
**From
Rhodesia
to
Zimbabwe**

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The land question

Roger Riddell

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About the author

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About the series

FROM RHODESIA TO ZIMBABWE consists of a collection of papers which address the social, economic, administrative and legal problems to be faced by an independent government of Zimbabwe. CIIR has launched this series in collaboration with the Justice and Peace Commission in Rhodesia as a contribution to the important debate about the creation of a just society in Zimbabwe — a debate which the Commission has been concerned to promote since its inception in 1971. Each paper will take as its starting point the question: how can the new government of Zimbabwe provide for the basic needs of the poorest sectors of society? The views expressed in individual papers are those of the contributors; they do not necessarily reflect the views either of CIIR or of the Justice and Peace Commission.

Introduction

Land is perhaps the most fundamental issue that has to be confronted in the whole Rhodesian impasse. This is not only because 83 per cent of the population live in the rural areas and the vast majority of these people are directly dependent upon agriculture for their livelihood, but also because the whole wage structure and labour supply system depend critically upon the land divisions in the country. Thus the type of land structure which Zimbabwe adopts will be a crucial determinant in the future pattern of the country's development — just as it has been in the ninety years of colonial rule. Of course to point this out is not to say anything particularly revealing, for in most parts of the Third World the struggle over land has been of overwhelming importance. What is surprising, and even alarming, however, is an almost complete absence of public debate about the future of land within Rhodesia at the present time. Beyond the well-known facts that the distribution of land in the country is highly inequitable and that European farms lie, for the most part, on the better quality agricultural land, little else is known. Inside the country there appears to be a general acceptance of the view that continuity with the present land structure is a *sine qua non* for all future development. The consequences of accepting this have not been debated and the question of whether continuity, with perhaps marginal changes in the form of partial resettlement, will lead to the fulfilment of basic needs does not appear to have even been raised as an issue. A more radical restructuring of land in a future Zimbabwe has hardly been seriously considered.

In this paper we shall attempt to go more deeply into the land question, in the hope of alerting people to the problems inherent in maintaining the present structures; we hope to show that there are realistic alternatives which if not grasped at now — a period of great political fluidity — might be lost for many years to come. In particular, we shall look at the following questions:

- Why is land important, how is it distributed at present, who gains and who does not?
- What proposals are being made to confront the current land crisis, what problems are likely to arise in the future and are these proposed

policies able to lead to the fulfilment of the basic needs of the people, particularly the poorest?

- Are there other types of land structure that the planners, politicians and general public should be examining as a way of meeting basic needs both now and in the future?

The Land Question

THE PRESENT SITUATION

a. Land Distribution, Inequalities and Poverty

For practically the whole of Rhodesia's colonial history, land has been divided up on a racial basis with the colour of a person's skin determining which area of land he could farm and where he could live. By 1896, 15m acres of farming land had been expropriated by the white settlers and the first African Reserves had been marked out. Under the 1930 Land Apportionment Act, the racial division of all land was institutionalised; this Act was updated in 1969 with the passing of the Land Tenure Act (LTA) under which the division of land into European and African areas was finalised 'for all time'.

The total surface area of Rhodesia covers 96.4 million acres. Under the Land Tenure Act, 45m acres have been set aside for Africans and Europeans respectively. In the European area, 38.5m acres have been allocated for farming land where land is privately owned and is divided up into medium and large farms (some are over 15,000 acres) which are owned by individual farmers and by both local and foreign companies. Of the 45m acres of land reserved for Africans, 39.9m acres are categorised as Tribal Trust Lands (TTLs), previously called Reserves. Here a system of communal tenure operates. The land is 'owned' by the various chiefs and Tribal Land Authorities and it is divided up into communal grazing land and individual arable plots. These plots are allotted to individual (male) cultivators for their own use, each potential farmer

being able to apply for land only in his 'home' area. Single women have no right to land. The African Purchase Areas (PAs) cover 3.7m acres of the African land. In this area, the more wealthy Africans can purchase land, provided they have qualified as experienced farmers.¹ Here land can be bought and sold under individual title as in the European farming area. The rest of the land in both the European and African areas is reserved for Forest and Parkland. The details of land division by race are shown in Table I.

Table I: THE DIVISION OF LAND IN RHODESIA BY RACE

<i>European Area</i>	<i>Acreage</i>	<i>African Area</i>	<i>Acreage</i>
Forest Area	1,863,918	Forest Area	424,840
Parks & Wild Life	4,383,447	Parks & Wild Life	630,526
General Land	38,564,496	Tribal Trust Land	39,979,963
		Purchase Area	3,670,770
Specially Designated Land	18,910	Specially Designated Land	291,660
TOTAL	44,831,233	TOTAL	44,997,731
National Land 6,596,876			
Total Rhodesia 96,425,840			

Source: The Land Tenure Act, Chapter 148 (1969: 204-309).

Recently there has been a legal change in this division of land. Since the March 1977 amendment to the LTA, all rural land, with the exception of the TTLs which are still reserved, in the words of the government, 'for the exclusive use of tribesmen', is now open to purchase by all races on a commercial basis. This means that Africans are now able to buy farms in the European area and, if they so wish, Europeans can buy land in the African Purchase Areas. However this *legal* change has made no difference to land divisions *in practice*. By mid-October

1. Until recently, a Master Farmer certificate was required; now, among other things, a points system operates to determine whether an African qualifies to purchase a Purchase Area farm.

1977, only two farms had been bought in the European area by (wealthy) Africans, while there still remain vacant farms in the African PAs.² To avoid confusion, in this paper we shall continue to refer to land in the pre-March 1977 land categories as shown in Table I.

The division of the country's land into 45m acres for Africans and 45m acres for Europeans masks acute and ever-increasing inequalities which, in no small measure, are contributory factors to the present Rhodesian crisis. At the end of 1976, there were approximately 680,000 African farmers and 6,682 European farmers, so that on average every European had access to one hundred times as much land as every African. But as land in the European areas is generally of higher quality, for example it contains almost twice as much of the land in the country most suited to crop production as in the African area, these inequalities are even more acute than the raw data suggests.

While European farming land has been historically reserved exclusively for the use of white farmers, this does not mean that no Africans live in the European rural areas. At the end of 1976, 332,000 African farm labourers worked on white farms for the 6,682 white farmers; indeed 97 per cent of the population in the European rural areas consists of Africans. In spite of this high African population on European land, the African rural areas are far more densely populated than the European areas. At the end of 1976, 4.4m people lived in the African rural areas and only 1.1m in the European areas; hence the African rural areas contained 80 per cent of the total rural population and the European rural areas only 20 per cent. Tables II and III show the rural population distribution and densities, the latter comparing densities in 1969 and 1976. Not only are the African areas three times as densely populated as the European areas, but they are becoming relatively more densely populated all the time because of the greater increase in population in the African areas. Between 1969 and 1977, for example, the population of the TTLs is estimated to have increased by no less than 50 per cent.

Dramatic as these inequalities are, the most important crisis in land relates to the effects of the present land structure (and supporting policies) on relative production levels in the African and European areas. The African areas are becoming less and less able to feed their

2. See *The Rhodesia Herald*, 13th October 1977.

*Table II: DISTRIBUTION OF RURAL LAND AND POPULATION
1976*

<i>Land Category</i>	<i>Per cent of Land</i>	<i>African Population</i>	<i>European Population</i>	<i>Total Population</i>	<i>Per Cent Population</i>
<i>(Population figures in '000s)</i>					
African Farming (TTL and PA) Land	53	4,440.6	2.3	4,442.9	80
European Farming Land	47	1,089.2	31.9	1,121.0	20
TOTALS	100	5,529.8	33.2	5,563.9	100

Source: Census of Population (1969: Tables 4 and 5); Rhodesia Monthly Digest of Statistics, April 1977, Tables 1 and 2.

Table III: RURAL POPULATION DENSITIES, 1969 and 1976

<i>Land Category</i>	<i>Population Densities, Acres Per Person</i>	
	<i>1969</i>	<i>1976</i>
African Land: TTL Plus PA	14.3	9.9
European Farming Land	40.2	34.4
European Farming Land (European Population only)	(1,272.8)	(1,208.9)
TOTAL, Rural Land	20.4	14.7

Source: Tables I and II, above.

growing population while at the same time in the European area large tracts of good farming land remain either unused or under-utilised. It has been estimated that each person requires approximately 385 lbs of maize a year for basic food needs. In 1962 the TTLs produced on average 352 lbs of maize per person, but by 1977 this had fallen to

231 lbs per person. Since the early 1960s, more and more food has had to be imported into the TTLs and the population of the Tribal Areas are becoming increasingly dependent upon commercial agriculture for their basic food requirements. Today 65 per cent of Rhodesia's population live in the TTLs where the vast majority are dependent upon subsistence agriculture, yet 70 per cent of the country's national food requirements are provided by commercial farmers.³ The following figures illustrate the growing crisis.

If each African cultivator is to have enough grazing and arable land to support his family then the TTLs, as presently constituted, are able to carry approximately 275,000 cultivators. But in 1977 there were already 675,000 cultivators in the Tribal areas, nearly three times the maximum number that can be safely carried.⁴ The land is not only acutely over-populated but there is now little or no land left for potential young farmers; in some areas over 40 per cent of men between the ages of 16 and 30 are landless.⁵

This massive over-population in the TTLs is bringing ecological disaster to the land. In the attempt to accommodate the increasing population, land designated as suitable only for grazing purposes has been gradually turned over to arable cultivation. By 1977, *seventeen* times as much land in the TTLs was being cultivated as was ecologically desirable and this had led to severe over-use of the grazing land. In 1965, 50 per cent of the grazing land in the TTLs was classified as either bare or heavily over-grazed. Since then the cattle population of the TTLs has increased by over 70 per cent.⁶

There is also a more recent problem. Since late 1972, Tribal agriculture has been seriously affected by the escalation of the war. Villages

3. See E.G. Cross, The Tribal Trust Lands in Transition: The National Implications. Paper presented to the Natural Resources Board Symposium: 'Rural Land Use and Conservation in a Changing Political Climate'. Salisbury, 2nd June 1977, (mimeo).
4. For current figures see A.T. Stubbs, The Tribal Trust Lands in Transition: Land Use. Paper presented at the Natural Resources Board Symposium, 2nd June 1977 (mimeo). The carrying capacity of the land has been discussed fully in V. Vincent and R.G. Thomas, *The Agro-Ecological Survey in The Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, An Agricultural Survey of Southern Rhodesia*, Salisbury, 1960.
5. A.K.H. Weinrich, *African Farmers in Rhodesia*, IAI, London, 1975, p.298.
6. Stubbs and Cross, *op.cit.* It should also be noted that there are also some 1.7 million goats held in the Tribal Areas.

have been bombed by the security forces, crops have been destroyed and cattle confiscated as a form of communal fine imposed on the local population. In the last few years thousands of Africans have been put into 'protected' and 'consolidated' villages and by mid-1977 it was estimated that nearly 20 per cent of the African rural population were living in 'protected' villages. Under the 'protected' villages scheme, living conditions are cramped and many cultivators can now spend only a few hours each day working in their fields both because of the long distances they have to travel to their plots and also because of the curfew regulations. Starvation and malnutrition have been reported.⁷

While this overview of the TTLs reveals a crisis of massive proportions, it hides enormous inequalities found *within* the African rural areas. On the better quality land, each cultivator needs 6 acres of arable land to grow enough food for his family; on the poorer soil, 15 acres are required. Yet the majority of cultivators have less than the minimum required. But there are also cultivators who have access to comparatively large acreages of land and it is not uncommon within a TTL for there to be a twenty-fold difference in plot sizes cultivated. Furthermore, it needs to be said again that a growing proportion, at least 20 per cent in many areas, have no land rights at all.

Under the present farming system in the TTLs, cattle are essential both for draught purposes and to provide manure so as to maintain soil fertility. We have noted the acute over-grazing problem caused by land scarcity, but another important problem is the fact that a large proportion of households own no cattle at all and this number is increasing. For example, in 1960 there were some 350,000 families in the African rural areas and 231,000 livestock owners, so that 66 per cent owned at least one head of cattle. Today the number is nearer to 50 per cent.⁸ And there are also great inequalities in the number of cattle (and other livestock) owned by those households which do possess animals. In a survey in the Karanga district, it was found that

7. See Catholic Commission For Justice and Peace in Rhodesia, *Rhodesia The Propaganda War*, Catholic Institute For International Relations, London, 1977 and various mimeographed reports of the Catholic Commission For Social Services and Development in Rhodesia, Salisbury, 1975-1977.

8. Survey conducted by the Principle Agricultural Extension Officer, Ministry of Internal Affairs, quoted in *Rhodesian Farmer*, 4th March 1977 and M. Yudel-man, *Africans on the Land*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1964, p.86.

30 per cent of families had no cattle, 22 per cent owned between 1 and 3 beasts and 23 per cent owned over 6 head of cattle.⁹ Thus within the TTLs, one finds rich and poor peasants and the poorer ones are tending to become even poorer.

The African Purchase Area land covers 3.7m acres, some 9 per cent of the total African land area. It contains about 8,100 farms under a system of individual tenure: farms can be bought and sold but they cannot legally be subdivided into smaller units. Although the PAs do contain some large farms, up to 1,000 acres in size, many of which do make good use of the land, the majority of PA farmers are still dependent upon subsistence-type agriculture and production levels are often lower than on neighbouring TTLs. The PA system was created in 1930 to cater for an African farming elite but, with the exception of the small number of prosperous farmers, it has not even led to these farmers using the land productively. Thirty five per cent of PA land comprises either unplanned farms or vacant farms which points to a serious under-utilisation of the land. Even if it could be shown that PA farming had been successful, it has certainly not provided a solution to farming in the African rural areas because only one per cent of African farmers live and farm in the Purchase Areas.

At the end of 1976, the European rural areas contained 6,682 farms, averaging 5,300 acres each and covering a total area of 35.6m acres. It is these farms which have been responsible for the enormous successes in Rhodesian agriculture. In 1976 the European areas were responsible for 92 per cent of marketed output and for many years European agriculture has been a major export earner. Between 1944 and 1976 gross output increased twenty-fold. An examination of land use in the European rural areas, however, reveals much that the aggregate figures hide; the undoubted successes have masked deep-rooted inefficiencies within European agriculture.

In the 1975/76 growing season, 4,023 out of the total of 6,682 farms (60 per cent) were not profitable enough to qualify for income tax payments. European farms vary greatly in size: 2,106 (32 per cent) are less than 1,000 acres, 2,918 (44 per cent) are between 1,000 and 5,000 acres while 469 (7 per cent) are larger than 15,000 acres. This latter 7 per cent of farms account for over 50 per cent of the total

9. Weinrich, *op.cit.*, p.83.

European farming area. In general, the efficiency of European farms in terms of output per unit of input depends upon the agro-ecological conditions in different parts of the country; intensive crop farms requires relatively less land than ranching farms. Relating output to land size, it is generally the small and medium-sized farms which make the least efficient use of the land: 72 per cent of all European farms cover 23 per cent of the European land area and produce 21 per cent of the total output while 5 per cent of farms account for 50 per cent of the land and produce 48 per cent of the output.¹⁰ And a very small number of farms are responsible for a major proportion of total income. For example, in 1976, 271 European farming units contributed 52 per cent of total taxable income, while, at the other end of the scale, a Rhodesian National Farmers' Union study of 1977 reported that 30 per cent of all farms were insolvent.¹¹

Inefficient white farms are able to survive because of a wide range of assistance given, both directly and indirectly, to European agriculture in the form of loans, price supports, capital grants, the low wage structure and 'artificial' land prices.¹² In 1963 foreign companies accounted for 75 per cent of total agricultural corporate profits and were responsible for 61 per cent of gross capital formation. Since then foreign involvement in agriculture has increased and at present foreign companies have total control of sugar production and the large citrus estates and major interests in tea, coffee, forestry and cattle ranching. Two foreign companies, Lonrho and Leibigs, have estates of over one million acres.¹³

Inefficiencies in land use in European areas are due to two factors: some of the land remains unused and some (a larger proportion) is

10. *Rhodesia, Income Tax Statistics, 1976*, and *Crop Production in European Areas*, C.S.O., Salisbury, S/AG/07, 1977.

11. See *Rhodesia, Parliamentary Debates, House of Assembly*, Vol. 96, No.10, Col.756, 15th July 1977.

12. For example, some \$138m were paid out in subsidies, loans and assistance between 1969 and 1976; and between 1972 and 1976, the loss to the exchequer in respect of previous interest-free loans to European agriculture amounted to \$18.5m. See Rhodesia, Report of the Comptroller and Auditor-General (1968-1976) and Rhodesia, Estimates of Expenditure (1971-1976).

13. For a discussion of multinational involvement in Rhodesian agriculture see D.G. Clarke, *Agricultural and Plantation Workers in Rhodesia*, Mambo Socio-Economic Series, No.6, Mambo Press, Gwelo, 1977.

under-utilised. In 1976, 3 million acres of European farming land were not being used at all. While some of this land may not be suitable for farming, this does not provide a total explanation because, for example, between 1975 and 1976 the total number of acres of land farmed fell by over 1 million acres. There are a number of unused European farms and farms which are only used for residential purposes, as well as weekend farmers, and since the escalation of the war this number has increased significantly.¹⁴ As long ago as 1972, before the major exodus began to take place, it was reported that 30 per cent of all farms in South-West Matebeleland were either unoccupied or used only for residential purposes.¹⁵

Even the land which is being farmed does not make anything like the most efficient use of the land. There are approximately 9 million acres of potential arable land in the European areas but in 1976 only 1.4m acres, or 15 per cent, was being cultivated. And in the most productive area of the country, the Mazoe valley area, approximately one quarter of the land is not being cultivated.¹⁶ Similarly in the beef producing areas of the Matebeleland and Midlands areas, it has recently been reported that between 40 and 60 per cent of the farms are non-viable; on some farms there is serious mismanagement and over-stocking leading to serious veld destruction.¹⁷ Thus, the impressive overall figures for European farm production disguise serious misuse and non-use of large areas of land in the European areas.

b. Land and National Development

So much for the current pattern of rural land use in Rhodesia — a pattern which has created acute over-populated African areas side-by-side underpopulated European areas. We now need to ask two critical questions: why has this particular pattern of land use evolved in Rhodesia and what has been the purpose of creating such a structure of land? As we shall see, Rhodesia's land policies have been the cornerstone of the

14. Especially in the southwest and northeast of the country.

15. Agricultural Development Authority, *AgroEconomic Survey of South-West Matebeleland*, GP & S 36419-9-1000, Salisbury, 1972.

16. A.G. Davies, Land Use in the Mazoe Valley: Land Capability Classification, *Rhodesia Agricultural Journal*, Vol.73, No.3, May-June 1976.

17. T. Bembridge and J.D.G. Steenkamp, An Agro-Economic Investigation of Beef Production in the Matebele and Midlands Provinces of Rhodesia, *Rhodesia Agricultural Journal*, Vol.73, No.2, March-April 1976.

country's labour supply system and have formed the foundation of the colonial pattern of development.

Rhodesia's capital development has been built upon the policy of cheap labour. In the early years of colonial history, in spite of taxes to 'induce' Africans to work for European employers, the number who actively sought work at the going (low) wage rate was far too small. Thus resort was made to foreign sources of labour and, for example, in the early 1920s well over 50 per cent of African workers were of foreign origin.

Rhodesian Africans at this early period continued to depend for their livelihood on peasant agriculture. However their ability to do this became gradually more difficult because of the forced movement of many thousands of people into the Reserves, the natural increase in population and the overt discrimination practised against African farmers. Production in the Reserves gradually fell, land became relatively scarce and more and more people became 'willing' to offer themselves for work in the capitalist sectors of the economy at the prevailing wage rates.

Now the movement out of the Reserves of men looking for work did not lead to the abandonment of subsistence agriculture; in Rhodesia there has always been deliberate government policy to ensure that workers maintained their rural agricultural links. Up to the present day, people looking for work leave the TTLs because they are not able to make a living from farming. But even when they find employment they are forced to continue to rely on the TTLs for two inter-related reasons. The wages paid to workers are so low that they do not enable a man to support his family and the majority of workers are not allowed to bring their families with them to town. And of those who are permitted to bring their families to town with them, most are forced to return to their rural 'homes' when they retire, so rural links have to be maintained as an insurance policy both against unemployment and against their retirement. Thus the TTLs act as a wage supplement for employers: workers are forced to maintain their rural links during the time of employment to make up the shortfall in wages. At the same time the TTLs act as a continual source of labour supply because the low level of production in the TTLs acts as a guarantee that workers will continue to seek work outside the TTLs to supplement their desperately low subsistence agricultural income.

In part, the system of agriculture practised in the European rural areas operates in the same way. A certain number of workers on European farms leave their families in the TTLs (or, in the case of migrant workers from abroad, in their country of origin) and so they are able to supplement their low wages with subsistence agriculture. But there are now a growing number of workers who bring their families with them to live on the farm compound. Because land is relatively plentiful here, European farmers can afford to lend out land to their employees' families and the food grown here supplements the low wages. At the same time the farmer has a ready supply of extra labour, the wives and children of his employees, which he can — and does — call upon when he needs them.

This brief summary of the labour supply system operating in Rhodesia shows how important the current land structure is; the TTLs act as a labour reserve for workers needed in other parts of the economy and a plentiful supply of land in the European areas ensures (amongst other things such as the non-recognition of labour unions in the wage 'bargaining' process) that low wages continue to be paid on European farms. In the TTLs the average income from farming is about £10 a month. In the urban areas the poverty datum line wage for a family of six is about £90 a month, yet half the urban labour force receives under £45 a month. The poverty datum line for a family of six on European farms is not less than £40, yet 90 per cent of all farm workers receive less than £25 a month. In stark contrast, average European wages are approximately £425 and the gap between average European and African wages has doubled in the last ten years to the present difference of £388 a month.¹⁸

In the last twenty years or so, land and labour policies have been so 'successful' that the supply of workers emanating from the TTLs has exceeded the rate at which this number could be absorbed in the modern sectors of the economy. To cope with this problem a number

18. See D.G. Clarke, *Inflation and Subsistence Wages: Revised Estimates of the Urban Poverty Datum Line in Rhodesia for September 1976*, University of Natal Pietermaritzburg, Department of Economics, Development Studies Research Group, Discussion Paper No.1, January 1977 (mimeo). The methodology and original calculations of the current poverty datum line are discussed in V.S. Cubitt and R.C. Riddell, *The Urban Poverty Datum Line in Rhodesia*, Faculty of Social Studies, University of Rhodesia, 1974.

of policies have been introduced. Foreign workers have been repatriated, steps have been taken to increase production in the TTLs and more recently thousands of Rhodesian Africans have been 'exported' to South Africa.¹⁹ Yet the unemployment problem remains acute; between 1969 and 1975 the modern sectors failed to provide jobs for 50,000 men and 210,000 women and in the next ten years the problems will become even more acute — unless radical changes in the land structure are implemented. Finally it needs to be stressed that the problem is more complex than just providing jobs. Of those who do find employment over 80 per cent receive sub-poverty wages, so that without confronting the underlying land structure the TTLs will continue to be used as a source of cheap labour for other sectors of the economy and the present pattern of development will continue, a pattern which benefits a small minority at the expense of growing poverty for the vast majority.

CURRENT PROPOSALS FOR CHANGE

We now turn from the past and present to look at the land question for the future Zimbabwe. There can be no doubt about the centrality of land for both the transition period and for the long-term development of an independent Zimbabwe; indeed the subject is of such critical importance that land rights were included as fundamental rights in the recent United Kingdom White Paper on Rhodesia.²⁰

In this section, we shall examine the proposals for changes in the present land structure which have been made in recent months within Rhodesia. We shall exclude the policy suggestions put forward by the right wing European political groups, The Rhodesian Front (RF) and the Rhodesian Action Party (RAP), because these policies are 'no change' strategies or worse. The RF advocates the continuation of the present situation while the RAP recommends an even more rigorous segregation than exists at present. Whatever political settlement is reached it will have to include changes in the land system.

The following groups have all put forward proposals for future

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19. See D.G. Clarke, *Contract Labour From Rhodesia to the South African Gold Mines*, Southern Africa Labour and Development Research Unit, Capetown, 1976.
 20. *Rhodesia, Proposals For A Settlement*, Cmnd 6919, HMSO, London, September 1977, p.10-11.

changes in land use, though some proposals are more detailed than others. Present and aspirant political groups: The Rhodesia Party (RP), which has recently been absorbed into the National Unifying Force (NUF), the United African National Council (UANC) and the African National Council Zimbabwe (ANCZ).²¹ Groups with institutional interests: The Rhodesian National Farmers Union (RNFU), representing white farming interests, the African Farmers Union of Rhodesia (AFUR), representing emergent African capitalist farmers chiefly from the Purchase Areas and finally the Whitsun Foundation (WF), a development institute in Salisbury financed largely by business interests which describes itself as a 'non profit welfare organisation whose objectives are to foster economic development as a means of building a strong, unified and harmonious nation'.²²

We do not have the space to consider the policies of each of these groups separately but, because they differ only marginally between each other and because there is apparent agreement between the groups, we shall examine them all together under one overall general strategy.²³

The policies advocated by these groups rest on two fundamental assumptions. The first is that all changes in land structure have to be based on *continuity* with the present system and thus on what is called a 'capitalist free enterprise economy'.²⁴ Hence radical structural change is excluded from the outset. The second assumption is that any change should be based on the maintenance and extension of a system of individual tenure.

According to these groups there are two basic land problems: the under-utilisation of certain areas of European land and the over-

21. The views of the ANCZ do not necessarily correspond with those of the external wing of ZAPU. See interview with Mr Nkomo, *New African Development*, October 1977.
22. The Whitsun Foundation was set up in August 1975. Its initial sponsors included Rhodesian Breweries, Shell and T.A. Holdings. Its Executive Director, a Rhodesian Dr Ian Hume, used to work for the World Bank.
23. Mr J. Chinamano is quoted as saying that his party's land policies (ANCZ) now broadly coincide with those of the RNFU. *Africa Confidential*, Vol. 18, No.14, p.4, 18th July 1977. The UANC, ANCZ and the Whitsun Foundation have been in joint consultation over policies. See *The Times*, 20th May 1977.
24. RNFU Land Policy Objectives: An Antidote To Chaos, printed as a supplement to *Rhodesian Farmer*, 6th May 1977.

population of the TTLs. It is argued that these problems will not be solved simply by reallocating available unused land because this constitutes such a small proportion of total land area. Because of the great population pressure in the TTLs, a resettlement programme is advocated which would have to include the more intensive use of the under-utilised land in the European rural areas. In such a resettlement programme, it is argued that the better African farmers should be put on the more productive land to ensure entrepreneurial initiative and on-farm investment.²⁵ For those who do not qualify for land under the resettlement scheme, it is suggested (by some groups) that a state farm system should be established, hopefully only as a temporary measure, which, in the words of the UANC, would employ people who "do not want a career in farming or town employment".²⁶

Together with the resettlement programme should be a vigorous development programme for the TTLs which would improve the productivity of these areas. In the medium or long term, it is proposed that the TTLs should shift to a system of individual tenure so as to expand the land market into all areas.

In the total strategy, the most important restructuring would occur in the resettlement programme of the better African farmers on individual plots during the transition period because, it is believed, 'if majority rule led to a massive and hysterical land grab by Africans, the result would be disastrous for all concerned'.²⁷ In short, these land policies are designed to pre-empt any radical restructuring of the country's economic base.

The general approach and the reasoning behind these proposals are thus clear. There are, however, a number of important factors which have not been discussed and which would need to be considered if such a strategy were to be implemented in practice. No time-scale has been given for the resettlement programme nor for the 'takeover' of the European farms to be used in the programme; no details have been given about whether previously-European farms are to be subdivided or maintained as they are nor of where these resettlement schemes are to be located. In the changeover to a system of individual tenure in

25. Whitsun Foundation, *An Appraisal of Rhodesia's Present and Future Development Needs*, Whitsun Publications No: 03, Salisbury, 1976, p.17.

26. Reported in *The Rhodesia Herald*, 21st June 1977.

27. *The Rhodesia Herald*, 16th June 1977.

the TTLs, no mention has been made of the size of plots to be allocated to individual farmers; the only suggestion on this issue appears to have come from the National Agricultural Workshop seminar in June 1977 where it was suggested that *present* plot-sizes should be registered under individual title. But, as we saw in the last section, most of these are totally inadequate to enable a farmer to obtain a minimum income for his family. There has been no mention of where state farms should be located, how many there would be, how large they would be or where the labour to farm these enterprises would come from.

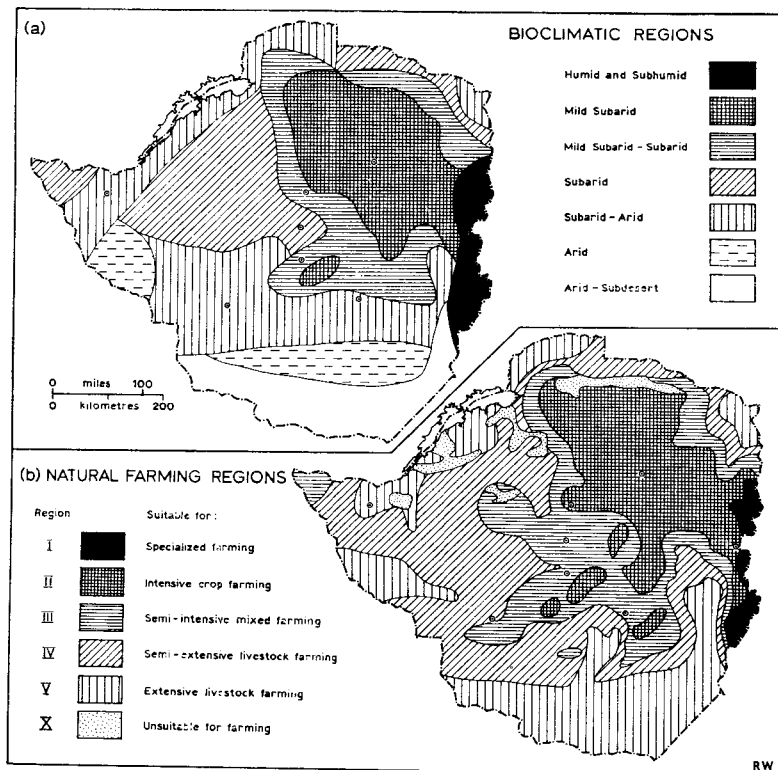
The UANC has suggested that a land tax should be introduced 'to ensure that the best use was made of all land', with every landowner placing a value on his land which would be used as the basis for the imposition of a land tax and as a value for expropriation if the land is required by the state.²⁸ While this idea might sound simple in theory, it would be well-nigh impossible to operate in practice. If too rigorous a criterion is adopted for land efficiency then there could well be the economic and political chaos so feared by these policymakers if farmers, feeling they were not being adequately compensated, began to sabotage their farms. If the definition of land efficiency is less rigorous, then the present land system would remain largely intact leaving most of the European land under-utilised and the potential arable land uncultivated. Finally evidence from other countries shows that 'it is hard to point to a single successful land tax in the Third World'.²⁹ Hence it is clear that these current proposals for changes in the land system throw up a number of practical problems which have not yet been adequately resolved.

We shall now consider the likely consequences for Zimbabwe of implementing these land proposals. In particular we shall examine how well the proposed land policies if carried out would lead to an efficient use of the land and, more fundamentally, whether such marginal changes to the present system are likely to lead to the narrowing of inequalities, the elimination of poverty and the satisfaction of the basic needs of the poorest sections of the population. As we shall see, it can be seriously doubted whether these goals can be achieved. Indeed it appears far more probable that this strategy would be a recipe for increasing

28. Reported in *The Rhodesia Herald*, 21st June 1977.

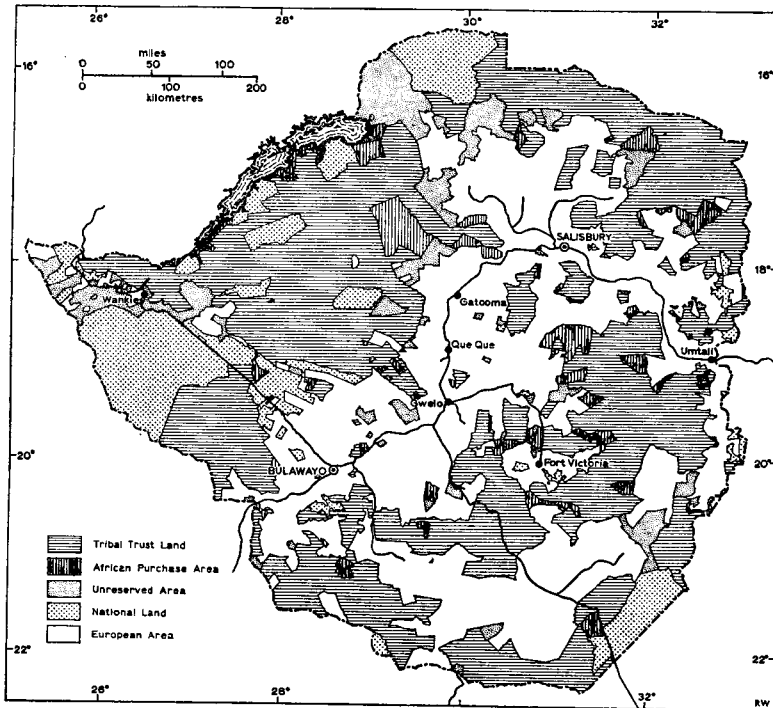
29. M. Lipton, *Towards A Theory of Land Reform* in D. Lehmann (Ed), *Agrarian Reform and Agrarian Reformism*, Faber, London, 1973, p.282.

Figure 1 Bioclimatic and Natural Regions of Rhodesia



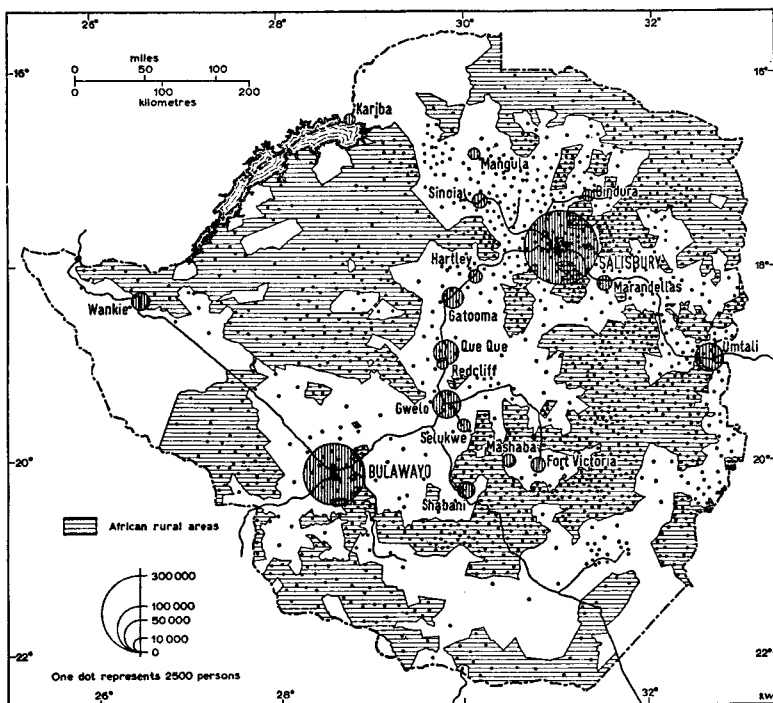
Source: Kay (1970) p.20.

Figure 2 Land Divisions by Race in Rhodesia



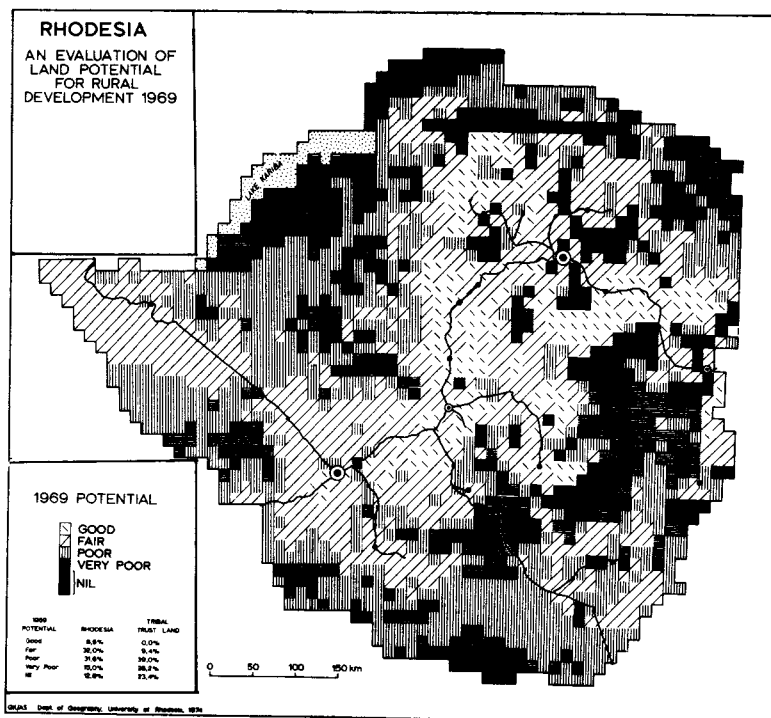
Source: G. Kay, *Rhodesia A Human Geography*, University of London Press, London, 1970, p.52.

Figure 3 Distribution of African Population 1969



Source: Kay (1970) p. 75.

Figure 4



Source: G. Kay, Population Pressure and Development Prospects in Rhodesia, *The Rhodesia Science News*, Vol.9, No.1, 1975.

inequalities and for contributing to the increased marginalisation of more people in the process of 'development'.³⁰

As we have seen, access to land in present-day Rhodesia is highly inequitable. Seventy seven per cent of all European farming land is covered by only 1,658 farms of average size 16,000 acres whereas the vast majority of the 675,000 Tribal cultivators have access to plots of less than ten acres in size. The current proposals for change envisage the settlement of the better African farmers on under-utilised European land and the extension of individual tenure to the TTLs with the probable registration of existing plots. No provision is made either for a minimum acreage for the poor or for a ceiling on large holdings. To assume that the future under these conditions would lead to a more equal distribution of land (or income) is blatantly false. One of the reasons for the implementation of the present strategy is for 'better' farmers to take over the farming of the better land; increasingly inequality thus appears to be an accepted by-product of the policy.

International experience over the past twenty years shows that when growth has led to a narrowing of income distribution and an alleviation of the poverty of the poorest, this has only occurred in countries which have taken positive steps to confront the problem. The experience of the Philippines and, nearer to home, of Kenya, illustrates that high levels of growth on their own do not lead to a 'trickle down' of the benefits of growth to the poorest.³¹

An initial situation of acute inequality in access to land together with the extension of individual ownership to small plot-holders will lead to greater inequalities and the increased marginalisation of the poorest. Smallholders, because they are already living at the margin of subsistence, are highly unlikely to be dynamic risk-takers because if innovation goes wrong it will lead to starvation. Farmers with larger incomes have more money available for potential investment, so smallholders will be more dependent upon credit than larger ones; but given the riskiness of agriculture they are also likely to be less creditworthy and would thus be expected to pay proportionately more for credit

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30. Marginalisation is the process whereby economic growth fails to lead to an absorption of the productive population into gainful employment. It produces what has been called the twilight zone of economic opportunities.
31. It has recently been argued that British aid to Kenya may well have played a part in increasing inequalities since independence. See G. Holtham and A. Hazlewood, *Aid and Inequality in Kenya*, ODI, London 1976.

and capital. Furthermore smallholders are far more likely to fall into debt than the larger-scale farmer so that in a regime of small farmers, moneylenders operate and any surplus in a good year is likely to be used for debt repayment rather than in capital accumulation. Now to impose a system of individual tenure on a group of smallholders is most likely to lead to the poorer peasants being squeezed out as they are now able to sell their land to pay off their debts. In contrast, larger farms are provided with relatively cheaper credit, they can take greater advantage of subsidised inputs and capital grants, they have easier access to technical assistance and the results of agricultural research and they are in a better position to benefit from international assistance. What this means is that to provide equality of opportunity in an initial situation of gross inequality is in practice highly discriminatory. It is no wonder that as long ago as 1957, the working party on African land tenure argued that 'it has been proved in many countries that the surest way to deprive a peasant of his right to land is to give him a secure title and make it freely negotiable'.³²

An increase in inequality in access to land does not mean of course that all African farmers are likely to be worse off in the long run as a result of these land policies. By no means. The better African farmers and especially those who would be resettled on plots in the unused and under-utilised European land are highly likely to benefit greatly. But how many will these be? The experience of Kenya is relevant here. It has been estimated that some 250,000 larger farms or prosperous smallholders have certainly benefited from land resettlement and land registration in the Reserves. But increased production for this group of farmers should not blind one to the fact that over 50 per cent of smallholders have not benefited at all, indeed many may well have become worse off. In general production on small farms in the Reserve areas in Kenya has remained at subsistence levels and where production has increased there is no evidence to suggest that this has been due to changes in the land tenure system and the shift to individual ownership of agricultural land.³³

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32. Quoted in E.H. Jacoby, *Agrarian Reconstruction*, FAO, Rome, 1968, p.61.
33. There was in Kenya, however, a strong correlation between the ending of discrimination in marketing produce of African farmers and a rapid rise in production for the market. See Holtham and Hazlewood *op.cit.*, p.23. For a general discussion of Kenyan agriculture see J. Hayer, *Agricultural Development in Kenya*, Oxford University Press, Nairobi, 1976.

Current land proposals would probably result in high growth rates for the present efficiently run European farms and the proportionately small number of better African farmers. But is this the sole criterion by which to judge the success of these land policies? We have just seen that one result is likely to be increasing inequalities in access to land, and hence in relative incomes. Two further results need to be considered: the effect of these policies on long run growth prospects both for agriculture and for the economy as a whole and the effect on overall land use efficiency.

We saw above that one of the basic assumptions behind these particular proposals was to provide continuity with the 'capitalist free enterprise economy'. It needs to be said that Rhodesia's particular brand of capitalism is very far from the world of competitive capitalism found in textbooks. The present structure of land has evolved through a whole range of institutional policies leading to the current position of extreme inequality and great inefficiencies in land use, discussed in the last section. There can be no doubt that this capitalist system has created an acute mis-allocation of resources and under-utilisation of potential capacity. Looking to the future, present land proposals are likely to lead to an increase in the number of large and medium-sized farms and the gradual eclipse of the smallest farms and it does not appear that this would result in an economically efficient use of resources.

It has been argued that large farms are necessary because the higher profit margins on these farms would lead to higher savings and so to higher rates of investment than on smaller farms where savings tend to be channelled into expanded consumption rather than into investment; as a result it is argued that for the economy as a whole a regime of larger farms will lead to higher overall growth rates and a more efficient use of resources. But the available evidence tends to question this assumption. Under market conditions, small commercial farms tend to make better use of their savings for investment than larger ones.³⁴

In practice, the Kenyan experience adds weight to the argument

34. Evidence from the ECLA countries from Latin America, for Europe and Japan shows that there is no correlation between income concentration and national development, while saving propensities appear to be low precisely in countries where income distribution is the most unequal. See P. Dorner, *Land Reform and Economic Development*, Penguin, London, 1972.

that Rhodesia's current proposals for land are unlikely to lead to an efficient use of land. In the Kenyan resettlement schemes, there appears to be a sharp decline in land utilisation in plots over 20 acres and on some farms so much money was paid out for original purchase of the land that little or none remained to purchase necessary inputs. An equally serious consequence of capitalist development in Kenya is that land is increasingly being bought by urban businessmen as a collateral for urban development rather than for its agricultural use. Land is being bought and sold without it even being viewed and in some cases it is lying fallow. In Kikuyuland, where land registration under individual title first occurred, over 37 per cent of the land is owned by absentee landlords.

Finally, the 1972 International Labour Organisation mission to Kenya reported that ten years after independence some 2½ million acres of medium-potential land available for development in the country had not been touched.³⁵ The African Farmers Union of Rhodesia has argued that it believes that 'land is put to most productive use if it is held on a freehold title basis with changes in ownership occurring through normal market disposal within a capitalist free enterprise system'.³⁶ In present-day Rhodesia and with the evidence of Kenya after independence, there are little, if any, grounds for believing this.

We are left, finally, with the argument that the current proposals will lead to high rates of agricultural growth. In the short term for the big and medium-sized farms and on the proposed resettlement farms this is highly likely to result, but a number of points need to be made. In the first place, as we have noted, high growth rates for some farms do not mean either that they will apply to all farms or that they will result in all the land being farmed in the most efficient way. More serious, however, in the long term are the likely consequences of promoting a strategy of rapid agricultural growth with a highly inegalitarian land structure. Experience elsewhere, for instance in Chile and other Latin American countries with large capitalist farms, has shown that earnings are liable to be spent on luxuries and on industrial investment rather than on investment to raise production on the large estates.

In Kenya the growth strategy of the past sixteen years is now leading

35. International Labour Office, *Employment, Incomes and Equality*, ILO, Geneva, 1972, p.172.

36. Quote in Africa Confidential, *op.cit.*

to structural problems in the economy. Growing numbers of the rural population are being displaced and not being absorbed into agriculture. This is leading to increased urban migration and the large number of work-seekers are not being absorbed into the urban economy; slums and squatter settlements are on the increase with their enormous social and economic consequences. The overall strategy is also leading to other problems such as agricultural stagnation in the peasant sector due to adverse terms of trade which place the poorer farmers at a disadvantage; it is also leading to structural inflation and an increasingly severe balance of payments crisis. And in Mexico where high priority has been given to capitalist agricultural development for the past thirty years, the consequences have been to create 'a vicious circle of backwardness and destruction from which the country has not yet been able to recover'.³⁷ The probable advantage of short term benefits of partial agricultural growth should not blind one to the serious structural problems likely to result in the future.

To summarise these points, current land proposals are based on the assumption that the country's well-being lies in attempts to maintain continuity with the present economic system which to date has led to increased inequalities in wealth, income and access to land. The TTLs have evolved to provide cheap labour for the modern sectors of the economy, but at present thousands of workers are not being absorbed into employment while conditions within the TTLs continue to deteriorate. Under these proposals, peasants would gradually be allowed to own their land, but the vast majority are likely either to remain at subsistence levels or to be displaced from their land. A few, those who are better off to begin with, are likely to benefit from resettlement, an increasing number are likely to join the ranks of the unemployed or poorly paid. The current proposals make little or no attempt to counteract the weak position of the poor majority or to incorporate them into the development process. As a way of assuring long term growth, narrowing inequalities, creating an efficient land structure and satisfying the basic needs of the people these proposals provide little hope.

TOWARDS A MORE RADICAL APPROACH

In this section we shall outline a very different approach to the land

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37. G. Esteva, *Agriculture in Mexico 1950-1975: The Failure of An Analogy*, Banco Nacional De Comercio Exterior, SA, *Economic and Political Aspects of Mexico and Latin America*, Vol.22, No.1, January 1976.

question. Here we shall assume that the purpose of land and agrarian reform is to integrate everyone into the development process, and most particularly the rural poor who are becoming increasingly marginalised in the evolution of the present system. The aim is to attempt to satisfy the basic needs of the population as quickly as possible by proposing land policies which would provide: a security of tenure for all, control of the land and any agricultural surplus produced by those who work the land, an equality in access to land, productive employment for all and participation in the decision-making process surrounding those policies which relate to agriculture and land.

While a variety of different policies to achieve these ends could be debated, we shall consider only one here – a land strategy based on socialism, the social ownership of the means of production, and self-reliance rather than on capitalism because it is argued that an economic system based on the decision-making of central planners and local communities provides a far more rational basis for achieving the policy goals listed above than the continuation of the present system which was considered in the last section.³⁸

A number of points need to be made at once. Firstly, the present discussion is concerned with a socialist and self-reliant *land* strategy and not with the total strategy; land policies would form only a part of the whole and so this discussion remains very much a partial analysis. And even the success of this type of land strategy would depend upon the administrative and organisational ability of an independent Zimbabwe to carry out the proposals listed below.

The most fundamental problem about debating such an alternative, however, relates to whether it is a politically realistic possibility. Is a socialist land strategy politically possible to achieve when there is no Zimbabwe Socialist Party which is committed to such a programme and when so many powerful interest groups, within Rhodesia and outside, would vigorously oppose it? (There are of course groups within ZAPU and ZANU and supporters of the UANC who would advocate socialist policies.)

In reply a number of points can be made. There are undoubtedly radical elements in all the major nationalist parties which would support

38. For a discussion on the meaning and interpretation of the term 'self-reliance' see *Self-Reliance and Solidarity in the Quest for International Justice*, World Council of Churches, Geneva, 1976.

a socialist land strategy. There are significant numbers of rural Africans within Rhodesia who, as a consequence of years of oppression and more recently acute military repression, would increasingly support such a strategy because of their growing opposition to present policies. And there are also a number of groups of Zimbabweans at present in Mozambique who have already begun to form successful trial agricultural cooperatives. As the media in Rhodesia are heavily controlled by the present government which is opposed to radical change, any support for widespread land reform goes largely unreported; but, as the Pearce Commission episode clearly demonstrated, many Rhodesians, particularly those benefiting from the present system, remain largely ignorant of mass feeling. In the present conflict no alternative can yet be ruled out. At its weakest, a discussion of a radical land strategy aimed at satisfying basic needs will provide — if nothing else — an alternative against which to judge possible 'solutions' as they are proposed by politicians in the move towards independence. The present discussion is presented as a contribution to the critically important debate about the sort of land structure Zimbabweans may well have to choose in the coming months. The experience from other countries shows that for a radical land strategy to become a realistic alternative, a series of short-term and quick decisions are necessary if a government committed to such reforms is to succeed in implementing such a strategy. The more these issues have been debated beforehand, the more likely they are to receive support and be fleshed out into realistic solutions.

The basic problem of land and rural population in present-day Rhodesia consists not so much in a critical shortage of land, but in the artificial structures that have been created and that maintain acutely over-populated African areas side-by-side under-utilised European land. A radical land policy would aim to eliminate this artificial structure, provide farmers with enough land so that they can satisfy the minimum needs of their families and create a land structure which does not place the poor at a disadvantage. In so doing, it would also lead to the destruction of the present labour supply system.

To achieve the first aim, a decisive shift of population would have to take place so that the better agricultural land supports the majority of the people who obtain their living from the land. At present 80 per cent of the rural population live in the less productive African land; a radical land reform would aim to have the majority living in what is now the more productive European land.

From Figure 2, it can be seen that the most productive land of the country lies in the Highveld, running from the South-west and branching out to the North-west and North-east of Salisbury. Figure 4 is a map of the land available for agricultural development (in 1969), given the present population distribution, and it shows that the areas marked as 'good' and 'fair' for development lie precisely in the presently designated European land in the Highveld (see Figure 1).

What this data suggests is that there should be a resettlement programme from the over-populated African areas to the more sparsely-populated and better quality European land. This would not be difficult to achieve in practice because at present the more heavily populated African areas lie adjacent to the more under-populated European land. The enormous differences between the population densities of adjacent European and African land can be seen from Table IV, below, which gives figures for selected rural areas stretching from the North-west, around Mangula down to areas to the North and East of Bulawayo.

A resettlement programme onto the unused and under-utilised land would not only lead to greater potential for agricultural development for those who are resettled, but it would also lead to an easing of land pressure in the African areas which should itself lead to increased agricultural development in these areas.³⁹

To propose a land resettlement scheme in accordance with the agro-ecological suitability of the land leads one to the important decision about what farming structure and tenurial system should be adopted to accompany the movement of population. Technical and financial arguments, long run considerations, the need to establish a system based on cooperation rather than competition, the attempt to create a structure of equal access to land and the concern to incorporate the poor and those who have become marginalised into the development process all point to the overwhelming conclusion that a system of rural communally-owned farming units would provide the surest base for future development.⁴⁰ Rather than extending the system of

39. In such a resettlement scheme onto European farms, it is not being suggested of course that capital such as tractors, combines etc. should be abandoned to make way for more labour-intensive forms of farming. But in the future, choices will have to be made about the type of capital and technology appropriate given the resources and capital shortages in an independent Zimbabwe.

40. These points obviously need expanding. They are discussed more fully in a forthcoming publication by Mambo Press.

*Table IV: COMPARISON OF POPULATION DENSITIES IN
SELECTED ADJACENT RURAL AREAS, CENTRAL WATERSHED
1969 CENSUS*

<i>Location</i>	<i>Racial Land Category</i>	<i>Population 000s</i>	<i>Area 000s Acres</i>	<i>Natural Farming Region</i>	<i>Density Acres Per Person</i>
Lomagundi	(European)	122.4	2,451.5	II	20.1
Urungwe	(TTL)	43.7	493.0	III	11.3
Mazoe	(European)	49.9	764.7	II	15.3
Chiweshe	(TTL)	39.7	212.9	II	5.3
Shamva	(European)	15.9	312.7	II	19.7
Marandellas	(European)	28.0	837.6	II	29.9
Mangwende	(TTL)	76.5	502.1	II	6.6
Hartley	(European)	57.2	1,321.9	II	23.3
Gatooma	(European)	17.6	1,166.3	II	66.2
Mondoro	(TTL)	44.3	322.3	III	7.3
Gwelo	(European)	26.6	1,453.4	II/III	54.7
Lower Gwelo	(TTL)	20.1	147.2	III	7.3
Selukwe	(European)	9.8	588.3	II/III	59.7
Selukwe	(TTL)	31.8	182.8	III	5.7
Victoria	(European)	17.6	932.2	II/III	52.8
Victoria	(TTL)	22.3	118.8	III	5.4
Bubi	(European)	11.9	1,382.0	IV	116.6
Ihkosikazi	(TTL)	7.8	118.3	IV	15.2
Nkai	(TTL)	63.8	1,057.1	IV	16.6
Umzingwane	(European)	7.7	437.6	III	56.4
Matopo	(TTL)	11.3	125.0	III/IV	11.0

Source: Land Tenure Act (1969) First and Second Schedules; Census of Population (1969: Table 2).

Note: Population figures include both African and European populations for both areas. The population in the European districts of course includes African farmworkers and their dependents living on European farmland. Natural Farming Regions I and II are most suited to intensive cultivation, Regions III and IV are least suited.

individual tenure throughout the country, it is argued here that in the long run the land should be divided up into communes with the land owned by the commune-members and farmed by them.⁴¹ The large to medium-sized farming units in the European areas should be maintained, the smaller ones joined together and the very large ones subdivided; the land in the TTLs and PAs should gradually be pooled together to form larger communally-owned farming units. The size of the proposed communes could not be decided complete in advance; this would depend upon the quality of the land in different parts of the country and the farming specialisation appropriate to each area as well as the harmonisation of broader national and local development strategies. But in the TTLs, for example, a proposed commune structure could be created out of the traditional land/population groupings — the *nyika* (chiefdom) and the *dunhu* (tribal ward). It needs to be added that there is no reason why the colonial practice of encouraging every African farmer to practise mixed farming of crops and cattle should be continued; indeed the practice has been condemned as a wasteful farming system on a number of occasions.⁴²

This new land system does not, of course, provide anything like a sufficient condition for agricultural development. What we are discussing here is the basic land structure necessary for a particular development path to be followed — a path which takes as its starting point the rapid alleviation of poverty and the absorption of the poor into the development process. Land reform is only a beginning; a whole range of supporting policies related, for example, to new infrastructural planning and the appropriate choice of technology, are needed to increase production and to provide basic services for the rural population.

The creation of a system of communes throughout the country is a long term goal that would take many years to complete. Some may call it little more than pipe-dreaming. Long term goals are important, however, because, as we argued above, one of the fundamental weaknesses of current land proposals is that they are essentially short term policies which in the long term are likely to create even more serious problems.

41. The formation of a commune-type organisation does not exclude provision for small private plots for families to grow some vegetables and to keep a few poultry etc.

42. See, for example, K. Brown *Land in Southern Rhodesia*, The Africa Bureau, London, 1959.

Nevertheless the most urgent need is to suggest short and medium term policies for land and this brings us back to the real world and the problem of how to move from the present to the more distant future.

There is no doubt that there are powerful interest-groups who would oppose radical land reform, such as the RNFU, the AFUR, all employers outside agriculture who gain from the present labour supply and low-wage system and probably also the better African farmers who would stand to gain from the proposed resettlement on individual plots in the European areas. Another important constraint relates to the present pattern of agricultural production. As we have seen, at least 70 per cent of the basic food needs of the country originate in the commercial, and overwhelmingly European, farming sector. Thus any reform would need to ensure that there is no massive reduction in food production for this would lead to widespread starvation, particularly in the Tribal Areas, and most probably both economic and political chaos. Furthermore, foreign exchange is likely to be scarce in an independent Zimbabwe, so every attempt would need to be made to maintain the production of export crops in the transition period.

A government committed to radical change would thus be faced with both the political and economic problems of launching its ambitious programme. Land reform is as much (some would say more) a political problem as an economic one. The pace of change would thus be partially determined by the different problems which arise as the reform proceeds. Hence no finally worked-out blueprint can be produced at this early stage: while some policies would need to be carried out gradually, others would require discrete steps forward to be taken.

The following proposals are just one set of short term measures which could form the basis of a radical land reform process during the transition period.

In the creation of a socialist and self-reliant economy and in the move to the eventual formation of communes, an essential first step should be the nationalisation of all farming land in the country: land would then only be 'sold' to the state at prices determined by the state. This would have to be accompanied at once by effective incentives to persuade the important (probably not more than 2,000) efficient commercial farmers to maintain production on their farms. What is crucial to the whole radical reform process, however, is that these incentives should be directly related to the long term land strategy and should not be applied across the board as occurred, at enormous ex-

pense, in Kenya. The aim is not to buy out all white farms at an exorbitant price but primarily to maintain production in the critical short term period. As the long term goal is to move over to a system of co-operative farming and workers' participation on these large farms, the highest incentives offered should be given to those efficient farms which not only maintain production but which also begin to work towards greater worker participation and the training of workers in the running and operation of the farms. If these 2,000 or so farms could be transformed in, say, a two or three year period to fully co-operative enterprises running efficiently, then it would have been well worthwhile giving the original landowners a large enough incentive to ensure that this process occurs. At the end of the transition period, these landowners could then have the choice of either remaining on the farm as a cooperative member or the choice of leaving. In similar fashion, farmers could be rewarded in the transition period if they are willing to use their managerial skills to help coordinate the resettlement of people onto vacant or under-utilised land in their districts or to help the bringing together of smaller farms into large units.

The success of this strategy would depend upon the money available, for it needs to be made financially worthwhile for the present farmers to stay on their land long enough for production levels to be maintained and to ensure that new management is trained to run the farms. In practice what is being proposed is a gradation of 'compensation'. Those who have unprofitable unproductive farms and who have no wish to participate in the move to communes should have their land taken from them at once. Those who maintain high levels of production and who move swiftly to a more productive farming structure should be highly rewarded. The money incentive would depend upon the response made to the proposals and could be related both to production figures (comparing them with previous years) and to the feedback received on each farm on the progress made towards greater cooperation. The farm employees would know well enough if genuine steps were being taken to incorporate them into the management and decision-making process. In the first year, a small amount of 'compensation' could be paid, and this could rise steeply each year until the workers were able to run the farm themselves with an upper limit of, say, four years for the most capital-intensive farming units.

A particular problem relates to those farming units run by multinational corporations (see above). Although in the long term it is

important to incorporate this land into the overall land structure, in the short term a different approach might be necessary. This is because some multinationals, such as Lonhro and Anglo-American, play critical roles in the mining and manufacturing sectors of the economy and policies which threaten immediate withdrawal in these sectors might be highly damaging. The issue is both critical and complex and needs to be related to the national strategy towards foreign capital in general.⁴³

A second critical short and medium-term policy relates to the much-needed resettlement of farmers from the desperately overcrowded African rural areas. The shift to greater cooperation on commercial farming land would lead to the absorption of African employees who presently work as farm labourers as well as a certain number from run-down farms and from adjacent TTLs. The precise number who would be absorbed cannot be determined at this stage as it would depend particularly on the policy to be adopted towards foreign agricultural workers. At present they constitute some 119,000 workers, approximately 33 per cent of the total. Assuming that at least some of these aliens return home, some African farmers from the TTLs could be absorbed fairly rapidly onto the viable European farming units. As for the rest, although it might be desirable to resettle them fairly slowly so that new communes can be effectively established and there is as little disruption as possible to agricultural production, it seems likely that a more rapid resettlement would have to take place both to relieve pressure in the TTLs and because of the political need to show that there is a genuine commitment to re-allocate land more equitably. Thus in the short term it would probably be necessary for some of those resettled to farm the vacated European land on small-scale plots as they now do in the TTLs. However this should be seen to be a transitional measure in the process of eventual communalisation of the land. To achieve this end, land should be allocated in such a way that both farming and residential land could easily be adapted to a commune system. In addition, the communal marketing of produce, the formation of communal work teams and communal access to credit, inputs etc. could all form part of the resettlement package. As the Kenyan case clearly shows, if resettlement leads to the establishment of an enriched and prosperous group of smallholders they will prove very difficult to dislodge in the future.

43. See note 40.

In the Tribal areas, it would be equally difficult to move over to a system of communes overnight. Thus in the short term, policies need to be introduced to encourage the shift to greater cooperation. At present the TTLs are divided up into communal grazing land and the individual cultivation (though not ownership) of small plots. The grazing land could immediately be taken over by agricultural groups and the care of grazing land would then become a group responsibility. This is nothing very radical and in some TTLs the Natural Resources Board has already done this with considerable success, for example in Msana TTL. In time, cattle would have to be transferred from individual to group ownership. For many this would be most welcome, for at present some 45 per cent of peasant cultivators own no cattle, but for those who own large herds this transition would not be achieved easily. The speed with which this takes place remains a political decision; it could be achieved, for example, by creating policies for dipping, calving, and purchase and selling of cattle which discriminate in favour of communally-owned and against individually-owned cattle.

For cultivated plots, a first step towards full cooperation and the joint pooling of land could take the form of mutual-aid farming groups where plotholders take it in turns to work each other's land with the plot 'owner' allocating work to the workteam. In addition, input prices, credit and the marketing of produce could all be organised in favour of corporate rather than individual farmers. The enormous success of the Silveira House groups over the past five years shows both the popularity of such a scheme and also demonstrates that it leads to dramatic increases in production.⁴⁴ In time this first-stage of cooperation could be extended. For example the price received for marketed produce could be related to the group's willingness to share out the surplus with all group members, regardless of the access each has to land. Eventually the pooling of land into communes could be achieved. Again, the speed and extent of cooperation would depend upon the successes achieved to date and the willingness of the people to move towards higher levels of cooperation. Little more can be said at this stage. However experience of what has been achieved in cooperative farming so far in Rhodesia, often with what was initially thought to be 'unsuitable' material,

44. Silveira House is a development, leadership and religious centre run by the Jesuit Fathers near to Salisbury. See Silveira House, Annual Reports, Chishawasha, 1973-76 (mimeo).

shows that the proposed shift to communes is a realistic alternative for Zimbabwe.⁴⁵

CONCLUSION

There can be little doubt that the land question is a complex issue. Although it is comparatively easy to list the basic problems of the present land structure, we have seen that a discussion of alternatives for the future leads on to much deeper dynamic issues than the simple reallocation of land. This is because the land issue provides the focal point around which many of the conflicts of Rhodesian society are centred. It is the land structure which plays a fundamental role in the labour supply and wage structure of colonial society, a structure that has led to increasing numbers of people having to live in poverty.

The present discussion about land in Rhodesia appears to be overwhelmingly concerned with maintaining this present system intact and policies for the future are more concerned with short-run partial agricultural growth and with defending the interests of a minority than with addressing the problems of poverty, inequality and the increased marginalisation of the majority. It seems highly likely that a development path built on these land proposals will not lead to satisfying the basic needs of the population in the foreseeable future — they have not been designed to do so.

We have argued in the last section that a radical land reform is necessary if it is assumed that high priorities for an independent Zimbabwe should include the narrowing of inequality, the elimination of poverty and economic growth based on the integration of all into the development process. We have put forward one approach for achieving these ends. A radical land reform provides the basic starting point for resolving the deeper conflicts of colonial society and for establishing an economic base which will confront the problems of poverty and underdevelopment. Yet it is also clear that even this hesitant first step is a difficult one: it requires the political will to implement such a policy and both political support and organisational expertise to carry it through. Even if the proposals made in these pages are dismissed as

45. The experiences of Cold Comfort Farm and Nyafaru are discussed in Guy and Molly Clutton-Brock *Cold Comfort Confronted*, Mowbrays, Oxford, 1972.

unworkable, it is hoped that by raising the deeper problems of Rhodesia's land structure, the debate might continue on how that land structure could be changed to solve Zimbabwe's long term as well as short term problems. To refrain from attempting to initiate a radical land reform on the grounds of impossibility would be both defeatist and also historically inaccurate.

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