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Women, Agriculture, and Social Change in Southern Rhodesia,
1898-1934,

With Special Reference to the Goromonzi District

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WOMEN, AGRICULTURE, AND SOCIAL CHANGE
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INTRODUCTION

Within eight years of the occupation of Southern Rhodesia, Africans in the Goromonzi District were seriously engaged in market production. Conveniently located in the environs of Salisbury and in the vicinity of several mines, peasant producers were expanding their acreage under cultivation and selling food and beer to traders, urban dwellers, and migrant workers on the mines. Through the sale of their agricultural products they were able to earn enough cash to pay their taxes and buy consumer goods without offering themselves up as wage labourers.

African women, as the primary agricultural producers, played a major role in peasant response to market opportunities. As political mechanisms employed by white settlers brought about a decline in peasant prosperity, women's labour was intensified in a final attempt to stave off the necessity for male labour migration. Countless women responded to their lives of increasing hardship by running away to the emerging towns, mining centres, and commercial farms, setting off another wave of social turbulence. In their efforts to regain control of their runaway daughters and wives, African men found themselves collaborating with their erstwhile colonial adversaries. Concerned with the beginning stages of social and economic transformation in Southern Rhodesia, this paper concludes with the early 1930s, long before the upheaval had reached its peak.

Between 1899 and 1949 the district in question passed through several name changes, alternating between 'Salisbury' and 'Goromonzi'. Even when the district as a whole was called 'Salisbury', the rural areas outside the capital, in which the African reserves were located, were treated as a sub-district (Goromonzi) under the control of an assistant commissioner. For convenience sake, and because the African peasants lived in the Goromonzi sub-district, the area will be referred to as 'Goromonzi' throughout.

The Peasant Boom, 1898-1908

When the Pioneer Column of the British South Africa Company occupied Mashonaland in 1890, its members were not seeking prime agricultural land. Formed in the wake of the gold rush on the South African Witwatersrand, the Pioneer Column was composed of adventurers and fortune hunters who were eager to join the northward trek in search of a 'second rand'. Although each of the 196 pioneers was granted a farm of 3,175 acres, few were interested in agricultural pursuits.¹ Obsessed by the prospects of mineral wealth, most of the early Europeans had little desire to grow their own food. They found it cheaper to buy their supplies from African producers who, in any event, were more knowledgeable about local conditions and suitable agricultural practices.²

In the Goromonzi District to the east of Salisbury, African agriculturalists were quick to respond to the market stimulus. Shortly after the termination of the 1896-97 risings, there were reported to be selling surplus food to Europeans.³ By 1901 the native commissioner could report that the African harvest was unusually heavy, the Natives being able to sell large quantities of grain. Since there was a ready market for rice, much more of that crop than usual had been planted. Generally, he noted,

... the cultivation of grain has greatly increased in this district. It is quite the usual thing for a Native to have three gardens. The first he will tell you is for his year's food the second to make beer of; the third for trade.

Writing in 1905 from the Jesuit mission 12 miles east of Salisbury, Father Richartz remarked upon the thriving business conducted between his African neighbours and the local mines:

The extensive crops of millet grown by the natives not only suffice abundantly for their own needs, but are sold in large quantities to the mine-owners, who send agents round every year in the season, to purchase this grain. It is almost the staple food of the boys employed in the Mashonaland mines.

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As dependent as they were on African-produced food, the mine owners realised that the robust peasant economy was a mixed blessing. Because of their success in growing and marketing their crops, African men in the environs of Salisbury had little incentive to work for Europeans. By 1906 African labour was so scarce that work had to come to a virtual standstill on several small mining properties.⁶ In spite of the fact that African taxes had recently been raised from 10 shillings to one pound per annum, with an additional 10 shillings levied for every wife after the first, Africans in the Salisbury area were easily meeting their cash needs through the sale of grain and fowls.⁷ By 1909 it was evident that, rather than simply selling their normal surplus, Africans were expanding their production to meet the demand of the large number of traders and mining centres in the district.⁸

The production of an agricultural surplus was the main bulwark against societal disintegration through the out-migration of African men. The primary producers of this surplus were African women. While both men and women were involved in agricultural production, women did most of the day to day work, thus contributing the greatest labour input throughout the growing season. Men generally cleared new fields, usually every five to six years, and prepared the land for planting. Thereafter, women were responsible for most of the planting, hoeing, weeding, reaping, and threshing, although men might help with some of these tasks

when not otherwise occupies. Since there had been no technological innovation, the 'increased acreage under cultivation' noted by the native commissioner in 1909 could only have transpired through the intensification of female labour.

If women laboured longer hours in the fields, they also devised more lucrative means of acquiring income. It was customary for women to brew millet beer which was provided to neighbours in exchange for labour at critical points in the growing season. It was but a small step to think of selling beer, as well as grain, to the mine labourers who had been imported into the area from Nyasaland. Mine wages were so low, and beer brewing so profitable, that women selling beers to the miners frequently earned more than the miners themselves.

By 1909 such enterprising women had come under virulent attack from the Goromonzi native commissioner. Already the Company administration had embarked on a fruitless attempt to encourage African girls to enter domestic service with Europeans. However, in 1909 - and for the next half century - neither the girls nor their families showed any interest in the employment opportunities offered to them. In his annual report of that year the native commissioner complained:

The women are yearly becoming more lazy and idolent and I do not know of a single case of a girl or women entering service. The young women living in the vicinity of the mines spend their lives making and selling beer and in general immorality. Where in previous years the women had to do their share of tilling the lands, this work in many cases is now done by natives from other Districts employed by the fathers or husbands of the women who become richer by the earnings of the latter.

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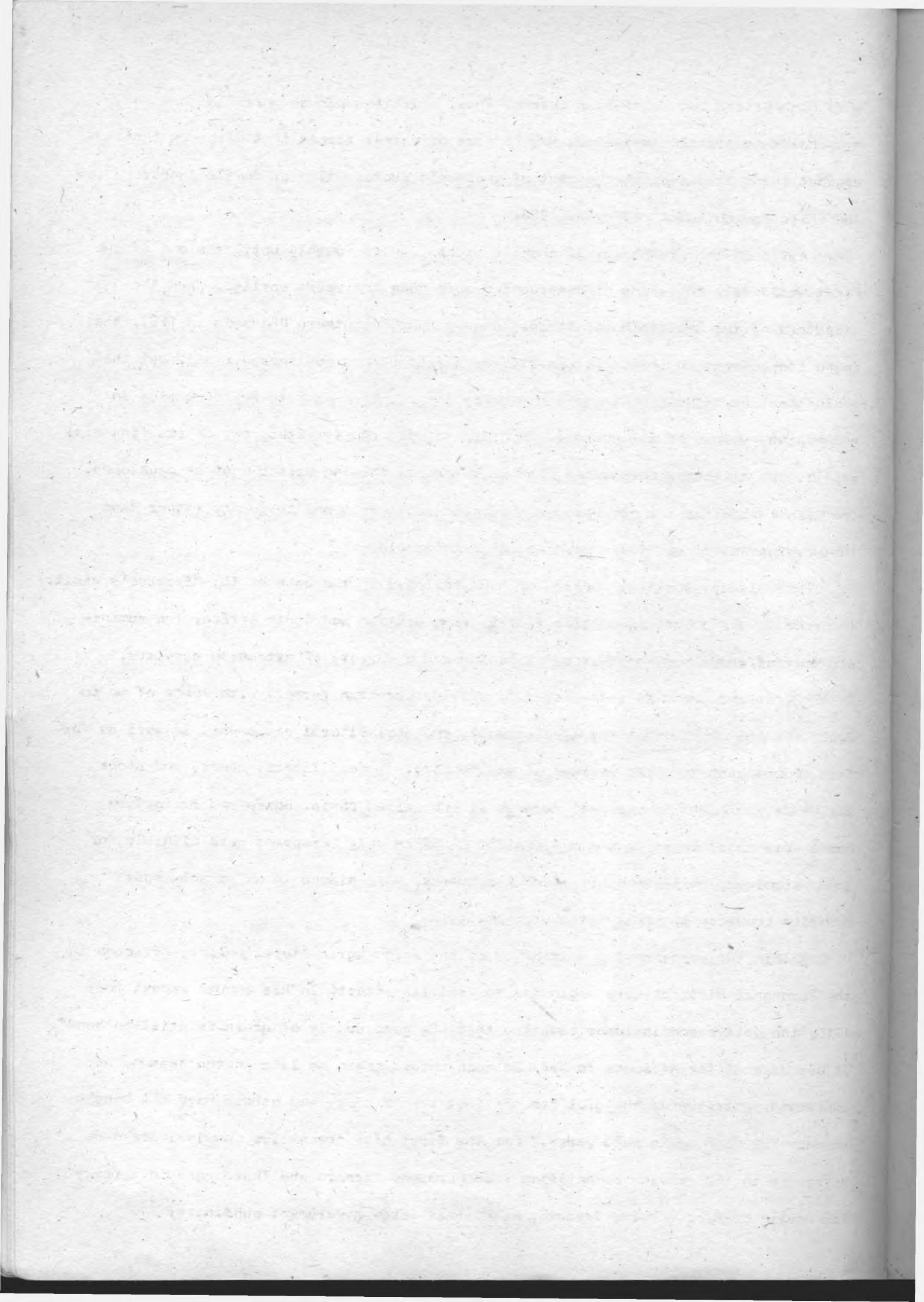
Evident from the native commissioner's report is the fact that within two decades of the occupation of Mashonaland, African households in the environs of Salisbury were embarking upon highly sophisticated, profit-oriented labour strategies. Household members were assigned, not to their customary tasks, but to those that

utilised their labour most profitably. While women could sell beer at one shilling per cup, hired male labour was going for an average of 10 shillings per month plus food.¹⁴ In other words, a woman needed to sell only 10 cups of beer per month in order to hire one man to work in her fields for the same length of time. Similarly, if a woman sold a bag of millet to mine workers in the Salisbury area, she could obtain three to four pounds. However, if she brewed beer from that same bag, she could produce 600 pints, which she could sell at one shilling each,¹⁵ making a substantial profit. Thus, it was evident to many households that female beer brewing was more lucrative than male, let alone female, wage labour, and was a more profitable use of female labour time than their involvement in field work. As a result, capitalist labour relations between Africans in the Salisbury area had begun at least by 1909 - financed by the cash earnings of African women.

Until 1904, African peasants in Mashonaland faced little competition from European farmers. In 1903/4, white farmers cultivated only five percent of the total acreage under cultivation, producing less than 10 percent of the total marketed out-put.¹⁶ Thus, African peasants continued to supply the mines with the bulk of their foodstuffs, primarily grain, cattle, and beer. Meeting mine workers' and urban dwellers' demand for a healthier and more varied diet, they also sold green vegetables, potatoes, wheat, and groundnuts. Because it was a sellers' market,¹⁷ high prices were paid for African produce. Given the central role of female labour in agricultural production, women were key agents of African peasant prosperity in the early years of the twentieth century.

In the Goromonzi District, peasant households responded to the demand of the local market by experimenting with new crops. Their substitution of the larger European mealies for the indigenous less marketable variety occurred fairly rapidly. By 1909 the native commissioner could note in his annual report:

There is a marked improvement in the quality of the mealies grown by the



were high-priced but value-less assets. Thus, while the plough permitted peasant households to sustain themselves in the face of market forces that were now turning against them, it did so at the cost of increased exploitation of female labour.

The White Agricultural Policy of 1908.

Although the prosperity of Shona peasants lasted roughly until the end of the First World War, the seeds of destruction were sown ten years earlier. When the directors of the British South Africa Company toured Southern Rhodesia in 1907, they found its economy in shambles. Clearly the territory was no 'second rand', yet the administration had failed to compensate for its relative poverty by investing in non-mining sectors of the economy. In order to pull the territory out of its financial crisis, the directors determined that a commercial farming sector must be developed. The plan called for the promotion of European settlement and training, rather than the development of an African commercial farming class.

The white agricultural policy of 1908 followed in the wake of the director's visit. In order to woo potential settler farmers from Britain and South Africa, the administration offered them agricultural training and a variety of extension services. In 1912, a land bank was established to provide European farmers with loans of up to 2,000 for the purchase of farms, livestock, and agricultural equipment, as well as for farm improvements such as irrigation and fencing.²⁶ Fertilizers, seeds, and stock were made available to European farmers at subsidized costs. Roads and irrigation works were constructed in their vicinity.²⁷ Since only Europeans were eligible for these services, white settlers, from the outset, were placed in an advantageous position compared to their African competitors.

Within two years of the initiation of the white agricultural policy, Africans in the Goromonzi District were beginning to feel its effect. In his annual report for 1910, the native commissioner remarked that, "a good supply of grain is still on hand" It was unusual for Africans to have so much unsold grain so late in the season, he continued, attributing the glut "to the fact that traders and others have not bought so much for cash as in past years." For the first time the native commissioner made reference to the growing competition from European farmers who "have gone in largely for mealie growing." These farmers, with their large government subsidies,

technologically advanced methods, and economies of scale, was undercutting the prices asked by African peasants. Whereas in the past Africans were able to get six to eight shillings per bag of mealies, traders were now willing to give them only three to four shillings.²⁸ Throughout the country maize prices declined 30 to 50 percent between 1903/4 and 1911/12.²⁹

A second problem faced by Goromonzi peasants was the change in market demand. Prior to 1910, millet was the staple food of both the peasants and the mine labourers. Consequently, the peasants simply expanded the production of their staple crop and sold the surplus to mine owners or intermediary traders. However, according to the annual report of 1910, "...the mines are now all feeding their boys on mealie meal." As a result, the peasants' millet crop was in low demand. They were finding it "difficult to dispose of their grain, except when ground, and then only in small quantities,"³⁰ In the latter case they were selling their millet directly to individual mine workers for their private production of beer.³¹ However, because the workers wanted the grain ready-ground, the crop could be sold only with the addition of a significant amount of female labour time--in the form of pounding and grinding the grain. Once this labour was done, the peasants could obtain an average of three to four pounds per bag of millet --sold bit by bit--in contrast to the three to four shillings per bag of maize offered by local traders and the even smaller sums offered for millet.³²

Their market having been uncontested for more than a dozen years, the peasants were not prepared to lose their foothold at the mines. In 1910, the Goromonzi native commissioner wrote that he had "no doubt that the native is making an effort to compete with the farmer in meeting the requirements of the mines." The large European farming population in the district gave peasants "an impetus to extend (their) lands... and so be in a position to sell at a lower figure."³³ The only way to extend their lands and undercut European prices, without benefit of subsidies and other advantages, was to intensify the exploitation of family labour--primarily that of women and children. However even these efforts were of no avail. By 1912, most of the food requirements of the mines throughout Rhodesia were met by European farmers.³⁴ In the Goromonzi District, the peasants turned their attention to the growing market in

Salisbury and to migrant workers on neighbouring European farms.³⁵

African markets were not the sole target of European attack after 1908. As the number of white farmers in Rhodesia grew, from 545 in 1904 to 1,324 in 1911, they began to challenge African peasants for the best agricultural land.³⁶ The Native Reserves Commission, established in 1914, recommended not only a massive reduction in the acreage set aside for Africans, but the removal from the reserves of most of the fertile, well-watered land in close proximity to markets and communication routes, and the substitution of impoverished, arid land in remote, tsetse fly infested areas.³⁷ In 1920, the recommendations of the Commission were enshrined in law; the African reserves were reduced by one million acres, and the territory's best land was turned over to European use.³⁸

Since the early years of occupation, the Goromonzi District had been known for its fertile soil, plentiful streams, the prime location in the vicinity of Salisbury and several mines.³⁹ Not surprisingly, Africans in this district were not spared from the European land grab. According to the 1915 diary of A.H. Holland, secretary of the Native Reserves Commission, the Meana Reserve was to be reduced by one-half, as it

...would make ideal farming country, as there is plenty of water and rich red soil, also a good class of sand soil.

Similarly, the Kunzwi Reserve was to be reduced by two-thirds, as it was.

...excellent for grazing and well watered...(with) rich red chocolate soil...it was ideal farming land.⁴⁰

Along with the pressures of dwindling markets and dispossession of land were dramatically increased financial burdens. The upward climb of hut taxes, rents, grazing and dipping fees, and various other levies imposed by the settlers eroded whatever cash earning the peasants had managed to acquire. Moreover, in order to compete with European farmers, Africans were investing in ploughs, wagons, scotch carts, and hybrid seeds, making further inroads into their limited supplies of cash. To make matters worse, prices for cattle and maize had fallen to rock bottom in the economic slump that followed the First World War.⁴¹ As fewer and fewer households could survive solely on the basis of produce and livestock sales, an increasing number of African men were forced to enter the wage labour market. European employers seized the opportunity to reduce African wages, which declined in real terms from

the 1920s onwards.⁴²

Production and Reproduction: Increased Pressures on Women

Although the decline had begun, African households continued their efforts to forestall the disintegrating forces of male labour migration. The on-going presence of women and girls at the homestead was key to the survival strategy. Commenting on the unlikelihood of persuading girls to engage in domestic labour for Europeans, an observer in the early 1930s noted that the removal of women and girls "means less food grown for the family and one less pair of hands for the many tasks that native life involves."⁴³ During the same period, another commentator remarked,

Up to the age of fifteen many girls are required to plough in the lands, and herd cattle...There is a growing tendency on the part of the male children to run away from home to work, thereby throwing a greater number of duties on the females.

The wages paid to girls in employment (domestic service) hardly compensates their parents for the loss of their services. Generally speaking, therefore, natives are opposed to their daughters leaving home, apart from the consideration of 'lobola' should they fail to return home to get married.⁴⁴

Apart from the labour of girls and women, it was through their brideprice (lobola) that households acquired most of their cattle. As the ox-drawn plough became more universally used and wagon and scotch cart transport assumed increasing importance, cattle began to play a greater productive, rather than predominantly social, role in African society. By the 1930s, cattle and ploughs had emerged as the most prominent forms of productive investment by Africans.⁴⁵ Consequently the value of cattle increased, and with it, the need to control the means of acquiring cattle, i.e. women.

As the productive labour and cattle-acquiring potential of women increased in value, so too did the value of their reproductive capacities. As producers of children, women were bearers of the next generation of labourers, who would sustain their parents in old age. Since the payment of lobola entitled a man to control over his wife's reproductive capacity and to any children she might bear, it is not surprising that the cattle and cash components of brideprices were rapidly inflating. Before the occupation of Mashonaland in 1890, lobola demands in the Goromonzi District included four to five head of cattle.⁴⁶ Similarly, typical brideprice payments at the time

of the Risings (1896-97) were: four head of cattle, plus four hoes, two blankets, and 10 shillings, or four head of cattle, and six baskets of grain, intended to represent a fifth beast.⁴⁷ In 1904, four to five head of cattle were still being demanded as lobola, but the cash component had risen to an average of one pound.⁴⁸ However, thirty years later, the growing need for cash and cattle was evident; in the late 1920s and early '30s, an average of eight to nine head of cattle and 15 to 19 pounds were paid as lobola.⁴⁹

Prosperous men were able to acquire more wives, and hence, more children and total labour power. They compensated for their lack of land by employing extremely intensive labour processes, using family, rather than hired, labour. Often these men were members of an emergent 'master farming' class, which was eagerly adopting the methods taught by agricultural demonstrators. The government's European agriculturalist remarked upon one such man in the Chihota Reserve a few dozen miles to the south of Salisbury:

(In 1929 Vambe)...made his two wives submit their labours to a proper 4 course rotation on two acres each. By 1934, Vambe had three wives, each with crop rotations. He also had a farm cart, two ploughs, a harrow, a planter and a cultivator.⁵⁰

Wives in such circumstances were little more than farm labourers, working for room and board, rather than pay.

New Options for Women: Farms, Mines, and Towns

Intensified pressure on women within the household was occurring at a time when alternative ways of living were also emerging. As legal minors without access to land or wage employment, women whose domestic situations had become intolerable needed to find new male patrons and protectors. A woman's options were few: she could run away with a lover, who would become her new husband; she could seek refuge at a mission station, exchanging the patriarchal control of her father or husband for that of the European missionaries; or, she could flee to the towns, mines, or farming compounds. There she would most likely form an informal, often temporary liaison or series of liaisons with a male worker, providing him with domestic and sexual services in exchange for shelter. Her own means of acquiring cash were few, and a woman who made money did so primarily through the sale of beer and through prostitution.⁵¹

A large number of young women who ran away were married to much older men, invariably polygynists, to whom they had been pledged in childhood.⁵² Although the pledging of children was outlawed by the Native Marriage Ordinance of 1901, 27 years later, the chief native commissioner asserted that it was "still unabated in Mashonaland."⁵³ In 1933, the Southern Rhodesia Missionary Conference maintained that, in spite of 30 years of legislation, the custom of child pledging was still prevalent.⁵⁴ One observer in the early 1930s believed child pledging was actually on the increase, due to the enhanced buying power of wage-earning men.⁵⁵

By the time girls pledged in childhood were old enough to join their husbands, these men had already paid substantial amounts of lobola. Since the pledging of children took place most frequently when families were in serious financial need, the cattle and cash so received had inevitably been consumed years before. Should the girls refuse to go to their husbands, their fathers had no way of repaying the lobola. Hence, girls who protested their arranged marriages were often threatened and beaten into submission.⁵⁶

Just as young women ran away to escape arranged marriages, junior wives, already established in polygynous households, sought refuge from oppressive domestic situations. Many of these were welcomed at mission stations, the missionaries having their own reasons for opposing polygyny.⁵⁷ Polygynists were predominantly older, relatively well-to-do men who acquired young wives to enhance their social status, productive capacities, and ability to acquire more children. Frequently the young wives had not freely consented to the marriages, but had been pushed into them by their families, who were anxious to consolidate important social bonds and to acquire bridewealth.

Once at the homestead, junior wives often found their position intolerable. Co-wives were encouraged to compete for their husband's praise and affection through hard work and obedience.⁵⁸ They rivalled one another for the scarce resources controlled and distributed by their husband.⁵⁹ In the case of 'master farmers', the senior wife frequently acted as a supervisor of homestead labour, and the manager of homestead affairs in the absence of the husband, while the junior wives

were mere labourers with little input into decision-making processes. Often they were assigned the most arduous and tedious agricultural tasks, supplying the bulk of the farm labour.⁶⁰ During the 1920s and '30s, when demands made on female labour were intensified, it is not surprising that junior wives constituted a significant proportion of the female runaways.

In their efforts to escape the adversities of rural life, women naturally sought patrons who could provide them with some thing better. If there was any group of men who threatened the proprietary rights of Shona men over their women, it was the migrant labourers from other territories who, by force of Rhodesian law, had left their own wives at home. Countless colonial documents note that these men were particularly attractive to Shona women because they earned much higher wages than local men, having been forced to enter wage employment at an earlier date.⁶¹ According to the native commissioners, many women living in the vicinity of towns and mining centres were enticed by

...the advantages offered them by natives in employment at mines and other places where they can get plenty of food and clothing and on the whole work is less hard than they have at the kraals.⁶²

There seemed to be a consensus among government officials that foreign men employed at the mines generally offered local women "better conditions of living" than their own husbands were able to provide.⁶³ However their views of women who sought a better life were unequivocally disparaging. Writing of the foreign workers, one native commissioner commented that

...they are always in possession of ready cash (which) counts greatly in their favour with the local women, who are fond of presents, clothes, etc. These women, finding that the life in mine compounds is one of laziness and luxury, are easily enticed to remain and encourage their friends to do likewise.⁶⁴

Another native commissioner, referring to the inordinate number of marital disputes in his docket of civil cases, wrote,

In seven tenths of the hundreds of cases which have come before me, (the woman) has left her husband, not because she does not get on with him, but because the idle, licentious, pretty clothes, beer drinking, and meat food life among the hundreds of grass widows or bachelors on a mine appeals to her more.⁶⁵

The native commissioners were unanimous in their condemnation of African women who,

they maintained, "only aim at lives of sloth and luxury under the protection of foreign natives at the mines or elsewhere."⁶⁶ It was certainly not of concern to them that the growing poverty of peasant kraals and the presence of thousands of 'unmarried' men from other territories was a direct consequence of administration policy.

Reassertion of Control: The Unholy Alliance

Native commissioners were not the only ones who felt that African women had gotten out of hand. An African man expressed concern that because his runaway wives had had a "taste of the easy life in the compound they would not be likely to remain with him in his kraal." Nonetheless he asked the magistrate to severely punish them:

I want them to be put in gaol, and I want them to be put to real hard labour. Washing clothes and such like light work they laugh at. I want them to feel the pain of the prison.⁶⁷

This man's complaint was not an isolated one. Throughout the 1920s and '30s, chiefs, headmen, and elders constantly complained to the government that their women were running away. Since government policies had created the situation, they felt that it was the government's duty to rectify it.⁶⁸

In the early 1930s, the administration established district level 'native boards' as safety valves for mounting African grievances. Composed of chiefs, headmen, and other 'respectable' males, the boards were a popular forum for airing complaints against wayward women. In the Goromonzi District, a large proportion of every meeting was devoted to the problems created by women and methods for their control. Chiefs and other elders urged the government to inflict corporal punishment on runaway wives who refused to return to their husbands.⁶⁹ They asked that policemen be charged with rounding up women in town locations, mining compounds, and on European farms. If these women could not produce marriage registration certificates, they should be sent back to the rural areas. Marriage certificates, in other words should serve as a form of 'pass document' for African women.⁷⁰

While chiefs and elders that the government was responsible for their women's aberrant behaviour, the native commissioners cast the blame on African men. They claimed that fathers were not disciplining their daughters, nor husbands their wives.

According to the native commissioner of Goromonzi,

When your children are naughty hit them with little sticks. It is your duty to punish your daughters. No one will interfere with you if you apply a reasonable punishment. But you must not take huge sticks and hit them hard on their heads.⁷¹

This sort of punishment, he wrote later, would cure the girls of the "obvious lack of respect shown to parents and elders."⁷² On another occasion he claimed that the men's wives ran away, "because (they) did not make them work hard." It was his contention that "idle women will get into mischief." Rather than spending cash to buy store-ground meal, the men must make their wives grind the maize by hand, as they had always done in the past. Rather than complain that they had no wagons to transport their maize to Goromonzi for sale, they should make their wives and children carry the maize on their heads.⁷³

Conclusion

The 1930s brought even greater strains to the peasant economy. With the onset of the Great Depression, wages fell, mines and factories were closed, and men were thrown out of work. Grain prices also nose dived, and white farmers, fearing African competition, pressed for the passage of protective legislation. Perhaps the most discriminatory of the ensuing laws was the Maize Control Act of 1931, which heavily favoured European at the expense of African producers.

Although remuneration was small and employment hard to come by, wage earnings had already surpassed the sale of agricultural produce as the most important factor in household survival. Consequently, women's work diminished in social, as well as economic importance, even as their work load grew. The deterioration of the reserves, as a result of over-population and hence, over-use of the land, meant that women worked harder for ever diminishing returns. Moreover they were assuming the tasks of absent men as well as their own.

All of these factors gave further impetus to the female exodus from the rural areas. In the 1930s and later, African women continued to seek new lives in the towns, on the mines, and on the farms. As their numbers slowly but steadily grew, African men and colonial officials embarked on new strategies to stem the town-ward flow. However, their efforts were to no avail. The process of unbanisation had begun, and African women were an integral part of it.

FOOTNOTES

Unless otherwise indicated, all colonial documents are housed in the National Archives of Zimbabwe.

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41. Arrighi, p. 216; Gann, p. 15; Palmer, p. 145.
42. Arrighi, p. 216; Gann, p. 149, 194; Palmer, p. 145
43. CNC S235/475, Federation of Women's Institutes of Southern Rhodesia, Report of the Standing Committee on Domestic Service, July 1930, Testimony of W. Selwyn Bazeley, p. 25.
44. Ibid., Testimony of T.M. Thomas, p. 50
45. Arrighi, p. 214.

46. NSL 1/1/1 (N.C. Goromonzi, Civil Cases), 7th June 1900, Masanaweduno vs. Tshibekeshwa; NSL 1/1/1, 10 Sept. 1900, Kuremba vs. Tshigitshi; NSL 1/1/1, 31 Aug. 1900, Vatayemura vs. Subani; Madzima vs. Shikwana.
47. NSL 1/1/1, 1 June 1901, Tshirunga vs. Kaseke; NSL 1/1/1, 4 May 1900, Kaduku vs. Zewere.
48. NSL 1/1/1, Jan. 1904, N'Gwendere vs. Gave; NSL 1/1/1, 17 Oct. 1904, M'swera vs. M'dghariwa; NSL 1/1/1, 22 Oct. 1903, Gampi vs. Mynyenga; NSL 1/1/1, 12 Nov. 1903, Chahoonza vs. Owebera.
49. CNC S138/47, Acting Assistant Native Commissioner, Goromonzi to Native Commissioner, Salisbury, 5 Sept. 1929, # 347/502/29; S1542/N2 (E-G), 4 Feb. 1932, Minutes of the Native Board Meeting, Goromonzi, p. 9;

Commenting on the importance of lobola as a means of acquiring much-needed cash, the assistant native commissioner of Goromonzi remarked in 1932,

"One point stands out - the undoubted fact that lobola has come to be looked upon as a fair means of making money by native fathers and guardians, and the naive speeches of members of the (Native) Board to the effect that their daughters used to wear skins but now want dresses and thus cause more expense, and also that fathers rely on lobola as a means of meeting their liabilities and taxes are illuminating".

(CNC S138/47, ANC Goromonzi to NC Salisbury, 10 Feb. 1932, #14/10/32).

50. Terence Ranger, Peasant Consciousness and Guerrilla War in Zimbabwe, A Comparative Study (London: James Curry, 1985), p.71. Quotes E.D. Alvord, Development of Native Agriculture and Land Tenure in Southern Rhodesia, "unpublished manuscript, 1958 pp. 25-26.
51. Commenting on the limited number of options open to women and the fact that many resort to temporary liaisons by sheer force of circumstances, the assistant magistrate of Shabani wrote in 1923,

"It is a fact that many native women have discovered that whereas adultery with one man is punishable, prostitution with a number of men offers a safe means of escape from an irksome marriage."

(N3/17/2, Assistant Magistrate Shabani to Secretary, Law Department, 21 Feb. 1923).

In a similar vein, the native commissioner of Marandellas, raised the case of a woman who had been granted a divorce some years previously, "owing to continued cruelty of her husband". Having no other means to support herself and her children (of whom she had been given "temporary" custody), she had worked as a prostitute in various labour centres and mining compounds. She explained that she had been driven into prostitution because her ex-husband was "an idle drunkard who had not contributed anything towards the children's maintenance. Desiring a better life for her children, she had sent all of them, both boys and girls to prestigious mission schools, financing their education through her prostitution.

(CNC S138/150, NC Marandellas, 13 March 1924).

52. Referring to the misuse of the Native Adultery Ordinance in cases of young girls pledged to old men against their will, one government official wrote,

... the nuisance was not that adultery was rampant but it was really that wives were breaking away from their husbands and choosing fresh ones. They were breaking away from husbands - who had perhaps half a dozen other wives - and going to younger men.

'This Ordinance has not been touching adultery, as the word is generally understood, but the woman who is dis-satisfied with her husband whom she has been mated to against her will'.

(CNC S235/429-31, Alfred Drew, Part II, Notes on the Native Adultery Ordinance, Why the Ordinance should be Swept Away," June 1924, pp. 55-56).

53. W.R. Peaden, Missionary Attitudes to Shona Culture, 1890-1923 (Salisbury: The Central Africa Historical Association, Local Series 27, 1970), p. 22; CNC S138/47, Chief Native Commissioner, Salisbury, 2 June 1928, Circular Letter #C.381/28, "Native Marriage Ordinance: Pledging of Children, Sec. 11 (2), Ordinance No. 15 of 1917".
54. CNC S138/47, Acting Chief Native Commissioner, Salisbury, to All Native Department Stations in Southern Rhodesia, 25 Jan. 1933, # N.14/49/33, "Pledging of Children: Native Marriage Ordinance".
55. CNC S235/475, Federation of Women's Institutes of Southern Rhodesia, 'Report of the Standing Committee on Domestic Service, July 1930, "Testimony of E. Tawse Jollie, p. 65.
56. CNC S138/47, NC Mazoe to CNC Salisbury, 5 Jan 1925; CNC S138/47, ANC Buhera to NC The Range, 8 April 1929, # 79/29; CNC S138/47, NC Mount Darwin to CNC Salisbury, 9 April 1929, #113/230/29; CNC S138/47, NC Fort Rixon to Superintendent of Natives, Matabeleland, 17 April 1929, #146/199/29; N3/17/4/2, CNC Salisbury to Secretary, Department of the Administrator, 18 Jan. 1917, #N.194/17; Peaden, p. 22, 25.
57. Peaden, p. 25, 26.
58. Interview with Hamundidi Mhindurwa, Seke Communal lands, 26 Jan. 1986;
Interview with Rinda Joto, Chihota Communal Lands 15 Feb. 1986;
Interview with Elizabeth Gara, Seke Communal Lands, 26 Jan. 1986;
Interview with Mandichera Jongwe, Chihota Communal Lands, 15 Feb 1986;
Interview with Alice Chidamahiya, Chihota Communal Lands, 15 Feb. 1986.
59. Kersten England, 'A Political Economy of Black Female Labour in Zimbabwe, 1900-1980' (Manchester University, B.A. Honours Thesis, 1982), n. 12.
60. Ibid., p.12, 96

61. N3/17/2, NC Gutu to Superintendent of Natives, Victoria, 12 May 1914, #D.G. 7/150/14; N3/17/2, NC Chilimanzi to Superintendent of Natives, Victoria, 8 May 1914, #2/331/14.
62. N3/17/2, NC Selukwe to Superintendent of Natives, Gwelo, 14 May 1914, #D.221/218/14.
63. N3/17/2, NC Gutu to Superintendent of Natives, Victoria, 12 May 1914, #D.G. 7/150/14.
64. N3/17/2, NC Chilimanzi to Superintendent of Natives, Victoria, 8 May 1914, # 2/331/14
65. N3/17/2, NC Rusapi to Superintendent of Natives, Umtali, 15 May 1914, #487/14.
66. N3/17/2, CNC Salisbury to Secretary, Department of the Administrator, 2 Feb. 1915, #542/15.
67. N3:17:2, Assistant Magistrate, Shabani to Secretary, Law Department, 30 April 1923.
68. N3/17/2, NC Mtoko to Superintendent of Natives, Salisbury, 12 March 1923, #26:23.
69. S1542/N2 (E-G), ANC Goromonzi to NC Salisbury, 25 April 1934, #63/224/34; S1542/N2 (E-G), 2 July 1931; S1542/N2 (E-G), Minutes of the Native Board Meeting, Goromonzi, 24 April 1934 pp. 45-46.
70. S1542/N2 (E-G), Minutes... 24 April 1934, p 44; S1542/N2 (E-G), 4 Feb. 1932, p. 10; S1542/N2 (E-G), Minutes of the Native Board Meeting, Goromonzi, 12 Oct. 1933, p.7; S1542/N2 (E-G), "Resolutions Passed at Meeting of Native Board of Salisbury Native District held at Goromonzi on May 5th 1933"; S235/16, Goromonzi Annual Report, 1939, p.11; England, p.53; Terrence Ranger, "Women in the Politics of Makoni District, Zimbabwe, 1890-1980," unpublished paper, 1981, p.13; Interview with Muneke Nyachuru (conducted by the National Archives of Zimbabwe), AOH/44, p.36
71. S1542/N2 (E-G), Minutes of the Native Board Meeting, Goromonzi, 24 April 1934, p.45.
72. S1542/N2 (E-G) ANC Goromonzi, 25 April 1934, p. 2.
73. S1542/N2 (E-G), ANC Goromonzi, 18 June 1934, p. 1; S1542/N2 (E-G), Minutes of the Native Board Meeting, Goromonzi, 12 June 1934, p.53.



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