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The Historical Context of Land in Zimbabwe

The Political Economy of Zimbabwe

One of the fundamental resources that is essential for the development and sustenance of people in Africa is land. Land is very important because it forms the basis of agricultural production in the sub-region. This chapter will trace the role and impact of land amongst the different ethnic groups that lived in the area between the Zambezi and Limpopo rivers since the fourth century AD to the present. The issue of land tenure will be discussed in passing before analysing the manner in which different imperial powers parcelled indigenous land to settlers. An analysis of how the exploitation of the land resource by white settlers led to the rise of African nationalism will be evaluated. Finally, an examination of the events leading to the invasion of white commercial farms in Zimbabwe will be made.

The political history of the area between the Limpopo and Zambezi rivers has always revolved around the question of land. The earliest known settlement site at Great Zimbabwe was established from about the fourth century AD (Nothling 1989). Cattle played a crucial role in the life of the Shona people (Beach 1980). Though a number of Eurocentric scholars are of the view that Great Zimbabwe was an outcome of Arab and Muslim penetration into the East coast, by 1906 this view had been rejected. These historians do not credit the Shona for building and sustaining the Great Zimbabwe state. The Great

Zimbabwe state was situated on the main trading route between the gold producing western part of Zimbabwe and the East coast (Nothling 1989; Beach 1969).

The Shona moved to the plateau from the south. They settled at Great Zimbabwe where the environment was conducive to supporting their large herds of cattle. The major activities of the Shona were subsistence farming and cattle herding supplemented with hunting and food gathering. The Shona economic activities were based on the availability of land where crops that included millet and sorghum would be grown. More land was required for pasturing the cattle. The formation of the Great Zimbabwe state was partly due to the capability of the leadership at Great Zimbabwe being able to control the long distance trade to the coast. The fall of the Great Zimbabwe state was partly due to the growth of population and shortage of land to pasture the growing numbers of cattle.

Oral tradition explains that the Great Zimbabwe fell due to the shortage of salt as a result Nyatsimba Mutota moved northwards in search of salt. However, Beach (1980) suggests that Mutota seems to be a mythical rather than historical figure. There is evidence that the Great Zimbabwe state collapsed suddenly (Phimister 1974). The growth of the population from 2,000 people in AD 4 to about 18,000 by the 1450s meant that crops might have been in short supply, game was no longer in large supply and large herds of cattle required more pastures. These were the reasons for the fall of Great Zimbabwe state (Nothling 1989). Social tensions could also have contributed to the decline of Great Zimbabwe as a state. There is evidence to show that from the fifteenth century, power shifted from the Zimbabwe state towards the west and south of the area between the Zambezi and Limpopo rivers. Around 1490 the Torwa state under Changamire established in the western part of Great Zimbabwe in modern-day Khami ruins.

According to Shona oral tradition the fall of Great Zimbabwe is linked to the rise of the Mutapa state. Mutapa established his kingdom in the western part of Zimbabwe, close to the Zambezi River. Though the direct link of the fall of the Great Zimbabwe state is disputed by modern historians who include Beach (1980), there is enough evidence that the people who built the Great Zimbabwe and Mutapa state belonged to the same Shona tribe. The question of land continued to be central in the lives of the Shona since the Mutapa king had to appoint trusted provincial officials whose main role was to collect taxes and ensure that the conquered ethnic groups did not rebel against him.

The Portuguese grabbed land from the African people living in the area between Zambezi and Limpopo and occupied it between the sixteenth and the eighteenth centuries. The prazo system involved the Portuguese crown granting land to Portuguese nationals for a period of three lives. This meant that land would be given to Portuguese nationals for a very long time (Newitt 1973). The idea was to grant prazos to Portuguese women, on condition they married Portuguese men. The prazos were very large farms that needed to be protected, and as a result, this led to the formation of slave armies known as *achikunda*. *Anachikunda* could be as large as two thousand soldiers. The prazos were mostly in the lower Zambezi valley. The prazo holders included men like Sisnado Bayoe, Lobo da Silva, and Diogo Simoes Madeira. The economy of the prazos depended on tribute from the indigenous people living in the area claimed by the prazo holder (Newitt 1973). It is clear therefore that land continued to be a critical factor in the lives of the Shona people during the colonial period. The conflicts that took place between the Portuguese and the Mutapa were mainly over land or control of the gold mines. By 1700 the Portuguese penetration in the Zambezi Valley had not brought either peace or prosperity. Instead, it brought disruption of the traditional authority, a decline in the mineral trade and loss of land by the indigenous people to the white settlers. There was a lot of resistance to the Portuguese in the eighteenth century, especially from the Sena, Tavara and Tonga indigenous people. According to Scoones (1998), it is critical for people to have natural resources that include water, vegetation, wildlife resource and land, among other things, in order for them to be able to earn a sustainable livelihood. The grabbing of land from the indigenous people first by the Portuguese and then the British settlers meant that it became difficult for the indigenous people to sustain their livelihoods.

Conflicts erupted amongst the indigenous people over land. The Mutapa also faced opposition from Changamire. Oral tradition claims that Changamire rebelled against the Mutapa and established his own Rozvi state that encompassed the following areas: Butua, Manyanga and Dhlodhlo. The Changamire area of influence also covered parts of Mozambique to Masekesa, Mazowe, Sanyati river up to Manyika. The boundary to the west was the Shoshong hills, whilst in the south Northern Transvaal enjoyed Rozvi rule. It should be noted that the major wars between the Shona rulers were for the control of land and minerals, clear evidence that land was an important commodity in African politics (Bhila 1972). Some of the people paid tribute to the Rozvi king because of fear of invasion. Payment of tribute showed allegiance of a vassal to his king. Refusal to pay was taken as rebellion against the king.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century the Ndebele settled in the area between the Zambezi and Limpopo rivers, resulting in conflicts between the Shona and Ndebele over land and cattle. Most descriptions of the Ndebele economy have been distorted by an overemphasis on cattle rearing (Cobbing 1976 and Nyathi 2000). Whilst cattle were an extremely important branch of the Ndebele economy, their primary farming activity was crop production. The main part of Ndebele diet was grain rather than beef. Cobbing (1976) highlights how a number of visiting Europeans remarked upon the green corn fields surrounding Ndebele homes and the quality of the grain grown. Approximately, 80 per cent of the grain was millet, sorghum, maize, groundnuts and rice (Rukuni 2006). Millet was the staple food. The indigenous farmers were familiar with rotating crops in order to ensure the maintenance of soil fertility.

The second most important branch of production was cattle rearing. Cattle occupied a vital position in the Ndebele socio-economic formation. Cattle not only provided meat but also milk and fats, whilst their hides were used in the manufacture of shields, skirts and whips. The securing of safe summer and winter pasturage for cattle underpinned Ndebele relations with the neighbouring Shona ethnic groups. The major objective of raiding was to seize Shona cattle to replenish or increase the national herd (Nyathi 2000).

The scramble for mineral concessions between the Portuguese Mozambique Company and the British South African Company (BSAC) took place towards the end of the nineteenth century. The scramble for land and mineral concessions assumed a new intensity between 1890 and 1894. Manuel Antonio de Souza, a Portuguese, acquired estates in Southern Africa. He had made claims of land that were also being claimed by Cecil John Rhodes through the British South African Company. The scramble for Manyika between the Portuguese and the British shows how critical land was in the fight by imperial powers in Southern Africa. The commercial interests of the Portuguese Mozambique Company and the British South African Company were so mixed up that sooner or later there would be a conflict between the two imperial powers. The Treaty of 1890 fixed the Portuguese border to include areas bounded by Rovuma river, Lake Chilwa, Zumbo, Tete and Cabora Bassa, Manyika and Gaza. There was an outcry in Portugal. New negotiations led to the signing of the 1891 treaty fixing the present borders of Mozambique and Zimbabwe.

When the pioneer column arrived in Mashonaland in 1890, their expectations were that they would discover another Gold Rand as they had done in South Africa (Chitiyo 2000). However, when the European settlers

realised that the mineral rights were not as lucrative as the ones in South Africa, some of them abandoned their claims. Having failed to get lucrative gold claims in Southern Rhodesia, the settlers turned to the next available prized commodity, land. The scramble for land was a little more than plunder (Meredith 2002).

Land Ownership During the Colonial Era

In the process of colonising the country, settlers realised the need to legitimise their land-grabbing by passing legislation to consolidate their title to the land. A series of laws dispossessing the indigenous people of the land they had held for generations and giving ownership to the settlers were passed. The pieces of legislation and other regulations will be discussed, from the arrival of Cecil John Rhodes, the Rudd Concession, up to the time of the Lancaster House agreement.

The Rudd Concession

In 1888, Rhodes tricked King Lobengula into signing the Rudd Concession, giving exclusive mineral rights to the BSAC in exchange for 1,000 rifles, a gunboat to patrol the Zambezi and a monthly rent of £100. A missionary known as C. D. Helms was used to persuade Lobengula to sign the Rudd Concession by convincing Lobengula that Rudd was an honourable man who would not cheat the Ndebele king (Mudenge 2001). Armed with this concession, Rhodes obtained a royal charter from Britain, granting the company the right to administer and govern the region and extend British rule into Central Africa (International Defence and Aid Fund for Southern Africa 1977). Table 3.1 summarises the major concessions, legislations and regulations from the time of the Rudd Concession to the time of the Lancaster Agreement. These are discussed in more detail in the ensuing paragraphs.

Table 3.1: Zimbabwe – History of Land Policy 1889–1979

Year	Land Act / Commission	Purpose	Result
1889	The Lippert concession	White settlers to acquire land rights from Native Zimbabweans	British South African Company (BSAC) buys concession and uses it as a basis for land appropriation
1898	Native Reserves Order in Council	To create Native Reserves in the face of mass land appropriation by white settlers	Native reserves created haphazardly in infertile, low-rainfall potential areas and which subsequently become communal areas.
1930	Land apportionment Act	To separate land between black and white people	The high-potential areas become white large-scale privately owned farms.
1951	Native Land Husbandry Act	To enforce private ownership of land, destocking and conservation practices on (TTLs)black small-holders	Mass resistance to legislation fuelling nationalistic politics. Law scrapped in 1961.
1965	Tribal Trust Land (TTL) Act	To change the name of Native Reserves and create trustees for the land	Because of population pressure, TTLs became degraded 'homelands'.
1969	Land Tenure Act	To replace the Land Apportionment Act of 1930 and finally divide land 50% white and 50% black	Combined with the TTL Act, Rhodesia had the equivalent of apartheid.

Source: Ministry of Lands, Land Reform and Resettlement (2003)

The Lippert Concession 1889

In 1891, in an attempt to play one European treasure hunter against another, Lobengula granted a 100-year concession over land to Eduardo Lippert, a German financier who was based in Johannesburg, but the concession was purchased by the BSAC in 1891, without Lobengula's knowledge (Tshuma 1997). Mudzengi (2008:379) cited in Moyo, Helliker and Murisa (2008) outlines the contents of the Lippert concession as:

The sole and exclusive right, power and privilege for the full term of 100 years layout, grant or lease, farms, township buildings, plots and grazing areas; to impose and levy rents, licenses and taxes thereon and to get in; collect and receive the same for his own benefit; to give and grant certificates for the occupation of any farms, township, building, plots and grazing areas.

It is clear from the contents of this document that Lobengula was not told what was contained in the document. White fortune hunters exploited the King's inability to read and write to sign a document whose content was different to what he was told. As a result, when the White settlers started flocking into Zimbabwe, the Ndebele reacted by revolting against the British in 1896.

In 1894, the BSAC promulgated the Matabeleland-Order-in Council, by which the BSAC assumed ownership of land by the right of conquest (Rukuni 2006). Through the use of the Order in Council of 1894, the indigenous people were allocated land in the Gwaai-Shangani area which was 1,006,010 hectares as opposed to 21,000,000 hectares they had occupied before the coming of the settlers (Mudzengi 2008).

The BSAC under Jameson was allocating 6,000 acre farms to white troopers by forcibly displacing the Africans. Jameson realised the need for cadastral surveying and a property map to formalise the land grabbing, and hired a surveyor general who placed beacons to demarcate boundaries of the farms. A representative of the BSAC would then come and inspect the beacons and enter the farms in the company's register at Salisbury (present-day Harare). These procedures created a proper, durable map, and the property map of 1894 has survived in its original form up to today (Hughes 2006). Furthermore, a hut tax of 10 shillings was imposed on indigenous people (Tshuma 1988). Those who failed to pay the taxes were forced to work on the farms for no pay.

The Native Reserves Order in Council of 1898

The Native Reserves Order in Council of 1898 created the infamous Native Reserves for indigenous people only. This was in the face of a systematic mass land expropriation by white settlers. The result was that Native Reserves were set up haphazardly in low-potential areas which subsequently became the present Communal areas. Leander Starr Johnson encouraged the settlers to get as much land as they wanted. Major Sir John Willoughby was granted 600,000 acres in Mashonaland. He also bought some land rights that had been given to pioneers who went in search of gold. Willoughby's Consolidated Company eventually had accumulated 1.3 million acres of land. Rhodes's surveyor general, on accepting his post, was given 640,000 acres of land. These settlers were parceling out land that belonged to either the Shona or Ndebele (Chitiyo 2000).

The South African Natives Land Act of 1913 had a strong impact on settler thinking north of the Limpopo river. The South African government philosophy was that people of different races should be left to develop at their own pace. Moyana (2002:27) states that the settlers both in South Africa and Southern Rhodesia 'built around themselves walls of racial prejudice, buttressed by vested self interests'. The white settlers believed that if total segregation was not instituted there would be war amongst the races (Hill 2003).

The Africans were deliberately impoverished in order to force them to go and work for the whites in their farms, mines and factories. The British government was requested by the settler government to stop the policy of allowing Africans to buy land adjacent to their farms. The white farmers and administrators used various methods to force indigenous people to work on their farms and projects for no payment. Administrators like the Native Commissioners found their free labour through the chiefs, who would select men from among their subjects to go and work at their instruction (Hughes 2006). These were mainly for short periods on projects such as road building. Violence was used, including the kidnapping of women until their husbands came, or holding the chief hostage until the required number of men came forward. The other source was those who could not pay hut tax. Another form of forced free labour was based on tenancy. Those indigenous people who were within the white farmers' demarcated boundaries were forced to work for the farmer for no pay as a form of tenancy. This was called 'kaffir farming', and the farmers deliberately built their homesteads within the vicinity of a number of indigenous people's villages so that they could have

easy access to free labour. Hughes (2006:55) states that the amount of labour and the level of violence were striking, as recalled by one Meredith, a Native Commissioner who said:

The farmers did not pay for Native labour but compelled the Natives to work for them gratis, not indeed, at intervals, but almost daily, and at least three days per week, and if they did not do the work, they were flogged. They found it useless to complain to the then Authority, because by so doing they got another flogging for daring to complain.

It is clear that the white settlers now had both land ownership and physical domination and control over the indigenous people.

Shona and Ndebele Uprisings – The First Chimurenga (War of Liberation) 1896-1897

The alienation of indigenous people from their land and the oppressive measures documented above led to the Shona and Ndebele uprisings of 1896-7 (dubbed the First Chimurenga) which were ruthlessly suppressed. Nehanda and Kaguvu were Shona leaders who were killed by the settlers during the first Chimurenga. Meanwhile the influx of settlers continued.

The Morris Carter Commission and the Land Apportionment Act of 1930

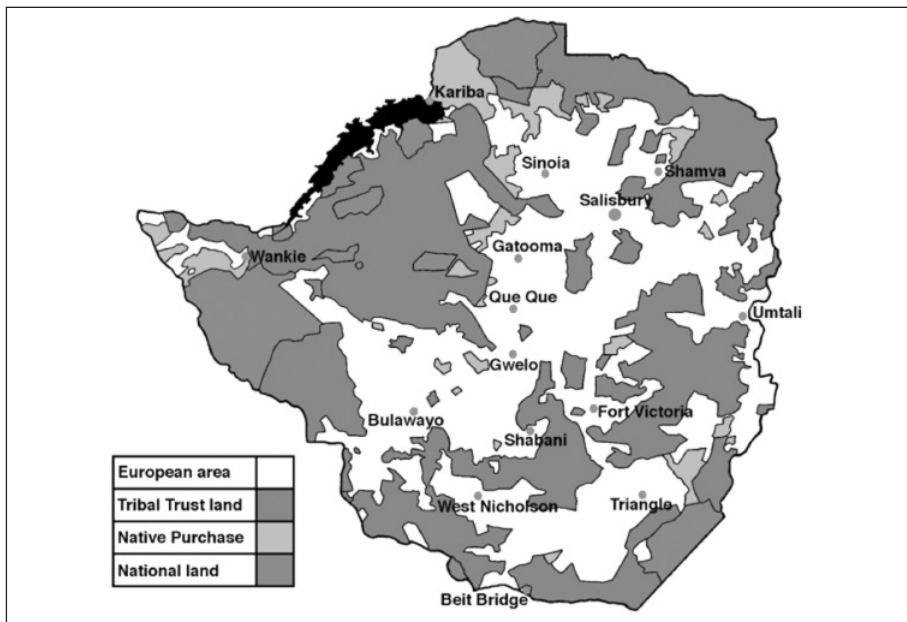
In 1925, the Morris Carter Commission recommended racial division of land and the result was the Land Apportionment Act of 1930. This Act partitioned land into European and African reserves and forcibly evicted Africans from fertile land, which they had held for generations and to which they were spiritually attached, to barren land. They were resettled in areas far away from major roads and railway lines, depriving them of a means of survival and the enjoyment of the transport infrastructure. Approximately 51 per cent of the land was set aside for European settlers (Tshuma 1997 and Rukuni 2006). Table 3.2 shows the resultant divisions, followed by a fuller discussion of the commission's deliberations, and the consequences of the Land Apportionment Act 1930.

Table 3.2: Land Distribution under the Land Apportionment Act 1930

Designation	Area In Hectares	% of Country
European area	19,890,398	51.1
Native reserves	8,549,996	12.0
Unassigned area	7,200,850	18.5
Native Purchase area	3,020,868	7.8
Forest area	238,972	0.6
Undetermined area	35,832	0.1
Total	38,936,916	100
Total for African use	11,570,864	29.7

Source: Moyana (2002:44)

The map of Zimbabwe (Figure 3.1) highlights the extent to which land had been appropriated by the white settlers by 1965.

Figure 3.1: Land Apportionment in Rhodesia in 1965

Source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Rhodesialand.png>

Under the Land Apportionment Act of 1930, the right of Africans to land ownership was rescinded. Africans would be allowed to purchase land in areas known as Native Purchase areas. Only 81 Native Purchase Areas were allocated very close to Native areas. Over 51 per cent of the land or 19,890,398 hectares of land was assigned as White area, whilst 29.7 per cent was given to indigenous people. It should be noted that during this period there were only about 50, 000 white settlers as opposed to 1,081,000 indigenous people. Most of these white settlers were acquiring this land for speculative purposes. Meredith (2002:113) states, 'Within ten years of the arrival of the Pioneer Column, nearly 16 million acres— one sixth of the entire land area of 96 million acres – had been seized by whites'.

The division of land between white settlers and indigenous people was formalised in the Land Apportionment Act of 1930. There are a number of reasons why the indigenous people detested the Land Apportionment Act (Meredith 2002). It was segregatory and vicious in the sense that Africans were relegated to very infertile areas, whilst their white counterparts were given fertile land at very cheap rates or no payment at all. The other important factor against this Act was that it was clearly designed to create poverty among the indigenous people (Marongwe 2003). Moyana (2002:46) suggests, 'The pauperisation of the African was a necessary prelude to his conversion into a working hand to work the lands and mines of the ruling class'. The settlers deliberately forced the indigenous people out of their land because the ulterior motive was to ensure that they work for the white settlers for a very low wage. It is interesting to note that of the 12.8 million hectares assigned to the white settlers only 404,694 were cultivated, 40 per cent was used for pastures and the rest was unused land which was lying fallow.

The Economic Effects of the Land Apportionment Act on Indigenous People

The Land Apportionment Act had social, economic and political effects on the indigenous people. It is very clear that it had serious negative effects on African agriculture. Immediately after the creation of the reserves, African agricultural production deteriorated. The fact that Africans were moved from productive to unproductive dry land meant that there was a reduction in their crop and livestock production. To Africans whose livelihood depended on land, the Land Apportionment Act brought misery. Table 3.3 shows this decline in productivity.

Table 3.3: Livestock Production by Indigenous People

Year	Cattle	Sheep	Goat	Yields In Bags
1923	927,343	262,432	779,614	3,483,650
1924	1,004,277	269,049	813,395	2,740,450
1936	1,547,623	234,769	765,624	2,991,630
1937	1,582,062	243,816	757,703	3,270,222
1939	1,570,310	234,748	647,569	3,160,999

Source: *Moyana (2002)*, Political Economy of Land in Zimbabwe.

The figures show that in 1923, before the Land Apportionment Act, the farmers were producing 3,483,650 bags of grain, whilst in 1939 the yield had dropped to 3,160,999. The figures of sheep and goats were also following a falling trend in that in 1923, the indigenous people kept 262,432 sheep, but by 1939 the figure had dropped to 234 748 – a reduction of 10 per cent over a period of 16 years. It is interesting to note that the populations of indigenous people were increasing, whilst their herds of cattle, sheep and goats were depleted. The Land Commission reduced the carrying capacity of the land. By 1943 most of the 38 reserves were overpopulated and, as a consequence, soil erosion took its toll on the land. Due to overgrazing, African cattle were awarded the lowest grade. African cattle fetched very low prices at the cattle market. Overstocking and overpopulation resulted in soil erosion which culminated in reduced production.

Table 3.4: Livestock Concentration in the Reserves 1963

Region	Stock Carried	Stock Carrying Capacity	Overstocked (+)	% Stocked
			Understocked (-)	
Midlands	274,855	256,932	+17,923	107
Mashonaland	148,533	247,971	- 99,438	59.9
Matabeleland	338,294	291,685	+46,609	116
Masvingo	371,776	226,397	+145,379	164
Manicaland	269,750	246,191	+23,559	110

Adapted from Chitiyo Tapera (2000)

According to the figures in Table 3.4, all the provinces were overstocked except Mashonaland North. The major reason for overstocking was that the indigenous people had lost their land to the white settlers and were overcrowded as a result of the Land Apportionment Act of 1930.

Pressure on Land: The Native Land Husbandry Act of 1951

The problem of shortage of land can best be described as a consequence of ill-conceived policies that resulted in acute shortage of land for Africans. The Land Apportionment Act affected the Africans in many adverse ways. Large concentrations of people led to overstocking and soil erosion. Most of the fertile topsoil was eroded leading to the reserves remaining with *dongas*. The immediate reaction of the colonial government to the problem of land in communal areas was the passing of the Land Husbandry Act 1951. This Act further imposed and enforced conservation measures on land owned by indigenous people (Vudzijena 1998). The logic behind this legislation was that land degradation was taking place in the tribal trust lands because of lack of individual title to the land. Communal farmers were required to obtain a permit called a 'farming permit' to cultivate land and a 'grazing permit' to graze livestock. Other measures included restrictions on the number of livestock as well as soil and water conservation. The measures were necessitated by the land and natural resource degradation as a result of overcrowding in the rural areas. However, because the regulations were imposed without consultation, they were resented by the rural people and compliance was erratic. Consequently, implementation of the Act was suspended in 1961.

When the colonial government faced a lot of opposition from the indigenous people, some of its officials suggested that the Land Apportionment Act needed to be repealed. But the white settlers were not prepared to repeal the Act. When Ian Smith's Rhodesia Front promised that they would keep the Act if they came to power, they won the election in 1962. The Smith government introduced the Land Tenure Act in 1969. The aim was to entrench the division of land between the whites and Africans. Africans continued to be evicted from settler farms and the Tangwena's people refusal to move from their land caught the attention of the international community.

The Case of the Tangwena Saga

The impact of the Land Apportionment Act during the colonial period can best be illustrated by analysing the Tangwena saga. Chief Tangwena and his people lived in the Nyanga highlands in the eastern part of Zimbabwe. Chief Tangwena's

fight against eviction from the land that belonged to his people brings to light and symbolises the price that Africans had to pay for their land.

During the time when the Land Apportionment Act was introduced, most Africans remained in the areas that had been designated as white areas. The British South African Company had been an active agent of land grabbing of African lands. On 31 July 1905, the Company had sold the land of the Nyanga Downs comprising 59,604 hectares in extent. In 1944 an Anglo-French company sold 23,472 hectares, part of Nyanga Downs, to the Gaeresi Ranch Company for 8,400 pounds. William Hanmer the director of the company settled on the land in 1948. He fenced part of the land excluding the land settled by the Tangwena people. The people applauded this development because they thought that their cattle would not stray into the Hanmer's land. Little did they know that the settler was planning to evict them on the grounds that the land had been sold to him two decades earlier. In 1963, Hanmer asked the court to evict the Tangwena people.

When the colonial government asked Chief Tangwena and his people to be relocated to Bende native reserves, Chief Tangwena refused to move. A court order was given accusing the Chief and his people of disobeying a State order for which they were fined. Chief Tangwena rather than accept defeat contested to this verdict in the High Court. The High Court vindicated the Chief and his people leading to the embarrassment of the colonial government. Chief Tangwena had used the very laws that the colonial government were using to oppress the Africans and won (Moyana 2002).

After losing the case in court, the colonial government used brutal force to drive the Tangwena people from their land. Village houses were pulled down and burnt, and men, women and children were ruthlessly beaten. The Tangwena people refused to give up. They ran away and lived in the bush, and then rebuilt their houses. Moyana (2000:153) suggests that 'to Chief Tangwena, land, human dignity and selfhood were inseparable'. Chief Tangwena was not prepared to accept the colonial government brutal force to remove his people from their land. He joined the people who were fighting against the settler regime in Mozambique. He was not prepared to give the land of Gaeresi to the white settlers.

The Tribal Trust Lands (TTL) Act (1965)

The next act that was introduced by the colonial government was The Tribal Trust lands (TTL) Act of 1965. The Act was devised to change the name of the Native Reserves and create trustees for the land. High population densities on tribal trust lands made them degraded 'homelands'.

The Land Tenure Act

The Land Tenure Act of 1969 repealed and replaced the Land Apportionment Act, and divided land into European, African and National land. European and African land comprised 45,000 acres each, while National land stood at 6,500 acres. This clearly shows that the Rhodesia Front wanted to perpetuate racial separation and white supremacy, and further stirred strong nationalist opposition. However, with the intensification of the liberation war, the Land Amendment Act of 1977 was passed, removing racial division of land.

Land Tenure

According to the Food Agricultural Organisation (FAO) (undated) land tenure is the relationship, whether legally or customarily defined, among people as individuals or groups, with respect to land. Rules of tenure define how property rights to land are allocated within societies, that is how access is granted to rights to use, control and transfer land, as well as responsibilities and restraints and who can use land, for how long and under what conditions. Land tenure may be well defined and legally enforceable or poorly defined, with ambiguities and open to exploitation.

Types of Land Tenure

The main types of land tenure in Zimbabwe are:

- Freehold – Full ownership of land is evidenced by title deeds that specify the area of land owned. The owner can dispose of the land as he/she wishes.
- Leasehold – This comprises of an agreement between the owner of the land and the tenant (the lessee) under which the tenant is allowed the free enjoyment and use of the land in return for payment of rent. These two types of tenure are also called statutory, as opposed to customary type of tenure.
- Traditional, Customary or Communal Tenure - Is where land belongs to the community, which decides how land is to be used. The chief is given power to allocate land to groups or individual members of the community.

A system of taboos and myths is used to conserve and preserve resources.

Security of Tenure

FAO (undated) further explains that security of tenure is the certainty that a person's rights to land will be recognised by others and protected in cases of

specific challenges. It cannot be measured directly and, to a large extent, is what people perceive it to be. Sources of security are categorised as follows:

- Recognition by the community or specific groups, i.e. where neighbours recognise and enforce a person's rights to land;
- The government may provide political recognition of some rights, e.g. it may undertake not to evict squatters from state land;
- Land registration or title deeds; and
- By coercion, where there are no government structures.

Security of tenure can be threatened when the government or neighbours choose not to recognise the rights bestowed by the tenure or because of some social changes, e.g. HIV/AIDS, when widows cannot inherit their husbands' rights. In some cases, different parties hold multiple rights over the same piece of land, and the rights can be overriding, overlapping, complementary or competing. The question of security of tenure is very important, because it is the vulnerable groups (the poor and women) who usually suffer if tenure is insecure.

Before the colonisation of Southern Africa, the customary or traditional or communal tenure system was the norm among the indigenous people. Under this system, land is communally owned and cannot be alienated from the community. Members have exclusive residential rights, and rights to arable land, as well as shared rights to grazing land and natural resources (UNECA 2003). Because communal land cannot be sold, land held under this tenure system cannot be used as collateral.

It is generally believed that a good tenure system with security of tenure is a pre-requisite for investments in land improvements and sustainable land utilisation (Vudzijena 1998). FAO (undated) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (2003) concur with this observation. When tenure is secure, farmers are able to use their land as collateral, to obtain loans from financial institutions, in order to invest in land improvements.

Tenure-related Problems in Southern Africa

In 2003 the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa carried out a study of tenure systems and security of tenure in six Southern African countries, namely Lesotho, Zambia, Botswana, Namibia, Mozambique and South Africa. The following is a summary of some of the tenure-related problems that the Commission encountered:

- Minority groups – The hunting rights of the San hunter-gatherers in Botswana are not recognised under customary or statutory law; their

traditional hunting grounds have been fenced in, and they have been displaced and relocated.

- Land alienation without compensation – This problem was prevalent in Malawi and Mozambique, where smallholders were losing land to well-placed individuals and foreign investors.
- Corrupt and exploitative practices by chiefs and government officials – this was common in all countries.
- Land encroachment and illegal settlers – this was observed in some of the countries.
- Land reforms – the poor and some women are sometimes adversely affected because they lack the competence to understand and follow the relevant procedures.

Initiatives to Improve Security of Tenure in Southern Africa

The team observed that there were various initiatives to improve security of tenure in all the Southern African countries, as follows:

- Botswana – embarked on a National Land Policy Review in 2003.
- Lesotho – A Land Policy Review Commission was appointed and published its report in 2000.
- Malawi – The Presidential Commission on Land Reform was established in 1996 and led to the formulation of a National Land Policy, approved by cabinet in 2002.
- Mozambique – A new Land Law was passed in 1997.
- South Africa – Various acts, including the Communal Property Act 28 of 1996, the Land Reform Labour Tenants Act No. 3 of 1996, an Interim Protection of Informal Land Rights Act No. 31 of 1996, and the Extension of Security of Tenure Act No. 62 of 1997 were passed.
- Zambia – The Lands Act of 1995 is the basis of the current tenure system.

Efforts to Improve Security of Tenure in Zimbabwe

In Zimbabwe similar efforts aimed at improving security of tenure were undertaken. On 1 November 1993, the Land Tenure Commission (the Rukuni Commission) was appointed to look into current tenure systems and make recommendations on alternative systems. In 1994, this Commission made its recommendations and the government acclaimed its findings.

Recommendations of the Rukuni Land Tenure Commission

On communal lands, the commission recommended the retention of the communal tenure system. It however recommended that the state should relinquish ownership of the land to a village assembly headed by the kraal head, as the chairman. A register of village members (both men and women) would be maintained. After surveying and demarcation of boundaries, each village would receive a village registration title. Households would receive land registration certificates for all arable and residential land, with the registration certificate for grazing and other common land being in the name of the village and held in trust by the kraal head. After fulfilling requirements for the effective village management, the land would cease to be state land and be traditional village land.

Regarding resettlement schemes, the Commission recommended the replacement of permits with long-term leases for Models A and B, and for leasehold tenure to continue in Model C. In Model A, in the better agro-ecological regions, it recommended that they should be given the option to be re-planned and demarcated into individual self-contained farms, comprising residential, arable, and grazing land. For the Large Scale Commercial Farms, the commission recommended maintaining the freehold tenure, with relaxation of restrictions on sub-division of large farms and the introduction of a land tax, based on productivity and farm size. It is hoped that the present study will shed some light on the types of tenure and the security of tenure in the resettlement areas.

Other Oppressive Native Practices

The BSAC established a Native Department through which Native Commissioners were responsible for the administration of the reserves, the maintenance of law and order and administration of justice (Tshuma 1997). The chiefs reported to the Native Commissioner, who had power to allocate land and fire or demote chiefs. As a result, those who supported the government were given more land or promoted. Those who opposed the government had their chieftainship taken away from them.

Exploitation of African Labour

One of the reasons for expropriating land from the Africans was to deliberately impoverish them so that these people would be forced to look for employment in farms and mines. Moyana (2002:72) argues, ‘The increasing shortage of

land was accompanied by increasing needs such as school fees, clothes and food'. The landless peasants had been converted into commodities by the Land Apportionment Act. In the 1890s, though the Africans lost some of their land, there was no pressure to drive the indigenous people to seek employment. They still had enough land for their basic needs. As a result, the British South African Company had an acute shortage of labour since Africans were not keen to work for the white men. Settlers who employed Africans were in the habit of ill-treating their employees towards the end of the month with the intention of forcing the workers to abscond before being paid. Such practices discouraged the majority of the Africans to seek employment; as a result there was a critical shortage of labour in the mines and farms. In order to force Africans to go and work on their farms, the colonial government in 1894 introduced a hut tax of 10 shillings per hut which was levied on each adult male. Another factor that contributed to shortage of labour was poor wages. Indigenous people worked for long hours but the wages were very low. The taxes that were imposed on them were meant to induce the indigenous people to seek employment. As long as they had cattle and land, there was no pressure for them to look for employment. The introduction of the different forms of taxes forced them to seek employment so as to pay the taxes.

One of the effects of land segregation and appropriation was that of squatting. Under the Private Locations Ordinance of 1908, Africans were allowed to pay rent to a landowner in exchange for the right to remain on the land that would have been allocated to a white farmer. For speculative purposes, a lot of companies had bought land that they did not utilise. Africans were expected to pay rent to the white settlers if they wanted to remain occupying land which originally had belonged to them. The rent paid by the Africans was too high such that most Africans lost their cattle. Apart from losing their land and cattle, the indigenous people suffered other abuses especially when eviction took place. By 1935, the majority of indigenous people living on Crown Land were in arrears in paying their rent. Table 3.5 shows the arrears that accumulated due to failure to pay rent.

Table 3.5: Rent Arrears by Blacks in 1935

District	Outstanding Amount (Pounds)	District	Outstanding Amount (Pounds)
Belingwe	111	Matobo	1,192
Bubi	1,990	Mtentengwe	3,895
Bulilima-Mangwe		Marandellas	20
Chilimanzi	608	Melsetter	179
Charter	295	Nuanetsi	309
Chibi	779	Nyamandhlovu	214
Chipinge	3954	Selukwe	3,176
Gutu	826	Shabani	517
Gwanda	2,026	Umtali	343
Gwelo	556	Umzingwane	96
Hartley	425	Victoria	1,576
Insiza	1,467	Makoni	1,062
Inyanga	1,494	Total	27,068

Source: Moyana (2002) *Political Economy of land in Zimbabwe*

The total amount in arrears was 27,068 pounds, a clear testimony that Africans were suffering economically.

The Rhodesian Front Era

In 1961, Ian Smith formed the Rhodesian Front party (RF) in protest against the introduction of African representation in the parliament and the party won elections in 1962. Ian Smith became Prime Minister in 1964 and his first action was to order the detention of Joshua Nkomo and Robert Mugabe, who remained in detention until 1974. In 1965, he made a Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI). However, the international community and the United Nations did not recognise the new republic. They responded by imposing economic sanctions. Not all countries imposed full sanctions; for countries like South Africa, Portugal and Israel assisted Rhodesia in busting the sanctions in many ways (Chitiyo 2000). The Smith regime wanted to perpetuate white domination at all costs.

Agriculture under UDI

Bautista, Thomas, Muir-Leresche and Lofgren (2002) observe that as a result of the Land Apportionment Act, and the Land Tenure Act, agriculture was overtly dualistic – a densely populated black communal sector and a modern white Large Scale Commercial farming sector (LSC). Population density and cropping intensity was about three times as high in communal areas as in the LSC sector. The LSC occupied about one-third of the total area and had a disproportionately large share of high-potential agricultural land, was highly mechanised, and had very high yields in the small proportion of the total farm area cultivated. The LSC received a lot of support from the colonial government, in the form of subsidies, soft loans, research and technical services, and infrastructure development. According to the International Defence and Aid Fund for Southern Africa (1977), in 1977, 6,000 white farmers had access to over \$100 million worth of credit facilities, whereas a mere \$1 million was made available to the 8, 000 African Purchase Area farmers and approximately 600,000 TTL farmers. The same sentiments are echoed by Shopo (1987) who states:

Historically the most outstanding characteristic of the agrarian structure of colonial Zimbabwe was its dualism, in which the state supported the white commercial sector (both family farms and large company estates), which possessed the most fertile land with access to national and international markets, credit, technology, extension services, credit, manufactured inputs and consumption goods. The traditional or communal sector was assigned unproductive land, producing in the main for family consumption and local markets. Its parameters for agricultural growth had since the first decade of the century been closely defined by

the state. Within such limits, the marginal improvements which had taken place with regards to marketing and pricing by 1965 had little effect on the pervasive historical patterns within the sector.

It is a clear indication that the then government favoured white commercial farmers and provided everything for them to produce at high levels, leading to Zimbabwe becoming the bread basket of Southern Africa. Compared to the LSC, communal areas had lower yields and a higher proportion of the arable land cropped. In fact, there was overcrowding and overstocking which resulted in land degradation, deforestation and poverty among the peasants. This unjust situation led to resentment of white domination, the birth of African nationalism and ultimately the armed struggle.

Growth of Trade Unionism 1934–1950s

There seems to have been a very close link between the rise of trade unionism in the early 1900 and the rise of African nationalism. It is a common assumption that the political consciousness of the black workers should be assessed largely through the presence of the association and organisation of workers' interests. Although associations and organisations were formed, it does not follow that those were the first signs of indigenous consciousness of their grievances. It merely means that the organisations became a more articulate expression of the discontent that had long been present. The initial strikes organised by trade union movements in 1901, 1906 and 1912 were discontent over low wages and Africans not having been placed on the same position with whites.

The formation of Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union (ICU) in 1929 under Charles Mzingeli laid the foundations for the organisation of nationalistic organisations whose major thrust was to articulate the grievances about land. Vambe (1976) is of the view that the ICU was more of a political body than a trade union. The leaders dealt largely with general economic and political grievances of the indigenous people that even included the question of land. The formation of the African National Congress in 1934 under the initiative of Aaron Jacha and Reverend T. D. Samkange laid the foundation for the formation of the more effective nationalistic parties of the 1950s. Whilst there is a link between the rise of trade unionism and the rise of African nationalism, the link was not strong. However, trade union activity laid the foundation for the formation of more organised national parties like the National Democratic Party formed in 1957. Through trade union activity, workers and intellectuals in towns started questioning the segregation that was practised by the white settlers. The rise of nationalism in the 1950s

transformed the trade union activities led by Joshua Nkomo into nationalistic movements whose aim was for the indigenous people to be given back their land and also fight for equal rights.

The Birth of African Nationalism and the Armed Struggle

It is against this background that resistance to white domination and African Nationalism was born. In 1957, Joshua Nkomo was elected president of the local branch of the African National Congress. After it was banned, he formed the National Democratic Party (NDP), which was banned in 1961. The Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) replaced the NDP. The slogan of the party was 'The land is ours', and party cadres addressed each other as 'Children of the soil', emphasising that land was the central issue in the struggle against white domination (Tshuma 1997). In 1963, Ndabaningi Sithole and Robert Mugabe split from ZAPU to form Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU). Some of the reasons for the formation of ZANU were that the militant Africans were frustrated by the leadership of Joshua Nkomo. One school of thought argued that Nkomo was spending too much time outside the country and he had too much confidence in the efficiency of the use of external pressure to influence the white settler regime. Another group of scholars are of the view that the formation of ZANU was based on ethnic grounds. These scholars argue that the formation of ZANU was meant to provide new leadership from the Shona ethnic group. When the two parties failed to influence the change of policy through the use of negotiation, they then resorted to the armed struggle.

The Liberation War (Second *Chimurenga*) and its Impact on the Land Question

Mudzengi (2008) is of the view that the liberation war went through three main phases, namely: the Chitepo phase (1962–1975), the Zimbabwe People's Army phase (ZIPA) period (1975–1977) and the Mugabe phase (1977–1980). An analysis of the different phases of the liberation war helps scholars to understand the manner in which the land question was resolved after independence. There were four major groups during the armed struggle. Mudzengi (2008) suggests that the Chitepo phase comprised the peasants, intellectuals, nationalists and youthful guerrillas. The peasants' major role was the provision of intelligence as well as the provision of food to the freedom fighters. On the other hand, the freedom fighters had to educate the peasants regarding the reasons why they were fighting against the white settler regime.

Whilst the freedom fighters were conscious of the major cause for fighting against the settler regime, namely regaining their land from the whites, it was critical for all peasants to be convinced of this cause. As a result, night meetings (Pungwes) were organised in order to fulfil that purpose. Interaction between the four different groups in these night meetings acted as synergies that resulted in the sharing of common visions and the same aspirations (Mudzengi 2008). It is clear from the arguments that have been discussed earlier that land has always been central in the lives of the indigenous people. The land question was a basis for the development of African nationalism, whilst workers in cities and in farms questioned the segregatory practices by the white settlers.

During the Chitepo phase, the majority of the nationalists had been arrested by the Smith settler regime. During this period, recruitment to the guerrilla army was not voluntary since most of the cadres were recruited from villages (Tungamirai 1995; Chung 2007). The war was confined to the north-eastern part of the country, with mainly the peasant freedom fighters shouldering the responsibility of the war effort. Most of the early recruits were peasants who were disgruntled about the land question. There is evidence to prove that a peasant-based culture was developed during this period (Mudzengi 2008). The leader of the ZANLA High Command, Herbert Chitepo, was killed by a car bomb in 1975. Members of the ZANLA High Command who were stationed in Zambia were arrested by the Zambian authorities on suspicion of the murder of Herbert Chitepo. Chung (2007) states how the Zimbabwe People's Army (ZIPA) was constituted to coordinate activities at the war front after the realisation that after the death of Chitepo there was a leadership vacuum as most of the commanders of ZANLA had been arrested.

ZANLA combatants in Mgagao in Tanzania made a resolution that there was need to restart the war against the settler regime, which had stopped due to the incarceration of the members of the High Command (Chung 2007). The two armies comprising ZIPRA and ZANLA agreed to work together as ZIPA in fighting the Smith settler regime. Some recruits who listened to the external radio transmitting from Mozambique, where ZANLA was operating from, were possibly persuaded to join the liberation struggle through the messages that were transmitted. A large number of recruits were influenced to join through contact with liberation fighters. The night meetings (Pungwes) played a critical role in convincing students, peasants and even intellectuals to join the liberation struggle. Chung (2007) suggests that the war was altered significantly between 1975 and 1977 when ZIPRA and ZANLA forces were

complementing each other. They were able to open 1,100 kilometres of the Mozambican border for freedom fighters to operate.

The ZANLA High Command was released in 1977 and relocated to Mozambique since it no longer trusted the Zambian government which had arrested them and accused them of possible implication in the death of Chitepo. The FLERIMO party in Mozambique was keen to support the ZANLA High Command in its fight against the settler regime. After 1977, a process of selective recruitment of cadres was started (Tungamirai 1995; Chung 2007).

The three phases of the guerrilla war had a number of implications, especially on the relations between the former fighters and the political leadership immediately after independence. The Chitepo phase was characterised by illiterate peasant freedom fighters who disliked the educated elite and tended to label those who continued with education as sell-outs and traitors (Chung 2007). Chung argues that many of the educated cadres at the war front became victims of torture and at times death at the hands of these veteran freedom fighters. The third and final phase was characterised by political education, where orders, rules and regulations were emphasised. Robert Mugabe argued that when an individual was not prepared to accept the discipline and rules of the party then external discipline should apply. The party was supposed to compel the individual to comply with its rules.

The peasants and farm workers were mobilised around the issue of land as well as the discriminatory practices of the Smith regime. The farm workers and ordinary peasants were expected to provide intelligence of the movement of the Smith soldiers when the freedom fighters entered any area. The peasants and farm workers played a key role in the provision of important intelligence and provision of food to the fighters. The promise that land would be divided amongst the hungry masses motivated these peasants and farm workers to continue supporting the freedom fighters. Whilst it is clear that the role of peasants and farm workers was invaluable to the liberation war, these people felt their efforts were not rewarded immediately after independence.

From 1966 – 1979 ZAPU and ZANU waged a guerrilla war to end white minority rule (dubbed the second Chimurenga). After the collapse of the Portuguese regime in Mozambique, Rhodesia found itself surrounded by hostile states. Thousands of black youths and school leavers crossed borders into Botswana, Zambia and Mozambique to join the armed struggle. All male whites above the age of 16 were conscripted into the Rhodesian army and had to spend long periods in the operational areas. Meanwhile, the freedom

fighters were intensifying their attacks on white farms and other economic targets, and penetrating deeper into the country.

An estimated 50,000 people of all races (mainly Africans) died in this war, with several others getting injured (Chitiyo 2000). In December 1978, ZANLA attacked and set ablaze the main fuel storage depot in Harare and the tanks burned for days, with black soot covering the whole city. In 1978, Smith made an internal settlement with Abel Muzorewa and Ndabaningi Sithole, but this did not receive international recognition, because both political power and control of the economy, land included, were effectively still in the hands of the whites. The guerrilla war continued with more intensity. The freedom fighters explained the reasons why they had to fight for their land. The question of land alienation was amongst the grievances that the liberation forces used in order to get the support of the peasants in the rural areas (Chitiyo 2000).

Most of these peasants expected that at independence they would acquire land. In 1980 when Zimbabwe acquired its independence, the whites who comprised one per cent of the total population owned 45 per cent of agricultural land. Most of this land owned by the white commercial farmers was located in the high rainfall agro-ecological regions of Zimbabwe as opposed to the Africans located in the drier, more marginal agro-ecological regions.

The Lancaster Agreement

The Lancaster Conference that included the internal political players as well as ZAPU and ZANU resulted in the Lancaster Agreement of 1979. ZANU and ZAPU attended the conference as a united front under the banner of the Patriotic Front (PF). There were serious differences between the British and the Patriotic Front over the land issue. The British wanted to ensure that property rights of the whites were guaranteed and that there would not be massive dispossession of land from white settlers without adequate compensation (Chitiyo 2000). On the other hand, the Patriotic Front's proposal was for protection of property from compulsory acquisition except in the public interest, and that compensation would only be paid at the discretion of the government. The Patriotic Front argued that placing restrictions on land acquisition would defeat the objective of the liberation struggle (Tshuma 1997). The British pointed out that the land reform programme had to be carefully prepared and implemented to avoid adverse effects on production. Compulsory acquisition of land of any description was prohibited according to the Lancaster House Constitution. Where there was a 'willing buyer and

willing seller' agreement, the constitution emphasised the payment of 'prompt and adequate' compensation using market prices (Tshuma 1997).

Section 52 (3) (b) (i) of the Lancaster House Constitution as read with subsection (4) stipulated that no provision of the fundamental rights would be amended for ten years without an affirmative vote in the National Assembly (UNDP 2002). It should be noted that the National Assembly had twenty seats (one fifth of the voting rights) that guaranteed land to the Zimbabwean white population for the first twenty years. One could argue that this provision was deliberately included in the constitution by the British in order to protect the rights of the white community. Though the Patriotic Front was totally against such clauses they were obliged to accept these legal provisions that were regarded as constitutional safeguards for the market-based land transfers. In fact the talks nearly collapsed and were saved by the USA, which promised to help finance a multinational fund to assist in agricultural and economic development, although the amount was not mentioned. Under intense pressure, the liberation movement abandoned radical land reforms in favour of the 'willing seller willing buyer', market-bound land acquisition process (Moyo 1994).

The Patriotic Front made it clear to the British that the Lancaster House Agreement was not workable. The clause that protected the white farmers defeated the whole process of the liberation war whose main aim was to redress the land question. Tshuma (1997) argues that the ideology of property as a human right had a hollow ring in the Zimbabwean context where people had been dispossessed of their land for the benefit of settlers. Riddel (1980) suggests that critics of the Lancaster House Constitution argue that the proposals that were stipulated in this constitution were meant to maintain the status quo rather than address the national problem of land.

Those whose land had been dispossessed by the colonial powers were constrained from repossessing what rightly belonged to them. Tshuma (1997:67) concludes by stating, 'The majority of blacks who were dispossessed of their land by the colonial state and thereafter denied the right to own land were further restricted in what they could do with state power to remedy the social injustice'. Only underutilised land could be compulsorily acquired for agricultural purposes and, in that event, the acquiring authority had to pay prompt and adequate compensation, with access to courts being guaranteed in disputes arising from the land acquisition. The acquiring authority was required to give reasonable intention to acquire the property. Both Zimbabweans and non-Zimbabweans were free to remit money paid by way of compensation to

any country of their choice. This would be entrenched for 10 years, during which period only a 100 per cent parliamentary majority could amend it. The whites, numbering about a quarter of a million were guaranteed 20 per cent of the House of Assembly seats and 25 per cent of the senate seats, while about 7 million blacks had only 80 per cent and 7 per cent of the seats respectively. This provision could only be altered with a one hundred percent consent within the first seven years and with a three-quarters vote in the next three years. This perpetuated racial inequality that had been a cornerstone of colonialism (Tshuma 1997). These restrictions on the new government were going to affect the pace of the resettlement programme, and in the absence of financial assistance from donors, for the purchase of land, expectations of the poor and landless blacks would not be realised for quite some time.

Change of Power Politics

After independence there was change of power from the white settlers to the African elite. Scholtz (2004:25) summarises what transpired in 1980 in the following statement:

White race was no longer the criterion for access to power and wealth. The tiny white elite was replaced by a tiny white and black elite. The Blacks in this elite of riches were preponderantly those few men and women who had either directed the war from the top floor of ZANLA Headquarters in Central Maputo or been away acquiring degrees in Britain or the United States.

The major points that are highlighted in the quotation are that power was moved from the white ruling elite to a black elite. It is also clear that the majority of the freedom fighters were sidelined and did not benefit economically from the gains of independence immediately after independence, as a result a number of them died as paupers. Some of the nationalists who had spent most of time doing administrative jobs outside the country were benefiting at the expense of the freedom fighters.

The peasants and farm workers continued to live in areas they had been moved to by settler regime. After independence a number of notable strides were observed in the agricultural sector. The production of maize, cotton and small grains by peasants backed by state support through the provision of subsidies investments and marketing infrastructure dramatically improved.

At independence the former freedom fighters were sent to assembly points. Some people who had lived as refugees in Botswana, Zambia and Mozambique also returned to Zimbabwe. Some of the youths who had been trained in the

operational areas, and were strictly not former freedom fighters, also went to the assembly points. One of the problems that resulted in the movement of trained war veterans and refugees was that some refugees became imposters who pretended to be former freedom fighters. It is against this background that the land redistribution programme was implemented.

Socio-economic and Political Conditions in the First Decade of Independence 1980–1990

After the end of the long and bitter war in 1980, the Prime Minister Robert Mugabe announced the policy of national reconciliation. The major aim was to unite the different groups that had fought against each other so that they could now work together for the benefit of the nation. Zimbabwe was accepted as a member of the international community; thus funding from the international community was readily available. Although the government stated that it was going to follow a socialist philosophy, in practice a dual agricultural policy was maintained that practiced both commercial and communal agriculture. This was the context in which the first phase of land resettlement programme was implemented (Rukuni 2006).

Zimbabwe received a bumper harvest in the 1980/81 agricultural season, and the economy grew by 11 per cent in 1980 and 15 per cent in 1981 (Rukuni 2006). The major thrust was the transformation of the infrastructure so that it could improve the lives of the majority who had been marginalised over the past several decades. There was a deliberate policy to develop and expand education, health and other social services so that the black majority would benefit.

Reform of Agricultural Institutions

Immediately after independence a number of reforms were instituted in the agricultural sector. There was the merger of separate agricultural institutions that had been organised on racial lines. Rukuni (2006) suggests that the other restructuring involved the extension of credit facilities to the majority of blacks. Marketing facilities were also extended to rural areas where the majority of people were practicing agriculture. The major aim was to ensure that it would be easier for the farmers to access markets nearer their homes. Whilst most of these changes were welcome and contributed to the development of the country and did improve the lives of the Zimbabwean majority, there were limitations that were caused by the provisions of the Lancaster House Constitution.

The majority of the Africans remained in the communal areas whose soils were barren, rainfall poor and climate generally not conducive for crop farming. The peasants, farm workers and urban workers were keen to be resettled into the more productive lands that were occupied by the white commercial farmers. Table 3.6 summarises the economic policy followed by the Zimbabwean government from 1991 to 2004, part of the period when the land resettlement programmes were implemented.

Table 3.6: Government Economic Policy 1980 to 2006

Period	Policy Regime	Features	Impact
1991 – 1995	Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Market processes through removal of controls 2. Devaluation of the Zimbabwean dollar 3. Export promotion programmes 4. Proactive investment policies 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Healthy balance of payments, more external finance to support the productive sector 2. Diminished exports and higher imports offset by donor financing
1998 – 2000	Zimbabwe Programme for Economic and Social Transformation (ZIMPREST)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continuation of the ESAP prescription with mitigation measures of the adverse effects 2. Reduction of budget deficit 3. Control inflation 4. Social transformation 5. International cooperation 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Never implemented since IMF and World Bank indicated that targets were not met 2. Stalled negotiations over land reform funding with the British 3. Steep deterioration of economy

Period	Policy Regime	Features	Impact
2000 – 2002	Millennium Economic Recovery Programme (MERP)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Restoring micro –economic stability 2. Controlling inflation 3. Capital expenditure and social services 4. Enhanced infrastructure development 5. Restore international cooperation 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Programme was overtaken by events when there was no positive response from donors and multinational institutions 2. Decline of real wages and no growth in GDP 3. High unemployment
2003 – 2004	National Economic Recovery Programme (NERP)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Biased towards agriculture. 2. Subsidies in the agricultural sector. 3. Support of the informal sector. 4. Combating HIV and AIDS 5. De-racialising the economic sectors 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Targets have not been met and continued economic meltdown of the country on all indicators (increased poverty levels, high unemployment, lack of foreign currency exchange and unserviced international debts)
2004 – 2006	Monetary policy statement	Government seeks to resuscitate the economy through clean-up of the financial sector, support to agricultural recovery and anti corruption blitz	Signs of economic recovery as inflation decreases from a high of 622 per cent by November 2003 to 326 per cent by August 2004

Sources: *Government of Zimbabwe (1998, 2000); UNECA (2003) and CSO (2002)*

The Economic Background at Independence

It is important to look at the economic conditions that prevailed in the post-independence era. The working class is the section of the population that is most affected by changes in the economy. The state of the economy in many cases determines whether they can continue in employment and stay in the urban areas, mines or commercial farms or are forced to go back to their rural homes, to eke out a living on the land. Outlined below is a synopsis of the performance of the economy as it affected the workers and ultimately the demand for land.

Soon after independence, the Government of Zimbabwe embarked on heavy spending on social services like health, education as well as on subsidies for small-scale farmers and parastatals. Although this had positive effects on social services, it resulted in an increase in public expenditure and had the effect of crowding out private spending and fuelling inflation and unemployment. In 1991, the Government of Zimbabwe adopted the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) which was to run for five years (1991-1995). The aim of this programme was to promote economic growth and reduce poverty, unemployment and social spending. However, the programme had serious adverse effects on the economy. It resulted in the closure of many businesses and retrenchment of both skilled and unskilled manpower in the private and public sectors. There were also general price increases and deterioration in the provision of social services. Some of the retrenched workers remained in urban areas and joined the informal sector. The majority of these were involved in cross-border trading and foreign currency dealing. In 2005, the government embarked on Operation *Murambatsvina* (Operation Cleanup and Restore Order) in which shacks and other buildings which had been constructed without following the city council's laid down regulations were pulled down. Most urban people were homeless and had to go back to rural areas, thereby putting more pressure on the already limited resources like land in rural areas. It is against this background that the FTLRP was implemented.

Conclusion

From a historical perspective there is no doubt that Zimbabwe's land problems are rooted in the racial land allocation policy practiced by the settler governments where white settlers were given fertile productive land while Africans were driven to poor unproductive reserves. The disparities in land allocation and settlement set the stage for the land conflicts in Zimbabwe. These disparities formed the basis for land reform and redistribution as discussed in the next chapter.