

# What you did not know about

# THE LAND ISSUE

The Zanu PF government has always claimed it will pay for "improvements" to farms but not the land as it was "stolen" by settlers. Of course, the Zimbabwe government has no capacity to pay and so this constant declaration smacks of fake political will in the hope that the IMF/World Bank will foot the bill. Sadly, it will be the Zimbabwe taxpayer that will ultimately shoulder this burden.

CASES FOR JAILED RAPIST: PAGE 4

BUSINESS: \$30M CHIBUKU PLANTS SOON: B1

## The Herald

REVIEW

He dates Macheso:  
Page R3

SPORT

Sent packing:  
Page 14



Harare, Zimbabwe, Friday 13 May 2016

US\$1



### Cash for white former farmers

George Mupfema

Ministry of Lands

WHITE former commercial farmers who lost land after Government embarked on the fast-track land reform programme in 2000 have started receiving compensation.

wide to evaluate properties on farms for the purposes of paying former landholders on improvements they made.

This, however, comes against the backdrop of liquidity challenges that have seen people — including those

country that are carrying out evaluation on farms that were acquired for resettlement under the land reform programme. We want to establish the total compensation that will be paid because in some cases we only pay the improvements on the land, while in

would have established the total compensation to be paid.

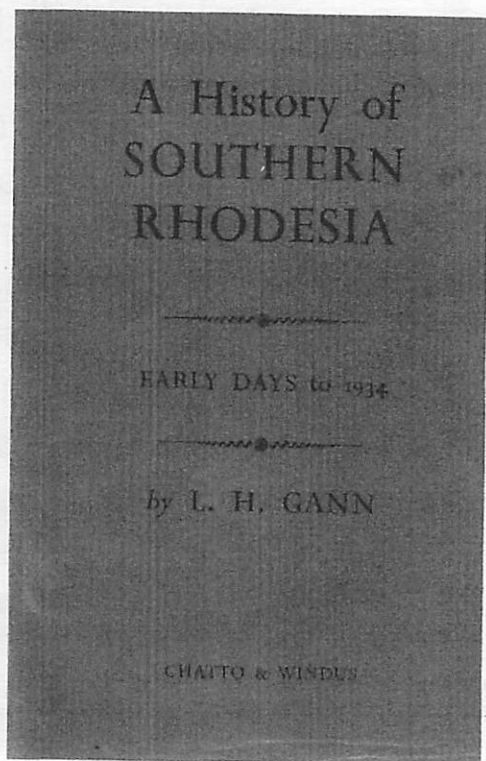
In actual fact, compensation of those who lost their land under the land reform programme has already started, but as for only a small number of people have been paid, others

There has been plenty of finger pointing over the past 16 years as to who is responsible for agricultural land today having no commercial value and a hugely diminished output – but what you do not know is that in 1924 when Southern Rhodesia became a colony, it **paid** the British Government for the untitled land. What? The Britishers sold us the land?

That's right. In 1923 when Southern Rhodesia became a Colony and was granted Responsible Government at the same time, **we paid** the British Crown £2.3 million based on a decision by the Privy Council in July 1918 that the British South Africa Company – with a Royal Charter granted in 1889 – had merely acted as its "agent" for the Crown in the territory known as Rhodesia.

Here is Lewis Gann in *A History of Southern Rhodesia*:

"In the end, the BSA Co and Colonial Office came to an agreement ... Southern Rhodesia obtained her public works and unalienated (untitled) land, the Southern Rhodesian settlers becoming the only community in Imperial history which has ever had to pay for the privilege of self government. In order to meet their bill, which [at £2.3 million] amounted to more than the country's entire revenue, the Rhodesians were allowed to raise a loan."





# Colony of Southern Rhodesia

By His Excellency the Governor of His Majesty's  
Colony of Southern Rhodesia.

In the name and on behalf of His Majesty **GEORGE THE SIXTH**, by the  
Grace of God of Great Britain, Ireland and of the British Dominions  
beyond the Seas, King Defender of the Faith.

This is rather an inconvenient truth. In effect, this means that the British government underwrote title in this country as they were the first group to receive payment for the vast majority of the virgin land in this country. This is a very simple argument – if the British Government sold us the land and we bought it in good faith (ie it was not stolen), they underwrote title, so just give the money back.

Are you outraged? This £2.3 million was then paid to the BSA Co, which then on to pay shareholders their first dividend in 34 years. In today's money this is £1,003,000,000 and it can go along way towards compensating farmers. What we propose doing is highlighting this historical travesty, pushing for recompense and using these monies to establish a fund to compensate farmers.

Furthermore, many farmers in districts that were developed post World War II were made on the basis of being an "Ex-Serviceman's Grant". The title deed very specifically states that it is issued "In the name and on behalf of His Majesty GEORGE THE SIXTH ..."

# Time line of events

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- 1888 (October 30) Rudd Concession granted by Lobengula to Cecil Rhodes' agent Charles Rudd, which would allow the BSA Co to exploit minerals in much of what is Zimbabwe today
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- 1889 (October 29) Queen Victoria grants a 25 year Royal Charter to the BSA Co, which would allow the Company to
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- 1891 For £30,000 and 15,000 shares in the BSA Company, Rhodes acquires the Lippert Concession, which guaranteed the holder the right to the land and not the mineral rights in the country.
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- 1914 Twenty five year Charter period expires and the settlers are fed up with the BSA Co push for self-government. At the crux of the matter is just who owns the untitled land?
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- 1914 (October 29) As a result of World War I breaking out, the BSA Co is given a supplemental chart to enable the Company to continue on the same terms for another 10 years
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- 1918 (July 29) Privy Council surprises the four parties contesting ownership of the unalienated land, ruling the BSA Co were merely acting as an "agent" for the British Crown. The other two challengers were the settler whites and the indigenous population.
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- 1919 (September 19) Cave Commission established to recommend the level of compensation due to the BSA Co for administering the territory since 1890. BSA Co demands £8 million. Cave Commission sets the amount at £4.435 million
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- 1921 (May 14) Buxton Committee publishes its finds that Responsible Government the best option for the territory. Winston Churchill says they must be offered the chance of joining the Union of South Africa
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- 1922 (October 27) Referendum held to see whether Southern Rhodesians wanted to join the Union of South Africa or opt for Responsible Government (self governing). RG wins by 8 774 votes to 5 989 votes
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- 1923 (September 12) Compensation for BSA Co set at £3.750 million. Britain formerly annexes Southern Rhodesia. Responsible Government established on October 1
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- 1924 (January 1) Southern Rhodesian Government deadline to pay HM Treasury £2.3 million (which was paid)
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