



Farmer–Miner Contestations and the British South Africa Company in Colonial Zimbabwe, 1895–1923

Tapiwa Madimu, Enocent Msindo & Sandra Swart

To cite this article: Tapiwa Madimu, Enocent Msindo & Sandra Swart (2018): Farmer–Miner Contestations and the British South Africa Company in Colonial Zimbabwe, 1895–1923, Journal of Southern African Studies, DOI: [10.1080/03057070.2018.1500747](https://doi.org/10.1080/03057070.2018.1500747)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057070.2018.1500747>



Published online: 11 Oct 2018.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 9



View Crossmark data [↗](#)

Farmer–Miner Contestations and the British South Africa Company in Colonial Zimbabwe, 1895–1923

TAPIWA MADIMU

(Rhodes University)

ENOCENT MSINDO

(Rhodes University)

SANDRA SWART

(Stellenbosch University)

This article explores the interaction of settler farmers, miners, and the state in Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) from 1895 to 1923. The governing authority, the British South Africa Company (BSAC), was a private commercial mining entity, which sought to maximise its earnings through mining, particularly gold extraction. Its mining bias set the stage for subsequent friction between the country's miners and the fledgling settler farming sector over the control of labour, land, wood and water resources in the new state. The end of BSAC rule in 1923 and its replacement with settler government has often been explained in economic terms, as an indication that farming had become more economically important to the state than mining. This article suggests, rather, that mining interests continued to be economically powerful, even when political power shifted towards the farmers. We show that the farmers' struggle (post-1910) for recognition, for fairer resource allocation and other rights, especially through the 1912 tax strikes and other political actions, set in place developments that eventually led to the end of Company rule in 1923. However, although this farmer-led activism transformed the political landscape, the politically combustible issue of miners' privileged access to resources in the Great Dyke (where Gold Belt Titles were mainly tenable) remained unresolved until 1961, when the Mines Ordinance was finally amended to give farmers some share of the environmental resources with miners on farms in the Gold Belt areas.

Keywords: Zimbabwe; settler politics; BSAC; mining; farming; competition for resources

Introduction

The development of Southern Rhodesia's colonial economy has attracted robust scholarly attention over the years, with historians focusing chiefly on the development and growth of the country's mining and agriculture in general, as well as on

the repressive and discriminatory nature of colonial land and economic policies.¹ This literature chiefly concentrated on inter-racial economic relations and made only passing reference to sectoral economic contestations among white settlers themselves. Earlier studies on intra-settler politics by Philip Mason,² Colin Leys,³ Louis Gann,⁴ and Donal Lowry⁵ have chronicled the political history of Southern Rhodesia since the occupation in 1890 by the British South Africa Company (BSAC), which hoped to find a second Rand, and how it was eventually replaced by a settler government in 1923. The conventional wisdom argues that gold mining in Southern Rhodesia failed to yield expected rewards and that, accordingly, the BSAC turned to agriculture in an attempt to recoup its earlier losses. This earlier scholarship, however, does not appreciate that there was no significant change in policy, as earlier legislation set to benefit the mining sector remained in force, even beyond 1923, and changes were minimal. This article contends that intra-settler contestations, particularly between farmers and miners, spurred by the BSAC's pro-mining stance and the ensuing demands of the farmers, became more virulent after 1910 (and the creation of the Union of South Africa). These farmers' demands influenced political debate over whether Southern Rhodesia should join the Union of South Africa or become an independent entity controlled by the settlers themselves. Additionally, these political actions and protests by farmers initiated a process of slowly rethinking the country's economic focus before 1923, as farmers secured some minimal concessions from the state, especially regarding labour tax after 1912.

This article is part of the growing scholarship on intra-settler relations in Southern Rhodesia. Some scholars have focused on government–farmer relations within the colonial and post-colonial era.⁶ Others, such as Muchaparara Musemwa, Vimbai Kwashirai and Admire Mseba, have focused on miner–farmer disputes and how those disputes laid the foundation for the development of conservationism in Southern Rhodesia after 1939.⁷ Their work focused on environmental history and thus did not address the questions of politics and

1 V.E.M. Machingaidze, 'The Development of Settler Capitalist Agriculture in Southern Rhodesia with Particular Reference to the Role of the State, 1908 to 1939' (PhD thesis, University of London, 1980); G. Arrighi, *The Political Economy of Southern Rhodesia* (The Hague, Mouton, 1967); R. Palmer, 'The Agricultural History of Rhodesia', in R. Palmer and N. Parsons (eds), *The Roots of Rural Poverty in Central and Southern Africa* (London, Heinemann, 1977); I.R. Phimister, *An Economic and Social History of Zimbabwe, 1890 to 1948: Capital Accumulation and Class Struggle* (London, Longman, 1988). Phimister's doctoral thesis (and subsequent articles) on Southern Rhodesia's mining history offer an indispensable study of the development, growth and significance of the industry to the colonial political economy. See I.R. Phimister, 'Economic History of Mining in Southern Rhodesia to 1953' (PhD thesis, University of Rhodesia, 1975); C. van Onselen, *Chibaro: African Mine Labour in Southern Rhodesia* (London, Pluto Press, 1976).

2 P. Mason, *The Birth of a Dilemma: The Conquest and Settlement of Rhodesia* (London, Oxford University Press, 1958).

3 C. Leys, *European Politics in Southern Rhodesia* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1959).

4 L.H. Gann, *A History of Southern Rhodesia: Early Days to 1924* (New York, Humanities Press, 1969).

5 D. Lowry, "'White Woman's Country': Ethel Towse Jollie and the Making of White Rhodesia", *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 23, 2 (1997), pp. 259–81.

6 See J.A. Mackenzie, 'Commercial Farmers in the Governmental System of Colonial Zimbabwe, 1863–1980' (PhD thesis, University of Zimbabwe, 1989); R. Pilosof, *The Unbearable Whiteness of Being: Farmers' Voices from Zimbabwe* (Cape Town, UCT Press, 2012); A. Selby, 'Commercial Farmers and the State: Interest Group Politics and Land Reform in Zimbabwe' (PhD thesis, University of Oxford, 2006); T. Madimu, 'Responsible Government and Miner–Farmer Relations in Southern Rhodesia, 1923–1945', *South African Historical Journal*, 68, 3 (2016), pp. 366–89; T. Madimu, 'Farmers, Miners and the State in Colonial Zimbabwe (Southern Rhodesia), c.1895–1961' (PhD thesis, Stellenbosch University, 2017).

7 M. Musemwa, 'Contestation Over Resources: The Farmer–Miner Dispute in Colonial Zimbabwe, 1903–1939', *Environment and History*, 15, 1 (2009), pp. 78–107; V.C. Kwashirai, 'Dilemmas in Conservation in Colonial Zimbabwe, 1890–1930', *Conservation and Society*, 4, 4 (2006), pp. 541–61; A. Mseba, 'Law, Expertise and Settler Conflicts Over Land in Early Colonial Zimbabwe, 1890–1923', *Environment and Planning A*, 48, 4 (2015), pp. 665–80; V. Kwashirai, *Green Colonialism in Colonial Zimbabwe, 1890–1980* (Amherst, Cambria Press, 2009).

economic policy in the Southern Rhodesian state. M.E. Lee, who dealt with the issue of intra-group conflicts among the various settler groups during Company rule, referred briefly to the miner–farmer dynamics as one of the unfolding struggles among the many interest groups during that time.⁸ This is an important issue that we intend to expand on, emphasising the role of this farmer–miner struggle in shaping the broader politics of the time and helping the state to rethink their economic priorities in the face of political and economic uncertainty between 1890 and 1923. The BSAC’s regulation of land, water and wood in favour of the mining industry particularly affected farms that fell within the Gold Belt areas. The Gold Belt lay on the country’s Great Dyke. This was a stretch of land that covered the central parts of the country, with the most fertile soils and good climatic conditions, and therefore suitable for farming.⁹ Farms allocated in the Gold Belt were tied to certain conditions that gave miners preference with regards to the use of resources such as timber, water, access to roads and the usage of the land in those areas. This opened up the space for competition over wood, water and land, engendering hostility on the part of the farmers who did not have legislation to protect them from the miners’ demands on resources in the Great Dyke. The growth, after 1910, of the political capital and agency of the farming community (evident in the 1912 tax revolt), significantly garnered votes in favour of the settler-controlled Responsible Government in 1922, and marked the end of Company rule.

Additionally, in a few instances, shifting political and economic dynamics after 1910 forced the BSAC administration to override mining interests not only when they clashed with settler farmers. Diana Jeater, for example, demonstrates how Africans successfully pushed for the promulgation of a Natives Adultery Punishment Ordinance (NAPO) in 1916, which criminalised adultery, against the wishes of mining capital.¹⁰ The assumption of the miners was that the passing of this ordinance would compromise labour supplies on the mines, wrongly assuming that African mineworkers would not work in the mines if women were forbidden from servicing their other social interests. E. Montagu, the Secretary for Mines, tried to block the NAPO, but his ‘protestations carried little weight’ mainly because, as Jeater argues, the ‘mines were not a great economic asset and the political influence of the mine-owners was fading in the rising light of settler power’.¹¹ There could be other more cogent reasons, such as the increasing migration into Southern Rhodesia of settlers with little capital, who went into the agriculture business, which was not as capital-intensive as mining. We do not think that mining in this era was no longer a dominant player, because, in fact, big mining corporations from South Africa and elsewhere were buying out smaller miners in Southern Rhodesia and establishing big corporations that stabilised the industry, financed it well and ensured higher productivity.¹² Secondly, mining remained the major economic player during the Company era, particularly during the First World War, when the price of gold and metal in general increased significantly. As Charles van Onselen rightly argued, the mining sector was economically dominant between 1890 and 1933: ‘[b]enefiting from its fixed price and the two periods of rapid expansion, it was gold that was the main progenitor of the striking growth of the National Income during the years between the two wars’.¹³ However, it is important to distinguish overall mining profitability from white population

8 M.E. Lee, ‘Politics and Pressure Groups in Southern Rhodesia, 1898 to 1923’ (PhD thesis, University of London, 1974). See also M.E. Lee, ‘The Origins of the Rhodesian Responsible Government Movement’, *Rhodesian History*, 6 (1975), pp. 33–52.

9 Unless otherwise stated, all archival files are from the National Archives of Zimbabwe (hereafter NAZ) S480/77, Gold Dredging rights 1933.

10 See D. Jeater, *Marriage, Perversion and Power: The Construction of Moral Discourse in Southern Rhodesia 1894–1930* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1993).

11 *Ibid.*, p. 139.

12 Van Onselen, *Chibaro*, pp. 29–30; Phimister, *An Economic and Social History*, pp. 56–7.

13 Van Onselen, *Chibaro*, p. 30.

growth in general. Our view is that, although the mining sector remained profitable, they did not have the political numbers on their side for them to win a plebiscite – especially when they were pitted against their farming counterparts, whose population was growing relative to that of mine owners. However, because of miners’ dominant economic position, government was always chary of altering the status quo, which favoured miners.

Upon being granted a Royal Charter in 1899, Cecil John Rhodes had hastily formed the BSAC, which presided over the country’s administration until 1923.¹⁴ An 1894 Order in Council paved way for the appointment of an Administrator who was to govern the colony with the aid of a council composed of Company appointees. These promoted and protected the Company’s main commercial interests in mining.¹⁵ White farmers were granted a consultative voice in 1898, when a Legislative Council was created as a restraining curb on Company power, following the Jameson raid and uprisings in Mashonaland and Matabeleland. Settler representation was initially set at four, but was raised, consistent with the growing political significance of the settler community, until elected members constituted a majority by 1913.¹⁶ However, we demonstrate how the elected members could not use their position to push for legislative changes because such attempts were always thwarted by the BSAC, which maintained its hegemony over the economy. White farmers became a strong voice after 1914, but the BSAC regime was slow to recognise their importance as a vector in Southern Rhodesian politics, contributing to its demise in 1923.

Early Years: Foundation of the Colonial Economy

When the Pioneer Column crossed the Limpopo into Southern Rhodesia in 1890 in the wake of the gold rush on the Witwatersrand, they expected to find a ‘second Rand’ and hoped to establish a mining-based economy. The passing of the Mashonaland Mining Regulation no. 1 of 1890, which embodied the American apex principle,¹⁷ and the subsequent opening of two large mines, the Cotopaxi and the Dickens, in Fort Victoria district in 1893,¹⁸ marked the beginning of large-scale mining efforts. In addition, numerous mining claims were parcelled out by the BSAC administration. The Company held a 50 per cent share in all mining ventures and, to maximise its profits, encouraged flotation¹⁹ of mining companies. Mining, therefore, became the initial cornerstone upon which the colonial economy was to be built.

In line with its vision of a mining-based economy, the Company administration tried to create an enabling environment for the mining business. In 1895, the Mines and Minerals Ordinance was passed, granting miners water, timber and grazing rights. Under this legislation, a licensed mining prospector had the right to peg claims on land that had been

14 See J.S. Galbraith, *Crown and Charter: The Early Days of the British South Africa Company* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1974), p. 311.

15 P.F. Horne, *Southern Rhodesia* (London, George Bell and Sons, 1909), p. 125.

16 For a detailed discussion of the development of Southern Rhodesia’s constitutional history see C. Palley, *The Constitutional History and Law of Southern Rhodesia 1888–1965 With Special Reference to Imperial Control* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1966); Leys, *European Politics in Southern Rhodesia*; D.J. Murray, *The Governmental System in Southern Rhodesia* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1970); E. Msindo, ‘Settler Rule in Southern Rhodesia, 1890–1979’, in E. Cavanagh and L. Veracini (eds), *The Routledge Handbook of the History of Settler Colonialism* (London, Routledge, 2017), pp. 247–62.

17 The apex principle, or extra-lateral right, allowed the claim owner to follow the gold reef in all its ‘dips, spurs and variations’, outside the limits of the claim. Transvaal mining regulations ‘allowed only that gold within the claim boundaries to be worked’. I.R. Phimister, ‘Rhodes, Rhodesia and the Rand’, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 1, 1 (1974), p. 88.

18 Van Onselen, *Chibaro*, p. 14.

19 The process of offering a company’s shares for sale on the stock market for the first time.

originally expropriated from indigenous African inhabitants and was currently owned by white farmers; on the land so pegged, the miner could freely graze up to 20 draught animals, hew indigenous wood for domestic purposes on payment of compensation to the white farmers affected, use water for free when this was required for domestic purposes, and erect temporary buildings within the limits of the pegged area.²⁰ This attention to the needs of the mining industry did not fully preclude development and growth of settler agriculture as such, but these rights gave white miners an unfair advantage over white farmers. The regulations were at first detested and then contested by settler farmers, who were not granted similar rights over resources on the land that they had expropriated from Africans. In fact, during the first decade of occupation, most settlers who had acquired agricultural land did not engage in actual farming, but were so-called ‘kaffir farmers’, who lived on extracting rents from African tenants, while others relied on cutting and selling firewood.²¹ These farmers were the first to register discontent when exclusive timber rights were extended to miners by the Company administration.

Company directors and officials made efforts to sustain the myth of an ultimately illusory ‘second Rand’ north of the Limpopo by making ebullient declarations about the country’s mineral potential.²² These produced the desired results, for they were followed by a rise in share prices on the London market. However, the averred boom proved ephemeral. In 1898, the *Rhodesia Herald* correctly reported: ‘[b]y 1898 shares such as those of the Rhodesian Exploration and Development Company which at the height of the 1895 boom were selling at £18 could be bought at £4 and those of the BSAC had dropped from £8.17s.6d to £2.15s.0d’.²³ The realisation that the territory was not especially mineral rich came with J.H. Hammond, a mining engineer of the Consolidated Goldfields, who was appointed by Cecil Rhodes to inspect the country’s mineral potential. In November 1894, he revealed that there were no vast gold deposits in the country.²⁴ This revelation, however, did not end the speculative tendencies that had characterised the nascent mining industry. Mining (especially gold mining) remained vital for the settler economy, the value of gold produced between 1890 and 1910 approximating £17 million.²⁵ Significantly, though, this led the state to consider agriculture as a viable economic option, yet there was still no clear policy on how to protect emerging farmers from dominant mining interests.

There was very little white commercial agricultural activity in the early colonial days. As Gann noted, ‘[m]ining began as the Chartered Company’s favoured child – farming was its neglected Cinderella’.²⁶ In the absence of any meaningful white agrarian development, it was the indigenous African producers who met food requirements of the mining sector, a few settler capitalist farms and the Company plantations.²⁷ African peasant production thus flourished in the first two decades of settler occupation. However, as white settlement progressively increased, it was accompanied by an expansion of settler agriculture, especially as more Africans were driven into unproductive reserves. The continued success

20 Murray, *The Governmental System in Southern Rhodesia*, p. 120.

21 T. Ranger, *Peasant Consciousness and the Guerrilla War in Zimbabwe* (Harare, Zimbabwe Publishing House, 1985), p. 31.

22 Phimister, ‘Rhodes, Rhodesia and the Rand’, p. 79.

23 *Rhodesia Herald*, Sailsbury/Harare, 30 March 1898.

24 Phimister, ‘Rhodes, Rhodesia and the Rand’, p. 83.

25 Phimister, *An Economic and Social History*, p. 57.

26 Gann, *History of Southern Rhodesia*, p. 161.

27 See I.R. Phimister, ‘Peasant Production and Underdevelopment in Southern Rhodesia’, *African Affairs*, 73, 291 (1974), pp. 217–28; Ranger, *Peasant Consciousness*, pp. 26–48.

of African peasants threatened to undermine labour supplies for the mining industry and presented competition for the embryonic but emerging settler farming sector.²⁸ Desirous to eliminate this hurdle, which threatened the perceived profitability of the mining sector, the Company administration supported the development of white agriculture (especially after 1908). Robin Palmer and Victor Machingaidze discuss the various schemes extended by the BSAC to settler farmers. Similar support was not provided to African producers.²⁹ Compared to mining, however, the levels of support to the agriculture sector remained at the bare minimum, and this aroused white farmer indignation. This was manifested, especially after 1910, as an amplified call for the replacement of Company administration by white settler control, or 'Responsible Government'.³⁰

White commercial agriculture had a slow start, and land was still largely regarded as a tradable asset, rather than a productive resource. Most settlers who had expropriated land from its original African owners sold that land to large speculative mining and land companies, which also received generous land grants from the BSAC administration. Examples of such companies include Copenhagen (Mashonaland) Company, Chartered Goldfields Ltd and Willoughby's Consolidated, who bought large tracts of land from some of the poor members of the Pioneer Column, and later held on to this land expecting to sell it in the near future when land values appreciated. Willoughby Consolidated, for instance, expropriated vast tracts of land that became a part of the Tati Concessions in Botswana, in addition to being allocated much land by Leander Starr Jameson, who thought that they would engage in mining and also agriculture. By 1899, these big companies held 9.3 million acres, out of the 15.3 million acres of land stolen from Africans by the BSAC and other settlers.³¹ No meaningful agricultural activity took place on these vast tracts of land, despite their constituting the country's best agricultural land. Moreover, individual applicants were denied land grants in such areas, which contributed immensely to the predominance of mining interests over agriculture. Even some who had come intending to farm in the new colony also sought the elusive fortunes from gold mining.³² For the few who opted to venture into agriculture, it was usually at a subsistence level. Some, especially those who settled in remote areas, kept their cattle, goats, pigs and poultry and produced maize by adopting African farming methods, while others engaged in transport riding, whereby groups of entrepreneurs moved around the country with wagons trading in grain and other commodities, and market gardening.³³

28 For a detailed discussion of peasant production and proletarianisation, see G. Arrighi, 'Labour Supplies in Historical Perspective: A Study of the Proletarianization of the African Peasantry in Rhodesia', *Journal of Development Studies*, 6, 3 (1970), pp. 197–234; Phimister, 'Peasant Production and Underdevelopment'; O.B. Pollak, 'Black Farmers and White Politics in Rhodesia', *African Affairs*, 74, 296 (1975) pp. 263–77. J. Bonello also notes that, apart from ensuring a steady supply of cheap labour, white treatment of Africans 'also reflected the need to create distance and difference between the races'; see J. Bonello, 'The Development of Early Settler Identity in Southern Rhodesia, 1890–1914', *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 43, 2 (2010), p. 348.

29 R. Palmer, *Land and Racial Domination in Rhodesia* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1977); Machingaidze, 'The Development of Settler Capitalist Agriculture'; M. Rukuni, P. Tawonezwi, C. Eicher, M. Munyuki-Hungwe and P. Matondi (eds), *Zimbabwe's Agricultural Revolution Revisited* (Harare, University of Zimbabwe Publications, 2006).

30 For more on the build-up to Responsible Government, see H.C. Hummel, 'Sir Charles Coghlan: Some Reflections on His Political Attitudes and Style', *South African Historical Journal*, 9, 1 (1997), pp. 59–79; H.C. Hummel, 'A Political Biography of Sir Charles Coghlan' (PhD thesis, University of London, 1975); J.M. Mackenzie, 'Southern Rhodesia and Responsible Government', *Rhodesian History*, 9 (1978), pp. 21–40; M. Chanock, *Unconsummated Union: Britain, Rhodesia and South Africa, 1900–45* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1977); Lee, 'The Origins of the Rhodesian Responsible Government Movement'; M.E. Lee, 'An Analysis of the Rhodesian Referendum, 1922', *Rhodesian History*, 8 (1970), pp. 71–98.

31 Palmer, *Land and Racial Domination*, p. 36.

32 See Horne, *Southern Rhodesia*, p. 93.

33 See, generally, Ranger, *Peasant Consciousness*, Chapter 2.

To foster agricultural development, the Company administration opened a Department of Agriculture in 1897, initially merely as a subdivision of the Surveyor General's office.³⁴ Around this time, formal appeals for the development of a robust agricultural sector that could complement the mining industry were being made. The Mines Department, Bulawayo district, declared that:

[t]he district is a good agricultural and pastoral one, but little advantage has been taken of this fact by the farmers and landowners as they have absolutely done little or nothing in the shape of cultivation. The land should be cultivated to assist the mines in providing produce on a cheap scale. It is to be regretted that large tracts of country have been given to people who practically close them up and allow valuable land to lie fallow which should otherwise be of the utmost assistance to the miner.³⁵

Such pronouncements stemmed from a desire to see the coexistence of settler farmers and miners in a way that replicated the gold and maize alliance forged in South Africa around the same period. For instance, the first farm in the Lomagundi district can be cited as an example of this intention. It was deliberately developed on the Ayrshire mine so as to grow maize for the food requirements of African mine labourers.³⁶ Before 1920, farmer–miner relations in South Africa were characterised by economic symbiosis, depicted by historian Robert Morrell as follows: '[t]he mines required a regular cheap supply of agricultural products, particularly maize, to feed their labourers who were housed in the compounds. The maize farmers on the other hand, had access to a reliable market for their crops'.³⁷ This relationship, described by Stanley Trapido as 'the uneasy union of "gold and maize"',³⁸ was not so neatly defined in Southern Rhodesia. In the latter, although farmers would grow their crops with the intention to utilise the market created by mining and urban centres, they still had an uncomfortable relationship with miners regarding the control over key resources on the land itself.

The gradual development of agriculture meant that more white farmers claimed land in highly productive farming areas, which were incidentally on the Great Dyke, the centre of the mining operations. This perceived encroachment sowed the seed for contestation between the miners and the farmers. This was exacerbated by the relaxation, in 1903, of the mining regulations that allowed small independent miners to mine without forming companies. The result of this policy was to scatter small-scale white mining enterprises across the country, where they came into conflict with emerging white farmers over the utilisation of natural resources and rights of entry into the new farmlands. Meanwhile, Africans were also victims of the colonial land policies as they were being relocated to the newly created reserves with poor soils and low rainfall. The first reserves were demarcated in the dry, tsetse-infested areas of Gwaai and Shangani (Matabeleland) in 1894 through an Order in Council issued in that year to ensure settlement of the Ndebele people after their defeat by the BSAC in 1893. More reserves were created in both Mashonaland and Matabeleland, but although the indigenous Africans were dispossessed of their land they were not immediately displaced until after 1925. Many remained on such alienated land as labour or rent-paying tenants who also cultivated their own lands,

34 NAZ BR4, The British South Africa Company (BSAC) Annual Reports on Administration, 1896–97.

35 NAZ T/2/29/7/1, Annual Report for the Mines Department, Bulawayo district, for the year ending, 30 September 1897.

36 S. Rubert, *A Most Promising Weed: A History of Tobacco Farming and Labour in Colonial Zimbabwe, 1890 to 1948* (Athens, Ohio Centre for International Studies, 1998), p. 29.

37 R. Morrell, 'The Disintegration of the Gold and Maize Alliance in South Africa in the 1920s', *Journal of African Historical Studies*, 21, 4 (1988), pp. 619–35.

38 See S. Trapido, 'South Africa in a Comparative Study of Industrialisation', *Journal of Development Studies*, 7, 3 (1971), p. 311.

while others continued living on land designated as ‘Crown’ land. Relocation of Africans to reserves was seriously considered when they became competitors to the nascent white settler agricultural sector.³⁹

Land in Mining Zones: The Genesis of the Gold Belt Reservations

The manner in which the Company administration dealt with applications for land grants in the first decade of occupation demonstrates the Company’s attitude towards agricultural development and the country’s economy at large. Mining interests were prioritised and agriculture was treated as the second option. Only land deemed unfit for gold production was then allocated to settler farmers.

It was Company policy to scrutinise all areas before allocating land for agriculture. Only the Administrator had the prerogative of approving land grants, especially on land suspected of bearing gold deposits. For example, when a settler, J. Squair, applied for a farm in an area about 15 miles from Salisbury in August 1892, Jameson responded, ‘[w]ith reference to your letter August 22nd last it is evident that the land you have occupied is situated upon the Gold Belt. Under these circumstances the company is not prepared to issue the ordinary title to the land’. This response can be taken to be representative of the Company’s general policy on land allocations, as it was to be invoked in many other instances that we highlight below. Squair was allowed to occupy the land on an interim basis until

such time as the land is proved to contain gold in payable quantities or not: in the former case you shall vacate the land without any compensation and peg out elsewhere – should the company consider your retirement necessary; in the latter case the district shall be considered as off the Gold Belt and will be surveyed in the ordinary case, title issued and fees charged.⁴⁰

Initial applications for land in that same area, the Enterprise Gold Belt, by Thurgood, Fiancome and Krants had been turned down.⁴¹ There was a general disinclination by the state to settle farmers on the Gold Belt. This was made clear by the Surveyor General’s statement in 1898 to Frames and Grimmer, in which he even made reference to Squair’s case, stating that, ‘[t]here is much development work proceeding on the Enterprise Gold Belt. I cannot now change the views taken in ’92. Indeed the serious question lately arised [*sic*] re -outspanning the neighbourhood rather strengthens me in the opinion that no ground except gold claims should be alienated’ [*sic*].⁴² This was an accurate reflection of Company’s policy on land grants in the years immediately after occupation.

The Company’s intention to promote mining at the expense of agricultural development is evident from the Mashonaland Mining Regulations (1890) and subsequent legislation.⁴³ Very few farmers had acquired land situated on or close to mining formations. Most of the land grants in the gold-bearing areas had been made to the big landowning companies. There were very few exceptions, where farmers were allocated land in these areas. In 1896, for example, Messrs Edmonds and Christian were granted the farm Meadows, on the Empress

39 See Palmer, *Land and Racial Domination*; J. Alexander, *The Unsettled Land: State Making and the Politics of Land in Zimbabwe 1893–2003* (Harare, Weaver Press, 2006); E. Punt, ‘The Development of African Agriculture in Southern Rhodesia with Particular Reference to the Inter-War Years’ (MA dissertation, University of Natal, 1979); H. Witte, ‘British Colonial Policy: Land, Labour and White Settlement in Southern Rhodesia, 1890 to 1908’ (MA dissertation, Sir George Williams University [Concordia University], 1973).

40 NAZ S2136/2862/A, Letter from L.S. Jameson of the BSAC to J. Squair, 18 March 1893.

41 NAZ S2136/2862/A, Letter from the A/Surveyor General to Frames and Grimmer, 31 November 1898.

42 *Ibid.*

43 NAZ EC4/1/3, Mashonaland Mining Regulations No. 1 of 1890.

Gold Belt close to a town now called Kadoma.⁴⁴ This land grant was made on condition that if the ground were to be expropriated for mining purposes, the two could not claim any compensation. It did, however, create a precedent, which encouraged other land seekers to claim land adjacent to Meadows.

During one of his surveying errands in the Chishawasha area, about 25 kilometres from Salisbury, the acting Surveyor General, J.M. Orpen, met a white land seeker, named M. Farranti, in an area opposite the Enterprise Gold Mining Company. Farranti claimed to be occupying the area on Squair's behalf.⁴⁵ The Surveyor General at once warned Farranti to vacate the area and to inform his principal that

permission would not be given to locate a farm in either the Umtinge or Amafen Valleys since the available water would all be used for mill races, the banks of the rivers for battery sites, the ground in the immediate vicinity would in the near future be traversed by tramway lines and would always be necessary for depasturing stock belonging to the mining companies or miners.⁴⁶

The Company administration was bent on enforcing the prohibition against land selection on gold-bearing land and kept refusing to grant requests for such areas. When, in 1896, the Surveyor General was informed about intentions to survey and peg agricultural land on the Penhalonga-Umtali Gold Belt, he argued:

[t]o prevent legal complications between future miners, existing claimholders, as the principal and the farmer as the secondary party concerned, the authorised surveyor employed will have to be careful to steer clear of dumping ground, mining timber, miners' water rights, furrows and races, also of ground required for compounds buildings and battery sites.⁴⁷

Such considerations usually simply delayed the processing of applications for land by prospective farmers in the areas concerned and thus frustrated the applicants. For instance, the response to W.F. King's application for a plot of land in the Imbeza valley, Umtali, was dispatched after three months from the date of application.⁴⁸ The delay was a result of research conducted by the mines department on the matter regarding water requirements of the Lisboa Gold Mining Syndicate situated in the same area.⁴⁹ Permission to grant King the land requested was issued only after the mines department had declared that Lisboa was no longer viable.

The Company's attitude and policy towards land grants had the potential to drive away potential settlers in a country where more white settlers were required to reinforce settler colonialism. A classic case occurred in 1903, when two pioneers, Wayne and Schukala, applied for a farm in the Belingwe district. Their attorneys notified the Civil Commissioner for Bulawayo that the two did not intend to settle on farms situated on mineral formations. They wrote: '[t]hey have instructed us to state that the farms in question are so thickly interspersed with claim pegs – apparently pegged off the gold belt – that they have no desire to disturb the fortunate claim owners by commencing farming operations at or near their properties'.⁵⁰ The two erstwhile prospectors wanted to engage in farming since their former trade was no longer profitable. Their initial application for land had been turned down

44 NAZ S2136/2862/A, Letter from the Acting Secretary to the Administrator to Messrs Edmonds and Christian, 11 May 1896.

45 NAZ S2136/2862/A, Letter from the A/Surveyor General to Frames and Grimmer, 31 November 1898.

46 *Ibid.*

47 NAZ L2/2/80/1, Surveyor General, 22 December 1898.

48 NAZ L2/2/80/4, W.F. King to Secretary for Lands Department, 2 September 1902.

49 NAZ L2/2/80/4, Secretary for the Lands Department to W.F. King, 10 December 1902.

50 NAZ S2136/2862/A, Letter from Russell and Hendrie to the Civil Commissioner, Bulawayo, 11 February 1903.

because the land concerned lay on the Gold Belt. Government officials kept on delaying the land grant, prompting the attorneys of the two applicants to write to the Civil Commissioner again, this time stating that

our clients are 'pioneer men' who have constantly resided in the country since the occupation and if the government now refuse to entertain their application for even a small portion of unalienated land which they are prepared to pay for, no other course is left open to them but to leave the territory.⁵¹

After issuing this threat, Wayne and Schukala were finally allocated the land because of their persistence and their use of attorneys to challenge the status quo, which favoured miners. Yet, at the same time, the BSAC had to balance this with their desire to sustain the privileged mining sector. The granting of this land to Wayne and Schukala is indicative of the Company's anxiety over losing settlers, because the white population was still perceived as too small to help the cause of maintaining Southern Rhodesia as a settler colony administratively, politically and economically. It was imperative to populate the country with more white settlers who would settle permanently, undertake large-scale agricultural ventures and, in the process, create a settler colony fashioned along similar lines to South Africa.⁵² Granting land to farmers on the Gold Belt seemed to be a negation of the latter, which was then solved by introduction of 'Gold Belt reservations'.

Perhaps taking a cue from the Wayne and Schukala case, new applications for land grants on the Gold Belt increased from 300 in 1903 to 900 in 1904.⁵³ Incidentally, this was at a time when there was a general mining crisis in the country (between 1898 and 1908). This was a result of increasing mining costs and the lower gold output figures at the time, which necessitated a reorganisation of the mining sector, with big players buying off smaller miners around 1908.⁵⁴ During this time of uncertainty, the state reluctantly tried to cater for some of the farmers' interests by promoting land settlement for agricultural purposes in areas that were previously reserved as part of the 'Gold Belt' – as most of the land that had been pegged for mining had remained idle. Raleigh Grey, who was known as 'the farmers' representative' in the Legislative Council, was the first beneficiary of this Gold Belt reservations concession, with discussions that started in 1898 culminating in his getting land in the Gold Belt in 1901. The Director for Lands and Settlement requested the Surveyor General to inform Grey that 'the government propose to attach conditions to the grant of further land on the Gold Belt and that pending formal publication of which, they do not propose to register further grants on such gold belts'.⁵⁵ This proposal marked the birth of Gold Belt reservations, which were inserted on permits of occupation for land granted on the Gold Belt in 1904, which in 1909 became the Gold Belt Title (GBT). Ernest Montagu, the Commissioner of Mines, wrote to the Secretary for Lands approving the extension of Grey's farm to include a portion of wooded hills on the Gold Belt. He noted that

51 NAZ S2136/2862/A, Letter from Russell and Hendrie to the Civil Commissioner, Bulawayo, 3 September 1903.

52 See A.S. Mlambo, *White Immigration into Rhodesia: From Occupation to Federation* (Harare, University of Zimbabwe Publications, 2002); J. Brownell, *The Collapse of Rhodesia: Population Demographics and the Politics of Race* (London, I. B. Tauris, 2011); A.S. Mlambo, 'Building a White Man's Country: Aspects of White Immigration into Rhodesia up to World War II', *Zambezia*, 25, 2 (1998), p. 123-46.

53 Mackenzie, 'Commercial Farmers in the Governmental System', p. 2.

54 See Phimister, *An Economic and Social History*, pp. 45–56, and Van Onselen, *Chibaro*, pp. 17–29.

55 NAZ S2136/2862/A, Letter from P. Inskipp to the Surveyor General, 1 July 1898.

[t]he provision should be made in the lease granting claimholders the right to cut wood for mining operations free of charge as if the land was still government land and that the government should be held harmless for any claims for compensation for any losses sustained by the United Rhodesia Goldfields through mining operations.⁵⁶

This was the first permit of occupation to be issued containing such a Gold Belt clause, reserving timber against cutting or removal for sale by the lessee. Although the clause allowed farmers access to land on the Gold Belt, it signified the beginning of open contestation over the use of timber, water and grazing rights, as well as rights of access to land, between farmers and miners. The first formal GBT was issued in 1909, two years after the London-based Company directors had recommended the development of white agriculture, together with mining, so as to realise the country's full productive capacity.⁵⁷ The visiting Company directors had hoped to douse the tension between the two sectors, and they also recommended superior settler representation in the Legislative Council.⁵⁸ In 1908, the Company administration adopted the White Agricultural Policy (WAP),⁵⁹ intended to stimulate the development and further growth of settler agriculture. Changes adopted included a reconstitution of the Department of Agriculture under the directorship of Dr Nobbs in 1908 and the establishment of two research stations in 1909, among many other innovations.⁶⁰ But the fundamental problem of miners' privileges on land resources was not dealt with.

Contestations over Wood and Water

In the main mining districts, there was severe wood cutting by miners on both settler and African land. This exacerbated the existing environmental crisis in the 'Native reserves' and also on the farms, a problem that the settler regime had to deal with many years after the collapse of the BSAC regime. A formal conservation policy was passed in 1939 as a result of extensive deliberations on the use of land resources on the Gold Belt.⁶¹ During the BSAC era, small miners felt that 'unfettered access to water, wood and grazing could make the difference between profit and loss'.⁶² Some less productive farmers also viewed timber sales as the easiest way to make money on their farms.⁶³ Neither of the two sides, who were both culpable in the destruction of the environment, was willing to lose access to wood, and this resulted in a prolonged legal struggle over wood rights.⁶⁴ Farmers who were granted land in the Gold Belt areas had the Gold Belt reservation clause inserted on their land titles, which

56 NAZ S2136/2862/A, Letter from E.W.S. Montagu (for Commissioner of Mines) to the Secretary, Department of Lands, 11 October 1901. See also NAZ S2136/2862/A, Inskipp to R. Reimer, 6 April 1906.

57 Declaration of policy issued at Bulawayo on 19 October 1907 by the Visiting Directors, contained in the BSAC Directors' reports and accounts, 31 March 1908.

58 NAZ T2/29/7/2, Memorandum addressed to Dr Jameson, titled 'Landowners' Rights', 29 November 1910. It contains farmers' grievances and proposals on how the GBT could be reformed.

59 Palmer, *Land and Racial Domination in Rhodesia*, p. 10; Machingaidze, 'The Development of Settler Capitalist Agriculture in Southern Rhodesia'.

60 H. Weinmann, 'Agricultural Research and Development in Southern Rhodesia, Under the Rule of the British South Africa Company, 1890 to 1923' (Occasional Paper, University of Rhodesia, 1972).

61 J. McGregor, 'Woodland Resources: Ecology, Policy and Ideology; An Historical Case Study of Woodland Use in Shurugwi Communal Area Zimbabwe' (PhD thesis, Loughborough University of Technology, 1991), p. 43. See also, NAZ S2136/2862/A, C.A. Jennings (Director of Lands), Titles to land on the Gold Belts of Southern Rhodesia: The Rights of Miners and Farmers, 9 February 1928; Musemwa, 'Contestation over Resources'; Kwashirai, 'Dilemmas in Conservation'; Mseba, 'Law, Expertise and Settler Conflicts'; Kwashirai, *Green Colonialism*.

62 Phimister, *An Economic and Social History*, p. 36.

63 McGregor, 'Woodland Resources', p. 42.

64 Musemwa, 'Contestation over Resources', pp. 78-107.

favoured miners.⁶⁵ The administration's pro-mining bias in 1904 can be discerned from a reply that the colonial Administrator, William Newton, received from the London office after he informed the Company board about the numerous challenges levelled against Gold Belt reservations by farmers. He replied, '[s]upposing agriculture was seriously impeded, we should all be delighted for it would necessarily mean a very large and flourishing mining industry'.⁶⁶ Such statements revealed the company's continued pro-mining partiality.

Farmers and miners also quarrelled over access to water, roads and small railway tracks that miners cut out and passed through the farmers' private property.⁶⁷ Water was a prerequisite for most agricultural ventures, and it was also useful for the miners' milling process. In 1903, M. Heyman, a member of the Legislative Council for the Midland district, moved to include this clause in the mining legislation: '[p]rovided that should the claimholder or claimholders desire to expropriate all or any of the water on private land they may do so on payment of compensation, the amount whereof to be fixed by arbitration in default of agreement'.⁶⁸ If this was ratified, farmers argued, it would guarantee an uninterrupted water supply to the mines. Heyman's argument hinged on the fact that '[t]he agricultural industry depended upon the mining industry for its successful development and if the mining industry had an obstacle put in the way of successful mining it must materially affect the prospects of the agricultural industry'.⁶⁹ Farmers, however, viewed water as an asset of the farm, for which miners had to pay.⁷⁰ W. Napier, member of the Legislative Council for the Western district, proceeded to argue that 'it was better for the mines to pay a large amount for water than to be deprived of it altogether'.⁷¹ The Mines and Minerals Amendment Act No. 10 of 1904 deprived the farmer independent use of water because it vested 'all rights to the expropriation of the water existing or flowing upon land held under grant from the BSAC' in the Administrator, who 'could exercise such rights through the Secretary for Mines'.⁷² Farmers from Matabeleland region – a water-scarce area – strongly campaigned to have miners pay for the water that they used.

For the members of the Legislative Council, the fundamental question to be answered was whether Southern Rhodesia was going to be populated by miners or by farmers? If these water restrictions to farmers were maintained, argued the farming interests, then the door was being closed to potential commercial farmers.⁷³ Expropriation of a farmer's water was seen as tantamount to expropriation of his farm.⁷⁴ Besides the use of water, there was also the problem of the intermingling of stock belonging to the miner with that of the farmer. Napier highlighted a scenario whereby more than eight prospectors could come on to a farm,

65 NAZ S2136/2862/A, Letter from R. Reimer to the Surveyor General, 13 November 1905; NAZ S2136/2862/A, Inskipp to R. Reimer, 6 April 1906.

66 NAZ A1/5/5, Wilson to Fox, 20 August 1903.

67 NAZ MU2/3/23, Letter from Mining Commissioner for Umtali to the Secretary for Mines and Works, 1 December 1914; NAZ MU2/3/23, Letter from the Mining Commissioner to J. Haslam, Brooksville Farm, 6 December 1914. See also Rhodesia Agricultural Union Congress, 1915. It highlights another conflict between a farmer and a mining company which intended to construct a railway line across farming land. Without hearing evidence from either of the two sides, the Mining Commissioner decided that the mining company had the right to take its line over the land without paying a farthing compensation. See also NAZ N3/33/9, Letter from the Secretary of the RAU to the Secretary Department of Mines and Works, 15 July 1915; NAZ MU1/1/9, Letter from the Bartissol Gold Mining Company Ltd to the Mining Commissioner for Umtali; NAZ M3/8/3/2, Heartland and Fletcher to Mining Commissioner, Bulawayo, 27 July 1899; NAZ M3/8/3/8, J.D. Graham (Manager, Sabi Ophir Mining Company) to Mining Commissioner, Umtali, 14 June 1897, also includes conflicts sparked by prospectors encroaching and pegging claims already pegged.

68 *Debates in the Legislative Council*, 30 June 1903.

69 *Ibid.*

70 Col. Napier, quoted in *ibid.*

71 *Debates in the Legislative Council*, 30 June 1903.

72 Mines and Minerals Amendment Ordinance 1904.

73 Myburgh, quoted in *Debates in the Legislative Council*, 14 May 1907.

74 *Ibid.*

each with his own cattle. It was highly likely that the stock might have picked up some disease along the way, and this would be passed on to the farmer's cattle. This was in view of the quarantine regulations instituted to contain the spread of bovine diseases that had decimated the country's herd in the previous few years.⁷⁵ This general fear was shared by farmers who were in the process of rebuilding their herds.

The Administrator nevertheless supported mining interests. Milton argued that there were no insecurities in the tenure system as highlighted by farmer representatives in the House of Assembly. The basis of his argument was that 'the history of the colonies which were developing more as the result of mining than agriculture was that the mines should take precedence'.⁷⁶ Milton also compared Rhodesia's mining law to those of the Transvaal, where a farmer vacated once a mineral was discovered on his land. Montagu had, earlier on, written to the Lands Department arguing against payment for water used by miners. His point was that 'if the proposed new legislation takes place where by a farmer has to be compensated by a miner for water the latter desired to use we may anticipate a good many applications for farms on gold belts with the hope that the acquisition of which will lead to compensation'.⁷⁷ Meanwhile, farmers' opposition to water and timber restrictions was again raised at the 1906 Rhodesia Agricultural Union (RAU) congress. A. Trollip drew the attention of the congress to the ironic condition prevailing in the country that whenever there was an objection raised by a farmer against the mining community a law was passed to compel the farmer to part with his claims.⁷⁸

In 1908, when the Department of Agriculture was established, a state-sponsored combined conference for farmers and miners attempted to reconcile the miner-farmer differences in line with the propositions arising from the visit of BSAC directors from London the previous year. However, the Mining Act Amendment No. 15 of 1908, enacted after the conference, failed to alter the status quo. It formalised the Gold Belt reservations by introducing a Gold Belt Title, further entrenching the pro-miner legislation, and farmers lost out on their demands. However, it did provide for the reservation by the Mining Commissioner of wood not exceeding 50 per cent for use by the farmer.⁷⁹ This clause worked only when the farmer concerned had genuine need for the wood, in which case he was supposed to make an application to the Commissioner of Mines for that wood to be reserved against cutting by miners. This simply magnified farmers' hostility towards the Company administration, since it had shown no interest in solving the problem.

In line with the amended mining law, applications for the reservation of timber were made by farmers to Mining Commissioners, who, in certain instances, supported such applications. For instance, the Mining Commissioner for Bulawayo recommended wood reservation for R.J. Edmonstone of Gwanda. Edmonstone had written to the Mining Commissioner, who in turn forwarded the application to the Secretary for Mines, saying: 'I enclose copy of a letter from Edmonstone of Gwanda complaining that his farm Mjeni is being cleared of timber for mining purposes thereby depreciating its value. I beg to recommend that some reservation be made as in the case of Mr. Fynn'.⁸⁰ This was a rare

75 W. Mwatwara, 'A History of State Veterinary Services and African Livestock Regimes in Colonial Zimbabwe, c. 1896–1980' (PhD thesis, Stellenbosch University, 2014); F. Dube, "'In the Border Regions of the Territory of Rhodesia, There Is the Greatest Scourge ...': The Border and East Coast Fever Control in Central Mozambique and Eastern Zimbabwe, 1901–1942', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 41, 2 (2015), pp. 219–35; W. Mwatwara and S. Swart, "'Better Breeds?'" The Colonial State, Africans and the Cattle Quality Clause in Southern Rhodesia, c. 1912–1930', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 42, 2 (2016), pp. 333–50.

76 *Debates in the Legislative Council*, 14 May 1907.

77 NAZ S2136/2862/A, Letter from Montagu (Secretary for Mines) to Secretary Department of Lands, 27 July 1903.

78 Trollip speaking at the Rhodesia Agricultural Union Congress, 1906. *Rhodesia Herald*, 28 August 1906.

79 Mines and Minerals Amendment Act No. 15, 1908.

80 NAZ M3/1/2, Letter from Mining Commissioner, Bulawayo, to Secretary for Mines, 6 May 1908.

occasion on which the Mining Commissioner supported a farmer. He argued for the protection of farmers' land against uncontrolled wood cutting and proposed that, if possible, a charge should be levied for wood removed by mining companies.⁸¹ By so doing, the Mining Commissioner was challenging the principle behind the Gold Belt reservations providing miners with free wood. Some more applications for reservation of wood were made by farmers in line with the amended legislation. There were some farmers who appeared to have taken the reservation clause as an as an opportunity to secure access to more wood.⁸²

Small miners, however, interpreted the 1908 Amendment to mean that farms were being handed out on the Gold Belt with full rights to wood. This was raised by Forbes in the House in 1910 on behalf of the Smallworkers' Associations, protesting against the alleged action of the BSAC in granting timber rights to farmers on farms within the Gold Belt.⁸³ This was in reaction to the several reservation orders that had been granted since the new amendment was ratified. They saw these reservations as a challenge to their established right over all wood on Gold Belt farms.⁸⁴ In fact, some farmers had misinterpreted the new amendment and thought that it granted them exclusive rights over all timber and the power to charge mine owners for wood cut on their farms. A farmer, G.A. Peacocks, wrote to P.J. Jensen of Arcturus mine: '[h]aving been informed by Mr Atherstone of Lands Department, that since the grant of new title issued to me some two months ago, I have the right to charge for all wood cut on my farm such being the case, I shall expect payment for any or all wood cut in future'.⁸⁵ Mr Jensen was perturbed, and he immediately sought clarification from the Mining Commissioner. One of his major worries was that:

[a]s I hold a permit to cut timber and wood for the Fiona Mine free of charge on Peacocks farm, will the government meet any charge there may now exist? The amount of capital invested in Fiona on the supposition of free wood and water will otherwise be considerably lowered in value, and may even prevent it ever being worked as a producing mine.⁸⁶

The Mining Commissioner allayed his fears by assuring him that there was only a single form of GBT issued by the BSAC. Such instances reveal the significance of free access to wood for both famers and miners and represented an important compromise on the part of the BSAC in response to farmers' representations.

Reservation of wood for cutting by miners on occupied Gold Belt farms was reaffirmed by the Mines and Minerals Ordinance Amendment No. 26 of 1914. Farmers were dissatisfied and agitated for absolute authority over all wood on their farms, as was reflected in a 1915 RAU Congress resolution that: 'after a farm on the Gold Belt has once had its wood cut off by the mines for fuel *etc*, it should thereafter become exempt for further servitudes in that respect, and that the owner of such farm should thereafter be given his timber rights over the farm'.⁸⁷ The state could not be moved on this point, because it wanted the guarantee of miners' unlimited timber access to be retained in the country's mining law. Rather, the Secretary for Mines referred RAU to a clause in the 1914 amendment that provided for a simple court of arbitration 'to consider and settle questions which may arise between a landowner and a prospector, as to whether or not ground is open to prevent the

81 NAZ M3/1/2, Letter from Mining Commissioner, Bulawayo, to Secretary for Mines, 11 May 1908.

82 NAZ MU2/3/23, Letter from Mining Commissioner, Umtali, to Secretary for Mines, 4 June 1909.

83 *Debates in the Legislative Council*, 19 May 1910.

84 Secretary for Mines, quoted in *Debates in the Legislative Council*, 19 May 1910.

85 NAZ S2136/2862/A, Letter from G.A. Peacocks to P.H. Jensen (Arcturus Mine), 1 June 1908.

86 NAZ S2136/2862/A, Letter from P.H. Jensen to the Mining Commissioner, Salisbury, 3 June 1908.

87 NAZ N3/33/9-11, Letter from the Secretary of the RAU to the Secretary of the Mines and Works Department, 15 July 1915.

entire cutting of wood on an occupied farm'.⁸⁸ This clause did not bring any desired change for the farmers. They were still supposed to make applications for reservations to the Secretary for Mines. By this time, however, the farming constituency had grown considerably and, significantly, it was pushed into politics by the kind of attitude shown by the Company administration.

The outbreak of the First World War in 1914 stimulated the demand for base minerals required for making munitions. This boosted chrome production in Southern Rhodesia, as producers sought to meet the international demand. The mining process for chrome ore was different from the manner in which gold was mined. The extraction of chrome ore on the surface necessitated trenches and shallow excavations, damaging land and destroying trees in the process. What made chrome mining more destructive was the extensive nature and size of the open-cast mining claims pegged when compared to the relatively smaller underground gold mining claims.⁸⁹ Farmers therefore clashed with the miners on two different fronts. First, there was the long-established battle against the Gold Belt restrictions on their land titles, then there was the environmental destruction caused by open cast chrome mining. In 1923, the Secretary for the RAU wrote a letter to the Secretary for Mines urging 'the government to amend the mining laws affecting base metals, to prevent the destruction of trees and herbage on the large tracts of land without compensation to the landowner'.⁹⁰ Yet nothing was done, because the state was generating significant revenue from base minerals mining at the time.

Farmers continued to pressure the administration to effect meaningful changes to the country's mining laws. This was reflected through the various resolutions made by different farmers associations calling for the repeal of the GBT.⁹¹ The 1921 RAU congress called upon the administration to curb the destruction of trees and for the miners to compensate landowners, including payment of grazing fees for the miners' livestock. Responding to these resolutions, the Secretary for Mines rejected these calls from the farmers, insisting that such resolutions would be rejected by the Chamber of Mines and that they would hurt the mining sector, which was the major contributor to the economy.⁹² Although settler agriculture had by this time (the early 1920s) been developed into a viable enterprise, farmers' concerns continued to be neglected. The government could not be seen to be capitulating to farmers' demands at that particular time, when the two sides were involved in a political debate on whether Southern Rhodesia was to be granted Responsible Government, as advocated by the Responsible Government Association (RGA), or to be joined to the Union of South Africa. This call was supported by the Rhodesia Unionist Association (RUA). The debate became prominent after the crafting of the Union of South Africa in 1910 on terms favourable to Afrikaners, despite their defeat in the South African War (Anglo-Boer War) of 1899–1902. This scenario dissuaded Southern Rhodesia, at that time, from joining the Union. However, the debate was intensified around 1917 after foiled attempts by the Company administration to push for the amalgamation of Northern and Southern Rhodesia. At this point, BSAC wanted Southern Rhodesia to join the Union of South Africa because the Company stood to benefit by getting a better financial settlement,

88 NAZ N3/33/13–15, Letter from the Secretary for Mines to the RAU, 2 August 1916.

89 NAZ N3/33/15, Letter from the Secretary for Mines to the Secretary, Department of Administration, 19 August 1916.

90 NAZ N3/33/15, Letter from Secretary for RAU to the Secretary for Mines and Works, 14 March 1923.

91 See, for instance, NAZ N3/33/10, provisional agenda for Annual Congress to be held at Bulawayo on 17 March 1921 and succeeding days and the replies to resolutions passed at the 1920 Congress held at Gwelo.

92 NAZ N3/33/13–15, Secretary for Mines to Rhodesia Agricultural Union Secretary, 30 June 1921. See also NAZ ORAL/F14, Henry Joseph Filmer (1889–1974), Manager at Pangani Asbestos Mine. It gives an account of Filmer's train journey, which provides a crucial pointer to the significance accorded to the mining industry.

as compensation for administrative expenses, from South Africa than from the Imperial government.⁹³ Mining companies and railway workers, who aspired to enjoy better terms offered by the Union, also supported the RUA. Farmers, wary of the BSAC's neglect over the years, swelled the ranks of the RGA. Responsible Government also appealed to white workers who had taken advantage of wartime labour shortages and the post-war economic recession to challenge mining capital. They also warned people against Jan Smuts' anti-labour reputation.⁹⁴ Junior civil servants were keen to secure their jobs and feared the Union's policy of bilingualism, while British Rhodesians hated Afrikaner language and culture and thus favoured settler government for Southern Rhodesia.⁹⁵

The Farming Interests

It is almost paradoxical that the Company administration introduced the GBT on land, yet it anticipated an inflow of new immigrants to foster the growth of settler agriculture. A number of initiatives were put in place to lure settlers into the country, including the inauguration of settlement schemes.⁹⁶ The administrator reported to the Legislative Council that the Company was keen to assist suitable immigrants (of the 'agricultural class') with sufficient capital and advice to commence operations.⁹⁷

The urgent need for more settlers was also noted by Godfrey Munay, the government agriculturist and botanist, who advocated the settlement of smallholder farmers rather than the established trend in the country of parcelling out huge tracts of land to large-scale farmers. He noted that, '[t]he large farmer thinks in pounds and neglects shillings – the small holder looks to the shillings for his livelihood'.⁹⁸ The smallholder farmer was likely to make a home out of his farm and settle permanently in the country. The Company administration, however, ignored this proposal and actively pursued actions and policies that were not attractive to the potential settlers. The BSAC regime closed some of the finest agricultural lands of Salisbury, Mazoe, Hartley and Mutare from settlement or issued such land under the Gold Belt permits of occupation.⁹⁹

The Company administration welcomed and helped to settle immigrants who possessed what it considered to be the requisite capital. Considering the huge minimum capital requirement of £700, it is clear that the BSAC prioritised wealth over agricultural expertise when selecting settlers. C.D. Wise, a British agriculturalist and Company settlement expert, noted in a special report that 'I can only repeat that a great deal will depend on the selection of men, and only those who have had experience in farming should at all events at present be accepted as settlers. Taking men without experience is a risk for the company and a risk for would be settlers'.¹⁰⁰ It does, however, appear to be that those farmers who had the requisite expertise did not always have the money to invest in farming. They were not financially assisted by the state and had their land taken away. A classic example was the

93 Lee, 'The Origins of the Rhodesian Responsible Government Movement', p. 50.

94 Phimister, *An Economic and Social History*, p. 100.

95 M.E. Lee, 'An Analysis of the Rhodesian Referendum', pp. 91–2.

96 Machingaidze, 'The Development of Settler Capitalist Agriculture in Southern Rhodesia', for the various schemes put in place to foster the development of settler agriculture in the country. Also see K. Larsen, "'You Rhodesians Are More British than the British": The Development of a White National Identity and Immigration Policies and Restrictions in Southern Rhodesia, 1890–1965', (PhD thesis, University of Western Australia, 2013).

97 *Debates in the Legislative Council*, 26 April 1905.

98 NAZ L2/2/187, Memorandum on closer settlement in Southern Rhodesia by Godfrey Munay (Government agriculturist and botanist).

99 M. Rukuni, 'The Evolution of Agricultural Policy: 1890 to 1990', in M. Rukuni, P. Tawonezwi, C.K. Eicher, M. Munyuku-Hungwe and P. Matondi (eds), *Zimbabwe's Agricultural Revolution Revisited* (Harare, University of Zimbabwe Publications, 2006), pp. 29–61.

100 NAZ T2/29/54/1, Special Report for Possible Publication, by C.D. Wise.

case of F.E. Sedman, who held a farm and had spent all his savings on clearing the land for cultivation and labour. His application for state assistance was then turned down by Wise.¹⁰¹ Outraged at this lack of support, Sedman wrote to the press discouraging potential immigrants from taking up land in Southern Rhodesia.¹⁰² He also issued a warning to potential immigrants that Southern Rhodesia was a dangerous destination in which to invest their £700. Instead, he offered the following alternative:

[a] man in England with £700 capital would be better off to stay there and buy 3 acres instead of coming to a new country (namely Southern Rhodesia) and to speculate it in farming, or try to, against all the disadvantages of South Africa, unless they want to work for all their lives to benefit the company and future generations.¹⁰³

This negative publicity was not good for a country set on a settler recruitment drive. Sedman's press representations coincided with R. Cross's vicious attack on the BSAC's policy of occupation titles that had severely affected farmers on the Gold Belt. Cross, a farmer in the Queenstown District of the Cape Colony, advised the BSAC administration as follows:

I am not in a way interested in Rhodesia or likely to be, but if the Chartered Company does not take steps to give more favourable and secure titles to the land, which will induce people to take up the vast stretches of unoccupied land, Rhodesia will remain a wilderness. To make a country you must have population, and the soil worked, and this too before gold mining.¹⁰⁴

Such negative publicity had the potential of dissuading people from settling in the country, especially given that Southern Rhodesia was competing with more developed countries such as Canada, Australia, South Africa and New Zealand.¹⁰⁵ The GBT was the worst enemy because it could scare away potential settlers. It was, however, serving the Company's primary economic concern (miners) by providing free access to timber, water and pasture land.

Apart from the capital requirements and agricultural experience expected from settlers immigrating to Southern Rhodesia, the settler administration in the 1890s–1910s aspired to build a society dominated by *British* settlers. It was this ethnic bias that contributed significantly to shaping the country's demographic structure. During the first 30 years of colonial rule in Southern Rhodesia, the settlers consisted of whites of different nationalities, the dominant group being British, followed by Afrikaners. The settler community was transformed from being 'a temporary miners' frontier to a family oriented farming and trading society'.¹⁰⁶ Although the composition of Southern Rhodesia's settler community kept shifting, it generally kept the form established during the time of Company administration until about 1965.¹⁰⁷ There was a desire among the early settlers to create a country that 'mirrored the image of Britain in terms of its demographic composition and

101 NAZ T2/29/54/1, Letter from F.E. Sedman to C.D. Wise, 26 November 1906.

102 NAZ T2/29/54/1, Letter from F.E. Sedman to the Editor of the *Overseas Daily Mail*, December 1906.

103 *Ibid.*

104 *Bulawayo Chronicle*, 10 August 1907.

105 Musemwa, 'Contestation over Resources', p. 91.

106 B.S. Schutz, 'European Population Patterns, Cultural Persistence and Political Change in Rhodesia', *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, 7, 1 (1973), p. 9.

107 A number of scholars have examined the fluid and transient nature of Southern Rhodesia's settler population. See Brownell, *The Collapse of Rhodesia, Population*; R. Bickers, *Settlers and Expatriates: Britons Over the Seas* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2010); K. Law, 'The White Rhodesians: Settlers or Expatriates', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 37, 2 (2011), pp. 389–92; J. Bonello, 'The Development of Settler Identity in Southern Rhodesia 1890–1914', *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 43, 2 (2010), pp. 341–61; A. Mlambo, "'Some Are More White than Others': Racial Chauvinism as a Factor in Rhodesian Immigration Policy, 1890 to 1963', *Zambezia*, 27, 2 (2000), pp. 139–60; Mlambo, 'Building a White Man's Country'; Mlambo, *White Immigration into Rhodesia*.

economic health'.¹⁰⁸ This desire led to the development of a settler identity that promoted the superiority of British settlers over indigenous Africans and non-British settlers.¹⁰⁹ The ultimate result of this racial chauvinism was a general dislike of non-British settlers, especially Greeks and Jews. If the overarching desire was to create a 'white man's country', this drive to recruit 'good quality' settlers from Britain failed to yield the intended consequences by blocking would-be settlers from other countries.¹¹⁰ Yet Afrikaners still entered Southern Rhodesia at various junctures of the country's history. Afrikaners were fundamentally a rural population, and Rhodes 'encouraged them to immigrate to Southern Rhodesia particularly to develop the agricultural industry'.¹¹¹ They were part of a predominantly British Pioneer Column, which crossed the Limpopo into Rhodesia in 1890, and more emigrated to Southern Rhodesia in search of job opportunities.¹¹² This was mainly through 'treks', the most famous of which was the Moodie Trek of 1892. Most of the Afrikaners settled in the Enkeldoorn and Melsetter areas.¹¹³ Although their numbers were low when compared with the British settlers, they became a crucial component of the white community in Southern Rhodesia. Immigration flows (and the county's immigration policies) for both British and Afrikaner settlers kept changing and dictated Southern Rhodesia's demographic complexion. However, English-speaking settlers maintained their numerical and political advantage.¹¹⁴

The settler population did not reach the expected levels of growth because of a high turnover. As historian R.S. Roberts argued,

[t]he most striking and persistent feature of 'settlement' in Southern Rhodesia is that, for every hundred migrants arriving, between sixty and eighty were always leaving ... As a 'settlement', white Rhodesia has been a sort of select suburban-cum-gentlemen-farming frontier outpost of Britain and English speaking South Africa, to which many 'settlers' always intended to return.¹¹⁵

As a result of this shifting demographic structure, the settler population was not homogeneous. This was especially true of the settler farming sector, which was dominated by a majority of Afrikaner immigrants. These Afrikaner farmers in due time played a significant role in the country's overall agricultural industry.¹¹⁶ Very few of them trekked towards Salisbury, and most of them settled in the Rusape, Odzi, Marandellas tobacco districts, Bikita, Buhera, Charter, Gutu and in the uplands of the Eastern districts. They thus came into contact with mostly British South African farmers who had relocated to Southern Rhodesia. Relations between British and Afrikaner settlers were amicable at first but started deteriorating after the 1896 Jameson Raid and the South African War. Hendrich argues that

108 S. Maravanyika and F.D. Huijzenveld, 'A Failed Neo-Britain: Demography and the Labour Question in Colonial Zimbabwe c.1890–1948', *African Nebula*, 1, 1 (2010), pp. 18–33.

109 Benello, 'The Development of Settler Identity in Southern Rhodesia', p. 354. A. King, 'Identity and Decolonisation: The Policy of Partnership in Southern Rhodesia, 1945–62' (PhD thesis, University of Oxford, 2001).

110 Mlambo, "'Some are More White Than Others'"; Larsen, "'You Rhodesians are More British Than the British'".

111 G. Hendrich, 'Allegiance to the Crown: Afrikaner Loyalty, Conscientious Objection and the Enkeldoorn Incident in Southern Rhodesia During the Second World War', *War and Society*, 31, 3 (2012), p. 230.

112 *Ibid.* For a detailed discussion of Afrikaners in Southern Rhodesia, see G. Hendrich, 'Die geskiedenis van die Afrikaner in Rhodesië 1890–1980' (PhD thesis, Stellenbosch University, 2010); W. Hodder-Williams, 'Afrikaners in Rhodesia: A Partial Portrait', *African Social Research*, 18 (1974), pp. 611–41.

113 See S.P. Olivier, *Many Treks Made Rhodesia* (Cape Town, H.B. Timmins, 1957).

114 See Madimu, 'Responsible Government and Miner–Farmer Relations'; Madimu, 'Farmers, Miners and the State'.

115 R.S. Roberts, 'The Settlers', *Rhodesiana*, 39 (1979), p. 61.

116 G. Hendrich, 'A History of Afrikaner Farmers in Southern Rhodesia (1890–1980)' (PhD thesis, Stellenbosch University, 2010). There is also a good account of one of these communities in Melsetter during this period in D. Jeater, *Law, and Language and Science: The Invention of the "Native Mind" in Southern Rhodesia, 1890–1930* (Portsmouth, Heinemann, 2007).

the Afrikaner minority was in ‘relatively friendly coexistence with the dominant English-speaking population of a British colony, although unsympathetic political attitudes ... and fear of Afrikaner nationalism often hampered relations’.¹¹⁷ For him, Afrikaners were not politically assimilated into the mainstream white population until 1965; instead they clung to a more separatist identity. The British, on the other hand, feared numerical domination by the Afrikaners, hence the ploy to block their entry into the country in favour of British immigrants. Authorities in Rhodesia also viewed the Afrikaner culture as inferior to that of the British.¹¹⁸ These differences thus characterised relations among the settler farmers. The settler farming community was more heterogeneous, fissured by these ethnic divisions.

Farmer Power: The 1911–12 Labour Tax Revolt

Consequent upon the aforementioned dynamics, Southern Rhodesia’s settler population continued to grow. There was a rapid increase in the number of settler farmers from about 1,093 in 1908 (when WAP was launched) to 2,067 in 1911.¹¹⁹ By 1911, the total white population of Southern Rhodesia was published as 23,606.¹²⁰ Such growth created more demand for African labourers required to work on the farms. Cheap African labour was also required for the mining industry; it was thus a subject of contestation between the two sectors, especially after 1908. The Rhodesia Native Labour Bureau (RNLB), formed in 1903 and reconstituted in 1906, recruited African labour for miners, and then farmers after 1906. However, settler farmers continued to experience serious labour shortages, since the RNLB favoured miners. The RNLB was financed by the BSAC and had the commitment of financial assistance from the mining industry, but this did not come in the expected amounts. It therefore ran into numerous financial difficulties during its lifespan, especially around 1909–10, when the Nyasaland government placed a temporary ban on the Bureau’s operations, which reduced labour supplies from the north.¹²¹ Henderson described the Bureau as ‘an appendage of the Chamber of Mines, and therefore of the company; most of its labour was supplied to the bigger mines while the farmers and smallworkers continued to complain of a labour shortage, and of the inferior specimen supplied to them by the Bureau’.¹²²

It was around this time that the Company administration announced its intention to improve the fortunes of the RNLB by levying a labour tax of one shilling per labourer per month, to be paid by all employers. This call angered most farmers, who by this time were undercapitalised and received few labourers from the Bureau. This call by the government had been preceded by a farmers’ meeting convened on 11 September 1911, which called upon the Company to provide ‘at once a minimum number of boys, sufficient to relieve temporarily, an unprecedented crisis which otherwise will prove of the ruin of the whole farming community’.¹²³ This tax issue revealed the fissures existing within the farmer class itself, for the elected members of the Legislative Council who represented farming interests voted in favour of the tax. This culminated in a massive and well-orchestrated tax rebellion in February 1912, led by farmers and small independent miners who were also against the imposition of a tax that they considered to be a subsidy to bigger mining capital, which received most of the Bureau labour.¹²⁴

117 Hendrich, ‘A History of Afrikaner Farmers’, p. ii.

118 See Hodder-Williams, ‘Afrikaners in Rhodesia’. See also R. Hodder-Williams, *White Farmers in Rhodesia: A History of the Marandellas District* (London, Macmillan, 1983), pp. 44, 86–8.

119 Lee, ‘Politics and Pressure Groups’, p. 97.

120 Schutz, ‘European Population Patterns’, p. 6.

121 *Rhodesia Herald*, 21 July 1908.

122 For a detailed discussion of the farmers’ revolt, see I. Henderson, ‘White Populism in Southern Rhodesia’, *Comparative Studies in Societies and History*, 14, 4 (1972), pp. 387–99.

123 *Rhodesia Herald*, 22 September 1911.

124 *Rhodesia Herald*, 2 February 1912.

When the Company's intention to impose the tax was announced, the immediate response was a revolt led by farming men such as Patrick Fletcher, who argued that it was not proper for a government to tax the people for the benefit of a private company (the RNLB).¹²⁵ The overall leader was John McClery, a farmer who, together with six others (including three Afrikaner farmers), published the 'Manifesto of the seven', which stressed the non-responsibility of the RNLB to tax payers' money.¹²⁶ In the 1911–12 wet season, farmers in the country's remote areas refused to pay the tax, and, in February 1912, between 2,000 and 3,000 farmers confronted the Company.

As the crisis worsened in May 1912 and the farmers exhibited unity and efficiency in organising the tax revolt, the Company administration was forced to compromise. An agreement was reached that exempted farmers from paying the newly introduced labour tax, but they continued to pay a capitation fee for the RNLB labour that they got.¹²⁷ This arrangement, however, set an unfair precedent, which haunted the settler government 13 years later. Miners continued to pay the tax and thus subsidised farmers through paying a capitation fee of £4/10 while farmers paid only £2. Henderson summarised the farmers' position by stating that '[t]he farmers had the best of both worlds. They continued to employ voluntary labour (some of whom were tenants on their own farms) and could tap the resources of the RNLB when they required to supplement their own supply'.¹²⁸ The 1911–12 events demonstrated the heterogeneity and fluidity of the settler community in Southern Rhodesia, and the increasing power of the growing white farmer population. Although, from one angle, it exhibited a semblance of unity among European capital, aided by the Company administration, against the prosperity of African peasant production, yet, from another angle, the European sector had numerous fissures that revealed themselves as the struggle to have access to more labourers continued to unfold.

Growing Farmer Influence and the Drive to Responsible Government

The events of the post-1908 period, especially the Company administration's insistence on Gold Belt reservations and the labour tax revolt, strengthened the farmers' resolve to challenge the status quo. As noted earlier, the number of settler farmers had increased significantly, making them an influential political constituency, and they joined the growing calls for replacement of chartered administration. The subject became topical during and after the 1908–9 Convention (which constructed the Union of South Africa) and later debates surrounding the entrance of Southern Rhodesia into the Union.¹²⁹ This growing importance of the farming sector in the country's politics is best represented by the administration's proposal in 1912 to redistribute the elective seats so as to increase rural representation.¹³⁰ This was born out of a realisation by the Administrator that one of the main causes of the labour tax revolt was inadequate representation of the farming communities; therefore continued chartered rule now depended on the co-operation of such communities. In the same vein, it was also around this same time that the BSAC enforced a proposal made by the visiting Company directors in 1907 to reduce the nominated members in the Legislative Council from seven to five, leaving the elected members with a majority. The timing of such shifts by the BSAC was not mere coincidence; they were influenced by a

125 NAZ ORAL/FL1, Sir Patrick Fletcher, interview at Sinoia, June 1971.

126 Henderson, 'White Populism in Southern Rhodesia', p. 393.

127 *Rhodesia Herald*, 10 May 1912.

128 Henderson, 'White Populism in Southern Rhodesia', p. 395.

129 Lee, 'The Origins of the Responsible Government Movement'; Lee, 'Politics and Pressure Groups'; Hummel, 'Sir Charles Coghlan'.

130 See Hummel, 'Sir Charles Coghlan', p. 73, and Lee, 'Politics and Pressure Groups', p. 101.

desire to placate the farmers after the tax strikes. Although increased settler representation in the Legislative Council counted for nothing, since the nominated members retained the prerogative to introduce crucial matters for debate, such as finance, the tax revolts heralded a new era in Southern Rhodesia's politics.

The seemingly intransigent attitude of miners, the mining department and the BSAC towards farmers' grievances pushed the RAU and most of its members into politics. Consequently, in May 1912, discontented elements formed a new political body, the Rhodesia Political Association (later called the Rhodesia League). It mainly advocated the achievement of a 'Responsible Government', more inclusive of settler interests.¹³¹ Although it was not founded by farmers, it later became a farmer organisation after three members of RAU endorsed the party's objectives. All this jostling was in anticipation of a post-1914 political dispensation, considering that the BSAC's administrative mandate, as provided by the 1899 Royal Charter, was due for renewal in 1914. Towards the 1914 election, the Rhodesia League was rocked by a serious division, with a 'Common Platform' (made up of farmers) on one side advocating a Responsible Government under the Crown.¹³² It was the pro-Charter platform, promoted by Charles Patrick Coghlan (a Bulawayo lawyer and elected member of the Legislative Council), which supported continuation of Company administration until the country was ready for Responsible Government, that won election into the Legislative Council in 1914. Consequently, the Royal Charter was extended for a further 10 years. However, there was a provision in the Supplemental Charter which granted members of the Legislative Council the right to demand Responsible Government at a time that they deemed to be most appropriate.¹³³

Attempts by the Company administration in 1916 to push for the amalgamation of Northern and Southern Rhodesia to stop Responsible Government were resisted by the colonial office. This provided impetus for Ethel Tawse Jollie, a female farmer based in the eastern highlands (working closely with the RAU) to launch the Responsible Government Association (RGA), whose main objective was the attainment of Responsible Government. By 1919, the RGA had grown beyond its original farming constituency and included small independent miners, who feared losing labour to South Africa, junior civil servants, who feared that the Union's policy of bilingualism could obstruct their chances of getting promoted, and the commercial class, who hated the Union's tax policies.¹³⁴ Coghlan was elected president in 1919.

The Company sought to counter the creation of the RGA by launching a pro-Union campaign spearheaded by the Rhodesia Unionist Association (also formed in 1919) and supported by Jan Smuts, who had just replaced Louis Botha as prime minister in South Africa.¹³⁵ It was chaired by Herbert Thomas Longden, another Bulawayo lawyer.¹³⁶ The RGA's position was boosted by the 1918 Privy Council ruling that declared that all land in the colony belonged to the Crown and not the BSAC. As argued by B. Mtshali, after the 1918 ruling, 'the company lost the economic motivation to govern since this now entailed intense liability'.¹³⁷ The 1920 Legislative Council election provided a litmus test to gauge the mood of the electorate. The RGA won 12 out of the 13 seats and set a precedent for the 1922 referendum, where 8,774 people voted for Responsible Government while 5,989 voted

131 See Hummel, 'Sir Charles Coghlan', p. 73.

132 Lee, 'Politics and Pressure Groups', p. 137.

133 See Palley, *The Constitutional History and Law of Southern Rhodesia*.

134 Lowry, 'White Women's Country', pp. 259–81. Also see *Bulawayo Chronicle*, 23 April 1920.

135 Gann, *Southern Rhodesia*, p. 234.

136 Blake, *History of Rhodesia*, p. 179.

137 B. Mtshali, *Rhodesia: Background to Conflict* (New York, Hawthorn Books, 1967), p. 61.

for union. Most farmers hoped that Responsible Government was going to institute reforms that would eliminate pro-miner Company policies.¹³⁸

Conclusion

This article has highlighted the evolution of Gold Belt reservations on land granted to farmers in gold-bearing areas, which epitomised the administration's preference for mining interests as the country's major economic activity. We argue that conflicts between farmers and miners were not driven solely by farmers' and miners' desire to control the means of production, as previously presented by existing literature on miner–farmer relations. Rather, the conflicts were a direct result of how the Company administration intended to structure the colonial economy from the outset.

Another key point made here is that, although the BSAC regime had policies to protect the mining economy, its hand was forced on several occasions by the fledgling farming community, which fought for certain rights to be extended to them. Farmers made representations to the government that resulted in government baulking under pressure to allocate farming land in the Gold Belt areas under the GBT arrangements, something that government did not foresee happening before 1910. The BSAC regime also acquiesced under pressure in 1912, following the tax revolts that resulted in farmers being exonerated from paying labour tax, a privilege that was not extended to the miners. Moreover, farmers obtained further minimal concessions regarding the use of timber and wood on their farms. All this happened, we argue, because of the growing numerical power of farmers as an electoral constituency, which eventually led to the rise of a powerful Responsible Government movement, which campaigned to instal a Settler Government through the 1922 referendum. However, what is clear is that, although farmers rose in political importance and attained these hard-won concessions, the legislation at the heart of farmer–miner conflicts was not repealed. In essence, political power (as represented by the farmers) remained distinguishable from economic power (held by the miners).

TAPIWA MADIMU

History department, Rhodes University, PO Box 94, Grahamstown, 6194, South Africa.

E-mail: madimutapiwa@gmail.com

ENOCENT MSINDO

History department, Rhodes University, PO Box 94, Grahamstown, 6194, South Africa.

E-mail: e.msindo@ru.ac.za

SANDRA SWART

History department, Stellenbosch University, Private Bag XI, Stellenbosch, 7602, South Africa. E-mail: sss@sun.ac.za



138 See Madimu, 'Responsible Government and Miner–Farmer Relations'.