare, January 2004.

By the early 1990s most government officials seemed to accept the political successes but economic shortfalls of resettlement. CFU records claim that “many senior officials and MPs spoke quite pragmatically about the ‘failures’ of the resettlement program”.³⁵² During parliamentary debate over a commission to examine the results of resettlement, the Minister of Agriculture, Mangwende, stated:

Of course we have all accepted that the first phase of resettlement had its shortcomings, especially on the settler selection aspect. (It) was meant to address a political reality... we had to give them land irrespective of whether they were productive or not. There was no time to plan, select and train these people...the second phase should be a productive one.³⁵³

He insisted that the new program required efficient utilization of land on a sustainable basis and that he wanted to see “one hectare in the communal lands produce what one hectare in the commercial sector does”, echoing Denis Norman in 1981.³⁵⁴ There was a growing opinion, driven by empowerment, economic-adjustment and productivity arguments that further resettlement should be commercially oriented and include larger scale farms. Minister of Lands Sidney Sekeremayi, explained: “the objective of land distribution is not merely to give land to the landless masses, but to create an (black) agricultural community on land which will no longer be just subsistence but commercial in orientation”.³⁵⁵ Mangwende, claimed “we are not going to give land to everyone including those who were not making use of it in the past, but only to those who have the wish, desire, commitment and knowledge of using the land” (Alexander 1991: 605). Whilst the emphasis on productivity in resettlement was not new, the commercial direction and implied increase in scale was.

³⁵² Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting 25 September 1991: Lands and Legislation Appendix.

³⁵³ Extract from *Hansard* Record of Parliamentary Debate, 11 March 1992.

³⁵⁴ Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 31 October, 1990. For more information on Norman’s (1986) strategy see his Foreword. Norman and Mupawose’s approach was incentive-led.

³⁵⁵ This was also cited in the National Land Policy Document (Alexander 1993: 186 and 1994: 333).

For most commercial farmers, the perceived failures of resettlement in the 1980s had as much to do with systems of land-tenure, as with the lack of official support.³⁵⁶ The ‘Tragedy of the Commons’ was perceived by many farmers to be the key flaw to communal production techniques, along with the inability to use land as collateral for credit. To many white farmers promoting a black commercial farming class was more desirable than what they saw as expanding communal areas through small-scale resettlement. Communal production systems were regarded as unproductive, subsistence oriented and inferior during the colonial era, and were increasingly perceived in the same way by the black-run administration after independence.

More fundamentally, this shifted the nature and direction of the land question. Despite politicians continuing to play the populist land card, the new focus on ‘productivity’ and on black ‘capitalist’ farmers threatened to sideline the peasantry and their needs for land redistribution.³⁵⁷ It also sought to break-down the dualism of the system, but was immediately affected by the impacts of structural adjustment on the farming sector and the land question.

4.3 STRUCTURAL ADJUSTMENT AND LAND REFORM

Zimbabwe’s Economic Structural Adjustment Program (ESAP) was adopted for two reasons. Firstly, an economic crisis had resulted from excessive borrowings and government expenditure leading to a balance-of-payments crisis. Secondly IFI-modelled reforms were being implemented throughout the developing world. Bernard Chidzero, the Finance Minister, advocated economic liberalisation throughout the 1980s and his personal influence, along with support from prominent black businessmen was instrumental in its approval.

³⁵⁶ This perspective was supported in reports by the World Bank (1991) and the Whitsun Foundation (1981) and fuelled opinions that land redistribution alone, in its contemporary form, could not solve Zimbabwe’s poverty problem.

³⁵⁷ “Land plan: New Doubts”, *Parade Magazine*, December 1990, p. 23.

Zimbabwe had inherited a robust but protected economy, along with controversial debts (over US\$500 million) from the Rhodesian era.³⁵⁸ The post-Independence administration was encouraged, primarily by the IMF, to borrow further and to enter international markets that had been inaccessible during sanctions (Williams, 1982). Much of the expenditure was welfare-oriented and resulted in significant achievements in rural infrastructure, health and education. However, with overly optimistic growth projections, land funding pledges, and expectations of peace dividends, state expenditure became over-extended. Development funding pledges did not materialise in the amounts expected, mainly due to donor conditions.³⁵⁹ By 1984, Zimbabwe's external debt had grown to \$US 2.4 billion and the debt servicing ratio to 25 percent of exports (EIU, 1987: 38). The drought of 1983/4 and the tobacco sector's shaky re-entry into world markets undermined the peace dividend. During the second half of the 1980s, the debt burden was exacerbated by an over-sized civil service, and a large loss-making parastatal portfolio.

The ESAP package envisaged currency devaluation, reduced government expenditure, privatisation and market liberalisation. Although portrayed as a home-grown solution, it was based on World Bank prescriptions (Williams, 1994). Zimbabwe's selective and partial adoption of the program illustrates that key administrators remained opposed to aspects of it.³⁶⁰ Negative and positive impacts were immediately evident. Inflation rose and real wages declined. Manufacturing contracted on exposure to regional competition and formal urban employment declined by nearly ten percent (30,000 jobs). Overall unemployment grew at alarming rates due to increasing school leavers against a stagnant job market. Government spending cuts adversely affected social infrastructure and services, particularly in rural areas. The 1992 drought and the 1995 drought exacerbated the difficulties, but Robertson (2001) argues that ESAP was showing longer-term benefits by 1996/97, when record growth was recorded.

³⁵⁸ There has always been contention about inheriting Rhodesia's debt, amounting to more than \$500 million.

³⁵⁹ ZIMCORD funding pledges in 1981 exceeded \$2 billion, of which only thirty to forty percent actually materialised (Jenkins, 1997).

³⁶⁰ Officials were particularly concerned by the Zambian regime change in 1992, in which SAP reforms undermined Kaunda's power by restricting UNIP's patronage system.

Much of this economic growth was skewed towards established capital with international connections, most of which was white-owned. Lower-tier wage earners, smaller businesses and communal producers were left exposed to inflation and reduced government spending. Visible and widening disparities in wealth all-too-often overshadowed governance issues such as selective-empowerment, land tenure restrictions and controversial government expenditure. Jenkins (1997) argues that sustained fiscal indiscipline, resulting from unnecessary defence expenditure, civil-service salaries, and a growing culture of high-level corruption, absorbed critical resources. Reduced spending on welfare services, such as health and education, magnified the socio- economic problems.

4.3.1 The Impacts of Structural Adjustment on Commercial Farming

Market deregulation provided commercial farmers with two diversification opportunities: they could access export markets or they could exploit restructuring domestic markets. Export incentives included a nine percent tax reduction and an Export Retention Scheme (ERS), allowing exporters to retain a proportion of income in foreign currency, with which to import inputs. Two basic strategies for accumulation emerged: intensification on existing land, or expansion on increased physical areas.³⁶¹ Moyo (2000) identified three significant types of export-related expansion: horticulture, cut-flower production and wildlife-related enterprises. Domestic-oriented diversification, expansion and vertical-integration strategies emerged later, due to delayed and hesitant market-deregulation.³⁶² Tobacco and beef were unusual; both industries were significant exporters, but were controlled through centralised marketing systems.

³⁶¹ These land use changes, and particularly the choice between intensification versus expansion, have parallels with the strategies of large-scale Orange Free State farmers, observed by Beinart (1984a).

³⁶² Initial shocks of currency devaluation and inflation also adversely affected producers targeting domestic markets. In the first year of implementation the currency devalued by 30 percent and inflation began to climb (Jenkins, 1997).

There was an immediate divide between exporters and producers targeting domestic markets, reflected in CFU records. Antony Swire-Thompson (CFU Vice-President) remarked in 1991 that “current policies are encouraging everyone to grow roses or tobacco...food producers are getting no incentives at all”.³⁶³ In November of 1991, following a review of foreign currency controls, Alan Burl expressed concern that the Export Retention Scheme was not helping domestic industries.³⁶⁴ Oliver Newton (Cereals Producers Association (CPA) Chairman) noted a move away from wheat towards export horticulture and, even in 1995, Peter MacSporran (CFU President) aired concerns about the financial status of non-exporting farmers.³⁶⁵ Input costs increasingly reflected export prices, and the ‘exporter v local’ divide became a notable plane of structural differentiation among farmers, often reflected regionally.

The impact of delayed and partial liberalisation in domestic markets was demonstrated in the dairy industry, which experienced a crisis towards the end of 1991. Government reluctance to decontrol milk prices, despite input (bran and feed) deregulation earlier in the year, placed dairy farmers in a cost-price squeeze. *The Farmer Magazine* illustrated that stock feed prices had risen by more than 100 percent in one year, amounting to 60 percent of input costs, whilst milk prices had declined in real terms.³⁶⁶ The Dairy Producers’ Association declared that “the current fiasco with stock feeds is an example of trade liberalisation gone wrong” and argued that deregulation had been started at the wrong end of the processing chain.³⁶⁷ Pressure on domestic producers encouraged many to move into export crops. Whilst large-scale producers had credit access to do so quickly, small-scale producers in communal and resettlement areas did not. With time, domestic markets did transform, through commodity exchanges and vertical-integration opportunities, but these also required capital and favoured large-scale established producers.

³⁶³ Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 25 September 1991, p 16. This proved perceptive the following year, during the fallout from severe drought.

³⁶⁴ Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 29 November 1991.

³⁶⁵ A diminishing proportion of farmers did not have some form of export income. In the Case Study sample, about half of the farmers were still wholly domestic-based. Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 26 April 1995.

³⁶⁶ *The Farmer Magazine*, 11 February 1992, p 3.

³⁶⁷ Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 27 November 1991

The seventy farms in the Case study area revealed interesting patterns in the 1989-1997 period (Appendix I). More than half of the farms diversified substantially during ESAP. Eight rose projects, nine fresh-produce operations, three field-flower enterprises, six citrus orchards, five ostrich schemes, and four tourism-related ventures were started. A co-operative fresh-produce pack-shed, an ostrich tannery, and a SADC citrus nursery emerged as supporting developments. Domestic sector reforms followed, including a large cattle feedlot and abattoir, three new butcheries, two industrial milling operations and two commercial bakeries. Three dairy producers began processing and two additional farm shops and kiosks were established. About twenty farms did not restructure, they were generally the less-developed properties, or secondary holdings and accounted for less than thirty percent of production before 1990 and less than twenty percent by 1995.³⁶⁸ Diversification increased and intensified production within the survey area. Export-crop areas increased markedly but because most were highly intensive, food-crop areas declined marginally; maize areas decreased by about 15 percent, but wheat plantings increased by 30 percent. Tobacco areas expanded by nearly 20 percent and permanent employment grew by nearly 25 percent (explained by the proliferation of horticultural enterprises).³⁶⁹ Cattle numbers in the case study area decreased due to the droughts and subsequent lack of recovery program, but were compensated in aggregate terms by Parma Meat's intensive feedlot expansion.

Structural adjustment encouraged inward flows of foreign direct investment (FDI) and capital flows out of Harare and Bulawayo into rural areas, for farming or tourism ventures.³⁷⁰ This was often through family connections or business contacts, and created further differentiation in local farming communities. FDI consisted of both multinational capital and private capital. Joint

³⁶⁸ Tobacco systems were conducive financially and management-wise for diversification.

³⁶⁹ The national tobacco industry grew notably during this period. Foreign currency earnings increased from \$US 310 million in 1990 to \$US 500 million by 1996.

³⁷⁰ Many Harare based investors struck up rose-growing partnerships with farmers. Discussions with Keith Butler, Harare 2003.

ventures, such as Luxaflor Roses, were established between white farmers and European partners. Similar arrangements spread into the wildlife sector as a number of ranches and lodges in Matabeleland, Masvingo and the Midlands were purchased by international investors.

ESAP also exposed variations in farmers' entrepreneurship and management skills. Land policy and discourse has always emphasized the importance of 'training' or 'knowledge' among small scale farmers, but the 'skills' factor is too often dismissed by analysts of the large scale farming sector. Chapter One discussed how time and difficult seasons produced better farmers. During ESAP, resourceful, hardworking farmers were often rewarded, whereas inflexible operators were exposed by inflation and economic shocks. Most successful farming expansions used established advantages of credit access, experience and industry contacts, but they also illustrated the importance of skills at practical farming levels, and at business and marketing levels.³⁷¹

Some of this entrepreneurship carried through to a younger generation of farmers. Moyo (1994: 18) and Cliffe (1988:315) argue, incorrectly, that children of white farmers were increasingly disinterested in farming. Within the case study area most farming families had at least one son or daughter who returned to farm, and at least two children returned in eight of the families.³⁷² Many studied internationally and returned with new ideas, new contacts and new marketing channels, particularly relevant to export horticulture and tourism. This also marked a distinct generational difference, as few farmers' sons had been able to study abroad during UDI and the war.³⁷³ ESAP was convenient for them, and many soon established multi-million dollar enterprises.³⁷⁴ These operations had many positive impacts but the emergence of young white

³⁷¹ For example, Mike Butler established the largest rose enterprise (100ha) in the southern hemisphere. The Dorward and Micklem families expanded their tobacco systems to become the two biggest private producers in the world. The Nicolle brothers amalgamated their grain farms into the biggest private grain producers in Southern Africa, accounting for more than 20 percent of Zimbabwe's annual wheat production.

³⁷² Only ten farmers did not have children returning.

³⁷³ In the case study area several farmers marketed fresh produce through contacts which they had established at College in the UK.

³⁷⁴ For example, the Ilsinks, Simon Philp, Tobs Strong and Hugo Firks were young entrepreneurs from in or around the case study area who took advantage of export markets and vertical integration to expand businesses rapidly.

millionaires against a background of increasing hardships in other sectors implied that the legacies of settler privilege were not abating.

Employment and management structures on many farms evolved with structural changes. Larger or more complex farming systems evolved tiered employment structures. The importance of skilled-labour began to challenge racial norms: young white farm assistants were increasingly working alongside or under black managers and although such arrangements were still isolated, they were significant departures from the practices of the past.³⁷⁵ Vertically integrating farms, such as mills and butcheries, required differentiated skills and the emphasis on human resources increased accordingly. Official records show that labour poaching became a big issue between farmers, especially in skilled jobs.³⁷⁶ Competition for other resources also increased. Land disputes emerged in certain districts, usually between expanding farmers.³⁷⁷ A series of ‘water wars’ erupted between irrigators, particularly on the Marodzi and Mazowe rivers.³⁷⁸

Competition for markets between butcheries, bakeries and value-added enterprises often sparked conflict between individual farmers. These differences, as with so much of the debate, appear to have been invisible to most outsiders, camouflaged by the aggregated gains of predominantly white commercial farming, in contrast to the hardships of other sectors.

The changing nature of the production environment and farming profile was reflected in the institutional and marketing structure of commercial farming.³⁷⁹ The Horticultural Producers Committee (HPC) and the Wildlife Producers Association (WPA) became new ‘commodity boards’ within the CFU. These shifted regional influences within the CFU and a commission

³⁷⁵ Alan Ravenscroft, in the case study area employed young graduates from the Tobacco Training Institute, who were increasingly working under established black farm managers.

³⁷⁶ Minutes of the CFU President’s Council Meeting, 27 November 1996. There were also numerous examples of white managers being ‘poached’ within the case study area.

³⁷⁷ For example, in Makonde region the Nicolle Brothers expansion of cereal farms, created resentment from other farmers who felt marginalised from the land market. In Glendale, John Sole purchased multiple farms.

³⁷⁸ The water contests were largely due to the 1992 drought. Shamva and Marodzi water boards experienced several court cases regarding water rights and excessive pumping.

³⁷⁹ For instance, the commodity exchange (ZIMACE) was established for the trading of domestic commodities, particularly maize, wheat and soya.

was appointed to restructure the institution.³⁸⁰ ESAP changed the parameters of farmer activities, interests and lifestyles. Opportunities generally entailed harder work and higher risks, but better rewards. Imported luxury goods became available after two decades of relative restrictions, and more farmers indulged in power-boats, luxury vehicles and larger farmhouses, highlighting the hardships of less successful farmers and other sectors. Many senior farming respondents lamented these ostentatious displays of wealth, and identified them as key drivers of class and race resentment.³⁸¹ In the same way that isolated cases of bad employment, came to dominate external perspectives of the sector, so displays of wealth by some farmers shaped the direction and tone of public debate. For example, in Parliament, Minister Mangwende claimed that:

We all know that some commercial farmers after they have accumulated enough wealth prefer to buy planes than to build decent accommodation for the farm workers who made them rich in the first place.³⁸²

Exporters were often accused of ‘externalising’ foreign currency through transfer-pricing.³⁸³ This was true in the late 1990s, as political insecurity mounted, but during the early stages of ESAP profits were usually recycled into farm infrastructure such as buildings or irrigation systems, but also into workers’ housing, schools and clinics as government services declined.³⁸⁴ Domestic-oriented producers and tobacco farmers also reinvested profits due to difficulties in securing foreign currency, but also because there was a sense of confidence in the sector. In Tsatsi-Marodzi, ten sizeable dams were constructed during this period and the area under irrigation nearly doubled. In response to government spending cuts, a health centre was established, a

³⁸⁰ Correspondence with Bill McKinney, August 2005. Interview with Gerry Davidson, Harare, August 2001.

³⁸¹ For example, Interview with Denis Norman, Sussex, October 2004.

³⁸² Extract from *Hansard* Record of Parliamentary Debate, 12 March 1992.

³⁸³ The most common method is double invoicing, in which exporters sell flowers or produce to an agent or company overseas. A proportion of payment is channelled into an offshore account, whilst the rest is invoiced and paid at a deflated price back to the exporter’s foreign currency account in Zimbabwe. The system is very difficult to police, especially if the exporters and agents have a close relationship.

³⁸⁴ These patterns are based on personal observations of farmer strategies during this period. Interviews and discussions with recently evicted farmers suggest that very few ‘externalised’ significant amounts of foreign currency. In the survey area, five farmers had externalised enough foreign currency to emigrate easily.

mobile farm clinic toured the district, and six new farm schools were set up.³⁸⁵ On a visit to the Barwick in 1995, Border Gezi, Governor of Mashonaland Central, expressed his surprise at the quality and extent of farm-worker facilities on the four farms visited acknowledging that they countered his preconceptions.³⁸⁶ Lending from banks to the commercial farming sector increased during ESAP and the finance sector's stake in land and farm infrastructural improvements grew accordingly.³⁸⁷ In due course, capital reinvestment raised the values of farms and land prices.³⁸⁸

Structural adjustment prompted new land-uses, new crop-types and further financial and social stratification. Some commercial farmers overextended their borrowings and went out of business during this period, whilst others on traditional maize and cattle systems stagnated.³⁸⁹ Class differentiation began to transcend racial boundaries; many salaried whites, battling with inflation, resented business owners (black and white) that were benefiting from market liberalisation (Weiss, 1994). Widening class divisions within the farming communities were more complex than during the Rhodesian era and undermined the institutional unity of the CFU.

The impact on the land question was significant. Moyo's (2000) research on land-use changes during structural adjustment is an important insight into the changing complexity of land demand. He argues that the unequal benefits of ESAP reforms fuelled the struggle for more land redistribution from both the peasant sector and the empowerment lobby. This increasing land demand was amplified by rejuvenated interests from international and urban capital seeking to

³⁸⁵ During the 1980s, significant improvements in government facilities for health and education reduced farm-worker dependence on farms. During the government spending cuts of the 1990s, these services deteriorated. Kerry Kay (CFU Aids representative) argues that farming facilities improved in response, and that this pattern was evident across most districts. Neighbouring farmers would sometimes collaborate to spread the costs of schooling or on-farm clinics. For farmers there was a vested-interest, in being able to retain skilled workers.

³⁸⁶ Personal attendance at the Tsatsi ICA Farmers Association Meeting, August 1996. Governor Gezi visited Willsbridge, Montgomery, Chaddesley and Msorodoni farms. He reassured farmers at this meeting that they had nothing to worry about, as they were demonstrating 'obvious commitment to Zimbabwean society'.

³⁸⁷ Discussions with Duncan Hale, Standard Chartered Bank, Harare, October 2003.

³⁸⁸ Most farm improvements, apart from irrigation infrastructure, were usually concentrated around central locations.

³⁸⁹ For example, Fanie Ferriera, a successful tobacco grower, bought a model farm near Concession, over-capitalised it and was forced into liquidation in the mid-1990s. At least five other local farmers were in severe financial difficulties during the same period.

exploit the opportunities of market liberalisation. A ready supply of land prevailed but land improvements increased prices. The growing importance of horticulture suggested that intensification could release excess or under-utilised land, but existing legislation prevented the subdivision of property (Maposa, 1995). Subdivision restrictions were originally introduced to curb speculation by large companies in the colonial era. Despite being cited as a key constraint to land supply they remained in place. Moyo (2000) acknowledged that this was the prime time to have concurrently permitted sub-division and introduced a land tax, which would have allowed price differentials between capitalised portions of farms and less developed outlying land.

At the same time, perceptions of white farmer affluence, attitudes and employment style shaped discussion in national forums, and influenced public perceptions, which increasingly isolated white farmers. During debates on the Land Acquisition Act in 1992, Mr Bhebe MP commented:

We need to keep a close eye on the commercial farmers... they are playing a yoyo with the nation... the white farmers realised that ploughing and all that was hazardous... they discovered new types of farming... they discovered that there is a safari business where you spend very little, all you have to do is construct a tall wire, to provide water fountains from farm to farm, the rest should look after itself...most of the commercial farmers do not have farms, only gardens. They hardly do any farming on those farms.³⁹⁰

Bhebe was referring to farmers in Matabeleland and specifically to the game conservancies, but his sentiments fed into a stereotype. Even the Minister of Agriculture distorted the facts and figures during his parliamentary addresses: “right now ... the majority of them [white farmers] own six or more farms which are mostly being under utilised”.³⁹¹

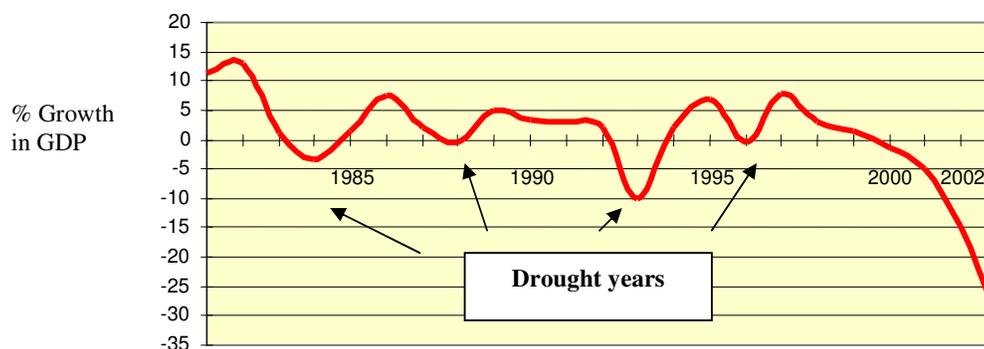
³⁹⁰ *Hansard* Record of Parliamentary Debate, 3 March 1992.

³⁹¹ *Hansard*, Record of Parliamentary Debate, 12 March 1992.

4.3.2 The 1991/1992 Drought

Rain shortages between December 1991 and November 1992 amounted to probably the worst drought in Zimbabwe's recorded history. The effects have been underestimated in analyses of structural adjustment and in terms of its influence on the land debate and the state-farmer alliance.³⁹² The drought interacted with structural adjustment, empowerment and the 1992 LAA to magnify and highlight social, political and economic imbalances. The CFU stated in January 1992 that it was the worst drought in more than 50 years, particularly in Matabeleland.³⁹³ Council noted that the drought had affected livestock and crops, and created massive unemployment in the communal areas, which had been the most badly affected.

Figure 4.1 GDP Growth Rates, Illustrating the Impact of Drought Years 1980-2000



Sources: IMF statistics (2001)

The severity of the drought was due to its widespread and prolonged nature. Livestock could not be moved locally, crops could not recover, and water storage shortages carried through to the irrigated winter crop and the following season's storage levels. The economy contracted by ten percent, the first negative growth rate in a decade, with significant implications for structural

³⁹² Moyo (1994) and Bond (2000) acknowledge the seriousness of the droughts but fail to note their impact on the reconfiguration of the land question.

³⁹³ Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 29 January, 1992.

adjustment.³⁹⁴ The impact of the drought affected all regions, not just the traditionally vulnerable provinces. John Meikle reported that the Eastern highlands had experienced one of the most difficult seasons on record. Dave Henson described the situation in Masvingo:

Catastrophic...unbelievable, worst in living memory, absolutely disastrous...It is fair to say that this is the worst position that most commercial farmers in the province have ever found themselves in... the situation in the communal lands is even worse.³⁹⁵

In February, Nick Swanepoel noted that Makonde region had received the lowest rainfall since 1927 and Alan Burl stressed that the current drought was the worst on record.³⁹⁶ Under these pressures 'squatter' problems re-emerged in the public forum. Stock theft, poaching and petty theft increased in commercial farming areas, especially those bordering communal areas. CFU regional representatives linked this to the drought and distinguished these patterns from the squatting tactics of the 1980s, arguing that the recent activities were more general and widespread, and not as focused or organized, even though they coincided with renewed and fiery land rhetoric.³⁹⁷ Similar observations emerged after the 1994/5 drought.³⁹⁸

The alliance between the farmers and the state was supported and undermined by different elements of structural adjustment and the drought. Farmers increased their proportions of foreign currency generation which bolstered the sector's position and the 1992 drought reinforced the dependency on commercial farmers for food security. The drought also exacerbated the stark contrasts between communal areas and commercial land: an increasingly inconvenient and awkward contradiction, which resurfaced in the land debate.

³⁹⁴ Also see World Bank (2004).

³⁹⁵ Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 29 January, 1992: Masvingo Regional Report.

³⁹⁶ Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 26 February 1992.

³⁹⁷ Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 28 October 1992. As many as 2 million rural dwellers relocated to urban areas during the 1992 drought.

³⁹⁸ Increased squatting in Odzi, Chinoyi, Angwa and Makonde was mainly based on gold panning and poaching. Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 31 May 1995 and 25 October 1995.

4.4 THE POLARISATION OF THE LAND DEBATE

The appointment of Witness Mangwende as Minister of Lands and Agriculture in 1990 indicated a political shift in the role of the Ministry. Mangwende had limited agricultural experience and was regarded by most farmers who knew him as part of a ‘hardline’ element within ZANU PF. In September 1990, David Hasluck and John Meikle cautioned CFU council members against adopting confrontational stances against government and polarising the land debate.³⁹⁹

The draft Land Acquisition Bill of 2 November 1990 unexpectedly carried a compulsory acquisition clause, without legal recourse or appeal.⁴⁰⁰ The CFU Council, caught off guard, called an emergency meeting of all members on 11 January 1991, held in the international conference centre at the Sheraton Hotel. It was the biggest ever gathering of white commercial farmers (4380 attended), and created a traffic gridlock in Harare.⁴⁰¹ The agenda focused on a hastily compiled report entitled “CFU Proposals for Land Reform”. It was a bid to work with government, to maintain some influence over the process, but lacked practical detail or implementation suggestions. Its most significant message, the call for an independent land board to adjudicate the issue, was lost behind the negative interpretations of the meeting.

The meeting was called early to precede the initial strikes of the first Gulf War, to ensure global press coverage.⁴⁰² It was termed the ‘Great Indaba’, in reference to the meetings of the Ndebele nation, as an attempt to portray the farmers as Africans. This provoked mirth within the ruling party, as Mangwende later noted in parliament.⁴⁰³ Denis Norman, who had recently resumed a

³⁹⁹ Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 26 September 1990.

⁴⁰⁰ Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 28 November, 1990: *Lands and Legislation*.

⁴⁰¹ Some farmers compared these scenes to strategies adopted by French farmers, who frequently jam the Paris ring road to protest against unwelcome agricultural policies. Interestingly, CFU records note that white farmers from the Transvaal drove tractors into Pretoria later that month, in protest at South African reforms. Whether or not there was a contagion element is not known. Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 30 January 1991.

⁴⁰² Mangwende apparently complained that he was forced to cut short a family holiday and to cancel a state visit with President Mugabe. Interview with Alan Burl, Marondera, January 2004.

⁴⁰³ See *Hansard* Record of Parliamentary Debate, 12 March 1993.

cabinet position, was deeply concerned about how it might be interpreted by the government and the ruling party. John Laurie, John Strong and Jim Sinclair were equally apprehensive and tried to persuade Alan Burl, the new CFU President, to cancel the meeting, or to clarify its objectives. At a pre-arranged breakfast, facilitated by Denis Norman, Burl was unreceptive from the outset, arriving forty minutes late with a joke about the obsolescence of past-presidents.⁴⁰⁴

Denis Norman explained that a confrontational stance might break the hard-earned 'trust' that had been developed with the government. Laurie and Sinclair suggested that it might scupper the whole alliance. However, Burl had support from council and stood his ground.⁴⁰⁵ Hasluck felt that the meeting was a necessary exercise to bring the issue to the attention of the international community and to demonstrate the power and unity of the farming community.⁴⁰⁶ John Brown supported Burl on the basis of council solidarity, as did Anthony Swire-Thompson. This dismissal of the concerns of previous leaders demonstrated a new and different style of CFU leadership: more aggressive and more public.⁴⁰⁷

The Sheraton meeting ran smoothly and initial press reports were generally favourable.

Mangwende clarified two important issues: firstly, that the five million hectares targeted was non-negotiable and, secondly, that productive farmers had nothing to worry about. On his subsequent 'meet the farmers' tour, Mangwende repeatedly assured farmers countrywide that the concept of 'willing buyer - willing seller' would remain. However, he also instructed the

⁴⁰⁴ Past presidents of the CFU traditionally met with the incumbent leadership once a month, but this practice had gradually lapsed in the late 1980s. Interview with John Strong, Harare, February 2003; Interview with John Laurie, Harare, February 2003; Interview with Denis Norman, Sussex, October 2004.

⁴⁰⁵ Interview with Alan Burl, Marondera, January 2004. There is little detail of attitudes towards the meeting in the CFU minutes, but David Hasluck supported Burl on the basis of council sentiment. John Meikle claims he was the only council member to oppose the meeting. E-mail correspondence with John Meikle, June 2005.

⁴⁰⁶ Interview with David Hasluck, Nyanga March 2003.

⁴⁰⁷ After the meeting, Mr Foot (CFU Public Relations officer) was congratulated on having done a good job. Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting 30 January 1991. In the latter half of 1991, Mr Foot acknowledged the union's move away from a non-confrontational approach. The minutes also claim that the more aggressive stance had done no harm. Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 25 September 1991 and Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 27 November 1991.

CFU to identify underutilised land. If they did not, he warned, government would.⁴⁰⁸ Many farmers were disillusioned after the January meeting and most CFU regional branches reported low morale among their members. The depressed tone of district reports contrasts with head office minutes.⁴⁰⁹ Matabeleland farmers were particularly unhappy that the report, the meeting and the agenda had been devised by the CFU leadership with little consultation, participation or support from members. Hasluck explained that this was due to time constraints.⁴¹⁰

The idea of a privileged, but politically illegitimate, white minority publicly challenging government's land policy was unacceptable to many in ZANU PF.⁴¹¹ However an amicable 'Meet the Farmers' tour by Mangwende soon afterwards concealed this hostility within some sectors of government. The ruling party was also alerted to the organizational abilities of the CFU and to their new-found preparedness to confront aspects of government land policy. The CFU was not unaware of these realities. On 22 January, Hasluck and Burl met with Mangwende, Attorney General Patrick Chinamasa and Permanent Secretary of Lands and Agriculture Ndimande. The meeting lasted four hours, was often heated and "certainly not constructive from the Union's point of view".⁴¹² The CFU council agreed that the next strategy was to lobby the private sector to encourage government to abandon designation and work with a market-based reform program. In mid-February, David Hasluck met with Michael Camdessus (IMF Director) and with Bernard Chidzero (Finance Minister). Camdessus was reviewing ESAP reforms and apparently "made clear his disapproval of the controversial constitutional amendments...which could jeopardize the economic reform program... [and warned that] land reform can be the best or the worst of things, depending on its implementation".⁴¹³ Chidzero reassured them that the program would proceed under the willing-buyer willing-seller system

⁴⁰⁸ Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 27 February 1991.

⁴⁰⁹ Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 30 January 1991.

⁴¹⁰ Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting 30 January 1991. Bill McKinney cited this as a precursor to the split of the Matabeleland Farmers Union from CFU in 2004. E-mail correspondence with Bill McKinney, August 2005.

⁴¹¹ Interview with Dr Kumbirai Kangai, Harare, December 2003. Dr Robbie Mupawose also commented on the misjudgements of this initiative. Interview with Dr Robbie Mupawose, Harare, January 2004.

⁴¹² Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 29 January 1991.

⁴¹³ Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 27 February 1991: 4.

and that productive farms would not be targeted. Market-based reforms were conducive to ESAP, but designation was not. Under these reassurances Camdessus was confident that the forthcoming Paris Donors Conference, which sought to raise US\$1 billion of credit for structural adjustment, would deliver sufficient funding. This portrayed two ‘camps’ within the administration. The CFU perceived the one as compliant and reassuring, and the other as radical, uninformed and unreasonable. There were two significant errors in farmer policies at this stage: the overestimation of their own power and the underestimation of this second camp.

4.4.1 Market versus Compulsory Acquisition

As the land question polarised, so debates about market reform versus compulsory acquisition intensified.⁴¹⁴ Roth (1994) argued that the 1992 LAA was unnecessary and that the ability of the market to deliver land was underestimated. Maposa (1995) identified the legal and practical shortfalls of compulsory acquisition. Analyses of the South African land market, suggest that the externalities of compulsory reform, such as legal contests, are unpredictable and often more timely and costly in the long run, than a market system of transfer.⁴¹⁵ Moyo (1994: 5), conversely, argued that market reform had failed to deliver satisfactory quantities or quality of land, and that it was therefore necessary to resort to compulsory purchase:

government sought a transparent, legal and administrative framework for land acquisition, which was democratically enacted by parliament, and which is explicit about compensating land owners. The Land Act seeks an administratively swift process for acquiring land by minimising legal contestations of land designations, while clearly articulating the reasons for land designations... government has finally established an appropriate legislative and administrative machinery to pursue a credible land redistribution program.

⁴¹⁴ For example, see: Roth (1994); Maposa (1995); Moyo (2000b).

⁴¹⁵ For example, see Bernstein (1994).

He also argued that the two systems could work concurrently and complement each other. Moyo's view is problematic for three reasons: Firstly, government hardly entered the land market in the late 1980s, nor did it intervene through credit, land taxes, or subdivision.⁴¹⁶ Secondly, the compulsory acquisition act was ultimately impractical. It was vulnerable to legal challenges and prompted a united coalition of opposition among farmers, business, civil society and donors.⁴¹⁷ Finally, the two systems undermined each other. Compulsory acquisition removed any real incentive for government to enter the land market, while the existence of an active transfer market undermined the credibility of compulsory acquisition.

The 1992 Land bill sought to change the nature and basis of land identification and the amount and timing of compensation.⁴¹⁸ Two aspects of the bill concerned the farmers. Firstly, the ability to designate land compulsorily and, secondly, alteration of the compensation clause from 'adequate' and 'timely' to 'fair' and 'staggered'. 'Fair' implied a political levy on the price of land whilst 'staggered' removed any urgency from government obligations to pay compensation. In ignoring the time value of money (no interest would be paid on delayed or staggered compensation which would be exposed to inflation) the bill undermined a fundamental principle of the financial system. From an individual farmer's perspective there were no incentives to offer land on this basis, particularly whilst an active market operated.

The designation principle was driven by political sentiment; it indicated the growing impatience and shifting locus of land decision-making, which Mr Munyoro articulated in parliament:

for the last ten years we have been telling people that we cannot do anything because our hands are tied and people have not forgotten that we told them that our hands are

⁴¹⁶ The 1992 amendments sought to update and strengthen the 1985 Land Acquisition Act. Palmer (1990) shows that more than 1 million hectares changed hands through the first-option system between 1985 and 1990.

⁴¹⁷ Edison Zvobgo, ZANU PF's legal 'supremo', subsequently acknowledged the shortfalls of the legislation during a conference in Copenhagen in 2001. Personal correspondence with Dr Jocelyn Alexander, Oxford, May 2005.

Also see: http://www.oxfam.org.uk/what_we_do/issues/livelihoods/landrights/downloads/zim2001.rtf

⁴¹⁸ Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 28 November, 1990: *Lands and legislation*.

ted. Why are we developing cold feet now... This bill without designation in it is not worth considering at all, just throw it away as a worthless piece of paper. It must entrench designation, then it may become a useful bill.⁴¹⁹

Chief Justice Gubbay criticized the constitutional amendments, arguing that the compensation clause in its new form amounted to an empty handed gesture. He warned that property rights were a pillar of the constitution, and that he had an obligation to comment as Judges were the custodians of the constitution.⁴²⁰ Moyo (1994) argues that this public judicial criticism undermined the credibility of the exercise, but concerns over designation were not restricted to white farmers or international donors. The ZFU submitted a land proposal to the government registering concerns about the land bill, and particularly the clauses regarding compulsory designation and compensation.⁴²¹ Even the ICFU expressed concern at the compensation clause. In the meantime the CFU lobbied third parties, briefing diplomats and members of the donor community about the concerns of compulsory acquisition.⁴²²

The farmers did not believe that an indiscriminate compulsory process would follow and were encouraged by some officials to think that the willing-buyer willing-seller process would prevail (von Blackenburg, 1994). The land market continued to function actively. On average, about 150 farms were being bought and sold on the open market, every year during the 1990s. *The Farmer* began publishing detailed lists of monthly farm sales and prices using deed registry data, to inform the general public about the availability of land.⁴²³ The state moved half-heartedly, with the belief that it could always resort to compulsory acquisition. Very clear here, but absent in

⁴¹⁹ Extract from *Hansard* Record of Parliamentary Debate, 3 March, 1992.

⁴²⁰ *The Farmer*, 17 January 1991: 1.

⁴²¹ Copy of the ZFU proposal on land reform, appended to Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting 26 February 1992. The NFAZ and the ZNFU expressed similar concerns directly to the CFU the previous year, before they merged as the ZFU. Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 25 September 1991.

⁴²² Hasluck met the US Ambassador, representatives of USAID, and members of several other foreign missions to brief them about concerns over the designation and compensation clauses.

⁴²³ In October and November 1995, 31 farms, totalling about 15000 ha were bought and sold, mainly in regions II and III, for a total price of \$20 million (average price: Z\$1300/ha; \$US90/ha). *The Farmer*, 1 February 1996: 12.

most analysis, is that there was never any agreement. Both groups fumbled forward expecting the issue to resolve itself on their preferred terms. The most striking feature of the standoff was the lack of compromise through land market interventions, and in particular the failure to implement land taxes.⁴²⁴

4.4.2 Land Taxes

Debates around land taxes reflected the increasing complexity of the land problem and the manner in which obvious compromises were overlooked. Levies on land ownership could have provided the farmers with a route back into a market-based system of reform, but they failed to see the opportunity and would not trust government or the World Bank to formulate one. A land tax could have concurrently oiled the transfer of land by increasing supply and reducing prices. Hypothecation of these revenues would have amounted to a material contribution towards land reform by the white farmers and demonstrated goodwill element within the process.

Land taxes were not new and had been used at various stages in the past. The Moffat government had passed “a mild land tax” in 1928, to counter land speculation, but it was only enforced until 1932 (Palmer, 1977: 185). A form of land tax always existed in Rural Council Rates, levied on the size of properties. During settlement negotiations in 1979, John Laurie, representing CFU Salisbury branch, called for a government land fund, prompting discussions about the merits of a land tax. In 1982/3 further discussions took place and an Agricultural Land Tax Bill was recommended to the Tax commissioner. In 1986 the World Bank argued that: “if a land tax is necessary to encourage a more efficient use of land, it should be relatively simple to administer and not impede efficiency.” The 1989 ZANU PF congress land paper and the New National Land Policy in 1990 both carried central clauses for land taxes. Moyo (1986, 1994 and

⁴²⁴ The World Bank and other analysts had strongly recommended an interventionist market approach, based on land taxes and more lenient subdivision legislation. For example, see: World Bank (1991); Bratton (1991); Rukuni Commission (1994); Moyo (1994); Roth (1994a and 1994b).

1998) called for land taxes over an extended period of time, whilst the Rukuni Commission (1994) recommended land taxes, subdivision and tenure reform. Despite agreement in principle among policy makers there was no delivery. The World Bank (2004: 49) details a chronological list of land market recommendations to the Zimbabwean government since 1990 and queries why none of the suggestions were adopted.⁴²⁵

Many farmers supported the idea of land taxes: if implemented effectively, they amounted to an insurance mechanism for productive farmers by exposing underutilised or speculative land. They also promoted both equity and efficiency. During council debates in 1991, the CFU showed an awareness of government funding shortages. Mr Alcock suggested that “it would (also) be desirable to raise a levy on income tax to enable the government to have sufficient funds available, to pay for and adequately compensate land purchased for resettlement.” It was also suggested, somewhat hopefully, that Britain might consider compensating the difference between the price of designated land and the price of normal market-based reform.⁴²⁶ Keith Harvey raised the idea of a land board and land taxes at the CFU Congress in 1992, ideas which were presented to government and later to the Rukuni Commission (1994).⁴²⁷

Following the passing of the Land Act, an Agricultural Land Tax Bill was tabled in 1993 proposing two possible means of land levy: either on production, or on land potential.⁴²⁸ CFU council initially agreed that the second option was better and that every farmer should have an approved farm potential plan within 3 years.⁴²⁹ David Hasluck then explained problems with

⁴²⁵ In addition, The World Bank's Agricultural Sector Memorandum (1991) calls for a land tax and for subdivision leniency. In 1995 the Bank submitted detailed proposals for a graduated land tax, and suggested the removal of all subsidies inflating land prices. In 1996 the World Bank advised VAT and a land tax within two years (Minutes of the CFU President's Council Meeting, 27 November 1996). In 1998, at the Donors conference, the bank resubmitted this proposal, which was unanimously accepted by all stakeholders (World Bank, 2004).

⁴²⁶ Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 27 March 1991: 2. Minutes of CFU Council Meeting, 27 February 1991

⁴²⁷ Minutes of the CFU Congress, August 1992.

⁴²⁸ In June 1991, Hasluck attempted, unsuccessfully, to discuss the proposed tax with the Commissioner of Taxes. He feared a last minute, non-consultative implementation. Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 26 June 1991.

⁴²⁹ Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 27 May 1993.

regional classification, and argued that production rather than potential was better.⁴³⁰ This illustrated the division of opinion over taxes and the manner in which David Hasluck, well-versed in the legalities and terminology of the land discourse, used his relative expertise to influence the council position. He had previously analysed the proposed Bill draft in an internal memo, criticizing it extensively but unconvincingly (See Appendix II).⁴³¹

At a second Paris Donor conference, in March 1995, the World Bank presented a paper entitled: “Achieving Shared Growth”.⁴³² It encouraged a market-based approach to land transfer and advocated a graduated land tax as a core element—based on land area, quality and location.⁴³³ Hasluck firmly rejected the paper in council, arguing that the underutilization estimates were exaggerated and that the proposed system of land tax would be too complicated.⁴³⁴ During a CFU debate later that year, Hasluck again opposed the idea of a tax claiming that it would be costly and complicated.⁴³⁵ Hasluck’s opposition to the tax was an example of the perceived ‘resistance to reform’ within the CFU, at which much government criticism has been directed. Land taxes also posed a conflict of interest for key councilors: Hasluck owned 1500 hectares in Burma Valley (Region I) which would have been subjected to a significant tax. David Irvine criticised the land tax but owned significant property in Mashonaland. However, the CFU remained divided on the subject: Bob Swift and Gerry Grant visited Brazil in 1998, and supported the idea of a land tax at the Donors Conference.⁴³⁶ Most respondents in Mashonaland did not oppose land taxes, whilst Matabeleland and lowveld respondents were supportive in principle on condition that natural region and topography considerations were included.⁴³⁷

⁴³⁰ Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 27 May 1993: 7.

⁴³¹ Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 31 March 1993: 2, section iv - Agricultural land Tax Bill 1993. See Appendix II: Summary of David Hasluck’s Land Tax critique.

⁴³² Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 29 March 1995. *Lands and Legislation*, 20083.

⁴³³ The World Bank paper referred to high estimates of under-utilised land in better regions and targeted the transfer of 1.6 million hectares in regions I, II and III.

⁴³⁴ Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 29 March 1995.

⁴³⁵ Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 27 September 1995.

⁴³⁶ E-mail correspondence with Bob Swift (CFU President 1998), July 2005.

⁴³⁷ These opinions may have shifted with time. Correspondence with Bill McKinney, (ex-Matabeleland rancher) August 2005. Discussions with Joseph Whittall (Lowveld rancher) Zambia, April 2005.

In September 1996, the Land Tax was still being debated.⁴³⁸ It came to the fore again during the 1998 Donors' Conference, twenty years after the CFU first discussed land taxes as a safety net for land funding. Whilst the CFU debated, procrastinated, and failed to see land taxes as a solution rather than a problem, the government appears to have done even less. Constitutionally, the Land Tax bill was less controversial than the 1992 LAA, but received very little parliamentary attention. Whilst the LAA had been fast-tracked through parliament, the Land Tax Bill remained on the table but off the agenda. The 1996 Tobacco Levy Act was subsequently rushed through, despite farmer outrage (See Chapter Five), and yet the Land Tax Bill remained in the background. Moyo (1994: 7) could offer no explanation either:

the state had been reluctant for *unclear reasons* [own emphasis] to use other measures such as land taxes to induce land redistribution and availability...Nor did the state encourage private land transfers in line with its rigorous regulation of land sub-division.

Renson Gasela, General Manager of the GMB at the time, suggests that this was due to “parliamentary lethargy” and that the 1992 LAA satiated immediate pressures for land policy within the ruling party: “they thought they had enough fire-power in the 1992 Act”.⁴³⁹ Dr Kangai, Dr Mupawose and Denis Norman all supported the idea but could not offer explanations as to why it was not implemented.⁴⁴⁰ The land tax debate remains a conundrum, and a missed opportunity, probably sidelined by more obvious elements of the land debate.⁴⁴¹

⁴³⁸ Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 25 September 1996.

⁴³⁹ Discussions with Renson Gasela (Shadow Minister of Agriculture) Nyanga, March 2003.

⁴⁴⁰ Interview with Dr Kumbirai Kangai, Harare, December 2003; Interview with Dr Robbie Mupawose, Harare, January 2004; Interview with Denis Norman; Sussex, October 2004.

⁴⁴¹ The recent successes of the Namibian Land Tax further expose Zimbabwe's lost opportunities. See Christoph Maletsky, “Land Tax Brings In Millions”, *The Namibian*, 9 March 2006.

4.4.3 Diminishing Farmer Consultations

The waning proximity of commercial farmers to the policy-making process was particularly evident during the 1992 LAA negotiations. At the Sheraton meeting and its provincial follow ups, Minister Mangwende promised farmers that they would be consulted throughout the drafting of the bill. In March, Emmerson Mnangagwa, Minister of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs, reassured the CFU that it would have access to updated copies of the draft throughout the process.⁴⁴² He stressed that the bill would target underutilized, absentee or foreign-owned farms, and not resident productive farmers.⁴⁴³ However, in June, Mnangagwa claimed that he was unable to provide the CFU with a draft, as that was the responsibility of the Ministry of Lands Agriculture and Rural Resettlement (MLARR), but he explained that it was unlikely to reach parliament before September.⁴⁴⁴ The MLARR referred the CFU back to Mnangagwa. CFU minutes then document regular, but unsuccessful, requests to view the draft. In September they record that although the sixth draft of the Land Act had been produced, the CFU had still not seen it.⁴⁴⁵ At the end of October the minutes record that there is “still no reply from the MLARR regarding requests for a copy of the Land Acquisition Act - (nearly) a year after the first request, four formal letters and monthly verbal requests”.⁴⁴⁶ The *Lands and Legislation* report from this meeting notes that:

the final draft of the Land Acquisition Bill is shortly to be considered by the cabinet committee on legislation...there is grave concern... Minister Mangwende had promised the CFU an opportunity to comment on the Bill before it was sent to the cabinet committee.

⁴⁴² Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 27 March 1991: 3.

⁴⁴³ Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 1 April 1992.

⁴⁴⁴ Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 26 June 1991.

⁴⁴⁵ Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 25 September 1991.

⁴⁴⁶ Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 30 October 1991.

In response, Alan Burl wrote another letter to Mangwende requesting a copy of the draft.⁴⁴⁷ In November, Burl received a reply stating that when the Bill was in working order it would be sent to the union for comment.⁴⁴⁸ A copy of the Bill was finally made available on 27 January 1992, allowing three weeks for review (ICG 2004).

There were also three pending international issues affecting the manner in which it was being drafted: firstly, the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM), secondly, the Donors' Conference in Paris at which funds for ESAP were to be raised, and thirdly, the South African settlement. In each case, the controversial clauses of the Bill had possible implications. CFU minutes in November note that the government was making a conscious effort to keep the profile of the Act low within these forums.⁴⁴⁹

Mugabe asked to meet Alan Burl in mid-February, and encouraged him to discuss amendments with the relevant Minister, Mnangagwa.⁴⁵⁰ One week later, Burl and Hasluck were called to Parliament, where they were presented with a single A4 sheet of paper with some minor handwritten amendments. According to Mnangagwa "it was government's intention to pass the bill... this was their policy and they would not be swayed – irrespective of whether it was fair or not, or whether it would work or not".⁴⁵¹ At the subsequent CFU council meeting it was noted that "the bill had been presented as a *fait accompli*, without much chance or opportunity for discussion".⁴⁵² It was decided that a letter should be sent to Mugabe, to record that there had been no opportunity for discussion. Council also resolved that key stakeholders such as the Judiciary and the Zimbabwe Chamber of Commerce should be kept informed about the lack of consultation. On March 12, Mangwende responded to the CFU in Parliament:

⁴⁴⁷ Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 30 October 1991: Lands and Legislation.

⁴⁴⁸ Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 27 November 1991.

⁴⁴⁹ Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 27 November 1991.

⁴⁵⁰ Mugabe had asked Burl for a CFU position on land the previous September, but Burl argued that he was unable to do so before he had viewed the bill. Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 25 September 1991, p 5.

⁴⁵¹ Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 26 February 1992. Confirmed in interviews with David Hasluck, Nyanga, March 2003 and Alan Burl, Marondera, January 2004.

⁴⁵² Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 26 February 1992, p 13.

there have been lots of allegations from the farming community that they were not consulted in the process...The truth is that consultations took place at several stages...It is not justifiable to claim that farmers were not consulted. They were consulted. The kind of consultation they mean is actual involvement in the drafting of the bill itself. Obviously as a government we cannot allow that ...What the commercial farmers are implying is that because they gave us their views, which were not acceptable to us, then they were not consulted.⁴⁵³

In the meantime, the CFU launched a publicity campaign, securing four television slots with ZBC, for information documentaries on commercial agriculture.⁴⁵⁴ *The Farmer* magazine published a major review of the land issue.⁴⁵⁵ The ZTA joined the initiative and took out full-page advertisements in the Financial Gazette and the Herald, emphasizing the importance of commercial agriculture to the economy and warning of the potential consequences of designation.⁴⁵⁶ Mangwende reacted to the press campaign in Parliament:

Already the public is being bombarded with a concerted campaign against land distribution. We have seen big adverts in bold print in the Herald [by ZTA] against designation. There have been similar insidious articles in the Pink paper... recently there has been a video... intending to persuade people [that] white commercial farmers are the only ones who can use land properly... to portray the African as a pathetic and incompetent peasant and therefore not deserving to be given land...⁴⁵⁷

⁴⁵³ *Hansard*, Record of Parliamentary debate, 12 March 1992. Dr Kangai offered a similar perspective a year later. In a 30 minute interview with *The Farmer* he argued that “consultation does not mean agreement”. In a radio interview shortly afterwards he stated, “the farmers don’t have a power of veto...if we look in the Oxford dictionary the word consult does not mean agreement”. *The Farmer*, 27 May 1993: 3. Extracts of an interview with Dr Kangai on Radio 1 “Spotlight” Program, text carried in *The Farmer*, 3 June 1993: 7.

⁴⁵⁴ The four documentaries provided an insight into crops, livestock, tobacco and an overview by Alan Burl, stressing the importance of the commercial farming sector.

⁴⁵⁵ Cited in the Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 26 February 1992.

⁴⁵⁶ Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 26 February 1992.

⁴⁵⁷ *Hansard*, Record of Parliamentary debate, 12 March 1992.

Moyo (1994: 1 and 4) argues that the dominance of the CFU in media outlets and on policy forums presented a distorted perspective on Zimbabwe's land problem, and that the government's own distorted portrayal of the issue as a contest between "greedy landowners and the majority of land hungry peasants" was justified on the basis that most of the poor did see it in these simple terms. The press campaign was convincing enough to raise concerns among donors which Mangwende sought to diffuse by clarifying government objectives in parliament:

the government will map out areas that will remain under LSCF and those that need to be purchased for resettlement purposes. In this way people who intend to buy farms will know which areas to go for. Those farmers who need to relocate themselves as a result of being displaced by resettlement will be able to buy farms in areas where they will guarantee that they will not be required to move again.⁴⁵⁸

This implied that certain commercial farming areas would remain untargeted, and that others would be resettled on a 'block' basis. He then contradicted himself within minutes by promoting a more selective approach based on the nature of individual farms:

The kind of designation we are talking about is different from mere designation in blanket form. What we will be looking for is land which falls under the following categories: underutilised land under absentee ownership, foreign owned land, derelict land, land owned for speculative purposes and land from people with more farms than are considered necessary.⁴⁵⁹

Although the initial 'block' maps were drawn up, the program shifted increasingly towards the second approach, after the appointment of Dr Kumbirai Kangai as Minister of Lands Agriculture and Rural Resettlement in July 1992. This was widely seen as a conciliatory gesture and Kangai

⁴⁵⁸ *Hansard* Record of Parliamentary Debate, 12 March 1992.

⁴⁵⁹ *Hansard* Record of Parliamentary Debate, 12 March 1992.

immediately compromised, explaining that the land program would proceed on both fronts, but that emphasis would be placed on securing land through ‘willing-buyer willing-seller’. So compulsory acquisition was to run alongside market reform, and selective identifications were to complement block designations. It was a case of choosing all routes without actually taking any. These inconsistencies in official stances carried through to the land identification exercise.

4.4.4 Conceptualising ‘Under-Utilised’ Land

The World Bank (1991) claimed that 65 percent of commercial farmland in Zimbabwe was underutilised. This statistic was widely cited in subsequent land debates, including parliamentary deliberations over the 1992 LAA.⁴⁶⁰ ‘Underutilisation’ was a key argument for promoting extensive land reform but its conceptualisation remained problematic.⁴⁶¹ Roth (1994), who co-authored the above-mentioned report, acknowledged broad assumptions in his calculations and that depending on land-use definitions, the area of underutilised land in Mashonaland could vary between 1.5 and 3 million hectares.⁴⁶² Due to the varied topography of individual farms, the margin for error in such an exercise without individual surveys is significant.⁴⁶³ Hasluck claimed that the World Bank exaggerated the degree of inefficiency of commercial agricultural land and that the report made “expedient suggestions” regarding further land purchases.⁴⁶⁴ Within parliamentary debate, the concepts of ‘underutilisation’ and multiple-ownership were important, but often distorted. Contextualising Minister Magwende’s earlier quote:

⁴⁶⁰ *Hansard* Record of Parliamentary Debate, 12 March 1992.

⁴⁶¹ For example, Alexander (1993: 191) identifies Cliffe (1986); Moyo (1989); Weiner (1988). In his detailed analysis of this issue, Roth (1994a: 330) cites similar work.

⁴⁶² Roth’s (1994) estimates assume that cattle-grazing in better regions amounted to underutilisation, irrespective of land gradient, soil type or wetland. At the 1995 Donor’s conference the World Bank claimed that 47 percent of commercial land was underutilised. Minutes of the CFU President’s Council Meeting, 27 November 1996.

⁴⁶³ New satellite technology, such as googleearth.com and worldwind.com, is likely to revolutionise survey accuracy and credibility. Researchers are beginning to use images in their analyses. Nyanga Land Symposium, March 2003.

⁴⁶⁴ Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 31 October 1990: Lands and Legislation. He also dismissed a subsequent land meeting with the World Bank as pointless. Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 31 March 1993.

right now (the white farmers) are busy stocking most of their underutilised land with wildlife... the majority of them own six or more farms which are mostly being under utilised. Surely we need all that underutilised land for resettlement.⁴⁶⁵

Against the distortions and misinformation of high level debate, concentrations of land ownership were ignored. Stoneman (1981: 135) illustrates that at Independence, 216 properties accounted for more than one-third of white-owned land, and that 736 farms (eleven percent by number) incorporated more than 60 percent.⁴⁶⁶ These properties were owned by multinationals, large companies and a number of private 'land barons'. Leibigs, Lonrho, Hippo Valley and Triangle estates owned more than 750 000 ha between them. At the other extreme, 55 percent of farms (by number - averaging 425 ha) occupied less than ten percent of the total white-owned area, and were mainly privately owned family farms.

Roth (1994: 144) illustrated similar concentrations of ownership in 1988. He showed that more than half the white farmers occupied less than one million hectares countrywide, or less than ten percent of all privately-owned land (See Appendix III). One-third of all white farmers (1400 by number) resided on only 500 000 hectares in Mashonaland. The productivity and utilisation debates regarding farm size remain unclear, but in my survey area productivity was generally higher on smaller farms (Appendix I). Larger or multiple-farm structures tended to concentrate enterprises in core areas, with less intensive outlying areas. Larger farms were generally situated on more broken country.⁴⁶⁷ The implications of these statistics are significant. Highly concentrated ownership was acknowledged by Rukuni (1994) and Moyo (2000a) but never incorporated effectively into land policy through, for example, graded land taxes. Furthermore, within the national land targets to transfer 5 million hectares, the smallest 2410 commercial

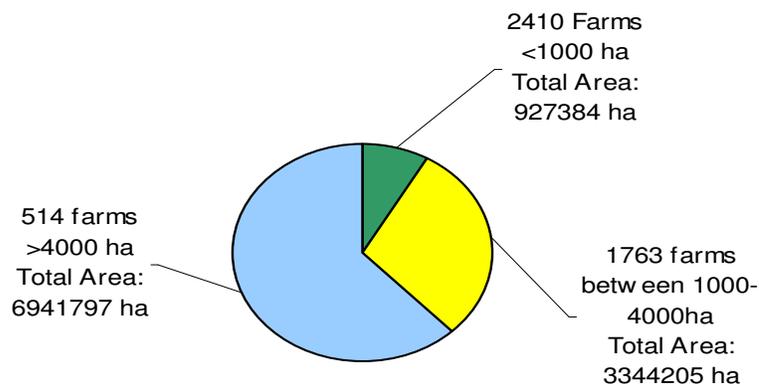
⁴⁶⁵ *Hansard* Record of Parliamentary Debate, 12 March 1992.

⁴⁶⁶ This work was based on Riddell (1980).

⁴⁶⁷ For example, Mountain Home farm occupied 1000ha with less than 150 ha of potential arable, the rest being granite outcrops, steep slopes and wetlands. Dorking farm, conversely, occupied less than 300 ha in total, but cultivated more than 200 ha.

farms (occupying less than 1 million hectares) were hardly worth considering, even in the better regions. Most interesting is that the pattern of vast landholdings by a few individuals and companies still survived from the 1890s, remarkably unchallenged.

Figure 4.2 Concentration of Land Ownership Among Commercial Farmers 1988



Source: Roth (1994: 144)

It is surprising that there was not more internal policy focus within the CFU, within the independent press or within academia, to encourage the companies and 'land barons' to release some land. But there were more obvious cases of massive underutilised land holdings in the public sector. The CFU and the press turned their attention towards examples such as Nuanetsi ranch, and state farmland owned by ARDA and the Cold Storage Commission. The independent press also began advertising black-owned farms that were underutilised, often ignoring the historical disadvantages for new black farmers. Even Minister Mangwende sometimes argued that these were irrelevant:

The land question should be considered a national question not a racial issue...we have always said that if land is underutilised, it should be taken for resettlement, no matter who owns it (HON.MEMBERS: Hear Hear)⁴⁶⁸

⁴⁶⁸ Extract from *Hansard* Record of Parliamentary Debate, 11 March 1992.

Kangai subsequently offered a more qualified opinion:

Officials are aware of the constraints which have hit our people hard...that they have not been able to develop their farms, but if one is sitting here with all the political connections ...and has not developed his farm, I do not think we will have sympathy with him. ⁴⁶⁹

Parade magazine then published an article detailing the derelict state of Senior Minister Msika's farm in Concession, revealing that he had failed to service his \$30000 AFC loan since 1981. This was followed by a series of press articles revealing the multiple ownership and underutilisation of farms by senior officials. ⁴⁷⁰ There was a general consensus within government that the CFU had initiated the articles as a secondary more aggressive stage to their press campaign. ⁴⁷¹ Moyo (1994) sensed naivety in the farmer reactions:

To boot (the white farmers')... insistence that Minister's farms be designated first, showed how oblivious they were to the *realpolitik*. Direct confrontations with farming politicians implied that white farmers were ready for political struggle over the land question, despite their weak political constituency...white opponents of land reform have negatively fuelled the racial question through their attempts to caricature black rule

From CFU's viewpoint this *realpolitik* was being exploited. Hasluck argues that CFU's stance had less to do with race than with practical discrepancies:

An indigenous owner on a derelict farm was more politically legitimate than a white owner on a productive farm. There were massive parastatal land-holdings lying virtually derelict ...

⁴⁶⁹ *The Farmer Magazine*, 25 March 1993.

⁴⁷⁰ Local opinion in Shamva suggested that Mujuru's and Ushewokunze's properties had been derelict for years and were rarely visited by their owners. Interviews and discussion with various Shamva farmers. Discussion with Keith Butler whose family sold a farm to Ushewokunze.

⁴⁷¹ Interview with Dr Kumbirai Kangai, Harare, December 2003.

These sort of double standards were very difficult to explain to (CFU) members when their productive properties were being identified for compulsory acquisition.⁴⁷²

But this statement illustrates how inherently race-connected the issue was. It was about practical discrepancies, along racial lines, which were a historical legacy. So in 1993, Government seemed intent on designating white farms despite massive unsettled state landholdings, whilst the CFU appeared oblivious to the negative political impacts in publicising underutilised black-owned farms. Behind this, debates about utilisation and productivity were clouded and misinformed on both sides, squandering opportunities for consensual or practical solutions.

4.4.5 Contentions over Land Identification and Allocations

The problems and politics of defining ‘underutilised’ land spilled into the farm identification exercise. When Minister Mangwende toured the commercial farming areas in 1991, each farmers’ association agreed to identify potential resettlement land and prepare an illustrative map accordingly.⁴⁷³ Farmer approaches to the issue varied, but were generally enthusiastic at this stage. In February 1991, it had been agreed in Council that the CFU should be involved in designating land, and continue to develop the information system and map.⁴⁷⁴ By April 1991,

All areas felt very strongly that the Union should not rush to Government with any offers, but rather prepare their cases, area by area and wait for the approach from Government... many farmers were expressing the view that the crunch may not come.⁴⁷⁵

⁴⁷² Interview with David Hasluck, Nyanga, March 2003.

⁴⁷³ John Meikle claimed that Eastern Districts Branch could do this within a month. South West Mashonaland Branch stated they could do the same. CFU Branch chairmen were encouraged to get close to their Agritex officials to have good, timely information on the government agenda. Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 27 March 1991.

⁴⁷⁴ The information system and map was a database of land ownership details for each district. Meeting of the CFU Council, 27 February 1991: Lands and Legislation Appendix.

⁴⁷⁵ Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 24 April 1991.

Anthony Swire-Thompson explained that it was “not the intention of the CFU to get involved with the designation of land, but it was important that they participated in the identification”.⁴⁷⁶

By the end of 1994, Peter Macsporran had refuted the 1991 resolution :

it never was and never will be the CFU’s duty to identify land for designation and it distresses me that rumors to the contrary persist – however when land is identified by AGRITEX, we help do an assessment of that particular piece of land in conjunction with all members of the Provincial Lands Identification Committees (PLICs).⁴⁷⁷

The CFU’s changing stance in council was largely irrelevant to the process on the ground, but reflected some members’ concerns that involvement in designation created problems between members. Provincial and district CFU representatives described the social and ethical difficulties of identifying land from members of their farming communities. The point was made repeatedly that the owners of underutilised farms were often difficult to deal with – they were “awkward and volatile, and usually embarrassed”.⁴⁷⁸ However, by distancing itself from ‘designation’ the CFU risked accelerating its waning proximity to the process.

All commercial farming areas had formed land identification committees by Easter 1992 and these were represented on the Provincial Lands Identification Committees (PLICs) along with members of local government, the ruling party and Agritex.⁴⁷⁹ In the middle of 1992, provincial officers from Agritex received a directive from the Ministry requiring the identification of ten farms in each province. In practice, land identification varied significantly between different provinces. Appendix IV summarises these differences. Whilst the process began well, political interferences came to dominate the work of the PLICs in most provinces, even when lists of farms had been consensually agreed with commercial farmers. For example, in Masvingo,

⁴⁷⁶ Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 24 April 1991.

⁴⁷⁷ Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 30 November 1994.

⁴⁷⁸ Minutes of the CFU President’s Council Meeting, 27 November 1996.

⁴⁷⁹ Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 29 April 1992: Lands and Legislation Appendix.

mutually agreed properties were identified and offered, but rejected by head office in Harare, on the basis that they were only in two ICAs (Intensive Conservation Areas) and did not break up the ‘fabric’ of the white farming community. Dr Ndimande, Secretary for Agriculture, mentioned to the CFU that he did not simply want reproductions of the resettlement areas or a perpetuation of the “them and us” attitude, or a continuation of the dualist farming structure. He wanted the “integration of competent black farmers”.⁴⁸⁰ Thus even when identified farms met the criteria of the Kangai principles, another set of undefined ‘political’ criteria came into play, which seemingly nullified both the block designation and selective identification processes that were supposed to run concurrently. Swire Thompson expressed his frustration; “whatever way you turned - it was the wrong way”.⁴⁸¹ In contrast, Moyo’s (1994: 8) reading of farmer protests identified racial arrogance as a key factor:

White farmers believe that they, not the state, should decide on land designation...
 (but) such decision making powers in designating land undermines the legitimacy of the
 elected government in adjudicating the land problem... Most interestingly it
 demonstrates an arrogance that only makes sense in racial parlance.

Controversial designations, detailed in Appendix IV, revealed the manner in which pressure was applied from above and below, and the often-conflicting agendas between local party officials, central government and technical departments. There is evidence to suggest that this frustrated some of the technocrats. During a meeting with the CFU, Kangai apparently seemed “visibly annoyed” with political interference, and articulated this in an interview with *The Farmer*:

⁴⁸⁰ Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 29 April 1992.

⁴⁸¹ Interview with Antony Swire Thompson, Harare, January 2004.

land designation should be a technical matter and not up to politicians... if the politicians are going into the field and say that one should be designated and another should not...it will destroy the agriculture industry.⁴⁸²

The PLIC process was unsuccessful. It was based on vague and often contradictory sets of criteria, and even when mutually acceptable properties were identified, it was frustrated by political interferences. It reflected differing interests between ZANU PF and government technocrats, and conflicts between local and national interests within these institutions. Final designation lists often differed from those produced by the PLICs. Highly productive farms were designated throughout the exercise, often next door to derelict land.⁴⁸³ By the end of 1993, of the 97 properties designated, 40 had been revoked, seven were mutually agreed, and 46 were pending determination by the Minister. Four farmers were prepared to contest the issue in court.⁴⁸⁴ Hasluck noted “extreme concern that the land identification committees had failed to identify properties as mutually suitable ... and (took) a serious view of the matter as it was incumbent of CFU to do something about it.” However farmer scepticism compounded with the revelations about the allocation of state acquired land to senior officials.

Concerns about land allocations dated back to the reforms of the early 1980s. Moyo and Skalnes (1990) had previously warned of the use of corrupt practices in the land allocation of resettlement land. CFU provincial reports record that members’ properties being leased from the state were being visited by retired police and army personnel in 1993.⁴⁸⁵ When controversy erupted over land allocations early in 1994, it was at the height of the mutual frustrations of the land identification process. Batha Farm in Wedza, which was acquired in April 1993 for the resettlement of 33 families, had instead been allocated to ex-Agriculture Minister Mangwende.⁴⁸⁶

⁴⁸² *The Farmer Magazine*, 25 March 1993: 3.

⁴⁸³ Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 29 April 1993: Lands and Legislation Appendix.

⁴⁸⁴ Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 27 October 1993.

⁴⁸⁵ Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 24 January 1994.

⁴⁸⁶ Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 24 May 1994.

When the news broke, Mugabe publicly revoked all state leases, although in practice nothing happened, and the credibility of government's reform program plummeted. It was an issue that drew overseas attention, and attracted criticism from the press, particularly in the wake of the 1992 LAA.⁴⁸⁷ Although the extent of the problem was quite small, the principle was large, and had significant political repercussions. On 11 May, Sydney Malunga, an outspoken ex-ZAPU MP, moved a motion in parliament for full disclosure of all state land lease allocations.⁴⁸⁸ Most had been allocated to civil servants or high-ranking members of the security forces. The allocations of farms to party officials and influential supporters in the 1993 designations,⁴⁸⁹ and the 1994 'Tenant Farm Scandal'⁴⁹⁰ were, according to Raftopolous and Moyo (1995: 26), a poorly disguised attempt to create a black landed class, who would support the government. For ordinary observers it amounted to hypocrisy from a government that always insisted on monopolising the moral aspects of the land issue

4.4.6 Farmer Scepticism and the Communication Breakdown

The breakdown of communications between the commercial farmers and the state was both a cause and symptom of deteriorating land negotiations. Farmer strategies were seen as underhand and unpatriotic and at the very least reactive. Farmers increasingly saw government as corrupt, incompetent and insincere. International concerns and negative-publicity were attributed to organized farmer lobbying, rather than to inherent flaws or inconsistencies in the program. Moyo (1994:7-8 and 16) saw the attitudes of white farmers as a problem:

There has been little proactive action by white landowners and their representative CFU to promote lasting reconciliation through reasonable offers of land ... claims by farmers'

⁴⁸⁷ Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 30 March 1994.

⁴⁸⁸ Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 24 May 1994; Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 28 September 1994.

⁴⁸⁹ Thirteen farms were originally designated for the Osborne Dam followed by another Seventy farms countrywide following the 1992 Land Acquisition Bill.

⁴⁹⁰ 400 State leases to white farmers were rescinded and reallocated to party supporters. Details of the beneficiaries were later revealed in March 2000. See the Dongo List www.zwnews.com.

representatives that they agree with the principle of land redistribution are not backed by concrete land offers, hence a poor negotiation climate for the land question... it appears that the political problem facing Zimbabwe is the absence of good faith on the part of the [white farmers] in negotiating and redressing the land question.

Farmers strategies were shaped by a growing mistrust of government and ruling party motives. After the 1989 Party conference the CFU realized that they were being distanced from decision-making, fuelling their concerns about the motives of the LAA, which prompted their calls for a representative land board to be appointed. CFU minutes following the Emergency meeting in 1991 noted that the land issue was their “biggest and most serious problem since the war”.⁴⁹¹ The CFU proposal stated that “the most important single issue facing Zimbabweans of the future is how the land question is managed today”.⁴⁹²

In the 1980s, most farming leaders had been impressed, if somewhat surprised, with the calibre and pragmatism of leadership within government. The post-1990 CFU leaders were more suspicious and critical. The relative stability and prosperity of the 1980s, compared to the economic instability, growing racial tensions and direct contest for the same resources in the 1990s obviously strained relations, but there was a difference in farmer strategies. Norman, Sinclair and Laurie had used quiet diplomacy and negotiation. The CFU administrations of the 1990s were more aggressive and more public. Immediately after the 1992 LAA, Alan Burl stated that “this bill violates, the provisions of the constitution, of the CHOGM declaration of human rights... the impact on the economy, foreign investment and structural adjustment is significant.”⁴⁹³ Hasluck cautioned that: “the issue must be fought with logic - not emotion!”.⁴⁹⁴ However, he had expressed his own doubts to the New National Land Policy in 1990:

⁴⁹¹ Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 30 January 1991: 2.

⁴⁹² Extracts from the CFU Position Paper presented at the Emergency Farmers meeting, 11 Jan 1991 (CFU, 1991).

⁴⁹³ Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 29 January 1992: Lands and Legislation Appendix. Both Dr Kangai and Dr Mupawose appeared to resent the manner in which the CFU used human rights as a basis for opposing the LAA.

⁴⁹⁴ Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 29 January 1992: Lands and Legislation Appendix.

Against this background, what should farmers be doing in the 1990s?... On the face of it, quit now, while the going is good ... get paid something for the farm before government cannot afford to pay anything (Alexander, 1991: 606).⁴⁹⁵

Shortly after the 1991 meeting, he presented an internal memo entitled ‘Ten Commandments for Development in the 1990s’ – a satirical set of criticisms against government, perhaps revealing an element of the arrogance to which Moyo (1994: 8) alludes.⁴⁹⁶ In the latter half of 1991, the CFU public relations officer, Mr Foot, acknowledged “the union’s move away from a traditional non-confrontational approach over the last year” and claimed that the more aggressive stance had done no harm.⁴⁹⁷ In April 1993, Hasluck implied that farmers should re-enter the political arena:

farmers individually and collectively must recognize the importance of maintaining standards of governance, as if this was usurped the chaos that we see in many neighbouring countries would prevail...[the CFU must consider] taking a more aggressive stance in influencing government than it [does] now.⁴⁹⁸

Where did the ‘apoliticism’ of the CFU sit in all this? Hasluck was not in favour of direct involvement in opposition politics, or of the new FORUM Party becoming embroiled in the land issue and his stance was “supported by many councillors, who agreed that CFU should remain low profile and separate from the FORUM Party”.⁴⁹⁹

The politics of uncertainty elicited inconsistent responses, but scepticism among CFU officials over government intentions and capabilities became more consistent. CFU Makonde branch

⁴⁹⁵ Cited in the *Financial Gazette*, 28 August 1990.

⁴⁹⁶ Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 30 January 1991.

⁴⁹⁷ Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 25 September 1991 and Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 27 November 1991.

⁴⁹⁸ Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 28 April, 1993: 4.

⁴⁹⁹ Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 30 June, 1993.

noted that “Mr Swanepoel reported on a meeting held in his area with Vice President Muzenda. He said that he was horrified at the lack of information the Vice-president had regarding the basic workings of commercial agriculture”.⁵⁰⁰ Notions of superiority and arrogance had waned in the 1980s, but re-emerged with increasing corruption, poor governance and official anti-white sentiments. Farmer scepticism illustrated one side of a two-way breakdown of communications within the farmer state alliance. Farmer reactions were interpreted by ZANU PF as resistant and confrontational. The process fed itself, as communications deteriorated and positions polarised. Structural changes in the sector created further tensions between the CFU and Government after commercial farmers were accused of neglecting food production and holding the nation to ransom during the 1992 drought. Mr Ncube MP had commented:

the commercial farmers union ... do not know that there is independence in Zimbabwe... they think that they can say and do anything, (even) sabotage the economy...there is a shortage of maize because the people who were supposed to be growing maize abandoned that and have chosen tobacco because they believe that there is more money in it.⁵⁰¹

In April 1992, Vice-President Muzenda requested early maize deliveries by commercial farmers as the communal crop had failed. He explained that between thirty and fifty thousand tons was needed within three weeks. Burl suggested that an incentive price of \$1500 /tonne for the relevant amount, on a first-come first-served basis, would ensure timely delivery. After discussions with Minister Mangwende, Muzenda returned, arguing that \$1500/t was too much and offered \$1000/t. Burl doubted that \$1000/t would be enough, explaining that farmers needed maize for their staff, and livestock (given the lack of grazing) and that the market price was likely to rise. Although the official price was still \$550/ton, the parallel market price had reached \$1000/ton. Within days, Mugabe vilified commercial farmers: headlines in *The Herald* read

⁵⁰⁰ Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 30 October 1991.

⁵⁰¹ *Hansard* Record of Parliamentary Debate, 25 February 1992.

“Farmers Demand \$1500 Or They Will Not Deliver”.⁵⁰² Burl argues that the market would have been the quickest way of meeting emergency demand.⁵⁰³ Burl noted that state media made no mention of the CFU’s joint-initiative with USAID to set up a famine early warning system, nor did they mention that Burl had facilitated the transport of maize to drought-stricken communal areas two months previously.⁵⁰⁴ John Meikle suggested that it was unhelpful to get involved in maize politics, but the issue was more fundamental: commercial farmers were increasingly convenient scapegoats. CFU officials were on the back-foot. Swire-Thompson observed:

It was difficult to know what to do... elements of the ruling party had no intention of considering our opinions, or listening to our suggestions ... lobbying other stakeholders was an obvious strategy. We felt that the more people that were informed the better.⁵⁰⁵

Farmers were exercising a ‘voice’ option. Under pressure and feeling threatened they attempted to apply the brakes within the existing institutional arrangement, within which the international community and donors were seen as arbitrators. Early in 1993 Antony Swire-Thompson sent a letter of qualified support to the Paris Donors Conference. The letter emphasised the impact of the drought and the potential implications of a large-scale land reform in its wake. It provoked a furious reaction from a normally amicable John Nkomo.⁵⁰⁶ There were critical articles in *The Herald*, *The Chronicle* and in *Parade* magazine.⁵⁰⁷ Two issues incensed ZANU PF: firstly, the perceived spoiler tactics and, secondly, the independent lobbying of the CFU.⁵⁰⁸ *Parade* magazine published the CFU’s rebuttal but Mugabe refused to meet Swire-Thompson for

⁵⁰² Minutes of the CFU Council meeting, 29 April 1992: 9-10.

⁵⁰³ Interview with Alan Burl, Marondera, January 2004.

⁵⁰⁴ Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 26 February 1992. A year later, excessive and ‘unnecessary’ imports of soya beans were blamed by the state press on commercial farmers’ estimates. According to CFU and the GMB, Vice President Muzenda was responsible for the import decision. Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 31 March, 1993. Discussions with Renson Gasela, Nyanga, March 2003.

⁵⁰⁵ Interview with Anthony Swire Thompson, Harare, January 2004.

⁵⁰⁶ The conference had been convened to raise funding and investment for ESAP.

⁵⁰⁷ Mark Chavunduka, “Farmers Unpatriotic: Paris Letter Sparks Row Between State and CFU”, *Parade Magazine*, February 1993: 6-7.

⁵⁰⁸ Interview with Dr Kumbirai Kangai, Harare, December 2003.

months, in much the same way as he had shunned Laurie after the 1985 elections.⁵⁰⁹ The CFU eventually asked Denis Norman to engineer a meeting, but communications remained strained.⁵¹⁰

Moyo (1994:4) argues that Mugabe sought to find a means of conciliation: “President Mugabe’s speeches since [1990] have emphasised the important role that land can play in reconciling blacks and whites”. If this was Mugabe’s public face, a different story emerged in other forums. Opening a central committee meeting, in September 1993, Mugabe declared:

Government will not surrender the people’s right to a greedy bunch of racist usurpers...these racist Rhodesians, sponsor the FORUM party and treat their workers worse than their dogs ... (these) farmers are either the direct descendents or inheritors or successors of the land and power grabbers of 1890.⁵¹¹

This was the start of a campaign to discredit commercial farmers. It differed from the sporadic election oriented outbursts of the 1980s and became increasingly sustained. It was used to specifically portray and suggest the illegitimacy of farmers’ involvement in ‘opposition’ politics. In April of 1994, a formal meeting was arranged with the Agricultural Editor of *The Herald* newspaper, to try to put an end to reports that opposition to land redistribution had been led by ‘disgruntled white farmers’.⁵¹² Yet it was this stereotype of the white farmer – arrogant, selfish, resistant to change, disgruntled, unpatriotic and confrontational, that began to shape and unite the spectrum of stances within the ruling party.

⁵⁰⁹ “Letter taken out of context – CFU Chief”, *Parade Magazine*, February 1993: 7.

⁵¹⁰ Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 27 October 1993. Interview with Denis Norman, Sussex, October 2004.

⁵¹¹ *The Farmer Magazine*, 23 September 1993: 1. Quoting ZIANA.

⁵¹² Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 27 April 1994: PR Report.

4.5 CONCLUSION

1990 was an important watershed for several reasons: the expiry of the Lancaster House Constitution, the implementation of structural adjustment, the return of land to the forefront of national discourse and the formal recognition of support for black economic empowerment. A wider array of interest groups engaged in a wider array of land uses, which fuelled a more complex set of land demands. Urban and international capital flowed into horticulture and wildlife sectors, while long-standing demands for land in communal areas were joined by demands from aspiring black commercial farmers, now legitimised by the market ideology of ESAP. In the 1980s land policy and agricultural policies had not contradicted each other. In the 1990s they did, heralding a new, more unpredictable and threatening era for white farmers.

The changes reflected and encouraged a reconfiguration of the state. Decision-making was increasingly confined by disagreements between the inner circles of the ruling party and government technocrats and moderates. The 1992 Land Acquisition Act attempted to transfer 'control' of property rights from the judiciary to the executive, and the ruling party sought to increase its control of the land question and the valuable political capital around it. Multiple, overlapping and often contradictory land policies emerged, in an attempt to cater for all interests, but really delivering to none. Compulsory land acquisition was incongruent with structural adjustment, particularly whilst an active land market operated. Structural adjustment and the democratisation process demanded a rolling back of the state, but in Zimbabwe this was partial and selective. Expenditure cuts were restricted to key sectors such as health and education and land resettlement, whilst spending on defence and government salaries increased. The devastating effects of the 1992 drought impacted heavily on the economy, land demand and the vulnerability of the state.

The profile of the farming sector evolved considerably during this period, primarily due to structural adjustment. The expansion and diversification into export-oriented land uses such as horticulture and wildlife, altered systems of land use across the country and brought previously marginal land into the main stream economy. Vertical integration and the processing of agricultural products also changed the structure of the industry. These structural changes and the influx of urban and international investment into agriculture increased the diversity and differentiation of the sector. The intensification of land use should have made commercial agriculture more conducive to reforms and adaptations, through subdivisions and land taxes, underlining the significance of these lost opportunities.

Communications between white farmers and the state deteriorated significantly and any trust that had developed during the 1980s was lost. Decreasing consultation with the CFU during the drafting of the LAA, political interference in land identification and controversial land allocations fuelled doubts across the farming community. Among government officials, CFU strategies were seen as confrontational. The state blamed the farmers and the farmers blamed the state as racial mistrust re-emerged amidst new uncertainties. The CFU representatives dealt with amicable front men for most of the post-independence era, without paying enough attention to background signals from the *politburo* or from local party and government, particularly over land identifications.⁵¹³ There was a tendency by farmers to listen to signals that they wanted to hear, and ignore those they did not, much like during the Rhodesian era. Illusions of indispensability, scepticism over government's ability to proceed with reform, and a focus on the opportunities of ESAP all contributed to a collective myopia. Demands for land had not subsided though, and were increasingly tied with the interrelated struggles for political terrain and economic terrain, illustrated through increasingly aggressive black economic-nationalist aspirations which are explored in Chapter Five.

⁵¹³ See World Bank Country Evaluation Report (2004).

CHAPTER FIVE

Radical Realignments: The Collapse of the State-Farmer Alliance 1995-2000

*“I survive extremely well in a very hostile [race] environment...
but without the hostility, I am not in business”*

- Roger Boka (Black Empowerment Leader) 1996.⁵¹⁴

*“CFU is in a difficult position... As issues become more clouded it becomes
increasingly arduous to see how to act in the best interests of the farmers”*

- David Hasluck (CFU Director) January 1997.⁵¹⁵

⁵¹⁴ Robert Block, “Roger Boka Thrived as an Icon Until His Bank Went Bust”, *The Wall Street Journal*, 8 September 1998.

⁵¹⁵ Minutes of the CFU President’s Council Meeting, 29 January 1997.

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The violence of Zimbabwe's post-2000 crisis often obscures the significant changes that took place during the late 1990s. The 2000 referendum was a watershed, but was set within a wider reconfiguration of the national political order and the changing compositions and realignments of key interest groups. This chapter explores the collapse of the alliance between commercial farmers and the state during the late 1990s, arguing that farmer opposition to the constitutional referendum in 2000 was symptomatic of deteriorating relations, rather than the catalyst.

To set up my analysis of the alliance's collapse, I discuss two processes. Firstly, I examine how an active politicisation of the land issue by ZANU PF during the mid-1990s brought the race question into prominence, and allowed the ruling party to secure a monopoly over the land issue and its political capital. Secondly, I explore how the radicalisation of the black economic empowerment lobby interacted with high-level corruption and the emergence of war veterans as political actors, and how these together transformed the balance of power within the ruling party and the state. The third part of the chapter examines the impact of these realignments on the deteriorating relationship between commercial farmers and the state. It illustrates the diminishing influence of white farmers, as well as other groups, in land and agricultural policy decisions. I argue that reduced state support, increased taxation and a state-sponsored smear campaign marginalised white farmers politically, economically and socially. Negotiations around the 1998 Donor Conference and the failure of the Inception Phase Framework Plan illustrate the sidelining of other groups including donors and moderate members of the ruling party and state bureaucracies. Analysis of farmer stances and strategies in the constitutional referendum illustrates the departure of farmers from their alliance with the state in favour of political opposition.

5.2 ACTIVE POLITICIZATION OF THE LAND QUESTION

Land in Zimbabwe has always been politicised, but after 1996 the nature of its political significance and utility changed. Chapter Four illustrated mounting incompatibility between populist-based ‘political’ arguments for radical reform, and technically-grounded ‘economic’ arguments for moderate approaches. This chapter explores how radical sentiments overwhelmed judicious options. Control of the land question and its political capital was monopolised by the ruling party. An objective of the 1992 Land Acquisition Act was to shift jurisdiction over property rights from the judiciary to the state executive in order to speed up land transfers. On Independence Day, in April 1993, Mugabe explained the need for the state to adjudicate the land process and emphasized the central role of the ruling party within the state. He reiterated this view when opening parliament in September 1994, repeating his intentions to resettle another five million hectares of land.⁵¹⁶ Moyo (1994: 4) saw this state empowerment as a positive step:

President Mugabe affirmed the central role that the state, as a sovereign entity, needed to play in land reform. (This) anchors the role of the state in adjudicating... the rights of the landowners...and also the land rights, needs and demands of the voiceless rural majority

However calls for a strong state to lead and revitalize land redistribution, ignored the ease with which other stakeholders could be excluded and the negative implications of this. In short, those outside the patronage of ZANU PF were unlikely to benefit. Increasing control of land by the ruling party contrasted with the recommendations of the Rukuni Commission (1994:140), the CFU and most donors, who called for adequate representation of other stakeholders. When Denis Norman was reappointed Minister of Agriculture in 1995, ‘land’ was separated once more into a Ministry of Lands and Water as it had been between 1980 and 1985. Mugabe apparently joked with Norman that he did not trust him with the Lands

⁵¹⁶ Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 28 September 1994: Lands and Legislation Report.

portfolio because it was too important.⁵¹⁷ In 1996, the new Land Identification Committees, appointed by the ruling party and consisting of ZANU PF, government and AGRITEX officials, explicitly excluded commercial farmers.⁵¹⁸ David Hasluck (CFU Director) argues that the administration of the land issue changed dramatically during 1996, when Mugabe shifted control and responsibility from the Ministry of Lands and Water into the confines of the ZANU PF's central committee.⁵¹⁹ Mugabe used his 1996 Presidential election campaign to raise the political and racial elements of the land issue, to which most farmers responded by adopting low profiles. Hasluck was invited to a politburo meeting and asked why so few whites attended rallies. He replied that "it is difficult to pluck up the courage to attend a mass rally if you were going to be castigated as a white racist that had frustrated government's land program".⁵²⁰

Initially, the CFU misjudged this politicization. After attending a meeting of the ZANU PF Central Committee on 18 February 1996, David Hasluck reported back to council that "the land issue is politically sensitive and will always be canvassed, especially by the President, in any political campaign".⁵²¹ When the anti-white rhetoric continued after the election, the CFU accepted the seriousness of the new direction but had no clear strategy. In May 1996, Peter MacSporran noted that "the political situation had deteriorated from bad to worse" and that "farmers are in for a difficult time".⁵²² His suggestion was to "lobby and improve the PR status of the Union with the general public", in the hope that public awareness would mediate and moderate the land agenda. Rob Webb (President ZTA) wanted "more macro political and economic debate", to generate "better farmer awareness of bigger issues". Hasluck explained the difficulties of distinguishing between election hype, empowerment rhetoric and genuine policies.⁵²³ Mr Taylor, from the Matabeleland branch, felt that "more attendance at political

⁵¹⁷ Interview with Denis Norman, Sussex, October 2004. CFU minutes noted that "this (Ministry) was split due to the political requirement for the redistribution of resources". Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 26 April 1995.

⁵¹⁸ *The Farmer*, 6 June 1996: 10.

⁵¹⁹ Interview with David Hasluck, Nyanga, March 2003. He also stressed this to CFU Council. Minutes of the CFU President's Council Meeting, 29 January 1997.

⁵²⁰ Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 27 March 1996.

⁵²¹ Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 27 March 1996.

⁵²² Minutes of the CFU President's Council Meeting, 29 May 1996.

⁵²³ Interview with David Hasluck, Nyanga, March 2003.

events was needed”.⁵²⁴ Such vague proposals illustrated the CFU’s awareness of the problems, but their diminishing ability to respond to them.

Within government, moderate officials realized that the issue was moving beyond their control, but also failed to offer practical alternatives. Dr Kangai explained that there were a variety of strong ‘political’ views within the government and within the party and that opinions were hardening.⁵²⁵ He claimed to have repeatedly defended the CFU’s position in cabinet, but was increasingly frustrated by the ‘token compromises’ of white farmers. During the middle of the year, Kangai described the farming sector as a lion that had eaten and eaten but refused to let anyone else near the prize. In August 1996, his critical address to the CFU Congress was interpreted as “dictatorial”.⁵²⁶ He “told the farmers to come up with offers of land...or else we will be forced to resort to identifying it ourselves”.⁵²⁷ Several Ministers, who had accepted invitations to the Congress, failed to show up, suggesting that the range of stances within the ruling party and the government were aligning against the perceived intransigence of the CFU.⁵²⁸

The CFU continued to direct Kangai towards the land market, towards extensive areas of unsettled state land, and towards underutilised parastatal land, particularly that belonging to the Agricultural Research Development Authority (ARDA).⁵²⁹ Most CFU leaders felt that there was hypocrisy in identifying productive white-owned land when government farms were underutilised, and often recognised to be so by government officials.⁵³⁰ Robbie Mupawose acknowledged that there was need to reform the state sector but that the CFU presented the issue

⁵²⁴ Minutes of the CFU President’s Council Meeting, 24 April 1996.

⁵²⁵ Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 30 June 1993; Interview with Dr Kumbira Kangai, Harare, Dec 2003.

⁵²⁶ Minutes of the CFU President’s Council Meeting, 25 September 1996.

⁵²⁷ Interview with Malcolm Vowels (CFU regional representative), Concession, September 2000.

⁵²⁸ Minutes of the CFU President’s Council Meeting, 25 September 1996.

⁵²⁹ In 1997, CFU Minutes record that there were many empty farms between Odzi and Save, and also in Shamva north but that most of these farms were owned by blacks and therefore outside the scope of the exercise. Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 29 January 1997.

⁵³⁰ Interview with Nick Swanepoel, Chinoyi, January 2005. The Rukuni Report (1994) cited parastatal farms as a key sector for review. Roth (1994: 29) noted that ARDA losses had increased during the 1980s to more than US \$2.5 million per annum by 1989, and that only five percent of their land area was cropped.

in a condescending manner that implied government and general black incompetence.⁵³¹ *The Farmer* subsequently discussed the designation of a working 6000 ha ranch adjoining Nuanetsi Ranch.⁵³² Nuanetsi, measuring 300 000 hectares, was owned by the Development Trust of Zimbabwe (DTZ) and, according to the article, remained “virtually derelict”.⁵³³ In much the same way that Mangwende’s procurement of a prime farm had created international uproar, so such stark inconsistencies in land designation angered farmers, donors and other critics.

Most farmers attributed the stagnation in land transfers to government shortfalls in funding allocations and broader resettlement capacity. The CFU identified nineteen different ministries involved in land settlement in 1996, compared to sixteen in the mid-1980s and eleven in the early 1980s.⁵³⁴ Waning government credibility among farming leaders suffered a further setback when Nick Swanepoel (CFU Vice President) claimed that he had inside knowledge from contacts in Makonde that prime land would be allocated to senior officials.⁵³⁵ By 1996 the race issue was at the heart of this land politicisation process and fed into the empowerment agenda. As the state assumed control of ‘land’, and the ruling party increased control of the state, so an alliance of empowerment interests increased its influence within the party. At ZANU PF’s 1996 congress in Bulawayo, CFU sources warned that 2028 farms had been identified for compulsory acquisition, and that a “young radical empowerment group had led the agenda”.⁵³⁶ In November 1997, 1471 farms were listed for compulsory acquisition. However, most identified properties did not match the ‘Kangai principles’ (Moyo, 2000). When the CFU asked for clarification, Dr Kangai claimed that “other criteria” had been used in the selection process,

⁵³¹ Interview with Dr Robbie Mupawose, Harare, January 2004.

⁵³² *The Farmer*, 6 June 1996: 9.

⁵³³ The DTZ was initially established by ZAPU and chaired by Joshua Nkomo.

⁵³⁴ Minutes of the CFU President’s Council Meeting, 27 November 1996.

⁵³⁵ Minutes of the CFU President’s Council Meeting, 29 January 1997: Security Report. Swanepoel was renowned for contacts within the ruling party. This information was offered in confidence to CFU Council.

⁵³⁶ Minutes of the CFU President’s Council Meeting, 29 January 1997.

including “political reasons”.⁵³⁷ In 1993, Dr Kangai had conceded that ‘political reasons’ were used in the identification of Altena farm in Centenary.⁵³⁸ He explained that this was ‘symbolic’ because it was the first farm attacked during the war - he went on to assure the CFU that such designations would be isolated. By 1998, his acknowledgement of the use of “social and political reasons” as core elements of the 1997 identifications, demonstrated how the politicisation of land had become a dominant feature of the process by the end of 1997.⁵³⁹ Within this, a logic of simply securing land from whites began to override rational approaches.

5.2.1 Legal Contests and the Judicial *cul de sac*

Some members of the ruling party viewed the preparedness of ‘white farmers’ to legally challenge farm designations as confrontational. By exposing technical and legal shortfalls in government’s reform program the farmers were seen to belittle the social and political significance of the land issue. The legal system’s exposure of the program shortfalls was also interpreted as a hostile gesture, rather than as a flaw of the program, even when listed farms clearly violated identification criteria. Joseph Msika subsequently claimed that farmers were responsible for the politicization of the land issue because they took government to court.⁵⁴⁰ My analysis suggests that politicisation of the land issue conveniently provided a means of circumventing legal procedures.

Since the early 1990s, influential elements of the ruling party perceived the law to be more of an obstacle than a vehicle for achieving land redistribution. In 1991, during and after the emergency farmers’ meeting, Witness Mangwende asked white farmers not to seek legal

⁵³⁷ Interview with Dr Kumbirai Kangai, Harare, December 2003. Dr Kangai claimed that he would have preferred a more consensual approach, but was under pressure from the politburo. Minutes of the CFU President’s Council Meeting, 29 October 1997.

⁵³⁸ See Appendix 4.3. Discussions with Chris Pohl, (Previous owner of Altena Farm), Harare, January 2004.

⁵³⁹ “Minister Warns Racist Zim Farmers”, *Dispatch Online (SA)*, 6 February 1998.

⁵⁴⁰ Discussions with Vice-President Joseph Msika, Harare, November 2002.

recourse, admitting that government was wary of the courts.⁵⁴¹ During a heated meeting shortly afterwards, Patrick Chinamasa (Attorney General) warned David Hasluck that if the farmers resorted to legal proceedings, the government would simply change the constitution.⁵⁴² Simon K Moyo declared in Parliament in 1992 that “the land issue is a political issue ... it is not an issue for the judiciary!”⁵⁴³ Following opposition to the initial land listings in 1993, Mugabe declared that he would “brook no decisions from any court that rules against government policy” and that if the law did not suit the modalities of land then they would simply change the law.⁵⁴⁴

Both parties were aware of two things: first, that the legislation of the 1992 Land Acquisition Act (LAA) was weak and, second, that it could be changed. By agreeing to the Kangai principles an uneasy truce ensued. However, every batch of farms designated for compulsory acquisition since 1993 included properties that did not match the agreed identification criteria. This was indirectly acknowledged by government when most of the 1994 listings were revoked. Likewise most of the 1471 farms listed in 1997 were ‘delisted’. Of the 1993 listings, four farmers contested their cases legally. Two key cases, including those brought by Henry Elsworth and Alistair Davies, illustrated the time and cost concerns of legal recourse.⁵⁴⁵ By the end of the following year, Alistair Davies’ case was still being remanded. According to CFU records it was unlikely to succeed but government did not want to lose it, so kept deferring.⁵⁴⁶ Hereford Farm’s case had also been protracted and although the Minister lost the case in the administrative court, the Agricultural Finance Corporation (AFC), on ‘political’ directives, tried to seize farm equipment.⁵⁴⁷ Max Rosenfels, from Matabeleland, had a farm identified for acquisition in 1996,

⁵⁴¹ Although farmers were in strong legal position to oppose designation, the CFU were warned by their lawyers to use legal recourse as a last resort. Interview with Richard Wood (Atherstone and Cook) Harare, January 2004.

⁵⁴² Interview with David Hasluck, Nyanga, March 2003.

⁵⁴³ Hansard Record of Parliamentary Debate, 17 March 1992.

⁵⁴⁴ Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 29 September 1993: L&L 19684.

⁵⁴⁵ Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 23 February 1994. Davies had been Vice-President of the CFU in the 1980s. His tobacco farm in Centenary was highly developed and did not meet any of the Kangai Principles.

⁵⁴⁶ Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 27 September 1995 and Minutes of the CFU President’s Council Meeting, 29 May 1996. The latter set of minutes record that the hearing was due on 30 May 1996.

⁵⁴⁷ Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 23 February 1994.

which he conceded the following year, but had still not been compensated two years later.⁵⁴⁸ It is also important to contextualise the number of legal challenges. Approximately 200 farms were listed between the 1992 LAA and the 1997 listings, of which about 100 were de-listed, less than ten were legally contested. The rest were conceded.

When the 1997 mass listing of 1471 farms took place, Alex Masterson, the CFU legal representative, wrote to the government asking for a clear position on the land program.⁵⁴⁹ Early in 1998 Masterson warned CFU Council against using court action before negotiation.⁵⁵⁰ Hasluck feared that it would sour relations and could set a negative legal precedent. In response to member concerns, the Agricultural Promotion Trust was established as a central fund from which members could draw to fight designation independently.⁵⁵¹ Approximately 1200 appeals were lodged after the 1997 listings, resulting in renewed anti-white rhetoric at the beginning of 1998, in which Minister Kangai threatened to designate the farms of “all racists and critics of government” – he did not elaborate on what specific criteria identified or distinguished these groups.⁵⁵² Mugabe again warned that the land issue was ‘political’ and would not be derailed by the courts. By actively politicizing the land issue through rhetoric and alternative justifications, the government sought to circumvent and even override its own legal framework.

5.2.2 The Waning Influence of the Technocrats

The ruling party’s active politicization of land was reflected in the waning influence of more moderate individuals and government departments. This was well illustrated in the land tenure

⁵⁴⁸ Minutes of the CFU President’s Council Meeting, 27 May 1999.

⁵⁴⁹ Interview with Richard Wood (Atherstone and Cook) Harare, January 2004. Minutes of the CFU President’s Council Meeting, 26 November 1997.

⁵⁵⁰ Minutes of the CFU President’s Council Meeting, 25 February 1998. Richard Wood, of Atherstone and Cook had issued similar advice. Interview with Richard Wood, Harare, January 2004.

⁵⁵¹ Minutes of the CFU President’s Council Meeting, 26 November 1997. A call to members for a \$1000 donation each was well supported. A special levy was subsequently added to CFU membership fees to fund land contestations: Minutes of the CFU President’s Council Meeting, 27 May 1999.

⁵⁵² “Minister Warns Racist Zim Farmers”, *Dispatch Online (SA)*, 6 February 1998.

debate. Parliamentary discussions during the drafting of the 1992 LAA led Mugabe to appoint a commission of enquiry into land tenure systems. The Rukuni Commission (1994) was a comprehensive study of Zimbabwe's land and agricultural structure. Most key stakeholders were represented to some extent, with strong input from small-scale farming groups and rural communities.⁵⁵³ The report offered a clear set of recommendations for each farming sector. The key recommendations were to retain but decentralize communal tenure in communal areas, to allocate longer-term leases in purchase and resettlement areas with a view to granting private tenure, and to retain freehold tenure in commercial areas (Rukuni 1994: 49, 69, 83 and 99). It emphasized dire pressure on land within communal areas, but also noted the differentiated nature of the commercial farming sector and the varied concentration of skills, productivity and employment within it. Most significantly the Report recommended the appointment of an Independent board to adjudicate land redistribution. The recommendations were supported by the CFU, the ICFU, the ZFU, the World Bank and the British Government. Whilst government agreed with the commission in principle, it was ignored in practice - a poignant illustration of how moderates and technocrats within the government and the agricultural sector were being sidelined. Indirectly, government's stance also amounted to a dismissal of key donor groups.

Shortly after the Report was published, Dr Kangai reassured Denis Norman that short-term resettlement would proceed on land that had already been acquired (approximately 200 000 hectares at that time), and that medium term reform would follow the recommendations of the report. Towards the end of 1995, on ZBC's Sunday evening *Insight* Program, Dr Kangai stated that the Land Tenure Commission's (LTC) recommendations would be incorporated into an all-encompassing land act that would establish concepts of maximum farm size, land taxes and a principle of one man - one farm.⁵⁵⁴ Professor Rukuni has subsequently expressed frustration at the lack of response to the commission, citing 'politicians' and the 'waning influence of

⁵⁵³ Four of the twelve commissioners were traditional leaders and four were representatives of different farming groups. The last four included two academics and two prominent members of the agricultural industry.

⁵⁵⁴ Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 27 September 1995.

technocrats'.⁵⁵⁵ Dr Kangai lamented the fact that the recommendations were not implemented, and cited "a range of political views within the party".⁵⁵⁶ He also explained that the resistance of white farmers undermined the credibility of moderate politicians within the politburo:

They were simply against any type of land redistribution. Why did they go to court, why did they oppose things like the land tax? Why did they not offer land? This allowed impatient members of the party to say 'look, see ... your route is not working ... these whites are just opposed to everything, even when you try to include them'.⁵⁵⁷

Dr Mupawose argued that polarizing perspectives between CFU and the government undermined the recommendations of the Rukuni Commission, and their chances of implementation.⁵⁵⁸ As the issue dragged on, moderate stances within government were seen to be part of the reason for the stagnation in land redistribution, and calls for more fundamental measures gathered momentum.

5.2.3 Racialisation of the Land Question

Race has always been a central aspect of the land question, but was actively promoted and distorted within the politicisation process. The more land was politicised, the more race formed the overriding principle and the more sustained and concerted anti-white rhetoric became. Anti-white sentiment had simmered throughout the 1980s and 1990s. CFU records during the 1980s contained sporadic references to anti-white propaganda, and elements of the 1992 LAA debate sometimes moved towards race.⁵⁵⁹ However, after 1995, the state media's derogatory portrayal of

⁵⁵⁵ Interview with Professor Mandivamba Rukuni, Harare, February 2004.

⁵⁵⁶ Interview with Dr Kumbirai Kangai, Harare, December 2003.

⁵⁵⁷ Professor Sam Moyo also argued that farmer and donor intransigence allowed the 'radical wing' of ZANU PF to gain ascendancy. Interview with Professor Sam Moyo, Harare, January 2004.

⁵⁵⁸ Interview with Dr Robbie Mupawose, Harare, January 2004.

⁵⁵⁹ For example, see Simon K Moyo's speech in *Hansard* Record of Parliamentary Debate, 17 March 1992.

whites increased steadily.⁵⁶⁰ During 1996, Roger Boka's empowerment campaign in the public media was more centred on denigrating whites than empowering blacks. It was effective and contagious. 'White farmers' and their 'racist ways' were portrayed as the core problem within the land deadlock, even among intellectuals. Moyo (1994: 8) linked farmer resistance to racism:

White farmers believe that they, not the state, should decide on land designation... (but) such decision making powers in designating land undermines the legitimacy of the elected government in adjudicating the land problem... it is a pretence that land grievances do not exist or are irrelevant in implementing land designations. Most interestingly it demonstrates an arrogance that only makes sense in racial parlance.

The white community's visible affluence and continued social isolation, which amplified during structural adjustment, provided a target and a catalyst for anti-white sentiment. A consultant identified the racial exclusiveness of the CFU as their biggest weakness and greatest threat.⁵⁶¹ Racism among some whites was still prevalent and mounting scepticism among farmers towards government was often explained through condescending cultural perspectives. Some farmers maintained conservative attitudes with racial undertones. For example, a CFU report from 1995 records that "Mr de Klerk suggested that the use of rubber bullets when dealing with poachers and stock thieves was a good idea".⁵⁶² However, other farmers, particularly the younger generation, were more enlightened and socially proactive.⁵⁶³ Von Blackenburg (1992 and 1994) identified increased co-operation between white farmers and black farmers in communal areas during the 1992 drought. He discussed changing attitudes among whites, particularly towards social responsibilities. His survey suggested that two-thirds of white farmers felt they belonged in

⁵⁶⁰ See Appendix VI.

⁵⁶¹ During the early 1990s the CFU employed an independent consultant, Professor Michael Bratton, to conduct a study into the CFU's political and structural weaknesses and threats. A copy of the report is in the CFU archives.

⁵⁶² Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 28 June 1995.

⁵⁶³ Weiss (1994) distinguished between 'Rhodies' and Zimbabweans and also noted the generational differences.

the country and that they were accepted by black Zimbabweans.⁵⁶⁴ Most of his respondents acknowledged that they needed to integrate more and were willing to do so, but that it was often difficult to know how. Similar patterns of social isolation exist among the settler societies of Argentina and Australia, and in the established farming cultures of the United States and Europe. Unsociable work patterns, geographical isolation, social norms and cultural peculiarities detach commercial farming groups. The nature of this isolation in Zimbabwe was reinforced through the organisational structures of the communities and their institutions, including security networks, co-operative buying pools and country clubs. However for many blacks these arrangements were insignificant and irrelevant. The combination of race and affluence was particularly unpalatable, leaving white farmers with few sympathizers among the wider population. ZANU PF expanded its network in the farming areas during this period and gathered intelligence on the farming community. Every farm had informers, as did key gathering points such as country clubs.⁵⁶⁵

In March 1996 there was protracted discussion about whether ZTA and CFU should react to racist statements by Roger Boka, or to the racist rhetoric in the press.⁵⁶⁶ Both councils decided against a countering media strategy, as “the press was unlikely to be sympathetic to farmers”.⁵⁶⁷

The Farmer commented on the state media’s hostility towards whites:

Zimbabwe is now a land where the trumpets of hatred ... threaten to drown the voices of reason...A land where ‘indigenous’ means blacks only... a land tacking perilously close to the official appellation *pariah state*.⁵⁶⁸

⁵⁶⁴ Compared to 1970, when less than 40 percent of white farmers had been born inside the country, more than 80 percent of remaining whites had been born inside the country by 2000 (Brand, 1981: 38; CSO, 2003).

⁵⁶⁵ In the case study area it subsequently turned out that both the barman at the Concession club and the barman at the Barwick club were ZANU PF officials.

⁵⁶⁶ This campaign was a counter strategy to the CFU/ZTA press campaign of 1993, but rather than countering the facts and figures cited by the CFU and ZTA, it sought to inflame issues of race and history.

⁵⁶⁷ Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 27 March 1996.

⁵⁶⁸ *The Farmer*, 4 April 1996: 28.

The press campaign targeted individual farmers, sometimes accurately, but usually not. CFU minutes recorded racially sensitive incidents in their PR section, and during this period they steadily increase. There was a notable shift in official attitudes and policies towards farmer behaviour. Many incidents were exaggerated, distorted or misrepresented. Mugabe publicly declared that “notorious and racist farmers will be targeted first”.⁵⁶⁹ Most state coverage focused on allegations of racist attitudes, arrogance, a lack of concern for farm workers and financial greed. Roger Boka and Philip Chiyangwa admitted that there was a concerted and systematic campaign to discredit white farmers.⁵⁷⁰ A CFU Security Report reads:

there is regrettably a growing tendency on the part of the authorities to regard offences committed against the commercial farming sector with some degree of laxity, whilst offences committed by members of the commercial farming sector are regarded with a considerable degree of severity.⁵⁷¹

The following year Nick Swanepoel (CFU President) urged farmers to tread carefully, stressing that “a single wrong action or comment by a single farmer could jeopardise the whole group”.⁵⁷² This was a tense period for white farmers, notable for the absence of reassurances from those officials previously perceived to be moderate. Even Dr Kangai declared to parliament in 1998 that ‘racist farmers’ would be targeted in land identifications.⁵⁷³

5.2.4 The Deterioration of British-Zimbabwe Relations

Politicization provided a medium of unity among many pro-land redistribution interests, but the rhetoric of race and revolution isolated other important groups. ZIANA reported in 1996 that

⁵⁶⁹ *The Farmer*, 15 February 1996:1.

⁵⁷⁰ Robert Block, “Roger Boka Thrived as an Icon Until His Bank Went Bust”, *Wall Street Journal*, 8 Sept 1998.

⁵⁷¹ Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 31 January 1996.

⁵⁷² Minutes of the CFU President’s Council Meeting, 24 September 1997.

⁵⁷³ “Minister Warns Racist Zim Farmers”, *Dispatch Online (SA)*, 6 February 1998.

“racial and inflammatory remarks by Zimbabwean government officials and radical black pressure groups against whites are reportedly discouraging major western business persons from investing in the country”.⁵⁷⁴ This isolation spread into diplomatic circles and a long history of Imperial distrust between Harare and Britain (Lee 2003). For members of the ruling party, scepticism of British strategic policies dated back to UDI. Stoneman and Cliffe (1989: 29) argue that the British remained largely passive about Rhodesia for the first ten years of UDI. Although relations improved after 1980, distrust re-emerged in the partial reconciliation of the 1980s (Raftopolous et al 2004). Accusations of a British plot to perpetuate the Lancaster House constitution through funding conditions, were prevalent in Government rhetoric and cited as a reason for the subsequent slow-down in the land transfer process, although Margaret Thatcher reaffirmed support for a market based reform program (Palmer, 1990:163). In 1991, a *Times* (London) editorial stated that there was “no point in paying good British money to support a catastrophically bad resettlement policy”.⁵⁷⁵ After the 1992 LAA, diplomatic relations deteriorated further. In 1993, the British informed the CFU that they were unlikely to support a compulsory reform process.⁵⁷⁶ Moyo (1994: 8) argues that farmer lobbying against the 1992 LAA created donor flight, but British land policy remained consistently opposed to compulsory acquisition.⁵⁷⁷

In a meeting with CFU officials on 23 January 1996, Dr Kangai admitted that government did not have the funds for resettlement.⁵⁷⁸ Mugabe used his 1996 election campaign to press Britain on funding obligations. According to CFU records:

the main thrust of the sentiments expressed [during the campaign rallies] were that if the British government are not prepared to make any more money available for land

⁵⁷⁴ Cited in *The Farmer*, 25 April 1996: 22.

⁵⁷⁵ Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 27 February, 1991.

⁵⁷⁶ Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, Interview with Antony Swire-Thompson, Harare, January 2003.

⁵⁷⁷ Interview with Richard Lindsay, British High Commission, September 2001. Lindsay cited concerns about compulsory acquisition and argued that the British government reached them independently of the CFU or the press.

⁵⁷⁸ Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 31 January 1996.

acquisition there would be a taking of the land... and that an accelerated program to finalise the land issue would be in place and implemented during the next 5 years.⁵⁷⁹

CFU minutes read: “the fact remains that there is still ample land available for government needs for resettlement but very little money for land acquisition”.⁵⁸⁰ In June 1996, Baroness Chalker visited and promised British support, but insisted on the willing-buyer willing-seller principle. Mugabe was adamant that if British funding was not forthcoming, he would take land and not pay for it. The CFU subsequently tried to organize a meeting with the ZFU, the British delegation and the government, noting that Kangai appeared willing, but Mugabe reluctant.⁵⁸¹ The meeting did not materialise, but in October an ODA (1996) report on land reform proposals argued that Britain was firmly in support of a willing-buyer willing-seller concept, but not compulsory acquisition.⁵⁸² Kangai refused to comment specifically on the report but warned that government would proceed with extensive reform if necessary.⁵⁸³

Mugabe set the British government a July 1997 deadline to resume funding for land (ICG 2004: 54). In the meantime, whilst the government stressed its funding limitations, the War Victims’ Fund scandal emerged (see below), in which approximately US\$100m was looted by senior officials, and about US\$200 million was pledged in gratuities to placate the real war veterans. This amounted to nearly twice the total funding spent on land reform since 1980, but Mugabe stepped up his self-righteous stance towards British funding responsibilities.⁵⁸⁴ In early November 1997, he restated that his government would only pay for ‘improvements’, not for the land, and that Britain would have to look after the white farmers. In response, Clare Short, the Development Secretary, wrote to Minister Kangai on 5 November 1997:

⁵⁷⁹ Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 27 March 1996: *PR Report*.

⁵⁸⁰ Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 27 March 1996.

⁵⁸¹ Minutes of the CFU President’s Council Meeting, 26 June 1996.

⁵⁸² Minutes of the CFU President’s Council Meeting, 26 March 1997.

⁵⁸³ Minutes of the CFU President’s Council Meeting, 27 November 1996.

⁵⁸⁴ *Financial Gazette*, 5 November 1997.

I should make it quite clear that Britain does not accept that it has a special responsibility to meet the costs of land purchase in Zimbabwe. We are a new government with diverse backgrounds without links to former colonial interests. My own origins are Irish and as you know we were colonized not colonizers. We do however recognize the very real issues that you face over land reform... we would be prepared to support a program of land reform that was part of a poverty eradication strategy but not on any other basis.⁵⁸⁵

Many analysts identify Clare Short's letter as a key moment in the frosting of relations between Harare and London (Chan 2002). Dr Kangai described it as "incredibly insensitive... (with) a complete lack of understanding, or respect, for the Zimbabwean administration".⁵⁸⁶ Denis Norman, who had severe reservations about the direction of the land program at that stage, described the letter as "tactless", and John Laurie was equally critical of Short.⁵⁸⁷ The letter was instrumental in aligning the moderate camps within ZANU PF with the more radical groups, and Mugabe immediately ordered the designation of 1471 farms (4 million hectares) for compulsory acquisition on 11 November 1997 (ICG, 2004: 54).⁵⁸⁸ Blair subsequently wrote to Mugabe in more diplomatic fashion on 27 August 1998, prior to the Donors Conference, recognising the importance of land redistribution, but later advised that he would be sending the High Commissioner to the 1998 Donor's conference, rather than attending personally. By the time the British government back-pedalled it was too late; the utility of the diplomatic rift to the Mugabe regime had become clear, and has since been used to maximum advantage. It allowed Mugabe to portray the land deadlock as part of a bilateral disagreement within a wider set of historical grievances and development questions.⁵⁸⁹ It also allowed him to corral the various camps within ZANU PF.

⁵⁸⁵ Copy of the Letter from Clare Short to Minister of Agriculture and Land, Hon K. Kangai, 5 November 1997.

⁵⁸⁶ Interview with Dr Kumbirai Kangai, Harare, 2003.

⁵⁸⁷ Interview with Denis Norman, Sussex, October 2004; Interview with John Laurie, Harare, February 2003.

⁵⁸⁸ For an interesting perspective on British Zimbabwe relations during this period see Chan (2003).

⁵⁸⁹ "Zimbabwe says Prince Charles' Comments 'Unhelpful'", *Mail and Guardian*, 5 November 2005.

British support for land transfer has been disappointing, particularly in view of pledges before and during Lancaster House, and the precedent of Kenyan land buyouts. Lord Carrington, who chaired the Lancaster House conference, recently acknowledged British responsibilities, but stopped short of admitting that he had given full funding assurances in 1980.⁵⁹⁰ Commercial farmers appear to have been largely irrelevant in this rift. Farmer doubts about British integrity persisted from pre-war years. Likewise the British government was unwilling to fund a buyout of farmers.⁵⁹¹ The CFU could possibly have played a more proactive stance in lobbying British financial support, rather than fuelling donor scepticism, but this is unlikely to have shifted the direction or momentum of the issue.

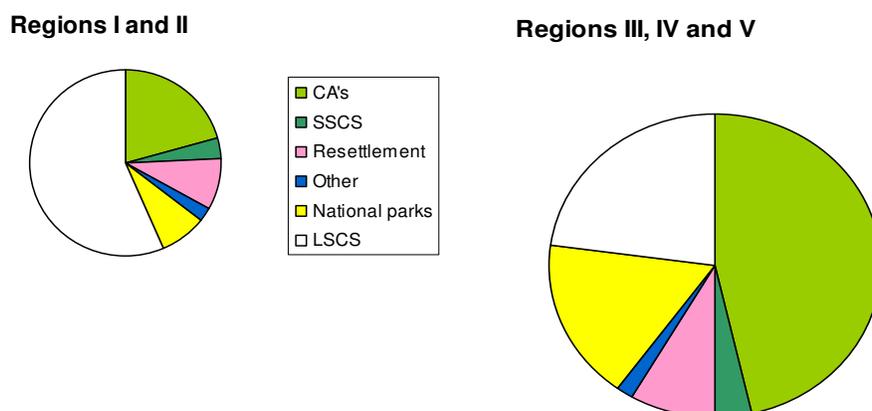
5.3 THE RADICALISATION OF BLACK ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT (BEE)

The formal black economic empowerment agenda of the early 1990s made little impact on the slow pace of reform in white-controlled sectors, especially banking, mining and farming. Glaring disparities in resource access continued: in 1980 there were 7000 dams in 'white' areas, irrigating 100 000 hectares, whereas there were only 5000 hectares of irrigated land in small-scale farming areas (Stoneman, 1981: 139). By 1994 there were 15000 dams in commercial farming districts irrigating nearly 400 000 hectares compared to only about 50 000 hectares in communal areas (Rukuni 1994). Structural adjustment benefited established white-controlled sectors and hit poor black sectors hardest. Eighty percent of officially marketed output was still produced by commercial farmers in 1994 and much of the fertile, better-situated and capitalised land was still owned by large-scale farmers. Figure 5.1 illustrates the proportional control of land in agro-ecological regions, and commercial farmers' continued dominance in regions I and II.

⁵⁹⁰ Copy of Lord Carrington's address to the House of Lords (2002). In a question to Baroness Amos, Carrington asked if the funding assurances granted in 1980 could be directed towards compensating white farmers.

⁵⁹¹ Interview with Richard Lindsay, British High Commission, Harare, September 2001.

Figure 5.1 Proportional Land Ownerships for Natural Regions in 1994



(AREAS IN RELATIVE SCALE)

Source: Rukuni (1994: 13)

Widening disparities of wealth between the most visible white sectors and the majority of blacks fuelled the appeal and impatience of more vigorous economic empowerment, particularly among the black elite. The *Independent* described “a growing restlessness among the majority of people who still feel economically marginalized in their own land”.⁵⁹² In 1994, the Affirmative Action Group (AAG) split from the IBDC, under the chairmanship of Philip Chiyangwa, a young relative of Mugabe’s.⁵⁹³ The AAG illustrated three features of affirmative action and the direction it was to follow: growing impatience, close ties to the ruling party, and its use to further personal agendas (Raftopolous and Moyo, 1995).

At the heart of the AAG was Roger Boka, who leapt to prominence as a champion of black empowerment. Boka’s demands for access to the gold, finance and tobacco sectors became symbolic of calls for wider ‘economic nationalism’, and attracted support from black business and broader society. The aggressive nature of Boka’s campaign moved quickly towards a

⁵⁹² “Umbrella Body Formed for Empowerment”, *Zimbabwe Independent*, 12 June 1996.

⁵⁹³ Divergent interests within the indigenisation lobby were demonstrated by other splinter groups such as the Black Business Council (BBC). See “New Lobby Group Challenges AAG”, *Zimbabwe Independent*, April 4, 1997.

sponsored smear-campaign against white farmers. In 1996 he had bragged, "I survive extremely well in a very hostile [race] environment...but without the hostility, I am not in business".⁵⁹⁴ On 31 March 1996, he published a full-page advertisement in several national newspapers, reproducing an old photograph of a black Kenyan carrying a white man across a swollen river. The caption read: "White Zimbabweans' idea of a 'good African'," adding: "We want our country Zimbabwe and our economy. No dogs or guns will stop the people's revolution". CFU responded by accusing Roger Boka of "stirring racial hatred to his advantage" and council minutes note "rumours that the ZTA president's life was threatened by Boka".⁵⁹⁵ This was a very different format to the empowerment policies of the early 1990s. Boka's approach was arrogant and ruthless, but it was popular, particularly within the ruling party, and he secured government support, materially and symbolically, for ventures in tobacco, banking and mining.

5.3.1 The Indigenous Commercial Farmer's Union (ICFU)

As the momentum of black empowerment gathered pace so it turned attention directly towards white farming. By 1995 most black commercial farmers still felt marginalised within the CFU, which to all intents and purposes remained an 'all-white old boys' network'.⁵⁹⁶ The same social and representative barriers to black integration from the 1980s persisted. Keith Harvey explained to the CFU council that many black farmers felt socially awkward at country clubs, and were often ostracized by the cliques that formed at club bars after farmers meetings.⁵⁹⁷ By 1996 not a single black member had been elected to the CFU council. The Indigenous Commercial Farmers Union (ICFU), informally established in 1990, had initially been ignored by government but re-

⁵⁹⁴ Robert Block, "Roger Boka Thrived as an Icon Until His Bank Went Bust", *The Wall Street Journal*, 8 September 1998.

⁵⁹⁵ Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 27 March 1996.

⁵⁹⁶ Interview with Robbie Mupawose, Harare, January 2004.

⁵⁹⁷ Minutes of the CFU President's Council Meeting, 25 September 1996.

emerged in 1995 with significant support.⁵⁹⁸ The new launch was organised by empowerment groups, with extensive coverage by the state media.⁵⁹⁹ ICFU membership initially drew from about 800 small-scale farmers, from former purchase areas, and from about 400 large-scale black commercial farmers (Moyo, 1994: 4).⁶⁰⁰ Government's stance towards the ICFU had shifted strategically. If CFU power could not be diluted through a single union, then the alternative was to establish a parallel structure.⁶⁰¹

Boka's aggressive empowerment strategy was appealing and increasingly adopted by politicians. Vice President Muzenda, addressing members of the Save Conservancy in 1996, stated that "this form of land use will not succeed unless indigenous businessmen are brought in as partners". He gave the Wildlife Conservancies two weeks to come up with suggestions.⁶⁰² Boka's foray into the banking sector enjoyed similar support from government, operating outside standard banking regulations with the blessing of the political elite.⁶⁰³ Unlike South African Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) charters there were no formalised guidelines, targets, incentives or controls in Zimbabwe's format - just conveniently vague objectives. Indigenisation was officially aimed at expanding black shares in the economy, but as it radicalised, it became more about promoting ruling party interests and those of key members.

5.3.2 The Selectiveness of Empowerment

ZANU PF increasingly used the empowerment process to extend its patronage. Key individuals dominated the process and its organizational structure for personal enrichment and in return

⁵⁹⁸ Members of Parliament, including Minister Mangwende did not know who the ICFU were a year after their formation. Mangwende noted that the ICFU did not have government support as this countered attempts to amalgamate the farming unions. *Hansard* record of Parliamentary Debate, 19 March 1992.

⁵⁹⁹ Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 29 November 1995.

⁶⁰⁰ About 200 white members of the CFU also subsequently joined. CFU Minutes of the CFU President's Council Meeting, 26 November 1997.

⁶⁰¹ The ZFU remained opposed to the ICFU on the grounds that it countered the merger objectives of 1993.

⁶⁰² Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 28 February 1996: *Masvingo Report*: 12.

⁶⁰³ Interview with Dr David Hatendi, Harare, January 2003.

stayed close to the ruling party. Boka and Chiyangwa's influence at ruling party congresses increased steadily, bolstered by other black businessmen.⁶⁰⁴ It was a flexible process in which young black entrepreneurs were absorbed or persuaded into the ruling party in return for preferential business opportunities. Chiyangwa explained the nature of this arrangement: "I am rich because I belong to Zanu PF. If you want to be rich like me you must join the ruling party".⁶⁰⁵ Established members of the ruling party used their positions to secure contracts, licenses and access to other commercial opportunities. Within this process the opportunities for corruption increased. For example, Leo Mugabe, the President's nephew, won a series of controversial tenders between 1994 and 1997, including a contract to build the Harare airport.⁶⁰⁶ The award of a Hwange power station contract to a Malaysian firm under controversial circumstances illustrated significant irregularities at high levels.

It was also an exclusionist system in which black entrepreneurs and businessmen, who were unwilling to tow the party line, met obstacles. Most prominently, Strive Masiyiwa, a dynamic telecommunications entrepreneur, battled for five years to obtain a licence to open a cell phone company.⁶⁰⁷ When a cartel of competitors, including Leo Mugabe, acquired a similar licence within months, the case became a focal point for protest against high-level corruption. It also sparked divisions within the party: Joshua Nkomo threatened to resign over the issue and Eddison Zvobgo was overtly supportive of Masiyiwa. Taylor (1999: 258) wrote that:

Zimbabwe's most 'successful' black business people are thus notable for their close ties to the state...and whose rise from ashes to riches is most suspicious...Since they are already co-opted into the state network they pose no political threat to the government... in fact they will likely be the heirs of the ZANU PF political machine.

⁶⁰⁴ This group included Chris Pamire, James Makamba, and Elliot Manyika, successful and outspoken entrepreneurs. See Raftopolous and Moyo (1995).

⁶⁰⁵ Pius Wakatama, "Why are Zanu PF leaders quiet?", *The Daily News*, 5 June 2000.

⁶⁰⁶ "Zimbabwe Airport Furore", *Mail and Guardian*, May 30, 1997.

⁶⁰⁷ "Cellular Man Strive Gets His Day in Court", *Mail and Guardian*, September 23, 1997.

The subsequent liquidation of Boka's United Merchant Bank (UMB) in 1998 exposed further corruption at high levels.⁶⁰⁸ In return for preferential banking conditions, UMB had been used as a vehicle for extending loans to high-ranking party officials.⁶⁰⁹ Many outstanding debtors were members of the ZANU PF hierarchy, including Chiyangwa and, allegedly, Emmerson Mnangagwa.⁶¹⁰ Corruption was seemingly overlooked providing it was within the party structure. This tainting image of the empowerment movement drew criticism from a wide array of civic groups, observers and commentators. Taylor (1999:260) argued that:

ZANU PF's principal tool for maintaining political power is the ideology of 'indigenisation' which is currently practiced in Zimbabwe as a neo-patrimonial game that rewards inefficiency and depresses productivity. Corruption becomes more likely in the absence of political and economic competition; ZANU's monopoly on power allows it to act with virtual impunity.

Dwindling state revenues were countered with bolder policies. The National Social Security Authority (NSSA) tax was implemented as a pension scheme for the workforce in 1994, but was channelled to central treasury, whilst the 1996 Tobacco Levy was also channelled to central funds (See below).⁶¹¹ ZANU PF's business interests expanded significantly during this period. Empowerment had become more about bolstering the ruling party's financial resources, and those of its supporters, than about wider black empowerment.⁶¹² CFU records show that such issues were discussed at council level, and often in depth. While noting international concerns about budget discipline, governance transparency, land and corruption, they also discussed focused cases such the President's wife "coming under fire for the misappropriation of USAID

⁶⁰⁸ "Boka admits United Merchant Bank is on the brink of collapse", *Business Day*, 29 April 1998. UMB's collapse was estimated to have cost the tax payer Z\$5 billion (US\$ 300 million).

⁶⁰⁹ Interview with Dr David Hatendi, Harare, January 2003. Irregularities in banking procedures continue to emerge. Thebe Mabanga, "ABSA's Zim Bank Pretext 'Nonsense'", *Mail and Guardian*, 19 October 2005.

⁶¹⁰ Ndamu Sandu, "Indigenous financial institutions under scrutiny", *Zimbabwe Independent*, 15 October 2004. Investigations into the collapse of the bank were thwarted by the disappearance of records.

⁶¹¹ Iden Wetherell, "Zim's Tobacco Industry Still Smoking", *Financial Gazette*, August 16, 1996.

⁶¹² For an illustration of ZANU PF's business interests, see "Inside Zimbabwe Inc." Focus 19, Helen Suzman Foundation, September 2000, at: <http://www.hsf.org.za/focus19/focus19fig1.html>.

money for residential developments”.⁶¹³ White farmers and many others increasingly attributed the mounting political and economic crisis to deteriorating governance. Diverging objectives over the direction of empowerment led to a breakdown in 1996 of the Zimbabwe Wealth Creation and Empowerment Council (ZWCEC), an official umbrella body.⁶¹⁴ Ominously, this split within the empowerment alliance resulted in a radical AAG offensive led by Chiyangwa and Boka in alliance with Chenjerai Hunzvi of the War Veterans’ Association.

5.3.3 Empowerment, War Veterans and the State

1996 was a turbulent year for commercial farming, particularly the tobacco sector, and yet it delivered the highest economic growth and output of the 1990s. The politicization of the land issue during the election campaign and ZANU PF congress was highly visible and aggressive empowerment rhetoric dominated the media. However, behind the scenes other developments were taking place which must be contextualised briefly. A rigorous study of Zimbabwe’s spread of ‘top-down’ corruption has yet to be conducted, but is needed to improve understandings of the state before and after the war veterans scandal emerged in 1997.⁶¹⁵

The 1993 War Veterans Compensation Act included a War Victims Fund, aimed at disability compensation for ex-combatants. In 1996 this fund was systematically ‘looted’ within eight months as senior government officials and members of the ruling elite claimed extensive disabilities.⁶¹⁶ Margaret Dongo, an Independent MP, ex-combatant and founder of the Zimbabwe National Liberation War Veterans Association (ZNLWVA) observed in Parliament:

⁶¹³ Minutes of the CFU President’s Council Meeting, 27 November 1996.

⁶¹⁴ Interview with Brian Latham, Editor of *The Farmer*, September 2001. Also see: “Umbrella Body Formed for Empowerment”, *Zimbabwe Independent*, 12 June 1996.

⁶¹⁵ Kriger’s (2003) analysis of the war veterans concentrates on the period 1980-1987. For a more relevant analysis of the post-1997 period see her journal articles (2003a and 2003b). Alexander (2003) analyses the relationship between war veterans and the state from the perspective of Matabeleland.

⁶¹⁶ For example, Reward Marufu (Grace Mugabe’s brother) claimed more than 100 percent disability and was awarded Z\$822,668 (US\$75 000). Angus Shaw, “On the run, again”, *The Observer*, 9 April 2005.

There are so many cabinet members, civil servants, army officers and police officers who are claiming funds for serious disabilities that it is a wonder the government can function at all...

Most of the real war veterans are living in abject poverty... this is Zimbabwe's worst scandal.⁶¹⁷

The ZNLWA subsequently assumed an anti-government stance, drowning out Mugabe's speech at Heroes acre in Harare and disrupting Heroes Day commemorations in Marondera, where they told Governor Karimanzira that "government will not be allowed to honor dead heroes whilst we the living heroes suffer".⁶¹⁸ The protests led to a demonstration outside State House where veterans threatened to return to war if demands for pensions and land were not met.⁶¹⁹ Mugabe responded by promising that 1772 farms, which had apparently been identified, would be reallocated with priority to war veterans.⁶²⁰ In October, Vice-President Muzenda confirmed that ex-combatants would be the first beneficiaries of land.⁶²¹

Mugabe's decision to award gratuity payments to war veterans was taken independently of parliament, and transformed the issue from a severe embarrassment to a useful alliance. He portrayed his stance as reasserting the ideals of the revolution and refusing to abandon his kith and kin. The unbudgeted payments comprised of a Z\$50000 'one-off' gratuity, and a monthly pension of Z\$2 000 per veteran. About 50 000 people were finally approved for benefit. The initial bill to treasury was estimated at Z\$ 2.5 billion (US\$208 million) followed by monthly payouts of Z\$ 100 million (US\$ 8.3 million).⁶²² The gratuity alone exceeded total expenditure on land since Independence.⁶²³ This pattern of events was even more remarkable in that Chenjerai Hunzvi (ZNLWA Chairman) masterminded the disability scam. He was exposed by

⁶¹⁷ Andrew Meldrum, "Zimbabwe's Cabinet 'Loots' Pensions", *Mail and Guardian*, 25 April 1997.

⁶¹⁸ Francis Murape, "Too Little Too Late for Veterans", *Mail and Guardian*, 15 August 1997.

⁶¹⁹ "The Rage of Mugabe's Old Soldiers", *Mail and Guardian*, 22 July 1997.

⁶²⁰ "Mugabe Won't Compensate White Farmers", *Mail and Guardian*, 13 October 1997.

⁶²¹ Minutes of the CFU President's Council Meeting, 28 October 1997.

⁶²² These are calculated at a mid-1997 exchange rate of Z\$12:US\$1 (ICG, 2004: 57).

⁶²³ This is based on assumptions that Britain and GoZ each contributed about US\$50 million (£35 million) to land reform by 1997 (Moyo 1998).

the 1997 Chidyausiku Commission, but only after he had brokered the gratuities.⁶²⁴ Rather than holding Hunzvi accountable, the war veterans threw support behind his promise to secure land.

This marked the emergence of a new set of actors in the political dynamic. The war veterans aligned with the empowerment lobby in its quest for key resources. Denis Norman argues that this was the pivotal and defining moment in the crisis.⁶²⁵ It coincided with the listing of the 1471 farms on 11 November, stimulating significant short term economic impacts. On 14 November 1997 the Zimbabwe dollar lost more than half its value. To meet the payouts, government hastily announced broad tax increases which were rejected in Parliament and led to violent street protests.⁶²⁶ At the 1997 ZANU PF congress, war veterans and empowerment leaders dominated proceedings and consolidated their influence within the party. This swung the balance of power away from the technocrats firmly towards the radical alliances. The following year, when Dr Kangai de-listed 500 farms from the main list, he was strongly criticized from within the party, particularly by Hunzvi.⁶²⁷ For ZANU PF, the war veterans were a valuable constituency, symbolically and strategically. This new found influence reshaped the politics of the land deadlock and accelerated the deteriorating relationship between farmers and the state.

5.4 THE COLLAPSE OF THE STATE- FARMER ALLIANCE

By the end of 1997 the ruling party, the government and the state had experienced profound changes, against which the commercial farmers were unable to adapt. CFU minutes in September 1997 note that “the PR situation is very difficult”, and that “farmers are the focus of a lot of bad

⁶²⁴ Mugabe appointed the Chidyausiku Commission to investigate the disbursement of Z\$1,5 billion. It concluded that The War Victims Compensation Fund was looted due to the under-funded war veterans fund. See: “Zimbabwe War Fund Inquiry Starts”, *Mail and Guardian*, 18 August 1997.

⁶²⁵ Interview with Denis Norman, Sussex, October 2004.

⁶²⁶ “Riots in Harare”, *Mail and Guardian*, December 10, 1997.

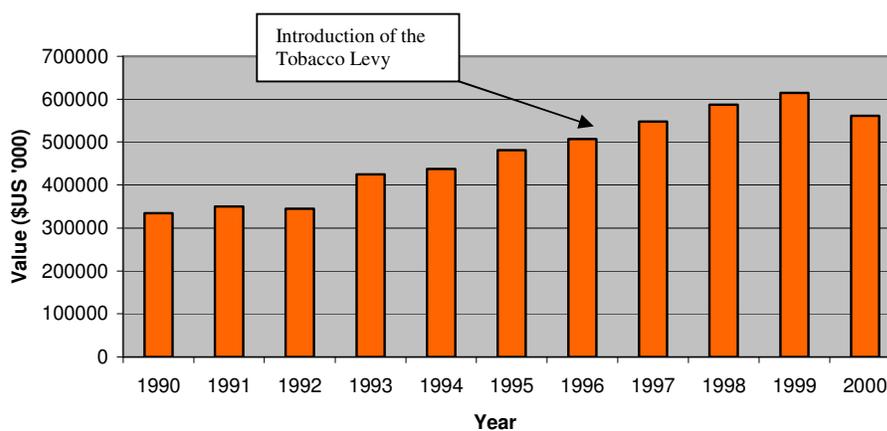
⁶²⁷ Interview with Kumbirai Kangai, Nyanga, March 2003; Interview with David Hasluck, Nyanga, March 2003.

press, particularly with respect to farm-worker conditions and the land issue”.⁶²⁸ The minutes note concern at wider political developments and the recent capitulation to the war veterans. A month later council concluded that commercial farmers were “under fire from all directions”, that their lobbying was ineffective and that their views were increasingly irrelevant to major decisions. In response members resolved to ‘internationalise’ the issue in the hope that external awareness would arbitrate the process.⁶²⁹ To explore the ‘cornered’ position in which the farmers now saw themselves I will discuss the tobacco levy and the pro-land redistribution initiatives.

5.4.2 The 1996 Tobacco Levy

In the 1990s tobacco was sold in nominal US dollar values but payments were made to farmers in Zimbabwe dollars, allowing government to extract revenues and control the sector through the exchange rate. Tobacco output and earnings increased throughout the 1990s (See Figure 5.2).⁶³⁰ The 1996 Tobacco levy illustrated two important issues: firstly, the irrelevance of farmer lobbying to agricultural policy and, secondly, that despite the levy, tobacco earnings and output continued to increase contrary to ZTA’s pessimistic predictions.

Figure 5.2 Tobacco Earnings (US\$) 1990 - 2000



Source: Tobacco Marketing Board

⁶²⁸ Minutes of the CFU President’s Council Meeting, 25 September 1991.

⁶²⁹ Minutes of the CFU President’s Council Meeting, 29 October 1997.

⁶³⁰ Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 25 September 1991.

The 1996 Tobacco Levy was introduced by Treasury rather than the Ministry of Agriculture, following a politburo directive.⁶³¹ ZTA called an emergency meeting, in much the same manner as CFU did in 1991, arguing that the tax should be levied at the buyers, away from the producer, and that five percent on income was excessive, especially for small farmers.⁶³² The five percent tax was on gross turnover and not tax-deductible, so growers would be liable for income tax on the levy amount too.⁶³³ Part of their press statement reads:

The ZTA and its growers are incensed at the imposition of the new five percent levy which (we) see as iniquitous and discriminatory... tax on exports is totally contrary to ESAP... (we have) moved from a nine percent export incentive to an eight percent export disincentive.⁶³⁴

The ZTA's response was reactive and defensive. Calls for a 'tractor demonstration' in Unity square were diffused by the CFU council, in more sober fashion, but other tobacco growers threatened to cut down on worker housing.⁶³⁵ The bill had notable precedents in 1949 and 1958, but whereas farmer opposition succeeded then, it failed now. Indeed, the ineffectualness of farmer opposition in 1996 was a stark realisation of how irrelevant farmers had become.

Denis Norman (Minister of Agriculture) was on holiday when treasury introduced the bill and it was 'fast-tracked' by Parliament within 21 days.⁶³⁶ *The Farmer* had described the passage of the 1992 LAA as "rushed and hushed", and now noted an "atmosphere of haste and secrecy surrounding the proposed tobacco levy".⁶³⁷ Opposition was not exclusively white. The initial draft was blocked in parliament by Webster Shamu and Border Gezi, both MPs for small-scale

⁶³¹ Apparently a levy on tobacco had been discussed within the politburo in 1992. Interview with Dr Kumbirai Kangai, Harare, December 2003.

⁶³² Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 28 February 1996.

⁶³³ It is not clear why the tax was implemented directly rather than through the exchange rate. The ease of collection at the tobacco floors and the manner in which it could be concentrated directly on the tobacco sector rather than other exporters is another.

⁶³⁴ *The Farmer*, 14 March 1996: 16.

⁶³⁵ *The Farmer*, 14 March 1996: 16. Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 27 March 1996.

⁶³⁶ Interview with Denis Norman, Sussex, October 2004; Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 27 March 1996.

⁶³⁷ *The Farmer*, 14 March 1996: 15.

tobacco growing areas. At the secondary hearing, five out of six ZANU PF MPs debated against it.⁶³⁸ The ZFU opposed the tax and Dr Kangai suggested that he would rather tax the buyers, which CFU argued would simply be passed down to the growers.

Despite concerted efforts, ZTA officials were unable to meet Mugabe, in the same manner as Laurie's restricted access after the 1985 election and Swire-Thompson's after the 1993 'Paris letter'.⁶³⁹ The ZTA turned on Denis Norman, complaining that the levy had been passed despite his assurances of a compromise.⁶⁴⁰ In May government increased the levy to ten percent, split equally between the trade and the farmers. TRIBAC attempted to block it and failed, illustrating the surprisingly limited influence of the tobacco companies as well.⁶⁴¹ Peter Richards (ZTA President) ruefully declared that "the imposition of the additional five percent ...levied against the growers is nothing but petty spite coming from MPs who do not understand economic fundamentals".⁶⁴² In response Herbert Murerwa (Finance Minister) tried to backdate the levy to the beginning of the selling season.⁶⁴³ In June, the ZTA warned of the impacts of the levy in a series of public advertisements, which catapulted the issue into the empowerment debate. The AAG declared that the ZTA was "thwarting indigenization" and accused Denis Norman of racism and the tobacco merchants of double invoicing.⁶⁴⁴ The more ZTA lobbied traditional channels the less success it had and the further it found itself from the negotiating table. As the ZTA's powerlessness sunk in so frustrations were directed inwards. Richard Tate (ZTA Vice President) again criticized Denis Norman's 'apathy' over the matter.⁶⁴⁵ When Kangai advised the ZTA to stop opposing the levy, Tate again castigated Norman for inaction.⁶⁴⁶

⁶³⁸ *The Farmer*, 14 March 1996: 15-16. Only 12 MPs were present (well below quorum) and yet it was still passed.

⁶³⁹ Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 27 March 1996: ZTA Report; Interview with Alan Ravenscroft, Concession, September 2001.

⁶⁴⁰ Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 27 March 1996.

⁶⁴¹ Minutes of the CFU President's Council Meeting, 29 May 1996.

⁶⁴² *The Farmer*, 6 June 1996: 11.

⁶⁴³ Based on the previous day's average price of \$2,96 per kg, farmers were paying 14 cents per kg whilst government was making 30cents per kg. Minutes of the CFU President's Council Meeting, 26 June 1996: ZTA.

⁶⁴⁴ Iden Whetherell, "Zim's Tobacco Industry Still Smoking", *Financial Gazette*, August 16, 1996.

⁶⁴⁵ Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 30 October 1996.

⁶⁴⁶ Minutes of the CFU President's Council Meeting, 29 January 1997.

Early in 1997, Dr Kangai introduced a broader set of agricultural marketing levies, again as a result of ruling-party directives.⁶⁴⁷ Again, Denis Norman was on leave.⁶⁴⁸ He realised the odds stacked against the farmers and on return sought compromise rather than confrontation. He lobbied extensively throughout January and February for the agricultural marketing levies to be hypothecated back into a separate agriculture/land fund rather than central treasury, and claims that assurances were given.⁶⁴⁹ In May 1997 it was revealed that the agricultural levies were being channelled into the central tax account.⁶⁵⁰ \$52 million (US\$4 million) was raised between January and March, and CFU noted that “it was clear by now that high level decisions were being made and implemented completely independently of (the farmers)”.⁶⁵¹

CFU minutes note that “ZTA were still publicly undermining Denis Norman”, illustrating how oblivious the ZTA council were to Norman’s irrelevance within the process.⁶⁵² Norman retired at the end of April 1997, claiming that he had pencilled the date in his diary when he accepted the appointment two years previously.⁶⁵³ In an interview with *The Farmer*, he stated “when the party’s all over it’s time to go home”, citing age as his main reason.⁶⁵⁴ Mugabe apparently tried to persuade him otherwise, arguing that “politicians never retire”.⁶⁵⁵ Three months previously, Norman had talked of ultimate job satisfaction in public service, without mentioning retirement. The previous year he stated that he would remain in the portfolio as long as he was asked to.⁶⁵⁶ He denied that political pressure was involved, but after a turbulent year, in which he was

⁶⁴⁷ Minutes of the CFU President’s Council Meeting, 26 February 1997; Interview with Dr Kumbirai Kangai, Harare, December 2003. The previous year, Mnangagwa had declared that all crops would be levied by Christmas.

⁶⁴⁸ Interview with Denis Norman, Sussex, October 2004.

⁶⁴⁹ Interview with Denis Norman, Sussex, October 2004.

⁶⁵⁰ Minutes of the CFU President’s Council Meeting, 28 May 1997. This was apparently due to more pressing economic requirements. Interview with Dr Kumbirai Kangai, Harare, December 2003.

⁶⁵¹ Minutes of the CFU President’s Council Meeting, 26 November 1997.

⁶⁵² Minutes of the CFU President’s Council Meeting, 26 March 1997.

⁶⁵³ Interview with Denis Norman, Sussex, October 2004.

⁶⁵⁴ “When The Party’s All Over, It’s Time to Go Home”, *The Farmer*, 23 January 1997: 22.

⁶⁵⁵ Interview with Denis Norman, Sussex, October 2004.

⁶⁵⁶ *The Farmer Magazine*, 14 March 1996: 13.

heavily criticized by the tobacco farmers and empowerment groups, and humiliatingly sidelined from major decision-making, the difficulties of his predicament were obvious.

The levies also created institutional splits. In January 1997, the ZTA supposedly relinquished all 'land initiatives' to the CFU.⁶⁵⁷ However the ZTA soon reverted to independent lobbying, and tried to hold a seminar with Parliament, who declined *en masse*.⁶⁵⁸ Swanepoel expressed concern that a ZTA land position paper had been leaked to government:

[Swanepoel] had always been under the impression this report was an in-house one... it had been agreed by ZTA and CFU that the CFU drove the land issue, and yet it had not had any input into the report under discussion.”⁶⁵⁹

Tate argued that government had asked for a copy of ZTA's technical report on land and soils, and that “the report was not a recommendation, but rather a thought-process that farmers must go through in the same way as government”. Swanepoel then voiced concern at the antagonism between the CFU and the ZTA that had arisen in some farmers' meetings, and felt that “during times of pressure there was a lot of responsibility to behave as leaders”.⁶⁶⁰ Yet the contentions and controversies over the tobacco levy and ZTA's autonomy continued.⁶⁶¹

The tobacco levy also created structural divisions, particularly between owners and managers. Some farmers simply passed the tax onto their managers and workforces, by reducing bonuses. Other farmers cut down on social expenditure such as worker amenities.⁶⁶² Manager's bonuses

⁶⁵⁷ Minutes of the CFU President's Council Meeting, 29 January 1997: ZTA Report.

⁶⁵⁸ The AAG had asked ZTA to attend a meeting, where Rob Webb delivered a paper entitled: “Indigenisation of the Tobacco Industry”. Minutes of the CFU President's Council Meeting, 30 April 1997.

⁶⁵⁹ Minutes of the CFU President's Council Meeting, 30 April 1997.

⁶⁶⁰ Minutes of the CFU President's Council Meeting, 30 April 1997.

⁶⁶¹ For example, at ZTA Congress in June, Rob Webb alluded to “being at war”. When asked to clarify his statement he claims that it was taken out of context and that he had meant being at war against the anti-smoking lobby. Minutes of the CFU President's Council Meeting, 25 June 1997

⁶⁶² Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 27 March 1996.

in good years had often enabled them to raise enough collateral to farm independently, and had become an accepted part of the system. *The Farmer's* letter page traced a public rift between some owners and managers.⁶⁶³ Farm owners accused the Blackfordby Tobacco Training Institute of inflating the self-perceived worth of graduates, and of distorting the concept of bonuses into rights rather than privileges. Managers argued that their bonus cuts did not stop the excessive spending of owners. One letter castigates a farmer's wife for buying a new set of curtains every year, whilst another complains that a tobacco farmer cut his manager's bonus after the levy and then purchased a new hot tub.⁶⁶⁴

The agricultural levies were a divisive issue in a divisive period, and captured the cocktail of interests and strategies among different groups. The AAG launched an offensive against the Minister of Agriculture, the tobacco merchants and the ZTA. ZTA was concurrently criticising Norman whilst trying to align with Roger Boka. The CFU was concerned at the ZTA's independent lobbying and its own restructuring. The agricultural levies illustrated three important points: firstly, the exclusion of commercial farmers from policy decisions, secondly, the shift towards new taxes on commercial farming, and thirdly, that the revenues were not being directed towards land reform or agriculture.

5.4.3 The Ineffectiveness of Farmer Initiatives

The political clout of white farmers waned during the 1990s. Farming leaders from this period are often accused of lacking the political acumen of their predecessors, but their challenges were greater and the room for diplomatic manoeuvres was more limited. Commercial farmers' attitudes towards land redistribution were often portrayed as reactive. Moyo (1994: 7) argued that

⁶⁶³*The Farmer*, August 1996 - February 1997: Letters Page.

⁶⁶⁴*The Farmer*, 2 January 1997: 13.

the white community itself has... not made concrete offers of land for redistribution, demonstrating a wait and see approach and defending their rights to hold large tracts of land... there has been little proactive action by the white landowners and their representative (CFU).

Whilst mounting scepticism towards the formal land program grew, many farmers were pragmatic enough to realise that promoting reform would protect their interests in the long run. Commercial farmers set up, supported and helped to run settlement schemes locally, such as the Percival farm scheme in Macheke, Wenimbi scheme near Marondera and the Angwa scheme in Makonde. A national level scheme was established through the Farm Development Trust (See Appendix V). Initiated in 1992 by the ZTA, and formally opened in 1994, the FDT was run by a representative board, appointed from the agricultural industry and its unions, and reported directly to the Ministry of Lands and Agriculture.⁶⁶⁵ The trust established projects at Panorama farm in Centenary and Bratton Farm in Matepatepa. It then assumed administration of Percival and Lot 10 Wenimbi, where local farmers had been helping fourteen resettlement farmers.⁶⁶⁶ By the end of 1995 the FDT had expanded to about 300 hectares under tobacco on four projects, in which more than 150 farmers had benefited.⁶⁶⁷ The program was beginning to attract donor attention and funding, and its PR success was recognised when Mugabe officially toured the Centenary FDT projects in 1996 and commented favourably.⁶⁶⁸ By the end of 1997, six schemes were promoting nearly 250 black farmers. However, the scheme was far from self-funding, and in the context of the national land problem it was tiny. The financial expenditure illustrated the high costs of undertaking carefully managed and monitored resettlement, and raised fears about the costs of extensive resettlement. Alan Ravenscroft, a founding proponent of the trust, remarked that:

⁶⁶⁵ Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 28 September 1994.

⁶⁶⁶ The latter project had been started by local farmers to counter the negative publicity after a race row in 1993. Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 27 September 1995.

⁶⁶⁷ Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 29 November 1995.

⁶⁶⁸ Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 25 September 1996.

the scheme had lots of positive aspects, but there is simply no way that it could be replicated on a national scale - the costs of this exercise showed how expensive a managed resettlement scheme was likely to be.⁶⁶⁹

The FDT also suffered political interference initially. Gerry Grant reported that the settler selection for Panorama farm in Centenary had met with extreme resistance from local politicians, who wanted to run it themselves and it was only the presence of high profile board members that overcame these.⁶⁷⁰ Other farmer initiatives, including support for communal farmers with land preparation, inputs and management advice bolstered white farmer perceptions of their own pro-activity. However, these initiatives were not substitutes for land reform, and illustrated how irrelevant local relations could be at national level.⁶⁷¹ Dr Robbie Mupawose suggested that the elements of farmer pro-activity were overshadowed by the negative elements, perceived and real, of social isolation, enduring racism and wealth. As the politicisation of land increased so farmer initiatives were treated more suspiciously.

5.4.4 The Deteriorating Institutional Effectiveness of the CFU

The weakening political effectiveness of the CFU and the ZTA created internal pressures. Initially these were due to the changing profile of the sector. The establishment of the Horticultural Producers Council (HPC) as a commodity board in 1990 reflected the growing significance of the fresh exports and horticultural sector.⁶⁷² By 1995 the HPC was powerful enough to ask for autonomy from the CFU, prompting extensive council debate. Peter

⁶⁶⁹ Interview with Alan Ravenscroft, Concession, September 2001.

⁶⁷⁰ Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 25 January 1995.

⁶⁷¹ For example, see Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 30 June 1993.

⁶⁷² The growth in horticultural exports took place in Mashonaland. Access to the international airport, was a prime factor but tobacco and other intensive cropping businesses were often better placed to finance and install horticultural production systems, through existing credit facilities and minimum business structural changes.

MacSporran advised against this in view of “the need for unity within the deteriorating political situation”.⁶⁷³ David Hasluck opposed the de-merger on the basis that the CFU had financially supported the HPC for five years and expected some loyalty.

In 1995 the recommendations of the Meikle Commission led to a restructuring of the CFU. Regional and Commodity councils were established with the idea of concentrating grass-roots and technical debate at Regional and Commodity levels, allowing more strategic decision-making within a smaller, but more powerful, President’s council.⁶⁷⁴ Functional limitations soon emerged and previous CFU leaders queried the wisdom and the effectiveness of the restructuring.⁶⁷⁵ There was also concerns among members. By the end of 1997 the ZFU had attracted 100 white members from the CFU, whilst about 200 had joined the ICFU.⁶⁷⁶ Matabeleland members had been unhappy with the CFU’s 1991 strategy and were equally unimpressed with the 1996 congress, arguing that council consistently placed the interests of Mashonaland first and that their representation was diminished within the new structure.⁶⁷⁷

The CFU’s awkward relationship with the tobacco sector simmered throughout the 1990s.⁶⁷⁸ The ZTA was a more united, streamlined, and economically powerful body. However, the limitations of its power were exposed during the deliberations over the 1996 Tobacco Levy.⁶⁷⁹ Later, in October 1999, CFU minutes note that ZTA had met Mugabe independently and that Richard Tate was pursuing his own land route.⁶⁸⁰ On 26 October 1999 Tim Henwood received a call from the President’s Office “accusing the CFU of no longer being supportive of government”. According to the informant, a ZTA employee had leaked CFU information to

⁶⁷³ Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 29 November 1995.

⁶⁷⁴ Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 31 May 1995.

⁶⁷⁵ Interview with Denis Norman, Sussex, October 2004.

⁶⁷⁶ CFU President’s Council Meeting, 26 November 1997.

⁶⁷⁷ Minutes of the CFU President’s Council Meeting, 25 September 1996

⁶⁷⁸ For example, in 1991, Ian Alcock (ZTA President) expressed concern at the criticism of the relationship between the CFU and the ZTA, which appeared to be confined to certain districts and certain individuals. Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 25 September 1991.

⁶⁷⁹ Minutes of the CFU President’s Council Meeting, 27 November 1996.

⁶⁸⁰ Minutes of the CFU President’s Council Meeting, 27 October 1999.

government. Denis Norman claims that he was deliberately set up by ZTA leaders during the agricultural levy campaign and that he used private investigators to substantiate this.⁶⁸¹ In 1997, David Hasluck expressed the challenges of remaining institutionally united during times of uncertainty: “CFU is in a difficult position – As issues become more clouded it becomes increasingly arduous to see how to act in the best interests of the farmers as a whole”.⁶⁸²

Other divisions between farmers emerged at grass roots. During the 1996 Presidential election campaign, some Centenary farmers donated maize to ZANU PF. This elicited favorable comments from the party towards the donors, but prompted harsh criticism against those farmers that did not contribute.⁶⁸³ The non-contributors then argued that the maize donors had placed them in an awkward position and community rifts ensued. In Shamva, the ‘water wars’ which had emerged in the early 1990s continued.⁶⁸⁴ The case study area, upstream, experienced similar controversies.⁶⁸⁵ Towards the end of 1996 the President’s Council registered concern that CFU Councillors at local and district levels were undermining central council.⁶⁸⁶ Following the 1997 farm listings, attendees at a Glendale farmers meeting strongly criticised the CFU.⁶⁸⁷ The following month CFU Council cited Mashonaland Central as a “major problem”: individual farmers had tried to negotiate their way off the list through the Governor, Border Gezi, who was deleting and adding farms without Senior Minister Msika’s approval. Nick Swanepoel was furious with these farmers, arguing that it was prompting splits within the community; even a farmers’ association chairman was implicated.⁶⁸⁸ By 1998 *The Farmer* magazine was regularly criticizing internal CFU politics and in response the council turned on the “unconstructive

⁶⁸¹ Interview with Denis Norman, Sussex, October 2004.

⁶⁸² Minutes of the CFU President’s Council Meeting, 29 January 1997.

⁶⁸³ Minutes of the CFU Council Meeting, 28 February 1996

⁶⁸⁴ These are recorded in the Minutes of the CFU President’s Council Meeting, 29 October 1997. Tug Morkel, an abrasive character from Shamva ostracised himself from the community through a range of controversial farming decisions including the flouting of water regulations. Discussions with Keith Butler, Harare, 2003.

⁶⁸⁵ John Sole, a large scale row cropper, was found to be extracting excessive water quantities, which when revealed, almost prompted legal proceedings. Personal correspondence with members of the Marodzi catchment water board.

⁶⁸⁶ Minutes of the CFU President’s Council Meeting, 27 November 1996.

⁶⁸⁷ Minutes of the CFU President’s Council Meeting, 26 November 1997.

⁶⁸⁸ Minutes of the CFU President’s Council Meeting, 29 January 1998. Interview with Nick Swanepoel, Chinoyi, January 2005.

criticism” of the editor.⁶⁸⁹ When Bob Swift was asked to resign from the CFU Presidency later in the year, council blamed *The Farmer* for a breakdown of confidentiality.⁶⁹⁰

Swift’s forced resignation after only four months in office illustrated how the pressures of the time infiltrated the CFU hierarchy. Following the 1998 Donor Conference, Swift travelled to Brazil with a governmental delegation to assess a market-based land reform program, and whilst absent an internal coup was mounted against him.⁶⁹¹ At an extraordinary meeting on his return, David Hasluck, called for Swift to delegate the land issue to Nick Swanepoel, who had agreed to stay on as a land representative to use his rapport with the donors, members of government and the ruling party.⁶⁹² Swift claims that Hasluck and a core group in council conspired against him.⁶⁹³ Hasluck claimed that Swift was regarded with suspicion within the ruling party and that he had “failed to do what his members had tasked him to do”.⁶⁹⁴ Swanepoel was asked to reinstate himself for the remainder of the year, and received a standing ovation when he agreed.⁶⁹⁵ Denis Norman was shocked at the manner in which the CFU had conducted the affair, observing that it demonstrated disunity and disloyalty.⁶⁹⁶

5.4.5 The 1998 Donors Conference

The breakdown of the 1998 Donors conference agreement is often cited by CFU representatives as evidence of ZANU PF’s insincerity. Populist pressures, funding conditions, and internal

⁶⁸⁹ Minutes of the CFU President’s Council Meeting, 29 April 1998; Minutes of the CFU President’s Council Meeting, 27 May 1998.

⁶⁹⁰ David Hasluck claimed that the *Sunday Mail*’s version of events was inaccurate. Jenny Swift subsequently responded in a letter to *The Farmer* castigating the CFU. Minutes of the CFU President’s Council Meeting, 25 November 1998.

⁶⁹¹ Grant and Swift visited Brazil with the World Bank land agency. Minutes of the CFU President’s Council Meeting, 28 October 1998 and 24 November 1998.

⁶⁹² Minutes of the CFU President’s Council Extraordinary Meeting, 12 November 1998.

⁶⁹³ E-mail correspondence with Bob Swift, August 2005.

⁶⁹⁴ Interview with David Hasluck, Nyanga, March 2003.

⁶⁹⁵ Discussions with Geoff Day, CFU Financial controller, Harare, January 2005. There was a distinct reluctance among CFU respondents to discuss this matter in any detail.

⁶⁹⁶ Interview with Denis Norman, Sussex, October 2004.

disagreements within government hamstrung the initiative before it started.⁶⁹⁷ An analysis of the conference and its aftermath illustrates the breakdown in communications between farmers and the state, and the ascendancy of the new and more radical alliances within the ruling party.

At the 1997 ZANU PF congress members accused farmers and donors of demanding excessive control over the land program. The IMF, WB, EU and other donors stated that they would only support legal, transparent and consultative land redistribution.⁶⁹⁸ Early in 1998, a joint initiative between CFU and government land technocrats formed ‘Team Zimbabwe’ to keep the donors and the government at the negotiating table.⁶⁹⁹ Together they drafted a paper entitled “Agriculture in Zimbabwe: Lets Grow Together” with a land transfer proposal based on market reform (CFU, 1998).⁷⁰⁰ The CFU identified 78 farms available for immediate resettlement and a series of discussions followed.⁷⁰¹ On 27 February 1998 an open seminar on land was held at the Meikles Hotel. Hasluck noted that since compulsory acquisition had been introduced in 1992, much less land had been acquired than ever before. He argued that the land act and funding shortages had stifled transfers, and that the market system still offered the best way forward.⁷⁰² CFU records suggest that Team Zimbabwe was dismissed by ZANU PF as a delaying tactic, but that the proposals had not been attacked by “important” ministers or MPs.⁷⁰³ Swanepoel arranged to meet Nkomo and General Mujuru, with Kangai and Msika.⁷⁰⁴ This illustrated a more sophisticated lobbying strategy that took account of internal differences within the ruling party. Mugabe stated he would wait and see what the farmers and the donors could come up

⁶⁹⁷ Discussions with Martin Makururu, Embassy of the Republic of Zimbabwe, London, February 2005.

⁶⁹⁸ Minutes of the CFU President’s Council Meeting, 29 January 1998.

⁶⁹⁹ Dr Robbie Mupawose, Professor Madivamba Rukuni, Professor Sam Moyo and Greg Brackenridge (Chairman of the Bankers Association) played key roles in liaising between farmers and government and in mobilizing donors.

⁷⁰⁰ Minutes of the CFU President’s Council Meeting, 25 February 1998.

⁷⁰¹ Minutes of the CFU President’s Council Meeting, 27 May 1998. Interview with Dr Robbie Mupawose, Harare, January 2004.

⁷⁰² Minutes of the CFU President’s Council Meeting, 25 February 1998. Mr Orphanides noted that that since 1985 nearly 5 million hectares of land had been offered to government through the market system, but only a fraction purchased. At this time, Nicholas Van Hoogstraten was purchasing Lonrho landholdings, amounting to nearly 500000 ha, for less than \$US5 million.

⁷⁰³ Minutes of the CFU President’s Council Meeting, 25 February 1998.

⁷⁰⁴ Minutes of the CFU President’s Council Meeting, 25 February 1998.

with. On 9 March, a closed meeting was held between government, CFU and the banking sector. At a press conference afterwards Minister Kangai declared that no land would be confiscated without adequate compensation and that redistributions would be transparent.⁷⁰⁵

However, differences of opinion within government soon re-emerged. In May 1998, Dr Hungwe (Director of Lands) wanted to acquire the farms that had not been delisted. Dr Kangai opposed this as he did not want to disrupt the Donors Conference, but stressed to the CFU that the 78 farms offered should be purchased before the ZANU PF congress in December.⁷⁰⁶ He warned that there were “strong radical pressures within the party to ignore the donors and go it alone”.⁷⁰⁷ There was also pressure on the ground and farm invasions erupted in May 1998 (Moyo, 2000b). In Nyamandlovu, about 800 ‘squatters’ moved onto three properties. According to CFU minutes they were well organized.⁷⁰⁸ In June, several farms in Marondera were occupied.⁷⁰⁹ By September, Team Zimbabwe had identified 118 available farms, amounting to 113 000 hectares, mostly in Region II. Mugabe was apparently pleased and reassured Swanepoel that he wanted the land program carried out in a disciplined manner.⁷¹⁰ He then reemphasized intentions to settle 110 000 families on five million hectares at an estimated cost of US\$1.9 billion, most of which he expected to come from donors (ICG 2004: 61). The disparities in perceptions about how the program would proceed were stark. Nevertheless, key members of Team Zimbabwe were confident that funding would materialise and that the program would proceed.⁷¹¹

⁷⁰⁵ *Financial Gazette*, 25 March 1998.

⁷⁰⁶ Minutes of the CFU President’s Council Meeting, 24 June 1998.

⁷⁰⁷ Interview with Dr Kumbirai Kangai, Harare, December 2003. He explained that there were two clear divisions as to how to proceed. A moderate direction promoted by members of the ‘old guard’ and more technical members, and a second option, led by war veterans and some younger more aggressive elements within the party. He would not be drawn on naming individuals, and stressed that both groups were united in their quest for extensive reform.

⁷⁰⁸ Minutes of the CFU President’s Council Meeting, 27 May 1998: Matabeleland Branch Report.

⁷⁰⁹ Minutes of the CFU President’s Council Meeting, 24 June 1998.

⁷¹⁰ Minutes of the CFU President’s Council Meeting, 30 September 1998.

⁷¹¹ Interview with Dr Robbie Mupawose, Harare, January 2004; Interview with Professor Sam Moyo, Harare, February 2003; Interview with Nick Swanepoel, Chinoyi, January 2005.

Twenty donor countries were represented alongside the WB, UNDP, IMF and EU. Government sent moderate delegates - the technocrats and diplomats; and whilst debate within the conference was constructive, less than \$US1 million of guaranteed funding materialised, most of which was from Zimbabwean financial institutions.⁷¹² *The Farmer* noted that larger donors promised support on condition of a “calm, orderly, fair and transparent program”. Unprecedented donor caution had recently been fuelled by the collapse of Boka’s Bank, government’s involvement in the war in the Congo, and the increasing lack of transparency in the land program.⁷¹³

5.4.6 The Inception Phase Framework Plan (IPFP)

Government signed a memorandum of understanding at the Donor conference, agreeing to an Inception Phase Framework Plan, in which the 118 available farms would be purchased, resettled and monitored. After the conference, Denis Norman met with Mugabe, who expressed support for the IPFP.⁷¹⁴ However donor groups had apparently registered concerns about “increasing government covertness” over the issue.⁷¹⁵ CFU sources warned that the politburo perceived the price of land to be too high and the IPFP too restrictive and too conditional.⁷¹⁶ After the 1998 ZANU PF congress, compulsory acquisition notices were issued to 841 farms, violating the signed communiqué from the conference.⁷¹⁷ The CFU noted that government had only settled four farms that year, despite purchasing 40 of the 118 that had been conceded. Against these figures they queried how government “could possibly justify [listing] 840?”. Jerry Grant (CFU Deputy Director) explained to CFU council that there were two simultaneous agendas running

⁷¹² *The Farmer*, 17 September 1998:13.

⁷¹³ Discussions with a representative from USAID, Nyanga, March 2003. The UN Report (2002) estimated that \$US5 billion of mining assets were transferred from the DRC state to private companies between 1999 and 2002. *Report On the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources of the Democratic Republic of Congo*.

⁷¹⁴ Minutes of the CFU President’s Council Meeting, 28 October 1998. Also confirmed in an Interview with Denis Norman, Sussex, October 2004

⁷¹⁵ Minutes of the CFU President’s Council Meeting, 28 October 1998.

⁷¹⁶ Minutes of the CFU President’s Council Extraordinary Meeting, 12 November 1998. Dr Kangai confirmed that influential members of the politburo (he did not state names) were opposed to the conditions of the IPFP from the start. Interview with Dr Kumbirai Kangai, Harare, December 2003.

⁷¹⁷ The communiqué noted that the 845 outstanding listings from November 1997 would fall away with the IPFP.

concurrently within government: a moderate co-operative approach from the donor conference, and an irrational radical program driven by a volatile group with strong influence within the politburo.⁷¹⁸ Although the CFU had previously identified the existence of two ‘camps’ within the ruling party this was the first formal acknowledgement of dominance by the radical group. Patrick Chinamasa, the Attorney General, had apparently advised cabinet to proceed with the mass designations or lose credibility with the war veterans, party members and the rural population, who were all expecting more fundamental reform.⁷¹⁹ Hasluck felt that government seemed unaware of the enormity of the impact on investor confidence, on borrowing abilities and on practical farming operations. The CFU, on the other hand, were unaware of just how little most members of government cared about this by now. Shortly after the donor conference, Joseph Msika told the CFU that government wanted to defer compensation for land as there were more pressing issues such as financing the military in the Congo, and paying out the war veterans.⁷²⁰ Mugabe then declared: “we’ve decided that the process of price negotiation can take place after the people have been settled.”⁷²¹

Communications between the CFU and the government deteriorated publicly. At a joint press conference with Olivia Muchena (Deputy Minister of Agriculture) Swanepoel and Hasluck expressed surprise at the mass listing of farms in contravention of the IPFP. Muchena was unable to offer an explanation and later accused Hasluck and Swanepoel of embarrassing her in front of the cameras. Hasluck claimed that “donors were furious at the new government angle” and that the head of the World Bank mission to Zimbabwe was “horrified by the change of direction”.⁷²² He also claimed that Government now realised that donor support had closed unless there was formal return to the IPFP agenda.⁷²³

⁷¹⁸ Minutes of the CFU President’s Council Meeting, 24 November 1998.

⁷¹⁹ Minutes of the CFU President’s Council Meeting, 24 November 1998.

⁷²⁰ Minutes of the CFU President’s Council Meeting, 28 October 1998: Confidential Addendum

⁷²¹ *The Farmer*, 5 November 1998: 13.

⁷²² Minutes of the CFU President’s Council Meeting, 25 November 1998.

⁷²³ Interview with David Hasluck, Nyanga, March 2003.

Government was obviously still concerned about donor opinion as there was a concerted effort to reengage. Muchena publicly reaffirmed that it was government's intention to stick to the IPFP.⁷²⁴ General Zvinvashe, the Head of the Defence Forces, issued a statement calling for the principles of the donor conference to be followed and for compensation to be paid to the farmers. In February both Vice President Msika and Dr Kangai told press conferences that the program would remain transparent.⁷²⁵ However, immediately afterwards, Mugabe accused Britain of treachery, stating that he refused to pay for the land and that government bonds would be issued for improvements. Divided opinions between compromising camps in government and radical alliances within ZANU PF explain these oscillations between conciliation and confrontation, although both groups had vested interests in seeing donor funds materialise. These contradictions kept the donors engaged, but off-guard, and increasingly cynical. Only the World Bank and IFAD had prepared program reports by 1999. DFID recommended donor reconsiderations, stressing the potentially high cost of inaction.⁷²⁶ World Bank representatives reached a similar conclusion: "the risks of doing nothing exceed those of a failed attempt" (ICG, 2004).

Swanepoel stressed the need for the CFU to remain apolitical and observed that as the government grew less consultative, the stances of the donors and the CFU were converging, and that the government was isolating itself.⁷²⁷ Early in January, Swanepoel met Silas Hungwe and Emmerson Zhou from the ZFU, to lobby support for the IPFP and to push government to acquire the remainder of the 118 available farms by April.⁷²⁸ Government's first draft of the IPFP insisted on a target of 5 million hectares. The costs of the inception phase framework budget were estimated at about Z\$167million (US \$ 10m) and technical support at about Z\$40 million (US\$2million). In May, the World Bank agreed to release a US\$5 million learning and

⁷²⁴ Minutes of the CFU President's Council Meeting, 24 November 1998.

⁷²⁵ Minutes of the CFU President's Council Meeting, 24 February 1999.

⁷²⁶ E-mail correspondence with Martin Adams, October 2005.

⁷²⁷ Minutes of the CFU President's Council Meeting, 24 November 1998.

⁷²⁸ Minutes of the CFU President's Council Meeting, 27 January 1999.

innovation loan, with a further US\$5 million on completion of the initial phase.⁷²⁹ By the end of May about 40 of the remaining farms, measuring nearly 50 000 hectares, were bought at a cost of about US \$ 2.5 million, at prices that the owners were satisfied with.⁷³⁰

Whilst government's delays in producing the IPFP blueprint were due to disagreements about its scale and direction, funding and implementation delays were influenced by other factors. In early 1999, the IMF registered concern about Zimbabwe's involvement in the DRC, and the lack of commitment to macro-financial discipline.⁷³¹ In February and again in July, Herbert Murerwa, the Minister of Finance, tried to reassure the IMF:

the government publicly reaffirm(s) its intention to pursue the land reform strategy set out at the donors' conference in September 1998. The two-year inception phase of this strategy was endorsed by cabinet in April. The strategy will involve fully transparent procedures governing the acquisition and redistribution of land, the payment of fair compensation for land acquired, and immediate commencement of the inception phase that will focus on the resettlement of uncontested farms... Implementation of land reform will be undertaken in close consultation with stakeholders and beneficiaries.⁷³²

The letter also claimed that the costs of the war in the DRC were about US\$1million per month. It worked: in August the IMF released a \$193 million loan (ICG, 2004: 67). Michael Nowak, the assistant director for Africa, said that "land was 'no longer an issue'...and that... Mugabe's rhetoric did not worry the fund, which preferred to judge 'what is happening on the ground'." No mention was made of the DRC, despite a leaked government memo suggesting that real costs were closer to US\$1million per day and that US\$166 million had been spent in the Congo in the

⁷²⁹ "Zimbabwe: Donors Back Reform", IRIN Report, 19 May 1999.

⁷³⁰ See ICG (2004: 67). This works out at an average price of US\$50 per hectare, which is similar in real terms to the average price of land purchased during the 1980s. A University of Wisconsin project illustrated that the land market was transferring more land per year to black farmers on the open market (Rugube et al, 2003).

⁷³¹ Minutes of the CFU President's Council Meeting, 27 May 1999.

⁷³² Copy of Letter from Herbert Murerwa to Michael Camdessus (IMF), dated 16 July 1999: *Attached Memorandum*. See: <http://www.imf.org/external/NP/LOI/1999/071699.htm>.

previous six months, roughly the same amount that had been spent on land purchases since 1980.

The *Financial Times* issued a scathing response, arguing that Mugabe had:

received a bail out he does not deserve, on terms he is unlikely to implement, offered by lenders who ought to know better. It does a disservice to Zimbabwe and makes the Fund look foolish.⁷³³

The FAO and UNDP funded a workshop which led to a Ministry of Lands and Agriculture draft National Land Policy Paper, which again recommended land taxes and subdivision, transparency and consultation. It was the same territory that had been explored at every conference and workshop since 1995. The ICG report (2004: 68) claims that the “technocrats were sidelined by the radical elements” but this had happened much earlier as illustrated in the ZANU PF congresses of 1996 and 1997. By 1999 the technocrats, the donors and the farmers were all on the same side but it was too late. No one was prepared to inject funds into the deteriorating political mix, and the longer the deadlock ensued the more the political situation deteriorated. Towards the end of 1999, David Hasluck and Nick Swanepoel attended the opening of the ZANU PF party congress and reported heated debate noting that “the leadership was castigated by war veterans and younger businessmen party members”. Hasluck and Swanepoel were then asked to leave.⁷³⁴ The CFU had been aware of these ‘two camps’ within the ruling party for years, and noted the growing power of the radical alliance, but underestimated the significance of it, convinced that ‘sanity’ would prevail. In January 2000, DFID announced that it was planning to allocate U.S. \$8.2 million for resettlement projects through a Civil Society Challenge Fund.⁷³⁵ Stan Mudenge (Foreign Minister) later argued that this illustrated how the British government was trying to force Mugabe to hold elections without letting him have the funds to

⁷³³ *The Financial Times*, 6 August 1999. Also quoted in ICG (2004: 67).

⁷³⁴ Minutes of the CFU President’s Council Meeting, 26 January 2000.

⁷³⁵ Briefing: Land resettlement in Zimbabwe <http://www.oxfam.org.uk/landrights/ZimDFIDbrief.rtf>

fulfil his promises on land, thus undermining his popular support.⁷³⁶ While DFID's funding delays made little difference materially, Britain's stance was undoubtedly linked to the broader political contest, which is what the issue, for all interest groups, was now primarily about.

5.4.7 White Farmer Mobilisation and the Constitutional Referendum

CFU records from February 1998 record growing frustration among farmers over political uncertainties and the stalemate over land.⁷³⁷ Although the CFU tried to depoliticize its congress, members were increasingly tempted to mobilise against government, even within Council.⁷³⁸ In November the CFU noted that despite the obviousness of the crisis “the bankers and business community in Harare [were] doing absolutely nothing”.⁷³⁹ But while urban capital remained aloof, farmer disgruntlement joined more widespread popular discontent among ordinary Zimbabweans.

By 1999, farming members felt that the CFU “was not being proactive enough and should engage with the international community, the black middle classes and the ZCTU after the recent strikes”.⁷⁴⁰ White political remobilization was a response to deliberate exclusion and direct threats to their interests and security. The economic crisis was spiralling out of control, as illustrated in Fig 5.3, and for many members of the white community the time to press for an alternative government was overdue.

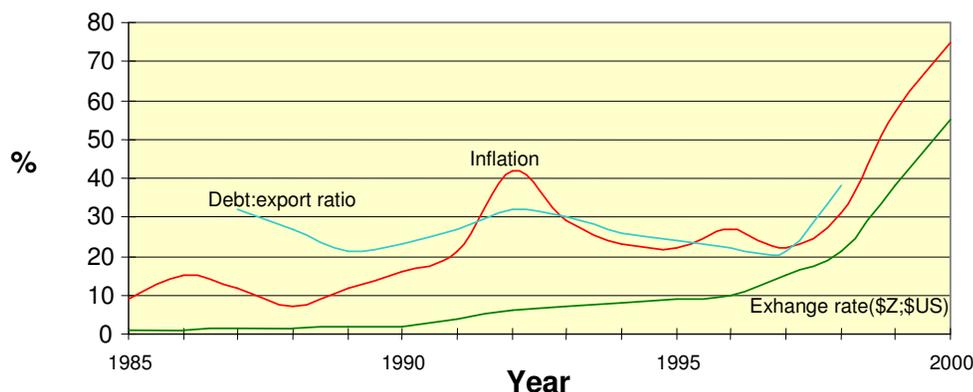
⁷³⁶ Simon Barber, quoting Zimbabwe's Foreign Minister Stanley Mudenge's address to an OAU meeting in Abuja on 9 May, reported in *Business Day*, 26 May 2000.

⁷³⁷ Minutes of the CFU President's Council Meeting, 25 February 1998.

⁷³⁸ Minutes of the CFU President's Council Meeting, 27 May 1999.

⁷³⁹ Minutes of the CFU President's Council Meeting, 24 November 1998.

⁷⁴⁰ Minutes of the CFU President's Council Meeting, 24 November 1998.

Figure 5.3 Broad Indicators of Economic Performance 1985 - 2000

Source: IMF Statistics (1985-2000)

The drafting of a new national constitution began through an alliance of civil society and church groups formally organised under an umbrella National Constitutional Assembly (NCA).⁷⁴¹ Government responded by appointing a National Constitutional Commission (NCC) whose drafting of a new constitution began consultatively enough. The draft constitution became a focal point for political contest as the NCA shifted its role to critique the NCC's draft. This increased political awareness and activity nationally. For commercial farmers the constitutional review began inclusively. Nick Swanepoel (CFU) and Richard Tate (ZTA) were both appointed commissioners for the NCC and the CFU was asked to submit suggestions. CFU minutes note that key issues under consideration included: governance, accountability, the Bill of rights clause and its influence on land, and judicial independence.⁷⁴² By October, CFU minutes note that the government and party drafts were quite pragmatic, but that two controversial clauses, relating to Mugabe's extended powers and compulsory land acquisition without compensation "raised much concern... were self-defeating in many respects, and were likely to scare away donors".⁷⁴³

⁷⁴¹ For a detailed analysis of the constitutional process see Rich Dorman (2002).

⁷⁴² Minutes of the CFU President's Council Meeting, 29 September 1999.

⁷⁴³ Minutes of the CFU President's Council Meeting, 27 October 1999.

Commissioners were not consulted on amendments to the draft which retained the controversial clauses over property rights and presidential powers. By the end of January the amended draft was being discussed extensively in CFU council. Mugabe's calls for Britain to assume full responsibility for land compensation prompted council to note that "Government were now refuting the donor conference agreements" and the CFU "feared that if the referendum was agreed, the donors would run".⁷⁴⁴ CFU issued a press statement rejecting the land clause without mentioning the presidential powers clause. However, at grassroots level most farmers were just as concerned about the governance clauses as they were by the compulsory acquisition clause. The ICG (2004: 69) noted that:

the official constitutional commission was ultimately reduced to something of a farce.

After the 400 person commission had deliberated for months, the drafting committee of senior ZANU PF officials rushed a version to Mugabe that omitted many of the key clauses at the last minute, including one calling for Mugabe to resign by April 2000.

The controversial clauses of the proposed constitution threatened to disenfranchise farmers, whilst the NCA and the newly formed Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) provided an alternative. Most farmers, across their divisions were highly cynical about the motives of these two clauses, adding to their concerns about the economic crisis, and mounting corruption.⁷⁴⁵ Whilst the NCA mobilised effectively in urban areas, farmers began to mobilize through local exercises, by urging farm-workers to reject the constitution, and by printing t-shirts and leaflets calling for a 'NO' vote.⁷⁴⁶ This unprecedented opposition from an unlikely array of groups amalgamated into a groundswell of anti-government sentiment. The draft constitution was

⁷⁴⁴ Minutes of the CFU President's Council Meeting, 26 January 2000.

⁷⁴⁵ Interview with David Coltart (MDC), Bulawayo, September 2001.

⁷⁴⁶ In the case study area key farmers, farm managers and farm foremen led the campaign for a 'NO' vote through discussion groups which concentrated on wider governance issues such as corruption and Mugabe's extended powers, rather than the land clause. These initiatives were well organised and effective and often based around football matches and 'VOTE NO' t-shirt distributions. In 1979, the RNFU and the RTA mobilized resources for the settlement referendum which gained an 85 percent approval. See Chapter Two.

rejected by 55 percent to 44 percent. CFU minutes note that that the result was “generally positive...that Mugabe had been called to resign from within the party... [and that] there are concerns at youth group movements”.⁷⁴⁷ The CFU Council, along with most farmers remained unaware of the political ramifications, which are discussed in Chapter Six.

5.5 CONCLUSION

Against Zimbabwe’s post-2000 upheavals it is easy to forget that the preceding period experienced profound changes. This chapter has traced the deterioration of relations between white farmers and the state during the mid to late-1990s and explored the stagnation in land redistribution. Rather than speeding up land transfers, the increased politicisation and racialisation of the land question by the ruling party became a central feature of the deadlock. It isolated white farmers and donors, and the more pragmatic and consensus-seeking elements of the ruling party and state bureaucracy.

Distinctions between the ruling party and the state became less clear during this period as alliances formed between an aggressive black empowerment lobby, the war veterans, and proponents of radical land reform within government. The perception by this alliance that ‘white farmers’ were resisting land redistribution brought an impatience and intolerance to the negotiations, which overwhelmed the diminishing influence and cohesion of ‘moderate’ groups. Although diplomatic government front men remained at the negotiating table, the real debate was taking place within the confines of the politburo. Government’s continued straddling of several positions on land evolved into an erratic and exclusionary approach to the reform agenda. Questions of land were absorbed into the confines of the party and the politburo, excluding farmers and donors alike. This prompted defensive farmer stances and donor reluctance and became a compounding process that fed on itself. Fundamental disagreements between market-

⁷⁴⁷ Minutes of the CFU President’s Council Meeting, 23 February 2000.

based reform and compulsory acquisition remained throughout, precluding chances of compromise. There was surprisingly little insight by farmers and donors into the changing nature of the ruling party and the state during this period. Both the CFU and the British government underestimated the seriousness and significance of these political reconfigurations, and both groups overestimated their own influence over the agenda.

The exclusion of farmers from policy-making was evident in other areas such as agricultural levies. From being heavily subsidised during the 1980s, commercial farming was increasingly taxed. The isolation of farmers, within this environment of uncertainty, affected attempts to implement their own coherent strategies, as well as defend their interests. Their strategies were increasingly reactive and disunited. Farmers' land initiatives such as the FDT were insignificant and not a substitute for land reform. Deteriorating communications and political and social pressures induced splits within the farming institutions, between the ZTA and the CFU, and within the CFU. Institutional leaders and structures struggled to retain unity and loyalty against these planes of division, particularly as the profile of the commercial farming structure had become dramatically differentiated through vertical integration and export-oriented land uses.

Ultimately, the mounting political and economic crises and the controversial clauses of the government's draft constitution became a focus of unity among farmers and other sectors of Zimbabwean society. As in previous eras, farmer divisions were overwhelmed by such core issues. Deteriorating macro-economic governance, increasing authoritarianism, and mounting corruption became focal points for criticism of the Mugabe regime. By 2000 the majority of farmers either openly or quietly used the constitutional referendum to call for political change. Much of the organizational and financial clout of white farmers was turned actively against the ruling party at local level. For ZANU PF, 'white farmers' had evolved from an inconvenience into a political threat, which signalled the end of the alliance.

CHAPTER SIX

Losing the Plot: Dismantling the White Farming Sector 2000-2005

“Our Party must strike fear into the heart of the white man. They must tremble.”

Robert Mugabe, December 2000.⁷⁴⁸

“From a bread basket... Zimbabwe has become a basket case.”

Morgan Tsvangirai, March 2002.⁷⁴⁹

“The CFU has become irrelevant to what is on the ground.”

Joseph Made, Minister of Agriculture, August 2003.⁷⁵⁰

⁷⁴⁸ Extract from Robert Mugabe’s speech at an extraordinary ZANU PF Congress, December 2000.

⁷⁴⁹ Discussion with Morgan Tsvangirai, London, April 2000.

⁷⁵⁰ “CFU now irrelevant says Made”, *The Herald*, 7 August 2003.

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Previous chapters have illustrated the differentiated and changing profile of the commercial farming sector, the deteriorating communications and increasing tensions between farmers and the state over the land deadlock, and the profound reconfigurations of a state in crisis. The 2000 referendum signified a collapse of the state-farmer alliance as farmers mobilised against the government's draft constitution. This chapter explores ZANU PF's reactions: its campaign to dismantle the white farming sector, its 'instrumentalisation' of land, and the broader impacts of 'fast-track' land transfers. It also examines the counter-strategies of farmers and the fragmentation of their sector.

The period since 2000 has been dominated by violence, political intolerance and intimidation, economic implosion, food insecurity and general uncertainty. It is possible to argue that the crisis was a culmination of unresolved race disparities identified in previous eras, but it is also clear that it has been dominated by ZANU PF's struggle to retain power. It is too early to analyse this period comprehensively and the polarised sentiments over land have clouded the more fundamental political contests. My analysis in this chapter focuses on topical questions relating to farmers and the state and what these can tell us about the history. Close examination of the pattern of land invasions and land allocations reveals important aspects of earlier land politics.

Research material for this chapter draws primarily on media reports, interviews, and evidence from my case study area. Since 2000, Zimbabwe has attracted unprecedented media attention,⁷⁵¹ and an emerging academic literature is beginning to unravel the post 2000 crisis.⁷⁵² Despite

⁷⁵¹ See Willems (2004) and her forthcoming doctoral thesis from SOAS.

⁷⁵² See Hammar et al (2004), which tackles three key issues: the politics of land and resource distribution, the reconstruction of the nation and citizenship, and the remaking of the state. Also see Lee and Colvard (2003) and Alexander (2006 forthcoming). Her final chapter is a succinct but comprehensive narrative of post-2000 developments.

renewed focus on other aspects of white society there continues to be a shortage of specific research on white farmers, which this chapter aims to counter.⁷⁵³

6.2 DISMANTLING THE WHITE FARMING SECTOR

The 2000 referendum result was ZANU PF's first popular defeat since 1980. Mugabe declared that he accepted the outcome and that his government respected the will of the people. However, within days commercial farms were being invaded throughout the country. Officials stressed their spontaneity but the political utilities of the invasions and evictions were obvious. They served multiple objectives: they neutralised a political threat, they provided an election campaign strategy, they detracted attention from more fundamental political contest and from economic stagnation, and they placated the demands of strategic client groups. The objective of this section is to explore the systematic dismantling of the white farming sector, and to illustrate how the strategic 'instrumentalisation' of land after 2000, provided a medium and camouflage within which ZANU PF could plan and implement strategies aimed at restoring its political hegemony.

6.2.1 Rejuvenating the Security State

Makumbe (2002) argues that the rejuvenation and refinement of the security state carries interesting parallels to the intransigence of the settler state during UDI and the war. Indeed, many of ZANU PF's strategies can be linked to the RF's policies of the 1970s. Had ZANU PF lost power in 2000, senior officials would probably have been held accountable for a range of unresolved issues such as the genocide in Matabeleland, key corruption scandals of the 1990s,

⁷⁵³ For example, see Raftopolous and Savage (2004), particularly the chapter by Karin Alexander.

and the looting of the War Victims' Fund.⁷⁵⁴ Senior officials therefore had a clear interest in retaining power which influenced ZANU PF's post-2000 strategies. The nature of the state changed considerably during the late 1990s with the co-option of the war veterans and the growing influence of an impatient and radical empowerment alliance.⁷⁵⁵ I argued in the previous chapter that Mugabe's concessions to the war veterans triggered increasingly radical strategies. Every ZANU PF conference after 1997 was dominated by an ascending alliance of radicals, increasingly prepared to challenge the 'old guard', who responded by forging new alliances; firstly with the empowerment lobby and war veterans in the 1990s, and subsequently with the youth and the military after 2000. It is only within the ruling party's monopolisation and militarisation of the state apparatus, that the land takeovers can be fully understood.⁷⁵⁶

Since 2000, the ruling party has systematically controlled the state apparatus and resources and subsequently militarized these institutions through strategic appointments. Members of the armed forces enjoyed regular and generous salary increases throughout the economic implosion and the CIO doubled in size.⁷⁵⁷ Military officers were appointed to oversee key public institutions such as the GMB, and the electoral commission.⁷⁵⁸ The army was integrally involved in the administration and organisation of the 'fast-track' land program and the 2002 and 2005 elections.⁷⁵⁹ Military officers were well represented on the Provincial Lands Committees and allocated themselves prime farms especially after the return of troops from the Congo in 2002.⁷⁶⁰ The distribution of food relief in 2003 and 2004 and the implementation of Operation

⁷⁵⁴ David Coltart explained that the MDC backed off the threat of holding Mugabe accountable after the 2000 election, over concerns about cornering ZANU PF. Interview with David Coltart, Bulawayo, September 2001.

⁷⁵⁵ Makumbe (2002) and Raftopolous (2004) explore the strategic alliances between the ruling party and the war veterans, members of the security apparatus and the youth militia. Hammer et al's (2004) analyses of 'remaking the state' illustrate reconfigurations of key groups within the ruling party.

⁷⁵⁶ For an analysis of the militarization of the state and its strategic use of fear and violence see Bracking (2005).

⁷⁵⁷ Interview with Brian Raftopolous, Harare, December 2003.

⁷⁵⁸ Retired Colonel Samuel Muvuti was appointed CEO of the Grain Marketing Board in 2003. See "Mugabe steps up militarization of state institutions", *Zim Online*, 9 May 2005.

⁷⁵⁹ Peta Thornycroft, "Mugabe puts Military in Centre of Election", *NewZimbabwe.com*, 24 January 2005.

⁷⁶⁰ In the case study area, more than thirty percent of farms have been allocated to members of the armed forces (See Appendix I). In August 2005, during his Heroes Day speech, Mugabe promised 6000 middle ranking and junior officers that they would be allocated land. See http://feoline.blogspot.com/2005_08_01_feoline_archive.html.

Murambatsvina involved the police, the CIO and the army, as do the ‘command agriculture’ policies of 2006.⁷⁶¹ Similar tactics were used as declining employment levels rendered the huge number of school leavers mobile, disgruntled, and primarily urban based - a key opposition constituency.⁷⁶² In much the same manner as the war veterans were turned from a threat into an asset, the government’s rejuvenated youth training scheme turned thousands of school leavers into an additional security wing for the ruling party. Concurrently, ZANU PF purged and politicised key civil institutions, such as the Judiciary, the Media and the Church (Raftopolous 2003b).

ZANU PF’s hegemony also depended on strengthening its resource bases. Whilst sources of financial support for the opposition, particularly white farmers, were systematically targeted, senior members and supporters of the ruling party were encouraged to consolidate their financial power. Land transfers were one element of a wider transfer of wealth and resources away from perceived sources of opposition towards supporters of the ruling party. Selective lawlessness and the nature of the economic collapse suited the process. A ‘shortage economy’ allowed ‘connected’ operators to profit. Price controls on basic goods such as fuel, bread and maize, created parallel markets from which ZANU PF supporters benefited with impunity.⁷⁶³ Parallel exchange rates allowed select groups to profit extensively in a very short period.⁷⁶⁴ White farmers, businesses and international companies seeking to ‘externalise’ capital, were prepared to buy foreign currency at heavily inflated prices. Connected members of the elite, able to access

⁷⁶¹ Operation Murambatsvina involved the razing of informal businesses and houses in urban MDC strongholds. Officials claimed that it was part of a slum clearance exercise, however the UN condemned the operation in a formal report. See <http://www.unhcr.org/documents/ZimbabweReport.pdf>.

⁷⁶² Zimbabwe’s population profile suggests that nearly half of potential voters are under the age of twenty five, and that three quarters are under the age of thirty five (Central Statistics Office, 2003).

Also see <http://www.census.gov/ipc/www/idbpyr.html>.

⁷⁶³ For example, in the case study area, Major Chriden Kanouruka purchased maize from the GMB at official prices and then retailed it at inflated prices. Discussions with farm workers from Zanadu, Glenbrook and Wengi Farms January 2004. This is supported in a written affidavit by the same farm-workers.

⁷⁶⁴ Many of these beneficiaries, including prominent politicians, immediately ‘externalised’ their gains, often investing in property in Cape Town or Johannesburg. The high profile cases of former Finance Minister Chris Kuruneru, and businessman James Makamba, are prominent examples. See: Andrew Meldrum, “Mugabe Minister Accused of Illegal Dealings”, *The Guardian*, 26 April 2004; and “Makamba Arrested Over Forex Deals”, *newzimbabwe.com*, 10 February 2004.

foreign currency at artificially low official rates, would then sell it on this grey market at the parallel rate, reapply for more foreign currency with the proceeds, and then repeat the process.⁷⁶⁵

The military intervention in the DRC provided lucrative mining and forestry ventures to key military and government figures, whilst others secured contracts for food and military supplies.⁷⁶⁶

Likewise, the sale of farm equipment, residential properties and white-owned businesses at deflated values to new farmers, members of the ruling elite, opportunists and speculators all represented transfers of wealth. Indigenous banks had been vehicles of wealth transfer during the late 1990s and stepped up their business to members of the ruling party alliance.⁷⁶⁷ With time, as the economic spoils have diminished, tactics to boost state resources have become more systematic and less subtle. Carbon taxes, car radio licenses, and mandatory vehicle number-plate changes all tax urban middle classes.

6.2.2 The Anatomy of Farm Invasions and Land Occupations

Zimbabwe's long and complex history of land occupations is well documented.⁷⁶⁸ Land self-provisioning and 'squatter' invasions were widespread before and after 1980, and throughout the 1980s and 1990s, particularly after the 1992 drought. Mugabe regularly warned about the possibility of popular farm invasions during the 1990s. In his 1996 election campaign, Mugabe said that he "did not want to send squatters to invade farms", but warned that he would consider

⁷⁶⁵ Interview with Dr David Hatendi, Harare, January 2003.

⁷⁶⁶ For a revealing assessment of resource exploitation by foreign interests in the DRC see the UN (2001) Report: <http://www.un.org/News/dh/latest/drcongo.htm>.

⁷⁶⁷ Seven Indigenous banks went into receivership between 2000 and 2004 and are being investigated for irregular banking practices. Thebe Mabanga, "ABSA's Zim Bank Pretext 'Nonsense'", *Mail and Guardian*, 19 October 2005.

⁷⁶⁸ For example, see Moyo and Yeros (2005: Chapter Six.); Moyo(2001); Alexander (1993).

it if Britain did not come forth with funding, or if farmers remained intransigent.⁷⁶⁹ So the chances of popular invasions were always obvious. Likewise, the potential for popular invasions to be used for political gain was well appreciated. Moyo (1994: 16) observed that:

a government and ruling party... bent on securing rural votes at any cost would have encouraged the numerous and continuous attempts... [at] systematic land occupations. Instead the government has forcefully or legally rejected radical land acquisition measures for 13 years.

I argue that Moyo's observation became relevant in 2000, when the ruling party's unprecedented political vulnerability (and need for rural votes at any cost) led to the encouragement and orchestration of the land invasions using the state apparatus. Whilst the program was portrayed as a populist-driven delivery of land it was well coordinated. There appeared to be three sets of objectives: first, a drive to destroy the sector's support for the MDC, secondly, a retributive agenda to simply remove whites from the land, and finally, an elite-led initiative to replace the land-owning group with a new and compliant constituency.

The outbreak of land occupations after the February 2000 referendum drew inspiration from the locally organised invasions of 1997 and 1998 and earlier 'squatting' tactics (Marongwe, 2004; ICG 2004). However, they were soon well-organised in most areas, and caught the CFU totally unprepared. Jerry Grant (CFU Director) told AFP:

I'm shell shocked, I can't believe a government can behave in this manner... the word is out that this is punishment for whites rejecting the constitution... it is orchestrated at the highest level... there are government and party vehicles involved in delivering [the

⁷⁶⁹ *The Farmer*, 15 February 1996.

invaders]... The police are aware of this and they're still doing nothing about it. They've had an instruction from the top not to interfere." ⁷⁷⁰

Information Minister Chimutengwende dismissed allegations of high level orchestration as "absolute rubbish" but conceded that "those who voted 'NO' complicated the matter... it is now leading to these invasions and I can only see more invasions".⁷⁷¹ Mugabe described them as "peaceful demonstrations... that only breach the little law of trespass".⁷⁷² He added that it could have been worse and, ominously, that it could still get much worse. Moyo and Yeros (2005) argue that the extent of occupations and violence was relatively low compared to other regional examples such as peri-urban land occupations in South Africa. However the controlled and strategic application of violence and lawlessness seemed to attract international attention and rhetorical condemnation, but little else.⁷⁷³

Farm invasion reports by the CFU and various rights groups such as Amnesty International confirmed pervasive involvement of government vehicles and personnel.⁷⁷⁴ In the case study area, Inspector Edward Mariwo (Member-in-Charge Concession) was integrally involved in the operation, often delivering invaders to one farm whilst driving to 'resolve' invasions at others.⁷⁷⁵ Close communications between Mariwo and District Administrator Mushaninga illustrated the coordination between local government and the police.⁷⁷⁶ Rural council and ZESA vehicles and staff were used extensively in local operations. Walker Gatse, the Concession ZESA manager

⁷⁷⁰ Editorial, *Mail and Guardian*, 2 March 2000.

⁷⁷¹ Editorial, *Mail and Guardian*, 2 March 2000.

⁷⁷² *Mugabe Smith and the Union Jack*, BBC Two Documentary with David Dimbleby, May 2000.

⁷⁷³ Charles Laurie is currently researching the use of strategic violence in Zimbabwe. His Doctorate is likely to be completed in 2008.

⁷⁷⁴ CFU situation reports (sit-reps) and JAG updates detail hundreds of incidents in which invasions appeared to have been orchestrated and in which the police were either involved, passive or 'notably absent'. See CFU records at http://www.cfu.co.zw/sitreps/2000/25_apr.htm or JAG daily updates.

⁷⁷⁵ This knowledge is based on personal experience with Inspector Edward Mariwo. Discussions with other commercial farmers in the case study area revealed similar experiences involving Inspector Mariwo and DA Mushaninga. Mariwo had at least five High Court Orders granted explicitly against him for contempt of court.

⁷⁷⁶ The coordinated nature of the farm takeovers, between the police and local government, was illustrated in subsequent negotiations. When telephoning Inspector Mariwo, DA Mushaninga would often answer.

was also a member of the ZANU PF provincial executive, as was the hospital administrator.

Moyo (2001) described the range of contests shaping the nature of land invasions:

The land occupation movement ... is politically organised but socially grounded. It had been instigated centrally but it was differentiated by the many different pulses driving it, including varied local interests of war veterans, traditional and other leaders and informal community organisations.

The nature of the invasions also varied with time. After the 2000 referendum, most were geared towards the general election in June. Invasions targeted MDC supporters and were an important element of ZANU PF's election strategy. War Veterans established 'base-camps' on particular farms in each area, which were then used to facilitate the election campaign.⁷⁷⁷ Farm-workers from surrounding properties were forced to attend 're-education' sessions during all-night 'pungwes'.⁷⁷⁸ After the official implementation of the 'fast track' program, in August, invasions became more formalised. The government's official 'fast track' plan distinguished between A1 (small scale) and A2 (medium/large scale) beneficiaries. Land occupations were then synchronized with official gazettes from provincial lands offices working on information from Provincial and District Lands Committees (PLCs and DLCs).⁷⁷⁹ The PLCs were dominated by army, civil servants and ruling party officials, many of whom were also war veterans.⁷⁸⁰ DLCs were chaired by the DAs and represented by members of local government, local party officials and local traditional leaders.⁷⁸¹ In Mashonaland Central the PLC allocated A2 farms, whilst the

⁷⁷⁷ In the case study area a base camp was established on Talland Farm.

⁷⁷⁸ *Pungwes* were all-night political rallies named after the Pungwe river valley, where they were first used by ZANLA guerrillas during the war. They usually involved the singing of liberation songs, dancing and chanting of political slogans. During the 2000 and 2002 election campaigns in the case study area they focused on beatings, public humiliations and intimidation into supporting the ruling party. Discussions with various farm workers, Concession 2000- 2002.

⁷⁷⁹ This process was explained to me by Lands Officer Zishiri, Bindura, October 2002.

⁷⁸⁰ In Mashonaland Central the PLC was chaired by Provincial Governor Elliot Manyika. Other members included Provincial Administrator Jaji, District Administrator Mushananga, Mr Chikowore (Provincial Officer, Agritex), Molly Mapfumo (DDF), Major Kanouruka (Presidential Guard), Wing Commander Gede (Air Force) and Chief Negomo from Chiweshe.

⁷⁸¹ Discussions with Chief Chiweshe, October 2002; Discussions with Chief Negomo, Chiweshe, November 2002.

DLCs administrated the A1 program.⁷⁸² In the case study area, all negotiations went through Concession DA Mushaniga who communicated directly with Governor Manyika and the PLC.

Invasions differed between regions and areas and local contexts often shaped individual occupations (Buckle, 2001). Initially, many were led by prominent war veterans with support from local communities, or disgruntled farm workers. In some cases hired help was bussed in to boost numbers and in others criminals were used.⁷⁸³ In Mashonaland Central, if a prominent war veteran or politician identified a particular farm for personal allocation, there was little chance of opposing the takeover. Local support, court orders, negotiated ‘downsizing’ proposals and even high level interventions were rarely successful.⁷⁸⁴ There is evidence to suggest that Joseph Msika tried to moderate many land takeovers in the Mazowe valley but was overridden by Governor Manyika.⁷⁸⁵ Many examples of high profile officials taking prime farms are documented in the press.⁷⁸⁶ It was a fast-moving, organized and flexible agenda, suited to intimidating the electorate, and to meeting the demands and opportunism of key party members.

As invasions gathered momentum they sometimes appeared to run out of control, particularly when opportunists and criminal elements became involved (Chitiyo 2003). The state media used this to explain the murders and assaults of white farmers, farm workers and MDC supporters. However, whilst local circumstances may have shaped the nature of specific invasions there is evidence that the murders of David Stevens, Martin Olds, Alan Dunn and Terry Ford were

⁷⁸² Discussions with Oliver Zishiri, Bindura, October 2002.

⁷⁸³ “Bindura’s ‘most wanted’ leads Manyika campaign”, *The Zimbabwe Independent*, 27 July 2001.

⁷⁸⁴ After the 2002 Presidential election many commercial farmers submitted subdivision proposals through an official ‘LA3 form’. Most offered to ‘downsize’ to 400 hectares and to help with the resettlement of new beneficiaries. These were submitted to the PLCs and received varied responses between provinces. In the case study area more than thirty are known to have been submitted, all of which were ultimately rejected.

⁷⁸⁵ In the case study area, six known subdivision proposals that were approved by Vice President Msika, were rejected by Governor Manyika.

⁷⁸⁶ For example, see Peta Thornycroft, “Zimbabwe police chief in land grab at white farm”, *The Daily Telegraph*, 24 November 2001; Adam Nathan and David Leppard, “Sainsburys supplied by Mugabe aide”, *The Sunday Times (UK)*, 20 October 2002; Pedzisai Ruhanya, “Reward Marufu grabs farm”, *Daily News*, 27 April 2002.

organised.⁷⁸⁷ A regular question at debates about land is why the murders of ten or so Zimbabwean white farmers attracted so much attention when hundreds of white farmers are murdered every year in South Africa. The fundamental difference is that in Zimbabwe most farmer deaths and the hundreds of serious assaults during this period were, at the very least, state sanctioned. This difference between insufficient state protection in South Africa and state involvement in Zimbabwe is significant.

Mugabe's clemency act after the violence of 2000 reads: "A free pardon is hereby granted to every person liable to criminal prosecution for any politically-motivated crime committed during the period 1st January, 2000 to 31st July, 2000".⁷⁸⁸ Whilst supposedly precluding murder, no perpetrators have been brought to justice, despite identified suspects in most cases. The farm takeovers became known as *Jambanja* (strategic violence or 'smash and grab') and its encouraged element of lawlessness suited the quick transfer of resources. Supporters justified it on the basis that this was how land had been secured by whites in the 1890s (Chitiyo, 2003). Breakdowns in discipline among invaders and selective application of the law cultivated a bizarre medium of controlled chaos, within which the white farming sector and the MDC could be systematically dismantled.

6.2.3 The Targeting of MDC supporters

The relative transparency of political affiliation among Zimbabweans in early 2000 made it easy to identify which white farmers, which black foremen and which farm workforces had voted 'no' in the referendum. These affiliations projected through to support for the MDC in the 2000

⁷⁸⁷ In the case of Stevens, a police officer subsequently confessed that the police were instructed to let the war veterans abduct him from Mrewa police station. Martin Olds death was a well planned assault by a large heavily-armed group. Alan Dunn and Terry Ford were both victims of targeted killings. Angus Shaw, "White farmer murdered in upsurge of violence in Zimbabwe", *AFP*, 18 March 2002.

⁷⁸⁸ General Notice 457A of 2000, Constitution of Zimbabwe, Clemency Order No. 1 of 2000.

election. Much of the pro- MDC campaigning was done openly and publicly and was perhaps most vividly illustrated when CNN broadcast scenes of white farmers presenting Morgan Tsvangirai with cheques. Mugabe was apparently “incandescent with rage”, and queried “how can you bite the hand that feeds you?”⁷⁸⁹

Although the CFU continued to stress its apolitical stance, ZANU PF clearly viewed local level political activity by white farmers, as a threat, which shaped the election strategy. Populist land occupations in the 1970s and 1980s had usually targeted abandoned or underutilized properties, or underdeveloped sections of larger farms. The pre-election invasions of 2000 were different; they often targeted developed properties with large workforces in Mashonaland. Invasions in sparsely populated areas and provinces were generally fewer, less violent and more locally organized than in Mashonaland.⁷⁹⁰ Before the 2000 General Election, war-veterans and ruling party militants moved systematically through Concession, Mvurwi and Centenary districts.⁷⁹¹ Farmers who had openly campaigned against the referendum, through transport, worker activism or t-shirt printing were singled out for early retribution. Near the case study area, Brian Martin held an MDC rally at Arda farm on the border of Chiweshe for which he was subsequently and repeatedly harassed by war veterans and members of the ruling party.⁷⁹² An interesting feature about this campaign was that the rhetoric was more anti-MDC, than about land.⁷⁹³ Farmers’ resources were often forcibly turned against the MDC during all three elections. Most were intimidated into supplying fuel or transport for ZANU PF rallies or had assets and resources

⁷⁸⁹ Angus Shaw, “On the run again”, *The Observer*, 9 April 2005. Interview with Denis Norman, Sussex, October 2005.

⁷⁹⁰ Matabeleland North was an exception in 2001, when ranchers were forced to abandon their properties for three months after Overt Mpfu initiated a blitz against white ranchers.

⁷⁹¹ See <http://www.cfu.co.zw/sitreps/2000>.

⁷⁹² Martin was eventually forced to evacuate the farm. Discussions with Brian Martin, Harare, January 2003.

⁷⁹³ Discussions with farm workers who attended these *pungwes*. April 2000.

extorted at gun point. In some cases farmers were persuaded to encourage their workforces to support the ruling party or lose their jobs.⁷⁹⁴

In 2000, Mugabe declared that notorious or racist farmers would be evicted first, but did not elaborate how these distinctions would be made, or who would make them. It seemed that being an MDC supporter was tantamount to being both ‘notorious and racist’. David Stevens and Alan Dunn were murdered because of their MDC activities and many other politically-active farmers were lucky to escape with their lives.⁷⁹⁵ At national level, perhaps the most prominent victim of persecution for MDC activity was Roy Bennett, who after winning his Chimanimani constituency for the MDC was forcibly evicted from his farm by the army under severe duress and subsequently jailed for a year.⁷⁹⁶

Land takeovers also affected black farmers and businessmen who were either linked to the MDC or refused to toe the party line, in much the same way that Strive Masiyiwa had been excluded from business contracts in the 1990s. Mutumwa Mawere’s reluctance to join the party cost him his business empire.⁷⁹⁷ His refusal to accept a ruling party nomination on a provincial executive, led to him being forced into exile. Edwin Moyo, a high profile businessman and MDC supporter was another obvious black victim of the farm invasions. His business, Kondozi Estates, which employed 500 workers and generated more than US\$15 million per year, was closed down after Joseph Made (Agriculture Minister) and Chris Mushowe (Transport Minister) personally invaded

⁷⁹⁴ Farm workers at Mitchell and Mitchell, a large horticultural exporter near Marondera, were apparently told by Defence Minister Sydney Sekeremayi, during the March 2005 election campaign, that unless they voted for ZANU PF the company would be closed and they would lose their jobs.

⁷⁹⁵ Ian Kay, from Marondera, was a prime example of an MDC supporter being repeatedly assaulted by ruling party militants who tried to kill him on more than one occasion. Discussions with David Kay, Harare, January 2003.

⁷⁹⁶ Bennett’s wife, Heather, suffered a miscarriage after one of many army-related incidents at the farm.

⁷⁹⁷ Hana Saburi, “Adios Zim, says Mawere”, *Financial Gazette*, 6 March 2004;

“Mawere blasts Gono over Arrest” in *The Zimbabwe Observer*, 28 May 2004;

Basildon Peta, “We’ll take over your company now thank you”, *Pretoria News*, 26 August 2005.

the farm on Christmas day 2003.⁷⁹⁸ Despite attempts by Joseph Msika (Vice President) to reinstate Moyo, he relocated to Mozambique and Zambia.

The results of the 2000 general election were disputed by most independent observers.⁷⁹⁹ Like the referendum, the voting patterns provided local level intelligence on which districts and often which farms had openly opposed ZANU PF.⁸⁰⁰ Alan Burl explained that the manner in which voting boxes were supplied and counted in 2000 in Marondera allowed election officials to calculate which farms had voted for the MDC.⁸⁰¹ Ongoing by-elections kept political tensions simmering throughout the country, and allowed focused application of ruling party resources to particular areas. Many farmers and farm workers remained anti-ZANU PF until the presidential election of 2002, but adopted lower profiles. Most farmers reasoned that the combination of economic collapse and international pressure would throw the vote even more convincingly against Mugabe. Farm workers in the case study area suggested that they would 'tow the party line' during electioneering and then quietly vote the other way, which many subsequently claimed to have done.⁸⁰² The organisation and outcome of the 2002 Presidential Election was also widely disputed, but illustrated the regime's determination to retain power and the limited ability of the international community or the internal opposition to do much about it.

6.2.4 Legitimizing the Land Invasions

Broad-based popular support for land reform did not translate immediately into invasions. State media claimed that there were 100 000 (one percent of the population) land occupiers by the middle of 2000. The CFU and the independent media estimated between 30000 and 35000 in the

⁷⁹⁸ "Zimbabwe loses out on High Profit Farm", *Business Day*, 17 May 2004.

⁷⁹⁹ The MDC launched appeals in 36 of 120 constituencies.

⁸⁰⁰ Groups of farms would organize transport for workers, so specific ballot boxes could be traced to certain farms or groups of farms. Discussions with Ian King, Concession, September 2000.

⁸⁰¹ Interview with Alan Burl, Marondera, January 2004.

⁸⁰² Farm worker respondents in the case study area claimed that their rejection of Mugabe in 2002 accounted for the blitz against the MDC in the six months after the elections. They were apparently told this by ZANU PF members.

same period.⁸⁰³ The Utete Report indirectly acknowledged that only about five percent of the population had benefited from land allocations by the end of 2003.⁸⁰⁴ It is difficult to accurately verify these figures, particularly with internal displacements and unrecorded self-provisioning of land. However, these aggregated ranges seem remarkably low, considering ZANU PF's concerted effort to sell the program internally, regionally and internationally.

The ruling party's 2002 election campaign ran on the slogan: "Land is the economy and the economy is the land". It succeeded in placing land at the centre of the political, economic and social crises, and portrayed its resolution as the panacea to the nation's problems. Media portrayals of vast areas of healthy crops attempted to generate public confidence and support for the project.⁸⁰⁵ Radio 'jingles' dominated the state-controlled airways and newspapers carried full-page adverts on the importance of every patriotic Zimbabwean reclaiming a piece of land. Even MDC supporters were warned that if they did not apply for land they would lose out. In some areas, those who did not apply were accused of opposing land reform – if you did not support it then you obviously opposed it, and were therefore an MDC supporter.⁸⁰⁶

Outrage among the international community was portrayed by Mugabe in neo-Imperialist terms. For example, the international media's focus on white farmers was queried against the neglect of black farm-workers and portrayed as evidence of Western racism (Willems, 2004). This offset western criticism and bolstered regional solidarity as he couched the issue within a wider development context. Mugabe also sold 'fast track' to a willing regional audience, playing on historical legacies of land alienations, which drew sympathetic responses, especially from countries such as South Africa and Namibia. State media argued that all other options, including

⁸⁰³ These figures are based on collated district reports. Interview with Gerry Davidson, Harare, September 2001.

⁸⁰⁴ The Utete Report (2004) claimed that about 130 000 people had been allocated land under the A1 scheme and 15000 under the A2 scheme. The report acknowledged that 93 000 and 7500 had taken up land under these schemes. Assuming an average family size of six, suggests that approximately 600 000 people directly benefited.

⁸⁰⁵ When Colonel Kaddaffi visited Zimbabwe in 2001 and toured the Mvurwi farming district he was shown the horticultural enterprises on Mick Marffy's farm as testament to the success of the new farmers. Discussions with Mick Marffy, Mkushi Zambia, April 2005.

⁸⁰⁶ Discussions with Mr Nyamaziwa, Bindura, November 2002.

market-based land reforms had failed, and even encouraged radical land programs in South Africa and Namibia.⁸⁰⁷ The same media generally understated the extent of economic and social disruption, and overstated the levels of success and recovery.⁸⁰⁸ ZANU PF propaganda concentrated on portraying all white farmers as unrepentant racists, and therefore deserving instigators rather than innocent victims, and at best as collateral damage.⁸⁰⁹

Within the program the immediate benefits for an average settler were good. Residual fertilizer and the low weed seed banks allowed a season or two of relatively easy cultivations. For A2 beneficiaries, farm houses and other infrastructure were key considerations.⁸¹⁰ Supporters of the program also saw important symbolic benefits, particularly among more radical elements for whom evicting white farmers was an end in itself. In Concession, a war veteran and army officer told me that “we would rather fail without you whites than succeed with you”.⁸¹¹ Mugabe often drew on this symbolism: “We feel that our land has been liberated. It is now the land of the people for our people. It gives the people a sense of belonging and ownership”.⁸¹² Symbolism and ties between land and identity, real and otherwise, were important elements of justification.

The economic implosion boosted the formal and informal take-up of land. Stoneman (1981: 128) observed that members of the peasantry, unable to earn sufficient wages for old age, were often forced to rely on the communal areas as a form of social security. As economic conditions deteriorated after 2000, so land became a means of survival for many. Its free allocation and

⁸⁰⁷ “Land: Africa Must Close Ranks”, *The Herald*, 22 August 2005.

⁸⁰⁸ For instance, Dr Murerwa, the Finance Minister, told Rwandan media that “we are a country where over 70 percent of people live in (rural) areas, and over 70 percent of the land was owned by 450 [not 4500] farmers.” See: “Rwanda Zimbabwe Ties: Interview with Dr Herbert Murerwa” *The New Times (Kigali)* 13 June 2005; Baffour Ankomah’s editorship of the *New African* portrays the issue in similar terms, exaggerating the success of the program, understating the costs and often distorting historical imbalances in land access.

⁸⁰⁹ The banding together of ‘all whites’ has been a common feature of ZANU PF propaganda, particularly through *The Herald*. For instance, see *The Herald* cartoon dated 6 July 2001, which specifically stereotypes whites. This is illustrated in Julie Taylor’s thesis (2002).

⁸¹⁰ In an illustrative incident within the case study area, the wife of a new farmer, upon arrival at her new residence, was utterly incensed by the fact that there was no cell phone signal, and immediately demanded that her husband secure a better situated farmhouse. Discussions with Cal Martin, Harare, January 2004.

⁸¹¹ Discussions with Major Chriden Kanouruka, Concession, October 2002.

⁸¹² “Land reforms Anchor Economy”, *The Herald*, March 15, 2004

association with the relative prosperity of white farmers had added appeal. Many displaced farm workers without *kamushas* (home areas) resorted to self provisioning, by squatting on underutilized and often marginal land.⁸¹³ Urban middle classes, many of whom had voted for the MDC, apparently began applying for land particularly after the 2002 election, reasoning that ZANU PF was entrenched and that they might miss an opportunity.⁸¹⁴ The Messenger of the Court from Bindura explained this to me: “I’ve applied, everyone is – if we don’t, others will”.⁸¹⁵

6.3 THE IMPACTS ON COMMERCIAL FARMERS

Having explored the nature of the farm invasions and how they were instrumental in dismantling the white farming sector, it is important to ask how they impacted directly on white farmers, how farmers reacted to the pressures at local level, and how this affected their organisational and institutional effectiveness at national level. Before doing so it is important to establish some key points about farmer and farm worker opposition to government. Firstly, farmer mobilization was about more than concerns over property rights. Secondly, farm worker mobilization was strongly linked to concerns about exclusion. Finally there were notable alliances between farmers and workers in opposition to ZANU PF, often dependent on personal ties.

6.3.1 The Political Mobilisation of Farmers and Farm Workers

The re-entry of whites into public politics was a response to their alienation from the decision-making process and their increasing economic and social insecurity. Constitutional proposals

⁸¹³ Within the case study area this was a common practice. Evicted workers, often without communal area homes, would establish settlements on remote sections of farms or move onto neighbouring properties. See Sachikonye (2003); Rutherford (2001).

⁸¹⁴ Discussions with Oliver Zishiri, Ministry of Lands, Bindura, January 2003.

⁸¹⁵ Discussions with Mr Nyamaziwa, Bindura, October 2002.

threatened property rights but there were more general governance issues at the heart of farmer concerns. The mounting scepticism of farmers towards government during the late 1990s merged with those of urban sectors, middle classes and industrial workers. High-level corruption and nepotism, particularly in the war-veterans scandal, the collapse of Roger Boka's empire, and Zimbabwe's questionable involvement in the DRC were national issues that united both blacks and whites. The referendum result provided a confidence boost for the growing anti-government alliance, as it turned attention to the general election and the MDC. White farmer mobilisation was generally led by younger more community-oriented farmers, but the activism became contagious. A young farmer from Mvurwi explained his involvement with the MDC:

When you consider the wider picture it was time for a change. We had this vision of taking Zimbabwe forward, of moving beyond the political, racial and economic claustrophobia that ZANU PF represented and this was the obvious opportunity.⁸¹⁶

During the referendum and 2000 election there was probably more racial integration within the country than at any time in its history. For many farmers, mobilizing for the MDC broke down the historical social barriers that stood between them, their workforces and the wider black population. It brought the sector out of social isolation in a manner that no other issue ever had. For some farmers it was the first time in twenty years that they felt sufficiently motivated to depart from the CFU's policy of apoliticism to express their sentiments. Publicity stunts of white farmers handing cheques to the MDC were symbolic gestures of rejection to the ruling party:

look, in retrospect it was probably poorly judged but there was no option... after the referendum we were on a roll. It was an exciting time. The atmosphere on these

⁸¹⁶ Discussions with Hugo Fircks, Mvurwi, September 2001.

farms was incredible. For the first time we were working together across race and station... united and motivated, with the same goal... it was inspiring stuff.⁸¹⁷

Farm workers are often perceived as passive players within the land, politics and race debates, even though they organized the largest strikes in the sector's history in 1997 and 1998.⁸¹⁸ In 1996, the CFU confidential security records show that workers on designated properties had reacted angrily because their livelihoods were threatened and they had not been consulted.⁸¹⁹ During the designations of 1997 and 1998, farm worker groups recorded concerns that they had been sidelined from land policy, and were not being consulted in the land process. The proposed constitutional amendments threatened the livelihoods of farm workers too, most of whom realized that they were likely to be neglected in land allocations.⁸²⁰ Close relations between younger farmers and farm managers with black assistants and foremen, had encouraged and promoted political alignments that carried through to the referendum debate.⁸²¹ Although a dependency relationship still existed between workers and owners this varied between farms (Rubert, 1998: Chapter 8). During 2000 the most politically active farmers often had close relationships with their black farm managers, assistants and foremen, who also became politically active and who often bore the consequences. For example, Julius Andoche, the foreman on David Steven's farm, was murdered within days of Stevens' own death.⁸²²

There are other striking examples of farm worker mobilization. In Shamva in 2000, workers colluded to drive out occupiers by organizing themselves in the guise of 'football teams'. Using

⁸¹⁷ Interview with Brian Martin, Harare, October 2002.

⁸¹⁸ For new work on farm workers see Rutherford (2001a) or Rutherford (Chapter Nine) and Tandon (Chapter Ten) in Raftopolous and Sachikonye (2001). For an updated historical assessment see Rubert (1998).

⁸¹⁹ Minutes of the CFU President's Council Meeting, 27 November 1996: Security Report.

⁸²⁰ Discussions with farm workers in the case study area suggest that they were highly aware of the implications of the draft constitution, and most were worried about their livelihoods. Few felt that they were likely to be beneficiaries of land, especially those who were of Malawian or Mozambique origin.

⁸²¹ In the case study area, Blaze Jowett, a manager on Howick Vale, maintained a close communication system with his workforce, and would often discuss political issues with his foremen. David Lines was another young manager in the district whose quick-witted fluency in Shona was widely respected throughout the local community.

⁸²² See: <http://www.hrw.org/reports/2002/zimbabwe/ZimLand0302-03.htm>.

a fleet of farmer's lorries, they systematically visited each occupied farm, and violently evicted A1 settlers and war veterans.⁸²³ Within days several hundred troops from the National Army descended on the area and terrorised the farm workers in question. In Concession, following Mr Ngwenya's occupation of Collingwood farm in 2003, farm workers and local town residents marched on the farm, with the intention of evicting Ngwenya, but were halted by an emergency deployment of military police.⁸²⁴ Rutherford (2001a) cites incidences of farm workers joining the land seizures in Hurungwe district, and collectively turning on their owners, but in general ZANU PF and the war-veterans accused most workers of being sellouts or white puppets, particularly if they were of Mozambique, Malawian or Ndebele descent.

6.3.2 Farmer Defences, Strategic Compromises and Co-existence

In August 2000 a Mashonaland Central farmers' meeting was held at Mvurwi Country Club. Tim Henwood, the beleaguered CFU President, was criticized for his placatory stance towards government.⁸²⁵ He handed the meeting over to Alan Ravenscroft, Ez Micklem and John Laurie, the elder statesmen of the community, all three of whom had been at the helm of agriculture during the war, twenty years previously. They urged a more cautious approach than during the pre-election period, admitting that their communications with government had virtually collapsed and that they had no way of knowing what the next offensive would be. This illustrated two important issues in farming politics: firstly, that indecision was emerging and there was a shift towards compromise, and secondly that there was a strong tendency among the farmers to resort to the familiar leaders and strategies of the past.

⁸²³ Discussions with Keith Butler, Concession, October 2002.

⁸²⁴ Discussions with Charles Gaisford, Oxford, May 2005.

⁸²⁵ This information is based on personal attendance at the Farmers' Meeting.

As *Jambanja* spread, farmers resorted to defensive tactics from the war years. District ‘reaction units’ were organised in much the same way that ‘reaction sticks’ had been formed during the war. Communication systems on two-way radio systems had become an integral part of communication for social and business purposes during the 1990s and during *Jambanja* they helped co-ordinate farmer strategies, much like ‘Agric Alerts’ during the war and in Matabeleland during the 1980s. Evening ‘call-ins’ and ‘sit-reps’ on the radio network provided updated information at local and national level, and bolstered community morale.⁸²⁶ The jargon of the war years returned too. Like ZANU PF’s reversion to liberation war rhetoric many older farmers resorted to terminology from that era, referring to invaders as ‘gooks’ and younger invaders as ‘mujibas’.⁸²⁷

‘Reaction units’ would rush to the help of besieged farms and quell the situation by outnumbering invaders, and bearing witness to events. These tactics would often ensure a quicker police response, however, as the retribution and intimidation of farm workers increased so they became unwilling to join sorties. Most farming districts employed professional security forces, such as Tsatsi Guard in the case study area. This was run by ex-policeman Rod Bowen and Sergeant Beru, both of whom diffused a number of standoffs, and both of whom were increasingly intimidated by war veterans, the CIO and party supporters.⁸²⁸ With time even farmers grew cautious about helping neighbours. In August 2001, twenty one Chinoyi farmers were arrested after helping a local farmer who was under siege. They were illegally jailed for more than two weeks. After this, reaction units nationwide were more cautious in their interventions and would often assume a ‘stand by’ position nearby.⁸²⁹ After the 2002 election

⁸²⁶ This observation is based on personal experience within the case study area, much of which was covered by the Tsatsi Farm Radio network.

⁸²⁷ In derogatory Rhodesian terminology guerrillas were known as ‘gooks’ and informers were known as ‘Mujibas’.

⁸²⁸ Discussions with Rod Bowen, Barwick, January 2003.

⁸²⁹ Simon Hale, the security co-ordinator for Nyabira district explained that it became too risky to help farmers under these circumstances, so reaction units would remain on standby and communicate by radio. Discussions with Simon Hale, Mkushi, April 2004.

when the process of evictions sped up and the army became more involved opposition was more risky, and there were fewer farmers left to rally.

Initially, farmer contributions to media coverage of the invasions were significant. Radio systems and e-mail meant that incidents on farms nationwide could be collated centrally within days, and instantly dispatched internationally. White farmers received disproportionate coverage, but much of this was due to their relative visibility and accessibility. Much of the video footage shown on international television was filmed by farmers on home recorders, whilst much of the print media came from telephone or e-mail. The CFU actively illustrated the plight of farm workers to attempt to deracialise the issue and highlight the wider political contest.⁸³⁰ The independent media within Zimbabwe recorded the experiences of farm workers and MDC supporters in detail during 2000. However, intimidated work forces and MDC supporters became less accessible for the press and did not have the same access to international outlets. They were also more vulnerable than white farmers and grew increasingly cautious.

After the 2002 Presidential election, as the 'hopelessness' of the situation sunk home, many farmers decided to compromise, mostly through subdivision proposals or co-existence agreements. In some areas these were negotiated individually and in others, such as the Midlands and Manicaland, they were negotiated collectively.⁸³¹ In Manicaland, Oprah Muchinguri (Provincial Governor) welcomed these proposals, and by the beginning of 2003 about 400 farmers of 600 were still operating on downsized farms. This changed dramatically when General Mike Nyambuya was appointed Governor in 2004, and by mid 2005 less than 200 farms in Manicaland were still operating.⁸³²

⁸³⁰ For example, see: www.cfu/sitreps/2000.

⁸³¹ E-mail correspondence with John Meikle, April 2005. E-mail correspondence with Bob Swift, August 2005.

⁸³² E-mail correspondence with John Meikle, July 2005.

Countrywide, farmers trying to negotiate subdivision proposals on LA3 forms were encouraged by relevant officials to withdraw their court cases, refrain from speaking to the press and to submit their title deeds.⁸³³ “Co-existence” became the catch phrase of heavily lob-sided negotiations between farmers, policemen, government officials and land occupiers during 2002. For many farmers it was a temporary strategy intended to buy time to make alternative arrangements, and to remove assets from farms. For occupiers it was an opportunity to get a foot in the door, see how farms operated and in many cases to ‘share’ their first crop. Negotiated compromises often resulted in crop-sharing arrangements in which the farmers would prepare and plant a crop on the understanding that they would continue operating and their new partners would assume a profit share. Farmers were then usually evicted before or during the harvest.⁸³⁴

6.3.3 The Breakdown of the White Farming Community

Community solidarity shaped the strategies of commercial farmers to begin with, but over time, amidst increasing uncertainties, farmer reactions became more inconsistent.⁸³⁵ The ruling party’s active ‘use of race’ from the 1990s escalated to new levels in 2000. At the 2000 ZANU PF Congress, Mugabe stated that “our party must strike fear in the hearts of the white man... we must make him tremble”. Joyce Mujuru (now Vice President), urged land occupiers to return with the blood soaked t-shirts of white farmers.⁸³⁶ Jocelyn Chiwenga, wife of the Army chief, allegedly declared that she “had not tasted white blood since 1980, and missed the experience”.⁸³⁷ This rhetoric of ‘race’ and ‘war’ and ‘blood’ and ‘hate’ set the tone of the anti-white farmer campaign. Many officials and proponents of the program resorted to *chimurenga*

⁸³³ Discussions with DA Mushaninga, Concession, November 2002.

⁸³⁴ Crop sharing arrangements were common in the case study area in 2002. Discussions with Geoff Detmer, Concession, September 2002.

⁸³⁵ For an interesting study of a commercial farming community see Taylor’s (2002) BA thesis entitled the *Politics of Uncertainty*, which examines the role of community in defining a sense of identity and belonging among farmers.

⁸³⁶ Trevor Grundy, “Bloody Pledge of Mugabe’s Protégé”, *The Scotsman*, 5 December 2004.

⁸³⁷ ‘I have not tasted white blood for 20 years’, *Independent Online*, 25 September 2002.

names and vowed to expel all whites. An official document entitled “Operation Give Up and Leave” was apparently circulated among ruling party officials and relevant Ministries.⁸³⁸ An extract reads: “the operation should be carefully planned so that farmers are systematically harassed and mentally tortured and their farms destabilized until they give in and give up.”

The invasions were traumatic for farmers, farm workers and MDC supporters alike, but it was often the more subtle and indirect tactics that were most effective in breaking the unity and resolve of commercial farmers. Buckle (2001) details her experience of a farm invasion and the manner in which her resolve was gradually worn down over time.⁸³⁹ Mark Butler, from Shamva had land occupiers living at his front gate for eighteen months. Every day they would frustrate some aspect of his attempts to keep farming.⁸⁴⁰ When farms were first invaded, occupiers would often keep farmers awake at night with *pungwes* directly outside their bedrooms. Settlers would make regular demands for food, water, transport, medicine, inputs and other forms of support. Refusing to do so was seen to be ‘unpatriotic’, ‘racist’ or at the very least ‘sabotaging the revolution’. Over time these tactics wore down even the most tolerant white farmers.

The sinister sides of the invasions also carried subtle messages. Livestock mutilations and crop-burning mirrored tactics from the war years, which had been used to break resolve. In 2002, north of the case study area at Forrester Estates, hundreds of cattle were driven into a lake and drowned.⁸⁴¹ At Border Timbers, in the Eastern Highlands, mature timber plantations were set on fire and on another occasion stocks of processed planks were burnt.⁸⁴² Farming operations were

⁸³⁸ C Lamb and D Bauber, “Mugabe’s Secret Plan to Evict all Whites from Zimbabwe”, *The Daily Telegraph*, 27 August 2001. The existence of this document was confirmed in discussions with an anonymous official in 2002.

⁸³⁹ For more information on Buckle’s accounts see: <http://www.africantears.netfirms.com/>

⁸⁴⁰ These included barricading his gate, keeping him awake at night, letting cattle out of their paddocks, intimidating his children and taunting his dogs. Discussions with Mark Butler, Nyanga, December 2004.

⁸⁴¹ Peta Thornycroft, “[Mugabe’s Men Drown Cattle As Thousands Go Hungry](#)”, *The Telegraph*, 16 December 2002.

⁸⁴² “Border Timbers Reports \$15 million in timber set on fire”, *zimsituation.com*, 12 October 2001.

regularly prevented or disrupted on principle.⁸⁴³ Settlers would sometimes cut down specific trees, not for firewood, but because farmers had special sentiments towards those trees.⁸⁴⁴

Family pets often bore the brunt of occupier frustrations and footage of farm invaders beating animals to death was screened around the world.⁸⁴⁵ Much of this behaviour was supposedly linked to the idea that stereotyped farmers treated their dogs better than their workers.⁸⁴⁶

According to several respondents, invaders sometimes justified their tactics in these terms, explaining that through these acts they were demeaning everything that was dear to the farmer whilst concurrently demonstrating that they meant nothing to the invaders. The cooking and eating of pet rabbits in front of a barricaded family was a particularly stark illustration.⁸⁴⁷

However, such incidents were not isolated. Dogs, cats, horses and other pets were poisoned, beaten and burnt throughout the country and veterinarians put down thousands of animals.⁸⁴⁸

The psychological aspects of the invasions seemed to have two motivations: firstly, to break down the resolve of the white farmers and, secondly, to effect some sort of vengeance - make today's farmers pay for yesterday through symbolic disempowerment. Chitiyo (2003: 164) alludes to this:

The white employer, especially the farmer, has traditionally been the 'big man' of Rhodesian and Zimbabwean society. Now they have to endure the ritual humiliation, violence and destruction of status; a 'disempowerment'.

⁸⁴³ During the 2002 winter season, wheat farmers countrywide had their irrigation cycles intentionally disrupted.
⁸⁴⁴ There are many accounts of trees on farm house driveways being chopped down and left as symbolic gestures. Discussions with Keith Butler, Concession, December 2002.

⁸⁴⁵ This footage was widely screened on most international television networks during the height of the farm invasions. For a graphic (and highly disturbing) photo essay of animal mutilations on farms during the invasions see: <http://www.africancrisis.org/Photo.asp?&State=V1&Subject=ZC&Page=3&>.

⁸⁴⁶ "Violence continues in Zimbabwe despite pledge to end hostilities", *CNN*, 20 April 2000.

⁸⁴⁷ Peta Thornycroft, "No relief for Zimbabwe Farmers", *The Telegraph*, 7 October 2003.

⁸⁴⁸ For example, see "Family Under Fire, Horse Burnt", *News 24*, 12 September 2002. Discussions with the head Veterinary Surgeon, Avondale Surgery, Harare, January 2003. Organisations such as the SPCA and the Wetnose Foundation rescued and exported thousands of distressed animals.

Ritual humiliations were a prominent feature of many incidents. Spitting in the faces of farmers, making them roll in dust, grovel on their knees, dance and chant *chimurenga* songs and ZANU PF slogans seemed to be conscious efforts to demonstrate power reversals.⁸⁴⁹ During volatile phases the process seemed to be about whites ‘giving something’ in return for historical injustices. They were expected to ‘suffer’ or ‘pay’ in some way. In August 2001, when the Chinoyi farmers were arrested (see above), they were shackled, shaved, forced to wear prison uniforms, and then paraded on international television. At the same time SABC News showed a farmer being forced to drink water out of a stagnant cattle trough, because he had refused to fix a water pump that had been vandalized by the same invaders.⁸⁵⁰ The brutality of many assaults and the inability to rely on the police or the law were, according to one farmer, “worse than anarchy... at least under anarchy you have the ability to defend yourself... even during the war years you could shoot back”.⁸⁵¹ It is perhaps remarkable that farmer retaliations were not more violent. Philip Buzuidenhout from Manicaland was the only white farmer officially convicted of violent retaliation during this period. He was found guilty of murder after running down a settler in his truck, and sentenced to twenty years imprisonment.⁸⁵² However, details of the incident remain cloudy. Bezuidenhout was married to a black woman and the victim’s family lamented the manner in which his death was used for political mileage.⁸⁵³

Unpredictability was also a big factor which, for most farmers, made ‘coexistence’ untenable. In Mashonaland Central ‘coexistence’ arrangements or negotiated compromises between farmers and A1 occupiers were often derailed by war veterans or party officials.⁸⁵⁴ Invaders were often supplied with drugs and alcohol, as young guerrillas had been during the war years.⁸⁵⁵ Seemingly constructive negotiations would be followed by sudden unexpected violence. Often when trying

⁸⁴⁹ Discussions with Mark Butler and Colin Huddy (Shamva farmers), Harare South, September 2001.

⁸⁵⁰ SABC Television Newsclip August 2001.

⁸⁵¹ Discussions with Dirk Buitendag, Harare, January 2004.

⁸⁵² “White Farmer Guilty of Murder” in News 24 (SA), 16 September 2005.

⁸⁵³ “Blacks take over white farm after murder in Zimbabwe,” AFP, 17 July 2001.

⁸⁵⁴ Discussions with Ed Cumming, Barwick, January 2003.

⁸⁵⁵ Discussions with Loreck and Kumbirai Kanouruka, Concession, October 2002.

to negotiate with settlers, farmers would be told to “stop calling us kaffirs”.⁸⁵⁶ Even though the farmers concerned were often quietly and carefully trying to calm the situation down this sort of catalyst would often drive the group into a frenzy once more. Maintaining this frenzy seemed to be an important aspect of the invasions. Elderly farmers were often subjected to worse insults because of their war histories and in many instances invaders refused to negotiate with older farmers.⁸⁵⁷ Ed Cumming put another view on negotiations: “it is impossible to reason with these people as a group - if one starts compromising or agreeing another will accuse him of being a sell-out... it seems that they are determined not to agree and certainly not to compromise”.⁸⁵⁸

The frustrations of countering invasions and the land acquisition notices administratively wore farmers down. Legal cases swallowed time and money and were increasingly ineffective. Alternative negotiations over farm sub-division proposals took up hundreds of hours and in most cases failed.⁸⁵⁹ No one in the police or government departments appeared to want to take responsibility, and this was perceived by many farmers as part of a grand plan. Farmer resolve diminished for safety reasons too as they became increasingly vulnerable to being set-up, under selective applications of the law. Duncan Hamilton at Forrester Estates was accused of hoarding grain. Jim Arrowsmith from Glendale was arrested on allegations of destroying grain after he buried chemically treated seed maize that was obsolete.⁸⁶⁰ Police inaction was frustrating for commercial farmers, but not as worrying as police involvement. The integration of war veterans

⁸⁵⁶ This is based on personal experience and on the experiences of several respondents. For example, Keith Butler experienced similar patterns during negotiations in Shamva. Discussions with Keith Butler, Harare, January 2003.

⁸⁵⁷ This observation is based on personal experience, but was common to many respondents.

⁸⁵⁸ Discussions with Ed Cumming, Barwick January 2003.

⁸⁵⁹ I spent nearly six months trying to negotiate a sub-division proposal with local government to reduce our farm from 670 ha to 400 ha, including a ‘resettlement package’ for the conceded 270 hectares. This process involved more than thirty different meetings with local authorities, provincial government and central government, AREX officials and Ministry of Lands officials. It was approved by Vice President Msika who issued instructions for its implementation, but was ignored by the provincial administration in Bindura.

⁸⁶⁰ Stella Mapenzauswa, “Zim farmer arrested on grain charge”, *The Herald (SA)*, 9 September 2002.

into the police service in 2001 saw a shift from passive presence to active involvement, and it became risky to report incidents to the police for danger of being arrested.⁸⁶¹

Rumours abounded as they had in the war. Max Rosenfel's wife, Mary, suggested that "if you have not heard a rumour by ten o'clock in the morning then make one up".⁸⁶² Fears grew about speaking to the press and general paranoia mounted. Before 2002, most farmers published their stories openly, but as the lawlessness and state oppression prevailed, it became riskier. Reports stopped naming farmers, and then farms, before finally reporting incidents with few identifiable details.⁸⁶³ The CIO was rumoured to be watching safe houses, and planting foreign currency or other illegal goods in car boots at roadblocks. White farmers felt visible and vulnerable and it became increasingly difficult to renew passports, gun-licenses, and work permits. Fears of being 'trapped' as stateless pensioners came to dominate concerns among elderly whites in Harare. As in the bush war, the impact on urban areas was deferred. Initially, farmers expressed frustrations at the ambivalence of Harare's 'town clowns' and their 'business as usual' approach.⁸⁶⁴ When the impacts of the crisis began to affect whites in urban areas after the 2002 elections, the rural-urban divide resurfaced. Urban whites increasingly blamed white farmers for the political crisis, even arguing that "if farmers had stayed out of politics none of this would have happened".⁸⁶⁵

Gratuity packages for farm workers became a key strategy in breaking the alliance between farmers and workers and also in breaking farmer morale. Before the 2002 Presidential election, government introduced a statutory instrument (SI6) requiring evicted farmers to compensate their farm workers for terminal benefits.⁸⁶⁶ Workers' unions, including GAPWUZ, joined the

⁸⁶¹ Chris Hart, a Glendale farmer, called the police to deal with a theft issue and was arrested. Discussions with Chris Hart, Concession Police Station, October 2002.

⁸⁶² Tim Butcher, "Agonising wait for Mugabe's White Africans", *Daily Telegraph*, 10 August 2002.

⁸⁶³ The CFU sit-reps have a statement to this effect. See: http://www.cfu.co.zw/sitreps/2002/03_jan.htm.

⁸⁶⁴ Discussions with Keith Butler, Harare, September 2001.

⁸⁶⁵ For example, at a dinner party in Harare in January 2003, a young farmer was subjected to severe criticism by white urbanites. Discussions with William Lowry, Harare, January 2003.

⁸⁶⁶ The SI6 gratuity formula consisted of a standard retrenchment amount equivalent to two months pay, plus a months worth of pay for every year worked by the individual in question.

fray and for a six-month period farmers were harassed for the payment of retrenchment packages to farm workers. Disenfranchised farm workers, vulnerable and traumatised, sought short-term security and increasingly turned on their employers, sometimes violently. Initially farmers refused to pay if they were undesigned, or had won court appeals, but as more conceded, so the process became a formality. In some cases farm workers conspired to ensure that farms were designated. Most farmers were forced to pay out in the end often to buy time to salvage possessions or equipment. Any mutual trust that had developed between farmers and workers was lost. It was an incredibly effective tool for government. The gratuities diminished the financial clout of the farmers and temporarily softened the blow for laid off farm workers, but perhaps most importantly it drove a wedge between the two groups and broke the remaining morale of many farmers. Government then taxed farmers on the pay outs.

Individuals, districts and eventually whole areas capitulated, but at differing rates as in the war years. Farmers support groups sprouted and psychologists and motivational speakers made a fortune during this period, advising farmers not to spend too much time together as this was likely to compound depression.⁸⁶⁷ Dr Kevin O'Connor explained the levels of psychological trauma experienced by many of his patients, who were predominantly evicted farmers. He described high levels of depression and stress related illnesses and the high proportion of children affected.⁸⁶⁸ An anecdote from a teacher at the Barwick preparatory school, in the case study area, vividly captures the bizarre contradictions of this process of white disempowerment. On a Monday morning, when stories about the weekend were being read out by eight-year olds, several traumatized white children delivered harrowing accounts of being evicted from their

⁸⁶⁷ The CFU instigated a farmers' support group. Stan Parsons, a former rancher from Matabeleland, who emigrated to become a businessman and motivational speaker in the USA, conducted several workshops designed to encourage evicted farmers into keeping their morale up and to look for alternative incomes.

⁸⁶⁸ Discussions with Dr Kevin O'Connor, Harare, December 2004. In the case study area three farmers died of stress related conditions by 2006 and another four elderly farmers passed away during the same period.

homes. Some of their black classmates described how they had visited their new farms, decorated their new bedrooms and swum in their new swimming pools.⁸⁶⁹

6.3.4 The Fragmentation of Farming Institutions

The fragmentation of the CFU marked the final stage of the collapse of white farming, and occurred along planes of historical division – most notably ideology, region, crop type and farm structure. Ideological differences first emerged between farmers prepared to compromise with government, and those intent on confrontation. Following the 2000 general election the first group reasoned that ZANU PF would not be ousted easily, whilst the second group felt that the elections had been so blatantly rigged that the international community would surely enforce some element of change and accountability. The latter group comprised mainly of evicted MDC supporters who felt that any compromise would undermine the chances of ousting ZANU PF. These two distinct pools of opinion were soon reflected in the politics of the farming unions and the indecisions over whether to take legal action against the government.

The Zimbabwe Joint Resettlement Initiative (ZJRI), a successor of sorts to the Team Zimbabwe initiative illustrated these divisions, but also the preparedness of most farmers to compromise. Early in 2001 Nick Swanepoel (ex CFU President) and Greg Brackenridge (Bankers Association Chairman), warned the CFU that compromise with ZANU PF was the only way forward, and submitted a proposal to offer government a million hectares of land.⁸⁷⁰ Revelations that John Bredenkamp had initiated the proposal did not encourage support from ordinary farmers. The CFU leadership of David Hasluck, Tim Henwood and William Hughes were seen to be an

⁸⁶⁹ Discussions with Paul Martin (Teacher), Barwick, January 2003.

⁸⁷⁰ Interview with Nick Swanepoel, Chinoyi, January 2005.

obstacle to compromise but immediately offered their resignations, which council refused.⁸⁷¹

With re-established authority the CFU then took over ZJRI and asked Swanepoel to lead the initiative, on the condition that he distanced himself from John Bredenkamp.

On the surface the initiative appeared workable. One million hectares of land was identified and offered to Vice President Msika. The farmers salvaged unity, and ZJRI became a central facet of the discussions leading to the Abuja agreement in September 2001. However both ZJRI and the Abuja agreement soon met the same fate as the IPFP. Moderate elements of ZANU PF, such as Msika, seemingly agreed with the process, but events on the ground were clearly being dictated by more militant members. Joseph Made (Agriculture Minister) dismissed ZJRI outright on the basis that “no deals were to be made”.⁸⁷² Sam Moyo suggested that Msika was interested in compromise, but that his influence was limited within the party.⁸⁷³ Like the IPFP, radical members of the party were not interested in compromise and had the capacity to prevent it.

In August 2001, Colin Cloete won a close CFU leadership contest against William Hughes, the younger but more articulate of the two Vice Presidents. Cloete’s election was remarkable for other reasons too. As an ex-Selous Scout he was hardly an ideal candidate to lead negotiations with an increasingly militant ruling party, and yet his leadership spell was characterized by compliance with government. By the beginning of 2002 it was clear that the Abuja agreement was irrelevant. For many farmers the failure of ZJRI dented the credibility of the CFU. The leaders of the CFU and ZTA were accused by their evicted members of protecting their own interests. Most of these leaders were remarkably unaffected in their farming operations, which seemed to be a strategy by ZANU PF to emasculate the hierarchies of the CFU and ZTA. The quiet diplomacy of the CFU and ZTA increasingly angered the growing number of evicted

⁸⁷¹ Interview with David Hasluck, Nyanga, March 2003. John Laurie, Mike Butler and John Strong were said to have supported Swanepoel’s compromise initiative.

⁸⁷² Interview with David Hasluck, Nyanga, March 2003.

⁸⁷³ Interview with Professor Sam Moyo, Harare, January 2004.

members who sought more confrontational stances. Eventually this prompted a breakaway of evicted farmers who formed Justice for Agriculture (JAG) in June 2002.⁸⁷⁴

JAG's mission was to secure justice, peace and freedom for the agricultural sector, expose the illegal and unconstitutional nature of the farm takeovers, and secure accountability for the events since 2005. Its first initiative was to compile a comprehensive 'loss document' and in August JAG facilitated a valuation consortium among estate agents to ensure independent professional valuations on land and improvements, aimed at future compensation and restitution claims.⁸⁷⁵

JAG came to represent evicted farmers, whilst the CFU appeared to represent those still farming.⁸⁷⁶ However, as the number of evicted farmers increased, so many members stopped paying CFU levies and fewer bothered to turn up to congress. Colin Cloete (CFU President) continued to pursue a non-confrontational approach arguing that legal action would simply anger government. A significant CFU split ensued in September 2002, when Cloete and David Hasluck (CFU Director) suspended Ben Freeth (Mash West CFU Chairman) for publicly denouncing government in a circulated e-mail. A backlash within the CFU led to a council vote after which both Cloete and Hasluck were asked to resign, which they did in October.⁸⁷⁷

JAG was soon wracked by internal divisions stemming from an uncompromising leadership.⁸⁷⁸

Insistence on including a claim for consequential losses (damages) in their compensation initiative were viewed to be excessive by some members, who argued that it would be pragmatic

⁸⁷⁴ The split was fuelled by the closure of *The Farmer* magazine after the editor's criticism of the CFU Council. Interview with Brian Latham, Harare, September 2001.

⁸⁷⁵ Other initiatives were mired in controversy. After the 2000 elections a young English lawyer, Jonathan Lockwood, claimed that he would take the British Government to court and win compensation for white farmers on the basis of historical obligations. Many farmers signed up, each paying £1000 to Lockwood, who then vanished.

⁸⁷⁶ This has an interesting historical precedent. In 1979 Dennis Norman insisted that the RNFU would act in the interests of those who wanted to stay rather than those wanting to go. See Chapter Two.

⁸⁷⁷ Takatei Bote, "Cloete, Hasluck Quit", *Daily News*, 30 October 2002.

⁸⁷⁸ John Worsley Worswick (JAG Chairman) was seen by many to be too dominating and confrontational in his leadership style. Ironically, his grandfather, Christopher, was an RF founder in Marandellas (See Chapter Two).

to simply claim for land and improvements, and, if necessary, just improvements.⁸⁷⁹ The formation of Agric Africa in February 2004 to pursue claims for land and improvements using the existing Valuation Consortium's database was not received well by JAG.⁸⁸⁰ It accused Agric Africa of pursuing its initiative for commercial gain.⁸⁸¹ JAG leaders also took a personal swipe at Bob Fernandez a founder member of the valuation consortium who had moved onto the Agric Africa committee.⁸⁸² At the end of 2003, the valuation consortium estimated that the value of lost land and improvements within the white farming sector was about £3billion (US\$5 billion). JAG estimated that compensation claims including consequential losses for both farmers and farm workers exceeded £12 billion (\$US20 billion).⁸⁸³

Given its history, the ZTA was always likely to pursue an independent route. In 2000, Richard Tate (ZTA President) is alleged to have said that "the sooner the elections are over and ZANU is back in power, the sooner we can get back to the business of farming."⁸⁸⁴ The ZTA continued to stress the importance of tobacco for foreign currency generation. When 'fast-track' was formally implemented, the ZTA allegedly tried to persuade government to retain the 500 largest tobacco growers. Kobus Joubert, Tate's successor, astounded farmers in June 2002 when he urged them to be 'apolitical' and to work with the government.⁸⁸⁵ He suggested that farmer politicians were playing with the livelihoods of others and that farmers should either compromise or pack their bags.⁸⁸⁶ This incensed evicted farmers and catalysed the formation of JAG which immediately accused Joubert and the ZTA of 'political prostitution'. Whilst the ZTA proposals were said to

⁸⁷⁹ Critics argued that the difficulties of calculating damages, would undermined the chances of securing basic compensation for land and improvements that could be easily substantiated.

⁸⁸⁰ Letter from John Worswick in response to Kerry Kay, [JAG Open Letter Forum, 22 March 2004](#).

⁸⁸¹ Agric Africa demands a four percent commission of any compensation paid out. See Ben Freeth, "Overview on Agric Africa", *JAG Open Letter Forum*, 14 January 2004.

⁸⁸² For example, see letters from Ben Freeth and Eric Harrison, *JAG Open Letters Forum*, 10 March 2004.

⁸⁸³ According to Graham Mullet about three quarters of Mashonaland farmers undertook some form of professional valuation exercise, and many took satellite images or aerial photographs to monitor effects before and after.. Discussion with Graham Mullet, of Redfern Mullet valuers, Harare, February 2003.

⁸⁸⁴ This story circulated in farming communities for months. It may have been hearsay, but Tate's flirtations with the black empowerment lobby and the ruling party are well documented in Chapter Five.

⁸⁸⁵ "Blunt message to Zimbabwe farmers", *Business Day*, 19 June 2002.

⁸⁸⁶ "No To lily Livered ZTA, CFU", *The Standard*, 23 June 2002; "When will Joubert Ever Learn", *The Standard*, 7 July 2002.

have been entertained by Msika, the radical wings of the ruling party were not interested, and by September 2002 most large tobacco farmers had been evicted. Duncan Miller's (Joubert's successor) 2003 ZTA congress speech was of a different tone and heavily critical of government. By this stage the ZTA, expecting a forcible takeover, had decided to sell off its assets.

Matabeleland's long history of institutional autonomy reemerged during the ZJRI, and during the JAG split. During the ZJRI crisis Matabeleland farmers opposed Swanepoel's moves for compromise and during the JAG split they opposed the CFU's decision to withdraw its legal action. Many Matabeleland farmers felt that they were not being consulted enough and that the CFU leadership was acting in its own interests, and not in those of its members.⁸⁸⁷ By 2004 the remaining 250 or so Matabeleland farmers distanced themselves from the CFU and refused to pay their subscriptions. Gavin Connolly argued that the CFU was not acting on principle or in the interests of its members and together with Mac Crawford, the long-time Matabeleland CFU representative, he established the Southern African Commercial Farmers' Association (SACFA) - a symbolic re-separation of the Matabeleland Farmers' Union. Doug Taylor Freeme, the CFU President, dismissed the move and declared that Matabeleland always had a history of autonomy anyway.⁸⁸⁸ But it was much more significant. The 100 year old unification of the MFU and the RAU and the CFU's 62 year-old unification of commercial farming institutions had fallen apart. By mid-2005 there were five independent groups representing the interests of former white farmers (CFU, JAG, ZTA, SACFA, Agric Africa).⁸⁸⁹ In April 2006 the CFU announced intentions to reengage with ZANU PF, but warned that it would only represent members willing to recognise the government. The remnants of this once powerful sector were once more divided along historical divisions: crop type, region, ideology and farm structure. They were divisions

⁸⁸⁷ Andrew Chadwick, "Breakaway Splits Zimbabwe White Farmer's Union", *Daily Telegraph*, 10 September 2003.

⁸⁸⁸ Andrew Chadwick, "Breakaway Splits Zimbabwe White Farmer's Union", *Daily Telegraph*, 10 September 2003.

⁸⁸⁹ The independent lobbying of the Horticulture Producers Council (HPC) and various corporate farming interests amounted to further divisions.

which had undermined the organisation of the sector during the colonial period and which had continued to undermine its unity throughout.

6.4 ASSESSING THE ‘FAST TRACK’ LAND REDISTRIBUTIONS

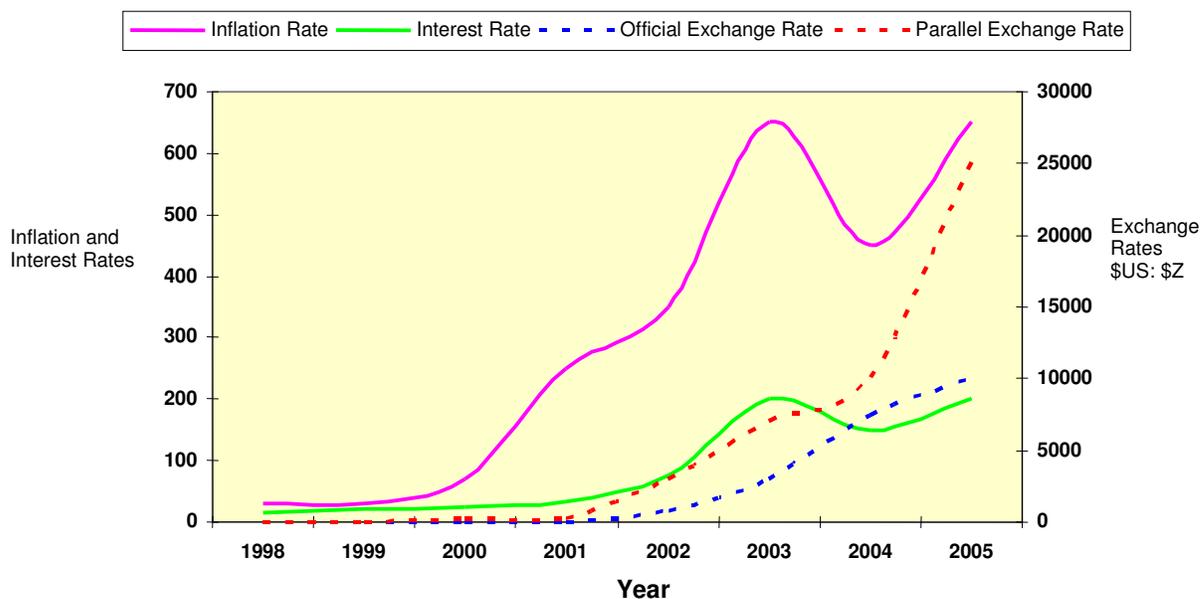
Five years after the formal implementation of ‘fast-track’ land reform, evidence of its repercussions is emerging. The independent and international media has concentrated on negative aspects whilst the state media portrayed them as inevitable costs of a necessary process. The state has argued two key points: that the process is irreversible, and that the recovery is being undermined by a neo-colonial conspiracy. The thesis essentially rounded itself off in the last section, but feels incomplete without some form of post fast track assessment. What exactly can an assessment of fast track tell us apart from providing an interesting directional prognosis? Analysis of the government’s own land audit is a good starting point. There are also some obvious questions relating to white farmers: Where have they gone and what are they doing? Who is still farming and how are they continuing to do so? Finally, there is an interesting set of questions relating to the beneficiaries of land reallocations and the ruling party’s overall strategy. Who’s getting what land?

The net effects of fast track are difficult to judge accurately, but macro-economic indicators illustrate the short-term impact of the crisis (See Figure 6.1). The *Financial Gazette* estimates that agricultural output shrunk by 13, 21, 23, and 20 percent in the years 2001 – 2004 respectively, and that agriculture’s foreign currency earnings decreased from US\$900 million to US\$350 million over this period.⁸⁹⁰ Most estimates suggest that the formal economy has shrunk by more than thirty percent since 2000, an unprecedented scenario for a country not officially

⁸⁹⁰ Felix Njini, “Sharp drop for horticulture”, *Financial Gazette*, 25 August 2005.

defined as a conflict situation. Zimbabwe's human development index (HDI) ranking has fallen significantly and the government admits that poverty estimates have increased by 21 percent.⁸⁹¹

Figure 6.1 Macro-Economic Indicators, 1998-2005



Sources: Collated Data from EIU, World Bank, IMF and John Robertson Financial Services

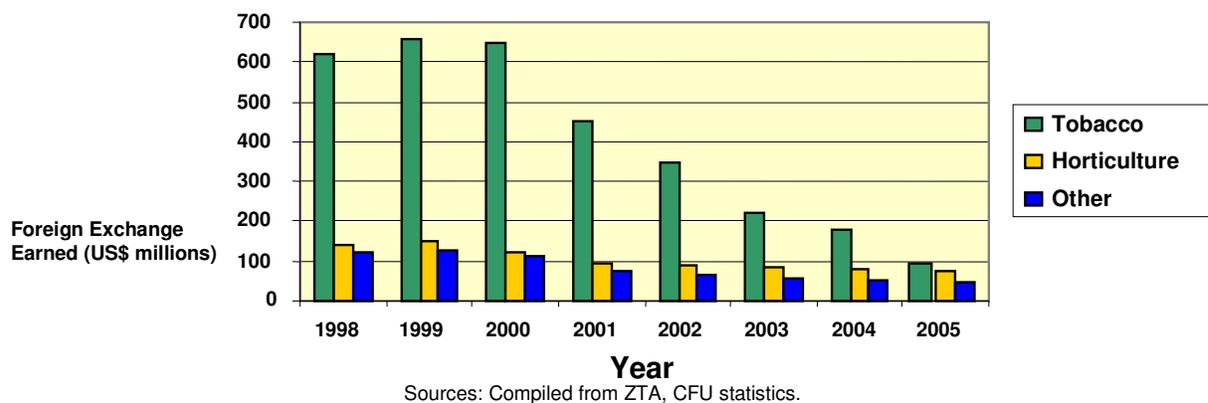
At local level, evidence from my case study supports this analysis of the collapse. No more than twenty percent of the arable areas cultivated in 2000 were being cropped in 2003 and horticultural and tobacco production had virtually ceased (Appendix I). More than 40 hectares (Of 55 in 2000) of greenhouse roses were abandoned. Formal employment levels dropped by more than sixty five percent and irrigated areas declined by at least three quarters.

Maize output is difficult to measure accurately, but Zimbabwe has suffered four consecutive years of food insecurity and food imports. Whilst there have been two years of regional drought most analysts agree that the disruptions of fast-track are primarily to blame. The Cattle Producers' Association reported that the number and quality of beef cattle has deteriorated

⁸⁹¹ Zimbabwe Human Development Report (2003) Ministry of Public service, Labour and Social Welfare.

significantly estimating the national herd at less than half its previous level. Beef exports virtually ceased because of foot and mouth, and although there has been a partial compensation with more new farmers, husbandry turnover rates remain low.⁸⁹² Other key crops such as tobacco and horticulture can be measured through their export earnings and even the state media eventually accepted the detrimental impact on the tobacco sector.⁸⁹³

Figure 6.2 Agricultural Foreign Exchange Earnings 1998-2005



The horticultural sector, which grew at an average of fifteen percent per year during the 1990s, contracted by more than 40 percent by 2005.⁸⁹⁴ Although there has been partially compensating growth in the informal economy, the net impact has been overwhelmingly negative. Most groups acknowledged this by 2005, but government continued to cite drought, sabotage by departing farmers or members of the MDC or neo-colonial conspiracies as the key reasons.⁸⁹⁵ Furthermore a recovery seems unlikely. The capacity constraints on new farmers, including limited access to credit, land tenure insecurity and input shortages have compounded a general lack of skills and experience, which are finally being acknowledged by state officials including the Deputy

⁸⁹² During the 1990s the commercial herd turned over about twenty percent of stock per year. The communal herd turned over about five percent, preferring to keep animals for draft power, milk, wealth and status symbols.

⁸⁹³ Darlington Musarurwa, "Tobacco Targets Missed", *The Herald*, 16 October 2005. The interesting thing about this article is that although 2005 sales mass decreased by about fifteen percent from 2003, \$US earnings halved to \$US117 million, reflecting the deterioration in tobacco quality.

⁸⁹⁴ Horticulture's export earnings of more than US\$150 million in 2000 fell to less than \$US90 million in 2005. See Felix Njini, "Sharp drop for horticulture", *Financial Gazette*, 25 August 2005.

⁸⁹⁵ Even in November 2005, Joseph Made was citing drought and western conspiracies for the collapse. His deputy Minister blamed land allocations. See "Made Speaks on Agric Production", *The Herald*, 2 November 2005.

Minister of agriculture, Sylvester Nguni.⁸⁹⁶ If established farmers are struggling within the hostile economic conditions then it is no surprise that nascent businesses are having difficulties.

6.4.1 The Utete Commission

In January 2003, the government claimed that 300 000 people had benefited under the A1 scheme and that 54000 farmers had been allocated A2 plots, but these were inconsistent with figures leaked from an internal government audit by Minister Flora Buka.⁸⁹⁷ In response Mugabe appointed an audit of the fast-track program, chaired by Dr Charles Utete. Although Utete was regarded as a Mugabe loyalist, the committee and technical team included reputable individuals.⁸⁹⁸ According to the Utete Report, of 11 million hectares acquired from large scale farmers only 6.5 million had been allocated. 134 452 land allocations were made on the A1 scheme, but only 93 800 had taken up offers. Of 15 000 planned A2 farmers, only 7 260 had taken up land.⁸⁹⁹

Government moderates and technocrats used the report to try to re-exert some control. Details of controversial land allocations and multiple farm ownership were confined to a confidential appendix, which was leaked to the press. However, subsequent failure to act on the recommendations of the report illustrates the dominance of the militant and radical alliances within the ruling party, which had ruined the IPFP in 1999 and ZJRI in 2001. The report also understated the impact of farm workers being evicted. It implied that most workers were based on corporate farms that remained unaffected. This was certainly at odds with the significant

⁸⁹⁶ George Chisoko, "Zim's Agric Production Declines", *The Herald*, 1 November 2005.

⁸⁹⁷ The internal audit of farming support schemes exposed high level scams in the disbursement of funds through the Livestock Development Trust Fund and Tractor Scheme. It also raised early concerns about land allocations to members of the elite. Innocent Chofamba-Sithole, "Leaked Report Details Abuse of Govt Scheme", *Zimbabwe Mirror*, 16 March 2003. Also see "This is Our Land", *Africa Confidential*, 21 February 2003, Vol 44, No.4.

⁸⁹⁸ The Committee included three previous Permanent Secretaries of Agriculture, Dr Robbie Mupawose, Dr Boniface Ndimande and Dr Tobias Takavarasha. The technical unit was headed by Professor Sam Moyo and included Dr Lovemore Rugube, Dr Chrispen Sukume and Dr Prosper Matondi.

⁸⁹⁹ "Land Audit Committee's Report Proves Government's Failure", *The Independent*, 24 October 2003.

displacement of farm workers in the case study area, and throughout most areas of Mashonaland. The number of displaced and unemployed farm-workers and their dependents was thought to exceed 1 million by that stage (FCTZ, 2001; Sachikonye 2003).⁹⁰⁰

The erosion of skills and intellectual capital within the agricultural industry is significant. Research stations such as Kutsaga and Grasslands are now virtually derelict, while breeding capital established over decades has been lost in livestock and crops.⁹⁰¹ An overriding impression of the 2003 Nyanga Symposium on Securing Livelihoods was the attempt by government and its sympathetic institutions to secure international funding for reconstruction, without first reconciling the events of the last few years.⁹⁰² The UN's funding of a food security conference in Harare in 2005, suggests that most of the key players were seeking to encourage reform through engagement.⁹⁰³ While most developing countries battle to penetrate international markets Zimbabwe has squandered privileged shares of beef, tobacco and horticultural markets.

Attempts to 'normalize' or legitimize fast-track have also ignored the infrastructural destruction and environmental damage, which is briefly touched on in the Utete Report. Short term coping strategies by local communities, increased significantly after 2000. In the case study area, tree cutting, poaching and water system damage is significant. More than two thousand gold panners occupied Falling Waters Estate on the upper Garamapudzi river. Some farms, including Zanadu and Glenbrook, had underground mainline irrigation pipelines and cables dug up and sold on the informal aluminium and copper markets.⁹⁰⁴ During 2002 three quarters of farms in the districts had irrigation equipment and electrical transformers stolen. Petty theft and crime levels

⁹⁰⁰ Other reports that have emerged in the wake of 'fast track' and attempt to make an assessment include: UN, 2002; ICG, 2004; World Bank, 2004. The last report was heavily criticised. See Chikwapuso, "World Bank Report Flawed", *The Zimbabwean*, 8 July 2005. Professor Sam Moyo had significant input into the UN Report (2002), the Utete Report (2003) and the World Bank Report (2004).

⁹⁰¹ "Land Reform Reaps Bitter Harvest", *Oxford Analytica*, 3 September 2003

⁹⁰² These observations are based on personal attendance of the event.

⁹⁰³ Eddie Cross, "Zimbabwe: Living in a Lunatic Asylum", *The Zimbabwe Standard*, 6 October 2005.

⁹⁰⁴ The largest internal market for aluminium is said to be coffin handles, due to the HIV AIDS crisis.

escalated significantly.⁹⁰⁵ Outlying sheds and barns had their corrugated iron and asbestos roofs dismantled along with fences, in some cases by settlers, in others by desperate farm workers. In short it is difficult to predict any form of recovery whilst the government continues to operate in denial, blaming drought, neo-colonial sabotage and anything else except the political expediency of 'fast track' land reform.

6.4.2 Where have all the farmers gone?

By 2004 there were differing assessments of the number of white farmers still operating. The Utete Commission suggested that 1323 white farmers were still farming on 1.2 million hectares, but this was an overestimate given that provincial lands records were out of date and only accounted for farmers that had been officially evicted with formal documentation.⁹⁰⁶ The CFU claimed that about 1000 farmers were still operating in some capacity, of which one-third were doing so by 'remote control'.⁹⁰⁷ This was likely to have been an overestimate to retain confidence within the sector. JAG estimated that less than 500 farmers were still operating, which was probably an understatement. The real figure was probably about 600 farmers on markedly reduced areas, of which about 200 were farming by 'remote control' (See Figure 6.3).

Of the 3500 evicted farmers in January 2005, approximately 2000 were in Harare, Bulawayo and Mutare.⁹⁰⁸ About 500 had emigrated to Europe and the United States, about 600 to Australia and New Zealand, and about 500 elsewhere within the region. Of these about 180 were thought to be in South Africa, 150 in Zambia, 120 in Mozambique, and about 75 between Botswana, Malawi,

⁹⁰⁵ The second-in-command at Concession Police station lamented the level of crime and his limited capacity to counter it. Discussions with Assistant Inspector Zimucha, Concession, October 2002.

⁹⁰⁶ Discussions with Oliver Zishiri (Lands Officer), Bindura, April 2003.

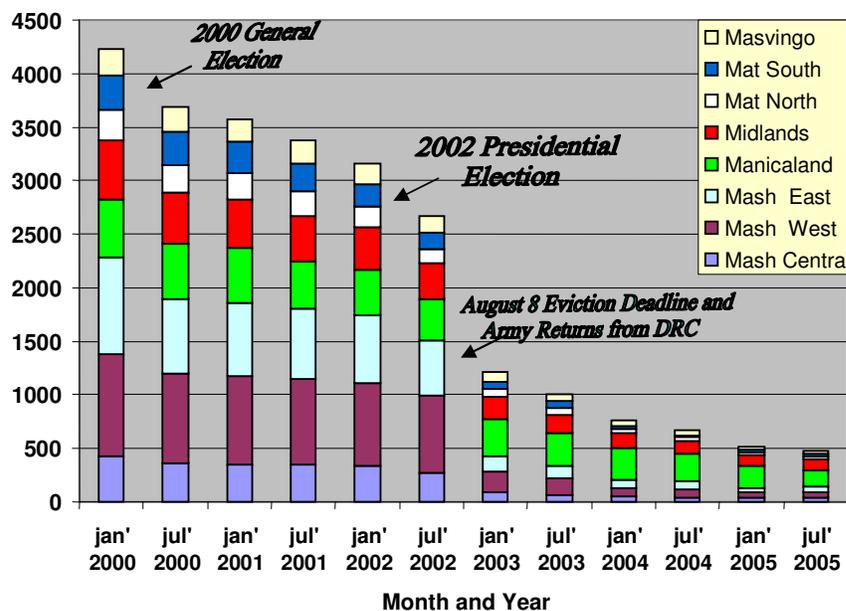
⁹⁰⁷ 'Remote control' was the system adopted by farmers who had been evicted from their houses but retained proportions of their farms, or leased land from other farmers, or felt too insecure to stay in farmhouses overnight. They generally lived in Harare, Mutare or Bulawayo from where they would travel out to farms during the day.

⁹⁰⁸ These figures are based on my observations and personal discussions with CFU and JAG representatives.

Nigeria, Namibia and Tanzania.⁹⁰⁹ Of the fifty farmers in the case-study area, eleven have emigrated to Australia and New Zealand, nine relocated elsewhere within the region, and five moved to Europe. Only three were still farming and the remaining thirty or so were in Harare.

Levels of tolerance, decisions about when to vacate and whether to emigrate varied, as in the war years. Farmers with young families often emigrated sooner, whilst those with children at school often delayed departures. Elderly farmers were reluctant to start new lives, or leave their friends, and were increasingly unable to emigrate because of age. Many of the remaining farmers have taken up alternative interests including transport, market gardening, aid industry consulting, foreign currency dealing and even fuel importing.

Figure 6.3 Number of White Farmers Operating by Province 2000 - 2005



Source: Collated from official CFU figures, JAG estimates, press statistics and discussions with relevant farming officials.

⁹⁰⁹ A scheme in Kwara State, Nigeria, has welcomed 15 white farmers. The governor has promoted the idea of a commercial farming sector in Nigeria, which imports most of its food requirements. Mozambique's Manica province has expanded its agricultural output significantly, particularly near Chimoio.

Those leaving Africa have mostly joined the Zimbabwean Diaspora in non-farming activities, although a few have managed to purchase farms in Australia. Those that emigrated within the region have generally remained farming. Zambia's agricultural boom is partly attributable to Zimbabwean immigrants.⁹¹⁰ For the Zimbabwean government, Zambia's agricultural regeneration alongside Zimbabwe's demise is an acute embarrassment, especially as most of Zimbabwe's food imports have come from Zambia in the past three years.⁹¹¹ The Zimbabwean government warned other countries about accepting 'racist' white farmers and actively prevented the export of tractors and farm equipment, most of which lay idle in urban warehouses.⁹¹² In response these countries have received farmers cautiously.⁹¹³ Even white Zambian farmers were apprehensive about a visible influx of Zimbabwean farmers, who many saw as a threat both economically and politically.

6.4.3 Who's Still Farming?

Interesting patterns emerge when we consider which white farmers were still operating in 2005. Most evicted farmers perceived that some form of collaborating with ZANU PF was the only explanation. JAG argued that the concept of apoliticism was farcical under the circumstances, and that continuing to operate under conditions imposed by the regime amounted to support for the system. JAG argued that while individual players might not agree with ZANU PF or its methods, their continued operations indirectly bolstered the regime. There are several explanations for how some managed to keep farming and these vary between regions, crop types, farm structures and individuals.

⁹¹⁰ "Zimbabwean Farmer's Boost Zambia's Prospects", *Oxford Analytica*, 23 October 2003.

⁹¹¹ Produtrade, a Zimbabwean commodity trading company opened a Zambian office in 2001. They won tenders with USAID and the World Food Program to export grain from Zambia back to Zimbabwe. In 2003 and 2004 most of Zimbabwe's grain imports came from Zambia. Discussions with Nigel Philp, Harare January 2003.

⁹¹² Discussions with relocated farmers in Zambia revealed stories about difficulties exporting equipment. By 2003 Chirundu border post was formally instructed to refuse the export of agricultural equipment.

⁹¹³ Peter Apps, "White Zim Farmers find mixed welcome in Africa", *REUTERS*, 14 March 2005.

President Mwanawasa told Zimbabwean farmers in Mkushi, that they were welcome but should respect Zambia's cultures and laws and that there was no room for racism.

Many farm subdivision proposals in Manicaland and the Midlands were accepted in 2002, and by 2004 these two provinces accounted for two-thirds of remaining white farmers.⁹¹⁴ Some ranchers in Matabeleland South also reached ‘downsizing’ compromises.⁹¹⁵ Remote enclaves of farmers have survived in other areas. Approximately twenty tobacco farmers were still operating in the Guruve-Centenary area by the end of 2005 - too far from Harare to appeal to A2 farmers and too productive to be allocated to A1s. Dairy farms were generally left alone because of their strategic importance.⁹¹⁶ Farms with Export Processing Zones (EPZs) were also ‘exempt’ initially, because they generated foreign currency. Fresh produce and flower growers with EPZs relied on the EPZ board in Harare to ensure their security. However, with time, even these assurances usually fell through. This was demonstrated in the Case Study area with the takeovers of Howick Vale, Mountain Home, Balley Carney and Montgomery farms by 2005.⁹¹⁷

Some white farmers certainly collaborated with the ruling party. The Midlands Farmers’ Association built close relationships with local political and army hierarchies during the 1980s and their land identification process in the Mid-1990s was the most consensual of the provinces. In 2004, the CFU Midlands branch asked members to contribute towards ZANU PF celebrations over the appointment of Joyce Mujuru as Vice President.⁹¹⁸ In the 2005 elections Midlands farmers were less subtle. Extracts from a letter written by Barry Lenton to Webster Shamu, the ZANU PF MP for Chegutu West, illustrated the stances of the remaining members of the Selous farming community:

⁹¹⁴ E-mail correspondence with John Meikle, June 2005. Email correspondence with Bob Swift, August 2005. Both respondents noted the risks of speaking freely whilst they were still farming.

⁹¹⁵ E-mail correspondence with Peter Rosenfels, August 2005.

⁹¹⁶ Discussions with Ian Webster, Harare 2004.

⁹¹⁷ See Appendix I.

⁹¹⁸ This was allegedly in solidarity with local ZANU PF heavyweight, Emmerson Mnangagwa who wished to appease the Mujuru faction after the ‘Tsholotsho Declaration’.

The Selous farming community has undertaken to donate diesel and petrol to assist with preparations for the forthcoming elections... Our community had to dig deeper into their pockets to raise donations that you requested for the successful implementation of your election campaign... we are proud that our donations helped you win the elections...The Selous community doesn't in any way doubt your ability to protect our properties as promised by yourself earlier. We sincerely feel you will do this so that our alliance remains put, between you and ourselves.⁹¹⁹

Colin Cloete (former CFU President), Kobus Joubert (former ZTA President) and Andrew Ferreria (ZTA Vice-President) were party to the initiative. This decision to compromise principles to protect interests had precedents in the UDI period. During the late 1960s Sir Cyril Hatty, a cereal farmer and previous Finance Minister of the Federal Government, was approached to join the Centre Party by Di Mitchell, to oppose the RF. He declined, apparently stating: "The only thing to do when you have a cowboy government is to become a cowboy".⁹²⁰ In the survey area only three farmers were still operating in November 2005: Ian King, the MDC coordinator was initially subjected to intense pressure. However his influence within the dairy sector is said to have contributed to his immunity and improved his 'communications' with local ZANU PF structures, much to the chagrin of other farmers.⁹²¹ Pip Fussell still farms a core section of Willsbridge which is attributed to his wife's (Fran) work as the medical doctor at Caesar Mine. The Ilsink family, who export roses to their company in Holland, are protected by a country-to-country agreement and an EPZ. However, even these arrangements appear shaky and inconsistent. Many other farmers in the district had similar protection agreements which were of little consequence.

⁹¹⁹ "ZANU PF Chefs Exposed" *Zimbabwe Independent*, 29 July 2005.

⁹²⁰ Di Mitchell, "The Cowboy Farmer's Legacy", *The Zimbabwean*, 5 August 2005.

⁹²¹ Discussions with Walker Gatse (ZANU PF Official), Concession, January 2004. Ian King encouraged many farmers in 2002 to remain defiant on principle and not to give in to ZANU PF's demands.

As time elapsed the remaining farmers became central sources of help for new settlers on surrounding farms. In Tsatsi, Bert Keightley of Wengi Farm and Pip Fussell on Willsbridge operated throughout 2003 and 2004 in this manner.⁹²² Settler demands included help with seed, fertilizer, cultivation and expertise. Individual arrangements were usually negotiated in an environment of uncertainty and unpredictability in which bargaining positions were increasingly stacked against white farmers. For most farmers it was not a question of if, but when and how they would have to leave, and what possessions and equipment they would be able to salvage.

Insufficient attention is paid to the corporate farming sector, consisting of very large-scale land owners, and multinationals, who own the lion's share of un-seized land and have become successors to the Rhodesian land companies. They keep a low profile and lobby directly in the same manner that they did during UDI. The Lonrho scandal in the 1960s illustrated the preparedness of big business to work with controversial regimes. In a remarkable echo, Nicholas van Hoogstraten, the British property tycoon, is now Zimbabwe's largest private landowner and an overt ZANU PF supporter.⁹²³ In 1998, at the time of the Land Donor's Conference, he purchased Willoughby's Consolidated from Lonrho for about £5 million.⁹²⁴ The investment included about 250 000 hectares on Central Estates, Essexvale and Eastdale Ranches and five smaller properties. Van Hoogstraten secured a CSC contract to supply beef to Zimbabwean troops in the Congo and is reported to have underwritten arms deals for Mugabe.⁹²⁵ Although Central Estates was invaded whilst Van Hoogstraten was in a British prison, the army evicted the settlers on his release. He now lives fulltime in Zimbabwe and has purchased controlling shares in Hwange Colliery, First National Merchant Bank, and Rainbow Tourism Group.⁹²⁶

⁹²² Discussions with Bert Keightley, Mkushi, April 2005.

⁹²³ Van Hoogstraten's manslaughter conviction was overturned on a technicality, but a civil court found him guilty.

⁹²⁴ Van Hoogstraten purchased Willoughby's consolidated off the London Stock exchange in 1998, after it made a 23% loss in 1997. This is much of the same land amassed by Sir John Willoughby in the 1890s (See Chapter One).

⁹²⁵ "White Capitalists and ZANU PF", *Sunday Mirror*, 12 December 2004; "Mugabe takes farm from White Ally", *The Independent (UK)* 13 May 2002.

⁹²⁶ "British Tycoon Consolidates Grip on Zimbabwe's Anaemic Economy", *Zim Online*, 15 October 2005.

The Oppenheimer family has significant land holdings in private ownership, as well as through De Beers and Anglo American.⁹²⁷ Nikky Oppenheimer was accused by various government officials of owning farms the size of Belgium and Mugabe singled him out during his 2002 election campaign. Debshan Ranch (short for DeBeers Shangani) exceeds 130 000 hectares and together with Anglo American holdings the Oppenheims are connected to more than 240 000 hectares (about ten percent of Belgium). In September 2000, Oppenheimer offered the Zimbabwean government 34 000 ha of Debshan Ranch and a \$2 million trust fund for the new settlers, if the remainder of their properties were left alone. A year later the government asked for 65 000 ha. In substance, these properties remain operationally intact, which some observers attribute to Oppenheimer's influence on key commodity and resource markets in the sub-region.

Forrester Estates, owned by the von Pezoldts, an Austrian family, amounts to about 10 000 hectares of regions II and III in the Mvurwi district. The estate experienced significant disruptions before 2002, but was protected under a country-to-country agreement and continues to operate. The family also owns a controlling stake in Border Timbers Ltd, the Harare-listed forestry concern, that owns an estimated 50 000 ha of land on five estates in the Eastern highlands, all of which are still operating, despite varying degrees of disruption by local communities.

John Bredenkamp, the sanctions buster and controversial businessman, moved back to Zimbabwe from the UK after being cited in the UN (2001) report into exploitation of resources in the DRC. He focused on strategic property investments rather than extensive land holdings. These include a string of safari lodges in Mozambique, South Africa and Zimbabwe.⁹²⁸

Bredenkamp retains close links to members of the ruling elite which he argues are purely for

⁹²⁷ See: "Zimbabwe Seizes Oppenheimer Land", *Business Day*, 7 Nov 2001; *Zimbabwe Independent*, 8 August 2003; *Mail and Guardian*, 25 March 2005.

⁹²⁸ These include luxury safari lodges such as Big Five on the Zambezi, Sanyati at Kariba, Clouds End at Mukuti and Margaruque and St Carolina Islands in Mozambique.

business purposes. His farm, Thetford Estate in the Mazowe valley, is listed, but un-invaded, and he has continued to invest in rose projects, fuel companies, wildlife and infrastructure.⁹²⁹

In other cases strategic partnerships emerged. Charles Davy, a professional hunting facilitator was a business partner of Webster Shamu (ZANU PF Minister) and has secured many of the prime hunting concessions through his company HHK safaris. These adaptive but controversial strategies were exhibited at other levels too. A young white ex-farmer, sold his tractors bought construction equipment and subsequently contracted his bulldozers to raze shacks during Operation Murambatsvina. He justified this business on the grounds that:

this is Africa, you have to make a plan, and if that means doing business with guys that aren't very nice then so be it. It was cash up front no questions asked ... It's survival of the fittest my friend... (if) you want to live here, you must play the game.⁹³⁰

Also 'playing the game', in strategic ways, are domestic and international corporations. Large domestic corporate interests such as the tea companies have adapted through managements structures and shareholdings on the ZSE, often through investments by consortiums linked to the ruling party.⁹³¹ Under testing economic conditions, multinationals such as Anglo American are inadvertently cornered into keeping the economy afloat, just as many multinationals were during the 1970s. Most of these interests have become involved in securing fuel and electricity supplies independently. Universal Leaf tobacco (ULT) has been criticized for procuring fuel supplies for

⁹²⁹ Interview with Costa Pafitas, Thetford Estate, January 2005. Pafitas, Mugabe's former press secretary, is now Bredenkamp's PR officer and did not deny proximity to key members of ZANU PF, but argued that BRECO's interests were business oriented, and nothing more.

⁹³⁰ Telephone discussions with source who asked to remain anonymous, August 2005.

⁹³¹ For example Tanganda Tea Company and Cairns Foods have experienced notable share transfers since 2000, whilst the companies themselves have retained their operation and land.

tobacco farmers to protect its interests within the country.⁹³² Standard Chartered Bank has been accused of bolstering the regime by securing a US\$80 million credit line.⁹³³ The same ethical debates about companies dealing with Rhodesian and South African regimes in the 1970s and 1980s have re-emerged.

6.4.4 Who's Getting What Land?

Land invasions were largely aimed at disenfranchising a group that had become politically threatening. Land allocations were ostensibly aimed at placating important client groups.

The allocation of land to A2 beneficiaries reveals much about the blueprint behind fast track. Behind the modalities of land allocations within an 'official' program run by the 'official' bureaucracies of lands committees was an agenda to forge new land-based alliances. ZANU PF's attempts to recreate strategic alliances have been brazenly illustrated in other sectors. At a meeting with heads of business in 2005, Elliot Manyika (ZANU PF's political commissar) reminded leaders of the CZI (Confederation of Zimbabwe Industries) and ZCC (Zimbabwe Chamber of Commerce) that seventy percent of Zimbabwe's listed companies were now in black hands, and that for this they owed the ruling party their allegiance.⁹³⁴ On a related angle, calls for international investment from Libyan farmers and latterly the Chinese state farming company suggest that the allocation of land to landless Zimbabweans has been of less concern than allocating prime land to financially capable, but politically compliant groups.⁹³⁵ It has been more about changing the participants than changing the dualist system.

⁹³² "Legal Battle Threatens Tobacco Sector Growth", *Oxford Analytica*, 23 June 2005.

⁹³³ Michael Holman, "Should UK Banks do Business in Zimbabwe?", *The Times (UK)*, 1 November 2005.

⁹³⁴ "ZANU PF summons Industry Bosses", *The Financial Gazette*, 13 October 2000.

⁹³⁵ "Zimbabwe: China Turns Down Mugabe's Farm Offer", *ZimOnline*, 12 October 2005

The selective promotion of black entrepreneurial interests in the 1990s through empowerment was aimed at creating and bolstering supportive economic clout through compliant interest groups.⁹³⁶ After 2000 the selectiveness of land allocations to A2 beneficiaries was a less subtle means of placating key groups and individuals. According to the Utete commission, 35 percent of land seized was allocated to A2 beneficiaries. Much of this was better land in terms of infrastructure, soil-types and locations, and the majority of A2 beneficiaries are connected to the regime in some way or other. In Matabeleland land allocations among key ruling party and security chiefs were also strategically decided. For example, many are along the course of the proposed Zambezi pipeline project.⁹³⁷ The spoils of ‘fast track’ have gone disproportionately to members and supporters of the regime. Virtually every senior party official, army officer, police chief or CIO officer has secured a prime A2 farm. The war veteran leaders have similarly benefited from A2 farms, along with key individuals in the judiciary, the church and state media houses.⁹³⁸

Justice for Agriculture (JAG) began compiling a comprehensive list of A2 beneficiaries in 2002. The group has a clear agenda in exposing what they perceive to be blatant clientist politics, but as a JAG representative argued: “it is in everyone’s interest to ensure that this list is as accurate as possible... the pattern of allocations is too blatant to warrant distortions... deliberate inaccuracies are unnecessary and lose us credibility”. When compared to my case study area and the government listings for Mashonaland Central the JAG list appears to be accurate.⁹³⁹

With time the land allocations have become increasingly dominated by members of the security apparatus, particularly since Zimbabwe’s withdrawal from the war in the DRC at the end of

⁹³⁶ “We Prefer Indigenous Capitalism: President”, *The Sunday Mail*, January 6, 1991.

⁹³⁷ Njabulo Ncube, “Chefs in fresh land grab orgy in Mat North”, *Financial Gazette*, 25 August 2005. This was supported in Email correspondence with Bill McKinney, August 2005.

⁹³⁸ For example, Chief Justice Chidyausiku, Bishop Albert Kunonga, Ruben Barwe and Ibbo Mandaza have all secured prime farms.

⁹³⁹ I compared a sample of farms from the JAG list of allocations with the official Government lists obtained from Bindura. I also compared land allocations in the case study area. For the most part, all three agree.

2002. John Nkomo compared the allocation of land to war veterans and members of the army with the ex- servicemen schemes after both World Wars, when white veterans were allocated farms. Within the survey area nearly half of the farm allocations have gone to members of the army, police or CIO (Appendix I). These land takeovers were often the most violent and contentious. Moreover, the most underutilized land after fast-track appears to be that under the control of the highest profile A2 beneficiaries.⁹⁴⁰ Leys (1959: 98) noted the prestige factor for which farmers held or aspired to land ownership during the colonial era and that prominent individuals often had farms alongside other occupations. Prestige has clearly been an important element of the recent farm access and allocation exercise, illustrated in the widely recognized concept of the ‘weekend braai farmer’.

The list of land beneficiaries on prime farms is telling, particularly in Mashonaland and especially Mashonaland Central. A ‘Confidential Addendum’ to the Utete report exposes a sample of multiple farm seizures by particular individuals.⁹⁴¹ Confidential government files from the Bindura Lands Office in Mashonaland Central illustrate the significance of war veterans, members of the civil service and members of the ruling-party in allocating and benefiting from productive farms.⁹⁴² Governor Manyika retained the final say in virtually every A2 allocation. In this respect Mashonaland Central’s land allocations are said to suit his own political ambitions and alignment to the ‘Zezuru mafia’.⁹⁴³ So whilst prime farms have, quite literally, been allocated to strategic beneficiaries, this has been on the basis of rewards for the

⁹⁴⁰ For example, three of the most disruptive takeovers of productive farms were by Irene Zindi (ZANU PF), Chriden Kanouruka (Presidential Guard) and Mr Ngwenya (Grace Mugabe’s Faith Healer). These are now among the most underutilised properties.

⁹⁴¹ Confidential Addendum to the Land Audit (2003). Among the most controversial revelations were Peter Chanetsa’s (Governor of Mashonaland West) connection to nine different farms, and Air Force Chief Perence Shiri’s multiple ownerships.

⁹⁴² A government official (anonymous) supplied me with confidential copies of “Updated Land Allocations” and “Farm Status Lists” for Mashonaland Central, as at July 2002. The Farm Status list details the name of the farm, the owner, details of the designation process and expiry dates and a column noting whether or not the farmer “resisted”. The land allocation list records details of the beneficiaries, their ID numbers and backgrounds, whether or not they are war veterans, their assessment score, whether they are likely to be small, medium or large scale, their farm allocation details and the status of the farm in question. The informant also gave me a copy of the official fast-track guidelines, which cite the Kangai principles as land identification criteria. Written in pencil on the form was the added criteria of “political and other reasons”, which he explained was aimed at racist farmers and MDC supporters.

⁹⁴³ Discussions with Walker Gatse, Concession, October 2002; Discussions with Roy Jahni, Glendale, October 2002.

past, but also with an eye to the future, in which members of the elite see themselves on one or other, or even both sides of an alliance between 'new farmers' and the state.

6.5 CONCLUSION

The period between 2000 and 2005 has been dominated by a systematic pattern of aggressive political manoeuvres by ZANU PF in its bid to ensure its political survival, and attempt to restore its dominance. The resulting economic and social implosion has been interpreted in different ways. Proponents of the regime see it as righting historical wrongs with predictable costs, whilst others argue that it has been a short-sighted political tactic by an increasingly desperate regime. Mugabe has succeeded in rekindling the heady sentiments of radical nationalism, which have clouded the political terrain. Against the historical injustices discussed in Chapter One, these sentiments are understandable, but against the government apathy, lost opportunities and ruling party arrogance identified in Chapters Four and Five the political opportunism is obvious.

My key objective in this Chapter has been to explore the collapse of the white farming sector in the face of orchestrated land invasions. The breakdown of the white farming sector occurred predominantly along the lines of historical divisions. The strategies of individuals, communities and institutions exhibited continuities from previous eras. Under pressure, the organisational power of the farmers diminished considerably and was reflected in their inability to broker a compromise with the relevant powers and their struggle to remain united against clear efforts to divide them. As institutional ineffectiveness mounted, so farmers resorted to community solidarity and strategies to counter the offensive, as they had done during the war years. As communities fragmented so the strategies of remaining farmers became increasingly disjointed,

independent, uncertain and prepared to compromise. By 2005 the remnants of the white farming sector were fragmented and powerless. Hardly a vestige of the alliance remained. White farmer production, economic contributions, financial clout and institutional effectiveness had been eliminated. Communication channels with the power brokers were closed and alternative lobbying routes such as the media, civil society, the international community and the donors were equally isolated by ZANU PF.

The systematic repression of the MDC and its supporters and the purge of civil and state institutions showed that land invasions and elimination of the white farming sector were only one element of a wider political contest, rather than the crux of the crisis as Mugabe has portrayed it. The ruling party has cleverly shrouded its broader political agenda (to restore its hegemony) beneath legitimate historical grievances over land and within wider contemporary issues of development and globalisation. The economic and social costs of ZANU PF's strategies are clear and the impacts are deep rooted with long term consequences.

The pace and complexity of events since 2000 renders more comprehensive assessment impossible at this stage, but emphasises the importance of further research. The increasing intolerance, authoritarianism and militarisation of the regime illustrates how power is increasingly concentrated in the hands of fewer individuals but is also increasingly fragile as the spoils, and the ability to enjoy those spoils, diminish.

CONCLUSION

"Burn down your cities and leave our farms, and your cities will spring up again as if by magic, but destroy our farms and the grass will grow in the streets of every city in the country."

- William Jennings Bryan, 1896.

C.1 INTRODUCTION

This thesis explores the history and politics of Zimbabwe's white farmers. It has traced the historical evolution of the strategic alliance between large-scale producers and the state and each chapter has drawn a set of detailed conclusions relating to the particular phases of this relationship. I also set out to challenge misleading perceptions about white farmer homogeneity, and explored two relevant themes: firstly, the differentiation of commercial farmers and, secondly, the changing profile of the sector, its participants and its land uses over time. This conclusion aims to pull these themes together and to discuss their implications for our understanding of Zimbabwe's land and political crises and to discuss some broader policy questions.

C.2 THE CHANGING PROFILE OF COMMERCIAL FARMING

Who exactly were Zimbabwe's 'white farmers'? My analysis has shown that they were a complex, divided, and evolving community. During the first 50 years of settler rule most farmers struggled to make a living in Southern Rhodesia's hostile environment, and land uses were dominated by speculative land companies. Only after World War Two did a more settled farming community materialise around a core of established farmers and the economic growth of the tobacco boom. The sector continued to evolve structurally through the decades. UDI and sanctions prompted structural shifts away from tobacco production into domestically oriented enterprises such as maize and cattle. Economic liberalisation in the 1990s encouraged land-use changes, diversification and vertical integration.

The sector also changed in terms of its size. Immigration after both world wars boosted farmer numbers, whilst the difficult security and economic conditions of the liberation war and emigration afterwards reduced the number of farmers by one third. The composition of farming communities changed significantly in the 1990s with new farming entrants and injections of urban and international investment. Although a black commercial farming class emerged it had little impact on the racial exclusiveness of the sector, which remained its key weakness.

This changing profile has important consequences for debates about land politics. Firstly, it shows that Zimbabwe's white farmers were not the direct descendants or inheritors of pioneers, as ZANU PF has often portrayed them to be. According to CFU records less than five percent of white farmers in 2000 were the descendants of pioneers, and less than ten percent were from families that had settled before World War Two.⁹⁴⁴ Nearly half of all farms in 2000 had been bought and sold at least once after Independence.

Secondly, the capitalization of most farms over time suggests that much of the value of prime land was due to 'improvements' and capital investments. Whereas about thirty percent of tobacco farm values in the 1930s were based on land clearance and buildings (Rubert 1998), by 2000 up to ninety percent of farm values in Mashonaland were attributed to infrastructure and capital investments.⁹⁴⁵ Consequently, Mugabe's arguments about refusing to pay for the soil were largely irrelevant to real land values. Moreover, technological advances, such as irrigation, and land use changes, such as game hunting, challenge traditional land valuations based on agro-ecological regions. For example, Chiredzi and Matetsi, which were deemed unfit for human habitation in the 1920s, were highly productive and sought after farming and hunting areas by 2000.

⁹⁴⁴ These statistics are supported in the case study area, where two families out of more than fifty were of pioneer descent and seven families had settled before World War Two.

⁹⁴⁵ Discussions with Graham Mullett, Harare, January 2003.

Thirdly, increasing intensification within the industry had important implications. By the mid-1990s most production and employment was carried out on a relatively small proportion of land. This was reflected in concentrated production within farms, but also between different farms. Productivity and efficiency disparities between intensive farms and large underutilised properties continued to grow, which should have made the distinction between suitable resettlement land and unsuitable land much clearer. Significant areas of land could have been redistributed without affecting core production and without displacing the majority of farmers or farm workers.

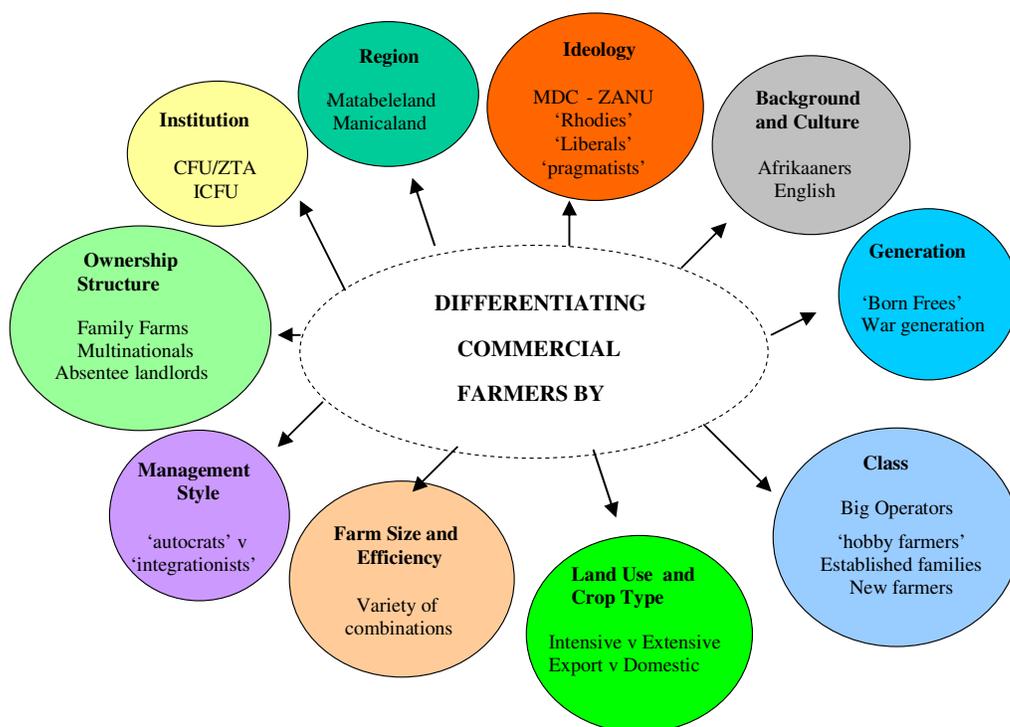
Finally, the constantly evolving profile of commercial farming, its differentiated structures, and its diverse and ever-changing set of participants suggest that it was more able to reform, adapt and restructure than has often been perceived. The existence of a vibrant land market throughout the 1980s and 1990s is testament to this changing profile of large-scale farming and remained an obvious but unexploited means of land redistribution.

C.3 COMMERCIAL FARMER DIFFERENTIATION

The changing profile of commercial farming demonstrated differences across time, whilst differentiation among farmers illustrated differences within the sector at any point in time. Individual farms differed in topography, location and potential, whilst farmers differed in background, ability, class and ideology. Farming systems varied in size, land use, management styles and ownership structures. The nature and significance of these multi-layered divisions varied between different eras and often interacted, but certain planes prevailed throughout. The tobacco industry retained a powerful autonomy whilst Matabeleland's regional independence was constantly at odds with Mashonaland's political and economic dominance. Multinational companies on large land areas were always a distinct agricultural sub-sector with alternative

interests and lobbying channels. Figure C1 illustrates the range of ways in which commercial farmers and their interests can be distinguished. It is a simplified portrayal of these divisions, which often overlapped and interacted, but remained incongruent and definable nevertheless.

Figure C.1 Historical Differences Among Commercial Farmers and their Interests



Divisions among farmers were often compensated for by institutions or overcome by the evolving profile of the sector. The organisational structures, representative unions and social institutions emerged through farmers' realisations of the need for unity. The CFU became an important means of regulating and articulating the varied interests of commercial farmers. Farmers often portrayed themselves as a homogenous community with a common identity and outlook when it was politically, economically or socially convenient to do so. Internal divisions and changes were also shrouded by other factors such as the social isolation of white farming communities.

Common threats also united farmers. For example, structural adjustment in the 1990s promoted unprecedented social and land use differences among white farmers, but they remained uniformly opposed to compulsory land acquisition. Indeed the 1992 LAA, the exclusion of farmers from policy making and increasing anti-white propaganda by ZANU PF encouraged a defensive unity among farmers which, for example, initially realigned the ZTA and the CFU. Broad-based scepticism became a uniting catalyst among commercial farmers in the 1990s, which culminated in opposition to official corruption and poor governance during the 2000 constitutional referendum. Most white farmers, across all divisions, joined other sectors of Zimbabwean society in actively campaigning for its rejection. During ZANU PF's subsequent campaign to eliminate the white agricultural sector, farmers initially united behind the MDC before fragmenting socially and institutionally along recognised planes of ideology, politics, crop-type, land use and region.

What is the relevance of this differentiation for our understanding of the sector? For a start it illustrates that commercial farmers were not a homogenous group. Their diversity was reflected in the range of social, political and economic interests. When taken into account alongside the evolving profile of the sector it shows that Zimbabwe's white farmers were far from the monolithic static, inflexible, intransigent group of ZANU PF stereotype. The differentiated structure also had important implications for land policy. Although official land reform plans recognised elements of farmer differentiation in the 'Kangai Principles' actual land policy was indiscriminate, and resulted in united opposition by the broad range of different farmers-types.

C.4 COMMERCIAL FARMERS AND THE STATE

The thesis has explored different phases in the relationship between farmers and the state. It has highlighted the various interests shaping each side of the alliance, and the interaction and influence of other interest groups. It has possibly understated the significance of 'race' in determining the collapse of the alliance but this, like many other political resources, has been distorted and exploited in the recent political struggle. In order to understand both sides of the alliance a more comprehensive insight into the ruling party is needed, to explain its own differentiation and internal contests and the manner in which these influenced key junctures. Mugabe's concessions to the war veterans, the breakdown of the 1998 Donor Conference agreement and decisions to eliminate the entire white farming sector, remain partially explained.

The alliance between large-scale land owners and the state emerged through mutually congruent interests but took time to consolidate. Settler farmer hegemony was reinforced by the state, and in turn reinforced the state. Despite the simple logic and power of the alliance, strains between farmers and the Rhodesian government reflected structural differences in the farming sector. For example the 1949 tobacco tax, the ascendancy of the Rhodesian Front, and the disagreements over UDI illustrated significant divisions between farming interests and politicians.

The power and autonomy of the farming unions was demonstrated during the liberation war, when the RNFU and the RTA pressured the Rhodesian Front towards settlement. This illustrated that farmers were prepared to confront but also to compromise in order to protect their interests. This also ensured the successful repositioning and perpetuation of the state-farmer alliance across the independence transition. Although, fundamental contradictions and mistrust periodically surfaced, they did not outweigh the reciprocated benefits of the arrangement.

In the 1990s the alliance was undermined as direct contests for land exposed the political contradictions of the arrangement. The 1992 LAA brought the two institutions into direct conflict and rekindled historical mistrust. For white farmers, political and economic privileges had been the main attraction of the alliance, and without them their insecurities mounted. For the ruling party, the conservative strategies and continued affluence of a racially exclusive sector brought into question the rationale of the alliance, particularly within the mounting economic and political crisis. Farming leaders overestimated their political legitimacy and underestimated the ruling party's growing impatience and mounting intolerance of continued white privilege.

As the debate polarised so government moved toward radical land takeovers. In response white farmers abandoned their apolitical stance and openly campaigned against government proposals in the 2000 referendum, before directing financial, organisational and symbolic support to the opposition MDC. This shift into direct political competition signified the end of the alliance. ZANU PF's subsequent elimination of the white farming sector served multiple purposes: it neutralized a political threat, it provided camouflage for a wider persecution of opposition supporters and institutions, and it rewarded strategic clients with land and other resources.

C.5 INTERPRETING THE LAND REFORM DEADLOCK

Do these analyses of the white farming sector, its participants, and its relationship with the state tell us anything more about Zimbabwe's land crisis? The thesis has shown that the land reform deadlock of the 1990s arose for many reasons, but argues that fundamental policy mistakes were made and key opportunities were missed. My analysis suggests that the critical policy period was the early 1990s, which is generally earlier than most analysts suggest. By the late 1990s it was too late. The political and economic crises had gathered momentum, the ruling party was

experiencing unprecedented internal reconfigurations, and the land debate had become too polarised for rational analysis or pragmatic negotiations.

With so much focus on deconstructing white farming interests, it is easy to end up neglecting the internal differences and divisions of the state the government and the ruling party. These were often responsible for the nuances in Zimbabwe's land history, which an explanation that relies on resource-centred contests between strategic groups cannot fully explain. For example, the government's straddling of several positions and policies on land in the early 1990s reflected the different stances within the official decision-making structures, and the range of pressures they were under from other groups. These numerous and often contradictory policy positions catered for a wide range of demands and expectations but ended up delivering to none. Furthermore, they isolated key stakeholders and lost the state its credibility. However, instead of engaging with stakeholders' concerns, the hierarchy of the ruling party reacted confrontationally and in 1995 claimed a monopoly on land-related decisions despite protests by other stakeholders.

This assumption of responsibility was at odds with ZANU PF's questionable prioritisation of land in terms of resource allocations. The disparity between populist rhetoric and budgetary commitments to land reform over time is telling. Less than US\$170 million was spent on land purchases in nearly two decades, on a sector that generated nearly US\$40 billion dollars during the same period.⁹⁴⁶ Land purchases in the 1980s and 1990s amounted to less than one half of one percent of total government expenditure.⁹⁴⁷

Limited government resource allocations for land purchases were compounded by other measures. In the 1980s, commercial farmers received roll-over finance on two occasions following droughts. Producer price and food subsidies in most years during the 1980s

⁹⁴⁶ This estimate is based on an average economic output of about US\$2 billion per year (2000 value) from commercial agriculture (IMF, 2000).

⁹⁴⁷ Government expenditure averaged about US\$1.2 billion per year during the 1990s (IMF, 2000) .

outweighed land purchase expenditures for the whole decade. Support for farmers during the 1992 drought propped up land prices. In 1997 sizeable revenues generated from tobacco marketing levies were diverted to central treasury, rather than being hypothecated towards land reform. The consistency and magnitude of these major budgetary decisions suggests that land reform was never as high on the real agenda as the ruling party has claimed.

The other key stakeholders were not blameless. Britain appears to have bypassed considerable responsibilities through limited funding of land transfers with awkward conditions, particularly when compared to Kenyan precedents. Whitehall also misinterpreted the direction and misjudged the seriousness of the political crisis. By belittling Britain's historical obligations the Blair administration provided ZANU PF with its most useful political resource in the international arena. The diplomatic stand-off between the British Government and Mugabe allowed him to successfully portray a primarily home-grown political and economic crisis as part of a bigger question of historical legacies and imperial chicanery.

Farming leaders also misjudged the seriousness of the land issue and overestimated their own influence and legitimacy. White farmers were never as powerful during the post-independence era as they have been made to seem. Their clout was exaggerated by state inexperience and apathy, government bureaucracy and an initial congruence of objectives with the government. In this respect farmers' resistance was probably not a defining element of the land deadlock. The CFU should have supported calls for British funding commitments, rather than fuelling debates about corruption and the perceived failures of resettlement but this is easy to observe in hindsight. CFU should also have promoted land taxes as a compromise, but such initiatives are unlikely to have averted the overall economic and political crises, or diminished the utility of a semi-resolved land issue to ZANU PF. Also increasingly obvious is that Zimbabwe's land issue remains as unresolved as it has ever been.

C.6 IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY

My research has consistently raised policy questions about what may have been done differently in Zimbabwe, and whether any of these lessons are relevant to Namibia and South Africa.

Specific policy lessons emerged within the text and this concluding section offers some observations.

C.6.1 Some Broader Land Policy Observations:

The need to moderate the politicisation of land - Land remains an inherently political issue in southern Africa. Zimbabwe's land debate became 'over-politicised', polarised and exclusionary which prevented opportunities for compromise. However, Zimbabwe's white farmers also underestimated its political significance. Ironically, there had been clear calls for an independent land commission in the early 1990s to specifically avoid 'over-politicisation' (Rukuni, 1994). It was argued that a commission would ensure representation of all stakeholders, naturally mediate the process, and balance the policy trajectory.

Reconcile social and production objectives - The farm size and efficiency debate needs to be revisited. Much of the land lobby in Southern Africa is promoting medium scale farms (10-50 hectares) without supportive evidence (Moyo 2005). Whilst the idea of medium-scale farmers may be socially attractive, my own research, and the initial results of Zimbabwe's medium scale A2 farmers, suggest that this could be promoting the least efficient and least competitive size of farm. These operations are too big to rely on family labour and must enter the machinery or labour markets, without the economies of scale to operate competitively. They are also often too small to source credit, negotiate access into international markets, reproduce skills, or risk diversification or innovation.

Compulsory acquisition should be a last resort - Zimbabwe's experience has reemphasised the consequences of compulsory acquisition. It undermines investor confidence, property rights, and international credibility. It also weakens internal confidence and social and institutional trust. It is open to abuse through questions over land identification, compensation and allocation, and should be unnecessary if other policy measures are implemented constructively.

Land taxes should be an effective means of transfer - Land markets may be slow and expensive in delivering land, but can be facilitated through intervention. Graduated land taxes provide a means of retaining a willing-buyer willing seller-format, and concurrently facilitating the transfer of excess or underutilised land, whilst protecting productive property. Revenues, if hypothecated, also contribute to the costs of land reform. Complimentary interventions include sub-division permits, land banks and capital gains tax breaks for sellers. Moreover, the compensation proceeds of market based reforms are likely to be reinvested locally, whilst those of compulsory acquisition (assuming there are any) are more likely to be externalised.⁹⁴⁸

Differentiate land - Policy makers need to understand the patterns and differences in large scale land ownership before attempting ambitious redistributions. In Zimbabwe, inconsistent approaches elicited united opposition from threatened farmers, which clouded the negotiation climate and undermined the opportunities for compromise. Graded land taxes naturally account for structural differences such as concentrations of production, and, formulated accordingly, should encourage the sale of land that is least productive and more conducive to reform.

⁹⁴⁸ Farm sellers in the case study area generally reinvested the proceeds in urban property. In Kenya most of the proceeds of compulsory reform were expatriated. There appears to be a logical correlation with reinvestment confidence.

C.6.2 Specific Concerns for South Africa and Namibia.

South Africa and Namibia each have unique contexts, but their racially skewed land imbalances remain stark. Zimbabwe's large scale farming sector controlled 28 percent of land in 2000. In South Africa, white farmers still own nearly 80 percent of agricultural land and in Namibia they own 40 percent.⁹⁴⁹ Without more racially balanced access there cannot be long term political or social stability. Both countries embarked on ambitious land reforms in the 1990s but have encountered familiar operational, institutional, political and financial obstacles.

Unrealistic targets - South Africa recently planned to transfer 30 percent of white-owned land by 2014, after transferring less than ten percent of their 1994 targets.⁹⁵⁰ Namibia announced its intentions to transfer 15 million hectares by 2020, after transferring less than 1 million hectares in ten years.⁹⁵¹ Such ambitious targets are unlikely to be met and only undermine credibility.

Insufficient budget and resource allocations - Namibia has used less than fifty percent of its annual budgetary allocations for land reform since 1996, and only purchased ten percent of the farms offered to it. South Africa claims that it does not have the funds to meet its 2014 targets, and has implied that it expects farmers to bear a significant proportion of the cost. Shortfalls in resource allocation were Zimbabwe's key constraint, and both South Africa and Namibia seem reluctant to deliver sufficient resources towards their programs.

Moves towards compulsory acquisition - Namibia recently moved to compulsorily acquire 19 farms on the basis that the land market was too slow. To date 142 farms have been purchased by the government off the open market while 741 farms have been purchased by blacks using the national land bank. A land tax has been implemented to tilt an already functioning market, and

⁹⁴⁹ "Southern Africa: Land Expropriation No policy Panacea", *Oxford Analytica*, 18 October 2005.

⁹⁵⁰ "South Africa: Summit Overstates Radical Land Agenda", *Oxford Analytica*, 4 August 2005.

⁹⁵¹ "Namibia: Ghost of Zimbabwe Haunts Land Reform", *Oxford Analytica*, 6 August 2004.

the move towards compulsory acquisition seems unnecessary. South Africa has also introduced compulsory acquisition - whilst identified farms are all subject to restitution claims, there is growing pressure for compulsory acquisition to replace willing-buyer willing-seller.

Polarising Race debate – Race is inherently linked to land in both Namibia and South Africa. White farmers are coming under increasing fire in both medias, particularly over the treatment of farm workers. This does not improve the image of the sector among ordinary Namibians and South Africans, and land pressure groups have used stereotypes to advocate Zimbabwe style land takeovers. These sentiments are unlikely to diffuse and will only distort and polarise debates.

Defensive farmer stances - White farming groups claim to recognise the need for reform, but continue to react defensively. The Transvaal Agricultural Union in South Africa opposes anything but *laissez faire* market reform, whilst the Farmers Support Initiative in Namibia has threatened to take the government to court.⁹⁵² These stances may not reflect the attitudes of most farmers but play into stereotypes. Farming groups continue to overestimate their indispensability and to underestimate the significance of the historical race legacy and its ability to overwhelm and distort the process. Farming unions must realise that the best form of insurance is to resolve the issue, and that this will require financial and ideological compromise and astute leadership.

Government commitment - South African and Namibian officials are using radical, racial rhetoric in public forums, and imply that the price of transformation should be borne by the farmers who enjoyed historical privileges. This will not transfer land and blaming white intransigence for delays will only defer the problem and undermine government credibility. Zimbabwe's greatest constraint was a shortage of funding allocations, and if South Africa and Namibia are to resolve their land challenges then they need to match rhetoric with resources.

⁹⁵² For the TAU's defensive stance see their website: www.tlu.co.za. "Namibia: Ghost of Zimbabwe Haunts Land Reform", *Oxford Analytica*, 6 August 2004.

We will only be grateful to those flowers that have borne fruits

-- Shona Proverb --