

*Rhodesia's War of Numbers:  
Racial Populations, Political Power, and the Collapse of the  
Settler State, 1960-1979*

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**Abstract**

This thesis repositions racial population issues as central to an understanding of the final decades of settler rule in Rhodesia. At the time of the disintegration of the Central African Federation, the small and transient white population of Rhodesia rested precariously atop a massive and fast-growing African population; and with high rates of white emigration and the spectre of being handed over to African majority rule, the Rhodesian regime declared their illegal independence from Britain in 1965. As several factors ripened together in the 1970s, including white Rhodesians' heightened population anxieties, the economic strains of the white 'brain drain,' and the African population 'explosion,' the demographically fragile settler state was gradually stretched to the breaking point. It was in this context that the escalation of the guerrilla war added new pressures and exacerbated pre-existing demographic strains that forced Rhodesia's final collapse in 1979. Despite their important role in the collapse of the settler regime, population matters have not been sufficiently addressed, periodised, or properly contextualised in Rhodesian history. As little scholarship as there has been on the significance of population matters generally, there has been even less on the ubiquity of white population anxieties, how these pressures shaped white society, or on the efforts of both the settler state and African nationalists to engineer these demographics. These demographic strains have typically been cast as a byproduct of the military conflict, and efforts to re-configure population numbers as merely an adjunct to the shooting war. In contrast to the prevailing orthodoxies on the subject, this thesis argues that this demographic struggle long pre-dated the escalation of the war, and that it was the Rhodesian state's defeat in the demographic 'war of numbers,' and the consequences which flowed from this failure, that were directly responsible for the settler state's collapse.

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## Chapter I

### Introduction: The Hidden War of Numbers in Rhodesia<sup>1</sup>

Two wars were fought alongside each other in the final decades of white rule in Rhodesia that in combination brought about the collapse of the settler state.<sup>2</sup> One war was always more voluble and violent, as it had far-reaching diplomatic and international political significance, and would from late 1972 escalate into a deadly civil war with guerrillas and counter-insurgency forces clashing inside and outside Rhodesia. This was the better known of the two wars, and the one to attract the attention of most historians studying the last years of settler rule. This war was also the only one retrospectively acknowledged by the political actors on both sides of the conflict in Rhodesia, and the only one that has seeped into the shared memories of Rhodesians and Zimbabweans alike. Yet there was another war in Rhodesia, a war of numbers. In some respects this was a disguised war, and instead of hills and villages, sanctions and electoral rolls, this was a contest over racial birth rates and death rates, immigration and emigration patterns, racial boundaries, and head counting. But this war of numbers was perhaps more important, and certainly no less political, than the louder and more violent war, even as its political nature was somewhat obscured by an apolitical, coded language of economic development, modernisation,

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<sup>1</sup> The phrase used in the title of this thesis, 'War of Numbers,' has acquired two different meanings over the years. The first instance of it being used as a unified phrase was by Lord Beveridge in an article that featured in the *New York Times* in 1946, entitled, 'The War Hitler Won—The War of Numbers.' Beveridge's usage refers to the demographic competition between Nazi Germany and neighbouring countries over population size. It was again to describe demographic competitions, primarily those that occurred in the Balkans, which Milica Bookman also refers to as a war of numbers. The most popular instance of the phrase, however, was in a memoir by a former CIA analyst, Samuel Adams, entitled, *The War of Numbers: An Intelligence Memoir*, published in 1994. Adams' usage described the bureaucratic controversy within the United States government over North Vietnamese troop numbers prior to the Tet Offensive. Similarly, Judith Tucker's article from 1982 again focuses on a controversy over statistics, this time regarding the casualties from the Lebanon War. Both meanings have since generated their own separate lineages. In a sense, this thesis refers to both a demographic war of racial population numbers, and a war over the significance of these numbers in Rhodesian history. But this thesis' title is primarily intended to convey the meaning of Beveridge's and Bookman's usage of the phrase, as a demographic competition between ethnic groups. See: L. Beveridge, 'The War Hitler Won—The War of Numbers; It increased Germany's Population relatively to that of her victims, raising a world issue,' *New York Times*, 18 August 1946; M. Bookman, *The Demographic Struggle for Power: The Political Economy of Demographic Engineering in the modern World* (London, Cass Publishing, 1997); S. Adams, *The War of Numbers: An Intelligence Memoir* (South Royalton, Steerforth Press, 1994); J. Tucker, 'The War of Numbers', *The Lebanon War, Middle East Research and Information Project Report No. 108/109* (September-October 1982).

<sup>2</sup> Over the period of my research, this same political entity was known sequentially as Southern Rhodesia (then a part of the Central African Federation), Rhodesia, and Zimbabwe-Rhodesia.

humanitarianism, feminism, and environmentalism. Because of this coded language, historians have looked past this other war to the more conspicuous images beyond as though those more violent dramas represented the entire story of Rhodesia's collapse. The relative imperceptibility of the war of numbers to subsequent observers did not at all mean it was vaporous or insubstantial at the time. It was the defeat in this war of numbers that sapped the morale of, and had profound psychological effects on white society; heaved unbearable economic and ecological pressures on the state; further undermined the white regime's international and domestic legitimacy; and rendered the military conflict unwinnable. In contrast to the prevailing orthodoxies on the subject of the fall of white Rhodesia, this thesis argues that it was the Rhodesian state's defeat in the war of numbers, and the numerous and surprisingly varied consequences which flowed from this failure, that were directly responsible for the settler state's political downfall. Nonetheless, it would be misleading to regard these two wars as being wholly distinct from one another, as they were inseparably commingled. These two complementary wars permeated, interacted, and influenced each other in complex ways, and neither the more conspicuous war of liberation nor the more clouded war of population numbers can be understood in isolation of the other.

The racial composition of Rhodesia was always of existential importance to the white-ruled settler state, both in regards to its *de facto* viability and its *de jure* legal status under both British imperial law and international law. Rhodesia was a British possession, which from 1923 to 1965 awkwardly straddled the imperial classifications of colony and dominion<sup>3</sup>—classifications that were not simply constitutional and conceptual, but were also self-regarding for the white inhabitants of these imperial territories. In a sense, Rhodesia was always an inchoate dominion: a settler colony with too few white settlers, and a tropical colony with too many. Settlers in Rhodesia viewed themselves as out of the same mould as Australians, New Zealanders, Canadians and South Africans, and in fact many of these settlers were the very same people drifting from one end of the former British

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<sup>3</sup> Highlighting this inchoate status, Rhodesia was a colony, but was not the responsibility of the former Colonial Office as were other colonies, but of the Dominions Office (later the Commonwealth Relations Office), and it was the only colony to have a High Commission in London, a mission status normally reserved for independent members of the Commonwealth. Rhodesian Prime Ministers were also invited to attend the periodic Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Meetings, another manifestation of its quasi-independent status.

Empire to the other, but despite a self-conscious grasping on the part of Rhodesian settlers for recognition of their commonality and equivalence with other settler communities, Rhodesia as a political entity was always a special case, a species of its own.

Rhodesia may have superficially resembled these former dominions in their political institutions, social manners, sporting culture, and in their general settler ethos, but unlike these other societies, the political power of Rhodesia's settler state was compromised by an ambiguous metropolitan tether, and rested precariously atop a massive and growing indigenous population. Among these settler societies, Rhodesia was most comparable to South Africa, which was also a minority regime in southern Africa presiding over an expanding African population. But even in this comparison, important distinctions existed. South Africa's white settlers were far more numerous than were Rhodesia's, both relative to their country's respective African populations and in absolute numbers, and were more rooted to the country than were Rhodesian settlers.<sup>4</sup> Most importantly, South African settlers had been granted irrevocable political independence by the British, whereas Rhodesia's application for dominion status was postmarked several decades too late, after the irrepressible political momentum in Britain and the wider international community turned away from the concepts of colonial trusteeship and inherent racial superiority upon which the principle of minority settler rule rested. There is little doubt that had whites in Rhodesia been able to establish themselves as a majority of the Rhodesian population, that Britain and the rest of the international community would have granted *de jure* recognition to the settler government, and even barring that unrealistic counterfactual, had whites in Rhodesia formed a more sizable percentage of the population than what existed there is little doubt that the state's *de facto* viability would have been greatly enhanced.<sup>5</sup> Yet far from expanding the percentage of whites in Rhodesia, the settler regime witnessed a continuous shrinking of the ratio of whites to Africans. And so while white Australians could effectively ignore the presence of their small Aboriginal population, Canadians could cordon-off and condescend to

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<sup>4</sup> Rhodesia's settler population was notably smaller and more transient than any other significant settler population in Africa. The *pied noirs* of French Algeria, for instance, numbered 984,000 in 1954, four fifths of whom were born in Algeria. R. Aldrich, *Greater France: A History of French Overseas Expansion* (Houndsmills, Palgrave, 1996).

<sup>5</sup> It was indeed the hope of the post-UDI Rhodesian regime that increased international connections and assertions of the state's viability would wear down and outlast Western hostility, and that a *de facto* recognition of the settler state would evolve by stages into *de jure* recognition.

their shrinking Native American population, New Zealanders could afford to gradually assimilate their Maori population, and white South Africans had the political freedom to construct an elaborate racial system to compartmentalise and mitigate the threats posed by their African population, none of these options were available to settlers in Rhodesia. Adding to this unique situation, from the early 1960s Africans in Rhodesia were one of the fastest growing populations in the world, and the white settlers, who were notoriously transient, were simultaneously experiencing a drop in birth rates that was steeper than any comparable population around the world. These historical trends were all on a collision course with the futile hopes of white settlers that Rhodesia be recognised by Britain as an independent member of the Commonwealth, free and fully equal with other nation-states.

For the combined reasons set out above, the settler state of Rhodesia was never granted *de jure* independence by the British, and so in a dramatic *coup de theatre* the small settler community took it for themselves. The settler state's Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) from Britain in 1965 occurred within the context of a growing insecurity among whites in Rhodesia following Britain's decision to dismantle the Central African Federation, of which Rhodesia was the principal member, and was the larger entity through which many whites hoped to finally achieve dominion status. In 1964, Rhodesia's two former Federation partners quickly gained their independence as the African-ruled states of Zambia and Malawi, leaving the fate of white-ruled Rhodesia undecided. Britain's decision to dismantle the Federation, and grant majority rule to the Federation's two northern colonies, was consistent with their policy of wholesale African decolonisation following the famous 'Winds of Change' speech in January 1960. By 1965, only Rhodesia and the former High Commission territories of Botswana, Lesotho, and Swaziland remained under British control in sub-Saharan Africa, with the latter three all gaining independence within three years. Whites in Rhodesia were all too aware of their anomalous and precarious status in post-colonial Africa, and with a rapidly emigrating population and the looming fear of being handed over to majority African rule by Britain, Prime Minister Ian Smith's government declared independence from Britain on 11 November, 1965. The Rhodesian state that was then created was an autonomous, if ostensibly illegal, entity politically dominated by white settlers until its collapse in 1980. A white-ruled state dominated by a shrinking settler minority, born into an

overwhelmingly African-ruled continent hostile to the regime's survival, and welcomed into an international state system that proclaimed its very existence a threat to world peace—that racial population numbers mattered in this political environment would seem to be, despite the historical silence on the matter, self-evident.

From before the time of UDI and continuing until independence, the white state and African nationalists battled for control of Rhodesia with varying levels of intensity on the political, military, and demographic fronts. The struggle over demographic engineering was itself contested on many levels. The political decisions determining these demographic policies came from as far afield as Salisbury, Lusaka, London, the United Nations Headquarters in New York City, and from scattered guerrilla camps in Mozambique and Zambia. The sites of conflict were also diverse, and included: the border ports of entry and departure in Rhodesia and abroad, the farms and roads of Rhodesia, in family planning and reproductive clinics, in newspapers and on the radio and television sets in Rhodesia, on the parliament floors in London and Salisbury, in the criminal courts of Britain and elsewhere, and perhaps most importantly, within both white and African families in Rhodesia. The variety of these sites of conflict and the geographical diversity of the decision centers reflect the geographical and conceptual breadth of this parallel struggle. The specific contours of this struggle were primarily dictated by two demographic realities: the rapid growth of the African population, and the small size and transience of the white population. By the late 1960s, the state had formulated an overall population strategy to increase white numbers and decrease African numbers, a strategy that was comprehensive in scale, but only desultorily applied and unevenly effective. Defensively, African nationalists also engaged in this demographic struggle, though mostly in reaction to state initiatives. Despite the asymmetry of interest and initiative in demographic engineering, these population trends of decreasing white birth rates, a growing African population, and continued white transience, intensified over the course of the 1970s, and all were moving in a direction that aided the nationalist cause and weakened the Rhodesian state. More than any battle, bombing, election result, coup, or diplomatic maneuver, these two trends, and the failure of the Rhodesian state to effectively alter them or mitigate their effects, and to a lesser extent the nationalists and guerrillas' successes in reinforcing these trends, determined the eventual outcome of the wider conflict in Rhodesia.

White Rhodesia eventually lost the war of numbers, even as the state's definition of victory evolved over time. The settler state could never achieve a sizable or stable white population in its 90-year history as a white possession, despite active efforts to do so. Before independence in 1980, the demographic frailty of white society in the overwhelmingly African territory was realised to be of great significance by both international and domestic policy-makers and analysts, and was a pervasive part of everyday life in Rhodesia, especially for the small white population.<sup>6</sup> As it was, whites in the territory never accounted for more than five percent of the total population, and hovered over five percent for only the nine years from 1955 to 1964, peaking in 1961 at 5.67 percent, and falling thereafter until the end of white rule in 1980, when their actual numbers were most likely less than only three percent of the total population.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, consistently high levels of population turnover through immigration and emigration throughout its short history reveal a white Rhodesia that always relied upon a perilous demographic juggling act,<sup>8</sup> and exposes a transient white population with only shallow national loyalties. In this context, the political, economic, psychological, and military effects of the rapidly expanding African population were doubly compounded. In waging the population war of numbers to reverse these widening ratios, the state was faced with irreconcilable conflicts and contradictions within their short-term and long-term policy goals, and these conflicts were never reconciled. Most broadly, the state had to solve or mitigate the problem of widening racial ratios or else the settler state would collapse, yet the solutions to these problems were also fatal to the state. And so the population problems in Rhodesia were like a patient with an inoperable terminal condition, in which the underlying problem and any solution to that problem would both kill the patient.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Several works describe white anxieties at the time regarding their minority status in an overwhelmingly African country. See D. Kennedy, *Islands of White: Settler Society and Culture in Kenya and Southern Rhodesia, 1890-1939* (Durham, Duke University, 1987); F. Clements, *Rhodesia: A Study of the Deterioration of a White Society* (New York, Praeger, 1969); and R. Blake, *A History of Rhodesia* (London, Eyre Methuen, 1977).

<sup>7</sup> Statistics were calculated using the Monthly Digest of Statistics issued by the Rhodesian government's Central Statistical Office.

<sup>8</sup> Alois Mlambo discusses this high rate of population turnover as always being a characteristic of white Rhodesia. A. Mlambo, *White Immigration into Rhodesia: From Occupation to Federation* (Harare, University of Zimbabwe, 2002).

<sup>9</sup> To take this analogy further, it is quite possibly true that some state officials realised the terminal nature of Rhodesia's condition at the time, and sought merely to prolong the lifespan for as long as possible. In a 1983 interview, Ian Smith answered a question about UDI by saying, "We gave

With the escalation of the war and the continuation of these demographic trends, the small and transient white population was gradually stretched to the breaking point. Rhodesia's white population after UDI was one of the most demographically fragile ruling ethnic castes in any polity anywhere in the world, and when the weakened settler regime finally surrendered in 1979, it was not so much the result of any decisive clashes in the civil war, as it was an exhausted acknowledgment on behalf of the settler state that it lost the war of numbers and could no longer resist the expanding demographic forces moving against it. The creation of Zimbabwe in 1980 marked the final end of white rule and with it the conclusion of the seven-year civil war, the fifteen years of fruitless settlement negotiations, and the final end to the war of numbers that had been waged with escalating intensity for a decade and a half.

### **Thesis Overview**

Even while population numbers were abstractly and conceptually recognised by white settlers to be linked to Rhodesia's long term viability as a settler state since at least the late 1950s, prior to the 1962 census exact population figures were unknown, and the knowledge of these numbers once revealed had profound effects on white society. The census corresponded with the dissolution of the Central African Federation and the rapid independence of Rhodesia's two former Federation partners. As will be discussed in chapter two, the findings of this census, and the one that followed it in 1969, concretised popular anxieties among whites about the widening population ratios in Rhodesia, and provided the impetus for a variety of state efforts to reconfigure these racial populations as a means of maintaining settler control.

The most shocking revelation to emerge from the 1962 census concerned the size of Rhodesia's African population. The census revealed an African population of 3,616,600, 20 percent higher than previous estimates of that population,<sup>10</sup> and roughly 17 times the total white population. As chapter three outlines, this African population 'explosion' fed into whites' longstanding fears regarding African sexual practices and their more recent insecurities concerning their political future in postcolonial Africa, and meshed with the increasingly widespread neo-Malthusianism

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Rhodesia 15 wonderful years extra... We gave the country 15 exhilarating years... We held the line back." 'Ian Douglas Smith, Ex-Leader of Rhodesia, Dies', *New York Times*, 20 November 2007.

<sup>10</sup> '3,610,000 Africans—20% Above Estimate', *RH*, 22 June 1962.

theory of an impending population apocalypse. These fears prompted more active efforts on the part of the state to slow African population growth so as to maintain political stability, economic growth, and secure white privilege. In the late 1960s, the Rhodesian state formulated a comprehensive population policy which was economically grounded in a government report created by a South African economist and demographer, Dr. Jan Sadie. The Sadie Report outlined the need to both increase white immigration and slow the African growth rate to maintain favourable racial ratios in order to stave off economic disaster. This Report, published in 1968, provided the theoretical blueprint for the state's population war, but it was the 1969 census a year later that provided the state its *casus belli* for the population war.

Simultaneous with this new knowledge of Rhodesia's growing African population, the Rhodesian public became increasingly aware of the extent of white emigration. High rates of white emigration were a longstanding phenomenon in Rhodesia, but normally white immigration numbers masked the outflow such that an illusion of continuity remained. However, with the precipitous drop in immigration numbers in the early 1960s, these emigration numbers became more obvious, and for the first time in Rhodesia's history the white population was actually decreasing. This in itself was objectively damaging to the settler state, but the knowledge of this population drain and its subjective effects on white morale and confidence in the future of white rule compounded this damage. Chapter four traces the phenomenon of white emigration from Rhodesia, and exposes the remarkable transience of the white population. It was partially out of the Rhodesian Front's frustration over Prime Minister Winston Field's failure to reverse these migration trends that it became possible for Ian Smith's internal party coup in 1964. Immediately upon entering office, Smith began to initiate policies with the purpose of rebalancing and mitigating the effects of the racial ratios in Rhodesia.

As Rhodesia continued to flounder in a constitutional stalemate after the disintegration of the Federation, unable to convince Britain to release it to white dominion status, the settler population began to drift away to more politically stable destinations, and few new immigrants arrived to replace them. It was out of an effort to restore white confidence in the future of white rule in Rhodesia and reverse migration flows, that Smith decided upon his most ambitious act in office, the Unilateral Declaration of Independence from Britain. A decade after UDI, Smith

use of  
relevance  
UDI:  
white  
confidence

asserted that his most important accomplishments in office were achieving the twinned goals of restoring white confidence and replenishing white numbers that were lost in the early to mid 1960s, and it was this bolstering of the white population that he considered to be the primary rationale behind UDI. Yet as will be discussed in chapter five, it would perhaps be more accurate for Smith to have stated that he won back *a* settler population, even as he lost another. Upon coming to office, an integral part of Smith's population agenda consisted of lowering the selectivity requirements for white immigrants to Rhodesia in order to draw bigger yields. The loosening of Rhodesia's selectivity standards included changes in the economic, educational, and ethnic criteria that prior Rhodesian governments had in place. Economically, this meant a lowering or dropping of the capital and skills requirements for white immigrants, and ethnically this meant allowing in greater numbers of non-British whites, particularly southern Europeans and Afrikaners. There was thus a significant population shift in the years following UDI that was distinct from the longstanding Rhodesian population turnover, as there were marked differences economically, ethnically, and politically between those who left and those who came to replace them.

In confronting the problems associated with African population growth, Smith's government was less successful in lowering natural growth rates than in the mitigation of their harmful effects to the regime. It was in this regard that his government aimed to stop the political progress of Africans under the 1961 constitution by introducing and campaigning for the 1969 republican constitution, which limited African political power to a distant parity, regardless of total numbers. In the referendum campaign, government propaganda relied heavily upon population fears, and the regime cynically timed the release of both phases of the 1969 census results to add rhetorical fuel to the campaign. Through the policies of charging for some social services, and pegging other costs to factors unrelated to actual African numbers, Smith's government pursued ways in which the Treasury would not have to bear the increasing burden of African population growth. Less successful, were the state's efforts to halt the urban influx, harden job reservation policies, and set into motion the broader separate development policies—all efforts to mitigate the byproducts of African growth.

Economic absorptive capacity of the state & education provision

Even as Smith's efforts to confront the population problem yielded some successes in the form of more immigrants and the mitigation of some of the effects of African growth, his government was never able to fully stem the flow of emigrants from Rhodesia or slow the growth of the African population, failures that were in part the fruit of nationalist successes. While the state's family planning efforts increased in scale in the 1970s, they were met with increasing resistance from the African population, in particular from the African male population in the rural areas. The traditional pronatalism of African males and the embedded peasant suspicions of the settler state's motives were tapped into by the guerrillas and combined to frustrate state efforts at promoting family planning. By the mid 1970s, while the white population had regained lost numbers and even reached new peaks, their commitment to Rhodesia was always weak, making this population vulnerable to disintegration when faced with any significant hardship—vulnerabilities that were successfully exploited by the nationalists. With the escalation of the military war in 1972, guerrillas began to attack white settler farms and commit high-profile acts of political terror in part to both force emigration and discourage new immigration, and this new level of violence, both real and perceived, had a marked effect on white migration patterns. The shooting war also had interesting effects on white fertility patterns. Chapter six analyses the scope and effectiveness of African nationalist agency in this population war.

Eventually, the weight of African numbers and the small size and transience of the white population proved too much for the settler state to resist majority-rule any longer. African population growth continued to drain the Treasury and increase economic pressures on the regime. It also continued to fill the urban areas with unemployed and disaffected African youths who were easily recruited into the nationalist cause. The frail white population began once again to drift away in large numbers after the increased call-ups beginning in the mid 1970s, despite draconian efforts to force them to stay and fight. More importantly, though, white immigration slowed to a drip and, as a result, the extent of white emigration was exposed to the broader white public. This evidence of population decline was internalised by white society, and a sense of decay seeped into the white Rhodesian psyche in the late 1970s. This perception of decay became self-fulfilling, and by the late 1970s there was a full flood of whites fleeing Rhodesia by any means possible—a flood that

less than ideal  
include  
lectures

Posterior  
betas

PTSD

Better  
Barron, date  
the  
Barron, date

erosion, yes  
collapse, no

included some prominent Cabinet Ministers and state officials. Unable to hold on to power with his shrinking base of support and his disappearing military muscle, Smith was forced into sharing power with Bishop Abel Muzorewa in an ill-fated attempt to co-opt moderate African opinion. Even this position eventually proved untenable, and in 1979 the white regime negotiated its own demise at the Lancaster House talks in London.

This thesis repositions population issues as central to an understanding of the collapse of white rule in Rhodesia, yet this account cannot be accurately characterised as demographic determinism. Demographic determinism in this context would mean that the collapse of the Rhodesian regime was inevitable and followed from fixed demographic laws, and that human agency played no role in this process. Yet as Peter O'Toole's *Lawrence of Arabia* emphatically pronounced in the classic movie of the same name, "Nothing is Written!"<sup>11</sup> Demographic trends in Rhodesia were not predestined, but were subject to change, susceptible to interference, and were the result of human agency, both on the individual and political levels. John Iliffe writes, "Population change is not an autonomous force; it results from other historical processes, above all human volition...it is a sensitive indicator of change, the point at which historical dynamics fuse into an outcome which expresses... the most fundamental circumstances and concerns of ordinary people."<sup>12</sup> The population trends in Rhodesia were the collective amalgam of thousands of human decisions—whether to immigrate to Rhodesia, emigrate from Rhodesia, when to marry, the number and spacing of children, and other significant life choices—decisions that were personal, but which were influenced by these individuals' psychological, social, economic, and political environments. The conditions within which these demographic decisions were made were violently contested by African nationalists and the state, and it was in the shaping of the conditions where the war of numbers was waged. That the settler state ultimately failed to reverse these demographic trends, and that the nationalists benefitted from them, does not lead to the conclusion that this course of events was inevitable and fixed, following mechanically from

<sup>11</sup> *Lawrence of Arabia* (1962).

<sup>12</sup> J. Iliffe, *Africans: The History of a Continent* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1995). Despite Iliffe's introductory caveat about the role of human volition in population change in *Africans*, it is his focus on the centrality of population pressures in driving major historical developments in Africa that he has nonetheless been accused of laying out an overly deterministic historical argument. See: T. Spear, 'Africa's Population History', *Journal of African History*, Vol. 37, No. 3 (1996).

✓ predictable natural laws. As will be discussed, the different components of Rhodesia's demography were only unevenly affected by the various political actions that were implemented. Some engineering tactics were implemented and proved successful in altering conditions and influencing demographic decision-making, other actions that could have potentially impacted demographic numbers were considered and rejected, and still other initiatives were preempted or countered by their opponent's policies.

### **Differentiating Rhodesia's Populations**

In its simplest form, the demographic war of numbers in Rhodesia concerned only the white and African populations, yet this most important racial division belied what was in fact a diverse spectrum of peoples with ambiguous and inconsistent racial distinctions resting in the middle of these two primary racial poles. Between the opposite poles of British-born whites and indigenous Africans, were complex gradations that carried both social and legal significance. In Rhodesia, the social stratification of ethnicities placed British-born Rhodesians, or those descended directly from Britain, atop the hierarchy; followed by those of northern and western European descent who assimilated into the mainstream of Rhodesian society; then below them, the largely self-segregated Afrikaner population; and then the southern and eastern Europeans, particularly Greeks, Portuguese, and Jews.<sup>13</sup> Lower in the social hierarchy were those whose position in white Rhodesian society was less clear, such as Turks, Arabs, and Persians who all inconsistently passed for whites.<sup>14</sup> All those deemed to be white faced no legal barriers in Rhodesia, despite the often isolating social barriers some non-British whites confronted. The small Asian community did face legal barriers, in terms of occupational and residential segregation, as well as other pettier forms of discrimination. However, Asians were largely supportive of the white regime<sup>15</sup> and enjoyed legal rights not afforded to

<sup>13</sup> See Clements, for an explanation of the white social hierarchy. Clements, *Deterioration*.

<sup>14</sup> See Clements, *Deterioration*.

<sup>15</sup> For example, when the Pearce Commission reported on the approval or disapproval of the Anglo-Rhodesian Agreement in 1971, a fairly accurate proxy for the support of the regime, the African population massively voted "no", while 97% of the "Coloureds" and 96% of the Asians, along with 98% of the whites, voted "yes." 'Rhodesia-Mzilikaze to Smith', *Africa Institute Bulletin*, Vol. 15 (1977).

Africans or to those who in southern African parlance were termed 'Coloureds'.<sup>16</sup> This population who were described by others and who identified themselves as Coloured, was actually a diverse composite of mixed race peoples, lighter-skinned Africans from outside Rhodesia, dark skinned Indians from Goa, natives from St. Helena, and even included some assimilated indigenous Africans.<sup>17</sup> This population faced greater legal barriers than did the Asians, but still were relatively privileged in a legal sense, compared against indigenous Africans, who were on the bottom of Rhodesia's social and legal hierarchy and were constrained by a wide variety of legal and social barriers. The Rhodesian state did not preferentially differentiate among the indigenous African tribal and ethnic groups, as legally all were collapsed in the larger indigenous category, referred to as 'African.'

The Rhodesian state's population policies in the war of numbers reflected the shifting relative worth of different ethnic populations of whites, even while racial divisions hardened. Since its founding in the late nineteenth century, Rhodesia had sought to restrict the immigration of non-British whites to maintain the British character of the colony, a policy intending most directly to address the fear of a large Afrikaner population.<sup>18</sup> This pro-British bias in immigration continued until the mid 1960s. With the rise to power of Ian Smith, these former ethnic barriers to white immigration were jettisoned, and the Rhodesian Front's definition of desirable populations expanded to include southern Europeans and Afrikaners. Indeed, under Smith's governments, the Minister of Immigration post was held by two Afrikaners, which in itself reflected a broader ethnic view of white Rhodesia. Despite this softening of white ethnic biases, there were never any corresponding efforts to expand immigration selectivity further to include the non-white populations who were politically and economically allied to the white state, most notably Asians and Coloureds. Thus, despite the complex and subtle distinctions between ethnic and racial categories that carried both legal and social significance in Rhodesia, the demographic policies of both the nationalists and the state focused exclusively upon the white settler population and the indigenous African population, with the more ambiguous middle groups ignored or disregarded as insignificant.

<sup>16</sup> See J. Muzondidya, 'Towards a Historical Understanding of the Making of the Coloured Community in Zimbabwe, 1890-1920', *Identity, Culture, and Politics*, Vol. 3, No. 2 (December, 2002).

<sup>17</sup> See Muzondidya, for a more in-depth description of Coloured identity. Muzondidya, *Coloured Community*.

<sup>18</sup> A. Mlambo, *White Immigration*.

Racial coalescence after UDI had a profound influence on the formation of white Rhodesian identity, a process complicated by continued white transience. The psychological anxieties and pressures brought on by the growing numerical disparities within Rhodesia, the consolidation of African political power in the continent, and the near universal condemnation of the white settler regime in the international community created a triple besiegement for white Rhodesians.<sup>19</sup> This triple siege mentality interacted with white transience in interesting ways. It had the effect of weakening ethnic divisions within white society, and forced a coalescence of the white community within Rhodesia.<sup>20</sup> Yet the constant population shuffle meant that this racial unity within Rhodesia was necessarily inculcated to, and adopted by, new immigrants quickly, and thus this acculturation process was deep but brief, similar to the acculturation of undergraduate students into the life of the university. As will be argued, however, these feelings of white solidarity and of a common defiance might well have engendered a bond among whites within Rhodesia and created a location for sentimentality afterwards, yet they did not for most constitute a true national feeling. Nonetheless, the anxieties engendered by the triple besiegement were internalised and absorbed by the whites in Rhodesia, if only during their short residence, so much so that in the last decades of settler rule, demographic issues not only permeated Rhodesian politics, but also defined what it meant to be a white Rhodesian, however brittle and ephemeral this identity may have been.

### **The Hidden Ubiquity of Population Pressures**

The anxiety over racial demographics permeated Rhodesia's political atmosphere like a miasma<sup>21</sup> during the final decades of white rule, and its ubiquity

<sup>19</sup> See for example: R. Hodder-Williams interview, Oral Archives, British Empire and Commonwealth Museum (hereafter BECM).

<sup>20</sup> This coalescence of white society in Rhodesia after UDI has been described by several historians, including Barry Schutz, Sue Onslow, Robert Blake, and Colin Leys. See, B. Schutz, 'European Population Patterns, Cultural Persistence, and Political Change in Rhodesia', *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, Vol. 7, No. 1 (1973); S. Onslow, 'A Scheme of National Importance': Winston Field and the Italian Settlement Scheme' (unpublished, no date); R. Blake, *A History*; C. Leys, *European Politics in Southern Rhodesia* (London, Clarendon, 1959).

<sup>21</sup> In a different context, William McNeill referred to the ubiquity of population change to "the drones of the bagpipe" setting "a background tone against which the shriller voices of political debate compete for attention." W. McNeill, *Population and Politics Since 1750*, (Charlottesville, University of Virginia Press, 1990), quoted in D. Kaplan, 'Population and Politics in a Plural Society: The Changing

served as a unifier for all sorts of facially dissimilar political phenomena. These anxieties innervated nearly every level and department of the settler state, and influenced almost the entire range of state policy. The connection between these political phenomena and the demographic motivations behind them, despite being retrospectively ignored by the participants in the conflict and overlooked by historians, are not the result of fallacious *cum hoc, ergo propter hoc* reasoning, as these connections and the ubiquity of demographic motives were public knowledge at the time and obvious to contemporaries in Rhodesia. During the last decades of settler rule, racial demographics were a dominant theme in white Rhodesia's public discourses: monthly migration numbers were consistently reported in the media as important news items; the reporting of the 1962 and 1969 censuses garnered widespread public interest and fueled a stream of editorials and opinion letters; the *Rhodesia Herald's* editorial page regularly focused on population issues as diverse as urban influx policies, family planning, immigration, and emigration; Rhodesia's Parliament dedicated a great deal of time to debating population matters; the Cabinet expended a disproportionate amount of energy on attempts to reconfigure population numbers and mitigate their effects; and white politicians, academics, and lay people could be regularly heard expounding on the impending neo-Malthusian doomsday, the urgent need for greater numbers of white immigrants, the racial swamping of the urban areas by dangerous African masses, or the problem of white emigration. Politicians and policymakers, the national media, and African nationalists explicitly linked a large proportion of Rhodesia's political phenomena with their demographic impetuses. In other policy areas, the linkages between demographic motivations and public policy were so obvious as to often go publically unstated. Still other policies were motivated by racial demographics, but their linkages were purposefully obscured by policymakers: efforts at concealment that were at the time rarely a complete success. Population anxieties were thereby an open and notorious influence throughout Rhodesian politics clouding most policy considerations.

While population 'problems' were often discussed and debated in the public domain, they were nearly always cloaked in a more polished language of economics and development, as opposed to the more raw language of racial domination. Oddly

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enough, this cloaking was less effective in obscuring the role of racial demographics at the time than it has been to subsequent observers. Several examples illustrate this cloaking of language that hid demographic motivations: The state's drive for more white immigrants was always portrayed as solely an effort to import skills and capital to promote economic growth; controls on non-white immigration were defended as efforts to protect indigenous jobs; the state's family planning policy was defended as an effort to alleviate scarcity, lessen unemployment, liberate women, and stem ecological degradation of the rural areas; restrictions on white emigration were described as a way to protect the currency reserves and bolster the regime's military conscription force; limiting the number of Africans drifting into urban areas was a way to save urban infrastructures, limit urban unemployment, and encourage the development of the Tribal Trust Lands (TTL); separate development and the hardening of racial job reservation policies<sup>22</sup> were both efforts to maintain a proper economic balance in Rhodesia, both spatially and in terms of labour reserves; pegging social spending to factors other than population numbers was defended as the only way to wisely apportion competing demands on the Treasury; and finally, the 1969 constitution capping African political potential to a distant parity was a method to ensure that no one race could dominate the other. Quite obviously, even these more palatable rationales all contained racist assumptions—dichotomies in which the white population was equated with the positive attributes of economic growth, enterprise, and general national well-being, and the African population was equated with economic burdens, a drain on the Treasury, political demagoguery, and a national problem to be solved. Even so, the state argued publically that these policies were not 'political' in their origins, meaning that they were not malevolent attempts to reconfigure the racial ratios out of concerns of power, but were instead rational efforts to ensure growth and prosperity for all Rhodesians, white and African. Nonetheless, this cloak was easily pierced to reveal the baser reasoning of the settler state, and it is unlikely that this obscuring on behalf of the state was convincing for many contemporary Rhodesians, white or African. It was certainly not convincing for African parliamentarians who consistently identified the racist political motives behind such policies; nor to African nationalists, whose propaganda often exposed the

<sup>22</sup> Rhodesia did not refer to its job reservation policies as such, but instead the policy eventually adopted by the Rhodesian Front was named 'the rate for the job,' which was in all practicality another method to enshrine racial employment discrimination.

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state's racist motives (even while also identifying what can be termed 'false-positives'); nor did this cloak even prevent the more impolitic of white Rhodesian Front backbenchers from directly arguing for the baser racial ends that underlay the state's policies. However unconvincing this cloaking might have been to people at the time, these state efforts to downplay the importance and the ubiquity of demographic motivations as political power concerns has successfully caused the majority of historians and analysts to look clear past the ubiquitous influence of population matters in Rhodesian history.<sup>23</sup>

Notwithstanding the profound importance of the population war, there have been incentives on both sides of the Rhodesian conflict to retrospectively downplay or disregard the role of population matters in the collapse of the settler regime. Emphasising the importance of population issues muddies the clean narratives that both the Zimbabwean nationalists and Rhodesian apologists have constructed in the years following independence. For nationalist and 'patriotic' Zimbabwean historians and commentators, the narrative of the liberation war was one of triumph won through blood and sacrifice against a formidable enemy and their imperialist allies.<sup>24</sup> Theirs' is a story of heroes and villains. National liberation was something that was forcibly taken, and did not come about as the result of thoughtless, faceless demographic trends. Any narrative that assigns great weight to population trends lessens the roles of those whom these writers seek to celebrate or vilify. Similarly, Rhodesian apologists portray the narrative of Zimbabwean independence also as a heroic struggle, albeit one in which the roles of hero and villain are reversed. But the Rhodesian narrative takes on the form of a tragedy. Theirs' describes a ~~futile~~ struggle of Rhodesians against foreign and domestic Communists, a struggle in which the heroic, but ultimately naïve Rhodesians were betrayed during the climactic battle by their own pusillanimous kith and kin. This betrayal narrative was being formulated even as the regime was still collapsing,<sup>25</sup> and has since become the predominate narrative among white Rhodesians in the diaspora. The most famous example of this genre was written by Ian Smith himself in his autobiographical account of the

<sup>23</sup> See chapter five for a fuller discussion of this cloaking discourse.

<sup>24</sup> For an account of the shifting political uses of history in Zimbabwe, see: T. Ranger, 'Nationalist Historiography, Patriotic History and the History of the Nation: the Struggle over the past in Zimbabwe', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 30, No. 2 (June, 2004).

<sup>25</sup> The then Minister of Transport and Power, PK Van der Byl, claimed that the British government's refusal to recognise the internal settlement regime of Zimbabwe-Rhodesia constituted a total and utter betrayal. 'Betrayal' Claims Van der Byl,' *RH*, 19 November 1979.

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collapse of the white regime, *The Great Betrayal*.<sup>26</sup> As with the nationalists' accounts, the Rhodesian narrative also downplayed the significance of demographic factors, as the impact of population trends would seem to reduce the role of historical actors to mere flotsam on the indomitable tides of demography.

The collective amnesia concerning the population war that afflicted the politicians, nationalists and policymakers who actively took part in it, only became symptomatic after independence in 1980. Prior to this synergistic forgetting, the Rhodesian state, international bureaucrats, diplomats and politicians, African nationalists and guerrillas, and lay people inside and outside Rhodesia, all acknowledged the primacy of population matters in the fate of the white regime. Former Prime Minister, Ian Smith, clearly exemplified this pattern by the sharp differences in his statements and writings concerning the role of population matters during white rule and since independence. Throughout his tenure in office, Smith publically and privately positioned population matters as central to the fate of the white regime. His internal party coup in 1964 was in part made possible by the inability of his predecessor, Winston Field, to reverse the negative migration flows, and his most dramatic achievements in office, the Unilateral Declaration of Independence in 1965 and the 1969 constitution, were both expressly inspired by population pressures: the former to convince whites to stay in Rhodesia, and the latter to limit the impact of African population growth. In the mid 1970s, Smith declared in a series of speeches that his greatest achievement in office to that point had been to bring about positive white migration flows. Contemporaneously with these self-congratulatory appraisals of his rule in the mid 1970s, Smith's Cabinet Ministers and government officials frantically schemed over how best to increase the white population, slow the African growth rate, and mitigate the adverse effects of widening racial ratios. As the war escalated in the later 1970s, and white emigration continued to drain the already limited white conscript reserves, a lack of white manpower was consistently cited by state officials, and by Smith himself, as being the greatest military problem faced by the state. While the strategies to alter and mitigate the effects of population numbers dominated so much of his government's energies, and were openly acknowledged by Smith as representing the most formidable challenge to

<sup>26</sup> I. Smith, *The Great Betrayal* (London, Blake Publishing, 1997).

the regime, after independence Smith's population amnesia set in. In his controversial autobiography *The Great Betrayal*, there is no mention of the significance of population matters, and the demographic backdrop to many of the events of the 1960s and 1970s are strangely omitted. Following this same pattern of forgetting, the popular memories of the Rhodesian conflict among the Rhodesians of the diaspora likewise contain blanks in places where population matters played a major role. Similarly, the nationalist and 'patriotic' histories of Zimbabwe omit population references in their politicised war narratives. As a result, this other war has been conveniently forgotten by all sides.

### **The Historiography of Demographic Engineering**

Population matters, then, have not been sufficiently addressed, analysed, periodised, or properly contextualised in Rhodesian history. When racial demographics have been addressed, it is most often as raw numbers inserted into the text, with little explanation of their significance. These population trends have been tracked over time, but always as a sub-plot outside the main narrative, and rarely incorporated into the main analysis. As little scholarship as there has been on the significance of population matters generally, there is even less on the ubiquity of white population anxieties, how these pressures shaped white society, or on the efforts of both the settler state and African nationalists to engineer these demographics. A small number of studies have analysed different aspects of this engineering, but no single work has linked all the many components of this multifaceted population struggle into a coherent whole within the Rhodesian context. Nor indeed has the outcome of this demographic struggle been presented as a primary cause of the fall of the settler state. When addressed at all, the demographic struggle has typically been positioned as a byproduct of the military conflict, and efforts to re-configure population numbers as merely an adjunct to the shooting war. Because of the synergistic forgetting by the participants, and the lack of subsequent historical analysis, Rhodesia's war of number remains clouded and barely visible.

The phenomenon of demographic engineering has been analysed in the comparative literature of other regions and in other time periods. The population anxieties of Rhodesian whites in the 1960s and 1970s can find parallels in inter-war

Europe. Historians of this period have described how these national population anxieties were often expressed through the use of anthropomorphic analogies to the vitality of the national body, the interest in demography as a science closely linked to politics, and the formation of state population policies to address these concerns, all of which were remarkably similar to ideas and policies that emerged some 40 years later in Rhodesia.<sup>27</sup> More recently, Milica Bookman has analysed inter-ethnic population struggles in Europe since the Cold War.<sup>28</sup> Bookman describes these 'wars of numbers' and demonstrates how population size often translates into political and economic power, and the incentives this equation creates for engineering demography. In the African context, Omari Kokole focuses upon inter-ethnic competition and population policies within post-colonial African states.<sup>29</sup> In these zero-sum competitions that Kokole surveys, such as Rwanda, Burundi, and Sudan, fertility was a powerful political weapon, and there were thus politicised initiatives to encourage high birth rates in order to garner more power at the expense of ethnic rivals. In a study on apartheid South Africa, Madi Gray describes white fears of being overwhelmed by African numbers, a fear very much shared by whites in Rhodesia during the last decades of settler rule.<sup>30</sup> Gray characterises South Africa as a dual state, in which a developed nation existed side-by-side with a developing one, and traces how the two nations experienced drastically different demographic trajectories, and the implications this had for settler power. A more thoroughgoing analysis of South Africa's population policies was written by Barbara Brown in 1990.<sup>31</sup> Brown's article outlines a comprehensive policy of population control by the South African state very similar to that of Rhodesia's, in a context that was in many ways a close fit, including the state's efforts to lower African fertility through family planning and massively increase white immigration to narrow widening racial ratios. All of these comparative studies highlight certain anxieties and exertions that resemble different

<sup>27</sup> See C. Ipsen, 'Population Policy in the Age of Fascism: Observations on Recent Literature,' *Population and Development Review*, Vol. 24, No.3 (September, 1998) and P. Weindling, 'Fascism and Population in Comparative European Perspective', *Population and Development Review*, Vol. 14 (1988).

<sup>28</sup> M. Bookman, 'Demographic Engineering and the Struggle for Power', *Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 56, No. 1 (Fall, 2002).

<sup>29</sup> O. Kokole, 'The Politics of Fertility in Africa', in L. Bondetam and S. Bergstrom (eds), *Poverty and Population Control* (London, Academic Press, 1980).

<sup>30</sup> M. Gray, 'Race Ratios: The Politics of Population Control in South Africa', in Bondetam, *Poverty*.

<sup>31</sup> B. Brown, 'Facing the 'Black Peril': The Politics of Population Control in South Africa', *International Migration Review*, Vol. 24, No. 4 (Winter, 1990).

aspects of Rhodesia's war of numbers, but for all the usefulness of comparisons and the identification of commonalities of experience in a wider context, there were unique qualities to Rhodesia's demographic struggle that facial comparisons with other regions and societies, even apartheid South Africa, do not adequately address.

Demographic engineering in the Rhodesian context has received little attention. Lovemore Zinyama has written on the migration trends of whites in and out of Rhodesia, and the push and pull factors influencing them.<sup>32</sup> Likewise, Alois Mlambo has analysed the state's immigration policies from its founding to the end of the Federation, and in so doing convincingly argues that immigration was always politically vital to the Rhodesian state.<sup>33</sup> George Kay's work touches upon the pressures that African population growth brought to bear upon the state, and parses through the discourses concerning family planning and 'overpopulation.'<sup>34</sup> Kay also analyses the demand-side competition for immigrants and how this migration market influenced Rhodesia's policies. Three other works conceptually combine more aspects of these broader strategies to manipulate racial demographics, and move closer towards properly contextualising the significance of racial demographics: Peter Godwin and Ian Hancock's *Rhodesians Never Die*, Martin Meredith's *The Past is Another Country*, and Amy Kaler's *Running After Pills: Politics, Gender and Contraception in Colonial Zimbabwe*.<sup>35</sup> Both Godwin and Hancock and Meredith's works address the political, psychological, economic, and military significance of the shifting racial demographics in the 1970s, as well as touch upon state efforts to manipulate these demographics through immigration promotion and emigration restrictions. Though importantly, both cast these demographic policies as an adjunct to the war effort, and therefore do not properly periodise or contextualise this population war. Amy Kaler's book is a thorough examination of the battles over African fertility in Rhodesia, as well as the political, psychological, and economic effects of the African population growth on the settler state. Focusing on the

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<sup>32</sup> L. Zinyama, 'International Migrations to and from Zimbabwe and the Influence of Political Changes on Population Movements', *African Affairs*, Vol. 79, No. 314 (January, 1980).

<sup>33</sup> A. Mlambo, *White Immigration*.

<sup>34</sup> G. Kay, 'Towards a Population Policy for Zimbabwe-Rhodesia', *African Affairs*, Vol. 79, No. 314 (January 1980).

<sup>35</sup> P. Godwin and I. Hancock, *Rhodesians Never Die: The Impact of War and Political Change on White Rhodesia, 1970-1980* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1993); M. Meredith, *The Past is Another Country: Rhodesia, 1890-1979* (London, Deutsch, 1979); and A. Kaler, *Running After Pills: Politics, Gender and Contraception in Colonial Zimbabwe* (Portsmouth, Heinemann, 2003).

ideological, strategic, and tactical background to the competing efforts of both the state and the nationalists to engineer the African fertility, Kaler's work is alone in revealing the nationalists' interests and efforts in the population realm. But while Kaler's work adroitly analyses the struggle over African population growth, she does not piece this important part of the war of numbers together with the other corresponding efforts of this wider conflict. Thus, even these more comprehensive works fail to combine all such efforts of both the settler state and African nationalists into a conceptual whole, encompassing the counting and registering of population numbers, migration trends, differential fertility trends, and the efforts to mitigate the effects of unwanted growth, nor do any periodise the population anxieties and efforts to engineer population patterns as preceding the shooting war. Consequently, none fill in the entire picture of the war of numbers. As a result, there is still a hidden story running throughout the last decades of settler rule that has been either conveniently forgotten, incompletely constructed, disarranged or deemphasised, if not ignored completely, in the current literature. This thesis aims to address these deficiencies in the historical literature, reposition population issues as central to the fate of white Rhodesia, and relate the hidden story of Rhodesia's war of numbers.

## Chapter II

### The Rationalisation of the Racial Population Problem

A generalised fear of 'racial swamping' was long an anxiety among settlers and white colonialists in all of Africa. The overwhelming disparity in numbers between whites and Africans was always known, but the perceived significance of these racial imbalances varied over time and space. Colonial military superiority on the spot; the potential accessibility of metropolitan resources; technological and communication advantages; effective divide and rule policies; and a trust in the political apathy and/or cowed ambitions of the African populations, all at times militated against these numerical disparities translating into insurmountable political vulnerabilities. From the early 1960s, however, these abstract anxieties became more concrete for settler communities across Africa, Rhodesia in particular, and the political implications of these racial population numbers became much more serious. The reasons behind this shift in white attitudes in Rhodesia towards racial population numbers, from abstract and vague anxieties to concrete and specific ones, were threefold: the momentum of decolonisation; the rise of African nationalism; and more specific population information that for the first time enumerated racial population trends in accurate detail.

From the 1960s, the Rhodesian state attempted to discover the contours of Rhodesia's demography by identifying, counting, registering, and tracking the racial populations.<sup>1</sup> The population numbers that were discovered were deployed in different ways and for different purposes by the state. The numbers could at times be weapons to use against political enemies, they could provide a pretext for actions, they could be evidence of success to boost popularity, or at other times they could be hidden away or obscured as signs of failure. As such, the counting of people and the control over these statistics were very important political issues in Rhodesia. This chapter will track the state's attempts to rationalise, regulate, manipulate, and control these demographic factors and examine this shift in white settler attitudes in Rhodesia regarding racial populations, from abstract anxieties to concrete fears.

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<sup>1</sup> For a good overview of the political significance of censuses in other contexts, see: D. Kertzer, *Census and Identity: The Politics of Race, Ethnicity and Language in National Censuses* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2001); L. Dudley-Jenkins, *Identity and Identification: Defining the Disadvantaged* (London, Routledge Curzon, 2003); F. Mimiko, 'Census in Nigeria: The Politics and the Imperative of Depoliticization', *African and Asian Studies*, Vol. 5, No. 1, (January, 2006).

## The Impact of the 1962 Census

Since the founding of the colony, whites in Rhodesia knew as a self-evident truism that they were grossly outnumbered, but they did not know the exact extent of the population differential, nor was this differential viewed as presenting an insurmountable obstacle to the long-term viability of white Rhodesia. Both of these factors would change after the 1962 census: the first immediately, and the second rapidly thereafter. The African population, and especially the rural African population, was the great unknown in Rhodesian politics prior to 1962: hidden, massive, and remote. Rural Africans were largely outside the pale and beyond the state's writ, and earlier attempts to regulate the rural population in a more interventionist fashion all met with intense resistance. The timing of the first comprehensive census in 1962 corresponded with the beginnings of the disintegration of the Federation, and was a demographic accounting of the territories on the cusp of independence. Within only a year-and-a-half of the census, Rhodesia's two northern Federation partners would both split off as independent African countries, with Rhodesia's fate as a minority settler regime increasingly uncertain. The census was the first of its kind conducted in Rhodesia, as it was extended to include all the Africans in the colony, a group whose numbers had previously only been counted using wildly inaccurate sampling methods.<sup>2</sup> It was the ambition of the 1962 census to finally grasp the contours of this hidden population, and in so doing, enhance and consolidate state control over the entire territory.

The 1962 African population census, unimaginatively named "Operation Big Count," was conducted over 15 days from the end of April to early May, and involved 3,000 enumerators who set out on bicycles and on foot to determine the age, sex, territory of birth, education, physical disabilities, and employment of the African population.<sup>3</sup> The enumerators distributed a half a million hand bills and 80,000 booklets in the Shona and Ndebele languages to explain the government's purpose behind the census. The number of enumerators—3,000—was chosen to allow for an approximate ratio of one enumerator per 1,000 Africans, as the pre-census estimates for the African population was 3,000,000.

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<sup>2</sup> 'Census in April of Africans in the Colony', *RH*, 16 February 1962.

<sup>3</sup> 'Census Teams Will Risk Lives to Collect Vital Facts', *RH*, 9 March 1962.

A month before the enumerators were to begin their work, ZAPU's then Publicity Chief, Robert Mugabe, announced that ZAPU would instruct its followers to ignore the census and not cooperate with the settler government's enumerators.<sup>4</sup> From the nationalists' perspective, censal knowledge meant power and control, and any state action that sought to gather information and bring the African population under greater state regulation was to be opposed. The nationalists appreciated immediately that the facially apolitical census was political indeed, and the counting was thus encumbered by this consistent opposition. The Central Statistical Office's Director of Statistics, Dr. F. T. Russell, seemed to be genuinely puzzled by ZAPU's politically motivated opposition to what he and many others considered a purely apolitical, technical and administrative task, especially one that he was at pains to point out was intended to aid in the provision of state services to Africans. Despite official bemusement, the enumerators were met with a great degree of organised opposition as they conducted their work. In the Mufakose Township near Salisbury, enumerators were physically threatened and many resigned, and similar obstructions occurred in sections of the Harare, Mrewa, and Sipolile districts.<sup>5</sup> In addition to verbal threats and intimidation, a number of enumerators were reportedly stoned.<sup>6</sup> In districts where enumerators had resigned, Dr. Russell expressed that the government's policy was to return to these "trouble spots" with larger teams of enumerators. Awakening to the extent of the resistance, the government instituted a "Get Tough" policy, directed towards the "ringleaders" of the censal opposition, who would be prosecuted under the "obstruction" provisions of the Federal Census and Statistics Act.<sup>7</sup> After a little more than a week into the census, already 13 arrests and convictions were handed out under Census Act; convictions that could have resulted in a fine of up to £50 or 6 months imprisonment.<sup>8</sup> Notwithstanding the government's insistence that "irresponsible and ignorant elements"<sup>9</sup> would not delay the census work, by 10 May, a day after the Director had hoped to finish, only a quarter of the colony had been covered.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>4</sup> 'Census Director is Baffled by ZAPU Ban', *RH*, 27 March 1962.

<sup>5</sup> 'Opposition to 'Big Count' in Some Areas: 'Get Tough' Plan', *RH*, 27 April 1962.

<sup>6</sup> 'Census on Schedule Despite Opposition', *RH*, 10 May 1962. In an unrelated incident, the *Herald* reported that one enumerator was even treed by a charging Rhino.

<sup>7</sup> 'Opposition to 'Big Count' in Some Areas: 'Get Tough' Plan', *RH*, 27 April 1962.

<sup>8</sup> 'Southern Rhodesia Census: Keogh is Satisfied with Progress, Aims at 100%', *RH*, 28 April, 1962.

<sup>9</sup> 'Census on Schedule Despite Opposition', *RH*, 10 May 1962.

<sup>10</sup> 'Census on Schedule Despite Opposition', *RH*, 10 May 1962.

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The Nationalists' decision to sabotage the 1962 census was consistent with ZAPU's overall policy of "non-cooperation and sabotage,"<sup>11</sup> of all state initiatives in rural areas at that time. These sabotage efforts targeted most specifically the intrusions of the Land Husbandry Act, including the enormously unpopular cattle destocking policies and the digging of contour ridges, but moved beyond these specific state interferences into attacking all visible state property and administrative arms in the rural areas, including cattle dips, and any structure containing the taint of colonial interference in 'traditional' rural life. In Matabeleland, for instance, state development programmes had a long history of being thwarted by this sort of widespread non-cooperation,<sup>12</sup> and it was in this receptive environment where nationalist efforts to sabotage the census emerged. These censal disruptions should be viewed as an early effort at 'cultural nationalism' on the part of African nationalists, who tapped into and used traditional peasant resentment of colonial interference in rural life for political advantage. Thus, the ambitious administrative outreach of the 1962 census in this context was an obvious target for nationalist disruptions, despite the fact that these disruptions seemed to take the state by surprise.

Despite these interferences, not even two weeks into Operation Big Count, the CSO began to realise that African numbers most likely far exceeded their pre-census estimates of 3 million.<sup>13</sup> Enumerators attributed this apparent discrepancy to "remoteness" and higher than expected birth rates.<sup>14</sup> In late June 1962, early CSO estimates claimed that the African population was nearer to 3,610,000 Africans, 20 percent higher than previous estimates,<sup>15</sup> and later revisions increased this number again to 3,616,600.<sup>16</sup> In analyzing these figures, the CSO revised their assumptions made in 1954 that African population growth averaged 3percent per annum and retrospectively altered their population estimates to account for an estimated growth rate of 3.5 percent annually.<sup>17</sup> A contemporaneous census of Northern Rhodesian Africans likewise discovered a vast previous undercounting.<sup>18</sup> A *Herald* editorial

<sup>11</sup> J. Alexander, J. McGregor, T. Ranger, *Violence and Memory: One Hundred Years in the 'Dark Forests' of Matabeleland* (Oxford, James Curry, 2000) p. 103.

<sup>12</sup> Alexander, *Violence and Memory*, pp. 132-134.

<sup>13</sup> 'African Census in SR Going Well, Says Director', *RH*, 25 April 1962.

<sup>14</sup> 'Southern Rhodesia Census: Keogh is Satisfied with Progress, Aims at 100%', *RH*, 28 April 1962.

<sup>15</sup> '3,610,000 Africans—20% Above Estimate', *RH*, 22 June 1962.

<sup>16</sup> '3,616,600 Africans in SR', *RH*, 24 October 1962.

<sup>17</sup> 'European Population Increases By About 1,335 in 4 Months', *RH*, 2 June 1965.

<sup>18</sup> 'Census Finds One Million Lost Africans', *RH*, 21 August 1963.

addressing the discrepancy asserted that the African population growth was a testament to the quality of the Federation's health services, and went on to argue that this unintended byproduct of the Federation's own successes created significant challenges for the white state. These challenges included greater strains on the economy and increasing land pressures, and the editorial also worried that African nationalists, in particular ZAPU's Joshua Nkomo, would find the larger African population and wider racial population ratios a source of political strength, and would increase calls to scrap Southern Rhodesia's new (1961) constitution.<sup>19</sup> Higher population numbers and faster than expected growth instantly were interpreted by white settlers as a problem with many heads attached to it. Not long after the spring census appeared, the first calls for state-sponsored family planning began to appear in the *Herald*. One letter from November 1962 laid out the case affirmatively: "[the Federation's] population problems are so great, so important, and so immediate, that only state supported programmes, inspired by private initiative, can attack them on the scale required."<sup>20</sup>

Population analyses following the 1962 census at first centered on the static size of the African population and its size discrepancy from what was previously estimated, but it was not long before future growth predictions added to these population fears. Predictions as to the speed of the African population doubling would later become almost a bettor's sport throughout the post census period, although unlike horses, it was one with supposed apocalyptic consequences. One of the first such predictions to come out was issued by the CSO in June 1964, which estimated that the current African population—then cited as 3.5 million—would double to 7 million by 1982, a mere 18 years from then.<sup>21</sup> In the spring of 1965, the Rhodesian Freedom from Hunger Campaign claimed that the African population would be trebled to over 12 million by the year 2000.<sup>22</sup> Soon after this last prediction,

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<sup>19</sup> 'Growth of the Population', Editorial, *RH*, 23 June 1962. As the *Herald* had predicted, Nkomo did seize upon these new numbers and reiterated his call that self-government had to mean immediate majority rule. However, one letter writer to the *Herald* made the interesting if specious argument that: "It is hard to see in view of these facts [regarding the white state's responsibility for higher African growth rates] how the Africans can claim any moral right to majority government... Had the 'settlers' left them to their own devices and to fend for themselves, it is doubtful if today they would have been in the majority anyway." 'Original Numbers Small', letter from John Bull, *RH*, 4 July 1962.

<sup>20</sup> 'Family Planning Needed in the Fed', letter from Joyce Wickstead, *RH*, 9 November 1962.

<sup>21</sup> 'African Population is 3.5 Million—Will Double by 1982, Census Report Reveals', *RH* 27 June 1964.

<sup>22</sup> "'Another 8m Rhodesians by Year 2000'", *RH*, 26 March 1965.

a former MP and Cabinet Minister stated that Africans would number 16 million by 2000, quadrupling instead of trebling.<sup>23</sup> Most public citations regarding the African population in the mid 1960s settled on the figure of the African population doubling every 20 years. After the findings of the 1969 census demonstrated that official estimates for the African population were still far too low, this prediction sport continued: in 1970 the government's Chief Town Planning Officer predicted 20 million by 2000,<sup>24</sup> and in a full page article entitled, "Rhodesia's Birth Bomb," in the summer of 1971 the *Herald* predicted 25 million by 2000.<sup>25</sup> As it was, Zimbabwe's population was nearer to 11 million in 2000,<sup>26</sup> but these demographic projections were more interesting for what they revealed about the projectors themselves, than their accuracy.

### Counting, Controlling, and Regulating the African Population

Soon after the census, several measures were proposed by the government to obtain more accurate information about the African population, so as to better track their demographics. Additional measures were also introduced that aimed to limit African immigration into Rhodesia generally, and specifically restrict the influx into the urban areas. In 1962, a bill was presented that sought to mandate registration for all African births and deaths. This law was intended to bring all Africans into line with what the other racial groups were already required to do. This initiative was contemporaneous with a bill introduced that would eliminate African migratory labour in Rhodesia. Another bill was proposed in 1964 that would issue mandatory identity cards to control the African influx into the cities, and still another sought to regulate the cross border migrations of Africans. As it was, all of these initiatives were met with great opposition due to their logistical difficulties, if not their intent, and all were significantly watered down before becoming law.

As the state attempted to rationalise the population problem after the 1962 census, officials began to delineate what was knowable and what was unknowable, and extrapolating from this, what populations and areas were the state's full

<sup>23</sup> 'Abrahamson's Warning on Population', *RH*, 6 May 1965.

<sup>24</sup> 'Population Soars in Rhodesia', *RH*, 25 July 1970.

<sup>25</sup> 'Rhodesia's Birth Bomb', *RH*, 1 June 1971.

<sup>26</sup> The Zimbabwean Central Statistical Office reported 11,631,657 people in 2002 undifferentiated by race. CSO web site: [www.zimstat.co.zw](http://www.zimstat.co.zw) (viewed 13 March 2008).

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responsibility and which were not. During the debates over the Births and Deaths Registration Bill, the idea of making the registration of all African births and deaths mandatory as it was for the other races, was offered but rejected as being unfeasible.<sup>27</sup> The resultant Act mandated that only Africans in certain urban areas had to register these statistics, and that in other regions the registration of births and deaths was voluntary. It is significant that only urban Africans were designated as being within the reach of the new birth registration law, and were thereby worth counting because they were a part of the formal and visible economic and political life of Rhodesia, while rural Africans were deemed to be largely an uncountable mass. Despite their inclusion in the watered down birth registration law, urban Africans still widely ignored the registration requirements.<sup>28</sup>

Before 1964, there were no mechanisms in place to monitor Africans crossing in and out of Rhodesia, and legislation was introduced in April 1964 to remedy this.<sup>29</sup> The Departure From Southern Rhodesia Bill as introduced aimed to regulate the flow of African citizens in and out of Rhodesia, funneling them through assigned points of entry and exit, and requiring travelers to carry the appropriate travel documentation. The failure to comply with these proposed requirements would constitute a criminal offence. In introducing the bill, the Minister of Internal Affairs, Jack Howman, had falsely assumed that the vast majority of border crossings were already through designated points of entry and exit, a proposition ridiculed by other MPs, in particular the former Prime Minister Edgar Whitehead. Whitehead asserted that every five miles or so there are footpaths connecting Rhodesia and Mozambique, and the same was true across the Limpopo during the dry season, concluding that, "unless you are going to build a Berlin Wall or something of that kind you will not stop this ancient custom of people crossing." The number of people using these ancient crossings he estimated to be in excess of one million annually.<sup>30</sup> In its amended final form, people crossing the borders were not funneled through a few staffed points of entry and exit, but instead, pre-existing unstaffed border crossing points were retrospectively designated as points of entry and exit, and the permit requirement would remain a law

<sup>27</sup> Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 18, 'Births and Deaths Registration (SR) Bill', 18 July 1962.

<sup>28</sup> The response to this compulsory registration law in force since 1963 was slow, as only 574 African births were registered in all of 1963. Whether or not this was because of a generalised reluctance to register with any state initiative, a passive form of resistance, or simple oversight is unclear. 'Africans Neglect to Register Births', *RH*, 18 February 1965.

<sup>29</sup> Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 56, 'Departure From Southern Rhodesia (Control) Bill', 2 April 1964.

<sup>30</sup> 'Departure', 2 April 1964.

more honoured in the breach than in the observance.<sup>31</sup> In truth, it must have been recognised that the administration of the state could never handle the actual observance of the law. If this law did not regulate border crossings in any meaningful way, from the state's perspective it at least provided a ready cause for prosecution of nationalists returning from abroad, who like everybody else, failed to gain the requisite permit. The Departure Act was amended in 1966 to cover aliens as well as citizens, but yet again a legal framework was established without any corresponding enforcement mechanisms, and it was again essentially state play-acting.<sup>32</sup> The cross border migrations of Africans in and out of Rhodesia that was the subject of these laws continued to remain in the realm of un-regulated and unknowable, despite the legislation imagining control.

After UDI, there was a renewed interest and a greater boldness in reconstituting Rhodesia's population numbers, including manipulating African migrations. In December 1965, Smith stated that he intended to replace alien African labour in Rhodesia with indigenous African labour and repatriate alien Africans.<sup>33</sup> This move to reorganise African labour was long called for by right wing Rhodesian politicians as a way to both slow the African growth rate by limiting what are in the United States pejoratively referred as 'anchor babies,' the offspring of alien males and indigenous females, and as a strategy to lower indigenous African unemployment. Despite the bold plan, Smith's attempt to force indigenous Africans to take up rural employment to replace those who would leave immediately met with resistance from the business community, and was soon abandoned. This abandonment was a reflection of the lack of interest that rural employment had for Rhodesian blacks, at least at the wages then offered by employers, and a realisation that if alien labour left there would be either no replacement at all, or that a comprehensive wage increase would be necessary to attract indigenous labourers. These wage increases, and the resulting increases in overhead costs to do business, would have been unacceptable to Rhodesia's white business community. The compromised labour policy that was finally introduced in 1966 created Closed Labour Areas in urban regions, where previously employed alien labour was exempted but new alien labour could not be

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<sup>31</sup> Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 56, 'Departure From Southern Rhodesia (Control) Bill', 3 April 1964.

<sup>32</sup> Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 64, 'Departure From Rhodesia (Control) Amendment Bill', 27 July 1966.

<sup>33</sup> 'Direction of Labour', Editorial, *RH*, 10 December 1965.

introduced, and attempted to direct new alien labour exclusively into the rural areas. As to the application of the Closed Labour Areas applying solely to urban areas, and even there with exemptions, the Minister of Labour and Social Welfare, Ian McLean, stated with resignation: "I would willingly re-apply the Order to the rural areas if I could be satisfied that Rhodesian Africans would genuinely seek and stay in employment in the rural areas, but regrettably at this point of time they are not prepared to do so to the extent required by the agricultural and mining industries..."<sup>34</sup>

The South African state attempted to impose similar labour controls, but the differential outcomes between the Rhodesian and South African examples in this and other racial policies, reflected less a difference in ideology, than a reflection of the relative weakness of the Rhodesian state.<sup>35</sup> This measure can be viewed as another delineation of those Africans who were within the visible world of the urban areas, and those invisible African numbers outside the regulatory grasp of the settler state.

As the African population continued to grow, Rhodesian Front politicians began plans to develop the Tribal Trust Lands to allow for a greater ability to absorb indigenous African numbers, and relieve the influx into the cities.<sup>36</sup> These policies and other decentralisation efforts would come to be called separate development or 'provincialism,' and were essentially moves toward apartheid-style racial homelands. While always a popular idea among the Rhodesian right, provincialism in its full form was never adopted because of the practical obstacles to its implementation, rather than a principled white opposition to the ideology behind it. The idea's popularity reflected the appeal for whites of disclaiming responsibility for growing African numbers, and a frustration among white politicians that Africans should be forced to reap what they themselves had sown, instead of burdening the largely urban white population. Yet the fluidity of the movement of the African population between rural and urban areas meant that in actuality this idea of a rigid dichotomy between urban and rural Africans was blurred almost to the point of meaninglessness.

<sup>34</sup> '75,600 Decrease in Foreign Workers', *RH*, 1 May 1969.

<sup>35</sup> The closed door Cabinet debates regarding the Whaley Commission's constitutional proposals provide a window as to the Rhodesian Front's views towards South African apartheid as a potential model for Rhodesia. Regarding "partition" as a possible goal for Rhodesia, the Cabinet concluded that partition, "appeared extremely attractive at first, particularly when comparisons were made with the success which South Africa was making with their partition policies. But it later appeared from evidence that the position was too complicated in Rhodesia for partition to be a practical proposition." Smith Papers, Box 3/001 (SSF), Cabinet Minutes, 'Note of Discussion between Cabinet Ministers and Representatives of the Constitutional Commission at Cabinet', 27 August 1968.

<sup>36</sup> 'Opening of Tribal Areas May Support 4m Africans', *RH*, 3 June 1967.

Influx control legislation that sought to limit the movement of Africans into urban areas was another priority of the Rhodesian Front, but it too was met with great resistance. In the mid 1960s, a debate in Parliament raged over a bill mandating the issuance of identity cards as a way to track African movements, but the bill was ultimately abandoned. The issue of urban influx was reopened in the autumn of 1968 with a report given by the Director of the Salisbury Municipality's African Administration, R.C. Briggs. In his fiery and paranoid report, Briggs warned if the urban influx of Africans continued unabated, Salisbury would soon be witness more overcrowding, worsening unemployment, a breakdown in African family life, more drinking, a spike in violent crime, civil strife, and an alarming rise in sexual crimes.<sup>37</sup> Briggs called for more accessible birth control to be provided for poor Africans in the cities as a method to reduce unemployment, in addition to a policy proposal euphemistically calling for indigenous Africans to be "drafted" to work in rural work camps away from urban areas.<sup>38</sup> The national government responded favorably to Briggs' concerns, if not his recommendations, and legislation was again formulated to regulate the drift of Africans into urban areas.<sup>39</sup> As part of Smith's end-of-the-year message, he admonished employed Africans in the city to, "work hard and not risk losing [your urban jobs] through laziness or indifference... to those who have no employment I would say leave the towns and go into the country where there is ample work available."<sup>40</sup> But the same pulls of the cities that killed earlier attempts to replace alien African labour in the rural areas with indigenous labour did not suddenly fall away, despite Smith's schoolmarm advice. More concretely than Smith's admonition, the identification and regulation of aliens within Rhodesia was enhanced by the Aliens Act of 1966, which amended an earlier 1954 law regulating aliens by providing the administrative devices to identify and locate aliens within Rhodesia, but the actual means to do so was beyond the practical reach of the state.<sup>41</sup> In 1968, a government Committee was created to re-investigate the problem of urban influx, but by 1970 it had rendered no policy recommendations.<sup>42</sup> As perceived by the right wing, the problem did not go away, and the RF Congress of October 1971 approved

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<sup>37</sup> 'Concern Expressed over African Influx Into Salisbury', *RH*, 30 November 1968.

<sup>38</sup> 'Birth Control Pills Wanted For Jobless', *RH*, 2 December 1968.

<sup>39</sup> 'Present Laws Cannot Stop Urban Influx', *RH*, 6 December 1968.

<sup>40</sup> "'Have No Fear' PM Broadcasts to Africans", *RH*, 1 January 1969.

<sup>41</sup> Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 64, 'Aliens Bill', 27 July 1966.

<sup>42</sup> 'Influx Committee Still Working', *RH*, 19 December 1969.

resolutions to reverse the influx of Africans into urban areas and create African townships in the TTLs.<sup>43</sup> In May 1973, another bill mandating African identification cards was introduced. These cards would distinguish aliens from indigenous Africans and it was presented as an effort to more effectively enforce the Closed Labour Areas Act, but this half measure was hardly enough to satisfy hardliners convinced of the horrors of urban influx and the effects of a large alien population.<sup>44</sup> To address these continued complaints, an amendment to the Foreign Migratory Labour Act was passed in 1976 making the punishments for violations of the Closed Labour Areas harsher.<sup>45</sup> This was a further effort to enforce the areas in which alien labour could legally be employed, and though it was presented as an effort to protect indigenous African labour, it was in reality another attempt to force black Rhodesians into fuller employment at lower wages in order to relieve the urban influx and growing unemployment pressures. A more ambitious population identification plan was introduced in 1976 that sought to create identification cards for all Rhodesians over a period of five years. These cards, which citizens would be required to carry at all times, would be backed up by a centralised and computerised documentation system, with instant data recapture, which would include fingerprints and photographs.<sup>46</sup> Seeing as the regime collapsed within three years of its passage, the five year implementation of this Act was never completed, but it did represent the most aggressive attempt to administratively regulate all Africans. These policy failures all exposed limitations as to the state's knowledge of, and control over, Rhodesia's African population: indigenous and alien, rural and urban.

### **Proposed Solutions to the Population Problem**

A debate over what exactly the proper solutions to the population problem would be, had already begun by late 1962. In 1963 several reports were published in the Western media that began to ignite what would later rage into the global neo-Malthusian population paranoia of the 1970s. One such report, issued by the Population Reference Bureau proclaimed that a new 'Dark Age' would soon be upon

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<sup>43</sup> 'RF Urges Reversal of African Influx', *RH*, 9 October 1971.

<sup>44</sup> Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 83, 'Africans (Registration and Identification) Amendment Bill', 21 November 1972.

<sup>45</sup> Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 92, 'Foreign Migratory Labour Amendment Bill', 17 February 1976.

<sup>46</sup> Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 93, 'National Registration Bill', 9 July 1976.

humanity if world birth rates, in particular Africa's world leading birth rates, were not soon reduced.<sup>47</sup> These neo-Malthusian fears found a receptive audience in post census Rhodesia, as these Western fears of Third World birth rates were seemingly being experienced in microcosm within Rhodesia. The title of an editorial running in October 1963 fatalistically wondered if fellow Rhodesians had to: "Prepare to Meet [Their] Doom?"<sup>48</sup> Contemporary economists and politicians feared that if the African population continued to grow relative to the white population, there would be growing unemployment and all the related problems of a massive, disaffected, unemployed urban African population. Strategies to manage this growing population, especially to limit its economic consequences, were also proposed, and combined with calls for more white immigration. As such, the white and African populations were deemed to be linked, especially in terms of an ideal ratio corresponding to the labour needs of white employers and unemployment rates of Africans. A *Herald* editorial from September 1964, expressed relief that Rhodesia's population problems were finally receiving the public attention they deserved. Situating the significance of population pressures thus, the editorial stated: "most public arguments on other topics are like a domestic quarrel in a farmhouse, while outside the fields on which the prosperity of the farmhouse depends are being eroded."<sup>49</sup>

This perceived population imbalance strained the state's education and employment policies. African school-leavers were graduating at unprecedented rates and were finding that there were no slots in the economy to fit into. With white paramouncy in the economy sacrosanct, these educated Africans merely added to the disgruntled unemployment numbers, or emigrated, and led several Rhodesian Front backbenchers to call for a lower percentage of secondary degrees to be awarded so as to limit educated Africans' unemployment. In 1967, one RF backbencher even argued that if education was to continue to be provided for all at current costs, then African parents should have to agree to use birth control, as a *quid pro quo*.<sup>50</sup> More numbers meant more schools and teachers and greater expenses, which exacerbated state spending pressures. Smith's government in 1965 decided to peg education spending at 2 percent of the GNP, regardless of African population numbers. This did

<sup>47</sup> 'Curb Needed on Birth Rates to Avert New 'Dark Age': World's Population Rose by 185 Million in 3 Years—Bureau', *RH*, 7 October 1962.

<sup>48</sup> 'Prepare to Meet Our Doom?', *RH*, 8 October 1963.

<sup>49</sup> 'The Greatest Problem', *RH*, 2 September 1964.

<sup>50</sup> 'Population Explosion Warning', *RH*, 19 August 1967.

not have any antinatalist effect on the growing African population, and a Select Committee on Education report from 1969 reported that the growing funding gap in African education that resulted from this policy was leading to a deterioration of African education standards and a rise in illiteracy. In addition, the racial economic divisions were straining at the seams with the declining white population and rising African population of the mid 1960s. A government Select Committee on Education from May 1967 concluded that, barring massive white immigration, many job categories formerly the preserve of whites would have to be integrated, as Africans pushed against the reservations and there was a dearth of qualified whites.<sup>51</sup> The state's conundrum was that further integration, the resultant filling of employment openings with Africans, and the generalised weakening of white preserve that would inevitably follow, would lower the attractiveness of Rhodesia to those white immigrants deemed necessary to save white Rhodesia. It also threatened to cause current residents to flee. In response to these pressures, the RF government after UDI actually strengthened the de facto job reservation through the fixing of rates for certain jobs, effectively sealing off white jobs even if there were no whites to fill them.<sup>52</sup> The creation of false demand for skilled white labour was explicitly both a protection to current white residents and an economic incentive for potential immigrants, and any negative effects that accrued to the African population were viewed to be largely a result of their own irresponsible fertility rates and unwillingness to take up rural employment.

The discourses concerning African population growth all tacitly assumed that the white and African populations were economically linked in such a way that their sizes needed to be pegged to some ideal ratio range, and that the growth of the African population portended disaster unless a rebalancing could be achieved. A *Herald* editorial from February 1964, following a year of enormous net migration losses of whites, explicitly connected racial population trends with the labour market, and again took for granted the white/employer African/labourer dichotomy. The editorial juxtaposed the high African birth rates with the slumping white birth rates and queried how this racial-come-economic imbalance can ever be remedied, asking rhetorically:

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<sup>51</sup> 'Basic to the Report', Editorial, *RH*, 8 May 1967.

<sup>52</sup> 'Persistent', Editorial, *RH*, 2 October 1967.

“Is any problem more pressing today than that of population trends?”<sup>53</sup> Though the slumping white birth rates of Rhodesian whites were at various times bemoaned by public figures, it was widely recognised that it would be through white immigration and African family planning, not white pronatalism or African out-migration, that the state could best hope to more favorably rebalance the racial populations.<sup>54</sup> It was assumed among a growing percentage of the electorate that these population problems could all be mitigated by re-pegging the white and African growth rates such that the white population could sufficiently carry the load of African numbers economically, both through employment and through expanding the tax base. Within months of the census in 1962, Federal economic planners, who unquestioningly applied racialised notions of race and economic niches, began to call for an increase in white immigration to Rhodesia in an effort to employ these surplus Africans that had been discovered in the census. In a published report by the Ministry of Home Affairs, it was asserted that Rhodesia’s immigration policy should aim for 12,000 white immigrants for the 1962/63 year, and increase by 1,000 every year thereafter, so that by 1969/70 there would be an annual white influx of 20,000.<sup>55</sup> It was argued that only immigration at or around this level could ensure that ideal racial/economic ratios could be achieved in the light of the recent census numbers. A specific target ratio for Africans per European was proposed by Professor Jan Sadie, from Stellenbosch University, when he conducted a wide-ranging government-sponsored survey of Rhodesia’s economy in 1967. In his report, he stated that on average every European employed 7.4 Africans.<sup>56</sup> Stemming from this ratio, Sadie concluded, and subsequent governments concurred, that white population growth must provide at least so many whites as to create employment for Africans as they entered the job market. Sadie concluded that this pegging of white immigration to African natural increase meant that Rhodesia should aim for at least 12,000 immigrants a year.<sup>57</sup> It is also significant

<sup>53</sup> ‘Population Trends’, *RH*, 28 February 1964.

<sup>54</sup> It should be noted, that at least some in Rhodesia recognised the impossibility of white immigration keeping pace with African natural increase, even at a set ratio. See for example a full page advertisement by the politically moderate Centre Group ‘Population Explosion Threatens Rhodesia’, *RH*, 31 May 1968.

<sup>55</sup> ‘20,000 Immigrants a Year is the Aim’, *RH*, 13 November 1962.

<sup>56</sup> Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 72, ‘Sadie Report’, 13 August 1968. Professor Sadie arrived at this number through dubious calculations.

<sup>57</sup> For a summary of the Sadie Report, see ‘Economic Report calls for more Immigrants’, Editorial, *RH* 13 October 1967. The state substantially supported Sadie’s thinking on planning methods, and

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that the Sadie Report attached equal importance to African family planning as another means to redress the racial imbalance. The Report concluded that only by achieving a more favorable racial balance could there be any hope of maintaining economic growth. Sadie's findings and the demographic solutions sections of his report were affirmed by the government and set out an informal blueprint for the state's population policies to follow.

### Control over the Numbers

As population numbers were matters of such political importance, the settler state was always very careful in controlling and distributing demographic information. There was a cessation of the publication of all state-issued statistical information in the mid 1960s that was consistent with the general censorship trends immediately following UDI. Choosing to include statistical information that related solely to population demographics in the censorship blackout might seem odd when the purported purpose of the post UDI censorship was to protect Rhodesia's sanctions busting and to guard against Rhodesia's enemies gathering vital economic measurements. However, the ban also served further hidden purposes, which were certainly to quell any public panic regarding the possibility of a white exodus from Rhodesia after UDI, and to deny international opponents of the regime from receiving any damaging information. A follow-up to the 1962 census was initially scheduled for October 1966, but in keeping with the information blackout, it was cancelled with no official explanation given.<sup>58</sup> The government's statistical information blackout finally ended in April 1967, with the publication of new state-issued population statistics quarterly, most likely made possible by the surprisingly positive white migration numbers since UDI that the RF government would certainly want to publicise.<sup>59</sup> It was not until August 1969, though, that the monthly digest of statistics were again published in their full form.

Already a year prior to the findings of the 1969 census, and before the resumption of the publication of the monthly digests, there was another wave of

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only disagreed with his recommended state machinery. See 'In Parliament Yesterday: Sadie Report Debated', *RH* 14 August 1968.

<sup>58</sup> 'Planned Census of Population is Postponed', *RH*, 18 October 1966.

<sup>59</sup> 'Coming Out of the Dark', Editorial, *RH*, 15 April 1967.

population panic in the summer of 1968. The panic was precipitated by the Minister of the Treasury, John Wrathall's, budget for the fiscal year, and the concurrent debate regarding the Sadie Report on the linkages between racial ratios and economic growth. Wrathall's lengthy Budget statement encapsulated much of the thinking of the RF government concerning the racial population contest: the explicit linkage between economic growth and African population growth, the need for greater white immigration to soak up African unemployment, the frustration over the continued need for foreign African labour when Rhodesian Africans were unemployed in the cities, and finally the need for intensive family planning to stem African growth.<sup>60</sup> The reasons behind the government's focus on African population growth was reiterated by the Secretary of Health, Dr. Mark Webster, who declared African growth rates "frightening" and the promotion of family planning a health priority.<sup>61</sup> Later in the year, the Minister of Health, Ian McLean, proposed "strong, even harsh, economic and other disincentives to unrealistic and irresponsible population growth, as well as postulating attractive and similar incentives for the opposite view."<sup>62</sup> Notwithstanding his Cabinet whipping up public anxieties over African population growth to a fever pitch, Ian Smith, in an interview from September 1968, presented a calmer and more measured face to the issue in a television interview in which he claimed he did not think the African birthrate would unduly worry him for about 6 to 10 years.<sup>63</sup> How much of his statement was an effort to put forward a tough pose on the eve of the Fearless talks the next month, or to what extent he was genuinely less concerned about these population pressures than his Cabinet officials, is unclear. It might also be the case that it was the RF government's design to begin seasoning public opinion for the racial population control measures that many in the settler regime were already envisioning, even prior to the findings of the 1969 census.

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<sup>60</sup> Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 71, 'Finance Bill: Budget statement', 18 July 1968.

<sup>61</sup> 'Growth of Population is 'Frightening' Says Health Minister', *RH*, 21 August 1968. Webster cites the African population as 4.5 million, and the growth rate at 3.4 percent.

<sup>62</sup> 'Punishing the Prolific', *RH*, 11 December 1968.

<sup>63</sup> 'Smith Discusses Settlement: Agreement Would Mean new Constitution: Insistence Stressed on Being Satisfied', *RH*, 27 September 1968.

### The *Casus Belli* for the War of Numbers: The 1969 Census Results

The next full population census after 1962 was again scheduled for two phases, and was to begin in the spring of 1969. The first phase was scheduled to cover the European, Asian, and Coloured populations, and the second phase would include an enumeration of all Africans in the territory, with questionnaires more detailed than the 1962 basic forms.<sup>64</sup>

On 23 May 1969, the front page of the *Herald* published the results of the first phase of the census, counting Europeans, Asians, and Coloureds.<sup>65</sup> The census reported that whites numbered 228,040, 15,000 less than was previously estimated. Before the census went public, the Rhodesian Cabinet debated how best to approach this “matter of political consequence,” the publication of which “might have serious effects on public morale...” The Cabinet concluded that the difference could be attributed to an undercounting of white emigration around the time of UDI, and that a public statement, “should highlight the fact that since then there had been a satisfactory and substantial increase indicating that the country had recovered well.”<sup>66</sup> The statement that was eventually released by the government attributed this underestimation to many Rhodesians being away on holiday, unrecorded losses up to the middle of 1964, and the fact that the Federation never recorded inter-territorial migrations. All of these reasons, even when combined, are not wholly satisfying, and were much more a product of political maneuvering than real statistical conjecture. Most specifically, periodising the majority of the losses before the middle of 1964 obviously absolved Smith from any blame for these out-migrations, as he came to power in April 1964. Notwithstanding Smith’s attempts at obfuscation, after the full reporting of the census political opponents attacked the RF government explicitly for allowing the population ratios to drift from 17.5 to 1 in 1962, to 22 to 1 in 1969.<sup>67</sup> That the parsing of demographic statistics created so much political heat indicates the degree to which population numbers, and even the esoterica of demography, could carry deep political significance in post-UDI Rhodesia.

<sup>64</sup> ‘Full Census is to be Held Next Year’, *RH*, 22 March 1968.

<sup>65</sup> ‘Non-Africans Number More Than 250,000’, *RH*, 23 May 1969.

<sup>66</sup> Smith Papers, Box 022, Cabinet Minutes, 20 May 1969.

<sup>67</sup> ‘Bashford Hits at RF Over ‘Isolation’ of Europeans’, *RH*, 2 September 1969.

*(Handwritten signature)*

The political impact of the 1969 census numbers harmed the Smith government in some respects, but those same numbers were also used by the Smith government to further longstanding political objectives. A new republican constitution that limited African political representation to a distant parity was long a political priority by many in the RF, and the White Paper proposals for a new constitution were published on 22 May 1969, a day before the publication of the non-African phase one of the census, yet only two days after the Cabinet discussed the census' findings.<sup>68</sup> The RF's campaign for the new constitution began in early June. The franchise requirements under the 1961/65 constitutions were a combination of educational attainment and income levels, which while certainly creating a disparate impact on racial voting power, were facially non-racial. In the campaign for a "Yes" vote in favour of the new constitution, the RF relied heavily on African population trends in an attempt to prove that if the 1965 constitution remained in force, Africans would soon dominate the voting rolls. Their referendum campaign disingenuously cited as evidence for their predictions the rise in the number of Africans coming through the education system, a function obviously of the general population increase. On the basis of education evidence alone, the Minister of Education, A.P. Smith, cited a potential African voting strength of 80,000 by 1975, a spectre intended to mobilise support for the capping of African political power in the proposed constitution. A week later, Ian Smith predicted that 550,000 Africans could qualify by 1977,<sup>69</sup> and the Minister of Information, Immigration, and Tourism, P.K. Van der Byl, estimated 586,073 by 1976.<sup>70</sup> However, as a *Herald* editorial explained, the RF's campaign of using attained education levels alone to predict voting eligibility, and not calculating that few Africans would also meet the requisite income requirements, especially considering the racial job reservation barriers limiting African advancement, was dishonest and even ridiculous.<sup>71</sup> This RF population rhetoric was augmented by print advertisements; one for example stating: "Irresponsible government leads to chaos and anarchy. Need we remind you of events in the Congo, Nigeria, Ghana, Zanzibar—of the proposed land grab in Zambia? If you are thinking of a future—

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<sup>68</sup> 'Major Changes are Proposed: Republican Constitution Rules Out Majority Rule: 'Objectionable Features' in Present Constitution', *RH*, 22 May 1969.

<sup>69</sup> 'PM's Estimation of African Voters', *RH*, 17 June 1969.

<sup>70</sup> 'Van der Byl's Estimates on A-Roll Voters', *RH*, 17 June 1969.

<sup>71</sup> 'What is the Real Reason?', Editorial, *RH*, 11 June 1969.

Sub joken à 9  
RF government.

Education. But new whites  
economic boomtime

think of the need for responsible government.”<sup>72</sup> Adding more details to this ‘Parade of Horribles,’ the Minister of Internal Affairs, Jack Howman, described on television the raping of white women, including nuns, in the Congo, and suggested that a “No” vote of the constitutional would allow for Rhodesia to lapse into that sort of chaos.<sup>73</sup>

The Rhodesian Front’s propaganda campaign behind the “Yes” vote, which relied heavily upon images of the chaos of independent Africa, was given a boost by the timed release of the phase two findings of the census detailing the African population. Phase two was scheduled to take three weeks and use 4,500 enumerators to fan out into the countryside. The official estimate for the African population prior to the census count was 4.5 million.<sup>74</sup> On 19 June 1969, the day before the constitutional referendum, the preliminary reports of phase two were published by the RF government, in which the Director of the Census and Statistics reported that Rhodesian Africans numbered 4,818,000, over 300,000 more than was previously estimated.<sup>75</sup> In total, the 1969 census revealed a total net increase of only 7,000 whites since the last census in 1962, compared against a net increase of 980,000 Africans. This fear of African numbers swamping Rhodesia into Congo-style chaos was certainly enhanced by the early release of the African census numbers. Whether or not the publication of the preliminary census report was intentionally timed to bolster the referendum campaign remains a matter of speculation, but the fact that the White Paper proposals were published one day before phase one reported and that the referendum was held the very next day after phase two reported, certainly points towards the timing of these releases not being simply coincidental. As it was, the new constitution passed by referendum overwhelmingly, quite likely due in large part to the RF’s orchestrated fanning of white anxieties regarding the expanding racial population differentials.

The 1969 census statistics had immediate political consequences beyond the constitutional referendum campaign. After phase one of the census had reported, but before phase two was made public, a Committee was secretly set up to investigate a broad policy of African population control, and make recommendations as how best

<sup>72</sup> RF Advertisement, *RH*, 6 June 1969.

<sup>73</sup> ‘Howman’s Half Hour’, Editorial, *RH*, 18 June 1969.

<sup>74</sup> ‘Over 4,000 Enumerators in Next Phase of African Census’, *RH*, 16 April 1969.

<sup>75</sup> ‘Number of Africans in Rhodesia Nears 5m’, *RH*, 19 June 1969.

*Desire needs that not Rhodesian state  
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to slow African growth.<sup>76</sup> The timing of the formation of this secret Committee, immediately after the preliminary phase two census figures would have been known to those in government, almost certainly points to it being motivated by the results of the African population census. Four months after phase two reported, the Rhodesian Front Congress of October 1969, unanimously passed a resolution that white immigration should be as "unselective as possible" and that more jobs should be reserved for whites in Rhodesia, which was an obvious effort to increase white numbers solely for political purposes.<sup>77</sup> As will be discussed below, mass immigration was a policy long in the making, but the adverse population numbers reported from the 1969 census provided the right impetus for its serious re-introduction.

*hoolly*

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The 1969 census was the last of its kind for Rhodesia. The abstract population anxieties that had long festered beneath the surface broke out into the public sphere as very specific fears in the 1970s. The next census would have likely been scheduled for sometime in the mid 1970s, but by then more pressing uses of state funds and energies were apparent, and there was obviously the security situation which would have seriously affected the enumerators' safety. It is also quite clear that the Smith regime, after the war escalated and white numbers began to decline, had little interest in creating a body of statistical information that would dishearten political supporters and give faith to his enemies, and as with the proposed 1966 census, the probable adverse findings of any mid 1970s census convinced the government to quash it.

*hoolly*

*Peace  
Committee*

*Report*

### Conclusion

Most of the policy proposals described in this chapter were cloaked as being apolitical and administrative, yet the registration of births and deaths, the restrictions on foreign African labour, efforts to create national identification cards, and the conducting of censuses were all intensely political. How this information was collected and presented to the public, in particular the censual information, was a matter of political strategy, not mechanical bureaucratic calculations. And from these

<sup>76</sup> Smith Papers, Box-023, Cabinet Memorandum, 'Population Control', 13 June 1969. It was ultimately decided that there was no easy solution. The state focused their activities on the dissemination of propaganda and increased funding for family planning. Box-023, Cabinet Minutes, 'Population Control', 8 December 1970.

<sup>77</sup> 'More Jobs for Europeans and Wider Immigration Are Called For', *RH*, 25 October 1969.

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new sets of information, white Rhodesians began to view population numbers very differently than they had prior to the publication of the two censuses, a conceptual change that would come to have a dramatic impact on the fate of the regime.

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Despite the state's interest in rationalising Rhodesia's racial demographics, the hidden African population remained a frightening mystery that was beyond their regulatory grasp. State efforts to regulate the massive African population through the registration of births and deaths, funneling them through assigned points of entry and exit, identifying them as indigenous or alien, reversing migration flows, and keeping them out of urban areas largely met with failure. These administrative failures forced the state into a dichotomous split of the African population between: the known/unknown, regulated/unregulated, and visible/invisible, which corresponded roughly with the urban/rural divide. This was in some ways analogous to what Frederick Cooper describes as the difference between the legal city and the real city, "a distinction between the regulated, controlled space of planners' imagination" versus the more chaotic "lived realities" of most Africans.<sup>78</sup> Dividing the African population thus, relieved some pressures from the state, and this divide between the regulated and the unregulated was seized upon by the right wing of the RF as a disclamation of responsibility for rural Africans through their policies of separate development. As the guerrilla war escalated, the state again tried to gain administrative control of rural Africans, but these efforts also met with failure, as by then the state's regulatory power was that much more constricted. These efforts at regulating the African population in a way that had never occurred in the past exposed the superficiality of the settler state's control outside of urban areas, and foreshadowed the state's difficulties in promoting family planning in rural areas.

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Population numbers were used in many different ways depending on political strategy and expediency. Adverse numbers were at times hidden or obscured from public view by the state, as during the post-UDI statistical blackout and the tortured explanations for the 1969 phase one discrepancy between the white population estimates prior to the census and the census findings. Out of this same logic, the 1966 and mid 1970s censuses were both cancelled, likely due to their potentially damaging findings. Numbers could also be used as additional evidence to push through

<sup>78</sup> F. Cooper, *Africa Since 1940: The Past of the Present* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2002) p. 120.

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preexisting plans and provide rhetorical fuel, as with the timed release of the 1969 phase two results of African population growth which bolstered the government's plan to push through a new constitution limiting African political power, and the RF Congress' vote to increase white immigration. African population estimates and future predictions were also employed during the 1970s to draw support for the government's expanding family planning initiatives. Population numbers that were deemed to be positive, such as the white migration gains after UDI, were widely trumpeted by the government, as evidence of their successes. The reintroduction of the published CSO reports in 1967 came out of this same instinct, as the state then saw the positive numbers after UDI as a justification, a defence, and a reassurance of the Rhodesian Front's leadership. Smith, in a series of interviews in the mid 1970s, proclaimed that these post UDI migration gains were his greatest accomplishment, as they saved Rhodesia.<sup>79</sup> From the mid 1970s onwards, the significance of these same figures was publically downplayed by the state for obvious reasons. All sides of the political contest, including those who followed Rhodesian politics internationally, understood the significance of population numbers and the nexus between racial population trends and the fate of the regime. This created a unique situation in which Rhodesian politics became highly statisticised, as political and economic trends were analysed and interpreted almost as tea leaves from the statistics of racial migration, fertility, and mortality rates, thereby reducing complex political and social phenomena to simple arithmetic.

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<sup>79</sup> '10 Years After', *RH*, 11 April 1974.

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### Chapter III

#### The African Population 'Explosion'

The African population 'explosion' in Rhodesia through the 1960s and 1970s roughly paralleled other population growth rates in sub-Saharan Africa, and to a broader degree, population growth rates throughout the developing world. This population boom ran alongside other developments in sub-Saharan Africa, all of which had an enormous impact on white society and the settler state in Rhodesia. These included: the political decolonisation of the countries north of Rhodesia, the growth of African nationalism in Rhodesia, declining white birth rates in Rhodesia, and Rhodesia's Unilateral Declaration of Independence. This growth rate also occurred in the global context of the neo-Malthusian population fears of the 1970s: a theory that enjoyed widespread popular, institutional, and governmental support in the Western world. Exact information regarding the size and growth of the African population in Rhodesia was unknown before the 1962 and 1969 censuses, but once discovered, this knowledge had dramatic effects on Rhodesian politics, as it added a desperate urgency to the state's population policies, in particular efforts to boost white immigration and decrease African fertility. The problems that emanated from African population growth were not merely perceptual or irrational, however. This growth brought intense, and ultimately fatal, pressures on the settler state, that included a drain on the treasury due to increased social spending on education and housing, a growing urban influx that strained the infrastructure and threatened white preserve, swelling urban unemployment numbers, rural food shortages, and more overcrowding and environmental degradation in the TTLs.<sup>1</sup> Several politicians located population growth as the biggest problem facing the regime, even after the escalation of the shooting war.<sup>2</sup> This chapter will contextualise white Rhodesian ideas regarding African population growth, study the demographic theories behind this African population explosion, the pressures that this growth applied to the settler state, and state efforts to slow down this rapid growth.

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<sup>1</sup> Over 60 percent of the African population lived in the TTLs, lands which became increasingly strained ecologically throughout the period of settler rule. A. Kaler, *Running*, p. 33.

<sup>2</sup> The Minister of Manpower and Social Affairs, Health and Education, Rowan Cronje, declared that population growth was a greater threat than the war or sanctions. 'Rhodesia's Public Enemy No. 1,' *RH*, 20 May 1978.

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This chapter will also explore a longstanding tension between two broad philosophies that was never resolved in the Rhodesian politics of population control, concerning the proper relationship between the white state and the African population: between pulling Africans closer to white society, so as to better understand, regulate, and control them, and pushing Africans away from white society, to protect white preserve, hoist off the perceived burdens of rule, and disclaim white responsibility for their fate. Both of these philosophies had old histories in Britain European colonial thought, and had in various forms and instances been described as the doctrinal conflicts between reform, modernisation, assimilation, and inclusion versus relativism, preservation, segregation, and exclusion—competing visions over white responsibilities, duties, and goals in governing subject populations. Although these two broad philosophies were in conflict with one another, to white politicians and the white electorate in Rhodesia both were attractive in some respects, and unattractive in others. Pulling Africans closer to white society, through a loosening of residential segregation, softening of economic restrictions on African advancement, and an opening up of political and social spaces within white society, would allow for greater regulation and the easier acquisition of demographic information. Most importantly, it was known that pulling Africans closer to white society, and thereby fulfilling the socio-economic preconditions to fertility transitions, was empirically proven to lower African birth rates. Yet this also inevitably meant a weakening of white preserve, a result that would probably have negative effects on the state's simultaneous efforts to attract white immigrants to Rhodesia and limit the flow of white emigrants from Rhodesia. Pulling Africans closer was also an acceptance on the part of white society of the burdens associated with African population growth. Pushing Africans away, through the continuation of rigid job reservation policies, enforced residential segregation, policies to stem the urban influx, and the promulgation of separate development policies, was an appealing option for many, in particular the rightwing of the RF, precisely because it did protect white preserve. But in protecting white preserve as sacrosanct and conceding responsibility over the African population, the state acknowledged that it had little power or control outside of traditionally white areas, either spatially, economically, or conceptually. This pushing away was also known to correlate with higher birth rates, even as this strategy sought to cut white society off from the burdens emanating from this growth.

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As it was, the RF governments oscillated between these two extremes of inclusion and exclusion, at times pulling Africans closer, and at others pushing them away, never fully reconciling the logical inconsistency between these contrary approaches. This tension played itself out clearly in the debates over the state's population control policies explored in this chapter.

### Wealthy Populations, Poor Populations, and Neo-Malthusianism

Rhodesia's two major racial populations experienced drastically different fertility rates in the 1960s and 1970s, which resulted in a wide variety of economic, social, and political consequences. The birth rates for the white population began to drop rapidly from the early 1960s. As explained in chapter six, this drop was much steeper than other comparable populations around the globe, yet white Rhodesia's drop in fertility roughly followed the general fertility trends of other affluent societies in its downward slope. In contrast, the African Rhodesian birth rate remained very high, despite a drop in mortality rates. This resulted in a very high rate of growth for the African population; a growth rate that roughly corresponded with other sub-Saharan African populations, though at a rate even higher than most comparable populations. These two populations in Rhodesia, both followed the two contrary global trends of affluent/poor, First World/Third World fertility rates, yet importantly, both of these contrary global trends existed in microcosm within the same territory, and both occurred as exaggerated exemplars of these global trends.

The two contrary population trends in Rhodesia were explained by contemporary commentators, both academic and lay, by the different stages that the white and African populations were in under the demographic transition theory (DTT). This linear transition terminology originates from the birth of demography as a science. Early demographic scientists, in particular Warren Thompson and later Frank Notestein,<sup>3</sup> analysed European population numbers during the past several hundred years, in an attempt to explain both the sharp population rise during the industrial revolution, and the leveling off of growth rates thereafter. The demographic transition theory that emerged from these and other studies divided fertility patterns

<sup>3</sup> See for example: W.S. Thompson, *Population Problems* (New York, McGraw-Hill, 1930) and F. Notestein, 'Population—The Long View' in T. W. Schultz (ed), *Food for the World* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1945).

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into distinct historical stages that corresponded with levels of economic and sociological development. The classical version of the theory<sup>4</sup> posits that in preindustrial societies high birth rates matched high death rates so that population levels remained steady. Following this first stage, improvements in health and wellbeing as a result of agricultural, industrial, and medical advances, led to a drop in death rates, with birth rates remaining high. This stage of high birth rates and low death rates created a spike in population, as that experienced in many European countries during the industrial revolution. Next is the demographic transition stage, which describes a drop in birth rates as various factors such as consumption patterns, access to contraception, and family wealth flows changed, resulting in slower growth. Finally, in the last stage of the classical theory, birth rates stabilised and corresponded with low death rates such that the overall population again reached equilibrium. Within Rhodesia, it was widely asserted that the white population had already experienced the demographic transition of stage three and had reached the equilibrium of stage four. The African population was considered to be in stage two, the growth stage, and had yet to experience the transition.

Globally, the demographic transition theory leapt from academia to governments, NGOs, and eventually the wider lay public with remarkable speed. The reason behind this leap from demographic esoterica to public knowledge lay with growing fears in the West following World War II of the effects of rapid population growth, both because of its short term potential for political instability and revolution, and its long term potential to overrun world resources.<sup>5</sup> These fears all found their theoretical footing in the rise of neo-Malthusianism, which laid out the alleged incompatibility between population growth rates and the resources needed to sustain human life. Yet as Betsey Hartmann argues, it was not a generalised fear of all babies that fueled the West's neo-Malthusianism, but instead it was the fears of the wealthy countries over the political and economic effects of the growing poor, non-white

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<sup>4</sup> There are still many active controversies within the demographic discipline regarding various components of the transition theory, including the number and relevance of the developmental stages. Other scholars have also criticised the entire Eurocentric premise of the developmental stages, and question their applicability to the non-Western world. For a recent examination of DTT, see: J. Caldwell, *Demographic Transition Theory* (Dordrecht, Springer, 2006).

<sup>5</sup> For an excellent overview the West's population control policies, see: B. Hartmann, *Reproductive Rights and Wrongs* (Boston, South End Press, 1995). See also the recent publication: M. Connelly, *Fatal Misconception: The Struggle to Control World Population* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 2008).

masses that led policymakers to make the reduction of population growth rates a foreign policy priority.<sup>6</sup> Demographic transition theory was the explanatory model for how Europe came to reduce its fertility rates, however, this European pattern inevitably became universalised as an ideal, and Third World peoples were widely seen to be floundering in the pre-transitional phase. This was what neo-Malthusians believed would continue until either a demographic transition occurred, or barring that, a global catastrophe. The DTT soon took on normative and prescriptive elements, as a model to be followed, as opposed to merely a model to explain past behavior. And it was the nexus between the DTT and neo-Malthusianism that explains the interest of the United Nations, NGOs, and the United States government in promoting birth control as a catalyst to push the Third World into the final demographic transition stage before it was too late.

Widespread popular fears in the West over population growth gathered steam in the early 1970s. A major reason for the timing of these public fears was the publication of the bestselling book by Paul Ehrlich, *The Population Bomb*.<sup>7</sup> The *Population Bomb* was based on the neo-Malthusian premise of population growth outstripping resources, and it quickly entered into the public consciousness and became a well-known frame of reference for lay people, even if the science behind it was at the time challenged by many scholars.<sup>8</sup> Shortly thereafter, the Club of Rome promulgated the influential book by Donella Meadows, Jurgen Randers, and Dennis Meadows, *The Limits to Growth*, which offered a computerised model backing the neo-Malthusian thesis.<sup>9</sup> As the neo-Malthusian momentum continued, 1974 was declared World Population Year, and a World Population Conference was hosted that same year by the United Nations in Bucharest. Contributing to these spreading population fears, were frequent statistics published in the popular press by various environmental and population control groups throughout the 1970s describing frightening Biblical catastrophes if world population growth rates continued at their current pace, the next report always more shocking than the one that preceded it. So dominant were these ideas in the public mind, that the truth or falsity of the neo-Malthusian premise of arithmetic growth of resources and geometric growth of

<sup>6</sup> B. Hartmann, *Reproductive Rights*.

<sup>7</sup> P. Ehrlich, *The Population Bomb* (New York, Ballantine Books, 1968).

<sup>8</sup> For a controversial criticism of Ehrlich's book, see: J. Simon, *The Ultimate Resource* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1981).

<sup>9</sup> D. Meadows, et al, *The Limits to Growth* (New York, Universe Books, 1972).

These ideas were all wrong they were self-fulfilling Prop

population was not seriously questioned by most lay people, even as this theory was contested in scientific circles. The population pressures of the 1970s had an even more biting urgency for whites in Rhodesia. While these neo-Malthusian horrors may have seemed distant and abstract to most people in the West, combining easily with the West's simultaneous fascination with disaster movies in the 1970s,<sup>10</sup> to white Rhodesians, population growth was a disaster movie that appeared to be occurring, quite literally, within their own backyards.<sup>11</sup>

AFRICAN POPULATION GROWTH AND RACIAL RATIOS IN RHODESIA (1960-1979)<sup>12</sup>

Year	African Population (to nearest 100k)	Population Ratio White/African
1960	3,600,000	1:16.5
1961	3,700,000	1:16.8
1962	3,800,000	1:17.5
1963	3,900,000	1:18.1
1964	4,100,000	1:19.7
1965	4,200,000	1:20.2
1966	4,400,000	1:20.6
1967	4,500,000	1:21.1
1968	4,700,000	1:21.1
1969	4,800,000	1:21.2
1970	5,000,000	1:21.1
1971	5,200,000	1:20.9
1972	5,400,000	1:20.6
1973	5,500,000	1:20.7
1974	5,700,000	1:21.1
1975	5,900,000	1:21.5
1976	6,100,000	1:22.3
1977	6,400,000	1:23.9
1978	6,600,000	1:25.5
1979	6,800,000	1:28.1

### Historicising White Population Anxieties in Rhodesia

Political interference in indigenous population and fertility matters has an old history in Rhodesia, as well in all of Africa, and indeed in the entire colonial

<sup>10</sup> This enormously successful disaster genre included movies such as: *Airport* (1970), *The Poseidon Adventure* (1972), *Earthquake* (1974), *The Towering Inferno* (1974), and *The Swarm* (1978). One could almost as easily imagine a neo-Malthusian disaster film out of this 1970s genre, possibly entitled: *Attack of the Hungry Babies*.

<sup>11</sup> There are many examples of the Rhodesian media's paranoiac portrayal of African population growth: 'Rhodesia's Birth Bomb', *RH*, 1 June 1971; 'Five Minutes To Go...', *RH*, 4 June 1971; 'Curb Needed on Birth Rates to Avert New 'Dark Age': World's Population Rose by 185 Million in 3 Years—Bureau', *RH*, 7 October 1962; 'Prepare to Meet Our Doom?', *RH*, 8 October 1963. 'Growth of Population is 'Frightening' says Health Minister', *RH*, 21 August 1968.

<sup>12</sup> Statistics derived from the CSO Monthly Digest of Statistics and Rhodesian Secretary of Health Reports.

experience.<sup>13</sup> The Rhodesian colonial regime had long had concerns about the growth and configuration of the African population, yet during the colony's early days the primary concern was that the African population was not growing fast enough to meet the colony's labour needs.<sup>14</sup> As Diana Jeater has written, Rhodesians also had an interest in African sexual practices that they considered deviant, immoral and/or irresponsible, though they vacillated over who or what were the causes of these deviances.<sup>15</sup> Thus while these anxieties over African sexual matters were old, they did not always correspond with the perception of African 'over'-population. As decolonisation proceeded apace from the late 1950s, and as the British Central African Federation experiment came to a close in the early 1960s, white settlers in Rhodesia began a process of taking stock of the racial populations in their territory. The resulting 1962 census concretised earlier colonial anxieties regarding African sexual practices and fertility, as this revealed growth of the African population was immediately recognised to pose a threat to the future stability of the settler state, and therefore these old fears had found a new focus.

Prior to the collapse of the Federation, the relative sizes of the white and African populations were of administrative interest, but did not appear to present a threat to the stability of white power in Rhodesia. As discussed in chapter two, accurate estimates of the size of the African population were even unknown before the 1962 census. Even after the 1962 census, there was insufficient political will behind any comprehensive efforts to reduce the size of the African population before the rise of Ian Smith in 1964, and even thereafter such efforts were uneven and inconsistent before 1968.<sup>16</sup> This was despite rumours to the contrary that buzzed around colonial Rhodesia from at least the 1940s that white society long connived to sterilise the African population.<sup>17</sup> These rumours of surreptitious sterilisations, despite being untrue, resonated among the African population of Rhodesia until

<sup>13</sup> See for example: A.L. Stoler, *Race and the Education of Desire: Foucault's History of Sexuality and the Colonial Order of Things* (Durham, Duke University Press, 1995).

<sup>14</sup> A. Kaler, *Running*, citing M. Vaughan, 'Measuring a Crisis in Maternal and Child Health: An Historical Perspective', in M. Wright, Z. Stein, and J. Scandlyn (eds), *Women's Health and Apartheid: The Health of Women and Children and the Future of Progressive Primary Health Care in Southern Africa* (Frankfurt, Medico International, 1989) pp. 130-142.

<sup>15</sup> D. Jeater, *Marriage, Perversion, and Power: The Construction of Moral Discourse in Southern Rhodesia, 1894-1930* (Clarendon, Oxford 1993).

<sup>16</sup> Kaler likewise concludes that even though African nationalists accused the government of attempting to reduce population numbers long before UDI, there was no evidence of any officially sanctioned efforts to reduce the African population before 1965. A. Kaler, *Running*, p. 57.

<sup>17</sup> A. Kaler, *Running*, p. 181.

white  
pieces

independence, rumours that were tapped into and used as vehicles for the nationalists' pronatalist agenda. In the late 1960s, however, several factors coalesced to make family planning an increasing priority for the Rhodesian Front government. These factors included a new jolt of demographic information concerning growth rates in 1969, continued high rates of white emigration that reinforced whites' political insecurity, a new interest in the political and economic effects of a growing dependent population, the growing neo-Malthusian hysteria in the wider Western world, and a greater political boldness of the Rhodesian right-wing after UDI. ✓

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The rapid rate of African population growth added serious strains on the settler regime, strains that were exacerbated by the unwillingness of the white regime to more equitably distribute the benefits and burdens of power. These strains were certainly administrative, economic, and political as will be discussed in later chapters, but there was also a moral component, as this population growth challenged the longstanding, albeit ambivalent and inconsistently applied, colonial efforts to fulfill their 'burden' of modernising the African population. In this context, African population growth exerted weight on the spatial and theoretical divisions of the territory, as the regime sought desperately, but unsuccessfully, to keep Africans in their proper place conceptually and physically. African population growth was regarded as 'overpopulation' only because it outstripped the resources the white regime was willing to devote to that population. In matters of education spending, health spending, housing, and employment opportunities, this growth overcrowded the limited physical, economic, and conceptual space the white regime allocated to the indigenous population. Specifically, this meant limiting African economic and political advancement, and keeping Africans from drifting into the urban areas. Yet despite constricting urban opportunities, Africans continued to come to the cities. Salisbury's African population had increased an enormous 5 percent from 1967 to 1968, and in total numbered 236,000, roughly 10,000 more than the entire white population of Rhodesia at that time.<sup>18</sup> African males in wage labour employment declined as a percentage of the total African male population from 78 percent in 1956 to 58 percent in 1968, even though in absolute numbers it increased over this same period, which created the large unemployed urban population so dreaded by the white

<sup>18</sup> 'Concern Expressed over African Influx Into Salisbury', *RH*, 30 November 1968.

state.<sup>19</sup> Likewise, in the fields of education and health the state limited spending to a set percentage of GNP, regardless of the actual needs of the African population. This arbitrary pegging of spending on total GNP had deleterious effects on the quality of African education in Rhodesia.<sup>20</sup> Overpopulation was always a distributive and an allocative problem more than an absolute scarcity problem, as the white regime was concerned that increased pressures building on the African side of the legalistic and conceptual wall would soon burst over into the white side, sweeping away privilege and white preserve. African population growth thus exposed the limits and contradictions of the colonial burden,<sup>21</sup> and this was the true meaning of 'racial swamping.'

The linearity of the demographic transition theory's progressive stages easily jibed with white Rhodesian perceptions of the backwardness of the African population relative to the white population. These two developmental stages of the white and African populations were referred to as post-transitional and pre-transitional, respectively, and mirrored white attitudes about the more general linear progress of the two races. Since the African populations' pre-transitional birth rates were seen to threaten the settler state, it was not surprising that the state attempted to force the African population into the next transition stage, as this intervention was consistent with earlier intrusions into African fertility. Efforts to forcibly push the African population into the next demographic transition stage and the African populations' resistance to these intrusions engendered frustration within the settler state. African aversion to white efforts to control their fertility was conceived by white Rhodesia as the same sort of intractability that had stifled other efforts at modernisation, in particular cattle de-stocking and immunisation campaigns. Expressing this exasperation, a regional chairman of the RF raged in 1974 that, "[Africans] cannot look for improvement—can never hope to achieve good living standards even in the absence of sanctions—while they indulge in their abysmal

<sup>19</sup> A. Kaler, *Running*, p. 34, citing D.G. Clarke, "Population and Family Planning in Economic Development of Rhodesia", *Zambezia*, Vol. 2 (1971).

<sup>20</sup> 'Report Urges reorganisation of Division of African Education: Danger in Gap Between Funds and Population Growth Rate', *RH*, 18 April, 1969.

<sup>21</sup> A *Herald* editorial from 1971 expressed the view that the Smith government had already "written off" the subsistence sector of the economy, as an Economic Survey reported that African employment problems were "insuperable" and persistent African growth made development impossible. 'Is This An Admission of Defeat?', *RH*, Editorial, 28 April 1971.

fecundity.”<sup>22</sup> The Minister of Finance, John Wrathall, expressed this same point in a Budget Speech from 1971: “The African people should have no illusions about the future. If they wish to attain a reasonable standard of life for their children, free from the frustration of thwarted aspirations and free from the misery of poverty, the realities of the situation demand a concerted effort to limit population growth...”<sup>23</sup>

There was thus the older paternalist strain of the ‘white man’s burden’ that ran alongside the more blatantly self-serving motivations to reconfigure African birth rates, which both suggested efforts to pull Africans closer to white society. Be that as it was, African reluctance to recognise the alleged modernising benefits of reducing their birth rates, in terms of female empowerment, more disposable income for consumer spending, and less scarcity generally, reinforced ideas in some sectors of the white community of the hopelessness of ever civilising the African population.

It was out of this instinct, one with an equally old colonial pedigree, that right-wing Rhodesians sought to cut white society off from the burdens and responsibilities of the massive and unresponsive African population. The Minister of the Public Service stated this frustration over the asymmetrical burden distribution when he stated in Parliament: “We cannot have the European continuing to be wholly responsible for the development of Rhodesia, as has been the position for many generations... Africans in increasing numbers [need] to come forward to help in shouldering the immense burden of developing and improving Rhodesia.”<sup>24</sup> The Cabinet debated how best to effectuate this distribution of the burdens of population growth, and a Cabinet memorandum from 1970 concluded that Africans needed to, “make a fair and realistic contribution towards the cost of social services they enjoy and [the government should charge] Africans accordingly.”<sup>25</sup> These two statements reflected the twin prongs of the state’s approach to redistribute population burdens: shift development and devolve economic responsibilities to African areas, and charge Africans for state social services. Describing the Rhodesian Front’s policy of provincialisation, a *Herald* editorial from 1972 stated: “In essence, the scheme outlined means that the least developed parts of Rhodesia would no longer be the direct concern of the Rhodesian government... Rhodesia’s central government and its

<sup>22</sup> ‘Africans’ Job Problem Due to Breeding—RF Leader’, *RH*, 11 May 1974.

<sup>23</sup> ‘More Africans Must Earn From Land’, *RH*, 16 July 1971.

<sup>24</sup> Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 85, ‘Motion: Employment of Qualified Africans’, 5 December 1973.

<sup>25</sup> Smith papers, Box 024, Cabinet Memorandum, ‘Report of the Committee on Population Problems’, 27 November 1970.

Civil Service would then, of course, be free to concentrate entirely on the white half of Rhodesia.”<sup>26</sup> If the African population refused to be responsible in their fertility rates, so these arguments went, then the state and white settlers should not have to subsidise their irresponsibility.

The state’s attribution of the causes behind the African population growth necessarily influenced their strategy to stem this growth. Whites regarded this population growth as partially a reflection of the success of the settler state’s modernising efforts in the realms of maternal and child health. Self-congratulation, however, ran uneasily alongside their efforts to clip this troublesome byproduct. One *Herald* editorial shortly after the 1962 census, even showed an obvious degree of circumspection about the wisdom of ever guiding Africans into stage two of the demographic transition, stating: “Without these improved services [provided by the Federal government] life expectancy and infant mortality would be at levels which would have hindered the rapid growth of the African population,” the editorial explained, before continuing on to analyse the political, economic, and administrative problems resulting from this rapid growth.<sup>27</sup> More explicitly, the head of obstetrics and gynecology at the University College of Rhodesia, R.H. Philpott, said in a public address advocating for immediate efforts to remedy the population problem: “In one generation the world’s population multiplied out of all proportion to food supplies, and the benefactor, the philanthropist, the physician, and the peacemaker faced the starving multitudes of their own creation... Those of the technologically advanced nations of the world have brought their new knowledge to the developing nations and are therefore in part responsible for the population explosion”<sup>28</sup> White intellectuals conjectured that the cultural clash of modernisation had a warping effect on African culture, and had corrupted the African population’s traditional equilibrium, creating a new pathology that was manifesting itself in irresponsible, and ultimately self-destructive, growth rates.<sup>29</sup> Amy Kaler, citing Dr. Philpott and others, described how white Rhodesian intellectuals viewed African growth as a result of the “benevolent,

<sup>26</sup> ‘Keep Feet on Ground’, Editorial, *RH*, 11 July 1972.

<sup>27</sup> ‘Growth of the Population’, Editorial, *RH*, 23 June 1962.

<sup>28</sup> R.H. Philpott, ‘Motives and Methods in Population Control: An Inaugural Lecture Given in the University College of Rhodesia’ (unpublished pamphlet, Salisbury, 1969) p. 3,5.

<sup>29</sup> A. Kaler, ‘Fertility Running Wild: Elite Perceptions of the Need for Birth Control in White-Rule Rhodesia’, in A. Russell, E. Sobo, M. Thompson (eds), *Contraception Across Cultures: Technologies, Choices, Constraints* (New York, Berg Publishers, 2000).

albeit fallible” dispensation of Rhodesia’s colonial burden.<sup>30</sup> This fallibility was exemplified by the unintended effects of only partially modernising the African population, and pushing them into the second stage of the DTT, without inculcating the concomitant responsibility that could guide them into the transition stage. To many it was better perhaps a job not done at all than a job half done, and as the population problem was purported to be the white man’s creation, it must of necessity be solved by white men.

### **The Origins of a Population Policy**

Though the Family Planning Association of Rhodesia (FPAR) was formed in 1964, before 1968 state efforts to control African population growth were uneven and desultory. Amy Kaler, in her book, *Running After Pills: Politics, Contraception, and Gender in Colonial Zimbabwe*, thoroughly analyses the origins, methods, and effects of the Rhodesian state’s efforts to promote family planning in Rhodesia.<sup>31</sup> As Kaler describes, the state’s family planning policy used as the vehicle of its efforts FPAR, which while ostensibly an independent nongovernmental organisation, relied on state revenue to operate. But the RF government’s support for FPAR was neither immediate, nor without reservation. In the spring of 1966, a private member’s bill from a Rhodesian Front backbencher was introduced calling for a wide-ranging effort to reduce the African birth rate, but after a lengthy and heated debate, the mover, Mr. Owen-Smith, withdrew the motion.<sup>32</sup> In October 1966, the Rhodesian Cabinet for the first time agreed to “the principle of family planning” and contributed a nominal sum to FPAR.<sup>33</sup> Several months later in the Committee of Supply Votes, the Minister of Labour and Social Welfare, Ian McLean, included a supplementary increase of £2,000 for family planning.<sup>34</sup> This was also a nominal sum in terms of the overall budget—tourism promotion, for instance received, £113,000 from that same budget<sup>35</sup>—but this amount did signal a growing ambition on the part of the state to enter into family

<sup>30</sup> A. Kaler, *Fertility Running Wild*, p. 92.

<sup>31</sup> A. Kaler, *Running After Pills: Politics, Gender and Contraception in Colonial Zimbabwe* (Portsmouth, Heinemann, 2003).

<sup>32</sup> Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 63, ‘Motion: Family Planning’, 9 March 1966.

<sup>33</sup> Smith papers, Box 020, Cabinet Minutes, ‘Family Planning’, 18 October 1966.

<sup>34</sup> Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 66, ‘Revenue Vote 33—Social Welfare’, 8 February 1967.

<sup>35</sup> Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 68, ‘Revenue Vote 31—Information, Immigration and Tourism’, 31 August 1967.

planning, even if Owen-Smith, the mover of the 1966 motion, retorted that the figure would be better set at £100,000.<sup>36</sup> Three months after the supplementary vote, a Cabinet Meeting discussed further increasing family planning funding as a method to thin the backlog of African school-leavers entering the labour market every year. At the same meeting, direct state propaganda was proposed and rejected, and it was decided that more money should be allocated to FPAR via the Ministry of Social Welfare and Labour.<sup>37</sup> As an adjunct to family planning efforts, a report was presented to the Cabinet that autumn by the Minister of Social Welfare and Labour arguing that to fully address the problem of Africans falling into urban unemployment, it was “emphasised that the important thing should be to divert the aspirations of [African] school children from white collar jobs... [though teachers] found it difficult to put this across when dealing with future employment prospects.”<sup>38</sup> In a related effort to relieve African unemployment, the Cabinet also agreed to investigate the possibility that an agreement could be reached for South Africa to employ black Rhodesians for mine work, which would partially mitigate adverse migration flows and alleviate unemployment.<sup>39</sup> It is significant that these first initiatives were already conceived in terms of allocative and distributive imbalances in the workforce, and conducted through the Ministry of Social Welfare and Labour, though eventually this responsibility would later shift to the Ministry of Health.

Throughout the post-Federation period, white Rhodesians experienced periodic waves of panic concerning the growth of the African population.<sup>40</sup> Often these waves were precipitated by sensual information, but they were also occasionally a product of deliberate fear-mongering on the part of the government. A wave of population panic among the white public, and a new energy behind demographic engineering policies arose in the summer of 1968. This panic was precipitated by the Minister of the Treasury, John Wrathall’s, budget for the fiscal year,<sup>41</sup> and the debate regarding the Sadie Report on the linkages between racial ratios and economic growth

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<sup>36</sup> Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 66, ‘Revenue Vote 33—Social Welfare’, 8 February 1967. Col. 1325.

<sup>37</sup> Smith Papers, Box-022, Cabinet Minutes, ‘African Education: School Leavers’, 7 May 1968.

<sup>38</sup> Smith Papers, Box-022, Cabinet Minutes, ‘Employment: African Youth’, 6 November 1968.

<sup>39</sup> Smith Papers, Box-022, Cabinet Minutes, ‘Foreign Labour and Unemployment-Eight Report’, 3 December 1968.

<sup>40</sup> For a good overview of white discourses in Rhodesia regarding African population growth, see: A. Kaler, *Fertility Running Wild*.

<sup>41</sup> Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 71, ‘Finance Bill: Budget Statement’, 18 July 1968.

one month later.<sup>42</sup> Wrathall's lengthy Budget Statement in July focused extensively on the detrimental economic effects of the growing African population, and the urgent need for a reduction in African growth rates, and echoed the main conclusions of the Sadie Report. Regarding the relationship between African population growth and total economic growth, Wrathall stated:

[African family limitation] is a delicate subject with moral and political overtones. The facts, however, are easy to understand. For an economy to grow it needs capital, skills, opportunities, markets, and not least, the entrepreneurs to exploit the opportunities. The lack of all or some of these elements limits the growth rate which can be achieved. It will not be easy for the Rhodesian economy to grow in real terms over a long period at a rate exceeding the present population growth rate of 3.5% per annum. During the last 10 years the average annual growth rate in real terms has been of the order of only 2.5%.<sup>43</sup>

The racialised assumptions embedded in Wrathall's speech publically laid out the direction of the state's population policies of limiting unproductive, burdensome growth (Africans) and attracting capitalised and entrepreneurial growth (whites), in the characteristically cloaked language of pseudo-economics. This budget statement and the 1968 budget's priorities represented the firmest determination on the part of the state to enter into family planning promotion, even if it was primarily through the medium of FPAR. This decision to boost funding to FPAR was consistent with the Cabinet's decision that spring to funnel family planning money through the Ministry of Social Welfare and Labour. Thereafter, the Rhodesian Front government began to enter into family planning funding with greater deliberateness, as evidenced by the percentage of FPAR's operating revenue provided by the state rising from 12 percent in 1965, to 51 percent in 1974, to 98 percent in 1979.<sup>44</sup> This increased financial commitment to family planning reflected a greater political commitment and will to slowing the growth of the African population, a political will that would be further stiffened by the publication of the results of the 1969 census.

Coming right on the heels of Wrathall's Budget statement was the delayed debate over the controversial government-sponsored Report on long-term economic planning by Dr. Jan L. Sadie. The essence of the Report, and the sections affirmed by

<sup>42</sup> Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 72, 'Sadie Report', 13 August 1968

<sup>43</sup> Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 71, 'Finance Bill: Budget Statement', 18 July 1968.

<sup>44</sup> A. Kaler, *Running*, p. 51.

the government, dealt with the detrimental economic effects of the population imbalance between whites and Africans in Rhodesia, and the urgent need to re-balance this ratio. Sadie's Report was explicitly premised on the idea that Africans were incapable of endogenous economic growth, and therefore it was vital for Rhodesia's economic future to match the African population growth with overall economic growth: growth that must originate with whites. Sadie calculated that on average every economically active white person created employment for 7.4 Africans, which meant that 5,400 whites needed to enter the labour force every year to accommodate the annual cohort of 40,000 Africans who entered into the labour market.<sup>45</sup> The government concurred with Sadie's recommendations that both ends of this ratio—rapid African growth and negligible white growth—needed to be attacked, with family planning addressing the former and increased immigration the latter. The Report was tabled in Parliament in October 1967, but was not debated until August 1968, a delay that was explained by Finance Minister Wrathall as an attempt have the Report be widely read and commented upon from various persons inside and outside government,<sup>46</sup> yet the content of the Report and the timing of the debate so soon after the controversial Budget, strongly suggest that the delay was quite likely a deliberate effort of the RF government to build support for its newly created demographic reconfiguration policies. As was stated in the resulting debate, the gist behind Sadie's Report was nothing new, and it was even referred to as "stating little more than has been obvious to men involved in commercial and industrial affairs for many years," but it provided an academic gloss to balder political motivations, and lent the credence of apolitical economics to an issue that the right-wing had long supported.<sup>47</sup> Sadie's Report can therefore be viewed in many ways as the theoretical blueprint for the RF government's massive intervention into demographic engineering, a blueprint for a war in need of a *casus belli*.

In the 1970s, the state's population efforts increased significantly in scale. The reasons behind this redoubling of effort are several, but most importantly it was the publication of the 1969 census numbers which had the most immediate and dramatic effects on white society generally, and especially on white policymakers. Six days before the publication of the phase two census numbers, the Minister of

<sup>45</sup> Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 72, 'Sadie Report', 13 August 1968. Col. 20-21.

<sup>46</sup> Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 72, 'Sadie Report', 13 August 1968. Col. 2.

<sup>47</sup> Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 72, 'Sadie Report', 13 August 1968. Col. 22.

Health and of Social Welfare presented a memorandum to the Cabinet recommending “that a Cabinet Committee, or a committee of Senior Officials, be set up to examine the problem [of African population growth] and... make recommendations as to the responsibilities of various Ministries in this regard with a view to mounting a positive and collective attack on the [population] problem as part of overall government policy.”<sup>48</sup> In an oral amplification of his memorandum a month later, after the census results were published, the Minister stated that the Cabinet should render the terms of reference for the proposed population committee rather broad, as it should, “also examine incentives for increasing the population in certain racial groups as opposed to disincentives for controlling the population of other groups.”<sup>49</sup> The Cabinet ultimately decided, however, that the bolstering of the white population “would have to be handled in a different way and should be the subject of a completely separate action,” lest these two contrary population policies “lead to political difficulties.”<sup>50</sup>

The first standing Committee on Population Problems was formed, albeit with the narrower terms of reference, with representatives of the Ministries of Local Government and Housing, Finance, Health, Education, and Internal Affairs, and reported its unanimous findings in November of 1970.<sup>51</sup> This initial Report laid out the government’s current population control policies in Rhodesia, the state of scientific and demographic theory in the field, and in the final section delivered recommendations. The findings of the Report give an eye to what the state actually knew about Rhodesia’s African population and contemporary fertility transition theories, and revealed that at the very outset the state was aware of some very uncomfortable contradictions in their population policies. One irony that the Report discovered was that the state’s urban influx policies ran counter to the state’s policies aimed at lowering African birth rates, as it was reported that urban birth rates ran on average about 5 percent lower than rural African birth rates. In this regard, these contradictory policies could be reconciled, the Report stated, by encouraging the development of urban centers in the TTLs, and pulling more Africans into the cash economy. This urbanity/fertility correlation and the desirability of creating African urban areas was accounted for in the following way by the Minister of Health a year

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<sup>48</sup> Smith Papers, Box-023, Cabinet Memorandum, ‘Population Control’, 13 June 1969.

<sup>49</sup> Smith Papers, Box-022, Cabinet Minutes, ‘Population Control’, 16 July 1969.

<sup>50</sup> Smith Papers, Box-022, Cabinet Minutes, ‘Population Control’, 16 July 1969.

<sup>51</sup> Smith papers, Box-023, Cabinet Minutes, ‘Report of the Committee on Population Problems’, November 27 1970.

later: “The alternative [to economic development in the TTLs] was a continual drift of Africans into European areas, which, although it might lead to a decline in the African birth rate in these areas, was in itself undesirable.”<sup>52</sup>

Consistent with contemporary scholarship at the time, the Report also commented on the connection between standard of living, education levels, and fertility rates, and that economic preconditions also needed to be met alongside the simple distribution of contraceptives—the very same preconditions idea that the head of FPAR derided publically as a “dangerous dogma.”<sup>53</sup> As Kaler notes, there were obvious “silences” in Rhodesia’s family planning policies regarding the socio-economic preconditions for demographic transitions.<sup>54</sup> Yet these silences were only public silences, and did not reflect the state’s ignorance of this scholarship, but were instead a rational realisation that altering these fundamental preconditions, even to address a problem as significant as African growth rates, would fatally damage white preserve. As Kaler argued in the context of FPAR’s public strategy, “if such changes had been undertaken on a large enough scale to produce an appreciable national effect, they would have threatened the racial inequalities on which Rhodesia’s political and economic structures were founded...”<sup>55</sup> And so this reasoning also permeated the thinking of the highest levels of Rhodesian state. It was out of this political calculation that these public silences regarding precondition theory were created. These silences were broken by a few errant voices, however. Some outspoken African MPs who were familiar with precondition theory argued forcefully that the Smith government was putting “the cart before the horse” in trying to impose family planning without first addressing socio-economic preconditions.<sup>56</sup> Yet these isolated voices were effectively marginalised, and the creation of these socio-economic preconditions, perhaps the best proven method to induce a demographic transition, was privately considered, consciously ignored, and publicly disreputed. Thereafter, the state publically defended its family planning policy as a method to bring about these socio-economic preconditions—that the cart will pull the horse behind it.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Smith Papers, Box-024, Cabinet Minutes, ‘Population Control’, 27 July 1971.

<sup>53</sup> A. Kaler, *Running*, quoting Dodds, p. 43.

<sup>54</sup> A. Kaler, *Fertility Running Wild*, pp. 95-96.

<sup>55</sup> A. Kaler, *Fertility Running Wild*, p. 96.

<sup>56</sup> Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 88, ‘Committee of Supply Vote’, 1 October 1974.

<sup>57</sup> ‘More Africans Must Earn from Land’, *RH*, 16 July 1971.

In the recommendations section, the 1970 Report of the Committee on Population Problems explored various ways in which the African birth rate could be lowered in light of the general findings of the first section. The first recommendations focused on forcing the African population to internalise the costs of population growth to create antinatalist incentives. The Report advocated changing the system of grants to African Councils to provide incentives “to change [the] present system from the taxation of adult males to the taxation of the total number in the family.”<sup>58</sup> Similarly, the Report noted that the “subsidisation by central government of social services is inconsistent with a policy aimed at reducing the birth rate because it insulates the people from the true cost of having large families, especially where a number of the services subsidised are for the benefit of children.”<sup>59</sup> Below-cost hospital charges for Africans were among those subsidies found to create incentives counter to government policy, as did state subsidised primary education.<sup>60</sup> In a further effort to better engineer African incentives, the Committee suggested “that more attention be given to stimulating the material wants of tribal Africans, particularly the women, whom, it is believed, would respond more readily to such action than would men. The Committee has in mind the expansion of extension activities for women’s clubs and of the promotion of sales of consumer goods.”<sup>61</sup> In this same vein of redirecting the consumer impulses of African women towards antinatal ends, the Report explicitly stated: “the desire for emancipation among African women [should] be exploited to the fullest extent by the ministries of Internal Affairs, Health, and Local Government and Housing in their efforts to improve the standards of living of families, especially women and children.” Further cost internalisation was suggested by expanding prosecutions of criminal neglect for parents of underfed children. In an oral amplification of the Report, the Minister of Health again reiterated the importance of targeting government propaganda towards African women, and the greater introduction of Africans into the cash economy, an

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<sup>58</sup> Smith papers, Box-023, Cabinet Minutes, ‘Report of the Committee on Population Problems’, November 27 1970.

<sup>58</sup> Smith papers, Box-023, Cabinet Minutes, ‘Report of the Committee on Population Problems’, November 27 1970.

<sup>60</sup> These hospital fees were eventually raised in the early 1970s creating a raucous outcry among African MPs in Parliament. Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 81, ‘Committee of Supply Vote’, 2 August 1972.

<sup>61</sup> Smith papers, Box-023, Cabinet Minutes, ‘Report of the Committee on Population Problems’, November 27 1970.

economic system whereby the family wealth flows were such that children became an economic burden rather than an asset. Explaining in more detail the reasons behind this gendered approach to family planning, the Minister of Health later stated: “while African women showed interest in family planning the same could not be said of African males who, once they achieved a measure of material success, hankered after the pleasures of subsistence level tribal living which included several wives and large families.”<sup>62</sup> In addition to the cost internalisation strategies, the Report also called for more intensive propaganda, including small family propaganda in school curricula, and for increases in the funds for the distribution of contraceptives. In his amplification, the Minister of Health expressed that the Report considered other antinatal incentives and disincentives, but these were “played down somewhat to avoid an accusation of ruthlessness. There were, of course, many other disincentives available to government [than those discussed in the Report] , but [these types] of action[s] would undoubtedly lead to criticism, especially overseas.”<sup>63</sup> Other topics that were introduced in the Report, for which it was concluded further discussion was needed, were the legalisation of abortion and voluntary sterilisation. The Cabinet approved the Minister’s request for the creation of a second standing committee of senior officials to re-analyse the government’s options in the area of population control.<sup>64</sup>

### **The Failure of the State’s Population Policy**

The ‘dangerous dogma’ of the necessity of preconditions before a fertility transition, was recognised to be on a collision course with the impatient demands of the rightwing RF members. Policymakers at the highest levels realised that they were constrained by contradictory policy objectives—African economic advancement lowered birth rates, but challenged white preserve; higher education levels resulted in lower fertility, but also increased employment frustrations for under-employed Africans; urbanity correlated with lower fertility, but whites were anxious to keep Africans out of white areas—and crucially all of these same modernisation efforts were vehemently opposed by the very same elements within the RF that pushed

<sup>62</sup> Smith Papers, Box-024, Cabinet Minutes, ‘Population Control’, 27 July 1971.

<sup>63</sup> Smith Papers, Box-023, Cabinet Minutes, ‘Population Control’, 8 December 1970.

<sup>64</sup> Smith Papers, Box-023, Cabinet Minutes, ‘Population Control’, 8 December 1970.

Who was driving this?

hardest for a reduction in African birth rates. This presented significant practical and philosophical problems for the white regime. The science behind precondition theory was never challenged, but the state immediately sought to cram the square pegs of precondition theory into the circle holes of a racialised economic and political system. Greater urbanisation had to mean new urban areas in African regions. Economic development and increases in wage labour employment had to be concentrated away from white areas, and education would have to be focused on vocational and agricultural training, so as not to threaten the spatial or economic preserve of whites. It was reasoned that standards of living would not have to be increased on a relative racial scale, nor even necessarily on an absolute family-wide scale, but instead wealth could be effectively redistributed within African families with women gaining more economic power vis-a-vis men, which could achieve the same antinatal effect. Similarly, the supposed latent consumerist hunger of African women could be fed by more retail stores and consumer goods available in the TTLs, spending temptations that, it was hoped, would prove more attractive than spending money on more children. It was in these ways that fertility precondition theory was awkwardly paired with institutionalised racial inequalities, as a strategy to simultaneously modernise and exclude. While this reconciliation appeared in Cabinet meetings and party congresses to be at least facially logical, if not also redundant and expensive, there would never in Rhodesia be the full public support needed to implement these separate development policies, and this parallelism would remain only plans on paper.

In July 1971, arising from the recommendations of the first meeting of the new standing committee, the Rhodesian state's second such committee, each Ministry was called upon to submit memoranda outlining what role they each could play in a state-wide effort to lower African birth rates.<sup>65</sup> The resulting memoranda, notwithstanding the excitement that population issues elicited in the wider public especially among the rank and file of the RF, were generally equivocal and conservative, and were much more an expression of prototypical bureaucratic caution than an all aboard approach to an existential problem facing the regime. As evidenced by the weak commitments expressed in these memoranda, the different government Ministries were unevenly committed to a broad-ranging attack on the population problem, even following the

<sup>65</sup> Smith Papers, Box-024, Cabinet Memoranda 1971 Part 2, 'Population Control', 23 July 1971.

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1969 census uproar, and these memoranda were duly taken into consideration by the standing committee.

Even as the second standing committee on population began its work and the various Ministries equivocated over their prospective duties in the population control area, the RF rank and file clamoured for more activist policies to address the population problem. To a certain extent, this population panic was manufactured and certainly enflamed by the RF in the late 1960s, but soon this Frankenstein-like beast began to turn against its creator. This ground swell from the party base concerned the chair of the standing committee, the Minister of Health, and in particular there were several resolutions that were introduced in the RF's national Congress in 1971 calling for drastic population control policies that he considered worrying.<sup>66</sup> Among the radical proposals burbling up from the lower reaches of the party, were calls for compulsory birth control for Africans, or barring outright coercion, others had in various forms suggested establishing some form of *quid pro quo* of using birth control or being sterilised in exchange for receiving government services.<sup>67</sup> Significantly, these views did only emanate from the sans culottes of the RF, as exerting some degree of coercion in African fertility matters was at times suggested even by Cabinet-level officials. Expressing an obvious frustration, the Minister explained that despite these urgent calls, there was no immediate, overnight solution to this problem of high African birth rates, involving as it did much larger socio-economic conditions. In his statement, the Minister explored some of the options considered by the committee, including legalising abortion and increased provisions for both male and female sterilisation, "particularly [for] women with large families seeking social welfare assistance," but he asserted that there was no straight forward answer to the complex problem.<sup>68</sup> Candidly admitting to the Cabinet why the African birth rate was as yet apparently unaffected by state initiatives, he said "[it was] borne out by evidence from all over the world that family planning as such did not control the size of the population; it only enhanced the standard of living although it was an integral part of a population control plan as a whole."<sup>69</sup> In the spring of 1971, the Secretary of Health conveyed this same frustration with the state's population control efforts this

<sup>66</sup> Smith Papers, Box-024, Cabinet Minutes, 'Population Control', 27 July 1971.

<sup>67</sup> 'Population Explosion Warning', *RH*, 19 August 1967.

<sup>68</sup> Smith Papers, Box-024, Cabinet Minutes, 'Population Control', 27 July 1971.

<sup>69</sup> Smith Papers, Box-024, Cabinet Minutes, 'Population Control', 27 July 1971.

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way: "the Ministry of Health could provide the water but could neither lead or drive the horse to the water nor make it drink."<sup>70</sup>

The full Report of the second Committee on Population Problems that was presented to the Cabinet in October 1971, called for a strong state commitment to attack the population problem. Among other things, it recommended that a new "broadly-based, high-powered," permanent Population Council be formed. Inevitably, the prospect of such a powerful new body quickly excited ministerial jealousies. In the Cabinet discussion that followed, it was stated that such a body outside the government would in essence be a "super Ministry" capable of "laying down policy which involved a large number of individual Ministries."<sup>71</sup> After debate, the Cabinet agreed that any new population committee's functioning would be hampered by "the many differences in the views of individual ministries and it appeared that it might be difficult to get this committee to function satisfactorily due to an apparent reluctance on the part of some ministries to become fully involved."<sup>72</sup> Concluding that a committee again needed to "examine the whole spectrum of population control and not limit it to the pure aspect of family planning," the Cabinet called on a new committee to take a fresh look at the problem, and "examine the problem in the broadest aspect of population control and to prepare an overall plan for the consideration of government."<sup>73</sup> The Cabinet decided to appoint a third standing population committee: a committee that was eventually elevated to the status of a Cabinet Committee with the Minister of Health serving as chair.<sup>74</sup> In the consideration of this second committee Report, the Cabinet simultaneously expanded the third Committee's terms of reference, and in the same instance limited its powers to implement any conclusions they reached. The Cabinet's decision was a pusillanimous punt back to a third committee, calling for yet another non-binding Report. In so doing, the Cabinet tacitly acknowledged that the state's broader population control proposals, beyond mere propaganda and contraceptive distribution, all contained insurmountable political, economic, and logistical problems.

*Why = No.*

<sup>70</sup> Smith Papers, Box-024, Cabinet Memoranda 1971 Part 2, 'Population Control', 23 July 1971. Quoting M.H. Webster, 3 May 1971.

<sup>71</sup> Smith Papers, Box-024, Cabinet Minutes, 'Population Control', 5 October 1971.

<sup>72</sup> Smith Papers, Box-024, Cabinet Minutes, 'Population Control', 5 October 1971.

<sup>73</sup> Smith Papers, Box-024, Cabinet Minutes, 'Population Control', 5 October 1971.

<sup>74</sup> Smith Papers, Box-024, Cabinet Minutes, 'Population Control', 12 October 1971.

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Running alongside the Cabinet's internal bickering over the scope of its population control policies, the state's sole reliance on contraceptive distribution and propaganda in lieu of more holistic approaches was reinforced by the continual degradation of the state's ability to administer effectively in the rural areas after the escalation of the war in mid 1970s. In practice, this meant that the state's more ambitious exclusionary policies of separate development and the intensive economic development of parallel tribal economies were impossible to implement. Any grandiose scheme like separate development would have taken time and money but also would require unfettered state access to the tribal areas, access that from the mid 1970s was less and less frequent and much more dangerous. When the Minister of Health finally presented the third standing committee Report in 1974, it was conceded that state action should remain concentrated primarily on supporting FPAR, as the broader based initiatives to slow African population growth were increasingly unfeasible.<sup>75</sup> In this way, contraceptive distribution and propaganda became, partially out of default, the sole solutions to a problem in which state officials knew very well required broader action, and therefore their population control policies were doomed to underperform, in spite of the political steam vented from rank and file Rhodesian Front party members. And so the state's population control policy plodded on with the implicit understanding that despite the importance of the population boom only some remedies remained on the table.

### Source **Measuring the State's Success**

There is some evidence that the state's population control policies through FPAR did have some limited effect on African fertility in the short term, even though it was far from reaching the demographic goals hoped for by the proposers. By 1974, W.M. Castle and K.E. Sapire reported that 20 percent of urban African women and 2.7 percent of rural African women were reliably using birth control.<sup>76</sup> Kaler also notes the FPAR's Salisbury Municipal Clinics increase in the distribution of birth control pills from 43,254 in 1973 to 49,889 in 1979, and more significantly in Depo-

<sup>75</sup> Smith Papers, Box-027, Cabinet Minutes, 'Population Control', 22 January 1974.

<sup>76</sup> Kaler, *Running*, p. 73, citing W.M. Castle, K.E. Sapire, 'The Pattern of Acceptance by Blacks of Family Planning Facilities in Relation to Socio-economic Status', *South African Medical Journal*, Vol. 50, No. 25 (June, 1976).

Provera shots from 13,279 to 45,336.<sup>77</sup> In 1976, the head of FPAR had asserted that from 1970 to 1976 Rhodesia's growth rate had dropped from 3.8 percent to 3.4 percent, and that FPAR had by 1976 prevented 25,000 births—an interesting, if curious, statistic to say the least.<sup>78</sup> But as impressive as these gains may seem, the results showed that the effectiveness was mostly localised in the urban areas, and as Castle and Sapire argue, urban areas correlated with more strongly with African fertility reduction than did socio-economic class.<sup>79</sup> It was in the rural areas where the vast majority of Africans lived, and it was in those areas in which, as chapter six describes, the state's policies were met with the greatest resistance. Yet even in the rural areas, the number of FPAR fieldworkers expanded from under 50 in 1969, to around 150 in 1976, to just under 250 in 1979.<sup>80</sup> While these efforts, even as they expanded, were not nearly enough to even scratch the racial ratios, they did reflect some degree of administrative effectiveness in promoting birth control, and importantly they did lay the groundwork for Zimbabwe's successful long-term reduction in fertility rates.

Ironically, the war did offer advantages to some of the state's population control efforts, even as it limited others. The war provided captive audiences for family planning promotion through the state's Protective Village (PV) scheme begun 1976. Kaler claims that within the PVs the state's family planning efforts had much greater success.<sup>81</sup> By the later stages of the war, however, even measurable shifts in African fertility, in or out of the PV's, garnered a much lower level of interest for the white public than it would have prior to the escalation of the war, as more immediate concerns took precedence. Even so, it is unclear that the state's efforts had any measurable effect at all on Rhodesian birth rates during the years of white rule, despite FPAR's claims to the contrary. Total African population numbers continued to expand in the 1970s by the hundreds of thousands a year, even after the RF government stepped up support for FPAR, and the racial population imbalance therefore grew more and more lopsided. As explained in chapter seven, there is some evidence that the early introduction of family planning into Rhodesia did begin to yield results sometime in the 1980s, but this was certainly a cold comfort for ex-

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<sup>77</sup> Kaler, *Running*, p. 69.

<sup>78</sup> A. Kaler, *Running*, p. 73.

<sup>79</sup> Castle, *Pattern of Acceptance*.

<sup>80</sup> Kaler, *Running*, p. 72.

<sup>81</sup> Kaler, *Running*, p. 74.

Rhodesian policymakers and the armchair neo-Malthusians of southern Africa, for whom the overriding purpose behind such policies had already expired.

## Conclusion

Francis Bacon wrote in 1620 that, "Nature to be commanded, must be obeyed."<sup>82</sup> That this old aphorism was ignored by Rhodesian policymakers in the construction of their population control policies reflects the irreconcilable conflicts between different goals of the settler state. The state disregarded the established precondition theories of fertility reduction, not out of theoretical disagreement with those theories, but because the implementation of those theories would undermine the very existence of the white settler state and destroy exactly what UDI was intended to preserve: white privilege. A comprehensive population policy that would have resulted in demonstrable fertility change would have also required extensive coordination among different parts of the government. Yet the mechanics of such coordination met with bureaucratic resistance, as the super-Ministry proposal of the Population Committee was rejected out of petty ministerial jealousies over the power of the new entity. In addition, the state was reluctant to ask for material sacrifices from the white taxpayers to fund any massively conceived population policy however popular this policy might have been as an abstract notion. All of these were brakes pulling back on any comprehensive policy to adequately address the population problem. These brakes precluded any real solution, and the caution they reflected reveal a broader truth about the nature of the Rhodesian state. This was that however large a problem was and however much it threatened the existence of the settler state, and none did so more than the African population 'explosion,' the solution to that problem could never call for too much sacrifice on the part of the white populace. It was feared by policymakers that when called upon to make material sacrifices, many white Rhodesians would merely drift away just as they drifted in: fears that would prove well-founded, as chapter three describes. As a result of these self-imposed limitations, the state merely redoubled its efforts in two aspects of fertility

<sup>82</sup> Reprinted in, F. Bacon, *Francis Bacon: The New Organon* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2000).

reduction—family planning provisions and propaganda—and hoped against hope that these two prongs would prove sufficient.

## Chapter IV

### White Emigration: 'The Hole in Rhodesia's Bucket'<sup>1</sup>

The most politically significant demographic trend in Rhodesia was the consistently high rate of white emigration compared against the total white population. The fact that Rhodesia had experienced positive migration flows for much of its history, with immigration outpacing emigration, obscured the scale and consistency of emigration and created an illusion of demographic stability and continuity within the settler population.<sup>2</sup> Yet white emigration anxieties were never far from the minds of Rhodesian state officials and provided an important backdrop for some of Rhodesia's most important political events. There were a range of attempts to engineer white emigration on the part of those with particular interests in the fate of the country, though the goals of doing so and policies themselves differed according to whether the proposers were hostile or sympathetic towards the settler regime. These population concerns, and the varied efforts to address them, reflected the reality that the white population had very little continuity over time, and that consequently, white Rhodesian loyalty and national identity were weaker than has been supposed. As it was, Rhodesia's white population was one of the most unstable and demographically fragile ruling ethnic castes in any polity anywhere in the world.

In 1976, the then Rhodesian Minister of Immigration, Elias Broomberg, informed the Rhodesian Parliament that:

We have a section in our Immigration Promotion Department which sends a letter to every emigrant who is leaving the country ... saying we understand that he is leaving and in a very tactful way asking, 'why' and if we can help, and if there is a chance of hi[m] changing his mind...[M]any of them appreciate it. They say: 'We cannot believe anybody is taking the interest in the fact we are leaving.' They think this would not happen in any other country.<sup>3</sup>

The intending emigrants were quite right that this would not have happened in any other country, yet it evidently still did not convince many of them to unpack and stay. These peculiar letters are revealing of Rhodesia's unique demographic history: they show the odd symmetry between white immigration and white emigration, the settler

<sup>1</sup> The title derives from 'There's a Hole in the Bucket', *RH*, Editorial, 13 June 1970.

<sup>2</sup> Robert Blake does note that high immigration rates hid high emigration rates, *A History*.

<sup>3</sup> Parliamentary Debate, Vol. 94, 'Committee of Supply: On Vote 12 Information, Immigration and Tourism--\$4,105,000', 5 August 1976.

state's anxiety regarding the small size of the white population, as well as highlighting Rhodesian whites' transient culture, and the desperation with which Rhodesia sought to bolster its white population.

This chapter analyses the transience of white Rhodesians in terms of five inter-related factors. First, settlers had a long history of drifting in and out of Rhodesia and other British territories in eastern and southern Africa without ever acquiring any significant loyalty to Rhodesia in particular. Second, countries sending white immigrants to Rhodesia rarely either expelled them or imposed constraints on return, so that returning home was always a viable option. Third, with increasing restrictions on political opposition after UDI, white residents tended to emigrate when Rhodesia failed to meet their expectations rather than voice their grievances. Fourth, the economic and political power of South Africa was attractive to Rhodesian whites and destabilised the settler population in Rhodesia, especially after UDI. Finally, the emphasis in Rhodesian immigration promotion propaganda on the material benefits of Rhodesia's way of life created an implied contract with new immigrants based upon the promise of easy living and material gain in return for settlement, such that any decline in material standards tended to provoke departure. All of these factors contributed to the profound lack of rootedness in Rhodesia for most whites, a vulnerability that would come to have an enormous impact on the fate of the settler regime after it severed its imperial connections.

### **The Historiography of White Demography and Identity in Rhodesia**

Emigration, as a distinct and persistent Rhodesian phenomenon, and the efforts to manipulate it, have not been fully analysed in the existing historical literature. Previous studies have downplayed the significance of white emigration, either by ignoring or wrongly periodising it, and have thus failed to appreciate its central importance in the political, social, economic, and psychological fabric of Rhodesia. In the last decades of settler rule, demographic trends, in which white emigration played a part, were not merely an effect of Rhodesia's collapse as most historians argue, but were a primary cause of it. In addition, emigration has been a persistent feature of white demography in Rhodesia, from the time of the first pioneers, and did not only emerge in the mid-1970s as a by-product of the war.

Indeed, as Alois Mlambo points out, of the 700 or so members of the pioneer column, only 15 were still in Rhodesia by 1924.<sup>4</sup> Even state officials in less guarded moments acknowledged the long history of emigration from Rhodesia. In 1970, the Minister of Immigration conceded that, “[emigration] has been part and parcel of a pattern of life in Rhodesia since the beginning of time...How many of the great heroes of the past, Selous, Rhodes, Jameson, any one you like to think of, how many actually died in this country? In the end practically none of them.”<sup>5</sup> The larger implications of this transient and fluid white population for Rhodesian national identity have not been adequately explored before and through the war years. The efforts of the Rhodesian state, African nationalists, and western governments to manipulate white migration patterns have likewise been overlooked or mischaracterised.

Historians have typically cast white emigration as a symptom of decline, fitting it into one of two predominant causal narratives of the collapse of white Rhodesia - the military victory thesis,<sup>6</sup> and the betrayal thesis.<sup>7</sup> Though differing in emphasis, both of these narratives assume that prior to the war, the white Rhodesian state was healthy and viable, and that the war was responsible for bringing about a range of changes including high rates of white emigration, that brought about the regime’s final demise.<sup>8</sup> Little attention has been paid either to the problems that emanated from the expanding racial ratios before the war, or to the weakness that accrued not only from the small size of the white population, but also the deeply rooted transience of whites.

Such thoroughgoing white transience has obvious implications for conceptions of white Rhodesian identity. Historians are in broad agreement that after UDI, most Rhodesian whites who stayed were politically united, if only in the preservation of their economic, political, and social privileges. However, beyond this broad agreement, the historical consensus begins to fray. Good and Kinloch, for example,

<sup>4</sup> Mlambo, *White Immigration*, p 1.

<sup>5</sup> Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 77, ‘Adjournment of the House, ‘Immigrants’’, 4 June 1970.

<sup>6</sup> H. Ellert, *The Rhodesian Front War* (Gweru, Mambo Press, 1989); D Martin and P Johnson, *The Struggle for Zimbabwe* (London, Faber, 1981); N Bhebe, *The ZAPU and ZANU Guerrilla Warfare and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe* (Gweru, Mambo Press, 1999).

<sup>7</sup> See for example: I. Smith, *The Great Betrayal* (London, Blake Publishing, 1997); P. Scully, *Exit Rhodesia* (Cottswold Press, 1984). For an oral account of this betrayal theory, see D. Chalmers interview, Oral Archives, The British Empire and Commonwealth Museum Archives, Bristol, UK (hereafter BECM).

<sup>8</sup> Other work does not fit into these categories, and provides some analysis of population issues. Peter Godwin and Ian Hancock detail wartime pressures, but portray white emigration as primarily a by-product of the war. P. Godwin and I. Hancock, *Rhodesians Never Die*.

downplay political and cultural differences, arguing that Rhodesians were unified and differences superficial, while Godwin and Hancock cast white society as fundamentally divided, with any real unity after UDI being illusory.<sup>9</sup> More nuanced are Schutz' and Onslow's accounts of how the fractured and heterogeneous ethnic divisions of white society began to coalesce under the Rhodesian Front into a broader vision of white Rhodesia. The unifying effect of racial solidarity in the face of overwhelming African numbers is also emphasised by Dane Kennedy and Lord Blake, while Leys discusses the uniting effects of international isolation and sanctions.<sup>10</sup> Kosmin in some ways reconciles these views by arguing that white Rhodesians were simultaneously culturally stratified in a pluralistic society, but at the same time broadly agreed on important political issues concerning race.<sup>11</sup> The role of white population turnover in these debates is highlighted by both Frank Clements and Alois Mlambo, who argue that it reveals a culture of transience and that Rhodesian identity was only thinly felt.<sup>12</sup> Mlambo convincingly demonstrates that this transience was a consistent feature of the territory, and concludes that whites were only ever shallowly rooted in Rhodesia. This chapter differs in that it extends the timeframe of analysis into the 1970s and the war for independence, as well as looking deeper into the causes and effects of white transience.<sup>13</sup>

While some of the Rhodesian state's efforts to stem white emigration have received attention from historians, they have been treated as an adjunct to the war effort,<sup>14</sup> while nationalist efforts to engineer Rhodesia's white population numbers

<sup>9</sup> K. Good, 'Settler Colonialism in Rhodesia', *African Affairs*, Vol. 73, No. 290 (1974); G.C. Kinloch, *Racial Conflict in Rhodesia: A Socio-Historical Study* (Washington, University Press, 1978).

<sup>10</sup> B. Schutz, *European Population*; S. Onslow, *A Scheme*; D. Kennedy, *Islands of White*; R. Blake, *A History*; C. Leys, *European Politics*.

<sup>11</sup> B. Kosmin, *Majuta: A History of the Jewish Community in Zimbabwe* (Gweru, Mambo Press, 1980).

<sup>12</sup> F Clements, *Deterioration*; Mlambo, *White Immigration*.

<sup>13</sup> The claim that Rhodesian identity was weak must account for its persistence. Katja Uusihakala argues that today's Rhodesian identity only began to form in the diaspora. K. Uusihakala, 'Opening up and Taking the Gap: The White Road to and From Rhodesia' (unpublished paper, no date), available at [http://www.anthrolobe.ca/docs/white\\_road.pdf](http://www.anthrolobe.ca/docs/white_road.pdf) Who is, or was a 'Rhodesian' is difficult to pinpoint, as large numbers passed through the colony and some stayed on after independence. R. Hodder Williams distinguishes 'Rhodesians' as unreconstructed loyalists from 'white Zimbabweans' who accepted the new order. 'Some White Responses to Black Rule in Zimbabwe,' (unpublished paper, presented in Harare, October 1982), quoted in A. Smith, 'Rhodesian Immigrants in South Africa: Government, Media and a Lesson for South Africa', *African Affairs*, Vol. 87, No. 346 (1988).

<sup>14</sup> Meredith mentions Broomberg's emigration letters only in the context of decline stemming from the war. M. Meredith, *The Past is Another Country: Rhodesia, 1890-1979* (London, Deutsch, 1979), p. 231.

have never been analysed sufficiently in the historical literature.<sup>15</sup> In addition, the British government's efforts to induce white emigration as a means to bring about the collapse of the post-UDI regime have been ignored. The British government's population policies regarding Rhodesia discussed here challenge the idea that the British government was largely complicit with the white minority regime.<sup>16</sup>

### White Demography Reconsidered

In light of the critical importance of white net migration flows to Rhodesia's survival, the consistent outward flow of whites from Rhodesia took on a heightened political and social significance. From 1955 to 1979, a total of 255,692 immigrants arrived in Rhodesia, but over the same period 246,047 emigrants left.<sup>17</sup> This rate of turnover is especially noteworthy when compared against the total white population, which during this same period averaged only 228,583. An annual average of 4.1 percent of Rhodesia's total white population emigrated each year over the 24 years from 1955 to 1979, and an average of 4.6 percent entered every year. This would be the percentage equivalent of the entire cities of Birmingham, Leeds, Liverpool, and Manchester being completely replaced by new people every year in the UK.

This population turnover was surprisingly consistent over Rhodesia's history. Intuitively it makes sense that when times were good, whites stayed on in Rhodesia and more arrived, and when times were bad, they left and few arrived. But this only ever happened within a certain numerical range, with neither immigration to, nor emigration from the settler colony going above or below certain base and peak levels. The six years of 1955 to 1960 (inclusive), were generally good years for whites in Rhodesia, which was then part of the Central African Federation, as white dominance seemed inviolable and the economy prospered. The average annual immigration

<sup>15</sup> Amy Kaler's work discusses in detail the nationalists' and state's competing efforts to engineer African population numbers. Kaler, *Running After Pills*.

<sup>16</sup> Those claiming complicity include M. Loney, *Rhodesia: White Racism and Imperial Response* (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1975). For a similar assertion leveled at the American government, see G. Home, *From the Barrel of a Gun: The United States and the War against Zimbabwe, 1965–1980* (Chapel Hill, NC, University of North Carolina Press, 2001). Nationalist propaganda also accused the West of complicity, *Zimbabwe News* (ZANU) and *Zimbabwe Review* (ZAPU), 1964–1979.

<sup>17</sup> CSO Monthly Digests. The statistics for 1979 are missing the months of February, June, August, November, and December. The reporting seven months were averaged out for the entire year. It should also be noted that some of these emigrants and immigrants were the same individuals being counted twice.

intake during these years was 13,666.<sup>18</sup> This same six year period also averaged 7,666 emigrants. Following this period, were five years of constitutional uncertainty and dramatic change, as the Federation split apart, Zambia and Malawi gained independence, and Rhodesia's future as a white settler state looked doomed. In the five year period from 1961 to 1965, Rhodesia averaged only 8,225 immigrants annually, and lost 12,912 emigrants, a net annual loss of 4,687. The following period, from 1966 to 1972, were the good years after UDI, when Rhodesia had seemingly defied the world and managed not only to survive, but apparently to thrive. But even during these seven years, when immigration averaged 11,395, emigration still ran at an average of 6,285 a year. Despite this old trend of high emigration, historians generally begin to treat emigration as a factor only during the last seven years of settler rule, from 1973 to 1979, considering it a by-product of the war. During the war, Rhodesia lost an average of 13,070 emigrants a year,<sup>19</sup> but perhaps more surprisingly they still gained an average of 7,542 immigrants during this same period, thus losing an average annual net of 5,528. Yearly immigration during this 24-year period only fluctuated between a low of roughly 3,500 and a high of 19,000, averaging 10,207 immigrants a year, and emigration fluctuated between a low of 5,000 and a high of 18,000, averaging 9,983 a year. These figures show an inverse relationship between immigration and emigration, but not as dramatic as intuition would indicate. Migration was only partially elastic to long-term political and economic changes, but also seemed to be to a large extent independent of these major historical trends, with people flitting back and forth across the border all the time.

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<sup>18</sup> Figures are from the Monthly Digest of Statistics, CSO. Prior to the dissolution of the Federation, numbers are estimates as Southern Rhodesia did not keep separate statistics.

<sup>19</sup> Many sources indicate that the actual numbers for white emigration could be as much as twice the officially reported figures. 'Taking the Chicken Run', *Time Magazine*, 1 August 1977.

AVERAGED WHITE MIGRATION TO AND FROM RHODESIA (1955-1979)<sup>20</sup>

	1955-1960	1961-1965	1966-1972	1973-1979 <sup>21</sup>	Average
Immigration (Annual Average)	13,666	8,225	11,395	7,542	10,207
Emigration (Annual Average)	7,666	12,912	6,285	13,070	9,983
Net Migration (Annual Average)	+6,000	-4,687	+5,110	-5,528	+224
White Population (Annual Average)	194,500	216,000	233,000	270,833 <sup>22</sup>	228,583

Rhodesian migration trends were particularly responsive to the vagaries of personal advantage in comparison to other global migrations. A *Herald* editorial commented on white movements in and around southern Africa: "There is so much of it—so much heated packing up and dashing about, accompanied so often by high-flown rationalisation—that it is a phenomenon in its own right."<sup>23</sup> This dashing about was not new. Before the 1960s, eastern and southern Africa had a sizable population of migratory whites who floated freely from one African territory to another depending upon job opportunities and political conditions.<sup>24</sup> Migrations to and from Rhodesia were private economic decisions, but were not prodded on by empty stomachs.<sup>25</sup> Most immigrants did not initially come to Rhodesia fleeing political or religious persecution, and most who left Rhodesia, likewise did not do so out of any dire hardship, but simply because other places looked comparatively better.<sup>26</sup> Most migrants who arrived only personally invested in Rhodesia for the short-term, and were not overly concerned with the long-term prospects for the country as a whole so long as their personal situation was secure. Conversely, during times of general prosperity, if a resident was not themselves prospering, the ease of leaving made

<sup>20</sup> Figures are from the *Monthly Digest of Statistics*, CSO. Prior to the dissolution of the Federation, numbers are estimates as Southern Rhodesia did not keep separate statistics.

<sup>21</sup> The statistics for 1979 are missing the months of February, June, August, November, and December. The reporting seven months were averaged out for the entire year.

<sup>22</sup> This figure includes only the average total white population from January 1973 through November 1978.

<sup>23</sup> 'Necessity—or Bad Habit?', Editorial, *RH*, 20 January 1966.

<sup>24</sup> Rhodesian media reported this hoping that more would settle in Rhodesia. See 'Why Don't they Come Here?', Editorial, *RH*, 21 February 1968.

<sup>25</sup> Blake, *A History*, p. 273.

<sup>26</sup> Clements, *Deterioration*, p. 93.

emigration a viable economic option. This short-term bias explains why Rhodesian migration was only imperfectly elastic when it came to responding to national trends.

The common border Rhodesia shared with its powerful southern neighbour, South Africa, and the shared ideology between the two territories after UDI, affected migration patterns in several important ways. On the one hand, after UDI, South Africa provided the largest source of immigrants to Rhodesia.<sup>27</sup> South Africa also provided the easiest access route and initial stopping point for immigrants from elsewhere, as it openly flouted UN sanctions and provided legal cover for immigrants to circumvent their home countries' domestic legislation by ostensibly immigrating to South Africa, then secretly crossing the Limpopo River. The presence of the powerful South African state directly bordering on Rhodesia no doubt also served as a psychological comfort for intending immigrants, lessening their fears about committing their future to the political uncertainty of Rhodesia. However, these same characteristics rendered South Africa an easy and attractive emigration option from Rhodesia, and there was always a fear of whites ebbing back across the Limpopo.<sup>28</sup>

The profound lack of Rhodesian rootedness had the effect of lowering the social costs of leaving, as residents tended to maintain ties to other countries. And it was not without reason that Rhodesia's large-scale immigration drives described in chapter five, of which the Settlers '74 campaign was the best known, tried to exploit these connections by urging residents to recommend Rhodesia to their friends and relatives back home.<sup>29</sup> Rhodesia lacked both strong retention factors and strong push factors, while migrants' source countries also rarely exerted harsh push factors. This had the effect of reducing differences that might encourage migration to Rhodesia, yet it also reduced the transaction costs of moving such that emigration was always a viable option. Southern Africa, and Rhodesia in particular, can therefore be seen as close to the neo-classical economic model of a perfectly efficient migration market, inhabited by informed, quality-conscious, non-loyal consumers, who responded quickly to product variations, unburdened by irrational attachments.

<sup>27</sup> The original source of Rhodesian immigrants is difficult to assess as only the departure country was listed, which was generally South Africa.

<sup>28</sup> In Eaton's survey, 49 percent of respondents emigrated from Rhodesia to South Africa, 29 percent to the UK, 8 percent to Australia, 3 percent to Canada, 3 percent to US, and 2 percent to New Zealand. W.G. Eaton, *A Chronicle of Modern Sunlight: The Story of What Happened to the Rhodesians*, (Rohnert Park, Inno Vision, 1996) p. 3.

<sup>29</sup> The method was also used in 1967. See '100,000 Air Letters Used to Launch Drive for Immigrants', *RH*, 29 July 1967.

## Exit, Voice, and Loyalty Among White Rhodesians

Albert O. Hirschman's theory of "exit, voice, and loyalty"<sup>30</sup> has served as a useful model in other work on emigration.<sup>31</sup> Hirschman argues that when organisations do not meet expectations, members have two general modes of action: exit and voice. Voice entails vocalising grievances to the organisation's leadership in the hope of provoking change. Exit, in contrast, describes the decision to leave. The suppression of one action renders the other more attractive. In Rhodesia, voice was more costly than exit, and was perceived to be ineffective, especially after UDI. As a result, Rhodesians typically did not utilise their political voice, or indeed were silenced if they did so. Former Prime Minister, Garfield Todd and his daughter were detained for speaking out against the regime and its policies in 1972,<sup>32</sup> as were numerous other dissidents. As Hirschman notes, organisations will often even encourage or force dissenters to exit, and from the time of UDI onwards, Rhodesia increasingly deported political dissenters. This politicised population turnover had a selective effect and acted to reinforce Rhodesian Front ideology, as disgruntled residents simply left and were replaced by new residents.<sup>33</sup> Institutionally, the quelling of voice protected the state from troublesome critics, but also reinforced the tendency among settlers to emigrate when Rhodesia did not meet expectations rather than attempting to influence its course.<sup>34</sup>

In an effort to stop the exodus, the Rhodesian state imposed restrictions on emigration while also trying to quell political voice. Hirschman's analysis of the behaviour of members in organisations that impose high prices for exit posits that in such cases the "threat of exit," as an effective form of voice is eliminated, yet the final exit occurs at the same level of dissatisfaction or deterioration as with organisations with no exit price. This was certainly true with Rhodesia, as dissatisfied Rhodesians

<sup>30</sup> A. O. Hirschman, *Exit, Voice and Loyalty: Responses to Decline in Firms, Organizations and States* (Harvard University Press, 1970).

<sup>31</sup> See J. M. Colomer, 'Exit, Voice and Hostility in Cuba', *International Migration Review*, Vol. 34, No. 130 (2000); S. Gammage, 'Exercising Exit, Voice and Loyalty: A Gender Perspective on Transnationalism in Haiti', *Development and Change*, Vol. 35, No. 4 (2004); S. Ma, 'The Exit, Voice, and Struggle to Return of Chinese Political Exiles', *Pacific Affairs*, Vol. 66, No. 3 (1993).

<sup>32</sup> Godwin, *Rhodesians Never Die*, p. 81.

<sup>33</sup> Clements claims Rhodesia lurched to the right due to post-UDI population transfers. Clements, *Deterioration*. p. 243

<sup>34</sup> When settlement talks and imminent majority rule incensed the right, they too exited. 'Taking the Chicken Run', *Time Magazine*, 1 August 1977.

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remained outwardly loyal, never threatening exit, until the very day they silently left. A Scottish automobile worker in Rhodesia was quoted in an interview in 1977, for example, as saying: “Yes, we’re taking the Chicken Run, but nobody wants to admit it publicly. If the word gets out, the revenue office will be breathing down your neck to see if you’re fiddling some extra cash out.”<sup>35</sup> The state’s efforts to stem exit therefore proved only partially effective, and its combination with the restrictions on voice produced a two-faced citizenry who displayed public contentedness, while experiencing private dissatisfaction and secretly planning to exit.<sup>36</sup>

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Hirschman defines his third major concept, loyalty, as tending to hold exit at bay and activate voice.<sup>37</sup> Loyalty describes a deep attachment to the organisation, and when present, “exit abruptly changes character: the applauded rational behaviour of the alert consumer shifting to a better buy becomes disgraceful defection, desertion, and treason.”<sup>38</sup> Loyalists thereby suffer an internalised penalty for exit, whereas non-loyalists do not. Were Rhodesians loyal as defined by Hirschman? There are several indications that typically they were not. There was a great deal of hedging one’s bets in Rhodesia. Many people looked to stay in Rhodesia as long as they could prosper, all the while preparing for the eventuality that on short notice they could exit. A large percentage of the white population never became citizens, far fewer than qualified, even after the state sought to streamline white citizenship and make it easier to obtain in 1967.<sup>39</sup> Many in Rhodesia, even long time residents, failed to register on the voting rolls.<sup>40</sup> There were even greater numbers who could have obtained Rhodesian passports, dual or otherwise, but refused to do so.<sup>41</sup> Even during the good years of UDI, UK passport offices were periodically mobbed with ostensible Rhodesians applying for UK passports.<sup>42</sup> Furthermore, when call-ups began in earnest, many men quickly opted for evasion and/or emigration to avoid military service. Independently, any one of these indicators does not necessarily mean national loyalty was weak, yet

<sup>35</sup> ‘Taking the Chicken Run’, *Time Magazine*, 1 August 1977.

<sup>36</sup> See ‘Chimurenga and the Chicken Run’, *Time Magazine*, 28 March 1977.

<sup>37</sup> Hirschman, *Exit, Voice and Loyalty*, p. 78.

<sup>38</sup> Hirschman, *Exit, Voice and Loyalty*, p. 98.

<sup>39</sup> ‘Citizenship Bill Gazetted’, *RH*, 18 February 1967.

<sup>40</sup> ‘RF Congress Urges Voters to Register’, *RH*, 25 October 1969; ‘50,000 Whites not Voters or Citizens—MP’, *RH*, 28 July 1971; ‘19,000 Have Not Re-Registered as Voters’, 21 February 1974.

<sup>41</sup> There were 12,760 dual Rhodesian/UK passports and 23,980 mono-UK passports. The FCO speculated that the latter figure was even higher. FCO memoranda of 1972 citing 1969 Census, FCO 36/1294.

<sup>42</sup> ‘Demand is Big For British Passports’, *RH*, 8 January 1964; ‘Rush at British Passport Office’, *RH*, 19 April 1966; ‘Passport Office Chaotic’, *RH*, 4 July 1969.

taken together they are clear manifestations of a weak loyalty to Rhodesia for most whites.<sup>43</sup> The consistently high levels of white turnover further reinforce this conclusion. A surprisingly small percentage of white adults were born in Rhodesia, or lived there most of their lives, and at no time did the Rhodesian-born whites outnumber the foreign-born.<sup>44</sup> With the notable exception of a small core of lifers—a group including Ian Smith, who was the first Prime Minister to be born in Rhodesia—for most whites, Rhodesia was simply a chapter in their lives both preceded and followed by longer stays elsewhere.<sup>45</sup> Most whites were not in Rhodesia long enough to establish the level of loyalty discussed by Hirschman.<sup>46</sup> Even if many had strong emotional and nostalgic ties, these were not strong enough to prevent, postpone, or even significantly complicate exit for most whites when Rhodesia failed to meet their expectations.

Any argument questioning the strength of white Rhodesian loyalty, must account for the incredible intransigence of the popularly elected Rhodesian Front governments in the face of strong pressures to capitulate to majority rule.<sup>47</sup> How did this intransigence jibe with white transience? Rhodesia's bell curve-like rise and fall of its white population from the 1950s through the 1980s occurred almost entirely in the urban areas, with the white rural population remaining consistently low, but more stable,<sup>48</sup> and there appears to have been some correlation between urbanity and transience, and rurality and rootedness. But significantly, the short-term interests of transients and non-transients regarding race were not in conflict, as there was a genuine consensus of white opinion on certain important racial matters. However, this did not necessarily mean that transients and non-transients were equally willing to suffer the consequences if these risky political gambles came due. Indeed, this

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<sup>43</sup> A *Herald* analysis of white ethnic heterogeneity concluded national identity was weak, 'The Rhodesian Blend', 13 October 1973.

<sup>44</sup> The 1969 census revealed that three quarters of Rhodesia's white population over the age of 16 were born outside Rhodesia, 59 percent of these were born in either South Africa or Britain. '59 percent of Whites over 16 Were Born in Britain or SA', *RH*, 8 May 1970. Of 1,460 people surveyed in the Rhodesian diaspora in the 1990s, only 36% were born in Rhodesia, 39% went to Rhodesia for jobs and 22% went as children. Eaton, *Modern Sunlight*. In 1969, only 40% of Rhodesians were born inside of Rhodesia. Among adults it was only 25.5%. Mlambo, *White Immigration*, p. 2.

<sup>45</sup> In 1975, 45% of the White population had been in Rhodesia for under ten years, Loney, *White Racism Imperial Response*.

<sup>46</sup> 80 percent of white Rhodesians in a survey had not seen Victoria Falls, '80pc Have Not Seen the Falls', *RH*, 1 May 1974.

<sup>47</sup> Popularly elected only for whites it should be noted.

<sup>48</sup> Nine out of ten white immigrants from the 1950s onwards took urban employment and half lived in Salisbury. Blake, *A History*, p. 275.

asymmetry of transience also reflected an asymmetry of cost internalisation that seemed to have the effect of stiffening, not weakening, white resistance and defiance.<sup>49</sup> The easy alternative of exit for migrants prevented what Hirschman referred to as the “raise hell” scenario of locked-in members vocally responding to changes in quality or policy direction.<sup>50</sup> As it was, these short-term migrants had strong incentives to support state policies that protected white privilege in the short-term, even as they could potentially mean greater risk in the long-term. As will be discussed below, though the state tried to more equitably divide the burdens of this intransigence, these policies proved extremely unpopular and not surprisingly contributed to greater emigration. This complex inter-play between exit, voice, and cost internalisation was recognised by British bureaucrats in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office as they approached the problem of how best to foment internal opposition to Smith’s government—a strategy premised on whites staying in Rhodesia to internalise costs, and hopefully raise hell.<sup>51</sup> For these reasons, the strength of white political support behind the Rhodesian Front’s policies specifically, and the cause of white Rhodesia more broadly, does not lead in a straight line to the conclusion that Rhodesian loyalty was strongly felt among the broader white population.

### **White Transience Explored**

Rhodesia’s white population was always especially susceptible to stresses that could induce emigration. One reason for this stemmed from the nature of their entry into Rhodesia. As described in chapter five, Rhodesia’s four main selling points to potential immigrants, as set out in their promotional literature, was its warm, sunny climate; the freedom to start a new life without the constraints of dour post-War Europe; the anachronistic imperial lifestyle evoked by Rhodesian publicity; and,

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<sup>49</sup> An analogy can be made to some recent arguments made in the United States positing that the U.S. would be decidedly more pacifistic if it reinstated the military draft.

<sup>50</sup> Hirschman, *Exit, Voice, and Loyalty*, pp. 44-45.

<sup>51</sup> See for example, FCO 36/1221. Letter from C. M. Le Quesne, FCO, to Sir Arthur Snelling and attached memorandum to letter, ‘Commentary on ‘An Outsider’s Reflections on Rhodesia’’, 14 November 1972.

importantly, an inflated material standard of living for whites.<sup>52</sup> The implied contract formed in the recruitment of immigrants was that if they settled in Rhodesia, they would prosper.<sup>53</sup> This marketing strategy inflated migration numbers in the short-term, but it also inadvertently contributed to the transient culture in Rhodesia.

Some commentators acknowledged the connection between white Rhodesian transience and the inducements offered to immigrants. Pat Bashford, leader of the opposition Centre Party, said in 1976 that residents were in Rhodesia for the lifestyle Rhodesia offered them, and “[w]hen that begins to deteriorate, they will take themselves elsewhere and who is to blame them?”<sup>54</sup> It was no secret at the time that there was a large population of residents who were essentially ‘Good Time Charlies.’ An editorial from 1976, which acknowledged the “disturbing” emigration figures, also claimed emigration was occurring primarily among “people who have not put down roots in Rhodesia ... Those of longer standing tend to adopt the attitude that, whatever Rhodesia’s present imperfections or even dangers, every other country has problems; which one is better?”<sup>55</sup> Rhodesia’s marketing strategy influenced the sorts of immigrants attracted, and while these appeals were effective in inflating migration statistics and boosting the Smith government in the short term, the immigrants’ lack of commitment to Rhodesia reduced their long-term value to the regime, especially as the material quality of life began to decline for almost all whites in the 1970s.

### **The Economic Effects of White Emigration**

Rhodesia’s high rates of emigration had detrimental economic effects, many of which long preceded the war. From the early 1960s until the end of minority rule there was a net loss of skilled and professional workers, or “brain drain.”<sup>56</sup> This occurred despite net migration gains in the good years of UDI from 1966–1972, and

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<sup>52</sup> See ‘Problems Face New Immigrants in Rhodesia’, *RH*, 7 October 1968; ‘New Rhodesians-V’, *RH*, 12 October 1968; ‘New Rhodesians-III’, *RH*, 10 October 1968; ‘New Rhodesians-XII’, *RH*, 22 October 1968.

<sup>53</sup> See Immigration Promotion Department’s adverts in Dublin, ‘New Move to Attract Irish Immigrants’, *RH*, 19 March 1969.

<sup>54</sup> ‘Smith’s ‘Stay On’ Plea ‘Useless’, *RH*, 2 August 1976.

<sup>55</sup> ‘Seeking Utopia’, *RH*, 30 June 1976; Eaton, *Modern Sunlight*, p. xv.

<sup>56</sup> The Ministry of Labour and employers acknowledged a brain drain, while the Ministry of Immigration and unions denied it, until the findings of a study in 1972. ‘Manpower Fact’, *RH*, 22 April 1972.

the corollary to the brain drain in an era of total net migration gains was the influx of unskilled and semi-skilled whites. This was partly a result of the skills barriers to white immigration being gradually phased out under Smith's Premiership. A practical effect of this policy was an increased difficulty in assimilating new immigrants.<sup>57</sup> The population exchange was such that the newer immigrants could not slot into the skilled openings reserved for whites at the top of the economic pyramid, but instead often challenged Africans for access to lower skilled jobs.<sup>58</sup> As will be argued in chapter five, despite the efforts by the Rhodesian state to promote mass immigration, there was simply no room for large numbers of unskilled and semi-skilled whites in Rhodesia's racialised economy.

African school-leavers in Rhodesia were compressed by racial job reservation which left the vast majority under-employed or unemployed despite shortages in many positions reserved for whites. During the war, state officials grew concerned with the competition between the economy and the military for white male manpower, and were adamant that this attenuation should not advantage Africans. By the time the war had further escalated in 1976, and the call-ups pulled greater numbers of whites from their employment, the state instituted a domestic volunteer service to fill in for called-up men as well as a scheme to temporarily employ white South Africans.<sup>59</sup> In 1975, the Director of the Centre for Inter-Racial Studies of the University of Rhodesia declared that the frustrated aspirations of African school-leavers was the single most important problem concerning Rhodesia's race relations, and plugging white employment gaps with both aged and foreign whites must have been particularly galling to skilled unemployed Africans.<sup>60</sup> A further by-product of the state's refusal to relax racial economic divisions was that white emigration reduced the tax base just as African demands for social services and other state expenditure were increasing. The expanding African population was viewed as an enormous economic burden by the state, yet ironically, maintaining white privilege

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<sup>57</sup> 'Miscegenation, Prostitution and Allied Problems', Smith Papers, Box-024, Cabinet Minutes, 24 August 1971. These newer immigrants were also often not of 'British stock'.

<sup>58</sup> For anecdotal evidence: Mr. Samuriwo's statements to the Committee of Supply, August 1, 1969, col. 1063, Mr. Rubatika, Committee of Supply, 1 August 1969, col. 1076.

<sup>59</sup> 'Volunteers Ready to Fill Call-Up Gaps', *RH*, 27 August 1976.; 'Temporaries' Rush to Help', *RH*, 30 July 1976.

<sup>60</sup> 'Frustration over Jobs 'Biggest Snag'', *RH*, 16 August 1975.

necessitated that Africans be prevented from rising economically and thus sharing in the shouldering of this burden.<sup>61</sup>

### White Emigration and the Military Conflict

A lack of white manpower greatly damaged military operations, particularly from the mid 1970s. Wing Commander Gaunt, stated bluntly in Parliament where he placed manpower issues in the priority of Rhodesia's military problems in 1977: "There is no doubt in my mind that the single and most inhibiting factor of this war is the shortage of manpower...<sup>62</sup>" Many agreed with his assessment, most notably Prime Minister Ian Smith. Throughout the war, the state was always bedeviled by the low call-up yields.<sup>63</sup> For example, a full half of the 3,000 eligible men called-up in 1973 evaded conscription, and in 1976, 3,000 eligible men never even registered for the call-up.<sup>64</sup> Before the February 1978 call-up, the Army stated that its minimum call-up requirement was 1,046. After the actual call-up, only 570 reported for Army duty, 476 short of their minimum stated requirement. All other services were likewise reduced for that period.<sup>65</sup> To remedy the manpower situation, the call-up system was constantly tinkered with over the war years, and was a perennial target for attack from those both inside and outside government.<sup>66</sup> Exemptions, deferments, age limits, sex biases, and even medical categories were reconsidered to pull in more soldiers.<sup>67</sup> As early as 1973, the Minister of Defence Jack Howman, in announcing a re-examination of medical categories, slammed those draft dodging white Rhodesians whom he

<sup>61</sup> Prior to the Lisbon coup in 1974, the US State Department believed that the minority regime would collapse, not due to the war, but as a result of the African population explosion. 'US Policy on Rhodesia Stays Firm', *RH*, 21 July 1976.

<sup>62</sup> Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 97, 'Motion: Registration and Call-Up Procedures', 12 October 1977.

<sup>63</sup> For an interesting exploration of the call-up system's many effects on white society, and its implications for Rhodesian civic culture in the 1970s, see L. White, 'Civic Virtue, Young Men, and the Family: Conscription in Rhodesia 1974-1980', *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol. 37, No. 1 (2004).

<sup>64</sup> White, *Civic Virtue*, citing Godwin, *Rhodesians Never Die*, p. 113-114, 136, 160; and *Fireforce Exposed: The Rhodesian Security Forces and Their Role in Defending White Supremacy*, (London, Anti-Apartheid Movement, 1979).

<sup>65</sup> BECM 2001/086/007 Manpower Committee Meeting Minutes, 2 February 1978.

<sup>66</sup> In a debate over call-up procedures, MP Mr. Parkin expressed what many inside and outside government suspected was behind the low call-up yields, "There is this visible avoidance of obligation by many weak-kneed males between the ages of 16 and 50...I believe they are selfish, I believe they are craven..." Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 97, 'Motion: Registration and Call-Up Procedures', 12 October 1977.

<sup>67</sup> See generally BECM 2001/086/007 weekly Manpower Committee Meetings, 1977.

described as, “gun-sky sportsmen, athletes fit enough to play games, but not fit enough for military service.”<sup>68</sup> Draft dodging was viewed to be such a problem that the military police were given powers to stop Rhodesian males of military age and require that they prove they had registered for military service.<sup>69</sup> One Rhodesian Front back-bencher even suggested that all white males should be required to wear dog tags around their necks at all times after they register for call-ups.<sup>70</sup> Despite the incessant tree-shaking for more men, the problem underlying Rhodesia’s various call-up systems was a simple lack of continuous access to a stable supply of white manpower.<sup>71</sup>

A related issue was how to guard against the reduction of this finite pool through emigration. Military and civilian bureaucrats regularly strategised how best to avoid pushing more Rhodesians to the point of emigration, while at the same time meeting escalating military demands on manpower. Emigration was seldom absent from the weekly Manpower Committee Meetings of the mid to late 1970s.<sup>72</sup> In order to bypass this conundrum of how to increase service commitments without inducing emigration, it was decided to obscure the exact terms of service.<sup>73</sup> Yet the creeping call-up commitments corresponded with increasing emigration of the primary call-up age group, as commitments could only be hidden so much. With each cohort that emigrated, the commitments of those who stayed increased, and the various call-up rules all had the perverse effect of increasing obligations on those who did report for duty. The Manpower Committee noted in 1977 that, “Experience had shown that few men in the under 38 age group actually served for 190 days during a 12 month period and that it was those men who did in fact come somewhere near to this figure that were leaving the country.”<sup>74</sup> This created a self-sustaining cycle of increased service

<sup>68</sup> ‘Government to Chase Draft Dodgers: Stiffer Medicals for ‘Unfit Sportsmen’, *RH*, 2 June 1973.

<sup>69</sup> ‘New Moves by Army to Catch the Dodgers’, *RH*, 2 July 1976.

<sup>70</sup> ‘Net Tightens on Manpower’, *RH*, 30 July 1976. The dog tag proposal was never implemented.

<sup>71</sup> This is to be contrasted with the almost unlimited supply available to African guerrillas. ZANLA recruits, for instance, grew so rapidly that in 1977 the party appealed on Radio Mozambique to aspiring guerrillas to stay in Rhodesia because there were insufficient facilities to house, clothe, train, and feed all the Africans coming into the camps. N. Kriger, *Zimbabwe’s Guerrilla War: Peasant Voices* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1992) p. 92, citing A. Wilkinson, ‘The Impact of the War’, *Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics*, Vol. 18, No. 1 (March, 1980) p. 116.

<sup>72</sup> BECM 2001/086/007 Manpower Committee Meeting Minutes. General Walls, Commander of Combined Operations, called for full mobilisation in 1977, which was rejected due to its probable effect of increasing emigration. BECM 2001/086/192 Combined Operations Meeting, 13 February 1978.

<sup>73</sup> BECM 2001/086/007 Manpower Committee Minutes, 5 May 1977.

<sup>74</sup> BECM, Manpower Committee Meeting Minutes, 29 August 1977.

demands, increased white emigration, and a worsening military situation. After a flood of internal memoranda, the conclusion was reached that the failures of the call-up were not a matter of administrative incompetence, nepotism, or shirking youth, but simply reflected the reality that increasing manpower demands could not be met by Rhodesia's small and shrinking white population, and efforts to squeeze the white population further would prove counter-productive.<sup>75</sup>

Low white manpower in the military directly dictated strategic and tactical capabilities. Most broadly, demographic constraints forced the state to rely upon smaller special forces-type operations rather than large-scale set piece manoeuvres. More specifically, manpower shortages undermined the late-developed strategy of security forces permanently holding the Tribal Trust Lands rather than merely entering them reactively. This policy was declared unfeasible by the commanders of several operational theatres due to manpower constraints.<sup>76</sup> Emigration also undermined the Protective Village (PV) programme, which was modeled on the counter-insurgency strategies in Malaya and Vietnam. As each call-up cohort shrank, the PV programme was continually passed over for priority to other services, and understaffing thus undercut a major strategic initiative.<sup>77</sup> A top secret internal strategic directive in July 1979 concluded: "Even if the best possible employment of troops evolves, our deployment levels in any given area will remain totally inadequate."<sup>78</sup> This deteriorating security situation, largely as a result of white manpower constraints, finally forced the regime to negotiate its own demise.<sup>79</sup>

<sup>75</sup> BECM 2001/086/192 Minutes of Meeting, 'Study the Implications of Phased Mobilisation, Strategy and Tactics', 17 February 1978.

<sup>76</sup> BECM 2001/086/007 Memorandum by RB Isemonger, BSAP, 'Permanent Presence in Selected TTLs', 2 April 1978.

<sup>77</sup> BECM 2001/086/007 Letter from Yardley, Sec. for Internal Affairs, to Commander of Combined Operations, 1 November 1977.

<sup>78</sup> BECM 2001/086/007 'Planning Requirements: Short Term (6-Month) Strategy', July 1979. This difficulty of Rhodesia white recruitment led to the extensive use of foreign mercenaries. By 1976, it was claimed that up to a third of all white regular army personnel were mercenaries. N. Kriger, *Peasant Voices*, p. 111, citing W. Minter, *King Solomon's Mines Revisited: Western Interests and the Burdened History of Southern Africa* (New York, Basic Books, 1986) p. 276.

<sup>79</sup> In contrast, the rapidly increasing African population served as a boundless well for guerrilla recruitment into both ZANLA and ZIPRA, at the same time as Europeans were struggling to fill vital positions in their military. Meredith claims that ZANU recruitment was steadily around 1,000 a month by mid 1977, and that ZAPU recruits filled up to two daily chartered flights from the border areas with Botswana to train in Zambia. See Meredith, *A Past*, pp 303-304.

## The Political Consequences of White Emigration

Losing people was an extremely sensitive issue for white Rhodesians, and it had significant political and psychological consequences in addition to the military and economic effects noted above. The Rhodesian press regularly analysed migration statistics: who was coming, who was going, and why. The political effects of these migration figures led the state to ban their publication at various times, in particular in the period immediately following UDI. In the autumn of 1978, the government debated again banning the publication of migration figures, but concluded that this would have the opposite effect intended, by exacerbating the public's population anxieties.<sup>80</sup>

The small size and narrow geographical distribution of the white population made it so white migration could not be easily hidden. These white migration patterns provided the momentum behind many of Rhodesia's most dramatic political events. Smith was able to carry out an internal coup within the Rhodesian Front in 1964, for example, partly because of the public disappointment over Winston Field's inability to stem white emigration, or more aptly, his failure to obscure emigration with immigration.<sup>81</sup> When Smith was asked a decade later what he thought was his greatest achievement in office, he responded:

I would say that UDI was part of it, but I think the greatest achievement—and I am happy to have played my part in it—was restoring to Rhodesians the confidence in their own country which we found they had lost when we came to power... We found that Rhodesians were leaving because they had no more confidence in the political future of their country... I believe this government has succeeded in changing that. We first of all had to stem the tide of people leaving. Then we turned the tide, and I am happy to say we regained more than we lost. ... I believe this more than anything else is the greatest achievement that the RF government can claim. I believe we saved Rhodesia.<sup>82</sup>

According to Smith, the demographic turnaround from the mid 1960s to the mid 1970s indicated the overall success of the settler state. UDI was considered a factor in this success, but only in so far as it helped to restore confidence in white rule such that

<sup>80</sup> 'Ban Emigration Figures—Ellis,' *RH*, 22 September 1978.

<sup>81</sup> See also Meredith, *The Past*, p. 46.

<sup>82</sup> '10 Years After', *RH*, 11 April 1974.

the white population would stay and even grow. In a September 1975 interview, Smith again cast UDI as primarily an effort to stabilise the white population and to secure the future of white Rhodesia, and attributed the Rhodesian Front under his leadership as saving Rhodesia by convincing whites to stay put.<sup>83</sup> Yet as previously detailed, stable white population levels did not mean that whites were staying put, but that new residents were arriving, in a manner characteristic of Rhodesia's long-standing population shuffle.

In the settlement talks, Rhodesian Front politicians consistently asserted that whites in Rhodesia were there to stay, and that they had nowhere else to go. But this was undermined by the emigration that occurred soon after Smith's triumphant interviews in the mid 1970s, which was again exposed by falling immigration. Rhodesians clearly had somewhere else to go, and were going there at a fast pace. As the white population decreased from the mid 1970s, it was accompanied by a feeling of decline and decay, which was a distinct change from the past, even from the period marking the end of the Federation. In 1978, former Prime Minister Roy Welensky reflected the fears of many when he said that Rhodesian emigration was the "haemorrhage that will bleed us to death."<sup>84</sup> The newly exposed emigration damaged the morale of the white population, making the prophesy of decline self-fulfilling.

While white retention rates had long been considered an indicator of the overall wellbeing of the settler regime, this was turned on its head in the final months before independence. Retaining the white population came to be the central purpose of the internal settlement regime, and halting emigration became an end in itself. Shortly before the creation of the short-lived Zimbabwe-Rhodesia, the Combined Operation Headquarters issued a top secret "Total National Strategy Directive," outlining the long-term strategy for the new government.<sup>85</sup> As expressed in this comprehensive plan, the prime objective of the Security Forces and every Ministry was to "retain the confidence of whites ... in order to prevent an exodus." Indeed, this was the only goal common to all the separate Ministerial reports. When seen in this light, the *raison d'être* of the end of the post-UDI experiment was perhaps less

<sup>83</sup> 'UDI Stopped the Rot says PM', *RH*, 20 September 1975. Significantly, after 1980, Smith downplays migration, perhaps because the negative net migration from 1973 indicated a lack of confidence in the RF government. See *The Great Betrayal*.

<sup>84</sup> 'Sad Loss', *RH*, Editorial, 30 December 1978.

<sup>85</sup> BECM Box 9271 2001/086/147. 'Total National Strategy Directive', Commops HQ, 21 March 1979.

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### Engineering Emigration

Given the perception that migration was so closely connected to the political fortunes of Rhodesia, it is not surprising that efforts were made by both proponents and opponents of the settler regime to engineer emigration. Legislation aiming to halt white emigration in the 1960s took the form of erecting obstacles that were regarded simply as a nuisance by residents, such as making it illegal to emigrate with a vehicle that still had payments left on it.<sup>86</sup> By the mid 1970s, however, restrictions included a dramatic drop in the allowances that emigrants were allowed to take out of the country.<sup>87</sup> Strict exchange controls also made it very difficult to obtain foreign currency, making preparations for foreign travel or departure that much more difficult. In 1975, the onus of proving compliance with exchange controls was shifted from the government to emigrants themselves.<sup>88</sup> These restrictions were greatly resented by many Rhodesians, yet efforts to combat them were hampered by the fact that those most affected carried little political clout. Nevertheless, the rules were widely circumvented by emigrants officially leaving the country for reasons other than emigration and/or by sneaking out assets.<sup>89</sup> For example, in the late 1970s precious stones in Salisbury were sold for three to four times their actual value because they could be easily sneaked out.<sup>90</sup> An emigrant from Rhodesia in the 1970s said the restrictions “turned just about everybody into crooks.”<sup>91</sup> The creative avoidance of emigration restrictions came to form a part of a diaspora myth among ex-Rhodesians across the globe, who oddly evoke patriotic pride by displaying their ingenuity in evading not only international economic sanctions, but also their own domestic restrictions.<sup>92</sup>

<sup>86</sup> ‘Emigrants Fail to Pay Car Installments’, *RH*, 29 April 1964.

<sup>87</sup> In July 1976, the Rhodesian Minister of Finance reduced emigration allowances from *RH*\$5,000 to *RH*\$1,000.

<sup>88</sup> Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 91, ‘Second Reading: Exchange Control Amendment Bill’, 21 August 1975.

<sup>89</sup> Uusihalaka, ‘Taking the Gap.’

<sup>90</sup> ‘Taking the Chicken Run’ *Time Magazine*, 1 August 1977.

<sup>91</sup> BECM Oral Archives, # 240, Mr. Ayers-Hunt, Interview (n.d, ca. 1994-1999).

<sup>92</sup> Uusihalaka, *Taking the Gap*, p. 18; L. Bolze and R. Martin, *The Whenswes of Rhodesia*, (Bulawayo, Books of Rhodesia, 1978).

The increased call-ups for national service meant that a large percentage of emigrants were of conscription age. In response, the government restricted foreign travel for young men and limited foreign schooling, and the Defence Act was amended to make it an offence for a man to leave Rhodesia after having received call-up papers. It was hoped that this and other measures would encourage South Africa to extradite offenders back to Rhodesia.<sup>93</sup> In 1975, Ian Smith sent a personal note to South Africa's Prime Minister, John Vorster, asking for help with Rhodesia's emigration problem, stating: "I believe that I should put you in the picture regarding the deteriorating security situation here, the most serious aspect of which is our shortage of manpower. A major factor is the continuing emigration—mostly to South Africa—of young men of military age, many of whom are trained soldiers. This has seriously reduced our effective potential force level..."<sup>94</sup> Smith went on to ask for South African aid in stopping the flow. Thereafter, though South Africa publicly denied any secret deal with Rhodesia to deny residency to Rhodesian men with military commitments, some such men were nonetheless sent back to Rhodesia for technical immigration violations.<sup>95</sup> Rhodesia's restrictions on emigration were later extended to include any non-African aged 18-25 who had not yet completed national service.<sup>96</sup> Later in 1976, the National Service Act was amended again to restrict even the departure of 16 year-old boys.<sup>97</sup> In the last gasp of settler rule, PM Muzorewa proposed that emigrating Rhodesians should pay a fine of RH\$20,000 if they wished to re-enter Rhodesia at a later date, though this was not enacted.<sup>98</sup>

These restrictions made many Rhodesians feel like prisoners. The *Herald* likened the Defence Amendment Act to the "Berlin Wall", and accused the government of "... lowering the portcullis to keep civilian soldiers in against their will."<sup>99</sup> An African MP caused an uproar in Parliament by supporting greater

<sup>93</sup> Smith Papers, Box 027, Cabinet Minutes, 'Departure from Rhodesia (Control) Act: Amendment', 29 October 1974.

<sup>94</sup> Smith Papers, Box 4/006(M) 'Personal Message from Mr. Ian Smith to Mr. John Vorster', 22 July 1975.

<sup>95</sup> "SA Denies 'Secret Deal' on Rhodesian Call-ups," *RH*, 12 February, 1976.

<sup>96</sup> Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 89, 'Second reading: Defence Amendment Bill', 13 November 1974.

<sup>97</sup> Smith Papers, Box-037, Cabinet Minutes, 'National Service: Restrictions on Travel Outside Rhodesia of Registered Male Residents', 31 August 1976. Further restrictions were rejected as representing a virtual border closing. Smith Papers, Box-037, Cabinet Minutes, 'Emigration Control', 18 May 1976.

<sup>98</sup> Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 100, 'Emigrants: Re-Entry Fee', 25 July 1979.

<sup>99</sup> 'Over-Reaction', *RH*, 15 November 1974.

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emigration restrictions precisely because they would cause more whites to leave.<sup>100</sup> The *Herald* agreed in July 1976 that increased restrictions could actually have the effect of dislodging whites by making them feel trapped and lowering their morale.<sup>101</sup> The restrictions also adversely effected immigration drives. But the immediate need for manpower outweighed other long-term considerations, and the state even reduced the so-called 'grace' period in which new immigrants were free from military service obligations, from five years to two years.<sup>102</sup>

Legal sanctions were bolstered by social sanctions within Rhodesia, as prospective emigrants were accused of cowardice and disloyalty. State officials described emigrants as casualties of the psychological war.<sup>103</sup> In a series of speeches given in the embattled Centenary area of north-eastern Rhodesia in 1975, a Cabinet Minister referred to those who fled Rhodesia when times were difficult as "Rainbow boys."<sup>104</sup> By the summer of 1976, Smith personally pleaded with whites to "Stay on."<sup>105</sup> Further measures were taken to convince whites to stay in Rhodesia through the desperate letter campaign discussed earlier, which was conducted by the Department of Immigration.<sup>106</sup> Based on Benjamin Franklin's dictum that an emigrant saved was an immigrant earned, white residents intending to leave received mailings of literature as if they were prospective immigrants. In addition, media advertisements unrelentingly promoted the benefits of life in Rhodesia concluding that, "Once you are a Rhodesian, no other land will do."<sup>107</sup> One wonders though to what extent those who protested the loudest against emigrants were actually underneath grumbling, "There but for the Grace of Ian Smith go I."<sup>108</sup>

African nationalists likewise appreciated the significance of white demography. In February 1972, Bishop Abel Muzorewa explained the ANC's

<sup>100</sup> 'Bill on Call-ups Accepted', *RH*, 14 November 1974.

<sup>101</sup> 'Mixed Bag', *RH*, 17 July 1976.

<sup>102</sup> Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 90/91, 'Ministerial Statement: National Service Training for Immigrants' 31 July 1975.

<sup>103</sup> See Godwin, *Rhodesians Never Die*, p. 208.

<sup>104</sup> "Rainbow boys' Under a Cloud', *RH*, 20 June 1975. In 1976 a motion was brought before Parliament to deny five 15 year-old boys the right to sit M Levels in South Africa. Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 95, 'Motion: Adjournment of the House: Departure from Country of Bulawayo School Children', 10 September 1976.

<sup>105</sup> 'Smith's Stay On Plea Useless', 2 August 1976.

<sup>106</sup> Parliamentary Debate, Vol. 94, 'Committee of Supply: On Vote 12 Information, Immigration and Tourism--\$4,105,000', 5 August 1976.

<sup>107</sup> See Meredith, *The Past*, p. 321.

<sup>108</sup> This hypocrisy was glaringly displayed by one-time Cabinet Minister, Wickus de Kock, who emigrated in 1977. 'Taking the Chicken Run', *Time Magazine*, 1 August 1977.

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opposition to the Anglo-Rhodesian settlement proposal to the UN Security Council, and urged member states to enforce UN Resolution 253 discouraging white immigration to Rhodesia, on the grounds that continued immigration only bolstered the regime.<sup>109</sup> Muzorewa argued that Africans would be willing to forego the monetary aid included in the settlement package, as it would be better spent paying for the repatriation of whites unwilling to live under majority rule. His 'golden parachute' idea, while never implemented, was reconsidered in different forms over the next eight years, most intriguingly by Tanzanian president Julius Nyerere in 1979.<sup>110</sup>

African leaders appreciated fully the manpower weaknesses suffered by the state, and interpreted high white emigration rates as positive indicators. Inducing emigration was also part of ZANU and ZANLA guerrillas' military strategy, as Herbert Chitepo explained in 1973:

...The strategic aim [of the guerrillas]...is to attenuate the enemy forces by causing their deployment over the whole country. The subsequent mobilisation of large numbers of civilians from industry, business, and agriculture would cause serious economic problems. This would have a psychologically devastating effect on the morale of whites, most of whom had come to Zimbabwe lured by the prospect of the easy privileged life promised by the regime.<sup>111</sup>

ZAPU's political newspaper, the *Zimbabwe Review*, argued, "In Zimbabwe, white settlers are seriously affected by the liberation war and are leaving the country in large numbers. This affects the manpower reservoir on which the Smith regime depends for its fascist army."<sup>112</sup> By instilling fear in the white populace, ZANLA guerrillas sought to force an exodus that would further thin white resources, and to this end they were quite successful, especially in the border regions. One white farmer put the targeting of the border areas this way: "People in Salisbury don't really know what the terrorist war is like. They regard it as they did the war in Vietnam—it's remote and doesn't touch them. What they don't seem to realise is that we are standing

<sup>109</sup> UNSC S/10540, 1640<sup>th</sup> Meeting, February 1972, paragraphs 3-20.

<sup>110</sup> 'Nyerere's Plan for Whites', *RH*, 7 August 1979.

<sup>111</sup> M. Raeburn, *We Are Everywhere: Narratives From Rhodesian Guerrillas* (New York, Random House, 1978), p. 201.

<sup>112</sup> 'Mercenary Menace: What is the Solution?' *Zimbabwe Review*, 3,4 (1976).

between them and urban terrorism.”<sup>113</sup> Writing about the eastern border regions near Mozambique, David Caute describes the fear and siege mentality of white settlers living there, who had sandbags piled up against bedroom walls to provide some level of protection against the constant threat of guerrilla attacks.<sup>114</sup>

White Rhodesian emigration was viewed with equal interest in the international arena. Prior to, and immediately after UDI, the British government thought that Rhodesia was headed irreversibly towards <sup>ultimate</sup> majority rule. In preparing for such a scenario, the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office debated how best to handle the inevitable white exodus from an African-ruled Rhodesia.<sup>115</sup> Prime Minister Harold Wilson called upon his diplomats to see if Australia would be prepared to offer assisted passage for white Rhodesians in the same way as they did to skilled British citizens.<sup>116</sup> There were also feasibility studies on various schemes for compensating whites if they sought to escape African rule.<sup>117</sup> But how to best facilitate white emigration without inadvertently providing a safety net to intransigent white residents was in practice a tricky line to negotiate.<sup>118</sup> After UDI seemed a semi-permanent state of affairs, the primary focus turned away from humanitarian evacuations in the event of majority rule, and towards clandestine measures for inducing emigration as a means to bringing about majority rule. political discussion

Over the course of the 1970s, British officials contemplated several strategies to lure whites from Rhodesia, with the aim of weakening the regime. One such scheme was floated by the Ambassador to South Africa, Sir Arthur Snelling, in October 1972, immediately after the Anglo-Rhodesian settlement was quashed, but prior to the escalation of the war. Snelling called on Britain to buy-out young, skilled Rhodesian whites to force Smith to negotiate. His proposal sparked a flurry of activity in the FCO, but was eventually rejected as being too expensive, too difficult

<sup>113</sup> ‘The Border farmers: ’It pays to be suspicious about everything—if you’re never frightened, you’re a fool,’ *RH*, 14 December 1977.

<sup>114</sup> D. Caute, *Under the Skin: The Death of White Rhodesia* (London, Allen Lane, 1983) p. 43-44.

<sup>115</sup> The British government dreaded the logistical, political, and moral problems a white Rhodesian influx presented, as it would coincide with restrictions on non-white immigration to Britain. It was unclear how many Rhodesians had the right of abode in Britain - one estimate was 155,000, or 3/5 of the white population. ‘Right of Whites to go to UK’, *RH*, 27 May 1976.

<sup>116</sup> PREM 13/2349. Copy of Minute by the Prime Minister Re: ‘Canberra Telegram to Commonwealth Office No. 1698’, 6 December 1966. DO 207/228. Letter from P Le Cheminant to Oliver Forster, 27 December 1966.

<sup>117</sup> FCO analysts researched French compensation packages for Algerian colonists, and earlier schemes for white Kenyans. DO 183/648.

<sup>118</sup> ‘Wilson Hits at Intransigent’ Rhodesia’, *RH*, 21 February 1976.

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to conduct given that Rhodesia appeared secure, and because it could have the unintended effect of draining the very whites most likely to be amenable to a political settlement.<sup>119</sup> Moreover, it was argued that any emigrants who were bought out would simply be replaced, given that Rhodesia was, “apparently prepared to accept any number of Afrikaners and Mediterranean immigrants.”<sup>120</sup> The conclusion was reached therefore, that “some scheme to help whites out of Rhodesia (for good) may eventually be needed, but this will be when Rhodesia already looks like [it is] becoming a black country.”<sup>121</sup> Though not named as such, this reasoning was based largely on the Hirschmanian idea of encouraging internal voices of resistance within Rhodesia, instead of enticing those people away who might ‘raise hell.’ In 1974, this buy-out idea was reintroduced in the FCO, as some of the earlier barriers to induced emigration seemed to have disappeared. Most importantly, by 1974 white Rhodesians’ sense of security was severely compromised by the escalation of the war and the Lisbon coup, and the regime found greater difficulty in replacing the emigrants who left with new migrants.<sup>122</sup> Furthermore, Harold Wilson returned to power in February 1974, and was determined to bring an end to the Rhodesia problem that had plagued his first term. These factors combined to make feasible a new effort to bring down the regime. Once again, it was agreed that a covert buy-out plan presented insurmountable logistical problems, but instead, a secret propaganda campaign should be formulated by the Information Research Department of the FCO for distribution to the press inside and outside of Africa communicating to whites in Rhodesia that “the future looks black [for them].”<sup>123</sup> It is difficult to trace the effects of this propaganda on actual emigration numbers, as the targeted recipients themselves would not have known the source. Nevertheless, this campaign clearly displays the importance the British attached to white Rhodesian demography

Rhodesian population matters remained prominent for Western politicians and diplomats throughout the settlement dramas and until the conclusion of the war.

<sup>119</sup> FCO 36/1221. Memorandum by Sir Arthur Snelling to Alec Douglas Home, FCO, October 10, 1972, ‘An Outsider’s Reflections on Rhodesia’. Memorandum appended to letter from CM. Le Quesne, FCO, to Sir Arthur Snelling, November 14, 1972 ‘Commentary on ‘An Outsider’s Reflections on Rhodesia’.

<sup>120</sup> FCO 36/1221. Commentary Memo, 1972

<sup>121</sup> FCO 36/1221. Commentary Memo, 1972

<sup>122</sup> FCO 36/1634. Memorandum by DR Upton, Rhodesia Dept., ‘Encouraging White Emigration From Rhodesia’, 18 July 1974.

<sup>123</sup> FCO 36/1634. Letter from DM Biggun, IRD, to Upton, RD, 31 October 1974.

Initially, Western policy-makers thought that the best strategy was to encourage the exodus of whites in order to force the settler state back to the negotiating table. In early 1976, the US government and then the British High Commission in Lusaka issued statements instructing their citizens to leave Rhodesia for their own safety, both of which were dismissed by the Rhodesian state as efforts at “psychological warfare.”<sup>124</sup> Events in Angola in the summer of 1976, added a new urgency to the Rhodesian problem in the eyes of Western diplomats and politicians, and the continued defiance of the minority regime took on a broader significance. Although the changes in the region meant white Rhodesians could be more easily induced to leave, their presence began to be viewed as essential to the political and economic survival of a free Zimbabwe. Supporting this argument was the view that whites would be more willing to surrender if they were assured of a future for them under African rule. There was also concern that enough dissenters remain in Rhodesia to put internal pressure on the regime. This reasoning underpinned the delicate policy of essentially paying whites to stay on in a free Zimbabwe, and Henry Kissinger crafted a proposal that included an incentive plan aimed at keeping whites in the country.<sup>125</sup> Although the Kissinger initiative ultimately failed at the Geneva Peace talks, the idea of being bribed into accepting African rule was not as indignantly dismissed by Rhodesians in the mid 1970s as it had been immediately after UDI, a testament to Rhodesia’s deteriorating political confidence.<sup>126</sup>

At different times Western politicians had proposed to pay white residents to leave, offered to pay them to stay, or suggested giving residents the choice. Yet these seemingly contradictory policies can be reconciled by understanding the shifting significance of whites in Rhodesia and the timing of their exit. It was always taken for granted that the size of the white population directly correlated with the success of whichever government was in power. The West was fearful both of the continuation of the embarrassing settler regime and of a dilapidated Zimbabwe ripe for Communist intervention, and saw a sizable white population as a bulwark against Communism

<sup>124</sup> See ‘Quit Rhodesia Warning ‘Kind of Blackmail’’, *RH*, 21 May 1976.

<sup>125</sup> Smith Papers, Box 4/005(M) ‘International Economic Support for a Rhodesian Settlement: US-UK Agreed Text’, 9 August n.d. [1976].

<sup>126</sup> ‘Package Deal’, *RH*, 21 July 1976 treats the Kissinger proposal as generous, in contrast to earlier defiance, ‘Rhodesia is not for Sale’, *RH*, 8 October 1968.

and an assurance of stability.<sup>127</sup> But most immediately, the regime had to be weakened enough to negotiate its own surrender. The Lancaster House Agreement of 1979 that finally ended the war, sought to reassure white anxiety and win acceptance for the Agreement by entrenching existing property rights and providing for the possibility of a new fund to finance land redistribution. With the settler regime fully defeated, the earlier concerns over white demography were transformed into a new and perhaps stickier issue of post-independence land reform.

### Conclusion

Former Prime Minister Godfrey Huggins once described white society in Rhodesia as a white island in a black sea. This evocation of white isolation and racial numerical disparity was apt in some respects, yet it also created a false image of constancy and solidity. Unlike a firmly grounded island, white society in Rhodesia was always shifting and shuffling. This characteristic transience was not of grave concern to the early settler governments, as Rhodesia was then an extension of the wider British imperial system. As British imperial policy regarding African decolonisation changed in the late 1950s, however, Rhodesian governments began to read more significance into white demography. Population issues came to be regarded as closely connected to the fate of the minority-ruled Rhodesian settler state, existing as it did in an increasingly African-ruled continent. Winston Field's inability to reverse migration losses provided part of the impetus for his replacement by Ian Smith in 1964, and UDI was, in large part, an effort to stabilise the white population. Smith's early years in power were publicly lauded as a success because he was perceived to have restored white settlers confidence, turning net migration losses turned into net gains. As Smith's first decade in power came to a close, however, migration gains reverted to losses, and new information on the widening gap between white and African demographic trends invoked older fears of whites being 'swamped' by Africans, while also introducing new uncertainty about the viability of white Rhodesia in post-colonial Africa. Although the Rhodesian state tried to discourage white emigration, some of its policies were counterproductive and actually reinforced

<sup>127</sup> This balancing of objectives was perceived by Nationalists as evidence of complicity. *Zimbabwe Review*, No. 8 (1977).

whites' culture of transience. The war, by exacerbating pre-existing strains and creating unbearable new pressures, exposed the vulnerability of white society. White Rhodesia is perhaps best thought of, not as a firm island, but as a floating mat of thick vegetation, which in calmer waters might have appeared to have been a grounded land mass, yet during stormier weather it loosened and broke apart rather easily.

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## Chapter V

### Rhodesia's Immigration Policy: 'To Save Civilisation in this Country'<sup>1</sup>

Immigration was the white population of Rhodesia's greatest source of population growth, and the most crucial competition in Rhodesia's war of numbers was between the Africans' rate of natural increase and the whites' rate of net migration. Within white population growth, immigration formed a massive percentage compared against the white's rate of natural increase. Even when compared with other so-called 'immigrant-hungry' populations, Rhodesia's reliance on immigration as a source of total growth stood apart. For example, from 1955 through 1972 net migration gains accounted for over 60 percent of total white population growth, and this figure includes five years of net migration losses.<sup>2</sup> In comparison, Australia's net migration gains for the same years accounted for only 35 percent of its total population growth.<sup>3</sup> Rhodesia's reliance on migration was further reinforced by the precipitous drop in white birth rates through the 1960s and 1970s, again at a rate divergent from other similarly situated settler states.<sup>4</sup> Immigration was therefore tasked with refilling Rhodesia's population at a rate faster than the constant emigration drain from the bottom and fast enough to supplement the sluggish white birth rate. Consequently, positive migration figures in Rhodesia were more crucially important to the political survival of the minority regime than they were to any comparable settler state. Despite this great reliance on white immigration to mask emigration, increase the white population, and keep pace with African natural increase, the Rhodesian state suffered from numerous legal, political, economic, and logistical barriers to their effective promotion and absorption of immigration.

Positive white population growth was of immeasurable psychological importance for white Rhodesians. As John Stone observed in the South African context, "Small shifts in numbers take on an actual as well as symbolic importance

<sup>1</sup> The title is taken from a quote by the one-time Rhodesian Minister of Immigration, Harry Reedman 22 September 1964 Committee of Supply, col. 648.

<sup>2</sup> Statistics derived from: Monthly Digest of Statistics issued by the Rhodesian government's Central Statistical Office (hereafter CSO).

<sup>3</sup> Statistics derived from: Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Australian Historic Population Statistics, Tables 64 and 4* (Canberra, Government Publication, 2006).

<sup>4</sup> White Rhodesia experienced a 51 percent drop in crude birth rates in the years from 1962 to 1979, far greater than any comparable population anywhere on the globe. Statistics derived from: Rhodesian Annual Reports of the Secretary of Health, *Vital Statistics* (Salisbury, Government Publication).

which can no way be related to their absolute size,"<sup>5</sup> and so it was in Rhodesia. It was widely stated in Rhodesia at the time that white immigration was a 'barometer' for the political fortune of Rhodesia.<sup>6</sup> The two-time Minister of Immigration, P.K. Van der Byl, for example, described immigration as, "a delicate barometer of Rhodesia's self-confidence, and whenever this was less positive the barometer reacted immediately."<sup>7</sup> Correctly reading the white migration trends for a month, quarter, or year could reflect, it was felt, the general well-being of the country. The perception of stability and confidence that these whites 'voting-with-their-feet' provided, in turn created more stability and more confidence in Rhodesia. Another snowball effect was that with more immigrants, Rhodesia's overseas networks grew exponentially, which provided for more potential immigrants, as it was usually those with pre-existing connections who tended to immigrate and stay.<sup>7</sup> Positive immigration bolstered the idea that a white-led Rhodesia was permanent, and strengthened Ian Smith's hand in negotiations during his innumerable settlement talks. Immigration exuded vitality. In the very same ways, however, the awareness of population decline and falling immigration numbers had the opposite effect: it conveyed national illness and decay. Rhodesia would experience this reverse snowball effect from the mid-1970s onwards. Immigration in Rhodesia was therefore an end in itself, not merely indicative of well-being, but a cause of well-being, and instead of comparing immigration to a barometer which measured the climate, perhaps it would be more apt to compare it to a thermostat which changed the climate. ✓

### The Migration Market

The Rhodesian state did not formulate its immigration policy in isolation, and white Rhodesians, inside and outside government, were very aware of the global and regional migration markets in which they were vying for immigrants. On the north side of the Strand in London, between the imposing South Africa House on Trafalgar Square and the equally massive Australia House at its eastern end, stood Rhodesia

<sup>5</sup> J. Stone, 'The 'Migrant Factor' in a Plural Society: A South African Case Study', *International Migration Review*, Vol. 9, No. 1 (Spring, 1975).

<sup>6</sup> 'Biggest Gain of immigrants for Ten Years', *RH*, 20 December 1968.

<sup>7</sup> The importance of pre-existing links was true for all commonwealth immigrations. A. Richardson, *British Immigrants and Australia: A Psycho-Social Inquiry* (Canberra, Australia National University Press, 1974).

House—now Zimbabwe House—which was then, as now, a narrow five-story building. This was the symbol of the Rhodesian state in London, and the main clearinghouse for potential immigrants to Rhodesia, where the London-based staff would process and vet immigrants. Following UDI in 1965, Rhodesia House's status was highly ambiguous; its staff was allowed to perform some, but not all, of the functions formerly afforded to them, most importantly, they could not handle any immigration matters, either promotion or vetting.<sup>8</sup> By the late 1960s Rhodesia House was the site of frequent anti-apartheid protests, sit-ins, and even of violent damage. On several occasions youths shimmied up the flag pole and replaced the Rhodesian flag with the Union Jack. Finally in 1969, following the decision to declare Rhodesia a republic, Britain ordered Rhodesia House to be closed for good and emptied of all staff, yet the building continued to be a site of protests and political demonstrations throughout the 1970s and became a sort of totem for the anti-Apartheid movement.<sup>9</sup> Both the Rhodesian and international media followed these stories about the fate of Rhodesia House with great interest.<sup>10</sup> Not five hundred yards in either direction from the besieged and abandoned Rhodesia House, Australia House, New Zealand House, and South Africa House were welcoming record numbers of British emigrants. The *Herald* regularly reported on the immigration numbers attracted by the former white dominions, and from regional rivals like Zambia, and it is clear that Rhodesians were fully aware of the strong competition for skilled immigrants and readily understood their limitations in these global and regional markets.

There were two major populations of potential immigrants from which Rhodesia sought to attract immigrants: whites already in Africa, and whites from

<sup>8</sup> 'Agreement on Status of Rhodesia House,' *RH*, 25 November 1965.

<sup>9</sup> See for example: 'Attempts to Fire Rhodesia House Alleged', *RH*, 13 March 1968; Another front page story detailed how a young member of the Communist League climbed the flag pole and tore down the Rhodesia flag. 'New Flag Torn down in London: Rooftop Raider Strikes at Rhodesia House: Mission Chief Denies Provocation', *RH*, 4 January 1969; 'Police Evict Demonstrators from Rhodesia House: Sit-In Siege Lasts 4 Hours', *RH*, 8 January 1969; In another incident, more than 500 anti-Rhodesian protestors attacked Rhodesia House and smashed a plate glass window. 'Rhodesia House Attack Foiled: London Demonstrators turn on South African Embassy: Leaders of Mob Fight with Police', *RH*, 13 January 1969; In another high-profile act, two men again climbed up the flagpole and replaced the Rhodesian flag with the Union Jack. 'Flagpole Raiders Leave Their Perch', *RH*, 13 January 1969.

<sup>10</sup> See for example, *The Times* (London) coverage of the Rhodesia House protests: 'Arrests After Protests in Strand', *The Times*, 13 November 1965; 'Smith Flag Survives Mauling', *The Times*, 4 January 1969; 'Battle of the Strand in South Africa and Rhodesia Protest', *The Times*, 13 January 1969; 'Students at Rhodesia House', *The Times*, 22 February 1969; 'Five Arrested After Apartheid Rally', *The Times*, 27 May 1969; '43 Charged After Rhodesia Protest March in London', *The Times*, 14 February 1972.

outside Africa. Regionally, Africa had a population of migratory whites who freely floated from one African country to another depending upon job opportunities and political conditions. Many of these whites were of British origin, but their loyalty was neither to any one African country, nor to Britain as it then existed. Whites already in Africa were much more responsive to both positive and negative trends in Rhodesia, with some moving in during good times and out during bad times. A *Herald* editorial from 1968 emphasised the transience of this white African population:

In the wider-visions days of the '40s and '50s the drain of Europeans from one part of Africa to another was not a prime target of Immigration Ministers. It was recognised that these migrants moved as jobs offered and would soon try their luck over yet another of the many horizons offering ... In the event, 'white' Africa has drawn back to the Zambezi and suitable horizons are scarce; much effort is now being made by individual countries to attract as many as possible of the Europeans leaving the remaining white pockets of the 'black' continent.<sup>11</sup>

The editorial went on to ask why Rhodesia should not try to attract and retain these people. South Africa was a way station for many in this migratory population, and by far South Africa was both the greatest source of immigrants to, and emigrants from, Rhodesia. It was always a great concern among many Rhodesians that South Africans not 'poach' these whites from Rhodesia. To assuage these fears, representatives of South Africa, and even of Australia, reassured the Rhodesian state that there would be no government efforts to 'poach' their whites.<sup>12</sup> Even so, Rhodesia was much more successful in attracting immigrants from this pool of migratory African whites, especially in re-attracting one-time Rhodesian residents, than they were in attracting white immigrants from outside Africa.<sup>13</sup>

In the case of white immigrants from outside Africa, Rhodesia was a relatively less attractive destination than the former white dominions. Interest in moving

<sup>11</sup> 'Why Don't they Come Here?', Editorial, *RH*, 21 February 1968.

<sup>12</sup> See for example, 'No Poaching of Emigrants by Australia', *RH*, 6 April 1961. The Australian High Commissioner promised that Australia would not attempt to woo Rhodesian whites. It is interesting to note that Rhodesians under the Federation likewise expressed a gentlemanly unwillingness to poach Kenyan whites prior to African majority rule. Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 12, 'Motion: Immigrants From Kenya and Tanganyika', 30 March 1960.

<sup>13</sup> For example, one third of all Rhodesian immigrants in 1978 were former residents. See Parliamentary Debates, 'Committee of Supply Vote', 26 July 1978, col. 850. In 1975 De Kock cited that this figure in 1974 as then one in six. Parliamentary Debates, 'Committee of Supply Vote', 12 February 1975, col. 1273.

overseas ran high in Britain, and British migration to the former dominions was robust from the mid-1960s to the early 1970s, and this was ruefully realised to be the case by Rhodesians at the time, as migration patterns were regularly tracked in the popular press—what numbers were moving to what countries, and why. A UK poll conducted in 1966, asked Britons, “Have you ever seriously considered going to settle in another country?” Of the respondents, 30 percent answered “Yes.” Of that 30 percent, 42 percent said they had considered Australia, 27 percent New Zealand, 24 percent Canada, 6 percent USA, 5 percent South Africa, and only 2 percent considered Rhodesia.<sup>14</sup> The politically uncertain future of post-UDI Rhodesia was identified to be a hindrance to Rhodesia’s success in the migration market long before the escalation of the shooting war. Ironically, it had been argued by RF politicians in and out of government before UDI that only by declaring unilateral independence could the state boost Rhodesia’s flagging immigration numbers.<sup>15</sup> A *Herald* editorial from 1967, commenting on the recent drive for skilled immigrants, stated:

[The Minister of Immigration] particularly wants the professional men and women—doctors and nurses, teachers and engineers—as well as technicians and artisans and men with capital. So does every country in the world, South Africa included. Rhodesia would stand a better chance of attracting money and new brain—even of re-capturing the brain drained from her during the past few years—if she were politically acceptable to the main sources of the trained men she must have. Given a constitutional settlement there is a chance of attracting the skills which the Minister affirms are essential.<sup>16</sup>

This obsessive competition with the former white dominions for immigrants led Immigration Minister P.K. Van der Byl to speciously claim that Rhodesia’s intake actually surpassed Australia’s in 1970, but not in total numbers, but as a percentage of the total white population, which considering Rhodesia’s total white population of 230,000 was hardly impressive.<sup>17</sup> This compensatory bravado masked the state’s and white settler society’s anxieties about Rhodesia’s relative attractiveness in the migration market, and a hopeful rejoinder that was often heard in explaining away emigration losses was that emigrating residents would soon realise the grass was not greener abroad and soon return. One returning emigrant described her stay in Britain

<sup>14</sup> A. Richardson, *British Immigrants*.

<sup>15</sup> See for example: ‘Independence in Needed to Boost Immigration’, *RH*, 6 March 1965.

<sup>16</sup> ‘The Price of Survival’, Editorial, *RH*, 29 July 1967.

<sup>17</sup> ‘Immigrant Figures ‘Surpass Australia’s’—Van der Byl’, *RH*, 12 June 1970.

and why she returned in an article in the *Herald* in 1979, saying, "It's not funny when you're paying £15 a week for a poky little room to be told by the Pakistani landlord that he's going to ration your bathwater." On the basis of this and several other personal stories, this article and others preceding it pointed to a possible optimistic trend that many former residents were returning, "preferring to brave the uncertainties of a country at war than accept the way of life overseas."<sup>18</sup> In the event, the numbers did not support these anecdotal observations, and while returning residents always formed a significant percentage of total immigrants, and their horror stories of the outside world were widely repeated as evidence to stay put, it was never the case that most emigrants eventually returned.

Rhodesia's four main selling points to potential immigrants was its warm and sunny climate; the freedom to start a new life without the constraints of dour post-War Britain; an anachronistic imperial lifestyle; and relatedly, an inflated material standard of living for whites.<sup>19</sup> The first selling point of its sunny climate was just as easily made in Australia and South Africa, both of which also enjoyed long beautiful coastlines, while Rhodesia was landlocked. And as it was, Britain's weather did appear to be a major consideration in emigrants' calculations. An Australian official was quoted in 1964 as saying that their emigration drop that season, "was entirely due to the better winter England has just experienced."<sup>20</sup> Other anecdotal evidence from Rhodesia confirms the importance of weather as a factor in moving. When asked why she was emigrating from Britain to Rhodesia, the 89 year-old Theresa Mahoney was quoted as saying, "To Hell with Wilson and Damn the Weather!"<sup>21</sup> The reaction to various frustrations over life in post-War Britain was certainly a strong force driving out-migrations, but this impulse too did not uniquely advantage Rhodesia.

<sup>18</sup> 'Gapping it in Reverse: Emigrants Fins Grass no Greener', *RH*, 18 October 1979.

<sup>19</sup> See also, 'Problems Face New Immigrants in Rhodesia', *RH*, 7 October 1968. The article described the results of a *Herald* survey of new immigrants. "Most immigrants today hail from England, South Africa, and Portugal. They come here without any preconceived political prejudice, are sun-worshippers and admit to being attracted by a lower cost of living and better pay." See also articles in the series: 'New Rhodesians-V', *RH*, 12 October 1968. Couple from England can buy a car for the first time; 'New Rhodesians-VII', *RH*, 15 October 1968; 'New Rhodesians-IX', *RH*, 17 October 1968. Couple from Kenya left because of the strain of African rule. 'New Rhodesians-III', *RH*, 10 October 1968. Portuguese man from Mozambique "likes the country, the easy life and the Rhodesian girls." 'New Rhodesians-XII', *RH*, 22 October 1968. Couple from New Jersey came partially because of New Jersey's cold weather. 'Family Leaves Britain for Children's Sake', *RH*, 24 October 1968. Left Britain in part because of non-white immigration into Britain.

<sup>20</sup> 'Good UK Winter Cuts Emigration', *RH*, 17 April 1964.

<sup>21</sup> '89 year old Immigrant is Due Tomorrow', *RH*, 19 December 1968.

It was the last two related selling points, of being the last haven for anachronistic imperial values and promising an inflated standard of living for whites, which proved the most effective for Rhodesia. Only by promising a privileged status and significant material benefits for whites as compared against their countries of origin could Rhodesia remain at all competitive in the migration market. One example of this emphasis on material betterment was this large advertisement that ran in a Dublin newspaper, as reported by the *Herald*.<sup>22</sup> The advertisement's text, which ran alongside a half-empty pint glass of beer read:

The 10,000 Irish in Rhodesia will be drowning the Shamrock tomorrow. Granted they have no Croke Park but they have just the weather to give them a powerful thirst. If you want a spacious home, good wages, reasonable taxation, first-class school, expert medical attention, help for the missus in the house and a bright sunny future for all. If you want assisted passages for yourself and your family if you qualify, and a two year special concession, where a family with two children can earn up to £1748 (£200 Sterling) tax-free, come out and have a pint.

An advertisement in *The Spectator* magazine posted by the Rhodesian Department of Promotion in 1973, described Rhodesia as an imperial idyll out of time:

Rhodesia. It isn't easy to find that haven to escape to any more. Most of the world's idyllic retreats are getting a little tarnished—and prices aren't what they were once, to say nothing of taxes. But there is one last retreat where Britain's way of life is still treasured and life has a special tempo of its own. Where endless sunny days and peaceful ways let one forget the problems of life elsewhere. Rhodesia. A land of leisurely pursuits and sophisticated facilities; of outstanding service and good neighborliness; where money still goes a lot further and taxes are low. There are spacious homes, domestic help, modern health amenities, fast communications and uncrowded cities. The arts are catered for and sport is second to none, no matter what you fancy. Rhodesia is dedicated to preserving a way of life we all cherish. We would like you to be a part of it.<sup>23</sup>

An advertisement that ran in the *Daily Mirror* in 1967 appealed to the entrepreneurial spirit many felt was lost in Britain:

Rhodesia invites you...to pull up your roots and move to a country where life is still a challenge. Where hard work and initiative still bring their just

<sup>22</sup> 'New Move to Attract Irish Immigrants', *RH*, 19 March 1969.

<sup>23</sup> Rhodesian Immigration Advertisement, *The Spectator*, 22 December 1973, found in FCO 36/1716.

rewards. Where opportunities for advancement and capital investment are virtually limitless...to live in a modern, sophisticated society where people still smile. Enjoying the benefits of a superb climate, low taxation and good salaries, a fine standard of living, educational, health and sporting facilities...to make a new life in a country with a great future.<sup>24</sup>

Another example of this marketing style that more explicitly emphasised the material benefits whites could expect in Rhodesia, was from the American-based *Newsweek* magazine in 1970, which ran the following advertisement:

Promote Yourself. Why wait for promotion? Promote yourself out of the rat race and into your kind of future. Then go to the top, fast in Rhodesia. You'll get higher wages, lower taxes; more take home pay that goes further in a country where almost everything costs less. On top of this you'll enjoy one of the world's highest standards of living in a booming, stable country. And a sun-filled, outdoors way of life. Move now, before the rush. Rhodesia offers a chance to move up in your field; to take greater responsibility and be well paid for it. The rapidly expanding economy means plenty of room for top talent in almost every field. And there are incentives for immigrants: Assisted passages, substantial tax abatements in your first two financial years; lower cost of living because of cheaper food and lower rents; excellent medical services, good schools, a wide variety of entertainment and sport—and almost 12 months a year of sunshine! Go Places in Rhodesia.<sup>25</sup>

With this style of immigration promotion, the state was at times accused of over-selling Rhodesia to prospective immigrants. There is some evidence that this over-selling and the deflated expectations of new immigrants occurred in the early 1970s, as many newcomers left soon upon arrival, and publically aired their disappointment in the Rhodesian press.<sup>26</sup> The nexus between the methods of promotion and disappointment and eventual emigration was identified by several African MPs. In 1976, one opposition MP pointed out that, “because of the bright picture which is being painted of Rhodesia, which is exaggerated, when these people come into the country they do not find this brightness and they are bound to fly by night.”<sup>27</sup> Another opposition MP argued that these materials highlighted the desperation of the state, especially when compared against other demand-side nations’

<sup>24</sup> Rhodesian Immigration Advertisement, *Daily Mirror*, (no date) December 1967, found in LAB 8/3195.

<sup>25</sup> Rhodesian Immigration Advertisement, *Newsweek*, 21 September 1970, found in FCO 35/354.

<sup>26</sup> See for example, ‘Few Jobs for Immigrants’, *RH*, 18 May 1972; ‘Newcomers Find Good Jobs Hard to Get’, *RH*, 25 July 1972; and ‘Rhodesia Not Utopia for Everyone’, *RH*, 9 October 1972.

<sup>27</sup> Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 89, ‘Committee of Supply Vote’, 12 February 1975.

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literature.<sup>28</sup> This flow of disappointed immigrants back to the supply-side countries was recognised to be very damaging to Rhodesia's image abroad, especially to prospective immigrants, further weakening their competitiveness in the migration market, especially since the state relied a great deal on word-of-mouth propaganda as the state's official propaganda in those countries was blocked by sanctions regulations.

In the global migration market, Rhodesia was poorly positioned to take advantage of British migration trends.<sup>29</sup> During these very active years of British emigration of the late 1960s and early 1970s, Rhodesia suffered from self-inflicted wounds, most importantly stemming from Smith's decision to declare UDI at the end of 1965, when British immigration was flowing in at a swift pace. International sanctions and Rhodesia's negative international image after UDI severely hampered large-scale immigration from Europe,<sup>30</sup> even as the economic crises of the mid 1970s increased the general attractiveness of emigration as an option for many Europeans.<sup>31</sup> Even among those people overseas interested in Rhodesia as a destination, many were quite often confused by, if not fully dissuaded by, the complex and shadowy process of moving to an illegal regime, in which emigration was subject to international sanctions and often domestic enabling legislation in the country of origin.<sup>32</sup> ?

Paradoxically, what attractiveness Rhodesia did possess was intimately connected to the country's racist political and economic structure that UDI solidified, and represented an ideology that was very controversial in most of the immigrant supply countries, particularly Britain. These same policies also rendered Rhodesia's long-term future uncertain. As a result, Rhodesia's immigration policy was forced to rely heavily upon whites in Africa, a population which was both fickle and not very large. But this exposes the central dilemma in the state's immigration policy: that Rhodesia could neither conform to world opinion by surrendering white supremacy and

<sup>28</sup> Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 94, 'Committee of Supply Vote', 5 August 1976

<sup>29</sup> See for example, 'Emigration Queues in London', *RH*, November 27, 1968; 'More Britons want to go to South Africa and the 'white' Commonwealth', *RH*, May 11, 1968; 'Emigrants leaving Britain at a rate of 100,000 a year', *RH*, 24 December 1962; 'Big Rush from Britain Maybe Record', *RH*, 22 March 1966.

<sup>30</sup> In a 1966 survey of British emigrants, Australia was preferred to South Africa and Rhodesia because of the African countries' "racial troubles." See A. Richardson, *British Immigration*, p 14-15.

<sup>31</sup> British economic woes led to lines outside Australia House, Canada House, and New Zealand House, as Rhodesia House remained unoccupied. 'Migrant Queues Grow as Crisis Worsens,' *RH*, 7 February 1974.

<sup>32</sup> 'Hopeful Immigrants in Dilemma', *RH*, 17 January 1974.

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repudiating UDI and with it their primary economic appeal, nor could they protect white privilege and remain a pariah state indefinitely, especially as Rhodesia's peculiar demographic juggling act relied upon a steady flow of new immigrants to replace those leaving.

### **Discourses Concerning Immigration**

The Rhodesian state viewed white immigration as vital to its political and economic structure. Since the founding of the colony, whites in Rhodesia created racialised economic dichotomies to justify, maintain, and strengthen their hegemony over the African populace. Long before the publication of the Sadie Report, the white/African population dynamic had grafted onto it immutable pseudo-economic dualities set in opposition to one another, reflecting perceived divisions such as skilled/unskilled, capitalised/non-capitalised, entrepreneurial/non-entrepreneurial, and tax payers/social welfare drainers, which overlapped perfectly with race. These artificial divisions provided a gloss for ostensibly non-racial defences of Rhodesia's population policies. The Sadie Report concluded in relevant part:

... economic development is fundamentally a function of the religious, social, and cultural values of a society and the psychological traits of its members, which together constitute a way of life. A study of the Bantu peoples of Africa reveals the absence at this stage of most of those elements which are conducive to economic growth as an endogenous process...the professional and technical men and those skills and experience which are prerequisites to the employment of workers in the lower echelons of the skilled hierarchy, [cannot] simply be imparted to an economically under-developed people by way of a crash programme of education and instruction.<sup>33</sup>

With the help of this new economic language, the long-standing promotion of immigration to increase the white population was presented by the state as being apolitical, administrative, and bureaucratic—an exercise in cool-headed economics, rather than hot-headed bigotry. This rhetorical tightrope walk between blatant racism and economic development was succinctly expressed by a Rhodesian Front backbencher in 1969: "...Immigration is vital to this country. It is vital that we close

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<sup>33</sup> J.L. Sadie, 'Report by J.L. Sadie on Planning for the Economic Development of Rhodesia', (Government Printer, Salisbury, 1967).

the population gap between the African on one side and the European on the other. I am not being racial in this. I am dealing with it from the point of view of the development of the country. The Europeans who come here develop the country and as they develop the country so employment opportunities occur for all races, not only for the European or the African.”<sup>34</sup>

Immigration was additionally rationalised as a tremendous bargain *vis-a-vis* the endogenous training and schooling of Rhodesian whites. This was an argument offered during many of the budget debates over immigration. The Minister of Immigration, Harry Reedman, argued in 1965:

The cost of learning is high anywhere, but to bring in people who have learned various skills and techniques at the cost of other nations is clearly an advantage. We save instantly on their education and subsistence and accrue a stock-in-trade of their aggregate skills and take in these new assets on a ‘free on board’ basis. I would say, what a valuable consignment.<sup>35</sup>

It was argued that immigration, even when calculating assisted passages and the settling-down costs for the state, was far cheaper than paying for the unproductive and expensive years of childhood and schooling, as was necessary with Rhodesian-born whites.<sup>36</sup> Immigration was also seen as an inexpensive way to provide for an influx of foreign capital, and the amount of capital declared by recent immigrants was often set against the costs of assisted passages and presented as a great profit for Rhodesia. These two premises combined in immigration discourses to present white immigrants as ready-made assets to the economy.

The stated premise of the racialised division of skills and potentialities upon which Rhodesia’s immigration policy rested was certainly not borne out in the evidence, either inside of Rhodesia or outside, a reality regularly pointed to by African MPs. Thus, government officials were often forced in Parliamentary debates to articulate defences of the non-racist character of the government’s immigration policy which played out in an oft-repeated rhetorical fencing match. Some officials were certainly more adept and subtle in masking the policy’s racist character than others. On one such occasion, an African MP asked the acting Immigration Minister,

<sup>34</sup> Parliamentary Debates, Vol. ‘Committee of Supply Vote’, 1 August 1969 col. 1061

<sup>35</sup> Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 60, ‘Committee of Supply Vote’, 9 March 1965.

<sup>36</sup> See for example: Parliamentary Debates, ‘Committee of Supply Vote’, 9 March 1965, col. 461; Parliamentary Debates, ‘Committee of Supply Vote’, 2 October 1974.

if it was skills and capital that Rhodesia was in such desperate need of, would the government consider importing skilled Africans from outside Rhodesia to fill openings, to which the acting Minister bluntly replied: "I would have thought [the questioner] had enough brains to realise the [government's] position."<sup>37</sup> A year prior, the Minister of Immigration replied to a similar question about bringing in skilled Africans to fill in critical openings in the economy, by saying that attracting African immigrants would be "a case of bringing coals to Newcastle."<sup>38</sup> Yet these rare instances of candour remained the exception, and state officials uniformly denied any surreptitious racial motives in immigration, at least in public. But behind closed doors, in Cabinet meetings, and RF party gatherings, away from public glare, state officials contradicted their impassioned assertions of non-discrimination, and explicitly crafted an immigration policy based upon bringing in whites for political, not economic reasons, with the goal of re-balancing racial ratios. *Labour + Culture*

In late October 1969, after the publication of both phases of the census, a resolution carried unanimously at the Rhodesian Front Congress to make immigration less selective, and to ensure that more jobs should be created for whites.<sup>39</sup> Rhodesian Front Congresses had in the past always been very secretive and closed to the press, but this one was unique in that it was relatively well reported. The explicit policy of mass unselective immigration carried unanimously, in sharp distinction to the government's publicly stated immigration policy. Van der Byl's published address to the RF Congress regarding this resolution provided an interesting and rare public look into real thinking behind the government's immigration policy. In his speech, he claimed that his Ministry ceaselessly received requests from industrialists to allow in Coloured skilled labour from South Africa, requests that he always turned down. Instead, he proposed allowing in unskilled whites and training them in skills once in Rhodesia, a proposition obviously contradicting both the government's assertion that it was skills not race that was the guiding principle, and negating the bargain of importing ready-skilled immigrants over training indigenous residents. He called for an immigration policy that would be "as unselective as possible [for whites]," denying residence only to "rogues, scalawags, and criminals." Also indicating the direction of RF's immigration vision, he said he thought it "utterly deplorable" that there was still

<sup>37</sup> 'Brains in Question', *RH*, 13 August 1970.

<sup>38</sup> Parliamentary Debates, 'Committee of Supply Vote', 17 January 1969.

<sup>39</sup> 'More Jobs for whites and Wider Immigration are Called for', *RH*, 25 October 1969.

a tendency to discriminate against non-British immigrants. He also said the government rejected the idea that Rhodesia must remain “as a preserve for the English way of life.” This public glimpse of the secret official thinking of the government on immigration resulted in heated debates in Parliament where Opposition MPs quoted Van der Byl’s words back to him, and the hostile response no doubt counseled future RF Congresses to be held, as had prior ones, behind closed doors.

Throughout the post-UDI period, and even after the anomalous 1969 RF Congress, the government continued to speak in ‘two tongues’ regarding immigration.<sup>40</sup> To support their claim of the exclusively economic nature of immigration, state officials continued to assert that their policy was ‘selective’ in terms of targeting certain individuals who would aid Rhodesia’s development. In this discourse on immigration, selectivity was contrasted with mass, ‘unselective’ immigration: the former being economic and apolitical and the latter being political and racial. Despite the government’s consistently stated policy of selective immigration, the primary, and arguably the sole, criteria for this selectiveness in immigration was race. Indeed, in 1964 the Cabinet explicitly laid out the policy that the first requirement for immigrants was that they must be white.<sup>41</sup> Also out of public view, it was reiterated that the policy for non-white immigration was that they would only ever be allowed in on exceptional circumstances of the entry being “in the national interest” or for “humanitarian concerns.”<sup>42</sup> The true character of Rhodesia’s immigration policies were heated topics of debate in Parliament, with thrusts and parries that were repeated every time immigration votes were up for Supply Committee debates. One common line of attack on the state’s immigration policies was the de-linking of skills and capital with skin colour through the use of counter examples.<sup>43</sup> The purpose of this de-linking was to pierce the transparent economic rationales offered by the state, and reveal the racist character of its immigration policies. These efforts on the part of African MPs to de-link race from skills and capital meant identifying both unskilled and poor white immigrants allowed in, and identifying skilled and capitalised non-whites denied access. Responding to these

<sup>40</sup> This phrase was used by an African MP to describe the variance between Van der Byl’s public and private statements regarding immigration. Parliamentary Debates, ‘Committee of Supply Vote’, 17 January 1969, col. 294

<sup>41</sup> Smith Papers, Box 017, Cabinet Minutes, ‘Immigration Policy’, 8 July 1964.

<sup>42</sup> Smith Papers, Box 024, Cabinet Minutes, ‘Immigration Policy: Permanent Residents: Non-Europeans’, 7 September 1971.

<sup>43</sup> See for example: Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 68, ‘Committee of Supply Vote’, 31 August 1967.

critiques, state officials nearly always retorted with boiler plate non-answers that obfuscated the state's true motives. The most salient thrusts and parries in Parliament regarding immigration were repeated throughout the post-UDI period, and are included below:

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES ON IMMIGRATION

OPPOSITION CHARGE	GOVERNMENT RESPONSE
1) The state's immigration policy is racist and politically motivated.	1) The policy is non-racial and economically motivated. <sup>44</sup>
2) The state is allowing in unskilled whites, that compete with Africans for jobs.	2) New immigrants create jobs for all Rhodesians, white and African. <sup>45</sup>
3) The state is allowing in poor whites, especially through the assisted passage schemes.	3) Immigrants are a net financial boon, even when calculating assisted passages. <sup>46</sup>
4) The state is denying residence to skilled and wealthy non-whites.	4) The state has an interest in protecting indigenous jobs in Rhodesia by keeping non-white foreigners out. <sup>47</sup> The state accepts hundreds of thousands of foreign migrants for work. <sup>48</sup>
5) The state should educate the Rhodesian labour force to create new skills.	5) Education takes too long to address current needs, and immigration is cheaper in any case. <sup>49</sup>
6) The state is allowing in whites with dubious moral character.	6) The state responds to criminality when it occurs, and most immigrants are hard-working people of good moral character. <sup>50</sup>

<sup>44</sup> See for example, Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 80, 'Committee of Supply Vote', 18 November 1971. This broader claim was clearly untrue, as Rhodesian Cabinet records indicate.

<sup>45</sup> See for example, Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 80, 'Committee of Supply Vote', 18 November 1971. This is certainly a questionable claim, and is more likely a flipping of causes and effects, as immigration tended to swell during better economic times with higher employment.

<sup>46</sup> See for example, Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 90, 'Committee of Supply Vote', 18 July 1975. The definition of capital as defined by Immigration Ministers was very loose and included moveable assets such as cars, and as a result the economic benefit to Rhodesia of this capital influx was greatly exaggerated, especially when compared against settling down costs, balance of payment issues, and infrastructural strains caused by new immigration.

<sup>47</sup> See for example, Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 79, 'Committee of Supply Vote', 21 July 1971. This argument was particularly disingenuous, as non-whites were already barred from the skilled jobs that would have been taken up by these potential immigrants.

<sup>48</sup> See for example, Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 90, 'Committee of Supply Vote', 18 July 1975. These migrant workers equated with white immigrants were only in Rhodesia on a temporary basis and had no opportunity to obtain permanent residence, and were, by definition, not immigrants at all.

<sup>49</sup> See for example, Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 80, 'Committee of Supply Vote', 18 November 1971. This might have been true in the short run, but the long term costs of importing and retaining foreign-schooled migrants was most likely more than improving Rhodesian training.

<sup>50</sup> See for example, Parliamentary Debates, 'Committee of Supply Vote', 29 September 1977. This might have been true generally, but even Immigration Ministers on several occasions complained about the lack of effective vetting processes for post-UDI immigrants.

Irrespective of any entertainment value derived from these periodic repartees, African MPs had little power to alter these policies, nor indeed did the occasional forced exposure of the state's racist motivations, as with Van der Byl's impolitic public statements from 1969, shock the wider white Rhodesian public, who no doubt already assumed and largely supported the underlying racial motivations.

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Perhaps a more interesting question, was why state officials bothered to expend the energy in hiding their motivations and cloaking the connections between the various population policies at all? The answer likely was that the intending audiences for these rhetorical charades were the wider international community and the African population. This act of speaking with 'two tongues' can be explained as an attempted reconciliation of the two conflicting policy goals pursued by Smith after UDI; of bolstering white power in Rhodesia and simultaneously winning international recognition. Though UDI removed some of the liberal constraints hampering Rhodesia's racial policies, the goal of a negotiated settlement also militated against the state acting in an unconscionably racist fashion that would preclude Britain from realistically granting independence. Another targeted audience was also likely Africans in Rhodesia, a population the state was desperately trying to convince to practice family planning.

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The state's policy of promoting family planning relied upon a degree of trust and cooperation that the state carefully nurtured in that policy sphere. The exposure of blatantly racist attempts to bolster the white population through immigration could jeopardise this policy of slowing African growth rates, and RF politicians always tried to publically de-link and de-politicise the two policies, but without much success. Though public linkages between the state's various population policies were usually assiduously avoided, this discursive cloak occasionally was lifted, and in a rare example of candour in Parliament the Immigration Minister, P.K. Van der Byl, posed this odd rhetorical to an African MP who had criticised Rhodesia's unselective, open-door immigration policy of the early 1970s:

... If the African population was to slow down its rate of increase then it would be quite possible that we would require fewer immigrants to provide job opportunities. I am prepared to come to an understanding with hon. Member on the cross benches in this—that if the African population is prepared to reduce its rate of increase by 1% then I am prepared to forcibly drop the European potential immigration by 2%. Are they prepared to accept

that or not? I think this is a very generous offer and will solve all these difficulties [regarding the unselectivity of white immigration policy].<sup>51</sup>

Needless to say, this preposterous offer was never taken up, and indeed these sorts of flippant remarks actually set back government policy. In the family planning context, a former Family Planning Association of Rhodesia (FPAR) supervisor for Midlands described how many Africans identified the political and racist motivations of the RF's population policies by reading, or hearing about, what was said in Parliament:

The thing that was hammering us [impeding our efforts] was then there were some whites who could talk in Parliament, that 'Oh those Africans are so many.' In Parliament! 'These Africans are so many, they don't even know what family planning is.' That alone was barrier for us. Some educated people in the rural areas, they knew [what was said in Parliament]. They said, 'You are talking of this [the benefits of family planning] but why are they saying that?' ... They said, 'Ah no, there is something behind it.'<sup>52</sup>

Echoing this same problem in the promotion of family planning, a nurse working in an FPAR clinic said:

They [local men] were saying that this is a white man's tool to put down the number of Africans... And then the white regime that was there would come out and say there are too many Africans, let's use family planning... It was also because of the negative press releases from the white regime, like there are too many Africans, we must cut down the number of Africans so far then family planning was to cut down the number of Africans which was all wrong  
...<sup>53</sup>

Regarding the incongruence of immigration and family planning specifically, an article from ZAPU's *Zimbabwe Review* from 1970 stated:

Whilst the settlers are, on the one hand, fielding this birth control campaign among Africans on the excuse of a population strained economy, they are, on the other, advertising for increased immigration from Europe... Who can fail to realise the whole trick in the circumstances?<sup>54</sup>

<sup>51</sup> Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 84, 'Committee of Supply Vote,' 9 August 1973.

<sup>52</sup> Kaler, *Running*, p. 202.

<sup>53</sup> Kaler, *Running*, p. 202.

<sup>54</sup> A. de Braganca, I. Wallerstein, *The African Liberation Reader: Documents of the National Liberation Movements, Vol. 1* (Zed Press, London, 1982) pp 153-157. Quoting 'African Population Growth Strangulation', *Zimbabwe Review* (January/February 1970).

Because of these tensions between public statements and (not-so) secret motivations, the state was compelled to strengthen white numbers and lower African numbers to retain power, but could never be publically heard to be doing either out of racist motivations, lest these initiatives fail because of non-cooperation: this was the rationale behind the 'two tongues.'

### **Economic Aspects of Immigration**

SA The two-tiered economy, buttressed as it was by the abundance of cheap African labour, meant that many whites could enjoy a privileged lifestyle in Rhodesia that they could enjoy probably nowhere else on earth. Even artisans and craftsmen could afford domestic servants, and possibly a free-standing house with a pool, and a car. There was one car for every four whites in Rhodesia in 1952, which was equivalent to the United States' ratio in 1977.<sup>55</sup> A survey from 1970 found that 97 percent of whites had refrigerators, one sixth had pools, and one fifth had hi-fi sets.<sup>56</sup> This material gap between standards of living in supply-side countries and Rhodesia was obviously greater for the less skilled and less qualified whites that slipped in. This was a fundamental tension that would constantly plague Rhodesia's racial immigration policies: those individuals who would gain the most through immigration to Rhodesia, and who would obviously be the most keen to commit themselves to immigrating to Rhodesia, were the same individuals who could not be easily absorbed. On the other side of the coin, those highly skilled and professional whites who looked to gain the least compared to their material standing in other countries were the ones who were unsuccessfully sought after by Rhodesian immigration officials.

From at least the mid 1960s, there were shortages in the skilled and professional sectors of the economy, and consistent with the discourse on racialised skills, white immigration was to be the primary method of adding more skills to Rhodesia rather than endogenous training and education, as there were not enough white youths in Rhodesia to train in all the necessary skills, and the large African

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<sup>55</sup> See Blake, *A History*, p. 277.

<sup>56</sup> 'Living Standards Among Highest', *RH*, 9 May 1970.

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population was deemed to be un-trainable. As a result of these assumptions of racialised skills and potentialities, the state's immigration policy was always defended publically as the simple, and facially non-political, syllogism: the economy needed skills and capital, only white people had the necessary skills and capital, and therefore the state's policy was to attract white immigrants.

Two factors contributed to a serious dearth of skilled and qualified workers in Rhodesia. One was Rhodesia's expanding economy—largely a result of the industrial diversification following international sanctions—and the other was the qualitative skills turnover following UDI that drained more and more skilled whites from Rhodesia and replaced them with unskilled whites. Because of the *de facto* job reservation that existed in Rhodesia, when vacancies were created in the skilled or professional positions, these jobs often remained open until whites could be found to fill them. The domestic education system did not produce the right number of white graduates in the required variety of skills needed to fill all the existing positions, and to remedy these deficiencies, the apprenticeship programme was revamped several times in an effort to ensure that enough whites came through the education system, yet none of the plans worked sufficiently well. A *Herald* editorial from 1967 reported on the findings of the Select Committee on Education, which concluded that there were nowhere near the number of whites necessary to fill all the skilled positions, and even with mass immigration the Committee foresaw greater job integration as necessary.<sup>57</sup> Even in light of this Report, the Smith government, instead of filling these positions with non-whites, relied solely upon immigration to import these skills, and even made moves to harden job reservation for whites. Consequently, troubling gaps opened up and remained in many areas of the economy, especially in the professional and engineering fields, which immigration was unable to fully satisfy. Even so, Smith's government was pulled by contrary pressures, one economic and the other political, and any serious effort to soften white preserve to address skill deficiencies would have meant political suicide for Smith, net migration losses, and probably an end to the UDI experiment.

White society was not uniform in its beliefs regarding job reservation, however. The commercial, business, and industrial communities felt most keenly the squeeze on their bottom lines of having positions remain unfilled when a massive

<sup>57</sup> 'Basic to the Report', Editorial, *RH*, 8 May 1967.

untapped pool of cheap labour longed to work. Many employers wanted to hire Africans to fill white jobs, even if it meant that several Africans would be required to fulfill each component part of what was formerly one white job. This idea was known as 'job fragmentation,' and was bitterly contested by the white labour unions who advocated instead for what they called 'the rate for the job,' which locked certain jobs into a set wage for one worker. This union policy, which was later taken up as the RF's official policy, was ostensibly non-racial, but it was in practice and intention another form of job reservation for whites, as the rate set for any job was high enough to preclude an African from charging that amount. The President of the Association of Mineworkers was reported to have stated in 1969: "The greatest fear of the white workman in Rhodesia today was that his job would sooner or later be done by an African for less pay, resulting in his having to leave the country..." He continued, "We are fighting to maintain wages and conditions and we intend that the white workman will not be booted out of the country to make way for 'cheaper labour.'"<sup>58</sup> That statement reflected the nub of the issue from the white labourers' perspective, and this threat of a white exodus in the wake of job fragmentation was taken seriously by Smith's government and stiffened its resolve in stopping fragmentation, even if it resulted in greater economic troubles. Nonetheless, out of necessity job fragmentation did still occur in some sectors, notably in the Rhodesian Railways and the building industry to the extent that these areas became increasingly Africanised.<sup>59</sup>

Africans' economic aspirations were thwarted at two levels by the Rhodesian political and economic system. At the peaks of the economic pyramid there were the Swiss cheese holes that remained open but reserved for white immigrants, in spite of the fact that more and more Africans were obtaining the qualifications and skills necessary to fill these positions. Consequently, African school-leavers with advanced degrees filled the unemployment queues in the cities vying for the limited opportunities available to them, while the state vigorously solicited white immigrants to fill open positions in the economy. In addition to the sacrosanct white job reservation at the top, the post-UDI immigrants took up unskilled or semi-skilled positions that had previously been the sole preserve of Africans.<sup>60</sup> The introduction of

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<sup>58</sup> "'Cheap Labour' Issue Worries Mineworkers", *RH*, 21 October 1969.

<sup>59</sup> 'Need Anybody Suffer?', Editorial, *RH*, 22 October 1969.

<sup>60</sup> For anecdotal evidence of this phenomenon, see: Mr. Samuriwo's statements to the Committee of Supply, August 1, 1969, col. 1063. Samuriwo pointed out that the job of parking meter readers used to

these new less-skilled immigrants, particularly the Portuguese, angered African politicians. They were derogatorily referred to as “fish fryers”<sup>61</sup> by many African MPs because of the large numbers who worked at fish-and-chip shops in the cities. But it is important to note that these new immigrants’ skills and qualifications were not only derided by Africans, but also by longstanding white residents.<sup>62</sup>

After further job integration was quashed by the RF government and more intensive education programmes for whites continued to prove insufficient, Rhodesian immigration was solely charged with providing Rhodesia with much-needed skilled labour, but predominately those who immigrated after UDI were less skilled than those who were leaving, and serious skills gaps remained in the economy. The extent of any ‘brain drain’ was hotly contested in and out of Parliament, although by the mid 1970s it was clear that Rhodesia was suffering a net loss in skills due to migration. The persistence of these skills gaps added to the frustrations of the rising African educated classes. In addition, the new immigrants did not only fail to redress the skills shortage, but challenged Africans for their positions, piling a further layer of racial tension to Rhodesia’s race relations, without solving any of the regime’s economic problems.

### **The Formation and Evolution of the State’s Immigration Policy**

The immigration policies of the RF governments reflected various efforts to negotiate the conflicting pressures of domestic politics, economic need, other demographic re-balancing policies, and the overriding desire of the Party’s right-wing to bring in “more white faces.”<sup>63</sup> While there was a general consensus in the RF that there needed to be more white faces, how to achieve this without threatening

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be one that was exclusively African, but was then a European job. In a follow-up speech, RF backbencher Mr. Pinchen, claimed the new Europeans could probably read meters better than their African predecessors. See also, Mr. Rubatika, Committee of Supply, August 1, 1969, col. 1076. Rubatika claimed beer sellers use to be an African job, but was then European. He went on to say that new immigrants also threatened African jobs in the building industry and in clerical work.

<sup>61</sup> African MPs were very hostile to the non-British character of white immigration after UDI. One MP, Mr. Maposa, said: “You see in the café’s at night many areas have become either Portuguese, Greek or whatever you may prefer to call them. These are not the immigrants the Minister says are carefully selected. The number is increasing. At one time I heard there were more than 35,000 Portuguese, most of whom are no better than any African really...” Parliamentary Debates, ‘Committee of Supply Vote’, 29 September 29 1977, col. 295.

<sup>62</sup> ‘Immigrants Hit for Rudeness’, *RH*, letter from S.G. Brown, 26 June 1972.

<sup>63</sup> Parliamentary Debates, ‘Committee of Supply Vote’, 29 January 1970.

unemployed whites in Rhodesia, appearing blatantly racist and thereby derailing other demographic policy goals, or upsetting the social and economic structure of Rhodesia, was a complex and subtle task.

1961  
Conclusion

The Rhodesian Front, under Winston Field, won the 1962 election in Rhodesia on the platform that concessions to African nationalism and multiracialism had gone too far, and under their rule would progress no further. Rhodesia was to be secured in white hands in perpetuity, even if this meant illegally cutting their ties with Britain. Though population anxieties had long been present among the Rhodesian right-wing—even Field himself had at one time forcefully argued for the creation of a white peasant class<sup>64</sup>—once in power, Field did very little to positively re-balance racial ratios, even after the 1962 census revealed the contours of the racial population gap. Field's immigration policy remained exactly as had been his predecessor Edgar Whitehead's: highly selective.<sup>65</sup> Specifically, Field kept in place the capital requirements, the pro-British bias, and the guiding principle of selective immigration that there be, "No direct competition with people already in the country."<sup>66</sup> Immigration therefore required openings to fill as a prerequisite, and coming to Rhodesia on spec was discouraged. As a result of this inactivity on the demographic front, dissatisfied Rhodesian Front backbenchers regularly challenged the Minister in charge of immigration to defend Field's restrictive immigration policy in light of the perceived need for more whites.<sup>67</sup> The *Herald's* opinion page also reflected wider signs of public discontent, that despite the RF's election, Rhodesia was still bleeding whites through emigration and there seemed to be no plan to replace them.<sup>68</sup> This all combined to create a pervasive sense of frustration over the unfulfilled promises that surrounded Field's tenure. It was an internal RF coup in April of 1964 that removed Field from the premiership in favor of the man whom the right-wing believed would declare UDI, plug the emigration leak, and permanently secure white rule: Ian Smith.<sup>69</sup>

<sup>64</sup> S. Onslow, *A Scheme*.

<sup>65</sup> See, for example: 'In Parliament Yesterday: 'Selective' immigration: Field Trying to find jobs for Civil Servants', *RH*, 2 October 1963.

<sup>66</sup> Smith Papers, Box 016, Cabinet Minutes, 'Immigration Policy', 5 November 1963.

<sup>67</sup> See for example: 'In Parliament Yesterday: Flare-Up on Immigration', *RH*, 23 July 1963.

<sup>68</sup> See for example: 'Too Little is Done to Keep Men Who Built-up Rhodesia' letter 'Reluctant Emigrant', *RH*, 9 October 1963; 'More Immigrants Essential', letter S. Cooper, *RH*, 2 August 1963.

<sup>69</sup> Meredith makes the claim that Smith partly came to power to assuage fears over white emigration, to stop the white flight. See Meredith p 46.

In many ways, the policy differences between Smith and Field were greater than those between Whitehead and Field, and certainly this was true in the realm of immigration. Upon assuming the premiership, Smith immediately created a new cabinet position of Minister of Immigration, the first such post in Rhodesia's history. The first Minister of Immigration, Roads, and Tourism was Harry Reedman, a businessman with a long history of interest in immigration issues. The creation of the post, and the appointment of Reedman to fill it, indicated a renewed interest in immigration and was an expression of the urgency in which these population issues had risen in the public mind.<sup>70</sup> Reedman had long believed in mass white immigration and a dramatic widening of the selectivity net to allow in more whites, regardless of their skills set. An attaché from the British High Commission in Salisbury was describing Reedman's reputation in Rhodesia when he wrote, "Mr. Reedman is renowned for his grandiose visions, bordering on the grotesque, of large-scale immigration into Rhodesia."<sup>71</sup> Even before entering the Cabinet, Reedman conceived of Rhodesia's future immigration policy as resembling Australia's and pre-War America's, and explicitly targeted racial population parity as the ultimate goal of his immigration policy.<sup>72</sup> To justify this mass immigration, Reedman made the absurd assertion that whites must come to defend Rhodesia from the Chinese, who would soon come to Africa in large numbers to settle.<sup>73</sup> Reedman was prone to making such outlandish claims and was awful at the management of the public's expectations, and as a result did much to discredit mass immigration as a viable policy goal.<sup>74</sup> Once in the Cabinet, Reedman pushed hard for approval of an ambitious, albeit impossibly vague, mass immigration scheme, but after debate the full Cabinet did not approve of the magnitude or design of the scheme advocated by Reedman. But while rejecting Reedman's particular plan, the Cabinet did agree as early as July 1964 that, "[it was] essential to have a bold immigration policy, as the African

<sup>70</sup> Letter from NAI French, British High Commission, to JN Allen of the Rhodesia Department, 13 January 1965, DO 183/885.

<sup>71</sup> Letter from a member of the British High Commission, NAI French, to JN Allen of the Rhodesia Department, 13 January 1965, DO 183/885.

<sup>72</sup> Parliamentary Debates, Committee of Supply Vote, 22 September 1964, col. 660.

<sup>73</sup> Oddly enough, some African MPs agreed with Reedman's assertion of the threat of mass Chinese settlement, but posited that the best way to foreclose this possibility was to continue to have large African families and resist calls for the state's family planning schemes. Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 63, 'Motion: Family Planning', 9 March 1966.

<sup>74</sup> Reedman said, "with tremendous developments ahead, Southern Rhodesia was capable of supporting 40,000,000-50,000,000 people at a high standard of living." Parliamentary Debates, 'Committee of Supply Vote', 22 September 1964, col. 653.

population would double itself in 20 years and the ratio should be reduced.”<sup>75</sup> Therefore by July 1964, only three months after Smith’s rise to the premiership, his Cabinet had already accepted mass immigration as a policy principle. But mass immigration as a principle was not the same thing as planning for mass immigration, and as his Cabinet decided to drop selectivity requirements and form a new Immigration Promotion Department, it proceeded ahead without any plans to absorb a large influx.<sup>76</sup> Stating this new policy, the Cabinet agreed “that the doors should be opened wide immediately to everyone of European stock, subject to health requirements and police records...[and that] all selection should be removed which would militate against mass immigration...”<sup>77</sup> Expressly linking white immigration to African natural increase, the Cabinet continued that “the target must be to reduce the present ratio of 16:1 Africans to Europeans to 5:1, and as soon as possible.”<sup>78</sup> No fuller explanation was offered in the meeting for the target ratio of 5:1; however it was most likely that it was the goal of a ratio more similar to that of South Africa’s at the time, which was very nearly 5:1. The South African ratio of 5:1 as a goal would certainly make sense, as the South African state was in 1964 politically secure and seemingly inviolable, a situation envied by Rhodesian settlers. These first Cabinet meetings under the new Smith government unequivocally refuted subsequent government denials of racial goals behind the state’s immigration policies, as mass unselective white immigration was explicitly intended to match, if not overtake, African natural increase, and indicated a sharp break from past Rhodesian governments in terms of immigration policy.

Reedman was replaced as Immigration Minister by Jack Howman in July 1965. Howman was initially welcomed by the *Herald* as a more moderate and sober-minded choice for the position, which was then combined with the Ministries of Information and Tourism.<sup>79</sup> Howman, who was in Winston Field’s Cabinet and resigned after the promotion of Smith to the Premiership, was always more moderate in his political stances than the dogmatic right-wing members of the Rhodesian Front. He significantly reduced the inflated expectations regarding immigration brought about by Reedman with a much more pragmatic approach, and reset Rhodesia’s

<sup>75</sup> Smith Papers, Box 017, Cabinet Minutes, ‘Immigration Policy’, 8 July 1964.

<sup>76</sup> Smith Papers, Box 017, Cabinet Minutes, ‘Immigration Policy’, 21 July 1964.

<sup>77</sup> Smith Papers, Box 018, Cabinet Minutes, ‘Immigration Policy’, 18 July 1964.

<sup>78</sup> Smith Papers, Box 018, Cabinet Minutes, ‘Immigration Policy’, 18 July 1964.

<sup>79</sup> ‘Immigration: Back to Earth’, Editorial, *RH*, 28 June 1965.

policy away from the goal of racial parity. Upon taking up his Ministerial post, Howman agreed with the Finance Minister that immigration promotion efforts would be suspended and assisted passages phased out until more opportune moments arose.<sup>80</sup> But even as promotion efforts eased, immigration during 1965 was surprisingly robust indicating a recovery from the post-Federation doldrums, despite the rhetoric from pro-UDI Rhodesians that immigration numbers would swell only after independence. Thus, despite being one part of the larger package of justifications for UDI, 1965 was a very good year for immigration and it was actually much harmed by UDI in the short term. In July 1967, after an extended cessation of promotion activities before and after UDI, there was launched a new immigration drive by re-instituting an assisted passage scheme, advertising in overseas publications, and by asking Rhodesians to forward on propaganda literature to their contacts abroad.<sup>81</sup> At the same time, and in seemingly contradictory fashion, Howman argued for a reinstatement of earlier selectivity requirements even as he called for a new influx, and argued that Rhodesia already had a large reservoir of unskilled labour, and that, “in any case, uncontrolled immigration could lead to the growth of a ‘white trash’ element and ultimately generate embarrassing problems in regards to [racial] segregation.”<sup>82</sup> The Cabinet rejected Howman’s call for greater selectivity, and maintained the lax entry standards for whites instituted during Reedman’s term.<sup>83</sup> In a Cabinet shuffle in 1968, Howman took up a different Ministerial portfolio and was replaced by PK Van der Byl.

Van der Byl was an Afrikaner, which was in itself quite significant in the post of Minister of Immigration, as it was a clear signal of Smith’s new vision of a white Rhodesia not riven by the age-old rivalry between the British and the Afrikaners. Indeed, much of Rhodesia’s early immigration policy was explicitly designed to exclude Afrikaners from immigrating to Rhodesia. His first term in office was the high water mark of post-UDI Rhodesia, and this general success was both reflected by, and spurred on by, immigration successes. During his tenure, Van der Byl expanded the scope of Rhodesia’s incentive programmes to entice new immigrants. Internationally, this was very much a ‘sellers’ market,’ with demand for skilled

<sup>80</sup> Smith Papers, Box 019, Cabinet Minutes, ‘Immigration: Assisted Passages Scheme’, 20 July 1965.

<sup>81</sup> ‘Immigration Offensive: Howman announces new assisted passage scheme: Advertising campaign to be launched’, *RH*, 28 July 1967.

<sup>82</sup> Smith Papers, Box 021, Cabinet Minutes, ‘Immigration Policy’, 5 April 1967.

<sup>83</sup> Smith Papers, Box 021, Cabinet Minutes, ‘Immigration Promotion’, 16 May 1967.

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immigrants exceeding supply, and demand-side countries vying for immigrants through offering competing incentives. Rhodesia's assisted passages programme was the most widely known of these incentives and it mirrored similar assisted passage programmes by Australia and South Africa. As was argued to Parliament, "Study throughout the world indicates that unless you provide assistance to immigrants you cannot get these immigrants. Australia does it, New Zealand does it, South Africa does it and if we are to get the immigrants we need we must [do so as well]." <sup>84</sup> Tax incentives, state-subsidised housing, and postponement of immigrants' military service were all also introduced. Van der Byl organised more unorthodox immigration drives as well: mailing unsolicited literature to selected localities abroad, asking Rhodesians to send out literature to friends and relatives abroad, <sup>85</sup> and he even once appealed to Rhodesians to open up their homes to allow new immigrants to stay with them until they settled in. <sup>86</sup> In another campaign in 1969, he initiated an immigration contest in which citizens sought to attract the most positive immigration responses from their foreign contacts: first prize was a free weekend holiday in Rhodesia, second place was a new refrigerator, and third place was a new record player. <sup>87</sup> The most famous of all Rhodesia immigration campaigns, though, was the massively conceived, but ill-fated, Settler '74 campaign, which again asked Rhodesians to draw on their foreign contacts in an effort envisioned to attract hundreds of thousands of whites. <sup>88</sup> In forms mailed to residents and in large cut-out advertisements in Rhodesian newspapers, current residents were informed of the benefits of large-scale immigration: "They will enjoy a much better life out here, and

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<sup>84</sup> Parliamentary Debates, Committee of Supply Vote, 31 August 1967, col. 1721.

<sup>85</sup> Van der Byl did not create these direct mailing out of whole cloth, however, as Howman had first introduced them in 1967. See for example, '100,000 Air Letters Used to Launch Drive for Immigrants', *RH*, 29 July 1967.

<sup>86</sup> After a *Herald* letter-writer asked if Van der Byl himself would open up his home, he declined, claiming his home was used to accommodate visiting VIPs. See 'Van der Byl is Unable to House New-comers', *RH*, 17 February 1968.

<sup>87</sup> See 'More Immigrants-'Greater Prosperity'', *RH*, 22 March 1969. George Rudland, Minister without portfolio, handed out prizes to winners of the recent immigration competition. Mr. Rudland presented Dr James Dick, of Salisbury, with the first prize of tickets for a six day Flame Lily Holiday (donated by Air Rhodesia); Mr. and Mrs. Jeff Healey, of Salisbury, with the second prize of a refrigerator (donated by Atlantis Electric Company); and Mr. and Mrs. Ernest McGarry, of Bulawayo, with the third prize of a radiogram (donated by Wholesale Radio Supplies Ltd.)"

<sup>88</sup> For the nationalists perspective on this campaign see: *Zimbabwe Review*, ZAPU's weekly organ, 12 January 1974. The British government's FCO speculated in a confidential memorandum that the Settlers '74 drive was designed to take advantage of the energy crisis in the UK and Western Europe. FCO 36/1766.

they'll ensure YOUR future. So do them, and yourself, a favour."<sup>89</sup> But already by February 1974, the government had retreated from its earlier rhetoric of a million potential immigrant names, and set a more measured and decidedly less ambitious tone.<sup>90</sup> In the end, the Settler '74 campaign was an enormous failure; the original goal of 100,000 immigrants was soon reduced to 10,000, by May 1974, only 4,200 names of potential immigrants had been received, and the campaign was soon abandoned altogether.<sup>91</sup>

In spite of Van der Byl's creative energies, the Rhodesian state faced tremendous legal barriers to immigration promotion that hindered large-scale immigration. The United Nations imposed selective sanctions in 1966 and mandatory comprehensive sanctions in 1968. The 1968 sanctions included a section on emigration to Rhodesia, and it was followed in Britain by domestic legislation forbidding the solicitation or encouragement of emigration to Rhodesia from Britain. Rhodesia's informal, decentralised, and outsourced methods of immigration promotion were necessary after these restrictions, as this UK legislation closed off access to the mainstream media.<sup>92</sup> In 1970, Van der Byl described this difficulty in promoting abroad:

Immigration promotion is subject to UN mandatory sanctions and it is subject to a special Order-in-Council of the British government. It is second only to one or two of our commodities as regards the degree of difficulty which sanctions have inflicted on us. The fact of the matter is that we are very limited indeed as to the avenues in which we can promote immigration, because it is forbidden in practically every country in the world for us to place newspaper advertisements, which were the main source of immigration promotion in the past. But nonetheless we do find—and I am not going to go into any detail on this—we do find ways of doing it from time to time.<sup>93</sup>

In Britain in 1974, *The Economist* and *The Spectator* magazines were both prosecuted for placing immigration advertisements in violation of this Order and were fined.<sup>94</sup> Blocked from these wider circulation outlets, Rhodesia also targeted regional newspapers and page-turning special-interest periodicals such as *Accountancy Age*,

<sup>89</sup> Settler '74 Advertisement by Ministry of Information, Immigration, and Tourism, *RH*, 1 January 1974.

<sup>90</sup> 'Settler '74 'Only if There is Work'', *RH*, 18 February 1974.

<sup>91</sup> See Godwin and Hancock, p 138.

<sup>92</sup> See Van der Byl, Committee of Supply, 28 July 1970, col. 886.

<sup>93</sup> See Van der Byl, Committee of Supply, 28 July 1970, col. 886.

<sup>94</sup> FCO 36/1716

Bridge Magazine, and *The Ophthalmic Optician*.<sup>95</sup> The British Department of Public Prosecutions (DPP) was initially unwilling to prosecute these ‘small fish’ violations because of the undeserved publicity they would bring, but by 1974 the British Foreign Office urged them to proceed, arguing that any publicity in this matter would be good for Britain’s image.<sup>96</sup> The British government also limited the amount of money allowed to people openly emigrating to Rhodesia to a paltry sum.<sup>97</sup> There were, of course, strategies to avoid this monetary restriction, which included claiming a different country as their final destination—usually South Africa—then moving on from there to Rhodesia. Nonetheless, despite this large loophole, many who might have normally been interested in Rhodesia were certainly turned off from taking part in such cloak and dagger activities.

Rhodesia’s immigration promotion efforts suffered from its international pariah status. It became a symbol for many inside of Britain and the West of obdurate white settler colonialism: racist and pernicious. Most importantly in terms of immigration yields, Rhodesia was widely perceived as being dangerous and its political future unsettled. The foreign press was roundly vilified by Rhodesian state officials as being biased in their reporting on the military conflict and the extent of the violence in Rhodesia.<sup>98</sup> In response to how these negative associations overseas effected immigration, Ian Smith said that, “it is amazing how people, including our friends from South Africa, are led to believe that it is dangerous to cross the border.”<sup>99</sup> The social stigma of emigrating to Rhodesia was also significant in the years after UDI, as emigration was viewed by many to be a political act, and as such emigrants were deemed to be viable targets for condemnation. In 1974, the UK Council of Churches decided to launch a concerted effort to discourage emigration to southern Africa, Rhodesia included.<sup>100</sup> Those that did make it to Rhodesia had to thus make a concerted effort to surreptitiously evade Britain’s monetary controls, withstand social

<sup>95</sup> FCO 36/1716

<sup>96</sup> FCO 36/1716

<sup>97</sup> See for example ‘Man of 82 can take Only L15 to Rhodesia’, *RH*, 22 May 1969. “The Bank of England has turned down a plea, made on compassionate grounds, to let an 82 year-old man take his savings to Rhodesia. Even the L50 travel allowance has been refused, and he may take only a maximum of L15 ‘for emergencies.’”

<sup>98</sup> ‘Told Dreadful Things...But Immigrants Still Come to Rhodesia’, *RH*, 6 September 1973.

<sup>99</sup> ‘Smith Says Immigration Will Pick Up’, *RH*, 24 October 1973.

<sup>100</sup> ‘UK Churches Asked to Fight Emigration to Rhodesia’, *RH*, 16 April 1974.

stigma, and settle in an illegal entity with an unclear political future—hardly as smooth a transition as cruising to Perth or Wellington.

For others, though, post-UDI Rhodesia became a defiant symbol—a nation upholding the fading British values of pride and strength; unwilling to be cowed by World Communism, the Afro-Asian Bloc, or an appeasing Britain. To these imperial sentimentalists, Rhodesia's defiance was a positive mark influencing their emigration decisions. In 1974, one prospective immigrant to Rhodesia stated his reason for choosing Rhodesia as being, "I see Rhodesia as the last bastion of the British Empire."<sup>101</sup> Post-UDI Rhodesia became a political position that people were either 'for' or 'against.' And Smith himself was for many years a very popular figure in Britain, drawing supportive crowds, as well as hostile crowds, whenever he arrived. Yet with the real barriers to migration, the political sympathy and support for Rhodesia among certain circles did not necessarily lead to immigration. It was one thing to toast to 'Old Smithy's' defiance in a London pub, but it was quite another thing to pack up and move there.

When Van der Byl left the immigration post in 1974, he was replaced by Wickus de Kock, another Afrikaner. During this period, net migration yields were temporarily inflated by the influx of Portuguese fleeing from Mozambique and Angola during 1975 and 1976.<sup>102</sup> Behind this temporary success, though, the reality of a more ominous figure on the spreadsheet was growing, which was the rate of emigration. Emigration had been slowly increasing since the intensification of the guerrilla war in 1972 and rose steadily as the war progressed. Though the upward blip of Portuguese refugees in the mid-1970s partially obscured this fact, Rhodesia's population was leaking at an even faster rate than normal. As will be discussed in chapter six, demands from the military conflict put pressure on immigration as well as emigration. The grace period during which new immigrants were free from military service was reduced from two to five years in 1975,<sup>103</sup> but even the existence of this reduced grace period aroused some resentment among current residents,<sup>104</sup> and

<sup>101</sup> 'Why Rhodesia? Prospective Immigrants Give Reasons for their Choice', *RH*, 8 February 1974.

<sup>102</sup> Immigration Minister De Kock explained this influx thus: "We have had a considerable increase in the numbers of persons of Portuguese extraction from Mozambique, in particular, who come to settle in this country which is attractive to them... May I say without any hesitation that we urge Rhodesians to welcome these people who wish to come and settle in this country..." Parliamentary Debates, 'Committee of Supply Vote', 22 July 1975, col. 1142.

<sup>103</sup> 'Call-Up Net Tightens on Immigrants from Today', *RH*, 1 August 1975.

<sup>104</sup> 'Immigrants' Grace Period Ridiculous', *RH*, letter from Corporal R.R., 15 March 1976.

balancing the conflicting demands of current residents with potential immigrants and the military conflict proved an insuperable task. Embarrassingly for the Smith government, De Kock himself emigrated in 1977. — *Reese*

Following Ian Smith's speech in 1976, which acknowledged the inevitability of majority rule, Rhodesia's immigration policy shifted conceptually from building a white population capable of maintaining white minority rule, to building a population capable of securing white privilege in African majority-ruled state. These were the years of the patching and plugging of holes in the population dike. When Van der Byl took over the Ministerial post again in the fall of 1977, both he and Rhodesia were on the political tumble. Though large budgets were still voted in for immigration, and particularly for assisted passages, few were interested in immigrating to a war-torn Rhodesia in the late 1970s. The money voted for immigration had increased consistently from the mid 1960s until the mid 1970s, peaking in 1976 at R\$822,000. Significantly, however, the amounts voted were all spent through 1975, but largest sum that was voted in 1976 corresponded with a drop in interest in immigration to Rhodesia generally, and specifically the drying up of the Portuguese influx, and only half of the 1976 immigration budget was actually spent. Subsequent sums voted for immigration spending were always more aspirational than realistic, and unspent money was carried over year after year, before dropping off completely in the last two years of settler rule, reflecting the vastly reduced potential for immigration to Rhodesia.<sup>105</sup>

The Rhodesia government acknowledged after the first year of Smith's premiership and the dismissal of Reedman, that racial parity was an unrealistic goal for white immigration. It was still explicitly hoped, however, that immigration could serve to narrow the racial ratios closer to that of the South African state, and after the retrenchment around the time of UDI, the late 1960s and early 1970s witnessed relatively large immigration yields. The numbers of immigrants during this period were widely touted, but who these immigrants were, what skills they possessed, and where they arrived from was purposely hidden from public scrutiny. The targeted South African ratio was also soon abandoned as unrealistic, and immigration was tasked only to peg the white population to keep pace with African natural increase so as to hold current ratios, but even this humbler goal could not be achieved, and

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<sup>105</sup> Rhodesian Estimates of Expenditure Reports, 1965-1979.

African growth rates continued to widen racial ratios. And in the final years of white rule, immigration served only as a partial cover to mask white emigration.

ANNUAL IMMIGRATION AND EMIGRATION OF RHODESIAN WHITES (1960-1979)<sup>106</sup>

Year	Immigrants	Emigrants	Net
1960	8000	7000	+1000
1961	8000	10000	-2000
1962	8000	12000	-4000
1963 <sup>107</sup>	7000	18000	-11000
1964	7000	15710	-8710
1965	11128	8850	+2280
1966	6418	8510	-2090
1967	9618	7570	+2050
1968	11864	5650	+6210
1969	10929	5890	+5040
1970	12227	5896	+6331
1971	14743	5336	+9407
1972	13966	5141	+8825
1973	9433	7751	+1682
1974	9649	9069	+580
1975	12425	10497	+1928
1976	7782	14854	-7072
1977	5730	16638	-10908
1978	4360	18069	-13709
1979 <sup>108</sup>	3288	14472	-11184

### Analysing the Post-UDI Immigration Yields

Despite the (not-so) secret policy of unselective immigration in force since the first months of Smith's premiership, Van der Byl and later Ministers, still publicly claimed to pursue selective immigration, and never overtly sought mass immigration after Reedman.<sup>109</sup> Mass unselective immigration was unpopular among many sections of the white community, and it was for this reason as well that the state never publically advocated for mass unselective immigration policy. To reconcile the public and secret policies, selectivity was always very loosely interpreted. Describing what were Rhodesia's selectivity criteria in 1965, for instance, Howman, said: "First of all, that he has white skin. I think that is accepted... Secondly, he must be free from active tuberculosis... Thirdly, he must not be a criminal; fourthly, he must not be a

<sup>106</sup> Figures are from the Monthly Digest of Statistics, CSO.

<sup>107</sup> Migration figures prior to the dissolution of the Federation are only estimates. These were from the CSO Monthly Digest of Statistics, December 1972..

<sup>108</sup> The 1979 figure was averaged from the six months for which information could be found from the CSO Monthly Migration Digests and estimated out to appear as a full twelve month period. The available months of January, March, April, July, September, and October averaged 274 immigrants and 1206 emigrants a month.

<sup>109</sup> Parliamentary Debates, Committee of Supply Vote, 10 August 1965, col. 71. There were even right-wing efforts to lessen the criminal bars as they pertained to immigration to allow in more white immigrants. Parliamentary Debates, Committee of Supply, 12 August 1965, col. 184.

communist... Then we go to the next criteria of whether or not he needs help and he is fitted and able to take work and contribute.”<sup>110</sup> These were hardly restrictive standards by any definition, and obfuscating or deflecting scrutiny as to the specifics of immigration yields under these lax standards was always a difficult verbal game for many officials. As such, there was much controversy as to the skills of the immigrants that did arrive. Employment agencies found it difficult to find work for the new immigrants. One agency official complained the RF government was too unselective, and said, “This often created a system where some unqualified people expected to find a vacancy above their station in life.”<sup>111</sup> Towing the official line, state officials always maintained that the immigrants coming in possessed new skills which were greatly needed in Rhodesia, and thus contested charges of any brain drain. It was not only Africans and employment agents, however, who questioned the economic and social implications of this turnover, as the lower economic class of many of the new immigrants was a difference noted by older residents with unambiguous disdain. One white resident stated in reference to the government’s policy, “Are we so hard up for white skins that we have to let in Europe’s riff-raff?”<sup>112</sup> Nonetheless, during the budget debates in Parliament, the various Rhodesian Front Immigration Ministers consistently deflected specific questions about the skills and backgrounds of the new immigrants by framing immigration specifics as vital national security secrets hidden due to their sanctions implications.<sup>113</sup> All that were ever revealed of these new immigrants were their numbers.

Some qualitative distinctions between emigrants leaving and immigrants arriving were harder to conceal. One characteristic noted by author Frank Clements was that there was a general population transfer of so-called liberals out of the country and more conservative or apolitical-types coming in.<sup>114</sup> Ethnically, there was also a shift away from the distinct pro-British bias that earlier characterised Rhodesian immigration in favour of more Afrikaners and southern Europeans, particularly Portuguese, a reflection of affirmative state policies to extend the scope of acceptable

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<sup>110</sup> Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 62, ‘Committee of Supply Vote’, 10 August 1965.

<sup>111</sup> ‘Agencies Consider many Immigrants ‘Unsuitable’’, *RH*, 15 June 1968.

<sup>112</sup> ‘Immigrants Hit for Rudeness’, *RH*, letter from S.G. Brown, 26 June 1972.

<sup>113</sup> See for example: Parliamentary Debates, Committee of Supply, 21 July 1971, col. 749.

<sup>114</sup> Clements, *Deterioration*, p. 243.

whites after UDI to include non-English speakers.<sup>115</sup> Portuguese immigrants became a conspicuous element in white Rhodesia, especially after the Lisbon coup, and despite efforts on the part of the state to welcome non-British whites into white society, there was significant residual xenophobia.<sup>116</sup> To combat this resistance to non-British immigrants, state officials regularly pleaded with Rhodesians to welcome in these new residents.<sup>117</sup> In keeping with the vision of a broader white Rhodesia, immigration promotional literature in the 1970s was printed in six other European languages not including English.<sup>118</sup> In the early 1970s, there were even plans to consider the implementation of crash courses in English for new arrivals.<sup>119</sup> It is interesting to note, that it was often the African MPs who were the ones who protested most strongly against the non-British character of Rhodesian immigration after UDI.<sup>120</sup> But the precise degree of increase of non-British immigrants after UDI is difficult to determine, even as it was certainly significant.<sup>121</sup> Even while a broader pan-European vision of white Rhodesia was being promoted, this wider scope of desirable immigrants was never extended to include Asians or Coloureds. The longstanding official state policy was to admit non-Europeans only if it was in the national interest or out of a humanitarian concern, and this never changed even during acute skills shortages.<sup>122</sup> Indeed, in 1969, despite the fact that capital influx was one

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<sup>115</sup> The Cabinet decided as early as 1964 that, "In general it should be accepted government policy that no persons should be refused entry into the country for purposes of immigration solely on the grounds of a lack of knowledge of English." Smith Papers, Box 017, Cabinet Minutes, 'Immigration: Conditions for Entry', 24 November 1964.

<sup>116</sup> Smith Papers, Box 023, Cabinet Minutes, 'Miscegenation, Prostitution and Allied problems', 24 August 1971.

<sup>117</sup> 'Plea to Aid 'Foreign Language' Migrants Settle', *RH*, 10 July 1970.

<sup>118</sup> Parliamentary Debates, Committee of Supply, 22 July 1975, col. 1140.

<sup>119</sup> 'English for Immigrants', *RH*, 18 July 1970.

<sup>120</sup> "I would like to advise the Minister that we do not want immigration from Greece. We do not want immigration from Greece, and we do not want immigration from Israel. This country has been civilised by English people and our immigration must be fixed from the English speaking people." Parliamentary Debates, Committee of Supply, 31 August 1967, col. 1682.

<sup>121</sup> In an answer to a suggestion of stationing a linguist at various immigration posts, Van der Byl claimed that, "still at this stage 80% of our immigrants are in fact English speaking," and thus concluded that a linguist would not be cost effective. Parliamentary Debates, Committee of Supply, 9 August 1973, col. 1680. The most accurate description of the national breakdown after the post-UDI period was from 1974. The then Minister of Immigration asserted that the origins of the immigrant coming in 1974 were as follows: UK 31%, South Africa 27%, Portugal 11%, Zambia 7%, Australia 3%, Greece 2%, Malawi 1%, Botswana 1%, Italy 1%, USA 1%, Holland 1%, and Others 12%. Parliamentary Debates, Committee of Supply, 12 February 1975, col. 1261. However, since immigration officials only recorded the countries of departure not migrants' nationalities, these numbers must be taken with qualification.

<sup>122</sup> Smith papers, Box 024, Cabinet Minutes, 'Immigration Policy: Permanent Residence: Non-Europeans', 7 September 1971.

justification for white immigration and the need for foreign exchange was pressing, Van der Byl declared that the idea of bringing in rich Indians was “ridiculous.”<sup>123</sup>

Post-UDI Rhodesia also received more than its share of kooks, criminals,<sup>124</sup> racists, and misfits.<sup>125</sup> Especially in the later 1970s, an odd amalgam of the disaffected, the opportunistic, and the radical showed up in Rhodesia. *Time Magazine* reported that large numbers of “carpet-baggers” and “bargain hunters seeking a cheap way to live in a style they could not afford anywhere else” were trickling in to Rhodesia. One recent arrival in 1977, who was slotted into an iron mine supervisor position, said: “It’s easy work. The niggers dig all the holes. You just stand over them.” The same article also reported embryonic chapters of both the John Birch Society and the American Nazi Party sprouted-up.<sup>126</sup> Consistent with these observations, the *Herald* regularly reported immigrants being deported for omitting prior convictions on their immigration forms, and the heavy publicity some of these deportations garnered were picked up in Parliamentary debates.<sup>127</sup> One reason Rhodesia let in so many dubious characters after UDI was that because of sanctions regulations, the source countries did not supply Rhodesia with background information on immigrants, and the state did not have officials in the source countries to vet potential immigrants, so who they actually received from their immigration drives was in many ways a mystery. In 1977, Van der Byl stated:

... the screening is done to the best of our ability and one must absolutely accept that because of the situation in which we find ourselves in this country there is a certain lack of cooperation, shall we say, between ourselves and other countries from which people coming into this country emanate, this is very often fraught with a considerable amount of difficulty. Therefore it does happen that people do get into this country who are highly undesirable and if whose proclivities were known before their arrival, would certainly not be let in.<sup>128</sup>

<sup>123</sup> Parliamentary Debates, Vol. , ‘Committee of Supply Vote 31’, 17 January 1969.

<sup>124</sup> There were even right-wing efforts to lessen the criminal bars as they pertained to immigration to allow in more white immigrants. Parliamentary Debates, Committee of Supply, 12 August 1965, col. 184.

<sup>125</sup> L. Ron Hubbard, the founder of Scientology, briefly set up his headquarters in Rhodesia, and James Earl Ray was believed to be making his way to Rhodesia when he was nabbed in Heathrow airport and extradited to the United States for killing Dr. Martin Luther King. See ‘Rhodesia-US Link in Manhunt: Immigration Query by Luther King Suspect: Government Assurance of Watch is Reported’, *RH*, 14 June 1968.

<sup>126</sup> ‘Land of Opportunity’, *Time Magazine*, 24 October 1977.

<sup>127</sup> See for example, ‘Immigrant had 46 Convictions’, *RH*, 12 May 1973; and ‘Convicted Immigrant Told to Go’, *RH*, 13 October 1973.

<sup>128</sup> Parliamentary Debates, ‘Committee of Supply Vote’, 29 September 1977.

As it was, Rhodesia was forced to net them all and any sorting had to be done after arrival.

### **Tensions and Contradictions in Rhodesia's White Migration Policies**

The nature of white migration patterns to and from Rhodesia precluded effective planning. By the early 1970s, at the peak of the immigration influx, the Rhodesian economy was straining under the proportionately high rate of white immigration. Affordable, decent housing in particular was in short supply for new residents. This led to bottlenecks wherein many new arrivals left before being effectively slotted into the Rhodesian economy.<sup>129</sup> The state undertook various initiatives to rapidly expand the urban infrastructure to support more whites by supplying furnished flats in high-density housing units and guaranteeing state loans to new immigrants for settling-in costs.<sup>130</sup> Nevertheless, this housing shortage was never solved adequately, partially because of the inherent problems in future planning with such high rates of turnover in Rhodesia. Overbuilding in expectation of large yields led to waste, neglect, and embarrassment, and building too slowly created disillusionment among the new immigrants, many of whom came flushed with inflated expectations of life in Rhodesia. As it was, the rushed accommodations disappointed many new immigrants, and this ebbing of migrants was never contained.<sup>131</sup> What spending there was on new immigrants also often provoked bitter responses from current residents who felt neglected in favour of newer arrivals.<sup>132</sup> More broadly, extensive planning of the scale first proposed by Reedman and others would have resulted in a radically different Rhodesia.<sup>133</sup> It would have among other things demanded significant capital outlays from the tax coffers, which would meant

<sup>129</sup> 'Only Fifth of Immigrants Quit—Minister', *RH*, 9 October 1970; 'Immigrant Housing Shortage 'Critical'', *RH*, 7 August 1970.

<sup>130</sup> 'Helping the Immigrants,' *RH*, 14 September 1970; and 'Immigrants to get Furnished Flats', *RH*, 27 August 1970.

<sup>131</sup> 'Rhodesia Will Lose Immigrants', *RH*, 22 December 1971; 'Immigrants not so Keen on Low-cost Housing', *RH*, 6 January 1972.

<sup>132</sup> See for example, 'Those Born in Rhodesia Also Need Houses,' *RH*, letter from M.J. Lawrence, 29 July 1972.

<sup>133</sup> A report by a South African academic counseled Rhodesia that a true influx would mean three Salisburys, three Bulawayos, three Gwelos, and three Umtalis by the end of the century. 'Immigration: Israel Can Teach Rhodesia', *RH*, 19 May 1972.

sacrifices on the part of current white residents, the same residents who already chafed at the special treatment afforded new immigrants. As the Cabinet recognised as early as the mid 1960s, these sacrifices required for mass immigration would have eaten into the cherished standard of living enjoyed by whites, which would have predictably resulted in greater emigration. The state's solution to this dilemma was to continue immigration promotion and ignore the more politically-sticky necessities of economic planning and spending that should have accompanied such policies.

Mass immigration piled on other strains to the Rhodesian economy, increasing the demands on schools, housing, and damaging Rhodesia's balance of payments through the draining of foreign currency reserves and the exporting of remittances.<sup>134</sup> These economic burdens rose to the point of provoking a Cabinet debate in 1971 on the overall cost-benefit merits of mass immigration. Though ultimately deciding that immigration's political benefits of maintaining a favourable racial balance outweighed the significant costs, these burdens, and the Ministerial push-back as a result of them, never fully disappeared.<sup>135</sup> Indeed, several months after the first debate over the wisdom of mass immigration, another Cabinet memorandum was distributed by the Minister of Local Government and Housing outlining the problems associated with high immigration yields. The memorandum criticised the high rate of immigration as a percentage of the overall white population—4 percent as opposed to the purported optimal target of 1 percent—which overburdened housing and other services. In summation, the Minister argued that the mass immigration intended to save Rhodesia, could ironically “destroy the ideal conditions under which we lived in this country.” Acknowledging the difficulties that immigration presented, the full Cabinet agreed that “normally the rate of 1 percent increase was the optimum figure, but the position in Rhodesia was somewhat different since in many parts of the world the same sense of urgency did not prevail.” Rhodesia was viewed to not have the luxury of a more rational rate of influx, since the state needed as many white faces as possible, as quickly as possible. With this decision, the Cabinet again prioritised the political and psychological benefits of immigration over the economic and social

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<sup>134</sup> Smith Papers, Box 024, Cabinet Minutes, ‘Economic Policies Following a Political Settlement With Britain’, 30 November 1971.

<sup>135</sup> Smith Papers, Box 024, Cabinet Minutes, ‘The Balance of Payments Situation and the Economic Consequences’, 7 December 1971.

burdens, reasoning that, “[immigration] was fundamental and of cardinal importance to the survival of the European in this part of the world.”<sup>136</sup>

## Conclusion

In Rhodesia’s population race between white immigration and African natural increase, the former was perhaps destined to lose in the long-run. Because of the unpredictability of economic trends and the myriad other factors that play into migration decisions, perhaps migration is inherently ill adapted to match the constant rhythm of natural increase. Comparatively, differential fertility rates seem to always outpace competitive migration.<sup>137</sup> The white fertility transition had long been firmly entrenched in Rhodesia, and historically all political efforts to cajole or pressure women in post-fertility transition societies into having higher numbers of children have failed,<sup>138</sup> and in Rhodesia, the white rate of natural increase actually declined throughout the 1960s and 1970s. White immigration, as the main source of white population growth, increased the population at an arithmetic rate, by adding additional people—people who for whatever reason tended to not have many children in Rhodesia. The African natural increase, however, was geometric in its growth. As a result, even Rhodesia’s Herculean efforts to attract large numbers of immigrants could only temporarily alter their population demographics, as these immigration numbers were quickly eaten into by the relentless rate of Africans’ natural increase. Any efforts to compete with African population growth were described by one newspaper article as “spitting against the wind.”<sup>139</sup>

Immigration was seen as the great hope, the panacea to cure all of Rhodesia’s ills. It was to increase the overall white population and ideally narrow racial ratios, but failing that, it was expected at very least to mask the consistent outflow of

<sup>136</sup> Smith Papers, Box 025, Cabinet Minutes, ‘European Immigration’, 14 March 1972.

<sup>137</sup> See for example the competitive population struggles of the linguistic groups in Quebec and the Israeli/Palestinian conflict: D. Kaplan, *Canada’s Linguistic Groups*; P. Fargues, ‘Protracted National Conflict and Fertility Change: Palestinians and Israelis in the Twentieth Century’, *Population and Development Review*, Vol. 26, No. 3 (September 2000).

<sup>138</sup> P. Demeny, ‘Pronatalist Policies in Low Fertility Countries: Patterns, Performance, and Prospects’, *Population and Development Review*, Vol. 12 (1986). This certainly did not mean Rhodesian Front politicians did not try. One Rhodesian Front backbencher said the use of birth control by white women was “race suicide.” Women who did practice birth control were labeled “selfish” and materialistic. ‘Charges of ‘Racialism’ in Debate on Family Planning’, *RH*, 21 April 1966.

<sup>139</sup> ‘The African Explosion’, *Financial Mail*, 30 April 1971.

migrants leaving Rhodesia. It was the failure of immigration policy to fulfill even this more limited role in the mid-1970s that exposed a declining population. The knowledge of this decline created feelings among the whites of a national rot that ate into Rhodesia's internal and international legitimacy, and just as positive immigration represented a symbolic affirmation of Rhodesia, negative net migration indicated its disaffirmation and artificiality. Perhaps most importantly, as the war intensified, the white population decline meant that even greater pressure was put on the small population, who by the late-1970s were fully stretched between their military and economic commitments. The circle was thereby closed, such that with greater demands being made upon the population, there was more emigration, which in turn created even greater demands on those who remained which rendered Rhodesia less attractive to potential immigrants. This circle constricted more and more until the final collapse of white rule.

## **Chapter VI**

### **African Agency in the War of Numbers**

As argued in earlier chapters, the consequences that flowed from the widening racial ratios in Rhodesia combined to play a major role in the ultimate collapse of the white settler regime. These racial ratios were directly related to the political fate of the white regime, and not merely as a proxy for decline or as a correlative factor, but also as a causal factor. Earlier chapters have outlined the attitudes and actions of the white population and the settler state in this population contest, and this chapter explores to what extent African nationalists were able to participate in this population contest. The main questions that need to be answered when analysing the agency of African nationalists in Rhodesia's war of numbers are: 1) To what extent did the African population as a whole view these disparate racial population matters holistically? 2) To what extent did African nationalists have control and influence over the various factors that determined population trends? and 3) To what extent were these factors purposefully influenced in order to bring about specific political goals? The answers to these questions have implications as to what degree did African nationalists produce these dramatic demographic changes that contributed to independence in 1980, and to what degree was this parallel war of population numbers guided not by conscious political agency, but instead by forces having little to do with liberation politics.

### **White and African Perspectives on Population Matters**

As we have seen, Rhodesia's racial population ratios were the combined result of several components: white and African rates of natural increase, white and African migration patterns, and methods of population enumeration. The extent to which Africans viewed these diverse population components that made up these racial ratios holistically, as part of a wider racial population contest, was uneven across different regions, generations, and education levels. Different sections of the African population were widely divergent in their knowledge of these trends, their interest in engineering them for political goals, and in their capacity to influence them.

As argued in chapter two, from the early 1960s these population numbers began to be deemed important, and their diverse components linked together by the white population. Generally, whites viewed population matters holistically, with fertility, mortality, and migration factors conceptualised as constituent parts of a zero-sum racial population contest. Most whites observed these widening racial ratios with a sense of dread, as they fed into older colonial fears of racial swamping and mixed with newer post-UDI fears of the settler regime's viability in a post-colonial Africa. This holistic approach was certainly shared, and indeed nurtured by, the post-UDI state, and its racial population policies reflected this. Despite their characteristic transience, whites in Rhodesia were fairly uniform in their support of these state policies aimed at mitigating these expanding ratios, and as argued in chapter four, this transience likely solidified white political unity even as there little actual population continuity. Kaler argues that there was a consensus in the white community on three general points concerning the African population problem: 1) that African fertility patterns were a problem, 2) that this problem was a danger to African well-being and the stability of the white state, and 3) that whites had a responsibility to intervene to ameliorate this problem.<sup>1</sup> Adding to Kaler's points, there was also a consensus among whites to stop emigration and to stabilise or turn back the racial ratios. However, the specific methods to effectuate these diverse policy goals, as well as the end goal of such policies divided the white public. Nonetheless, there was still a high degree of political unity among whites behind the holistic view of population matters, a desire to ameliorate the effects of widening ratios, and the goal of stabilising or reversing racial ratio trends.

In population matters, as with other political issues, Africans were less unified than whites, and one of the several complications in this inquiry into the role of Africans in Rhodesia's war of numbers, is that it is impossible to speak of the African population as a monolithic mass, who all pursued the same political goals for the same purposes. This was partially due to the political/sociological phenomenon of the relative cohesiveness of minorities versus majorities, but other factors specific to Rhodesia also contributed to a diversity of views, actions, and interest levels among the African population. There were significant cleavages within the African population between tribal/ethnic/regional groups, urban and rural communities, men

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<sup>1</sup> Kaler, *Running*, p. 29.

and women, as well as older and younger generations. While some sections of the African population were very active in liberation politics, many others were markedly uninterested in, or indeed suspicious of or opposed to, the liberation movement, and it is still debated what degree of political support nationalists had among the general African population.<sup>2</sup> Whereas Terence Ranger traces the historical antecedents to the nationalist movement by emphasising the formation of a 'peasant consciousness' that rendered rural Africans a receptive audience to guerrilla appeals, Norma Kriger emphasises the coercive character of guerrilla/peasant relations.<sup>3</sup> Gann and Hendriksen explore the deep divisions within African society regarding the war, and describe how the guerrilla war was also "a black civil war" in which "many more Africans died at the hands of bush fighters than did Europeans," and where the guerrilla fighters were opposed not just by the Rhodesian white forces, but also by "traditional chiefs and headmen...an entire army of black functionaries, telegraphists, detectives, court interpreters and policemen...African 'master farmers', building contractors and transport operators [who] had obtained a modest, and sometimes considerable, degree of prosperity" who "distrusted the guerrilla's promises."<sup>4</sup> Though the nationalists and guerrillas described African opposition as 'sell-outs,' this facile labeling does not answer for the deep divisions with the African population regarding support for the nationalist cause. There were heated and occasionally violent clashes between the nationalist factions themselves, and ZAPU and ZANU, as was common with many liberation movements, were arguably as hostile towards one another as against the Rhodesian state, a situation exploited with some success by the white regime. Even within the different nationalist groups, Kriger describes the 'struggles within the struggle,' where she highlights the generational, gendered, and economic conflicts within the nationalist movements. Likewise, Kaler expands on the gendered divisions within the guerrilla camps. As a result, any search for uniform African views regarding the population war, or politics generally is illusory.

Nonetheless, despite these significant divisions several general conclusions can be drawn as to African views and African actions concerning population matters.

<sup>2</sup> For an interesting summary of these debates, see S. Robins, 'Heroes, Heretics and Historians of the Zimbabwe Revolution: A Review Article of Norma Kriger's *Peasant Voices*', *Zambezia*, Vol. 23, No. 1 (1996).

<sup>3</sup> T. Ranger, *Peasant Consciousness and Guerrilla War in Zimbabwe* (London, James Curry, 1985); N. Kriger, *Peasant Voices*.

<sup>4</sup> T. Ranger, *Peasant Consciousness*, p. 276, quoting L.H. Gann, T.H. Henriksen, *The Struggle for Zimbabwe: Battle in the Bush* (New York, Praeger, 1981) p. 90.

The spectrum of African political interest from apathy to activism roughly correlated with the conceptualisation of racial population factors holistically, and with efforts to influence these factors to further political ends. Most African political leaders, both in Parliament and out, fully appreciated the significance of racial population matters in the fate of the white regime. As will be discussed, nationalist politicians and guerrilla leaders attempted to engineer these numbers to achieve political goals, and African MPs regularly attacked the state's population policies in Parliament. For those less politically minded and for whom support for the nationalists was decidedly less warm, the linkage between population and politics was most likely less clear. For the great bulk of black Rhodesians, population matters did not terribly concern them, as generally the perception of the linkage between its diverse components was weak, and the desire to engineer these numbers for political purposes was by and large nonexistent.

An obvious question is then left: Why would it be the case that matters of such deep political importance as population ratios would not concern the bulk of the African population, especially as a war for national liberation was being waged? One major reason reiterates the argument made by Lann and Henriksen concerning the lack of any consensus within African society about direction of any political change from the white-ruled *status quo*, or indeed even if such change was desirable. But several other factors also contributed to this lower level of interest concerning holistic population issues among the African population, even among those who sympathised with the liberation movement. One explanation was that the vast majority of Africans lived in rural areas, and the influx or outflow of a few thousand whites in and out of the cities would not have been noticeable, or have had much of a direct impact on their lives.<sup>5</sup> Whereas whites, who were overwhelmingly urban, would have been much more intimately aware of even subtle shifts in white migration patterns. To a large percentage of Africans, especially those in the TTLs, whites were a distant and seldom seen urban community.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, some of these elements, such as African fertility and mortality levels carried a great deal of independent significance

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<sup>5</sup> For example, between 1955 and 1979 immigration averaged only 10,207 annually and emigration 9,983 annually, the vast majority of which occurred within Salisbury, Bulawayo, Umtali only. Statistics derived from Rhodesian Central Statistical Office Monthly Digest reports.

<sup>6</sup> In December 1974, for example, 81.7 percent of Rhodesian whites lived in towns. G.H. Tanser, *The Guide to Rhodesia* (Johannesburg, Winchester Press, 1975). p. 310. Since the 1950s, the overwhelming majority of white immigrants came to the urban areas.

irrespective of liberation politics, and were not readily equated with the other components that did not.<sup>7</sup> As will be discussed below, fertility issues had a deep cultural and economic importance, and any linkage to white migration was likely an irrelevant abstraction to most rural Africans. Generally, precise population information would not have been as readily available among rural Africans, especially those living in more remote areas, which would have militated against their tracking these factors with any precision even if they were so inclined. In contrast, whites were regularly confronted with population figures in the popular media. Moreover, because Africans were not in control of state administration, the direct correlation between racial population figures and the practical effects of these numbers—as they pertained to housing, education, health, other social spending, tax revenues, electoral roles, employment opportunities and the like—would not have been as explicitly addressed as they were among the white electorate. Because whites were in control of state administration, diverse population trends were necessarily disaggregated and analysed as part of state business, and population issues becoming political issues was a natural result of this. In this important racial population contest that was so closely connected with Africans' political liberation, it is important to note that by the early 1960s, when these trends began to be seen as being significant by most of the white population, these trends were all moving in a direction that harmed the white regime and aided the nationalist cause. This crucial population contest was thus being won by African nationalists without requiring much effort on the part of the winning side. It was this reality that, more than any other reason, informed African nationalist views regarding population issues, and since Rhodesia's racial population trends were moving in the direction in which African nationalists wanted, there was no great need for nationalists to mobilise the populace towards this goal. The sheer fact of winning without trying in this sphere of activity would obviously counsel nationalists to expend their limited energies elsewhere. For these reasons, population matters were by and large not conceptualised holistically, they did not generate the same degree of interest, and certainly not the same degree of urgency, among most Africans as they did among the white population. Yet to the frustration of the settler state and the

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<sup>7</sup> E. Schmidt, *Peasants, Traders, and Wives: Shona Women in the History of Zimbabwe, 1870-1939* (Portsmouth, Heinemann, 1992).

delight of the nationalists, the African population insouciantly continued to widen the population gap.

### The Politicisation of 'Natural' Growth Rates

The degree to which Africans were having more children and thereby widening the racial ratios to effectuate political ends was a sensitive issue to white Rhodesians. Some high-level state officials saw in African pronatalism a concerted effort to weaken the state. As the Minister of Health <sup>who</sup> callously declared in 1972, African politicians, "seem quite happy to see people starve as long as they can step on their backs or over dead bodies to get into power."<sup>8</sup> Many lower-level RF politicians and members of the rank-and-file certainly agreed with the Minister's accusation that nationalists were cynically promoting higher growth rates as a method of weakening the white regime. For instance, a letter from the Sabi Valley Branch Secretary of the RF to the Secretary of Health from 1973 stated, "In fact we [the Sabi Valley Branch] would go further and say that they [the Africans] are using the population explosion as a weapon against the future of the Europeans in this country."<sup>9</sup> The extent to which whites actually believed this, and were not merely using it as an expression of frustration, or more cynically, using the intentionality accusation to propose more draconian birth control measures, is unclear. Also culture

Regardless of the sincerity of these white accusations, African nationalists took up this claim that growth rates were indeed a political weapon consciously employed by the African people. In a letter to the editor from 4 June 1971, Ernest Mporfu wrote:

... though Africans are politically silent that does not mean they are pleased with the present political atmosphere in this country... We, the silent majority, are not happily silent. We are instead busily producing more and more babies. That is our only weapon. We hope to flood this country with the black population by a huge percentage during the next decade or two. Nature is on our side. While the government is busy screaming for more and more immigrants, we are busy sending our pregnant women to the nearest clinic to give birth to future voices.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 81, 'Committee of Supply Vote', 4 August 1972.

<sup>9</sup> Kaler, *Running*, p. 64, citing NAZ B/137/5.

<sup>10</sup> 'Birth-Rate Being Used As Weapon', letter by Ernest Mporfu, *RH*, 5 June 1971.

Guerrillas in the field likewise picked up this rhetoric of the weaponisation of African wombs. Two African women interviewed by Kaler recounted the guerrilla's political speeches to villagers:

“They [the guerrillas] opposed family planning, they wanted us to have children who will fight in the war.” Mrs. Ngavira.

“They encouraged us to have many children, they say [the children will be] tomorrow's warriors and ministers [in government].” Mrs. Mhene.<sup>11</sup>

In an article entitled, ‘Other Fronts in the Struggle,’ ZAPU's *Zimbabwe Review* explicitly declared that a population war was occurring and African birth rates were a key militarised front:

Next to the insecurity the enemy fears from the gutting red-hot barrels of guns is the preponderantly engulfing population increase of the Zimbabweans... There are eighteen Zimbabweans to one settler racist... They see the power of the Zimbabwean population and the armed struggle ending their dreams of a permanent paradise of economic monopoly and fictitious class of a so-called privileged race. It is as though a rock is about to fall on them—and indeed it is—hence their frantic abuse of the idea of family planning among Africans... One of the urgent needs of Zimbabweans is a greater rate of population increase necessitated not only by demanding space but also by the dictates of the armed liberation struggle.<sup>12</sup>

Yet as again with white politicians, it must be questioned the degree to which African guerrillas truly believed the high growth rates were a result of liberation politics. Ascribing political motivations to the high fertility rates already occurring offered obvious advantages to the guerrillas, as it presented at least the illusion of greater control. As it was, it was doubtful that many women avoided using birth control to bolster the guerrilla armies or to drop a ‘rock’ on the white enemy. These private decisions to have more children were much more likely the results of intra-familial negotiations, and represented local social pressures, such as the possible return of *lobola* from the wife's family or the fear of husbands taking additional wives if more children were not forthcoming, than out of the desire to further liberation politics. Yet

<sup>11</sup> Kaler, *Running*, p. 194.

<sup>12</sup> *Zimbabwe Review*, 17 November 1973.

the idea of African fertility being a political weapon was continually employed by both sides of the population contest.

### **The Nexus Between Population and Land**

Land scarcity in Rhodesia was historically the most emotive and most pressing grievance of the African peasants, and it was closely linked to African population growth. As argued in chapter three, the economic and political pressures that were intensified by African 'overpopulation' always reflected a distributive and allocative problem rather than an absolute scarcity problem. Structural racial inequalities thoroughly permeated the social, economic, and political spheres in Rhodesia, but it was the inequitable racial division of land which symbolically represented all such inequalities. It was white encroachment on African lands that served as the impetuses for the Ndebele rebellion in 1893 and the 1896-7 rebellion by the Shona and Ndebele. And it was because of these rebellions that the British colonists first decided to create African Reserve lands that would be off-limits to white purchasers. The Land Apportionment Act of 1930 locked into place the racialised division of land in Rhodesia. This Act was updated and replaced by the Land Tenure Act in 1969, which re-divided the land in Rhodesia, allotting 47 percent of the total land area for exclusive white usage, and 53 percent for exclusive African usage.<sup>13</sup> The roughly equal division of land on paper was grossly unequal in regards to the quality of the land, and in terms of the population densities on their respective lands. The white population in white-assigned rural areas averaged one person per square mile, whereas Africans in the African rural areas averaged 45.8 persons per square mile, and in the Tribal Trust Lands this population density was much higher.<sup>14</sup> In stark contrast to the densely populated African lands, much of the white lands were unoccupied, which amounted to almost one tenth of the total white land area in 1961.<sup>15</sup> These divergent population densities on white and African lands were exacerbated by the contrary demographic trends of whites and Africans occurring

Repealed  
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<sup>13</sup> N. Kriger, *Peasant Voices*, pp. 52-53.

<sup>14</sup> Kriger, *Peasant Voices*, p. 54.

<sup>15</sup> Kriger, *Peasant Voices*, p. 54, citing M. Yudelman, *Africans on the Land* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1964).

through the 1960s and 1970s. Land issues and population issues were thus inextricably intertwined.

Tapping into African peasants' pre-existing grievances over land scarcity was the most effective method of guerrilla propaganda. It also was the primary vehicle for African guerrillas' appeals to cultural nationalism, as the discourse between guerrillas and African peasants was filtered and translated through the language of land metaphors. Land issues served as a flexible metaphor to broader themes of whites' dispossession of African traditions, of African manhood, and the nation's overall well-being, and could be analogised to other grievances so as to garner wider support for the guerrilla movement. This method of discourse was, for example, used by ZANLA guerrillas in the field, as Commissar Comrade Zeppelin recounted to Julie Frederickse:

We would get into an area, study the problems in that particular area, and then teach those people about their problems, how we can solve them by fighting the enemy... we would tell them, 'It's you, the people of Zimbabwe, of this area, who should have been in the areas where there are those farmers who are getting a lot from the rich land. They've thrown you out of the rich land so that you don't get anything,' and of course, then the people would like very much to have that land which they did not have. In fact, overall, the land question was our major political weapon. The people responded to it.<sup>16</sup>

By combining white immigration with land dispossession, guerrilla propagandists had little further work to do to link white emigration with land repossession. A popular Chimurenga song, "Maruza Vapambi Pfumi" encapsulated this linkage:

They come to Zimbabwe from Germany, America, Britain, fleeing from hunger in their own lands, seeing it was a black land, full of milk and honey. Our land, we the black people... It was not long before we saw them moving into our land of Zimbabwe. These oppressors were arrogant people, people with long trousers, who thought only of themselves and cared nothing for the Zimbabwean people, who were the rightful owners of the land... So we showed the people of Zimbabwe that when the oppressor is seen acting in such a manner it is time for him to go home; where his troubles are many and the women are lazy ...<sup>17</sup>

<sup>16</sup> T. Ranger, *Peasant Consciousness*, pp. 178-179, quoting Frederickse, *None But Ourselves*, p. 61.

<sup>17</sup> T. Ranger, *Peasant Consciousness*, p. 170.

Promises were made by guerrillas to peasants at political meetings to win support, and often these promises centered on repossessing lost lands by forcibly removing the whites. This meant both the more abstract political repossession of Zimbabwe, and the concrete sense of physically removing whites and repossessing their lands. Kriger quotes Africans from the Mutoko region recounting ZANLA political promises to African villagers:

Parents, you can't live like this in the mountains. You must go and live in the valleys on the white farms... Whites have everything: cars, enough to eat, nice houses. You have nothing... The chief enemy was the white man. If he were driven off the land, there'd be enough land for everyone and people could plough and live where they liked.<sup>18</sup>

Population density provided the linkage between land and population, and as African overpopulation in rural areas intensified these land grievances, it also provided more willing populations for guerrilla support. Since so much of the land was reserved for whites, and only sparsely occupied, the scarcity problems in the African areas that were intensified by high growth rates were recognised by politicised Africans to be a political rather than a purely demographic construct. An article in ZAPU's political organ, the *Zimbabwe Review*, entitled, "Land: Rhodesia's Powder Keg," stated:

Four million are allotted less than 42 percent of the land whilst 6 percent of the population has exclusive rights over 58 percent of Rhodesian soil... Thus in fact, the bulk of the African population lives in and cultivates 21 million acres or 22 percent of the land surface... Population increase from 1931 had resulted in serious overcrowding in the African Reserves, the land formally allocated to every family had further to be subdivided into yet smaller plots. Every household was allocated a maximum of six acres, and livestock had to be drastically reduced since grazing land had become scarce... Under the guise of land consolidation, the African people were systematically dispossessed of rich land and driven to arid areas to give room to the new overlords—the white settlers.<sup>19</sup>

ZANU's political organ, the *Zimbabwe News*, identified the essentially distributive nature of African overpopulation problem in this 1968 article entitled, "Battle Cry: Forward with the War of the Peoples' Liberation—Chimurenga":

<sup>18</sup> Kriger, *Peasant Voices*, p. 98.

<sup>19</sup> 'Land: Rhodesia's Powder Keg,' *Zimbabwe Review*, No. 9, 24 October, 1966, in A. Braganca, I. Wallerstein, *Liberation Reader*, pp. 57-58.

Confronted with the 4 ½ million peasants and workers in Zimbabwe, the ¼ million white settlers acknowledge that fact that they are a negligible minority... In most cases the European farms are just lying idle because, either the owners have no interest in developing them, or are now too rich to farm them, whereas Africans are packed like sardines in the so-called reserves where subsistence agriculture alone cannot support a reasonable standard of life.<sup>20</sup>

An article from ZAPU's *Zimbabwe Review* entitled, 'Genocide Economics in Rhodesia,' echoed this same point: "...there is plenty of land in Zimbabwe: only that the greater and better part of it has been greedily appropriated by the white minority therein; and a lot of this white-grabbed land is just lying idle..."<sup>21</sup> The *Zimbabwe Review* succinctly argued that family planning was actually an effort by the settler state to conform the African population to their reduced economic role in Rhodesia:

After depriving the African people of their cattle, thus putting an economic squeeze on the Africans, the settlers are now seeking to trim and tie down the size of African families to that squeeze... An African family which surrenders itself to be trimmed to the economy of the settlers is not helping itself at all but is contributing to the fortunes of the settlers...<sup>22</sup>

In an editorial addressing the Sadie Report's recommendations to reconfigure Rhodesia's population, the ZAPU's *Zimbabwe Review* queried:

Rhodesia is three times the size of England. England with its small land area carries a population of more than 50 million people. Zimbabwe with its large land area carries a small population of 4.5 million. In short, whilst Rhodesia is about three times the size of England, England's population is twelve times the population of Zimbabwe. So what is family planning for?<sup>23</sup>

African nationalists obviously had their own ideas of what state's population policy was really for, and it had little to do with the state's purported rationale of the amelioration of African suffering in the rural areas. The nationalists actively sought to communicate these alleged ulterior motives to the African people through their propaganda campaigns.

<sup>20</sup> *Zimbabwe News*, July-September 1968.

<sup>21</sup> *Zimbabwe Review*, 26 July 1969.

<sup>22</sup> 'African Population-Growth Strangulation', *Zimbabwe Review*, January/February 1970.

<sup>23</sup> 'Birth Control', *Zimbabwe Review*, 5 July 1969.

## Nationalist Propaganda

African nationalists affected the various components of Rhodesia's demography unevenly, yet through different forms of propaganda the nationalists attempted to synthesise these different components into a comprehensive and easily understandable population policy and thereby impute a greater degree of control than that which existed. Regardless of their respective causality in each of these factors, nationalists propagandised about racial population issues consistently through the 1960s and 1970s.<sup>24</sup> The forms taken by nationalist propaganda can be divided between what can be characterised as political terror, or 'propaganda of the deed'<sup>25</sup>; direct verbal propaganda; and print media in partisan periodicals. It would be misleading to describe these forms as being wholly distinct and separate, as it was often in combination that these forms relayed their population message; for example harassing or intimidating family planning workers, railing against their work in *pungwes*, and reinforcing this message in print. This section will deal primarily with the nationalists' print media, as the other methods are discussed in other parts of this chapter.

The periodicals analysed below are ZANU's *Zimbabwe News* and ZAPU's *Zimbabwe Review*, which in style, ideology, and subject matter differed very little, despite the antagonistic relationship between the two nationalist forces issuing these periodicals. These periodicals were produced outside Rhodesia, mostly in Zambia, Tanzania, or outside Africa and distributed as far afield as London to sympathetic organisations and movements, expatriates, exiles, and guerrillas in the field. The style in which these organs were written combined with their distribution, point to these periodicals not being intended to win converts or convince the apostate of the righteousness and prospects of the nationalist cause. And it was clearly to hearten and re-energise the flock, and inform sympathetic audiences of the rationales behind their various policies, that this print propaganda was produced.

<sup>24</sup> Editions of both the *Zimbabwe News* (ZANU) and *Zimbabwe Review* (ZAPU) are located at the Institute of Commonwealth Studies Archives and Special Collections, Russell Square, London, UK.

<sup>25</sup> Or as Mikhail Bakunin wrote in 1870 in his 'Letters to a Frenchman on the Present Crisis', "...from this very moment we must spread our principles, not with words but with deeds, for this is the most popular, the most potent, and the most irresistible form of propaganda." See M. Bakunin, M. Shatz (ed), *Bakunin: Statism and Anarchy* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990).

Nationalist print media addressed population issues in different ways, depending upon the components being discussed. Print propaganda regarding population matters focused on five primary themes: 1) the previously discussed nexus between population pressures and land scarcity, 2) portraying the wide racial population ratios and the large African population as a source of power, 3) articulating their resistance to the state's family planning efforts, 4) articulating their opposition to the state's immigration policies, and 5) trumping the high white emigration rates as evidence of broader nationalist successes in the political and military spheres. The relative population numbers of whites and Africans were often cited as evidence of African strength and white weakness: at times explicitly, other times implicitly. For instance, the *Zimbabwe Review* cited the African population figure of 4 million three times in one weekly edition,<sup>26</sup> five times in another,<sup>27</sup> and seven times in still another,<sup>28</sup> and in many of these same editions the figure of 200,000 whites is also repeated. An excerpt from a *Zimbabwe Review* article from 1964 exemplified this repetitive impact of African population numbers:

Let there be no doubt about the irrevocable decision of the 4 million African peoples of Zimbabwe that they and they alone are the unchallengeable owners and rulers of Zimbabwe and that it is their dedicated and irrevocable decision to take over the reins of government NOW. The white settlers, colonist inhabitants and all their progeny, now or after, living in Zimbabwe do so by grace, wishes and above all by their degree of cooperation and submission to the will of the 4 million African people as expressed by their chosen African majority government in Zimbabwe. Hence the recent arrogant declaration by settler PM Ian Smith that he cannot visualise in his lifetime an African government in Southern Rhodesia, is to us and the 4 million Africans in Southern Rhodesia a kind of fairy tale best suited to retell to his mother.<sup>29</sup>

The rhetorical thrust of this constant repetition is the strength of African numbers and the weakness of the regime as exemplified by white numbers. One *Zimbabwe Review* article specifically stated: "Today there are twenty five Zimbabweans to one white person in our country. It's this which makes fascist Smith tremble into barbarous mischief."<sup>30</sup>

<sup>26</sup> *Zimbabwe Review*, 9, 24 July 1964.

<sup>27</sup> *Zimbabwe Review*, 8, 14 November 1964.

<sup>28</sup> *Zimbabwe Review*, 7, 28 November 1964.

<sup>29</sup> (my underlines) *Zimbabwe Review*, 3, 24 April 1964.

<sup>30</sup> 'Genocide Economics in Zimbabwe', *Zimbabwe Review*, 26 July 1969.

The most successful themes of nationalist propaganda were those that jibed with pre-existing African inclinations, as with their consistent theme of malevolent white intentions, which readily found a receptive audience among many Africans. Searching for racist thinking behind the regime's population policies was easy hunting for nationalist propagandists, and these grounded suspicions were often bolstered by rumours and untruths. In this vein, propaganda reinforced the fear of white medicine, in particular that which was distributed by the state, by feeding into older (yet untrue)<sup>31</sup> rumours about the state surreptitiously sterilising African women.<sup>32</sup> In print media, nationalists attacked most vociferously the state's family planning efforts, which in part fitted in with this bad medicine theme. Amy Kaler divides nationalist rhetoric concerning family planning into three frames: 1) a plan to secretly annihilate the African population, 2) an example of white desperation, and 3) white disregard for sexual morality or decency.<sup>33</sup> This rhetorical strategy was in part successful because the nationalists' pronatalism was consistent with long-standing African practices such as bride-wealth and vertical family-based social security for elder relations. The pre-existing economic and cultural incentives to have more babies were supplemented by nationalist propaganda offering newer political rationales to older motivations. Combined with the aforementioned assertions, nationalist propaganda highlighted the racialised nature of state family planning efforts and how efforts to reduce the African population coincided with the RF's policy of mass white immigration. As will be discussed below, it was the cultural nationalist preservation of patriarchal tradition that proved the most successful theme, especially in appealing to African males.

Propaganda in the print form confronted the state's immigration policies on their merits, and challenged the state's purported motives behind these policies. One way in which this was done was to expose the incongruence of the state's family planning promotion and its simultaneous mass immigration policy. This specific rhetoric about white hypocrisy not surprisingly peaked around the time of the Settler '74 Campaign. The *Zimbabwe Review* queried: "Couldn't the whole contradiction of imposing birth control among Africans in Rhodesia on the one hand and pressing for

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<sup>31</sup> There was some limited truth to the charge of coercion in the realm of family planning, but not state coercion, as the Herald reported that some employers required proof of birth control pill usage before employing African girls. 'Pill or No Jobs' Claim' *RH*, 28 June 1971.

<sup>32</sup> D. Jeater, *Marriage*.

<sup>33</sup> Kaler, *Running*, p. 187.

immigrants (a million) from Europe on the other, be likened to a single family which whilst taking birth control pills on the one hand, advertises for the collection of children for adoption on the other?"<sup>34</sup> An example of the sort of state language concerning immigration seized upon as being inconsistent with other statements on family planning, can be found in a Rhodesian immigration promotion pamphlet from July 1965, which read: "The 'new' Rhodesia offers opportunities not bettered by any other country...by world standards Rhodesia is starved of population."<sup>35</sup> Nationalists took on the issue of white immigration into a supposedly population-starved land and how this coincided with neo-Malthusianism in Rhodesia, by pointing out that if the problem were merely too many humans in Rhodesia vying for resources, as suggested by the state's family planning propaganda, then it would make little sense to import more white humans into Rhodesia. Smith's loosening of immigration restrictions also proved to be great fodder for African opponents of the RF's immigration policies, even those within the Rhodesian Parliament. In this regard, immigration was equated with mercenary recruitment, and immigrants were deemed mercenaries regardless of their age, gender, or their intentions on moving to Rhodesia.<sup>36</sup> Added to these attacks on the nature of white immigration were threats made against the immigrants themselves, as they were accused of being witting or unwitting tools of the regime. The back cover of a *Zimbabwe News* from 1974, had the following words printed in bold letters below news clippings of war violence: "Are you prepared to immigrate to & die in Rhodesia???"<sup>37</sup> Another article warned: "Future Rhodesia immigrants are warned to note that our liberation bullets have no mercy on reinforcements from Europe or elsewhere."<sup>38</sup> An article from ZAPU's *Zimbabwe Review* in 1973 characterised the nature of white immigration after UDI as a vulnerability to be exploited by guerrilla forces:

Immigrants are fortune seekers. They have left their countries for new ones in order to make quick-money and enjoy their cheaply acquired riches. In guerrilla-infested land, a land of landmines and of a people that [have]

<sup>34</sup> For example: 'Smith's Million Immigrants', *Zimbabwe Review*, 12 January 1974.

<sup>35</sup> Smith Papers, Box 019, Cabinet Memorandum, 'Rhodesia: Assisted Passages to land of Sunshine: Golden Opportunity', 2 July 1965.

<sup>36</sup> 'Immigrant Reinforcements', Editorial, *Zimbabwe Review*, 12 January 1974.

<sup>37</sup> *Zimbabwe News*, January 1974.

<sup>38</sup> 'Immigrants Reinforcements', *Zimbabwe Review*, 12 January 1974.

resolved to rout once and forever its oppressors, immigrants find the situation far [from] being ideal and they leave.<sup>39</sup>

In targeting immigration, nationalist organs also signaled their appreciation of the importance of immigration to the settler regime, not just militarily—as so-called mercenaries—but also economically, politically and psychologically. Therefore, the dissemination of angry rhetoric aimed at newcomers and the state that promoted their migration was a political education to other nationalists and sympathisers as to why the arrival of a few thousand whites in Salisbury and Bulawayo mattered in the context of the wider liberation war. — whose aim was to block migration

Nationalist print propaganda in both the ZANU and ZAPU newsletters took great interest in the whites leaving Rhodesia as well as those coming in. Emigration figures were reported in nationalist periodicals often with commentary directly linking these movements with nationalist activity. As with the display of population numbers generally, emigration figures were on other occasions displayed alone, or with little comment. Commentary accompanying other figures emphasised the transience and lack of rootedness of the white population. With these observations, the propagandists exposed the nub of the settlers' greatest vulnerability, yet an observation of a phenomenon, no matter how keen, is certainly not the same thing as the power to influence that phenomenon. The straightforward message conveyed was that of the inevitability of the nationalist victory, and of a more immediate positive momentum moving in the direction of white capitulation.<sup>40</sup>

where did they come from?

To what audience, to what purpose, and to what effect did this print propaganda have on the actual population numbers? Most obviously, this form of propaganda targeted literate nationalist supporters. Because the faithful outside of Rhodesia, and perhaps some limited clandestine readers within Rhodesia, were clearly the nationalists' intended audience, it is likely that only a few whites in Rhodesia outside the Security Forces ever came across these periodicals. It is even probable that those Rhodesians who did find copies did not take their assertions or threats too seriously. Similarly, it is even more unlikely that any of these materials ever found their way into the hands of potential immigrants to Rhodesia overseas, either in the UK, South Africa, or elsewhere. This must surely have been known to be the case by

<sup>39</sup> 'The Ian Smith Dilemma', *Zimbabwe Review*, 28 July 1973.

<sup>40</sup> See for example, 'The Revolutionary War Scares White Settlers', *Zimbabwe News*, June 1977.

the producers of these materials. As for potential white immigrants and emigrants, and so too with potential African practitioners of family planning, this nationalist propaganda was not intended to speak directly to them to influence their behavior, so much as to justify or explain why nationalist policies were what they were to sympathisers. This print propaganda itself did not intimidate white residents into emigrating, scare off potential immigrants from coming, or dissuade women from using birth control, though it did articulate an appreciation of the nexus between population issues and the fate of the regime, as well as create at least the illusion of a more activist and holistic population strategy on the part of African nationalists than what actually existed. To what extent nationalists' actions, as opposed to mere words, effected population patterns will be explored below.

### **African Influence on White Migration Patterns**

African guerrilla activity had both direct and indirect effects on white migration patterns, and it was on these components that the nationalists exerted the greatest degree of control in the wider war of numbers. Through the increasing drain on morale that call-ups generated, and the use of political terror, African guerrillas sought to make life in Rhodesia unbearable for whites, and to thereby induce higher emigration rates. These same tactics also served to give off the image of Rhodesia as a dangerous and unpredictable destination to potential immigrants in their source countries. Perhaps surprisingly, the nationalists were more successful in drying up white immigration than in directly inducing emigration. This was partially, perhaps, a reflection of disparities in information between current residents and potential immigrants. However, as discussed chapters four and five, these two factors of white migration were closely linked. In this way, African nationalists were able to apply pressure on the white population shuffle, and this had dramatic demographic and political consequences.

Ironically, the activities that produced the most dramatic demographic results were those in which the nationalists' specific intent was diffused among several goals, demographic changes perhaps even the lesser of the many. This in particular references the guerrillas' military and terroristic activities during the war. Within this sphere of activity, nationalist actions can be further divided between actions aimed at

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directly lowering the white settlers' sense of security, and those morale-sapping byproducts of the war pertaining to the compounding military and civilian demands of the white population. Despite the many direct and indirect effects that stemmed from the war, these disparate effects all emanated from only a few categories of actions. ZANLA military strategy in the war was two-fold: to attenuate white manpower resources to the point that holding on to power proved too much of a strain on the small white population, and to create an atmosphere of terror and insecurity.<sup>41</sup> Both of these prongs had demographic components. The attenuation of white manpower resources was only an effective strategy because of the relative sizes of the white and African populations. Likewise, the terror strategy was especially effective because of the white population's constant population shuffle, and its need for new migrants to replace those leaving. Nonetheless, the demographic results of these actions were only of secondary consideration to the nationalist leaders. Of primary importance to them was the demoralisation of the white populace such that whites would surrender power. But again, as discussed in chapter four, white morale was intimately related to migration figures, and these two factors moved in tandem. The tactical applications of ZANLA's strategy were of the following types: 1) attacks on settler farms, directed at African farm workers and white farmers; 2) an increasing presence in the TTLs to recruit more guerillas, punish informers and state collaborators, and hold *pungwes*; 3) extensive mining of rural roads and attacks on moving vehicles, both military and nonmilitary; and 4) what can be described best as 'propaganda of the deed,' high profile terrorist acts on non-military targets, such as downing two Viscount civilian airliners, the 1977 bombing of a Woolworth store, the fire-bombing of the Pink Panther restaurant, and blowing up an enormous fuel storage facility outside of Salisbury in December 1978.

A complication in determining the causation between guerrilla activity and migration patterns is that it is impossible to accurately discern the truthful reasons why emigrants decided to leave Rhodesia, or why potential immigrants decided not to come. When emigrants did cite reasons for their departure during the war years, which itself was only rarely done, emigrants tended to claim that they either left for

<sup>41</sup> See, for example, the Chitepo quote in an earlier chapter on ZANU strategy. M. Raeburn, *We Are Everywhere: Narratives From Rhodesian Guerrillas* (New York, Random House, 1978), p. 201. ZIPRA's military strategy was based more upon conventional invasion forces, and did not become a military factor until much later in the conflict. See Ellert, *The Rhodesian Front War*.

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economic reasons, call-up strains, or political differences with the regime. These were all, in part at least, traceable to nationalist activity, though with an emphasis on the indirect effects of the war rather than the direct effects. Whites from the rural areas more explicitly cited security fears than did most emigrants, as their degree of risk was more immediate and palpable than the vast majority of whites, who were primarily urban dwellers. High rates of emigration from the rural border areas greatly expanded the scope of guerrilla activity and extended the territory accessible to the guerrillas. Those farmers who remained in these areas were under that much more of a threat, and demanded greater military protection from the state lest they too emigrate. For example, an internal memorandum from the Thrasher Zone of operations, which was along Rhodesia's eastern border with Mozambique, dated April 1978, read: "In February 1976 there were a total of 31 occupied farms in the Mayo Farming area. As at the 1<sup>st</sup> April 1978, the number of occupied farms has dropped to 19... 11 of the 19 farmers have stated categorically that unless the security position improves, and by this they mean the presence of a permanent security force in the area, they will vacate their farms before the advent of the next rainy season... This will of course leave the remaining 8 farmers in an almost untenable position and there is every likelihood of their also leaving the area."<sup>42</sup> While whites on the 'sharp end' of the guerrilla war explicitly cited security concerns for their departures, urban whites typically did not. A 1976 government survey of known intending emigrants asked, "Why are you leaving?" In reporting the results, the Minister of Immigration indicated that within this pool of known emigrants, the majority of respondents replied that it was because of a lack of job opportunities in Rhodesia, many others were pensioners wishing to retire by the sea, and others were leaving simply because they were getting married abroad and staying. He concluded: "[t]here are a hundred and one excuses but a very small proportion say they are leaving because of the constant call-ups or they do not see any future in Rhodesia."<sup>43</sup> One of the weaknesses of this survey is that there were obvious reasons why emigrants would have tended to not be completely truthful in their given reasons for leaving, the most obvious being to avoid charges of cowardice. More importantly though, there was a selective bias in the respondent pool in that it only captured those emigrants who made themselves

<sup>42</sup> BECM 2001/086/007 Memorandum by AW Rich, JOC Thrasher, 6 April 1978.

<sup>43</sup> Parliamentary Debate, 'Committee of Supply: On Vote 12 Information, Immigration, and Tourism--\$4,105,000', col. 229, 5 August 1976.

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known to the state, which by 1976, was an ever-shrinking proportion of total emigrants. Even so, this survey jibes with a more recent survey of emigrants conducted in the early 1990s, in which only 5 percent of the ex-Rhodesian respondents indicated that they left due to the war.<sup>44</sup> But this survey too suffers from an even greater selective bias, as the pool was collected from among members of diasporal Rhodesian associations and was conducted many years after the move, both factors that would presumably skew towards retrospectively discounting the significance of fear in their decision making. It is therefore very likely that the direct effects of the war, in particular the fear of physical violence played a much more significant role in white emigration during the war years than was admitted to by the emigrants themselves, at the time of departure or in the years since, particularly among whites from the border areas. Yet as explained in chapter four, this phenomenon of high rates of white emigration was as old as the colony and long preceded the shooting war.

8 white reasons tho! for their pop. flow.

The association of Rhodesia with white insecurity and continuous white call-ups played a major role in dissuading potential immigrants from choosing Rhodesia as a destination, as argued in chapter five. Both the direct and indirect effects of the war had a greater impact on lowering immigration numbers into Rhodesia than in raising emigration numbers from Rhodesia. White residents of Rhodesia, even factoring in their characteristic transience, would need greater prodding to leave than a potential immigrant would need to be discouraged from migrating to Rhodesia. Added to this inertia effect, was that the foreign press' coverage of the Rhodesian war portrayed the war in a much more negative light than did Rhodesia's coverage of the war. While the white Rhodesian press reported overly optimistic appraisals until the very end of the war, the foreign press prematurely predicted the demise of the white regime, which would have had a chilling effect on Rhodesian recruitment. As it was, Rhodesian immigration officials openly conceded that negative foreign press coverage affected Rhodesia's immigration yields.<sup>45</sup> Nonetheless, while immigration

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figures

<sup>44</sup> W.G. Eaton, *Modern Sunlight*.

<sup>45</sup> Parliamentary Debate, 'Committee of Supply: On Vote 31—Information, Immigration, and Tourism—L1,019,200', col. 1055, 1 August 1969.

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 did drop during the war years, surprisingly significant numbers still entered, at least partially mitigating the political and demographic effects of nationalist activity.<sup>46</sup>

### **African Influence on the Rate of White Natural Increase**

Doesn't off to white mig. flows to pol. circumstances

The war had both direct and indirect effects on white rates of natural growth, but surprisingly it was not on white death rates that the war had had its greatest effect, but on white fertility. A problem that complicates the study of Rhodesian demographic behavior is that it is in many ways trying to hit a moving target due to persistent white transience. Nevertheless, approximately 1000 to 1500 whites, both civilians and Security Force members, died due to war-related causes.<sup>47</sup> This was out of a total of 16,974 registered white deaths from 1972 through 1979.<sup>48</sup> This worked out to approximately 7 percent of white deaths during the war years being directly attributable to the war. In contrast, during the war years 113,889 Africans died, approximately 19,000 of which from war-related causes—16 percent of all deaths.<sup>49</sup> Annual white mortality charts throughout the 1970s consistently had ischemic heart disease as far and away the greatest killer of whites, followed by cancer, in particular lung cancer.<sup>50</sup> Another major killer of whites was motor vehicle accidents.<sup>51</sup> These were all mortalities typical of other affluent communities around the world. In addition, despite a gradual rise in the 1970s, white Rhodesian death rates were always significantly lower than in Britain throughout the war years: from 1972 to 1979 the two averaged 8 deaths per 1000 and 11.8 per 1000 respectively.<sup>52</sup> The war, and by extension the guerrillas who waged it, did have some mild effect on white mortality, but oddly enough not nearly as much as did white tobacco farmers through the

<sup>46</sup> From 1973 to 1979 immigration still ran at an average of 7,542 annually. Statistics derived from Rhodesian Central Statistical Office Monthly Digest reports.

<sup>47</sup> Godwin, *Rhodesians Never Die*, p. 280.

<sup>48</sup> Statistics derived from Rhodesian Secretary of Health Reports (hereafter SHR), (Government publications, 1953-1979).

<sup>49</sup> Statistics derived from SHR and Godwin, *Rhodesians Never Die*, p. 280. Many of these African combat deaths were combatants serving on the government's Security Forces.

<sup>50</sup> SHR

<sup>51</sup> A growing percentage of motor vehicle deaths from the mid 1970s were caused by landmines placed by African guerillas. Because of the prevalence of these landmines along Rhodesia's roads, road traffic decreased to the extent that total road deaths dropped. This ironically meant that in statistical terms, all in all, the mining of Rhodesian roads saved white lives. SHR

<sup>52</sup> SHR. British figures include only England and Wales.

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Marcraft differs

cigarettes they produced, nor even as white bar owners for over-serving automobile drivers.

The escalation of the guerrilla war had a greater effect on white fertility. White Rhodesian birth rates in the 1950s were comparatively high for a wealthy society, but were roughly consistent with other contemporary settler communities, such as South Africa, Australia, and New Zealand, all of which were higher than the UK and other European nations.<sup>53</sup> Even against these other settler communities, Rhodesia had the highest birth rates in 1950. All wealthy societies, including white Rhodesia, experienced a decline in birth rates from the 1950s to the late 1970s. Sloping downwards at different pitches, the gap between Britain's consistently low birth rate and the higher rates of Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and America's white population tightened somewhat, yet Britain's always remained the lowest, even by the late 1970s. Rhodesia followed this same general movement, but at a much steeper slope than all comparative Western societies.

WHITE CRUDE BIRTH RATES COMPARED (1960-1979)<sup>54</sup>

1960	1966	1972	1979
<b>Rhodesia--</b>	<b>26.3</b>	NZ-- 22.3	RSA-- 23.2 <sup>55</sup>
RSA whites--	24.8	Aus-- 19.3	NZ-- 21.6
US whites--	22.7	Brits-- 17.7	Aus-- 19.9
Australia--	22.4	USw- 17.4	<b>Rho-- 18.1</b>
Britain <sup>57</sup> --	17.1	<b>Rho-- 16.9</b>	USw- 14.5
New Zealand-	N/A	RSA-- N/A	Brits-- 13.7 <sup>58</sup>
			<b>Rho-- 11.0</b>

This descent of white Rhodesia's dropping fertility was not smooth, but instead resembled a series of drops and plateaus, like steps, which corresponded neatly with other historical and political trends in Rhodesia, particularly the boom and bust years of net migrations discussed in chapter four. Consistent with Rhodesia's

<sup>53</sup> Statistics derived from the United Nations Secretariat, *World Population Prospects: The 2004 Revision* (New York, United Nations, 2005), (hereafter UNWPP) found on World Resources Institute web site, 'Earth trends.' URL: <http://earthtrends.wri.org>

<sup>54</sup> Statistics derived from: Rhodesian Annual Reports of the Secretary of Health, *Vital Statistics* (Salisbury, Government Publication); Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Australian Historic Population Statistics Table 42* (Canberra, Government Publication, 2006); Statistics New Zealand, *Demographic Trends 2006* (Wellington, Government Publication, 2006); United States National Center for Health Statistics, *Live Births, Birth Rates, and Fertility Rates, by Race: United States, 1909-2000* (Washington, Government Publication); Official Yearbook of the Republic of South Africa, *South Africa 1985* (Pretoria, Government Publication).

<sup>55</sup> South African figure from 1970, not 1972.

<sup>56</sup> South African figure from 1980, not 1979.

<sup>57</sup> British figures are for England and Wales only.

<sup>58</sup> British figure from 1973, not 1972.

then robust economy and high political confidence, white birth rates remained about 25 per thousand throughout the 1950s.<sup>59</sup> In comparison, Britain's birth rates during this time hovered between 15 and 17, on average around 30 percent lower than Rhodesians. Beginning in 1960, and coinciding with the disintegration of the Federation, Rhodesia's birth rate plummeted during this first step down. Before leveling off again in 1966, Rhodesia's crude birth rate fell nearly 36 percent from 26.3 in 1960 to 16.9 in 1966, when it briefly dipped below Britain's for the first time. From 1966 the birth rate flattened out, and even rose slightly as Britain's continued to fall. Rhodesia's plateau during these years was consistent with South Africa, Australia, and New Zealand's patterns, though notably Rhodesia's rate was already lower than all three. This leveling occurred alongside the generally optimistic post-UDI mood and lasted until the winter of 1972, when the war escalated, strongly suggesting a correlation. After 1972 the birth rate fell again, and following a small bump in 1974, that was most likely due to the influx of Portuguese settlers, the birth rate would continue to drop until the end of the war. From 1972 to 1979 the white birth rate fell from 18.1 to 11, a 40 percent drop. Other comparable birth rates in 1979 were Britain's at 12.9, white America's 14.5, Australia's 15.4, Greece's 15.5, and New Zealand's at 16.6. All in all, Rhodesia had a 59 percent drop in birth rates in 20 years, far greater than any comparable population anywhere on the globe.

Divorce  
Rate  
7.  
war

The dramatic and unique demographic changes experienced by Rhodesia in the 1960s and 1970s are all the more notable in light of the transience of the white population. Because such a large percentage of whites were in Rhodesia for such a short time before continuing on to other destinations or returning home, that Rhodesia's birth rates were at such variance with both the most common source and destination countries is even more puzzling. This disparity between birth rates in Rhodesia and elsewhere could be attributable to a combination of three factors: a migratory selective effect, a deliberate effort of many women in Rhodesia to limit the size of their families or postpone children beyond that which was already being practiced in other Western populations, and/or a general, unwanted disruption of marital and sexual relations while in Rhodesia.

WAR

<sup>59</sup> In 1960 the world average birth rate was 35-36. South and East Africa was 45, Europe was 19, North America and Oceania were 24. S.J. Behrman (ed), *Fertility and Family Planning: A World View*, (Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 1969). p. 77.

Selective migratory effects certainly influenced the composition of Rhodesia's white population in many ways. White migrants were always coming and going, but prior to 1960 whites were having more children in Rhodesia. The sorts of migrants to and from Rhodesia did begin to change after Smith's premiership in 1964, as earlier immigration restrictions on capital, skills, and ethnicity were all loosened. The immigrants after the mid 1960s were on average slightly less skilled and poorer, and were very often not British. These compositional changes of Rhodesian whites would not seem to necessarily influence birth rates in an adverse way, but instead would tend to have the opposite effect, as according to Vining's paradox,<sup>60</sup> of wealth's negative correlation with birth rates. Furthermore, the non-British ethnicities that did appear in greater numbers—in particular Afrikaners, Portuguese, and Southern Europeans—all on average had higher birth rates than did those of British descent. These compositional changes would intuitively lead to a rise not a decline in birth rates. At any rate, any changes that did occur after Smith coming to power in 1964 would obviously not explain the drop in the early 1960s. It was probably in a different respect that Rhodesian migration influenced birth rates, through the interaction of Rhodesia's long-standing transience and political and economic uncertainty. Migrants might well have had a child or children, but perhaps either before or after their stay in Rhodesia. This moves us directly into the second factor, which was the purposeful postponement of childrearing during insecure times, aided as this was by white women's easy access to birth control. Postponement could mean either waiting for better times in Rhodesia, or as stated earlier, waiting until exiting Rhodesia to have (more?) children. This break from child rearing while in Rhodesia, enabled as it was by access to family planning for white women, could have been the product of a rational, deliberate decisions of white families, or at very least, white women.

This reduction of potential family size was not always an act of rational planning by white families, however. From 1973, the consistent rise of call-up commitments and other strains of living in a country at war took their toll on white families. Some commentators have noted that these combined pressures physically and psychologically exhausted the white population. Discussing the effects of the war on the white population, Richard Hodder-Williams in an interview noted that, "By the

<sup>60</sup> M. Potts, 'Sex and the Birth Rate: Human Biology, Demographic Change, and Access to Fertility-Regulation Methods', *Population and Development Review*, Vol. 23, No. 1 (March, 1997).

Relative  
Affluence  
←  
child  
birth

end of the '70s [white] people were totally confused... and exhausted... [To most whites, the end of the war] was a release both physically and personally. [They suffered] tremendous psychological problems. Marriages had broken up during this period." The end of the war "delighted" them, as it "was a release."<sup>61</sup> Consistent with Hodder-William's observations, alcoholism and suicide rates were both higher in 1970s Rhodesia than in most comparable populations around the globe.<sup>62</sup> Divorce rates in Rhodesia were also very high, a result certainly related to war-related stresses.<sup>63</sup> In 1976, Rhodesians had the third highest divorce rates in the world, with one in four marriages ending in divorce, leading some civic leaders to call for a change in the law to implement mandatory waiting periods before granting divorces.<sup>64</sup> Even in relationships that remained intact, war-time separation no doubt disrupted sexual relations which would also have an effect on fertility. In addition, the loss of the husband's income forced recalculations of the economics of childbearing. One *Herald* article from August 1974 described at length the psychological and economic plight of white wives of soldiers:

A regular soldier on active service spends a month in the bush and 10 days at home. As one wife said: You marry him and then it's a battle trying to find the time to get to know him...[wife, Jean, said] 'It's quite hard being on my own. I get very depressed just worrying about him in the bush. I just worry about everything... One month I nearly had to put the baby in a home because I didn't even have the money for milk tokens. But I borrowed money from my friend for milk and got an advance on my husband's pay. Then you have to pay it back and in the end you just can't win. Because of all this I've started to work and now get \$135 as a clerk. The baby stays with a nanny because I couldn't get him into a crèche'...[wife, Diedre, said] 'I have to work but I'm going to have a baby and I'll have to stop in the next few months. I dread to think how I'll manage then...I dread having my baby. It was a mistake.' [wife, Anne, said] 'Of course I have to work...You'll find all Army wives struggle. I couldn't afford to fall pregnant, much as my husband would like me to'...[wife, Sandy, said when the husbands return] 'You try to put up a cheerful front, you don't mention the problems of home. They've got terrorists to worry about.'<sup>65</sup>

<sup>61</sup> R. Hodder-Williams interview, Oral Archives, BECM.

<sup>62</sup> 'Rhodesia Top the Big-Time Boozers', *RH*, 18 July 1973.

<sup>63</sup> See Rhodesia Herald articles on divorce, separation, and war stress: 'Marriage No Bliss for Many Rhodesian Couples', *RH*, 7 June 1974; 'Family Stress Caused by Call-Up', *RH*, 14 July 1976.

<sup>64</sup> 'Rhodesia Divorce Faster than in Reno', *RH*, 16 August 1976.

<sup>65</sup> 'Terror War & Women Wait', *RH*, 20 August 1974.

These factors of purposeful postponement, unwanted disruptions in sexual relations, and war-related economic re-calculations, when taken together help to account for Rhodesia's significant deviation from the fertility levels of comparative societies.

Regardless of the specific mechanisms at work, only the second step down in Rhodesia's birth trends corresponded with the war, as the first step down in the early 1960s was prior to UDI, and long before the war's escalation in 1972. This first drop could obviously be better explained by political and economic uncertainty, and transience and its effect on fertility, than by the war-related stresses. It would be an especially long stretch to attribute this first fertility drop to nationalist activity, any more than the wider decolonisation trends occurring throughout the continent. If this causality were to be taken seriously, Harold MacMillan would be as responsible for falling white Rhodesian birth rates in the early 1960s as Joshua Nkomo. The second drop during the war years can be more easily traced to guerrilla activity. Affected as the second drop was by the war waged by African guerrillas, it can be said that African military and political activity were partially responsible for Rhodesia's odd fertility patterns, and in a limited sense this would be correct. However, it is highly doubtful that even the most politically aware nationalists pretended that this drop in white fertility, such as it was even known, was a result of deliberate nationalist policies intended to effectuate this drop, and as a result their actual *mens rea* was limited.

### **Nationalist Resistance to the State's Family Planning Initiatives**

Nationalists were the most active in their resistance to the state's family planning efforts. These state efforts had their antecedents in colonial interference in African sexuality dating back to the earliest settlement in Rhodesia.<sup>66</sup> Considering the long history of white interference in African sexuality, and African resistance to these interferences, the state's interest in slowing the African birth rate in the mid 1960s unsurprisingly aroused deep suspicions among many sections of the African population in Rhodesia. By the mid 1960s, as official fears turned to African growth rates as a great threat to the regime, official blame in sexual politics landed on African men and traditional lineage systems and their pronatalist impact, and family planning

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<sup>66</sup> Jeater, *Marriage*, p. 35.

advocates portrayed African women as unwilling victims in this foolhardy pursuit of wanting more babies.<sup>67</sup> This set state policy against the interests of traditional patriarchies, and African males generally, whose power was largely dependent on controlling female reproduction. This opened up a space for nationalists to forge a politically expedient alliance with important sections of rural society.

The alliance struck between rural patriarchies protecting male power and nationalists keen to establish themselves as agents of an African authenticity uncorrupted by the white settler state's debasement, was part of nationalists' strategic 'cultural nationalism.'<sup>68</sup> The depth of guerrilla commitment to gender equality was not so deep as to bypass the opportunity to create a bond with rural males and traditional rural elites, and this opportunity presented itself quite clearly in the issue of state-sponsored family planning. Kriger writes that in establishing this alliance, ZANLA had some difficulty in reconciling its purported "goal of liberating women from their double burden of racism and tradition" with an avoidance of any clash with African custom that would weaken rural support. Kriger concludes that in deciding how far to intervene in African customs that ran contrary to their liberation ideology, ZANU decided to "not go very far."<sup>69</sup> Kaler describes this compromised approach to liberation ideology for the sake of cultural nationalism in this way: "In the realm of marriage and family, cultural nationalism took the form of insisting that both genders conform to gender-specific norms of ideal patriarchal behavior. In this respect, the liberation movement did not attempt to change gender hierarchies and actually provided reinforcement to patriarchal values."<sup>70</sup> This opposition to family planning was not merely for the sake of rural alliances, however, as it also meshed well with the guerrillas' other strategic goals, namely: the degradation of state administration in the rural areas; the facilitation of the economic, political, and morale strains placed on the state as a result of population growth; and the fulfillment of the long-term goal of bolstering African numbers that could fill military requirements in the future were the war to persist.

<sup>67</sup> As Jeater's book explains, during the colony's early history the state oscillated between blaming the rural patriarchal system for purported African sexual deviancies and blaming the absence of these same systems when not present. Jeater, *Marriage*.

<sup>68</sup> See generally, N. Kriger, 'The Zimbabwean War of Liberation: Struggles Within the Struggle', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 14, No. 2 (January, 1988).

<sup>69</sup> Kriger, *Peasant Voices*, p. 193.

<sup>70</sup> Kaler, *Running*, p. 9.

In repeated exhortations in *pungwes* and political gatherings, guerrillas warned Africans that family planning was ‘cutting down the nation.’ But what did the guerrillas really mean by this? Kaler argues that guerrilla arguments about family planning stripping the nation of future soldiers and future voters were more metaphorical, spiritual, and symbolic than practical, as it would be many years until these hypothetical babies would be of use to the nation politically or militarily.<sup>71</sup> However, when viewing these population matters holistically, it is clear that even newborn babies were of immediate political use to nationalists. More babies meant more scarcity and therefore more demands on resources, social services, and especially land, that the state was loathe to (re)distribute. More babies also meant new citizens for which present claims could be made on behalf of. Their contribution to Rhodesia’s overall racial demographics also had dramatic effects on both white morale and on African nationalist morale as discussed in earlier chapters. It is also not clear that African guerrillas, even in the later 1970s, knew that independence was as close as it turned out to be, especially as there were no liberated areas and the white state’s military capacity appeared strong and effective almost until the very collapse. Therefore, the appeals to produce future soldiers might have also been a reflection of the residual doubt that the war would be successfully resolved before these babies’ maturity, and the perceived effects of babies on the war should perhaps be taken seriously. Finally, more African babies meant a failure of the state programme promoting family planning, and this further meant a major state initiative in the rural areas was failing, and as Kriger argues in a broader context, this inability to impose its will or exert influence in this sphere and over this population added to the perception that the nationalists sought to foster, which was of a generalised degradation of state power and a severance of the connections between rural Africans and the settler state.<sup>72</sup>

This last motivation combined the guerrillas’ antipathy towards family planning with older anti-state and cultural nationalist impetuses. In this regard, the guerrilla opposition was not against family planning *per se*, so much as family planning was another state interference into the lives of rural Africans, and especially into the politically sensitive area of African fertility. This non-cooperation and

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<sup>71</sup> Kaler, *Running*, p. 201.

<sup>72</sup> Kriger, *Peasant Voices*.

Wheatley: Heavy reliance  
 section on 2 pb authors.

sabotage targeting family planning jibed with other nationalist campaigns against cattle de-stocking and census-taking a decade prior. As well, there was a continuity with the contemporaneous destruction of cattle dips, the burning of Protected Village huts, attacks on agricultural extension officers, African workers on white farms being targeted, and the intimidation of those better-off African farmers who marketed their goods through official state channels and were state certified master farmers.<sup>73</sup> These were all part of a larger effort described by Kriger as the guerrillas' general antipathy towards any arm of state activity, or any association with white settler society. It was to sever the connections, even those connections conceived to be beneficial, between the state and the rural Africans, that state services such as schools and cattle dips were attacked, and why even state anti-epidemic campaigns, such as the one against cholera, were frustrated by guerrilla activity,<sup>74</sup> as the de-linking of rural Africans from the state delegitimised the regime and opened up space for guerrilla support.<sup>75</sup> But as with all such anti-state activity, the driving theme was a return to legitimate, traditionally African practices, untainted by colonial interference, and especially in the realm of family planning these appeals to resist white interference met with very receptive ears, particularly among African males. And as such, all state interferences in rural areas were conflated. As a female family planning worker interviewed by Kaler recounted about the guerrilla strategy:

Just like the digging of contour ridges and dipping of cattle, such talk about family planning was there and regarded as a Western way of reducing the number of blacks so that we have fewer children and they come and take over the land and eventually the land is taken... Like the issue of contour ridges for conservation, to dig contour ridges or to take your cattle to the dip tanks to clean ticks, these were opposed as propaganda for the war... So all these things, these developmental issues that would do down the enemy would be advanced. During the war you use any available propaganda. It's a question of what ideas people will buy and you advance them.<sup>76</sup>

Another example of this view that it was not family planning *per se* that the guerrillas opposed so much as the state promoters of this policy, can be found in interview with a female family planning worker recounting conversations she had with guerrilla

<sup>73</sup> Kriger, *Peasant Voices*, p. 106.

<sup>74</sup> Kaler, *Running*, p. 218, footnote 9.

<sup>75</sup> Kriger, *Peasant Voices*, p. 114.

<sup>76</sup> Kaler, *Running*, p. 211.

commanders in the field: "The Comrades just said, 'Carry on [with your job]. There is no government that doesn't like family planning, when we are the government we will want it.'" <sup>77</sup> And as it was, after independence the Zimbabwe government did want it.

Nationalist opposition to family planning was a public political position from as early as 1957, but this did not mean that many did not support the idea of family planning outside of Rhodesia's peculiar political circumstances, that there was not a gender divide among nationalists regarding these matters, nor indeed even that many female guerrillas did not even privately use family planning services. <sup>78</sup> All this displays the lack of any monolithic approach to family planning among all nationalists, everywhere, and in all circumstances, despite their unequivocal public positions.

Despite this patriarchal/guerrilla alliance regarding the opposition to family planning, many African women still used birth control throughout the war years, often at great risk to themselves. Kaler's book describes many of the fascinating lengths that African women would go to hide their pills from their husbands:

Some would put them [pills] under the mattress, some would put them in the mealie-meal. But then these other ones [husbands] would fish it out. Some would hide them in a pot, when there are many pots in the house, but this man would sometimes just get the pills when his wife is not there, he would just search and when she comes he would say, 'I have found this, so you are using!' Maybe the men would be talking to each other at the beer halls, to give each other ideas where these women could be keeping their things. <sup>79</sup>

This gendered divide over family planning existed within the guerrilla armies as well, and there is even evidence that female guerrillas covertly used birth control, despite the staunchly pronatal position of the leadership. <sup>80</sup> A female guerrilla was quoted as saying, "some of the male comrades did not like contraceptives because they thought it was murder, but really it was our duty and we female comrades were ready to defend it." <sup>81</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Kaler, *Running*, p. 211.

<sup>78</sup> See generally, Kaler, *Running*.

<sup>79</sup> Quoting Gloria Tekere. Kaler, *Running*, p. 136.

<sup>80</sup> Kaler, *Running*, pp. 213-215.

<sup>81</sup> Kriger, *Peasant Voices*, p. 193, citing M. Davies, compiler, *Third World-Second Sex: Women's Struggles and National Liberation: Third World Women Speak Out* (London, Zed Press, 1983) p. 105.

Despite this lack of uniformity among nationalists, family planning services were met with strong, and in some cases violent, organised resistance. Guerrillas in the field regularly railed against state-sponsored family planning efforts in their *pungwes*, where family planning was described as both a white scheme to ‘cut down’ the Zimbabwean nation, and as a health threat to the women themselves. In political meetings, guerrillas informed African villagers of the alleged ill intentions behind the state’s family planning programs, and the political justification for their pronatalism. The following are quotes from interviews compiled by Kaler of African women remembering guerrillas’ political attacks on family planning:

“During the war sometimes the comrades told the people they should not use family planning from white people because during the time of war we are losing children... they told us that the children you bear will be fighters who will fight for the country until they win, some will become doctors or nurses.”  
Mrs. Banga.

“...the freedom fighters did not want us to listen to what was said by the whites. If the children are too few, we will all be lost fighting in the war.”  
Mrs. Maita.<sup>82</sup>

In addition to these rhetorical attacks on family planning, family planning workers and their families were directly threatened and intimidated. One former family planning worker described how guerrillas would confront them in the field and ask: “Why do you want us to be few? You want us to be few because you want the Rhodesian forces to come and kill us when all our children will be dead. Because the government doesn’t want us to have many children, because if the children are many they will go out of the country and then come back and fight.”<sup>83</sup> Not all such interactions were just words, however, as in one instance a family planning worker was nearly executed at a *pungwe* until the crowd intervened to save the worker.<sup>84</sup> Kaler asserts that in all at least two and probably five family planning workers were killed as a result of their work. Even taking into account this physical violence, it was in the promotion and distribution of anti-state rumours regarding reproduction that the guerrillas proved most effective. As discussed earlier, these rumours fitted within a long tradition of African suspicion of white medicine, and this form of propaganda

<sup>82</sup> Kaler, *Running*, pp. 194-195.

<sup>83</sup> Kaler, *Running*, p. 199.

<sup>84</sup> Kaler, *Running*, p. 206.

Problem; no differentials  
 of tribal/ regional response — prob

found a receptive audience.<sup>85</sup> This rhetorical frame of the health implications of family planning medicines appealed to rural Africans of both genders, whereas the political rationales of creating future fighters appealed almost exclusively to males.<sup>86</sup>

In a more gender-specific method of propaganda, guerrillas appealed to African male frustration over the regime's meddling into what many considered to be the exclusive domain of African males. Rural men were generally against family planning because they thought it was intended as a political weapon by the state to reduce African numbers, but they also opposed it because they believed it allowed African women to be promiscuous, and because children were valuable both in terms of status and in the economics of rural areas.<sup>87</sup> More children provided much-needed free labour, and in the case of girls, could provide for the father a *lobola*, or bride-price, to be paid by prospective husbands to the prospective wife's family. Boys also strengthened the lineage ties and spread the father's name, as well as providing economic security for older age.<sup>88</sup> These traditional benefits of more children were all important stoppers on state-sponsored initiatives to promote smaller families. More broadly though, Kaler argues that white male interference in African women's fertility must be viewed in the frame of the wider emasculation of African males. Kaler links male opposition to family planning with the more general emasculation of Rhodesian colonialism:

During the first three quarters of the twentieth century, masculinity was threatened and degraded by the white colonial regime... White colonists appropriated the material bases of masculine identity—cattle, land, labor—and intervened in African men's right to control their women and children, directly through laws governing marriage practices and family residences, and indirectly through the provision of alternatives to patriarchal control for young men and women. In this context of degradation, the promotion of birth control was read as another attack on masculinity.<sup>89</sup>

Whether or not the entire colonial experience in Rhodesia can be fairly characterised as attacks on African masculinity matters less than the narrower point that the settler

<sup>85</sup> For an excellent study of African suspicion of white medicine, see: L. White, 'Poisoned Food, Poisoned Uniforms, and Anthrax: Or, How Guerillas Die in War' *Osiris*, 2nd Series, Vol. 19, Landscapes of Exposure: Knowledge and Illness in Modern Environments (2004).

<sup>86</sup> Kaler, *Running*, p. 195.

<sup>87</sup> Kaler, *Running*, pp. 200-201

<sup>88</sup> Schmidt, *Peasants, Traders, and Wives*.

<sup>89</sup> Kaler, *Running*, p. 180.

state's interference in family planning in the last decades of settler rule was certainly an affront to African masculinity. As a guerrilla recruiting tool, this appeal to lost masculinity proved effective, as winning political liberation was tied to winning back their stolen manhood.<sup>90</sup>

How much did these nationalist anti-family planning activities affect actual population numbers? If nationalist activity in galvanising resistance to family planning was effective in promoting more African births, or at least in preventing state initiatives, then this demographic effect should be visible in African birth rates. After independence in 1980, the new Zimbabwean government ended the former state's family planning efforts, and banned the usage of Depo Provera.<sup>91</sup> It was not long, however, before the new ZANU government began to grow concerned about the effects of high fertility on the state's economic and social goals, and set about trying to lower Zimbabwe's birth rate. In 1984 the former Family Planning Association of Rhodesia was reorganised as the Child Spacing Organisation and tasked with the promotion of birth control. Reflecting this policy reversal and the full state sanctioning of family planning activities, Robert Mugabe's own sister-in-law was placed as the programme director of the Zimbabwe National Family Planning Council in the 1980s,<sup>92</sup> and in 1989 Mugabe received the Population Institute's International Population Control award.<sup>93</sup> The nationalists' political turn on family planning so soon after coming to power was swift and within a few years had shifted from sanguinary hatred of such practices to aggressively promoting the same. But even though the ZANU government reversed their opposition to family planning, it still had to tread carefully to avoid older fears of the state's regulation of women's fertility.<sup>94</sup>

To isolate causation in Rhodesia/Zimbabwe, it is necessary to first examine traditional pronatalism in the broader African context. As a continent, Africa has been the slowest region to embrace birth control. Some demographers argue that African cultural factors are primarily responsible, as social and religious practices

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<sup>90</sup> Kaler, *Running*, p. 180-181.

<sup>91</sup> A. Kaler, 'A Threat to the Nation and a Threat to the Men: The Prohibition of Depo-Provera in Zimbabwe 1981', *Journal of Southern African Studies* Vol. 24, No. 2 (June 1998).

<sup>92</sup> D. Lucas, 'Fertility and Family Planning in Southern and Central Africa', *Studies in Family Planning*, Vol. 23, No. 3 (May - June, 1992) p. 155.

<sup>93</sup> A. Kaler, *Depo*, p. 375.

<sup>94</sup> Kaler, *Running*, p. 222.

Ethno hypothesis  
factors!

reward high fertility and more children reap real financial and social benefits.<sup>95</sup> Even significant changes in what are commonly regarded as the socio-economic preconditions for fertility transitions matter less in affecting actual fertility numbers in Africa than the perception of those factors.<sup>96</sup> Thus even as shifts in industrialisation, infant mortality, family wealth flows, consumption patterns, urbanisation, and access to birth control technologies may occur, these objective preconditions take time to work through cultural filters.<sup>97</sup> Traditionalist resistance to family planning was a continent-wide phenomenon in Africa in the 1970s. The few newly independent states in Africa that tried to implement population control policies were all met with great opposition from these traditional rural sources. In Rhodesia there was much social pressure on rural women to have many children irrespective of liberation politics. In explaining the value of fertility in Zimbabwe, a Mrs. Ngururu, interviewed by Kaler stated:

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population

Some of the women wanted [to have many children] but some didn't. I think those who wanted just wanted to be thanked by their husbands and to avoid divorce and polygamy. Even the elders encouraged many children because when their daughter failed to have children or to reach the number her husband wanted, they gave the husband the sister of the wife. They did this because they were afraid that he will demand his *lobola* or marry another wife which means that the husband's wealth will be eaten by that other family. I can say that having children was encouraged by everyone at that time.<sup>98</sup>

These traditional pronatalist forces in the 1960s and 1970s did not suddenly disappear with the ZANU's policy change in the early 1980s. In a group interview from the 1990s, the older members of the Zvamaoko Women's Club, near Wedze, stated:

Some of our women were divorced by their husbands in the 1970s when women started to use injections. Our African men want children, so at that time we had to hide pills, but we go for injections because they are private and easier to use than pills, because he will try to find out [find where the pills are hidden] one day...Some they are still hiding their pills, but they end up [get

<sup>95</sup> See for example: J.C. Caldwell, P. Caldwell, 'The Cultural Context of High Fertility in sub-Saharan Africa', *Population and Development Review*, Vol. 13, No. 3 (September, 1987).

<sup>96</sup> K.O. Mason, 'Explaining Fertility Transitions', *Demography*, Vol. 34, No. 4 (November 1997). p. 450.

<sup>97</sup> Potts has argued that ideational shifts sometimes initiate fertility transitions in the absence of other preconditions. Potts, *Birth Rate*, p. 16

<sup>98</sup> Kaler, *Running*, p. 123.

caught or found out]; their husbands get other wives. We are still fighting the war of understanding if we are talking in terms of family planning.<sup>99</sup>

These traditional pronatalist forces were not instantly overcome by state policy shifts in the regional context either. Kenya, which in 1968 became the first sub-Saharan state to implement a state-sponsored family planning effort, failed to reduce their birth rate, and as it was their birth rate actually rose throughout the 1970s, at one point holding the distinction as having the highest natural growth rate anywhere in the world.<sup>100</sup> Similarly, Botswana introduced a state-sponsored family planning programme in 1971, only to experience a rise in its Total Fertility Rate from 5.6 children per woman to 7.1 children per woman from 1971 to 1981.<sup>101</sup> As well in Ghana, family planning measures introduced in 1970 yielded no results whatsoever by 1980.<sup>102</sup> Kenya, Botswana, and Ghana were all pioneers of family planning, and significantly all were African-ruled states, yet all their programmes had seemingly failed after a decade of state promotion as a result of traditionalist resistance. With the significant exception of South Africa, no sub-Saharan country experienced a drop in birth rates from the 1950s until the end of the 1970s. This was true irrespective of whether the leaders in power were Africans, and notwithstanding any state programmes to lower the birth rate.

The family planning policies of Rhodesia's settler state and the results that flowed from them were remarkably similar to those in post-independence Botswana and Kenya.<sup>103</sup> All three initiated state-sponsored family planning policies within a span of three years in the late 1960s and early 1970s, and all three were in varying degrees ineffective at first, and their birth rates more or less mirrored those countries that had no programmes at all. On fertility matters, Zambia serves as a useful control for Rhodesia/Zimbabwe, as it was a regional neighbour, also a former British colony, and from the 1960s until the mid 1980s its government was "laissez faire" concerning its fertility rate.<sup>104</sup> Zambia's birth rates remained close to Botswana, Kenya, and Rhodesia's until the early 1980s when all three activist countries dropped

Parallel  
context

<sup>99</sup> Kaler, *Running*, p. 225.

<sup>100</sup> L.M. Thomas, *The Politics of the Womb: Women Reproduction and the State in Kenya* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 2003).

<sup>101</sup> Lucas, *Fertility and Family*, p. 150.

<sup>102</sup> Caldwell, *Cultural Context*, p. 414.

<sup>103</sup> Statistics were derived from UNWPP.

<sup>104</sup> Lucas described the Zambian government as "laissez faire" on population matters. Lucas, *Fertility and Family*, p. 152.

Population Control Program  
 across Africa.

significantly below Zambia's. This signature drop continued for all three at a faster pace than Zambia or the sub-Saharan average until the end of the millennium.<sup>105</sup> The divergence of Botswana and Zimbabwe, as well as South Africa, has led one scholar to posit that this region of central and southern Africa had by the early 1990s begun the fertility transition, whereas the rest of Africa had yet to.<sup>106</sup> Seemingly consistent with precondition theories of fertility, after independence Zimbabwe began to experience rising incomes and expectations, and many of the other socio-economic preconditions thought to influence drops in fertility rates. As well, new financial relationships may have had some effect on "expanding the parameters of manhood to encompass a small family and a wife who goes to the family planning clinic," as Kaler argues.<sup>107</sup>

Yet these shifts and the perceptions of these changes were not at all universal and immediate. The ZANU government still had to confront residual "hang-ups" of men in rural areas, and opposition from traditional peasant leaders concerning family planning.<sup>108</sup> Into the 1990s, traditional chiefs remained outspoken in their opposition to family planning, as did others, who all pointed to the foreignness of contraception.<sup>109</sup> Most significantly, however, this resistance to state-sponsored family planning reflected a broader antagonism between African peasants and any state interference. As Kriger argues regarding post-independence Zimbabwe: "Peasant relations with states are characteristically overtly or latently antagonistic. Many peasants wanted, as before, to keep the state from imposing demands on them." The political interests of the male peasants and the guerrillas were initially aligned regarding family planning, but after the ZANU policy turn, they were in opposition. Regarding peasant/nationalist relations generally, Kriger notes, "Guerrilla appeals against whites had raised peasant consciousness and emboldened them without necessarily converting them to nationalists."<sup>110</sup> As a result, the traditional male peasant opposition to birth control did not follow lock-step with ZANU policy turn in the early 1980s.

<sup>105</sup> See also: W.C. Robinson, 'Kenya Enters the Fertility Transition', *Population Studies*, Vol. 46, No. 3 (November, 1992).

<sup>106</sup> See generally: Lucas, *Fertility and Family*.

<sup>107</sup> Kaler, *Running*, p. 222.

<sup>108</sup> Kaler, *Running*, p. 223, quoting *Zimbabwe Herald* columnist Idi Muvake, 19 September 1985.

<sup>109</sup> Kaler, *Running*, pp. 224-225.

<sup>110</sup> Kriger, *Peasant Voices*, p. 230.

Despite its arguable tardiness, the rest of Africa did follow the fertility patterns of Zimbabwe and the early family planning pioneer states of Africa, though at a much slower pace. From the mid 1970s until the mid 1980s a growing number of African states became convinced that population growth had harmful economic and social effects.<sup>111</sup> By the mid 1980s, this trend had turned into a majority of states which began to put into place population policies a decade and a half after Botswana, Kenya, and Rhodesia. Only after these newer policies had time to seep into the cultural frames of these societies, did the rest of Africa begin the slow process of lowering birth rates.

AFRICAN CRUDE BIRTH RATES COMPARED (1960-2000)<sup>112</sup>

1960-65	1965-70	1970-75	1975-80	1980-85	1985-90	1990-95	1995-00
Kenya-- 51	Ken--51	Ken--51	Ken--50	Ken-48	Zam-47	Zam-46	Zam-43
Zambia-- 49	Zam--50	Zam--51	Zam-47	Sub- 47	Sub--45	Sub--44	Sub-42
Botswana-- 48	<b>R/Z--49</b>	<b>R/Z--49</b>	<b>R/Z--47</b>	Zam-46	Ken-45	Ken-39	Ken-37
<b>Rho/Zim-- 48</b>	Sub--48	Bots--48	Sub--47	<b>R/Z--45</b>	<b>R/Z--40</b>	<b>R/Z-36</b>	<b>R/Z-32</b>
Sub-Saharan-48	Bots-47	Sub--47	Bots-45	Bots-42	Bots-37	Bots-32	Bots-30

That Zimbabwe's birth rate began to drop at the very same time as the ZANU's political turn might tempt one to conclude that this temporal overlap must imply causation, but this easy *post hoc ergo propter hoc* conclusion must be avoided. The nationalists' political turn in the early 1980s towards supporting family planning did not itself alter the fundamental social, cultural, and economic conditions on the micro-level, and just as Botswana, Kenya, and Ghana's state support in the late 1960s/early 1970s did not yield immediate rural support for family planning in those countries, neither did Zimbabwe's state sanction guarantee support. As these other countries' experiences indicate, these traditional cultural forces were present and strong even under African governance. What the nationalists did do was inherit a family planning programme that had already been working to erode these traditional underpinnings with slow successes for over a decade, much as Kenya and Botswana's had done. It was only in the 1980s that these programmes began to have real demographic effects, and only then did these activist pioneers pull away from

<sup>111</sup> N. Heckel, 'Population Laws and Policies in Sub-Saharan Africa: 1975-1985', *International Family Planning Perspectives*, Vol. 12, No. 4 (December, 1986). p. 122.

<sup>112</sup> Statistics derived from UNWPP.

neighbouring countries that did not have long-standing policies. Looking at Zimbabwe's birth rates in a comparative way, the drop in the 1980s was less a display of nationalist power in both resistance and promotion, than a display of the glacial pace of these deep social transformations which only came to bear fruit (or actually not bear fruit) after the nationalists took over the mechanisms of the state. Here, as in other respects, there was a great deal of symmetry between the old and new states, and far from showing great change in the state's relationship with the peasant populace, family planning policies expose an equal disconnect between the rulers and the ruled, and an equal inability to change African peasant society from the top down

As the preceding argument outlines, pre-existing traditional obstacles to family planning—pronatalist husbands, the threat of returned *lobola* or polygamy, lineage ties, economic security in old age, other familial pressures to have more children—were more of a force militating against family planning usage under the white regime than was the more ephemeral and opportunistic nationalist resistance. This pre-existing resistance was a force tapped into by nationalists, but not controlled by nationalists. As a result, nationalist agency in this aspect of the population war was only partial at best.

## **Conclusion**

Nationalist agency in the population war was mixed, and varied greatly depending upon which specific factor is analysed. Generally, nationalist agency regarding white population factors was greater than their agency over African population factors, paralleling the white regime's similar scope of agency. White factors were easier to manipulate due to the small size of the white population, its transience, its connections with the formal economy, and its urbanity. The African population was always more difficult to manipulate through political means for the exact opposite reasons, and in many respects it was largely beyond the reach of the state. This inability of political actors to control the African population was a continent-wide problem in Africa for governments of all races, and was so even for the Zimbabwean state after 1980. Fortuitously for the nationalists, the tidal demographic trends of skyrocketing African birth rates occurring in the 1970s across Africa and within Rhodesia were politically beneficial to their movement.

Nationalists in their propaganda added *post hoc* political justifications for these tidal changes, but did not steer them. As for the white population factors, nationalists did have some control in the shifting demographics. Some of their impact on these numbers, such as with immigration and emigration rates, was specifically intended, but others, including the drop in white fertility, were not intended, and one factor that was surprisingly not effected to any significant degree by African nationalists was the white death rate. A result of this peculiar population situation was that the belligerents on one half of the population war were consistently winning without having to do very much whatsoever, whereas their opponents were forced to expend prodigious amounts of their political, economic, emotional, mental, and physical resources Quixotically attempting to counter these trends.

## Chapter VII

### Conclusion

The war of population numbers in Rhodesia was contested along many conceptual levels. It involved thousands of different actors inside and outside Rhodesia, some knowing participants and others unaware of their role; and its sites of contest were truly global in scope, stretching across the oceans into the vast migration networks to the great metropolitan capitals and seats of Western power. It was on one level, a political struggle between the Rhodesian state, its allies, and collaborators, both white and African; and African nationalists and their allies, both white and African; but despite this significant racial overlap between the contestants, the war of population numbers was still fundamentally racial in character. This war was a political contest, but one that had military and diplomatic components. In addition, there were important social aspects to the war of numbers, as it created gendered divisions within families over the number and spacing of their children, and on a certain level was a contest between pronatalist husbands and their antinatalist wives. The war combined the social and the political, as it was within the context of certain social and economic conditions in which individuals made their demographic choices. Contestants on both sides of the conflict sought to engineer these conditions to change the environments in which individuals made life decisions, and in so doing sought to make children a more or less economically attractive option for families, to create incentives or disincentives for whites to move to or stay in Rhodesia, to transfer economic burdens from the central government to African families so as to shift the costs of African population growth, and to spatially re-configure Rhodesia's racial boundaries, altering work and residential patterns.

There was a remarkable amount of symmetry in the capacities of both the settler state and African nationalists to effectuate demographic change. In spite of the wide-ranging efforts to shape these conditions, both contestants in this population struggle were only unevenly effective in manipulating individual decision-making to the extent that their efforts yielded the desired demographic results. Both contestants were equally ineffective at manipulating fertility patterns in the short term, either the pronatalist policies targeting their own racial population, or the antinatalist policies targeting their opponent's racial population. This was true, even though in the longer-

term the state's efforts to lower African fertility did yield results several years after white rule had ended. Both sides were more effective, however, in engineering migration patterns, as various degrees of coercion could be applied more effectively in this realm than in fertility, recalling the Secretary of Health's admission in regards to family planning that, "[the state] could provide the water but could neither lead or drive the horse to the water nor make it drink."<sup>1</sup> The state's failure to control and regulate the rural African population—most obviously through family planning, but also the regulating of cross-border African migrations, the registration of births and deaths, and effective census-taking—revealed the limits of state power in rural areas and over peasant populations, and as evidenced by the independent Zimbabwean state's own difficulties in controlling and regulating rural populations, this may indeed reflect a generalised defect or deficiency in the African state.

Despite these deficiencies, both the settler state and African nationalists projected and imagined power over populations, regions, and phenomena that were, in reality, beyond their control. The settler state projected and imagined control over African migrations to and from Rhodesia, while these actual movements were beyond the capacity of the state to regulate effectively. The same was true regarding internal African migrations—keeping rural Africans from drifting into the cities and preventing alien Africans from working in Closed Labour Areas. Both trends were beyond the administration of the state, yet the promulgation of legislation regulating these movements, or retroactively designating the *status quo* as being within state regulations, projected a degree of control that was in reality nonexistent. In the registration of African births and deaths, and in the general accounting of African demographics, the settler state issued statistics and promulgated regulations, but these attempts at state control were ineffectual and the state's knowledge of African demography remained, even after the 1969 census, largely guesswork. African nationalists likewise projected and imagined power over phenomena in which they had little direct agency. Much of the thrust of nationalist print propaganda was an effort to claim responsibility and power over events that had independent causes. This was particularly the case regarding African fertility, in that nationalists claimed that fertility was being employed as a weapon of the liberation war, when in reality

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<sup>1</sup> Smith Papers, Box-024, Cabinet Memoranda 1971 Part 2, 'Population Control', 23 July 1971. Quoting M.H. Webster, 3 May 1971.

high fertility rates had causes outside of liberation politics. All of these efforts of the state and African nationalists to imagine power were in a sense commanding the sun to rise in the morning. The war of numbers that was waged inside and outside of Rhodesia thus draws out broader themes of the projection and imagination of political power in postcolonial Africa, especially in the rural areas, and the limitations of formal politics to effectuate change and control populations.

Though there was symmetry between nationalist and state agency in what demographic factors could be controlled, the distinct differences in the way the white and African populations were composed greatly favored the nationalists in this population struggle. White residents in Rhodesia were uniquely susceptible to migratory engineering due to their high degree of transience and thin roots in Rhodesia. This meant that nationalist efforts to force Rhodesian residents to emigrate were much easier than they would have been had they had to uproot a more settled population. At the same time, the short-term bias of most migrants coming to Rhodesia also meant that it was possible for the state to attract a certain amount of immigrants through economic incentives, as the relative 'liquidity' of migrants' personal investment in Rhodesia lowered the risks associated with moving there. It was the fact that this symmetrical power corresponded to the differences in the ability to engineer migratory factors and fertility factors, and that these factors overlapped with the primary methods in which the white and African populations relied upon for population growth, that gifted a decided advantage to the African nationalists in the war of numbers. And it was this relative inability of the state to lower African birth rates in the short-term, and the contested nature of white migration that proved decisive in this parallel war of numbers.

The settler state lost the war of numbers, even as the definition of what constituted victory changed over time to increasingly less ambitious goals. There was never any publicly articulated and officially sanctioned population goal that the state sought to reach through their diverse population policies, likely because of the old political rule to never set specific goals that could define your own failure. But goals were secretly articulated behind the closed doors of Cabinet debates, in confidential memoranda, departmental meetings, and RF Party Conferences, which did set population end-points. The ultimate goal of racial parity was expressed by Smith's first Immigration Minister, Harry Reedman in 1964, but his view was likely not

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endnote

shared by many others inside or outside government as a realistic population goal. In Parliament, Reedman stated emphatically, "With tremendous developments ahead, Southern Rhodesia was capable of supporting 40,000,000-50,000,000 people at a high standard of living."<sup>2</sup> But after Reedman's statements were widely mocked in Parliament and in the public press as being preposterous, the Smith government distanced itself from the goal of racial parity, and Reedman and his goal of racial parity were pushed into the background. The target of the white population making up ground on the rate of African natural increase was never abandoned, however, and only a few months into Smith's Premiership, the Cabinet set up South Africa's racial ratio of 5:1 Africans to whites as a viable policy goal. Yet even this goal was never close to being attained, as the racial ratios in Rhodesia widened from 19.7:1 in 1964, to 21.1:1 in 1974, to 28.1 in 1979. In 1967, the Sadie Report offered a population goal that was a function of pegging the economically active white population to the entry of Africans into the labour force. This goal meant setting a more favourable ratio, perhaps in the lower teens, but the Report did not realistically envision immigration rolling back African natural increase to any great extent, and certainly not to the South African ratio of 5:1.<sup>3</sup> This was essentially a maintenance goal, an odd companion to Smith's famous words several years earlier regarding African political advancement: "So Far and No Further!" But these racial ratios went much further, and even maintenance soon became an unrealistic objective. After the publication of the 1969 census revealed the extent of the widening population gap, the state's population policy goals were set more towards slowing down these widening differentials, rather than maintaining a constant ratio. It was a partial admission of defeat in the population war, that the Rhodesian Front government began advocating for slice-and-dice racial policies to cordon-off what areas and what populations were the responsibilities of the central government, in effect redefining what and where racial ratios mattered. After Smith's 1976 speech that conceded the inevitability of eventual African majority rule, the state's goals for its population policy shifted conceptually towards the creation of a politically powerful white minority that could still maintain white privilege in an African-ruled state. In the final years of settler

<sup>2</sup> Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 58, 'Committee of Supply Vote', 22 September 1964

<sup>3</sup> J.L. Sadie, 'Report by J.L. Sadie on Planning for the Economic Development of Rhodesia', (Salisbury, Government Publication, Salisbury, 1967).

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rule, racial population policy focused on the tapering-over of the flow of white emigration out of Rhodesia, and became an exercise in mitigation.

From a policy perspective, the evolution of the state's goals in the war of numbers did not matter in so far as the strategies to effectuate them remained the same. However wishful or realistic these goals might have been, the state never came close enough to any of them to alter the conduct or urgency of the population war. Yet in another way, the shifting definitions of victory did matter, as they revealed something about the self-conception of white settlers in Rhodesia and what these white settlers hoped the Rhodesian state would become—whether it would be a majority white settler country of the Australian or Canadian mould, a smaller version of apartheid South Africa, a fully partitioned entity, or failing that, a small but powerful minority under African rule.

*slipping*

*White Dominion*

*Robertson!*

**Conundrums, Conflicts, and Contradictions Within the State's Population Policies**

The state's failure to achieve even these progressively humbler population goals was not inevitable or fixed as a result of immutable demographic laws, nonetheless there were inherent paradoxes, conundrums, and contradictions existent within the state's population policies that were never resolved or reconciled. The broadest and most significant paradox facing white Rhodesia was that the underlying population crisis and the remedies proscribed for this problem were both potentially fatal to the state. This fundamental paradox concerned the weak loyalty that most white Rhodesians felt for the settler state, and the reality that most comprehensive remedies for these population problems required a degree of sacrifice that the white population was unwilling to make. These sacrifices would have included: a softening of white preserve so as to meet the socio-economic preconditions for the African fertility transition; more job competition, increased state spending, and strains on the urban infrastructure to allow for mass white immigration; and remaining in Rhodesia to serve in the military, spread out the conscription burdens, and ease emigration pressures. Yet the white population was by and large unwilling to suffer any degradation of their inflated standard of living, and when degradations to these standards did occur, whites emigrated in large numbers. Fully aware of this tension

*fatal later in the day*

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between problems and remedies, the state was forced to combat the existential threat that population pressures presented with half-measures and partial solutions, which had the twin effects of neither fully solving the underlying problem, nor fully satisfying the fickle white populace.

Another fundamental paradox faced by white policymakers concerned conflicts inherent in making Rhodesia a viable white settler state in post-colonial Africa. For white Rhodesia to survive politically and economically there had to be a continual influx of white immigrants and a greater retention of whites already living in the country. For this to happen, Rhodesia had to maintain its racialised economic and political system locked into place by UDI. Without these racially discriminatory systems in place and the elevated status afforded to whites, Rhodesia could not hope to lure a significant number of white immigrants away from the other demand-side countries, nor could the state expect to retain current residents if there was a softening of these racial preserves. At the same time, however, to permanently secure a future for white Rhodesia economically and politically, the economic sanctions and diplomatic isolation had to be lifted. This was true, despite Rhodesia's defiant and unpredicted economic performance in the years immediately following UDI. Yet the price to be paid to have these international sanctions lifted was an end to Rhodesia's racially discriminatory policies. To survive as a white settler state in post-colonial Africa, Rhodesia could neither keep the racist structures in place to stabilise white migration, nor jettison these structures to be free from international opprobrium.

A broad paradox existed between the Rhodesian state's policies to promote mass immigration and the maintenance of the inflated standards of living for whites already in Rhodesia. The racial economic structure in Rhodesia was such that white privilege relied upon an imposed hierarchy of occupations and the artificially low cost of African labour, both of which were threatened by influxes of lesser-skilled whites who could not slot into the sectors of the economy designated for whites. Rhodesia was in some respects a haven for whites, but the territory's carrying capacity for whites was limited, as was the willingness of current residents to subsidise the cost of attracting and sustaining new migrants. A chicken-or-the-egg conundrum also existed about what should come first: available jobs and infrastructure capabilities or new influxes of white immigrants. On the one hand, the short-term availability of employment opportunities provided inducements to potential immigrants and avoided

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conflicts with current white residents, as well as ensuring that the state could absorb the social costs of more whites, but this policy could never attract sufficient numbers of whites to satisfy the state's politicised demographic goals. In addition, there was the purported long-term economic growth potential of new immigration, which supposedly created new opportunities. In the event, current residents typically resisted calls for new immigrants when there were no employment opportunities available for them, as this would increase employment competition and potentially flood Rhodesia with white job-seekers. This cut through the nature of the white Rhodesian experience after UDI: more immigrants were necessary to maintain white Rhodesia's political viability, yet more whites meant a steady erosion of the privileged status of whites in Rhodesia—the very essence of what the settler state was trying to defend. And as with a previously exclusive beach, larger crowds had a deleterious effect on the value of the experience for current bathers and lessened the attractiveness for potential beachgoers.

Some of the settler state's other migration policies also ran counter to each other. In order to stem the serious problem of white emigration, the state began to impose draconian restrictions on whites leaving the country, but these emigration restrictions led to a conflict of how to keep current residents in place without frightening-off potential residents. Within the competitive migration market, this lack of liquidity must have been another negative consideration influencing potential immigrants' decisions over whether or not to move to Rhodesia. Compounding this problem, the state's efforts to promote immigration also inadvertently reinforced the culture of transience in Rhodesia. This culture of 'Good Time Charlies' encouraged by the promotion literature, reinforced this unwillingness of Rhodesian whites to suffer declines in their standards of living. After the war escalated in 1972, another conflict was exposed between the state's military demands and the state's migration goals. The regime steadily increased the call-up commitments for whites in Rhodesia, which had a predictably negative impact on emigration. Demand for white soldiers eventually forced the regime to reduce the 'grace period' which exempted new immigrants from military service, a policy change which had a chilling effect on further immigration. The state could never find the correct balance between assuaging current residents and attracting new migrants. These conflicts and

Pl. Model  
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paradoxes all combined to render the Rhodesian state's white migration policies self-contradictory and unworkable.

There were also irreconcilable paradoxes involving the state's efforts to combat African population growth. One such conflict existed between the preconditions for fertility reduction and the preservation of white privilege. The conflict arose because any systematic change in the African population's educational or economic opportunities, or in urbanisation levels which would have a demonstrable effect on fertility, would necessarily threaten the white population's privileged status, which would have had adverse affects on white migration patterns. To side-step this paradox, the Rhodesian state attempted to drop the African birth rate through family planning efforts alone, despite the weight of evidence that expanding economic and educational opportunities and increased urbanisation correlated with lower fertility rates. As with other aspects of Rhodesia's population policy, this conflict was never resolved.

### **The Timing of Rhodesia's Collapse**

This thesis has argued that the white-ruled state had, since its founding, rested upon the perilously fragile demography of its white population, and that the military conflict only accelerated the demise of white rule. This then raises the question of why Rhodesia collapsed when it did and not at some other time. The answer lies in a combination of factors that ripened together in the late 1970s. First, white society after UDI viewed the importance of population matters differently than beforehand. So long as Rhodesia continued to be a part of the larger British imperial system, population matters were only of administrative interest, but after the break-up of the Federation, and especially after UDI, racial demography was linked to independent nation-building. As such, loyal British subjects passing through the colony of Rhodesia before UDI, came to be viewed as disloyal Rhodesians after UDI. Second, white migratory inflows had matched outflows in both number and kind despite the continually high turnover of population before UDI, but thereafter, even when immigration matched emigration in scale, it was different in kind. The mismatch in skills took some time to have its full effect on the Rhodesian economy, but the 'brain drain' eventually put heavy strains on the economy, as well as exacerbated racial

tensions. Third, knowledge of the extent of the African population 'explosion' and the pace of widening ratios only became known following the 1962 and 1969 censuses, which revealed not only the size of the African population but showed its rate of growth, which was the fastest in Africa at the time.<sup>4</sup> These factors combined to alter the objective conditions in the country in the 1970s, and perhaps more importantly, also the white population's subjective perception of the conditions, such that the escalation of the war was that much more damaging to the settler state.

The 1969 census, in particular, brought a new urgency to African and white population issues in the white public's mind. By revealing previously hidden demographic facts, the census added a new urgency to efforts to rebalance Rhodesia's racial demographics and rig the political system to secure white rule. Population issues in the 1970s became political matters of a deeper significance than they had been in the previous decade, and carried new psychological and social weight. It was within this context of a heightened importance of racial population matters, that the military conflict influenced a negative net shift in white migration patterns. But as with the census, it was the white public's *knowledge* of this shift in migration patterns that created the existential panic and initiated the full white exodus from Rhodesia, and it was this exodus more so than the war which precipitated the final collapse of the white settler state.

### How Unique Was Rhodesia's Fate?

The foregoing analysis has attempted to reposition the role of population matters as being central to an understanding of the final decades of settler rule in Rhodesia. As argued throughout, the combined pressures that destroyed the Rhodesian state in the late 1970s would have been appreciably less intense had the white settler population been larger and more rooted. An intriguing counter-factual would be the length of any extended lifespan of the Rhodesian state had it been able to narrow the racial ratios significantly, thereby easing these pressures. Had the Rhodesian state achieved its goal of South Africa's racial ratio of 5:1, for instance, would it have allowed for another decade and a half of white minority rule, paralleling

<sup>4</sup> 'Highest Rate of Growth', *RH*, 30 September 1969.

South Africa's demise in the mid 1990s?<sup>5</sup> Would having met even the state's humbler population goals enabled Rhodesia to survive into the 1980s? As with all counterfactuals, the answers to these questions are obviously left to speculation and conjecture, yet there is little doubt in the case of Rhodesia that there was a direct correlation between racial population ratios and political survival.

Yet to what extent were these interwoven connections between racial population issues and the political fate of the settler state unique to Rhodesia? Rhodesia shared many characteristics with other settler states around the globe, and the shared traits of settler societies have led some authors to posit that there is a fundamental and distinct global settler ethos, notwithstanding other cultural or regional peculiarities.<sup>6</sup> Irrespective of the truth or falsity of the assertion of a cross-cultural settler ethos, these peculiarities and differences between settler societies mattered greatly in the political fates of these settler states. Some territories that once had large settler populations are now politically, economically, and demographically still dominated by the race or ethnicity of that settler population, such as Canada, the United States, Australia, and New Zealand, while in other territories that once had large non-indigenous settlement, the descendants of those settlers are no longer in political control of the state, such as with Algeria, South Africa, and Zimbabwe. Other examples shade various hues of a middle ground, as with the continuing political and demographic struggles between the whites and Melanesians in New Caledonia, and more violently between the Jews and Arabs over the fates of Israel and Palestine. Perhaps the most decisive factor in the complex and distinct fates of all these different settler societies has been the timing and trajectories of the settler/indigenous population ratios. The size and direction of these ratios may perhaps function as a political clock for when and how these various settler societies either lost control or consolidated control of the state. This is a line of inquiry that would be interesting to explore in more comparative detail.

Despite any parallels with other settler societies, Rhodesia was always a species unto itself. As an entity that straddled the legal and conceptual definitions of

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<sup>5</sup> The answer would likely be that while Rhodesia would have survived longer, it still would not have survived as long as did apartheid South Africa, as Rhodesia, unlike South Africa, would have still been burdened with complete international isolation, an active guerrilla war inside the country, and a legacy of white transience that would not have disappeared even had their ratios improved temporarily.

<sup>6</sup> See for example, D. Stasiulis, N. Yuval-Davis (eds), *Unsettling Settler Societies: Articulations of Gender, Race, Ethnicity, and Class* (London, Sage Publications, 1995).

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what it was to be a settler state, it defied easy comparisons. As a result, even while Rhodesia's political fate was inextricably entangled with its racial population ratios, to inductively assert with full confidence the universal applicability of this causal relationship between settler/indigenous racial ratios and the timing and ultimate fate of settler rule, would ignore Albert Einstein's wise admonition, that so far as the theories are about reality, they are not certain; so far as they are certain, they are not about reality. So perhaps we arrive again at the narrower conclusion that Rhodesia was indeed a special case. Four decades after UDI, the Rhodesian state now appears as a peculiar sort of anachronism, an inchoate settler state that battled futilely against the political aspirations of its African majority, against the irresistible tides of world opinion and a growing moral consensus, and, of course, against population numbers.

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