

**Working Paper Number 143****Losing the Plot: The Strategic Dismantling  
of White Farming in Zimbabwe  
2000-2005**Angus Selby<sup>1</sup>

*This paper examines the dismantling of the white farming sector in Zimbabwe after 2000. It argues that although ZANU PF portrayed farm invasions as a demonstrable effort towards populist land reforms, the 'fast-track' strategy was primarily one of political survival, and that this is evident in the pattern of land invasions and land allocations. Farm invasions quickly evolved into a systematic and methodical purge of commercial farms, to undermine support for the MDC from farmers and farm workers. Local contexts and local politics shaped the nature of local invasions, but the overall program was centrally endorsed and centrally co-ordinated. The reallocation of farms and assets were strategically geared towards placating key groups and key individuals within ZANU PF's increasingly militarised patronage system. Finally, this paper explores the reactions, counter strategies and patterns of collapse within the white farming sector. It illustrates how the community and its institutions fragmented along established planes of historical division, re-emphasising the significance of differentiation among farmers, throughout their history*

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***“Our Party must strike fear into the heart of the white man. They must tremble.”***

Robert Mugabe, December 2000.<sup>2</sup>

***“From a bread basket... Zimbabwe has become a basket case.”***

Morgan Tsvangirai, March 2002.<sup>3</sup>

***“The CFU has become irrelevant to what is on the ground.”***

Joseph Made, Minister of Agriculture, August 2003.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Extract from Robert Mugabe’s speech at an extraordinary ZANU PF Congress, December 2000.

<sup>3</sup> Discussion with Morgan Tsvangirai, London, April 2000.

<sup>4</sup> “CFU now irrelevant says Made”, *The Herald*, 7 August 2003.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

This paper is drawn from the final chapter of my doctoral thesis (Selby 2006). Preceding chapters illustrate the differentiated and changing profile of the commercial farming sector, the deteriorating communications and increasing tensions between farmers and the party-state over the deadlock in land reform, and the profound reconfigurations of a state in crisis. The constitutional referendum in 2000 signified a collapse of the state-farmer alliance as farmers mobilised against the government's draft constitution. This paper explores ZANU PF's 'instrumentalisation' of land after 2000 and its campaign to dismantle the white farming sector. It also examines the counter-strategies of farmers and the fragmentation of their communities. Furthermore it offers a tentative assessment of the impacts of 'fast-track' farm redistributions, five years after their inception.

In Zimbabwe, the period since 2000 has been dominated by violence, political intolerance and intimidation, economic implosion, food insecurity and general uncertainty. It is possible to argue that the crisis was an unavoidable culmination of unresolved and deep-rooted resource and race disparities, but it has been dominated by ZANU PF's often-ruthless struggle to retain power. Indeed, my analyses in earlier chapters illustrate that many of Zimbabwe's key problems were just as home-grown as they were unavoidable legacies of its colonial history.

Since 2000, Zimbabwe has attracted unprecedented media attention, and an emerging academic literature is beginning to unravel the post 2000 crisis.<sup>5</sup> Despite renewed focus on other aspects of white society there continues to be a shortage of specific research on white farmers, which this chapter aims to address.<sup>6</sup> It is perhaps too early to analyse this period comprehensively and the polarised sentiments over land and broader political contest have clouded more rational analyses. This paper focuses on modest but topical questions relating to farmers and the state during the crisis and ponders what these can tell us about the history. For example close examination of the pattern of land invasions and land allocations reveals important aspects of earlier land politics. Research material for this chapter draws primarily on media reports, interviews, and evidence from my case study area.

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<sup>5</sup> See Hammar et al (2004), which tackles three key issues: the politics of land and resource distribution, the reconstruction of the nation and citizenship, and the remaking of the state. Also see Lee and Colvard (2003) and Alexander (2006 forthcoming). Her final chapter is a succinct but comprehensive narrative of post-2000 developments.

<sup>6</sup> For example, see Raftopolous and Savage (2004), particularly the chapter by Karin Alexander.

## 1.2 DISMANTLING THE WHITE FARMING SECTOR

The 2000 referendum result was ZANU PF's first popular defeat since 1980. Mugabe declared that he accepted the outcome and that his government respected the will of the people. However, within days commercial farms were being invaded throughout the country. Officials stressed their spontaneity but the political utilities of the invasions and evictions were obvious. They served multiple objectives: they neutralised a political threat, they provided an election campaign strategy, they detracted attention from more fundamental political contest and from economic stagnation, and they placated the demands of strategic client groups. The objective of this section is to explore the systematic dismantling of the white farming sector, and to illustrate how the strategic 'instrumentalisation' of land after 2000, provided a medium and camouflage within which ZANU PF could plan and implement strategies aimed at restoring its political hegemony.

### 1.2.1 Rejuvenating the Security State

Makumbe (2003) argues that the rejuvenation and refinement of the security state carries interesting parallels to the intransigence of the settler state during UDI and the war. Indeed, many of ZANU PF's strategies can be linked to the RF's policies of the 1970s. Had ZANU PF lost power in 2000, senior officials would probably have been held accountable for a range of unresolved issues such as the genocide in Matabeleland, key corruption scandals of the 1990s, and the looting of the War Victims' Fund.<sup>7</sup> Senior officials therefore had a clear interest in retaining power which clearly influenced ZANU PF's post-2000 strategies. The nature of the state changed considerably during the late 1990s with the co-option of the war veterans and the growing influence of an impatient and radical empowerment alliance.<sup>8</sup> I argued in the previous chapter that Mugabe's concessions to the war veterans triggered increasingly radical strategies. Every ZANU PF conference after 1997 was dominated by an ascending alliance of radicals, increasingly prepared to challenge the 'old guard', who responded by forging new alliances; firstly with the empowerment lobby and war veterans in the 1990s, and subsequently with the youth and the military after 2000. It is only within the ruling party's monopolisation and militarisation of the state apparatus, that the land takeovers can be fully understood.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> David Coltart explained that the MDC backed off the threat of holding Mugabe accountable after the 2000 election, over concerns about cornering ZANU PF. Interview with David Coltart, Bulawayo, September 2001.

<sup>8</sup> Makumbe (2002) and Raftopolous (2004) explore the strategic alliances between the ruling party and the war veterans, members of the security apparatus and the youth militia. Hammer et al's (2004) analyses of 'remaking the state' illustrate reconfigurations of key groups within the ruling party.

<sup>9</sup> For an analysis of the militarization of the state and its strategic use of fear and violence see Bracking (2005).

Since 2000, the ruling party has systematically increased its control of state resources and the state apparatus, and subsequently militarized these institutions through strategic appointments. Members of the armed forces enjoyed regular and generous salary increases throughout the economic implosion and the CIO doubled in size.<sup>10</sup> Military officers were appointed to oversee key public institutions such as the GMB, and the electoral commission.<sup>11</sup> The army was integrally involved in the administration and organisation of the ‘fast-track’ land program and the 2002 and 2005 elections.<sup>12</sup> Military officers were well represented on the Provincial Lands Committees and allocated themselves prime farms especially after the return of troops from the Congo in 2002.<sup>13</sup> The distribution of food relief in 2003 and 2004 and the implementation of Operation Murambatsvina involved the police, the CIO and the army, as do the ‘command agriculture’ policies of 2006.<sup>14</sup> Similar tactics were used to placate youth groups as declining employment levels rendered the huge number of school leavers mobile, disgruntled, and primarily urban based - a key opposition constituency.<sup>15</sup> In much the same manner as the war veterans were turned from a threat into an asset, the government’s rejuvenated youth training scheme turned thousands of school leavers into an additional security wing for the ruling party. Concurrently, ZANU PF purged and politicised key civil institutions, such as the Judiciary, the Media and the Church (Raftopolous 2003b).

ZANU PF’s hegemony also depended on strengthening its resource bases. Whilst sources of financial support for the opposition, particularly white farmers, were systematically targeted, senior members and supporters of the ruling party were encouraged to consolidate their financial power. Land transfers were one element of a wider transfer of wealth and resources away from perceived sources of opposition towards supporters of the ruling party. Selective lawlessness and the nature of the economic collapse suited the process. A ‘shortage economy’ allowed ‘connected’ operators to profit. Price controls on basic goods such as fuel, bread and maize,

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<sup>10</sup> Interview with Brian Raftopolous, Harare, December 2003.

<sup>11</sup> Retired Colonel Samuel Muvuti was appointed CEO of the Grain Marketing Board in 2003. See “Mugabe steps up militarization of state institutions”, *Zim Online*, 9 May 2005.

<sup>12</sup> Peta Thornycroft, “Mugabe puts Military in Centre of Election”, *NewZimbabwe.com*, 24 January 2005.

<sup>13</sup> In the case study area, more than thirty percent of farms have been allocated to members of the armed forces (See Appendix I). In August 2005, during his Heroes Day speech, Mugabe promised 6000 middle ranking and junior officers that they would be allocated land. See [http://feoline.blogspot.com/2005\\_08\\_01\\_feoline\\_archive.html](http://feoline.blogspot.com/2005_08_01_feoline_archive.html).

<sup>14</sup> Operation Murambatsvina involved the razing of informal businesses and houses in urban MDC strongholds. Officials claimed that it was part of a slum clearance exercise, however the UN condemned the operation in a formal report. See <http://www.unchs.org/documents/ZimbabweReport.pdf>.

<sup>15</sup> Zimbabwe’s population profile suggests that nearly half of potential voters are under the age of twenty five, and that three quarters are under the age of thirty five (Central Statistics Office, 2003).

Also see <http://www.census.gov/ipc/www/idbpyr.html>.

created parallel markets from which ZANU PF supporters benefited with impunity.<sup>16</sup> Parallel exchange rates allowed select groups to profit extensively in a very short period.<sup>17</sup> White farmers, businesses and international companies seeking to ‘externalise’ capital, were prepared to buy foreign currency at heavily inflated prices. Connected members of the elite, able to access foreign currency at artificially low official rates, would then sell it on this grey market at the parallel rate, reapply for more foreign currency with the proceeds, and then repeat the process.<sup>18</sup> The military intervention in the DRC provided lucrative mining and forestry ventures to key military and government figures, whilst others secured contracts for food and military supplies.<sup>19</sup>

Likewise, the sale of farm equipment, residential properties and white-owned businesses at deflated values to new farmers, members of the ruling elite, opportunists and speculators all represented transfers of wealth. Indigenous banks had been vehicles of wealth transfer during the late 1990s and stepped up their business to members of the ruling party alliance.<sup>20</sup> With time, as the economic spoils have diminished, tactics to boost state resources have become more systematic and less subtle. Carbon taxes, car radio licenses, and mandatory vehicle number-plate changes all tax urban middle classes.

### 1.2.2 The Anatomy of Farm Invasions and Land Occupations

Zimbabwe’s long and complex history of land occupations is well documented.<sup>21</sup> Land self-provisioning and ‘squatter’ invasions were widespread before and after 1980, and throughout the 1980s and 1990s, particularly after the 1992 drought. Mugabe regularly warned about the possibility of popular farm invasions during the 1990s. In his 1996 election campaign, Mugabe said that he “did not want to send squatters to invade farms”, but warned that he would consider

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<sup>16</sup> For example, in the case study area, Major Chriden Kanouruka purchased maize from the GMB at official prices and then retailed it at inflated prices. Discussions with farm workers from Zanadu, Glenbrook and Wengi Farms January 2004. This is supported in a written affidavit by the same farm-workers.

<sup>17</sup> Many of these beneficiaries, including prominent politicians, immediately ‘externalised’ their gains, often investing in property in Cape Town or Johannesburg. The high profile cases of former Finance Minister Chris Kuruneri, and businessman James Makamba, are prominent examples. See: Andrew Meldrum, “Mugabe Minister Accused of Illegal Dealings”, *The Guardian*, 26 April 2004; and “Makamba Arrested Over Forex Deals”, *newzimbabwe.com*, 10 February 2004.

<sup>18</sup> Interview with Dr David Hatendi, Harare, January 2003.

<sup>19</sup> For a revealing assessment of resource exploitation by foreign interests in the DRC see the UN (2001) Report: <http://www.un.org/News/dh/latest/drcongo.htm>.

<sup>20</sup> Seven Indigenous banks went into receivership between 2000 and 2004 and are being investigated for irregular banking practices. Thebe Mabanga, “ABSA’s Zim Bank Pretext ‘Nonsense’”, *Mail and Guardian*, 19 October 2005.

<sup>21</sup> For example, see Moyo and Yeros (2005: Chapter Six.); Moyo(2001); Alexander (1993).

it if Britain did not come forth with funding, or if farmers remained intransigent.<sup>22</sup> So the chances of popular invasions were always obvious. Likewise, the potential for popular invasions to be used for political gain was well appreciated. Moyo (1994: 16) observed that:

a government and ruling party... bent on securing rural votes at any cost would have encouraged the numerous and continuous attempts... [at] systematic land occupations. Instead the government has forcefully or legally rejected radical land acquisition measures for 13 years.

I argue that Moyo's observation became relevant in 2000, when the ruling party's unprecedented political vulnerability (and need for rural votes at any cost) led to the encouragement and orchestration of the land invasions using the state apparatus. Whilst the program was portrayed as a populist-driven delivery of land it was well coordinated. There appeared to be three sets of objectives: first, a drive to destroy the sector's support for the MDC, secondly, a retributive agenda to simply remove whites from the land, and finally, an elite-led initiative to replace the land-owning group with a new and compliant constituency.

The outbreak of land occupations after the February 2000 referendum drew inspiration from the locally organised invasions of 1997 and 1998 and earlier 'squatting' tactics (Marongwe, 2004; ICG 2004). However, they were soon well-organised in most areas, and caught the CFU totally unprepared. Jerry Grant (CFU Director) told AFP:

I'm shell shocked, I can't believe a government can behave in this manner... the word is out that this is punishment for whites rejecting the constitution... it is orchestrated at the highest level... there are government and party vehicles involved in delivering [the invaders]... The police are aware of this and they're still doing nothing about it. They've had an instruction from the top not to interfere." <sup>23</sup>

Information Minister Chimutengwende dismissed allegations of high level orchestration as "absolute rubbish" but conceded that "those who voted 'NO' complicated the matter... it is now leading to these invasions and I can only see more invasions".<sup>24</sup> Mugabe described them as "peaceful demonstrations... that only breach the little law of trespass".<sup>25</sup> He added that it could have been worse and, ominously, that it could still get much worse. Moyo and Yeros (2005)

<sup>22</sup> *The Farmer*, 15 February 1996.

<sup>23</sup> Editorial, *Mail and Guardian*, 2 March 2000.

<sup>24</sup> Editorial, *Mail and Guardian*, 2 March 2000.

<sup>25</sup> *Mugabe Smith and the Union Jack*, BBC Two Documentary with David Dimbleby, May 2000.

argue that the extent of occupations and violence was relatively low compared to other regional examples such as peri-urban land occupations in South Africa. However the controlled and strategic application of violence and lawlessness seemed to attract international attention and rhetorical condemnation, but little else.<sup>26</sup>

Farm invasion reports by the CFU and various rights groups such as Amnesty International confirmed pervasive involvement of government vehicles and personnel.<sup>27</sup> In the case study area, Inspector Edward Mariwo (Member-in-Charge Concession) was integrally involved in the operation, often delivering invaders to one farm whilst driving to 'resolve' invasions at others.<sup>28</sup> Close communications between Mariwo and District Administrator Mushaninga illustrated the coordination between local government and the police.<sup>29</sup> Rural council and ZESA vehicles and staff were used extensively in local operations. Walker Gatse, the Concession ZESA manager was also a member of the ZANU PF provincial executive, as was the hospital administrator. Moyo (2001) described the range of contests shaping the nature of land invasions:

The land occupation movement ... is politically organised but socially grounded. It had been instigated centrally but it was differentiated by the many different pulses driving it, including varied local interests of war veterans, traditional and other leaders and informal community organisations.

The nature of the invasions also varied with time. After the 2000 referendum, most were geared towards the general election in June. Invasions targeted MDC supporters and were an important element of ZANU PF's election strategy. War Veterans established 'base-camps' on particular farms in each area, which were then used to facilitate the election campaign.<sup>30</sup> Farm-workers from surrounding properties were forced to attend 're-education' sessions during all-night 'pungwes'.<sup>31</sup> After the official implementation of the 'fast track' program, in August, invasions

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<sup>26</sup> Charles Laurie is currently researching the use of strategic violence in Zimbabwe. His Doctorate is likely to be completed in 2008.

<sup>27</sup> CFU situation reports (sit-reps) and JAG updates detail hundreds of incidents in which invasions appeared to have been orchestrated and in which the police were either involved, passive or 'notably absent'. See CFU records at [http://www.cfu.co.zw/sitreps/2000/25\\_apr.htm](http://www.cfu.co.zw/sitreps/2000/25_apr.htm) or JAG daily updates.

<sup>28</sup> This knowledge is based on personal experience with Inspector Edward Mariwo. Discussions with other commercial farmers in the case study area revealed similar experiences involving Inspector Mariwo and DA Mushaninga. Mariwo had at least five High Court Orders granted explicitly against him for contempt of court.

<sup>29</sup> The coordinated nature of the farm takeovers, between the police and local government, was illustrated in subsequent negotiations. When telephoning Inspector Mariwo, DA Mushaninga would often answer.

<sup>30</sup> In the case study area a base camp was established on Talland Farm.

<sup>31</sup> *Pungwes* were all-night political rallies named after the Pungwe river valley, where they were first used by ZANLA guerrillas during the war. They usually involved the singing of liberation songs, dancing and chanting of political slogans. During the 2000 and 2002 election campaigns in the case study area they focused on beatings,



became more formalised. The government's official 'fast track' plan distinguished between A1 (small scale) and A2 (medium/large scale) beneficiaries. Land occupations were then synchronized with official gazettes from provincial lands offices working on information from Provincial and District Lands Committees (PLCs and DLCs).<sup>32</sup> The PLCs were dominated by army, civil servants and ruling party officials, many of whom were also war veterans.<sup>33</sup> DLCs were chaired by the DAs and represented by members of local government, local party officials and local traditional leaders.<sup>34</sup> In Mashonaland Central the PLC allocated A2 farms, whilst the DLCs administered the A1 program.<sup>35</sup> In the case study area, all negotiations went through Concession DA Mushaniga who communicated directly with Governor Manyika and the PLC.

Invasions differed between regions and areas and local contexts often shaped individual occupations (Buckle, 2001). Initially, many were led by prominent war veterans with support from local communities, or disgruntled farm workers. In some cases hired help was bussed in to boost numbers and in others criminals were used.<sup>36</sup> In Mashonaland Central, if a prominent war veteran or politician identified a particular farm for personal allocation, there was little chance of opposing the takeover. Local support, court orders, negotiated 'downsizing' proposals and even high level interventions were rarely successful.<sup>37</sup> There is evidence to suggest that Joseph Msika tried to moderate many land takeovers in the Mazowe valley but was overridden by Governor Manyika.<sup>38</sup> Many examples of high profile officials taking prime farms are documented in the press.<sup>39</sup> It was a fast-moving, organized and flexible agenda, suited to intimidating the electorate, and to meeting the demands and opportunism of key party members.

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public humiliations and intimidation into supporting the ruling party. Discussions with various farm workers, Concession 2000- 2002.

<sup>32</sup> This process was explained to me by Lands Officer Zishiri, Bindura, October 2002.

<sup>33</sup> In Mashonaland Central the PLC was chaired by Provincial Governor Elliot Manyika. Other members included Provincial Administrator Jaji, District Administrator Mushaniga, Mr Chikowore (Provincial Officer, Agritex), Molly Mapfumo (DDF), Major Kanouruka ( Presidential Guard), Wing Commander Gede (Air Force) and Chief Negomo from Chiweshe.

<sup>34</sup> Discussions with Chief Chiweshe, October 2002; Discussions with Chief Negomo, Chiweshe, November 2002.

<sup>35</sup> Discussions with Oliver Zishiri, Bindura, October 2002.

<sup>36</sup> "Bindura's 'most wanted' leads Manyika campaign", *The Zimbabwe Independent*, 27 July 2001.

<sup>37</sup> After the 2002 Presidential election many commercial farmers submitted subdivision proposals through an official 'LA3 form'. Most offered to 'downsize' to 400 hectares and to help with the resettlement of new beneficiaries. These were submitted to the PLCs and received varied responses between provinces. In the case study area more than thirty are known to have been submitted, all of which were ultimately rejected.

<sup>38</sup> In the case study area, six known subdivision proposals that were approved by Vice President Msika, were rejected by Governor Manyika.

<sup>39</sup> For example, see Peta Thornycroft, "Zimbabwe police chief in land grab at white farm", *The Daily Telegraph*, 24 November 2001; Adam Nathan and David Leppard, "Sainsburys supplied by Mugabe aide", *The Sunday Times (UK)*, 20 October 2002; Pedzisai Ruhanya, "Reward Marufu grabs farm", *Daily News*, 27 April 2002.

As invasions gathered momentum they sometimes appeared to run out of control, particularly when opportunists and criminal elements became involved (Chitiyo 2003). The state media used this to explain the murders and assaults of white farmers, farm workers and MDC supporters. However, whilst local circumstances may have shaped the nature of specific invasions, the murders of David Stevens, Martin Olds, Alan Dunn and Terry Ford appeared to be organised.<sup>40</sup> A regular question at official debates seems to be why the killing of ten Zimbabwean white farmers attracted so much attention when hundreds of white farmers are murdered every year in South Africa. The fundamental difference is that in Zimbabwe most farmer deaths and the many serious assaults during this period were state sanctioned. There are profound differences between insufficient state protection in South Africa and direct state involvement in Zimbabwe.

Mugabe's clemency act after the violence of 2000 reads: "A free pardon is hereby granted to every person liable to criminal prosecution for any politically-motivated crime committed during the period 1st January, 2000 to 31st July, 2000".<sup>41</sup> Whilst supposedly precluding murder, no perpetrators have been brought to justice, despite identified suspects in all cases. Farm takeovers became known as *Jambanja* (strategic violence or 'smash and grab') - its encouraged element of lawlessness suited the quick transfer of resources. Supporters justified it on the basis that this was how land had been secured by whites in the 1890s (Chitiyo, 2003). Breakdowns in discipline among invaders and selective application of the law cultivated a bizarre medium of controlled chaos, within which the white farming sector and the MDC could be systematically dismantled.

### 1.2.3 The Targeting of MDC supporters

The relative transparency of political affiliation among Zimbabweans in early 2000 made it easy to identify which white farmers, which black foremen and which farm workforces had voted 'no' in the referendum. These affiliations projected through to support for the MDC in the 2000 election. Much of the pro- MDC campaigning at this stage was done openly and publicly and was perhaps most vividly illustrated when CNN broadcast scenes of white farmers presenting Morgan Tsvangirai with cheques. Mugabe was apparently "incandescent with rage", and queried "how can you bite the hand that feeds you?"<sup>42</sup>

<sup>40</sup> In the case of Stevens, a police officer subsequently confessed that the police were instructed to let the war veterans abduct him from Mrewa police station. Martin Olds death was a well planned assault by a large heavily-armed group. Alan Dunn and Terry Ford were both executed in what appeared to be targeted killings. Angus Shaw, "White farmer murdered in upsurge of violence in Zimbabwe", *AFP*, 18 March 2002.

<sup>41</sup> General Notice 457A of 2000, Constitution of Zimbabwe, Clemency Order No. 1 of 2000.

<sup>42</sup> Angus Shaw, "On the run again", *The Observer*, 9 April 2005. Interview with Denis Norman, Sussex, October 2005.

Although the CFU continued to stress its apolitical stance, ZANU PF clearly viewed local level political activity by white farmers, as a threat, and geared their election strategies accordingly. Populist land occupations in the 1970s and 1980s had usually targeted abandoned or underutilized properties, or underdeveloped sections of larger farms. The pre-election invasions of 2000 were different; they mainly targeted highly developed properties with large workforces, particularly in Mashonaland. Invasions in sparsely populated areas and provinces were generally fewer, less violent and more locally organized than in Mashonaland.<sup>43</sup> Before the 2000 General Election, war-veterans and ruling party militants moved systematically through Concession, Mvurwi and Centenary districts.<sup>44</sup> Farmers who had openly campaigned against the referendum, through transport, worker activism or t-shirt printing were singled out for early retribution. Brian Martin held an MDC rally at Arda farm on the border of Chiweshe for which he was subsequently and repeatedly harassed by war veterans and members of the ruling party.<sup>45</sup> Another interesting feature about this campaign was that the rhetoric was more anti-MDC, than pro-land.<sup>46</sup> Farmers' resources were often forcibly turned against the MDC during all three elections. Most were intimidated into supplying fuel or transport for ZANU PF rallies or had assets and resources extorted at gun point. In some cases farmers were blackmailed to force their workers to support the ruling party, or risk losing their farms and the workers jobs.<sup>47</sup>

In 2000, Mugabe declared that notorious or racist farmers would be evicted first, but did not elaborate how these distinctions would be made, or who would make them. It seemed that being an MDC supporter was tantamount to being both 'notorious and racist'. David Stevens and Alan Dunn were murdered because of their MDC activities and many other politically-active farmers were lucky to escape with their lives.<sup>48</sup> At national level, the most prominent white victim of persecution for MDC activity was Roy Bennett, who after winning his Chimanimani constituency for the MDC, was harassed and eventually forcibly evicted from his farm by the army. Bennett was subsequently jailed for a year in contentious circumstances.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Matabeleland North was an exception in 2001, when ranchers were forced to abandon their properties for three months after Overt Mpfu initiated a blitz against white ranchers.

<sup>44</sup> See <http://www.cfu.co.zw/sitreps/2000>.

<sup>45</sup> Martin was eventually forced to evacuate the farm. Discussions with Brian Martin, Harare, January 2003.

<sup>46</sup> Discussions with farm workers who attended these *pungwes*. April 2000.

<sup>47</sup> Farm workers at Mitchell and Mitchell, a large horticultural exporter near Marondera, were apparently told by Defence Minister Sydney Sekeremayi, during the March 2005 election campaign, that unless they voted for ZANU PF the company would be closed and they would lose their jobs.

<sup>48</sup> Ian Kay, from Marondera, was a prime example of an MDC supporter being repeatedly assaulted by ruling party militants who tried to kill him on more than one occasion. Discussions with David Kay, Harare, January 2003.

<sup>49</sup> Bennett's wife, Heather, suffered a miscarriage after one of many army-related incidents at the farm.

Land takeovers also affected black farmers and businessmen who were either linked to the MDC or refused to toe the party line, in much the same way that Strive Masiyiwa had been excluded from business contracts in the 1990s. Mutumwa Mawere's reluctance to join the party cost him his business empire.<sup>50</sup> His refusal to accept a ruling party nomination on a provincial executive, led to him being forced into exile. Edwin Moyo, a high profile businessman and MDC supporter was another obvious black victim of the farm invasions. His business, Kondozi Estates, which employed at least 500 workers and generated more than US\$15 million per year, was closed after Joseph Made (Agriculture Minister) and Chris Mushowe (Transport Minister) personally invaded the farm on Christmas day 2003.<sup>51</sup> Despite attempts by Joseph Msika (Vice President) to reinstate Moyo, he relocated to Mozambique and Zambia. Kondozi is now virtually derelict.

The results of the 2000 general election were disputed by most independent observers.<sup>52</sup> Like the referendum, the voting patterns provided local level intelligence on which districts and often which farms had openly opposed ZANU PF.<sup>53</sup> Alan Burl explained that the manner in which voting boxes were supplied and counted in 2000 in Marondera allowed election officials to calculate which farms had voted for the MDC.<sup>54</sup> Ongoing by-elections kept political tensions simmering throughout the country, and allowed focused application of ruling party resources to particular areas. Many farmers and farm workers remained anti-ZANU PF until the presidential election of 2002, but adopted lower profiles. Most farmers reasoned that the combination of economic collapse and international pressure would throw the vote even more convincingly against Mugabe. Farm workers in the case study area suggested that they would 'tow the party line' during electioneering and then quietly vote the other way, which many subsequently claimed to have done.<sup>55</sup> The organisation and outcome of the 2002 Presidential Election was also widely disputed, but illustrated the regime's determination to retain power and the limited ability of the international community or the internal opposition to do much about it (Makumbe 2003).

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<sup>50</sup> Hana Saburi, "Adios Zim, says Mawere", *Financial Gazette*, 6 March 2004; "Mawere blasts Gono over Arrest" in *The Zimbabwe Observer*, 28 May 2004; Basildon Peta, "We'll take over your company now thank you", *Pretoria News*, 26 August 2005.

<sup>51</sup> "Zimbabwe loses out on High Profit Farm", *Business Day*, 17 May 2004.

<sup>52</sup> The MDC launched appeals in 36 of 120 constituencies.

<sup>53</sup> Groups of farms would organize transport for workers, so specific ballot boxes could be traced to certain farms or groups of farms. Discussions with Ian King, Concession, September 2000.

<sup>54</sup> Interview with Alan Burl, Marondera, January 2004.

<sup>55</sup> Farm worker respondents in the case study area claimed that their rejection of Mugabe in 2002 accounted for the blitz against the MDC in the six months after the elections. They were apparently told this by ZANU PF members.

#### 1.2.4 Legitimizing the Land Invasions

Popular support for land reform did not translate immediately into land invasions. State media claimed that there were 100 000 (less than one percent of the rural population) land occupiers by the middle of 2000. The CFU farm invasion reports and independent media estimates suggested between 30000 and 35000 occupiers at this stage.<sup>56</sup> The Utete Report acknowledged that only about five percent of the population had benefited from land allocations by the end of 2003 and that more than half of seized land had not been taken up.<sup>57</sup> It is difficult to accurately verify these figures, particularly with internal displacements and unrecorded self-provisioning of land. However, these aggregated ranges seem remarkably low, particularly when estimates of farm worker displacements exceed 1 million people (FCTZ 2001). Nevertheless, ZANU PF instigated a propaganda effort to sell the program internally, regionally and internationally.

The ruling party's 2002 election campaign ran on the slogan: "Land is the economy and the economy is the land". It succeeded in placing land at the centre of the political, economic and social crises, and portrayed its resolution as the panacea to the nation's problems. Media portrayals of vast areas of healthy crops attempted to generate public confidence and support for the project.<sup>58</sup> Radio 'jingles' dominated the state-controlled airways and newspapers carried full-page adverts on the importance of every patriotic Zimbabwean reclaiming a piece of land. Even MDC supporters were warned that if they did not apply for land they would lose out. In some areas, those who did not apply were accused of opposing land reform – if you did not support it then you obviously opposed it, and were therefore an MDC supporter.<sup>59</sup>

International concerns were dismissed by Mugabe as neo-Imperialism. He queried the international media's fixation with white farmers against their neglect of landless blacks, declaring this as evidence of Western racism (Willems, 2004). Mugabe offset western criticism and bolstered regional solidarity by successfully couching the issue within a wider development context. Mugabe also sold 'fast track' to a willing regional audience, playing on historical legacies of land alienations, which drew sympathetic responses, especially from South Africa and Namibia. State media misleadingly argued that government had tried all other options, including market-based land reforms, and even encouraged radical land programs in South

<sup>56</sup> These figures are based on collated district reports. Interview with Gerry Davidson, Harare, September 2001.

<sup>57</sup> The Utete Report (2004) claimed that about 130 000 people had been allocated land under the A1 scheme and 15000 under the A2 scheme. The report acknowledged that 93 000 and 7500 had taken up land under these schemes. Assuming an average family size of six, suggests that approximately 600 000 people directly benefited.

<sup>58</sup> When Colonel Kaddaffi visited Zimbabwe in 2001 he was misleadingly shown established horticulture projects in Mvurwi as testament to the success of new farmers. Discussions with Mick Marffy, Mkushi Zambia, April 2005.

<sup>59</sup> Discussions with Mr Nyamaziwa, Bindura, November 2002.

Africa and Namibia.<sup>60</sup> The same media understated the economic and social fallouts of the farm takeovers, and exaggerated levels of success and recovery.<sup>61</sup> This heady propaganda rekindled images of the liberation struggle and portrayed all white farmers as unrepentant racists, and therefore deserving instigators. At best the white farmers were dismissed as collateral damage.<sup>62</sup>

The immediate benefits for a new farmer were generally quite good. Residual fertilizer and the low weed seed banks allowed a season or two of easy low-input cultivations. For A2 beneficiaries, non-farming considerations such as farmhouses were important.<sup>63</sup> Supporters of the program also saw important symbolic benefits, particularly among more radical elements for whom evicting white farmers was an end in itself. In Concession, a war veteran and army officer explained that “we would rather fail without you whites than succeed with you”.<sup>64</sup> Mugabe often drew on symbolism: “We feel that our land has been liberated. It is now the land of the people for our people. It gives the people a sense of belonging and ownership”.<sup>65</sup> Symbolism and ties between land and identity, real and otherwise, were important elements of justification.

The economic implosion boosted the formal and informal take-up of land. Stoneman (1981: 128) observed that members of the peasantry, unable to earn sufficient wages for old age, were often forced to rely on the communal areas as a form of social security. As economic conditions deteriorated after 2000, so land became an even more important means of survival for many. Its free allocation and association with the relative prosperity of white farmers had added appeal. Many displaced farm workers without *kamushas* (home areas) resorted to self-provisioning, by squatting on underutilized and often marginal land.<sup>66</sup> Urban middle classes, many of whom had voted for the MDC, began applying for land particularly after the 2002 election, reasoning that ZANU PF was entrenched and that they might miss an opportunity.<sup>67</sup> The Messenger of the Court from Bindura explained this to me: “I’ve applied, everyone is – if we don’t, others will”.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> “Land: Africa Must Close Ranks”, *The Herald*, 22 August 2005.

<sup>61</sup> For instance, Dr Murerwa, the Finance Minister, told Rwandan media that “we are a country where over 70 percent of people live in (rural) areas, and over 70 percent of the land was owned by 450 [not 4500] farmers.” See: “Rwanda Zimbabwe Ties: Interview with Dr Herbert Murerwa” *The New Times (Kigali)* 13 June 2005; Baffour Ankomah’s editorship of the *New African* similarly distorts the facts figures and history of the issue.

<sup>62</sup> The banding together of ‘all whites’ is a common feature of ZANU PF propaganda. For instance, see *The Herald* cartoon, 6 July 2001, which specifically stereotypes whites. This is illustrated in Julie Taylor’s thesis (2002).

<sup>63</sup> The wife of a new farmer was incensed by the fact that there was no cell phone signal at her new residence and demanded that her husband secure a better situated farmhouse. Discussions with Cal Martin, Harare, January 2004.

<sup>64</sup> Discussions with Major Chriden Kanouruka, Concession, October 2002.

<sup>65</sup> “Land reforms Anchor Economy”, *The Herald*, March 15, 2004

<sup>66</sup> Within the case study area evicted workers, often without communal area homes, established settlements on remote sections of farms or neighbouring properties. See Sachikonye (2003); Rutherford (2001).

<sup>67</sup> Discussions with Oliver Zishiri, Ministry of Lands, Bindura, January 2003.

<sup>68</sup> Discussions with Mr Nyamaziwa, Bindura, October 2002.

### 1.3 THE IMPACTS ON COMMERCIAL FARMERS

Having explored the nature of the farm invasions and their instrumental role in dismantling the white farming sector, it is important to ask how they impacted directly on white farmers, how farmers reacted to the pressures at local level, and how this affected their organisational and institutional effectiveness at national level. Before doing so it is important to establish some key points regarding farmer and farm worker opposition to government. Firstly, farmer mobilization was about more than concerns over property rights. Secondly, farm worker mobilization was strongly linked to concerns about exclusion. Finally there were notable alliances between farmers and workers in opposition to ZANU PF, often dependent on personal ties.

#### 1.3.1 The Political Mobilisation of Farmers and Farm Workers

The re-entry of whites into public politics was a response to their alienation from the decision-making process and their increasing economic and social insecurity. Proposed constitutional amendments certainly threatened property rights but there were more significant governance issues at the heart of farmer concerns. The mounting scepticism of farmers towards government during the late 1990s merged with those of urban sectors, middle classes and industrial workers. High-level corruption and nepotism, particularly in the war-veterans scandal, the collapse of Roger Boka's empire, and Zimbabwe's questionable involvement in the DRC were national issues that united both blacks and whites across a spectrum of political constituencies. The referendum result provided a confidence boost for the growing anti-government alliance, as it turned attention to the general election and support for the MDC. White farmer mobilisation was generally led by younger more enlightened farmers, but the activism became contagious. A young farmer from Mvurwi explained his involvement with the MDC:

When you consider the wider picture it was time for a change. We had this vision of taking Zimbabwe forward, of moving beyond the political, racial and economic claustrophobia that ZANU PF represented and this was the obvious opportunity.<sup>69</sup>

During the referendum and the build up to the 2000 election there was probably more racial integration within the country than at any time in its history. For many farmers, mobilizing for the MDC broke down the historical social barriers that stood between them, their workforces and

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<sup>69</sup> Discussions with Hugo Firecks, Mvurwi, September 2001.

the wider black population. It brought the sector out of social isolation in a manner that no other issue ever had. For some farmers it was the first time in twenty years that they felt sufficiently motivated to depart from the CFU's principles of apoliticism, and this was celebrated publicly, if somewhat naively in hindsight. Publicity stunts involving ceremonies of white farmers handing cheques to the MDC were as much symbolic as material gestures of rejection to the ruling party:

look, in retrospect it was probably poorly judged but there was no option... after the referendum we were on a roll. It was an exciting time. The atmosphere on these farms was incredible. For the first time we were working together across race and station... united and motivated, with the same goal... it was inspiring stuff.<sup>70</sup>

Farm workers are often misleadingly perceived as passive players within the land, politics and race debates, even though they organized the largest strikes in the sector's history in 1997 and 1998.<sup>71</sup> In 1996, the CFU confidential security records show that workers on designated properties throughout the country had reacted angrily because they had not been consulted by government and their livelihoods were threatened.<sup>72</sup> During the mass designations of 1997 and 1998, farm worker groups recorded concerns that they had been sidelined from land policy, and were not being consulted in the land process. The proposed constitutional amendments threatened the livelihoods of farm workers too, most of whom realized that they were likely to be neglected in land allocations.<sup>73</sup> Close relations between younger farmers and farm managers with black managers, assistants and foremen, had encouraged and promoted political alignments that carried through to the referendum debate.<sup>74</sup> Although dependency relationships still existed between workers and owners, this varied considerably between different farm types, different business structures and different management styles (Rubert, 1998: Chapter 8). During 2000 the most politically active farmers often had close working relationships with their black farm managers, assistants and foremen, who also became politically active and who often bore the consequences. Julius Andoche, the foreman on David Steven's farm, was murdered within days of Stevens' own death.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> Interview with Brian Martin, Harare, October 2002.

<sup>71</sup> For new work on farm workers see Rutherford (2001a) or Rutherford (Chapter Nine) and Tandon (Chapter Ten) in Raftopolous and Sachikonye (2001). For an updated historical assessment see Rubert (1998).

<sup>72</sup> Minutes of the CFU President's Council Meeting, 27 November 1996: Security Report.

<sup>73</sup> Discussions with farm workers in the case study area suggest that they were highly aware of the implications of the draft constitution, and most were worried about their livelihoods. Few felt that they were likely to be beneficiaries of land, especially those who were of Malawian or Mozambique origin.

<sup>74</sup> In the case study area, Blaze Jowett, a manager on Howick Vale, maintained a close communication system with his workforce, and would often discuss political issues with his foremen. David Lines was another young manager in the district whose quick-witted fluency in Shona was widely respected throughout the local community.

<sup>75</sup> See: <http://www.hrw.org/reports/2002/zimbabwe/ZimLand0302-03.htm>.



There are other striking examples of farm worker mobilization. In Shamva in 2000, workers colluded to drive out occupiers by organizing themselves in the guise of ‘football teams’. Using a fleet of farmer’s lorries, they systematically visited each occupied farm, and violently evicted A1 settlers and war veterans.<sup>76</sup> Within days several hundred troops from the National Army descended on the area and terrorised the farm workers in question. In Concession, following Mr Ngwenya’s (Grace Mugabe’s traditional healer) occupation of Collingwood farm in 2003, farm workers and local town residents marched on the farm, with the intention of evicting Ngwenya, but were halted by an emergency deployment of military police.<sup>77</sup> Rutherford (2001a) cites incidences of farm workers joining land seizures in Hurungwe district, and collectively turning on their owners, but in general ZANU PF and the war-veterans accused most workers of being ‘sellouts’ or white puppets, particularly if they were of Mozambiquean or Malawian descent.

### 1.3.2 Farmer Defences, Strategic Compromises and Co-existence

In August 2000 a Mashonaland Central farmers’ meeting was held at Mvurwi Country Club. Tim Henwood, the beleaguered CFU President, was criticized for not being proactive enough.<sup>78</sup> He handed the meeting over to Alan Ravenscroft, Ez Micklem and John Laurie, the elder statesmen of the community, all three of whom had been at the helm of agriculture during the war, twenty years previously. They urged a more cautious political approach and warned against the public opposition of the pre-election period, admitting that their communications with government had virtually collapsed. They also warned that they had no way of knowing what the next offensive would be. This illustrated two important issues in farming politics: firstly, that indecision was emerging and there was a shift towards caution and compromise, and secondly that there was a strong tendency to resort to the familiar leaders and strategies of the past.

As *Jambanja* spread, farming communities resorted to defensive tactics from the war years. District ‘reaction units’ were organised in much the same way that ‘reaction sticks’ had been formed during the war. Communication systems on two-way radio systems had become an integral part of communication for social and business purposes during the 1990s and during *Jambanja* they helped co-ordinate farmer strategies, much like ‘Agric Alerts’ during the war and

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<sup>76</sup> Discussions with Keith Butler, Concession, October 2002.

<sup>77</sup> Discussions with Charles Gaisford, Oxford, May 2005.

<sup>78</sup> This information is based on personal attendance at the Farmers’ Meeting.

in Matabeleland during the 1980s. Evening ‘call-ins’ and ‘sit-reps’ on the radio network provided updated information at local and national level, and bolstered community morale.<sup>79</sup> The jargon of the war years returned too. In similar vein to ZANU PF’s reversion to liberation war rhetoric and chimurenga *nom de guerres*, many older farmers resorted to terminology from that era; war veterans were referred to as ‘gooks’ and younger invaders as ‘mujibas’.<sup>80</sup> These represented a symbolic return to the battles of the past, and played into the hands of ZANU PF.

‘Reaction units’ comprising of farmers and farm workers would rush to the help of besieged farms and quell the situation by outnumbering invaders, and bearing witness to events. These tactics initially ensured quicker police responses, however, as the retribution and intimidation of farm workers increased so they became unwilling to join sorties. Most farming districts employed professional security forces, such as Tsatsi Guard in the case study area. This was run by ex-policemen Rod Bowen and Sergeant Beru, who diffused numerous standoffs, and both of whom were increasingly threatened and intimidated by war veterans, the CIO and party supporters.<sup>81</sup> With time even farmers grew cautious about helping neighbours. In August 2001, twenty one Chinoyi farmers were arrested after helping a local farmer who was under siege. They were illegally jailed for more than two weeks. Consequently, reaction units nationwide grew more cautious and would often assume ‘stand by’ positions nearby rather than intervene directly.<sup>82</sup> After the 2002 election when the process of evictions sped up and the army became more involved, so interventions were more risky, and the dwindling numbers of remaining farmers increasingly opted for lower profiles.

Initially, farmer contributions to media coverage of the invasions were significant. Radio systems and e-mail meant that incidents on farms nationwide could be collated centrally and dispatched internationally within hours. White farmers received disproportionate coverage, but much of this was due to their relative visibility and accessibility. Much of the graphic video footage shown on international television was filmed by farmers on home recorders, and much of the print media came from telephone or e-mail. Farm workers and ordinary MDC supporters lacked this direct access to international outlets, but the CFU invasion reports actively illustrated the plight of farm workers to attempt to deracialise the issue and highlight the wider political

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<sup>79</sup> This observation is based on personal experience within the case study area, much of which was covered by the Ttatsi Farm Radio network.

<sup>80</sup> In derogatory Rhodesian terminology guerrillas were known as ‘gooks’ and informers were known as ‘Mujibas’.

<sup>81</sup> Discussions with Rod Bowen, Barwick, January 2003.

<sup>82</sup> Simon Hale, the security co-ordinator for Nyabira district explained that it became too risky to help farmers under these circumstances, so reaction units would remain on standby and communicate by radio. Discussions with Simon Hale, Mkushi, April 2004.

contest.<sup>83</sup> The independent media within Zimbabwe also tried to record the experiences of farm workers and MDC supporters in detail during 2000. However, intimidated work forces and MDC supporters were more vulnerable than white farmers and grew increasingly cautious and therefore less accessible for the press, who in turn were increasingly harassed.

After the 2002 Presidential election, as the ‘hopelessness’ of the situation sunk home, many farmers decided to compromise, mostly through subdivision proposals or co-existence agreements. In some areas these were negotiated individually and in others, such as the Midlands and Manicaland, they were negotiated collectively.<sup>84</sup> In Manicaland, Oprah Muchinguri (Provincial Governor) welcomed these proposals, and by the beginning of 2003 about 400 farmers of 600 were still operating on downsized farms. This changed dramatically when General Mike Nyambuya was appointed Governor in 2004, and by mid 2005 less than 200 farms in Manicaland were still operating.<sup>85</sup>

Countrywide, farmers trying to negotiate subdivision proposals on LA3 forms were encouraged by relevant officials to withdraw their court cases, refrain from speaking to the press and to submit their title deeds.<sup>86</sup> “Co-existence” became the catch phrase of heavily lobbied negotiations between farmers, policemen, government officials and land occupiers during 2002. For many farmers it was a temporary strategy intended to buy time to make alternative arrangements, and to remove assets from farms. For occupiers it was an opportunity to get a foot in the door, see how farms operated and in many cases to ‘share’ their first crop. Negotiated compromises often resulted in crop-sharing arrangements in which the farmers would prepare and plant a crop on the understanding that they would continue operating and that their new partners would contribute a share of the input costs and assume a share of the profit. In most instances, farmers who had entered such arrangements were then usually evicted directly before or during the harvest.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> For example, see: [www.cfu.sitreps/2000](http://www.cfu.sitreps/2000).

<sup>84</sup> E-mail correspondence with John Meikle, April 2005. E-mail correspondence with Bob Swift, August 2005.

<sup>85</sup> E-mail correspondence with John Meikle, July 2005.

<sup>86</sup> Discussions with DA Mushaniga, Concession, November 2002.

<sup>87</sup> Crop sharing arrangements were common in the case study area in 2002. Discussions with Geoff Detmer, Concession, September 2002.

### 1.3.3 The Breakdown of the White Farming Community

Community solidarity shaped the strategies of commercial farmers to begin with, but over time, amidst increasing uncertainties, farmer reactions became more inconsistent.<sup>88</sup> The ruling party's active 'use of race' from the 1990s escalated to new levels in 2000. At the 2000 ZANU PF Congress, Mugabe stated that "our party must strike fear in the hearts of the white man... we must make him tremble". Joyce Mujuru (now Vice President), urged land occupiers to return with the blood soaked t-shirts of white farmers.<sup>89</sup> Jocelyn Chiwenga, wife of the Army chief, allegedly declared that she "had not tasted white blood since 1980, and missed the experience".<sup>90</sup> This rhetoric of 'race' and 'war' and 'blood' and 'hate' set the tone of the anti-white farmer campaign. Many officials and proponents of the program resorted to *chimurenga* names and vowed to expel all whites. An official document entitled "Operation Give Up and Leave" was apparently circulated among ruling party officials and relevant Ministries.<sup>91</sup> An extract reads: "the operation should be carefully planned so that farmers are systematically harassed and mentally tortured and their farms destabilized until they give in and give up."

The invasions were traumatic for farmers, farm workers and MDC supporters alike, but it was often the more subtle and indirect tactics that were most effective in breaking the unity and resolve of commercial farmers. Buckle (2001) detailed her experiences of a farm invasion and the manner in which her resolve was gradually worn down over time.<sup>92</sup> Mark Butler, from Shamva had land occupiers living at his front gate for eighteen months. Every day they would frustrate some aspect of his attempts to keep farming.<sup>93</sup> When farms were first invaded, occupiers would often keep farmers awake all night with *pungwes* directly outside their bedrooms. Settlers would make regular demands for food, water, transport, medicine, inputs and other forms of support. Refusing to do so was seen to be 'unpatriotic', 'racist' or at the very least 'sabotaging the revolution'. Over time these tactics wore down even the most tolerant white farmers.

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<sup>88</sup> For an interesting study of a commercial farming community see Taylor's (2002) BA thesis entitled the *Politics of Uncertainty*, which examines the role of community in defining a sense of identity and belonging among farmers.

<sup>89</sup> Trevor Grundy, "Bloody Pledge of Mugabe's Protégé", *The Scotsman*, 5 December 2004.

<sup>90</sup> 'I have not tasted white blood for 20 years', *Independent Online*, 25 September 2002.

<sup>91</sup> C Lamb and D Bauber, "Mugabe's Secret Plan to Evict all Whites from Zimbabwe", *The Daily Telegraph*, 27 August 2001. The existence of this document was confirmed in discussions with an anonymous official in 2002.

<sup>92</sup> For more information on Buckle's accounts see: <http://www.africantears.netfirms.com/>

<sup>93</sup> These included barricading his gate, keeping him awake at night, letting cattle out of their paddocks, intimidating his children and taunting his dogs. Discussions with Mark Butler, Nyanga, December 2004.

The sinister sides of the invasions also carried subtle messages. Livestock mutilations and crop-burning mirrored guerrilla tactics from the war years, which had been aimed at breaking farmer resolve. In 2002, north of the case study area at Forrester Estates, hundreds of cattle were driven into a lake and drowned.<sup>94</sup> At Border Timbers, in the Eastern Highlands, mature timber plantations were set on fire and on another occasion stocks of processed planks were burnt.<sup>95</sup> Farming operations were regularly prevented or disrupted on principle.<sup>96</sup> Settlers would sometimes cut down specific trees, not for firewood, but because farmers had special sentiments towards those trees.<sup>97</sup>

Family pets often bore the brunt of occupier frustrations and footage of farm invaders beating animals to death was screened around the world.<sup>98</sup> Much of this behaviour was supposedly linked to the idea that stereotyped farmers treated their dogs better than their workers.<sup>99</sup> According to several respondents, invaders sometimes justified their tactics in these terms, explaining that through these acts they were demeaning everything that was dear to the farmer whilst concurrently demonstrating that they meant nothing to the invaders. The cooking and eating of pet rabbits in front of a barricaded family was a particularly stark illustration.<sup>100</sup> However, such incidents were not isolated. Dogs, cats, horses and other pets were poisoned, beaten, burnt and maimed throughout the country and veterinarians were forced to put down thousands of animals.<sup>101</sup> The psychological aspects of the invasions seemed to have two motivations: firstly, to break down the resolve of the white farmers and, secondly, to effect some sort of vengeance - make today's farmers pay for yesterday through symbolic disempowerment. Chitiyo (2003: 164) alludes to this:

The white employer, especially the farmer, has traditionally been the 'big man' of Rhodesian and Zimbabwean society. Now they have to endure the ritual humiliation, violence and destruction of status; a 'disempowerment'.

<sup>94</sup> Peta Thornycroft, "[Mugabe's Men Drown Cattle As Thousands Go Hungry](#)", *The Telegraph*, 16 December 2002.

<sup>95</sup> "Border Timbers Reports \$15 million in timber set on fire", *zimsituation.com*, 12 October 2001.

<sup>96</sup> During the 2002 winter season, wheat farmers countrywide had their irrigation cycles intentionally disrupted.

<sup>97</sup> There are many accounts of trees on farm house driveways being chopped down and left as symbolic gestures. Discussions with Keith Butler, Concession, December 2002.

<sup>98</sup> This footage was widely screened on most international television networks during the height of the farm invasions. For a graphic (and highly disturbing) photo essay of animal mutilations on farms during the invasions see: <http://www.african-crisis.org/Photo.asp?&State=V1&Subject=ZC&Page=3&>.

<sup>99</sup> "Violence continues in Zimbabwe despite pledge to end hostilities", *CNN*, 20 April 2000.

<sup>100</sup> Peta Thornycroft, "No relief for Zimbabwe Farmers", *The Telegraph*, 7 October 2003.

<sup>101</sup> For example, see "Family Under Fire, Horse Burnt", *News 24*, 12 September 2002. Discussions with the head Veterinary Surgeon, Avondale Surgery, Harare, January 2003. Organisations such as the SPCA and the Wetnose Foundation rescued and exported thousands of distressed animals.

Ritual humiliations were a prominent feature of many incidents. Spitting in the faces of farmers, making them roll in dust, grovel on their knees, dance and chant *chimurenga* songs and ZANU PF slogans seemed to be conscious efforts to demonstrate power reversals.<sup>102</sup> During volatile phases the process seemed to be about whites ‘giving something’ in return for historical injustices. They were expected to ‘suffer’ or to ‘pay’ in some way. In August 2001, when the Chinoyi farmers were arrested (see above), they were shackled, shaved, forced to wear prison uniforms, and then paraded on international television. At the same time SABC News showed a farmer being forced to drink water out of a stagnant cattle trough, because he had refused to fix a water pump that had been vandalized by the same invaders.<sup>103</sup> The brutality of many assaults and the inability to rely on the police or the law were, according to one farmer, “worse than anarchy... at least under anarchy you have the option of defending yourself”.<sup>104</sup> It is remarkable that farmer retaliations were not more violent – indeed there was only one supposed incident. Philip Buzuidenhout from Manicaland was the only white farmer officially convicted of violent retaliation during this period. He was found guilty of murder after running down a settler in his truck, and sentenced to twenty years imprisonment.<sup>105</sup> However, details of the incident remain sketchy. Bezuidenhout was married to a black woman and the victim’s family lamented the manner in which his death was used for political mileage.<sup>106</sup>

Unpredictability was also a big factor which, for most farmers, made ‘coexistence’ untenable. In Mashonaland Central ‘coexistence’ arrangements or negotiated compromises between farmers and A1 occupiers were usually derailed by war veterans or party officials.<sup>107</sup> Invaders were often supplied with drugs and alcohol, as young guerrillas had been during the war years.<sup>108</sup> Seemingly constructive negotiations would be followed by sudden unexpected violence. Often when trying to negotiate with settlers, farmers would be told to “stop calling us kaffirs”.<sup>109</sup> Even though the farmers concerned were often quietly and carefully trying to calm the situation down, this type of catalyst would drive the group into a frenzy once more. Maintaining this frenzy seemed to be an important aspect of the invasions. Elderly farmers were often subjected to worse insults because of their war histories and in many instances invaders refused to negotiate with older farmers.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> Discussions with Mark Butler and Colin Huddy (Shamva farmers), Harare South, September 2001.

<sup>103</sup> SABC Television Newsclip August 2001.

<sup>104</sup> Discussions with Dirk Buitendag, Harare, January 2004.

<sup>105</sup> “White Farmer Guilty of Murder” in News 24 (SA), 16 September 2005.

<sup>106</sup> “Blacks take over white farm after murder in Zimbabwe,” AFP, 17 July 2001.

<sup>107</sup> Discussions with Ed Cumming, Barwick, January 2003.

<sup>108</sup> Discussions with Loreck and Kumbirai Kanouruka, Concession, October 2002.

<sup>109</sup> This is based on personal experience and on the experiences of several respondents. For example, Keith Butler experienced similar patterns during negotiations in Shamva. Discussions with Keith Butler, Harare, January 2003.

<sup>110</sup> This observation is based on personal experience, but was common to many respondents.

Ed Cumming put another view on negotiations: “it is impossible to reason with these people as a group - if one starts compromising or agreeing another will accuse him of being a sell-out... it seems that they are determined not to agree and certainly not to compromise”.<sup>111</sup>

The frustrations of countering invasions and the land acquisition notices administratively wore farmers down. Legal cases swallowed time and money and were increasingly ineffective. Alternative negotiations over farm sub-division proposals took up hundreds of hours and in most cases failed.<sup>112</sup> No one in the police or government departments appeared to want to take responsibility, and this was perceived by many farmers as part of a grand plan. Farmer resolve diminished for safety reasons too as they became increasingly vulnerable to being set-up, under selective applications of the law. Duncan Hamilton at Forrester Estates was accused of hoarding grain. Jim Arrowsmith from Glendale was arrested on allegations of destroying grain after he buried chemically treated seed maize that was obsolete.<sup>113</sup> Police inaction was frustrating for commercial farmers, but not as worrying as police involvement. The integration of war veterans into the police service in 2001 saw a shift from passive presence to active involvement, and it became risky to report incidents to the police for danger of being arrested.<sup>114</sup>

Rumours abounded as they had in the war. Max Rosenfel’s wife, Mary, suggested that “if you have not heard a rumour by ten o’clock in the morning then make one up”.<sup>115</sup> Fears grew about speaking to the press and general paranoia mounted. Before 2002, most farmers published their experiences openly, but as the lawlessness and state oppression prevailed, it became riskier. Reports stopped naming farmers, and then farms, before finally reporting incidents with few identifiable details.<sup>116</sup> The CIO was rumoured to be watching safe houses, and planting foreign currency or other illegal goods in car boots at roadblocks. White farmers felt visible and vulnerable and it became increasingly difficult to renew passports, gun-licenses, and work permits. Fears of being ‘trapped’ as stateless pensioners came to dominate concerns among elderly whites in Harare. As in the bush war, the impact on urban areas was deferred. Initially, farmers expressed frustrations at the ambivalence of Harare’s ‘town clowns’ and their ‘business

<sup>111</sup> Discussions with Ed Cumming, Barwick January 2003.

<sup>112</sup> I spent nearly six months trying to negotiate a sub-division proposal with local government to reduce our farm from 670 ha to 400 ha, including a ‘resettlement package’ for the conceded 270 hectares. This process involved more than thirty different meetings with local authorities, provincial government and central government, AREX officials and Ministry of Lands officials. It was approved by Vice President Msika who issued instructions for its implementation, but was ignored by the provincial administration in Bindura.

<sup>113</sup> Stella Mapenzauswa, “Zim farmer arrested on grain charge”, *The Herald (SA)*, 9 September 2002.

<sup>114</sup> Chris Hart, a Glendale farmer, called the police to deal with a theft issue and was arrested. Discussions with Chris Hart, Concession Police Station, October 2002.

<sup>115</sup> Tim Butcher, “Agonising wait for Mugabe’s White Africans”, *Daily Telegraph*, 10 August 2002.

<sup>116</sup> The CFU sit-reps have a statement to this effect. See: [http://www.cfu.co.zw/sitreps/2002/03\\_jan.htm](http://www.cfu.co.zw/sitreps/2002/03_jan.htm).

as usual' approach.<sup>117</sup> When the impacts of the crisis began to affect whites in urban areas after the 2002 elections, the rural-urban divide resurfaced. Urban whites increasingly blamed white farmers for the political crisis, even arguing that "if farmers had stayed out of politics none of this would have happened".<sup>118</sup> Many of these stresses, strains and squabble mirrored the internal fallouts of white communities during the war years (Godwin and Hancock, 1993).

Gratuity packages for farm workers were a key strategy in breaking the alliance between farmers and workers and also in breaking farmer morale. Before the 2002 Presidential election, government introduced a statutory instrument (SI6) requiring evicted farmers to compensate their farm workers for terminal benefits.<sup>119</sup> Workers' unions, including GAPWUZ, joined the fray and for a six-month period farmers were harassed for payment of retrenchment packages to farm workers. Disenfranchised farm workers, vulnerable and traumatised, sought short-term security and increasingly turned on their employers, sometimes violently. Initially farmers refused to pay if they were undesignated, or had won court appeals, but as more conceded, so the process became a formality. Land occupiers often conspired with farm workers and in some cases farm workers plotted to ensure that their farms were designated. Most farmers were forced to pay out in the end often to buy time to salvage possessions or equipment. Any mutual trust that had developed between farmers and workers was lost. It was an incredibly effective tool for government. The gratuities diminished the financial clout of the farmers and temporarily softened the blow for laid off farm workers, but perhaps most importantly it drove a wedge between the two groups and broke the remaining morale of many farmers. Government then taxed farmers on the pay outs.

Individuals, districts and eventually whole areas capitulated, but at differing rates as in the war years. Farmers support groups sprouted and psychologists and motivational speakers made a fortune during this period, advising farmers not to spend too much time together as this was likely to compound depression.<sup>120</sup> Dr Kevin O'Connor explained the levels of psychological trauma experienced by many of his patients, who were predominantly evicted farmers. He described high levels of depression and stress related illnesses and the high proportion of

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<sup>117</sup> Discussions with Keith Butler, Harare, September 2001.

<sup>118</sup> For example, at a dinner party in Harare in January 2003, a young farmer was subjected to severe criticism by white urbanites. Discussions with William Lowry, Harare, January 2003.

<sup>119</sup> The SI6 gratuity formula consisted of a standard retrenchment amount equivalent to two months pay, plus a months worth of pay for every year worked by the individual in question.

<sup>120</sup> The CFU instigated a farmers' support group. Stan Parsons, a former rancher from Matabeleland, who emigrated to become a businessman and motivational speaker in the USA, conducted several workshops designed to encourage evicted farmers into keeping their morale up and to look for alternative incomes.



children affected.<sup>121</sup> An anecdote from a teacher at the Barwick preparatory school, in the case study area, vividly captures the bizarre contradictions of this process of white disempowerment. On a Monday morning, when stories about the weekend were being read out by eight-year olds, several traumatized white children delivered harrowing accounts of being evicted from their homes. Some of their black classmates described how they had visited their new farms, decorated their new bedrooms and swum in their new swimming pools.<sup>122</sup>

### 1.3.4 The Fragmentation of Farming Institutions

The fragmentation of the CFU marked the final stage of the collapse of white farming, and occurred along planes of historical division – most notably ideology, region, crop-type and farm structure. Ideological differences first emerged between farmers prepared to compromise with government, and those intent on confrontation. Following the 2000 general election the first group reasoned that ZANU PF would not be ousted easily, whilst the second group felt that the elections had been so blatantly rigged that the international community would surely enforce some element of change and accountability. The latter group comprised mainly of evicted MDC supporters who felt that any compromise would undermine the chances of ousting ZANU PF. These two distinct pools of opinion were soon reflected in the politics of the farming unions and the indecisions over whether to take legal action against the government.

The Zimbabwe Joint Resettlement Initiative (ZJRI), a successor of sorts to the Team Zimbabwe initiative illustrated these divisions, but also the preparedness of most farmers to compromise. Early in 2001 Nick Swanepoel (ex CFU President) and Greg Brackenridge (Bankers Association Chairman), warned the CFU that compromise with ZANU PF was the only way forward, and submitted a proposal to offer government a million hectares of land.<sup>123</sup> Revelations that John Bredenkamp had initiated the proposal did not encourage support from ordinary farmers. The CFU leadership of David Hasluck, Tim Henwood and William Hughes were seen to be an obstacle to compromise but immediately offered their resignations, which council refused.<sup>124</sup> With re-established authority the CFU assumed control of ZJRI and asked Swanepoel to lead the initiative, on the condition that he distanced himself from Bredenkamp.

<sup>121</sup> Discussions with Dr Kevin O'Connor, Harare, December 2004. In the case study area three farmers died of stress related conditions by 2006 and another four elderly farmers passed away during the same period.

<sup>122</sup> Discussions with Paul Martin (Teacher), Barwick, January 2003.

<sup>123</sup> Interview with Nick Swanepoel, Chinoyi, January 2005.

<sup>124</sup> Interview with David Hasluck, Nyanga, March 2003. John Laurie, Mike Butler and John Strong were said to have supported Swanepoel's compromise initiative.

On the surface the initiative appeared workable. One million hectares of land was identified and offered to government. The farmers salvaged unity and ZJRI became a central facet of discussions leading to the Abuja Agreement in September 2001. However both ZJRI and 'Abuja' soon met the same fate as the IPFP. Moderate elements of ZANU PF, such as Msika, seemingly agreed with the process, but had limited influence as events on the ground were being dictated by more militant members. Joseph Made (Agriculture Minister) simply dismissed ZJRI on the basis that "no deals were to be made".<sup>125</sup> Like the IPFP, radical members of the party were not interested in compromise and had ample capacity to prevent it.

In August 2001, Colin Cloete won a close CFU leadership contest against William Hughes, the younger but more articulate of two Vice Presidents. Cloete's election was remarkable for other reasons. As an ex-Selous Scout he was hardly an ideal candidate to lead negotiations with an increasingly militant ruling party, and yet his leadership spell was characterized by compliance with government. By the beginning of 2002 it was clear that the Abuja agreement was irrelevant. For many farmers the failure of ZJRI dented the credibility of the CFU, and farming leaders were accused of protecting their own interests. CFU and ZTA leaders remained remarkably unaffected in their farming operations - a shrewd strategy by ZANU PF to emasculate farming leaders from their members - which increasingly angered the growing number of evicted farmers, who desired more confrontational stances. Eventually this prompted an institutional breakaway of evicted farmers who formed Justice for Agriculture (JAG) in June 2002.<sup>126</sup>

JAG's mission was to secure justice, peace and freedom for the agricultural sector, to expose the illegal and unconstitutional nature of the farm takeovers, and to secure accountability for events since 2005. Its first initiative was to compile a comprehensive 'loss document' and in August JAG facilitated a valuation consortium among estate agents to ensure independent professional valuations on land and improvements, aimed at future compensation and restitution claims.<sup>127</sup> JAG came to represent evicted farmers, whilst the CFU appeared to represent those still farming.<sup>128</sup> However, as the number of evicted farmers increased, so many members stopped paying CFU levies and fewer bothered to turn up to congress. Colin Cloete (CFU President)

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<sup>125</sup> Interview with David Hasluck, Nyanga, March 2003.

<sup>126</sup> The split was fuelled by the closure of *The Farmer* magazine after editorial criticism of the CFU Council. Interview with Brian Latham, Harare, September 2001.

<sup>127</sup> Other initiatives were mired in controversy. After the 2000 elections a young English lawyer, Jonathan Lockwood, claimed that he would take the British Government to court and win compensation for white farmers on the basis of historical obligations. Many farmers signed up, each paying £1000 to Lockwood, who then vanished.

<sup>128</sup> This has an interesting historical precedent. In 1979 Dennis Norman insisted that the RNFU would act in the interests of those farmers who wanted to stay rather than those wanting to go (Selby 2006: Chapter Two).

continued to pursue a non-confrontational approach arguing that legal action would simply anger government. A significant CFU split ensued in September 2002, when Cloete and David Hasluck (CFU Director) suspended Ben Freeth (Mash West CFU Chairman) for publicly denouncing government in a circulated e-mail. A backlash within the CFU led to a council vote after which both Cloete and Hasluck were asked to resign, which they did in October.<sup>129</sup>

JAG was soon wracked by internal divisions too, stemming from leadership squabbles.<sup>130</sup> Insistence on including a claim for consequential losses (damages) in their compensation initiative was seen to be excessive by some members, who argued that it would be pragmatic to only claim for land and improvements, and, if necessary, just improvements.<sup>131</sup> The formation of Agric Africa in February 2004 to pursue claims for land and improvements using the existing Valuation Consortium's database was not received well by JAG.<sup>132</sup> It accused Agric Africa of pursuing its initiative for commercial gain.<sup>133</sup> JAG leaders also took a personal swipe at Bob Fernandez a founder member of the valuation consortium who had moved onto the Agric Africa committee.<sup>134</sup> At the end of 2003, the valuation consortium estimated that the value of lost land and improvements within the white farming sector was about £3billion (US\$5 billion). JAG estimated that compensation claims including consequential losses for both farmers and farm workers exceeded £12 billion (\$US20 billion).<sup>135</sup>

Given its history, the ZTA was always likely to pursue an independent route. In 2000, Richard Tate (ZTA President) is alleged to have said that "the sooner the elections are over and ZANU is back in power, the sooner we can get back to the business of farming."<sup>136</sup> The ZTA continued to stress the importance of tobacco for foreign currency generation. When 'fast-track' was formally implemented, the ZTA allegedly tried to persuade government to retain the 500 largest tobacco growers. Kobus Joubert, Tate's successor, astounded farmers in June 2002 when he urged them

<sup>129</sup> Takatei Bote, "Cloete, Hasluck Quit", *Daily News*, 30 October 2002.

<sup>130</sup> John Worsley Worswick (JAG Chairman) was seen by many to be too dominating and confrontational in his leadership style. Ironically, his grandfather, Christopher, was an RF founder in Marandellas (Selby 2006: Chapter 2)

<sup>131</sup> Critics argued that the difficulties of calculating damages, undermined the chances of securing basic compensation for land and improvements that could be more easily calculated and substantiated.

<sup>132</sup> Letter from John Worswick in response to Kerry Kay, *JAG Open Letter Forum*, 22 March 2004.

<sup>133</sup> Agric Africa demands a four percent commission of any compensation paid out. See Ben Freeth, "Overview on Agric Africa", *JAG Open Letter Forum*, 14 January 2004.

<sup>134</sup> For example, see letters from Ben Freeth and Eric Harrison, *JAG Open Letters Forum*, 10 March 2004.

<sup>135</sup> According to Graham Mullet about three quarters of Mashonaland farmers undertook some form of professional valuation exercise, and many took satellite images or aerial photographs to monitor effects before and after. Discussion with Graham Mullet, of Redfern Mullet valuers, Harare, February 2003.

<sup>136</sup> This story circulated in farming communities for months. It may have been hearsay, but Tate's flirtations with the black empowerment lobby and the ruling party are well documented in Chapter Five.

to be 'apolitical' and to work with the government.<sup>137</sup> He accused farmer politicians of playing with the livelihoods of others and that farmers should either compromise or pack their bags.<sup>138</sup> This incensed evicted farmers and catalysed the formation of JAG which immediately accused Joubert and the ZTA of 'political prostitution'. Whilst the ZTA proposals were said to have been entertained by Msika, the radical wings of the ruling party were not interested, and by September 2002 most large tobacco farmers had been evicted. Duncan Miller's (Joubert's successor) 2003 ZTA congress speech was of a different tone and heavily critical of government. By this stage the ZTA, expecting a forcible takeover, had decided to sell off its assets.

Matabeleland's long history of institutional autonomy re-emerged during the ZJRI, and during the JAG split. During the ZJRI crisis Matabeleland farmers opposed Swanepoel's moves for compromise and during the JAG split they opposed the CFU's decision to withdraw its legal action. Many Matabeleland farmers felt that they were not being consulted enough and that the CFU leadership was acting in its own interests, and not in those of its members.<sup>139</sup> By 2004 the remaining 250 or so Matabeleland farmers distanced themselves from the CFU and refused to pay their subscriptions. Gavin Connolly argued that the CFU was not acting on principle or in the interests of its members and together with Mac Crawford, the long-time Matabeleland CFU representative, he established the Southern African Commercial Farmers' Association (SACFA) - a symbolic re-separation of the Matabeleland Farmers' Union. Doug Taylor Freeme, the CFU President, dismissed the move and declared that Matabeleland always had a history of autonomy anyway.<sup>140</sup> But it was much more significant. The 100 year old unification of the MFU and the RAU and the CFU's 62 year-old unification of commercial farming institutions had fallen apart. By mid-2005 there were five independent groups representing the interests of former white farmers (CFU, JAG, ZTA, SACFA, and Agric Africa).<sup>141</sup> In April 2006 the CFU announced intentions to reengage with ZANU PF, but warned that it would only represent members willing to recognise the government. The remnants of this once powerful sector were once more divided along historical divisions: crop type, region, ideology and farm structure. They were divisions which had undermined the organisation of the sector during the colonial period and which had continued to undermine its unity throughout.

<sup>137</sup> "Blunt message to Zimbabwe farmers", *Business Day*, 19 June 2002.

<sup>138</sup> "No To lily Livered ZTA, CFU", *The Standard*, 23 June 2002; "When Will Joubert Ever Learn", *The Standard*, 7 July 2002.

<sup>139</sup> Andrew Chadwick, "Breakaway Splits Zimbabwe White Farmer's Union", *Daily Telegraph*, 10 September 2003.

<sup>140</sup> Andrew Chadwick, "Breakaway Splits Zimbabwe White Farmer's Union", *Daily Telegraph*, 10 September 2003.

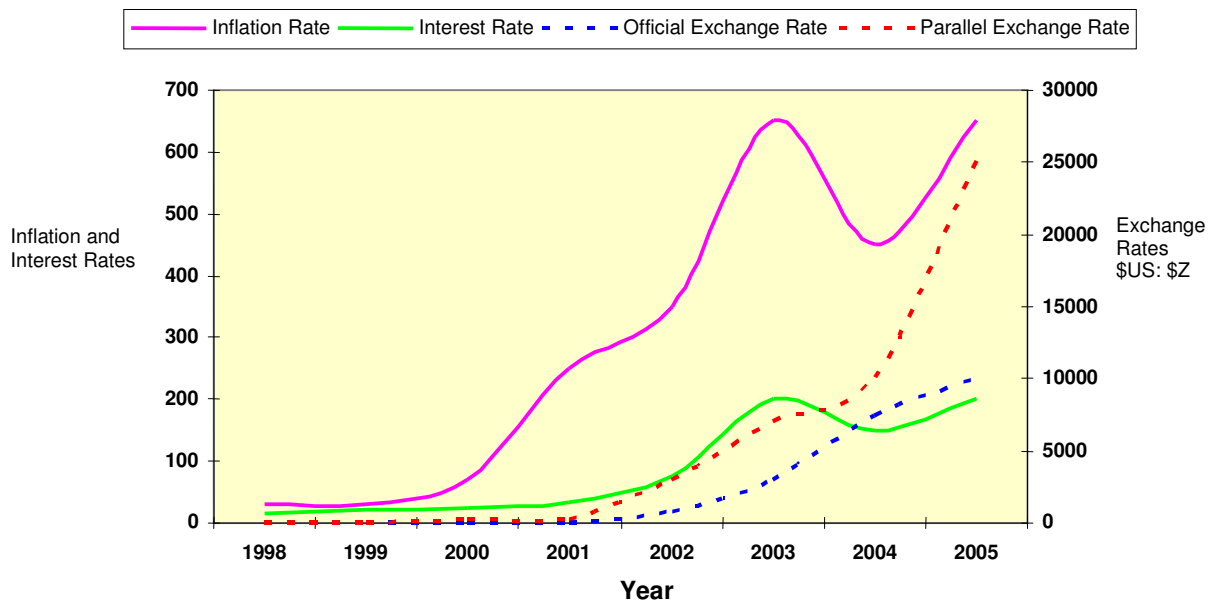
<sup>141</sup> Independent lobbying by the Horticulture Producers Council (HPC) and corporate farming were further divisions.

### 1.4 ASSESSING THE ‘FAST TRACK’ LAND REDISTRIBUTIONS

Five years after the formal implementation of ‘fast-track’ land reform, evidence of its repercussions is emerging. The independent and international media has concentrated on a plethora of negative aspects, which the state media has portrayed as the inevitable costs of a necessary process. The state has argued two further key points: that the process is irreversible, and that the recovery is being undermined by a neo-colonial conspiracy.

My thesis essentially rounded off in the last section, but feels incomplete without some form of address to these issues or some form of post ‘fast track’ assessment. At the very least an assessment of ‘fast track’ provides an interesting directional prognosis, and analysis of the government’s own land audit is a good starting point. There are also some obvious questions relating to white farmers that have not been addressed yet: Where have they gone and what are they doing? Who is still farming and how are they continuing to do so? Finally, there is an interesting set of questions relating to land beneficiaries and the ruling party’s overall strategy. Who’s getting what land and why? Although the net effects of ‘fast track’ are difficult to judge accurately, macro-economic indicators illustrate the short-term impacts of the crisis.

**Figure 1.1 Macro-Economic Indicators, 1998-2005**

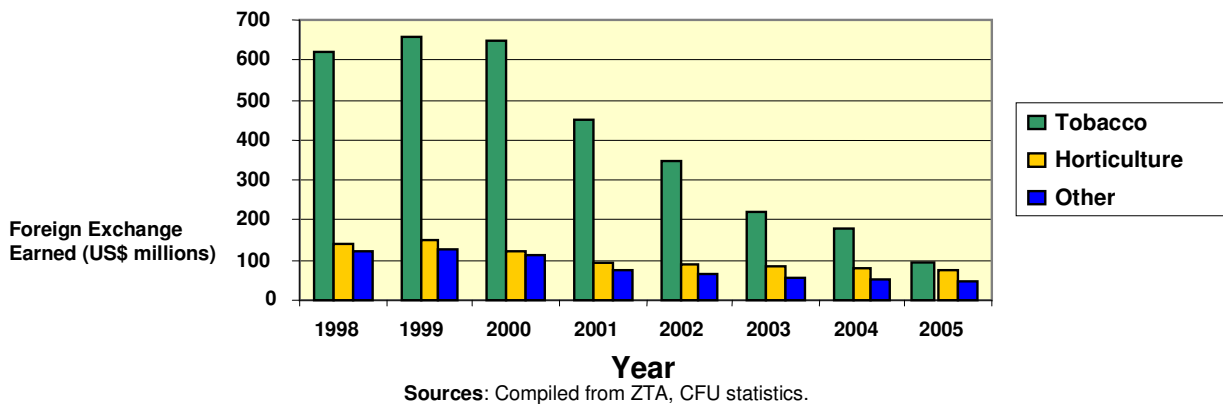


Sources: Collated Data from EIU, World Bank, IMF and John Robertson Financial Services

The *Financial Gazette* estimates that agricultural output shrunk by 13, 21, 23, and 20 percent in the years 2001 – 2004 respectively, and that agriculture’s foreign currency earnings decreased from US\$900 million to US\$350 million over this period.<sup>142</sup> Most estimates suggest that the formal economy has shrunk by more than thirty five percent since 2000, an unprecedented scenario for a country not officially defined as a conflict situation. Zimbabwe’s human development index (HDI) ranking has fallen significantly and the government admits that poverty estimates have increased by 21 percent.<sup>143</sup>

Within the agricultural sector various trends emerge. Maize output is difficult to measure accurately, but Zimbabwe has suffered four consecutive years of food insecurity and food imports. Whilst there have been two years of regional drought most analysts agree that the disruptions of ‘fast-track’ are primarily to blame. The Cattle Producers’ Association reported that the number and quality of beef cattle has deteriorated significantly estimating the national herd at less than half its previous level. Beef exports virtually ceased because of foot and mouth, and although there has been a partial compensation with new farmers, herd turnover rates remain low.<sup>144</sup> Other key crops such as tobacco and horticulture can be measured through their export earnings and even the state media eventually acknowledged the detrimental impact on the tobacco sector.<sup>145</sup>

**Figure 1.2 Agricultural Foreign Exchange Earnings 1998-2005**



<sup>142</sup> Felix Njini, “Sharp drop for horticulture”, *Financial Gazette*, 25 August 2005.

<sup>143</sup> Zimbabwe Human Development Report (2003) Ministry of Public service, Labour and Social Welfare.

<sup>144</sup> During the 1990s the commercial herd turned over about twenty percent of stock per year. The communal herd turned over about five percent, preferring to keep animals for draft power, milk, wealth and status symbols.

<sup>145</sup> Darlington Musarurwa, “Tobacco Targets Missed”, *The Herald*, 16 October 2005. The interesting thing about this article is that although 2005 sales mass decreased by about fifteen percent from 2003, \$US earnings halved to \$US117 million, reflecting sharp deteriorations in tobacco quality.

The horticultural sector, which grew at an average of fifteen percent per year during the 1990s, contracted by more than 40 percent by 2005.<sup>146</sup> Although there has been partially compensating growth in the informal economy, the net impact has been overwhelmingly negative. Most groups acknowledged this by 2005, but government continued to cite drought, sabotage by departing farmers or MDC members, or sanctions under neo-colonial conspiracies.<sup>147</sup> At local level, evidence from my case study describes serious collapse (Selby 2006: Appendix I). About twenty percent of the arable areas cultivated in 2000 were being cropped in 2003 and horticultural and tobacco production had virtually ceased. More than 40 hectares (80 percent) of rose greenhouses were abandoned. Formal employment levels dropped by more than sixty five percent and irrigated areas declined by at least three quarters, as did wheat and soya output. Constraints on new farmers, including limited access to credit, land tenure insecurity and input shortages, compounded a general lack of capacity, skills and experience, which are finally being acknowledged by state officials including the Deputy Minister of agriculture, Sylvester Nguni.<sup>148</sup> The few remaining well-established farmers are struggling within hostile economic conditions, so it is no surprise that nascent businesses are having difficulties. Indeed, the prospects of any short term recovery, without first addressing these many problems, are highly unlikely.

#### 1.4.1 The Utete Commission

In January 2003, the government claimed that 300 000 people had benefited under the A1 scheme and that 54000 farmers had been allocated A2 plots, but these were inconsistent with figures leaked from an internal government audit by Minister Flora Buka.<sup>149</sup> In response Mugabe appointed an audit of the fast-track program, chaired by Dr Charles Utete. Although Utete was regarded as a Mugabe loyalist, the committee and technical team included reputable individuals.<sup>150</sup> According to their report, of 11 million hectares seized from large scale farmers only 6.5 million had been occupied by 2004. 134 452 land allocations were made on the A1 scheme, but only 93 800 had taken up offers. Of 15 000 planned A2 farmers, only 7 260 had taken up land.<sup>151</sup>

<sup>146</sup> See Felix Njini, "Sharp drop for horticulture", *Financial Gazette*, 25 August 2005.

<sup>147</sup> Even in November 2005, Joseph Made was citing drought and western conspiracies for the collapse. His deputy Minister blamed land allocations. See "Made Speaks on Agric Production", *The Herald*, 2 November 2005.

<sup>148</sup> George Chisoko, "Zim's Agric Production Declines", *The Herald*, 1 November 2005.

<sup>149</sup> The internal audit of farming support schemes exposed high level scams in the disbursement of funds through the Livestock Development Trust Fund and Tractor Scheme. It also raised early concerns about land allocations to members of the elite. Innocent Chofamba-Sithole, "Leaked Report Details Abuse of Govt Scheme", *Zimbabwe Mirror*, 16 March 2003. Also see "This is Our Land", *Africa Confidential*, 21 February 2003, Vol 44, No.4.

<sup>150</sup> The Committee included three previous Permanent Secretaries of Agriculture, Dr Robbie Mupawose, Dr Boniface Ndimande and Dr Tobias Takavarasha. The technical unit was headed by Professor Sam Moyo and included Dr Lovemore Rugube, Dr Chrispen Sukume and Dr Prosper Matondi.

<sup>151</sup> "Land Audit Committee's Report Proves Government's Failure", *The Independent*, 24 October 2003.

Government moderates and technocrats used the report to try to re-exert some control. Confidential details of controversial land allocations and multiple farm ownership were leaked to the press. However, subsequent failure to act on the recommendations of the report re-illustrates the dominance of militant-radical alliances within the ruling party, which had ruined the IPFP in 1999 and ZJRI in 2001. The report also understated the impact of farm workers being evicted. It misleadingly implied that most workers were based on corporate farms that remained unaffected, which was at odds with the significant displacement of farm workers in the case study area, and throughout most areas of Mashonaland. The number of displaced and unemployed farm-workers and their dependents was thought to exceed 1 million by that stage (FCTZ, 2001; Sachikonye 2003).<sup>152</sup>

The erosion of skills and intellectual capital within the agricultural industry was significant. Research stations such as Kutsaga and Grasslands are now virtually derelict, while breeding capital in livestock and crop genetics, established over decades, has been lost.<sup>153</sup> An overriding impression of the 2003 Nyanga Symposium on Securing Livelihoods was the attempt by government to secure international funding for reconstruction, without first reconciling the events of the last few years.<sup>154</sup> The UN's funding of a food security conference in Harare in 2005, suggests that key international players may be seeking to encourage reform through engagement, but remain cautious.<sup>155</sup> While most developing countries battle to penetrate international markets Zimbabwe has squandered privileged shares of beef, tobacco and horticultural markets.

Attempts to 'normalize' or legitimize 'fast-track' have also ignored environmental damage, which is only briefly cited in the Utete Report. Short-term coping strategies by local communities increased significantly after 2000. In the case study area, tree cutting, poaching and water system damage is significant. For example, more than two thousand gold panners occupied Falling Waters Estate on the upper Garamapudzi river. The destruction of infrastructure has also been overlooked. On some farms underground irrigation pipelines and cables were dug up and

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<sup>152</sup> Other reports that have emerged in the wake of 'fast track' and attempt to make an assessment include: UN, 2002; ICG, 2004; World Bank, 2004. The last report was heavily criticised. See Chikwapuso, "World Bank Report Flawed", *The Zimbabwean*, 8 July 2005. Professor Sam Moyo had significant input into the UN Report (2002), the Utete Report (2003) and the World Bank Report (2004).

<sup>153</sup> "Land Reform Reaps Bitter Harvest", *Oxford Analytica*, 3 September 2003

<sup>154</sup> These observations are based on personal attendance of the event.

<sup>155</sup> Eddie Cross, "Zimbabwe: Living in a Lunatic Asylum", *The Zimbabwe Standard*, 6 October 2005.



sold onto the informal aluminium and copper markets.<sup>156</sup> During 2002 three quarters of farms in the case study district had irrigation equipment and electrical transformers stolen. Petty theft and crime levels escalated significantly.<sup>157</sup> Outlying sheds and barns were stripped of corrugated iron and asbestos roofs and livestock fences were dismantled, in some cases by settlers, in some cases by opportunist criminal elements, in some cases by internal refugees, and in some cases by desperate farm workers. As the battle for survival intensifies within the harsh economic realities, so distinctions between these groups become more obscure and less important.

#### 1.4.2 Where have all the farmers gone?

By 2004 there were varying estimates of the number of white farmers still operating. The Utete Commission suggested that 1323 white farmers were still farming on 1.2 million hectares, but this was an overestimate given that provincial lands records were out of date and only accounted for farmers that had been officially evicted with formal documentation.<sup>158</sup> The CFU claimed that about 1000 farmers were still operating in some capacity, of which one-third were doing so by 'remote control'.<sup>159</sup> This was likely to have been an overestimate to retain confidence within the sector. JAG estimated that less than 500 farmers were still operating, which was probably an underestimate. The real figure was probably about 600 farmers on markedly reduced areas, of which about 200 were farming by 'remote control' (See Figure 1.3).

Of the 3500 evicted farmers in January 2005, approximately 2000 were in Harare, Bulawayo and Mutare.<sup>160</sup> About 500 had emigrated to Europe and the United States, about 600 to Australia and New Zealand, and about 500 elsewhere within the region. Of these about 150 were thought to be in South Africa, 150 in Zambia, 120 in Mozambique, and about 100 between Botswana, Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria, Namibia and Tanzania.<sup>161</sup> Of the fifty farmers in the case-study area, eleven have emigrated to Australia and New Zealand, nine relocated elsewhere within the region, and five moved to Europe. Only three were still farming, and the other thirty were in Harare.

<sup>156</sup> The largest internal market for aluminium is said to be coffin handles, due to the HIV AIDS crisis.

<sup>157</sup> The second-in-command at Concession Police station lamented the level of crime and his limited capacity to counter it. Discussions with Assistant Inspector Zimucha, Concession, October 2002.

<sup>158</sup> Discussions with Oliver Zishiri (Lands Officer), Bindura, April 2003.

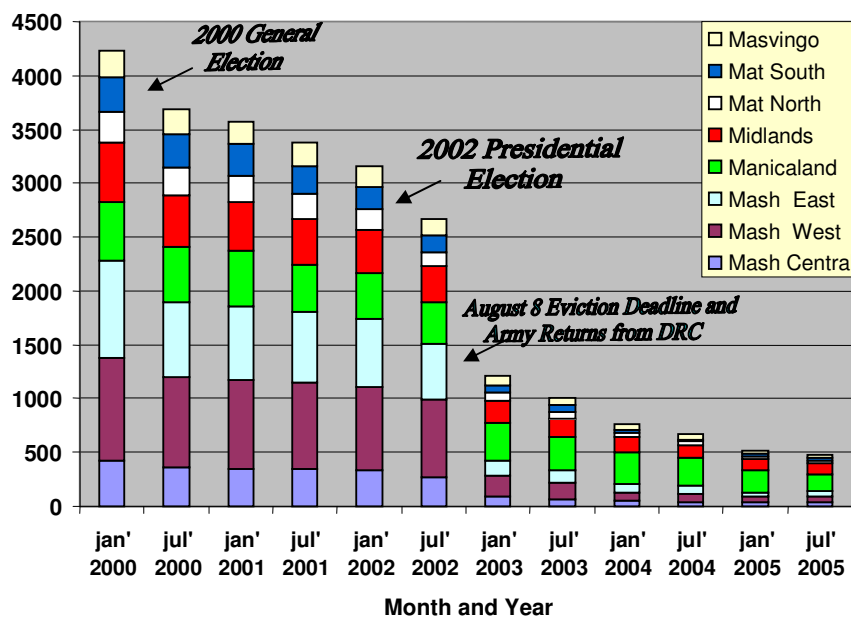
<sup>159</sup> 'Remote control' was the system adopted by farmers who had been evicted from their houses but retained proportions of their farms, or leased land from other farmers, or felt too insecure to stay in farmhouses overnight. They generally lived in Harare, Mutare or Bulawayo from where they would travel out to farms during the day.

<sup>160</sup> These figures are based on my observations and personal discussions with CFU and JAG representatives.

<sup>161</sup> A scheme in Kwara State, Nigeria, has welcomed 15 white farmers. The governor has promoted the idea of a commercial farming sector in Nigeria, which imports most of its food requirements. Mozambique's Manica province has expanded its agricultural output significantly, particularly near Chimoio.

Levels of tolerance, decisions about when to vacate and whether to emigrate varied, as in the war years. Farmers with young families often emigrated sooner, whilst those with children at school often delayed departures. Elderly farmers were reluctant to start new lives, or leave their friends, and were increasingly unable to emigrate because of age. Many of the remaining farmers have taken up alternative business interests including transport, market gardening, aid industry consulting, foreign currency dealing and even fuel importing.

**Figure 1.3 Number of White Farmers Operating by Province 2000 - 2005**



**Source:** Collated from official CFU figures, JAG estimates, press statistics and discussions with relevant farming officials.

Those leaving Africa have mostly joined the Zimbabwean Diaspora in non-farming activities, although a few have managed to purchase farms in Australia. Those that emigrated within the region have generally remained farming. Zambia’s agricultural boom is partly attributable to Zimbabwean immigrants.<sup>162</sup> For the Zimbabwean government, Zambia’s agricultural regeneration alongside Zimbabwe’s demise is an acute embarrassment, especially as most of Zimbabwe’s food imports have come from Zambia in the past three years.<sup>163</sup> The Zimbabwean government warned other countries about accepting ‘racist’ white farmers and actively prevented

<sup>162</sup> “Zimbabwean Farmer’s Boost Zambia’s Prospects”, *Oxford Analytica*, 23 October 2003.

<sup>163</sup> Produtrade, a Zimbabwean commodity trading company opened a Zambian office in 2001. They won tenders with USAID and the World Food Program to export grain from Zambia back to Zimbabwe. In 2003 and 2004 most of Zimbabwe’s grain imports came from Zambia. Discussions with Nigel Philp, Harare January 2003.

the export of tractors and farm equipment, most of which lay idle in urban warehouses.<sup>164</sup> In response these countries have received farmers cautiously.<sup>165</sup> Even white Zambian farmers were apprehensive about the influx of Zimbabwean farmers, who were seen as a threat both economically and politically.

### 1.4.3 Who's Still Farming?

Interesting patterns emerge when we consider which white farmers were still operating in 2005. Most evicted farmers perceived that some form of collaboration with ZANU PF was the only possible explanation. JAG argued that the concept of apoliticism was farcical under the circumstances, and that continuing to operate under conditions imposed by the regime amounted to support for the system. JAG argued that while individual players might not agree with ZANU PF or its methods, their continued operations indirectly bolstered the regime. There are a number of explanations for how some managed to keep farming and these vary between regions, crop types, farm structures and individuals.

Many farm subdivision proposals in Manicaland and the Midlands were accepted in 2002, and by 2004 these two provinces accounted for two-thirds of remaining white farmers.<sup>166</sup> Some ranchers in Matabeleland South also reached 'downsizing' compromises.<sup>167</sup> Remote enclaves of farmers have survived in other areas. Approximately twenty tobacco farmers were still operating in the Guruve-Centenary area by the end of 2005 - too far from Harare to appeal to A2 farmers and too productive to be allocated to A1s. Dairy farms were generally left alone because of their strategic importance.<sup>168</sup> Farms with Export Processing Zones (EPZs) were also 'exempt' initially, because they generated foreign currency. Fresh produce and flower growers with EPZs relied on the EPZ board in Harare to ensure their security. However, with time, even these assurances usually fell through. This was demonstrated in the Case Study area with the takeovers of Howick Vale, Mountain Home, Balley Carney and Montgomery farms by 2005.

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<sup>164</sup> Discussions with relocated farmers in Zambia revealed stories about difficulties exporting equipment. By 2003 Chirundu border post was formally instructed to refuse the export of agricultural equipment.

<sup>165</sup> Peter Apps, "White Zim Farmers find mixed welcome in Africa", *REUTERS*, 14 March 2005.

President Mwanawasa told Zimbabwean farmers in Mkushi, that they were welcome but should respect Zambia's cultures and laws and that there was no room for racism.

<sup>166</sup> E-mail correspondence with John Meikle, June 2005. Email correspondence with Bob Swift, August 2005.

Both respondents noted the risks of speaking freely whilst they were still farming.

<sup>167</sup> E-mail correspondence with Peter Rosenfels, August 2005.

<sup>168</sup> Discussions with Ian Webster, Harare 2004.

Some white farmers certainly collaborated with the ruling party. The Midlands Farmers' Association built close relationships with ZANU PF and army hierarchies during the 1980s and their land identification process in the Mid-1990s was the most consensual of the provinces. In 2004, the CFU Midlands branch asked members to contribute towards ZANU PF celebrations over the appointment of Joyce Mujuru as Vice President.<sup>169</sup> In the 2005 election Midlands farmers were less subtle. Extracts from a letter written by Barry Lenton to Webster Shamu, the ZANU PF MP for Chegutu West, illustrated the stances of the remaining Selous farmers:

The Selous farming community has undertaken to donate diesel and petrol to assist with preparations for the forthcoming elections... Our community had to dig deeper into their pockets to raise donations that you requested for the successful implementation of your election campaign... we are proud that our donations helped you win the elections... The Selous community doesn't in any way doubt your ability to protect our properties as promised by yourself earlier. We sincerely feel you will do this so that our alliance remains put, between you and ourselves.<sup>170</sup>

Colin Cloete (former CFU President), Kobus Joubert (former ZTA President) and Andrew Ferreria (ZTA Vice-President) were party to the initiative. This decision to compromise principles to protect interests had precedents in the UDI period. During the late 1960s Sir Cyril Hatty, a cereal farmer and previous Finance Minister of the Federal Government, was approached to join the Centre Party by Di Mitchell, to oppose the RF. He declined, apparently stating: "The only thing to do when you have a cowboy government is to become a cowboy".<sup>171</sup> In the survey area only three farmers were still operating in 2005: Ian King, the former-MDC coordinator was initially subjected to intense pressure. However his influence within the dairy sector is said to have contributed to his immunity and improved 'communications' with local ZANU PF structures, much to the chagrin of other farmers.<sup>172</sup> Pip Fussell still farms a core section of Willsbridge, which can be attributed to his wife's (Fran) work as the medical doctor at Caesar Mine. The Ilsink family, who export roses to their company in Holland, are protected by a country-to-country agreement and an EPZ. However, even these arrangements appear shaky and inconsistent. Many other farmers in the district had similar protection agreements which were of little consequence.

<sup>169</sup> This was allegedly in solidarity with local ZANU PF heavyweight, Emmerson Mnangagwa who wished to appease the Mujuru faction after the 'Tsholotsho Declaration'.

<sup>170</sup> "ZANU PF Chefs Exposed" *Zimbabwe Independent*, 29 July 2005.

<sup>171</sup> Di Mitchell, "The Cowboy Farmer's Legacy", *The Zimbabwean*, 5 August 2005.

<sup>172</sup> Discussions with Walker Gatse (ZANU PF Official), Concession, January 2004. Ian King encouraged many farmers in 2002 to remain defiant on principle and not to give in to ZANU PF's demands.

As time elapsed the diminishing number of remaining farmers became ‘forced’ sources of help for new settlers on surrounding farms. In Tsatsi, Bert Keightley of Wengi Farm and Pip Fussell on Willsbridge operated throughout 2003 and 2004 in this manner.<sup>173</sup> Settler demands included help with seed, fertilizer, cultivation and expertise. Individual arrangements were usually negotiated in an environment of uncertainty and unpredictability in which bargaining positions were increasingly stacked against white farmers. For most farmers it was not a question of if, but when and how they would have to leave, and what possessions and equipment they would be able to salvage.

Insufficient attention is paid to the corporate farming sector, consisting of very large-scale land owners, and multinationals, who own the lion’s share of un-seized land and have become successors to the Rhodesian land companies. They keep a low profile and lobby directly and independently, in the same manner that they did during UDI. The Lonrho scandal in the 1960s illustrated the preparedness of big business to work with controversial regimes. In a remarkable echo, Nicholas van Hoogstraten, the British property tycoon, is now Zimbabwe’s largest private landowner and an overt ZANU PF supporter.<sup>174</sup> In 1998, at the time of the Land Donor’s Conference, he purchased Willoughby’s Consolidated from Lonrho for about £5 million.<sup>175</sup> The investment included about 250 000 hectares on Central Estates, Essexvale and Eastdale Ranches and five smaller properties. Van Hoogstraten secured a CSC contract to supply beef to Zimbabwean troops in the Congo and is reported to have underwritten arms deals for Mugabe.<sup>176</sup> Although Central Estates was invaded whilst Van Hoogstraten was in a British prison, the army evicted the settlers on his release. He now lives fulltime in Zimbabwe and has purchased controlling shares in Hwange Colliery, First National Merchant Bank, and Rainbow Tourism Group.<sup>177</sup>

The Oppenheimer family has significant land holdings in private ownership, as well as through De Beers and Anglo American.<sup>178</sup> Nikky Oppenheimer was accused by various government officials of owning farms the size of Belgium and Mugabe singled him out during his 2002

<sup>173</sup> Discussions with Bert Keightley, Mkushi, April 2005.

<sup>174</sup> Van Hoogstraten’s manslaughter conviction was overturned on a technicality, but a civil court found him guilty.

<sup>175</sup> Van Hoogstraten purchased Willoughby’s consolidated off the London Stock exchange in 1998, after it made a 23% loss in 1997. This is much of the same land amassed by Sir John Willoughby in the 1890s (See Chapter One).

<sup>176</sup> “White Capitalists and ZANU PF”, *Sunday Mirror*, 12 December 2004; “Mugabe takes farm from White Ally”, *The Independent (UK)* 13 May 2002.

<sup>177</sup> “British Tycoon Consolidates Grip on Zimbabwe’s Anaemic Economy”, *Zim Online*, 15 October 2005.

<sup>178</sup> See: “Zimbabwe Seizes Oppenheimer Land”, *Business Day*, 7 Nov 2001; *Zimbabwe Independent*, 8 August 2003; *Mail and Guardian*, 25 March 2005.

election campaign. Debshan Ranch (short for DeBeers Shangani) exceeds 130 000 hectares and together with Anglo American holdings the Oppenheimers are connected to more than 240 000 hectares (about ten percent of Belgium). In September 2000, Oppenheimer offered the Zimbabwean government 34 000 ha of Debshan Ranch and a \$2 million trust fund for the new settlers, on condition that their remaining properties were left alone. A year later the government asked for 65 000 ha. These properties remain operationally intact on the whole, which observers attribute to Oppenheimer's influence on key commodity and resource markets in the sub-region.

Forrester Estates, owned by the von Pezoldts, an Austrian family, amounts to about 10 000 hectares of regions II and III in the Mvurwi district. The estate experienced significant disruptions before 2002, but was protected under a country-to-country agreement and continues to operate. The family also owns a controlling stake in Border Timbers Ltd, the Harare-listed forestry concern, that owns 50 000 ha of land on five estates in the Eastern highlands, all of which are still operating, despite varying degrees of disruption by local communities.

John Bredekamp, the sanctions buster and controversial businessman, moved back to Zimbabwe from the UK after being cited in the UN (2001) report into exploitation of resources in the DRC. He focused on strategic property investments rather than extensive land holdings. These include a string of safari lodges in Mozambique, South Africa and Zimbabwe.<sup>179</sup> Bredekamp retains close links to members of the ruling elite which he argues are purely for business purposes. His farm, Thetford Estate in the Mazowe valley, is listed, but un-invaded, and he has continued to invest in rose projects, fuel companies, wildlife and infrastructure.<sup>180</sup>

In other cases strategic partnerships emerged. Charles Davy, a professional hunting facilitator was a business partner of Webster Shamu (ZANU PF Minister) and has secured many of the prime hunting concessions through his company HHK safaris. Adaptive but controversial strategies were exhibited at various levels. A young white ex-farmer, sold his tractors bought construction equipment and subsequently contracted his bulldozers to raze shacks during Operation Murambatsvina. He justified this business on the grounds that:

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<sup>179</sup> These include luxury safari lodges such as Big Five on the Zambezi, Sanyati at Kariba, Clouds End at Mukuti and Margaruque and St Carolina Islands in Mozambique.

<sup>180</sup> Interview with Costa Pafitas, Thetford Estate, January 2005. Pafitas, Mugabe's former press secretary, is now Bredekamp's PR officer and did not deny proximity to key members of ZANU PF, but argued that BRECO's interests were business oriented, and nothing more.

this is Africa, you have to make a plan, and if that means doing business with guys that aren't very nice then so be it. It was cash up front no questions asked ... It's survival of the fittest my friend... (if) you want to live here, you must play the game.<sup>181</sup>

Also 'playing the game', in strategic ways, are domestic and international corporations. Large domestic corporate interests such as Tanganda Tea have adapted through management structures and shareholdings on the ZSE, often through investments by consortiums linked to the ruling party.<sup>182</sup> Under testing economic conditions, multinationals such as Anglo American are inadvertently cornered into keeping the economy afloat, just as many multinationals were during the 1970s (Hatendi 1987). Most of these interests have become involved in securing fuel and electricity supplies independently. Universal Leaf Tobacco (ULT) has been criticized for procuring fuel supplies for tobacco farmers to protect its interests within the country.<sup>183</sup> Standard Chartered Bank has been accused of bolstering the regime by securing a US\$80 million credit line.<sup>184</sup> The same ethical debates about international companies dealing with Rhodesian and South African regimes in the 1970s and 1980s have re-emerged. Within these debates are questions about whether or not there are differences between institutions trying to retain or salvage investments, and those moving into the vacuum opportunistically. South African investment house, Standard Bank is allegedly financing tobacco exports, whilst BNP Paribas, the French Investment Bank is financing fuel deals for Harare.

#### 1.4.4 Who's Getting What Land?

Land invasions were largely aimed at disenfranchising a group that had become politically threatening. Land allocations were ostensibly aimed at placating important client groups.

The allocation of land to A2 beneficiaries reveals much about the blueprint behind fast track. Behind the modalities of land allocations within an 'official' program run by the 'official' bureaucracies of various Lands Committees was an agenda to forge new land-based alliances. ZANU PF's attempts to recreate strategic alliances have been brazenly illustrated in other sectors. At a meeting in 2005, Elliot Manyika ( ZANU PF's political commissar) reminded leaders of the CZI (Confederation of Zimbabwe Industries) and ZCC (Zimbabwe Chamber of

<sup>181</sup> Telephone discussions with source who asked to remain anonymous, August 2005.

<sup>182</sup> For example Tanganda Tea Company and Cairns Foods have experienced notable share transfers since 2000, whilst the companies themselves have retained their operation and land.

<sup>183</sup> "Legal Battle Threatens Tobacco Sector Growth", *Oxford Analytica*, 23 June 2005.

<sup>184</sup> Michael Holman, "Should UK Banks do Business in Zimbabwe?", *The Times (UK)*, 1 November 2005.

Commerce) that seventy percent of Zimbabwe's listed companies were now in black hands, and that for this they owed the ruling party their allegiance.<sup>185</sup> On a related angle, calls for international investment from Libyan farmers and latterly the Chinese state farming company suggest that the allocation of land to landless Zimbabweans has been of less concern than allocating prime land to financially capable, but politically compliant groups.<sup>186</sup> It seems to have been more about changing the participants than changing the system.

The selective promotion of black entrepreneurial interests in the 1990s through empowerment was aimed at creating and bolstering supportive economic clout through compliant interest groups.<sup>187</sup> After 2000 the selectiveness of land allocations to A2 beneficiaries was a less subtle means of placating key groups and individuals. According to the Utete commission, 35 percent of land seized was allocated to A2 beneficiaries. Much of this was better land in terms of infrastructure, soil-types and locations, and the majority of A2 beneficiaries are connected to the regime in some way or other. In Matabeleland land allocations among key ruling party and security chiefs were also strategically decided. For example, many are along the course of the proposed Zambezi pipeline project.<sup>188</sup> The spoils of 'fast track' have gone disproportionately to members and supporters of the regime. Virtually every senior party official, army officer, police chief or CIO officer has secured an A2 farm. The war veteran leaders have similarly benefited from A2 farms, along with key individuals in the judiciary, the church and state media houses.<sup>189</sup>

Justice for Agriculture (JAG) began compiling a comprehensive list of A2 beneficiaries in 2002. The group has a clear agenda in exposing what they perceive to be blatant clientist politics, but as a JAG representative argued: "it is in everyone's interest to ensure that this list is as accurate as possible... the pattern of allocations is too blatant to warrant distortions... deliberate inaccuracies are unnecessary and would lose us credibility". When compared to my case study area and the government listings for Mashonaland Central the JAG list appears to be accurate.<sup>190</sup>

With time land allocations have become increasingly dominated by members of the security apparatus, particularly since Zimbabwe's withdrawal from the war in the DRC at the end of

<sup>185</sup> "ZANU PF summons Industry Bosses", *The Financial Gazette*, 13 October 2000.

<sup>186</sup> "Zimbabwe: China Turns Down Mugabe's Farm Offer", *ZimOnline*, 12 October 2005

<sup>187</sup> "We Prefer Indigenous Capitalism: President", *The Sunday Mail*, January 6, 1991.

<sup>188</sup> Njabulo Ncube, "Chefs in fresh land grab orgy in Mat North", *Financial Gazette*, 25 August 2005. This was supported in Email correspondence with Bill McKinney, August 2005.

<sup>189</sup> For example, Chief Justice Chidyausiku, Bishop Albert Kunonga, Ruben Barwe and Ibbo Mandaza have all secured prime farms.

<sup>190</sup> I compared a sample of farms from the JAG list of allocations with the official Government lists obtained from Bindura. I also compared land allocations in the case study area. For the most part, all three agree.



2002. John Nkomo compared the allocation of land to war veterans and members of the army with the ex- servicemen schemes after both World Wars, when white veterans were allocated farms. Within the survey area nearly half of the farm allocations have gone to members of the army, police or CIO (Selby 2006: Appendix I). These land takeovers were often the most violent and contentious. Moreover, the most underutilized land after fast-track appears to be that under the control of the highest profile A2 beneficiaries.<sup>191</sup> Leys (1959: 98) noted the prestige factor for which farmers held or aspired to land ownership during the colonial era and that prominent individuals often had farms alongside other occupations. Prestige has clearly been an important element of the recent farm access and allocation exercise, illustrated in the increasingly well-recognized concept of the ‘weekend braai farmer’.

The list of land beneficiaries on prime farms is telling, particularly in Mashonaland and especially Mashonaland Central. A ‘Confidential Addendum’ to the Utete report exposes a sample of multiple farm seizures by particular individuals.<sup>192</sup> Confidential files from the Bindura Lands Office in Mashonaland Central illustrate the significance of war veterans, members of the civil service and members of the ruling-party in allocating and benefiting from productive farms.<sup>193</sup> Governor Manyika retained the final say in virtually every A2 allocation. In this respect Mashonaland Central’s land allocations are said to suit his own political ambitions and alignment to the ‘Zezuru mafia’.<sup>194</sup> So whilst prime farms have been seized by or allocated to strategic beneficiaries, this has been on the basis of rewards for the past, but also with an eye to the future, in which members of the elite see themselves on one or other, or even both sides of an alliance between ‘new farmers’ and the state.

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<sup>191</sup> For example, three of the most disruptive takeovers of productive farms were by Irene Zindi (ZANU PF), Chriden Kanouruka (Presidential Guard) and Mr Ngwenya (Grace Mugabe’s Faith Healer). These are now among the most underutilised properties.

<sup>192</sup> Confidential Addendum to the Land Audit (2003). Among the most controversial revelations were Peter Chanetsa’s (Governor of Mashonaland West) connection to nine different farms, and Air Force Chief Perence Shiri’s multiple ownerships.

<sup>193</sup> A government official (anonymous) supplied me with confidential copies of “Updated Land Allocations” and “Farm Status Lists” for Mashonaland Central, as at July 2002. The Farm Status list details the name of the farm, the owner, details of the designation process and expiry dates and a column noting whether or not the farmer “resisted”. The land allocation list records details of the beneficiaries, their ID numbers and backgrounds, whether or not they are war veterans, their assessment score, whether they are likely to be small, medium or large scale, their farm allocation details and the status of the farm in question. The informant also gave me a copy of the official fast-track guidelines, which cite the Kangai principles as land identification criteria. Written in pencil on the form was the added criteria of “political and other reasons”, which he explained was aimed at racist farmers and MDC supporters.

<sup>194</sup> Discussions with Walker Gatse, Concession, October 2002; Discussions with Roy Jahni, Glendale, October 2002.

## **1.5 CONCLUSION**

The period between 2000 and 2005 has been dominated by a systematic pattern of aggressive political manoeuvres by ZANU PF in its bid for political survival, and attempts to restore its political hegemony. The resulting economic and social implosion has been interpreted in different ways. Proponents of the regime see it as righting historical wrongs with predictable costs, whilst others argue that it has been a short-sighted political tactic by an increasingly desperate regime. Mugabe has succeeded in rekindling the heady sentiments of radical nationalism, which have clouded the political terrain. Against the historical injustices of the Rhodesian settler era, these sentiments are understandable, but against the government apathy, lost opportunities and ruling party arrogance since 1980, the political opportunism is obvious.

My key objective in this paper has been to explore the collapse of the white farming sector in the face of orchestrated land invasions. The breakdown of the white farming sector occurred predominantly along the lines of historical divisions. The strategies of individuals, communities and institutions exhibited continuities from previous eras. Under pressure, the organisational power of the farmers diminished considerably and was reflected in their inability to broker a compromise with the relevant powers and their struggle to remain united against clear efforts to divide them. As institutional ineffectiveness mounted, so farmers resorted to community solidarity and strategies to counter the offensive, as they had initially done during the war years. As communities fragmented so the strategies of remaining farmers became increasingly disjointed, independent, and uncertain. By 2005 the remnants of the white farming sector were fragmented and powerless. Hardly a vestige of the alliance remained. White farmer production, economic contributions, financial clout and institutional effectiveness had been eliminated. Communication channels with the power brokers were closed and alternative lobbying routes such as the media, civil society, the international community and the donors were equally isolated by ZANU PF.

Systematic repression of the MDC and its supporters and the purge of civil and state institutions showed that land invasions and elimination of the white farming sector were only one element of a wider political contest, rather than the central crux of the crisis as Mugabe has portrayed it. The ruling party has cleverly shrouded its broader agenda beneath legitimate historical grievances over land, and within wider contemporary allegations of neo-imperialism.

The pace and complexity of events since 2000 renders more comprehensive assessment impossible at this stage, but emphasises the importance of further research. The increasing intolerance, authoritarianism and militarisation of the regime illustrates how power is increasingly concentrated in the hands of fewer individuals but is also increasingly fragile as the spoils, and the ability to enjoy those spoils, diminish. The political, economic and social costs of ZANU PF's strategies are clear, and the impacts are deep rooted with long-term consequences.

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