

THE STRUGGLE FOR PROFIT AND PARTICIPATION BY AN
EMERGING AFRICAN PETTY-BOURGEOISIE IN BULAWAYO, 1893-1933

by

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"Freedom, Justice and Commerce"
(Motto of Bulawayo Chamber of Commerce)

It is the intention of this paper to examine the experience of those Africans in Bulawayo who managed throughout the period under discussion either to maintain or to acquire some form of economic independence from wage labour. A good deal has been written concerning the development of an African working class, by Charles van Onselen (1), and on the structural underdevelopment of the peasant economy leading to the destruction of a once prosperous rural sector, especially by Palmer. (2) Little, however, has been said of the struggle of various groups of Africans, particularly within the urban areas and their immediate hinterlands, to compete openly with colonial capitalism, and it is hoped that this paper may go some way towards filling an obvious gap.

Using the ideological pronouncements of the latter quite unashamedly, these groups demanded what they considered to be their legal rights and basic socio-economic freedoms, including the rights to trade, own land and collect rents. The theoretical benefits of capitalism, namely, freedom and prosperity, however, proved to be remarkably elusive for Africans, revealing the essentially monopolistic nature of colonial capitalism; as a result the struggles of the emerging black petty-bourgeoisie became more explicitly political as they found their demands interpreted as a challenge to the system, rather than merely facilitating their fuller participation in it. Thus, not only are these groups important in terms of our understanding particular economic developments in Southern Rhodesia, but also because they initiated particular forms of political protest into which other very different groups were drawn.

Conventionally, "proletarianization" represents the process whereby men are denied both ownership and access to the means of production and are therefore forced into selling their only remaining asset, their labour power, to the owners of capital. Having sold their labour power, they are in an exploited relationship vis-à-vis their employer, in that the surplus value of production, over and above that necessary for the subsistence and reproduction of the labourer and his family, is expropriated by the owners of capital. In the Rhodesian context, access to the means of production was not totally removed from the peasant. This actually facilitated a high level of exploitation and a faster rate of primary accumulation, by allowing employers to pay wages lower than the actual costs of reproduction, which were left to the activities of family and kin groups eking out a "living" in the Reserves. Thus, a relationship was established between the capitalist and pre-capitalist modes of production, in which the latter was artificially maintained to provide for the rapid growth of the former. This resulted in the widespread institution of migrant labour.

The development of capitalism in Africa, however, was essentially unequal and uneven and was not the linear process of penetration previously assumed by some

underdevelopment theorists. (3) In Rhodesia, the mining companies, the large land companies, the settlers, and the British South Africa Company itself all had priorities concerning the exploitation of Rhodesia and its people, and, as Palmer has successfully shown (4), their arrival afforded new opportunities to certain groups, especially in the peasant production sector, whilst progressively destroying activities in other sectors. So, in the urban area of Bulawayo and its hinterland, whilst most Africans were forced into varying periods of migrant labour, certain Africans were able for a long period to maintain the ownership of their land, their effective means of production, whilst others retained access to it, although under various and generally increasing restrictive conditions. Others, meanwhile, were able to seize opportunities not previously available in the pre-capitalist economy, which were presented to them in the specific urban context of Bulawayo: e.g. in trading, letting and the operation of what has become known as the "informal sector" of prime and petty commodity production. Yet others combined a position of relative privilege in the wage labour sector, normally attained through education or ethnic preference (5), with a form of independent commercial enterprise.

It is suggested that such a disparate group of individuals can best be categorized as a nascent petty-bourgeoisie in that their aims, both explicit and implicit, were to ensure the development of the necessary political and economic conditions for the effective reproduction of their capital and the retention of their access to and ownership of the means of production. There was a position of perpetual contradiction, however. Just as they consistently demanded full participation in the very system designed to frustrate their ambitions, so they found themselves in a fundamentally exploitative relationship vis-a-vis other members of the urban African community with whom, paradoxically, they developed increasing political identification in their struggle against European monopoly capital.

A. Land Owners (6)

Effective ownership of the means of production was restricted to a small but significant group of eight Africans who owned land around Bulawayo, and who used the Town as a centre for the distribution of their produce.

Schedule of Land Owned by Africans in the Bulawayo District in 1925 (7)

| <u>Name</u> | <u>Amount of Land</u> | <u>Distance from Bulawayo</u> |
|---|---------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Thomas Mazinyane and Makeke | 6 acres at Trevance Plot | 4 miles |
| Albert Nxale | 40 acres at Trevance Plot | 4 miles |
| Rev. M. Dipulela Makgatho and David Mogale | 89 acres at Riverside | 6½ miles |
| Maya, Gwabu and Mgitshane's heirs | 12 morgen, at Riverside | 6½ miles |

From what little information is available concerning this group (8), it seems that the majority of them acquired their land around the turn of the century. The two Rhodesians of the group, Maya and Gwabu, who described themselves as "Marozwi natives", were able to buy their plots at Riverside in 1898 from the proceeds of inflated wages earned during the Revolt of 1896-7. Nothing is known of the exact nature of the jobs they performed, but they were able, between them, to pay off £270 for the land over a period of two years.

By 1925 these two men had developed one of the most efficient and highly capitalized African farming enterprises, with all their available land under cultivation, and using three ploughs, and a petrol engine and donkey engine for

irrigation. Both men claimed incomes of £100 per annum, in a good year, from the sale of vegetables, which were sold either to local white farmers or to Asian traders from the Bulawayo Market. When questioned by the Land Commission of 1925, they were obviously anxious to establish their rights to permanent ownership, accepting readily the existing conditions of free competition with European landowners. As for a racial separation of land and special treatment for Africans, Maya simply stated: "we have nothing that we can urge on land being set aside for natives in view of the fact that we have already bought land." (9)

Their overriding aim was the efficient reproduction of their capital, reflected in their preoccupation with the problems of labour supply in their statement to the Land Commission. Like their European neighbours, the supply of cheap labour was crucial for the maintenance of high profits; as Maya complained: "I hire up to five natives, and then I get as much as £100 per year for my vegetables, [but] at other times when I have not got any labour I get from £30 to £40 for my vegetables." (10) Thus he continued: "The local labourer is too expensive. He wants 25/- per month, or at least 20/- per month." Local Africans could avoid farm labour by working in Town, where wages were higher, much to the annoyance of both Maya and Gwabu, who required 10 labourers, and it was "for this reason that I approached Sir Herbert Taylor so as to be able to get labourers through the RNLB (Rhodesian Native Labour Bureau), and I then got them at 15/- per month". (11) Thus, we have the clearest indication of an African capitalist farmer using the mechanisms of the State to avoid paying the full costs of reproduction of his labour by using coerced "Chibaro" labour.

The rest of the landowners around Bulawayo were all Africans from South Africa, many of whom had settled in Rhodesia at the turn of the century, having arrived with the early settlers, and who were regarded at that time as black allies against the Ndebele. One such individual was M. D. Makgatho, a Sotho, who had arrived in Rhodesia in 1890 and who, with another Sotho, David Mogale, had bought an 89 acre plot at Riverside in 1904. Again, it was from money earned during the Revolt that they were able to pay £436 to Willoughby's Ltd for the land, which by 1925 was earning both men and their sons some £60 per annum each, from the sale of mealies and vegetables. They, too, employed African labourers, up to four at the height of the season, as well as collecting rents from squatters on their land.

In their evidence to the Land Commission of 1925, they expressed satisfaction with their purchase, and, like Maya and Gwabu, were anxious that their rights should not be interfered with. Makgatho realized that it would be beneficial to poorer Africans to have certain land reserved for them, especially for those in the Bulawayo Location who wanted to own or rent a small plot, but he insisted that this must not be done at the expense of his own ability to compete with Europeans in the produce market. As he stated, "The only thing I am afraid of is that if separate areas are set aside, the Government might be inclined to place the areas for natives too far away". (12) Similarly, his son, Zachariah, stated: "We want it close to the Towns. We can then go to our homes and sleep there at nights, and we can send our vegetables into Town." (13)

In addition to rousing fear amongst white neighbours of commercial competition, the community at Riverside, which included a school and a church, had become the centre of activities for the African Methodist Episcopal Church, as M. D. Makgatho was, in addition to his farming activities, a minister of that church. An independent church, run in Rhodesia entirely by Africans, the AME was for many years subject to European suspicion. In 1902 Makgatho was refused permission to preach in the Bulawayo Location, "in view of the fact that this church is not under the supervision of or attached to any recognised religious body of white persons". (14) Over 20 years later a similar application was turned down by the Location Superintendent on the grounds that, "as far as Rhodesia is concerned it is a political movement, and I know for a fact that all its adherents here are political agitators". (15)

As the local leaders of an independent church, and with the freedom of owning their own land, the Makgathos retained a position of both influence and independence,

a combination much feared by the colonial authorities. Restricted at first in their religious activities, and later in their commercial activities, they became the centre for a number of interlocking African protest groups who used the AME as a platform for their ideas, a development that is discussed in more detail below.

Of the two smaller land-owners, Mazinyane and Makeke, there is adequate information only on the former. Unlike the large land-holders, Mazinyane had bought his plot much later, in 1916, after a considerable period of saving a portion of his income as Chief Messenger on the Beira and Mashonaland Railway. Thus, for him, land ownership represented a different function from that of the larger land holders, who saw it simply as an effective means of reproducing their capital and earning a living independent of wage labour. For Mazinyane it was an investment intended to secure his position in the urban area, one of considerable privilege in the wage labour sector. Paid £8 per month, he was one of the highest paid Africans in Bulawayo, but in common with all others was regarded by both his employers and the municipality alike as a temporary visitor to town, there only as long as he was performing a useful job of work. The ownership of land was the only means of securing a more permanent home in the urban area, as he told the Land Commission in 1925:

Take myself. I have worked in this country since 1898. I have not been back to my home, and I have worked here continually for 27 years. If I want a place for myself, I have got to go thousands of miles away. I want to go on working until I die. I am not like the natives who work for six months and then go home again. I want to work here continuously. (16)

His land gave him a residential independence, in that he was not forced to live in the municipal location, where he had spent a number of years previously, and where he had resented the degree of physical control exerted over the inhabitants by the location Superintendent and his Police. Unlike the large land owners, however, it did not provide him with an income with which to earn an independent living, but merely with food for his and his family's immediate needs, one head of cattle, and poultry which he sold in Town. In common with all the landowners, none the less, in the face of proposed segregation, he told the Land Commission firmly:

I think that it would be better to let things go on as they are at present ... My opinion is that a native should be allowed to buy land anywhere he likes ... I understand that the aim of the Commission is to try and get the natives to buy land by themselves and that certain areas should be set aside for the white people and certain areas for the natives. In referring to Clause 44 of the Draft Letters Patent, it says that 'a native may acquire, hold, encumber, and dispose of land on the same conditions as a person who is not a native'. How is that going to stand, Sir? (17)

His deepest fear was not that as a result of such segregation he would lose the ability to compete with white farmers around Bulawayo, but that his position of permanence in the Town would be seriously undermined. Although he wanted more land, he told the Commission in no uncertain terms: "I want the land which is convenient to Town, where I can go out and sleep at night and then come to my work in the Town in the morning."

During the first quarter of the 20th century this small group of landowners was able to make slow but steady progress in the development of its enterprises. It was not until the decade 1926-36 that "Europeans began to move decisively towards South African policies" when legislation protecting Europeans was introduced: when Carbutt could warn that "we are going too fast in the development of the native", a decade marked by "increasing and at times hysterical European fears of African competition" (18), the African reaction to which we shall turn later. Meanwhile, in the more strictly urban-based sectors of the economy there were a number of important developments, to which we now turn our attention.

B. Tenants

According to Palmer, in the earliest years of occupation, "there is no doubt that the Ndebele were much more quickly forced to bear the brunt of European acquisitiveness. Their centralised state situated on the high veld within 60 miles of Bulawayo was precisely the area coveted by the European invaders, each of whom had been granted a farm of 6,350 acres." (19) Thus, within a few months of the European occupation, practically the whole of their most valued region ceased to be their patrimony and passed into the private estate of individuals and the commercial property companies. According to one contemporary, "the settlers did not waste time; before many weeks had passed the country for 60 miles and more around Bulawayo was located as farms and by January 1894, over 900 farm rights had been issued and half of them pegged out". (20)

Many of the early settlers were interested only in minerals and sold their land claims once they had prospected it to a small number of rapidly growing Land companies, the principal one of which, in the Bulawayo district, was Willoughby's Consolidated Limited, which owned much of the land west of the Town, now part of the African townships. Thus, when the Ndebele returned to their homes following the end of the revolt, they found themselves as tenants of absentee landlords or large property companies, not anxious to remove them but, instead, keen to exact rents of at least £1, and invariably of £3 to £4 near Bulawayo itself. (21) As one contemporary noted: "It has always been, in a way, unfortunate that the dominant Native section in Southern Rhodesia, the Ndebele, should have suffered more than the other tribes from the European occupation in respect of their lands and homes ... The return to their old homes has proved incompatible with the increase in the European population and the needs of the European settlers." (22) Yet another described the plight of these people, declaring: "I do not know of a case in which the Native tenant is benefited to the degree we should naturally hope for. No agreement longer than one year, and no agreement has ever stipulated any particular spot on that property for the tenants' exclusive use. Thus, though he has a yearly lease he can be ordered to move his whole kraal or village to another site without the landlord breaking the terms of the lease. Hence the Native is only there on sufferance - a squatter." (23)

With the reserves in Matabeleland so remote from Bulawayo, many Africans preferred to remain on the alienated land, prepared to pay the increasing rents and fees imposed by the companies. After the Private Locations Ordinance of 1908, however, which limited the numbers allowed on each farm, the companies increased these rents and fees considerably, and the move to the reserves gained momentum. For those who remained, access to the means of production, the land, under these conditions was essentially temporary, removal being entirely at the will of the European landlords. It was increasingly impossible for a family to live off the proceeds of that land, and it did not enable local Africans to avoid wage labour, let alone give them the opportunity to participate in the local produce markets created by the increased urban population of Bulawayo. Africans in this position were not, therefore, able to benefit in terms of their ability to compete with Europeans in the new capitalist economy, as this opportunity had been denied them from the beginning, but merely in that, with residential proximity to Bulawayo, and the ability to draw on some kind of family support in terms of basic subsistence, they were given a degree of choice in the labour market not available to migrants from Mashonaland and the north. Thus, many preferred work as domestic servants and as assistants in the commercial undertakings in town, often living temporarily in the municipal location as well as maintaining a home in the vicinity of Bulawayo, avoiding the more physically exacting and poorly paid jobs offered by the municipality, the railways and other large employers in Bulawayo.

Within the Bulawayo township lands the pattern of African settlement was somewhat different, owing to the different regulations in force over these areas. The British South Africa Company had granted a piece of land of approximately 10,000 morgen around the Town itself to the municipal council, known as the commonage, portions of which the Council could sell by public auction, with the consent of the Company, half of the proceeds accruing to each body. (24)

As early as 1897, "it was noted that numbers of kafirs are inhabiting certain areas of the Commonage and it was unanimously agreed that the Location was the place for natives". (25) Little was done to implement this resolution, and Africans continued to live in these areas until after the Boer War, when two separate developments ensured their removal. The period immediately following the War was one of severe depression, and the Municipality was forced to cut back its expenditure considerably. In order to make up the shortfall on the rates, the Council began selling portions of the commonage to farmers and those anxious to cash in on the low price of land. Thus, for the first time, the Council appreciated the financial benefits of the commonage, whose value was not enhanced by the existence of African squatters.

Significantly, it was at this time that the fear of "black peril" was at its highest, with the famous Umtali Rape Case, and an attempted lynching in Bulawayo itself. As the Mayor himself declared in 1902, "there is being aroused a very bitter feeling in the whole community which I am led to believe is likely to take active form against any native who may be apprehended in such an offence". (26)

In November 1902 the Council decided that planting on vacant parts of the commonage could continue as long as squatting was stopped. (27) In the April of the following year, 26 families were removed by the commonage ranger appointed to keep the area clear of squatters (28), and by June of that year the latter could report that there were no more huts left on the Commonage. (29) There were by then, however, a total of 47 acres cultivated by Africans living on adjoining farms, who, according to the Ranger, "were not willing to pay rent. They have been in the habit of cultivating land on the Commonage for years without being disturbed or informed that the land does not belong to them." (30)

The Council considered that this planting in itself might encourage squatters, and in June 1903 resolved that (magnanimously in its own opinion) one year's notice would be given to the planters "in order that they might break up fresh gardens during the next rains". (31) Little thought was given to the fact that for many Africans this was the only land available to them without paying high rents and fees on European farms, an area now denied to them by the activities of the commonage ranger and his police.

As the above discussion has revealed, access to the means of production for Africans in the immediate vicinity of Bulawayo had become severely restricted by the turn of the century, and where it was possible it was under increasingly difficult terms. Soon after the arrival of the Europeans in Bulawayo, however, it was realized that it would be necessary to have a ready supply of perishable foodstuffs for consumption in the town. Accordingly, a number of plots were laid out by the then Sanitary Board on the commonage, which were rented out at a cost of 10/- per month for market gardening and £1 per month for brick-making (also necessary, with the boom in building), on a 21-year lease, so that "any man as would like to do it can start market gardening within the Commonage". (32)

Initially, the leases were entirely multi-racial and were granted to a number of Africans and in particular to Asians. Many of the European settlers had been provided with land, and others were anxious to make money in commerce and mining, and the thought of a long-term investment in a garden plot showing small returns was not appealing to many of them in the boom years of 1893-6. Nevertheless, the problems for African and Asian plot-holders were considerable. Although multi-racial in theory, in practice there was a degree of informed segregation over the allocation of plots, and African applicants were given plots in the area south-west of the Location, particularly those plots numbered 54a-k, which followed a small tributary of the Bulawayo Spruit south of the municipal farm. (33) According to Rabakani, an African holder of one of these plots, they were of an inferior quality, and particularly stony. (34)

At a cost of 10/- per month, a considerable capital investment was required before any return could be shown, and, as many of the plots were poorly watered, new

seed and irrigation was necessary. Thus, the sheer cost of the initial outlay meant that the number of Asian plot-holders was limited to 18 and that of African plot-holders to 5 in 1895 (35), not a serious threat to a vital sector of the urban economy. Although there are no exact figures available, it seems that the majority of African plot-holders were immigrants from the south, referred to in their applications as "Cape Boys". As the Native Commissioner reported, "nearly all are habitual labourers who have married and acquired a home and remain in continuous employment and support their families by their earnings". (36) Thus, they aimed to combine wage employment with market gardening, the former providing a regular income, the latter a degree of stability and permanence in the urban area as well as additional income and the ability to live away from the strict physical control of the location. It was only those in the higher echelons of wage employment, however, that could aspire to the independence afforded by renting a commonage plot, restricted to wagon drivers and office boys.

With the onslaught of the revolt, the Boer War and the ensuing depression, the European attitude to the commonage plots changed dramatically. With the cessation of trading in the countryside, the prices of foodstuffs rocketed and, as one European plot-holder stated, "our surplus supply of eggs fetched £1 a dozen and everything else was proportionately dear". (37) Just as market gardening became a more reasonable financial proposition for a number of whites, so their opportunities in other sectors diminished as the depression began to bite. (30)

The Sanitary Board had already clamped down on African competition in the brick-making sector during the building boom a year or so before the outbreak of the revolt. Following a petition from the European brick-making community to the Board, objecting to the British South Africa Company granting brick-making licences to Africans, it was decided to refuse all future applications on the grounds of "unfamiliarity with the nature of the work", but in reality on grounds of colour. (39) According to the petition, there were in 1895 some eight to ten African brick-makers, and the brick fields were described as "a mixed lot, black and white living next door to each other making it more like a native location". (40) "A great many of us are Pioneers", the petition claimed, "who desire to settle down in the country but who at present cannot make a living." The European manufacturers were willing to pay skilled African brick-makers up to £6 per month, but insisted that they could not be allowed to compete with them, a policy endorsed by the Sanitary Board.

A similar tightening up of the procedure was followed for the garden plots. In 1899 it was decided that there could be no transfer of plots from Whites to Asians or Africans, although exchanges within the racial groups and of vacant plots were continued. (41) In the same year an application by John Goodman, a black South African, was turned down on the basis that "Cape Boys have been found to be very undesirable tenants of these plots". (42) The Asian and Chinese communities similarly found their applications refused more often on the grounds that, "in view of the opposition which has been made to imported Chinese as labourers, the Council should not encourage Chinese market gardeners". (43)

For those with existing plots, the regulations were similarly tightened. In June 1902 it was resolved that no more 21-year leases were to be granted, and the whole position of land tenure on the commonage was to be reviewed, with the granting only of short-term yearly tenancies. (44) Police supervision was stepped up, and African licences were cancelled in cases where the former reported that a "nuisance" had taken place. For example, on the flimsy evidence of the municipal Farm Stable Manager that he had been obliged to sack a number of his drivers on account of their getting drunk, "probably on the native plots $\frac{3}{4}$ mile away", the lessees of the 7 plots, 54d-i, were ordered to quit in April 1902. (45) Through a firm of solicitors, the lessees stated that they were working the plots properly, and that all attempts to remove them would be met with force, a threat which came to nothing when the police came to remove them later that month. (46)

Eleven years later, in 1913, complaints from Africans whose applications for garden plots were consistently turned down reached Rev. Buck, a missionary from

St Augustine's, Penhalonga, who brought up the matter with the Town Clerk. In reply, the latter stated that "the Council has no objection to letting Garden Plots to natives provided that they give an undertaking to work them with the view to raising a crop of bona fide market garden produce". (47) In practice, however, from an examination of the applications from that date, it is suggested that the only Africans considered were those whose applications were channelled through their employers. Thus, the acquisition of a plot became a reward for long-serving wage earners of various firms in Town, a form of gratuity for unquestioning service. In 1917, for example, the Beira and Mashonaland Railway applied successfully on behalf of Thomas Mazinyane, their Chief Messenger, who had been with them for a number of years, and whom they described as "the type of native we should be encouraging". (48) Similarly, a retiring employee of the Bulawayo Clothing Factory was granted a plot in 1920, to allow him to remain in Bulawayo rather than have to return to his native Nyasaland. (49)

C. The Location Economy

We turn now to an examination of the experience of the African community in the location itself, particularly in regard to the pattern of land and property ownership. The Bulawayo location, set up on an informal basis immediately following the European occupation as an area for "non-white" residence to the north-west of the township, was formally recognized as an administrative unit under the control of the Sanitary Board in January 1895, with the publication of Government Notice Number 12. Quite simply, it was to be "such portions of the Town extension or of the common pasture lands of the Township of Bulawayo as shall be set apart or reserved for the huts or dwellings to be occupied by the Native races". (50)

Africans could settle either as the owners of dwellings, applicants for settlement being granted a piece of ground for 5/- per month "upon which such applicants shall be at liberty to erect such huts or dwellings" (51), or as lodgers, as "any person desirous of becoming an inhabitant of the Location without erecting a hut or dwelling may, on his satisfying the Superintendent ... that he follows ... a lawful occupation, receive from the Superintendent ... a three days permit for the purpose of finding some registered occupier of a hut with whom he can be domiciled". (52) For this privilege, both landlord and tenant paid the Sanitary Board 2/6 per month. Thus, two classes of resident became established, those owning their own property, and those living as lodgers, although the Sanitary Board retained ownership of all land, and was permitted to "define the streets within the Location ... and remove the position of the Location to any other portion of the common lands of the Township" (53) (a ruling that was to have wide repercussions in the 1920s), and to "break down, remove, burn, or sell or destroy such hut or dwelling without compensation to the owner" (54), in cases of rent arrears.

By 1902 (the first year for which figures are available), there were 164 privately owned huts, and 184 adults had been granted permission to live in these as paying lodgers. (55) Only 106 of the huts, however, were occupied by their owners, the remainder being described as being "in the hands of agents". By 1902, then, a feature common to the whole of the period under discussion was well established, namely, the existence in the location of property owned by absentee landlords. According to Fallon, the location Superintendent, these huts were often built by local Africans, able to rent a plot because they worked in town, but able to live on European farms or Land Companies' property in the immediate vicinity of the town. As he said in his annual report in 1903, "many of the hut owners are absent and the renters do not keep the huts in proper repairs, with the consequence that the number of huts is decreasing. The late rains caused five to fall down and left many others not fit to live in." (56) He considered this situation to be extremely hard on the single male migrant to Town, "for whom building is almost impossible; in the first place he has not the capital and secondly not the time". (57)

With a major share of house building traditionally the task of women, by the time of World War I, 106 of the 115 stands rented out by absentee landlords were owned by women, "who pay the rents due to the Council through agents who are boys working in

Town". (58)

In addition to absentee landlords there were those who rented part of their dwellings to other Africans. A structure of any shape or size could be erected on one stand and a handful of Africans and all the 16 Asians living in the Location had erected substantial brick buildings by 1913. (59) As early as 1903, for example, one Henry Mangesana, a Nyasa, wanted to dispose of his house in the Location and return to Nyasaland, and he offered it to the Council for £300. Needless to say, they turned down the offer, but he subsequently sold it to an Asian family for an undisclosed figure. Many of this group of householders rented portions of their accommodation to other Africans, particularly the Asians, many of whom also employed Africans as domestic servants and hawkers' Boys, accommodating them on their premises. (61)

The private landlord/tenant relationship was disliked by both the Location inhabitants forced to pay for poor quality property and the municipality alike, but for very different reasons. The former, unable to afford their own plots, resented the virtual monopoly over accommodation exercised by a few African women and Asian families, an attitude reflected by a petition from the Loyal Mandabele Patriotic Society in 1916, in which they protested that "in the Bulawayo Location nearly all the stands and huts are occupied by single women who should not be there at all, for the reason that these Locations are established for male servants who are working in Town". (62)

For the municipality, the existing arrangements posed two problems, namely, the fear of an outbreak of an epidemic, and the need for effective police control over a potentially hostile African urban population. The Town Engineer clearly stated the problems as seen from the Council's point of view in 1904, when he said:

The majority of the Natives' huts are badly constructed and are built of various kinds of insanitary materials; they are not properly ventilated and are overcrowded. The lanes between them are overgrown with grass and littered with refuse. I fear an outbreak of plague. It is most essential that the Town Location should be carefully supervised and I strongly urge the passing of Location Regulations as the present ones are no longer suitable.

His answer to the problem lay with the municipality, who, he suggested, "should demolish the existing huts and erect brick huts with cement floors and plastered, whitewashed walls in neatly laid out rows". (63)

The Council responded in 1905 by erecting a number of experimental single-roomed huts in order to assess the cost of such a venture, insisting that all costs must be borne by revenue from the location itself (64), and it was not until 1907 that low enough tenders were found to begin erection on a regular basis, when two pairs of brick huts were built at a cost of £120. (65) These and subsequent huts were built on vacant ground and there was no demolition of existing property, each group of huts being taken over by a firm in town, and rented out en bloc to its employees. (66)

The problem of the rest of the location remained, and became the focus of a Medical Commission in 1910. (67) The Council's own building operation was praised by the report, which stated that "the methods adopted give better control as well as being a safeguard to the health of the community by as far as possible getting the boys in Town to live in the Location". (68) The remainder of the location was condemned, however, on the grounds that there was no proper system regarding the erection of huts and that "this renders proper supervision impossible". (69) The Commission's radical recommendations were that a blueprint plan should be drawn up of an "ideal" location, with the streets laid out in straight lines, and that, time and money permitting, the Bulawayo location should be brought into line.

Time, however, did not permit, as the outbreak of World War I in 1914 meant both a curtailment of "unnecessary" Municipal expenditure and a critical shortage of white labour, especially in the building industry. In 1918, however, the seriousness of the situation was brought home starkly to Bulawayo's European population with the outbreak of the 'flu epidemic. A nation-wide epidemic, the conditions in the Bulawayo location were no more a cause of it than poor conditions elsewhere, but its severity (70) made the European population aware of the intimate interdependence of the two racial groups within the urban area and the necessity to ameliorate the worst health risks in the location to avoid their effects spreading to the European areas of town.

In its report on the epidemic, the Committee on Influenza stated:

In the course of its investigations the conditions disclosed were sometimes appalling; rooms suitable only for one occupant were found to be inhabited by whole families ... and when it is remembered that the occupants of these hovels are often our domestic servants it seems imperative that this should not be allowed to continue ... This Committee recommends that the Town Clerk makes an official inspection with a view to effecting some improvement under the Council's powers in the immediate future. (71)

In a similar vein, the Location Superintendent complained that:

The condition of most of the private huts makes them uninhabitable; built of pieces of tin, kitchens built of sacking and other debris they present an unsightly appearance and are an undoubted danger to health. I have approached the owners with a view to erecting better buildings but most of them are too poor and the present price of material is beyond their income. I suggest that the places be demolished without any compensation to the owners and the Council build new places, say a few each year, then through course of time the Location will present a better appearance, and in the event of an epidemic breaking out it would be much easier to handle. (72)

Even with the urgings of the Public Health Committee of the Council that provision be made in the forthcoming estimates for building a block of ten rooms out of location revenue (73), and of the Location Superintendent who assured them that, with the stricter supervision that would be possible, the location revenue would be increased by cutting the number of lodgers who avoided payment (74), the municipality considered the tenders submitted to be too high, and deferred their decision. It was not until 1921, in fact, that the plan for a gradual rebuilding of the location was approved. (75)

Unbeknown to the municipality at the time when the scheme was begun, the rebuilding of the location was to be, during the ensuing ten years or so, the most significant stimulant to effective political protest on the part of the location inhabitants. It was to become the single issue which united existing African political groupings, which allowed nation-wide movements to recruit on a local basis, and, above all, which united the location inhabitants with very different economic interests into one relatively well concerted attack on the white controlled Municipality.

The scheme was slow to get off the ground, and by 1923 only 24 cottages had been built. (76) The whole of the location, however, had been surveyed, and efforts made to lay out streets in straight lines through areas of existing habitation. With demolition easier and cheaper than construction, the number of huts destroyed consistently outnumbered the number of new cottages available, causing considerable hardship to the population. The occupants were informed in advance that

many of their houses would have to be demolished, a statement that, on the one hand, galvanised opposition to the scheme but, on the other, meant that landlords and tenants alike stopped the necessary repair work to their homes, reluctant to invest time and money with the prospect of their being demolished in the near future.

One of the first complaints came from the Argus Publishing Company, on behalf of their employees, who "are anticipating that their huts will be pulled down, but that it will take two years before the new buildings extend to that part of the Location occupied by them, and by that time their huts will be uninhabitable as they refuse to repair them, knowing they will be destroyed". (77)

With the onset of the rainy season 1920-21, considerable damage was done to a large number of huts, leaving many uninhabitable, and instead of the customary repair work being done by the women "many have abandoned them and sought shelter elsewhere; many of the women have gone to their homes, some have left their husbands and gone to the mines". (78) Vawdrey, the Location Superintendent, remained unperturbed and suggested that, although he hoped to cause as little inconvenience as possible to the residents, "some sacrifice will have to be made by them". (79)

Of those who remained, the most vociferous group of complainants were the owners of property who stood to lose their livelihood from the scheme. The Superintendent of Natives at Bulawayo described this group as "not a few - especially women - who have been leasing their huts (some in appalling condition) to other natives and thus deriving a substantial income in the form of rent. Such income ceases of course, once the Council takes over the huts. I can understand that in some cases the individuals, especially the females, suffer appreciably by reason of their rentals being cut off". (80) Numerous individual complaints were voiced to the Location Superintendent and in March 1925 a deputation met the Superintendent of Natives after the former had been "given a lot of trouble about the destruction". (81) The principal complainants were one Gibson, who was not a location resident but who derived £1/7/6 per month in rent from his property there, and four women, all of whom were residents, deriving up to £3 per month in rents.

It was not, however, until external political and religious movements, dominated in the Bulawayo locality by members of the small landowning class, saw the rebuilding scheme as an opportunity to extend their influence that these disparate and unco-ordinated protests were galvanized into an effective protest movement. It was, in particular, the activities of the African Methodist Episcopal Church (the AME) and the Rhodesian Bantu Voters' Association (the RBVA) that had a profound effect on the organizing ability of the Location inhabitants.

The former, as we saw earlier, was led in the Bulawayo area by the Makgathos, the Riverside landowners. The AME had been working in Bulawayo since 1897, although, as an African-run institution, it was consistently refused permission to build a church in the location. In 1909 M. D. Makgatho made the first of many personal applications to open a church there but was refused (82), and in 1922 he was prevented from holding services in hut 89 (that of his son, Zachariah) in the location, where he claimed to have over 60 adherents. The municipal objection was based on the fact that the AME was not under any form of European supervision, and they insisted on banning the Church despite the fact that Makgatho, who had been under regular police surveillance for 20 years, had nothing recorded in his files to his detriment (83) and that the police had failed to establish any link between the AME and Ethiopianism, as the municipality had intimated. (84)

As for so many years it was the only African-run organization with national and even international links, in Bulawayo, it was inevitable that it should develop aspirations outside the purely religious field, aspirations which the municipality were quick to condemn as subversive. Insistence on maintaining its independence from European control and demands that it should be allowed to open schools independent of European inspection, combined with its links with South Africa, for example, prompted the police to declare that "some of the ministers are active members of the movement

termed Africa for the Africans, whose leaders are American and West Indian negroes and whose object is to form an independent African republic with Martin [sic] Garvey as President, and it would be advisable to refuse them access to Rhodesia". (85) Vawdrey concurred with this view, stating that "as far as I am concerned it is a political movement under the cloak of the AME and I know from facts that all its adherents are political agitators". (86)

The Church itself, however, annunciated no clear political statements, other than that it should remain independent, but did, as Vawdrey suggested, become a ready platform for the explicitly political aims of its leaders and followers alike. Thus, the RBVA, a nation-wide movement founded in Gwelo in 1923 to press for a wider enfranchisement of Africans, with Zachariah as Secretary of the Bulawayo branch and with most of its members in Bulawayo drawn from AME ranks, had strong links with the Church.

Not a radical movement, and one referred to even by the police as being "earnestly desirous of advancing the interests of their race and aiding good government of Southern Rhodesia" (87), the RBVA demanded the right to full participation in the economic and political life of the colony for those Africans able to compete with Europeans. At its 1924 annual conference it demanded equal treatment in both, declaring, somewhat naively, that "we learn that the British system is based on Justice, Freedom, and Commerce, and we want to come under Magistrates not Native Commissioners as they kept down the rights and interests of the people". (88)

Its three Bulawayo leaders were clear in their demands for a freely competitive society, the natural corollary of which was the demand for full participation in the democratic process designed to serve such an economic system. Hence, it was the freedom to buy land, the only available means of production, which would, in their opinion, advance members of their race not only materially but morally as well. Mazinyane, the chairman of the Bulawayo branch, and a landowner himself, was quick to condemn those whose answers to the problem of African advancement lay elsewhere. As he told the Land Commission in 1925, "The old Matabele natives do not understand the position clearly. They think that they should be given the land, because they think the land belongs to God and the King". Integration into the capitalist economy would teach the Africans how to prosper, as the latter would look to a white neighbour as "his guardian and adviser" so that "the young men ... of the Matabele tribe who come into contact with the white people understand what it means to buy land and they will be the ones who purchase land". For the remainder of the African population, Mazinyane had little patience, declaring simply that "those who are not in a position to buy land, then it is their own fault". (89)

Martha Ngano, a Bulawayo commonage plot-holder and secretary of the Bulawayo branch of the RBVA, described by the Superintendent of Natives there as its "livewire" (90), similarly scorned those who sought a solution outside the bounds of open competition. "Natives should be allowed to buy land just where they like and white people should do the same", she told the 1925 Land Commission, but, she added, "most of the natives in this country do not understand about the buying of land. They want to have the land which belonged to the King. They are merely like children and they do not know anything about it ... The natives here do not know anything about the land. It is only the people who come from other places who know about it".

Only full participation in the competitive society would bring about the civilization of the African, one benefit of the former being that "in course of time they will understand that buying land is a very good thing for them". Even now, she stated, "the younger natives do not like to live among old people. They would like to become farmers". (91)

Zachariah Makgatho, the third official of the Bulawayo branch, likewise saw the answer to the local problems in the location in terms of an extension of

individual property ownership. "I know for a fact", he stated, "that natives living in the location are very desirous of buying their own land. It is not that they want a gift of the land made to them. They want to buy it themselves". (92)

The leaders of both the AME and the RBVA were anxious to tap the swell of popular discontent being created by the rebuilding scheme. They were not only responsible for the formation of a specific organization of householders against the municipal measures but were able to widen the protest to other groups in the location, resulting in the earliest recorded examples of regular mass meetings to be held in the location, forerunners of those to be held under the auspices of the ICU in the 1930s.

In October 1924, Vawdrey accused the AME of being the cause of a lot of trouble in the location during the new building scheme, which, he said, was started by them, and that they had "held secret meetings and urged all the inhabitants against occupying the new houses as a protest against the destruction of old and dilapidated huts". (93) At one such meeting held in the AME "church" at hut 98 in the location in 1924, convened by the RBVA and chaired by Zachariah Makgatho, a women's league, later to be known as the Bantu Women's League, was formed with the specific intention of mobilizing opposition to the rebuilding scheme amongst the women householders. (94) Martha Ngano, the RBVA secretary, was made president, and Mary Lobengula, one of the householders, became secretary, both of whom began recruiting support in the location.

The former included the principal complaints of the League in her evidence to the 1925 Land Commission, where she complained that women in the location were not fairly treated. In the past, she said, women "used to get a stand and they would build rooms on them which they used to let to other natives and now they are not allowed to do that. It is very hard on them as the men cannot get sufficient money to support their wives". (95)

Mary Lobengula, meanwhile, on behalf of the League, complained to the municipality. The full text of her letter of complaint has been reproduced below to show how very early in the League's life it became the mouthpiece of women generally in the location, having used the popular issue of the rebuilding scheme to widen its influence away from the small group of aggrieved landlords. The demands of the latter remained the most important, namely:

1. "That houses are built by the Council at the Location that do not agree with our men's wages", and
2. "Where are the helpless women in the Location to go if their houses are being broken down?"

New demands aimed at a much wider audience, however, were made, including:

3. "The Beer Hall in the Location ruins the Bantu Nation and causes starvation to our children."
4. "Why should we be stopped from gathering dry wood from the veld?"
5. "We should be granted free schools for the fatherless children in order to keep them from being scavengers."
6. "There are girls at the Location who are under nobody's control - how do they get their living?" (96)

The first two complaints came rapidly to be supported by landlords and tenants alike, principally on account of the high rents charged for the municipal cottages. The housing provided by the African women and the Asians, although reported as being very often in a poor state of repair, had two important advantages - it was cheap, well within the budget of most Africans working in Bulawayo, and was very often large enough for reasonable family accommodation. The municipal cottages, on the other hand, were notoriously expensive. Anxious to recoup the money spent as rapidly as possible, in order to make the scheme self-financing, the municipality charged a

rent of £9 per annum, for cottages which had only cost £50 to build in the first place. As Makgatho complained, "houses are erected by the Municipality for which a man has to pay 15/- per month rent, and yet he may only earn £1". (97) With four single men per dwelling in the rows of rooms, and two rooms per family in the cottages, according to the Superintendent of Natives, "it is a very general complaint amongst the natives in the Location that their houses are too small". (98)

The remainder of the complaints were those with which the vast majority of women in the Location could identify. The presence of women in the Location was not regulated in the same manner as that of men, by the use of the pass laws and registration certificates, and there was no legally instituted way of preventing women from entering the town. Instead, the location regulations were used to remove from the Location any women who were not either legally married or employed in Town. As, in practice, few women were employed by Europeans, and as most were not married under Christian rites, their position was extremely precarious, with police raids three nights and three early mornings a week, intended to rid the Location of what the authorities assumed, quite simply, were prostitutes.

Finding themselves in this strange position, with a degree of freedom not available to men working as wage labourers but constantly running the risk of being arbitrarily removed from their homes, the women attempted to establish themselves in economic activities which would give them a degree of permanence in the urban area. One of the most successful of these, as we have seen, and one accepted by the Municipality as a legitimate activity, was the renting of property. Likewise, women had for many years enjoyed the privilege of collecting dead wood from the commonage for use and sale in the Location for cooking and heating purposes. This was a practice disliked by both the Municipality, who feared the presence of unsupervised women wandering on the commonage, and European traders, who made a considerable profit from the sale of wood through their hawkers. Consequently, the women were regularly prosecuted on the grounds that they had picked up "green" wood instead of dead wood, fined and expelled from town. (99) Thus, in pursuance of what they considered to be a legitimate activity, giving them a degree of independence and permanence in town, they regularly broke the law.

Such law breaking was a matter of course for those involved in other activities in the Location, namely, beer brewing and prostitution. The former activity, although a traditional activity of women and one where a considerable amount of money could be made, had been banned from the very inception of the Location. Until 1911, however, beer brewing had been allowed to a certain extent, with permission from the Superintendent, but with the participation of the Municipality in the brewing business with the opening of the beer hall in that year, all private brewing was stopped. Providing the Municipality with considerable additional income (of which only a fraction was used for the benefit of the Location inhabitants), whilst aiding efficient control and ensuring workers' efficiency, the ratepayers soon saw the advantages of the beer hall, whilst a number of Location inhabitants were equally quick to regard it as an instrument of their own exploitation. Some of the largest meetings held by the Bantu Women's League concerned the whole question of beer brewing, and in 1934 a successful boycott of the beer hall was organized by the women, protesting against their own prosecution. (100)

By 1926, then, the League had gained much wider support both from the women of the Location, who feared the loss of their economic independence and their permanence in town, as well as from the male tenants. Vawdrey's observation that the League consisted merely of "about a dozen old women who are worn out prostitutes [whose] object is to be able to brew and sell beer themselves, social reform being the farthest thought from their heads" (101), was obviously a vicious and inaccurate attack on a movement which by 1926 was holding public meetings in the Location, one of which, in September of that year, attracted some 300-400 Africans and where the constable on duty described the speeches being made as being "about social reform, free education and politics".

According to Palmer, throughout Rhodesia the period 1926-36 was one of increasing racial animosity, when "Europeans were beginning to fear Africans as competitors and were attempting to hinder African advancement". (102) Such advancement as had taken place in the past had been generally acceptable, but would continue to be so, according to Huggins, only "as long as it is harmless". (103) Meaningful advancement was rapidly to be curtailed, however, following the acceptance of the segregationist policies of the 1925 Land Commission which were embodied in the Land Apportionment Act of 1931, an act which Palmer so accurately describes as having allowed Europeans to establish "a position of economic and political dominance which they were determined to defend at all costs against Africans who now had less and less opportunity of competing with them on anything approaching equal terms". (104) This particular brand of segregation in Rhodesia, he suggests, "spelt separateness but not equality".

These feelings and moves towards the stifling of further African competition were apparent in Bulawayo during this decade. More Africans were forced into the Reserves from the private land around the town as squatters were evicted and further Private Locations agreements suspended in preparation for the expected abolition of African residence on European land by 1937. (105) African occupation of the commonage plots was abolished following the Land Apportionment Act, with alternative accommodation for Africans supposedly to be provided in the form of a "Native Village Settlement", with grazing and arable land available, a plan never fully realized other than in the setting up of Luveve, merely a residential suburb for workers, in 1937.

Hardest hit of all was the small group of landowners all of whose land, following the Land Apportionment Act, was to be incorporated into the European area. They had all made eloquent protest, as we have seen, to the proposals of the Land Commission but, as a numerically insignificant group, they carried no effective political weight and were unable to influence the course of events. Consequently, Maya and Gwabu were paid £880 compensation, the Makgathos £1,137, and Mazinyane a mere £187, as their lands were incorporated into the European area.

All forms of private land ownership by Africans in or around the Town were abolished as the particular brand of segregation of the Land Apportionment Act was enforced. Under the new arrangements, as Prime Minister Huggins assured the municipal council in 1935: "It has been represented to me that the Natives should be given the right to purchase holdings in the proposed Native Village Settlements, but I agree with the Labour Party that if any Government did that they would be creating a definite nuisance and a menace, because if Natives bought land they could live in the Settlement as long as they liked, whether in employment or not, and they could hand the Settlements on to their sons. In that way the Settlement would grow and grow until it became unwieldy." (106) Thus, the benefit for individual Africans of ownership of the means of production was withdrawn, as was their ability to compete effectively with European capitalists. Not content with this situation, the previously limited access to land which had allowed Africans a degree of independence from wage labour and allowed them to establish a position of permanence in the Towns was also withdrawn, as Luveve was established as merely a better quality extension to the Location, with all its property rented and with residence dependent on the acquisition of a job.

Much of the above was achieved with little concerted African protest. In the Location, however, the already vocal elements working against the rebuilding scheme were able to mobilize opposition to the new measures introduced there to further stifle African economic independence and promote residential uniformity in the interests of creating a servile labour force.

By 1927, Vawdrey had been bold enough to suggest that "the sanitary and hygiene conditions in the Location are as near perfect as possible" (107), and in the same year the Mayor had stated proudly that the location "may now be said to be assuming the character of one of the show places of Bulawayo". (108) In addition to pursuing the rebuilding scheme, Vawdrey had laid down rules concerning the erection of further privately owned property, insisting on the use of proper materials, rules which had been accepted by the householders and the Women's League. (109)

Despite these acknowledged improvements, however, the Council in 1929 adopted a harder line towards private ownership in the location. Maintaining their public stance that the existence of such property was "not in the best interests of the Natives themselves or conducive to good health conditions" (110), and that these were the primary reasons for pursuing their policy, the real reason for their hardened attitude was the growing fear of the African as a permanent inhabitant of the town, with all that followed in terms of economic and political participation in urban life.

By 1930 the location had found numerous voices to put forward its claims. The Women's League was the most prominent on this particular issue, but other organizations, including the ICU, were rousing the fears of the European inhabitants of the town. (111) Government proposals to come to terms with these movements, by setting up compliant alternatives in the form of an advisory board for the location, were met with a firm refusal from the municipality. (112) The latter was in no mood for reconciliation or accommodation, and sought a solution in line with the growing desire for some form of segregation to stem the tide of African advancement, combined with the need for further controls over the lives of those Africans who had to remain in town. "The African is only in Town as a worker for European business and his home is in the Reserves", the town clerk stated starkly in 1930. "To afford him any further rights would be a mistake." (113) Even the degree of segregation offered by the Land Apportionment Act was not adequate for the municipality. Encouraged by the provision which allowed them to define the greater part of the urban area as an exclusively European area, they reacted strongly against any scheme which might give Africans more permanence in town. Councillor Davies summed up the general feeling when he stated: "No encouragement at all should be given to any scheme to bring the Natives close to Town ... They must be 50 miles away in the Reserves." (114)

The existence of private property was contrary to all these aims. It had given the African population a cause of which "agitators" had been able to take advantage, it had allowed a section of the population a degree of freedom which encouraged both political activity and crime, and gave to many who, according to the municipality, should not have been living in town at all the ability to do so. Even the Superintendent of Natives, who in the late 1920s became the champion of many evicted without compensation, accepted quite simply that "the change is necessary to ensure the better control of the Location". (115)

The change to which he referred was the decision of the council in October 1928 that no further private buildings were to be erected in the location and that its policy forthwith was to reduce the number of private dwellings and huts within the location as much as possible. This prompted a further storm of protest from the residents, and at a mass meeting called by the Women's League the following question was put to a large audience:

"Why some women who wanted to build their houses are refused to do so after they bought their bricks as the custom of the Bulawayo Location?"

In a letter to the council from the League following the meeting, they demanded an answer, which came in the form of an unrepentant resolution from the Finance Committee which resolved that "the principle with regard to the abolition of private ownership of buildings in the Location be adopted forthwith and no further sites for private building be granted". (117) An immediate abolition, in fact, proved unfeasible as, following complaints to the Chief Native Commissioner by the League and the ICU, the Government insisted on adequate compensation being paid to the householders, which slowed the Council's progress somewhat, although no further building was sanctioned. (118)

One of the consequences of the tightening of controls in the period 1926-33 was to place further restrictions on another group of Africans, of which we have said little as yet, the small but growing group of African businessmen in the location. From its inception, trading in the Location had been prohibited (119) and the tone of the authorities was set in 1899 when a group of Africans from the south, who had

migrated to Bulawayo, applied to open a store in the location and were informed that "the CNC is not in favour of giving the necessary permission to Africans". (120) A further application in 1913, from an African, Dafo, to open a bakery was similarly turned down on the grounds that "the Council is averse to the granting of trading privileges in Native Locations and has always deprecated trading in any form within the Municipal Location". (121)

In reality, the trade that did exist in the location was dominated by a combination of European businessmen and wholesalers and Asian traders. The latter, having been allowed to reside in the location since 1895, were in the advantageous position, as British citizens, of being able to apply successfully for trading licences and to operate from the parts of the town nearest the location. (122) Although Asians, like Africans, were never granted General Dealers' Licences for the Location, they dominated the trade through the outlets of the eating houses which they ran from their own premises in the location, through the control of hawking, and through their shops operating in the western parts of the town along Lobengula Street. As hawkers, they could sell bread, fruit, vegetables, ginger beer, and firewood, as they could from their eating house premises (123), but in fact, as residents of the location, they frequently carried on business as general dealers, quite illegally. (124)

European traders dominated the wholesale market, supplying even the Asians, except in market garden produce, which they obtained from the Asian plot-holders, and the lucrative butchery trade in which the European concerns would allow no competition at all. Meat was hawked by African employees of the butcheries in town, which were reluctant to give up their monopoly. (125)

Complaints against the rights of the Asian traders were voiced frequently by the European commercial lobby in Bulawayo, and all were united in their opposition to African participation. Thus the Superintendent of the Location assured the Bulawayo Chamber of Commerce in 1924 that it would never consider granting General Dealer's Licences to Africans, as "the necessities of the inhabitants of the Location are well and sufficiently catered for by the two European hawkers and several Indians who daily visit the Location; most of the firms in Town deliver twice a day, besides the Town is only an easy ten minutes walk from the Location". (126)

By the mid-1920s, however, some Africans had managed to break into the business world of the location, although they were resolutely prevented from participation in the food market. A number of other businesses had been established with the tacit approval of the location Superintendent, and by 1927 there were three shoemakers, three wood-sellers, four carpenters, one cycle repairer, one painter, and one laundryman operating in the location. (127)

In that year, however, under pressure from sections of the European community who feared increased competition from Africans, the council tightened up the previously loose controls over these activities. Particularly anxious to prevent the growth of an independent artisan class, the Bulawayo builders and white building unions combined in protest, the former declaring that "such practices are in direct opposition to the laws of economy". (128) Similarly, the Chamber of Commerce voiced reservations, suggesting to the town clerk that "there are at present quite a lot of businesses in the Location, they cannot all make legitimate business, hence there is a need for a limit". (129)

The council's response was strictly to enforce new regulations for trade and business in the location. Thus, the businessmen were subjected to regulations which meant that their licences could be revoked at any time, that trade could be done only with other Africans, and that the number of their employees must not exceed five. (130) These were regulations designed to stunt, quite blatantly, the growth of any business which could compete with the town's European traders.

One of the most destructive clauses in the new regulations was that "the Council's new cottages can only be used as dwellings and not let for trade purposes" (131), which meant that the businessmen were forced to seek accommodation in the rapidly declining private sector of the location. The first to feel the impact of these regulations was Marquesa, a furniture maker with a considerable European clientele, who worked from one of the new cottages and employed ten men. Both he and his employees were given notice to quit the location in 1927, "until they could get legitimate employment when they will be allowed to return". (132) By 1932 the position of all these businesses was critical, as "they are absolutely stranded now, and cannot find any accommodation" (133) despite the municipal provision of a block of 12 lock-up shops in the May of that year. The provision of the latter, in fact, merely allowed the municipality to keep trading activity in the location within the guidelines of the new regulations, and to keep it to a level acceptable to the European business community, without appearing to ban it altogether. (134)

Like the small group of landowners, this small group of businessmen were vocal in their protests against their treatment. Their demands were made largely through the use of European solicitors in town and the tone of these demands reflected their desire to participate in the economic system, not to challenge it. Again, like the landowners, they were too small a group to have any significant political impact, but, unlike them, were able to popularize their complaints to form the basis of mass protest. (135)

D. Conclusion

It is hoped that this paper has successfully documented the struggles of a number of disparate sections of an emerging African petty-bourgeoisie, as they attempted to secure a political settlement which would complement their desire for full participation in the free market economy.

The uneven and unequal development which European capitalism brought in its wake meant that, in addition to the general process of proletarianization which led to the institution of migrant labour for the vast majority of the African male population, it created new opportunities for a burgeoning African capitalist class. Thus, a small but significant class of landowners was created around Bulawayo, a class which was able to consolidate its position during the first 25 years of the century. In the town itself, new opportunities opened up for a small number of Africans, predominantly women, able to seize the opportunities afforded by the pattern of property ownership in the location. Similarly, others were able to combine wage labour with access to the means of production, particularly the commonage plots, which gave them a degree of independence from that labour, a more permanent niche in the urban economy, and a stronger bargaining position vis-à-vis their employers.

The overriding political ambition of these groups was to facilitate their full participation in the existing political system, primarily through the acquisition of the vote, in order to ensure the consolidation and extension of their economic rights. Cries of loyalty to the British empire were combined with exhortations on the moral benefits of capitalism and land ownership, necessary for the "civilization" of the African. Such demands, from the pulpit of the AME and the political platform of the RBVA, were met with polite but insistent rebuttals from the government and Municipality alike. Thus, they attempted to forge political organizations with wider appeal (the Women's League in Bulawayo), which combined the demands of the property owners with those of the urban working class. In this way, Africans with very different economic interests developed increasing political identity in their struggle against the European administration, a process which led the petty-bourgeoisie into conflict with the system they had previously purported to support.

From the turn of the century, however, the European authorities in Bulawayo had eschewed direct economic competition with Africans. As a town built on the commercial activities of its European residents, African participation in trading was

never tolerated. African initiative in building and brickmaking was stifled long before the Boer War, and participation in market gardening tolerated only in insignificant numbers, as a reward for long serving wage labourers.

Thus, by the 1920s African accumulation was restricted to economic activities in the location, and to the small class of landowners. A combination of a near paranoid fear of the outbreak of further epidemics, particularly of the plague, following the 'flu epidemic of 1918, and the desire for strict control over a continually growing and potentially antagonistic African urban population, saw the gradual elimination of the former. Meanwhile, the concept of segregation took hold amongst the European population as an effective means of stifling all African competition (both political and economic), following the 1925 Land Commission, leading subsequently to the Land Apportionment Act and the demise of all remaining vestiges of an African petty-bourgeoisie, as land owners and location businessmen alike were eradicated.

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Notes

- (1) C. van Onselen, Chibaro (London, 1976).
- (2) R. Palmer, Land and Racial Domination in Rhodesia (London, 1977).
- (3) A. G. Frank has been so criticized by D. Booth in I. Oxaal, Beyond the Sociology of Development (London, 1976).
- (4) Palmer, op. cit.
- (5) For an examination of the relationship between job and ethnic identification, see S. Thornton, "Municipal Employment in Bulawayo, 1895-1935", University of York, seminar paper, 1978.
- (6) For a complete list of African land owners in Southern Rhodesia, see appendix II in Palmer, op. cit.
- (7) Written evidence to Morris Carter Land Commission, 1925, National Archives of Rhodesia (NAR), S96.
- (8) Virtually all information on the land owners is found in the evidence to the above Commission, contained in two slightly differing collections in NAR, NAR ZAH & NAR S96.
- (9) Maya to Commission, Bulawayo sessions oral evidence, March 1925, NAR ZAH 1/1/2, pp. 13, 14.
- (10) Ibid.
- (11) Ibid.
- (12) M. D. Makgatho to Commission, Bulawayo oral evidence, pp. 14, 15.
- (13) Z. Makgatho to Commission, Bulawayo oral evidence, p. 15.
- (14) Town Clerk to Acting Civil Commissioner, 7 Oct 1902. Town Clerk's Out Letters (TC OUT), B1/8/5R Box 6.
- (15) Location Superintendent to Town Clerk, 4 July 1924. Town Clerk's In Letters (TC IN), B23/3/1R 5884.
- (16) Thomas Mazinyane to Commissioners, Bulawayo evidence, p. 18.
- (17) Ibid.
- (18) Palmer, op. cit., Chapter Eight, "The Fear of Competition", p. 195.
- (19) R. Palmer, "The Making and Implementation of Land Policy in Rhodesia", London PhD, 1968, p. 64.

- (20) A. Boggie, From Ox-Wagon to Railway (Rhodesia Reprint Library, Bulawayo).
- (21) Report of Native Commissioner for Insiza, August 1903, NAR NB6/4/5.
- (22) Report of Native Commissioner for Bulawayo District, 31 Dec 1914, NAR N3/21/1-10.
- (23) W. M. Onslow-Carleton, Land Settlement Scheme for the Matabele (London, 1910).
- (24) BSA Company to Town Clerk, 3 May 1902, Town Hall NAV, Collection Box 8.
- (25) Minutes of Bulawayo Sanitary Board, 28 June 1897.
- (26) Mayor to Acting Administrator, 23 Sept 1902, TC OUT B1/8/5F Box 7.
- (27) Minutes of Public Works Committee, 24 Nov 1902.
- (28) Fallon, Commonage Ranger, to Town Clerk, 17 April 1903, Town Hall NAV Collection, Box 9.
- (29) CNC Bulawayo to Town Clerk, 18 June 1903, TC in B23/1/1R 5608.
- (30) Ibid.
- (31) Ibid.
- (32) Rowland Thomas, Sec. to Sanitary Board, to Sir R. Martin's Report on Native Administration of the BSA Company, July 1897. C8547.
- (33) Town Clerk to Mr Newman, 24 April 1902, TC OUT B1/8/5R Box 6.
- (34) Anstee to Town Clerk, 3 September 1909, TC IN B23/1/2R 5612.
- (35) H. G. Maygloss, Location Superintendent to Secretary of Sanitary Board, 10 June 1895, TC IN B23/1/1R 5606.
- (36) Report of Native Commissioner, Bulawayo, 1910. NAR L04/1/29.
- (37) C. Southey, "Reminiscences of an European Settler in Rhodesia", Rhodes House, Oxford, Mss. Afr. s875.
- (38) B. Parsons reported from Bulawayo that he was forced to work as a waiter at Charter Hotel, owing to the Depression. NAR PA2/1/1.
- (39) Petition from Bulawayo's brickmakers, May 1895. TC IN B23/1/1R 5606.
- (40) Ibid.
- (41) Town Clerk to Mr Mulrey, 8 April 1899, TC OUT, Box 2.
- (42) Town Clerk to Messrs Roberts and Letts, April 1899, TC OUT, Box 2.
- (43) Minutes of Commonage sub-committee, 31 July 1902.
- (44) Minutes of Commonage sub-committee, 6 June 1902. By 1905 there were only 16 21-year leases remaining.
- (45) Town Clerk to Mr R. Newman, 24 April 1902, TC OUT B1/8/5R, Box 6.
- (46) Town Clerk to Messrs Bate & Welsh, April 1902, TC OUT B1/8/5R Box 6.
- (47) Town Clerk to Rev. Harry Buck, St Augustine's, Penhalonga, 29 April 1913, TC IN B23/1/6R 5677.
- (48) Beira and Mashonaland Railway Manager to Town Clerk, 18 July 1917, TC IN B23/1/7R 5684.
- (49) Minutes of Finance Committee meeting 12 Feb 1920.
- (50) Location Regulations of Bulawayo Sanitary Board, Government Notice Number 12, 25 Jan 1895.
- (51) Ibid. Section 3, p. 2.
- (52) Ibid. Section 5, p. 2.
- (53) Ibid. Section 1, p. 1.
- (54) Ibid. Section 14, p. 4.
- (55) M. Fallon, Location Superintendent's Report, July 1902, Town Hall NAV Collection, Box 9.
- (56) Fallon's Report, Nov 1903, Town Hall NAV Collection, Box 9.
- (57) Ibid.

- (58) A. Tomlinson, Assistant Commissioner, BSA Police, 6 Dec. 1916. NAR N3/21/1-10.
- (59) Bulawayo Mayor's Minute, 1913.
- (60) Henry K. Mangesana to Town Clerk, 28 Dec. 1903, TC IN B23/1/1R 5608.
- (61) Roberts and Letts to Town Clerk, 23 Sep 1915, TC IN B23/1/7R 5684.
- (62) Petition from Loyal Matabele Patriotic Society to Town Clerk, 30 Aug 1916, NAR N3/21/1-10.
- (63) J. W. Maynes, Town Engineer's Department to Town Engineer, 13 April 1904, TC IN B23/1/1R 5608.
- (64) Minutes of Public Works Committee, 8 March 1905.
- (65) Memorandum of Town Clerk, 21 Aug 1907, TC IN B23/1/3R 5622.
- (66) Haddon and Sly were the first to rent a row of cottages when ten were specially built for them in September 1909, at a charge of 10/- per room per month, with three "boys" in each room. Haddon & Sly to Town Clerk, 22 July 1909. Similarly, the Rhodesian Tobacco Company leased rooms for 60 African employees at an annual rent of 25/- in 1911.
- (67) Report of Medical Commission on Water Supply and General Sanitary Conditions of the Bulawayo Township, F. Ellis and E. Head, 1910. TC IN B23/1/8R 5689.
- (68) Ibid. TC IN B23/1/3R 5622.
- (69) Ibid.
- (70) Over 70 Africans died in hospital, many more died in the countryside, and the epidemic cost the Municipality £3,229.
- (71) Committee on Influenza, General Report, 19 Oct 1918, TC IN B23/1/8R 5689.
- (72) Native Location Superintendent's Report for month ending June 20 1919. TC IN B23/1/8R 5691.
- (73) Minutes of Public Health Committee, 13 Jan 1920.
- (74) Native Location Superintendent's Report, June 1919. TC IN B23/1/8R 5691.
- (75) One of the benefits of the reluctance to spend money on this project was that African labour was used in preference to expensive European labour, thus giving African artisans their first opportunity of regular employment. See S. Thornton, op. cit.
- (76) Mayor's Minute, 1923.
- (77) T. E. Vawdrey, Location Superintendent, to Town Clerk, July 1921, TC IN B23/2/4R 5769.
- (78) Vawdrey to Town Clerk, 26 Jan 1921. TC IN B23/2/4R 5769.
- (79) As 77.
- (80) Acting Superintendent of Natives to CNC Salisbury, 22 Aug 1933. NAR.
- (81) Vawdrey to Town Clerk, 18 March 1925, TC IN B23/3/3R 5892.
- (82) S. Mabote to Town Clerk, 3 Sept 1909, TC IN B23/1/2R 5612.
- (83) Superintendent of CID, Southern Rhodesia, to Town Clerk, 26 Sept 1924, TC IN B23/3/3R 5892.
- (84) Ibid.
- (85) Superintendent CID to Town Clerk, 26 Sept 1924.
- (86) Vawdrey to Town Clerk, 10 Oct 1924, TC IN B23/3/1R 5884.
- (87) Brundell, Superintendent CID, Bulawayo, to CNC Salisbury, 28 Aug 1924. NAR S138/18 (now withdrawn from public access).
- (88) Minutes of RBVA Annual Conference held in Bulawayo, 14 July 1924. NAR S138/18.
- (89) Mazinyane to Commission, Bulawayo oral evidence, pp. 17-18.
- (90) Superintendent of Natives at Bulawayo to CNC, Salisbury, 23 May 1924. NAR S138/18.
- (91) Ngano to Commission, Bulawayo oral evidence, p. 8.
- (92) Zachariah Makgatho to Commission, Bulawayo oral evidence, p. 15.

- (93) Vawdrey to Town Clerk, 10 Oct 1924, TC IN B23/3/1R 5884.
- (94) Vawdrey to Town Clerk, 16 May 1925, TC IN B23/3/2R 5889.
- (95) Ngano to Commission, Bulawayo oral evidence, pp. 9-10.
- (96) Mary Lobengula to Town Clerk, Nov 1925, TC IN B23/3/3R 5892.
- (97) Makgatho to Commission, Bulawayo oral evidence.
- (98) Superintendent of Natives at Bulawayo to Town Clerk, 7 Feb 1930, TC IN B23/3/7R 6493.
- (99) Rev. Beattie, St Columba's Mission, Bulawayo, to Town Clerk, 4 March 1916. TC IN B23/1/7R 5684.
- (100) Town Hall NAV Collection, Box 144.
- (101) Taylor, Location Superintendent, to Town Clerk, Monthly Report, June 1934. Town Hall Loosely Filed Material.
- (102) Palmer, op. cit., p. 229.
- (103) Huggins to Land Commission, NAR ZAHL/1/1.
- (104) Palmer, op. cit., p. 187.
- (105) This, in fact, did not take place and the Land Apportionment Act was amended to make 1941 the deadline. The controversies surrounding the establishment of a new location, and after the Act a "Native Urban Area" and a "Native Village Settlement", as laid down by the Act, were long and complex and need to be the subject of a separate paper.
- (106) PM to Town Clerk, 26 March 1935, Town Hall 1935-7 Series, Box 1.
- (107) Vawdrey to Town Clerk, 28 Sept 1927, TC IN B23/2/5R 6111.
- (108) Bulawayo Mayor's Minute, 1927, p. 18.
- (109) Ngano to Town Clerk, 22 Nov 1929, TC IN B23/3/7R 6492.
- (110) Town Clerk to Conference of Christian Natives, 8 Sept 1930, TC IN B23/3/7R 6494.
- (111) The ICU, the "Native Urban Community" and the "Workers Mouthpiece" were three such movements, the details of which remain the subject of another paper.
- (112) Municipal Comments on Commission of Enquiry into Matters Concerning the Bulawayo Native Location, TC IN B23/3/7R 6492.
- (113) Town Clerk to CNC, Salisbury, 12 April 1930, Town Hall NAV Collection, Box 274.
- (114) Bulawayo Chronicle, 9 May 1934.
- (115) Superintendent of Natives to CNC, Salisbury, 10 Dec 1929, NAR S235/418/428.
- (116) Bantu Women's League to Town Clerk, 13 Oct 1929, TC IN B23/3/7R 6492.
- (117) Minutes of Finance Committee, 27 Nov 1929.
- (118) The house belonging to Martha Kumalo, one of the League members, was not taken over until 1934, when it cost the Municipality £100 in compensation. There were still 17 privately owned properties in the Location in 1943. Taylor to Town Clerk, 1 Sept 1943, Town Hall Loosely Filed Material R1.
- (119) "No shop or trading station shall be allowed within the Location except with the approval and during the pleasure of the Board." Location Regulations, Govt Notice No. 12 1895, Section 23, p. 6.
- (120) Secretary to Administrator to Town Clerk, 2 Aug 1899, TC IN B23/1/1R 5545. S. Masabalala applied on behalf of himself and three others, described as being "British subjects and registered voters from the colony of Rhodesia, having been in Rhodesia for a period of time in poverty and had no place to save money such as savings bank. We do not plough or plant anything so in applying for this liberty we mean to use the little we have in speculation".
- (121) Finance Committee Minutes, Feb 1913.
- (122) The European community often objected to this provision, but "under the British Constitution any person of any nationality within the Empire is free to come and go for pleasure or business in any part of HM's Dominions". Thus, the Civil Commissioner was obliged to grant licences to "all and sundry", despite

complaints in 1903 that "trade in Town is passing into the hands of men whose civil and general character enables them to live in a way impossible and undesirable here for white men to live". Town Clerk to Civil Commissioner, 17 March 1903, TC OUT B1/8/5R, Box 6.

- (123) Finance Committee Minutes, 25 July 1917.
- (124) Memo re Indian Traders, NAR S235/440/232.
- (125) Chief Sanitary Inspector to Town Clerk, 9 April 1923, TC IN B23/2/7R 5782. "Almost every firm in Bulawayo of butchers have natives employed carrying meat about in trays exposed to the elements and becoming contaminated with all kinds of filth."
- (126) Vawdrey to Chamber of Commerce, 17 March 1924, TC IN B23/3/7R 6492.
- (127) "Trading in the Location", April 1927, TC IN B23/2/5R 6111.
- (128) Secretary of Bulawayo Builders' Society to Town Clerk, 28 May 1927, TC IN B23/2/2R 5760.
- (129) Chamber of Commerce to Town Clerk, 28 Dec 1927, Town Hall NAV Collection, Box 159.
- (130) "Trading in the Location", loc. cit.
- (131) Town Clerk to Messrs Webb and Low, 5 Jan 1928, Town Hall NAV Collection, Box 159.
- (132) Vawdrey to Town Clerk, 8 Feb 1927, TC IN B23/2/5R 6111.
- (133) Coghlan and Welsh to Town Clerk, 3 Feb 1932, Town Hall, NAV Collection, Box 290.
- (134) Bulawayo Mayor's Minute, 1932.
- (135) The ICU did take up the question of the domination of trade by the Asians, as when Masotsha asked the Town Clerk to "clear up the Indian traders who hold a monopoly of the trade in our Location, so that natives can establish their own businesses". It was not a popular rallying point, however, as the establishment of a business would have been impossible for the majority of the poverty-stricken inhabitants of the Location.