

rhodesian history

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G. LIESEGANG

Aspects of Gaza Nguni history

B. A. KOSMIN

Asian trading patterns

M. E. LEE

Responsible Government movement

H. I. WETHERELL

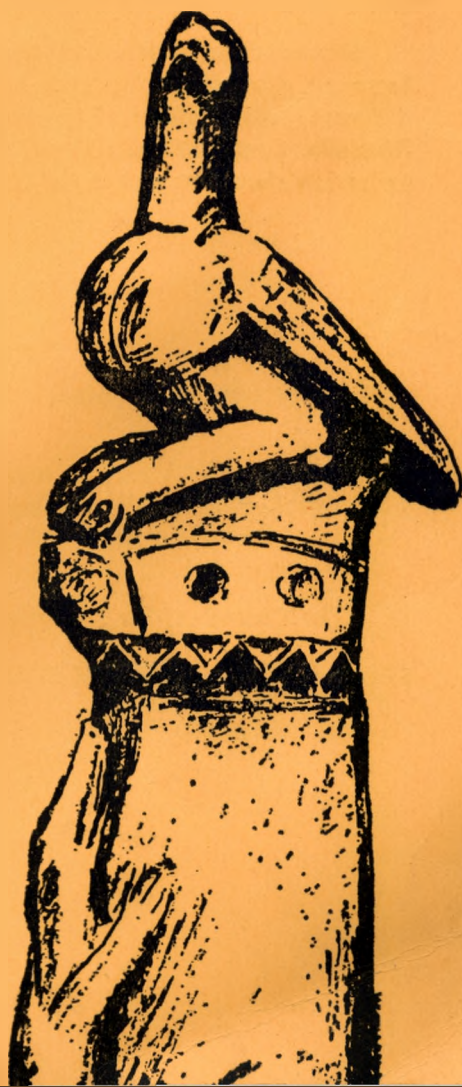
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RHODESIAN HISTORY

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THE ORIGINS OF THE RHODESIAN RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT MOVEMENT

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Johannesburg

IN 1923 SOUTHERN RHODESIA, a country with a population of 33 000 Whites and approximately 1 000 000 Africans, gained Responsible Government. This was a great achievement for the white settlers, and an event of considerable significance for the future of the whole country. It was achieved in the face of opposition from the Colonial Office, the existing government of the British South Africa Company, and the South African government; for it had generally been supposed from the earliest date of white settlement that the country's future would be linked with that of South Africa. The hostility that developed in Southern Rhodesia towards such a course was due to the rise of Afrikaner nationalism, and was encouraged by the B.S.A. Company, which was reluctant to relinquish the reins of administration before it had achieved its economic aims; the Company therefore persuaded the Colonial Office to consent to the alternative of Responsible Government, which had been first proposed by the settlers themselves, and had been incorporated in the terms of the Supplemental Charter of 1915.¹ Had the demand for this form of government been delayed, it is possible that it might have been subject to the later change in Colonial Office thinking towards its colonies in terms of the Devonshire Declaration and Passfield Memorandum, in view of the small number of white settlers in the country; and such a development would in turn have made it more likely that the country would have joined the Union of South Africa.

It is therefore essential to analyse the reasons for the demand for a change of government earlier than the expected 1924, and to examine the political movements that culminated in the vote for Responsible Government in 1922. Typically, the sequence of events in Rhodesia has been seen as a purely natural political development of a British colony, from gaining the franchise to achieving self-rule; but this simplifies the issues involved, and ignores the vital factor of the demands of the settlers themselves. For their dissatisfaction with existing conditions and the rule of the B.S.A. Company was not merely the expression of 'British' instincts, but rather the result of internal conflicts over economic conditions. Indeed without these conflicts, fear of Afrikaner

¹ Great Britain, *British South Africa Company. Supplemental Charter . . . 13th March, 1915* [Cd 7970], (HC 1914-16, xlv, 571).

nationalism might simply have resulted in a desire to maintain the *status quo* of Company rule.

The political role of the settlers has usually been overlooked or underestimated. The granting of the franchise to qualified persons in 1898 was in fact the outcome of a series of demands, public meetings, and representations to Rhodes for the vote, which had been ignored before 1896. The circumstances after the risings of 1896-7, and especially the possible revocation of the Charter, caused Rhodes to propose settler representation in a Legislative Council to the Colonial Office, whose assent can be taken as recognition that such a body and the appointment of a local Imperial officer, the Resident Commissioner, would provide a salutary check on the Company's government. The increases in the number of elective seats in the Council in 1902, 1907 and 1912 were similarly responses to popular demand, concessions granted in order to allay discontent, rather than gratuitously offered by the Company.² A demand for the termination of the Company's administration was defeated in the elections of 1914; but in the elections of 1920, the success of the candidates supporting Responsible Government led to the referendum of 1922, and an earlier end to Company rule than might otherwise have been expected in 1924 or even later.³

These political demands and achievements can only be understood by reference to the economic situation in the country. The type of government established in Southern Rhodesia inhibited a normal development of political parties, and so created a situation whereby pressure groups wielded considerable political power as a result of their direct representation in the Legislature (see Table I). This led to conflict between the groups, and the failure of the white farming community to achieve what it considered a satisfactory representation had far-reaching repercussions. The Charter given to the B.S.A. Company in 1889 vested in the Company the right of administering the territory it acquired in central Africa for an initial period of 25 years, after which such rights were renewable for ten year periods. There was no serious challenge to this right of administration until the end of the first period in 1914, when an attempt by the settlers to oppose its renewal failed. The 1915 Order in Council therefore renewed Charter administration for another ten years; but, in recognition of the demand

² See L.H. Gann, *A History of Southern Rhodesia* (London, Chatto & Windus, 1965), ch.6. M.E. Lee, 'Politics and Pressure Groups in S. Rhodesia, 1898-1923' (Univ. of London, unpubl. Ph.D. thesis, 1974), ch.2-4, 6.

³ The prospect of continued Chartered administration after 1924 was considered by the Company; see the British South Africa Company, 'Memorandum by Mr. H. Wilson Fox containing Notes and Information concerning Land Policy . . .' (Strictly private and confidential; printed for the personal use of the Directors, 1912), 9-17.

for self-rule by a substantial minority of voters,⁴ it allowed for an earlier termination of Company's administration in favour of Responsible Government should it be requested by an absolute majority in the Council. Company rule, however, was efficient, and there was no reason to suppose that it would not continue for the full ten-year period. That this did not occur resulted from the under-representation of farming interests in the Legislature; and the Rhodesian Responsible Government Party which replaced the Chartered Company as the country's government in October 1923 originated as a farmers' party. Although the achievement of self-government has previously been studied in considerable detail, the economic and political development culminating in the formation of this party has been neglected. The Company lost its position as a result of its failure to adequately protect and represent the interests of all sectors of the electorate.⁵

Table I
SECTOR REPRESENTATION IN THE
LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL 1899-1923*

Year	Mining		Agriculture		Commerce	Political	Labour
	Company	Smallworker	Company	Private			
1899-1902	2				(1)	2	
1902	2 (1)					2	
1903-5	3		1	1	1	1	
1905-8	2	1 (1)	1	1	1	1	
1908-11	1 (1)	1 (2)		3	(1)	2	
1911-14	3 (1)	1		2	(1)	1	
1914-15	5 (1)	2	1	2	1 (1)	1	
1915-20	6 (1)	1		3	1 (1)	1	
1920-3	(2)	(1)		(6)	(2)	13	3
TOTALS	24 (7)	6 (4)	3	12 (6)	4 (7)	24	3

* Representatives who stood on a political platform rather than as members of the sector to which they belonged are indicated in brackets; so also are representatives with divided interests.

The settler community (13 000 in 1899 and 33 000 in 1923) was divided into five major categories (Table II), of which the comparatively small agricultural and mining groups were to develop into the major political factions. The white labour class, of insignificant

⁴ Of the 5 057 effective votes cast, 2 140 were in favour of termination of Company rule, and 1 883 in favour of Responsible Government (calculated from F.M.G. Willson, *Source Book of Parliamentary Elections and Referenda in Southern Rhodesia 1898-1962* (Salisbury, Univ. Coll. of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, 1963), 107-9).

⁵ As is shown by B.A. Kosmin, 'Ethnic groups and the qualified franchise in Southern Rhodesia 1898-1922', *Rhodesian History* (forthcoming), the electorate was almost entirely white; and the large African majority in the country did not expect, as a defeated people, to participate in their conquerors' government, and were not expected by it to play a positive role in public affairs.

political account before the First World War, was to contribute substantially to the course of events in 1920 and 1922. The mining sector, the most influential in 1899, had declined in numerical and political significance by 1923, in contrast to the agricultural community, which by 1923 formed the largest single group in the electorate.

*Table II*⁶
ANALYSIS OF THE 1899 VOTERS ROLL

<i>Occupation</i>	<i>Number</i>
Industrial (including railwaymen, artisans and professional men)	1 638
Civil Service /Police	953
Commerce	952
Mining	675
Agriculture (including transport riders, market gardeners, etc.)	389
TOTAL	4 607

Popular discontent before 1907 was led usually by members of the commercial community, who were most affected by the economic depressions during which political factions were formed to oppose Company rule and demand political and financial concessions. They were supported by members of the white farming population, which was, however, extremely small and disunited before 1904. The formation of the Rhodesia Agricultural Union (R.A.U.) in 1904 lent strength to farming demands from this date, and from 1907, political agitation was increasingly led by representatives of farming organisations. The settlers, however, were by no means united against the Company. The political demands made first by the commercial sector and later by farming representatives were invariably opposed by the capitalist mining sector. Although the Chambers of Mines opposed the commercially-led Abrogation of the Charter movements of 1902, 1904 and 1906 as well as the Responsible Government movement of 1914 and 1920, conflict between mining and farming interests was the more intense and dominated events in the country once coherent expression of farming grievances was formulated in opposition to the privileged economic position of mining groups. The factions formed throughout the period were composed largely of members from one or other of these main sectors.

Since the expectation of both Company and settlers in the 1890s had been that Rhodesia's future would be based on the mining industry, this sector was favoured by legislation and other benefits at the expense of the rest of the community. Mining representatives in the

⁶ [*The*] *Bul[awayo] Chron[icle]*, 22 and 29 Apr. 1899.

Legislature after 1898 ensured the continuation of their privileged status, and the weight of this representation reflected the awareness of the mining bodies of the need to protect their position from challenges and threats to their acquired rights; this was particularly so after 1903, when it was becoming apparent that the premise on which the policy of the Administration was based, was false: the gold resources of the country were proving inadequate as a foundation for a permanent policy of favouring mining capitalist companies in order to promote general development and settlement. Somewhat reluctantly, in view of the close links that existed between mining capitalists and the B.S.A. Company, the Administration began to encourage the growth of the farming industry from 1904.

Previous political agitation had been rooted in general economic conditions, the failure to find gold in Mashonaland in the 1890s, the post South African War depression of 1902, and the collapse of confidence in the London market in 1902-3. It had been in the Company's interest to restore market faith in the country by alleviating local discontent as far as possible. Amelioration of the royalty system satisfied the mining interests and small-workers; reductions in railway rates restored the goodwill of the commercial classes.⁷ The majority of the settlers had no other acute objections to Company rule, and such concessions were followed by the collapse of factions formed to oppose it. It was less easy, almost impossible, however, to satisfy the demands made by farmers. The position established by the mining industry had been primarily at the expense of landowners. Although several different forms of land title existed, all were subject to reservations and restrictions imposed by the mining laws. The Mines and Minerals Ordinance (No. 1 of 1895) gave holders of prospecting licences the right to prospect and search for minerals on any government or private land subject to a mineral reservation. Prospectors had the right of free grazing for 20 draught animals, provided no horned cattle were taken upon occupied land without the consent of the occupier; the right to take for domestic use or for mining purposes indigenous timber, unless otherwise reserved by a Mining Commissioner, on payment to the owner of the land such price as fixed by regulation; and the right of taking free of charge water required for domestic use from any land open to prospecting.⁸ All ground was in fact open to prospecting unless notice was given by the government of reservation against pegging. The only areas restricted from pegging were land within 200 yards of any inhabited house, land under actual cultivation, or areas set aside for townships, building purposes, roads or dams.

⁷ Mines and Minerals Ordinance (No. 19 of 1903), sections 40-5; RC/2/4/5 (Resident Commissioner: Out Letters: High Commissioner for South Africa, Affairs in Southern Rhodesia: 22 Sept. 1904 - 25 Nov. 1905), Res[ident] Com[missioner] to High Com., 10 Jan. 1905.

⁸ The terms and conditions of Prospecting Licences, Mining Claims and Land Title can be found in the *Government Gazette* and the Statute Law of Southern Rhodesia, but they are conveniently summarised in H. Bertin, *Land Titles in Southern Rhodesia* (Salisbury, Argus [1912]).

The holder of a registered block of claims had the right of grazing upon land open to prospecting for such draught animals, including horned cattle, as were necessary for the working of his location, upon payment to the occupier of 1s. per head per month; and the same right to timber and water, subject to the same conditions, as possessed by the holder of a prospecting licence. If necessary, and requested by the occupier, he would have to fence off an area sufficient for the grazing of his stock, the occupier to pay half the costs.

Of the actual land titles, the Victoria Agreement Title, issued in Matabeleland to members of the 1893 columns, gave the proprietor of the surface half of any claim licences or rents that accrued to the Company from any registered mining location or site, the holder of which had the right to cut any timber for bona fide mining or domestic uses, on payment according to the tariff for timber on private ground. All other land titles contained a full reservation of minerals, mineral oils and precious stones to the Company. The title deed of Pioneer Grants entailed the loss, without compensation, of any portion of the land covered by a registered mining location or site, the holder of which had the exclusive right to cut any indigenous timber on land covered by his location or site. Permits of Occupation, in common use after 1900 for long-term purchase of land, contained clauses debarring tenants from granting store sites and from carrying on trade without permission of the Company. Sale or removal of indigenous wood was also prohibited, although tenants were entitled to cut such wood as they required for building, fencing and domestic purposes.

The most controversial title, however, was that applied to land on the Gold Belt, and this was to be the main source of conflict between the mining and farming communities. In the 1890s the generally accepted view was that mining and farming could not thrive side by side, and there had been a universal prohibition against the selection of land on the Gold Belt (once such areas were known — they were never fully defined), although it was possible to lease such land. By the early 1900s much of the best land away from the Gold Belt had been alienated, and there was therefore a demand for farms on the Gold Belt, which contained rich soils suitable for agriculture. Moreover, as farming was not generally on a commercial basis before 1906, nearby mines provided a supplementary means of income in the form of sales of timber, transport riding or trading. In 1905 the B.S.A. Company Board approved the granting of title to land on the Gold Belt, with substantial reservations in favour of the miner, including the complete reservation of timber and water, in addition to the clauses of the Permit of Occupation debarring trade and the granting of store sites.

In addition to the disabilities inflicted by land titles and the mining laws, the vast acreages alienated to mining companies in return

for their investments in the country⁹ were often sited conveniently close to the main centres, and were held as a long-term investment, thus restricting the availability of farming land and access to markets. As well as these disadvantages resulting from the Company's mining policy, farming suffered from the successful response of the African peasantry to demands for produce after 1890.¹⁰ Despite increasing numbers of active white farmers after the turn of the century,¹¹ African and Asian producers continued to dominate the local market for some years, and forced settlers to turn to crops more suitable for export, such as tobacco and cotton, for which, however, there were at first no marketing facilities. Shortages of labour resulted from the inability of the peasantry to meet the financial demands made of them by the Administration by means other than sale of labour; this increased the difficulties of white farmers, who blamed the Company for its inability to secure labour supplies.¹² The doubly disadvantageous position of white farmers, thwarted by miners and Africans, was on both counts thought to be attributable to Company policy.

The promotion of land settlement by the Company from 1904 resulted in increased numbers of white farmers, and assisted the development of farming associations and the formation of the R.A.U., but did not otherwise materially affect the situation. Failure to aid farming development was partly a result of the weak financial position of the Company; administrative officials were instructed to restrict expenditure in every possible way in 1904.¹³ However, the Company attempted to overcome its financial problems and promote land settlement by the introduction of a Loan Ordinance (No. 14) in 1905, by which a loan of £250 000 could be raised from the public for the assistance of agriculture, at no expense to the Company's shareholders. Although the objects of the ordinance were approved by the settlers, there was some objection to the fact that the country was expected to finance the

⁹ Willoughby's Company, for example, was granted 600 000 acres in return for expenditure of £30 000 within three years, CT/1/11/2/3 (Cape Town (Kimberley) Office: In Letters and Correspondence: London Office: Mashonaland: Land Settlement, 19 Oct. 1891 - 22 Nov. 1894), London Office to Cape Town Office, 6 May 1892 covering copy Memorandum, 4 May 1892. By 1896 some nine million acres had been alienated.

¹⁰ I.R. Phimister, 'Peasant production and underdevelopment in Southern Rhodesia 1890-1914', *African Affairs* (1974), 73, 217-28.

¹¹ The number of farms being worked in 1903 was 317, 'Digest of Agricultural Returns', *The Rhodesian Agricultural Journal* (1903-4), 1, 97; by 1905 it had risen to 948, Southern Rhodesia, *Report on the Department of Agriculture for the Year Ended 31st March, 1905* (Sessional Papers, 1905), 1. The number of Whites engaged in agriculture similarly went up from 879 in 1904 to 2 067 by 1911, Southern Rhodesia, *Report of the Director of Census . . . 1911* (Sessional Papers, A7, 1912), 20.

¹² In 1901 the Administration, on Colonial Office instructions, ordered Native Commissioners to stop their assistance in labour recruiting, [*The*] *Rh[odesia] Her[ald]*, 26 Oct. and 9 Nov. 1901.

¹³ T/2/2/3 (Treasury: In Letters and Correspondence: Administrator, 4 Jan. 1899 - 2 Dec. 1904), Administrator to Treasurer, 2 Apr. 1904.

scheme; it was felt that the Company was evading its responsibilities under the Charter to provide for good government; and the Colonial Office reacted similarly and disallowed the Ordinance on the grounds that the Treasury could not allow the creation of a public debt with a charge on the revenue of Rhodesia whilst the Company remained responsible for finances.¹⁴

Limited practical assistance was therefore given to farmers. The Experimental Station, promised in 1903 and vital for agricultural progress, proved a disappointment; only 200 acres and the small sum of £500 was provided for its establishment. The appointment of an officer to assist prospective farmers with information regarding land available for sale was the only concession to land settlement, despite an advertising campaign in England to promote immigration. The budget for the Agricultural Department was reduced in 1904, and again in 1905 to a sum of £6 015, of which over half, £3 860, was administrative. In 1905 the small grant to the Rhodesia Agricultural Union was withdrawn, although it was reinstated later. In 1906 the young tobacco industry was aided by the construction of a warehouse, established on a commercial basis, but the Administration then proposed the imposition of a tax on locally manufactured tobacco, which was dropped after strong opposition from the R.A.U.¹⁵

Thus, despite the increased numbers of farmers, the industry was not a prosperous one; in 1906 the country was still importing maize to the value of £20 221, and the Secretary for Agriculture pointed out that even the land companies who were engaged in farming were in every instance making a loss.¹⁶ The publication of the *Rhodesian Agricultural Journal* by the government from 1903 was of assistance in improving methods of cultivation, but in the main, government aid to agriculture was limited to loans for fencing and the purchase of stock,¹⁷ and the exemption of farmers from the Labour Fees Ordinance (No.11 of 1906) which imposed a labour tax of 1s. per head per month on labourers supplied by the Rhodesian Native Labour Bureau. No real effort, however, was made to overcome the main farming grievances in regard to land titles and the mining laws, and only minor amendments were made after a conference between miners and farmers in 1904.

¹⁴ Southern Rhodesia, *Debates [in the Legislative Council]...1905* (London . R. Cary [1905]), 26-7 Apr., 3, 6-8; P[ublic]R[ecord]O[ffice], C[olonial]O[ffice] 879/86 [Confidential Print, hereafter cited as African (South)], 763/267, C.O. to B.S.A. Co., 25 Sept. 1905; African (South), 802/15, C.O. to B.S.A. Co., 5 Feb. 1906.

¹⁵ *Debates 1904*, 6 June, 32-3. R[hodesia] A[gricultural] U[nion], *Report of Proceedings at . . . Congress . . . 1905* ([Salisbury] the Union [1905]), 56; R.A.U. *The Farmers' Handbook containing Report of Proceedings at . . . Congress . . . 1906* ([Salisbury] the Union [1906]), 68-9, 94, 105.

¹⁶ *Report on the Department of Agriculture for the Year Ended 31st March, 1905*, 23.

¹⁷ RC/3/7/12 (Resident Commissioner: Correspondence: High Commissioner for South Africa, Main Series: 1906), 212, Admin. to High Com., 18 Feb. 1907.

Increased numerical strength, however, meant a louder voice for farming spokesmen from this date; the policy of the Agricultural Union reflected the prevailing dissatisfaction with the *status quo* in its constant attempts to secure amendment of the mining law. Discontent was not limited to the farming community, and by the time the High Commissioner visited the territory in October 1906 there was a widespread demand for an investigation into past and present administration, for a separation of commercial from administrative revenue and for the elimination of the commercial interest from public affairs. A resolution demanding representative government under the Crown found popular support; and representatives from the various public bodies made demands for reforms, including a request for improved title to land and water from the farming associations.¹⁸ As a result, the Company decided to send out a commission of Directors to investigate the situation.

The Directors did not visit Rhodesia until July 1907; as a result political discontent increased. Lord Selborne's Memorandum on South African federation, in which he included a discussion on the future prospects of Rhodesia, revived the issue of federation. Demands were made for immediate representative government and eventual unification with South Africa.¹⁹ This was opposed by Colonel Raleigh Grey, a leading figure in the Salisbury Chamber of Mines and a close associate of the Directors, who warned the Company of the strength of the movement. Depression had given way to prosperity in Rhodesia, and he warned that the country was no longer dependent on the Company, which should institute more liberal and popular methods in place of the 'silent and cast-iron form of government here'. If this was not done, 'the result will inevitably be that the Chartered Company will be a failure administratively and politically, and you are quite sharp enough to know what it will be commercially if things are hurried in this way'.²⁰ In May 1907 Grey formed a 'Mashonaland Progressive Association' to advocate 'representative government under the Chartered Company',²¹ in opposition to the Crown Colony government proposed by the Constitutional League, which had been formed a week earlier. However, hostility to the Company increased when the visit of the Directors was preceded by the announcement that the primary purpose of the trip was not the redress of grievances, but the development of their commercial interests.²² In fact the thirteen-week visit of the Directors resulted in substantial concessions. The elected members were to be given a majority by the reduction of nominated

¹⁸ *Rh. Her.*, 12 Oct. 1906.

¹⁹ *Bul. Chron.*, 20 Apr. 1907.

²⁰ The British South Africa Company, 'Memorandum by Mr H. Wilson Fox on the Position, Policy and Prospects of the Company including an Investigation of the Company's Title to Land in Rhodesia' (Strictly private and confidential, printed for the information of the Board; for the personal use of Directors, 1907), 14, Grey to H. Wilson Fox, 3 Mar. 1907.

²¹ *Rh. Her.*, 13 May 1907.

²² *Bul. Chron.*, 1 June 1907.

members in the Council from seven to five.²³ The validity of the farmers' complaints was recognised by the Directors, who promised to simplify land titles. However, the Company found it difficult to give expression to this sympathy in practical form by reversing the earlier trends in legislation.

Although the Directors had promised a reform of the land titles, this was to be based on agreement between the mining and farming communities. A series of meetings was therefore held, and in February 1908 a special meeting of the Agricultural Union was called to discuss the terms and alterations required by farmers. The resolutions passed at this meeting were used as a basis for discussion at a conference in March between all major mining and farming institutions. The representatives of the Rhodesia Chamber of Mines (Bulawayo) proved most conciliatory, partly because Gold Belt titles were not issued in Matabeleland where the Victoria Agreement title was more common, but also as it represented principally the large capitalist companies, who were less affected by the small financial sacrifices that were entailed by concessions. The Salisbury Chamber of Mines and the Smallworkers Associations, however, fought each proposal. The farmers' suggestions were modified, and the conference recognised the landowners' inherent right to timber, grazing and water. Permission was to be sought from owners of land for grazing, and a fee of 1s. per head of horned stock per month was agreed. Land users were entitled to the water, and terms for the use of 'surplus' water by the miners were to be agreed, or submitted to a Water Board for decision by the government. No agreement was reached on terms for timber.²⁴

The bulk of these provisions were incorporated in an amendment of the Mines and Minerals Ordinance (No.19 of 1903), the Mining Law Amendment Ordinance (No.15 of 1908); but the mining representatives, Grey and Coghlan in particular, took the opportunity of opposing the Ordinance on the grounds that the Administration had made alterations to the agreed terms. These were in fact minor; the only addition of importance was that requiring miners to pay for expropriation of farms should no agreement be reached on water. Coghlan condemned the Ordinance. It made 'for uncertainty, it interfered with vested rights ... a measure which was not directly in the interests of the miner, nor the ultimate interests of the farmer'.²⁵ Grey felt that consideration had been given entirely to the landowner. Although the Ordinance was passed, miners' rights to grazing, water and wood on the Gold Belt

²³ Wilson Fox was later to admit that this concession was not only in advance of what the majority of the settlers had asked for, but also, because of 'faulty drafting', went 'beyond what the Company intended to give', 'Memorandum by Mr H. Wilson Fox on Constitutional, Political, Financial and Other Questions concerning Rhodesia' (Strictly private and confidential; printed for the information of the Board, 1912), 89.

²⁴ *Bul. Chron.*, 13 Mar. 1908.

²⁵ *Debates, 1908*, 19 June, 39-53; 22 June, 54-9.

were confirmed, and it was acknowledged that existing claims and licences were to continue in their rights. Most of the advantages won by the farmers were thus negated; farmers were not satisfied with the Ordinance and objected especially to the continued issue and terms of Gold Belt titles.²⁶ Resentment was felt against the Company, which had failed to ensure full implementation of the decisions of the conference, and this resentment increased with the labour problems experienced by farmers after 1909.

In fact the Company was obliged to tread warily between the two groups, introducing reform at the request of the farmers, later compromising and reducing the concessions at the demand of the miners; for despite the failure to find a 'second Rand', Rhodesia continued to be dependent on gold revenue for its principal income and could not afford to discourage mining development and investment — a situation which mining groups warned would result from any interference with their 'title'. Any amelioration of farming grievances was therefore necessarily slow, prolonging the issue past 1923. The farmers resented the refusal of the mining industry to meet their demands, but in fact the majority of miners worked on a margin of profitability as low as that of most farmers; each concession represented possible financial loss. Hostility far greater than would otherwise have existed between the two groups was created, which in itself contributed to the failure of attempts to reconcile their interests. The extremism bred by this situation would not permit of compromise.

The Company's efforts to attract settlers and promote agriculture in order to realise its land assets meant that its attitude towards the agricultural community's other demands after 1908 were usually sympathetically met. A good example of this was the promulgation in 1910 of the Private Locations Ordinance (No.14 of 1908). This measure was intended to prevent the large land companies' practice of 'Kaffir-farming', the extracting of rent from African tenants on their property, which returned a satisfactory revenue without any effort towards development but meant that land and labour coveted by neighbouring farmers was unavailable. However, the failure of the Company to satisfy farming demands in regard to title and mining rights resulted in the extension of hostility to the government. The farmers considered it had not only prepared the ground for the conflict, but also fostered it by its continued alliance with the influential, London-based mining companies, in support of capitalist development and its own and other companies' interests, at the apparent expense and neglect of the individual landowner and settler. A policy of concessions to companies, high railway rates, and slow land settlement were thought to be the natural attributes of a commercial administration, the first consideration of

²⁶ The Mines Department, backed by miners, continued to issue Gold Belt titles, whereas the intention of the government had been to allow the department to refuse applications altogether where clashes with mining interests were likely, the remainder to have full title, S480/59B (Dep. of Mines, Correspondence, 1912-50; *Farmers versus Miners, Disputes, 1923-30*), Downie to Premier, 7 Jan. 1929.

which had to be their shareholders. Demands were made for the reversal of such policies, for increased expenditure on public works, and for government assistance in the recruitment of labour and restriction of African competition. To be just to the Company, it attempted to implement aspects of this programme at various times, especially as demand for land would raise the price and improve returns from its investment not only in land but in the railways,²⁷ but such policies were not necessarily effective,²⁸ and failed to placate the farmers and other critics. Concessions were invariably 'too little and too late'.

Failure in attempts to amend the mining legislation satisfactorily resulted in the reflection of discontent in a purely political form, for a change of government was considered necessary in order to effect the desired reforms. Before the war, political movements had been short-lived, terminating with concessions from the Company, or a general improvement in economic conditions. The more enduring conflict that arose between miners and farmers after the emergence of a powerful farming organisation in 1904 resulted in a more deep-rooted political discontent which found expression first in the Rhodesian League of 1912, and later in the Responsible Government Association.

It was to be expected that the mining interests would oppose movements antagonistic to continuation of Chartered rule, since a premature termination of the Company government, which, after the tumultuous 1890s, had proved stable and conducive to investment, endangered their own existence and profits. In particular a government controlled by politically inexperienced settlers favouring the farming industry was to be avoided for fear of financial mismanagement, exorbitant taxation of companies and termination of existing benefits such as the timber and grazing rights. Political movements prior to 1907 were overcome largely by Company policy, but it had been aided by the mining interests, either by direct opposition from the Chamber of Mines, or by the infiltration of the movements by their members, who exercised a moderating restraint. The tactics of Colonel Grey were equally effective; the moderate parties he formed tended to attract support from, and thus undermine, the more radical groups. The opposition offered to subsequent farming movements, therefore, was not new, although the farmers represented a more direct challenge to mining interests as well as to Company rule.

By 1911, the rapid increase in the white farming community combined with an acute labour shortage to result in the most serious political crisis faced by the Company to date, the refusal of farmers to pay a

²⁷ The British South Africa Company, 'Memorandum by Mr. H. Wilson Fox on Problems of Development and Policy . . .' (Strictly private and confidential; printed for the information of the Board; for the personal use of the Directors, 1910), 36-7.

²⁸ R. Hodder-Williams, 'The British South Africa Company in Marandellas: Some extra-institutional constraints', *Rhodesian History* (1971), 2, 39-64.

labour tax. The increased interest in tobacco contributed to a deteriorating labour situation for a large labour force was required for this crop.²⁹ The Labour Bureau established in 1906 was the most effective the country had known, but since farmers had objected to the monthly tax on labour employed through the Bureau, they had not participated in the scheme, despite the fact that the Bureau agreed in 1907 to provide farmers with ten per cent of their recruits. By June 1908 the Mashonaland farmers were complaining that the activities of the Bureau had diverted their voluntary supply of labour, and the R.A.U. decided to make its own recruiting arrangements in Nyasaland. The success of this endeavour united the white farmers: the Bulawayo Landowners and Farmers Association joined the Union in 1909, since labour was supplied for a wage of 10s. per 30 working days compared with the 15s. wage required by the Bureau.³⁰ However, the hostility of the Bureau to the independent recruiting activities of the R.A.U. resulted in the ultimate failure of the scheme, and the Union 'was practically forced by the Administration into the Bureau' in 1910, although they did manage to secure more favourable terms than those pertaining to mines.³¹

Late in 1910, the Bureau's financial difficulties resulted in a proposal for the reformation of the Bureau as a Joint Stock Company with capital subscribed in England, but with continued assistance from the labour tax on employees. The financial crisis was partly a result of inherited liabilities, exacerbated by the decision of the Nyasaland administration to end the Bureau's recruiting operations there as a result of the high death rate prevailing on Rhodesian mines. An acute shortage of labour resulted, and caused the discouragement of prospective settlers and considerable losses in the harvesting of crops.³² The farming community gave its reluctant support to an Ordinance constituting the reformed Native Labour Bureau in May 1911, but became indignant when a special session of the Legislative Council was called in December to introduce a new Labour Fees Ordinance by which payment of the 1s. monthly tax was made compulsory on all employers, regardless of whether or not labour was obtained from the Bureau. Despite heated opposition from the R.A.U., the Ordinance was passed. The single farming representative in the Legislature had initially opposed it, but his conversion was secured by the Administration's argument that this was essential to provide adequate financial support to an organisation which would ensure a sufficient labour supply.³³ The majority of farmers, however, particularly in areas which did not rely on a labour force

²⁹ Exports of tobacco increased from £2 892 in 1906 to £27 028 in 1910.

³⁰ R.A.U., *Farmers' Handbook 1908-9* ([Salisbury] the Union [1909]), 'Report of Proceedings of Annual Conference 1909', The President's Address, 233.

³¹ R.A.U., *Farmers' Handbook: Report of Congress . . . 1911* ([Salisbury] the Union [1911]), 4-6. Capitation fees to farmers were £1.10s. as against the normal £4.10s.

³² Southern Rhodesia, *Annual Report of the Director of Agriculture for the Year Ended 31st December . . . 1911* (Sessional Papers, A5, 1912), 7.

³³ *Debates . . . 11th to 20th December, 1911*, 13-14 Dec., 44-80, 82-93.

supplied by the Bureau, strongly resented this measure which resulted, it was felt, from their lack of representation in the Council.

A Defence Committee organised farmers into a 'passive resistance' movement, and an increasing number refused to pay the tax.³⁴ This obliged the Administration to reconsider its policy of prosecuting defaulters and resulted in a request to the Colonial Secretary in May to disallow the Ordinance. However, considerable damage had already been done to the relations between farmers and government, not least by the Administrator's threat to use force to exact payment.³⁵ The R.A.U. made its first entrance into the political field during this period, with a demand for representative government under the Crown, and a new constitution based on the Transvaal or Lyttelton constitution of 1905.³⁶ The Administrator recognised that in part the movement resulted from inadequate representation of rural areas, and introduced proposals for redistribution and an increase in elective seats. The strife and rural unrest had brought home to the Company its reliance on the co-operation of the settlers not only for continued progress but for continuation of Chartered rule. Concessions were made to the farming community in an attempt to win its sympathy, and the farmers resumed their privileged position of not paying the tax, while continuing to pay reduced capitation fees.³⁷

The Passive Resistance movement was followed by the formation of the Rhodesian League, a party dedicated to ending Company rule with the termination of the first period of the Charter in 1914. The R.A.U.'s proposals had stimulated consideration of the possible political changes in 1914, and the League was formed in Bulawayo in May 1912 by men largely unconnected with the farming sector.³⁸ However, within a short period, it was adopted as a more adequate outlet for political views by members of the R.A.U., and the majority of the signatories of the League's Manifesto of November were farmers.³⁹ The

³⁴ See correspondence in T/2/29/47 (Treasury: In Letters and Correspondence: Subject Files: Labour Tax Ordinance 1911, 16 Sept. 1911 - 1 July 1912); of approximately 4 500 employers liable, 1 600 refused to pay in January 1912 and this figure increased to 1 800 by February. See generally, I. Henderson, 'White populism in Southern Rhodesia', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* (1972), 14, 387-99.

³⁵ *Ibid.*; P.R.O. C.O.417 (Original Correspondence, African South), 510/8363, Minute by Sir John Anderson, 19 Mar. 1912.

³⁶ R.A.U., *Report of Proceedings, Ninth Annual Congress . . . 1912* ([Salisbury], the Union, [1912]), 101.

³⁷ 'Memorandum by Mr. H. Wilson Fox on Constitutional . . . and Other Questions . . .', 246.

³⁸ *Bul. Chron.*, 10 May 1912.

³⁹ See list of signatures in Historical Manuscripts Collection, RH7/1/1 (Papers of the Rhodesian League: Manifestos: 4 Nov. 1912).

League was vigorously opposed by both the press and leading mining figures, whose accusations that it secretly supported absorption of Rhodesia by the Union of South Africa were given widespread publicity. The attempt of the Administration to win farming support by increasing rural representation had not initially affected the popularity of the League, but the intentions of this electoral reform were in fact negated by the 1914 elections. Members of the League stood on a 'Common Platform' (also known as the Gwelo Platform) but were defeated, partly as a result of their failure to reflect the views of a wider section of the community,⁴⁰ but largely because of the considerable pressure exerted by the Company and mining interests to ensure the return of candidates supporting the continuation of the Charter.⁴¹ Their League's support was also undermined by a visit to Rhodesia by the Company's directors in January 1914. At a conference held with mining and farming representatives it was agreed that the areas of protected land around permanent buildings should be increased, while fallow land was to be included in areas protected from prospecting.⁴² The sympathetic response of the Directors to the settlers' demands generally contributed to the success of those candidates who claimed that the country was not yet ready for self-rule.

Despite the fact that the farming sector now formed approximately 20 per cent of the white population (Table III), their numerical increase was not reflected in the new Council, in which over-representation of mining interests continued. Moreover, considerable dissension arose over the draft mining ordinance, for although in principle both miners and farmers agreed on moderation and the equal importance of their industries, in practice they were a little less considerate. The bitter attack on the Bill by mining representatives, and the minor amendments made to its provisions, renewed discontent in the farming organisations, whose original demands had been modified considerably at the conference, only to be further whittled away in the Legislature.⁴³

⁴⁰ P.R.O., C.O.417/526/41619, High Commissioner to Secretary of State, 13 Nov. 1913.

⁴¹ Lee, 'Politics and Pressure Groups', 136-9; Hist. Mss Colln, HE1/1/1 (Papers of Sir Herman Melville Heyman: Correspondence: General, 15 Jan. 1913 - 20 Oct. 1915), *passim* for 1913-14.

⁴² *Rh. Her.*, 29 Jan. 1914.

⁴³ *Debates 1914*, 4 May, 70-100.

*Table III*⁴⁴

ANALYSIS OF THE 1914 VOTERS ROLL

Industrial	1 921
Agriculture	1 824
Commerce	1 811
Mining	1 533
Railways	634
Government Service	625
Professional	458
Police and Volunteers	431
Religious Orders	107
Others	158

Without an effective voice in the Legislature (although the later reversion of the Marandellas seat gave the 'Common Platform' one spokesman⁴⁵), the farmers remained isolated and unexposed to the moderating influence of the parliamentary atmosphere. Unable to bring financial pressure to bear on the government in the same way as the mining companies, their representative organisation, the R.A.U., could only advise the Administration of its resolutions, and had few means of ensuring that action would be taken. This bred increasing frustration; and unreasonable resolutions were passed which were not conducive to action being taken.

Reaction to this situation was again at two levels. After the post-war depression the R.A.U. attempted to reform itself on a more political basis with the specific object of achieving direct representation in the Legislature, but in fact this aspect of its reorganisation did not receive the required two-thirds support and was suspended. An earlier reaction, however, was not directly associated with the R.A.U.; this was the formation of the Responsible Government Association by leading figures of the R.A.U. immediately after its Congress in 1917, in response to the Company's attempt to enforce amalgamation of Southern with Northern Rhodesia. Its leaders, as with the Rhodesian League, were mainly farmers, and it attracted widespread support from rural areas.⁴⁶ In view of the predominantly farming support for the Association, it can be seen as a continuation of the anti-Charter feeling amongst farmers which had led to the formation of the Constitutional League in 1908 and the Rhodesian League in 1912. It would perhaps have fared little better than its predecessors had it not been for the decision of the Privy Council in favour of the Crown in the Land case. The Company had always believed the land to be its principal asset,

⁴⁴ African (South), 1015/108 encl.

⁴⁵ Col. W. Napier was originally returned with a majority of four votes; John McClery lodged a petition against this result and was later declared to be elected, Willson, *Parliamentary Elections and Referenda . . . 1898-1962*, 108.

⁴⁶ *Bul. Chron.*, 28 Sept. 1917.

and had maintained this stance from the earliest questioning of its ownership, by virtue of the Lippert Concession and the conquest of the Ndebele in 1893. All income from land had been treated as commercial revenue, and since this position had not been challenged by the Colonial Office, this was considered to be tacit acceptance by the Crown. While it had been to the Imperial Government's advantage not to question the rights of the Company before 1913,⁴⁷ the land settlement scheme proposed by the Company in that year brought the question to the fore, for it entailed recognition of Company ownership. In view of the possible constitutional changes in 1914, it became necessary to resolve the issue of land ownership in the face of the persistent challenge of the Company's claim by the settlers, in particular the Rhodesian League and the R.A.U., which petitioned the Crown for an investigation in 1913.⁴⁸

The loss of ultimate ownership of the land resulted in the Company's decision to avoid further financial commitment in Rhodesia. At the annual general meeting of the Company's shareholders in August 1918, Gell announced that, 'it is obvious that since the land is not yours, capital for its further development must be sought elsewhere than from you'.⁴⁹ This meant that a change of government before the due date of 1924 became a viable object for the first time, and thus attracted support to the Responsible Government Association. The elected members of the Legislature, elected on a pro-Charter basis in 1914, commented that:

. . . it follows that the country will be administered in future from its own resources, which, if the B.S.A. Company administration continues, of necessity involves that the people will have all the disadvantages of Responsible Government without the corresponding advantages. If the country is to be administered on its own resources and credit . . . it might as well have the management of its own affairs.⁵⁰

Support for the Responsible Government Association increased further in 1919 after the election as its president of the most eminent settler politician, Sir Charles Coghlan, who had previously opposed the farmers' parties. Lawyer to the Rhodesia Chamber of Mines, he had hitherto supported mining interests in the Legislature. A second factor relating to the success of the Association in the elections of 1920 was the support of the large white artisan class, who supported Responsible Government in preference to the continuation of administration

⁴⁷ African (South), 932/38, Secr. of State to High Com., 25 Feb. 1909.

⁴⁸ P.R.O., C.O.417/526/41556, Minute; the petition was described as 'not very effective'.

⁴⁹ The British South Africa Company, *Report of the Twenty-Second Ordinary General Meeting . . . 7th August, 1918* ([London, the Company, 1918]), 3.

⁵⁰ *Rh. Her.*, 1918, Statement by Elected Members.

by a capitalist organisation, or incorporation with the Union of South Africa, a country dominated by the 'Randlords' and favoured by Rhodesian employers. Labour combined with the rural bourgeoisie vote to result in the return of the Responsible Government Association members to 12 of the 13 seats, with the 1 seat lost only as the outcome of a split vote.⁵¹ The Responsible Government Association can thus be considered to have been formed as a result of farming grievances, and its broader appeal as a result of the land case ensured its success in 1920; it is ironic that, having achieved this much, the R.G.A. lost much of its farming support after 1920.

The case for Union was fought more vigorously in 1922; not only did mining companies and employers generally prefer this course, but the B.S.A. Company stood to gain a more satisfactory financial settlement with the South African government than with the parsimonious Imperial government. The support attracted to the Rhodesia Unionist Association was principally from representatives of the mining companies and other international capitalist groups, although it also secured the railwaymen's vote by virtue of the better terms and prospects offered to them by the Union; also, surprisingly, it now had the support of the majority of farmers, not only Afrikaners but English-speaking as well, since the depression and insecurity following the slump in agricultural produce prices from 1920 meant that the prospects for farmers under Union seemed to be more favourable than thought possible with Responsible Government;⁵² farmers had consistently opposed Chartered government; once its termination was ensured, economic considerations reversed their earlier support for Responsible Government. However, they had yet again chosen an unsuccessful course, for under Responsible Government they failed to secure the benefits that had once been expected of it. This was due partly to the antipathy of Coghlan to the leading farming spokesmen,⁵³ but it was also due to the fact that in order to ensure moderation and 'good' government, former Unionists, like Fletcher, wasted no time in changing their sympathies and political coats. The Responsible Government Association's alliance with Labour was also abandoned in favour of the ex-Unionist mining interests.⁵⁴ The structure of support for the Party was generally altered, but determination to make self-government succeed, and loyalty to

⁵¹ Willson, *Parliamentary Elections and Referenda*, 111-13.

⁵² Lee, 'Politics and Pressure Groups', 230-4. It has usually been assumed that the railwaymen supported Responsible Government but an analysis of voting in a 'railway suburb' shows a large majority in favour of Union; this subject will be dealt with in my forthcoming article in *Rhodesian History*.

⁵³ Hist. Mss Colln, NE1/1/1 (Papers of Sir Francis James Newton: Correspondence: Sir Charles Coghlan, 13 Nov. 1922 - 24 Aug. 1927), Coghlan to Newton, 4 Nov. 1925.

⁵⁴ Lee, 'Politics and Pressure Groups', 244-6.

the party that had won it, ensured continued and in fact increased support for Coghlan after 1923 from many groups which were otherwise disappointed in its results. The governmental system that succeeded Chartered rule was therefore in many respects essentially similar to it, being based on co-operation with the mining industry, with slow and grudging concession to farming demands until the late 1920s. Economic pressures in the 1930s meant that the original requirements of the agricultural sector were finally met, with the abolition of the Gold Belt title, and restriction of African competition.

Although the achievement of Responsible Government has usually been attributed to the natural desire of the white settlers to replace the rule of a commercial organisation by a traditionally British form of self-government, it is apparent that the issues were more involved, and that economic factors lay behind the political evolution. Dissatisfaction with their commercial form of government was not an inherent or a necessary aspect of the situation as long as it provided 'good government' and satisfied the needs of the settlers. Rather, it is believed that the inability of the Company to meet the needs and demands of a part of the electorate, which by 1922 represented the largest single occupational sector amongst the white settlers (Table III), resulted in the formation of a political party which felt it necessary to change the government in order to achieve its objects. Unlike the mining and commercial sectors, the farming group was unable to influence governmental policy by the means available to them. Like the Labour movement by which they were later supported, farmers lacked the personal contact and financial influence of the mining or even the commercial interests. Even more important, given the comparative willingness of the Company to meet just demands, the circumstances prevailing in Southern Rhodesia before 1923 resulted in a situation whereby the Company was not able, by virtue of its ties to and dependence on the mining industry, to satisfy the aims and objects of the farming sector.

*Table IV*⁵⁵

ANALYSIS OF THE 1922 VOTERS ROLL	
Public Services	1 784
Professional	540
Mining	1 586
Agriculture	3 050
Industries	1 248
Commerce	2 075
Commercial services	620
Railways	1 370
Independents	80
	<hr/>
Males	12 353
Females	6 457
	<hr/>
	18 810
	<hr/>

⁵⁵ RC/3/1/125 (Resident Commissioner: Correspondence: General: 1922), No. 785, Res. Com. to High Com., 9 Oct. 1922.

Without the long-standing opposition of the farmers to Company rule, it is unlikely that the post-war depression would have resulted in the well-organised campaign to establish Responsible Government. Although the Responsible Government Movement lost its farmers label, without the earlier campaign challenging the land rights of the Company, no reason to terminate its administration would have created the same convincing appeal as did the judgement of the Privy Council. Despite the small size of the white population, and the large African population, the Imperial Government was obliged to concede Responsible Government in place of the preferred course of either maintaining Company rule, or incorporation with South Africa, in view of the vociferous and prolonged campaign for settler self-government. A few years delay in such a campaign might not have yielded the same result.



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