

It is one of the purposes of this article to test the validity of the assumption of an interaction between economic base and superstructure in explaining the historical development of Rhodesia, and in interpreting recent political events there. To this end the economic base of the Rhodesian social system before World War II is analyzed and related to the coexisting set of socio-political events and attitudes. In and after World War II external stimulants induced a process of development which altered the economic base and saw the emergence of an African proletariat and a manufacturing capitalist class. But this process of development was subsequently interrupted because of the resistance of those classes who owe their economic and social status to the superstructure of the old production relations. In the light of this analysis some conclusions about the present political conjuncture are drawn.

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The Political Economy of Rhodesia

The most important single element determining the nature of economic and political development in Southern Rhodesia, was the British South Africa Company's overestimation at the end of the 19th century of its mineral resources, and the persistence of this overestimation for roughly 15 years. The reasons behind such a misconception can be partly detected in the political interruptions which characterized the early period of colonization (Jameson Raid, Matabele and Mashona rebellions, Boer War). The costs incurred in the meantime increased the stake of the Company in the country and led to additional heavy development investment particularly in railways. The over valuation became apparent when, eventually, the Rhodesian gold fields failed to yield

deposits comparable to those of South Africa. For example, even in 1910 against a profit of close to £7 million from the eleven leading Johannesburg gold mines, the ten leading Rhodesian mines yielded a profit of only £614,000. Large-scale workings were uneconomic because the deposits were scattered and the ore itself often of a low quality.

The desire to recover the original heavy outlays induced the Chartered Company to foster the formation of a white rural bourgeoisie which, by developing the country would raise the value of its assets in the area—viz. the railway system, the mine claims, and especially land.

Settlement gathered momentum after 1902 when small workings of mine claims on a royalty basis were extended. 'The influx of peoples, European and African, to the mining camps brought about a derivative demand for other products. Between 1901 and 1911 the European population doubled from 11,000 to over 23,000. Farmers began to settle and to feed the growing population and commercial undertakings became established in the growing towns of Salisbury and Bulawayo.'¹ Thus a cumulative process was started leading to a class structure which crystallized during the depression of the 1930's.

The White Rural Bourgeoisie

Within this class structure the white rural bourgeoisie was the foundation of the capitalist sector of the economy. This bourgeoisie consisted largely of both owner-workers of small and medium-sized mines and farmers who were economically committed to the development of the country. This *national* character of the white rural bourgeoisie, even at that time, distinguished Southern Rhodesia from practically all other African colonial territories north of the Limpopo and South of the Sahara, where exploitation of resources was carried out by large-scale *international* capitalism. In these other territories, where exploitation was based on large-scale mining or plantation or monopoly trade, capitalist interests in the economy were not permanent but lasted until, for example, deposits were exhausted or the raw material was substituted in the industrial process overseas or some more economic source of supply was found.

In inter-war Rhodesia about a third of the Europeans gainfully occupied belonged to the rural bourgeoisie, but to assess the full strength of this class, it is important to take into account the would-be agriculturalists. In fact 'even the civil servant, business and professional man, miner or railway employee looked forward to retiring to a plot of land.'² International capitalism was represented mainly by the British South Africa Company which, apart from its control over the railways, the bulk of gold production and coal mining, also owned land in part exploited for productive purposes (maize, cattle, citrus, etc). In accordance with its interest in encouraging the growth of the white rural bourgeoisie, it also experimented with new crops.

¹ *Report of the Urban African Affairs Commission*. Salisbury 1958.

² R. Gray: *The Two Nations*. London, 1960. p. 13.

Large estates had been given to companies and syndicates for certain interests acquired by the British South Africa Company.³ Other big companies were already dominating asbestos and chrome mining.⁴ Control over tobacco production was exercised indirectly through monopsonistic practices by the United Tobacco Company which, in Huggins' view, 'was aiming at becoming the country's sole tobacco buyer, and managed to draw the best experts out of the government service'. A third class consisted of craftsmen engaged in manufacturing, whose activity was totally dependent on the rural bourgeoisie and big international capital, mainly the British South Africa Company. It was typically a petty bourgeoisie and, indeed, the Colony's official Year Book of 1932 does not even mention the manufacturing industry.

White Wage-Workers

Much more significant was the class of white wage-workers formed by artisans, semi-skilled workers, foremen, clerical workers, administrative employees, etc. Demand for their labour was concentrated in mining, transport (mainly railways) and service activities (civil service especially). It is important to notice that, unlike South Africa, or Algeria, their settlement was a *consequence of*, and did not precede, capitalist development in the country. Therefore they had to be attracted by the offer of high wages, and with their skills they brought union organizing abilities. This phasing of white settlement and capitalist development is at the root of the absence of 'poor-white-ism' in Southern Rhodesia. This class of white wage-worker, together with the white petty bourgeoisie, i.e. handicraftsmen, shopkeepers and small employers in agriculture and mining, already in the pre-war period constituted the bulk of the European population in Southern Rhodesia.

Africans

The Africans were still essentially a class of self-employed rural cultivators. The African wage workers, the African middle-class and petty bourgeoisie⁵ were merely appendages of the peasantry rather than independent classes. Land was not a saleable commodity but each adult had rights to its use. The system of cultivation involved a form of land rotation whereby it was used until its fertility was diminished and then abandoned and left to recover until fertility was restored. Within the peasantry some division and hence specialization of labour could be observed.⁶ The role of men was to regulate the community's relationship with animals (tending cattle and hunting) and to provide development works such as bush clearance and building huts. The women's role on the other hand consisted of routine tasks: sowing, weeding, threshing, fetching water, preparing food and making beer. Communal

³ M. Yudelman: *Africans on the Land*. London. 1964. p. 141.

⁴ W. J. Barber: *The Economy of British Central Africa*. London. 1961. p. 119–22. and L. H. Gann and M. Gelfand: *Huggins of Rhodesia*. London. 1964. p. 175.

⁵ Middle-class and Bourgeoisie (or capitalist class) are distinguished by the fact that the former consists of white-collar employees or self-employed professional men whereas the latter is formed by employers of labour for the purpose of profit. The members of the petty bourgeoisie are characterized by the fact that though employers of labour they themselves provide part of the manual labour.

⁶ M. Yudelman. *op. cit.*, p. 12–13. 132–133. Barber, *op. cit.* p. 46.

ties were very strong⁷ and when the peasant left to seek wage employment he left his family behind and kept close links (through a flow of goods, cash or occasional labour) with the peasantry to which he belonged and meant to return, even after several years of absence. At the same time the size and number of holdings under cultivation within the rural areas contracted and expanded as the wage labourers left or returned to their wards. Thus, given this security in land tenure, we cannot, strictly speaking, refer to the African wage-workers of the 1930's as a proletariat.⁸

On the other hand the African middle class and rural (petty) bourgeoisie were numerically and economically insignificant. For example, by 1930, i.e. before the Land Apportionment Act was introduced, Africans had managed to acquire only 45,000 acres in the open market while Europeans had purchased about 31,000,000 acres.⁹ The reasons for the failure of these classes to emerge are a consequence of the class structure itself and therefore they will be dealt with at a later stage.

To sum up: we can discern five main classes in pre-war Rhodesia. There were (a) the white rural bourgeoisie operating in mining and agriculture, national in character; (b) large-scale international capitalism controlling transport (railways) and power (coal) and engaged in primary production and speculation in land; (c) the white wage-workers whose entrance into the economy followed and did not precede the capitalist development of the country; (d) the white petty bourgeoisie operating in all sectors of the economy but especially trade; (e) the African peasantry and wage-earners.

Political Implications of Pre-World War II Economic Base

The key to understanding the outcome of the struggle for political power in the period under discussion, is the different degree of class consciousness—that is the awareness of their own interests, displayed by the various classes. While the classes within the European section of the population were characterized by a remarkable degree of class consciousness, particularly in periods of economic depression, the Africans were not. In a scattered peasantry, whose economic conditions had not yet notably worsened, and which still used the traditional mode of production based on kinship relations, rather than impersonal market relations, class loyalty could not possibly substitute tribal loyalty. 'In

⁷ *Report of the Mangwende Reserve Commission of Enquiry*. Salisbury 1961. pp. 18. 37.

⁸ By proletariat is here understood the class of modern wage labourers who, having no means of production of their own, are reduced to selling their labour power in order to live. This definition is however, too broad and must be qualified to exclude the middle-class. Such a distinction is unnecessary, and indeed impossible, at a high level of abstraction when labour is defined as a homogeneous quantity, i.e. as abstract labour. In the present analysis however, this would be an oversimplification preventing a correct assessment of the class structure. The proletariat will therefore include only manual and semi-skilled labour. The distinction has its rationale in the fact that the middle class sells its labour in a seller's market, or at any rate in conditions less unfavourable to the seller than is the case for the proletariat.

⁹ Gann and Gelfand. *op. cit.* p. 79.

Mashonaland . . . the small and broken tribes, scattered and restricted to their separate and distant reserves, were prevented from developing any cohesion or a wider outlook, while in Matabeleland the only rallying point of national feeling—the family of Lobengula—was becoming . . . more a family and sentimental affair than a national aspiration'.¹⁰ At the same time the wage workers still belonged to the peasantry and furthermore their incessant movements 'from job to job, from location to kraal, from the Protectorates to the Union' prevented them from 'developing, as a community, any corporate independence, initiative and self-respect'¹¹ It is true that protest movements were already appearing in the 1920's but either they were concerned with the status of the negligible nucleus of educated Africans or they were vague and ill-directed and disappeared as soon as they were faced by official repression. In consequence the African masses were politically inert, passive and hence virtually powerless. The only signs of a class struggle were therefore to be seen within the European section of the population. The rather mild character of such a struggle can be ascribed precisely to the political inertia and passiveness of the large majority of the population which created the possibility of a deal between the different interests of the white classes.

White Coalition

The class structure sketched above obviously could lead to a coalition of all white classes national in character (i.e. rural bourgeoisie, wage-workers and petty bourgeoisie, whose interests were compatible, if not identical) in opposition to international capitalism; the conflict being mainly focused on the issues of overhead capital expansion and monopolistic practices. This is, in fact, what happened. Two stages of political evolution can be discerned. At first the community of interests of the Chartered Company and the rural bourgeoisie materialized in an ambitious programme of investment and in legislation aimed at obtaining labour from the indigenous population. The latter included (a) the expropriation of land while encouraging the dispossessed peasantry to remain where they were as tenants, their rent being commuted for labour; (b) a hut tax which virtually compelled the adult African males to spend between one and three months a year in wage-employment, and (c) a Pass Law intended to direct labour where it was wanted.¹² Labour could have been expanded in three ways: (a) through a system of forced labour; (b) by lowering the opportunity cost of the peasantry, i.e. by progressively reducing its overall productivity; and (c) by means of the proletarianization of the peasants. Alternative (c) however, runs against the other interest in limiting competition from Africans, since the proletarianization of the peasantry would bring about the emergence of a black agrarian bourgeoisie bound to compete on the markets of produce and of factors of production. Probably more important is the consideration that, by preserving the traditional system of land tenure, wages could be kept lower in the long run, since part of the real cost of the means for the subsistence of the migrant workers' families would be borne by the peasantry. In fact, forced labour was the solution relied upon at this stage.

¹⁰ Gray: *op. cit.* p. 159.

¹¹ Gray: *op. cit.* p. 269.

¹² C. Leys: *European Politics in Southern Rhodesia*. Oxford 1959. p. 10.

With World War I the economic power of the national bourgeoisie and white wage-workers *vis-à-vis* international capitalism had grown stronger. Hostilities and their aftermath had produced a widespread shortage of skilled white labour and of world supplies of raw materials. This relative strength lasted throughout the 1920's and by the time the depression of the 1930's had set in, the coalition of the white national classes had managed to obtain a good share of political power. A decisive step toward greater national control was the achievement of responsible government as opposed to amalgamation with the Union of South Africa. This latter course was, according to Gann and Gelfand, favoured by international capitalism because of the reliability of Smuts as an upholder of Imperial interests.

Responsible Government

Responsible government merely meant a greater share of power for the national white classes and by no means their undisputed rule. Economic dependence on foreign capital forced the settlers' government to adopt middle of the road policies, compromising between the interests of the national bourgeoisie and white workers on the one hand and of international capitalism on the other. The result was that these conflicts fell into the background and that greater national control over legislative power found expression in an institutional framework strongly biased in favour of the interests of white national classes, which would regulate future class relations. This is reflected in the legislation passed before World War II (especially in the 1930's when the depression stiffened the class consciousness of the white classes) to regulate the supply of labour, the reservation of produce markets, government expenditure, monopsonistic practices and the expansion of overhead capital.

Though the railway system and coal supply remained under the control of the British South Africa Company, the Government took important steps in other spheres to provide basic facilities for the economic development of the country in line with the class interests of the national bourgeoisie and white workers. Government intervention increased remarkably and moved in two directions; expansion of overhead capital and strengthening of the bargaining power of the national bourgeoisie on the raw materials market. Public works, especially in road building, were carried out on a large scale; several state enterprises were founded in the 1930's and early 1940's, including the Electricity Supply Commission power stations, the Rhodesian Iron and Steel Commission foundries and mills, and the Cotton Industry Board mills. Raw materials processing plants (e.g. a roasting plant for processing low grade ores and the establishment of a Sugar Industry Board) and marketing organizations were also set up. A side effect of these developments was a reduced economic dependence on international monopolistic interests. More direct steps were however taken to strengthen the bargaining power of the white farmers *vis-à-vis* the United Tobacco Company. The Tobacco Marketing Act (1936), by limiting competition among growers, attempted to replace the monopsonistic market with a kind of bilateral monopoly. Whether the attempt was successful is a different matter. It is interesting that in 1943, seven years after the im-

plementation of the act, the Southern Rhodesian Finance Minister still maintained that the price of leaf was controlled by powerful interests outside the Colony.¹³

The Land Apportionment Act

More significant was the legislation passed to ensure an expanding supply of labour and to divide the economy into non-competing racial groups. This was achieved by a series of legislative measures and finally by the Land Apportionment Act. This Act put a definite limit to the land available for African permanent settlement and in consequence made necessary the transformation of the traditional system of cultivation from shifting to continuous cultivation. The change was also encouraged by the Government which 'centralized' the African rural areas, i.e. divided them up into permanent arable and permanent grazing land. Given the techniques employed by the peasantry and the type of soil allocated to them, this move from shifting to continuous cultivation produced progressive soil erosion¹⁴ and thus decreasing productivity of African land. However, since the criteria employed for allocating land to Africans was an average acreage per family rather than income off that acreage, the progressive decreases in the productivity of land were tantamount to a progressive decrease in the overall productivity of the peasantry. Thus a built-in trend of decreasing peasant productivity was established, which would ensure an expanding supply of labour. Apart from these long-term implications, the Land Apportionment Act provided the European farmers with a pool of labour straight away. This was achieved by allowing a European farmer to enter into an agreement 'whereupon a native or his family shall be permitted to occupy a portion of such land under condition that he supply labour to such owner or occupier'. Similarly the hut tax guaranteed a steady flow of labour from the tribal areas. Furthermore as time went by and contacts with the money economy increased, new needs were felt (especially for education and clothes) altering the means of subsistence.¹⁵ In consequence the demand for cash was itself growing and, given the limitations on the production of cash crops a further element was at work to expand labour supply.

The distribution of the total African labour supply between the different capitalist sectors on the other hand, was not left to the law of supply and demand but was also legislated for, mainly through the Native Registration Act (1936). This Act tightened up the Pass Law and effectively contributed to the maintenance of a wage structure whereby the white farmers constantly paid unskilled labour lower wage rates than other employers.¹⁶

¹³ Gann and Gelfand. *op. cit.* pp. 175–76.

¹⁴ For the effects of continuous cultivation over African agriculture, see K. Brown: *Land in Southern Rhodesia*. London 1959. pp. 6–10. Also *Second Report of the Select Committee on Resettlement of Natives*.

¹⁵ It is therefore assumed that a historical and social element (besides a physical element) enters into the determination of what is socially accepted as subsistence income and consumption. For a discussion of the meaning of 'Subsistence' see Maurice Dobb: *Wages*. Cambridge, 1959.

¹⁶ Recruitment of labour outside Southern Rhodesia was certainly one of the major factors in determining both the rise and distribution among sectors of the total African labour force.

The second implication of land apportionment was to be the division of the economy into noncompeting racial groups. Racial competition could potentially take place between (a) white agrarian bourgeoisie and African peasantry; (b) white and black bourgeoisie in both the produce and the labour markets; (c) white and black petty bourgeoisie in retail trade and (d) white and black wage-workers in the skilled labour market. In restricting competition in these markets the Land Apportionment Act drew the general lines whereas more specialized legislation tightened the restrictions in the individual spheres.

Reduction of African Competitiveness

The competitiveness of the peasantry on the produce markets was restricted in a number of ways. In the first place the Africans were confined to the poorer land resources of the country. Secondly the conversion of part of the peasantry into tenant-labourers inevitably reduced the marketable surplus. Thirdly, the same effect resulted from the decreasing productivity of African agriculture. Fourthly, the clear separation of land between Africans and Europeans made it possible to direct capital expenditure in roads, dams, etc, so as to widen the differential in overall productivity of European and African agriculture. These were indirect checks on African competition. At the same time more direct steps were taken in order to discourage African sales through discriminatory price policy (e.g. Maize Control Act of 1931).

Competition from an African rural bourgeoisie was potentially much more dangerous. Its emergence was accordingly prevented or at least contained within well-defined limits. This was achieved by preserving the traditional system, whereby land was not a saleable commodity in the African areas. Native Purchase Areas, where Africans could hold land in individual right, were set aside, but the African rural bourgeoisie was nevertheless bound to remain negligible. For land in the Native Purchase Areas was to be allocated by the Government and thus the formation and growth of the African bourgeoisie could be indirectly controlled by the very class which feared its competition. However, the total land to be allocated constituted only 8 per cent of the total land areas of the country and it was generally located even farther away from markets, railway lines and main roads, than that of the traditional peasantry. Furthermore, though land once allocated was owned individually, there were many limitations to its transferability, such as maximum size of holdings and sales to Europeans. Among other things this meant that the extension of credit (which could possibly come only from European sources) to African farmers was hampered and therefore a constant lack of finance was bound to hold back their development. In other words, quite apart from direct discriminatory practices in granting credit, the preservation of the traditional system of land tenure prevented the consolidation of land-holdings so that administrative difficulties made credit extension to Africans impracticable.

Interracial competition was also prevented in trading activities since the Land Apportionment Act, by prohibiting African ownership or lease of premises in the European areas (which included all towns and cities) banished African traders to the poorest markets, implicitly

preventing their growth. Furthermore under the Native Registration Act of 1936 mentioned above, even hawkers were restricted to the African locations: only sales of curios, baskets, and similar articles were allowed in the towns whereas sale of such goods as chicken, eggs, butter etc. was prohibited.¹⁷

White Wage-Workers' Consolidation

The greater political power achieved by the white wage-workers, through their coalition with the national bourgeoisie, also found expression in a number of Acts and policies which aimed at improving their social and economic conditions, and at perpetuating the scarcity of skills on which their bargaining and political strength was based. Under the Industrial Conciliation Act (1934) and its Amendment of 1937, machinery was set up for settling disputes in practically all industries employing white labour. Agreements between employers and employees in the Industrial Councils were to become legally binding in the industry concerned. The Act explicitly excluded African workers from its definition of employee, but all the same wage rates and conditions of employment negotiated by the Industrial Councils were applicable to skilled white and black workers alike. In practice this meant that Africans were debarred from climbing the industrial ladder since no white employer would have employed an African if, for the same wage, he could obtain a European. Even more significant was the provision which empowered the Industrial Councils to regulate the conditions of apprenticeship. This provision created a situation strikingly similar to that governing competition between the white and black agrarian bourgeoisies. In other words, here too, remarkable power was given to a white class (wage-workers) to control the rise of African competition. Thus the white workers came to control the scarcity of their own skills. This scarcity was also guaranteed by the Government immigration policy which was, especially in the 1930's, highly selective and against any large-scale immigration of whites.

This body of legislation and policies was well summed up in the prevailing ideology of the period: the doctrine of 'parallel development' or of the 'two-pyramids policy' according to which inter-racial competition ought to be prevented. Having shown how the economic base has produced a certain superstructure we now turn to deal with the effects of the superstructure on the economic base.

War and Post-war Economic Development

The desire for industrialization and the progressive decrease of the peasant's productivity, implicit in the institutional framework produced by the class structure of the 1930's, were inconsistent with each other. For a necessary condition of industrialization was an expanding internal demand, whereas the deterioration of peasant productive capacity inevitably led to the opposite—an internal demand which, if not stagnant, grew at a negligible rate. In fact a growing population combined with constant *per capita* income in the subsistence sector, simply means

¹⁷ Gray. *op. cit.* p. 154.

greater subsistence output rather than expanding aggregate demand for capitalist production. Thus, notwithstanding increased government intervention to foster economic growth, the system lacked an *internal* force sufficient to start development. The result was stagnation and in fact in the 1930's, after nearly two decades of self-government, the country still had a typically colonial economy with no industrial sector apart from the railway workshop and small firms engaged in wholly subsidiary activities.

There was a second inherent contradiction in the institutional framework. The preservation of the traditional African system of land tenure was meant to prevent the emergence of a proletariat which, nonetheless, was an inevitable consequence of the decreasing productivity of the peasants combined with labour migration.

Once the process of deterioration of African agriculture had started, it became cumulative since the lowered and continuously decreasing opportunity cost of the peasantry in the traditional sector was bound to force an ever-growing number of men into wage employment. This was true, even though the average *per capita* income in the traditional sector remained constant, for two reasons: (a) the 'effort-price' of that constant income increased, by extension of the acreage under cultivation; (b) a constant average conceals important variations from area to area. Furthermore the process was accelerated by the fact that cattle was the most important of the few forms of investment open to Africans, so that the population explosion was accompanied by remarkable increases in the cattle population which worsened pressure on the land.

Thus in the long run the savings of the wage-workers would not correspond, in the traditional sector, to an increased productivity of the peasantry that would make the production of a surplus above subsistence possible. Therefore when the limits of land available had been reached, the attempt by wage labourers to realize their 'savings' would be frustrated, their security would be lost and a proletariat arise.

The upshot of this was that the institutional framework established in the 1930's, while it could not lead endogenously to economic growth, was unable to prevent the formation of a proletariat.

World War II

The lack of internal demand represented a brake on industrialization and development, and the progressive decrease of overall peasant productivity increasingly worsened this obstacle. World War II was the external stimulant which more than offset the hindrance and started economic growth in Southern Rhodesia after the stagnation of the 1930's. Goods previously imported became practically unavailable, thus creating a demand for local industries; chrome and asbestos assumed strategic importance; world shortage of agricultural produce provided a rapidly growing outlet for farmers' output. More specifically an air training scheme was implemented in the country, in association with the British Government, whereby Southern Rhodesia had to supply air stations, quarters, land and buildings. 'The air training

scheme proved a major economic boom. Farmers and industrial firms suddenly found an almost insatiable market, and Guest¹⁸ calculated that Imperial expenditure on the scheme alone almost equalled the indirect benefit which the country derived from its entire gold-mining industry.¹⁹ This explosion in demand could have led *merely* to inflation as it did in many other underdeveloped countries. Instead, it was under these circumstances that the *national* character of the white bourgeoisie and white workers which controlled the government became important. Contrary to what happened in the economies of the 'enclave' type, controlled by *international* capitalism with no interest in the development of the country, the Government in Southern Rhodesia could intervene both through direct anti-inflationary controls and by setting up actual iron and steel production and cotton spinning plants which made the growth of secondary industry possible. Though the shortage of man-power and especially of capital goods prevented the capitalist sector of the economy from taking full advantage of the high war demand, it was during this time that overhead capital was developed and resources were being accumulated which could finance future developments.²⁰

By the end of the war the limitations on the expansion of the internal market (the institutional framework) had not been removed and therefore a slump would have ensued were it not for new external stimulants. The world shortage of raw materials which followed the war was accompanied by a dollar shortage. Asbestos and chrome were both dollar-savers and demand for them increased considerably. More important still was the role played by tobacco production which, since the war, was greatly stimulated by the limitation of dollar expenditure by the United Kingdom: the amount of tobacco produced tripled between 1945 and 1958, its value rising fourfold. This remarkable increase in production was accomplished through an increase in the same period in the number of producers from just over 1,000 to 2,669²¹ and was the main factor behind the high rate of immigration in the post-war years.²² The influx of Europeans in turn created demand for goods and services, particularly housing, and the number of Africans in wage employment rose from 254,000 in 1936 and 377,000 in 1946 to more than 600,000 in 1956, thus keeping up internal demand for manufactured and agricultural products. These effects induced by the increased demand for tobacco and other raw materials account for the permanence of a sustained rate of growth between the end of the war and the late 1940s. By then an additional external stimulant came into operation: the outflow of capital from the Union of South Africa and the United Kingdom.²³ In the Union the *national* bourgeoisie and white workers had seized power in 1948 and *international* capitalism, scared by the possibilities of

¹⁸ Guest was the Head of Department of Air, set up in 1940.

¹⁹ Gann and Gelfand. *op. cit.* p. 153.

²⁰ C. H. Thompson and H. W. Woodruff: *Economic Development in Rhodesia and Nyasaland*. London, 1954. p. 20.

²¹ Barber, *op. cit.* p. 131.

²² The yearly average of European net immigration, which was less than 800 between 1921 and 1946, shot up to more than 7,000 in 1946-56.

²³ For the reasons for, and characteristics of, the outflow of capital from the United Kingdom see M. Barrat Brown: *After Imperialism*. London, 1963. chs. 7-8.

nationalization of means of production in the interests of the new ruling classes reacted by looking for alternative outlets for its investment. In fact, 'the City . . . from about 1947, was increasingly inclined to channel money directly into Rhodesia instead of routing funds via Johannesburg'²⁴ and 'considerable sums formerly earmarked for investment in the Union have been placed in Southern Rhodesia . . . to escape extremist Nationalist policies, or . . . hedging against the possibility of later migration under conditions where capital movements might prove more difficult.'²⁵ Southern Rhodesia, with its developed overhead capital, growing industries and European immigration could provide the alternative outlet for international capitalist investment. Thus, foreign investment in Southern Rhodesia, which amounted to £13.5 million in 1947, was more than double that amount in 1949 and reached £50.7 million by 1951.²⁶

The overall results of this remarkable war and post-war economic development of Rhodesia can be gauged by the fact that the net domestic product at current prices had risen more than ninefold from £27.4 million in 1939 to £251.1 million in 1961, and that fixed capital formation in the period 1946–61 was at a yearly average of more than £50 million.²⁷ However, even more significant changes occurred in the class structure of the economy, which we must now discuss.

Changes in the Economic Base Since World War II

From 1901 to 1950 the productivity of the peasantry had been constantly declining so that the 'effort price' of maintaining a constant subsistence income had been continuously growing. This helps to explain why the volume of African employment continued to expand between 1930 and 1945 notwithstanding the fact that real wages steadily declined, as shown, for example by Barber. The formation of a proletariat, implicit in this trend, was accelerated by the active implementation of the Land Apportionment Act. This was started as soon as the squatting of the African peasantry on unalienated land encroached upon European cultivation, but especially when more land had to be provided for the post-war white settlement and tobacco cultivation. In 1948 close to 300,000 Africans were either residing on European land or were occupying land within the areas marked for European use and in the post-war years 85,000 African families were shifted in organized expulsions.²⁸ This settlement was accompanied by large destocking programmes which curtailed the main form of investment open to Africans.

Declining real wages, deterioration of peasant productivity, restriction of land available for African use, curtailment of African investment

²⁴ Gann and Gelfand. *op. cit.* p. 212.

²⁵ L. Tow. *The Manufacturing Economy of Southern Rhodesia* (mimeographed). Washington, 1960.

²⁶ Thompson and Woodruff, *op. cit.* p. 173.

²⁷ Central Statistics Office; *Report on the Results of the National Income and Balance of Payments, of Northern Rhodesia, Nyasaland and Southern Rhodesia, 1954–63*, Salisbury 1964. Also Thompson and Woodruff, *op. cit.* p. 173.

²⁸ Second Report, *op. cit.* pp. 13, 51.

—all these combined to make the wage-workers realize not only that their living conditions were constantly worsening but also that their savings were illusory and so was their 'old age insurance'. Frustration and insecurity ensued and with them the consciousness of being wage-workers for good—that is, of forming a proletariat. 'I have grown up under the white people. . . My wish is that . . . we get *better treatment in the way of wages*. Today I am getting older and I have nothing. *I have not saved anything*. I might die and not know how my children are going to manage.'²⁹ [Italics added G.A.] With this new consciousness came a wave of strikes and political activities on a completely new scale.³⁰ The emergence of a proletariat did not mean that the solidarity between wage-workers and peasants was diminishing. On the contrary the interests of the two classes largely overlapped, for the decreasing productivity of the peasantry was at the root of the impoverishment of both classes. Unrest spread from the towns to the rural areas where grievances over destocking and the organized expulsions provided a ready demand for political leadership.³¹ This solidarity of interests stemmed also from the fact that the transformation into proletarians was gradual and did not involve *all* wage-workers. In fact when in the early 1950's the Government, now pursuing a policy of labour stabilization, tried to implement the Land Husbandry Act, the class consciousness of both peasants and proletarians gathered momentum.³²

Emergence of a Manufacturing Capitalist Class

A second major change in the class structure was the emergence of a manufacturing as opposed to a rural capitalist class. The contribution to national income of manufacturing rose from 9 per cent in the late 1930's to about 15 per cent in the early 1950's to over 18 per cent in the early 1960's. Even more important was the fact that the growth was matched by the concentration of production as the industry passed from the small family-shop stage to the large scale, mechanized, corporate-owned factory. The proportion of firms whose gross output exceeded £50,000 was more than a third in 1957 but accounted for less than 8 per cent in 1938 and 'while the typical industrial unit is growing in size, there is also a growing concentration of industrial output in the largest units, as experienced by the fact that 85 firms with gross outputs of £250,000 and over, comprising only 9 per cent of the total number, accounted for 67.8 per cent of the gross values of manufacturing output in the territory.'³³

The labour requirements, both qualitative and quantitative, of this sector came to differ sharply not only from those of pre-war manufacturing but also of mining and agriculture. With mass production and mechanical aids, complex jobs could be divided into simple operations. Hence new possibilities of substituting relatively unskilled labour for

²⁹ Evidence to the Howman Committee (1943).

³⁰ Gray. *op. cit.* 283–90.

³¹ J. Van Velsen: 'Trends in African Nationalism in Southern Rhodesia'. *Kroniek van Afrika*. Universitaire Pers Leiden. June 1964, pp. 146–7.

³² A leader of the African Nationalist movement, G. Nyandoro, is reported to have said that the Act had become 'the best recruiter the African Nationalists ever had'.

³³ Tow. *op. cit.* p. 17.

artisans arose. On the other hand, with greater capitalization of production, specialization and hence stability of labour became relatively more important than large supplies of cheap migrant labour. Demand for non-manual labour increased more rapidly than demand for manual labour.

Outlets for Production

In order to gauge the interests of the manufacturing class, the outlets for its production must also be considered. As we should expect, the bulk of manufacturing has been concentrated in heavy construction materials, processing of local food production, and low quality consumer goods. Production of heavy construction materials was stimulated by large expenditure in overhead capital and housing. Production of low quality consumer goods has increasingly come to depend on the *growth of the purchasing power of the African peasants and wage-workers*. Its development can be explained by import substitution, European immigration and the increases in African wage employment, but its long-run prospects are being hampered mainly by the institutional framework which had led to a continuous decrease in the peasantry's productivity. Processing of local farm production was stimulated by the expansion of the European market brought about by post-war immigration and import substitutions. The stabilization of the European population since 1960 (the natural increase has hardly offset net emigration) and especially the low income elasticity of demand for food has been seriously limiting expansion in this field. African food consumption on the other hand 'is dominated by the cheapest foodstuffs: mealie meal, low quality meat, dried and fresh fish, bread and sugar, account for roughly 80 per cent of the food outlays of African families.'³⁴ Hence, for this sector too, the *growth of the purchasing power of the Africans* and their rapid proletarianization, and especially urbanization, became a condition for expansion.

Though the emergence of a proletariat and of manufacturing capitalism represent the major changes in the pre-war class structure, important changes *within* mining and agrarian capitalism have also occurred. Three main changes can be observed; the relative decline and increased concentration of the mining industry; the economic strengthening of the agrarian bourgeoisie; the shift of emphasis from the internal to the external market for agricultural produce.

The contribution to national income of mining declined from over 25 per cent in 1938 to about 10 per cent in the early 1950's and about 5 per cent in the early 1960's. This general trend conceals significant internal variations. Gold output has decreased, mainly 'because of the static dollar price of gold in relation to rising cost of production',³⁵ while production of asbestos, chrome and coal have shown a steady rise since the war. The fact that mining of these three minerals has been dominated by four large firms, by itself accounts for the increased concentration of mining in general. Furthermore in gold production the

³⁴ Barker, *op. cit.* p. 171.

³⁵ Thompson and Woodruff, *op. cit.* p. 154.

'small-workers' were eliminated by rising mining costs so that the total number of gold workings dropped from over 1750 in 1935 to 700 in 1947 and 300 in 1956. This greater concentration was accompanied by the employment of more modern techniques and greater capitalization which reduced the dependence of the industry on a growing supply of labour.

Opposite trends appeared in European agriculture where the total value of output (at current prices) in 1958 was tenfold that of 1937. As mentioned earlier, war-time production and increased export of tobacco was the decisive factor behind this spectacular increase. Tobacco has become since the late 1940's Southern Rhodesia's most important single export commodity and therefore the major foreign exchange earner. Since the growth of the tobacco industry was accomplished through an influx of new producers, the number of firms increased.

The other significant change has been the shift from maize to tobacco as the main crop. Two important implications of this change must be made explicit. In the first place the emphasis was shifted from internal to external market, *thus reducing the agrarian bourgeoisie's dependence on, and interest in, the industrialization of the country*. In the second place, mechanization has been held back by the fact that tobacco growing demands more labour-intensive methods than maize, so that agrarian capitalism remained on the whole more dependent on unskilled labour than mining and manufacturing.

International Capitalism

Significant changes have also occurred in the relationships between national and international capitalism in Rhodesia. Before World War II the main foreign interests were centred around the appreciation of land values, the mineral rights and the railway. The mineral rights were bought by the Government in 1933, and the railway line in 1949. On the other hand, in the post-war period the interests of international capitalism came to involve practically every sector of the Rhodesian economy, non-agricultural industries in particular.

Within foreign capital, three main interests may be singled out: (a) interests connected with the Anglo American Corporation (AAC); (b) interests in primary production of large-scale foreign companies other than Anglo-American; and (c) interests of manufacturing firms.

(a) The interests connected with AAC are centred around four 'giant' corporations (Tanganyika Concessions, De Beers, British South Africa Company and AAC itself) which are united by interlocking holdings and directorships.³⁶ The wealth and power of the group is based on the exploitation of the mineral riches of South Africa, the Zambian Copperbelt and Katanga. Its interests in Rhodesia are subordinated to those of these other areas. It is probably right to assume that Anglo-American depends neither on British nor South African capitalism but is rather an

³⁶ *The Economist*. Oct. 7th 1966. p. 55. also J. Ziegler: *La Contre-Révolution en Afrique*. Paris, 1963.

'independent super-state', an economic empire centred in Southern and Central Africa (this is the reason for dealing with the group separately). Apart from the group's control over the extremely important coal supplies of the country, the Rhodesian economy has offered, particularly since the late 1940's, an outlet for investing the profits reaped in Zambia and to a certain extent (and for certain periods) in South Africa. In Rhodesia the group dominates coal and iron pyrites mining, ferro-chrome and cement industries, and together with RST controls iron and steel production (formerly a Government controlled enterprise) and the Argus Group which has practically the monopoly of the Rhodesian daily press.³⁷ Other major investments include citrus and sugar estates, forests, clay products, financial houses, etc.

(b) The other giant companies engaged in primary production in Southern Rhodesia are not locally based (i.e. on Southern Africa as a whole) and therefore their interests in the economy are less diversified and their profits generally flow overseas in a greater proportion. The Rhodesian (now Roan) Selection Trust (RST) is controlled by the American Metal Climax Co. and has no significant mining interests in Southern Rhodesia. The Trust operates in the Copperbelt and its participation with AAC in certain sectors of the economy is subsidiary.

Production of asbestos is dominated by the British company, Turner & Newall, which controls approximately 90 per cent of the territory's output, and also dominates the asbestos cement product industry.³⁸ Other examples of big foreign interests in primary production are Lonrho (gold mining, cattle and ownership of the oil pipe-line) and Forestal Land, Timber and Railways Company, one of the world's largest producers of tanning extracts, which through the subsidiary Rhodesian Wattle Company owns nearly all of the wattle acreage.³⁹ When account is taken of the monopsonistic practices in the purchase of tobacco, the general picture which emerges is one of a highly concentrated and to a great extent foreign-controlled primary production sector.

(c) The situation in manufacturing is similar. Well over one-third of the 50 largest British Manufacturers have direct⁴⁰ interests (subsidiaries and not merely sales organization) in Rhodesia. As a result the presence of 'giant corporations' can be observed in practically every sector of the Rhodesian manufacturing industry, with a relatively greater concentration of British capital in the first stages of production and South African capital at the other stages (including distribution).⁴¹

The overall control of foreign interests over the Rhodesian economy can to a certain extent be gauged by examining the results of a question-

³⁷ Tow. *op. cit.* p. 124. Ziegler. *op. cit.* p. 34. Also O. Guitand: *Les Rhodésies et le Nyasaland*. Paris, 1964. p. 60.

³⁸ Tow. *op. cit.* p. 50.

³⁹ *The Rhodesia Herald*. July 8th, 1964.

⁴⁰ The proportion of those who have direct *and* indirect interests (through South African subsidiaries) is certainly greater, but not easily ascertainable.

⁴¹ These are the conclusions I have tentatively reached from an examination of published material.

naire sent to companies operating in the Federation in 1960. The results from Southern Rhodesia (which covered over 65 per cent of the total profits earned in the country) show that two-thirds of the total recorded net operating profits accrued to companies not domestically controlled.⁴²

The New 'Centre of Gravity'

Meanwhile, economic development shifted the 'centre of gravity' within the *white* community from the petty bourgeoisie to the wage-worker. The concentration of ownership over mining and manufacturing resulted in the elimination of the craftsmen and 'small-workers' which was only partially compensated for by the increased number of shopkeepers.⁴³ On the other hand, wages and general welfare of the white wage-workers have improved considerably since the 1930's. This class has become one of the better paid working-classes of the world with average annual earnings well above £1,000 in the late 1950's. The main factor behind the trend, has been the high rate of development and capital accumulation maintained in Rhodesia during the war and post-war period, which kept the economy in a perennial state of over-full-employment in the non-manual and skilled-manual occupations. The result of this state of over-full-employment was the strong bargaining power of white workers, which put them in a position not only to obtain economic concessions, but also to resist any infringement, let alone the repeal, of the legislation passed in the 1930's. The entrance of Africans into skilled occupations was consequently hampered and the growth of an African petty bourgeoisie was prevented both by the institutional framework of the 1930's and by the increasing concentration of production in mining and industry, which was thus ill-suited to bring about the rise of an African artisan class. In agriculture on the other hand, though the decreasing importance of maize production reduced the resistance of European farmers to African sales in the home market, the African petty bourgeoisie of the Native Purchase Areas was blocked from taking advantage of the boom in export crops.⁴⁴ Furthermore their numerical increase was held back by the Government, the pretext being the lack of surveyors.⁴⁵

Class Interests

Given these changes in the class structure, what interests can be attributed to each class?

In the first place, there occurred the growth of an African proletariat and a greater political consciousness in the African population at large. This had many consequences. The pressure for higher wages, better, working conditions and greater investment in industrial training and African education increased; the opposition to an institutional framework which meant a decreasing productivity of the peasantry, grew stronger; the loss of security of land tenure was resisted, etc.

⁴² Report of *op. cit.* Table 4.

⁴³ For the pattern of the European employment in 1951 see (16, p. 81-82).

⁴⁴ Barber, *op. cit.* p. 27.

⁴⁵ Brown, *op. cit.* p. 23-24.

Secondly, this phase saw the rise of manufacturing capitalism (induced by a series of exogenous 'shocks') the growth of which was hampered by the decreasing productivity of the African peasantry.

Mass production and the high capital intensity of operations in this new sector meant a dwindling demand for unskilled migrant labour and a growing interest in a more stable labour force. The substitution of the traditional system of cultivation by African agrarian capitalism which would bring about both greater productivity of African agriculture and stabilization of the labour force thus suited the interests of manufacturing capitalism. *Greater competition* between African and European agriculture would inevitably follow such a substitution. The greater degree of capital intensity also meant that high-level man-power has become important in the cost structure of manufacturing; hence an interest in fostering *competition* between European and African skilled and non-manual labour, i.e. an interest in a growing African middle class and consequent weakening of the white workers' bargaining position. At the same time the manufacturing sector of the economy was still dependent on the market of the white Rhodesians. In other words manufacturing capitalism required for its expansion the relative worsening of living conditions of the very classes on which it still heavily depended.

Thirdly, the white agrarian bourgeoisie, having shifted from maize to tobacco production, had lost interest in industrialization and continued to require large supplies of cheap unskilled migrant labour. This further emphasizes the conflict of interests between white manufacturing and white agrarian capitalism.

Fourthly, there was a greater diversification and penetration of international capitalism in Southern Rhodesia. The interest of the giant foreign manufacturing companies overlap with those of manufacturing capitalism in general, but some important differences distinguished them from the interests of the corresponding national capitalist class. The big foreign companies engaged in primary production were even less interested in the country's industrialization than the agrarian national bourgeoisie. These big companies are specialized on a world scale in the exploitation of certain raw materials, so that what matters for their expansion is the growth of world demand for their products and this growth does not in any way depend on local development. Since they employ or can easily adopt more modern techniques and greater mechanization their expansion is less dependent on migrant labour than in the case of national agrarian capitalists. The interests of AAC and related companies, given their 'unique' position, lie somewhere between those of the other two categories of international capitalism, namely manufacturers and primary producers.

Lastly, there are some features which characterize foreign capitalists in general (whatever the nature of their activities) *vis-à-vis* the national bourgeoisie. Other things being equal, given their financial power, greater capital intensity and scale of operations, they are much less vulnerable to local competition. Secondly, their size and concentration give them a stronger bargaining position at Government level. Thirdly,

their common and all-pervading interest is to prevent 'nationalist' policies which might tamper with their local operations, irrespective of whether these policies are in favour of a national bourgeoisie, or a racial minority, or the majority of the population.

In conclusion, we can say that there is a certain coincidence of class interests between African middle class and African bourgeoisie on the one side and manufacturing capitalism on the other. But much more evident is the community of interests of the white agrarian (and petty) bourgeoisie and white wage-workers, focussed on preventing racial competition. On the other hand the interests of foreign capitalism engaged in primary production were drawn nearer to those of the manufacturing class by the emergence of the African proletariat and its external manifestations, which acquired a broader political significance from the rise of African nationalism throughout the continent.

Political Implications of the Changes in the Economic Base

The changes in the superstructure resulting from the altered class structure were epitomized by the shift from the ideology of the 'two pyramids' or separate development to one of 'racial partnership'; i.e. from non-competing racial groups to the 'colour-blind' law of supply and demand. Competition was to concern mainly the African middle-middle-class and bourgeoisie, since peasantry and proletariat were too weak to be able to compete with anybody but among themselves. The African middle class and bourgeoisie, as we have seen, had interests coincident with those of manufacturing capitalism and therefore their rise was to be fostered as industrialization proceeded.

As early as 1948, at the time of the African strikes and the emergence of the African proletariat, Huggins was led to think that 'we shall never do much with these people until we have established a native middle class'.⁴⁶ Later, in 1952, '*under the pressure of industrialization . . .* (he) quite deliberately thought of power in terms of social class, and aimed at a working alliance between the European ruling strata and the more prosperous Africans, bus-owners and master farmers, building contractors and senior employees. . . .'⁴⁷ We can trace two complementary interests underlying these passages: the need of an African middle class and bourgeoisie as a *requirement* for industrialization and as an 'insurance against the mass of Africans'. As a matter of fact the constant factor noticeable in Government policies during the 1950's, was the creation of an African middle class and bourgeoisie by inducing more inter-racial competition.

The institutional framework established in the 1930's no longer reflected the underlying class interests and in consequence a series of reforms were attempted by the Government.

⁴⁶ Gray. *op. cit.* p. 314.

⁴⁷ Gann and Gelfand. *op. cit.* pp. 224-25. Italics added.

Government Reforms

Since the early 1950's, under Huggins but especially Todd⁴⁸ and later Whitehead, there was a reversal of policies, whereby all restrictions on competition were increasingly questioned. In 1954 a Bill was introduced by the Government to give recognition to African Trade Unions; the Bill was referred to a Select Committee which after two years recommended an amendment to the Industrial Conciliation Act so as to include Africans in the definition of employee. Since the recommendation did not discriminate between the voting power of Europeans and Africans and sought to make all unions 'vertical' (i.e. a single union covering a whole industry), African-controlled unionism could become a possibility.⁴⁹

In African education the 'whole emphasis had changed from the slow, steady uplift of the villages . . . to the rapid creation and training of an *elite*'.⁵⁰ The number of teachers and pupils increased, between 1956 and 1959 by about 10 per cent each year; between 1954 and 1960 the number of pupils doubled and multi-racial University education was introduced.

Similarly, reforms were attempted in order to increase competition between Europeans and African agriculture. In the 1950's expenditure on African agriculture increased remarkably. 'In the nine years from 1941 to 1949 inclusive, expenditure on agriculture development is estimated to have been close to £2.5 million. In the following nine year period, 1950-58 inclusive, the level of expenditure increased very rapidly, totalling £18.8 million, a sixfold increase over the preceding nine years'⁵¹. Between 1948 and 1958 the first serious effort was made to introduce purely cash crops such as cotton and Turkish tobacco.⁵² Though a differential between the prices paid to Europeans and Africans remained, the lower prices were now paid in order to accumulate funds for the improvement of African agriculture. In 1961 a Select Committee recommended some purchase of European land for African use and the establishment of small unreserved areas where farmers of both races could buy land; and finally, at the congress of the United Federal Party, in October 1962, Whitehead pledged himself to repeal the Land Apportionment Act in case of electoral victory for his party.

These attempts to accelerate the promotion of an African middle class and bourgeoisie were matched by reforms of the electoral system to enfranchise these classes. This enfranchisement had a double purpose; in the first place it aimed at compensating the loss of votes by the white classes whose interests were bound to be encroached upon by the very emergence of the African middle class and bourgeoisie.⁵³ Secondly it

⁴⁸ It is significant that Todd obtained the premiership with the support of the 'Action Group' formed by business and professional men.

⁴⁹ Leys. *op. cit.* pp. 116-18.

⁵⁰ Gray. *op. cit.* p. 207.

⁵¹ Yudelman. *op. cit.* p. 159.

⁵² Yudelman. *op. cit.* p. 240.

⁵³ Leys. *op. cit.* p. 225-29.

aimed at preventing the latter from becoming 'agitators' by siding with the peasantry and the proletariat.⁵⁴

It remains to examine the political implications of the formation of the African proletariat. The problem here was the stabilization of the proletariat, because the high rate of turnover associated with migratory labour retarded specialization within the manufacturing sector. This stabilization, which as early as 1943 was deemed necessary by 'several industrialists'⁵⁵ had an urban and a rural aspect. In fact it implied the severing of the ties linking peasantry and proletariat, something which, in turn, had two implications. In the first place a rise in the minimum wages in urban areas and mining locations would become necessary in order to put the workers in a position to support, even at bare subsistence, their families in the towns. However, such a policy ran against the interests of the white agrarian bourgeoisie; in 1943 a senior official of the Native Affairs Department warned the Howman Committee, inquiring into the matter, that if a minimum wage was introduced in the towns 'you are bound to have repercussions amongst the farming community and today the farming community rules this country, so that flattens out the minimum wage straight away'.⁵⁶

The second implication of urban stabilization was that the traditional system of land tenure in the rural areas ought to be abandoned in order to remove the right of free access to land for urban Africans. Here too, the interests of manufacturing and white agrarian bourgeoisies conflicted. The interests of the former were voiced in the Legislative Assembly by Todd (at the time a Government back bencher); 'We do not want native peasants. We want the bulk of them working in the mines and farms and in the European areas and we could absorb them and their families'. . . If 100,000 families moved from the rural areas, 'we can begin to cope with what is left. . . and give each family 150 or 200 acres on a 99-year lease'.⁵⁷ In other words it was necessary to substitute an African agrarian bourgeoisie and proletariat for the peasantry but the change was bound to bring about greater competition for the European farmers and therefore conflicted with their class interests. The Land Husbandry Act (1951) represents a compromise between these conflicting interests. A money value was attached to farming rights which were granted to all individuals who were cultivators at the time. The rights expired on the individual's death and their transferability was limited. Thus the privilege of free access to land for urban Africans was removed, but at the same time the growth of an African agrarian bourgeoisie was prevented.

Failure of Capitalist Reforms

This wave of 'capitalist reforms' failed conspicuously. The amendment of the Industrial Conciliation Act, recommended by the Select Committee was not accepted, and the Bill which was finally enacted was much

⁵⁴ Leys. *op. cit.* p. 246.

⁵⁵ Gray. *op. cit.* p. 227.

⁵⁶ Gray. *op. cit.* p. 228.

⁵⁷ Gray. *op. cit.* p. 299.

less 'revolutionary'; neither were the recommendations of the 1961 Select Committee on Land Apportionment accepted. Though progress was made in African education it fell short of expectations and, particularly, of what was being done for Europeans. In agriculture more competition between Europeans and Africans had been introduced, but this was done in the less profitable markets.⁵⁸ Similarly, though Government expenditure in African agriculture had grown, a dual standard was still applied to the two racial communities.

The ruling United Federal Party (UFP) lost the December 1962 Election and the 'Land Apportionment Act' was therefore never repealed. This electoral defeat of the UFP was itself the consequence of another, possibly the major, failure of the reformist programme. This was the failure to achieve the aims pursued with the enfranchisement of the African middle class and petty bourgeoisie.

At the roots of this total failure, there were a number of inconsistencies inherent in the reforms themselves. First and foremost there was the fact that the new policies encroached upon the interests of those very classes on which manufacturing capitalism and its political counterpart still heavily relied, both economically and politically. As a consequence Government actions were continuously hampered by its dependence on the ruling Party's rank and file and on the electorate. Such a dependence explains the abortive nature of the reforms which, in turn, accounts for the failure to encourage the growth of a sizeable African middle class and bourgeoisie. The ensuing frustration induced these classes, condemned to remain a negligible economic force, to side with the peasantry and the proletariat whose grievances were also fostered by the contradictory policies of the 1950's.

A compromise between the conflicting interests of the white classes (of manufacturing and agrarian capitalism in particular) was attempted, as in the 1930's, at the expense of the Africans. The main example of this compromise is certainly the Land Husbandry Act. Labour stabilization was pursued through the stabilization of the peasantry, but, to guarantee the interests of the white farmers and workers no urban counterpart of the policy (such as guaranteeing the subsistence of the *family* of the workers in the towns) was envisaged. The 'deal' which might have been possible in the 1930's was bound, in the 1950's, to set up strong reactions on the part of the Africans whose political consciousness had greatly increased. In fact the reaction was such as to make the Government discontinue the implementation of the Act. On the other hand, the resistance to the implementation of the Act strengthened the African nationalist movement which was joined by the African bourgeoisie and middle class frustrated in their growth.⁵⁹

These developments within African ranks brought about firm acts of suppression on the part of the Government, and, at the same time,

⁵⁸ As mentioned earlier African producers were almost completely prevented from taking advantage of the boom in tobacco exports.

⁵⁹ For the political polarization of the 1950's in Southern Rhodesia, see Van Velsen. *op. cit.* pp. 143-54.

brought even closer the interests of manufacturing and international capitalism in accelerating the formation of an African middle class and bourgeoisie. When this 'acceleration' was attempted in the early 1960's, the result was a polarization of white workers, agrarian and petty bourgeoisie, around the reactionary Rhodesian Front Party which obtained power with the elections of December 1962.

Recent Political Developments

We have seen that in the 1930's a class structure which had its centre of gravity in a *national* agrarian bourgeoisie found expression in an institutional framework which meant (a) the division of the economy into largely non-competing racial groups, (b) a continuously decreasing productivity of the African peasantry, and (c) Governmental intervention to foster economic development through industrialization. The framework was internally inconsistent since a stagnant home demand for manufactures could not foster industrialization. It was also 'unstable' because of the formation of a proletariat which would alter the class structure.

World War II, the post-war shortage of dollars and the increasing demand for raw materials, the outflow of capital from the United Kingdom and South Africa, and the creation of the Federation, continuously increased external demand. This tendency which could have led merely to inflation was instead exploited by the Government to foster economic growth. Development accelerated the rise of the African proletariat, altered the pattern of foreign investment in the country, and, above all, brought about the emergence of manufacturing capitalism which became the new 'centre of gravity' of the class structure. These changes resulted in strong pressures to remove the institutional framework of the 1930's. Greater inter-racial competition, stabilization of the proletariat and creation of an African middle class constituted the new ideology. A wave of reforms ensued. But these reforms failed because they set up 'centrifugal reactions' which culminated in the seizure of power by the white workers, the *national* agrarian capitalists and petty bourgeoisie, who all rallied around the Rhodesian Front. These developments of the 1950's and early 1960's in Rhodesia were strikingly similar to what happened south of the Limpopo, roughly a decade earlier.

Today there are three fundamental political questions to be asked:

- 1 Is a neo-colonial solution possible in Rhodesia?
- 2 How can the seemingly absurd attempt of seizing independence unilaterally be explained?
- 3 Whither Rhodesia?

But before we turn to answer these questions, we need to adopt some interpretation of the behaviour of the UK government *in colonial situations in general and in the Rhodesian situation in particular*. It seems a good working hypothesis to trace the rationale of its behaviour in the interest of *large-scale international capitalism* (or British capitalism whenever a conflict of interests arise). If this assumption is accepted, the granting of independence to African territories can be explained as a

strategy to retain economic power (i.e. to guarantee the interests of foreign capital) by concessions, in the political sphere, to the indigenous middle-classes. This is the so-called 'neo-colonial' policy, the failures and successes of which need not be examined here. The creation of conditions favourable to the formation of an indigenous middle-class has undoubtedly been one of the most general characteristics of the pre-independence periods in colonial countries. In the Rhodesian context, as we have illustrated in previous sections, the affinity of the interests of the African middle-class and those of large-scale capitalism can explain the series of reforms attempted during the Federal period, a corollary of which was the development of the African middle-class itself. This affinity of interests, however, is not absolute. If the advantages to be derived from the development of an African middle-class, are offset by the reactions of other classes, then the interest of large-scale capitalism in such development fades away and a policy of 'the second best' will probably emerge. The meaning of this will emerge in our discussion of prospects for a 'neo-colonial' solution to the Rhodesian problem.

1. Prospects for a Neo-Colonial Solution in Rhodesia

In other African countries the development of an indigenous middle-class was and is relatively easy, either because no class with an interest in resisting its emergence existed, or because those classes that had such interest had no sufficient political and/or economic power to organize themselves successfully and because the economic and political role to be played by the nascent class was to varying extents unsophisticated. In Rhodesia this was and is problematic. Here there is a vicious circle stemming from the cause-effect relationship between control of political power by the white settler and insignificance of the African middle-class. The former induces the latter which in turn prevents the growth of a nationalist movement suitable for a solution of the 'neo-colonialist' type. Hence large-scale capitalism (and the British government) are in a weak position *vis-à-vis* the white workers and petty bourgeoisie who are thus enabled to consolidate their power position in the political as well as economic sphere. The circle is closed.

This vicious circle explains the fading away of the reformist attitude of large-scale capitalism and the British Government in the three years between the end of 1962 and the end of 1965. During this period a series of political set-backs (advent to power of the RF at the end of 1962, Field's resignation in April 1964, Welensky's electoral defeat in October 1964, Referendum on independence in November 1964, General Election of May 1965) marked the retreat of the upholders of reforms and the consolidation in power of the Rhodesian Front and the classes it represents. The advent to power of the Rhodesian Front can be interpreted as an attempt to halt the wave of reforms of the Federal period, and, in particular, the process of constitutional advancement which was a necessary condition for such reforms. After a period of transition (ended in April 1964 when Smith became Prime Minister) the long drawn-out *threat* of UDI and the tightening of the repressive machinery against the African nationalist movement proved to be most effective in reversing the political evolution from reforms to

reaction. There was a return of the ideology and policies of the pre-Federal period. By means of mass arrests and restrictions the government was able to wipe the leadership of the African nationalist movement from the political scene. The relative ease with which the Rhodesian Front government succeeded in disrupting (at least temporarily) the organization of the nationalist movement cannot be explained as is often done, especially by leaders of other African countries and in 'liberal' circles, in terms of some inherent shortcoming of the Rhodesian African leadership as compared with the leadership of other African movements. A far more realistic explanation can be provided by the observation that the organization of the movement had, in the late 1950's and early 1960's, been shaped on the same pattern as that generally adopted in other African nationalist movements. This pattern showed a general bias in favour of securing power either by constitutional means (participation in elections, agitation and propaganda, lobbying and pressure group activities, etc) or, if unconstitutional means were adopted, by non-violent action (refusal to pay taxes, strikes, etc). This type of strategy and related party structure and organization have undoubtedly proved successful in most African countries where, as suggested above, the socio-economic formation (i.e. economic base and superstructure) was such that the groups controlling political power were willing and able to transfer it to the African middle-class. In these countries the granting of independence was as much, if not more, the outcome of external circumstances as it was the result of the independence struggle waged by the nationalist movements. We have seen, on the other hand, that the classes controlling power in Rhodesia have altogether different class interests. i.e. The prevention of the growth of an African middle-class and of a 'neo-colonialist' solution is the very objective of their rule. *It was the inadequacy of the African nationalist party as an underground revolutionary movement suitable to cope with this kind of superstructure that contributed to its repression.* The Rhodesian Front Government in the year preceding UDI set up an effective repressive machinery, and thereby hampered considerably the functioning of the African nationalist party as a non-violent movement. The significance of this achievement is that *it deprived the British Government and the reformist groups of an alternative to the settlers' rule* and, what is even more important, *it hampered the growth of an African threat* which might have counterbalanced the UDI threat that accompanied the repression of the African nationalist movement.

UDI obviously expresses, in the ideological sphere, the interests of the classes represented by the ruling party. These interests were threatened by a possible political alliance of large-scale foreign capitalism and of the African middle-class and petty bourgeoisie. UDI was brandished as the only way to eliminate the possibility of such an alliance. It was, therefore, directed as much against large scale capitalism as against the Africans. The populist undertones of the UDI campaign were very noticeable. The effect of the UDI threat was to force the British Government to realize that in *Rhodesia*, as opposed to the normal colonial territory, it had no viable substitute solution for settlers' rule. UDI, in other words, was a threat to bring the issue of 'settlers' government versus neo-colonialist solution' into the open. In this sense the issue both crystallized the class consciousness of the majority of the white

population, clinching the political power of the RF, and intimidated the British government and related interests into renouncing the reformist programme and constitutional advancement: up to 1965.

But if it is true that the *threat* of UDI, combined with the repression of the African Nationalist movement, was enough to consolidate the status quo and to divert the possibility of reforms, what induced the RF government actually to *implement* UDI?

2. Some Assumptions on UDI

Many reasons for the decision to implement the UDI threat can be found, but at the present stage of documentation none is *per se* convincing. All we can do is to list a number of possible motives but any attempt to assign weights to these possibilities may be misleading.

A first reason may be traced in the African unrest in the rural areas adduced by Lardner-Burke (the Rhodesian Minister of Law and Order) in order to justify the declaration of a state of emergency over the whole country which was the prelude to UDI. It is not possible to judge to what extent African unrest really threatened a breakdown of law and order since too little of what has been happening over the last year or two in the African rural areas and townships has leaked out through the Rhodesian and foreign Press. But if sufficiently widespread unrest had persisted within the African population it is quite possible that the RF government feared that, notwithstanding the strict security measures, the internal situation might explode, upsetting the delicate balance of threats and counter-threats upon which the preservation of the status quo rested.

A second reason is that the threat of UDI was wearing out both as a catalyst of class solidarity and as an instrument of intimidation. Some African leaders north of the Zambesi were already voicing (for example at the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference in London at the end of June 1965) the idea that UDI was merely a device to divert attention from more fundamental issues, viz. African constitutional advancement. It may be, therefore, that in want of a substitute for the UDI threat, which was becoming an empty one, the RF government decided to implement it.

The relationship between economic base and superstructure is always one of mutual interdependence. The superstructure can influence the economic base by conditioning the behaviour of the members of the various classes. If this is accepted, it is possible that UDI having been embodied in the ideology of the ruling classes, came to be regarded by the rank and file of the RF not as an instrument of intimidation *vis-à-vis* the reformist groups, and of propaganda in fostering class solidarity within the white population, but as a real solution of the contradictions inherent in the Rhodesian society. Remembering the high degree of control exercised by the rank and file of the RF over the ruling elite, it is reasonable to conclude that the pressure exercised by the former probably represented a powerful spur for the latter to declare independence unilaterally.

The realism of these three assumptions increases once they are seen in the light of yet another possible explanation. That is, the RF government may have considered that conditions were particularly favourable for the success of the operation. There were no alternatives to white settlers' rule acceptable to the British government and related interest; class consciousness of the white classes was high; and both conditions had been reinforced by the Rhodesian government's policies. In order to assess whether or not the expectations of the RF government were misplaced we must discuss the nature and the chances of success of the retaliatory action undertaken by the British government. But, whether UDI succeeds or not (in the sense to be discussed below), it is difficult to deny that it was a 'fair bet'.

3. Whither Rhodesia?

Let us first examine the chances of success of the retaliatory action undertaken by the British government. In assessing the success of this action what really matters is not so much *the extent to which economic sanctions will hit the Rhodesian economy* but rather *the existence of a mechanism whereby economic hardship (whatever its intensity) can induce the emergence of a political alternative* acceptable to those classes or groups which directly or indirectly share political power in Rhodesia, namely the settlers and the British government. What is acceptable to the British government is determined by a set of circumstances which are largely exterior to the Rhodesian situation; they concern British domestic politics, Britain's international relations in general and in Africa in particular. At any event we may assume in the first place that what is acceptable to the British government is some programme of reforms aimed at the development of an African middle-class to whom power could *ultimately* (say, in five to six years' time) be transferred according to the traditional pattern followed in granting independence to colonial territories. For the white Rhodesians, on the other hand, UDI has represented an attempt to perpetuate those restrictions on competition which are at the roots of their privileged economic and political position. Reforms aimed at promoting the development of an African middle-class will lead to increased African competition in the produce, retail and skilled labour markets. African advancement would mean a progressive erosion of their social status and of the premium they enjoy over wages and general working conditions in Britain, South Africa and other white Commonwealth countries—either because it would induce substitution of African for white workers and/or because it would eliminate those restrictions on the supply of their (real or imaginary) skills from which that premium originates. White workers, petty bourgeoisie and most of the agrarian capitalists are aware that their socio-economic position *as classes* is based on their control of the political machinery. If and when they think that such control cannot be maintained indefinitely (that is, under present circumstances, that UDI has failed) they will prepare themselves to leave the country.

It is unrealistic to expect the majority of the white Rhodesians to cooperate in bringing about those conditions which would force them to relinquish their present political and economic power. Thus if white unemployment is induced by these sanctions, all the white unemployed

can be expected to do is either to emigrate or to put pressure on the party leadership to step up unproductive activities (Army, Police, Civil Service, etc) in order to absorb them, and to subsidize or force capitalists to keep them in employment. (Of course such a situation would be untenable in the long run, but as argued below, the long-run effects of sanctions are to a large extent irrelevant.) Other classes within the white population—manufacturing capitalists, some professional groups, and in general all those who are not vulnerable to African competition—are not directly opposed to African advancement. These classes, however, cannot possibly be organized politically in opposition to the present rulers for two main reasons.

In the first place they are numerically insignificant and, though they retain a crucial position in the economic structure of society, their *economic* power cannot be translated into *political* opposition because of the high degree of class consciousness of the overwhelming majority of the electorate. The second reason is probably more fundamental. Though these classes are not directly threatened by African competition, their economic functions are tied to a certain economic base in the sense that the possibility of finding an outlet for their products and services is highly dependent on the given composition and level of demand, which, in turn, is determined by the existing class structure. Though a gradual removal of the shackles on competition would benefit them by improving market conditions in both factors and products market, any major and especially any *sudden* change in the economic base would seriously endanger their economic position. Under conditions of fast economic development such as obtained in the 1950's relatively minor reforms were easily smuggled into the superstructure and manufacturing capitalism (and related interests) could play an important political role. As economic growth slowed down, population growth outstripping the growth of production, class conflicts hardened and reforms became impracticable. Under these new circumstances the alternative to the *status quo* became a radical, revolutionary change of the superstructure but, for the reasons just mentioned, the former was and is preferable to the latter for those groups who had attempted the reformist programmes. It follows that a solution of this type cannot be implemented without the prior removal from political power of the white settlers (which can only be achieved through military intervention and subsequent direct rule), since it cannot be expected to be brought about from within the system.

The Minimum Acceptable

If military intervention and subsequent direct rule are not considered viable in London, then we must assume that, provided some face-saving device is available, the British Government is prepared to meet the 'minimum' acceptable to the ruling classes in Rhodesia. The 'minimum' acceptable to the ruling classes in Rhodesia is the indefinite continuation of their control over the political machinery. This result can be brought about essentially in two ways. In the first place there can be a gradual consolidation of the régime in the political sphere, even though the economic hardship caused by sanctions increases—at least temporarily. Irrespective of the degree of contraction of the economy, what

matters most from the régime's point of view is to last long enough, say a year or two after the declaration, to consolidate itself politically to such an extent that, even if sanctions have not been formally relaxed, loopholes will be more easily found. Furthermore, one can also assume that given a long enough period, a certain readjustment in the pattern of trade and production would take place. One can expect a switch (at least partial) in productive processes which would lessen the economic dependence on Britain and other 'hostile' countries, increasing the economy's self-sufficiency and/or dependence on the South African economy. Given the absence within the system of any mechanism that can translate *economic* hardship into *political* opposition to UDI only British military intervention can stop this consolidation. A commitment against such intervention can only mean its tacit acceptance.

The acceptance may even be negotiated. It is clear that the Rhodesian rulers are prepared to make concessions (constitutional or otherwise) provided they are left in control of the political machinery. Whatever the constitutional arrangements, it would then be possible to control administratively, economically and socially, the political evolution of the system—ultimately reverting to an *apartheid* system of one sort or another consistent with the class interests of white workers, petty bourgeoisie and agrarian capitalists. Any sign of success of the 'talks about talks' between British and Rhodesian civil servants, at present (June 1966) being held in Salisbury, would therefore seem to point to a negotiated, rather than tacit, acceptance of the trend towards *apartheid* in Rhodesia.

Sanctions and Military Intervention

To sum up, the ability of sanctions to impose economic hardship on the white population should not be denied. Given sufficient determination on the part of the British and Zambian governments, such hardship can be increased at will; there is a limit, of course, determined by the resilience of the economy and the determination—difficulty to assess correctly—of the South African Government to keep Rhodesia under white settlers' control. What must be questioned is the belief that such hardship will bring about political change in the sense of accepting ultimate African rule. Since it ignores the economic base and superstructure (and especially their interdependence) of the Rhodesian social system this belief is based on naïve analysis. On the other hand, if it is accepted that political change in the desired direction cannot be produced from within the Rhodesian social system, ultimately the British government will have either to intervene militarily in order to produce the change from without, or gradually to accept the status quo. If the first alternative is chosen, it is not clear why military intervention was not carried out in the first place when UDI was declared. Even if the main obstacle was British public opinion, there is no reason to expect this obstacle to disappear. What is more important is that the passing of time is not going to improve the prospects of a bloodless intervention, and this for two main reasons. In the first place a certain confusion of interests was bound to exist in the top and middle ranks of the Army, Police, Judiciary and Civil Service, when UDI was declared. These were in fact inherited by the RF government from the Federal period and to

some extent must have retained the 'liberal' characteristics of the previous rule. At the time of UDI the presence of a British armed force could have made the choice between 'treason and loyalty' a real and not merely a theoretical one, as in effect it became. In the absence of such force the crucial choice was, and is, between supporting the *status quo* and resigning. As a result of delaying action on the part of the British government, these groups will be increasingly committed to the Smith régime, both through increased commitment of the individuals and through a process of selection and substitution which inevitably accompanies promotions, recruitment and resignations. From this point of view, therefore, the increased commitment to the régime of the administrative and military apparatus can only reduce the chances of a swift, and possibly bloodless, seizure of power by Britain. Moreover, of course, anti-British feelings among white Rhodesians have hardened since UDI and the introduction of sanctions. These feelings are an expression, in the ideological sphere, of the class consciousness of white Rhodesians. As such they have perfectly rational roots, but they may easily develop emotionally into an autonomous element capable in itself of influencing the behaviour of the party's rank and file, the ruling elite and the white population at large.

If the assumption of naiveté on the part of the British government is not thought to be satisfactory, then the conclusion must be drawn that British government and related interests accept the prospect of Rhodesia ultimately resorting to *apartheid*.

Prospects of African Revolution

One crucial question has been left out of the discussion so far: the prospects of an African revolution. Can we expect an African revolution to halt the trend towards an *apartheid* society—which as we have seen, may be the result of the British government's Rhodesian policy? There are two problems here. What are the chances that an insurrectionary movement will gather momentum? If it did, how would it influence the trend of events outlined above?

Notwithstanding the severe security measures taken by the government, outbursts of violence have already occurred in Salisbury and in some rural areas in the Northern and Eastern parts of the country. The régime while disclosing acts of violence due to infiltrators from outside the country, has tried its best, often successfully, to conceal any violent activity originating within the country. Whether these activities will gather momentum is difficult to say. The disproportion of forces—in weapons, organization, training, etc—between the two sides is enormous, being itself a reflection of the class structure of the system. Geographically the country is land-locked and except in the North⁶⁰ is surrounded by countries more or less sympathetic to the régime. There are no jungles or mountainous areas except on the borders (the region being a plateau, generally from 4,000 to 5,000 ft. above sea-level, enclosed by the Lowveld of the Zambesi and Limpopo valleys to the

⁶⁰ The Zambian government, however, has so far impeded the flow of arms through its country.

North and South respectively). What is more important, the Land Apportionment Act, besides its political-economic effects, has segregated the Africans in such a way that, in the urban areas, they can be 'sealed-off' from the white communities enhancing the security of the latter. All these factors are handicaps in the organization of revolutionary activity in Rhodesia. Furthermore Rhodesia (with South Africa) represents the unique situation of a society where, almost literally, all the top and middle ranks of the Army, Police, Civil Service, etc, are occupied by the ruling classes who are easily identified by the colour of their skin. Moreover, some units of the armed forces consist exclusively of members of the dominant classes. This factor rules out the possibility of the ruling classes being ousted by any form of *coup d'etat* and makes protracted guerrilla warfare of the traditional type unlikely to succeed in directly toppling the régime.

Presumably this is consciously or sub-consciously realized by the African population. Unless it lapses into resignation, its widespread discontent will be channelled into terrorist activities.⁶¹ Assuming that the organization of the nationalist movement is being restructured in this sense, a *tendency* for widespread terrorism, will most certainly develop with the steady increase (worsened by sanctions) of unemployment.

It is of course possible that such activities could come just at the 'right time', adding insecurity to economic hardship, transforming the 'creeping' emigration of whites into a 'galloping' one, and then setting up a cumulative process of violence and economic hardship the outcome of which is uncertain: intervention from the South, intervention from the North, Britain's or UN's intervention, a combination of these—or no intervention at all.

⁶¹ The distinction between terrorism and guerrilla warfare is based on the fact that the latter is *mainly* directed against regular forces while the former is mainly directed against the civilian population.