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by: D G Clark

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WAGES AND SUBSISTENCE OF AGRICULTURAL WORKERS IN RHODESIA

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Before reporting on employment, wages, non-wage sources of earnings, income distribution, productivity, minimum consumption needs and wage-fixing in respect of agricultural workers, it is relevant to first briefly consider the salient trends in postwar agricultural production.

I SCALE AND STRUCTURE OF PLANTATION PRODUCTION IN POSTWAR RHODESIA.

Here the prime concern is the European farming sector - otherwise referred to as the 'plantation sector', because of its distinguishing characteristics in relation to other forms of agrarian production, notably in African Purchase Lands and Tribal Trust Lands. [redacted]

LAND AND FARM SIZE

Under the Land Tenure Act (1969) approximately 38,7 million acres are reserved as 'European land', this being 40,1 per cent of all land in Rhodesia. The vast bulk of this area is farm land. The land distribution pattern is highly unequal in relation to the population dependent on the respective land areas. This fact has had a major bearing on the accumulation of capital and the distribution of income and wealth in Rhodesia.

In 1914 there were 2042 farms, the number rising to 3052 in 1932 and 3640 in 1944.[1] By 1965 the figure had risen to 6266 and in 1969 the farm count totalled 6716 (though a number of these have not been worked or developed). Some farmers own more than one farm.

Data show that the average size of these farms has remained relatively constant from 1951-65. In 1951 there were 1047 farms (19,5 per cent) smaller than 1000 acres and

21,5 per cent which were in excess of 5000 acres. The respective portions in 1965 were 23,5 per cent and 21,6 per cent. However, the size of the average holding has decreased slightly from 5433 acres to 5376 acres. It is believed, however, that fewer owners control these holdings.

From 1946-65 the acreage covered by these farms rose from 22,5 million to 33,7 million, a 49,7 per cent rise, yet acreage under crops only rose from 552,000 acres (2,45 per cent of the total acreage in 1946) to 1 107 000 acres in 1965 (3,28 per cent of total acreage). Some of the land was also used for cattle ranching and grazing, as well as for other livestock. A large unused land surplus thus existed and continues to be found in the plantation sector.

LANDOWNERS

In 1914, the first year for which such statistics are available, there were 3475 white persons involved in one capacity or another as farmers (2640 males and 835 females). By the end of the B.S.A. Co. administration in 1923 the number had increased to 4305 (3245 males and 1120 females). By 1965 there were 7251 persons engaged as owners/occupiers (5477 males and 2374 females). At this stage 72 per cent of farms were under the control of owner-occupiers, 16 per cent under lessees and the balance were 'managed' farms. A number of 'absentee landlords' also existed. Recent data on the question of the composition of the rural landowning class are not available.

INPUT/OUTPUT RELATIONSHIPS

The gross value of agricultural output of plantation producers has grown enormously since 1920 when it was valued at 32 million.[2] In 1955 it was valued at 377 million and in 1973 at 3257,2 million. Much of the growth in output value has thus been a phenomenon of postwar years.

In 1949-50 the value of crop output was 34,5 per cent of total output value. At this time cattle slaughtering and

dairy produce only accounted for 11 per cent of value produced. By 1973 the respective portions were 59,9 per cent and (approximately) 30 per cent. Also by 1973 the output of the forestry sector had grown to just under 2 per cent of Gross Agricultural Product and a processing industry (within the industry) accounted for a similar amount. These developments have had some effect on the pattern of demand for farm labour and have affected the status of employers and type of production with which workers have been associated.

The total input cost of labour into production has fallen as a portion of total input costs with sharp reductions being experienced in the post-1965 period. Taking African labour inputs separately, the respective input portions for 1965 and 1973 are 34,3 per cent and 27,3 per cent.[3] Production has thus become more capital-intensive - a fact reflected in the greater volume/value of inputs like fertilizer, fuel, transport and electricity - and it has depended less and less on unskilled African labour. Thus 'purchased inputs' have grown from 35,6 per cent of total inputs in 1950 to 58 per cent in 1965. In many ways, then producer-relations with commerce, industry and foreign suppliers has assumed greater economic importance than the wage-labour relations with African workers. This is not to suggest, however, that the latter group has become more dispensible.

STRUCTURAL CHANGE AND AGRARIAN PRODUCTION

Whilst remaining the most important employer in the economy and the biggest earner of foreign exchange, plantation agriculture has lost ground to other sectors as a contributor to Gross Domestic Product. In 1959 the industry contributed 14,0 per cent of the total while in 1973 its share was 10,1 per cent. Real GDP grew substantially in this period. Mining, too lost ground in this period, the central dynamic in the economy being represented by the industrial sector. What must not be forgotten

however, is that a growing element of plantation production has also become 'industrialized' in the last two decades.

In relation to plantation production, 'African agriculture' has become less important. However, the wage-labour sector of the latter part of the agrarian system is growing in significance.

Another important indicator of structural change is the changing number of tractors used on farms. In 1947 there were 1155 while in 1965 there were 14 539. This has created new labour demands for tractor drivers, for operators of equipment used with tractors and for mechanics and technical personnel on farms or in agricultural services.

It is against the above production structure that the conditions of labour and earnings of farm workers must be assessed. Other aspects of the structure of the agricultural industry - capital, taxation, and finance - will be briefly dealt with in later sections of the report.[4]

II TRENDS IN EMPLOYMENT AND THE COMPOSITION OF THE FARM-WORKER POPULATION.

The growth in the employment of workers on farms for 1946-74 (African and European) is shown in Table 1

TABLE 1

EMPLOYMENT IN PLANTATION AGRICULTURE

1946-1974.

Year	(1) Europeans Asians & Coloureds	(2) Africans in Thousands	Year	(3) Europeans Asians & Coloureds	(4) Africans in Thousands
1946	-	142	1961	4270	270
1947	-	150	1962	4360	272
1948	-	156	1963	4440	282
1949	-	166	1964	4390	293
1950	-	177	1965	4360	289
1951	-	184	1966	4370	272
1952	-	183	1967	4090	271
1953	-	200	1968	4060	282
1954	3220	218	1969	4540	300
1955	3300	225	1970	4590	290
1956	3420	228	1971	4640	303
1957	3690	245	1972	4680	334
1958	3700	253	1973	4300	348
1959	4040	259	1974	4900	358
1960	4250	270			

Sources: Data in Col (1) for 1954-57 are from Rhodesia, National Accounts and Balance of Payments of Rhodesia 1965, C.S.O., Salisbury, P.I.3. For 1958-74 data have been extracted from Rhodesia, Monthly Digest of Statistics, C.S.O., Salisbury August, 1975, Table 14, African employment figures are also taken from this source, while for 1946-51 data are derived from Southern Rhodesia, National Income and Social Accounts of Southern Rhodesia, 1946-51, C.S.O.

Note: A line between two consecutive figures indicates that the data are not strictly comparable above and below the line.

The number of African farmworkers has increased 252 per cent in the 28 year period. The last 5 years have shown a positive annual average rate of employment growth of 3,86 per cent.

The numbers of 'European employees' has also grown, but far less spectacularly, much of the increase being recorded prior to 1960.[5] The numbers of employees did not fall as a consequence of sanctions, at least not in 1966, as it did for Africans.

The numbers of workers in plantation agriculture are shown as a portion of total wage employment (1965-74) and in relation to agriculture's share of GDP in Table 2 below:

TABLE 2

AGRICULTURAL WORKERS' SHARE OF GDP

(including 'Agricultural Services)

1965-74

Year	(1) Share of Wage Employment (African & European) %	(2) Share of GDP %	(3) Ratio of (1)/(2)
1965	39,3	12,3	1:3,19
1966	39,6	12,5	1:3,17
1967	36,7	10,9	1:3,36
1968	36.3	9,7	1:3,74
1969	36,5	10,8	1:3,38
1970	34,7	9,6	1:3,61
1971	34,5	10,8	1:3,19
1972	35,4	11,1	1:3,19
1973	35,1	10,6	1:3,31
1974	34,5	11,2	1:3,08

Source: Calculated from Rhodesia, National Accounts and Balance of Payments of Rhodesia 1973, C.S.O. Salisbury, and Rhodesia, Monthly Digest of Statistics, C.S.O, August, 1975

The data in Table 2 show that while agricultural employees have become a smaller component of the wage-labour force, the industry has maintained a relatively constant share of G.D.P. per worker employed - allowing, that is, for some fluctuations above and below the average for the period. Capital-intensification has thus been a feature of the post-UDI period.

The regional provincial breakdown of African agricultural workers is shown in Table 3.

TABLE 3
AFRICAN AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYMENT BY PROVINCE
30 SEPTEMBER 1971

Province	Workers	% of Total	No.of Farms	Av. no. workers/ farm
Mashona. N	87 148	35,2	1 458	59,8
Mashona. S	62 603	25,3	1 738	36,0
Manicaland	38 603	15,5	859	45,0
Victoria	25 532	10,3	389	65,6
Matabeleland	19 026	7,7	931	20,4
Midlands	14 925	6,0	869	17,2
Totals	247 917	100,00	6 244	39,2

Source: B.H.G. Duncan, The Wages and Supply Position in European Agriculture, Rhodesian Journal of Economics, 7, 1, March, 1973

Over half of all workers are in Mashonaland, though the Victoria average per farm is highest - a reflection of the concentration of workers on large sugar estates in the area. The high average number of workers per farm for Mashonaland reflects the labour-intensive production pattern of tobacco growing while the low Midlands and Matabeleland averages reflect the relative preponderance of ranching in these areas. Despite possible changes after 1971, it is most likely that this broad pattern prevails in 1976.

The sex breakdown of the African agricultural labour

TABLE 4
AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYEES BY SEX
1956-75.

Year	Branches of Production: Agric.& Livestock Males	Agric.& Livestock Females	Agricultural Services Males	Agricultural Services Fem.	Forestry & Logging Males	Forestry & Logging Fem.	Fishing Male	Fishing Fem.	Total Males	Total Female
1956	212 850	28,571	-	-	6 046	879	-	-	218 896	29 450
1961	218 264	13 284	-	-	5 748	566	34	-	224 046	13 650
1969	212 667	35 524	6 536	609	3 175	230	144	1	222 522	33 364
March 1972(1)									237 412	69 341
March 1975(2)									245 697	79 294

Sources: Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, Report on the Census of Africans in Employment on 8th May, 1956, C.A.S.O., Salisbury; Rhodesia, Final Report on the September 1961 Census of Employees, C.S.O., Salisbury; Rhodesia, 1969 Census of Employees, C.S.O., (mimeo); B.H.G. Duncan, The Wages and Supply Position in European Agriculture, Rhodesian Journal of Economics, 7, 1, March, 1973; C.S.O., Letter to the Author, Ref. No. AG/4/03, 19 November 1975

Notes: (1) The data exclude 15 076 contract workers for whom there is no sex breakdown.
(2) The data exclude 16 304 contract workers (11 042 males and 5 262 females).

The bulk of workers have been employed in agriculture and livestock production. Unfortunately, no data exists on the exact portion employed in ranching. The forestry component is a small portion of the total labour force. Since 1956 the numbers of women workers has increased markedly, so increasing employer dependence on this source. Most of these workers have been 'drawn' from farm compounds where a greater degree of 'labour stabilization' has taken place in the last two decades. Only an element of the female labour force has been employed on a permanent basis. The vast majority, however, constitute a casual or seasonal labour supply. In 1972, for instance, there were 17 992 women employed as 'permanent and semi-permanent' workers in plantation agriculture. This was 6,3 per cent of all African employees at the time and 26,9 per cent of all women workers so employed. Further data on this point for 1969-75 are shown in Table 5.

TABLE 5

AGRICULTURAL WORKERS - PERMANENT AND CASUAL BY SEX. 30 SEPTEMBER, 1969-72.

Year	Permanent and Semi-permanent		Casual		Total		Total
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	
1969	192 678	16 306	18 584	27 887	211 262	44 193	255 455
1970	194 936	15 043	9 334	21 761	204 270	36 804	241 074
1971	196 075	17 959	10 177	23 707	206 252	41 664	247 917
1972	192 866	17 996	26 813	48 838	219 679	66 834	286 513
% of 1972 Total	67,3	6,3	9,4	17,0	76,7	23,3	100,0
1973	209 654	18 857	23 735	49 266	233 389	68 123	301 512
1974	212 463	21 303	26 064	52 033	238 527	73 336	311 913

Sources: B.H.G. Duncan, The Wages and Supply Position in European Agriculture, R.J.E., 7,1,1973; Letter from C.S.O. to the Author, Ref No. AG/4/03, 19 November 1975

Note: Permanent and semi permanent includes workers contracted through the Rhodesian African Labour Supply Commission

The numbers of women workers have increased greatly in the period, especially as casual employees. It is important to note, too, that more women in number and proportion have become fully proletarianized as permanent agricultural workers. But is also striking is the fact that employers have placed relatively less dependence on permanent labour vis-a-vis casual labour during the period, a trend which reflects the lower price of the latter form of labour supply and the wage discrimination element whereby African women workers have received lower rates of pay than men. Their increased supply on to the low-wage end of rural labour market has been a consequence of three processes: underdevelopment in the reserve, stabilization of families on plantations and the growing shortage of non-rural wage employment for women compared to available labour supply.

Account must also be taken of the use of low-cost juvenile labour in agrarian production. Data for males for 1961-69 are shown in Table 6.

TABLE 6

MALE JUVENILES IN AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYMENT 1961-69

	1961	1969	% change
Rhodesian	14 814	18 497	24,9
Foreign	9 842	9 491	-3,6
Total Juveniles	24 660	27 988	13,5
% Total employment	10,4	10,8	-
% adult male employment	12,4	14,4	-

Source: Calculated from Rhodesia, Final Report on the September, 1961, Census of Employees, C.S.O., Salisbury; Rhodesia, 1969 Census of Employees, C.S.O., Salisbury, (mimeo)

Note: Juveniles are persons under 16 years of age.

Juveniles became a more important source of labour from 1961-69. The data in Table 6 understate the use of juvenile labour as they exclude female juveniles. Nonetheless, the numbers and proportion of male juveniles increased in the period. Significantly, however, the numbers of foreign male juveniles decreased, as has the number of foreign workers in general. Taking the data in Table 5 and 6 together, it can be shown that in 1969 women and male juveniles - both groups paid below the rates applicable to adult male workers - constituted 23,3 per cent (72,181) of the total African agricultural labour force. Even though the above data are not broken down by occupational category, it would be correct to state that the juvenile/female component constituted an even greater element of the labourers in the industry - because most skilled/semi-skilled and service jobs have been held by adult males. This proportion has most likely increased since 1969 as employers have become more dependent on non-permanent/female labour supplies.

Another relatively cheap source of labour supply, provided through African labourer contractors, should also be examined in conjunction with data on females and juveniles. This has been another important form of labour contract which has been used to reduce labour costs. Data on contractor-negotiated hirings are found in Table 7.

Data on employees in 'agricultural services' (e.g. clerks, teachers, etc) are shown in Table 3. These are workers not directly involved in agricultural production.

TABLE 8
AFRICAN EMPLOYEES IN 'AGRICULTURAL SERVICES'
1969-71

Year	Number	% of total employment
1969	11 100	3,693
1970	11 600	3,993
1971	12 20[illegible]	4,050

Source: C.S.O., Revision of Statistics Relating to Africans employed in the Agricultural Sector, LS/1/01, (mimeo)

The number and proportion of 'service workers' has grown in recent years, reflecting the greater diversity of needs to be satisfied on farms (e.g. for education) as well as the greater complexity and bureaucratization of production which has resulted in a greater demand for clerks, storemen, etc. There is little seasonal fluctuation in the employment of service workers, most being on regular/permanent contracts.

The influence of a greater preponderance of such workers has also had an effect on farm/compound wage income stratification. Not all of these workers are employed by farmers (e.g. teachers employed by missions and the Ministry of Education and storemen employed by traders who's farm stores are rented from farmers). Unfortunately, there is no national breakdown of data on these points.

The range of occupations classified here, however, is quite substantial, the classification being based on the United Nations Industrial Classification which includes: 'Agricultural, animal husbandry and horticultural services on a fee or contract basis, such as harvesting, baling, threshing, husking and shelling; preparing of tobacco for auctioning; animal shearing; pest destroying and spraying by aircraft; priming; picking of fruits and vegetables and packing on the farm and on the account of the producer elsewhere; and the operation of irrigation systems. The provision of a fee contract basis, of agricultural equipment along with the services of drivers and other attendants of the equipment, is covered in this group, but the letting of agricultural equipment solely is classified (elsewhere)'.[6] Thus a number of the employees classified here work for the Sabi-Limpopo Authority, Conex, African Development Fund and the Tsetse and Trypanosomiasis Control Branch of the Ministry of Agriculture.

Typically, foreign workers have constituted an important component of the average farm labour supply, though the pattern has changed significantly since 1958. Data on foreign agricultural workers are found in Table 9.

TABLE 9

FOREIGN WORKERS IN AGRICULTURE

1941-72

Year	Numbers	% of Total Employment
1941	56 083	-
1946	84 089	56
1951	114 873	62
1956	137 050	60
1961	135 330	50
1969	130 255	43
1970	114 693	39
1971	119 275	39
1972	120 964	36
1973	118 000	34
1974	119 000	33

Sources: C.S.O. Letters to the Author, Ref No. LS/3/01, 2nd May 1973 and 25th May, 1973; C.S.O. African Farm Employees Classified by Sex and Country of Origin, 1974 (Letter to Mr S. Fly, 1975)

The adoption of a new foreign labour policy after 1958 has resulted in the gradual phasing out of the plantation economy's dependence on foreign African labour.[7] However, the pattern has been that inflows have been discouraged and reduced, while many foreign workers already in farm employment have remained, the decreasing proportion resulting from growth in the indigenous component of labour supply.

The bulk of foreign workers remain those of Malawian origin (2,2 per cent of the male labour supply in 1972) though Mozambiquans are only slightly fewer in number. In 1972 only 5,4 per cent of male workers were of Zambian origin.

In Table 10 data are shown on the distribution of workers by status of employers for 1961-69.

TABLE 10

DISTRIBUTION OF AFRICAN AGRICULTURAL WORKERS BY STATUS OF EMPLOYER 1961-69

Status of Employer	1961		1969	
	Number	%	Number	%
Central Government	5339	2,2	4 643	2,1
Local Government	92	0,1	113	0,1
Statutory Bodies	1 671	0,7	1 661	0,6
Limited Liability Coys	46 090	19,3	131 886	58,4
Unincorporated Enterprise	184 039	77,4	116 878	51,5
Other	665	0,3	705	0,3
Total	237 896	100,0	225 836	100,0

Source: Rhodesia, Final Report of the September, 1961 Census of Employees, C.S.O., Salisbury; Rhodesia, 1969 Census of Employees, C.S.O., Salisbury (mimeo)

The most important shift in the status of employer for 1961-69 has been in the greater number and proportion of workers falling under the control of limited liability companies. This reflects two basic tendencies: the expansion of the agricultural operations of large (multi-national) corporations, e.g. Triangle Ltd, Hippo Valley Estates Ltd, Mazoe Citrus Estates Ltd, etc and the greater extent of incorporation of smaller-settler producers into private limited companies. The influence of familial/personal paternalism in framing labour conditions has thus given way in priority to a corporate/multinational regime. This has also had an influence on farming operations and labour practices because the tax position/laws and practices differ between these two types of enterprise.

A degree of unemployment and self-employment can also be identified within 'European farming areas'. Data on this point from the 1962 Census are shown in Table 11. No recent data are available.

TABLE 11

SELF EMPLOYED AND UNEMPLOYED IN EUROPEAN FARMING AREAS, ADULT MALES, 1962

Status	Numbers	% of all adult males in area.
Self Employed	4 400	1,5
Employees of Africans	4 510	1,6
Unemployed - seeking paid work	7 410	2,6
Unemployed - others	12 440	4,3
Unknown	6 720	2,3

Source: Final Report of the April/May 1962 Census of Africans in Southern Rhodesia, C.S.O. 1964.

The element of 'unemployment' identified - 6,9 per cent - can be regarded as a conservative measure of the unemployment of labour in these areas at this time because (1) it excludes women and juveniles (those under 16 years) and (2) the 'unknown' component was inadequately specified and most likely contained some unemployed persons. The bulk of those unemployed adult males were between 16 and 44 years of age.

It is unfortunate that no recent data on such employment exists. It is likely, however, that there exists a growing degree of unemployed female and juvenile labour on farms because many more families now live full-time on farms and the latter two categories of work-seekers typically find employment for only part of the year.

Demographic data on the African population in ' European farming areas' exist for 1962 only and are shown in Table 12.

TABLE 12
BIRTH/SEX OF AFRICAN POPULATION ON FARMS
1962

Group	Numbers	% of total
Males born - (total)	(472 850)	(56,7)
Before 1918	55 180	6,6
1918-1945	232 450	27,8
1946-1962	185 330	22,2
Females born - (total)	(363 580)	(43,5)
Before 1918	26 560	3,2
1918-1945	154 390	18,4
1946-1962	182,630	21,8
Totals	836 430	100,0

Source: Final Report of the April/May 1962 Census of Africans in Southern Rhodesia, C.S.O., Salisbury

The bulk of the farm population (in 1962) was male/adult and of the age group 16-44 years. A notable sex imbalance existed in this age category (1,59 males for every female) though it was much less pronounced in the under 16 age group. However, slightly fewer young girls stay on farms, some being sent to live in the reserves or in the countries of origin of their parents. The ratio of 'adult males' to others in 1962 was 1:1,30. There is little doubt that this has changed since 1962 as more families have taken up more-or-less full-time residence on farms. In 1969 the non-urban African population of the 'European Areas' totalled 928,379

(assumed here to be equivilent to the on-farm population). In the 1961-69 period the total farm labour force grew by 10,3 per cent (23 000), some of it in the form of female and juvenile workers. It can thus be concluded that the estimated 91 949 increase in farm population from 1962-69 was mainly an increase in numbers of dependents brought to live with the breadwinner in farm compounds. It is likely that these trends have continued in the period 1969-76

The process of 'labour stabilization' on farms has also reflected the changing division oflabour in plantation production and a lessening of dependence on supplies of unskilled/'migrant'/foreign labour. Higher paid employees bureaucratic groups, 'service workers', African supervisors and 'Boss boys', semi-skilled operators and technical employees - have typically lived with their families on the farm. These groups now form a more significant element of the labour force.

Having examined production and employment relationships, attention will now be given to wages and earnings.

III STRUCTURE AND TRENDS IN WAGES, EARNINGS AND INCOMES DERIVED FROM PLANTATION EMPLOYMENT

It is instructive to examine the historical development of farm wages from the 1890's to the present day, firstly, for the period up to 1946 and, secondly, for the post-war period to date. Because of the complications involved in data collection, constructing suitable wage-deflators and the different treatment accorded payment of wages in cash and kind between the periods, some care needs to be exercised in interpreting trends.

WAGES : 1893-1948, 55 YEARS OF REAL WAGE STAGNATION AND DECLINE.

The wage data for the period 1893-1948 are collected in Table 13. Note that the data are incomplete in some respects, for example in terms of the coverage by year and in terms of being quoted in 'ranges' and not as consistent averages throughout.

The wage data should be read in conjunction with the price adjusted data collected in the Table in order that real cash wages or earnings can be estimated. The real wage figures should be interpreted in the light of the Notes to Table 13 which deals with sources and the method of construction of the long-run index which has been used to estimate real wages in constant prices.

TABLE 13

AFRICAN AGRICULTURAL WAGE RATES, 1893-1948

Year	Current Prices	Price Index Constant 1939 Prices (Linked Series)	Real Wage 1939 Prices	Remarks	Source (Original cited where possible)
1893	10/- monthly	-	-	'Rations' probably given in addition	Decle, Three Years in Savage Africa, p. 151 Hist Mss.C04/1/1
1903	15/- to 30/-	-	-	Probably per ticket	CNC, Annual Report, 1903
1906	22/6 (av.)	-	-	Monthly	CNC, Annual Report, 1906
1912 (a)	30/- to 40/-	-	-	Probably per ticket, for 'raw' non-RNLB labourers, plus food and quarters	Civil Commissioner, Annual Report, Hartley, 1912
(b)	15/- to 25/-	-	-	Probably per ticket, off the gold belt, 'all found' - supply scarce.	
1914	10/- to 25/-	90,3	11/1 to 27/9 (av. 19/7)	Wages noted for 23 districts: average around 15/-, probably per ticket	Office of the CNC, 22 Nov 1920, Salisbury, NAR N3/33/2, Schedule B
1919	18/- ticket	n/a	n/a	Considerable worker discontent at wages reported	CNC Annual Report, 1919
1920	12/6 to 40/-	124,9	10/- to 32/- (av. 16/- to 20/-)	Wages noted for 23 areas, av. around 20/- to 25/-. Real wage 1914-20 reported to have fallen 16½	Office of the CNC, 22 Nov 1920, Salisbury, NAR N3/33/2, Schedule B.
1922	20/-	88,1	22/9	'Ration' in addition	Official Year Book of S.R. 1924
1923	5/-	86,1	5/10	Some employers in Mrewa/ Mount Darwin	Rhodesia Herald, 9/3/1926
1926	21/-	84,5	24/10	'Rations' in addition	Report on Industrial Relations, 1930, by Sir Henry Clay.
1926	18/- to 22/6	84,5	21/4 to 26/6	Re ticket for RNLB labourers	M.C. Steele, Labour Research Seminar No. 6, 1973, University of Rhodesia.
1927	15/-	86,2	17/5	Mean level	Ibid., reported by CNC
1934	8/-	104,7	7/7	Some 'bad' employers: ticket rate	CNC, Annual Report, 1934
1946	28/9	131,3	21/10	RNLSC ticket rate	RNLSC, Annual Reports
1948	30/9	144,2	21/4	Industry average derived by apply known 1971 cash/kind ratio to 1948 earnings level of 46/3 monthly.	S.R. National Income and Social Accounts 1946-51, C.S.O.

Note: The Price Index shown in the Table is a composite Linked Series derived from three separate sources. The first, for 1914-23, calculated as a 1914 base, has been obtained from the C.S.O., Letter to the Author, Ref. No. CPI/2/02, 21 Nov 1975. The second was calculated from the deflation index used by E.J. Barber, The Economy of British Central Africa, O.U.P., 1961, p. 134 for converting National Income to constant prices. Its base is 1929 and it runs up to 1939. The third index is an All Items index (base 1939 = 100) derived from the C.S.O., Letter to the Author, Ref No. CPI/2/02, 4 February, 1972. Figures are available on this index for 1939-71. The rate of changes is consistent with the presently published European C.P.I. found in Rhodesia, Monthly Digest of Statistics, C.S.O. Arrighi, (Labour supplies in Historical Perspective, Journal of Development Studies, 6, 3, April 1970) has constructed an African Imports Price Index (base 1914 = 100) and quotes 1904 = 148 and 1911 = 94. Linked to the series above, these would read 1904 = 133,6 and 1911 = 84,9.

The data show that the cash wage in 1948 was quite possibly below the level for 1922 and average wages for intervening years, including the Great Depression (1927-34). If Arrighi's 'African Import Price Index' could be said to have been an adequate representation for pre-1914 price changes, then it would be a logical inference of the above data that the 1912 average wage on the gold belt (35/4 in 1939 prices) was above the real wage for 1948 (as measured in 1939 constant prices) by a not inconsiderable margin.

Because of intermittent depressions, and fluctuations in prices between different years, one must be careful in assessing the real wage data when making inter-year comparisons. Qualifications must also be made for the fact that these are cash wage not earnings data. However, it would be not unreasonable to assume that there existed a strong degree of consistency in the payments in kind (in terms of volume/value) throughout the period. Allowance should also be made for the fact that the index usedfor price deflation is based on indices which are not themselves specifically African consumer price indices. The former is a composite of the European C.P.I. and a 'national income' deflator.

The assumption made in drawing inter-annual real wage comparisons, however, is that these are adequate trend indicators of the situation. It may be noted here that because the post-1964 European and African Urban C.P.I. exhibit a high degree of consistency and correlation, this assumption is not wholly unwarranted. Furthermore, even N.M.F.U. economists and others in the Ministry of Agriculture, have used the African urban C.P.I. to deflate farm earnings in order to obtain constant real wages.[3]

The significance of the 1893-1943 data, then, remains. It is that there is [redacted] evidence to suggest that real cash wages (and earnings, if the additional assumption regarding a constant cash/kind ratio is allowed) in 1922 were lower for farmworkers than in 1948. If they were not,

then at least these wages were close enough to the 1943 level to justify the statement that evidence of real wage stagnation exists for the plantation sector since 1922. Indeed, for some workers in the twentieth century, e.g. in Mrewa and Mount Darwin in 1923 and others as reported by the Chief Native Commissioner in 1954, wageshave been below 1893 levels.

[redacted] : 1948-74, A PERIOD OF STAGNATION, DECLINE AND EVENTUAL PARTIAL RESTORATION OF REAL WAGE LEVELS.

The essential evidence on post-1948 real agricultural earnings have been cited elsewhere. However, it will be useful to recount this data and relate it to the wage data for 1893-1943. Post-1948 earnings are shown in Table 14.

TABLE 14

AFRICAN AGRICULTURAL EARNINGS 1948-74

Year	Wage Bill Current Prices £millions	Av Earnings Current Prices £ per annum	Av Earnings 1964 Prices £ per annum	Year	Wage Bill Current Prices £millions	Av Earnings Current Prices £ per annum	Av Earnings 1964 Prices £ per annum
1948	8,7	55,7	99,1	1962	30,2	111,0	115,4
1949	9,6	57,8	97,6	1963	34,4	121,9	125,2
1950	10,6	60,0	95,5	1964	36,2	123,5	123,5
1951	11,2	60,9	88,6	1965	35,9	123,5	120,4
1952	12,8	69,9	97,5	1966	33,9	124,6	117,8
1953	14,0	70,0	93,1	1967	33,2	122,5	114,2
1954	21,0	96,3	125,0	1968	34,6	122,6	111,7
1955	22,6	100,4	128,2	1969	36,9	123,0	111,7
1956	23,8	104,3	127,7	1970	36,8	126,8	112,8
1957	24,4	99,6	118,2	1971	39,8	131,0	113,1
1958	26,4	104,3	119,7	1972	44,5	133,0	111,7
1959	27,0	104,2	116,4	1973	49,5	142,0	115,6
1960	28,6	105,9	115,5	1974	55,8	155,8	119,0
1961	29,2	108,1	114,6				

Sources: Southern Rhodesia, National Income and Social Accounts of Southern Rhodesia 1946-51 C.S.O.; K.J. Barber, The Economy of British Central Africa, O.U.P., 1961; Rhodesia Monthly Digest of Statistics, C.S.O. (various)

Note: The data have been deflated in accordance with the relevant price index cited in Table 13. Also note that data prior to 1954 cannot be compared directly with data thereafter.

In Table 14 it is shown that, while (current price) [illegible] earnings increased, in real terms the 1974 earnings level was below the 1954 level. It is also possible, by omitting 1953 and 1954 earnings levels (the data may not directly comparable) to argue that the evidence supports the view that the 1974 real earnings level was no higher than in 1948.

[illegible]ation in conjunction with the data in Table 13, it can be argued that real wages in 1974 were possibly no better than were in 1922. Here there is strong evidence to confirm the judgement that real earnings have been stagnant for the last 50 years - except where they have declined, for instance, in the 1963-74 period. Indeed, because a large amount of the increase in earnings can be attributed to non-labourers employed in plantation agriculture, it is most likely that real wages for labourers have even seriously declined. The absolute poverty of many farmworkers, while nothing new in itself, may in fact have changed little in its real character and dimensions for many decades. Has it changed in relative terms?

RELATIVE DEPRIVATION

There are a variety of possible measures of relative deprivation. One is to consider the group concerned as against others, e.g. the national position. Bearing in mind that for the 1965-73 period farmworkers and their families have constituted around 20-25 per cent of the total population, consider the data in Table 15.

TABLE 15

AFRICAN AGRICULTURAL WAGE BILL AND FARMWORKER CONSUMPTION
(EXCLUDING AGRICULTURAL SERVICES)
1965-73

Year	G.D.P. Mkt Prices $ Millions	Wage Bill as Percent G.D.P.	Wage Bill as Percent of total Wage Bill in economy	Wage Bill as % of total as % of Gross Operating Profits in the economy	Wage Bill as % of total Pvt Consumption Expenditure	Wage Bill as % of total Personal Disposable Income
1965	736,7	4,65	8,68	12,60	7,91	6,79
1966	734,0	4,40	7,93	12,33	7,38	6,15
1967	805,9	3,92	7,43	10,26	7,02	5,46
1968	843,2	3,90	7,10	10,98	6,46	5,47
1969	996,1	3,52	6,92	8,79	5,45	5,08
1970	1 067,7	3,27	6,33	8,58	5,42	4,65
1971	1 238,8	3,04	6,09	7,64	5,09	4,39
1972	1 391,3	3,03	6,07	7,48	5,29	4,42
1973	1 534,9	3,05	7,62	7,63	5,14	4,56

Source: Rhodesia, National Accounts and Balance of Payments of Rhodesia, 1973, C.S.O., Salisbury.

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From 1965-73 the Gross Domestic Product grew by 108 percent in market prices. During this period of steady growth (in real terms also) the wage bill paid to agricultural workers fell as a percent of G.D.P., from 4,65 per cent to 3,05 per cent. The farm wage bill also fell as a proportion of the total (black and white) wage bill. Further, it declined significantly as a portion of the Gross Operating Profits earned in the economy as a whole, from 12,60 per cent in 1965 to 7,63 per cent. Thus, while other workers gained at the expense of farm workers, profit-recipients gained even more in proportionate terms. The relative poverty of the African population dependent on earnings from farm employment also can be highlighted by the fact that, as a percentage of total Private Consumption Expenditure, the wages of farmworkers (the dominant element of the incomes of farmworkers' households) dropped from 7,91 per cent to 5,14 per cent in 8 years. As a per cent of total personal disposable incomes in the whole economy, this 20-25 per cent of the population experienced a significant negative re-distributive shift against themselves. In 1973 more than a million and a quarter farm workers and dependents commanded less than 5 per cent of total personal disposable incomes (as calculated by their wage earnings). For the past 10 years these trends have all been strongly against the economic interests of the average farmworker.

Relative deprivation may also be assessed on an industry level. To do this, data on the African agricultural wage bill have been gathered in Table 16.

TABLE 16

AFRICAN AGRICULTURAL WAGE BILL AND AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY 1965-73
(EXCLUDING AGRICULTURAL SERVICES)
£ Millions

Year	Wage Bill As percent Industry Wage Bill	Gross Operating Profits	Wage Bill as % G. O. P.	Gross Agricultural Product	Wage Bill as % G. A. P.	Wage Bill as % value of Inputs
1965	77,6	35,2	97,4	79,4	43,2	31,2
1966	78,0	40,3	80,2	81,8	39,5	30,8
1967	79,0	38,0	83,2	78,0	40,5	29,0
1968	79,6	30,8	106,8	72,1	45,6	29,7
1969	77,0	51,2	68,5	96,3	36,4	28,4
1970	77,5	45,2	77,2	90,3	38,6	27,0
1971	78,5	68,8	54,8	116,8	32,3	26,2
1972	79,6	84,3	50,1	137,3	30,6	27,3
1973	82,1	84,2	55,6	143,4	32,7	

Source: Rhodesia, National Accounts and Balance of Payments of Rhodesia 1973, C.S.O.;
Rhodesia, Report of The Commission of Inquiry into Agricultural Inputs Costs,
Cmd RR 36 - 1973

The African farm wage bill has been a more-or-less constant 77-82 per cent of the industry wage bill, but as a portion of the value of inputs it has diminished from 31,2 per cent in 1965 to 27,3 per cent in 1972. African labour has thus become less important in economic terms as an input into production - largely as a consequence of mechanization and producer dependence on purchased inputs. The wage bill/gross operating profits relationship has varied from year to year. Nonetheless, it would appear to have fallen in recent years. This indicates some ability within the industry to finance higher African wages. The wage bill has also fallen as a percentage of the value of Gross Agricultural Product.

WAGE TRENDS/STRUCTURE AND FORM OF CONTRACT

The wage structure of agricultural employment by type of contract has changed in some important ways in the last decade. Data are shown on this point in Table 17.

TABLE 17

AFRICAN AGRICULTURAL WORKERS WAGE RATES AND EARNINGS BY CONTRACT TYPE
1964-73
(in dollars per annum)

Year	Cash Wages				Income in Kind
	Permanent	Casual	African-hired Contractees	RALSC-hired Contractees	Permanent & casual workers.
1964	81	48	48	62	44
1965	82	48	50	62	43
1966	84	48	55	62	44
1967	85	48	60	62	42
1968	85	48	64	62	44
1969	85	48	72	62	46
1970	87	48	89	62	44
1971	91	52	96	62	47
1972	99	49	97	78	46
1973	109	50	87	78	49

Source: C.S.O. Earnings of African Employees on European Farms, Salisbury, 1974 (data supplied by C.S.O. to Mr E. Ely - cited in Background to the Present Labour Shortage, Rhodesia Agricultural Journal, 72 6, 1975); D.G. Clarke, Contract Workers and Underdevelopment in Rhodesia, Mambo Press, Gwelo, 1974.

Note: Data for the 1964-70 period are C.S.O. estimates, except for data on RALSC-hired contractees.

The highest paid contract form has been that for permanent workers. In real terms (deflating the data by means of the African C.P.I.) the cash wage rate for these workers fell from 1964-71, and rose by 9,6 per cent in 1973 in relation to the 1964 level. It is likely that a large portion

of the increase accrued to non-labourers. The permanent cash wage rate has risen in relation to those applicable for casual workers, and RALSC-hired contractees. A most noticeable shift has occurred in the casual/African-hired contractee cash wage ratio. It has moved from parity in 1964 to a 1:1,74 relationship in 1973. The non-wage element of the earnings of permanent and casual workers, while rising in money terms, fell in real terms from a value of $44 per annum in 1964 to $39,9 per annum (1964 constant prices) in 1973, a 9,3 per cent reduction. The falling real wages of RALSC-hired contractees (from Malawi) has been documented elsewhere in detail, but it is quite apparent from Table 17 that their real wages had fallen seriously up to 1971 and the increased rate applicable for 1972-73 only increased the real cash wage by 3,8 per cent over the 1964 level.

In terms of relative contribution to the African farm wage bill, the position as represented in Table 18 pertained in 1973-74.

TABLE 18

WAGES, SALARIES AND ANNUAL BONUSES PAID TO AFRICAN AGRICULTURAL WORKERS
1973-74
(millions of dollars)

Type of Contract	1973		1974	
	$	%	$	%
Permanent	25 387	82,9	30 967	82,2
Casual	3 848	12,3	4 844	12,9
African-hired contractees*	1 483	4,8	1 376	4,9
Total	31 218	100,0	37 627	100,0

Source: C.S.O. letter to the Author, Ref. No. AG/4/03, 19th November, 1973

Note: * Data on permanent workers includes 'other employees', i.e. teachers, clerks, storemen, etc.

These (referring here to Table 5), although casual workers represented 25 per cent of the permanent and casual African farm labour force in 1974, their wage bill came to only 12,9 per cent of total payment of wages, salaries and bonuses to Africans. African-hired contractees represented 5,4 per cent of the permanent and casual labour force in the same year and received 4,9 per cent of the payments of wages, salaries and bonuses.

These relationships, in terms of total and average earnings have been most clearly specified for 1969-71 (see Table 19).

TABLE 19

AFRICAN AGRICULTURAL EARNINGS

1969-71

Year	Permanent, Semi-Permanent and Casual Employees			African-hired Contractees	Employees in Agricultural Services	Total
	Cash	Kind	Total			
	A. TOTAL EARNINGS £'000					
1969	20 920	12 471	33 391	1 639	1 779	36 809
1970	21 542	11 808	33 350	1 436	1 887	36 673
1971	21 247	12 370	33 617	1 764	2 113	37 494
	B. AVERAGE EARNINGS £'000					
1969	78,39	46,73	125,12	72,80	160,27	122,49
1970	81,97	44,93	126,90	89,25	162,67	126,34
1971	78,46	45,68	124,14	96,52	172,60	124,48

Source: C.S.O., Revision of Statistics Relating to Africans Employed in the Agricultural Sector, DL/614/15, March, 1972 (mimeo)

One important feature shown in Table 19 is that the wages of 'Agricultural Service' employees have been considerably higher than rates applicable to other workers. This group also contributed more to the wage bill in 1963-71 than African-hired contractees. By contrast with 'permanent, semi-permanent and casual workers', their earnings have been steadily rising.

NON-CASH ELEMENTS OF EARNINGS : AN ESSENTIAL COMPONENT OF SUBSISTENCE

Agricultural workers depend for subsistence on a large element of payment-in-kind, given in a variety of forms. Real earnings calculations must take these carefully into account. The published data for earnings are usually aggregated estimates of wages and payments in kinds. As the C.S.O. Monthly Digest reports: 'Earnings include: (1) all cash wages, salaries, allowances, commissions and bonuses; (2) employers' contributions to pension funds, provident funds, holiday funds and medical aid societies; (3) the cash value of all income received in kind, e.g. free rations, housing, uniforms, etc.' [9]

The procedure adopted for estimation is as follows. The C.S.O. ask all farmers to complete a return (the last was in 1975 and the one before in 1971). Returns specify the quantities given to workers in respect of various items. These data are then 'priced' or valued at cost to the farmer, aggregated, put into per capita terms and then added to wage data derived from the quarterly enquiries on employment. They are updated annually; the end result is an industry 'overall earnings' figure.[10]

Data for the cash/kind breakdown by industry for 1971 are available (see Table 20)

TABLE 20

AFRICAN WORKER CASH AND KIND PAYMENTS BY INDUSTRY

1971

(millions of dollars)

Sector	Cash	Kind		Total Earnings
		Value	% of earnings	
Agriculture	25,074	12,688	33,6	37,742
Mining	12,503	6,704	35,3	19,007
Manufacturing	47,848	3,463	6,7	51,311
Electricity & water	1,900	0,143	7,0	2,042
Construction	21,351	1,665	7,1	23,516
Finance	1,931	0,103	4,9	2,034
Distribution	22,140	1,936	8,0	24,076
Transport	12,317	0,735	5,6	13,052
Public Admin.	11,936	0,350	6,6	12,706
Education	12,177	1,262	9,4	13,439
Health	4,557	0,335	6,8	4,892
Private Domestic	14,866	14,840	50,0	29,706
Other services	9,836	0,926	8,6	10,762

Source: C.S.O., Letter to The Author, Ref. No. LS/3/01, 12 January, 1973

After domestic and mining workers, agricultural employees receive the highest component of earnings in kind, (35,6 per cent of earnings in 1971). The absolute value (312 633 000) was not inconsiderable. Some attention should thus be given to the constituent elements of this form of earnings.

A series also exist in the trend of payments in kind for 1963-71 (the data are shown in Table 21).

TABLE 21
AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION WORKERS
CASH/KIND RATIOS
1963-71
(annual in dollars)

Year	Cash Wage	Value in Kind	Total	Kind as % Total
1963	77,31	43,48	120,79	36,0
1964	78,14	43,79	121,39	35,9
1965	79,09	42,80	121,89	35,1
1966	79,11	43,67	122,73	35,6
1967	79,04	41,14	120,54	34,1
1968	79,17	41,62	120,79	34,5
1969	77,95	43,09	121,04	35,6
1970	82,42	42,35	124,77	33,9
1971	79,45	42,82	122,27	35,0

Source: B.H.C. Duncan, The Wages and Supply Position in European Agriculture, R.J.E., 7, 1, March, 1973. Duncan's data are derived from the C.J.C.

The data show that the 'Income in Kind' element of agricultural earnings has not altered much in the 1963-71 period.

The components of earnings (some 19 in all) should now be examined. Data are available for 1973 and are produced in Table 22.

TABLE 22

MONTHLY 'INCOME IN KIND' PER AVERAGE AGRICULTURAL WORKER VALUED AT COST TO EMPLOYER

1973
(dollars)

Element	Monthly Receipt/Payment		Source of Provision (cents)	
	Volume	Value (cents)	From Farm	Purchased
Mealie Meal	29,587742 kg	51,720	35,17	16,55
Sorghum	0,026599 kg	0,010	0,01	n/a
Drief fish	0,456828 kg	6,900	n/a	6,90
Beans	1,544657 kg	15,210	3,17	12,04
Groundnuts (shelled)	0,434515 kg	3,990	1,50	2,49
Cattle Slaughtered	0,009680 head (approx 2,42 kg)	91,264	91,26	n/a
Sheep Slaughtered	0,004868 head (approx 0,7789 kg)			
Pigs slaughtered	0,000878 head			
Goats slaughtered	0,004298 head (approx 0,1405 kg)			
Beer Purchased	4,56766 litres	105,51	n/a	105,51
Meat purchased	1,033599 kg	19,120	n/a	19,12
Other rations	-	11,854	n/a	11,85
Accommodation other than pole and dagga (equal to 21,3409 per cent)	(At $25 per annum)	44,476	n/a	44,48
Accommodated in pole and dagga (78,6511%)	(At $1,50 per annum)	9,831	9,831	n/a
Schooling	-	5,617	n/a	5,62
Medicine		13,173	n/a	13,17
Hectares provided (0,209325)	($2 per acre)	8,610	8,61	n/a
Other benefits	-	12,995	n/a	12,99
Xmas bonuses	-	11,519	n/a	11,52
TOTALS	n/a	411,800	149,55	262,25

Sources: C.S.O. Letter to the Author, Ref No. LS/3/01, 20 November, 1975. Discussion with C.S.O. (24 November, 1975). Discussion with Cold Storage Commission (on average weight of beasts).

It is shown that on average in each month in 1973 $4,12 wasprovided to the average agricultural worker in the form of 'earnings in kind'. The largest item by value were meat ($1,10), beer ($1,05) and mealie meal ($0,52). A medical specialist to whom I showed this average 'hypothetical diet' said that, while it provided enough bulk intake in the form of meal, the meat/protein intake wasprobably only adequate for a single person, especially since some meat would include bone and fat.[11] The fish element was described as 'enough for one meal'. When asked about the relevance of the diet for a family of four, the specialist said such a consideration was simply 'a bad joke', implying clearly that for such purposes it was wholly inadequate. Thus the average package of employer-supplied 'rations' regarded by volume (whatever the monetary value thereof) can be considered as little more than sufficient to meet feed requirements of a single worker.

Some other observations are also worth recording. Firstly, the value of the land acreage made over for workers' land is regarded by the C.S.O. as a 'high valuation' because the real cost to the farmer is probably less than $2,00 per acre. Secondly, no estimate was incorporated for 'grazing lands' where given, as in ranching areas. However, this is unlikely to be very significant for the industry as a whole. Thirdly, the 'other benefits' item included salt and [illegible] etc. Fourthly, the 'income in kind' per head data are derived by excluding African-hired contractees fro the calculations. All payments in kind to casual workers are included. Fifthly, all data are assessed at cost to the employer. This means that the retail purchase-price equivilents of a number of items (e.g. mealie meal, meat, beer, etc.) would be slightly higher.

It can also be ascertained from Table 22 that a large portion of employees' earnings are derived from on-farm production. In other words, workers constitute an important 'market' for plantation products. In 1973 the value rate of

non-wage elements of earnings between provided and purchased elements was $1,20/$1,75. Since the annual income in kind payments in 1973 were estimated at $49,42 per head, and there were approximately 348 000 workers receiving such payments in that year, this implied a value of $17,2 million, of which an estimated $6,3 millions were supplied from farms themselves. Here then is an important economic reason why the industry's employers are keen to maintain their present labour policies which provide a large element of earnings in kind.

Resistance to expenditures on schooling and medicine by employers can also be understood as part of a general resistance to making purchases from outside the industry, especially asin such cases the items are often not considered as absolutely necessary by producers (in the same way as food is). The outlays on schooling and medicine are very low (1,36 per cent and 3,19 per cent of earnings in kind) and indicate an employer contribution on an industry wide basis of $195 472 and $458 420 respectivally. A large portion of these outlays are probably accounted for by a relatively small number of large plantations and estates.

EARNINGS/INCOME RELATIONSHIPS

Certain problems thus arise in the measurement of the earnings from employment of agricultural workers. However, the problem is even more complicated. It is also important to note that farm workers' 'incomes' (which can be differentiated from earnings by the fact that they may derive from sources other than employment) may be in excess of the earnings data recorded - indeed they are usually.

What are these other sources of income? What is their significance? For example, they may derive from the 'returns' from foraging for food. Typically, workers and their dependents (often children) will gather food commodities from the land, e.g. dried caterpillars, insects, flying ants, wild fruits, (prickly pears, loquats, figs, berries, etc.)

income of the latter (or the minimum required for subsistence), however, since workers' dependents may be located in the reserves or elsewhere and may obtain some of their primary consumption needs, which are necessary for subsistence and for meeting the costs of reproduction of labour-power, from non-farm sources. These subsidies or transfers of value - to the employer, insofar as he avoids the full costs of the reproduction of labour - form an extremely important source of ('primitive') accumulation of capital. Taken together then, earnings from employment, non-earnings elements of income derived from the farm, and non-farm incomes taken together form the real incomes from which subsistence and survival are obtained.

'QUASI-FEUDAL' LABOUR RELATIONS?

There are grounds for considering management/worker relationships on many plantations as being 'quasi-feudal' in character, at least in sufficiently important respects to differentiate this form of labour mobilization from others.

Firstly, unlike in urban-industrial employment - where wage relations presuppose a 'free' wage-labour force and labour relations revolve almost exclusively around a 'cash nexus' - farm labour relations involve a high degree of non-cash and non-wage committment on both sides of the contract. Worker links to the plantation are almost all encompassing. These links are not simply economic, but also involve a high degree of (personal) socio-political subordination and dependence. Indeed, many links are non-contractual in nature.

These unique features are also reflects in the totality of employer control over workers. The landowner is not only the sole employer of the worker's family, but is also the landlord of his worker-tenants. This imposes an additional constraint on employees. Loss of job means loss of right

of tenure, loss of basic subsistence and a high degree of insecurity. Workers also rely extensively on employer-initiated welfare policies which often re-inforce dependency links. The provision of education, the supply of rudimentary medical aid, the hope of 'retainer status' after retirement, the prospect of obtaining intermittent cash loans, and the local authority of the employer for discipline order and obedience are dependent often on employer decision and inclination. In this respect workers are 'tied' to the land. Indeed, ownership transfer is inevitably carried out on the basis of 'lock-stock-labour and barrel', and the asset price obtained sometimes reflects (in part) the availability of labour supplies.

'Extra-wage' obligations take various forms, e.g. in obligations to provide family labour for work at critical times of the year. By contrast, such a situation is atypical of industrial employment, or even, though for different reasons, domestic employment.

The system of allowing small plots of land to be cultivated by workers helps reduce the employers' need for outlaying cash to meet wage costs; and it provides a means of supplying workers with low-cost food. By providing 'private' means of production (however illusory in social reality), the owner gives some incentive to workers to raise their level of consumption. The 'allocation of land' is usually expected to contribute to worker welfare and subsistence. However, it also harnesses family labour to plantation production under a feudal-paternalist system in which the output is regarded as part of the payment for the workers' labour, services whereas the input consists primarily of family labour supplies, an input which is not rewarded by the employer in the form of cash wages. The allocation of 'village land' thus masks the essential relationship that appears to exist between management and workers, especially the farmer and the family of the latter.

IV INCOME DISTRIBUTION : THOSE AT THE BOTTOM OF THE PILE

In order to fully appreciate the structural position of farmworkers, and the income distribution pattern within this group, it is necessary to consider the total income distribution pattern. For instance, if the farmworkers' wage bill (a substantial portion of the latter's total income) is compared against the (taxable) incomes which accrued to the top 5 per cent of (European) individual income tax-payers in 1966/67, it is found that the latter, numbering 3 553 in total, received $35,5 million while 272 000 farmworkers received a lesser amount of $35,2 million.[13] The ratio per capita was 82:1.

As against other African workers, it can be calculated that in 1948 some 38 per cent of the total African wage bill accrued to farmworkers, then 38 per cent of all African workers. In 1970 these two proportions were 16 per cent and 39 per cent respectively. Other data confirm similar shifts as against other classes or groups, e.g. white workers.

Nonetheless, there does exist an important and growing degree of stratification within the plantation labour force. This can be observed in the trends in the cash wage distribution for 1961-71 (see Table 23).

TABLE 23

INTER-TEMPORAL CASH WAGE DISTRIBUTION FOR PERMANENT AFRICAN AGRICULTURAL WORKERS

(constant 1971 prices)

1961-1971

Wage Group	1961		1971	
	Number	%	Number	%
Under $12,26	212 767	89,4	204 955	84,6
$12,26 - $24,54	21 484	9,0	30 315	12,5
$24,54 +	3 645	1,6	6 930	2,9
Totals	237 897	100,0	242 200	100,0

Source: Calculated from Rhodesia, Cash Wage Distribution of African Employees, C.S.O., DI/599/5[illegible], Dec, 1971 (mimeo); Rhodesia, Final Report of the September, 1961 Census of Employees, C.S.O. Salisbury, 1965. On the method of adjustment of wage intervals see the method as used in D.G.Clarke, Domestic Workers in Rhodesia : The Economics of Masters and Servants, Mambo Press, Gwelo, 1974, Table 12, p. 71

Here the cash wage distribution can be taken as a useful proxy indicator of earnings distribution because of the historical constancy of 'rations' and other receipts between farm workers. Note too that the data exclude non-permanent workers, the bulk of whom would fall into the lowest paid categories. Even so, the vast bulk of permanent workers (84,6 per cent) in 1971 received a cash wage of less than $12,26 (1971 prices). A growing proportion and number received a cash wage greater than $24,54 monthly, and those in the intervening category had also increased. It would appear then that for 1961-71 increasing stratification was taking place.

The conclusion that proportionately fewer workers fell below a cash wage level of $12,26 in 1971 must be considered tentative, however, because the data for 1961 and 1971 are not 100 per cent comparable. In the 1961 figures it appears from comparison with published employment data that almost all workers were accounted for in the distribution. In 1971 some 91 030 workers were excluded. If this latter number were included in the lowest wage band - a reasonable assumption since they consisted of contractees and casual workers - then 235 935 workers or 88 per cent of the total would have been in this category in 1971. It is likely then that while some structural change occurred, this was confined largely to the upper end of the wage distribution.

Data are also available for June, 1975 to enable the cash wage distribution to be identified for this period (see Table 24)

TABLE 24

CASH WAGE DISTRIBUTION OF PERMANENT AFRICAN AGRICULTURAL WORKERS

JUNE, 1975

Wage Interval	Numbers	Per cent
Under $10	119 670	46,31
$10 - $20	103 960	42,17
$20 - $30	17 970	6,95
$30 - $40	6 120	2,37
$40 - $50	2 340	0,91
$50 - $60	1 690	0,65
$60 +	1 660	0,64
Total	258 380	100,00

Source: C.S.O., Wage Distribution of African Employees by Industrial Sector for the Month of June, 1975, DL/933/60, November, 1975 (mimeo)

In 1975 then, 93,40 per cent of all permanent African agricultural workers received a monthly cash wage of less than $20. Unfortunately, the data in Table 24 cannot be directly compared with data for 1967-71 in Table 23 because the wage intervals need first to be adjusted for the distorting effects of inflation. What can be said, however, is that a far larger number of workers received cash wages of less than $10 monthly. If the 'excluded workers' - 93 230 seasonal/casual employees and 28 440 African-hired contractees are included in the lowest wage category (an eminently reasonable assumption) - then the figure for those in the lowest wage interval would be 241 330 (63 per cent of all African agricultural workers). Comparing this to the data in Table 23 (and the qualifications made thereto) it would appear that during 1971-75, a shift occurred in the relative patterns in the lowest wage group. In other words, more recently the stratification tendencies have increased.

The above conclusion is also supported by the fact that more workers in numerical terms are now in the higher wage categories. Note also that in 1975, 10 employees received cash wages in excess of $500. These persons, however, were probably ex-Chibero graduates, and are now 'farm assistants/supervisors' or employees in agricultural services. Thus the changing occupational pattern has contributed to wage shifts.

POSITIVE EFFECTS OF INCOME REDISTRIBUTION TOWARDS FARM WORKERS

It has only been in 1973-75 that the average earnings level of farmworkers has begun to marginally improve in real terms. What would be the possible economic effects of an acceleration of this tendency?

Firstly, it is obvious that higher wage/earnings would have a positive effect of mitigating poverty, which the data would suggest is extensive. However, small changes would only have an 'ameliorative impact'. A 10 per cent

rise on $10 is only 1 dollar and such an increase cannot buy a great deal extra, certainly not enough to 'transform' conditions of subsistence. However, from the perspective of the average agricultural worker, it would be better than nothing. Large shifts in incomes could thus have clear beneficial effects on the severity of farm poverty.

Secondly, increased incomes would most likely go toward domestically produced commodities - foodstuffs, clothing, etc. If this income were transferred from high income groups, the marginal impact would (probably) be to reduce the demand for foreign imports, save scarce foreign exchange and boost demand for domestic industry and production.

Thirdly, a major economic imbalance in rural society might be corrected and the so-called farm 'labour shortage' might be substantially dealt with, if wage increases were large enough

PRODUCTIVITY TRENDS

Productivity indices are measures of efficiency. Productivity is a relationship of input to output. However, there are problems in the construction of measures of (labour productivity). If labour inputs are related to output, in terms of numbers of employees and labour cost, a rough approximate idea of the trend in productivity can be obtained (see Table 25)

TABLE 25

CRUDE PRODUCTIVITY ESTIMATES OF AGRICULTURAL LABOUR 1963-74.

Year	Gross Output $ millions.	African Employees ('000)	Output per employee $	Wage Bill $millions	Output Per Dollar of Labour Cost	Output per Dollar Labour Cost. (Index)
1963	133,6	282	473	34,4	3,88	100,0
1964	138,2	293	471	36,2	3,82	98,5
1965	140,3	289	485	35,9	3,91	100,7
1966	144,6	272	532	339	4,26	109,8
1967	145,1	271	535	33,2	4,37	112,6
1968	136,8	282	485	34,6	3,95	101,8
1969	171,5	300	571	36,9	4,65	119,8
1970	168,4	290	580	36,8	4,57	117,7
1971	208,2	303	687	39,8	5,23	134,8
1972	233,0	334	669	44,5	5,24	135,1
1973	273,3	348	794	49,5	5,52	142,3
1974	311,8	358	870	55,8	5,59	144,1

Source: Calculated from data in Tables 1 and 14.

Note: A similar type of index has been constructed by B.H.G. Duncan (EJE, 7, 1, March,73)

Even if gross output were deflated to eliminate price increases, a rising level of 'output per African employee' would have been recorded for 1963-74. Both this, and the index of 'output per dollar of labour cost', show an upward tendency from the 1963-65 period, the increase being recorded as in the vicinity of 44 per cent in the case of the latter and substantially more in the case of the former.

Partly, these trends reflect increasing mechanization, the shift in emphasis in production to mechanized maize farming, the utilization of existing 'labour slack' under diversification programmes and the development of ranching. It is [redacted] argues that the increased in value per head as recorded must as a result be 'dis-embodied' from one another to reflect the 'return' derived from labour and from 'capital'. But this all depends on the objective of the analysis since much capital accumulation in plantation agriculture is itself dependent on either previously earned profits (subsequently re-invested) or the 'capitalised' value of the returns from the 'primitive accumulation' process. In either instance, discounting the relatively small inflows of 'fresh' foreign capital and some 'surplus re-allocation' towards plantation owners from other branches of the capitalist sector, these processes of accumulation are themselves dependent on, in the first mentioned case, the 'labour process' in prior periods or, in the second instance, the low-wages (input costs) of the wage-labour force. To this extent, the case for dis-embodied productivity exploitation is weakened.

Here an important issue may be raised. If productivity has been increasing steadily, and wages have been stagnant, where have the gains gone? Clearly, they have not been received by workers, at least labourers. Employers, owners and shareholders have benefitted, but so have foreign and local consumers, in the form of cheap prices of foodstuffs.[14]

VI MINIMUM WAGE CONSUMPTION NEEDS AND SOURCES OF SUBSISTENCE

During the average person's life cycle, labour is supplied/applied from the household. Households differ in size and composition. These factors crucially affect the level of minimum consumption necessary for subsistence of the household/family. Thus an assessment of wage 'adequacy' (in relation to the criterion of meeting basic subsistence costs from wage-labour) must take account of household size and needs. The extent to which employers avoid these costs - which then must be met some how else from other sources - reflects the 'implicit subsidy' which they derive from the employment of workers thus concerned.

It is thus useful for analytical purposes to have some empirical conception of minimum necessary consumption needs in relation to wages. Usually this measure is referred to as the Poverty Datum Line, a criteria which has been talked about in Rhodesia but seldom acted upon.[15] At any point in time (P.D.L.'s are static indices), a P.D.L. will measure the effective minimum necessary income required to meet the cost of reproduction of labour in the environment of employment at a particular historical juncture under certain defined conditions - usually those of basic physical health and social decency.[16] It is not in itself a recommendation that wages should be pegged to the P.D.L. and not be allowed to rise further. But it does help define certain basic conditions of subsistence and it can be used as an analytical tool in the evaluation of the relationship between wages and the process of accumulation.

There are some difficulties experienced in the construction of P.D.L.'s which it would be unwise to ignore. To some extent, these have been discussed elsewhere though the difficulties in the construction of a national P.D.L. specific to conditions/prices of plantations involves other issues as well. These cannot be dealt with at length here. Instead, it will be useful to mention the findings of the one farm-specific P.D.L. study done in Rhodesia (in 1974).[17]

Firstly, worker subsistence needs were defined for different household sizes. These needs were itemized and priced to reflect the minimum cost of purchase for the workers concerned. Special account was taken of the payments practices on the farm - e.g. the fact that 'rations' provide a significant element of food consumption, the fact that firewood was free, etc. Then all items provided by the employer were deducted from the value required to satisfy the P.D.L. at every given household size. The results of the calculation are shown in Table 26.

TABLE 26

MONTHLY P.D.L. BY FAMILY SIZE

(AFTER ACCOUNTING FOR PAYMENTS IN KIND)

SELECTED FARM

FEBRUARY 1974

(dollars)

Family Size	Food	Clothing	Fuel & Lighting	Personal Care & Health	Household Goods	Transport	Education	Post Employment Consumption	Total
2	9,02	3,48	,45	,83	1,98	,59	-	1,47	17,82
3	9,93	4,34	,45	,93	2,09	,59	-	1,47	19,80
4	14,43	5,48	,45	1,21	2,72	,59	,65	1,47	27,00
5	19,30	6,81	,45	1,47	3,13	,59	2,67	1,47	34,56
6	25,90	7,95	,45	1,74	3,76	,59	3,36	1,47	45,22
7	31,15	9,28	,45	2,01	4,17	,59	4,05	1,47	53,17
8	38,26	10,61	,45	2,27	4,80	,59	4,05	1,47	62,50

Source: Roger C. Riddell and Peter S. Harris, The Poverty Datum Line as a Wage Fixing Standard, Mambo Press, 1975, Table 23, p.68.

Note: Riddell and Harris stress that the above data represent minimum costs needed beyond what employees receive 'in kind'. No value is included for accommodation. I have taken the smallest families size in each instance. The original table shows two sizes of household for each family unit (i.e. young as opposed to older children).

These data were then compared against the cash wage structure, the comparison showing that P.D.L. levels are substantially higher than average cash rates and that the bulk of the labour force receive a sub-P.D.L. wage. At the time, Riddell and Harris calculated that the single man's P.D.L. was 39,62. It could be shown that 73,1 per cent of farm workers received a cash wage below $10 monthly in that year.

It would thus appear to be feasible to conclude that most individual workers' earnings have been well below the P.D.L.' However, family earnings from employment may have been higher for quite a few households since women/juvenile earnings must also be taken into account. There are no adequately specified data available to enable these two 'streams' of household earnings to be aggregated into a form depicting household income distribution. This will surely be one of the important findings of the proposed Agricultural Labour Bureau's study of household 'income and expenditure patterns'. However, with the knowledge of the data as it now stands, it could be concluded that, even after such an adjustment, it is most probable that the vast bulk of households would still receive earning receipts substantially below their respective minimum subsistence costs, particularly in the case of large families and older workers.

The conclusion to be drawn from such a finding is that employers still remain in receipt of substantial resource subsidies in order to meet the costs of labour's reproduction. Hence accumulation remains essentially dependent on a form of labour mobilization whereby the functioning and existence in the economy of the reserves (as well as other sources of supplementation) is crucial.

However, it would also be worth positing for examination the proposition that the subsistence level of farmworkers has been at a level below that typically expected in non-

plantation sectors, (say) urban-industrial employment, the 'frame of reference' upon which the Riddell/Harris rural P.D.L. was based.

Perhaps implicit knowledge of the above, even though it would methodologically be illegitimate to generalise the P.D.L. findings on one farm to all farms to all farms, lies behind the reluctance of the R.N.F.U. and N.F.A., similar to employers in general, to participate in the construction of a national P.D.L. specific to plantation enterprises. Such reticence was displayed in response to an initiative of the Research Advisory Committee (which was a steering Committee connected with the urban P.D.L. of 1975) inviting these organizations to join in such a research task.

The fact that P.D.L. levels, however, defined mostly *exceed farm wages or household earnings raises an important* issue. Where exactly do the subsidies necessary to meet the shortfall between earnings and the required subsistence income come from? And in what proportions are they related? This problem isof great importance yet little empirical work exists which throws adequate light on the answers. It is raised here in order to encourage further investigation, the detailed task of which has gone beyond the brief of this report. Suffice it to say, however, that such an analysis would have to be intimately concerned with the articulation of various modes of production in the economy in relation to the 'labour resources' - the supplying, base areas - and the international sources of plantation labour supply.

VII MINIMUM WAGE FIXING AND FARM WAGE RATES

The minimum wage issue is a thorny question - theoretically as well as in practical economic and political terms. In other industries wage-fixing for some Africans became effective as early as 1934, under the then Industrial Conciliation Act (I.C.A.) which gave the Industrial Councils -

controlled by white workers - a limited power to regulate minima for 'natives'. Butthere has never been a minimum wage in agricultural employment. Indeed, there has not even been a 'rations' minimum stipulated by law. Under the Native Labour Boards Act (1947) African urban-industrial workers obtained minimum wage advantages, not that these were necessarily set at high or 'living levels', but they did place a 'floor price' to these labour markets. Eventually, when the I.C.A. was amended in 1959 to incorporate Africans under it (prior to this all African workers were not considered as employees for the purposes of the Act and collective bargaining rights), it deliberately excluded agricultural industry, as well as domestic employment. Hence no Industrial Council or Board could be established in the industry. This position still pertains.

Even the mildly liberal Phillips Report on agriculture claimed that 'it (was) impractical ... to include the rural workers within the ambit of wage fixing machinery'.[18] It argued so because inter alia there was 'a wide dispersal of earnings about the average level of remuneration'. But this was in violation of the facts because, as data show, not only then (1962) but now, there exists greater dispersion in almost all other industries. Such a criterion is not the appropriate test. On the one hand, there is the matter of principle - whether farmworkers are to be denied an economic right and protection, albeit minimalist in character, which has been an accepted datum now for most other workers for more than 15 years. Then there is the problem of practical implementation - viz. of the level at which such a rate should be set. Both the matters of principle and practice are of great importance.

In effective terms, the matter of principle has been resolved as a consequence of an unequal employer-worker bargaining strength. The second (issue of implementation) has therefore never arisen, except as a focus for polemics designed to thwart concession by employers on the first

issue. It is worth recalling, for instance, that in Rhodesian history there have only been two occasions when national wage minima have been debated in the House of Assembly. On both occasions (1948 and 1973) the proponents, few in number, have been easily defeated. Instead of reviewing these debates, which still have a relevance, it is perhaps more appropriate to consider arguments raised by employers on the one occasion when the issue was seriously mooted. (in 1960-61).

THE BRIEF CRISIS OF FARM MINIMUM WAGE POLICY IN 1960-61

In late 1960, the then Minister of Labour (the Hon. A.E. Abrahamson) wanted to introduce a minimum wage on farms and the matter was put to the R.N.F.U. Council to be decided first in principle and then as to the exact level at which it might be set. The matter was put to Branches and Associations of the R.N.F.U. and was opposed at thislevel.[19] The reasons given for rejection varied. They included the arguments: (1) that 'there was no labour problem' (2) that changes would 'upset the present settled labour position on farms' (3) that 'there was no telling where the process would stop' (4) that 'old servants would have to go if they had to be paid standard rates'. The Bulawayo Branch of the R.N.F.U., for instance, unanimously adopted a resolution recommending that 'a minimum native wage and ration scale be not established for farm labour in Matabeleland'[20]

Another employer invoked the following arguments against a minimum wage: (1) non-wage benefits 'made up' the wage-gap with industrial workers - a proposition incorrect in fact for 1961 and even more so now; (2) workers were contented and life was already idyllic: 'He lives a life similar to that of his forebears, in the open air and usually in connection with cattle; his women-folk work in the lands allotted to him (unlike town wives, who may get into mischief when their husbands are at work);

his children are brought up in rural surroundings; and over weekends he meets his fellows at beer drinks where singing, dancing and discussion pass the hours, as they have always done'; (3) minimum wage policies would lead to the withdrawal of 'tillage land' rights or rights to have cattle - a possibility in fact which could reduce worker benefits. The farmers' advice was in a nutshell 'the government would be advised to let sleeping dogs lie'.[21]

The solid rejection of the idea of minimum wages by agricultural employers could not be dealt with until after the 1962 'General Election'. As the then Minister has observed in retrospect: 'From that point onwards, I was determined to apply the Industrial Conciliation Act to Agriculture and would have done so had we been returned at the end of 1962. This would have had the immediate effect of setting up an Industrial Board of Industrial Boards for Agriculture with a view to introducing not only an improvement in earnings but, in my belief, a more stable labour force'.[22] Thus one politician's influence from a position of authority came to grief on the rock of political change. No subsequent Minister of Labour had indicated any desire or intention to pursue such a policy.

CONTEMPORARY ARGUMENTS AGAINST MINIMUM AND/OR HIGHER WAGES

More recently, other arguments have been raised against the application of higher and/or minimum wages in agriculture.[23]

Firstly, it is held that producers lack the 'ability to finance' higher wages. This may be true of some producers. Input costs have risen and export prices tend to be competitive, the effect being most severe on marginal enterprises. But this is only a partial perspective of the total cost structure which must include an evaluation of tax/subsidy arrangements. Thus, if it were the case that higher wages could not be financed by some producers, it would be

possible to devise a policy to ensure that wage-supplementation assistance were given to them. Sources of finance for this could be various, e.g. other better-off producers, taxpayers, other sectors, etc. On the other hand, it is true that the data usually employed to identify an 'inability to pay' are based on recorded profits. As shown in a later Chapter, these accounting derived records are notorious for undervaluing the real economic position of producers. Producers have encouraged these tendencies, declared/'realized' operating profits being reduced in order to avoid tax liability and minimize total costs. It should also be pointed out that the cost to the producer of adding one dollar to the wage bill is in real terms (usually) only 56 cents, because wages are a deductible item against pre-tax profits for the purposes of tax assessment, (currently 44 cents in the dollar for companies). It should also be noted that the African agricultural wage bill has fallen as a percentage of Gross Operating Profits in recent years, thereby indicating employers may have a better 'ability to pay' than before.

Secondly, it is often agreed that high profits are needed to ensure that re-investment levels are maintained and raised. Here it is implied that wage costs should be kept down. In this view, as Harris has agreed, investment is regarded as a function of profits, but in reality it ignores the structural constraint of limited foreign exchange resources which tends to reduce the potential volume of machinery, imports and other imported and thereby capital investment. Thus it may be the case that profits are earned, but not productively invested in agrarian production. Here it will be useful to review data on fixed investment (see Table 27).

TABLE 27

GROSS FIXED CAPITAL FORMATION AND GROSS OPERATING PROFITS

PLANTATION AGRICULTURE

1965 - 73

(millions of dollars)

Year	G.F.C.F.	G.O.P.	G.F.C.F./ G.O.P. %	G.F.C.F. as % total G.F.C.F.	Agricultural G.F.C.F. Index
1965	29,6	35,2	84,1	30,1	100,0
1966	17,3	40,3	42,9	20,6	58,4
1967	19,6	38,0	51,6	19,1	66,2
1968	22,1	30,8	71,8	15,4	74,6
1969	22,9	51,2	44,7	15,8	77,3
1970	24,6	45,2	54,4	14,5	83,1
1971	30,3	68,8	44,0	13,9	102,3
1972	31,7	84,3	37,6	12,8	107,9
1973	33,9	84,2	40,3	11,0	114,5

Source: Rhodesia, National Accounts and Balance of Payments of Rhodesia, 1973, C.S.O.

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-60-

The data show that Gross Fixed Capital Formation has picked up from the post-U.D.I. low of $17,3 million in 1966 to $33,9 million in 1973. As a portion of Gross Operating Profits, GFCF has been falling, indicating that the industry has had a greater ability over this time to meet non-investment costs from existing profits. However, the data on this point are to some extent inconclusive, partly because reported profits undervalue real receipts and also because no industry net profits data (adjusted for these distortions) are available. But it would be reasonable to conclude that employer objections on this (second) ground appear wholly unjustified.

The third employer argument against minimum or higher wages, that wages must be related to 'productivity', can be assessed in relation to data already cited about labour productivity. The evidence strongly suggests that productivity has not fallen, but has indeed risen - yet average earnings have been stagnant. Clearly 'the market' has not done its job, or employers have not wished to be held to their own propositions. In either event, a wage minimum could help restore a 'balanced relationship' in the wages-productivity equation.[24]

A fourth argument suggests that, as an export industry, agriculture should be 'blessed' with a low-wage structure so that export competitiveness can be maintained. In effect, workers are being asked to bear the cost of obtaining foreign exchange supplies to finance industrialization. A legitimate question arises here - why should these workers be so excessively burdened? The responsibility for efficiency at the farm level is a management one and there are numerous means to improve efficiency other than through the reduction of labour costs, even although this is one important input cost.

Finally, it is argued that higher wages cause more unemployment. Is this so? The answer is possibly yes and possibly no, dependent on the other adjustment taking

place in the economy, some of which are directly amenable to State control. It is possible that the level of unemployment could in fact be reduced if a constructive and carefully planned land reform policy accompanies the introduction of a wage minimum. The surplusland left unused on many farms may aid private accumulation but it probably detracts substantially from potential current production. Indeed, in many ways the imbalance in the land/labour equation has a determining effect on wage structures, as Rhodesian historiography has shown. The relevant point is that complementary initiatives could be taken to minimize the unemployment impact of higher wages in agriculture.

Other points should also be borne in mind here. It is unlikely for instance, that many producers are 'carrying surplus labour' greatly in excess of annual requirements, although they may do so at particular periods of the year. Usually the latter requirement is met by the employment of casual/seasonal labour. Also, replaceability in production requires the existence of feasible alternatives. To some extent, these are reduced by the foreign exchange constraints the rising cost of imported inputs and the existing deployment of capital-intensive equipment in production. Furthermore, by changes in appropriate taxes/tariffs and subsidy patterns, the State could bias the input demand in favour of labour even when wages are rising. It may be concluded therefore that it might be unwise to uncritically apply a wage minimum without careful examination of the level at which it would be set and associated policies which might accompany it.

CASE FOR HIGHER AND/OR MINIMUM WAGES

The case for higher and/or minimum wages applies with even more force in agrarian industry. Harris has suggested four grounds which will be noted here.

Firstly, higher wages would overcome some of the serious problems of worker poverty and contribute to labour

stability, a condition in which indeed, some have argued, the wage costs would be recouped from higher productivity.

Secondly, rural peasant development - presently hampered by the burden of meeting the costs of an ill-provided for worker group - requires higher wages to enable it to become a possibility.

Thirdly, higher wages could help expand domestic markets and reduce import costs if financed from quarters which have a high marginal propensity to import. Further, agricultural producers and manufacturers could benefit, the farmers from increased food consumption and the latter from expansion in mass-commodity markets, especially important if these are in labour-intensive industries like textiles, the expansion of which then has beneficial ancillary effects on employment growth.

Fourthly, change in the low-wage structure would enable reduced worker dependence on the 'traditional' paternalistic system of supports. In the case of agriculture, a greater wage element would have the effect of 'loosening' the non-wage bonds of dependence of workers on an individual employer.

It should be pointed out that it is not asserted that the above effects will take place, but it is likely that benefits of this character could become more attainable in a climate of higher earnings.

VIII NON-AFRICAN FARM EMPLOYEES' WAGES AND EARNINGS

European employees have been and remain an important group on farms. They are mostly employed as assistants, managers, technicians and service specialists.

Unfortunately, the Monthly Digest's record of 'European agricultural employees' does not mean exactly what it implies.[25] The series used includes a portion of 'owners, occupiers, partners and lessees' involved in agriculture - those, strangely enough, who are actively engaged in the operations of private limited companies. Those who are not incorporated are omitted. Thus it is impossible to get a

accurate trend of European employment levels on farms from available published data. Nor can the data be exactly adjusted retrospectively. However, I have ascertained the relevant data for 1973-74 and report on these in Table 28.

TABLE 28

EUROPEANS, ASIANS AND COLOUREDS ON FARMS

1973-74.

Classification	1973			1974		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Owners, Occupiers, Lessees.	5 044	1 374	6 418	4 852	1 311	6 163
Employees	2 087	107	2 194	2 167	101	2 268
Totals	7 131	1 481	8 612	7 019	1 412	8 431

Source: C.S.O., Letter to the Author, Ref No. AG/4/03, 19 November, 1975

Note: Employees here includes employees in 'agricultural services'

In discussion with the C.S.O., it was discovered that the portion so classified of employees (out of the owners, occupiers, lessees group) in 1974 was about 2 100 in number and those in 'agricultural services' about 500, leaving approximately 2300 farm employees proper.

Unfortunately, the earnings data applicable to 'European employees' is also a distorting indicator of farm employees (proper) earnings because the salaries or earnings from employment which are awarded by 'worker-directors' to themselves are included in the recorded figure. It thus makes little sense to lump together the earnings of these two different socioeconomic groups and analyse the

resultant trend. The average 'earnings' recorded in 1974 was $3 592 per annum compared to (say) $2 294 in 1962. It is impossible to separate out the 'income streams' involved here.

IX CONCLUSION

It has been shown that farm wages for Africans, the large t element of the plantation labour force, are low and [illegible] problems of poverty exist. [redacted]

1. Data extracted from C.S.O., Seasonal and Statistical Bulletin of Southern Rhodesia, 1, 4, 1973, p. 4 and H. Dunlop, The Development of European Agriculture in Rhodesia 1945-1965, Part of economics, Occasional Paper No. 5, University of Rhodesia, 1971, p. 61. Unless otherwise cited, data in this section are taken from these two sources.

2. C.A.T.C., Report on Agricultural and Pastoral Production in Southern Rhodesia 1946-1947, Salisbury, p. 27.

3. See Rhodesia, Report of the Commission of Inquiry Into Agricultural Input Costs, Salisbury, 1973, Table 1, p. 24.

4. More detail on the contemporary position may be obtained from a survey of the two sectors written by B.H.C. Duncan (R.N.F.U. economist) in Rhodesian Financial Gazette. 18 July, 1975.

5. See a later section of this Chapter on the methodological basis to the definition of 'European employers' in agriculture.

6. Data supplied in C.S.O., Letter to the Author, LS/3/01, 2 May, 1975.

7. For detailed analysis see D.G. Clarke, Contract Workers and Under-development in Rhodesia, Mambo Press, Gwelo, 1974, especially Ch. V.

8. See B.H.C. Duncan, The Wages and Labour Supply Position in European Agriculture, Rhodesian Journal of Economics, 7, 1, March, 1973; also J.D. Sly, Background to the Present Labour Shortage, Rhodesia Agricultural Journal, 72, 6, 1975.

9. Rhodesia, Monthly Digest of Statistics, C.S.O., August, 1975, Explanatory Notes, p. 75.

10. I am grateful to the C.S.O. for discussions on this point.

11. Note that it is not suggested here that such a diet represents all that is consumed by farmers. It is however the official estimate of all that is given in the form of food 'rations'.

12. On this theme and nutritional value thereof, see the Nutritional Council of the Rhodesian Food Manufacturers Association, Food for your Family, Rhodesian Literature Bureau, 1975, especially Ch. 3.

13. Rhodesia, Report of the Secretary for Internal Affairs For The Year Ended 30 June, 1963, Government Printer, Salisbury 1963.

14. Consider here agricultural wage rates in other parts of the world, for instance for cane cutters in Australia (approximately $3000 monthly). Note also the $1 for a two person family in the U.S.A. of $1,994 per annum (1962). See W.W. Chamberlain and D.E. Cullen, The Labour Sector, 2nd. Edition, 1971, p. 556. See also the article 'Low Pay on the Farms' in Family Circle March 6th, 1975 on British farm wages.

15. See here P.S. Harris, In Defence of the Bill, South African Labour Bulletin, forthcoming 1976.

16. For discussion see Roger C. Riddell and Peter S. Harris, The Poverty Datum Line as a Basic Living Standard, Mambo Press, Gwelo, 1975; also J.D. Sly, The Determination of Subsistence Wages in Rhodesia, South African Labour Bulletin, forthcoming, 1976.

17. See also R. Riddell and Peter S. Harris, op cit.

18. J. Phillips, Report of the Advisory Committee, C.A.R. 15-1962, Pardon, Salisbury, p. 5-11.

19. See Rhodesian Farmer, 11 November, 1961.

20. Rhodesian Farmer, 19 January, 1961

21. See Rhodesian Farmer, 11 October, 1973.

22. Letter from Hon. A.E. Abrahamson to the Author, 15th December, 1975.

23. Many of these arguments have been dealt with at length in Peter G. Harris, Black Industrial Workers in Rhodesia, Mambo Press, Gwelo, 1974. I have drawn on these arguments extensively in applying them to agriculture.

24. Note here the statement of B.H.G. Duncan (RAU economist): 'An increase in the cost of labour could stimulate and lead to increased productivity. It is unreasonable, in my opinion, to wait for an increase inproductivity as a pre-requisite to an increase in earnings'. Rhodesian Journal of Economics, 7, 1, March, 1973.

25. I am grateful to the C.S.O. for discussions on the definition of 'European employees'.