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Cultivating Conflict: Agricultural 'Betterment', the Native Land Husbandry Act (NLHA) and Ungovernability in Colonial Zimbabwe, 1951–1962[1]

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Abstract

In the 1950s, the white minority regime in Zimbabwe launched an ambitious development scheme for peasant agriculture, known as the Native Land Husbandry Act. It was abandoned in 1962 in the face of massive rural opposition. This paper explores the key provisions of this surprising scheme and its origins in the political economy of the colony and the contradictory interests of the settler community. It then looks at why Africans rejected the measure, arguing the NLHA undermined key peasant strategies for production, environmental management, and survival in the colonial order. Peasants initially tried to evade the impositions of the scheme, but then became defiant as the state tried to coerce them to follow the law. Protests spread throughout the country, creating a state of ungovernability that threatened white rule. These developments played a key role in rural mobilisation and the emergence of land-based nationalism in Zimbabwe, factors that continue to shape the political and social landscape today.

Résumé

Dans les années 50, le régime de minorité blanche avait initié un ambitieux programme de développement destiné à l'agriculture paysanne, connu sous le nom de Native Land Husbandry Act. Celui-ci a été abandonné en 1962, face à la farouche opposition rurale qui s'en est suivie. Cette contribution analyse les principales dispositions de ce surprenant programme, ses origines, dans le cadre de l'économie politique coloniale, ainsi que les intérêts contradictoires des colonisateurs. Elle se penche ensuite sur les raisons pour lesquelles les Africains ont rejeté ce programme, en avançant que le NLHA menaçait les principales

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stratégies de production des agriculteurs, de même que la gestion environnementale et la survie au sein de l'ordre colonial. Les paysans avaient d'abord tenté de se soustraire aux règles imposées par ce programme, puis ont commencé à se rebeller, lorsque l'état a tenté de les contraindre à respecter ce dernier. Des protestations s'élevèrent de tous les coins du pays, créant ainsi un état de «non gouvernabilité» qui menaçait le régime blanc. Ces évolutions ont joué un rôle clé dans la mobilisation rurale et l'émergence d'un nationalisme fondé sur la terre, au Zimbabwe. Ces facteurs continuent de modeler le paysage politique et social d'aujourd'hui.

Introduction

The Mugabe government's recent Fast Track Land Reform programme has brought Zimbabweans' struggle with the difficult legacies of colonial land and agricultural policies into wide public awareness once again. State land grabs, rural political unrest, authoritarian decision-making and violence, however, have a long history in Zimbabwe, extending back to the foundation of the colonial state. This paper explores a key period in the country's agrarian history, when the white minority regime embarked on a huge social engineering and development project to reshape the productive, social, and economic order of the African reserves through the 1951 Native Land Husbandry Act (NLHA). A massive extension of state power, the measure undermined key peasant farming practices and survival strategies within the colonial order. Rural Africans initially tried to evade the impositions of the law, but as enforcement intensified, peasants began to confront officials and defy orders. By late 1961, rural opposition and unrest threatened state control of the countryside, creating a state of ungovernability in many reserves that compounded the state's efforts to contain nationalist organisation and township protest. While intensified repression was a key component of the white minority regime's response, they also tried to reduce African opposition by modifying the NLHA and other racial regulations. These initiatives failed, however, provoking a political crisis within the settler community that led the government to reduce its role in the reserves and brought the extremist Rhodesian Front to power.

The events of the 1950s and early 1960s therefore played an important role in Zimbabwe's agrarian and political history, leaving legacies that continue to shape the political and social landscape today. The rural developments of this period, however, have received relatively little academic attention, particularly in comparison with the extensive discussion of the liberation war and the period from 1890 to 1945.[2] My intention in this paper, then, is to shed more light on this important period,

but I also want to emphasise the impact of the NLHA on peasant cultivation techniques, methods of environmental management, production strategies, and rural social relations. The paper will build on the existing scholarship on state intervention in the Zimbabwean countryside that explores land seizures and forced relocations of Africans, agricultural 'improvement' efforts in the 1920s and 1930s, and the role of agricultural innovators.[3] I also engage with the historical scholarship on the development of nationalism, exploring how the period of NLHA implementation saw a massive upsurge in rural political mobilisation and growing articulation of African grievances about land, key developments behind the recent political turmoil in Zimbabwe.[4]

This paper provides an extended treatment of the NLHA and its legacy. It discusses how the measure fit into the political economy of colonial Zimbabwe, why peasants objected so vociferously to its implementation, the rapid spread of rural resistance, and the political crisis that growing African opposition provoked, emphasising several themes. I argue for the continued importance of peasant agriculture to the colonial economy after the Second World War, when industrialisation and the dramatic expansion of settler tobacco production created a massive demand for basic foodstuffs, which was partially met by farmers in the reserves. Studying the NLHA also illuminates other contradictions of settler colonialism, particularly the conflicts within the bureaucracy and white interests that influenced the law's introduction and implementation. These came to a head in the political crisis of 1961 and 1962. On a different level, the discussion of peasant understandings of state initiatives argues that the NLHA imposed a much more onerous labour regime that undermined farmers' production strategies and ecological management techniques rooted in indigenous knowledge. It was these realities, combined with the social disruptions of the law and the coercive ways in which it was implemented, that fuelled rural opposition and created conditions of ungovernability in many reserves. While these developments laid the basis for the later liberation war and recent conflicts over land, I argue that the relationship between peasants and nationalists was a complicated one, compounded by the divisions that emerged in rural communities because of popular mobilisation. Finally, I want to emphasise the legacies of this period, which continue to shape social and political dynamics in Zimbabwe, particularly as many of the modernist assumptions of the NLHA can be seen in the technocratic approaches of the post-independence state agricultural extension services as well as the current agrarian policies of the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC).

The bulk of this paper rests on a close reading of a variety of written sources that primarily illuminate the colonial political economy and the dynamics of the government and settler community, although they also provide insight into nationalist activity and, to a lesser degree, peasant protest. These sources include records of cabinet, newspapers, administrative files, government propaganda, and contemporary scholarship on the economy. To get at peasant understandings of state initiatives, rural social dynamics, and the complexity of peasant political activity, I am also drawing on material from an extended study of social, cultural, and agrarian change in the Madziwa Communal Area in northeastern Zimbabwe. This larger project rests on life history interviews with 115 elderly residents of Madziwa, which took the form of extended conversations that were shaped by the participants as well as my questions and the input of my research assistants, rather than a fixed protocol.[5]

The Law

A detailed discussion of the legislation itself is a necessary, albeit rather dry, first step to understanding the goals of, and reactions to, the NLHA.

The law was a complex measure that gave the settler state extensive powers over the inhabitants of the reserves and Special Native Areas (SNAs), allowing officials to direct peasant production, control land use, and determine who could have access to farm land.[6]

The first section of the law allowed the state to decide how people farmed and how they used the land through a range of regulations.[7] These included measures to proclaim permanent, separate grazing, arable, residential and garden areas, the right to allocate holdings within these spaces, and the authority to restrict access to them. Officials could also forbid cultivation in areas that were seen as ecologically sensitive, such as wetlands, river flats and stream banks, as well as issue orders to fence off or protect springs and headwaters. This section further empowered authorities to direct peasants' farming practices by requiring landholders to follow approved cropping systems and to build contour ridges, storm drains and grass buffer strips to control soil erosion in their arable holdings. In theory, the approved cropping systems were to be adapted to local environmental conditions, but in practice the state imposed a single model throughout the country. It forbade inter-cropping, while requiring farmers to grow crops in rows, work manure or compost into their lands to improve soil fertility, and to follow a four year rotation of maize with manure, followed by maize or sorghum, then groundnuts, beans or another legume, and finally finger millet.

Officials determined who could farm in the reserves and SNAs under the second and third sections of the act, which introduced a system of arable and grazing permits. Farm rights were distributed to male heads of households on the basis of permanent individual tenure within the arable blocks. Each man was allocated a standard holding of basically equal size, which officials set according to the area's rainfall; in the wetter regions of the country, the standard holding was 6 to 8 acres, while in the driest areas it could reach 15 acres. Polygynous men received an extra 1/3 of a holding for each wife after the first, while chiefs and village headman received an extra allocation in recognition of their duties. Holdings could not be subdivided, nor could they be used as collateral for loans as the farming permit conferred use rights rather than full ownership.

Grazing rights were issued in a similar fashion, and were restricted to recognised landholders. Officials calculated the stock carrying capacity of the area based on its size, rainfall, and soil conditions, then set a standard holding calculated in Large Stock Equivalents (LSE). One LSE was defined as 1 head of cattle or 5 goats or 5 sheep. The typical standard holding was 6 LSE, but this ranged up to 20 in drier regions where stock keeping was more important.

As the law was implemented, anyone who currently owned animals or had worked land in the last growing season was eligible to receive a land and grazing permit. Any person with the right to reside in the area could apply for left-over rights, but most reserves were overpopulated. Therefore, there were few, if any, permits available to applicants and many regions were so overcrowded that the current residents received smaller holdings than the ideal standard unit. Stock allocations were much more restrictive. Most animal owners had to reduce their herds, even those with 3 or 4 animals. Those who did not currently own stock, or had only one or two LSE were restricted to that number. Permits could be bought and sold, so that young men coming of age and returning labour migrants could look for rights, but they were unlikely to obtain them. Ambitious farmers could purchase additional holdings, although the NLHA imposed an individual limit of three grazing and three arable permits. While rights were basically restricted to adult men, women who were divorced, widowed, over 25 and unmarried, or whose husbands were missing, were eligible to receive their own allocation.

The fourth section of the law provided for the designation of village and business sites in the reserves and SNAs, as part of Rhodesia's grand segregation plans. Blacks were only allowed to live in towns or other designated white areas as long as they were employed, and were made to

return to their reserve of origin at the end of their contract. Before the NLHA was introduced, returnees took up farming, but as land access was restricted under the measure, village areas were seen as necessary to accommodate former migrants and others without farming rights. The fifth section of the law allowed officials to recruit forced labour for government conservation works in the African areas. Any male landholder who had not been employed for 3 months in the last year could be recruited for up to 90 days, paid at the prevailing wage rate in the area.

The NLHA was designed to be gradually implemented throughout the country. Each reserve and SNA had to be individually proclaimed to bring the act into force, while each section of the act could be introduced when local officials thought it was appropriate. Finally, the law also set penalties to enforce its provisions. Violations of regulations under the first section of the law were punished by a fine of £1 or a week in jail; this rose to £15 or three months for a third offense, while a fourth charge could lead to confiscation of the land right. Animals that were grazed illegally were seized and sold, while crops grow in violation of the law were ploughed under.

Despite the sweeping changes in peasants' lives implied by the NLHA, the law was not an innovation. Rather, it drew on models introduced by Christian missionaries throughout southern Africa and earlier state initiatives in Southern Rhodesia through the 'native' agriculture department and community betterment schemes.[8] What was truly new about the NLHA was that it provided officials with extensive coercive powers and brought a number of earlier programmes together into a comprehensive scheme. State betterment efforts in the 1920s and 1930s were haphazard, limited to a few areas, and relied on peasants voluntarily following the advice of agricultural and community demonstrators. More basically, the earlier measures were poorly funded, reflecting white farmers' deeply rooted fear of black competition as well as the reluctance of settlers to spend state revenues on Africans.[9] Thus the passage of the NLHA and its expansion into an expensive, extensive modernisation scheme is something of a dilemma, one that can only be understood in light of fundamental changes in the colony's political economy.

Origins of the NLHA

The Second World War and the years following it brought unprecedented prosperity for Europeans in Southern Rhodesia. The economy not only expanded rapidly, but diversified. In mining, the least successful of the major sectors, output grew by 157 percent from 1946 to 1953, as the

structure of the industry changed.[10] Gold production declined slightly, as many small white controlled mines that had emerged in the depression closed. Asbestos and chrome production, dominated by large foreign owned companies, grew in scale and importance.[11] The output of large scale agriculture, legally restricted to Europeans and heavily supported by state subsidies, expanded ten times between 1937 and 1958.[12] Maize, beef, and dairy production all rose, but tobacco grew the most quickly; the 1950 harvest of 107 million pounds was five times that of 1939. The number of registered growers increased from 1000 in 1945 to 2150 in 1950, then to 2669 in 1958, reflecting not just the conversion of existing farms to tobacco production, but expansion in the number of white farmers, fed by immigration, government land sales and the subdivision of large estates.[13]

However, it was manufacturing that expanded most quickly, with annual growth rates averaging nearly 25 percent between 1944 and 1948.[14] Overall output grew ten times between 1940 and 1955, while the number of factories rose from 299 in 1939 to 473 in 1948, 714 in 1953 and 918 in 1957.[15] Manufacturing overtook mining as the second largest sector in the economy during the war, behind European agriculture, and it continued to grow in relative importance through the 1950s. Firm size and output also increased, reflecting mechanisation and expansion in textile and metals manufacturing. Most of the larger operations were foreign owned, due to heavy investment by outside interests in secondary manufacturing.[16]

Overall rapid economic growth was encouraged by a number of factors. The war fostered import substitution, while rapid European immigration after 1945 provided skilled individuals, new markets and opportunities in construction. Capital flight from the UK and South Africa fuelled foreign investment, while the emergence of the sterling zone and tight dollar import restrictions within it provided ready markets for Southern Rhodesia's exports.[17] At its core, it remained a colonial economy, dependent on primary product exports; the most important of which were tobacco, replacing US imports in British markets, along with chrome and asbestos for military uses in the US and UK.[18] Despite falling production, gold exports were vital because of their support for the pound, and averaged £6 million a year.[19] Exports represented 45 percent of GDP; manufactured goods were of limited importance, serving only the small regional market.[20] Cheap labour underwrote all sectors of the economy, including secondary industry, but was especially important to the labour intensive commercial agriculture and mining sectors. Short term male migrancy, drawing large numbers from Southern Rhodesia, as well as colonial Malawi, Mozambique,

and Zambia was a key feature, secured by pass laws, low wages and extractive taxes. Most of the costs of reproducing labour were borne by peasants, especially rural women throughout the region.[21]

Economic expansion and diversification were not the result of consistent state policy, nor a clear commitment to promoting industrialisation.[22] Rapid growth in the 1940s and 1950s has blinded researchers to the divisions and contradictions of this period; they have created an image of unmitigated settler success which rested on white unity and the dominance of industrial interests. This in turn has made them far too ready to see the small openings offered to Africans under the liberal facade of 'racial partnership' that Southern Rhodesia and the Central African Federation promoted to contain black opposition and overseas criticism as real gains.[23] There were some new educational and employment opportunities and a slight easing of petty racial restrictions, mainly for the tiny black elite, but these did little to alter the structures of domination and exploitation, especially as they had no impact on the lives of the majority of Africans. There were indeed strong cohesive forces in the settler community. White Rhodesia was a small society. In 1951 there were only 138 000 Europeans in the country, with a pervasive culture and extensive informal social contacts which fostered an appearance of homogeneity. Moreover, whites were united by their desire to maintain their distance from the black majority, an undercurrent of fear of Africans, and a common goal of securing European privilege and domination.[24]

White political conflicts were also obscured by the dynamics of the state, which was effectively a corporatist system.[25] The colony was dominated by the ruling United Rhodesia Party (URP) despite the existence of several other political parties. Led by Godfrey Huggins, Prime Minister from 1933 to 1953, the URP had drawn in many of its former critics, merging several times with opposition organisations. Huggins built up a range of inclusive mechanisms to attract the major white interest groups, including formal consultative bodies and the governing boards of parastatal corporations that ran key sectors of the economy. The executive branch engaged in extensive informal consultation, a process that was reinforced by the small size of the European population, exclusion of Africans, and limited formal party organisation. Many important meetings took place between government officials and leading individuals over lunch, sundowners, or within social and sports clubs.[26]

Below the surface however, there were important fissures in whites' apparent unity. There were significant class divisions. Professionals, managers and owners of large business interests, and successful, well-

capitalised farmers generally felt their positions were secure. White workers, clerical employees, owners of small businesses and poorer farmers – many of whom were Afrikaners – were suspicious of the elite and concerned to protect their privileges which rested on a range of laws restricting opportunities for Africans. Large economic interests, particularly foreign owned companies in manufacturing and mining were much less committed to maintaining Rhodesia's rigid racial order, at least measures that protected lower level European employees and provided them with high salaries and generous benefits. They recognised that promoting blacks into'white' jobs would reduce their costs, while many manufacturers produced mainly for the African market, and could see that African advancement would increase their sales.[27]

These divisions were reflected in two competing visions of the best means to secure white dominance of the colony. To oversimplify a little, this split can be typified as a divide between 'little Rhodesia' types and advocates of a 'greater Rhodesia'.[28] Proponents of a greater Rhodesia believed that the future of white domination would only be assured by building a modern state in central Africa, based on an expanding industrial economy and political amalgamation with Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland. They were generally willing to make some concessions to Africans, particularly economic changes that would give black workers and peasants more purchasing power while integrating them more fully into the capitalist economy. A few liberals within this group were ready to offer minor political and social openings to elite Africans, seeing such initiatives as away to contain black opposition and overseas criticism. Greater Rhodesia advocates were mainly drawn from the upper levels of white society; professionals, successful farmers, managers and owners of larger businesses, as well as government officials.[29]

Little Rhodesia types had a much narrower and defensive outlook. They were suspicious of the Federation, believing it was better for Southern Rhodesia to stand alone and push for constitutional concessions from Britain that would advance the colony towards dominion status, thereby guaranteeing white control. While they benefited from the growing industrial sector, they worried that it would lose momentum, an attitude that was rooted in a fear of African advancement and competition, as well as memories of earlier economic contractions. They were primarily concerned with securing white privilege and control by building on earlier measures that protected Europeans, including wider segregation, job reservation, and state support for settlers, particularly farmers. Africans were mainly seen as cheap labour, so little Rhodesia types were hostile

towards welfarist measures, especially as they would draw on government revenues. They held that the state's main concerns in the African areas were basic control and labour mobilisation. Support mainly came from white workers, lower level employees, and the less prosperous farmers, particularly the Afrikaner minority. Many government officials and MPs also adhered to this view.[30]

These divisions ran through post war debates on economic development, political reforms, and state policies towards Africans. Ideally consensus was supposed to emerge within Southern Rhodesia's corporatist mechanisms, but in the changing economic climate after the Second World War and the diverse interests it created, government decisions often rested on awkward compromises and some initiatives were only introduced after long delays, if at all. In the booming economy, there was wider support for some greater Rhodesia policies, such as the successful creation of the Federation.[31] But other measures were blocked by the defensiveness of the white lower classes and little Rhodesians, particularly commercial farmers and small gold mine owners who had disproportionate influence because they produced vital exports. Industrial interests were ready to compromise to maintain the basic stability of the colony; they also recognised that export earnings provided the income to purchase their products. Therefore, industrial policy remained ambivalent, reflecting fears of African urbanisation as well as worries about the impact of the growth of manufacturing on labour costs for mining and farming. For similar reasons, little was done to promote the stabilisation of the black urban workforce, particularly measures that were the logical compliments to the NLHA, such as allowing Africans to buy houses, settle permanently in urban areas, or creating a pension system.[32] Deep divisions flared over African education, which stalled expansion for years, reflecting conflict between industries that wanted increased funding to train semi-skilled workers, and the white majority who were concerned by the cost and implications for black advancement.[33]

The introduction of the NLHA illustrates the working of these uneasy compromises. Its passage rested on the seemingly contradictory promises it made, which allowed the law's proponents to win acceptance from diverse economic interests and overcome the suspicions of little Rhodesia types. In particular, the measure promised to address a number of the central challenges facing the colony after the Second World War, problems that threatened future economic expansion and the bases of white prosperity.

Having lost self-sufficiency in major foodstuffs during the war, the colony had a serious food crisis.[34] There were shortages of maize, beef

and dairy products in the late 1940s. These were partly met by rationing and other controls, but expensive dollar imports were necessary, bringing British pressure for self-sufficiency.[35] Concern about potential wider economic damage peaked during the 1947 drought:

> The seriousness of the maize position goes beyond the drought. The figures of the past twenty years read against the expanding economy of the Colony make it clear that unless we take a bold step now the maize supplies of the Colony are likely to falter, on from hand to mouth through a period during which prospective and expanding industry should not be disturbed by qualms on that account.[36]

Many white farmers were reluctant to grow food crops or to invest capital and scarce labour in increasing production of foodstuffs, as tobacco was far more profitable. The state refused to coerce them, a clear reflection of farmers' influence.[37] Instead, there was a new interest in peasant agriculture as a key sector of the economy, with African producers growing low return grains and groundnuts to supply basic foodstuffs for the expanding workforce in the towns, mines and commercial farms, as well as inputs for the growing food processing industry.[38] Despite entrenched racial inequalities in land access, land quality, and input availability, African farmers, mainly in the reserves, produced roughly a third of the marketed maize in the colony from 1947 to 1954, along with almost all the marketed groundnuts and small grains.[39]

The colony also faced a serious labour shortage, particularly in the vital mining and white farming sectors where wages were lower and conditions harder than in manufacturing. Shortfalls in these industries averaged 15 percent in 1949, ranging up to 45 percent for some farmers.[40] Like the food shortage, this challenge raised serious concerns about its impact on the national economy.

> It is clear that the rapid development of Southern Rhodesia and its neighbouring territories has outstripped the labour supply. Unless adequate steps are taken to meet the anticipated demand for labour, the Colony will suffer a severe setback during the most important time in its history.[41]

This was a regional problem. Not only did it affect the nearby territories, but more than half of Southern Rhodesia's waged workers were migrants from neighbouring colonies, where it was thought that post-war development would further reduce the numbers making their way to Rhodesia. The state faced intense pressure to increase the numbers of job seekers, especially as wages had risen as workers recognised that the labour shortage gave them new leverage with employers.[42]

The tight labour market encouraged a new assertiveness among black workers, reflected in the emergence of new worker organisations and successful strikes in Salisbury and Bulawayo. Scattered unrest grew through the post-war years, culminating in the 1948 general strike that was marked by worker frustration with the cautious leadership of the new unions and elite political movements.[43] The general strike particularly alarmed whites, feeding fears that state control of the urban townships was weakening. There was also growing concern about the countryside, as rural discontent and peasant restiveness accelerated during the same period, often associated with the activities of the new British African Voice Association (BAVA).[44]

Much of the rural unrest was the result of the state's efforts to forcibly relocate Africans living on designated white land, which was now wanted for farming by new immigrants. Peasants in such areas fought relocation through passive resistance and the courts, in some cases with BAVA's assistance.[45] The new white landowners were frustrated by the slow pace of the relocations. This had a wide political impact as the vast majority of Europeans supported intensified racial segregation and wanted to see Africans moved off designated white land as quickly as possible, fulfilling promises made when the Land Apportionment Act (LAA) was passed in 1930. In 1948, nearly one-third of the African population, 500,000 people, were living as tenants and squatters in European areas.[46]

Moving thousands of peasants presented a massive logistical problem. Many of the reserves were already overpopulated, especially in Matabeleland, so that thousands more people could not be forced into them without threatening the viability of the family farming that underwrote low wages. Despite intense white pressures not to assign more land to the designated African area, the government did add 4.1 million acres of SNAs in 1950. However, a significant proportion of this land was already densely occupied by Africans, so that it mainly eased the problem by making low quality, black occupied, white land part of the African area, effectively relocating thousands by a paper transfer.[47] NAD officials therefore concentrated on measures to increase the carrying capacity of the African areas, allowing more people to be pushed into the reserves and SNAs. With this goal, the state began to more aggressively support some aspects of the agricultural betterment programme and to force people to comply with them. The main initiatives were limiting and reducing cattle numbers, creating nucleated settlements and restricting individual land holdings as permanent arable and grazing areas were established.[48]

Linked to these measures was a settler environmental discourse that attributed the consequences of overpopulation – soil erosion, deforestation, declining soil fertility – to peasants' farming methods, particularly those who had adopted new tools and techniques:[49]

> As is to be expected, the Native is rarely alive to the importance of conserving the soil; his concern is to get crops, with the consequence that the disease of erosion is spreading at an alarming pace where the primitive methods of agriculture have given place to the plough. ... In some districts, the Natives' quest for more and more land has transformed once beautifully clad hills into gaunt spectres of ruin. One trustworthy witness instanced a hill, formerly covered with grass and trees, losing every atom of soil after having been attacked by Native cultivation.[50]

Environmental degradation was seen as a key part of what was increasingly presented as a rural crisis in the post war years. Looking back and assessing the extent of the damage to the African areas is difficult, although it would be hard to conclude that no important physical changes were happening. Officials used environmental concerns to justify intervention in the rural areas and to win greater funding for the NAD, probably turning to selective reporting and exaggeration to make their claims. More basically, environmental alarmism, which peaked during the Great Depression and again during the transitional years of the late 1940s and early 1950s, expressed wider settler insecurity.[51] Soil erosion became a powerful metaphor for the perceived undermining of white control of the colony and its resources in a period of economic transition and insecurity. Black tenant farmers were particular targets of concern. Not only were they damaging 'white' resources, but their presence on European land violated settlers' plans for segregation, as the black sea ate away the islands of white.[52]

The NLHA promised to address a variety of these settler concerns. By raising the carrying capacity of the African areas, it would facilitate forced relocations and promote racial segregation. In a more liberal vein, officials argued that the law would create a prosperous peasantry, forming the foundations for political stability. More in line with established Rhodesian racial policy, it gave the NAD greater powers to supervise and control the lives of peasants, intruding much further into rural society and production. It also held out the promise of a larger, cheaper, and more easily controlled work force, as young men and migrants lost access to land, becoming a dependent and vulnerable proletariat, subject to a range of controls. Proponents of the law argued that food production would increase as peasants adopted new methods and were drawn further into the market. This would provide cheap food, while reducing imports – but the strict

limits on the accumulation of holdings would prevent peasants competing with white farmers. As rural people produced and bought more and workers became more dependent on their wages, the cash economy would broaden, creating a larger market for the colony's industries. Further, the NLHA offered a solution to the rural crisis by protecting the physical environment at minimal cost to the state, while simultaneously allowing the NAD to cram more people into the African areas.

These diverse motives behind the NLHA highlight its complexity. Conservation, segregation, agricultural modernisation, and intensified state control intermingle in a manner that echoes one of Escher's famous drawings, where perspective suddenly shifts and new features jump out. The varied meanings and interpretations of the law are not an illusion. Their diversity reflects the government's efforts to placate competing political interests, and it is this very malleability of the NLHA that explains its passage when many other proposed initiatives failed, or were delayed or severely constrained in the late 1940s and 1950s.

Implementation and High Modernism

In the years immediately following its passage, implementation of the NLHA was very slow. Work began in only three of the 98 reserves and SNAs between 1951 and 1954. Financing for programmes under the law was limited, as its proponents were unable to build support within the government, and were fighting critics within the NAD who argued the measure was poorly thought out.[53] During this initial period, however, a technocratic group of officials drawn mainly from the agriculture division of the NAD and the Natural Resources Board drafted an ambitious and expensive programme to rapidly implement the NLHA throughout the country, arguing it would transform African farming. The proposal was successful, largely because it did not require any additional state funding; rather it relied on already planned expenditures on African agriculture, revenues from state development levies on African crop sales, and borrowing against future income from these levies – including the expected dramatic increase in production, sales, and crop levies because of the NLHA. Cabinet approval rested primarily on the implications of accelerated implementation that were most desirable for white settlers – that it would facilitate forced relocations by allowing officials to move more Africans into the reserves and provide funds for road and water development in remote SNAs, making resettlement in these areas feasible – as well as its proclaimed developmental, conservation, and propaganda benefits.[54]

So in 1955, the NAD launched a highly publicised £12 million plan to fully implement the NLHA in almost all the reserves and SNAs by the end of 1961, making the act the centerpiece of state development efforts for the colony's African population. The parallels with late colonial labour stabilisation and modernisation schemes in other parts of the continent allowed the Rhodesian regime to aggressively publicise the NLHA programme, using the plan to blunt growing international criticism of its racial policies, thereby creating conditions that would help to draw investment from outside the colony, and justify white rule.[55]

The Todd government promoted the NLHA programme extensively through film, government publications, the British *Journal of African Administration*, diplomatic tours, and African-targeted newspapers, eventually winning the approval of international agronomists. The act's liberal proponents within the NAD led these efforts, portraying the plan as a high modernist development scheme that would transform the reserves and the role of peasant agriculture in the colony.[56] By standardising land and cattle holdings and permanently designating the use of land areas, the NLHA was supposed to bring order, rationality and progress – in short, modernity – to the reserves:

> The methodical and systematic layout of lands has increased the grazing areas. Technical officers find it easier to check and organise their work. Administrative control, so essential to promote development and improvement programmes, is complete. The Native Land Husbandry Act stabilises an area, the fundamental problems are crystallised, it limits the maximum number of native farmers and lays the foundations for future land use and farm planning on an organised, intensive and progressive basis.[57]

State propaganda further presented the NLHA as a popular intervention that Africans supported, a modern developmentalist scheme to lift peasants out of their purported backwardness:

> Consulted on every detail in the Land Husbandry Act, the native people have had the courage and wisdom to participate in an agricultural revolution, which cuts straight across their time-honoured traditions and tribal customs. A revolution which is leading them to the first step on the ladder to western standards.[58]

The reserves were also supposed to be economically transformed by the implementation of the act. Officials argued that the plan for rapid national implementation would lead to a 50 percent increase in the value of crops produced in the African areas within 5 years, and a 50 percent rise in cattle output in 8 years, lifting the average cash income per peasant family

from £17 to £41 per annum.[59] The proponents of the NLHA argued that the benefits of this growth would be felt throughout the economy as rural Africans became model consumers:

> The doubling and more of the cash income from the produce of Native Agriculture will open up a huge market for agricultural and household requisites and a wide range of these and other commodities will find rapidly increasing sales in the Native areas, to the great benefit of trade and industry generally.[60]

Thus the NLHA was promoted as a model development scheme, a paternalistic measure that would bring modernity and economic progress to the reserves, while spreading its benefits to all the occupants of the colony under benevolent white rule.

These arguments for economic transformation were based on dubious figures from a single reserve, so that the prophetic image of the colony's future really rested on officials' belief in the inherent superiority of modernity, and assumptions about African primitivism and the need for European guidance.[61] In common with the general racism of white settlers, these ideas shifted responsibility for the consequences of state policies that impoverished blacks to essentialised African characteristics. Moreover, contrary to the assumptions behind the NLHA, black peasants were already heavily involved in produce markets, and had adopted a variety of new tools and techniques. Yields – for those who used indigenous methods as well as those who had adopted new ones – were much higher than officials thought.[62] There were real challenges facing peasant agriculture, but they were not some form of 'primitivism'. Rather, they were rooted in labour problems, shortages of draught power, lack of capital, land shortage, and soil exhaustion, in which state land policies, discriminatory pricing, low wages and measures to extract labour played a central role.[63] These were key features of the colonial political economy, which the modernist dreams of the NLHA did not challenge.

The plans for accelerated implementation of the NLHA rapidly ran into trouble, and fell far behind schedule. Financing presented tremendous difficulties, as the planned international loans did not materialise until 1960.[64] There were chronic staff shortages, organisational problems and planning confusion. More basically, the implementation schedule was wildly optimistic and therefore unrealistic. By April 1959, four years into the scheme, only 25 percent of individual land rights and 28 percent of stock rights had been distributed in the areas that were scheduled for completion by 1960.[65] Most importantly, implementation of the NLHA

encountered growing resistance from peasants throughout the country in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Initially these reactions slowed and complicated implementation, but as the coercive efforts of officials intensified, rural opposition expanded dramatically, eventually threatening state control and colonial dominance itself.

Resistance and ungovernability

The NLHA was wildly unpopular with Africans of all social positions. Once its implications became clear, criticism was almost universal, although many people did not express their grievances to colonial officials.[66] Peasants' objections to the act were complex, but at the core of Africans' complaints lay a rejection of the state's extension of its influence into rural people's lives, that is, to the essence of the developmental project. Until the late 1930s, the state generally had limited ambitions in the reserves: maintaining order at minimal cost, extracting taxes and labour, as well as some crops, which created space for peasants to carve out some independence from colonial demands.[67] Many men strove to limit their participation in the labour market, which required access to other sources of money for taxes and other family needs that required cash. Most oscillated between waged labour and farming, but some men, mainly older ones, were able to stay in the reserves, avoiding employment through crop and cattle sales, as well as cash provided by their sons and other relations. Their relative affluence rested on a variety of patriarchal social networks that allowed them to benefit from the work of women, their male relatives and the poor. These were complicated relationships, moderated by ties of affection and by promises of individual social advancement, but they were also exploitative.[68] The NLHA introduced a new balance of power to the countryside, giving the state a much greater role. This change threatened the bases of rural accumulation, unequal access to land resources and the social networks that made the 'partial autonomy' of people in the reserves possible.[69] The threat runs through peasants' specific grievances with the act, which are also bound up with coercion, dispossession, social disruption, and the loss of personal economic security, as well as wider objections to white domination.

Dispossession was the most basic grievance people had with the NLHA. Destocking – the forced sale of domestic animals in excess of the permitted number – looms large in people's memories, particularly as the worst-hit areas faced reductions of up to two-thirds of their animals. While only a minority, albeit a sizable one, of peasants owned cattle, stock were the key to rural accumulation, as a source of draught power for ploughing

and a rapidly reproducing asset that could weather poor seasons.[70] While men controlled cattle, women also recognised their importance for family success, as Ambuya Musonza made clear:

> They did, yes, the whites came to cut down [the numbers of] our cattle. It was wrong, very very wrong. Cattle are our [Africans'] wealth, our only wealth, the one way we have to become rich. How could they do that?[71]

The law also forcibly dispossessed people of land, as it denied labour migrants and young men access to arable holdings, especially as many reserves were so overcrowded that men who were not working the land at the time the NLHA was implemented would likely never receive a holding. Among both the Shona and Ndebele, community membership implied the right to a plot of land and access to the communal grazing. This basic right was cut off by the law. Africans refused to accept this decision, especially as land provided the basis for economic security in a country where the pension system and unemployment benefits were restricted to whites. A delegation of elders raised these issues while meeting with the Chief Native Commissioner:

> Is it lawful for the people to have their things taken away by force? We have been given lands, but our children have been told they cannot have lands or live in the area. We have had no good harvests since allocation. Now our cattle are going. The Native Commissioner says he is carrying out the laws of the Government when he takes our cattle away. The Native Commissioner said that we could make our complaints to Salisbury.[72]

Landlessness became a serious problem as NLHA implementation moved ahead. In August 1961 the NAD had registered more than 45,000 men across the country who had applied for land but could not receive plots as there was no land in their areas. If their families were of typical size, this meant 225,000 people, about one-fifth of the population, did not have land.[73] The crisis was especially marked in certain regions. In the Mangwende Reserve more than 40 percent of men from the area did not receive allocations.[74]

There were also strong objections to the farming methods promoted as 'improved' agriculture, as they clashed with many peasants' practices. Indigenous Shona techniques were based on the hoe, shifting cultivation and inter-cropping to ensure food security while minimising labour inputs. Maximal production was sacrificed to ensure a reasonable harvest and workload in all but the worst years. Many farmers, however, had adopted ploughs, new crops, and some innovative techniques to expand the area that they could use and ease workloads while increasing production and

sales. By 1950 field practices varied widely, but most farmers' options were disrupted by the NLHA. It cut off shifting cultivation, which was a key mechanism for peasants to preserve soil fertility. Inter-cropping was also threatened. It was used to reduce weeding and other labour demands, preserve moisture in the earth, and protect the soil from erosion by heavy rains. NLHA regulations prevented people working dambo land - flat naturally wet areas where groundwater rose to the surface – and riverbanks where water was readily accessible. Both of these areas were generally controlled by women and played a vital role in crop diversity and food security. Dambo land was used to raise rice and a tuber called tsenza, while river banks were used for gardens to produce vegetables, early maize and pumpkins that helped people to survive the hungry season, the time from mid-January to early April when last year's crops could run out while this year's were ripening.[75] Some plough owners worked large fields, allowing them to sell considerable amounts of grain; individual allocation was intended to block this route to accumulation.[76] More basically, while colonial authorities believed that 'improved' techniques produced vastly more than peasant methods, many Africans questioned this - as did the first comprehensive study that measured and compared the output of different cropping practices.[77]

Peasants' most basic complaint concerned the increased workload created by the methods advocated by the state, which imposed a much more onerous labour system to maintain fertility on permanent fields and to meet state conservation models than indigenous techniques. Digging and moving cattle manure to improve soil fertility was an onerous task, as was stumping fields. Fixed cultivation, especially while using manure, exponentially increased the number of weeds, and thus the work required to control them.[78] The physical conservation works required under the NLHA, particularly the contour ridges and the storm drains that they required took a tremendous amount of hard labour, work that had to be completed before the landholders were allowed to use their holding. Shingaidze Madewe remembered this difficult work well, seeing it as another form of forced labour:

> Those agriculture officers, people did not hate them; it was only that the work they gave us was too much. It was chibaro [forced labour]. It did not pay or help us in any way.[79]

Religious objections were also raised to new methods, with spirit mediums who were possessed by prominent ancestors proclaiming that people should not adopt imported techniques.[80]

The spatial rearrangements brought by the NLHA generated a wide range of concerns. Conflicts over field boundaries surfaced, and people found adjusting to living in nucleated settlements difficult. Minor tensions flared over personalities, children, dogs, and particularly because of closer observation of habits and consumption.[81] Maintaining family ties presented a special challenge, as parents preferred to have at least one son build his home close to them, who would have primary responsibility to assist them as they aged.[82] NLHA regulations about housing stands made this difficult. Some people argue that new living patterns had profound social and cultural effects.

> How can we stay with our ways? The Europeans came and forced us into lines. We used to live here, there, over there, way over there, scattered all about. Now we're all crowded together, and have to give up our customs.[83]

More importantly, the restrictions and demands of the NLHA disrupted relationships and social bonds. Land restrictions compounded gendered conflicts within the family as women and men argued over who could use which area and what should be grown. This eroded the bases of women's independence, rooted in their control of certain crops and types of arable land. Arguments also occurred over farming techniques, particularly where a man wanted to fully embrace 'improved' methods while the woman wanted to assert her right to plant pumpkins and beans in with male crops such as maize and millet.[84] Disagreements about production methods surfaced along generational lines, especially between fathers and sons.[85] Stock and land restrictions threatened broader social networks. Marriages, generally secured by the payment of 8 to 10 head of cattle to the woman's family, were complicated by the restrictions on individual holdings. Patronage links were strained. The relatively affluent had used surplus grain and lending cattle to hire labour and to secure support from other community members, practices that became increasingly difficult with destocking and land limitations.[86]

The burdens of the NLHA fell disproportionately on young men and women. They were called upon to perform much of the heavy labour of building contour ridges and digging storm drains by their parents and older relatives. Their prospects for marrying, establishing independent families, and progressing socially were shattered in areas where land was so short that further allocations were impossible after the initial implementation. Independence, accumulation and farming success lay at the centre of male identities, as men aspired to be patriarchs over extensive extended families. Older women and men also viewed the implications of

the NLHA with concern, as this severing of young people's rural opportunities threatened their long term security, which relied on the support and assistance of their children.

Thus the NLHA posed a wide threat to peasants' production strategies, economic security, and social networks. However, it met with little open opposition in the early years of implementation. In part, this was because the first areas selected were reserves where earlier betterment work had been done, so state intrusion was not something new for residents. This also meant people in these areas had developed evasion strategies. In Chinamora Reserve, the government's NLHA showpiece, people began 'illegally' cultivating in 1953, the year following individual land allocation, while in Manyene and Sabi North reserves people drove some of their cattle onto the underutilised Wiltshire Estate whenever officials came to conduct stock counts.[87] Previous improvement efforts had been poorly enforced, so residents appear to have assumed this would also happen with the NLHA.

These patterns of grudging acceptance and evasion remained the most common responses as implementation spread into new areas and intensified after 1955. The lack of open opposition, interpreted by the state as willing consent, did not mean that people did not have the grievances described above. Rather, it reflected their fear of the colonial authorities, and a general sense of powerlessness to affect state policy. Shingaidzo Madewe expressed this sense of resignation well, explaining people's failure to complain when implementation began in his village in Madziwa Reserve: 'That was not the time to do that, one could only agree'.[88] In a similar vein, Levison Chanakira also spoke of the inability to influence authorities, even when discontent was obvious: 'We did nothing, but the government realised we were angry. We did not do anything as we could not do anything'.[89]

Doing nothing meant avoiding confrontation, rather than accepting the state's diktats. After land allocation, many peasants expanded their arable holdings by moving beacons, working the areas designated for conservation works such as contour ridges, or taking over land proclaimed as grazing, particularly where it bordered their allocation.[90] From the beginning, many people refused to give authorities information about their stock and land holdings or simply ran away during the initial survey and census phases of implementation. Such action was so widespread that the administration had to introduce regulations requiring people to provide this information in 1955.[91] In Nata Reserve, communities who had been 'finally' moved five times to open up land for white settlers simply refused to obey their land allocations, and ploughed where they liked in 1960 and 1961.[92]

This move from evasion to defiance grew as the scale of implementation increased in the late 1950s, and the state's determination to enforce the Act became clear through coercive enforcement mechanisms. Cattle were seized and sold and people prosecuted for NLHA violations in many parts of the countryside. Disrupted meetings and gatherings with officials became common. Vociferous public grumbling occurred throughout Madziwa, often initiated by enraged women. In Levison Chanakira's community, residents chanted 'Hatidi, hatidi' – 'we don't want it, we don't want it' – when the Native Commissioner (NC) discussed individual land allocation.[93] Implementation had to be suspended three times in 1959 in one village in Mhondoro Reserve when people refused to move to new fields and residential sites. Authorities finally abandoned the effort for the year after a riot nearly broke out when the NC confronted women who had pulled up the wooden pegs marking allocations.[94] In another Mhondoro community, people discarded the land allocation cards as the NC distributed them at a public meeting, then surged forward, threw away his tea, and threatened him and the village headman until the NC pulled a gun and fired two shots into the air.[95] Many black agricultural demonstrators, the implementation line agents, were physically threatened, and some were reportedly killed; many ran away from their assignments.[96] Violence and sabotage directed against white and black NAD employees, chiefs, and village headmen became more common in 1960 and 1961. Chief Nyakena of Fort Victoria Reserve and his messenger were beaten in February 1961 for enforcing a destocking order, and then the NC was shouted down when he arrived to try and calm people. At a land registration meeting in Buhera in March of 1961, the crowd of 200 people prevented the first grantee from accepting his land right. This prompted the NC to hit a few people with his revolver, fire several shots into the air, and then to threaten to shoot people – seriously enough that the white Land Development Officer (LDO) at the meeting seized the gun. The crowd ran off but blocked the wheels of the NC's car with piles of stones. Later that month in Urungwe Reserve, an unknown group broke into the LDO's office, burned the land allocation files in the toilet, and then set fire to the office and the LDO's Landrover.[97]

While this intensified opposition was bound up with the state's accelerating efforts to implement the act, it was also tied to the spread of nationalist activity in the late 1950s. Evaluating the influence of the nationalist parties is difficult. The state attributed all rural discontent to outside agitators, and the new African political organisations gladly claimed responsibility. Security and police reports were extensive, but

scattered because settlers destroyed many sensitive records in 1979 and 1980 as majority rule loomed. Nationalist ideas clearly influenced people, as did rumours and stories of confrontations in other areas, but many incidents occurred in places where African politicians were not active. Nationalists may have played a key role in moving protest from expressions of anger and rejection to more pointed attacks on colonial structures and authorities. Several men in Madziwa Reserve made this association and said nationalist activists helped people to overcome their fear of Europeans.[98] Leaders of the African National Congress, which operated from 1957 until it was banned in 1959, did a lot of work in the rural areas. They frequently attacked the NLHA, saying settlers had stolen people's land and cattle, arguing the goal of the act was to provide cheap labour for Europeans.[99] The ANC was strongly supported in a number of districts where implementation pressures were intense, including Sipolilo, Umtali and the Mhondoro Reserve. Rural party activists detained in February 1959 often raised the NLHA in their complaints. Gibson Nyandoro of Mhondoro, said during his interrogation by the police:

> The complaints I want to put to the Government are that I have 8 cattle of which 6 are to be 'destocked', that I have 6 acres of land and have been told that I am to get 8 acres, which is not enough for my needs, that I am not allowed to plant rice in the vlei (dambo), and I am not allowed to have a garden.[100]

While he was being questioned in March 1959 George Chipfatsura of Umtali District explained that he had joined the ANC

> because I was not allowed to have enough cattle nor land enough to plough. Because my cattle were not allowed to walk on the contour ridges... Also my sons who work in town, if they wish to come back to the reserve are not allowed to have cattle or any land. I expect Congress to give me more cattle and more land.[101]

The move to open defiance and protest in rural communities was a difficult period for reserve residents, and many people in Madziwa were reluctant to discuss these developments. In part this reflected the sensitivity of protest strategies, especially for farmers who are increasingly frustrated with the current realities of life in Zimbabwe. It was also, however, due to the turmoil and tensions of the early 1960s, which continue to resonate. Young men and women, who were most sharply affected by the NLHA, often took leading roles in the protests, inverting the gender and age hierarchies of rural society. Many older people, particularly men, spoke painfully about the fear they felt during the disturbances - fear of the state's

retribution, but also of the nationalist activists and the young people from the area who had mobilised themselves against the state and the reluctance of their elders.[102]

State authorities were most concerned by intensified nationalist activity in the late 1950s, reflected in the declaration of the State of Emergency and banning of the ANC in February 1959. By the early 1960s, however, the government was worried not only by the activities of the new National Democratic Party, but by the growing disorder in the urban townships and reserves. Much of the countryside was in a state of ungovernability; while no alternative political order had emerged, state control was breaking down, and officials were no longer able to impose government policies, especially the NLHA.[103] By October 1960, concern with conditions in the countryside reached the cabinet, which said that the reserves 'while not yet explosive, were dissatisfied'.[104] A special three day meeting of the Native Affairs Advisory Board (NAAB) was called in March 1961 to discuss the impending likely breakdown of order in the reserves. It established a series of internal NAD review committees, while the government began public hearings into the operations of the NAD and the role of peasant production in the national economy.[105] By June, members of the internal Working Party D, set up to consider questions about land and the role of 'tribal' authorities phrased the problem as: 'We have no time in the bank. We have to buy it. How do we buy it?'[106]

Intensified repression was one part of the state's answer. The police and army were deployed in the reserves, and airforce jets flew over disturbed areas. Public meetings in the reserves had been forbidden since early 1960, and the NDP was banned in December 1961.[107] More than 1300 people were convicted of violating the NLHA in 1961, and a further 1836 were punished in the first six months of 1962.[108] The government's consideration of a number of political proposals formed the second part. These initiatives were bound up with efforts to win greater constitutional autonomy from Britain, including proposals to ease racial segregation, replace the NAD with a single nonracial administration, and abolish the LAA.[109] The third part of the state's answer was to try and reduce the immediate grievances of rural Africans, hoping this would quiet the reserves. NLHA implementation was officially slowed in March 1961, and discussions began on how to modify the law, focusing on landlessness, drawing the chiefs and headmen into the allocation of land, and finding additional African areas. The technocrats within the NAD launched a plan that included temporary land allocations in the grazing areas for the landless that were to be allocated by the chiefs, and a new system of unit

planning, whereby the chiefs and headmen would represent the community in meetings with NAD officials to plan land use and individual allocations for their area. This was part of a wider plan to deflect criticism from the state as a member of the NAAB made clear:

> The essence of the approach is to get the right-holders in a unit to resist demands from non-right holders, by making them conscious of the value of their rights and responsibility for the development of their unit. It is getting back to the classic principle in administration of dividing and ruling.[110]

All of these initiatives failed. Peasant defiance and rural unrest continued to spread. With the police and army presence, however, people increasingly turned to sabotage rather than public gatherings.[111]

Behind the scenes, the little Rhodesia faction within the NAD renewed its attacks on the NLHA. They argued that the law was the root cause of discontent in the countryside, claiming that its 'supreme confidence in the power of intellectual planning based on the slide rule and statistics' ignored important human considerations and the cultural context within which Africans operated.[112] Nationalists had taken advantage of this.

> The N.D.P. has used the Government's land policy as the principle weapon in inciting disaffection towards the Government in the rural areas in their attempt to drive a wedge between the Chiefs and their people. It is now abundantly clear that both in concept and application, the Native Land Husbandry policy has ignored in some ways both tribal authority and Native law and custom and so enabled the agitator to foment trouble and opposition.[113]

This critique of the NLHA was part of the broader strategy that the 'culturalist', little Rhodesian clique in the NAD developed to respond to intense criticism of the department. Rural ungovernability had led to calls for the abolition of the department and two major inquiries into the breakdown of state control.[114] The culturalists directed criticism towards the technocrats and NLHA to save the NAD, arguing that the methods used by the department before the act was introduced had been far more effective, a form of benevolent paternalism that was compatible with cultural differences. They presented an essentialised construction of Africans as communal people, rather than individualists, who could not operate outside of 'their' framework of kin, chiefs, and patriarchal dominance. The culturalists called for a drastic scaling back of interventionist programmes in the reserves and to return control of land, minor administration, and local judicial matters to the chiefs. This was not

presented as a simple return to the past, but a reaffirmation of the 'real' NAD as part of a new philosophy, Community Development. This approach had the additional advantage of wide international acceptability, particularly from the United States, which provided and paid for a community development advisor in Rhodesia as part of the containment strategy.[115]

The culturalists' effort was partially successful. Rural disturbances continued, but the technocrats were marginalised. In February 1962 the cabinet suspended NLHA implementation, leaving it only partially completed in many reserves. This decision was never publicly announced to avoid any appearance of weakness on the state's part. Without the NLHA, the budget for African agriculture was slashed, and the NAD, renamed as the Department of Internal Affairs, continued as a separate administration for the African population under the Community Development policy, retaining many of its staff.[116] The culturalists' ascendancy was secured by the December 1962 election, when the Rhodesian Front (RF) ousted the URP. There were already strong ties between the RF and the culturalists, and Internal Affairs was rapidly reorganised to push out any critics of the Front.[117] African Community Development, until then an ill-defined policy, became an articulated plan for separate development, that is apartheid. The RF victory reflected a shift in white politics. Urban and rural unrest, growing international criticism of Rhodesia's racial policy, Britain's demands for constitutional reforms, and especially a marked economic decline that threatened white prosperity fueled a shift in the white polity, undercutting support for greater Rhodesia measures. The RF was the embodiment of little Rhodesian thinking, with its harsh racial policies, extensive support for the European community, and willingness to pursue a separate independence for the colony. Its victory rested on the support of white workers and clerical employees, but it also reflected a shift in the middle, as people who had supported some aspects of a greater Rhodesia in the expanding economy of the late 1940s and 1950s became defensive, looking to secure white domination and the bases of their privilege.[118]

Conclusion

The withdrawal of the NLHA was an ambiguous victory for Zimbabwe's peasants. The settler state was forced to back down, but this was part of its response to broader challenges than rural ungovernability, including urban unrest, intensifying nationalist activity, a contracting economy and political struggles within the European polity. No further implementation took place after February 1962 and the administration largely disavowed

reserve development schemes. Rural conditions eased as thousands of people received land from the chiefs and headmen, destocking ended, and people regained some of the partial autonomy that they had fought to defend against the intrusive liberalism of the state. However, land allocation and the settlement patterns of the nucleated villages were not generally reversed, so that they remain important features shaping the landscape of many reserves today, albeit as one of several factors. People have received land from the chiefs, bought it from villagers, or simply occupied it in the ensuing years. Houses have been built along varied patterns, some adjoining the colonial lines and others scattered across the countryside. But many who received allocations under the NLHA use its provisions to legitimate their claim to the limited resources of the communal areas.[119]

Abandoning the NLHA did not undo racial land apportionment, and the limited post- independence land reform of the 1980s and 1990s did little to redress that reality, so that most peasants continued to face overcrowding, environmental degradation, and their social consequences. The current confusion of the Fast Track Land Reform - compounded by the economic crisis and political turmoil - makes it difficult to see what benefit the recent land seizures will have for residents of the communal areas. While some land has been redistributed to peasants, the clearest goals behind the programme have been to undermine popular support for the MDC by extending the promise of new land, to reward senior ZANU members and to increase the number of black commercial farmers.

Moreover, as the liberation struggle intensified after 1962, the nationalist leadership attacked many dimensions of Rhodesia's complex web of racial oppression, but their focus on juridical and constitutional issues meant that peasants' objections to the forms of earlier state intervention in the countryside were obscured. The obvious racism and political allegiances of the culturalist faction within the NAD discredited their critique of the NLHA and the technocrats' approach to peasant agriculture. After 1980, the dramatically expanded agricultural extension service in the communal areas revived many of the technocrats' methods. The service emphasised mono-cropping, manuring, building contour ridges, and other modernist techniques while maintaining the restrictions on riverbank and wetland cultivation. Although the post-independence extension officers lacked the coercive means of the NLHA, many reproduced colonial ideas about peasant backwardness and the dangers of indigenous farming techniques, as Michael Drinkwater has argued.[120] The idea of individual tenure as a modernising measure that encourages

'responsible land use' has also continued. The majority of resettlement areas in the 1980s operated on the Model A basis, which gave use rights, rather than full tenure, to individual peasants, and the current Fast Track programme is using the same model for small scale redistribution. The opposition MDC's agrarian policy emphasises moving to individual tenure in the communal areas, as well as resettlement schemes.[121]

Despite the short life of the NLHA, the legacies of the measure therefore continue to influence developments in Zimbabwe today, shaping the rural landscape, state policies, reform proposals, and agrarian services. The political legacies of the period are also important, reflected and refracted in the intense demand for land redistribution, the turmoil around the Fast Track Land Reform, and deep popular discontent with the economic and political situation facing the country.

Notes

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2. This comment applies to the published literature; there are a number of conference and seminar papers, theses and dissertations that discuss events in the countryside during this period, but they are, unfortunately, not widely available.
3. Major works on the period before 1945 include Giovanni Arrighi, *The Political Economy of Rhodesia*, (The Hague, Mouton, 1967), Giovanni Arrighi, 'Labour Supplies in Historical Perspective: A Study of the Proletarianization of the African Peasantry in Rhodesia', *The Journal of Development Studies*, 6 (1970), pp.197–234, H. Moyana, *The Political Economy of Land in Zimbabwe*, (Gweru, Mambo Press, 1984), Robin Palmer, *Land and Racial Domination in Rhodesia*, (London, Heinemann, 1977), Robin Palmer, 'The Agricultural History of Rhodesia', in Robin Palmer and Neil Parsons (eds.), *The Roots of Rural Poverty in Central and Southern Africa*, (Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1977), Ian Phimister, 'Discourse and the Discipline of Historical Context: Conservationism and Ideas about in Development in Southern Rhodesia, 1930–1950', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 12 (1986), pp. 263–275, Ian Phimister, 'Commodity Relations and Class Formation in the Zimbabwean Countryside, 1898-1920', *Journal of Peasant Studies*, 13 (1986), pp. 240–257, Ian Phimister, *An Economic and Social History of Zimbabwe*, 1890–1948: Capital Accumulation and Class

Struggle, (London and New York, Longman, 1988), Robin Palmer, *Land and Racial Domination in Rhodesia*, (London, Heinemann, 1977), Robin Palmer, 'The Agricultural History of Rhodesia', in Robin Palmer and Neil Parsons (eds.), *The Roots of Rural Poverty in Central and Southern Africa*, (Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1977), T. Ranger, 'Growing from the Roots: Reflections on Peasant Research in Central and Southern Africa', *Journal of Southern African Studies* 5 (1978), pp. 99–133, Elizabeth Schmidt, *Peasants, Traders and Wives. Shona Women in the History of Zimbabwe, 1870–1939*, (Portsmouth, Heinemann, 1992).

4. There is some scattered published scholarship on the NLHA, including William R. Duggan 'The Native Land Husbandry Act of 1951 and the Rural African Middle Class of Southern Rhodesia', *African Affairs*, 79 (1980), pp. 227–239, Victor E.M. Machingaidze, 'Agrarian Change from Above: The Southern Rhodesia Native Land Husbandry Act and African Response', *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 24 (1991), pp. 557–588, Ian Phimister, 'Rethinking the Reserves: Southern Rhodesia's Land Husbandry Act Reviewed', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 19 (1993), pp. 225–239. While the older literature on the growth of nationalism before the liberation war mainly focuses on urban developments, formal organisations and constitutional debates, there is a growing body of work that looks at rural identity and engagement with nationalism in this period; see Jocelyn Alexander, JoAnn McGregor, Terence Ranger, *Violence and Memory: One Hundred Years in the Dark Forests of Matabeleland*, (Portsmouth, Heinemann, 2000), Ngwabi Bhebe, Benjamin Burombo: African Politics in Zimbabwe, 1947–1958, (Harare: The College Press, 1989), Terence Ranger, *Peasant Consciousness and Guerrilla War in Zimbabwe*, (London, James Currey, 1985), T. O. Ranger, *Voices from the Rocks: Nature, Culture and History in the Matopos Hills of Zimbabwe*, (Oxford: James Currey, 1999).
5. I would like to thank my research assistants, Rangarirai Gurure, Solomon Mahdi, and Obert Kufinya for their invaluable assistance. For full details see my doctoral dissertation, 'Cultivating Conflict: 'Improved' Agriculture and Modernisation in Colonial Zimbabwe, 1920–1965', (PhD Dissertation, University of Minnesota, 2000).
6. Southern Rhodesia's Land Apportionment Act restricted land access along racial lines and was the cornerstone of racial segregation in the colony. The more desirable areas were reserved for Europeans, and were made up of large farms· the minimum economic size was considered to be 750 acres. There were three categories of African land: reserves which were constitutionally protected tracts scattered throughout the country; Special Native Areas allocated for African occupation in 1949, ostensibly on a temporary basis; and Native Purchase Areas where approved black applicants could purchase farms that averaged 200 acres. For details see Palmer, *Land and Racial Domination*.

7. The section that follows describing the law is based on: 'The Native Land Husbandry Act' in Southern Rhodesia, *The Statute Law of Southern Rhodesia, 1951*, (Salisbury, Government Printer, 1952), pp. 893–916; A. Pendered and W. von Memerty, 'The Native Land Husbandry Act of Southern Rhodesia', *Journal of African Administration*, v. 7, no. 3 (1955), pp. 99–109, particularly pp. 103–108; J.E.S. Bradford, 'Survey and Registration of African Land Units in Southern Rhodesia', *Journal of African Administration*, v. 7, no. 4 (1955), pp. 165–170; Mary Elizabeth Bulman, 'The Native Land Husbandry Act of Southern Rhodesia: A Failure in Land Reform', (MSc Thesis, University of London, 1970), pp. 5–10.
8. See John L. Comaroff and Jean Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution, Volume 1: Christianity, Colonialism and Consciousness in South Africa*, (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1991) and John L. Comaroff and Jean Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution, Volume 2: The Dialectics of Modernity on a South African Frontier*, (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1997), William Beinart, 'Soil Erosion, Conservationism and Ideas About Development: A Southern African Exploration, 1900–1960', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 11 (1984), pp. 52–83, Ian Phimister, 'Discourse and the Discipline', Eira Kramer, '"Coercion, not Persuasion". Transformation of the Centralisation Policy in the Reserves, 1935–1951', Paper presented at *The Zimbabwe Economy*, August 4th to 10th 1998, University of Zimbabwe.
9. See Phimister, 'Discourse and the Discipline'.
10. United States Department of Commerce, *Investment in the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. Basic Information for United States Businessmen*, (Washington, US Government Printing Office, 1956), p. 101.
11. Arrighi, *Political Economy*, pp. 40–41, pp. 46–48, Phimister, *Economic and Social*, pp. 220–223.
12. H. Dunlop, *The Development of European Agriculture in Rhodesia, 1945– 1965*, (Salisbury: Department of Economics Occasional Paper No. 5, Department of Economics, University of Rhodesia, 1971), pp. 7–8, Mandivamba Rukuni, 'The Evolution of Agricultural Policy: 1890-1990' in Mandivamba Rukuni and Carl K. Eicher (eds.), *Zimbabwe's Agricultural Revolution*, (Harare, University of Zimbabwe Press, 1994), pp. 22–24, p. 22 fn, Roger Riddell, 'Zimbabwe's Land Problem: The Central Issue', *Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics*, 28 (1980), pp. 5–6, Arrighi, *Political Economy*, p. 46.
13. Phimister, Economic and Social, p. 225, p. 227, Arrighi, *Political Economy*, p. 41, pp. 46–47, Dunlop, pp. 7–8, Ranger, *Peasant Consciousness*, p. 103.
14. Southern Rhodesia Development Coordinating Commission, *Third Interim Report: The Pattern of Progress*, (Salisbury, Rhodesian Printing and Publishing for the Government Stationery Office, 1949), p. 16.
15. Leonard Tow, *The Manufacturing Economy of Southern Rhodesia: Problems and Prospects*, (Washington, National Academy of Sciences, 1960), p. 16, Christine Sylvester, *Zimbabwe: The Terrain of Contradictory Development*, (Boulder and San Francisco, Westview, 1991), p. 37.

16. Rukuni, p. 22, Howard Simson, *Zimbabwe – A Country Study*, (Uppsala, The Scandinavian Institute of African Studies, 1979), p. 43, Tow, pp. 123–125, p. 12, p. 17, Arrighi, *Political Economy*, p. 42, p. 45, p. 49, Phimister, *Economic and Social*, p. 255.
17. Arrighi, *Political Economy*, pp. 40–41, National Archives of Zimbabwe (NAZ) S2223/23, Cabinet Resolutions of 9/9/47, NAZ S3238/8 Memo from the Chairman of the Public Services Board to the Acting Prime Minister, 17/11/47, pp. 1-2, NAZ S2223/25 SRC (49), 49th Meeting of the Cabinet, 4/10/49, p. 6, NAZS2223/26 SRC (50) 22nd Meeting of the Cabinet, 13/5/50, p. 5–6, SRC (50) 42nd Meeting of the Cabinet, 24/10/50, pp. 9-10, SRC (50) 48th Meeting of the Cabinet, 29/11/50, pp. 1–3.
18. Riddell, p. 4, p. 8. Simson, p. 17, US Commerce, pp. 78-79, Tow, pp. 119–120.
19. US Commerce, p. 78.
20. Simson, p. 17.
21. Riddell, p. 8, Colin Leys, *European Politics in Southern Rhodesia*, (Oxford, The Clarendon Press, 1959), pp. 107–108, US Commerce, p. 71.
22. This insight is partly derived from a series of comments by Timothy Burke in *Lifebuoy Men, Lux Women. Commodification, Consumption and Cleanliness in Modern Zimbabwe*, (Durham, Duke University Press, 1996), p. 92, p. 95, pp. 107–110.
23. These faults mark all the major works on the period, although not all make both mistakes. Arrighi does make both, while Phimister proclaims the dominance of industrial interests. Leys is far too ready to see the small openings made to Africans during the Federation period as significant.
24. White unity is Ley's central argument; see pp. 88–94 for his arguments about homogenising forces in settler society. For more on white culture and dynamics, also see Dane Kennedy, *Islands of White: Settler Society and Culture in Kenya and Southern Rhodesia, 1890–1939*, (Durham, Duke University Press, 1987). The population figures are from Tow, p. 93.
25. For a fuller discussion of white political dynamics, see my doctoral dissertation, Guy Thompson, 'Cultivating Conflict: Modernism and "Improved" Agriculture in colonial Zimbabwe, 1920-1965' (PhD Dissertation, University of Minnesota, 2000). This insight into the corporatist nature of the Southern Rhodesia state is derived from Leys's work and particularly from D. J. Murray's *The Governmental System in Southern Rhodesia*, (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1970), although he never uses the term.
26. See Murray and Kennedy throughout, Leys pp. 88-94, pp. 144–146, pp. 158–161, Richard Gray, *The Two Nations: Aspects of the Development of Race Relations in the Rhodesias and Nyasaland*, (London, Oxford University Press for the Institute of Race Relations, 1960), p. 22.
27. See Murray throughout, as well as Arrighi's arguments in *Political Economy*. Arrighi, however overstates the importance of class divisions, downplaying the unifying forces within the settler community. Leys also has a good section on the major interests and the differences between them on pp. 104–128, but he sees them as unimportant, especially on pp. 93–97.

28. This model is derived from an extensive rereading of the secondary literature, but the main influence is Larry W. Bowman, *Politics in Rhodesia. White Power in an African State* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1973). His central argument is that while Europeans had a common goal of securing white domination, they disagreed over the best methods to do so. He pays little attention, however, to the class roots of different positions. See particularly pp. 17–19, pp. 31–3, pp. 43–44. For other insights into this division, see Hardwicke Holderness, *Lost Chance: Southern Rhodesia 1945–58*, (Harare, Zimbabwe Publishing House, 1985), especially pp. 106–107 on arguments about the Federation, and Gray, p. 227–228.
29. For insight into greater Rhodesia views and the interests that promoted them, see Leys, pp. 156-158, Gray, pp. 24–25, p. 277, and Ian Hancock, *White Liberals, Moderates and Radicals in Rhodesia, 1953-1980*, (London and Sydney, Croon Helm, and New York, St Martin's, 1984), especially pp. 28–33.
30. Little Rhodesia views are discussed in Leys, pp. 158-159, Gray, pp. 310–312. Details on the little Rhodesian Liberal, Confederate and Democratic Parties are in Leys, p. 164–7, Murray, pp. 105–110, pp. 152–160, pp. 173–179, pp. 185-186, pp. 265-266, and Gray pp. 306-308.
31. Burke, p. 114.
32. Burke, p. 92, p. 105, pp. 108–110, p. 116.
33. See NAZ S3240/6, SRC (55) 49th Meeting of the Cabinet, 24/10/55, pp. 5–6.
34. NAZ SRG - 4 'Report of the Southern Rhodesia Government to the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations for the Year 1949–1950' p. 1.
35. Southern Rhodesia, *Report of the Chief Native Commissioner, 1947*, (Salisbury, Government Printer, 1948), p. 9, Southern Rhodesia, Development Coordinating Commission, *Second Interim Report - Agricultural Production in the Early Future*, (Salisbury, Rhodesian Printing and Publishing Company, 1949), p. 6, p. 2, NAZ S2238/28, SRC (51) 57th Meeting of the Cabinet, 11/12/51, p. 1.
36. NAZ S3238/7, Cabinet Memoranda, 1946-1947. 901/47 Ministry of Agriculture and Lands, Long Term Maize Policy and Drought Relief. Dated 24/2/47.
37. Dunlop, pp. 11–12, Phimister, 'Discourse and the Discipline', pp. 266-269.
38. 'Native Reserves' Part in the Country's Economy', *Harvester*, v. 2, no. 9, 5/10/49, p. 1, 'Real Contribution to Progress', *Harvester*, v. 3, no. 10, 18/10/50, p. 2.
39. *Annual Report of the Chief Native Commissioner, 1947–1954, Annual Report of the Grain Marketing Board, 1951–1954*. These numbers are based on official estimates, which likely underreported African production. Unfortunately there are no figures on African production and sales available between 1939 and 1946.
40. Development Coordinating Commission, *Third Interim Report*, p. 18, Development Coordinating Commission, *Second Interim Report*, p. 8, NAZ S2223/24 SRC (48), 27th Meeting of Cabinet, 26/10/48, NAZ S3240/1, SRC (52), 19th Meeting of the Cabinet, 15/4/52, pp. 7–8. See also the reports of the Chief Native Commissioner for 1945 to 1950. For a discussion of wages and working conditions, see Bhebe, *Burombo*, pp. 9–18, E.G. Howman, *Report*

of the Committee to Investigate the Economic, Social and Health Conditions of Africans Employed in Urban Areas, January 1944.

41. 'Report of the Commissioner of Native Labour for the Year 1947,' in Southern Rhodesia, *Report of the Chief Native Commissioner, 1947*, (Salisbury: Government Printer, 1948), pp. 38–39.
42. Development Coordinating Commission, *Third Interim Report*, p. 18, Development Coordinating Commission, *First Interim Report*, (Salisbury: Rhodesian Printing and Publishing Company for the Government Stationery Office, 1948) p. 28-29, *Report of the CNC, 1947*, pp. 38-39, Southern Rhodesia, *Report of the CNC, 1948*, (Salisbury: Government Printer, 1949), p. 2, NAZ S2223/22, Cabinet Meeting of 8/3/46, NAZ S2223/24 SRC (48) 13th Meeting of the Cabinet, 6/7/48, p. 4, NAZ S2223/25, SRC (49) 44th Meeting of the Cabinet, 30/8/49, p. 2, NAZ S2223/26 SRC (50), 42nd Meeting of the Cabinet, 24/10/50, p. 10, SRC (50) 48th Meeting of the Cabinet, 29/11/50, pp. 8–9.
43. See Bhebe, *Burombo*, pp. 37–72, Terence Ranger, *Are We Not Also Men? The Samkange Family and African Politics in Zimbabwe, 1920 - 1964*, (Portsmouth, Heinemann, 1995), pp. 108–122, and Phimister, *Economic and Social*, pp. 274–82 for detailed discussions of the general strike and worker militancy.
44. See Bhebe, *Burombo*, pp. 85–89, pp. 101-102, Phimister, *Economic and Social*, pp. 262–4.
45. See Bhebe, *Burombo*, pp. 85–89, pp. 101–102.
46. NAZ S2959/1, Report of the Committee Appointed to Investigate the Question of Additional Land for Native Occupation, June 1948, p. 4.
47. John Godfrey Mutambara, 'Africans and Land Policies: British Colonial Policy in Zimbabwe, 1890 – 1965', (PhD Dissertation, University of Cincinnati, 1981), p. 543, pp. 564–, Dunlop, p. 3.
48. Kramer, Phimister, 'Discourse and the Discipline', pp. 271–4.
49. NAZ RG - P/NAT 3, 'Secretary for Native Affairs Memorandum and Plan for the Development and Regeneration of the Colony's Reserves and Native Areas', dated 4/9/43, p. 3, Annexure 4, p. 1, Southern Rhodesia, *Report of the Commission to Enquire into the Preservation* etc. of the Natural Resources of the Colony, (Salisbury, Rhodesian Printing and Publishing Co, 1939), pp. 11–12, p. 19, p. 57, Southern Rhodesia, *Report of the Native Production and Trade Commission*, (Salisbury, 1945), p. 10, p. 29, Roger Howman, 'Industry and Human Erosion', NADA (*Native Affairs Department Annual*), No. 21 (1944), p. 20.
50. *Native Production and Trade Commission*, p. 12, p. 19.
51. See Beinart, 'Soil Erosion', especially p. 53, p. 65, p. 68, William Beinart, 'Introduction: The Politics of Colonial Conservation', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 15 (1989), pp. 143-161, Kate B. Showers, 'Soil Erosion in the Kingdom of Lesotho: Origins and Colonial Response, 1830s - 1950s', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 15 (1989), pp. 263-286, NAZ RG - P/NAT3, Secretary for Native Affairs 'Memorandum and Plan for the Development and Regeneration of the Colony's Reserves and Native Areas', dated 4/9/43,

pp. 1-3, pp. 9-10, C. Winnington-Ingram, 'Note Following a Visit to Some African Farming Areas in Southern Rhodesia', *Journal of African Administration*, v. 7, no. 2 (1955), p. 68.

52. *Commission ... Natural Resources*, p. 38. The phrase 'islands of white' is taken from Kennedy's work; it serves as a metaphor for Europeans' cultural isolation from Africans, as well as the pattern of Rhodesian land segregation which, in an oversimplified image, reserved the central highlands of the country for Europeans as an island surrounded by the sea of African reserves.
53. Paul Carbery, 'The Land Husbandry Act of 1951: The Dialectic of Exploitation and Improvement of African Reserves', (MA Thesis, University of Zimbabwe, 1987), pp. 29-30, Bulman, p. 11; for the bureaucratic attacks on the law see NAZ S2818/12.
54. NAZ S2808/1/34, 'LHA: Minutes of a Meeting in the Office of the Secretary, Native Economic Development, 8/6/53', p. 1, S3001/3, 'Implementation of the NLHA', dated 21/4/54, pp. 2 -3, NAZ S2818/12, Natural Resources Board to Secretary, Mines, Lands and Survey, 1/5/54, Southern Rhodesia, *What the Native Land Husbandry Act Means to the Rural African and to Southern Rhodesia*, (Salisbury, Government Printer, 1955), pp. 18-22, NAZ S3240/5, SRC (55) 18th Meeting, 18/4/55, p. 7, 21st Meeting of the Cabinet, 6/5/55, pp. 1-5, SRC (55), 22nd Meeting of the Cabinet, 13/5/55, pp. 1–2, NAZ S3240/6 Cabinet Conclusions July-December 1955, SRC (55) 53rd Meeting, 17/11/55, p. 2–3, NAZ S2808/2/7 NLHA Review, 'Report by the Secretary for Native Agriculture'. [1958], Schedules 9 and 10.
55. See Frederick Cooper, *Decolonization and African Society. The Labor Question in French and British Africa*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996), and Alexander, pp. 45-46, NAZ S2818/12, NLHA Circulars, MB 8873/LAN 20/2/51 Undersecretary Native Economic Development to Assistant Secretary Native Economic Development, 2/3/53, NAZ S3240/5 Cabinet Conclusions January to June 1955, SRC (55) 14th Meeting, 31/3/55, p. 1, NAZ S 3240/4 Cabinet Conclusions 1954, SRC (54) 48th Meeting, 31/8/54, p. 8, SRC (54) 57th Meeting, 19/10/54, p. 1.
56. For example, see the newspaper *Nhume*, published for African staff of the government, Reports of the CNC and Director of Native Agriculture, 1955-1961, as well as *What the Land Husbandry Act Means*; the two films made by the Central African Film Unit were *The New Acres* and *Changing the Land*. For international academics' approval, see Kingsley G Garbett, 'The Land Husbandry Act of Southern Rhodesia', in Daniel Bieybuck (ed.) *African Agrarian Systems*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1963) and Montague Yudelman, *Africans on the Land* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1964). I am working from James Scott's definition of high modernism in James C. Scott, Seeing Like a State: *How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998).
57. Pendered and von Memerty, p. 109.
58. *What the NLHA Means*, p. iii.

59. *What the NLHA Means*, p. 13.
60. *What the NLHA Means*, p. 13.
61. The figures were extracted from crop sale figures for Chinamora reserve in 1952 and 1953; see Pendered and von Memerty, p. 109. I suspect the increase in sales and production figures reflected closer state supervision, particularly of sales, and the assumptions of officials who made the estimates for production figures.
62. NAZ FG-P/STA, Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, *Sample Survey of African Agriculture, Southern Rhodesia, 1959/60*, (Central Statistical Office, July 1962), Preface.
63. Kramer, pp. 15-16, NAZ S2818/12, Natural Resources Board to Secretary Mines, Lands and Survey, 1/5/54, p. 4, Minutes of the Meeting of the Assessment Committee in ANC Shabani's Office, 1954, p. 4, S483/2/43 'Memo - NLHA', circa May 1950, p. 2, J.D. Jordan, 'Zimutu Reserve: A Land Use Appreciation', *Rhodes-Livingstone Journal*, No. 35 (1965), pp. 59-77. For a full discussion of these problems, see my dissertation.
64. The World Bank, IBRD, and United States International Cooperation Administration gave the project very low ratings and refused to make loans; the administration funded implementation through overdrafts, loans against the next year's budget and stripping the Native Development Fund's price stabilisation funds. In 1960, the World Bank extended a £2 million loan for African agriculture, including the NLHA. NAZ S 3240/10 Cabinet Conclusions July-December 1958, SRC (58) 44th Meeting, 23/9/55, SRC (58) 46th Meeting, 8/10/58, p. 2, NAZ Records Centre, Box 45595 Ministry of Agriculture, MB 1702/LAN 20/12/B NLHA Finance, Accelerated Implementation 1956-1959, pp. 2-5, Financing the NLHA Programme for 1958, dated 4/1/58, p. 2 NEM 2234/MAR 40/3/4 Under Secretary, Native Economics and Marketing to NLHA Committee, /9/57, pp. 3-5, NLHA Standing Committee, Minutes of Fourth Meeting, p. 3-4, NAZ S2808/2/3 Appointment of Assessment Committees, B 621/3359/176/1 Memo, NLHA: Five Year Implementation Plan, 21/1/56, pp. 1-2, 3359/196/1 Under Secretary Native Economic Development to CNC, 30/6/56.
65. Two years earlier, in April 1957 only 16 percent of the area planned for implementation by 1960 had had individual land rights assigned; stock rights had been distributed in only 18 percent of that area, so the rate of implementation was slowing down. National figures hid substantial variation between areas; the 1959 survey found that stock allocation had been completed in 9 percent of the African areas covered by the plan in Manicaland and only 9 percent of Mashonaland West had had land rights distributed. NAZ S2808/2/7, NLHA Review, Annual Report of the Under Secretary, Department of Native Agriculture and Land Husbandry, 1957, p. 8, Native Land Husbandry Act, dated April 1959, p. 6, Table 8a.
66. When the legislation was introduced, it provided a propaganda triumph for the white authorities. They held Select Committee hearings in which a number

of African political organisations took part. Most gave their grudging approval, mainly as they were convinced by their lawyers that as the NLHA would be introduced regardless of their arguments, it would be better to offer amendments and suggestions than to reject the act outright. See Holderness, pp. 84-94.

67. This oversimplifies a little as there were arguments from missionaries and some officials for a more extensive state role in the reserves, but until the economy changed during the Second World War, only a few token programmes were introduced.
68. See Schmidt, and the detailed discussion of these issues in my doctoral dissertation.
69. The idea of 'partial autonomy' of peasants is derived from Allen Isaacman's work. See Allen Isaacman, *Cotton is the Mother of Poverty: Peasants, Work and Rural Struggle in Colonial Mozambique, 1938-1961*, (Portsmouth, Heinemann, 1996), especially the conceptual discussion on pp. 8-10. For a fuller explanation of its manifestations in Zimbabwe see my doctoral dissertation, as well as Terence Ranger's arguments about self-peasantisation in *Peasant Consciousness*.
70. State cattle ownership figures are extremely inaccurate because of widespread evasion of registration to avoid dipping fees and destocking. This included lending animals and registering them in the user's name, building on older cattle lending practices called *kuronzera* in Shona and *mafisa* in siNdebele. While figures varied from area to area, I believe it can be safely assumed that on average about 1/3 of reserve families had their own animals, and roughly half owned or had use rights of at least one animal. See Kramer, pp. 15-16, NAZ S2818/12, Natural Resources Board to Secretary Mines, Lands and Surveys, 1/5/54, p. 4. For a brief description of disguising stock ownership, see Ngwabi Bhebe's descriptions of the ways his mother 'hid' her animals in the introduction to *Benjamin Burombo*.
71. Interview with Ambuya Musonza, Madziwa Communal Area, 18/4/97.
72. NAZ S2808/2/6, 'Record of a Meeting'. Undated, but likely circa June 1960.
73. NAZ S2817/2, DSD 39/10/2, Working Party D, Paper No. 16 Annexure B, August 1961.
74. Southern Rhodesia, *Report of the Mangwende Reserve Commission of Inquiry*, (Salisbury, Government Printer, 1961), p. 12.
75. For a fuller discussion of different farming methods - indigenous, adopted and innovative - see my dissertation. These arguments are partly derived from Paul Richards' work, especially 'Ecological Change and the Politics of African Land Use', *African Studies Review*, 26 (1983), pp. 1-72. *Dambo* land is also commonly known by the Afrikaans term, *vlei*. The Latin name for *tsenza*, also called *shezha*, is *coleus esculentus*; I have not been able to find an English name for it, or to see it as it is now rarely grown, but it is supposed to be similar to a sweet potato. For a full discussion of *dambo* farming see Richard Owen, Katherine Verbeek, John Jackson and Tammo Steenhuis (eds.) *Dambo Farming in Zimbabwe: Water Management, Cropping and Soil Potentials*

for Smallholder Farming in the Wetlands, (Harare, University of Zimbabwe, 1995).

76. See Ranger, *Peasant Consciousness*.
77. NAD officials complained constantly about Africans' refusal to see the superiority of 'improved' methods, and had estimated crop production and yield figures, rather than measuring them. The first rigorous evaluation of farming outputs found African yields were roughly three times the figure that the NAD had unquestioningly used since at least the 1920s. See *Sample Survey of African Agriculture*.
78. Group interview with the women of the Dambaza family, Madziwa Communal Area, 27/10/97. This was a recurrent complaint about using manure.
79. Interview with Shingaidze Madewe, Madziwa Communal Area, 24/5/98, Kramer, p. 3.
80. Interview with *Mhondoro* Gumboromwe, Madziwa Communal Area, 20/5/98. The *mhondoro* is the ancestral spirit, who agreed to be invoked and interviewed.
81. Interview with Jojo Mandaza, Mai Sophia and Mai Rita, Madziwa Communal Area, 16/10/97.
82. Interview with VaMukeri, Madziwa Communal Area, 17/10/97.
83. Conversation with anonymous man in Madziwa Communal Area, 6/11/97.
84. Interviews with VaKapfunde and VaNyamapfene, 23/10/97, women of the Dambaza family, 27/10/97, Madziwa Communal Area.
85. Interviews with Sinet Makamba, 6/5/98, Charles Mutyakambizi, 28/5/98, Madziwa Communal Area.
86. Interview with VaMutmabi, Madziwa Communal Area, 10/11/97.
87. NAZ LAN 20/7/D14/52, NLHA, 'Chinamora Reserve, 1953', NAZ LAN 20/7/D18/53, Administrative Assistant, NLHA to Assistant Secretary, Native Economic Development, 27/3/54.
88. Interview with Shingaidzo Madewe, Madziwa Communal Area, 24/5/98.
89. Interview with Levison Chanakira, Madziwa Communal Area, 30/5/98.
90. NAZ S2808/1/5, Land Development Officer, Buhera, Report for the Assessment Committee, undated, but likely from 1959.
91. NAZ S2808/2/3, Confidential, NC Nkai to PNC Matabeleland, 6/10/55.
92. Carbery, pp. 48-49, pp. 55-56.
93. Interviews with Joseph Musikiwa, 9/10/97, Levison Chanakira, 30/5/98, Madziwa Communal Area.
94. NAZ S2825/4, clippings of 'Mhondoro Reserve', *African Daily News*, 27/10/59, and 'Near Riot in Mhondoro', *African Daily News*, 21/10/59.
95. Nathan M. Shamuyarira, *Crisis in Rhodesia*, (London: Andre Deutsch, 1965), p. 97.
96. Interviews with Cephas Mushonga, Mutare, 23/5/97, VaCotto, Madizwa Communal Area, 2/11/97, Shamuyarira, p. 95.

97. Ngwabe Bhebe, 'The National Struggle, 1957-1962' in Canaan S. Banana (ed.), *Turmoil and Tenacity: Zimbabwe 1890-1980*, (Harare, The College Press, 1989), p. 97. For a nationalist interpretation of resistance to the NLHA, see Machingaidze.
98. Interviews with Charles Mutyakambizi, 28/5/98, Agrippa Zuda, 8/5/98, Starben Barwa, 5/5/98, Madziwa Communal Area.
99. NAZ S3240/12 Preventative Detention (Temporary Provisions) Act, 1959, Statement of Case, Morris Nyagumbo, p. 1, Preventative Detention (Temporary Provisions) Act, 1959, Statement of Case, John Chikoya, p. 2, Preventative Detention (Temporary Provisions) Act, 1959, Statement of Case, Faiba Dombo, p. 1.
100. NAZ S3240/12 Preventative Detention (Temporary Provisions) Act, 1959, Statement of Case, Gibson Nyandoro, p. 2.
101. NAZ S3240/12 Preventative Detention (Temporary Provisions) Act, 1959, Statement of Case, George Solomon Majoki Chipfatsura, p. 2.
102. Interviews with VaMutmabi, 10 November 1997, Titus Musokwa, 25 May 1998, Nelson Kabvundu, 5 May 1998, VaMrewa and VaMushoniwa, 18 October 1997, Staben Barwa, 5 May 1998, Joseph Musikiwa, 9 October 1997, Madziwa Communal Area.
103. I am using ungovernability as it was promoted by the South African liberation movements in the late 1980s, particularly the African National Congress, South African Communist Party and United Democratic Front, who advocated defying the apartheid government's authority to the point where it lost control. Their efforts concentrated on the townships, rather than the rural areas.
104. NAZ S3240/18, SRC (60), 57th Meeting, 10/10/60, pp. 1-5.
105. NAZ Records Centre Box 84526, DSD 38/1, 'Special NAAB Meeting, 20-22 March 1961', pp. 1-3.
106. NAZ Records Centre Box 98229, 1195/DSD.39/10/2 Working Party D Paper 8, Robinson Commission Report, p.1.
107. NAZ S 2827/2/2/8, volume 2, 'Annual Report of the Native Commissioner, Matobo District, 1961', S2827/2/2/8 volume 3, 'Annual Report of the Native Commissioner, Sipolilo, 1961', p. 19. Bhebe, 'National Struggle', pp. 106-107.
108. Bhebe, 'National Struggle', p. 107.
109. Bowman, pp. 35-44, Hancock, pp. 92-100.
110. NAZ Records Centre Box 84526, DSD 38/1, 'Special NAAB Meeting, 20 to 22 March 1961, Annexure B', p. 3.
111. NAZ S2827/2/2/8, volume 2, 'Annual Report of the Native Commissioner, Matobo District, 1961', S 2827/2/2/8 volume 3, 'Annual Report of the Native Commissioner, Umvuma', p. 11, 'Annual Report of the Native Commissioner, Umtali', p. 28.
112. From the *Mangwende Commission of Inquiry*, cited in Machingaidze, p. 585.
113. NAZ Records Centre, Box 98229, 1131/DSD.39/10/2 Working Party D, First Meeting, 6/7/61, p. 1.

114. *Mangwende Commission of Inquiry*, Southern Rhodesia, *Report of the Commission Appointed to Inquire into and Report on Administrative and Judicial Functions in the Native Affairs and District Courts Departments*, (Salisbury, Government Printer, 1961).
115. NAZ Records Centre, Box 98229, 1131/DSD.39/10/2 Working Party D First Meeting, 6/7/61, NAZ Records Centre Box 84526, 'Prerequisites to African Development' by James Green, NAZ S 2973/8 Community Development Adviser to Chairman, Natural Resources Board, 31/7/62. James Green, the US-provided advisor's, records are in Box 84526. For a fuller discussion of this struggle within the NAD, see Guy Thompson, 'Peasants, Production and the NLHA, 1945 - 1965' in Alois Mlambo and Evelyn Pangetti (eds.), *The Zimbabwe Economy*, (Harare: University of Zimbabwe Press, 2003).
116. NAZ S 3240/21, SRC (61) 55th Meeting of the Cabinet, 3/10/61, pp. 6-11, NAZ S3240/22, SRC (62) 7th Meeting of the Cabinet, 6/2/62, pp. 6-8, Southern Rhodesia, *Financial Statements, 1961-1962*, p. 7, Southern Rhodesia, *Financial Statements, 1962-1963*, p. 7, Southern Rhodesia, *Financial Statements, 1963-1964*, p. 7, pp. 10-11, pp. 52-53. For details on the extent of implementation, see Phimister, 'Rethinking the Reserves', pp. 236-238.
117. Interview with J.D. Jordan, Harare, 21/2/97.
118. Bowman, pp. 41-44, p. 104, Hancock, pp. 97-100. Community Development was also the official policy for Europeans, but operated under a separate administration, in line with the RF's racial definition of communities.
119. Interview with VaChiimbira, Madziwa Communal Area, 17/10/97, Pius S. Nyambara, 'Land Disputes in the "Communal" Areas of Zimbabwe: The Case of Gokwe District in the 1980s and 1990s'. Seminar Paper, Department of Economic History, University of Zimbabwe, October 1997, personal communication from Jens Andersen.
120. See Michael Drinkwater, *The State and Agrarian Change in Zimbabwe's Communal Areas*, (New York, St Martin's Press, 1991), and Martin Whiteside, *Encouraging Sustainable Smallholder Agriculture in Zimbabwe*, (Lypiatt,Glos, UK, Environment and Development Consultancy Ltd/ Agricultural Services Reform in Southern Africa, 1998).
121. Whiteside, pp. 49-51, Movement for Democratic Change, *Restart: Our Path to Social Justice. The MDC's Economic Programme for Reconstruction, Stabilisation, Recovery and Transformation*, (Harare: MDC), p. 43, available at http://www.zwnews.com/RESTARTpdfa.pdf. See also MDC, '5.1.2 In Communal Areas, Recommendations', *Agriculture, Land and Water Policy Statement* (June 2000) available on the MDC website at http:// www.mdczimbabwe.org/policy/policy.htm.