

CHAPTER TWO

PEASANT PRODUCTION AND DIFFERENTIATION: THE SANYATI HINTERLAND (1939 – 1964)

INTRODUCTION

A cursory look at Sanyati communal lands in this period does not portray a distinctive pattern of rural differentiation nor does it give a hint that towards the end of the 1960s the state would institute irrigation agriculture in the area which, subsequently was to influence differentiation in its own significant way. There has been little attempt by historians to engage in active discourse on development and differentiation in very remote parts of Zimbabwe such as Sanyati nor did the state show any interest in this area during the Second World War (1939 – 1945). Moves to open it up to people who were driven away from crown land only started at the end of the war. The 1940s, therefore, mark an important benchmark in the study of Sanyati because that is when the settlement of “immigrants” from Rhodesdale¹⁴² began, starting off as a mere trickle but soon becoming a flood in the 1950s especially after the promulgation of the Native Land Husbandry Act (NLHA) in 1951. Immigration, to a large extent, reinforced the sort of differentiation that had already started to take root in this frontier region of the country since the pre-colonial period.

Earlier forms of differentiation can be traced back to many years before the encroachment of white settlers in the area. The indigenous population the white colonisers found in Sanyati in 1890 had a strong political economy which revolved around tobacco, the growing of various cereal crops and animal husbandry. The latter activity, however, was impeded by tsetse infestation which is discussed later in this chapter. A brief description of these people’s economy shows that prior to the NLHA and the forced resettlement of “immigrants,” the original inhabitants who were stigmatised as “Shangwe” practised shifting cultivation on the rich alluvial soils along the major rivers such as Munyati and Sakurgwe when the floods had receded. They also grew crops during the rainy season (summer) away from the river valleys (the banks of the river). It appears, therefore, that more than one crop was raised in the year. The range of crops grown included short season varieties of maize and a long season variety the locals called “Salisbury white, 8 lines, Kalahari or Bhogwe,” bulrush millet, finger millet (mhunga), sorghum (mapfunde), water melons (manwiwa), pumpkins (manhanga), sweet potatoes (mbambaira), groundnuts (nzungu), small leaf tobacco (fodya) and cotton (donje). Hunting, gathering and fishing also constituted an essential part of the Shangwe economy (i.e. supplemented the economy). Evidence from early travellers in northwestern

¹⁴² For the geographical location of Rhodesdale see Map 4. Rhodesdale was bounded by a line roughly connecting Gwelo, Que Que, Hartley, Enkeldoorn, Umvuma, Lalapansi and Gutu. See Ngwabi Bhebe, *B. Burombo: African Politics in Zimbabwe, 1947-1958*, (Harare: The College Press, 1989), 74. N.B. Most of the people who were moved to Sanyati and Sebungwe (now Gokwe district) during the 1950s came from Rhodesdale, a vast ranch owned by the British multinational company, LONRHO. Before their eviction, they lived in Rhodesdale’s so-called Squatter Communities. Rhodesdale was also home to a number of former migrant workers from Nyasaland (Malawi), Northern Rhodesia (Zambia) and Portuguese East Africa (Mozambique) who had resided there for years as labour and rent-paying tenants.

Zimbabwe, and from interviews with informants revealed that hunting in particular was at one stage a central feature of the economy. Shangwe hunters spent days trekking game in the vast forest areas of the Munyati area.¹⁴³ The vast forests provided an invaluable source of a variety of fruits, leaves, roots (bulbs) and grasses which provided a major source of food especially in the period between the exhaustion of grain supplies and the next harvest. The NLHA and the allocation of land to vast numbers of “immigrants” not only restricted and deprived the Shangwe of a large part of their hunting grounds, but also limited their access to other natural products of the forest. Their gathering and hunting rights were, thus, curtailed. Relocations to the demarcated plots (under the NLHA) meant that the Shangwe had to give up land in the river valleys which they had cultivated for generations.¹⁴⁴ The NLHA plots were “neatly” arranged in arable blocks of 8 acres laid out in a linear fashion (maraini) following the centralisation policy. Between the 1930s and 1950s, agriculture was mainly rainfed.

Although agriculture has been the mainstay of the Zimbabwean economy since time immemorial, Sanyati did not, however, have any irrigation history before the 1960s. For example, Sanyati never had irrigation in the formal (conventional) sense save for the small water projects or gardens littered along valleys of the Munyati River, around major boreholes which were sunk concurrently with the process of settling evicted African farmers from Rhodesdale, and the cultivating of crops near local wells and in the marshlands/wetlands or dambos. Thus, irrigation development in Sanyati occurred in an area that had no significant irrigation history. Whatever irrigation existed prior to ARDA schemes were relics of the old system of applying water to crops that pre-dated the colonial period.

In this chapter, earlier rural class formations are examined to discern what caused them and whether these were sustained or obliterated during the irrigation phase. The two captions at the beginning of this study underscore how the peasants’ contribution to agricultural development has been denigrated by historians who wrote during colonialism and how differentiation emerged despite concerted efforts by the colonial state to proscribe it. Perhaps, differentiation which was directed and dictated by the state, such as when it encouraged the emergence of a group of *kulak* farmers¹⁴⁵ in the countryside, distinctly labelled “master farmers,” was the only one that was tolerated. The prime purpose of this “toleration” should be viewed as part of the larger colonial policy framework in which the government deliberately created the master farmer category, not precisely for the benefits it envisaged would accrue to this group, but as a guarantee of its own political survival. It guaranteed the government’s survival because the passage of the

¹⁴³ Nyambara, “A History of Land Acquisition in Gokwe,” 91.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁵ Small-scale capitalist peasants in the Soviet Union were known as *kulaks*, a name that spread to other socialist countries as well. In the 1980s Zimbabwe subscribed to the Marxist-Leninist philosophy of scientific socialism. Thus, this Russian term is being used here to refer to Zimbabwean farmers with a capitalist orientation (i.e. master farmers) who were often equated to the *kulak* class. N.B. Wherever small-scale production is widespread the process of accumulation will steadily bring capitalist property into being and the most successful or fortunate peasants farming on a small or medium scale will become *kulaks*. For detail on what the word *kulak* means see János Kornai, *The Socialist System: The Political Economy of Communism*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 77-78 and 82.

Land Apportionment Act in 1930 divided land on racial grounds. Under the Act black farmers were allocated poor land resources in the so-called “native reserves” and this did not please them. The creation of a middle class category of farmers i.e. master farmers who were subsequently considered for irrigation plots and small-scale commercial farming was meant to placate the African population and make them think that the government was committed to improving the lot of the African farmer. This double-faceted nature of the colonial state will be explored in detail in the next chapter.

This chapter will attempt to illustrate the state of peasant ¹⁴⁶ agriculture and the extent to which society was differentiated in the period prior to the inception of irrigation. It will also demonstrate how the colonial state, equipped with its numerous interventionist measures, tried to “flatten” or eliminate differentiation in the countryside and how, in the process, it has been responsible for the impairment of peasant agricultural initiative and black economic advancement. This will be done by demonstrating how the peasant economy created by the colonial government has, to a certain degree, fostered African underdevelopment and at the same time underestimated the existence of differentiation in the area. The social structure that emerged in Sanyati between the 1930s and the 1960s will be used to prove the fallacy of the argument by Gelfand that Shona society was a homogeneous and egalitarian entity in the twentieth century – a society devoid of any signs of differentiation among its peasantry. ¹⁴⁷ Far from it, the emergence of classes can be traced back to the pre-colonial period. Several studies have revealed that by the turn of the twentieth century no African polity conformed to Gelfand’s perception of rural society, notably that it was universally traditional and egalitarian. ¹⁴⁸ This was so due to the political voice and the extent of agricultural commercial influence exhibited by the

¹⁴⁶ Peasant is not an easy term to define. In my study the term denotes a small-scale or smallholder communal farmer who since the latter part of the nineteenth up to the early twentieth century and indeed in subsequent decades up to the beginning of the new millennium has not been producing merely for subsistence needs only but for commercial purposes as well. This seems to tally with Hansen’s definition of this word when he says, peasants are not just small-scale farmers or entrepreneurs, nor are they simple commodity or capitalist producers, but they are producers with one foot in subsistence and the other in the market. See Esbern Friis-Hansen, *Seeds for African Peasants: Peasants’ Needs and Agricultural Research - The Case of Zimbabwe*, Publication (9), Centre for Development Research in co-operation with the Nordic Africa Institute, formerly the Scandinavian Institute of African Studies, (Copenhagen, Sweden: Uppsala, 1995), 16.

¹⁴⁷ M. Gelfand, “Who is Rich and Poor in Traditional Shona Society” and “The Egalitarian Shona,” *NADA*, 10(4), 1972, 49-54.

¹⁴⁸ Among the numerous studies that can be used to demonstrate agricultural commercialisation and socio-economic differentiation in peasant societies are: A. A. Roux, “A Survey of Proposals for the Development of African Agriculture in Rhodesia,” *Proceedings of the Geographical Association of Rhodesia*, 3, (1970); D. N. Beach, “The Shona Economy: Branches of Production” in R. Palmer and N. Parsons, *The Roots of Rural Poverty in Central and Southern Africa*, (London: Heinemann, 1977); B. Kosmin, “The Inyoka Tobacco Industry of the Shangwe People; the Displacement of a Pre-Colonial Economy in Southern Rhodesia, 1898-1938” in Palmer and Parsons, *The Roots of Rural Poverty*; Beach, *The Shona and Zimbabwe, 900-1850: An Outline of Shona History*, (Gweru: Mambo Press, 1984); Beach, “Second Thoughts on the Shona Economy: Suggestions for Further Research,” *Rhodesian History*, 7, (1971), 1-11; C. Bundy, *The Rise and Fall of the South African Peasantry*, (Cape Town: David Philip, 1988); E. Worby, “Remaking Labour, Reshaping Identity: Cotton, Commoditisation and the Culture of Modernity in North Western Zimbabwe,” PhD dissertation, McGill University, 1992 and P. S. Nyambara, “A History of Land Acquisition in Gokwe, North Western Zimbabwe, 1945-1997,” PhD dissertation, Evanston, Illinois: North Western University, June 1999.

peasant farmers. The level of commercialisation determined the extent of rural differentiation. Hence, it will be demonstrated in this chapter that differentiation as a process pre-dates the era of irrigation enterprise in Sanyati. It is as much a pre-colonial and post-colonial as it is also a pre-irrigation and irrigation phenomenon.

The immediate post-Second World War period ushered arguably the three largest waves of “immigrants” into Sanyati who were compulsorily removed from European and Crown land by the Responsible Government.¹⁴⁹ The first group was forcibly moved to Sanyati in 1950; the second was moved in 1951; the third and last wave arrived in Sanyati in 1953, the year the Federation of Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), Northern Rhodesia (Zambia) and Nyasaland (Malawi) was formed. These “immigrants” lived as squatters¹⁵⁰ on European land before their ruthless eviction and subsequent settlement in Sanyati. This chapter analyses the nature of peasant society and economy in the two and a half decades prior both to the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) of 1965 by Ian Douglas Smith and the inception of irrigation at Gowe (Sanyati) in 1967. One of its central arguments is that, by the turn of the century, it would be ill-conceived to speak of African society as being traditionalist and egalitarian. As a matter of fact, the increased commercialisation of the rural economy, especially with the introduction of plow agriculture¹⁵¹ and cotton on the one hand, coupled with labour migrancy on the other, led to clear forms of socio-economic differentiation manifesting themselves much earlier in Sanyati, thereby refuting the assumption that such an economy was markedly subsistence-oriented. It can be conceded that the forced removals from Rhodesdale might

¹⁴⁹ The Responsible Government was in power from the end of British South Africa Company (BSAC) rule in 1923 to the beginning of UDI in 1965. In this period, Rhodesia was a self-governing colony of Britain which was more representative of the white population. Since the hoped-for mining potential [the Second Rand] of the region had failed to materialise, agriculture became the country’s dominant enterprise and principal export earner. White settler farmers controlled much of this key sector and enjoyed a correspondingly dominant political importance. See William A. Masters, *Government and Agriculture in Zimbabwe*, (London: Praeger Publishers, 1994), 3.

¹⁵⁰ It is difficult to come up with a universally accepted definition of the word “squatter.” Sometimes the terms “tenant”, “sharecropper” and “outgrower” have been used interchangeably to mean squatter. According to Giovanni Arrighi, the squatter system created a congenial atmosphere for white land owners because in return for use of land, African producers paid rent in labour or in kind or both. He views squatting in Southern Rhodesia as an institution that created semi-feudal relations and as one that promoted “The take off of European agriculture.” J. K. Rennie concurs with Arrighi when he says that the labour tenantry arrangement “was a relation of serfdom which emerged wherever white farmers with limited capital took land from agricultural peoples.” For Tabitha Kanogo, the term “squatter,” which originated in South Africa, “denoted an African permitted to reside on a European farmer’s land, usually on condition he worked (labour tenantry arrangement) for the European owner for a specified period. In return for his services, the African was entitled to use some of the settler’s land for the purpose of cultivation and grazing.” This perception of “squatter” is analogous to how the people who were moved to Sanyati were portrayed before their eviction from Rhodesdale. For detailed studies on squatters in Zimbabwe, Kenya and South Africa, see G. Arrighi, “Labour Supplies in Historical Perspective: A Study of the Proletarianisation of the African Peasantry in Rhodesia,” *Journal of Development Studies*, 6(3), (1970), 209; John K. Rennie, “White Farmers, Black Tenants and Landlord Legislation: Southern Rhodesia 1890-1930s,” *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 5(1), (1978), 86; T. Kanogo, *Squatters and the Roots of Mau Mau*, (London: James Curry, 1987), 10 and C. Van Onselen, *The Seed is Mine: The Life of Kas Maine, a South African Sharecropper 1894-1985*, (Oxford: James Currey, 1996), 1-649.

¹⁵¹ For more detail on the revered advantages as well as some disadvantages of plow agriculture see E. D. Alvord, “The Gospel of the Plow,” Unpublished, 1950.

have arbitrarily disrupted and redefined previous community-based relationships including fluid and dynamic ones, but at the same time these relocations did not dampen the people's zeal to economically produce or reproduce themselves as a class.

The chapter also addresses the advent of cotton and the consequent differentiation that emerged. It examines the levels of accumulation experienced by certain categories of cotton cultivators in the 1960s to establish whether they transcended those witnessed in the previous two decades. The returns from the cultivation of this crop, often achieved at the instigation or insistence of the State, enabled some peasants to amass some wealth in their communities. The differential impact exerted by cotton agriculture on this frontier economy was prodigious by many standards. Clearly, some peasants benefited disproportionately from colonial agricultural schemes, while the majority were disadvantaged as demonstrated in this chapter.

STATE OF PEASANT AGRICULTURE: THE PRE-IRRIGATION ERA (1939 – 1951)

Peasant society and economy up to the promulgation of the NLHA in 1951: -

In the 1930s, when the government first began to take an active role in the promotion of irrigation schemes in the communal areas,¹⁵² there was no inkling that this same innovation would be introduced in Sanyati more than 30 years later. Irrigation did not seem to be a top priority in the government's scheme to develop the peasant sector in the frontier region of Sanyati. Since the passage of the LAA the white settlers created separate areas for their own use and they did not want to compete with Africans on an equal footing. This policy was consolidated and intensified by the adoption of the NLHA twenty years later. In fact, racist ideology was prioritised in order to produce a skewed developmental economy dominated by whites. State intervention in agriculture was the order of the day and the material upliftment of the Africans was arguably not upper most in the minds of the white settlers of the country. Hence, colonial Zimbabwe's racialised development regime has largely been responsible for shaping the face of peasant agriculture in the Sanyati communal lands.¹⁵³

The determination by the government to subordinate African economic interests to those of the white settlers that it represented was explicit in the racial policies it enunciated since and even prior to the implementation of the Land Apportionment Act of 1930. It frequently stood in the way of African economic initiatives as it tried to ensure that the Africans did not compete on an equal footing with the whites. Life in the African areas was communal in character. It was the racial discriminatory policies in vogue since the passage of the LAA and the NLHA by the colonial government which led to the

¹⁵² A. J. B. Hughes, *Development in Rhodesian Tribal Areas: An Overview*, (Rhodesia: Tribal Areas of Rhodesia Research Foundation, 1974), 184.

¹⁵³ In Zimbabwe five major categories of land can be identified, namely communal land; large-scale commercial land; resettlement land; small-scale commercial land and urban land. "Communal land" refers to any land that is communal land in terms of the *Communal Land Act* (Chapter 20:04) and any other land that was within the area of a district council on the 19th August 1988. See *Rural District Councils Act* (Chapter 29:13), Revised Edition, Harare: Government Printer, 1996, 442-443.

perception of Africans residing in rural areas as having few economic wants¹⁵⁴ and reflecting them as uneconomic men; a premise this chapter is challenging on the basis of Sanyati's practical experiences. Thus, in this period, the state made concerted effort to use racist propaganda to eliminate competition between black and white, which also implied the elimination of a black entrepreneurial class. Its motives regarding African development were far from being altruistic as demonstrated in a statement by Ian Douglas Smith. Smith, the former Prime Minister of Rhodesia, illustrated this when he said in reference to demonstration policy:¹⁵⁵ "Extension work was mainly conducted to improve farming systems i.e. extension officers went out into the field to translate the work of government specialists who were divided into research workers and scientific implementers of the programmes on to the ground." "The prime consideration behind the inauguration of such development policies," he added, "was to prevent the deterioration of the soil and allow an increased number of Africans to subsist in the reserves without the support of government famine relief in times of drought or crop failure."¹⁵⁶

Because of settler racist policy coupled with the fact that Sanyati was a land-scarce area when compared to a land-abundant region like Gokwe labour migrancy to the white farms and mines of the Midlands and Mashonaland West Provinces of Zimbabwe was quite endemic by the 1950s. However, the whites did not anticipate the vital role labour migrancy played in the injection of wage remittances back into the peasant agricultural sector. These were crucial as they were utilised to boost agricultural production back home, although it should not be assumed that all migrants repatriated wages. According to Jacob Rukara "Some people used migrant wages to increase production [in their home areas]. Others did not and production in their districts stagnated" because such areas lacked this supplementary resource of production.¹⁵⁷ He pointed out that Sanyati households with some relatives working in towns, mines or farms generally possessed the resources or farm implements ("zvibatiso") which ameliorated the burden of carrying out agricultural tasks without the appropriate means with which to do so.¹⁵⁸

In a semi-autonomous settler colony such as Southern Rhodesia, it can be pointed out that the emerging post-war development regime was constituted to meet a set of very explicit requirements. On the one hand, the state was bent on maintaining white settler hegemony and ensuring that a constant supply of labour was guaranteed for white enterprise. On the other, it was considering the idea of achieving sustainable development in the African areas. Achieving the former alongside the latter sometimes produced numerous contradictions to a point that at times there was lack of coherence and consistency in the settler government's policies and strategies regarding rural development. In the circumstances, Africans adopted their own methods to achieve prosperity with the result

¹⁵⁴ *Report of Native Production and Trade Commission or Godlonton Commission*, (Salisbury: Government of Southern Rhodesia, 1944), 21.

¹⁵⁵ Demonstration policy entailed the use of demonstrators who gave African farmers agricultural extension advice i.e. on "proper" methods of farming which included conservationist education.

¹⁵⁶ Ian Douglas Smith (Former Prime Minister of Rhodesia), Personal Interview, Belgravia, Harare, 28th September 1993.

¹⁵⁷ Jacob Rukara, (Messenger in the DA Kadoma's Office), Personal Interview, DA's Office – Kadoma, 16th October 2004.

¹⁵⁸ Rukara, Personal Interview.

that those with greater initiative became more successful. This chapter will demonstrate how some farmers progressed more than others.

From a Government point of view, rural agriculture was to be improved through the engagement of the Native Department which was directly responsible for the appointment of agricultural demonstrators and extension officers. In fact, the Agriculture Department (an arm of the Native Department) in the then Ministry of Internal Affairs through institutional development agents such as demonstrators, extension officers and Land Development Officers (LDOs) was designed, among other things, to provide material services and advice to the African peasantry throughout the country. This department also maintained official control over certain aspects of agricultural production, for example, registration of cotton growers' numbers which was also utilised to facilitate marketing procedures and the disbursement of cash to farmers who had delivered their crop to the Cotton Marketing Board (CMB – now the Cotton Company of Zimbabwe, COTTCO) in Gatooma.¹⁵⁹ The two departments (Native Department and the Agriculture Department) actually became the best collaborators of governmental action.

Among the first demonstrators to be appointed and stationed in Sanyati were Lazarus Sithole and Macloud Mushawarima.¹⁶⁰ Sithole was transferred, with effect from the 1st of May 1947, from Ndanga District (Zaka) to Hartley District¹⁶¹ for location on Sanyati Reserve where a demonstrator was urgently needed in connection with the settlement of that Reserve by “immigrants” from the Rhodesdale Estates.¹⁶² Demonstrators were employed in marking out new lands for these people. For example, one of their major tasks entailed the preparation and marking out of lands for planting.¹⁶³ This was in line with the Agricultural Demonstration Policy adopted by E. D. Alvord, the Director of Native Agriculture in 1945. Policy circular No. 10 of 1945, under the heading Duties and Aims of Demonstrators, stipulated that “Agricultural Demonstrators are appointed to assist and advise Natives to make the most of arable and grazing lands. They receive

¹⁵⁹ P. S. Nyambara, “Colonial Strategies and Peasant Response and Initiatives: The Development of Peasant Cotton Agriculture in Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), c. 1904-1953,” MA thesis, Evanston: History Department, North Western University, June 1994.

¹⁶⁰ NAZ, S160/DG/105/2/50, Gatooma district: sub-division: Sanyati reserve: 1950–1951: LDO's Monthly Report, January 1951, LDO, Sanyati Reserve, Gatooma to The Provincial Agriculturist (PA), Causeway, Salisbury copied to the Director of Native Agriculture, Salisbury and the Assistant Native Commissioner (ANC), Gatooma, 5th February 1951, 25.

¹⁶¹ Hartley is now Chegutu. Gatooma (Kadoma), where the Sanyati reserve is situated, was an Assistant Native Commissioner's station under Hartley from 01/09/1915 until 18/01/1957 when it became a full Native Commissioner station. Prior to 1915 there was a clerk in charge of Gatooma Pass Office, which was in Hartley District. See NAZ (RC), Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 158081, Location C.19.5.6R, File: HIS 3, November 1968-November 1970, D. K. Parkinson for DC Gatooma to the National Archives of Rhodesia, Salisbury, 12th November 1968.

¹⁶² NAZ, S160/DG/105/2/50, Gatooma District: Sub-division: Sanyati Reserve: 1950–1951: LDO's Monthly Report for February 1951 (LDO Sanyati Reserve, Gatooma to The Director of Native Agriculture, Salisbury copied to the PA, Northern Mashonaland, Salisbury, and the ANC Gatooma, 04/03/51), 29.

¹⁶³ NAZ, S160/DG/105/2/50, Gatooma district: sub-division: Sanyati Reserve: 1950–1951: LDO's Monthly Report, October 1950 (LDO Sanyati Reserve, Gatooma to the ANC, Gatooma copied to The PA, Salisbury, 4th November 1950), 3-4. See also NAZ, S160/DG/105/2/50, Gatooma district: sub-division: Sanyati Reserve: 1950–1951: LDO's Monthly Report, December 1950 (LDO Sanyati Reserve, Gatooma to the PA, Northern Mashonaland, Salisbury, copied to the ANC Gatooma, 6th January 1951).

instruction and supervision from the District Land Development Officer regarding methods to be adopted.” It added:

Their duty is to instruct and advise in methods of tillage; conservation of soil and water; crop rotation; compost making and use; the planting, growing, harvesting, storage and use of various crops; pasture improvement, and other subjects connected with the use of land and to carry out the Government Agricultural policy for Natives.¹⁶⁴

The demonstrators, in turn, worked hand in hand with the traditional leadership mainly chiefs such as Neuso and Wozhele to implement settler agricultural policies, projects and other measures deemed necessary by the government. For instance, when cotton was introduced, these demonstrators and such administratively appointed chiefs, together with compliant religious leaders, were tasked with the responsibility of persuading and convincing ordinary people to accept the rationale for cotton cultivation in suitable districts like Sanyati. This had the effect of alienating the Chiefs and headmen from their people. Hence, according to C. M. Arensberg, “A self-declared felt need... is better than imposed betterment; enlisting local leadership...” and that “peasants prove very ready to innovate when they really experience an improvement they can value themselves.”¹⁶⁵ Thus, the engagement of traditional leaders in this way was often resisted and it tended to create social inequalities in the manner in which power and income were distributed between the two categories (chiefs and commoners). By giving the chiefs this vantage position, the state was not in any way stifling but promoting the emergence of differentiation in Sanyati. In fact, among its major activities and pursuits in Sanyati between the 1940s and 1960s, the state made a conscious effort to reconcile agrarian conservationist goals with the imperative to increase the prosperity of both Europeans and Africans. It also wanted to see, *inter alia*, the regularisation of anomalous tenurial arrangements and the rationalisation of agrarian techniques.¹⁶⁶ This meant that agriculture’s success was not only based on the growing and marketing of produce. It had to take into account soil preservation measures, the granting of communal tenure to peasant farmers and the standardisation of agricultural methods to be applied to all rural areas in colonial Zimbabwe. Above all European and African areas were to be developed along different lines as enunciated by the LAA.

The objective here is to explore and identify how the various kinds of administrative procedures and practices authorised by the government coupled with peasant participation or resistance shaped the course of Sanyati agriculture and rural differentiation in this period. The questions that can be posed at this juncture are: Why were these objects of reform – tenure conservation and technique – conceived as necessary dimensions of a unitary colonial project devoted to “Native advancement”? Was modernisation, irrigation development and differentiation realisable on the strength

¹⁶⁴ NAZ, S2585/1064: Demonstrators General: 1940-1949, Agricultural Demonstration: Policy and Methods, Circular No. 10 of 1945, Office of the Director of Native Agriculture, Salisbury, 2nd November 1945, 1.

¹⁶⁵ C. M. Arensberg, *Upgrading Peasant Agriculture: Is Tradition the Snag?* 67.

¹⁶⁶ Worby “Discipline Without Oppression,” 103.

of these? Answering these questions requires an in-depth knowledge of the agricultural scenario as it unfolded in Sanyati in this period. According to Worby, “assigned a definitive tenure status under the LAA only in the 1950s and 1960s, development intervention arrived late in this region, and it arrived as a more fully articulated package than in the African reserves in the south and east of the colony.”¹⁶⁷ Despite this late encroachment of development intervention onto Sanyati, it can be pointed out that rural differentiation had manifested itself much earlier than the 1950s as a consequence of peasant agency and initiative.

Four additional features make Sanyati nearly unique in the colonial development picture. Most distinct is its perceived marginality in terms of distance from historical centres of missionisation, economic growth, population concentration and political power. Catholic and Baptist missions, for example, were only established in the Gokwe-Sanyati region between 1954 and 1963, and the construction of government schools only began in the late 1970s before increasing rapidly after Zimbabwe’s independence in 1980. Second, in the 1950s, the state never considered the idea of developing irrigation. Before the advent of irrigation, settler reaction to drought mainly included the distribution of food relief but, more importantly, it entailed encouraging peasant farmers to grow drought resilient crops such as cotton, mhunga and sorghum. This was confirmed by W. D. R. Baker, the Provincial Commissioner, Mashonaland South, when he stated: “A marked swing to drought resistant crops is expected [in the fight for the alleviation of hunger in the rural areas]”¹⁶⁸ – [own emphasis]. A more pressing task was to resettle the former Rhodesdalites. Third, the region is distinguished by the historical absence of competing claims by European settlers to land. A malarial, tsetse infested lowland with patchy and variable rains, it was considered to be unsuitable for crop cultivation or animal husbandry by whites. Given a choice, Chief Wozhele and his people would not have opted to settle in this place either. Finally, the occasion for the arrival of development in the region was the forced resettlement of entire villages or chiefdoms from the European farms and African “reserves” in the south and west of the colony.

The sequence and timing with which Sanyati received these “immigrants” had important consequences for differentiation. The coming of “immigrants” from the Rhodesdale Estates into Sanyati, with their vast agricultural knowledge and technique, boosted and intensified the rural differentiation process. They were generally viewed as possessing greater agricultural intelligence than their Shangwe counterparts. As already indicated, Sanyati began to receive these “immigrants” in 1950, when the coercive and rather insensitive model of development was reaching its apogee behind the passage of the NLHA of 1951. At this time, the local agricultural development staff were tasked with the responsibility of enforcing conservation and extension measures. This was a by-product of concern expressed in official circles about the state and extent of land degradation in the rural areas in general. According to Phimister, in 1954, the Natural

¹⁶⁷ Worby “Discipline Without Oppression,” 103.

¹⁶⁸ NAZ (RC), Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 158086, Location C19.6.7F, DC’s File: District Information 1961-1971, Includes Programme of Events 1890 to 1961: “Report” submitted to the DC Gatooma, R. L. Westcott, in terms of Circular No. 222 by W. D. R. Baker, Provincial Commissioner (PC), Mashonaland South on the PC’s visit to Gatooma, 30th July 1966.

Resources Board (NRB) expressed alarm, if not despondency, at the extent and rate of soil erosion in the “reserves”:

The time for plain speaking has now arrived, and it is no exaggeration to say that at the moment we are heading for disaster. We have on the one hand a rapid increase taking place in the African population and on the other a rapid deterioration of the very land on which these people depend for their existence and upon which so much of the future prosperity of the country depends ... the happenings in the Native reserves must be viewed in the light of an emergency and not as a matter that can be rectified when times improve, for by then the opportunity to reclaim will have passed.¹⁶⁹

What was ignored, though, was that the pieces of land allocated to Sanyati residents were too small to cater for the increase in both the human and animal population. Erosion was, therefore, largely a reflection of this oversight.

In addition to the small tracts of land allocated to each peasant household, conservation measures such as the construction by the Agricultural Extension Officers of contour ridges (makandiwa) that approximated to the width of a Jeep truck to combat erosion had the deleterious effect of significantly reducing the size of land a farmer could put under the plough. According to the Councillor for Ward 23, Jacob Mukwiza, the Jeep truck was actually driven through the contour to make sure that it measured up to the expected width.¹⁷⁰ Gully erosion, in particular, rendered large portions of land useless for productive purposes. Contouring was viewed as a panacea to the massive land degradation induced by surface run-off. As if this was not enough, the contour ridges, which the cultivators were coerced to erect to address the problem ate further into their already small plots culminating in stiff resistance against conservationist policy in general. In this case, erosion and not differential access to land was responsible for differential levels of production among the Sanyati peasants. To some extent, this plague facilitated the development of significant disparities in agricultural income. Therefore, the role of erosion, conservation and extension measures in enhancing land shortages and differentiation in the countryside should not be overlooked.

An important watershed in the agricultural history of Sanyati was that these local government officers evolved, in the 1960s, a flexible programme to introduce cotton production [commodity production] among African smallholder farmers, with results that have profoundly transformed much of the northwest quadrant of pre-colonial Zimbabwe which includes Sanyati, Gokwe and Chenjiri. Ironically, it is in Sanyati and some parts of Gokwe – some of the very last regions of the colony to be subjected to “development” – that the possibility of gaining a reasonable livelihood exclusively as a subsistence and cash crop farmer had been realised for many, although certainly not all rural households. According to Worby, whether this is because, or in spite of, lessons learned in the course

¹⁶⁹ I. Phimister, “Rethinking the Reserves: Southern Rhodesia’s Land Husbandry Act Reviewed.” *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 19(2), (June 1993), 227.

¹⁷⁰ Jacob Mukwiza (Councillor for Ward 23), Personal Interview, “Old Council” or Wozhele Business Centre, Sanyati, 14th October 2004.

of many years of state intervention in agrarian practice remains an open question, but the significance of the region's late incorporation into the overall pattern of colonial statemaking for its future position in the post-colonial national development regime cannot be in any doubt.¹⁷¹ The emergence of relatively clearer forms of rural differentiation especially with the implementation of the cotton regime cannot be doubted either. The cut-throat competition engendered among the peasant farmers by this commodity crop rendered any notion of socio-economic homogeneity impeccably impracticable.

The legislative framework: count down to the NLHA: -

It is pertinent to observe that central government preoccupation with different forms of legislation took shape in the 1940s.¹⁷² Several authors have observed that it was during this period that the removal of African tenants¹⁷³ from white designated farmlands to overcrowded, land-scarce reserves like Sanyati foreshadowed a self-evident future of poverty and eroding resources.¹⁷⁴ As already stated, the impoverished and marginalised position of the peasantry did not preclude the emergence of rural differentiation in Sanyati. Nevertheless, the blame for such a future was pinned upon farmers in those same reserves rather than on the racial policies authorising forced resettlement. Thus, the Natural Resources Act of 1941 summarised and addressed a decade of anxiety in the Department of Native Affairs over the accumulating social and environmental effects of an expansionist category of Africans, who were deemed to be plowing up an even greater acreage of land in the "reserves."¹⁷⁵ The Act was, above all, a programme of constraints or prohibitions imposed on existing agricultural practices; it empowered Native Commissioners (NCs) to "Depasture stock, give orders on so-called modern methods of cultivation, prohibit the cultivation of land and control water."¹⁷⁶ Just like the NLHA that was passed subsequently, it sought to eclipse the emergence of rural differentiation, a proposition that was going to prove difficult to implement given the level of commercialisation extant among the peasants before and after they had harnessed cotton as a cash crop.

Surprising enough, these seemingly genuine concerns did not immediately extend to cover the northwestern "reserves" in Mashonaland West part of which comprises Sanyati. The first systematic survey of the agricultural status of "Reserve Natives" conducted in

¹⁷¹ Worby, "Inscribing the State at the 'Edge of Beyond': Danger and Development in North-western Zimbabwe," *Political and Legal Anthropology Review*, 21, (1998), 55-70.

¹⁷² M. Drinkwater, "Technical development and peasant impoverishment: land use policy in Zimbabwe's Midlands Province". *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 15, (1989), 287-305.

¹⁷³ In certain contexts these are known as outgrowers, sharecroppers, plowholders, smallholders, settlers or peasants. See Friis-Hansen, *Seeds for African Peasants* and Stephen F. Burgess, *Smallholders and Political Voice in Zimbabwe*, (New York: University Press of America, 1997).

¹⁷⁴ T. O. Ranger, *Peasant Consciousness and Guerrilla War in Zimbabwe: A Comparative Study*, (Harare: Zimbabwe Publishing House, 1985), cited in Worby, "Discipline Without Oppression," 104.

¹⁷⁵ Ranger, *Peasant Consciousness*.

¹⁷⁶ D. J. Murray, *The Governmental System in Southern Rhodesia*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), 35. For a comparative view of these trends across British colonial Africa, see Sara Berry, *No Condition is Permanent: The Social Dynamics of Agrarian Change in Sub-Saharan Africa*, (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993), 46-53.

1930 by the Department of Native Development noted that only ten cattle were enumerated in an area of 764 000 acres in the only two “reserves” surveyed in the Gokwe-Sanyati region (Impapa and Omay), adding that the “percentage of worn out land” was “nil” in these “reserves,” and that therefore no agricultural demonstration efforts of any kind were needed.¹⁷⁷ The report concluded, the “natives are very backward, and until we can rid the country of tsetse fly their progress will be retarded.”¹⁷⁸ This evidence illustrates clearly that four “reserves” in the north-west (Sanyati, Sebungwe, Sibaba and Pashu) were excluded from the survey altogether on the grounds that they were “not occupied by natives” - an assertion that was likely a convenient fiction¹⁷⁹ given that NCs began recording hut-tax collection from throughout this “unoccupied” region from as early as the turn of the century.

In 1944, the *Commission on Native Production and Trade (Godlonton Commission)* deemed it necessary to go beyond the establishment of negative sanctions in controlling the kinds of practices held to be destroying the agrarian base in most other parts of the country, and formulated a sweeping programme of “native” improvement that was to be finally institutionalised by the NLHA. The prescriptions formulated by this Commission were explicitly framed by a larger thesis on natural law and development, one intended to put in proper perspective “the relative obligations of the European and African races.”¹⁸⁰ For the Godlonton Commissioners, the displacement of the African occupants off the land by Europeans was justified in terms of the “natural laws which inexorably govern human existence” to which Africans must either adapt or else face extinction.¹⁸¹ As Holleman astutely observes, the Commission in this fashion, “reconstituted the Rhodesian social order as a product of the law of nature ... Europeans thus being identified with progress and progress being enshrined in an inexorable law of nature, the legitimacy of white progressive leadership now fully sanctioned by law and logic.”¹⁸² Such laws were used as legal justification to uphold the erroneous notion that African society was lagging behind in development and that it was basically traditional, subsistence-oriented, largely homogeneous, egalitarian in character and not differentiated at all.

Duty and discipline were thus introduced as the new instruments of African self-improvement in Sanyati, these characteristics being lauded as the distinguishing mark of “civilised” persons bearing allegiance to modern states.¹⁸³ The Commission went on to express the opinion:

That forward peoples while preserving their settled economy have a duty by all reasonable and proper means to assist backward peoples to progress and for that

¹⁷⁷ Worry, “Discipline Without Oppression,” 105.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁹ NAZ, GEN-P/ALV, E. D. Alvord, *Agricultural Demonstration Work on Native Reserves*, Occasional Paper, No. 3, (Southern Rhodesia: Department of Native Development, November 1930), Table 1.

¹⁸⁰ *Godlonton Commission*, 9.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁸² J. F. Holleman, *Chief, Council, and Commissioner: Some Problems of Government in Rhodesia*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1969), 46.

¹⁸³ Worry, “Discipline Without Oppression,” 105.

purpose to enforce discipline without oppression. It is also the duty of forward peoples to adapt themselves to the presence of such backward peoples in their midst. That it is the duty of backward peoples to contribute to their own advancement to the limit of their powers and to observe proper discipline.¹⁸⁴

The duties of “forward” and “backward” peoples were thus seen to be reciprocal, but asymmetrical. The former had to “enforce discipline without oppression”; the latter, to embody that discipline themselves if development was to be achieved.¹⁸⁵ To call this “discipline without oppression,” though, was hypocritical on the part of the settler regime as it implied two things – firstly, that the Africans willingly adopted it and secondly, that persuasion was employed to make Africans adhere to this very weird concept of natural discipline. However, the fact that it was enforced is irrefutable given the racial outlook and the hegemonic tendencies of the regime and there was nothing natural about it whatsoever.

Indeed, a preoccupation with the disciplined body as the diacritical sign of “civilisation” was everywhere apparent during this period. This enforcement of discipline and other measures at the behest of the NLHA was designed, therefore, to beat Africans into line, keep them under surveillance, facilitate the whites’ version of development which entailed exploiting the African race and to curb the emergence of differentiation in rural Sanyati which had already proved inevitable.

In giving legislative shape to the *Godlonton Commission’s* proposals, the NLHA aimed to redesign agrarian practice in ways that visibly embodied the spirit of discipline that both body and landscape required.¹⁸⁶ There were essentially two dimensions to this process. First, by forcing Africans to deploy their labour in new ways on their own lands (practising systematic crop rotation, constructing contours, fencing off grazing areas and so on), order in the landscape could be used to both mirror and monitor the extent of progress. Such progress also reflected the social and economic class to which a farmer belonged. Second, by installing a regime of private property or individual units, rewards accruing from the disciplined and efficient application of labour and proper management of a plot of land would go directly to the owner of that land. For example, when demonstrators were appointed and the idea of demonstration plots was hatched, it was envisaged that:

The Demonstrator, after winning the confidence of a promising Native farmer, will tell him that he is prepared to help him obtain much larger yields from his lands by using better tillage methods. He will then offer to take over two acres of this man’s land, and with the owner’s full help work it in a proper manner by laying it out into a 4-course crop rotation

¹⁸⁴ *Godlonton Commission* cited in Worby, “Discipline Without Oppression,” 106.

¹⁸⁵ For more detail on the obsession with native discipline in development discourse, see POZ Library, ZF 351-1096891 SOU/56322, *Report of the Commission Appointed to Enquire into the Cost of Administration of the Colony of Southern Rhodesia/The Woolley Commission*, (Salisbury, Southern Rhodesia: The Government Printer, 26th June 1924); Drinkwater, “Technical Development,” 295 and T. A. Murton, “Land-use Planning in Tribal Areas in Rhodesia,” *Rhodesia Agricultural Journal*, 61, (1971), 6.

¹⁸⁶ Worby, “Discipline Without Oppression,” 108.

unit on 4 half-acre plots ... The Demonstrator will direct the handling of the crop until after it is harvested and the yields determined. He will then turn the crop over to the owner.¹⁸⁷

These “technical” procedures, it was believed, would transform backward “tribesmen” into disciplined “modern” farmers. The rapid commercialisation of agriculture, however, can be used to refute the argument that African farmers were still primitive¹⁸⁸ or backward and undifferentiated by the 1950s. Thus the “primitiveness” or otherwise on the part of the peasantry should not be over-emphasised.

According to Worby, Africans living in the Sanyati “reserve” and the Special Native Area of Gokwe during the 1940s were far removed from the cordon sanitaire of European life.¹⁸⁹ It is imperative to note that, until the 1960s, the Sanyati region was perceived as the wild, remote and culturally backward domain of the “Shangwe” ethnic group. However, the people had already been drawn into a pattern of seasonal migration for employment – often for wages in kind – especially on European farms to the north-west of the highland commercial farming centre of Gatooma. Nevertheless, because some Africans believed they could use their stake in the land to prosper, they declined to sell their labour power to white employers, prompting the Provincial Native Commissioner (PNC), J. E. S. Turton, to lament “...[the] general shortage of labour of all kinds on the mines despite the general increase in wages.”¹⁹⁰ He put the average wage on the mines at 22s.6d to 27s.6d and on the farms at 20s.0d to 22s.6d.¹⁹¹ Attractive though these wages might have seemed to the PNC, they failed to lure sufficient quantities of labour to meet the mines and farms’ requirements. On the one hand, this was sufficient testimony that Africans were indeed economic men. On the other, it can be pointed out that whilst since the 1940s the dryland cultivation of maize (a staple crop), rapoko, sorghum and pumpkins was undertaken in rural Sanyati in conjunction with livestock rearing (amid efforts to eradicate the tsetse menace), as well as hunting and gathering, the prevalence of labour migrancy was dictated mainly by excessive land pressure. In circumstances of land shortage, the need to eke out a living from off-farm activities naturally became greater. Thus, for those who migrated, labour migrancy and the earnings that were repatriated for purposes of boosting agricultural production became significant bases of differentiation.

¹⁸⁷ NAZ, S2585/1064: Demonstrators General: 1940-1949, Agricultural Demonstration: Policy and Methods, Circular No. 10 of 1945, Office of the Director of Native Agriculture, Salisbury, 2nd November 1945, 1.

¹⁸⁸ The “primitiveness” of African peasants has been strongly challenged by a multitude of scholars, notable among them, I. Oxaal, T. Barnett and T. Booth (eds.), *Beyond the Sociology of Development: Economy and Society in Latin America and Africa*, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1975); Palmer and Parsons, *The Roots of Rural Poverty* and Bundy, *The Rise and Fall of the South African Peasantry*. N.B. African peasants were market-oriented men and quite commercialised in their activities.

¹⁸⁹ Worby, “Discipline Without Oppression,” 108.

¹⁹⁰ NAZ (RC), Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 158086, Location C19.6.7F, DC’s File: District Information 1961-1971, Includes Programme of Events 1890 to 1961: Report of the Provincial Native Commissioner (PNC), J. E. S. Turton, Salisbury, on the office of the ANC, Gatooma to NC, Hartley, 15th August 1947, 2.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 2.

Sanyati, like Gokwe, suffered severe droughts in 1941 and 1942. These were followed, five or six years later, by an even worse drought in 1947.¹⁹² 1955 and 1961/1962 were also drought years.¹⁹³ The spectre of catastrophic droughts reduced peasant households' capacity to produce food crops for their own consumption, let alone for sale. However, in spite of these calamities, intervention in rural agriculture by administrative authorities was still largely absent, the purview of the Native Department being limited in these areas largely to tax collection, dispute adjudication and the killing of rampaging elephant, kudu and other game for distribution as emergency food relief and as a conservation measure to promote agriculture. In the early years of settlement, game slaughter and tsetsefly control were considered essential as far as protecting human life and crops from rampaging wild animals, promoting conservation and agricultural development was concerned. In an interview, P. B. Fletcher, then Minister of Mines, Lands and Surveys, defended game shooting by saying, "the Southern Rhodesia Government Policy towards game is to protect and preserve wherever possible."¹⁹⁴ He felt that the public had an incorrect view of the Government's game policy. Continuing his defence, Fletcher said:

It is not indiscriminate slaughter ... We do our utmost to avoid slaughter. Our primary aim is to preserve and protect, but this has to be done in consideration with two vital factors - agricultural development and tsetsefly control. Private enterprise has invested a great deal of money in agricultural development and the taxpayer makes an appreciable contribution every year ... In elephant control it is impossible to know the number of animals that will be killed. What people overlook about game is that practically the whole of the country is agricultural. There is a limit to the amount of game you can have in association with agriculture. Farming and big game don't go hand in hand ... The problem of game would then boil down simply to a question of protecting agriculture ... Sometimes game rangers shoot elephants in self-defence. Elephants can do enormous damage ... and to drive them back into their hinterland the Game Department shoots the minimum number necessary ... Game cannot stand in the way of development.¹⁹⁵

To achieve development in Sanyati, the terrible tsetsefly menace also had to be eradicated. For Fletcher, "this has to be kept in check and eliminated where possible. It is, indeed, such a terrible menace that we have to use every known means at our disposal

¹⁹² P. S. Nyambara, "Colonial Policy and Peasant Cotton Agriculture in Southern Rhodesia, 1904-1953." *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 33(1), (2000), 105.

¹⁹³ In the 1961/1962 season drought hit many rural peasant farmers very hard as it wiped out the early maize and rapoko crop on which they entirely depended. The Minister of Native Affairs, H. Jack Quinton, who toured the drought-stricken areas described the situation as "serious in some parts," with Matabeleland being the worst affected area. For example, some peasant farmers in Nkai and Ntabazinduna, by January 1962, were already considering approaching their local District Commissioner (DC) to warn Government of famine relief needs. For more detail on this drought see "Drought Hits Many Peasant Farmers" and "Cattle Position Serious," *The Central African Daily News*, First Edition, 5(179), Saturday 6, 1962, 1.

¹⁹⁴ "Fletcher Defends Game Shooting to Preserve Agriculture," *The Rhodesia Herald*, Salisbury, Thursday, October 11, 1956, 11.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

[including game slaughter].”¹⁹⁶ Field research confirms that wild animals (e.g. elephant) were killed for purposes of using the meat in the campaign against tsetse. The meat would be poisoned and used to lure or entice tsetsefly to death.¹⁹⁷ The Minister emphasised that “if a means of fighting tsetsefly other than game slaughter were discovered, the Government would be only too pleased to adopt it.”¹⁹⁸

Whilst Fletcher’s argument is justified from a conservationist and agricultural point of view, it is not clear how the proceeds from the sale of ivory were used. By his own admission: “The tusks from these operations would be brought in and the Government would sell them. So far as he was aware, nothing had been done about the meat, although he understood that some of it had been consumed by Africans.”¹⁹⁹ Ideally, there was need to plough back the profits derived from ivory sales into Sanyati agriculture, but regrettably, no official record exists to support this. Perhaps the only benefit obtained by Africans who participated in the hunting of elephants was the privilege to partake of the meat and practise agriculture in an elephant and tsetse-free environment. From a policy perspective, therefore, game and tsetse control were an integral part of the implementation of the NLHA in its formative years.

It can be noted that, the anxieties that gave rise to the NLHA originated in reserves far to the south and east, for example, Selukwe (Shurugwi), Gwelo (Gweru), Fort Victoria (Masvingo), Gutu and Chibi (Chivi), where the centralisation and alignment of African communities in the name of both conservation and of instilling modern farming practices had been underway for some two decades prior to the 1940s.²⁰⁰ The absence of centralisation in Sanyati can be explained by the fact that the policy could only be implemented where Native Reserves had been created. Some of the tenets of this programme were only effected concurrently with the NLHA because prior to the arrival of the Rhodesdalites, there were no Native Reserves in the area.²⁰¹

Worby has observed that a remarkable government document laying out a five-year plan for the implementation of the NLHA illustrates with striking clarity the importance of constructing a coherent explanatory narrative of past failures in these southern and eastern communities.²⁰² He further says the document’s title: *What the Native Land Husbandry Act Means to the Rural African and to Southern Rhodesia: A Five Year Plan that will Revolutionise African Agriculture* is indicative of the Native Agriculture

¹⁹⁶ “Fletcher Defends Game Shooting to Preserve Agriculture,” 11.

¹⁹⁷ Headman Lozane, Personal Interview.

¹⁹⁸ “Fletcher Defends Game Shooting to Preserve Agriculture,” 11.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁰ For more detail on centralisation see Ranger, *Peasant Consciousness*; E. Punt, “The Development of African Agriculture in Southern Rhodesia with Particular Reference to the Interwar Years,” MA thesis, Durban, 1979 and M. Nyandoro, “The Colonial State’s Response to the Problem of Overcrowding: A Study of Shurugwi Reserve, 1920-1945, BA Special Honours dissertation, Harare, November 1993, 43-62.

²⁰¹ NAZ (RC), Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 158086, Location C19.6.7F, DC’s File: District Information 1961-1971, Includes Programme of Events 1890 to 1961: Report of the PNC, Turton, Salisbury, on the office of the ANC, Gatooma, to NC, Hartley, 15th August 1947, 2.

²⁰² Worby, “Discipline Without Oppression,” 108.

Department's zeal to spearhead a "revolution" in African agrarian practice since the 1920s.²⁰³ "From 1926 onwards," the document stated:

The history of Native agriculture in Southern Rhodesia has been that of a continuous battle between the steadily increasing pressure of a growing population on the restricted land resources, and the efforts of the Native Department to establish those methods which would check the soil erosion and human degradation which are the inevitable concomitant of the old system [i.e. shifting cultivation] under new conditions. By the middle forties it began to be recognized that propaganda, instruction and voluntary acceptance of the new methods were inadequate. With restricted funds and limited staff the Native Department was doing most valuable work and had achieved some remarkable results, but, faced with the background of centuries' old tribal custom embodied in communal systems of land use, progress was slow.²⁰⁴

It was believed that the economic and political stability of the Africans would be restored, with private title to land being the instrument through which individual men (Africans) would become the interested conservators of their land or natural resources in general. Hence,

A settled and thriving agricultural population is probably one of the best sheet-anchors of political stability, in particular when the land user has ownership rights, with appropriate safeguards in his own interest, in the land he occupies. Full implementation of the Native Land Husbandry Act will do more than stabilize the native agricultural population. By discontinuing a system which allows the native to vacillate between spells of work in the European area and spells of semi-loafing in the Reserve it will do much to stabilize also the industrial working population. An important factor in this context is that in general under the new conditions the families will be with the workers in the non-agricultural occupations and the workers will be with their families on the land, in contrast to the present position. Stabilized populations based on the complete family unit offer the soundest prospect both for the social advancement and the political stability of the African in the future.²⁰⁵

Although no specific mention of differentiation was made in policy discourse, the full implementation of the NLHA was intended to scuttle this process. African progress was only tolerated in so far as it was subordinated to white settler interests. Notwithstanding this, differentiation on the basis of land ownership, labour, gender and capital accumulation became even more pronounced. Most of the Madherukas ("immigrants")

²⁰³ Ranger, *Peasant Consciousness*, 60, 70-71, cited in Worby, "Discipline Without Oppression," 108-109.

²⁰⁴ Government of Southern Rhodesia, *What the Native Land Husbandry Act Means to the Rural African and to Southern Rhodesia: A Five Year Plan that will Revolutionise African Agriculture*, (Salisbury: Government Printers, 1955), 1.

²⁰⁵ *What the Native Land Husbandry Act Means*, 14.

self-allocated themselves land (madiro)²⁰⁶ and became employers of labour as they furthered their accumulation prospects and established more stabilised rural families (homes).

Thus, a “modernist” type of development envisioned “complete family units” replacing the ragged fragmented pieces of industrialised African social life. As one Native Affairs official aptly observes:

In no aspect of Native culture have the effects of the part-time system been more deplorable than upon family life and morals. The frequent and often long absence of large numbers of men from the reserves has led to a preponderance of the one sex over the other in both the European and the Native areas. The evils of this are too obvious to need elaboration. In the European areas the men turn to illicit and often impermanent unions, the offspring of which tend to grow up without discipline and in unsatisfactory surroundings. The absence of fathers makes for marital instability and deprives the children of that necessary paternal discipline and the wives of that help and support without which family life cannot be satisfactorily maintained.²⁰⁷

It was against this backdrop that the Rhodesdalites were received and that the autocratic NLHA was implemented in Sanyati.

The immigrant factor: From Rhodesdale to Sanyati and the contradiction of implementation:-

Chief Wozhele, whose personal name was Munyaka, and his people used to live in Lalapanzi from where they were moved to Rhodesdale in 1925 by the Native Commissioner for Que Que, Hulley – commonly referred to as “Mudzviti²⁰⁸ Hari” by the locals. Since Rhodesdale was a European ranching area, he was bound to be moved again to a settlement designed for Africans. This would be the culmination of an idea muted prior to the granting of responsible government to Rhodesia in 1923, when the question of allocating separate defined areas in which Europeans and Africans could respectively and exclusively acquire land had arisen in the Rhodesian legislature. Since the 1920s, a number of African applicants were denied permission to buy land by the Director of Land Settlement on the grounds that African ownership would depreciate the value of adjacent European land.²⁰⁹ The settlers also regarded the relatively small-scale purchases of land by the Africans which had taken place by 1921 as the beginning of a massive influx of advanced Africans into the European area. Hence, the Morris Carter Commission or the Lands Commission of 1925, which was appointed to test opinion on

²⁰⁶ For more detail on madiro (freedom ploughing) see Nyambara, “A History of Land Acquisition in Gokwe.” In state corridors, to underscore the NLHA’s disapproval of this practice, madiro cultivators or peasants who disregarded the Act by overploughing were disparagingly labeled “illegal cultivators.”

²⁰⁷ Cited in Worby, “Discipline Without Oppression.” 110.

²⁰⁸ “Mudzviti” is a Shona word that is used to refer to the NC, District Commissioner (DC) or the District Administrator (DA).

²⁰⁹ NAZ, NAS S924/GI/1, Director of Land Settlement, B.S.A.C., July 18, 1921.

the question of land segregation in Rhodesia succinctly enunciated European fear of the “inevitable racial conflict” which would ensue if a policy of land segregation was not adopted then.²¹⁰ The Land Apportionment Bill which resulted from the Commission’s report became law in 1930. Although the law (LAA) did not take effect until April 1931, under the terms of the new Act, the rights of the Africans to land ownership anywhere in the colony were rescinded.²¹¹ Africans were only compensated for this loss by being given the exclusive right to purchase land in the so-called Native Purchase Area (NPA) or move outright to what were known as Native Reserves. This partly explains why Wozhele was moved from Lalapanzi. Using the same argument, the Europeans also intended to set aside Rhodesdale for their occupation and push the African population further out of “white enclaves” such as Rhodesdale. However, this imminent move was deferred if not put on hold by the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939. In the war against Hitler the African population was called upon to make its contribution in support of the Allied cause. As Rhodesian Europeans and Africans fought side by side for the attainment of a common objective, all racial differences seemed to have been swept under the carpet, only to be resurrected at the conclusion of the war.

No sooner had the war ended than the demobilised African soldiers started to be accorded the status of second-rate citizens. Wozhele’s people, in spite of their sacrifice in aid of the Allies, were not spared from the racist slant that was to dominate the post-war years. In 1946, a year after the termination of World War 2, in a less startling move to those familiar with the settler philosophy of the day, the NC for Que Que (now Kwekwe), Nasebet, in tandem with his Provincial Native Commissioner, unashamedly served Chief Wozhele with notification of removal in due course from Rhodesdale to Sanyati Reserve in the north-western part of the country.²¹² In the following year, serious famine was allayed by the prompt and expeditious importation of yellow mealie-meal (known in local circles as “Kenya”) from the United States of America (USA). 1947 also marked the installation of boreholes and the construction of new roads in the Sanyati Reserve in preparation for the settlement of Wozhele’s people there.²¹³

On receiving the news of the impending eviction of Wozhele and his followers, Benjamin Burombo, affectionately known to his mass of supporters simply as B. B., the Organising Secretary of the British African Workers Voice Association²¹⁴ (The Voice, in short), stepped into Rhodesdale in 1950 viciously encouraging people to refuse removal. Much

²¹⁰ H. V. Moyana, *The Political Economy of Land in Zimbabwe*, (Gweru: Mambo Press, 1984), 58.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, 68. For more detail on the Act see also S. Moyo *The Land Question in Zimbabwe*, (Harare: Sapes, 1995); B. Floyd, “Land Apportionment in Southern Rhodesia”, in R. Prothero (ed.), *People and Land in Africa South of the Sahara*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1972); R. H. Palmer, *Land and Racial Domination in Rhodesia*, (London: Heinemann, 1977); L. H. Gann, “The Southern Rhodesian Land Apportionment Act, 1930: An Essay in Trusteeship,” *The National Archives of Rhodesia and Nyasaland Occasional Paper*, (1), (June 1963) and M. L. Rifkind, “Land Apportionment in Perspective,” *Rhodesian History*, 3, (1972).

²¹² NAZ (RC), Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 158086, Location C19.6.7F, File: DC’s File, District Information 1961-1971, Includes Programme of Events 1890 to 1961, Calendar of Events: Sanyati TTL.

²¹³ *Ibid.*

²¹⁴ Benjamin Burombo came into the political limelight in 1947 when he formed this association in Southern Rhodesia. Its headquarters were in Bulawayo. The association’s chief aim was to unify Africans politically and to fight for their better economic opportunities and social advancement.

as B. B. might not have countenanced it, the whites prevailed upon Chief Wozhele to go on a preliminary inspection of Sanyati Reserve. He was not pleased with what he saw during reconnaissance because the area was tsetse and mosquito infested. It resembled a jungle in that it was characterised by dense forest and was inhabited by dangerous wild animals such as elephants, lions, hyenas and poisonous snakes. There was hardly any decent infrastructure by way of roads, bridges, schools, stores, grinding mills or reliable water sources. Perhaps the most noticeable service that was provided by the government was a rudimentary road infrastructure to facilitate travel by the NC or DC. (See pictures showing the effort to clear bush and build a road linking Kadoma and Sanyati – Appendices I and II). The only distinguishable human inhabitants of the area at that time, the people of Chief Neuso, lived in one line in the middle of this thick bush. In spite of his resistance to go to this inhospitable backwater of the country, the Chief's trip was immediately followed by the decisive meeting between the NC Gatooma, Finnis, and Que Que's new NC, Buckley, at Elephant Hill ("Chomureza Hill"). This meeting which was also attended by Wozhele, signalled confirmation of his removal together with his people including Headman Mudzingwa to Sanyati despite Burombo's influence of "Zuva Ravira."²¹⁵ This term literally signified that the "sun has set"). It was coined to mean that the time had come to fight and resist unjust colonial prescriptions such as the forced removal of Africans from their original homes implemented under the ostracised LAA. Indeed, the die had been cast as the first wave of "immigrants" was forcibly moved to Sanyati in 1950. This year marked the beginning of repressive fast-track removals of unprecedented magnitude for most of the people living on Alienated and Crown Lands.

In a show of excessive force, the Rhodesdale residents or evictees were loaded into waiting lorries at short notice and transported into the inhospitably hot malarial lowlands of the Sanyati and Sebungwe districts. Most of the early "immigrants" were settled in villages under their own village heads and headmen, but formally under the ultimate jurisdiction of indigenous chiefs. Among the first evictees of Rhodesdale were 470 families under Chief Wozhele and his Headmen Mudzingwa and Lozane who were dumped in the Sanyati Reserve. Another group consisted of 1 000 families under Headmen Myambi and Chirima who were forcibly settled in Gokwe Special Native Area.²¹⁶ December 11, 1950 was the deadline set by the Native Department for the final evacuation of people residing on the Rhodesdale Estates.²¹⁷ Accordingly, at a meeting held by members of the Native Department in September 1950, it was decided that "all families ... moved from Rhodesdale would by force of circumstance be accommodated in the areas mentioned even if the size of what was regarded as an economic unit had to be

²¹⁵ NAZ (RC), Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 158086, Location C19.6.7F, File: DC's File, District Information 1961-1971, Includes Programme of Events 1890 to 1961, Calendar of Events: Sanyati TTL. N.B. Benjamin Burombo's contribution marked the beginning of full-scale resistance to calculated massive movements of persons to various destinations in the country. For a more elaborate description of Burombo's influence see Bhebe, *B. Burombo*, 1-160.

²¹⁶ The new areas created from Unassigned Area were designated as "Special Native Areas" to distinguish them from the Native Reserves already provided for in the constitution, but to all intents and purposes the rights to land and methods of production within the special areas were no different. For more detail see M. Yudelman, *Africans on the Land*, 75, and P. S. Nyambara, "A History of Land Acquisition in Gokwe," 75.

²¹⁷ Bhebe, *B. Burombo*, 76.

reduced.”²¹⁸ The area set aside for habitation by those families that were relocated to Sanyati comprised very poor sandy soils and received little rainfall. Parts of it were tsetse infested and crop cultivation in such an area was associated with a considerable amount of risk. It was here that the “immigrants” dislodged from Rhodesdale were allocated land under the NLHA of 1951.²¹⁹

Just before the second wave of “immigrants” was dispatched to Sanyati in 1951, Chief Munyaka Wozhele died. One informant in Sanyati has narrated a deeply touching story of the pain, agony and anguish that accompanied these forced evictions. Joke Munyaka Wozhele who alleges that the late Chief was his grandfather, said:

The trauma caused by eviction from Rhodesdale led to my grandfather’s death. My grandfather was a High Blood Pressure (BP) patient, and was one of the staunchest opponents of eviction from Rhodesdale. He could not stomach the damage inflicted on his property [acquired from many years of hard work] during the process of eviction. As he helplessly watched the proceedings [which entailed hauling and wrecking his possessions onto the lorries waiting to take them to Sanyati] he crumbled under the weight of this pressure, collapsed and died on 9th August 1951. He must have suffered a sudden and severe stroke.²²⁰

This evidence is corroborated by Pius Nyambara who quotes Anna Madzorera, Kesiya Madzorera’s wife, as saying:

... the government forced us to leave Roseday [sic]. They sent the police with big lorries and they forced us into lorries and brought us to Nyaje. They had to force us as we had not agreed to move to a place we did not know. We lost a lot of property in the process because the police just threw our things into trucks. They were very rough.²²¹

Similarly, a nationalist leader narrated the Rhodesdale evictees’ ordeal as follows:

On our way [home] many police trucks raced past us. When we arrived my uncle told us that the Europeans had just arrested the chief, because he told the people to resist. A police truck sped out of the village and we

²¹⁸ NAZ, S1194/190/1, Report of a meeting held in September 1950.

²¹⁹ For detail on the background to and implementation of the NLHA see the government policy document, *What the Native Land Husbandry Act Means*. Several writings have given different interpretations of the Act, for example, Barry Floyd, “Changing Patterns of African Land Use in Southern Rhodesia,” PhD dissertation, Syracuse University, 1959; M. Yudelman, *Africans on the Land*, Chapter 5; William Duggan, “The Native Land Husbandry Act of 1951 and the Rural African Middle Class of Southern Rhodesia.” *African Affairs*, 79, (1980), 315; Bulman, *The Native Land Husbandry Act of Southern Rhodesia* and Machingaidze, “Agrarian Change from Above,” 557-589.

²²⁰ Joke Munyaka Wozhele, Personal Interview, ARDA Main Irrigation Estate, Sanyati, 20th October 2004. See also NAZ, MF 557: Mashonaland South Province: Gatooma District (Ministry of Internal Affairs), 14.

²²¹ Anna Madzorera interviewed by Irene Staunton, *Mother of Revolution: The War Experiences of Thirty Zimbabwean Women*, (London: James Currey, 1990), 113 cited in Nyambara, “A History of Land Acquisition in Gokwe,” 73.

could see the chief and some elders handcuffed and under guard ... Later that day soldiers and police started ordering men to empty their houses and barns. When they refused they were arrested. Soldiers entered their houses and threw everything onto trucks, wrecking a lot of things in the process. Then they did the same with the barns, loading all the tools, grain, etc, into the same trucks. This over, the women, children and old people were put on top of their belongings and driven away. The animals had been rounded up and the boys were ordered to drive the herds north. It was a sorry sight - women, children, old people were weeping, the men arrested, homes set on fire and destroyed.²²²

Apparently, unperturbed by this tragedy, the whites still insisted that these people should depart for Sanyati; and under an Acting Chief Wozhele appointed with effect from 1st September 1951, they were moved to the Reserve. As if to add insult to injury, the Acting Producer of the Central African Film Unit in Salisbury (now Harare), was frantically preparing to film the movement of people to Sanyati. In his correspondence to the NC Que Que, copied to the Assistant Native Commissioner Gatooma, entitled "Film on movement of peoples" the Acting Producer did not hide his excitement at filming "the movement of Africans from the Que Que district to the Sanyati Reserve, Gatooma district ... likely to take place shortly."²²³ He went further to say:

This Unit has planned to film scenes of the movement proper, and also scenes of preparation in the Sanyati Reserve, these scenes [are] to be kept from inclusion in any future film made on the wide subject of the movement of peoples ... on information from the Land Development Officer [LDO], Sanyati Reserve, it is understood that preparation activities will be continuing for at least three months.²²⁴

In separate correspondence to the NC Que Que, copied to the NC Hartley and the ANC Gatooma when the movement to the Sanyati Reserve had commenced, he was delighted to inform his audience that: "Messrs. S. Peet and P. Young, of this Unit, will travel to Gatooma on the 20th August [1951]. The purpose of their visit will be, first, to view the movement activities and plan film coverage, and subsequently to do such filming as may be necessary."²²⁵

The purpose of such filming was not clear, but it is probable that this must have been used for propaganda purposes. However, with or without the film, opposition to eviction persisted. Presumably, out of fear that resistance to eviction might escalate to

²²² Old Gjerstad (ed.) *The Organizer, Story of Temba Moyo*, (British Columbia: LSM Press, Richard, 1974), 32 cited in Nyambara, "A History of Land Acquisition in Gokwe," 73-74.

²²³ NAZ (RC), Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 158077, Location C19.2.10R, File: LAN 9 Sanyati and Ngezi: 1951-1964, The Acting Producer, Central African Film Unit, Salisbury, to NC Que Que and to ANC Gatooma), 20th July, 1951.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*

²²⁵ NAZ (RC), Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 158077, Location C19.2.10R, File: LAN 9 Sanyati and Ngezi: 1951-1964, The Acting Producer, Central African Film Unit, Salisbury, to NC Que Que, NC Hartley and ANC Gatooma, 9th August, 1951.

unmanageable proportions, in 1952 armed soldiers were deployed to deal with the situation. Huts and granaries belonging to persons who offered the last remnants of resistance were tied in chains and pulled down by lorries or bulldozers as the soldiers went on the rampage destroying huts and forcing people to move to Sanyati. In Lozane's words: "Police, soldiers, guns and dogs were used to evict people and sacks were provided by government to pack goods and not every possession could be taken on board as a lot of personal belongings and a myriad other things were left behind, leaving an ineradicable sense of loss and deprivation in the minds of the victims."²²⁶ This must have been done with the approval of the newly appointed NC for Gatooma, O'Conner as no dissenting voice was heard from him. Through this callous and reprehensible way of handling resistance, all the people from Rhodesdale had been moved to Sanyati by 1953, the year the third and last wave of "immigrants" was settled. The following year, 1954, the Acting Chief whose personal name was Ndaba was installed as the substantive Chief Wozhele on 1st April.²²⁷

However, eviction from Rhodesdale was not accepted without resistance. In correspondence by Finnis to the NC Hartley entitled: "Movement of Natives 1952: The Land Apportionment Amendment Act No.54/1951," it was noted with grave concern that Wozhele's people employed avoidance or diversionary tactics to resist eviction from Crown Land. The fear that these people were determined to stay in Rhodesdale despite the offensive that was launched against them was gaining currency by the day as revealed by the following statement:

A number of followers of Chief Wozhele are still resident on Rhodesdale (Gatooma). They were due to leave with Headman Mudzingwa for the Sanyati Reserve in 1950, but avoided this move by entering into the employ [labour contracts] of the Cold Storage Commission [CSC] who hold grazing rights on Rhodesdale (Gatooma). I understand the Cold Storage Commission will leave Rhodesdale (Gatooma) in April this year, and will take a number of these natives to another grazing area. It is possible that some of these natives presently employed will not move with the Commission, but will endeavour to remain on Rhodesdale (Gatooma).²²⁸

In the light of the above, it was deemed necessary to issue a sterner ultimatum to Wozhele's people ordering them to leave Rhodesdale.

For the purposes of Section 5 (1) of the Land Apportionment Amendment Act No. 54 of 1951, I beg to suggest that the Proclamation so far as Rhodesdale (Gatooma) is concerned be worded to include all natives there residing and requiring them to leave by 31st August 1952 and to proceed to

²²⁶ Headman T. M. Lozane, Personal Interview, Lozane Village Homestead, Sanyati, 18th October 2004.

²²⁷ NAZ, MF 557: Mashonaland South Province: Gatooma District (Ministry of Internal Affairs), 12 and 14.

²²⁸ NAZ (RC), Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 158077, Location C19.2.10R, File: LAN 1-7: 1951-1964, S. F. Finnis, ANC Gatooma, to the NC Hartley, 7th January 1952.

either the Special Native Area in the Subungwe [sic] District or the Sanyati Reserve in the Hartley District.²²⁹

According to R. L. Westcott, the NC Gatooma, "... it is a contravention of the Land Apportionment Act for a native to occupy, or be allowed to occupy, land in the European area unless he is in the employ of the owner, either full time or on a Labour Agreement basis."²³⁰ ANC Barlow avidly warned against "Native squatters" living on European ranches. The full text of the warning served on one Doreen's Pride Ranch owner, T. J. Rorke, under the heading "Native Squatters" read:

I am informed that there are Native squatters living on your ranch where they have built huts, ploughed lands and are depasturing stock. I have to point out that unless these Natives are bona fide, full time employed by you, this would seem to constitute a contravention of the Land Apportionment Act, by you and by the Natives concerned. Section 26 of the Act prohibits the lease or occupation of land in the European area by a Native unless the Native is bona fide employed by the owner or occupier of such land, for so long as he is in such employment as necessitates his presence on such land. The same section prohibits an owner or occupier of land in the European area permitting a Native to occupy such land unless he is in bona fide employment. If the Natives are not bona fide employed, provision exists under Section 32 of the Act for Natives to occupy such land under Labour Agreements the terms of which must be approved by the Chief Native Commissioner, whereby such Natives are under the obligation of personally working for the owner. I would suggest that you take steps as soon as may be, to legalise the situation regarding Natives living on your property.²³¹

The eviction of such people from European designated land was often carried out swiftly. Barlow sometimes:

Ordered Natives to leave white Ranches [farms] in this 'District' [Gatooma] within a week. Regarding their standing crops I have told the Natives they must move and that they should either arrange to sell them as they stand to other Natives remaining on the farm, or arrange for them to be looked after until they can reap them at a later date.²³²

²²⁹ NAZ (RC), Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 158077, Location C19.2.10R, S. F. Finnis, ANC Gatooma, to the NC Hartley, 7th January 1952. See also same NAZ (RC), Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 158077, Location C19.2.10R, File: LAN 1-7: 1951-1964, "Programme for Movement of Natives," ANC Gatooma, 27 March 1952.

²³⁰ NAZ (RC), Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 158077, Location C19.2.10R, File: LAN 1-7: 1951-1964, R. L. Westcott, NC Gatooma, 18th January 1962.

²³¹ NAZ (RC), Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 158077, Location C19.2.10R, File: LAN 1-7: 1951-1964, G. A. Barlow, ANC Gatooma, to T. J. Rorke, Doreen's Pride Ranch, Gatooma, 19th February, 1957.

²³² NAZ (RC), Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 158077, Location C19.2.10R, File: LAN 1-7: 1951-1964, ANC Gatooma, G. A. Barlow, 15th April 1957.

Cases of stiff resistance against eviction were reported to the British South Africa Police (BSAP). For instance, the following case was tabled by the ANC Gatooma for investigation by the Member-in-Charge, Battlefields, in terms of the alleged breach of the Land Apportionment Act 1941(Rhodesdale):

In 1950 a large number of natives living on Rhodesdale, Selina Block, your area, moved to the Sanyati Reserve. A number moved on to neighbouring farms to avoid removal to the Reserve. I have recently [sent] two Messengers warning the remaining natives to move in terms of Proclamation No. 8/52. The Messengers report that a large number of natives who were living on Rhodesdale have moved with their cattle onto a farm owned by 'Torr' across the Ngezi River. This European may be Bartlett-Torr of Silver Star Ranch your area. The Messengers say these natives are not full time workers. There is no record of any Labour Agreement under the Land Apportionment Act in this office. Would you please investigate and prosecute if facts permit.²³³

Upon investigation, these allegations were categorically denied by Torr, whose full defence was:

I understand the nature of the enquiry, i.e. natives moving from Rhodesdale to my farm [Ranch] with their cattle etc and not working full time, and myself not having a Labour Agreement with them. Definitely no natives, to my knowledge have come from Rhodesdale to my farm as squatters. All the natives on my farm are signed on by me, and I give them full-time work. I came to Silver Star Ranch in February, 1947. There were three times as many natives squatting on the farm as there are now. Mr Nesbitt, the NC of Que Que interviewed these natives on the farm in October, 1947. Previous to this, these natives were working for me on a squatter basis, i.e. three months work, and three months off work. Mr Nesbitt gave them the choice of either becoming full time workers, or leaving the property. Two thirds of these natives left for Mzingwa [Mudzingwa] area, Rhodesdale, and the Goldfields Area. The remainder stayed on as permanent workers. They have been given the privilege of working some of my land for themselves, providing that the land was protected in conservation. They have been allowed to keep cattle but on a much reduced scale. With the quarantine of Epivagenitis on my farm at the moment, I have been unable to carry out the destocking, excepting for the male oxen stock. Since 1947, no natives have been allowed on this farm from Rhodesdale. If any have arrived here, I am unaware of it. All the natives on Silver Star Ranch were taken over in 1947, February, in similar squatter agreement as the Rhodesdale Squatter Agreement.²³⁴

²³³ NAZ (RC), Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 158077, Location C19.2.10R, File: LAN 1-7: 1951-1964, S. F. Finnis, ANC Gatooma to Member-in-Charge, B.S.A. Police Battlefields, 4th March 1952.

²³⁴ NAZ (RC), Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 158077, Location C19.2.10R, File: LAN 1-7: 1951-1964, Eric Bartlett-Torr, Owner of Silver Star Ranch, Ngesi, in his response to the investigation by the Member-

After investigation and on the basis of Torr's polished defence, the Member-in-Charge, Battlefields, had no option but to exonerate him which illustrated the flimsy grounds on which allegations were made against this farmer. Clearly there were numerous deficiencies and frailties in the manner the investigation had been conducted, thereby forcing the Member-in-Charge to conclude that: " 'Torr's' account was correct i.e. that no natives have moved from the Rhodesdale area to his farm to avoid going to the Sanyati Reserve and that the natives at present on his farm have been there since he took over the farm in 1947, and that they are all working full time for him." ²³⁵

However, given the need for labour on big ranches such as Silver Star, Bartlett-Torr's response to the allegations of harbouring squatters can be interpreted in two ways. On the one hand, being near to the Mondoro Reserve, it is possible Bartlett-Torr received plenty of labour whenever he needed it and so might not have desperately required the labour of the Rhodesdale evictees. On the other, it is likely that he was conniving with the squatters so that he would retain their labour for his seasonal requirements.

Although exact figures have not been provided, by 1953 it appears, the Sanyati Reserve was already over-crowded and the Office of the ANC Gatooma was making frantic efforts to block new claims to land by people who felt they had a right to move to the district consequent to the move from Rhodesdale to Sanyati. People needed to be registered by the ANC Que Que at the time of the movement in order to be legitimate claimants to land in Sanyati or thereafter, Que Que needed to confirm them as authentic "left overs from mass movements." ²³⁶ The ANC Gatooma was particularly querying the authenticity of a certain Matembo-Sayimoni (registration No. J 2022, Que Que) and Shebeni's (No. X 3185 Que Que) claims because their names did not appear on his lists and thus constituted what were deemed "Irregular removals to Sanyati." Accordingly, the ANC issued an injunction to prosecute those people who had moved without the express permission of the ANC for Que Que. It read: "Matembo-Sayimoni and Shebeni are no doubt exploiting a situation which has not been buttoned up properly. All Natives that do not appear on our lists should be prosecuted if they have moved without any advice of removal from Que Que." ²³⁷ However, it is probable that the two might have gone to work (wage employment) and were not registered at the time of the movement and, incidentally, had lost their right to land ownership in the Reserve. In subsequent correspondence with Que Que, the ANC Gatooma was prepared to reconsider Matembo and Shebeni's case only if it was verified that their names existed on the original Rhodesdale list of evictees to Sanyati arguing that: "I have closed the general list and ... If these persons should have been included in the Rhodesdale lot I can accept them but if they are from other kraals I cannot do so, as this would only start a series of unauthorised movements for the future." ²³⁸ This, in essence, signified that, officially, the movement of

in-Charge, Battlefields, 18/3/52.

²³⁵ NAZ (RC), Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 158077, Location C19.2.10R, File: LAN 1-7: 1951-1964, The Member-in-Charge, Battlefields, to the ANC Gatooma, 26/3/52.

²³⁶ NAZ (RC), Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 158077, Location C19.2.10R, File: LAN 1-7: 1951-1964, ANC Gatooma to Land Development Officer (LDO), Sanyati, 3rd March 1953.

²³⁷ *Ibid.*

²³⁸ NAZ (RC), Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 158077, Location C19.2.10R, File: LAN 1-7: 1951-1964,

people to the Sanyati Reserve had been completed and that any new entrants would be a further strain to the existing carrying capacity of the area.

According to Headman Two Macleod Lozane (a former Primary School teacher), the evictions of thousands of Africans from Rhodesdale to various rural destinations throughout pre-independence Zimbabwe were “more of a political move than anything else”²³⁹ and were justified from a colonialist standpoint. M. Yudelman has argued that between 1941 and 1948 the African population in Rhodesia increased by more than 700 000 persons, while the area apportioned for their use had remained almost unchanged.²⁴⁰ The land position in the Native Reserves²⁴¹ in the post-war period was such that 7 118 200 additional acres of land were urgently required for an estimated 71 182 African families, who lived outside the Native Reserves, on Alienated Land and Crown Land designated as European Land, Forest Areas and Unassigned Areas. The last straw was when Africans residing in these areas were required, much to their chagrin, to move out as a result of the implementation of the “politically-driven” Land Apportionment Act of 1930. The Act legalised the division of the country’s land resources between black and white.²⁴² This marked a major turning point in colonial Zimbabwe’s racialised regime which in all respects became highly segregationist in outlook. Table 2.1 illustrates the categories into which the country was divided and the area in acres occupied by each category.

ANC Gatooma to the ANC Que Que, 13th March 1953. See also NAZ (RC), Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 158077, Location C19.2.10R, File: LAN 1-7: 1951-1964, S. F. Finnis, ANC Gatooma to the Director of Native Agriculture, Causeway, Salisbury, 29th October, 1952.

²³⁹ Headman Lozane, Personal Interview.

²⁴⁰ M. Yudelman, *Africans on the Land: Problems of African Agricultural Development in Southern, Central and East Africa, with Special Reference to Southern Rhodesia*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1964), 74.

²⁴¹ African areas were known as Native Reserves until 1962. Since 1962 they were renamed Tribal Trust Lands (TTLs). At independence in 1980 they were re-christianed Communal Lands. These were areas where Africans were considered to live according to their own “customs” under their traditional leaders. See A. K. H. Weinrich, *Chiefs and Councils in Rhodesia: Transition from Patriarchal to Bureaucratic Power*, (Columbia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 1971), 5.

²⁴² NAZ, S1194/190/1: Land for Native Occupation 1946-47, Reports of the Ad-Hoc Committee.

Table 2.1: Land Apportionment in Rhodesia, 1930 ²⁴³

Land Category	Area (acres)	% of total area
Natives Reserves	21 600 000	22.4
Native Purchase Areas	7 464 566	7.7
European Area	49 149 174	50.8
Undetermined Area	88 540	0.1
Forest Area	590 500	0.6
Unassigned Area	17 790 300	18.4

Source: G. Kay, *Rhodesia: A Human Geography*, 51.

The influx of white immigrants from Europe in the post-war period necessitated the evictions of a large number of Africans from Crown and Alienated Lands. To make way for the new immigrants, recourse was made to the policy of eviction of Africans from land so designated as Crown Land by the LAA, which, for security reasons lay somewhat dormant during the war years. The decade 1945-1955 saw at least 100 000 African “squatters” all over the colony being moved, often forcibly into overcrowded “reserves” and the inhospitable and tsetsefly-ridden Unassigned Areas. ²⁴⁴ Despite efforts by the Department of Conservation to get rid of the tsetse fly menace through massive spraying campaigns and the engagement of “magotchas” ²⁴⁵ (tsetse fly hunters), ²⁴⁶ the tsetsefly was never completely eradicated. Notwithstanding this, many people were still moved and resettled in the small and overcrowded Sanyati Reserve under the NLHA.

²⁴³ These categories were defined as follows: European Area consisted of European owned land; Native Reserves were those enshrined in the Constitution and within which land was allocated according to African customary laws; Native Purchase Area was reserved for acquisition as farms for individual Africans and was regarded as compensation for the loss of the right to purchase farmland anywhere else in the country; Unassigned Area consisted of European – owned land, which if the owners so wished, could be transferred to Africans and thereafter would become a permanent part of the Native Purchase Area. The Forest Area consisted of land set aside for development as Forest Area Reserves, legally it lay within the European Area. The Unassigned Area consisted of poor, inhospitable land left under the unfettered jurisdiction of the state to be distributed at a later date among any of the other categories. See George Kay, *Rhodesia: A Human Geography*, (London: University of London Press, 1970), 51 and *Second Report of the Select Committee on Resettlement of Natives*, Salisbury: Government Printers, (1961), 15.

²⁴⁴ Palmer, *Land and Racial Domination*, 243.

²⁴⁵ “Magotchas” was a term that was used in the context of the massive and intensive tsetse campaigns mounted by the government in the 1940s and 1950s to describe the tsetse fly hunters and the ruthless way they killed these insects. The method of killing tsetse fly by spraying their host (cattle) with toxic chemicals, which killed them instantly, was synonymous in local circles with literally butchering, torching, “braaing” or roasting (“kugocha” in Shona) these marauding pests/creatures.

²⁴⁶ NAZ, MF 557; Mashonaland South Province: Gatooma District (Ministry of Internal Affairs), 6; See also NAZ, MF 707; Mashonaland South Province: Gatooma District (Ministry of Internal Affairs); or NAZ, S2929/1/9: Sanyati Tribal Trust Land: Gatooma District (Ministry of Internal Affairs).

The Act, which was a key feature of the 1950s, was justified on the grounds that, by the end of the Second World War, Southern Rhodesia's "Native Reserves" were seriously overcrowded and overstocked. An official investigation found that more than half of the so-called reserves were overstocked with cattle by 145%. The government responded to this situation by publishing a Native Reserves Land Utilisation and Good Husbandry Bill in 1948 which was later promulgated as the NLHA. Its stated objectives were wide-ranging: "to provide for the control of the utilisation and allocation of land occupied by natives; and to ensure its efficient use for agricultural purposes; and to require natives to perform labour for conserving natural resources and for promoting good husbandry."²⁴⁷ Phimister states that, the Act's more specific objectives were:

- (i) to provide for a reasonable standard of good husbandry and for the protection of natural resources by all Africans using the land;
- (ii) to limit the number of stock in any area to its carrying capacity, and, as far as practicable, to relate stock holding to arable land holding as a means of improving farming practice;
- (iii) to allocate individual rights in arable areas and in communal grazing areas as far as was possible in terms of economic units (See Table 2.2), and, where this was not possible due to over-population, to prevent further fragmentation and to provide for the aggregation of fragmentary holdings in economic units;
- (iv) to provide individual security of tenure of arable land and individual security of grazing rights in communal grazing areas; and
- (v) to provide for the setting aside of land for towns and business centers²⁴⁸ in the African areas.²⁴⁹

²⁴⁷ Southern Rhodesia, *Native Land Husbandry Act*, No. 52, 1951, Salisbury, 1952, 893 cited in Phimister, "Rethinking the Reserves," 225-226.

²⁴⁸ This was one of the earliest hints of the government's desire to eventually adopt the Growth Point Policy which culminated in the establishment, in 1974, of the Sanyati Growth Point or Business Centre. It was an irrigation-based Growth Point. A preliminary evaluation of the origins and effects of a regional policy commonly known as the growth point strategy in Zimbabwe has been presented in Tshenesani Nigel Tapela's 1985 study. He discusses this policy in terms of its contribution to both rural development and decentralised regional development. The period 1956-1975 marked the height of the "Decentralisation Policy" Debate in Zimbabwe. Chapter 2 of my thesis will address both the theoretical and practical basis of the growth point policy in Sanyati. For further discussion of this policy see Tshenesani Nigel Tapela "Growth Points and Regional Development in Zimbabwe: A Case Study of Sanyati, MA dissertation, Montreal: School of Urban Planning, McGill University, October, 1985, 1-105, and K. H. Wekwete, "Growth Centre Policy in Zimbabwe: With Special Reference to District Service Centres" in N. D. Mutizwa-Mangiza and A. H. J. Helmsing (eds.), *Rural Development and Planning in Zimbabwe*, (USA: Avebury, 1991), 187-221.

²⁴⁹ Phimister, "Rethinking the Reserves," 226.

Table 2.2: Recommended allocations of land and stock under the Land Husbandry Act.²⁵⁰

Annual Average Rainfall (inches)	Full Standard Holding		Acres of Grazing land per animal unit	Approx. total acreage per full holding
	Acres of arable land	Numbers of Animal Units*		
28 or over	8	6	10	68
24 – 28	8	6	12	80
20 – 24	13	10	15	160
16 – 20	12	15	25	390
Below 16	15	20	30	620

Source: Adopted from M. Yudelman, *Africans on the Land*, 120-1 and B. Floyd, *Changing Patterns of African Land Use*, 140-3.

Essentially the Act was an attempt to attack the multifarious problems of erosion, land fragmentation and tenure, migratory labour and African agricultural traditions. Under this Act a “standard area” or “economic unit” of land was allocated per family unit (comprising a man, his wife and three children) by the NC under the direction of the CNC as primary allocative authorities, thus effectively usurping the right to allocate land by traditional chiefs. A “standard” or “economic” unit was defined by the architects of the Act as “a piece of land which, if farmed according to recommended procedures laid down by the Department of Native Agriculture, would serve not only to support the holder and his family at subsistence level, but was expected to be capable of producing a crop surplus for sale.” As illustrated in Table 2.2 above, the size of the “standard” unit was fixed according to the climatic and ecological configuration of each area, for instance, in high rainfall regions the standard holding was 6 acres, ranging to 15 acres in the driest areas. Ideally, a holding in the 28-inch rainfall area would have 8 acres of cultivable land. The producer’s stock would require 10 acres of grazing land per animal unit. His total requirement would be 68 acres, with the 8 acres of arable land to be farmed under crop rotation, combining a 2-acre fallow with grain and leguminous crops, which, if supplemented by the manure from cattle, would preserve the nitrogen in the soil. The position adopted by the Act has been backed by Ian Douglas Smith, the former Prime Minister of Rhodesia, who has pointed out that the original type of agriculture in the country was what he called “peasant farming,” arguing that in the pre-colonial period “The people [Africans] ... didn’t know anything about modern cropping, the use of manure and artificial fertilisers i.e. they didn’t understand scientific farming, for example, green cropping, crop rotation and the use of legumes.”²⁵¹ This stipulation in the Act was aimed at intensifying production by changing what was perceived as the haphazard

²⁵⁰ Cited in Phimister, “Rethinking the Reserves,” 227. N.B. The size of holdings was to depend on climatic conditions. More precisely, the size of “a full standard holding” depended on the size of the arable holding, and the amount of grazing land needed to maintain the livestock. All of these factors were to be adjusted according to rainfall conditions.

* This represented one large animal (for example, a cow) or two sheep, or three pigs, or the equivalent in other animals.

²⁵¹ Ian Douglas Smith, Personal Interview.

system of “shifting” cultivation (referred to as “slash-and-burn” agriculture or chitemene in parts of Northern Zambia), to one more suited to a sedentary type of agriculture.²⁵²

The NLHA was also intended to terminate what were perceived as “traditional” practices of land tenure by introducing “individual ownership.” The architects of the Act hoped that the concept of ownership would help reduce land fragmentation and give incentives to the peasant farmer to undertake improvements on the farm which in turn would assist in checking soil erosion thereby increasing agricultural productivity. Furthermore, the colonial state attempted to systematise land distribution in order to check African competition against white settler farmers while at the same time injecting some sort of egalitarianism which was believed to be an aspect of African “traditional” land holding practice.

It is important to note that, while the Act sought to equalise land holdings for the majority of rural households, it also created conditions for the emergence of a small class of large land holders. In Sanyati, these were among the many peasants who had challenged the 8-acre allocations per household. Given the very low rainfall it received and that it was not well endowed with fertile soils, the allocation of 8 acres per family was staunchly resisted. This land area was too small to sustain a family and their animal possessions neither was it sufficient to produce a saleable surplus as stipulated in the Act. Sanyati, being a land-scarce area compared to Gokwe was, therefore, more prone to erosion and an organised pattern of migratory labour.

It seems ironic, according to Holleman, that the primary motivation behind the NLHA that the land could not continue to cater for the subsistence needs of an ever-growing rural population had in fact long since been accepted by rural communities themselves. In colonial Zimbabwe evidence abounds that since the turn of the century, the peasant economy had ceased to depend entirely on agriculture, in that most cash requirements derived from wage incomes outside it. For Holleman, the stage had long since been reached whereby a large proportion of the average rural household income derived not from agriculture but from migrant labour.²⁵³ This shift in economic orientation by the migrant labourers was a result of the despicable size of household land holdings in Sanyati reserve. After land allocation under the NLHA, as revealed by the *Mangwende Commission of Inquiry* of 1961, although some landholders cultivated 10 or more acres, many households actually cultivated much less than the standard allocation of 6 to 8 acres. In areas of excessive land pressure such as Sanyati the restricted size of arable lots per family is attributable to the scarcity of available land. Thus, in Sanyati, where the land was less available than in neighbouring Gokwe, it seemed appropriate for the officials to apply the “tight formula” under the NLHA allocations as it was a question of survival for the landless peasants or those whose economic needs were not fully catered for by the restricted 8-acre allocations, to indulge in labour migrancy and other off-farm activities.

²⁵² Yudelmann, *Africans on the Land*, 121, cited in Nyambara, “A History of Land Acquisition in Gokwe,” 77. N.B. The chitemene system is discussed in greater detail in A. Roberts, *A History of Zambia*, (London: Heinemann, 1976), 8 and 87.

²⁵³ Holleman, *Chief, Council and Commissioner*, 63.

As will be demonstrated in this chapter, despite its perceived suitability to the Sanyati situation, the Act still engendered forms of resistance hitherto unknown since the passage of the LAA which preceded it. One of the stipulations of the NLHA was that, for one to be registered as a farming right holder, one had to be a cultivator of land in the area concerned on the date selected for implementation of the Act. As a result, many migrants who were absent at the time the allocations were made were simply not considered, and a considerable portion of the recognised rural village membership was deprived of its basic right to land. According to Simon C. Pazvakavambwa, in 1950, land was allocated in Sanyati on the basis of three principles; first, for settlement purposes; second, for cultivation and, third, for despasting stock or grazing purposes. These were self-contained units allocated on a “stand alone basis” (i.e. individual allocation).²⁵⁴ However, these allocations did not anticipate three things. Firstly, that an increase in population would lead to a sub-division of the initial allocated land for cultivation. Since sons of “immigrant” farmers were not allocated land they encroached onto grazing areas or self-allocated themselves land, thereby reducing land for grazing. Secondly, it was not anticipated that there would be an increase in livestock because once a farmer got his allocation he would parcel out pieces of land to his sons. The sons would also acquire their own beasts and this had a multiplier effect. Destocking was a result of this lack of anticipation on the part of the settler government. Thirdly, the contribution of the urban economy to the rural economy through transfers was not considered. Because sons and daughters of communal farmers were not guaranteed life in the towns and mines, their only form of security was to invest in cattle in anticipation of retirement. This investment drive in cattle caused levels of off-take²⁵⁵ to remain very low (around 3%) against an increasing livestock population.²⁵⁶ Regarding the third point, the thinking of those who designed the NLHA was clearly spelt out by the Under Secretary in the Department of Lands and Agriculture when he remarked that “If a native enters a trade, such as shoemaking, for instance, and becomes industrialised he should not retain the right to land in the reserves ... he is either a tradesman or a peasant farmer and should not be both. If he hankers after land, he should purchase land in the Native Purchase Area or a plot in a semi-urban area.”²⁵⁷

In 1947 the CNC was even more emphatic when he remarked that “Once a final allocation of land [has been made], the Native will either become a peasant farmer only, adopting proper agricultural and soil conservation methods, or become an industrialised worker with his tentacles pulled out of the soil.”²⁵⁸ Clearly, one of the major aims of this

²⁵⁴ S. C. Pazvakavambwa, (Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Lands, Land Reform and Resettlement, Office of the President and Cabinet), Personal Interview, Makombe Government Complex, Harare, 15th November 2004.

²⁵⁵ Levels of off-take are measured in terms of slaughters that take place or the amount of sales outside the region (external disposals) including local slaughter. Involuntary off-take can take place due to disease outbreak and other factors, but anything that reduces the number of cattle through some managed process is called off-take.

²⁵⁶ Pazvakavambwa, Personal Interview.

²⁵⁷ NAZ, S1194/190/1, Under Secretary, Department of Lands and Agriculture to Secretary, Department of Lands and Agriculture, 3 April 1947.

²⁵⁸ Report of the Secretary for Native Affairs, CNC and Director of Native Development for the year

policy was to limit the number of people allowed to farm in the reserves. In fact, in post-war Southern Rhodesia where the relatively advanced urban sector demanded more African labour, senior civil servants in the government in particular were envisioning “stabilised” proletarian labour, whereby “an increasing number will become permanently divorced from the land” and “find a livelihood in the European areas.”²⁵⁹ As Frederick Cooper has recently pointed out, the provision of housing for urban African labour was crucial to the stabilisation of labour.²⁶⁰ The conditions of Africans in the urban areas were, however, deplorable. Several official reports and commissions of inquiry published in the 1940s and 1950s on African urban conditions revealed the dire conditions under which urban African workers lived: inadequate and poor housing, discriminatory legislation, poor wages, insecure tenure and lack of social security for African urban workers, all which discouraged many urban workers from cutting their ties to the land.²⁶¹ When the NLHA was introduced, it was expected that the consequences would create a growing class who would have no rights to farming land in the “Reserves,” and who would seek alternative livelihoods in the urban areas, and that alternative means of security would be found. It was hoped that the increasing industrialisation and economic opportunity in the urban areas would provide for this, but it did not.²⁶²

Nevertheless, confidence returned at the start of Federation. The expansion in the economy which followed the Federation of Southern Rhodesia with Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland in 1953, fully justified this hope. Secondary industry was booming. An additional boost was provided by the 1955 trade agreement with Pretoria which significantly increased the degree of protection provided for local industrialists.²⁶³ Nevertheless, discussion in Cabinet in the same year was dominated by the pros and cons of speeding up implementation of the NLHA, hence it focused much more on problems in the “reserves” than on opportunities created by secondary industry.²⁶⁴ In the years up to 1958, the opportunities for employment of Africans in the urban industrial centres were in excess of the number of school leavers, and the population in the reserves was relatively stabilised. However, from 1958 the situation began to change as political uncertainties grew regarding the future of the Federation. In 1960, the number of school leavers began to exceed the number of openings for work.²⁶⁵ The Rhodesian economy experienced an economic slump and many young men could not secure employment. Faced with unemployment in the towns, and the absence of adequate social security

ending 1946, 2.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁰ Frederick Cooper, *Decolonization and African Society: The Labour Question in French and British Africa*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 335-336.

²⁶¹ See Report on a Survey of Urban African Conditions in Southern Rhodesia by Percy Ibbotson, Bulawayo, 1943; Edward Batson, *The Poverty Datum Line in Salisbury*, Cape Town, 1945; Report of the Plewman Urban African Affairs Commission, 1958 cited in Nyambara, “A History of Land Acquisition in Gokwe,” 118.

²⁶² Report of the Secretary for Internal Affairs for the year 1962/63, 11.

²⁶³ South African State Archives, Pretoria, HEN 710 Vol. 3896, High Commissioner, Salisbury, to Secretary for External Affairs, Pretoria, 8 December 1954; Cape Argus, 7 July 1955 cited in Phimister, “Rethinking the Reserves,” 232.

²⁶⁴ Todd Papers, Cabinet Minutes, 6 May 1955 cited in Phimister, “Rethinking the Reserves,” 232.

²⁶⁵ Gloria C. Passmore, *The National Policy of Community Development in Rhodesia with Special Reference to Local Government in the African Rural Areas*, (Salisbury: University of Rhodesia, 1972), 30.

there, many young men were thrust back to the only form of security they knew – a piece of land in the “reserves.” Yet, they were denied that security.²⁶⁶

In these circumstances, it is no wonder that strong resentment to the Act stemmed from the younger generation who did not qualify for initial rights to land, and for whom there was no land available to enable such rights to be granted. For the African nationalist groups, according to George Nyandoro, the Secretary General of the African National Congress (ANC), the NLHA “has been the best recruiter Congress has ever had,” and the nationalists drew much of their support from young urban workers rendered landless by the Act.²⁶⁷ In fact, opposition to the Act was not only confined to the landless young men, it was equally strong among rural accumulators who saw the Act as a constraint on their accumulation. These rural accumulators took over the leadership of rural opposition to the colonial administration. They joined the ANC and became some of its staunchest supporters. In Makoni district, Ranger found out that the key leaders and opponents of the colonial administration in the aftermath of the NLHA were not landless young men, but members of the chiefly family, headmen and male peasant elders over 40 years. One of Ranger’s informants told him that “... You will find these [elders] on Kraalhead dares, school Boards, church leaders, etc ... You will find the over 40s have a big influence for they are usually the ones with land, house and cattle.”²⁶⁸ No matter how active the young men may have been in the nationalist parties, Ranger argues that the core of peasant radical nationalism in Makoni were the resident elders, who were determined to retain their hold on large plots. Chief Wozhele together with his royal lineage were not prepared to give up the practice of overploughing because in Rhodesdale they cultivated fields of up to 40 acres which was five times the standard allocation in Sanyati. In an interview, he confessed that “people disliked the NLHA because they were used previously to a life of no control.”²⁶⁹ Despite the strictures imposed by the Act, Ndaba Wozhele and his kinship group, Mudzingwa, Tiki, Vere, Sifo, Ngazimbi and Mazivanhanga clung on to their abnormally extended plots and remained some of the largest cattle owners in the area.

It can be argued that chiefly lineages and resident male elders resisted the NLHA because the Act rendered them powerless in the allocation of land since their cherished prerogative to distribute or redistribute land among their subjects had been usurped. Norma Kriger notes that “Loss of the right to allocate land so outraged chiefs in the early 1950s it looked as if they and the nationalists would forge a lasting alliance.”²⁷⁰ Phimister similarly argues that

²⁶⁶ Duggan, “The Native Land Husbandry Act”; Phimister, “Rethinking the Reserves”; Report of the Secretary for Native Affairs for 1962/63.

²⁶⁷ Ken Brown, *Land in Southern Rhodesia*, (London: The African Bureau, 1959), 2.

²⁶⁸ Ranger, *Peasant Consciousness*, 163.

²⁶⁹ Chief M. T. Wozhele, Personal Interview, Chief’s Court, “Old Council”/ Wozhele Business Centre, Sanyati, 17th October 2004. During this interview, the Chief was ably assisted by Headman Samson Mudzingwa and Maunganidze Nyahwa (all members of his court).

²⁷⁰ Norma Kriger, *Zimbabwe’s Guerrilla War: Peasant Voices*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 67. See also POZ Library, FR 641 *Report of the Commission of Inquiry into Discontent in the Mangwende Reserve (The Mangwende Commission)*, 1961, 1-202.

alienated and embittered by the attempts of successive settler regimes to wrest control over the dynamics of rural accumulation from their grasp, a significant number of richer peasants turned away from cooperation with government agencies to embrace nationalist politics. It was the grievances and hopes of ‘the 30 per cent better-off’ African producers that crucially shaped both opposition to the NLHA and the kind of nationalism which emerged at the end of the 1950s and the beginning of the 1960s.²⁷¹

It appears, therefore, that African nationalism in colonial Zimbabwe in the 1950s and early 1960s exhibited tendencies towards solidarity for a common cause between landless young men, elders and local leaders and rural accumulators alike. This apparent solidarity across generational and class lines was, however, to be short-lived. When the guerrilla war intensified from the mid-1970s, there developed a significant shift in rural alliance from solidarity for a common cause to divisions clearly along generational, class and gender lines. These issues will be explored further in chapter four.

Thus, the application of the NLHA evoked one of the greatest forms of resistance from rural Sanyati, which, among other things, forced the colonial state to suspend the implementation of some of the most controversial provisions of the Act especially the new principle of individual farming and grazing rights which was in conflict with old concepts regarding the security of rural tenure; and the haste as well as the totalitarian manner in which the Act was implemented particularly during the “speed-up” period from 1956 to 1961.²⁷² According to Holleman, the Act became one of the most contentious measures passed by the colonial parliament and a clear target for bitter attack and resentment by the Africans. He argues that the Act faced stiff opposition because it was “discriminatory and restrictive and agrarian and therefore became almost inevitably associated with the Land Apportionment Act (1930), one of the most hated symbols of white authoritarianism and exclusiveness to the African.”²⁷³

As already noted, Holleman has revealed that many young males who were away or absent performing migrant labour for periods ranging from a few months to several years were not considered for land allocation under the NLHA.²⁷⁴ This stipulation in the Act, “though logical from the legislator’s point of view, was often misunderstood and caused hardship and widespread resentment in the African communities. The individual claims to farming rights were to be based on actual occupation (‘lawful cultivation’) at an arbitrarily appointed date line.” Such a stipulation was completely “foreign and wholly irrelevant to land rights in indigenous society, which are based on membership of the local communities, a membership not affected by a person’s temporary absence on migrant labour”²⁷⁵ Holleman further argues that conflict became inevitable when, upon the implementation of the NLHA, “the statutory requirements of security of tenure deprived a considerable portion of the recognized rural village membership of what it had

²⁷¹ Phimister, “Rethinking the Reserves,” 239.

²⁷² Holleman, *Chief, Council and Commissioner*, 56.

²⁷³ *Ibid.*, 61.

²⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 37.

²⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 65.

always believed to be its basic right to land. Among these, many of whom were young migrant wage earners preparing for a married rural life, this sudden deprivation was likely to engender a feeling of insecurity and sense of injustice, which was not easily dispelled by arguments, however pertinent, of an economic or legalistic nature.”²⁷⁶

Writings on migrant labour in Southern Africa suggest that labour migrants and their families regarded labour migrancy as a stage in a man’s life through which he hoped to accumulate wealth to invest in agriculture. In his influential work on migrant labour in Lesotho, Colin Murray has argued that “the paradigm of the successful migrant career for a man is to establish his own household and to build up a capital base, through the acquisition of land, livestock and equipment, to enable him to retire from migrant labour and to maintain an independent livelihood at home.”²⁷⁷ The case of C. L. Muzondo of Mhondoro Gavunga, Gatooma, who worked for Union Wide Aid Services, Johannesburg, South Africa (SA) can be used to illustrate how the NLHA deprived migrant workers of land. After discovering that the NC Gatooma (G. A. Barlow) had sub-divided his allocation so that other people could occupy certain portions of it, out of distress, he requested his employers to approach the NC’s office on his behalf to find out the reason for this sub-division.²⁷⁸ In spite of the employers’ intervention, the NC remained adamant arguing that Muzondo had purchased the piece of land in question from a person who had moved to Northern Rhodesia and that the man who had sold it to him had no right to do so. Continuing his argument, Barlow said “prior to the implementation of the Native Land Husbandry Act, the land was held by Natives in Native Reserves under communal tenure” but since the implementation of the Act “certain land previously under cultivation [had] to be excluded from arable blocks by reason of conservation hazards and for other reasons,” so it was not possible for Muzondo’s original allocation to be allowed to remain intact.²⁷⁹ According to Wozhele, sometimes land belonging to urban workers was encroached upon by other land-hungry peasants and indeed more encroachments occurred if the rightful owners did not challenge these encroachments.²⁸⁰ By denying land in the “Reserves” to young men who were performing migrant labour, the NLHA stifled the ambition of the young men to establish their own independent households and to invest in agriculture.

The contradiction of implementation:-

The settling of “immigrants” in Sanyati revealed numerous contradictions in the manner in which the exercise was going to be implemented on the ground. It was one thing to be a local officer given the task of bringing about its practical realisation and quite another

²⁷⁶ Holleman, *Chief, Council and Commissioner*, 66.

²⁷⁷ Colin Murray, *Families Divided: The Impact of Migrant Labour in Lesotho*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 41.

²⁷⁸ NAZ (RC), Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 158077, Location C19.2.10R, File: LAN 9 Sanyati and Ngezi: 1951-1964, Onay, Union Wide Aid Services (Pvt) Ltd, Johannesburg (SA) to the Land Development Officer, Ngezi, Gatooma, 4th November, 1960.

²⁷⁹ NAZ (RC), Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 158077, Location C19.2.10R, File: LAN 9 Sanyati and Ngezi: 1951-1964, G. A. Barlow (NC Gatooma) to Messrs Union Wide Aid Services, Johannesburg, 14th November 1960.

²⁸⁰ Chief Wozhele, Personal Interview.

to be subjected to its draconian prescriptions. Concretely, the reordering of African rural life had first to accommodate the political imperative to put an end, once and for all, to relations of labour tenancy on white farmland that had persisted in spite of the intentions of the LAA. This meant finding land for the forced resettlement of Africans deemed to be “squatting” on land designated for African purchase or residing as labour tenants on farms managed by absentee European owners as other white farmers actually signed or entered into labour agreements designed to retain labour on the farm or mine. Among those targeted were some 2 000 families residing on the Rhodesdale Estates in the Midlands. It was the destiny of most of them to be forcibly removed to the sparsely populated, malarial and tsetse-infested lowland regions of Sanyati and Gokwe. Their movement and subsequent settlement in Sanyati engendered peculiar forms of differentiation in the sense that a good number of them possessed master farmer qualities and advanced crop and animal husbandry skills as they had been exposed to demonstrator advice earlier in the southern “reserves.” They were almost a *kulak* class unto themselves, although this was not the intention of the planners to create such an influential rural class.

The planning methodology used by those officials required to carry out the forced relocation exercise was not premised on a concern to reunite “tribal” subjects with their homeland but rather to balance population numbers with what they called the “carrying capacity of humans and stock” in order to optimise the productivity of the land base. In the event, however, a certain pragmatism, born of the political necessity to move persons as expeditiously as possible, overrode the positivist rationale governing the entire exercise.²⁸¹ “As it is politically important to get the Natives off Rhodesdale,” concluded a meeting of NCs and assorted agricultural officers after a discussion of stock numbers and land allocations in the Gokwe Special Native Area and Sanyati, “they must be got in with less stock.”²⁸²

It must be remembered that many of the technical personnel were indeed committed to finding the magic numbers that would ideally balance population with stock and grazing land, although many farmers owned more head of cattle than others and indeed than prescribed or stipulated under the NLHA, which was a manifestation of resistance to the Act. According to Lozane, his group was already rich from Rhodesdale. Mazivanhanga, for example, was one of the first people to own a store and a “lorry-bus.” He agrees that his family and that of Mazivanhanga’s were the first to use planters in Sanyati, signifying the advent of “progressive farmers.” “We [Madheruka] brought commerce to Sanyati,” Lozane says adding, with typically Madheruka arrogance:

There was no store. We were the first to own a bus [Mazivanhanga’s]. My father was the first lorry owner in Sanyati. We used to market our maize in Que Que [Kwekwe] from Rhodesdale and continued to do so in Gatooma after eviction to Sanyati. My father’s stores were used as the first grain holding centres [GMB depots] before crops could be transported to the major GMB storage facilities in Gatooma.²⁸³

²⁸¹ Worby, “Discipline Without Oppression,” 111.

²⁸² Ranger, *Peasant Consciousness*, 126-7.

²⁸³ Headman Lozane, Personal Interview.

Grain was delivered to Kadoma by the first transport owners who included Lozane, Chida Mukoki, Mazivanhanga and Tiki Wasarirevhu who also owned a store. In addition, they sold small grains like rapoko to the surrounding mines and traditional or opaque beer brewing companies like Chibuku Breweries. Lozane estimates that about three quarters of the Rhodesdale evictees possessed master farmer certificates hence they were more progressive than the locals whom they taught “modern” methods of farming.²⁸⁴ All these people also owned exceptionally large herds of cattle. Mazivanhanga seemed to have the largest herd estimated to be between 600 and 1 000, followed by Lozane with between 500 and 700. According to Lozane, “they evaded destocking by registering some of the cattle in the names of their children, their children’s wives [daughters-in-law] and other relatives (i.e. their nephews). The rest were registered in their own names.”²⁸⁵ Large cattle owners also adopted discrete methods to defeat the aims of the NLHA such as clandestinely dipping their cattle after the official dipping exercise had been conducted.²⁸⁶ In fact, A. A. Le Roux’s discovery confirms that cattle ownership had become more unequal: “As with crops two types of cattle owners had developed by 1960. One was a small-scale owner with a subsistence herd, the other was a large-scale owner who supplied the beef market.”²⁸⁷

In a more recent re-evaluation of the effects of the NLHA on rural communities, Ian Phimister has similarly noted that “far from the LHA checking entrepreneurial individualism, the wealth gap between these two classes of farmers [the rich and the poor] actually increased during the 1950s.”²⁸⁸ This had two major implications. Firstly, what this signified was that it was extremely difficult if not impossible to come up with the magic wand that would assist officials to achieve an equalisation of the livestock resources Sanyati peasants owned. Secondly, it reveals that rural differentiation as a process was probably beginning to astound those (including the colonial state) who often wanted to project African society as traditional and egalitarian. It is plausible to argue that, in relation to Sanyati, the homogenous backwardness, traditionalism and subsistence orientation of African peasant farmers is, therefore, a myth that should be deconstructed and disaggregated so that a new story of rural transformation is written.

Technical officials, though, were under immense pressure from central government to modify their recommendations in accordance with political imperatives driven by post-war growth: “The boom in European agriculture and especially in ranching and tobacco production” writes Ranger, “led to the great investment estates being broken up into workable farms or ranches for sale or lease to whites. The investment companies, which had for so long wanted to keep rent-paying Africans on their land, now wanted to clear them off it as rapidly as possible.”²⁸⁹

²⁸⁴ Headman Lozane, Personal Interview.

²⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁷ A. A. Le Roux, “A Survey of Proposals for the Development of African Agriculture in Rhodesia,” 39.

²⁸⁸ Phimister, “Rethinking the Reserves,” 237.

²⁸⁹ Ranger, *Peasant Consciousness*, 103.

The following section shows how the peculiar history and timing of Sanyati's exposure to the development protocols emanating from various government ministries and departments responsible for both the forced removals and the subsequent development and extension programmes in the 1950s and 1960s helps to account for the emergence of differentiation.

HISTORY OF DEVELOPMENT AND FEDERAL AGRICULTURAL POLICY: IRRIGATION STILL A PIPE DREAM (1952 – 1964)

Development protocols: Settlement and resistance to NLHA prescriptions:-

The period from the 1950s through to the 1960s is significant in the developmental history of this area. As final settlement was taking shape, a plethora of other state-initiated or sponsored imperatives were concurrently pursued. The pre-occupation with conservationism, the construction of roads, bridges, dams or weirs, dip tanks, rest houses for visiting officials, and the drilling of boreholes by the Irrigation Department also took centre stage. Development protocols were not formalised on the basis of negotiation with the people towards whom implementation was targeted, but these were dictated from above and resentment of state measures became inevitable.

In fact, development in Sanyati between the 1950s and the beginning of the 1960s was mainly undertaken within the context of the NLHA and Federal Government policies. In this period irrigation prospects were still remote. According to Phimister,

The 'long' 1950s mark a key period in the history of colonial Zimbabwe. They were a time of dramatic economic, social and political change, not least in the countryside where the state embarked on a hugely ambitious programme to recast the prevailing pattern of African agricultural practice. The rural linchpin on which everything turned was the Land Husbandry Act of 1951 ...²⁹⁰

The Federal Government invariably saw it fit to subordinate its agricultural programmes to those already spelt out by its predecessors in the NLHA. From a historical perspective, Sanyati clearly depicts a landscape which many years of state intervention have yielded. A close examination of the landscape between the modern town of Kadoma in the heartland of Zimbabwe's commercial farming Midlands and the communal lands (formerly "reserves") of Sanyati and Gokwe starkly reveals the sedimented layers of Zimbabwe's colonial and post-colonial experience with land allocation, population management and development. The entire area from the mining centres of Golden Valley and Patchway, stretching northwards into Sanyati is characterised by dense forest or shrubs and lacking evidence of human habitation. At long intervals, as Worby points out, this vista is punctuated by the raw appearance of newly cleared fields and clustered huts that signal the work of African farmers resettled there under government schemes that began shortly after independence in 1980.²⁹¹ Before that, these lands had been set aside for future settlement of European ranchers. Since settlement, fenced-off homesteads, each

²⁹⁰ Phimister, "Rethinking the Reserves," 225.

²⁹¹ Worby, "Discipline Without Oppression," 112.

with a carefully apportioned allotment of residential land and perhaps three or four round or rectangular huts – brick walls under asbestos roofs – are crowded among baobab and mango trees. These developments, to some extent, epitomised the level of rural differentiation that characterised Sanyati communal lands at that time. The widespread adoption of cotton, despite earlier resistance,²⁹² coupled with demonstrator advice, culminated in an increase in farm output, income and the number of affluent people in society. This wrought many changes to people’s tastes. Those who had become wealthy now preferred to buy clothes from retail shops in Kadoma and meat from nearby butcheries and built brick houses under asbestos roofing. This was in sharp contrast to the period when the people of this area wore animal skins as “... it is stated that long before the Europeans came the indigenous inhabitants wore skins. These skins were obtained from wild animals which [they] hunted or trapped.”²⁹³

Agricultural development and the seeds of resistance (1954-64):-

Once dumped into Sanyati the Rhodesdalites together with their hosts, the “Shangwe,” began summoning all their experience to survive in an otherwise inhospitable country. State assistance for these people was at best very minimal or at worst non-existent. Intervention by the State mainly favoured the advancement of settler hegemonic interests. In the first years of settlement these people grew crops but they were constrained by distance to the market. Under the circumstances, they were compelled to market their produce through African middlemen or trader-producers.²⁹⁴ However, the procedure for one to be a trader-producer was made tedious by the Grain Marketing Board (GMB). One had to formally apply to the Native Commissioner of the district in which one wished to be registered. The NC would provide the necessary application form and arrange an “educational test [interview]” for the would-be applicant. One of the most stringent conditions set by the Secretary for the GMB was that: “You are not permitted to buy, as a Trader-Producer, any maize or grain until you receive a Registration Certificate from this office.”²⁹⁵ Thus, Jaison of Karoi had to abide by these regulations in order to get a certificate and commence his trade in Sanyati. Invariably, it took long to procure this document.

By the mid-1950s Sanyati’s agricultural productivity far exceeded that of the settlement years culminating in the staging of the inaugural Agricultural Show in 1955 which was presided over by NC Staunton, better known by the locals as NC Msana.²⁹⁶ Peasant exhibition stands revealed the amount of development that had taken place in this sector

²⁹² Some indigenous people from both Sanyati and Gokwe resisted the introduction of cotton because it was not an edible crop and it did not provide any insurance against hunger.

²⁹³ NAZ, MF 557: Mashonaland South Province: Gatooma District (Ministry of Internal Affairs), 7.

²⁹⁴ Trevor V. Ncube in “Peasant Production and Marketing of Grain Crops in Zimbabwe 1890-1986: An Overview,” Henderson Seminar Paper (72), 1987 has produced a more comprehensive analysis of the operations of trader-producers in the country.

²⁹⁵ NAZ (RC), Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 22867, Location 18.5.3R, File: Cancelled Leases: Sanyati: Ngezi, Warnings Re: Buildings, pp. Secretary, Grain Marketing Board, Causeway, Salisbury to Native Jaison (X 8546 Urungwe, Madiro Stores, Karoi, 18th January 1954.

²⁹⁶ NAZ (RC), Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 158086, Location C19.6.7F, File: DC’s File, District Information 1961-1971, Includes Programme of Events 1890 to 1961, Calendar of Events: Sanyati TTL.

over a few years. Individual Madherukas' presentations attracted official attention. A sharp contrast could easily be drawn between the quality of their produce and that of the Shangwe, attesting to the differential crop and animal husbandry skills the two groups possessed. The Gatooma-Hartley Agricultural Show which was held on the 22nd and 23rd August 1958 further confirmed this agricultural developmental trend. At the invitation of the Gatooma-Hartley Show Society, the office of the NC Gatooma in co-operation with the Native Commissioner, Hartley, put on a display at this Show that advertised the splendid performance of Sanyati agriculture as well as other regions. Items on display at the show included specimens of maize, mhunga, rapoko, groundnuts and other crops grown in the Sanyati, Ngezi and Mondoro "Reserves." These were shown together with articles of sewing, handwork, carpentry, tinware and ornaments from these areas. The display was mainly illustrative and informative. As far as the NC Gatooma was concerned: "Together with a series of photographs showing all aspects of agricultural and development work in Native Areas and Reserves these [specimens] made an attractive and interesting stand" and consequently he thought that this item merited publication in the farmers magazine called *The Harvester*.²⁹⁷

At these Agricultural Shows where the adjudicators mainly judged the field crops and cattle, the presence of the broadcasting and film units helped to mark an "auspicious occasion." According to NC Barlow, the Show was primarily an agricultural affair in which Agricultural Demonstrators played the main role and school sports were merely incidental. The LDO only attended in an advisory capacity. Agricultural Shows encouraged competition among farmers. At these Shows farmers exhibited their cattle and crops and outstanding performers became recipients of a wide range of prizes canvassed by the LDO, Ronald R. Jack.²⁹⁸ The prizes which included scotch carts, ploughs, harrows and fertilisers, among others, were donated by corporate stakeholder companies like Windmill, the Zimbabwe Farmers Co-operative (ZFC), Pfizer and Rhodia (the biggest fertiliser producing company at that time).²⁹⁹

In addition to Agricultural Shows, "Field Days" marked an important occasion for the peasants to exhibit their knowledge and skills of farming. Field Days were hosted to show an exemplary farmer – one who had adopted agricultural methods well on his field from the demonstration plot.³⁰⁰ More importantly, after establishing demonstration plots under the close supervision of specialist advisors, these events were held in order to advertise the success of a crop (e.g. cotton) to the farming population at large in the district. For the Madheruka, Agricultural Field Days provided an opportunity to

²⁹⁷ NAZ (RC), Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 22867, Location 18.5.3R, File: AGR 2 - Agricultural Shows (1957-1958), G. A. Barlow (NC Gatooma) to the Chief Information Officer, Causeway, Salisbury, 28th August, 1958.

²⁹⁸ LDOs were responsible, inter alia, for pegging dams, weirs and instructed the building of contours. As liaison officers between the DC's office and grassroot, they designed and supervised agricultural activities. They carried out agricultural and livestock demonstration, which included supplying demonstration plot inputs e.g., seed, fertiliser, pesticides etc. On the whole, they were involved in monitoring developmental progress on the ground.

²⁹⁹ Tarisai E. Chikombingo, (Department of Agricultural Research and Extension/AREX Supervisor), Personal Interview, AREX Sanyati, 19th October 2004.

³⁰⁰ Chikombingo, Personal Interview.

acknowledge and publicise the model of “development” that these “immigrants” thought of themselves as having imported. In recognition of their social standing, Chiefs Wozhele and Neuso were invited to these Agricultural Shows and Field Days in ex-officio capacity.

Centralisation in Sanyati:-

Centralisation was introduced to deal with population pressure. In a Circular Minute No. 309 of 1952 by the Director of Native Agriculture, R. M. Davies, to all the Provincial Agriculturists (for Northern Mashonaland, Matabeleland, Midlands, Southern Mashonaland and Manicaland), it was stated that there were considerable increases in population in many already overpopulated “Reserves.” It was also noted that the arable-grazing ratio in overpopulated “Reserves” was unbalanced. It followed, therefore, that if more taxpayers were given new lands then the situation would be further aggravated. On the other hand, if additional land was cultivated (madiro) it meant that the original centralised blocks were extended and new land was cultivated which was unsuitable.³⁰¹

The NC was empowered to prohibit the cultivation of any new lands in cases where all the suitable arable land had already been occupied. According to the Director “if there is not strict control then when the Native Land Husbandry Act comes to be applied to a particular Reserve a very embarrassing situation will arise. In terms of the Act every native who is cultivating land at the date of proclamation must be granted a farming right for land in that Reserve.”³⁰² What was more worrying to the Administration was that, in reality, Africans were extending their cultivations outside the original demarcated lands [madiro]³⁰³ especially above and below the contours, on stream banks, grass strips, vleis and even into streambeds. As a result, the Director observed that “The whole value of centralisation is nullified if there is not vigilance and control.” He added, “It is the duty of Demonstrators and Land Development Officers to report any unauthorised encroachments to the Native Commissioner who can take effective action.”³⁰⁴ However, encroachments occurred but they were hidden from official view as a depleted staff of only two Demonstrators for the whole Sanyati Reserve was insufficient to ensure adequate control.

In Sanyati, centralisation which commenced in 1950 was completed in 1953 with an estimated arable area under cultivation of 4 576 (at 8 acres average per household) and an

³⁰¹ NAZ (RC), Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 158077, Location C19.2.10R, File: LAN 9 Sanyati and Ngezi: 1951-1964, “Circular No.309, Addendum ‘C’, 1952: Centralisation and Individual Allocation of Arable Land in Reserves and Special Native Areas,” R. M. Davies (Director of Native Agriculture) to all Provincial Agriculturists, 16th February, 1953, 1.

³⁰² *Ibid.*

³⁰³ Madiro was the practice of grabbing land by land-hungry peasants wherever it was available irrespective of whether it was in restricted areas e.g. grazing lots or not. In short this can be described as “freedom ploughing” i.e. ploughing anywhere one wished regardless of NLHA regulations.

³⁰⁴ NAZ (RC), Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 158077, Location C19.2.10R, File: LAN 9 Sanyati and Ngezi: 1951-1964, “Circular No.309, Addendum ‘C’, 1952: Centralisation and Individual Allocation of Arable Land in Reserves and Special Native Areas,” R. M. Davies (Director of Native Agriculture) to all Provincial Agriculturists, 16th February, 1953, 1.

estimated arable area of 20 000 acres which was not yet under cultivation.³⁰⁵ An estimated number of 572 cultivators were allocated land individually. There was no block allocation in 1953. New or abandoned lands were authorised by the ANC Gatooma and allocated by the LDO.³⁰⁶ It was noted by the ANC that 1 500 acres comprised flat land and required no protection. 700 acres required contour ridging and the balance required contour grass strips.³⁰⁷

In the ANC Gatooma's response to a questionnaire on the NLHA sent by the Administrative Officer, Land Husbandry Act, in the events leading to the implementation of the Act in Sanyati, it was noted that centralisation had been satisfactorily carried out by June 1954 "with minor adjustments in hand" and buffer stripping was about to be started.³⁰⁸ A census conducted in the "Reserve" in 1954 revealed that there was an estimated 850 landholders or stockowners cultivating an estimated 6 800 acres (8 acres standard right).³⁰⁹ After successfully overseeing the completion of centralisation, the ANC believed that the NLHA should be implemented within the next five years and not later. The reason he advanced for this was that "Many Natives were settled in this area [Sanyati] and the limiting factor is water. [And] with very good organization the settlement can be kept well in hand before harm is done."³¹⁰ At that time, there was one LDO, one Community Demonstrator and three Agricultural Demonstrators to spearhead or pioneer the implementation of the Act. According to the ANC, the Act had to be implemented with haste:

With the settlement of Native ex Rhodedale the lines [maraini] in the Sanyati Native Reserve has [sic] been well planned with the exception of a settlement along the Umnyati [sic] River which is being eliminated with the passage of time ... The immigrants are of a high order of intelligence and are co-operative. They will remain co-operative if we can introduce the provisions of the Land Husbandry Act now before the introduction means drastic destocking and other unpopular measures.³¹¹

Later developments as will be demonstrated below proved that this hope was presumptuous.

³⁰⁵ NAZ (RC), Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 158077, Location C19.2.10R, File: LAN 9 Sanyati and Ngezi: 1951-1964, "CNC Circular No. 309, Addendum 'C', 1952: Centralisation and Individual Allocation of Arable Land in Reserves and Special Native Areas," ANC Gatooma to the Provincial Agriculturist, Causeway, 1st May, 1953.

³⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁰⁸ NAZ (RC), Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 158086, Location C19.6.7F, File: DC's File, District Information 1961-1971, Includes Programme of Events 1890 to 1961, "Implementation of Parts II and III of the Native Land Husbandry Act, 1951 to Native Reserves and Special Native Areas: Questionnaire A - Sanyati Native Reserve," W. von Memerty (Administrative Officer, Land Husbandry Act - Department of Native Economic Development, Causeway) to the ANC Gatooma, 9th and 18th June, 1954, 1.

³⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

³¹⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹¹ *Ibid.*, 2.

Visit to Sanyati “Reserve” (1956):-

After his visit, it was believed by the Land Development Officer (Land Husbandry), R. R. Jack, that the implementation of the Land Husbandry Act would not be difficult in Sanyati “Reserve.” The ANC Gatooma was advised to apply for Proclamation as soon as possible so that the LDO would be able to complete his Initial Survey before going on leave in September [1956].³¹² The use of logs for the demarcation of lands was obviously unsuitable as these were so easily moved and were also subject to termite attack. A system of earth banks was worked out to demarcate the ends and sides of holdings as well as the grass strips between each area block.³¹³

According to the NC Gatooma, G. A. Barlow, land rights were not given in Sanyati “Reserve” under the Land Husbandry Act to people who were not ploughing land in 1956 [when the Act was implemented] and those under the age of 21 were not eligible to apply for land rights under the Act.³¹⁴ The seeds of future generational conflict seemed to have been sown at this stage as young land aspirants were deprived of land at a time when chiefs and their entourage (including their offspring) frequently flexed their social muscle to obtain land.

Chiefs who were loyal to the Administration obtained more land, which enhanced their wealth and ensured that their children and other relatives had access to land despite the restrictions imposed by the NLHA. When Chief Ndaba Wozhele applied for a farm in the Chenjiri Native Purchase Area (NPA), his application was accorded top priority because according to NC Barlow, “This man [was] a good chief, very co-operative with the administration and exercise[d] good control over his people.”³¹⁵ Based on this recommendation, the Secretary for Native Affairs did not hesitate to allocate Wozhele a farm in Chenjiri Division, Gatooma District. The Secretary also endorsed the NC’s submission that the Chief’s house in the Sanyati “Reserve” and its residential plot be regarded as a Chief’s Headquarters [used for his judicial and administrative duties] rather than a personal allocation.³¹⁶ His “Reserve” lands were allocated at his request to two of his sons. Subsequently, the Chief decided not to take up the Chenjiri farm, but sooner than later new land was block allocated to him by the NC. According to the NC, although a lot of stumping was required, Chief Wozhele “did not mind leaving his old lands since they had been allocated to his own family.”³¹⁷ The case of Ndaba illustrates how

³¹² NAZ (RC), Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 158077, Location C19.2.10R, File: LAN 9 Sanyati and Ngezi: 1951-1964, “Visit to Sanyati Reserve: 23rd to 27th April, 1956,” R. R. Jack (Land Development Officer, Land Husbandry, Office of the Provincial Agriculturist, Causeway) to the Provincial Agriculturist, the PNC and the ANC Gatooma, 30th April, 1956, 1.

³¹³ *Ibid.*

³¹⁴ NAZ (RC), Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 158077, Location C19.2.10R, File: LAN 9 Sanyati and Ngezi: 1951-1964, “Land rights – LHA,” G. A. Barlow (NC Gatooma), 8th July 1958.

³¹⁵ NAZ (RC), Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 158077, Location C19.2.10R, File: LAN 8, 1961-1964, “Holdings Applications and Approvals,” G. A. Barlow (NC Gatooma) to the PNC Mashonaland West, 29th June 1959.

³¹⁶ NAZ (RC), Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 158077, Location C19.2.10R, File: LAN 8, 1961-1964, “Holdings Applications and Approvals,” R. Howman for Secretary for Native Affairs, Causeway, Salisbury, to the PNC Mashonaland West, 23rd June, 1960.

³¹⁷ NAZ (RC), Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 158077, Location C19.2.10R, File: LAN 8, 1961-1964:

powerful people (i.e. the chiefly family) obtained more land and became rich rural entrepreneurs because of the additional farming and grazing rights they got.

In fact, Sanyati is one of the areas to which newcomers (Madherukas),³¹⁸ frustrated by land shortages and village centralisation in the south and south east of the colony, “came in search of land” in the 1950s. The Madherukas started cultivating fields which were conspicuously of irregular shape in relatively undulating topography. To the eye of the planner, the administrator and the extension agent, Sanyati lacks what James Scott has recently called “legibility”;³¹⁹ that is, it lacks the heavy markings on the landscape normally left behind by interventions of the modern, development state. Sanyati, like many parts of northwestern Zimbabwe in which indigenous people known as “Shangwe” until recently predominated, was touched only belatedly by “development.” Yet to mistake the absence of the formal signs of a modernised agrarian regime (fenced homesteads aligned along roads, contoured, orthogonal fields) for the absence of economic expansion, transformation and rural differentiation would be a serious error of judgement, for it is Sanyati, together with Gokwe, that has, to a greater extent, driven the emergence of the region as the foremost engine of cotton production and trade in all of post-independence Zimbabwe. Up to 2000 cotton was the mainstay of the Sanyati/Gokwe economy. Sanyati was undergoing great commercial transformation. Evidence of differentiation could not be disputed as differential land holdings, access to labour and cotton inputs were some of the bases of this process. Those farmers who embraced cotton and demonstrator advice early enough became distinct classes in their communities.

As already noted, the Sanyati Communal Land, once a malarial area with a foreboding presence of baboons, monkeys, leopards, hyenas, kudus, lions and elephants was densely populated with Africans forcibly resettled between 1950 and 1953 from farms reserved for European occupation on the Midlands.³²⁰ Settled under the nominal authority of their own headmen, these “immigrants” suffered the attention of the state at the high watermark of the NLHA and the compulsory forms of rationalised settlement and resource management that it authorised.

On the eve of the forced resettlement exercise, the 28 000 hectare Sanyati “reserve” was reported by the ANC to be “virtually uninhabited” despite the presence of a government recognised chief (Neuso). After much debate over the carrying capacity of the “reserve” in relation to the required number of people to be moved, it was decided that 356 families could be accommodated, each with an allocation of 8 acres of arable land and ten head of cattle.³²¹ However, due to various forms of manoeuvrings, some farmers came to own

Holdings Applications and Approvals, “Land Husbandry Act: Sanyati Reserve,” G. A. Barlow (NC Gatooma) to the PNC Mashonaland West, 6th August 1960.

³¹⁸ For another discussion of the immigrants or “Madheruka” from Rhodesdale see Worby, “Remaking Labour, Reshaping Identity” and Nyambara, “A History of Land Acquisition in Gokwe.”

³¹⁹ J. C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998).

³²⁰ By 1956, the 875 families settled in the Sanyati reserve had exceeded the estimated “carrying capacity” by over 30%. See Government of Southern Rhodesia, Annual Report of the Director of Native Agriculture, R. M. Davies, for the year 1956, Chart viii.

³²¹ NAZ, S160/DG/105/2/50 Gatooma district: sub-division: Sanyati reserve: 1950-1951, LDO Monthly

larger pieces of land and larger herds of cattle than their counterparts. Freedom ploughing which was the unilateral right peasants gave themselves to cultivate wherever they wanted was quite widespread in Madiro Village (Ward 23) headed by Morgan Gazi. The village was given this name because of the massive land-grabbing that went on in defiance of NLHA stipulations. Most reserve entrepreneurs in this area cultivated up to 15 acres. Gazi says, because he was a nephew of Chief Wozhele, he cultivated about 18 acres,³²² 10 acres more than the standard allocation, illustrating how rife and uncontrollable madiro ploughing was especially among people with chiefly connections (own emphasis). Accumulation of cattle by “reserve entrepreneurs” was not allowed. A ring or grazing permit which was issued in terms of Section 9 (2) of the NLHA No. 52 of 1951 entitled people to keep a maximum of between 10 and 20 head of cattle, but some enterprising peasants like Morgan Gazi’s uncle, Phillip Gazi, declared in 1952 that he had 10 head of cattle when in actual fact he had two. Over-declaring his herd gave him the leeway to increase his cattle herd later to a maximum of 10,³²³ thereby making a mockery of the NLHA’s checks and balances at the peak of destocking measures. As a dip tank officer at the time (a portfolio he held up to 1970 when he was promoted to become a dip supervisor until 1992), Morgan Gazi did not reveal this over-declaration to the white officials. Phillip Gazi, as a result, was issued with a grazing permit for the 10 head of cattle he purportedly held. Clearly, this was made possible with the connivance of his cousin who used his position to access more land and help conceal the number of newly born calves to protect other “reserve entrepreneurs” from destocking, thereby helping to blunt the state’s offensive. Differential land and livestock holdings illustrate that the state, to a large degree, had failed to eliminate social differentiation in the rural areas. The human targets of these calculations recall that they were “chased away” from their homes in Rhodesdale because whites wanted to farm there; some remember being taken “family by family,” while others say they were loaded into trucks in groups of ten to twelve families at a time.

Records from the work of the officers in charge of resettlement in Sanyati reveal a pre-occupation with the practical exigencies of getting boreholes drilled and roads, dip tanks and administrative housing constructed. A certain ambiguity is preserved in the description of how some of the work was carried out, as is evident in the monthly report submitted by the Land Development Officer for January, 1951:

Surface erosion this season has convinced the majority of natives that contour ridges are an asset and a necessity. Many constructed ridges following the first heavy downpour of rain but unfortunately they were of a temporary nature and of insufficient strength to withstand subsequent heavy rains ... Kraalheads are at present organizing to repair village roads

Reports (Native Agriculture). See also NAZ, S160/DG/104/1A/50, Land Allocation: Gokwe 1950-51, “Schedule: Proposal Re: Resettlement of Natives on Rhodesdale.”

³²² Morgan Gazi (Madiro Village head, Ward 23), Personal Interview, Agricura, Sanyati Main Growth Point, Sanyati, 15th October 2004. Madiro Village is also known as Kufa or Chomupinyi.

³²³ Morgan Gazi, Personal Interview.

... Dipping is again in operation coupled with a count of all stock in preparation for destocking.³²⁴

Most of the “immigrants” interviewed for this study recalled doing “chibaro” or forced labour building roads in the months after settlement, yet this is only indirectly suggested in correspondence and reports left by government administrators. The idea that Africans had in fact been persuaded to take on conservation and development tasks willingly persisted, despite evidence that resistance was prevalent. One LDO’s report to his superior indicates the desperate effort made to convince the Rhodesdale evictees of the virtues of these measures:

At ... farmers meetings an effort was made to show how, by preserving grass, we can improve the quality of our rainfall, but by burning and overgrazing the veld, we encourage hail, floods, and erratic conditions. Furthermore, how, by unbalancing nature through the ruthless destruction of indigenous life, such as birds and game, we encourage the tick and insect life which destroys our cattle and crops.³²⁵

Yet, he goes on to report that, in meetings with Chiefs Gambiza and Chiwundura, solutions were being sought to the problems of cattle trespassing in agricultural areas during the summer growing season, and, rather more ominously, to “people destroying conservation works, roads, etc.”³²⁶ It should be pointed out that the environment under which conservation measures were enforced was, indeed, fraught with insurrectionist tendencies among the peasants who bore the brunt of these stipulations whose rationale they openly or surreptitiously questioned. Hence, conservationist education was not voluntarily embraced in rural Sanyati, as some colonial officials would want us to believe. As will be observed later in this chapter, resistance against the payment of exorbitant dipping fees, destocking, contouring and other unpopular conservation measures was everywhere evident.

If Sanyati residents bore the full brunt of the NLHA as victims of both the forced displacement and the forced labour that it implied they also quickly demonstrated just how unworkable the idea of creating full-time yeoman farmers in an arid “reserve” on a severely restricted land base was. Virtually every family settled in the area subsequently combined farming with a wide range of wage-work (largely by men) and informal marketing (largely by women), both locally and in towns such as Kadoma and Kwekwe.

³²⁴ NAZ, S160/DG/104/1A/50, LDO Que Que to Director, Native Agriculture, 4 March 1951.

³²⁵ NAZ, S160/DG/104/1A/50, LDO Que Que to Director, Native Agriculture, 4 November 1950.

³²⁶ *Ibid.* N.B. The officers were, no doubt, acutely sensitive to the unpopularity of forced conservation measures and its possible political entailments. Both passive and active opposition to conservation works (e.g. contour ridging, drain strips, gully dams and grazing rotations) had by this time become starkly apparent to Native Department personnel in land-scarce eastern reserves such as Weya and Tanda. See Ranger, *Peasant Consciousness*, 152-3, whose evidence strongly suggests a direct link between such resistance and the emergence of support for nationalist politics in these areas, where conservation demands, after years of centralisation and land alienation, were perceived to be nothing other than the extraction of forced labour. For a comparative Southern African overview, see W. Beinart, “Introduction: The Politics of Colonial Conservation.” *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 15, 1989, 143-62.

The standard of living was higher for most labour migrants because their source of revenue was constant compared to the rural areas where it was seasonal.³²⁷ Migrant earnings, thus, contributed to further forms of differentiation. With the arrival of the Baptist mission and its associated school and hospital in 1963, education was avidly sought as a means of obtaining employment credentials. The establishment of a state-run irrigation scheme in the late 1960s (Gowe) and of a cotton ginnery and associated “growth point” for small businesses after 1976 increased opportunities for local employment, albeit at low wages. Yet, nobody, save the very poorest (particularly widows and divorced women) who had no other choice, attempted to emulate the happy ideal of the immobile, self-sufficient farmer offered up by development rhetoric. Poverty, on the part of women in general, however, could not halt the emergence of differentiation as some of them continued to strive to improve their economic condition and became relatively better off than others.

It is clear that the future envisioned for peasants by the NLHA did not materialise in Sanyati. In accordance with NLHA provisions, existing homesteads were moved into “lines” (maraini) along the first roads constructed in 1947, three years before the first “immigrants” were settled there. The clearance and cultivation of riverbanks was forbidden (a law that was still being enforced half a century later), although this was frequently breached, while the mission school and hospital actively sought to instil and enforce ideals of health, dress and hygiene among clients of both. Education provided by the Baptist school was to differentiate Sanyati peasants in a big way. For instance, a sizeable number of Baptist mission educated Africans who became demonstrators trained at Domboshawa and Tjolutjo Agricultural Training Institutes, and those who found work outside the reserve were behind the remittances that flowed or trickled back into rural agriculture.

Impact of immigration: -

By 1963, when the decade-long experiment with the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland ended, 113 000 people had been forcibly relocated throughout Southern Rhodesia, and immigration to Sanyati faded to a trickle of relatives of those already resettled there.³²⁸ Differentiation among the “immigrant” groups was thus on the basis of affiliation to a particular kinship group. This was not, however, to be the end of immigration to the adjacent district of Gokwe. Further forced relocations of people into Gokwe continued unabated even after independence in 1980. These relocations of people into Gokwe were the consequence of compulsory evictions of people from white ranches. Although there are interesting overlaps, Gokwe is outside the scope of this study.

In fact, as knowledge of a newly opened area drifted back through networks of kin to the immigrants’ district of origin, land-hungry relatives from the home “reserve” or

³²⁷ For more detail on the effects on the dryland farmers of growing crops in a particular season (e.g. summer) see Gerard J. Gill, *Seasonality and Agriculture in the Developing World: A Problem of the Poor and Powerless*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 1, 44-49, 52-59, and 68-73.

³²⁸ M. Bratton, *From Rhodesia to Zimbabwe: Beyond Community Development: The Political Economy of Rural Administration in Zimbabwe*, (London: Catholic Institute for International Relations/CIIR, 1978), 39.

workmates from town came of their own accord to request land from local Sanyati headmen. However, although Sanyati was small and not as fertile numerous applications for land were lodged with the DC via the applicants' respective headmen or chiefs. On arrival in Sanyati master farmer "immigrants" imparted their knowledge of agriculture to the "Shangwe" they found there. These new farmers were touted as having better farming skills than the locals and this gave them a sense of difference due to their exposure to the brunt of the disciplinary programme devised by the Native Agriculture Department in the 1920s which emphasised conservation ideals more than anything else. Indeed, it is striking that some of the post-war "immigrants" to Sanyati originated in reserves in the Fort Victoria (Masvingo) region where policies of centralisation and conservation were pursued earliest and with the greatest vigour. At the core of this programme was the replication of what was perceived to be an orderly way of planning settlement (homesteads) in a linear fashion. A cattle kraal was always situated adjacent to the home. Immediately after the homesteads were arable and then grazing lands. Attempts to "centralise" rural settlement patterns according to this plan began under the direction of the former missionary, E. D. Alvord,³²⁹ as early as 1929 in the Selukwe "reserves" and were soon duplicated in the other "reserves" of Victoria Province (Masvingo) and much later in Sanyati.³³⁰

Only ten years later, "approximately 3,6 million acres had been centralised and over 1 100 villages laid out along 'improved lines' by community."³³¹ Throughout the country, long before the implementation of the NLHA, many of the eventual "immigrants" to Sanyati had already been exposed to the modernising regime of the Native Department – a regime aimed at sifting out the "forward" from the "backward" "natives"; and many had already adopted new identities within the hierarchy of achievement and practice laid out by Alvord: they became "Co-operators," then "Plotolders" and, finally, "Master Farmers."³³² On the whole, the "immigrants" from Rhodesdale were seen by the colonial state as more industrious than the locals. According to the LDO Gatooma's monthly report for October 1950, "Apart from a few exceptions the old settlers [the Shangwe] in the [Sanyati] reserve ... [did] very little in the way of clearing or improving their lands ..."³³³ The Madherukas, the majority of whom had attained master farmer status, were clearly a cut above the rest in terms of the modernisation expectations of the state and the agricultural sophistication they embodied compared to the "Shangwe." This in itself signified the existence of differentiation.

³²⁹ Alvord embodied both missionary and agriculturalist identities.

³³⁰ NAZ, S 138/72, Centralization in Selukwe, 1927-1930. See also E. D. Alvord, "The Agricultural Life of Rhodesian Natives," *NADA*, 7, 1929 and Palmer, *Land and Racial Domination in Rhodesia*, 220-21.

³³¹ Phimister, *An Economic and Social History of Zimbabwe, 1890-1948: Capital Accumulation and Class Struggle*, (London: Longman, 1988), 235-36.

³³² R. W. M. Johnson in his work, "African Agricultural Development in Southern Rhodesia, 1945-1960," *Food Research Institute Studies*, 4, (1964), 165-223, gives the following definitions: Co-operator, any farmer who uses manure or fertiliser, carried out some rotation, and plants his crops in rows (other than broadcast crops); Plotholder, a farmer who is under tuition by a demonstrator in order to become a master farmer, and whose cropping programme is recorded; Master Farmer, a plotholder who has reached a certain minimum standard of crops and animal husbandry as laid down by the Agriculture Department.

³³³ NAZ, S160/DG/105/2/50, Gatooma district: sub-division: Sanyati Reserve: 1950-1951: LDO's Monthly Report, October 1950 (LDO Sanyati Reserve, Gatooma to the ANC, Gatooma copied to The PA, Salisbury, 4th November 1950).

When demonstrators were appointed to Sanyati, starting with Lazarus Sithole in 1947, they insisted on strict crop and animal husbandry methods. The farmers were instructed to apply manure regularly (i.e. 30 scotch carts per acre) and plant a five-year rotation, each year putting manure on a different field. After the fifth year, one qualified to be a recipient of a certificate. Nevertheless, obtaining a certificate (Master Farmer Certificate) required not only that one adopt techniques such as crop rotation, manuring and the building of field contours. One had to present evidence of a profound transformation of the domestic environment as well and specifically to meet a set of stringent criteria: “They would check you(r) house to see if you had a nice dining room, you had to get two rooms – a living room and dining room. ‘Nice room,’ they might say ‘but you still [had] to plant a [mango or fruit] tree’ in your yard.”³³⁴ Today there is hardly a homestead in Sanyati which does not boast of its own fruit orchard of banana, lemon, orange, mango, guava, peach or paw paw.

Sanyati’s indigenous residents did not know LDOs and agricultural demonstrators before the 1960s. In contrast to the south-eastern reserves, the contour-pegging of fields was undertaken only at the end of the decade when other provisions of the NLHA had long been abandoned. For the indigenous people of Sanyati, the “immigrants” from the southeast – people whom they derogatorily named madheruka after the sound of the Thames Trader and Bedford lorries that brought them – both advocated and embodied the prescriptions and ideals of the development regime.³³⁵ So did the missionaries, doctors, teachers and agricultural demonstrators (madhumeni) who came in their wake. The role played by the Baptist school, hospital, demonstrators and the “immigrants” in promoting differentiation among the people cannot be underestimated. The newcomers arrived espousing not only a set of abstract principles consonant with mainstream Christian values, but also embodying the complex habits instilled in them: the routines of dress, consumption and hygiene that had been part and parcel of Alvord’s demonstration efforts in areas like Shurugwi for more than three decades. The recognition, indeed the very assertion of their difference, was evident in their disparaging characterisation of the indigenes among whom they had come to live – people whom they called “Shangwe.” The madherukas distinguished themselves from the locals in that they built their houses with bricks and often put up a “latrine” and rubbish pit to conform with the standards of hygiene and cleanliness set by their demonstrators. The opposite is believed to be true of the local “Shangwe” people. Thus, differentiation manifested itself in multifarious forms, including on the agricultural productivity front and in the type of home they possessed and the levels of hygiene they tried to maintain.

In contrast to Nembudziya and Makore wards of Gokwe, Sanyati, like Copper Queen, by virtue of having been settled by “immigrants” from Rhodesdale, Belingwe (Mberengwa), Shabani (Zvishavane), Shurugwi and other areas of Masvingo Province in the southeast,

³³⁴ Cited in Worby, “Discipline Without Oppression,” 117.

³³⁵ The immigrants all came “bearing the same discourse of progress and development, the same conceit of living in advance of those they had come to live among”. See Worby, “Maps, Names and Ethnic Games: The Epistemology and Iconography of Colonial Power in North-western Zimbabwe, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 20, (1994), 390 and Nyambara, “A History of Land Acquisition in Gokwe.”

was much more advanced. It is hardly surprising that these new comers constituted the readily identifiable target for a novel and regionally specific rural development strategy, one that was rather ironically built around the cultivation of cotton, a cash crop already famous in colonial Africa for its association with brutal state coercion and economic disaster.³³⁶ In Sanyati, this crop was also central to the differentiation process that emerged from the 1960s onwards. Cotton, in the early years, was not necessarily the “Mother of Poverty” but was, in fact, instrumental in enriching some peasants.

Opposition and resistance to settler government measures:-

Aware that the amount of land they had allocated the Africans was insufficient to carry existing stock³³⁷ including upholding all the rules enshrined within the conservationist ethos and partly out of genuine fear of African competition, the settler state instituted cattle destocking measures in Sanyati in 1956.³³⁸ The audacity with which the NC Gatooma’s office directed destocking left a sour taste in the mouth. The culling and destocking process was ruthlessly conducted. Ownership of large herds of cattle which the Madherukas were used to was immediately threatened. This programme was executed with such notoriety by NC Barlow that it earned itself the disparaging name, “Nhimura [muswe] yava Barlow.”³³⁹ To ensure that everyone abided by destocking stipulations, cattle rings (“marin’i/maringi”) were introduced in 1957.³⁴⁰ However, cases where destocking regulations were flouted were as numerous as the reasons were. Cattle, among other things, symbolised wealth, so rural accumulators resisted any measures designed to reduce their herds.

Destocking was an attempt to adjust the number of cattle rural Africans held in the light of limited land resources and conservationist concerns, but regardless of how ruthlessly it was applied, it could not conceivably alleviate the land shortage. This fact was only

³³⁶ A. Isaacman, *Cotton is the Mother of Poverty: Peasants, Work and Rural Struggle in Colonial Mozambique, 1938-1961*, (London: James Curry, 1995).

³³⁷ The quality of grazing in Sanyati varies from a carrying capacity of between 16 in some parts and 20 acres per beast in others. In terms of Section 8 (2) Act 52/51 the maximum number of animal units to be grazed was fixed at 10 per holder. For more detail on the carrying capacity of the Reserve see the Technical Survey Report: Sanyati Reserve compiled by the LDO for Sanyati, A. R. Vaughan Evans in NAZ (RC) Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 158077, Location C19.2.10R, File: LAN 9 Sanyati and Ngezi: 1951-1964, “Technical Survey Report: Sanyati Reserve,” A. R. Vaughan Evans (LDO) to the Director of Native Agriculture, Causeway, 20th July, 1954, 1-9.

³³⁸ NAZ (RC), Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 158086, Location C19.6.7F, File: DC’s File, District Information 1961-1971, Includes Programme of Events 1890 to 1961, Calendar of Events: Sanyati TTL.

³³⁹ *Ibid.* N.B. Since he was responsible for implementing it, in Shona literally this meant NC Barlow’s destocking. During the implementation of the culling and destocking measures peasant farmers who owned more cattle than the stipulated maximum (of ten) were required to slaughter or sell the excess animals. To ensure that farmers abided by these rules the said cattle’s tails (“miswe” in Shona) would be cut by the dip tank officers as a mark that they were excess to requirements and should be disposed of, hence “nhimura muswe” or “gura muswe.” On the next cattle dipping day if a farmer brought such cattle for dipping then the dip officer was entitled to take legal action against the farmer for refusal to comply with destocking regulations. However, rural accumulators often succeeded to hide the excess animals by either dipping them after the official dipping exercise or registering them in the names of their relatives.

³⁴⁰ NAZ (RC), Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 158086, Location C19.6.7F, File: DC’s File, District Information 1961-1971, Includes Programme of Events 1890 to 1961, “Calendar of Events: Sanyati TTL.”

realised in 1959 when it was decided to embark on another chapter of land allocation.³⁴¹ This revision of land allocation, though, was a belated call to correct an anomaly dating back to 1950 when the Rhodesdale evictees were settled in Sanyati. It was rather unpragmatic for the settler government to fail to anticipate an obvious human and animal population explosion by the late 1950s.

After 1960, probably as a reaction to the peasants' massive investment drive in cattle, the LDO, J. E. Gamble, noted the importance of building additional cattle sale pens.³⁴² The first cattle sales centre in the Sanyati "Reserve" with a weigh bridge had been established by Finnis shortly after March 1952. Some enterprising peasants took advantage of the sale pens to market their beasts although these were sold at very low prices. In the main, however, it appears, these sale pens were introduced to help Africans dispose of their "excess" cattle quickly. Thus, this was to complement destocking measures in an enormous way. At one of the cattle sales which commenced at 9.30AM on Monday 1st September, 1958 at the Sanyati Reserve Sale Pens, entries of about 230 head were anticipated.³⁴³ At all these sales the prescribed method of sale was "open auction without floor price" and any person was entitled to buy although it was white ranch owners, butchery owners and middlemen of long standing who could afford to buy many beasts sold at almost "give away" price.³⁴⁴ Writing to G. A. Barlow (the NC Gatooma), the ANC Gatooma, R. C. Plowden, testified in 1961 that a very common complaint by peasant farmers in Sanyati "Reserve" was: "The Government had done a lot to better the wages and working conditions of those engaged in employment in towns but that the prices of crops and cattle had not been raised sufficiently to compensate the Reserve farmer for his efforts."³⁴⁵ Even the NC Gatooma concurred that the low prices of cattle and crops were generally deplorable when he said: "A general complaint ... is that prices for cattle and crops have not risen proportionately to the increases in pay that labour in towns has received."³⁴⁶ Prior to sale, cattle were graded and weighed as a guide to buyers and sellers. The NC for Gatooma, Barlow, required that: "Purchase must be for cash and a levy of 17½% of the purchase price is payable by the purchaser to the Native Development Fund [NDF]. This levy is additional to the purchase price."³⁴⁷ To realise better returns on their investments, reserve entrepreneurs often evaded official marketing

³⁴¹ NAZ (RC), Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 158086, Location C19.6.7F, File: DC's File, District Information 1961-1971, Includes Programme of Events 1890 to 1961, "Calendar of Events: Sanyati TTL."

³⁴² NAZ (RC), Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 158 077, Location C19.2.10R, File: LAN 9 Sanyati and Ngezi: 1951-1964, J. E. Gamble, Land Development Officer, Office of the Land Development Officer, Gatooma, to the NC Gatooma, 27th January 1960.

³⁴³ NAZ (RC), Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 22867, Location 18.5.3R, File: Minutes of Farmers Meetings, G. A. Barlow (NC Gatooma) to the Secretary, Gatooma Farmers' and Stockowners' Association, Gatooma, 27th August 1958.

³⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁴⁵ NAZ (RC), Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 158 077, Location C19.2.10R, File: LAN 9 Sanyati and Ngezi: 1951-1964, ANC Gatooma, R. C. Plowden, to the NC Gatooma, 23rd March 1961, 1.

³⁴⁶ NAZ (RC), Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 158077, Location C19.2.10R, File: LAN 9 Sanyati and Ngezi: 1951-1964, Confidential Correspondence, "Discontent: Ngezi-Mondoro Reserve," G. A. Barlow (NC Gatooma) to the Provincial Native Commissioner, Mashonaland West, Causeway, 23rd March, 1961.

³⁴⁷ NAZ (RC), Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 22867, Location 18.5.3R, File: Minutes of Farmers Meetings, G. A. Barlow (NC Gatooma) to the Secretary, Gatooma Farmers' and Stockowners' Association, Gatooma, 27th August 1958.

channels as they indulged in side marketing their beasts to the highest bidder. They side marketed grain as well. With regard to disposal of grain, considerably more rapoko was disposed of to “natives” at the mines than to authorised traders since it appears that they obtained a better price through this method.³⁴⁸ The amount disposed of in this way is impossible to assess except for the estimated total sales and income through legitimate channels and others for the 1952 harvest which have been given as 8 250 bags of maize fetching a total of £2 400; 123 bags of rapoko (£3 200) and 241 bags of groundnuts which fetched £2 900.³⁴⁹

All cattle sales in the colony’s rural areas were conducted in terms of the Native Cattle Marketing Act No. 23/47. A seller was issued with a permit to sell cattle before entering into an agreement of sale. Such permits were issued under Section 6 of the Act. One permit given in 1949 to a certain Mary of Mudzingwa village read: “Permission is hereby granted to Mary of Mudzingwa, Gatooma District, to sell, otherwise than at a Native Department Sale, the following number and class of cattle: Cows 0, Bulls 0, Oxen 0, and Young Stock 1.”³⁵⁰ The validity of the permits usually ranged from 7 to 30 days. Buyers other than “natives,” were required by law to endorse on the permit the number of cattle bought and the endorsement was supposed to be signed and dated by the buyer. The permits were used for purposes of supervising and monitoring destocking measures, but stock owners often found a way round the Cattle Marketing Act which, in the first instance, was not designed to benefit them.

Contours, dipping fees and peasant discontent:-

Lack of adequate land, the forced adjustment to the contour regime, the increase in dipping fees (tax) and destocking measures fomented a lot of discontent in the rural areas. The NC Gatooma complained that in the month of March 1961, he had been inundated with applications by “natives” of other districts for permission to move to Sanyati Reserve arguing that: “Allocation in Sanyati was completed last year [1960] apart from some 1 600 acres which was block allocated and where individual allocation will be done this year [1961].”³⁵¹ He proceeded to say: “The possibility of allocating extra people on consolidated holdings in the ‘Jesi’ area is being investigated by Technical Block, but this is very much ‘in the air’ and to all intents and purposes there is no more land available in Sanyati ... While it is difficult to refuse these applications and while I cannot quote any authority for my right to do so, nevertheless I am doubtful of the wisdom of allowing

³⁴⁸ NAZ (RC), Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 158077, Location C19.2.10R, File: LAN 9 Sanyati and Ngezi: 1951-1964, “Agro-Economic Survey: Sanyati Reserve,” Patterson (Land Development Officer), 25th March, 1953; See also NAZ (RC), Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 158077, Location C19.2.10R, File: LAN 9 Sanyati and Ngezi: 1951-1964, “Agro-Economic Survey: Sanyati Reserve,” R. M. Davies (Director of Native Agriculture, Causeway) to all Provincial Agriculturists and all Land Development Officers, 23rd February, 1953, 4.

³⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 2.

³⁵⁰ NAZ (RC), Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 22867, Location 18.5.3R, File: AGR 2 – Agricultural Shows (1957-1958), “Permit to sell cattle,” NC Gatooma, 07/04/49.

³⁵¹ NAZ (RC), Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 158077, Location C19.2.10R, File: LAN 9 Sanyati and Ngezi: 1951-1964, G. A. Barlow (NC Gatooma) to the PNC, Mashonaland West, Causeway, 24th March, 1961.

them in, since they will merely increase the number of landless people in the reserve and probably be a source of trouble in the future.”³⁵²

Due to land shortage, many people were ploughing in the grazing areas in spite of the threat of prosecution. For encroaching onto the grazing lot, offenders were charged under Section 42 of the African Affairs Act which empowered law-enforcement agents to prosecute them for disobeying the orders of the Chiefs and Headmen against this illegal practice.³⁵³ The law, nevertheless, proved quite cumbersome to enforce since some “Kraalheads” themselves were also ploughing in the grazing area. Complaints that “the grazing area is being completely taken up and that the cattle are dying of starvation” were frequently heard.³⁵⁴ As already noted, land shortage seemed to be compounded by the demand to erect contours for conservation purposes.

After the Planning Team from the Department of Native Agriculture’s visit to Sanyati Reserve between the 8th and 11th of June 1954, a strategy for the agricultural development of the area was adopted. One of its main focus was soil conservation. The Acting Assistant Director of Native Agriculture, T. G. Murton, accompanied the Animal Husbandry Officer and the LDO, Vaughan-Evans, on this tour of the Reserve, at the conclusion of which a discussion was held with the ANC, O’Conner. During the visit, it was generally observed that a grass cover in the grazing area should be maintained and that the concentration of cattle in certain parts was leading to the commencement of serious erosion.³⁵⁵ It was further observed that:

In the arable areas, a system of grass buffer stripping on grade should be commenced without delay. These buffer strips should be 4 vertical feet or a maximum of 70 yards apart. The drainage channels should be properly demarcated with banks, and roadstrips similarly so (a stone beacon could be used for road strips). The arable land should be individually allocated, on the lines of the Land Husbandry Act. Later when grass is established on the drainage channels, contours could be constructed, preferably by the landowners themselves, paid for from the Native Development Fund. The construction of stone terraces or banks at the approaches and vicinity of dips should [also] be done within the next year or two.³⁵⁶

³⁵² NAZ (RC), Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 158077, Location C19.2.10R, File: LAN 9 Sanyati and Ngezi: 1951-1964, G. A. Barlow (NC Gatooma) to the PNC, Mashonaland West, Causeway, 24th March, 1961.

³⁵³ NAZ (RC), Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 158077, Location C19.2.10R, File: LAN 9 Sanyati and Ngezi: 1951-1964, R. L. Westcott (DC Gatooma) to Member-in-Charge, B.S.A. Police, Featherstone, 1st December 1964.

³⁵⁴ NAZ (RC), Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 158077, Location C19.2.10R, File: LAN 9 Sanyati and Ngezi: 1951-1964, V.O. Meredith (District Officer, Gatooma) to DC Gatooma, 5th November 1964.

³⁵⁵ NAZ (RC), Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 158077, Location C19.2.10R, File: LAN 9 Sanyati and Ngezi: 1951-1964, T. G. Murton, Acting Assistant Director of Native Agriculture (Native Agriculture Department, Causeway) to the Director Native Agriculture; the PNC (Northern Mashonaland); the Provincial Agriculturist (Northern Mashonaland); the ANC Gatooma and to the Land Development Officer (Sanyati Reserve), 20th July, 1954, 2.

³⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

Following a discussion of the above general observations with the LDO, the information necessary for the Technical Survey was also considered. Using this information, it was agreed that the priority development work which the LDO should carry out during 1955 should, among other things, include agricultural extension and soil conservation work. Extension work through demonstrations was to be provided by the LDO, Demonstrators and Supernumeraries or Extension Assistants (when available) emphasising early planting, compost making, stocking and winter ploughing, the greater use of “munga” (a good variety to be obtained from Makoholi and distributed free), Tseta Kaffir Corn and Radar as well as the tackling of mixed cropping and ensure its complete disappearance especially after individual allocation.³⁵⁷ Compost making, the rotating of crops and other such measures constituted what were described as improved methods of agriculture. Each agricultural demonstrator was ordered to commence buffer stripping on grade and drainage channel demarcation with the help of the Soil Conservation Officer. A stopgap measure was put in place to counteract any possible resistance against buffer stripping, that is:

Where the landowners refuse to co-operate in the marking of these buffer strips with their ploughs, it should be done with the Soil Conservation oxen or the tractor. The Soil Conservation tractor with the disc terracer should demarcate the drainage channels etc (sic), and gangs should finish there off. Permanent rangers should be appointed to see that buffer strips are not ploughed in the ploughing season.³⁵⁸

Based on these general observations and preliminary findings, the LDO for Sanyati, Vaughan-Evans, proceeded to submit to the Director of Native Agriculture an “excellent” Technical Survey Report on Sanyati agriculture, for example, its arable and stock position as well as its conservationist thrust.³⁵⁹ As the Reserve lacks any distinct topographical features it was considered preferable to divide it and this Survey into zones on a vegetation and soil basis and as a result five fairly distinct zones (See Mozaics – Appendix III)³⁶⁰ can be differentiated. These are namely:

1. The Mopane Zone, covering an estimated 47 000 acres with very sparse grass cover, yellow mopane type of soils and the arable land just like the other four zones is in centralised blocks and under regular cultivation; 2.

³⁵⁷ NAZ (RC), Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 158077, Location C19.2.10R, File: LAN 9 Sanyati and Ngezi: 1951-1964, T. G. Murton (Acting Assistant Director of Native Agriculture) to the Director Native Agriculture et al, 20th July, 1954, 2.

³⁵⁸ Ibid. , 3.

³⁵⁹ NAZ (RC), Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 158077, Location C19.2.10R, File: LAN 9 Sanyati and Ngezi: 1951-1964, “Technical Survey Report: Sanyati Reserve,” A. R. Vaughan Evans (LDO) to the Director of Native Agriculture, Causeway, 20th July 1954, 1-9. N.B. The origins of this Technical Survey Report can be traced back to the Report of the Field Survey Party of 1950.

³⁶⁰ NAZ (RC), Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 158077, Location C19.2.10R, File: LAN 1-7: 1951-1964, the Administrative Officer Native Land Husbandary Act, Causeway, Salisbury to the ANC Gatooma, 30 June 1956. N.B. Serial Mosaic is the term applied to the technique of serial mapping by which photographs taken from the air (aerial photographs) are fitted together like a jig-saw puzzle; a technique used since World War 2 in the service of town-planning. Source: Alexander H. Irvine (ed.), *Collins English Dictionary*, (London: William Collins Sons and Company Limited, 1956), 656.

Jesi Bush Zone is very dense thicket of approximately 15 000 acres in size, situated in the central part of the reserve on white sandy soils and its stocking situation is rather 'on the heavy side'; 3. Renje Vlei Zone which is approximately 12 000 acres big is a flat depression in the central portion of the Renje River and is merely a grazing area; 4. The Msasa, Mfuti [Mupfuti], Acacia Zone is about 15 000 acres in size, situated on white sandy and grey silty loam soils in the central portion of the reserve east of the Renje Vlei and appears to provide the best grazing in the reserve; 5. Last but not least the Banks of the Umniati River is a narrow strip zone of alluvial soils occurring along the river, extending to approximately 10 000 acres and often realises good yields.³⁶¹

The five major zones are said to be relatively flat and, as such, the reserve was hardly affected by serious erosion requiring the building of contour ridges in the arable lands. However, this argument has been proved to be merely academic as most of the field informants testify to being compelled to erect contours and maintain them in good condition - a very laborious and onerous task indeed.

An advertisement often flighted by the Natural Resources Board (NRB) of Southern Rhodesia suggests that everywhere contours were encouraged: "Contour Ridges slow down the flow of water in our fields. They conserve the soil. They cost money to build but they save more. Keep them in good repair."³⁶² In a written message, Dokotela Moyo, Vice President of the Southern Rhodesia African Farmers Union, said "African farmers could show other Africans that farming is the best science in this world" as "it is giving and will continue to give to the starving world," adding that "it was the duty of all farmers to fight erosion and put right what has been spoilt by rains in the form of soil erosion and other agents of nature."³⁶³ He was probably being cautious and diplomatic enough to avoid direct mention of contours which had become a sensitive subject. In fact, all the people in the allocated area were warned regarding the completion of beacons and interrupted contours for which individual orders had already been given in terms of the Land Husbandry Regulations. Conscientising the people on the evils of erosion was prioritised because the problem of erosion was of special concern to Government, as it threatened the future of the Agricultural Industry and the National Economy. Recent statistical estimates show soil loss rates in Zimbabwe to be of the order of 50 to 80 tonnes per hectare per year from arable lands. It has been argued that at this rate of soil loss, extensive areas of the Communal Lands will not be able to sustain even subsistence yields in three decades from now.³⁶⁴ Because contours entailed a lot of labour and were time consuming, resistance to contouring was unavoidable. Many villagers, including Joke Munyaka Wozhele and some of Neuso's people, refused to comply with the order to

³⁶¹ NAZ (RC), Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 158077, Location C19.2.10R, File: LAN 9 Sanyati and Ngezi: 1951-1964, "Technical Survey Report: Sanyati Reserve," A. R. Vaughan Evans (LDO) to the Director of Native Agriculture, Causeway, 20th July 1954, 1-9.

³⁶² *The Central African Daily News*, First Edition, 5(176), Wednesday, January 3, 1962, 7.

³⁶³ "A Prosperous New Year To Farmers," *The Bantu Mirror*, Bulawayo, 20(43), Saturday, January 7, 1956, 1.

³⁶⁴ Victoria Chitepo (Minister of Natural Resources and Tourism) "Foreword" in Henry A. Elwell, *Soil Conservation*, (Harare: The College Press Pvt Ltd, 1986).

build contour ridges.³⁶⁵ Joke declared: “if these things are necessary somebody else must do them not me.”³⁶⁶ Neuso’s uncle challenged the NC to take him to his (NC’s) farm and see if he was also digging these contours he was forcing them to build. He bluntly told the District Officer, Meredith, that “You can take your gun and shoot me if you want ... but I am not going to dig a single contour come hell come sunshine.”³⁶⁷ Similarly, in Ngezi-Mondoro Reserve, as admitted in confidential correspondence between NC Barlow and the PNC Mashonaland West, “a general order for the construction of interrupted contours on lands allocated last year [1960] was given on 25th January [1961], to be carried out by 1st May [1961]. To date, no effort whatever has been made to construct these and at the Assistant Native Commissioner’s [R. C. Plowden] meeting several speakers intimated that they had no intention of doing so.”³⁶⁸

Resistance against contours coincided with the countrywide opposition to the proposed increase in dip fees. A report compiled by the ANC, Plowden, on meetings he held in the Reserves (Sanyati and Ngezi) to explain the increase revealed the insurrectionist mood that had gripped most rural constituencies. Sanyati is said to have received the imposition of dipping fees with a lot of calm. According to a report by Plowden:

In Sanyati the bad news was accepted philosophically and the only reaction was a request that collections be postponed to allow the people time to sell their crops. In view of the extremely bad season these people have suffered, this request has been accepted and the dip fee collections have been arranged to commence on 12th June [1961].³⁶⁹

He revealed that a similar postponement had been arranged for Ngezi-Mondoro where collections were set to commence on 19th June 1961. However, deferring payment to a later date was not a solution. For Sanyati, the fact was that this was a calm before a storm, as nowhere in the country were such measures that had the effect of impoverishing Africans received without opposition. Resistance virtually assumed nationalistic proportions, as NC Barlow himself testified in respect to Ngezi-Mondoro:

In this Reserve ... widespread dissatisfaction over the increase in fees has been expressed and I believe that there may be trouble when the time comes for the collection. People at Zimindo Dip have openly informed the Field Assistant that they will not pay the fee of 2/6 [2s.6d.] and that they will come to the collections with 2/- per beast only.³⁷⁰

Barlow went further to state:

³⁶⁵ Joke Munyaka Wozhele, Personal Interview.

³⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁶⁷ Chief L. Neuso, Personal Interview, Chief’s Court, Nyimo Business Centre, Sanyati, 19th October 2004.

³⁶⁸ NAZ (RC), Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 158077, Location C19.2.10R, File: LAN 9 Sanyati and Ngezi: 1951-1964, Confidential Correspondence, “Discontent: Ngezi-Mondoro Reserve,” G. A. Barlow (NC Gatooma) to the Provincial Native Commissioner, Mashonaland West, Causeway, 23rd March, 1961.

³⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

The main speaker at one meeting, Kraal head Makwawarara, is a kraal head in an area [in the north-west portion of the Reserve, adjoining the Mondoro Reserve of Hartley district] where considerable difficulty was experienced last year [1960] when land allocations were carried out. I understand from Mr. Plowden that his attack on the Government was vociferously applauded by the meeting.³⁷¹

This speaker had a large following in the area which he used to spread the gospel of resistance. Partly as a result of his influence in Headman Chizinga's area, marked opposition was also voiced at the receipt of the two Land Husbandry Orders (increased dip charges and contours). Speakers maintained that more time should have been given to complete the interrupted contours and when asked suggested three years. Other speakers intimated that they wanted the order cancelled as they had no intention of completing these contours. Some of Neuso's followers demonstrated their disenchantment with contours and the increase in dipping fees when they filled up dip tanks with logs and burnt down demonstration schools, for example, Sirambe Farmer Training School and Katsime (Katsimi) Farmer Training School in Neuso and Wozhele's areas respectively.³⁷² (See Map 8 showing these areas). Strong criticism of the Government in raising dipping fees was persistently made by the riled village head, Makwawarara, who accused the ANC, Plowden, of "having reduced his stock holding, allocated him too small an acreage of land and now intending to ruin him with an exorbitant charge for dipping his cattle."³⁷³ Another speaker in Headman Chikowore's area asked if the raise in dipping charges was not due to the fact that the Government had to maintain the same staff for a decreased number of cattle in view of the Government's countrywide destocking programme.³⁷⁴ Chiefs Nyika (Ngezi-Mondoro) and Wozhele (Sanyati) supported these taxation measures, hence they were accused of collaboration with the regime. The Kraal Heads, in general, co-operated with the NC with the production of addresses of defaulters in their areas. Chief Neuso (Sanyati), however, chose to remain aloof and did not attend the two major tax collection meetings, signifying his displeasure with the proceedings.

In the light of African opposition, the NC (Barlow) was hesitant to impose penalties on offenders for fear of aggravating the situation: "It is realized that the Act [NLHA] lays down penalties, but it will be difficult to enforce such orders in the face of a mass refusal."³⁷⁵ He emphasised the volatility of the situation when he stated to the Provincial Native Commissioner, Mashonaland West: "I do not wish to be alarmist in this matter,

³⁷¹ NAZ (RC), Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 158077, Location C19.2.10R, File: LAN 9 Sanyati and Ngezi: 1951-1964, Confidential Correspondence, "Discontent: Ngezi-Mondoro Reserve," G. A. Barlow (NC Gatooma) to the Provincial Native Commissioner, Mashonaland West, Causeway, 23rd March, 1961.

³⁷² Andrew Kachinga, (Gambiza Village Head), Personal Interview, Chief Neuso's Court, Nyimo Business Centre, Sanyati, 19th October 2004. Also Ephraim Parayangiwa, (Parayangiwa Village Head), Personal Interview, Kasirisiri turn off, Chief Neuso's Court, Nyimo Business Centre, Sanyati, 19th October 2004.

³⁷³ NAZ (RC), Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 158077, Location C19.2.10R, File: LAN 9 Sanyati and Ngezi: 1951-1964, "Ngezi-Mondoro Reserve," ANC Gatooma (R. C. Plowden), to the NC Gatooma, 23rd March 1961, 1.

³⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 2.

³⁷⁵ NAZ (RC), Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 158077, Location C19.2.10R, File: LAN 9 Sanyati and Ngezi: 1951-1964, Confidential Correspondence, "Discontent: Ngezi-Mondoro Reserve," G. A. Barlow (NC Gatooma) to the Provincial Native Commissioner, Mashonaland West, Causeway, 23rd March, 1961.

but do think there is a possibility of trouble over these dip fee collections. I would be grateful for advice as to the action to be taken if people do as they threaten, only produce 2/- per head. Should it be refused or should it be accepted as a payment on account?"³⁷⁶ Not only dipping fees but also tax collections were detested. Tax evasion was a chargeable offence. Accused persons were charged for contravening Section 4 (2) read with Section 7 (1) of the Native Tax Act (Cap. 78) as amended.³⁷⁷ In 1960, P. F. Parsons, the Acting ANC Gatooma, wrote to the Registrar of the High Court; "it is not uncommon for natives [recalcitrants] to be charged with failing to pay ten or more years tax ..." He proceeded to say: "Offences against the Native Tax Act, are on the increase, and because of the difficulties of keeping track of defaulters, it is easy for a native to evade payment of tax if he so desires. It is felt that some sterner action must be taken in order to put down the offence so far as is possible."³⁷⁸ In juridical matters, Chief Wozhele and Neuso reported directly to the NC Gatooma.³⁷⁹ In fact, some tax collecting points were set up in both Sanyati and Ngezi Reserves. At such gatherings (tax collection meetings), it was not uncommon to find people who told the Chiefs, Headmen and Kraal Heads that they were not going to pay. However, they were compelled to do so through tax patrols mounted by the Police. Patrols were employed to check any "blatant disregard of the tax laws of the country," but they did not mark the end of resistance.³⁸⁰

Opposition to conservation and peasant agency:-

In Southern Rhodesia's interventions in rural agriculture, it is important to note that, in the two decades between the 1950s and 1960s, conservationism loomed large. The almost ubiquitous pre-occupation with soil conservation and the conservation of other natural resources have been seen as central to agricultural development.³⁸¹ Government reports

³⁷⁶ NAZ (RC), Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 158077, Location C19.2.10R, File: LAN 9 Sanyati and Ngezi: 1951-1964, Confidential Correspondence, "Discontent: Ngezi-Mondoro Reserve," G. A. Barlow (NC Gatooma) to the Provincial Native Commissioner, Mashonaland West, Causeway, 23rd March, 1961.

³⁷⁷ NAZ (RC), Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 99233, Location 14.18.9R, File: JUD 9 Review and Appeal JUD. High Court; JUD 9 to 23 (1957 to 1964), "Review Case No.71 of 1960 Before the Court of the Native Commissioner for the District of Gatooma," 17 October 1960.

³⁷⁸ NAZ (RC), Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 99233, Location 14.18.9R, File: JUD 9 Review and Appeal JUD. High Court; JUD 9 to 23 (1957 to 1964)," Jud 9/1/60, Office of the NC Gatooma."

³⁷⁹ NAZ (RC), Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 99233, Location 14.18.9R, File: JUD 9 Review and Appeal JUD. High Court; JUD 9 to 23 (1957 to 1964)," Jud 18, Judicial – General Correspondence."

³⁸⁰ NAZ (RC), Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 158077, Location C19.2.10R, File: LAN 9 Sanyati and Ngezi: 1951-1964, "Tax Patrols: Sanyati and Ngezi Reserves," ANC Gatooma (R. C. Plowden) to the NC Gatooma, 23rd March 1961, 1.

³⁸¹ For an elaborate discussion of conservation in the context of development in Southern Rhodesia see Phimister, "Discourse and the Discipline of Historical Context: Conservationism and Ideas About Development in Southern Rhodesia 1930-1950," *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 12, 1986, 263-75. Phimister's article can be lauded for the way it critiques William Beinart's "Soil Erosion, Conservationism and Ideas About Development: A Southern African Exploration, 1900-1960," *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 11, (1984), 52-83. Beinart has used his article to argue for a Southern African conservationist ethos, but abandoned the idea after it was criticised by Phimister for Southern Rhodesia. Nearly all of Beinart's works on conservation are not broadly Southern African but they emphasise Cape liberal conservationism and progressivism. Good examples to illustrate this are: Beinart, *The Rise of Conservation in South Africa: Settlers, Livestock and the Environment, 1770-1950*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); "Environmental Destruction in Southern Africa; Soil Erosion, Animals and Pastures Over the Longer Term" in T. S. Driver and G. P. Chapman (eds.), *Time-Scales and Environmental Change*,

on colonial Zimbabwe were intended to suggest conservation's broader appeal than opposition to it. These, however, contradict reality, not least of all because of their resolutely official perspective and disregard for popular African opposition³⁸² to state agricultural improvement in Sanyati.

Opposition to nearly all governmental action was synonymous with opposition to the rather unsympathetic bureaucratic state machinery and its authoritarian conservationist prescription, the NLHA. As amply demonstrated by the pundits of the Act, the number and quality of state functionaries on the ground was a crucial determinant of success. The Native Department was grossly understaffed and its efforts at rural agricultural improvement token. Agricultural improvement could not be achieved by imposing settler conservationist ideology on African subjects. A lot of persuasion and a great deal of transparency in implementation on the part of state officials coupled with an exercise to consult widely with their conservationist targets (Africans) would have carried the day for them. Shunning the latter meant that the NLHA was going to be implemented in Sanyati under the most unfavourable circumstances which militated against success.

Mamdani can be used to affirm the acute vulnerability of tribal subjects under communal tenure not only to illustrate summary dispossession but also draconian direct interventions to dictate land use. Conservation or the NLHA can be used to underpin the racially motivated social-engineering which was uninformed by any real understanding of or even interest in the African agricultural experience. The Act was ultimately deployed as a class weapon by Chiefs and other reserve entrepreneurs to resuscitate their fledgling economic fortunes, and wage a war against it.

(London: Routledge, 1996), 149-68; and in M. Leach and R. Mearns (eds.), "The Lie of Land: Challenging Received Wisdom on the African Environment" in T. Griffiths and L. Robin (eds.), *Ecology and Empire: Environmental History of Settler Societies*, (Edinburgh: Keele University Press, 1997), 87-101; "African History and Environmental History," *African Affairs*, 99, (2000), 269-302; "South African Environmental History in the African Context" in S. Dovers et al (eds.), "South Africa's Environmental History: Special Issue: Environmental History," *Kronos*, 29, (2003), 222-26 and Beinart and Joann McGregor (eds.), *Social History and African Environments*, (Cape Town: David Philip, 2003). For another critique of Beinart see Lance Van Sittert, [Review of *The Nature of Power: Cape Environmental History, The History of Ideas and Neoliberal Historiography*], *The Journal of African History*, 45(2), July 2004, 1-22. For other comparative sources on soil conservation in Africa see Tilley on the African Survey; Carswell on Kigezi Uganda; McCracken revisiting the "Dead North" and Yngstrom on Dodoma, Tanzania cited in Sittert, "The Nature of Power," 4. For a detailed history of the Cape Administration and its environmental interventions see K. Brown, "Progressivism, Agriculture and Conservation in the Cape Colony c.1902-1908," PhD thesis, University of Oxford, 2002.

³⁸² Opposition to conservationism was not a novel phenomenon to colonial Zimbabwe alone. In South Africa's Cape Province there were numerous incidents of opposition to it especially from the Afrikaner community. For Cape Afrikaner opposition see M. Tamarkin, "Flock and Volk: Ecology, Culture, Identity and Politics Among Cape Afrikaner Stock Farmers in the Late Nineteenth Century," paper presented at African Environments Past and Present Conference, Oxford: St Antonys College, 5-8 July 1999 and Nel, "For the Public Benefit" and for African opposition in the Cape see P. Scully, "The 1914 Dipping Disturbances: An Analysis of the Effects of the East Coast Fever Regulations on East Griqualand Society," Honours dissertation, University of Cape Town, 1984 and C. Bundy, "We Don't Want Your Rain, We Won't Dip: Popular Opposition, Collaboration and Social Control in the Anti-Dipping Movement, 1908-16" in W. Beinart and C. Bundy, *Hidden Struggles in Rural South Africa: Politics and Popular Movements in the Transkei and Eastern Cape 1890-1930*, (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1987), 191-221 cited in Sittert, "The Nature of Power," 19.

The battle against destocking, for instance, dates back to the Rhodesdale days when some 320 squatters who owned 20 head of cattle or more protested against forced destocking and other colonial injustices. In 1950, the ANC Que Que summoned these cattle owners to his office and warned: “Some of you have 100 head ... We cannot allow you to continue destroying the grazing, and the land itself and the water supplies ... By the end of next year [1951] you must all have reduced your stock to 10 head ... Sooner or later you must leave Rhodesdale ... I do not think you will be permitted to take large heads.”³⁸³ These livestock owners, led by John Jack and his sons who owned a large herd and over 500 acres of land, asked many incisive questions about destocking i.e.

1. Do the European owned cattle not cause as much damage? Why force only the natives to destock? Have our cattle got two mouths? 2. Is Rhodesdale a new thing that we cannot claim it as home? Were not most of us here present actually born there? 3. Is Rhodesdale not overstocked because farms have been sold to Europeans and we have been forced altogether into one corner of it? 4. We are told we will some day be moved. Why should we destock when we are to be moved? 5. How can I feed my children without cattle? What shall I do when famine comes? How can I start herds for my sons? 6. Just who is the Government? 7. Why does the Government change policy so often? 8. During the war [World War 2] we were told, “After the war you will all live in freedom.” We were told “Help us to buy aeroplanes and after the war you will all be free.” We helped. Now see what happens to us. Is this freedom? 9. Why do you reduce us to ten head of cattle when we see Europeans who live next to us with 1 000 head of cattle?³⁸⁴

These questions duly demonstrate the hardly controversial proposition that indigenous agency was one of the most effective ways of challenging a hamfisted political machinery to abandon irrational economic practice. In fact, in the face of worsening resistance to destocking, the NC Gwelo ordered the ANC Que Que to stop using what he termed “shock tactics or giving out discriminatory orders.”³⁸⁵ It was not surprising, therefore, that by 1951, some of the officials in the Native Department denounced destocking measures as “not only vague but that they should be suspended until a clear and proper policy on the issue was formulated.”³⁸⁶

A prevailing view is that African states “capture” small-scale farmers, exploiting them and rendering them politically marginal and powerless to make an impact on governments and the policy process.³⁸⁷ This chapter takes issue with the view that

³⁸³ NAZ, LS104/1/50 ANC Que Que to NC Gwelo, 7 June 1950 cited in Nyambara, “A History of Land Acquisition in Gokwe,” 64-65. See also Ranger, *Peasant Consciousness*, 121-122.

³⁸⁴ NAZ, S1018/13A, ANC Que Que to NC Gwelo, 7 June 1950 cited in Nyambara, “A History of Land Acquisition in Gokwe,” 65 and in Bhebe, *B. Burombo*, 87.

³⁸⁵ NAZ, S160/LS100/3A (106/1/50) Movement of Natives, NC Gwelo to ANC Que Que, 9 June, 1950 cited in Bhebe, *B. Burombo*, 87.

³⁸⁶ Bhebe, *B. Burombo*, 87.

³⁸⁷ Cited in Burgess, *Smallholders and Political Voice in Zimbabwe*, 1. The term “capture” is derived from

smallholders are inevitably powerless and perpetually vulnerable to exploitation by presenting the case of Zimbabwe where smallholders have acted effectively and have developed the political and economic voice necessary to influence the state and the policy process. Smallholder influence played a significant role in the agricultural and social transformation of Zimbabwe's rural areas. In the literature on states, agricultural policy and smallholders in Africa, a debate has been waged between those who believe that governments can be reformed to play a more positive role in agriculture and those who think that agricultural institutions need to be privatised and market forces emphasised.³⁸⁸ Thus, in this debate, insufficient attention has been devoted to the issue of how farmers might think, speak and act in the process of shaping governments and their agricultural policies. Instead, farmers are referred to as victims – vulnerable and politically anaemic.³⁸⁹ The received wisdom that smallholders are incapable of counteracting the harmful agricultural policies of African governments has been articulated since the 1970s.³⁹⁰

It is important to note the non-validity of the assumption that small farmers are inevitably disorganised and incapable of influencing governments.³⁹¹ Indeed, in Sanyati, issues raised by farmers were responsible for defining policy and differentiation developed much more rapidly than previously anticipated despite the proscribing effects of the NLHA. As Ian Phimister has pointed out, interpretations of African agriculture are polarised between scholars who see peasant cultivators as “collapsing beneath accumulated weight of discriminatory practices, or surviving as a significant economic force well into the 1950s.” Such views, according to Phimister, obscure the large differences in experience between regions.³⁹² By specifying processes of rural differentiation, it is possible to reconcile evidence of immiseration with signs of poverty. Hence, while some studies are concerned with examining the mechanisms by which peasants were exploited,³⁹³ others have moved beyond this to emphasise peasant agency by showing how peasants, through various forms of resistance, often frustrated settler efforts to introduce and institutionalise conservation measures such as contours and destocking among rural communities. As a social and economic class, peasant farmers remained intact. These circumstances reflect that Africans knew something about their

Goran Hyden in his study of an “uncaptured peasantry” in Tanzania. See Goran Hyden, *Beyond Ujamaa in Tanzania: Underdevelopment and an Uncaptured Peasantry*, (London: Heinemann, 1980).

³⁸⁸ Burgess, *Smallholders and Political Voice in Zimbabwe*, 1. See also Robert H. Bates, *Markets and States in Tropical Africa: The Political Basis of Agricultural Policies*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981).

³⁸⁹ Burgess, *Smallholders and Political Voice in Zimbabwe*, 1. For a Malaysian (Southeast Asian) comparative study on the almost permanent conspiracy of those regarded by society as “the weak” (the peasantry) against “the strong” (the rich, who often craft the legal codes governing the ownership, use and disposal of land and other resources) see James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1985), 1-389.

³⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 2.

³⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 177

³⁹² Phimister, “Commodity Relations and Class Formation in the Zimbabwean Countryside, 1898-1920,” *Journal of Peasant Studies*, 13(4), (July 1986), 239-57 and Phimister, *An Economic and Social History of Zimbabwe*.

³⁹³ Isaacman, “Peasants, Work and the Labour Process: Forced Cotton Cultivation in Colonial Mozambique 1938-1961,” *Journal of Social History*, 25(4), (1980), 581-615.

environments and that such knowledge ought to inform the design of conservation and development schemes on the part of colonial officials and that European science should build on local knowledge.³⁹⁴

Contrary to arguments that denigrate peasant agency, it can be noted that resistance to the NLHA was quite rife among the “immigrants,” the majority of whom comprised the rural elites. Convinced that “good farming methods were almost impossible to enforce with lasting results under a communal system ... [and that] there was great danger of further soil deterioration throughout the Reserves unless the system of land tenure was rapidly changed,” the Southern Rhodesian state decided to speed up the Act’s implementation.³⁹⁵ A Five Year Plan was drawn up, which envisaged the transformation of about 30 million acres of “Native Reserves” by 1961. Nevertheless, this greatly accelerated programme, which turned on determining who had, and who did not have, access to land, cattle and an array of other resources in the “reserves,” meant that African opposition could hardly be prevented.

This opposition, in turn, fuelled the expansion of mass nationalism in the second half of the 1950s. “Any act whose effects undermine the security of our small land rights,” declared the Southern Rhodesia African National Congress (ANC) in 1958, “dispossess us of our little wealth in the form of cattle, disperse us from our ancestral homes in the reserves and reduce us to the status of vagabonds and as a source of cheap labour for the farmers, miners and industrialists - such an Act will turn the African people against society to the detriment of the peace and progress of this country.”³⁹⁶ The NLHA, remarked George Nyandoro, was the best recruiter Congress ever had.”³⁹⁷ According to Phimister, by 1961, rural resistance had escalated to an extent where it was assuming the dimensions of “a major revolt against the Act.”³⁹⁸ Illustrating the volatility of the situation throughout the country as a result of opposition to the Act, Ngwabi Bhebe quotes Nyandoro as saying: “In October-November we [the ANC] received at our newspaper office reports from all over the country – Belingwe [Mberengwa], Enkeldoorn [Chivhu], Matobo, Sinoia [Chinhoyi], Umtali [Mutare] – of school buildings, teachers, houses, cattle-dipping tanks, beer-garden shelters being burnt down or destroyed.”³⁹⁹ Land allocation maps were torn up by angry villagers, and Land Development Officers and their assistants assaulted. “Resistance got to the point where DCs [District Commissioners] could no longer hold meetings and the administration was grinding to a halt.”⁴⁰⁰ In early 1962, implementation of the NLHA was suspended. Various writers

³⁹⁴ For a more detailed argument on this see Arensberg, “*Upgrading Peasant Agriculture*,” 63-69.

³⁹⁵ Garfield Todd Papers, Cabinet Minutes, 6 May 1955 cited in Phimister, “Rethinking the Reserves,” 227.

³⁹⁶ Cited in C. Nyangoni and G. Nyandoro (eds.), *Zimbabwe Independence Movements: Select Documents*, (London: Rex Collings Ltd., 1979), 15.

³⁹⁷ K. Brown, *Land in Southern Rhodesia*, (London: The Africa Bureau, 1959), 2.

³⁹⁸ Phimister, “Rethinking the Reserves,” 228.

³⁹⁹ N. Bhebe, “The Nationalist Struggle 1957-1962,” in C. S. Banana (ed.), *Turmoil and Tenacity: Zimbabwe 1890-1990*, (Harare: The College Press, December 1989), 94-8.

⁴⁰⁰ Bhebe, “The Nationalist Struggle 1957-1962,” 94-8. See also Phimister, “Rethinking the Reserves,” 228.

have emphasised the poor planning and arrogant implementation which characterised the Act.⁴⁰¹ “Planning was by no means thorough,” concluded Bulman:

The greater error was in assessing the speed at which it was possible to implement the different stages, in 27 million acres of widely diverse Native Reserves, among two million people. By 1958 only 7 million acres were completed instead of 14 million. This was partly due to changes in the programme, unforeseen circumstances (for example, the need for recentralisation in some areas), new techniques (e.g. stereoscopic photography, unit planning), and staff shortages (photographers, surveyors, and agricultural officers) and bottle-necks in the supply of machinery. The NAD [Native Affairs Department] had, quite simply, undertaken more than they had realized.⁴⁰²

Events leading to the abandonment of the NLHA in 1962:-

Several official attempts were made to save the Act from imminent demise. The NC of Belingwe (Mberengwa), Hayes, in his speech addressing the Belingwe Branch of the African Teachers’ Association at Masvingo Mission on 21st July, 1956 outlined the objectives and implications of the LHA: “Africans,” he said, “have been clamouring for such things as land rights, security of tenure and title deeds for many years. The Government has in the Land Husbandry Act evolved a partial solution to the problem as can be seen from the way it is being implemented in the target areas at the moment.”⁴⁰³ He went on to say that the Act aimed at developing the Reserves economically and stressed the point that farming was not the only means of gaining a livelihood as there were many other avenues both in the rural and urban areas [probably encouraging labour migrancy].⁴⁰⁴ Explaining the meanings of certain technical terms found in the LHA, Hayes seemed to be at pains to come up with clear definitions of farming rights, grazing rights and the holding capacity of a grazing area.

After Hayes’ speech which was described as enlightening by his colleagues in the colonial government, many of the people present at the meeting fired a barrage of questions at him. Answering a question about who had the right of farming in the reserves, he said that all Africans had the right with the exception of minors and unmarried women.⁴⁰⁵ Clarifying his reply, he said that all non-indigenous Africans [probably referring to labour migrants from Zambia, Malawi and Mozambique] had no right whatsoever to hold land in the reserves; the same applied to all indigenous Africans

⁴⁰¹ Planning errors on the part of the implementors of the Act have been emphasised by G. Kingsley Garbett, “The Land Husbandry Act of Southern Rhodesia” in D. Biebuyck (ed.), *African Agrarian Systems*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), 194; Machingaidze, “Agrarian Change from Above,” 557-589; and Duggan, “The Native Land Husbandry Act of 1951 and the Rural African Middle Class of Southern Rhodesia.”

⁴⁰² Bulman, “The Native Land Husbandry Act of Southern Rhodesia,” 15.

⁴⁰³ “The Husbandry Act: Partial Solution to the Problem of Land Rights,” *The Bantu Mirror*, Bulawayo, 21(21), Saturday, August 4, 1956, 1.

⁴⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

who were minors or had lost their farming rights or grazing rights for one reason or another. A teacher asked if members of his profession and other workers could hold land. The NC Belingwe (Hayes) replied that they could in their own home areas provided they complied with the demands of the Act.⁴⁰⁶

Clearly, the NLHA was applied with a great deal of haste. The 5-year plan to apply the Land Husbandry on the 40 million acres in all the African reserves, which was announced by the Minister of Native Affairs, P. B. Fletcher, in July 1955, was said to be in full swing. A progress report released by the Agricultural Department on Wednesday (14th November, 1956) for the 3 months ending September 30 showed that the work was ahead of schedule.⁴⁰⁷ For example, the acreage planned to be surveyed and allocated in 1956 was 2 702 000 acres, but on the 30th of September 2 882 166 acres, which exceeded the 1956 target, had already been done. Conservation planning, including the demarcation and centralisation of lands, was reported to be completed on 2 291 217 acres, which was 84% of the 1956 target, and allocation of rights completed on 768 767 acres, which was 28% of the 1956 target area.⁴⁰⁸

The report admitted that there was a general shortage of African Agricultural Demonstration staff. The shortage, it was argued, was, fortunately, not being felt in some areas where the Act was being implemented because the areas were small (e.g. Sanyati), but, it was observed that, unless the output of demonstrators was stepped up considerably, there would be difficulty in carrying out follow-up work, as large areas would be completed next year (1957) and in subsequent years.⁴⁰⁹ Fletcher announced the following plan to deal with the shortage of African staff: “We will have to make more use of Supernumerary Demonstrators to make up for this shortage. Pegger staff is up to strength in all provinces except Matebeleland [sic] and in that province arrangements are in hand for training the additional 31 peggers required.”⁴¹⁰

One of the factors that heightened opposition to the NLHA was that rural farmers needed to be given authority to graze their cattle. Grazing stock without permission was a punishable offence. Chief Sigombe Mathema of Wenlock, Gwanda Reserve, and his right hand man, Headman Masole Nkala, for example, were among the 11 people who were arrested at Wenlock on Tuesday (9th January, 1962) for grazing stock without permits.⁴¹¹ *The Central African Daily News* Correspondent in Gwanda reported: “it appears there were also other people who had been arrested in Wenlock in connection with such offences as failure to dip their cattle and refusing to destock their cattle,” adding that, “... what is upsetting the people very much is the presence of police jeeps in the area shortly after the ‘troops had been around before Christmas, terrorising the people.’ ”⁴¹²

⁴⁰⁶ “The Husbandry Act: Partial Solution to the Problem of Land Rights,” 1.

⁴⁰⁷ “Husbandry Act Being Implemented Faster Than Expected,” *The Bantu Mirror*, Bulawayo, 21(36), Saturday, November 17, 1956, 1.

⁴⁰⁸ “Husbandry Act Being Implemented Faster Than Expected,” 1.

⁴⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴¹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹¹ “Chief Arrested For Alleged Stock Offence,” *The Central African Daily News*, First Edition, 5(185), Saturday, January 13, 1962, 1.

⁴¹² *Ibid.*

According to the *Daily News* Political Correspondent “Ukuru,” the United Federal Party Paper for Africans, had forecast the repeal of the Land Apportionment Act (which became the NLHA after several amendments) in its entirety in 1962. The paper also predicted the abolition of the Native Affairs Department.⁴¹³ “Ukuru” projected that the year 1962 would be remembered in history as the year in which “true freedom” would be achieved in Southern Rhodesia,” because, by the end of 1962, there will not be a trace of racial discrimination left on Southern Rhodesian Statute Books.”⁴¹⁴ The paper told Africans that “The big news of 1962 will be the complete repeal of the Land Apportionment Act. This means that you, if you can afford it, will be able to buy land and live wherever you like in Southern Rhodesia, even in the big towns like Salisbury and Bulawayo.”⁴¹⁵ Predicting the abolition of the Native Department it said: “It is certain that the Native Department will be abolished completely, following the recommendations of the *Robinson Commission*; and that its place will be taken by an administrative Department that will deal equally with the problem of all races.”⁴¹⁶

Two important scenarios emerge from this. On the one hand, the paper’s prediction was quite apt as the NLHA was eventually not only suspended but abandoned in 1962. On the other, the forecast that a new department bent on achieving parity between the races would replace the Native Department was to prove a misplaced and pretentious hope as the UDI era killed all this optimism. Incidentally, the UDI Government of Ian Smith and its State Departments became even more authoritarian and racist than “Ukuru” had ever imagined.

Convicting Africans for settling on Crown Land made the situation worse as far as the survival of the NLHA was concerned. For example, 75 men and women were reported to have appeared in the Gutu magistrate’s court to answer charges under the Land Apportionment Act.⁴¹⁷ A Correspondent of *The Daily News* in the area said that the accused were charged under Section 8 (2) of the Act and that Advocate Herbert Chitepo (Zimbabwe’s first black lawyer) of Salisbury (Harare) conducted the defence. Of these, 52 (50 men and 2 women) were formally charged for contravening the Act. According to the Correspondent, although these people pleaded guilty to the charges levelled against them, they, however, maintained that they had settled on the Crown land which was close to Devure Native Purchase Area simply because “they had nowhere else to go,” and assured the magistrate that “they would be prepared to go anywhere in Southern Rhodesia where land could be made available for them.”⁴¹⁸

Land shortage and poor economic planning did not ameliorate the situation either. As Phimister has pointed out, the NLHA tried to impose “a mixed farming system of grain and cattle all over the country ... [but] this system was quite unsuited to the low-rainfall

⁴¹³ “Land Apportionment Act Goes this Year,” *The Central African Daily News*, First Edition, 5(187), Wednesday, January 17, 1962, 1.

⁴¹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴¹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴¹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴¹⁷ “Settled On Crown Land: 52 Convicted,” *The Central African Daily News*, 5(188), Thursday, January 18, 1962, 1.

⁴¹⁸ *Ibid.*

areas [such as Sanyati], [while] in the high-rainfall Eastern areas, a great potential for intensive cash-crop farming was ignored.” Consequently, productivity fell and per capita income actually declined. On the whole, the Act “had been implemented too quickly and on too large a scale. It had been imposed from above, and where Africans had expressed doubt and advocated caution, they had been ignored. Not [sic] sufficient attempt had been made to gain understanding and support for the changes involved, and the high-handed, accelerated implementation had antagonized many, both through the mistakes made, and the failure to hear complaints.”⁴¹⁹

Recent studies have also not missed the intensity of peasant opposition to the NLHA. Ranger, for example, has written of “embittered peasants ... and returning labour migrants who found themselves without land or cattle entitlement.” Similarly, Bhebe has described how many villages “were deserted, their occupants hiding in the bush,” when government officials arrived to enforce Land Husbandry measures. Obviously influenced by Benjamin Burombo, in 1955, at a large meeting in Shangani Reserve at the beginning of the ploughing season, people “declared that they were not going to have anything to do with the Land Development Officers, the Demonstrators and other agricultural Officers.” These were not empty threats, as the local Native Commissioner soon discovered.

He was told by one Headman Manguni ‘that the Voice Association had threatened that if any of the people were seen co-operating with ... [the Native Commissioner] in connection with the Land Husbandry Act, their villages would be attacked at night and they would be beaten up.’ The Voice warned people that being in the presence of the Native Commissioner would be no safeguard as they would be beaten anyway. The people were thus afraid to co-operate with the Native Commissioner. When the latter went to Manguni’s area to start an evaluation of the lands, no one except Manguni turned up ... The Native Commissioner was unable to do anything by way of implementing the Land Husbandry Act. The Voice in the meantime was expanding rapidly in the reserve.⁴²⁰

On the whole, Africans resented the Act because it hampered their economic progress and did not intend to foster an African middle class in the reserves, but as far as the whites were concerned, any effective scheme for raising the reserves from impoverishment would have threatened the very basis of settler society. Quite plausibly, Floyd has noted that the NLHA was opposed by a broad and clearly diverse section of rural African society. Floyd, for example, conceded that “malcontents” included “those who have suffered considerable reductions in land and cattle, or those who have been caught in violation of some phase of the Act,”⁴²¹ while Ranger has acknowledged that:

almost everyone in the reserves opposed it. In many reserves, entrepreneurial peasants farmed quite large areas of land. Under Land Husbandry they would have been allocated the standard 6 or 7 acres, so they naturally opposed its implementation. Many chiefs resented the loss

⁴¹⁹ Bulman, “The Native Land Husbandry Act of Southern Rhodesia,” 17 and 20.

⁴²⁰ Bhebe, *B. Burombo*, 107 and 108.

⁴²¹ Floyd, “Changing Patterns of African Land Use,” 269.

of their power to allocate land. Even peasants who were allocated more or less the same amount of land than they had previously farmed resented new and unpopular patterns of residence and the coercive commands of agricultural demonstrators and land development officers.⁴²²

According to Phimister, without exception opposition to the Act came overwhelmingly from those people whom it threatened to render landless and Holleman was emphatic on this point:

Evidence from African witnesses ... strongly suggested that the majority of agitators, though coming from Salisbury, were in fact young migrant labourers from the Mangwende area whom the Land Husbandry Act had made ineligible for farming rights in their own areas. They appeared to be the most vociferous and excitable elements who exhorted their tribesmen to resist land allocation and who threatened to resort to physical violence if people co-operated with the Administration.⁴²³

As already noted, some of the severest critics of the Act were the landless, most of whom were absent from the reserves performing migrant labour. In the Mondoro Reserve, it was reported on 2nd October 1961 by Chief Nyika and Headman Chizinga and Mudumwa that European type Beers and Wine were being sold at week-end assemblies in the Reserve which were disguised as “Tea-Parties,”⁴²⁴ but in essence these were meetings to map the way forward in the light of the NLHA’s cruel dictates. Confirming the same, Bulman noted that “In the towns, there were the stirrings of unrest, which spread to the reserves at weekends, from those who felt themselves dispossessed of a birthright.”⁴²⁵ “If a man is told that he has no Native Land Husbandry rights and that he cannot be given any,” Bessant quoted a government commission as reporting, “then he is a ready-made supporter of the National Democratic Party [successor to the African National Congress] which promises land to all ... he is ready to lend ear and hand to carry out the various illegal and subversive activities ... Why not, he thinks: he has no job and no land, so what has he to lose?”⁴²⁶ “Above all”, concluded Ranger, “those young men who were away in the towns and who lost land rights at the time of registration opposed implementation very strongly.”⁴²⁷

Clearly, the authors of the NLHA grossly underestimated the number of people who would lose their right to land. From the very beginning, official calculations were thrown

⁴²² Ranger, *Peasant Consciousness*.

⁴²³ Holleman, *Chief, Council and Commissioner*, 206.

⁴²⁴ NAZ (RC), Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 158077, Location C19.2.10R: File: LAN 9 Sanyati and Ngezi: 1951-1964, “Beer Drinking Assemblies: Ngezi-Mondoro Reserve,” R. L. Westcott (NC Gatooma) to the Member-in-Charge, B.S.A. Police, Featherstone, 3rd October 1961.

⁴²⁵ Bulman, “The Native Land Husbandry Act of Southern Rhodesia,” 14.

⁴²⁶ Leslie Bessant, “Coercive Development: Peasant Economy, Politics and Land in Chiweshe, Colonial Zimbabwe, 1940-1966,” PhD dissertation, Yale University, 1987, 252, cited in Phimister, “Rethinking the Reserves,” 234.

⁴²⁷ Ranger, *Peasant Consciousness*.

out by a greater than expected degree of over-crowding in many reserves.⁴²⁸ The plan was also not sufficiently flexible to accommodate the thousands of people who attempted to return to the reserves when they lost their jobs during the economic recession precipitated by a slump in the price of copper after 1957.⁴²⁹ What can be gleaned from all this is that the issue of land rights affected a large and growing constituency, and it is least surprising that resistance to the NLHA was the embodiment of the numerous grievances the people had against the totalitarian and irrational nature of the Act, let alone the unrepresentative nature of the government. The slow tempo of African agricultural development up to the abandonment of the Act can be explained in this context.

Peasant differentiation defies NLHA dictates:-

It is true that reserve entrepreneurs made concerted effort to survive in an otherwise difficult political and economic environment. As suggested by Phimister, rural elites were not destroyed by the Act. They were indeed some of the most vociferous opponents of the Act. This seems to contrast sharply with the belief that “entrepreneurial” peasants comprised only a tiny and dwindling minority of reserve inhabitants, whose backs were broken by the NLHA’s implementation, and whose protests were unimportant compared to those of the landless poor. Quoting Ranger, Phimister says “During the 1930s the Rhodesian government [had] set its [sights] against the kind of ploughman entrepreneurs who were emerging on a significant scale within the Reserves,” as “The redistributive procedures of ‘centralisation’ and ultimately of Land Husbandry were used to undercut such men; and ... destocking of cattle was similarly used to reduce differentiation among cattle owners.”⁴³⁰ However, the assumption that “rural entrepreneurs” did not engage in cash-crop production and became differentiated is grossly misleading.

In fact, evidence to the contrary is galore. Le Roux has revealed that, at the end of the 1940s an estimated 52% of cultivated land in the reserves was farmed by 30% of the peasantry.⁴³¹ This meant that there was increased land and cattle ownership despite stipulations of the NLHA as well as destocking measures. Having largely evaded earlier Native Department attempts to limit the acreage they could plough and the number of cattle they could own, this category of producers were no less determined to go their own way in the 1950s, and they did so with considerable ingenuity and remarkable success. To some extent they were helped by the fact, as indicated previously, that the initial implementation of the NLHA was extremely slow. It was largely confined to three reserves, and, even when the whole process was speeded-up between 1955 and 1961, the very haste with which it was carried out conferred an important degree of protection on better-off cultivators. “Consider the consequences of speed,” warned one observer in 1959. “Shoddy and inaccurate work can result in the field; errors in census taking can create serious difficulties as the later stages of the Act are implemented ... Pacing of

⁴²⁸ P. Hamilton, “Population Pressure and Land Use in Chiweshe Reserve,” *Rhodes-Livingstone Journal*, 36, 1964 cited in Phimister, “Rethinking the Reserves,” 234.

⁴²⁹ D. Clarke, *Unemployment and Economic Structure in Rhodesia*, (Gwelo: Mambo Press, 1977), 8-9.

⁴³⁰ Ranger cited in Phimister, “Rethinking the Reserves.”

⁴³¹ Le Roux, “Survey of Proposals for the Development of African Agriculture,” 34.

lands by foot rather than taping or chaining can lead to errors in acreage calculations of 20 to 25 per cent ... A hasty and inaccurate check on number of livestock at [the] Kraal appreciation [Stage] will be perpetuated under the stock control regulations of the NLHA.”⁴³²

This over-emphasis on speed meant that government officials inevitably skipped stages in the Act’s implementation. The insurmountable problems caused by the shortage of competent staff as well as other difficulties caused certain key provisions of the Act to be quietly abandoned. For example, “the requirement that arable land should be matched by a grazing area sufficient to enable the maintenance of fertility was dropped, cultivation rights were permitted in the grazing areas and a substantial degree of overstocking (30 per cent) was tolerated.”⁴³³ In a recent study, Phimister states that, at the end of 1961, shortly before implementation was suspended, individual land allocations had been made in 54% of the area proclaimed in terms of the Act. As this applied only to 78% of the total acreage of the reserves and so-called Special Native Areas, it meant that even the formal implementation of the NLHA was confined to about 42% of reserves.

These figures suggest that, in nearly 60% of the reserves, cultivators were left in possession of their existing land holdings, and even where the provisions of the NLHA were carried out, deficiencies regarding staff made implementation difficult. For the limited staff that was available to the Native Department, any attempt at curbing *madiro* ploughing far exceeded their capacity. There were numerous cases of people self-allocating themselves land (“*kuita madiro*”) ⁴³⁴ upon arrival from Rhodesdale in 1950. Self-allocation and the size of land they self-allocated themselves was dependent on the availability of individual or household productive resources like labour, draught power and other equipment (“*zvibatiso*”). When the NLHA was eventually implemented in Sanyati in 1956, it tried to limit allocations to the stipulated 8 acres but people who had self-allocated themselves more than the 8 acres tended to resist this limitation. Hence, “illegal extensions take place, or the ploughing of vacant plots is done by unauthorised people.”⁴³⁵ The rampant nature of *madiro* is clearly reflected in Bhebe’s confession that

Out of the 15 acres which we had ploughed over the years, carefully cleared, annually fertilised with cattle manure only three acres were allocated to my mother and the rest was given to other people. Our savings also consisted of over 30 head of cattle and over 50 goats. The stock permit that was given to my mother authorised her to graze only 6 head of cattle. The rest of the stock we were supposed to dispose of at once by selling or slaughtering ... Had we complied with the dictates of the colonial regime, my brother and sister and I would never have afforded the

⁴³² Floyd, “Changing Patterns of African Land Use,” 339-40.

⁴³³ H. Dunlop, “Land and Economic Opportunity in Rhodesia.” *Rhodesia Journal of Economics*, 6, (1972), 7.

⁴³⁴ For more detail on “*madiro*” (Freedom ploughing) see Nyambara, “A History of Land Acquisition in Gokwe.”

⁴³⁵ NAZ, S160/LS/103/1A/50, Additional land required for occupation by natives, unassigned area, report of 25 August 1950. See also Southern Rhodesia, *Report of a Commission of Inquiry into the Cold Storage Commission of Southern Rhodesia (Danziger Report)*, Salisbury: Rhodesian Printing and Publishing Company, 1952.

school fees for our education ... [but] for the next few years [after 1959] my family and many other people in the area, with the active connivance of the local dip-tank supervisor who was supposed to enforce stock-permit regulations and our chief, Mketi, who was assigned the task of enforcing regulations pertaining to the arable plots, fought very hard not only to retain our livestock but also to extend our plots into viable units.⁴³⁶

The basic point being conveyed by the foregoing is that a large number of better-off peasants came through the NLHA, if not exactly unscathed, then more or less intact. So much so, in fact, that in the 1950/60 season 30% of reserve producers were now working 63% of all cultivated land. What is clear from this is that the trend towards an unequal distribution of the area under cultivation was more pronounced at the end of the decade than it had been at its beginning. Cattle ownership had also become more unequal and this is validated by Roux's assertion that: "as with crops two types of cattle owner[s] had developed by 1960. One was a small-scale owner with a subsistence herd, the other was a large-scale owner who supplied the beef market."⁴³⁷ Over the same period, the real incomes of this "upper 30 per cent of African producers" were consistently higher than those of the lowest paid urban workers, and expanded faster than those of the majority of reserve cultivators.⁴³⁸ Far from the Land Husbandry Act checking "entrepreneurial individualism,"⁴³⁹ the "wealth gap between these two classes of farmer" actually increased during the 1950s.⁴⁴⁰

This does not imply, though, that opposition by "reserve entrepreneurs" to the NLHA was any less fierce after having escaped most of its provisions. On the contrary, it implies that resistance from this source was much more important than previously suspected. Alienated and embittered by the attempts of successive settler regimes to wrest control over the dynamics of rural accumulation from their grasp, a significant number of richer peasants turned away from co-operation with government agencies to embrace nationalist politics. Along with rural businessmen, school teachers and headmasters, as well as some chiefs and headmen, they assumed leadership positions in branches of the African National Congress (ANC) and the National Democratic Party (NDP). In Matabeleland's Wenlock district, for example, the first chairman of an ANC branch was "the agrarian entrepreneur, Mark Docotela Ncube," while at the other end of the country a few years later, the leaders of rural dissidence "were not landless young men or itinerant traders but members of the chiefly family, headmen and male peasant elders."⁴⁴¹ Undoubtedly, the grievances and aspirations of this "upper 30 per cent of African producers" crucially shaped both the kind of opposition to the NLHA and the particular brand of nationalism which was emerging at the end of the 1950s and the beginning of the 1960s. This very strong opposition was to remain an ingrained feature of the liberation war years in Zimbabwe.

⁴³⁶ Bhebe, *B. Burombo*, 5-6.

⁴³⁷ Le Roux, "Survey of Proposals for the Development of African Agriculture," 38-9.

⁴³⁸ Yudelman, *Africans on the Land*, 244.

⁴³⁹ Ranger, *Peasant Consciousness*, 75.

⁴⁴⁰ Le Roux, "Survey of Proposals for the Development of African Agriculture," 37.

⁴⁴¹ Ranger, "Origins of Nationalism in Rural Matabeleland: The Case of Wenlock," unpublished, 1990, 36, cited in Phimister, "Rethinking the Reserves," 239. See also Ranger, *Peasant Consciousness*, 162.

In fact, as far as resistance to the implementation of the NLHA was concerned what was specific about the Sanyati experience was the combined involvement not only of the agrarian entrepreneurs but also the participation in resistance to the Act by the poorer peasantry as well. Chiefs and headmen opposed the NLHA but not in as vociferous and open a manner as some of the traditional leadership in Mhondoro “Reserve.” Chiefs like Wozhele tried to exploit the position vested in them by the state to amass wealth by claiming ownership of multiple pieces of land some of which they bequeathed to their children/offspring. The Sanyati example reveals that the recent roots of differentiation were steeped in the community’s averseness to measures that were aimed at limiting the African’s economic opportunities. The people’s hate of the NLHA dates back to the early 1950s when this Act was deployed to force African farmers out of the so-called white ranching areas. On the whole, between the 1950s and 1960s this northwestern frontier portrays a wide array of complexities that determined rural differentiation and highlights the rather ambiguous relationships that distinguished the rich from the poor in what then was a predominantly rainland/dryland area. Although the power balancing strategies of the state and the preponderance of a single social category (i.e. the master farmer category) were emphasised to structure the rudiments of order and progress in rural development it can be noted that the master farmers were forever mindful of the hegemonic inclinations of the state. On the other hand, the fears of subjugation by the state and the master farmers on the part of the poor categories were quite pronounced. In Sanyati, therefore, the less-to-do peasants’ awe of the balancing as well as bandwagoning strategies of the state informed the nature of their resistance to such prescriptions as the NLHA. These nuances, which constitute how rural Sanyati was ordered and how differentiation progressed in this arid region have been captured in the broad categorisation of the local peasantry into “progressive” and “backward” farmers. The latter term was used in a generic fashion to refer to all farmers/agrarian classes who resisted the so-called modern methods of farming which in reality entailed European methods of farming. They were seen as lagging behind. However, their action was a clear manifestation of resistance against the state whose inclinations during the colonial period as evidenced by the NLHA constrained or were not in favour of bolstering the peasant farmer in general.

Clearly, the scope for accumulation in the 1950s and 1960s was normally strictly limited by government planners of the day, who tended to limit the acreage and level of production of these individual producers in line with the quality control and technical criteria set by the state. As Cowen has suggested in another context, the aim of such measures is to generate the development of an undifferentiated middle peasantry, producing high-grade export crops (e.g. cotton in the case of Sanyati) under “controlled and increasingly technically advanced methods of production and to avoid the uncontrollable aspects of rich peasant differentiation.”⁴⁴² The advent of cotton in 1963

⁴⁴² Cowen makes the point that this form of development of commodity production is preferred by international capital as obstructing any tendencies towards the formation of an autonomous national bourgeoisie. See M. P. Cowen, “Capital, Class and Peasant Households,” Unpublished Paper, (Nairobi: Mimeo, July 1976) cited in Raikes, “Rural Differentiation and Class-Formation in Tanzania,” 286.

and its influence on the differentiation process was quite considerable. In fact, the state tried to arrest rural differentiation to no avail.

Introduction of cotton and socio-economic differentiation:-

In spite of the unfavourable political climate, the 1960s witnessed increased rural differentiation as some peasant households with sufficient resources diversified their agricultural pursuits and took to cotton cultivation. Far from being mere pawns in the colonial game, peasant households mainly of Madheruka extraction took the initiative and cultivated cotton and prospered, while others (notably the Shangwe and Madheruka with inadequate resources) objected to cotton growing⁴⁴³ and these malperformed economically. 1963 marked the introduction and development of cotton agriculture in Sanyati and the crop had significant ramifications on the process of differentiation. Rural households participated in cotton growing at various levels because of differential access to essential productive resources such as credit, labour, land, farm equipment (“zvibatiso”), other agricultural services like demonstrator advice and access to limited and distant markets in Kadoma. Those who embraced cotton earlier and possessed the requisite resources unquestionably became a “black capitalist entrepreneurial class.” In other words, it was towards these few leading prosperous farmers (Master Farmers)⁴⁴⁴ that the colonial agricultural officers devoted most of their efforts by giving them the advice they needed. In addition, Master Farmers dominated the growing of cotton because of the knowledge of farming which they brought with them from their areas of origin (e.g. Rhodesdale). They also dominated the co-operative societies through which much of the credit to purchase inputs as well as technical advice were channeled. Due to their growing influence, Master Farmers had access to adequate co-operative and hired labour in addition to family household labour. In this vein, therefore, cotton was to become one of the major causes of differentiation among the Sanyati peasantry.

As already noted, the majority of the rural households who lacked access to adequate essential productive resources derived limited if any benefits from participation in cotton growing. Actually, some of the resource-poor households did not grow cotton, but rather became a source of labour for the large-scale farmers. Quite appropriately, Worby has recently observed that, the introduction of cotton and the cotton boom that followed “generated its own regionally based class of aggressive entrepreneurs who were crossing residual historical boundaries in land tenure and labour markets to constitute a nascent class of large-scale black agrarian capitalists.”⁴⁴⁵ Those who did not join the bandwagon invariably lagged behind and constituted a class of less-to-do peasants. Although this latter category was poverty-stricken, the argument in this study is that its predicament did

⁴⁴³ Nyambara, “Colonial Policy and Peasant Cotton Agriculture in Southern Rhodesia, 1904-1953,” 84. See also Nyambara, “ ‘Madheruka’ Master Farmers and the ‘Shangwe’: Ethnic Identities, Cotton Agriculture and Socio-Economic Differentiation in the Gokwe District of Northwestern Zimbabwe, 1963-1979,” Northwestern University, May 1998, 1-50.

⁴⁴⁴ Yudelman, *Africans on the Land*, 140, defines Master Farmers as peasants who received training on experimental farms and followed improved methods of farming prescribed by the advisory services. A more comprehensive discussion of the origins of the Master Farmer concept will be provided in the next chapter.

⁴⁴⁵ Worby, “Remaking Labour, Reshaping Identity,” 214.

not preclude the emergence of distinct classes of people in the area. This was so because, as agriculture became more commercialised especially with the introduction of cotton, a process of agrarian capitalist accumulation developed in Sanyati to benefit a few economically well-endowed peasant farmers who were akin to agrarian *Kulaks*.

The element of increased commercialisation led to the widening of the social and economic gap between Sanyati residents. Pius S. Nyambara's findings in his case study of Gokwe bear a similar resonance with the pattern of differentiation found in Sanyati that, not every peasant household, let alone every individual peasant, derived similar benefits or experienced the same degree of success with cotton agriculture.⁴⁴⁶ According to M. Yudelman, in the process of differentiation, cotton benefited a few "progressive" farmers,⁴⁴⁷ the majority of whom were "immigrants" (Madheruka). Indeed, increased cotton production and high levels of marketed cotton were achieved by a minority of producers as some peasants definitely benefited from cotton agriculture, while others were disadvantaged hence the differential impact exerted by cotton cultivation on the peasantry.⁴⁴⁸ Quoting Lenin, C. A. Smith endorses the same view: "The prevalence of commodity economy ... gives rise to competition among producers, and, while ruining the mass, enriches the few."⁴⁴⁹ To a large extent, therefore, cotton commodity production in Sanyati was also instrumental in enriching a handful of peasants whilst at the same time ruining the greater spectrum of rural society. Hence, Sanyati did not conform, especially in the twentieth century, to the rather unorthodox and obsolete theories of a homogeneous peasantry propounded by Gelfand and others. In fact, for a region purportedly a backwater of Southern Rhodesian economic development going into the middle of the twentieth century, Sanyati has moved rapidly to occupy centre stage at the close of the 1990s. It now boasts a fairly developed economy by many rural standards and the area owes this distinction to being one of the oldest frontier regions of this former British colony to embrace cotton agriculture.

Conclusion

This chapter has argued that the actual impact of the NLHA may have been overestimated, at the same time as the extent of differentiation among the peasantry was underestimated. Truly Sanyati farmers were highly innovative entrepreneurs who

⁴⁴⁶ Nyambara, "A History of Land Acquisition in Gokwe," 196.

⁴⁴⁷ Yudelman, *Africans on the Land*.

⁴⁴⁸ Nyambara, "Colonial Policy and Peasant Cotton Agriculture in Southern Rhodesia, 1904-1953," 83. A large body of literature on peasant cotton production in colonial Africa exists which includes A. Isaacman, "Chiefs, Rural Differentiation and Peasant Protest: The Mozambican Forced Cotton Regime 1938-1961," *African Economic History*, 14, (1985); Isaacman, *Cotton is the Mother of Poverty*; Isaacman and R. Roberts (eds.), *Cotton, Colonialism and Social History in Sub-Saharan Africa*, (London: James Curry, 1995); Isaacman, "Peasants, Work and the Labour Process"; E. Mandala, *Work and Control in a Peasant Economy: A History of the Lower Tchiri Valley in Malawi 1959-1960*, (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990); O. Likaka, *Rural Society and Cotton in Colonial Zaire*, (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1997).

⁴⁴⁹ V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, 1, 430 cited in C. A. Smith, "Does a Commodity Economy Enrich the Few While Ruining the Masses? Differentiation Among Petty Commodity Producers in Guatemala," *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 11(3), (April 1984), 60-61. See also V. I. Lenin, *The Development of Capitalism in Russia*, (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1954).

invariably did not resemble, in any way, a truncated peasantry. Rural elites may well have survived the Act, and in the process crucially shaping opposition to it. In the course of analysing the peasant economy in the pre-irrigation era in the context of colonial Zimbabwe's pivotal Native Land Husbandry Act, this chapter has also argued that the Act was not an invincible creation as it was breached several times by the growing body of pro-active peasants. It has further suggested that the very success with which "reserve entrepreneurs" withstood the onslaught of the NLHA permitted this significant stratum of rural society to make its presence felt throughout the liberation struggle. By surviving the Act, the "upper 30 per cent of African producers" demonstrated that the colonial state machinery could not conceivably break the jaw of the rural elites nor could it dampen their march towards economic prosperity and political independence. This ensemble of resource rich peasants and their poorer counterparts, taken together with the income disparities that existed between them, revealed that twentieth-century Sanyati society was hardly economically and socially homogeneous but highly heterogeneous.

Furthermore, it has been demonstrated that, while writings on the NLHA have tended to see the Act as having had a restrictive effect on rural differentiation and accumulation because of its tendency towards equalisation of resources, the outcome was a skewed pattern of access to land (the basis of any rural differentiation). The contradictions inherent in the NLHA itself made it possible for the better-off to take advantage of these loopholes to enhance their accumulation prospects. While on the one hand, the Act disadvantaged the women, especially single women, and the young men, on the other, it produced a small class of rural accumulators. However, the ability of this small class of rural entrepreneurs to engage in further accumulation was greatly curtailed by stipulations in the Act (e.g. regarding size of land) but they always sought to fight its stipulations off. Although literature on the NLHA has emphasised that bitter opposition to the Act came from the landless young men, this chapter has demonstrated that fierce opposition also came from "immigrant" reserve entrepreneurs who saw the Act as a constraint on further accumulation. Thus, it is this chapter's contention that conventional wisdom on the effects of the NLHA may have overstated the actual impact of the Act, while ignoring the extent of differentiation that emerged among the Sanyati peasantry notwithstanding the over-bearing presence of the Act.

The chapter has also revealed that the regime of "development" that emerged in post-war Southern Rhodesia was organised around a naturalised racial axis that differentiated among African and European populations in a three-fold manner i.e. economically, culturally and politically. Within their own communities Africans were also differentiated, as a series of legislative acts and administrative innovations were devoted to the reform of four principal domains of African rural life: the disciplining of hygienic practice, the stabilisation of the monogamous family, the regularisation of land tenure and the rationalisation of agrarian techniques. The state interventionistic measures were considered integral to the task of reconciling conservation imperatives with political exigencies, particularly the demand that Africans be removed from European-designated farmland while sustaining the promise to increase black prosperity – a major contradiction in policy discourse.

This analysis of Sanyati reserve illustrates the importance of the timing and sequence according to which hinterland regions were drawn into the prescriptive apparatus of the development regime. This malarial, tsetse-infested lowland, remote from the major axes of urban and industrial development, is located in a region distinguished by the historical absence of competing claims by European settlers to land. Sanyati began to receive “immigrants” forcibly resettled from Rhodesdale in the 1950s, at a time when the coercive and hyper-rational model of development was reaching its apogee behind the passage of the NLHA. Targeting “immigrants” who had already internalised the “discipline” of development and styled themselves as “modern,” Sanyati’s extension staff was able to institute a voluntary, cotton-based regime, one widely regarded as a model of African rural “advancement.”

By and large, it cannot be refuted that the unfolding rural differentiation process was more clearly recognised at the beginning of the 1960s as more and more peasants embraced the values and virtues of cotton growing. Although social inequalities existed in the early twentieth century, as cotton became firmly established, major and intractable forms of differentiation in the manner in which power and income were distributed set in. The intrusive effects of a market economy whose basis was cotton gave rise to a differentiation between rich and poor farmers which tended to alter the existing social and economic structure. Old economic forms were quickly giving way to new ones. The local staple crop, maize, was still being grown but greater emphasis was now placed on cotton by many households in Sanyati.

In this period, no doubt, growing economic differentiation was witnessed and “co-operative” agricultural work, known locally as *humwe*, became the order of the day as wealthier members of the community who could afford a lavish outlay on entertainment of groups of young men and women harvesting their fields emerged.⁴⁵⁰ However, a more detailed examination of cotton cultivation and the sort of differentiation it wrought upon Sanyati society particularly during the irrigation era will be conducted in chapter four as the area lacked an irrigation history prior to the 1960s. Indeed, the adoption of cotton in 1963 was responsible for stepping up the tempo of differentiation in rural Sanyati. To all intents and purposes, this was to represent a prelude to the kind of agricultural and developmental policies adopted by Ian Douglas Smith’s Rhodesia Front (RF) government when it unilaterally declared independence from Britain in 1965. The case of TILCOR/ARDA irrigation, to be discussed from chapter three onwards, would be incomplete without the history that preceded it. Irrigation did not take place in a vacuum. Whilst initially there were no signs of irrigation save for the few boreholes drilled by the Irrigation Department, events between the 1930s and 1960s including the climatic and ecological conditions of the area, pointed to a need for harnessing water in the Munyati River by the parastatal organisation and use it to alleviate the occurrences of frequent drought and hunger. Co-operatively

⁴⁵⁰ D. B. C. O’Brien, “Co-operators and Bureaucrats: Class Formation in a Senegalese Peasant Society.” *Africa: Journal of the International Institute*, 41(4), (October 1971), 267. See also Nyambara, “A History of Land Acquisition in Gokwe,” and Worby, “Remaking Labour, Reshaping Identity,” for a fuller and detailed elaboration of what they term “humwe.”

From the foregoing, it can be pointed out that irrigation was still unknown in Sanyati by 1964. Serious engagement with the irrigation debate on the part of the colonial government only took precedence in the latter half of the 1960s. After 1965, the state formulated key policy strategies to direct irrigation development as illustrated in chapter three. This chapter, however, has demonstrated that differentiation, as a process was not an irrigation phenomenon alone. Even in the decades prior to the inception of irrigation technology socio-economic differentiation had started to manifest itself in Sanyati quite clearly – this in spite of the futile onslaught by the colonial state machinery to “flatten” or eliminate it particularly at the high watermark of the implementation of the NLHA during the 1950s and early 1960s.