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The Importance of Land Redistribution in Zimbabwean Politics and the Impact on its Foreign Policy Toward South Africa and Britain.

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CHAPTER 2:
ZIMBABWEAN HISTORY

INTRODUCTION

A firm understanding of Zimbabwean history is necessary if one is to investigate the current situation in the country and the land redistribution programme specifically. This is because Zimbabwe was a former colony of the United Kingdom, and the issue of land can be traced back to colonialism. Also, ZANU – PF was formed during that time as an African nationalist movement fighting for the end of colonialism and black majority rule.

The history of any country is important to our understanding because it aids the explanation of questions regarding citizens, governments, and group actions and beliefs. It is imperative to comprehend what sparked these actions (past or present), and where the roots of certain beliefs can be found. In history, many things are interconnected, and thus one needs to understand the past in order to understand and conceptualise the future.

The separate sections in this chapter will provide the reader with an understanding of the significance of Zimbabwean history. The subject of early colonialism introduces the reader to the country of Zimbabwe and Britain's rule of its people. Chronologically this begins with the British South Africa Company in 1890 (the Pioneer Column that crossed into Matabele territory), and then moves on to Rhodesia as a self – governing colony after the referendum of 1923.[1] This is followed by an investigation of African nationalism and the Ian Smith regime. Both of these sections encompass what was then a growing crisis in Rhodesia. This then suitably leads the reader on to Zimbabwe's attainment of independence in 1980. The section entitled "Post – Colonialism" deals with the years of transition and transformation after independence. However, it merely summarises the period 1980 to 2005, since the events of those years are of importance to this research report are divided up and discussed in – depth in the separate chapters of this dissertation.

It is impossible and unnecessary to include every moment of Zimbabwean history in this chapter. This chapter has been divided into specific sections chosen by the author

to reveal the processes and events that contribute to the investigation of the research topic. The author's discussion of Zimbabwean history centres on significant dates and events, as opposed to all dates and events.

EARLY COLONIALISM

> *The Matabele kingdom of Lobengula became a British sphere of influence and concessions were obtained for mining and mineral rights in the late 1880s. Subsequently, Rhodes, in pursuit both of his imperialist and commercial visions, sought, and in 1889 was granted by the Imperial Government in London, a Royal Charter for his British South Africa Company. This Chartered Company was to govern, legislate and administer the new territory under the protection of the Crown whose influence over the Company was to be exercised by the British High Commissioner for South Africa.*[2]
>
> *On 11 July 1890, the Pioneer Column crossed into Matabele territory. It consisted of 180 colonists, 62 wagons and 200 volunteers, and a special police unit set up by the BSAC. A support party followed with a further 110 men, 16 wagons, 250 cattle (to be used as food) and 130 spare horses.*[3]

The British South Africa Company was Cecil John Rhodes's venture, and he recruited fortune hunter, Frank Johnson, to lead the invasion into what is now Zimbabwe. The pioneers founded the first town which they named Fort Victoria (now Masvingo), and in September 1890, they raised the British flag in a place they called Fort Salisbury (after the British Prime Minister). Fort Salisbury is modern Harare.

The Pioneer Column met little resistance from either the Shona, or Matabele peoples and the pioneers marked out their farming land with little regard for Shona occupation.[4] By April 1894, 859 farms had been laid out by white settlers; a number that increased to 11 000 two months later. It is important to note here that Rhodes was warned that at that rate, in a few years, no land would be left for the indigenous people of the country. This concern was dismissed – a dismissal that would lead to later African nationalism, bloodshed and finally, independence. It would also be the main reasoning given by Robert Mugabe (the current president of Zimbabwe) for his radical and violent land redistribution process.

In 1896, Rhodesian Africans started the Matabele Rebellion.[5] The rebellion was put down and the outcome was that in 1898, a Legislative Council was set up in Rhodesia

– it was the first time rule was shared by the settlers, and the British government saw it as steps on the road to the settlers future self – government.[6] It was envisaged by the British government that Rhodesia would become a white self – governing colony on the general pattern of the Cape or Natal.[7] This fact is very important for what happened later in the country, because it moulded many future plans.

> *In 1910, the British colonies of Natal and the Cape united with the former Boer republics to form the Union of South Africa. Rhodesia was invited to become the fifth province but declined. On 7 November 1923, a second attempt to make Rhodesia part of South Africa was roundly rejected by the white electorate, with 5 989 voting in favour of the proposal, and 8 744 opting for the country to become the empire's first self – governing colony, with essentially the same status as Canada or Australia.*[8]

So, the Colony of Southern Rhodesia came into being – with a written Constitution designed to protect the legislature, rights of capital, and Africans from discriminatory legislation without Whitehall's sanction.[9] The vote was given to all who had property qualifications – African or European. Many sections of the constitution could not be amended by the Legislature, and Britain had the power to legislate by Act or Order in Council, and to revoke or suspend the Constitution.[10] Special provisions were made to retain Native Reserves for African Occupation and use only. This appeared to be a positive if one considers the previous fears about Africans and land that had been expressed many years earlier to Rhodes.

The Land Apportionment Act, originally passed in 1931 (frequently amended) regularized land tenure. By the late 1960s, some 44million acres (including 4m. acres for purchase) was reserved for Africans, 36m. for Europeans, 6m. acres open to purchase by anyone regardless of race, and 11m. acres of national land (parks, reserves, and forestry plantations). All urban areas were designated "European" (except the townships), save some Africans working in the towns and those using educational and religious facilities. From 1963, Africans were able to obtain freehold title instead of leasehold in some urban townships. It may have appeared that Africans were accounted for in terms of land, yet there were many more of them than there were Europeans, and it was far easier to own land as a European. Also, the European pioneers took the majority of the best farms.[11]

One notorious Rhodesian resettlement attempt was that of the Tangwena tribe.[12] Under the Land Apportionment Act the land they had lived on for eight generations or more became the property of the Gaeresi Ranch Company. The tribe took this matter to the High Court in 1968 and won their appeal – the government then issued a proclamation under section 86 of the Act that ordered the tribe to relocate to tribal trust lands. The tribe refused to move and subsequently had to watch their huts burn to the ground.

The Rhodesian Land Apportionment Act was based on the recommendations made by the Morris Carter Commission of 1926 that basically advised that Europeans and Africans remain separate until Africans had advanced as a people. The Act remained in operation until 1969 when the Land Tenure Act replaced it. This new act formalised land distribution and prevented Africans from settling in 'white suburbs' in the urban areas.[13]

The above – mentioned land division brought with it problems of overpopulation and overstocking, which in turn produced soil erosion. To better deal with these problems, the government of Southern Rhodesia introduced the Native Land Husbandry Act in 1948.[14] The act became law in 1951 but was only implemented in 1955.[15] This act was one of the most far – reaching land reform measures in Africa, and the objective of the act as stated in the preamble was:

> *"To provide for the control of the utilization and allocation of land occupied by natives and to insure its efficient use for agricultural purposes; (and) to require natives to perform labour for conserving natural resources and for promoting good husbandry."*[16]

This act basically abolished the native customary system of land holding, introduced a system of grazing rights, good farming principles, and opened up native purchase land in urban areas.[17] Implementation of the act was slow however, and when it came to estimating the number of people and the amount of land that could yield each person with a decent holding, it fell extremely short.[18] There was also a huge variation in family and livestock sizes distributed across reserves. The act introduced alien concepts that were not understood, such as land purchase, and removed traditional authority over land rights (replaced by the marketplace).[19] Native security and society

were undermined instead of enhanced, and the act failed to produce any tangible benefits.

One final important action to note while land division was tacking place was the formation of the Central African Federation in 1953.[20] Mainly due to basic commercial wisdom, a Southern Rhodesian referendum voted in favour of union with the protectorates of Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia) and Nyasaland (now Malawi).[21] The federation was dissolved in 1963, but it is important because it encouraged African nationalism and highlighted the want for independence and majority - rule in Africa.

THE RISE OF AFRICAN NATIONALISM

The Central African Federation was formed at a conference at London's Lancaster House, and Winston Churchill (then British Prime Minister) insisted that a native representative be present.[22] Joshua Nkomo who was then leader of the rail trade union was thus flown to London.

> *Addressing the conference, he supported the principle of federation, but said it would be difficult to sell the idea to Rhodesia's black majority unless active steps were taken to include them in business and society as equal partners.*[23]

This sense of equality never eventuated, and native insurgency reared its head in Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland in 1957 and 1958.[24] The two territories were then given new constitutions, and although this did not stop the fighting, it gave hope that the Federation was likely to get its independence.[25]

In Southern Rhodesia, the political tempo was also changing.[26]

> *In 1957 a new nationalist organisation, the African National Congress (ANC), had been launched. To avoid alarming the white population, it set out to project a moderate image. The central theme of its platform was non - racialism and economic progress; it suggested the abolition of discriminatory laws, reform and land allocation, and an extension of the franchise. Although the franchise was non – racial, the qualifications for the vote, based on income, were so high that at the time, of an electorate of 52, 000, only 560 were Africans.*[27]

The ANC's leader was none other than Joshua Nkomo.[28] Within a short time, the party had a large following.[29] The ANC was banned in February 1959 on the grounds that the nationalists were encouraging Africans to defy government authority – there was no open disorder, however.[30] Over 500 Africans were arrested, and 300 were detained.[31] Not deterred, the ANC was reformed in January 1960 under the name the National Democratic Party (NDP). This time however, the party was more radical – they demanded the redress of grievances and political power.[32] The head of the party was Michael Mawema – Nkomo headed the London office.[33]

In 1960, Robert Mugabe was urged to join the cause.[34] In July of that year, the government arrested three prominent NDP leaders under sections of the Unlawful Organisations Act (1960).[35] 7, 000 Africans set out on a protest march, and the crowd had grown to 40, 000 the following day. Mugabe was asked to speak at the gathering.[36]

> *Introduced as a distinguished scholar who had travelled in Africa and who possessed three university degrees, he began to talk about his vision for the future of "Zimbabwe", the name the nationalist movement used for Rhodesia, adopted from the sight of impressive stone ruins near Masvingo that five centuries before had been the political and religious capital of a black monarchy. When he finished, the crowd gave him a rousing round of applause.*[37]

Government dealt with the gathering by introducing the Law and Order (Maintenance) Act.[38] Mugabe gave up his teaching post in Ghana and joined the nationalist cause and became the NDP's publicity secretary.[39] In 1961 the British convened a meeting in Salisbury to discuss Rhodesia's constitutional future, and NDP officials were invited to attend.[40] Agreement was met on a new constitution that would include a bill of rights, a widening of the African franchise, and clauses to protect non – European Rhodesians that could only be abolished after holding separate referendums for each race.[41] The government's finance minister, Ian Smith resigned in protest, and the NDP withdrew its support after its constituency blamed it for not gaining enough concessions.[42] The constitution however, was adopted by parliament and endorsed by a referendum.

In April of 1961, Mugabe was searched at the airport and quoted in a newspaper article as saying at the time: "We are taking over this country and we will not put up with this nonsense."[43] Later in December, Mugabe told a crowd of 20, 000 at an NDP gathering that if the product of European industry was going to be used to buy guns to point at Africans, then Africans would have to withdraw their labour and custom in order to shut the industries down. A week later the NDP was banned, but they regrouped less than two weeks after as the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU).[44]

In June 1962, Nkomo managed to get the UN General Assembly to pass a resolution that called for an all – party meeting to design a new constitution for Rhodesia.[45] On his return in July, ZAPU increased its industrial strikes, even using intimidation to do so (if full support was not shown one risked a beating by a gang of youths who checked for ZAPU membership cards).[46] The government then made it a crime to try to force anyone to join a political party. By September, ZAPU had been banned and its leaders detained.[47] Nkomo then swore to go into exile when released and fight from beyond Rhodesia's borders.[48]

The 1962 election was a watershed with Smith and Field's new Rhodesian Front fighting to keep power in the hands of the white minority, and Whitehead's government stating that if re – elected black people would be allowed to participate in most aspects of society.[49] Both wanted complete independence from Britain. The nationalists boycotted the election.[50] Without the black vote, Whitehead lost and Field became the new prime minister.[51] The new government was quick to introduce the death penalty for sabotage.[52]

The ZAPU leaders were released but then re – detained three months later for addressing political rallies.[53] Nkomo tried again to convince his party to be active in exile.[54] He told them that President Nyerere of Tanzania had offered them sanctuary. The party agreed to this plan, although Mugabe had serious reservations.[55] Party officials flew to Tanzania where Nyerere told them he had offered no such sanctuary to Nkomo.[56] Party officials then approached the OAU in Ethiopia looking for support for the proposed government in exile.[57] The OAU would not lend ZAPU its support – it agreed with Nyerere that the struggle could only be fought within Rhodesia's

borders.[58] The ZAPU party officials and the OAU agreed that Nkomo should step down as leader.[59]

In June 1963, Nkomo suspended Mugabe and three other leaders from the party executive.[60] They received the news in Tanzania and responded by voting Rev. Ndabaningi Sithole to replace Nkomo.[61] Soon afterwards, Sithole's supporters named the breakaway party the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU), and appointed Sithole leader.[62] Nkomo remained leader of ZAPU, but many influential members were unhappy with this decision.[63]

In December 1963 the federation was dissolved, and Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland were granted independence.[64] Much to Field and Smith's dismay, Rhodesia remained bound to the crown.[65] In the same month, Mugabe returned to Rhodesia.[66] By this stage, Nkomo had become the sole black leader in the country as Sithole's group was all but forgotten. This, however, only happened after violent rivalry between the Nkomo and Sithole factions of the party.[67] Mugabe was arrested on arrival (he had prison terms emanating from prior arrests), and later sentenced to indefinite detention under the Law and Order Maintenance Act – he spent the following eleven years in prison.[68]

In April 1964, Ian Smith replaced Field as prime minister.[69]

THE IAN SMITH REGIME

Any good history of Zimbabwe includes a chapter on Ian Smith. This is because his actions as Prime Minister of Rhodesia turned the tide in the nationalists fight for independence. Smith declared Rhodesia a republic in 1970, which angered the British and made them push for majority rule also. The culmination of British and nationalist pressure led Zimbabwe to independence in 1980.

By the time Smith became Prime Minister, he felt ready to pursue an objective of independence.[70] Smith not only wanted to control the pace of African integration and advancement, but he also felt betrayed by the British for giving independence to Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland but not Southern Rhodesia.[71] In 1964, Smith travelled to London, and in turn Harold Wilson (British PM) travelled to Salisbury,

both to discuss independence but neither could agree on the terms.[72] Smith then called a referendum that voted in favour of independence.[73] Once again, the number of Africans who voted was miniscule.

In May 1965, Smith Rhodesian Front won all the "white" seats in the election.[74] Wilson then offered Smith a royal commission on the subject of independence – Rhodesia and the UK would keep to the commission's recommendations.[75] The commission stated that there should be no independence without a 'one man, one vote' policy.[76] From then on British attitudes hardened, and Smith government was refused attendance at the Commonwealth Prime Minister's Conference in July.[77]

On 11 November 1965, Smith's cabinet agreed to a unilateral declaration of independence (UDI). Speaking to journalist Geoff Hill about UDI in 2001, Smith stated:

> *"What were we supposed to do? Every time we agreed to something, from the 1961 constitution to the break – up of federation to the royal commission, they put new obstacles in our way. We had no other choice."*[78]

Wilson, who had previously stated that issues in Rhodesia would not be met with force, was afraid that military action in Rhodesia would produce far - reaching repercussions on the continent.[79] Wilson did, however, move swiftly to isolate the Smith regime by declaring British sanctions against Rhodesia, and then convincing the United Nations to follow suite.[80]

Most diplomatic channels remained open in Zimbabwe until Rhodesia became a republic in 1970 (replacing the monarch with a non – executive president).[81] Thereafter, relations only remained open with Greece, Portugal and South Africa. Declaration of the republic came after two rounds of negotiations between British Prime Minister, Harold Wilson, and the Prime Minister of the 'illegal' Rhodesian regime, Ian Smith, aboard HMS *Tiger* (1966) and HMS *Fearless* (1968), both of which failed to end the impasse.[82]

In 1971, the British government sent British Foreign Secretary, Sir Alec Douglas-Home to Salisbury with a proposal so beneficial to white Zimbabweans that Smith accepted it.[83] Negotiations were reopened with the hopes of finally resolving what had become a domestic and international dilemma due to the attraction and involvement that sanctions caused.[84]

> *Smith agreed to a settlement that would theoretically provide for majority rule in the longer term. Following the Anglo – Rhodesian Agreement, it appeared that the British government would now be able to grant the white Rhodesian regime legal independence with a minimum of international condemnation and absolve itself of responsibility for its last African colony. Despite the exclusion of African representatives at the Anglo – Rhodesian negotiations, the so – called 'fifth principle' included in the Agreement gave them the power of veto.*[85]

Thereafter, in 1972, the Pearce Commission was appointed by the British Government to ascertain the reaction of black Africans to the sanctions against Rhodesia. It carried out a referendum on majority rule, which was supported by Rhodesia Front Government of Ian Smith, but rejected by the African nationalist parties.[86] Nationalists were brought out of their prison cells to give Douglas – Home their views.[87] African opposition was so strong that the deal collapsed.

Although ostensibly united over a common cause, there was little to no trust between ZANU and ZAPU in the 1970s.[88] Mugabe's ZANLA army (the guerrilla arm of ZANU) fought the brunt of the war in eastern Rhodesia while Nkomo's (leader of ZAPU) ZIPRA army concentrated on areas in western Rhodesia.[89] ZANLA and ZIPRA conformed to the tribal split of Shona and Matabele since ZANLA had been recruited from Shona - speaking areas, and ZIPRA was recruited mainly from Matabeleland and spoke Sindebele.[90]

ZIPRA was supplied with substantial Russian aid, and kept most of its army in reserve leading many within ZANLA to suspect they were being withheld for later use.[91] To some extent these fears were confirmed when Joshua Nkomo secretly met with Prime Minister Ian Smith in 1978 and tried to reach a settlement that would lead him to power separately.[92] The meeting brought no results.

Despite this, Smith did sign an accord in 1978 with three moderate black leaders headed by Bishop Abel Muzorewa calling for universal suffrage and a black majority rule with safeguards for whites.[93] This settlement was the result of many things. Firstly, it was the result of the impact of the guerrilla war fought by ZANLA and ZIPRA.[94] Secondly, it was the involvement of Zambia and South Africa.[95] After 1970 South Africa had stationed a counter-insurgency trained police detachment with the purpose to defend Rhodesia from the guerrilla armies, and deter the spreading of the war to South Africa. These troops were withdrawn in the late 1970's.[96] Zambia was adversely affected by the reverberations of the war (ZIPRA used bases in Zambia).[97] "In conjunction with other African leaders, the governments of Zambia and South Africa conspired to force on Smith and the nationalists their own plan for a Rhodesian settlement."[98]

South Africa had until 1978 supported the Smith regime and circumvented the UN sanctions campaign, but when the war against the Smith government began to turn the tide, Smith was forced to the negotiating table in 1979 and subsequently lost the 1980 elections to Mugabe in a landslide victory, South Africa began to worry about the possibility of Zimbabwean guerrillas entering its state.[99]

"In the 1979 elections, Muzorewa's party won 51 of the 100 parliamentary seats; another 28 were reserved for whites."[100] A coalition government of Muzorewa's party and Smith's Rhodesian Front was formed with Muzorewa as the first black Prime Minister of a black – ruled Zimbabwe-Rhodesia – later shortened to Zimbabwe.[101] This government failed to sustain support (for the people were essentially fighting for the right to self – determination), and a settlement was reached at a conference in London later in 1979, and Britain resumed control of the country. In the elections held in February 1980 Mugabe and his Zimbabwean African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU – PF) won.

<u>The United Nations and UDI</u>

The United Nations Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 14 December 1960, yet Britain kept control of its colony until 1980 due to the fact that legal majority rule had not been established in Rhodesia (the UN supported this

decision by supporting the UDI sanctions), and the administration prior to Smith's had agreed to move toward majority rule, which the UDI was an attempt to prevent.[102]

Britain had an agreement with Rhodesia's ruling party prior to the Ian Smith (Prime Minister of the white majority ruled self – governing colonial entity) administration coming to power that included the gradual movement toward majority rule which ironically had 1980 as its culmination point. This is ironic, because liberation came in that year after a civil war between the African nationalists and the Smith regime**.** Smith, however, became prime minister on a white nationalist ticket that opposed the constitutional arrangement made by Britain and the previous government.

INDEPENDENCE

The complete independence for Zimbabwe finally came on April 17, 1980.[103] This followed the adoption in 1979 of Zimbabwe's constitution along with The Bill of Rights.[104] It superseded the 1961 constitution and its amendments, which entrenched white minority rule.[105] The 1979 constitution still allowed the British Governor to make constitutional provisions.[106] After independence, the constitution was subjected to a number of changes including the abolition of reserved seats for whites in parliament and highlighting the importance of the role of president.[107] The Lancaster House Constitution expired in 1990, giving Mugabe *carte blanche* to make amendments.

"The judiciable Bill of Rights provided by the government was important because at this time (1979), the country had no human rights jurisprudence because Rhodesia had no judiciable Bill of Rights".[108] This Bill of Rights was handicapped, however, because it was championed by the Smith – Muzorewa settlement and not by the nationalists who fought in the struggle.[109] The problem arose with certain provisions contained in the bill that protected the privileges of whites, such as the protection of property (this also protected the small black middle class and farming community). [110] Unlike the South African transition to democracy, the Zimbabwean Constitution was partially imposed on the people. As Ncube (1994) points out:

> *Zimbabwe's Constitution from the beginning of its adoption in 1979, was seen…as a liability, a fundamentally flawed document…thus from the beginning Zimbabwe's*

> *Constitution was undermined and its legitimacy called into question with the consequence that the rights and freedoms it sought to protect were also from the beginning undermined in their legitimacy.*[111]

Sadly, the culture of human rights that resulted from the Zimbabwean struggle in the form of the Constitution and Bill of Rights were not only flawed, but were not adhered to. Zimbabwean novelist and playwright, Marechera, on his return from exile in 1981, discovered his novel *Black Sunlight* had been banned by the new regime under the old Rhodesian censorship legislation.[112] "Democracy was only skin – deep in the new Zimbabwe, a State of Emergency was still in effect and the new ZANU (PF) government was extremely sensitive to criticism".[113]

POST - COLONIALISM

"The risk of a second civil war following independence was ever present from the moment the new flag of Zimbabwe was raised."[114] The election campaign was fought with much aggression by both Mugabe's ZANU - PF and Nkomo's ZAPU – the two guerrilla armies remained potential adversaries. Nkomo's ZIPRA army had been recruited mainly from Matabeleland and spoke Sindebele. Mugabe's ZANLA army was recruited from Shona speaking areas and was twice as large as Nkomo's. Nkomo and ZAPU were disgruntled by the first election results, leading ZANLA to suspect they might be attempting to plan an insurrection. ZANU – PF questioned ZAPU's participation in the cabinet and derided ZIPRA's contribution to the war effort. ZANU talked about a one party state, hoping for complete control.

The friction between the two guerrilla armies resulted in seven years of fighting. In 1982, Mugabe unleashed the 5th Brigade (Shona speaking ex – ZANLA forces trained in North Korea) or *Gukurahundi*, Shona for "the rain that blows away the chaff before the spring rains."[115] The 5th Brigade went on a killing spree, with the intention of wiping out ZIPRA and all Nkomo's supporters. For this reason, Matabeleland, the prime target was subjected to massacres and other such atrocities. People were interrogated, the 5th Brigade enforced a food embargo on the area, and there were daily beatings and torture of the residents. There was no protection of human rights in Matabeleland.

It is interesting to note here that the State of Emergency called by Mugabe in 1984 (due to the civil war between the guerrilla armies) was the same Act enacted by the British Governor of Rhodesia in 1965 (Emergency Maintenance of Law and Order Regulations). The first state of emergency was designed to quell the African nationalist uprising, and the second was imposed by one African nationalist faction on another.[116]

In the 1985 election, with Nkomo back in the country (he had gone into exile), ZAPU won all 15 parliamentary seats in Matabeleland. Mugabe was determined to exact revenge, so he appointed Enos Nkala (who hated Nkomo) as Minister of Police. Nkala then set about raiding Nkomo's home and detaining ZAPU supporters. "To avoid further violence and repression, Nkomo capitulated. On December 27, 1987, Mugabe and Nkomo signed a Unity Accord. It merged ZAPU and ZANU – PF into a single party, thereafter known as ZANU – PF."[117] Mugabe's intimidation and human rights violations had won.

Internal fighting was not the only threat to the new democracy. Mugabe and his ministers began attacking the press from early on.[118] The government did not like reading negative articles about themselves, and in the middle of 1980, the Argus group was forced to give up their shares in ZimPapers (the government threatened to nationalise it) and the Nigerian government gave Mugabe the money to take over the investment.[119]

Zimbabwe, at this time, also had difficulty with the mass of ex – soldiers and deserters. Many of the soldiers were absorbed into the new army, but many left over renegades and dissidents caused much havoc (robbing stores and murdering white farmers).[120]

Mugabe's want to consolidate power at this time could be seen in Nkomo fleeing the country in 1983.[121] On his arrival in Britain he said: "Things are worse now than they ever were under Ian Smith. This is the worst government in the history of the country."[122]

According to a source that Geoff Hill interviewed for his book *The Battle for Zimbabwe – The Final Countdown*, the 1980's and 1990's were a time of political intimidation.[123] "It would have been hard for anyone to really campaign, really hold meetings and rallies, because the police would tend not to give permits and, if they did, ZANU – PF would visit the candidate with warnings to stop making a noise."[124]

Mugabe was also in full control of any party politics.[125] Parliament had become less relevant, for besides being party leader, Mugabe was appointed head of a politburo to control government policy at a party congress in 1984. He also reserved the right to appoint all politburo members. Mugabe also furthered his role in international affairs. He was a key figure in the frontline states that fought against Apartheid in South Africa. Also, between 1986 and 1989 Mugabe was chairman of NAM.

Edgar Tekere (who fought the liberation struggle with Mugabe) spoke out against the new regime – "Democracy in Zimbabwe is in intensive care and the leadership has decayed."[126] In April of 1989 Tekere launched the opposition party: Zimbabwe Unity Movement (ZUM). ZUM was constantly harassed yet won 30 percent of the vote in the 1990 elections. Just before these elections, Mugabe gave himself even more power by increasing the number of parliamentary seats to 150 (only 120 were to be contested on the common voter's roll). This meant that even if another party won the majority of seats available, they might still not have enough to form a government.

Yet another person disappointed by the new government was Morgan Tsvangirai, the then (1990's) secretary – general of the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU). Tsvangirai spoke of a rising state of repression and a suppression of individual rights. He was thereafter arrested. Tsvangirai is the now leader of ZANU – PF's main opposition party the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC).

Also at this time, the Zimbabwean population was becoming desperate.[127] By the end of the 1990's they were 10 percent poorer on average, over 70 percent lived in abject poverty, the value of wages in real terms had dropped 22 percent, the unemployment rate had risen to 50 percent, inflation was almost at 60 percent, output in mining and manufacturing had dropped, and life expectancy had fallen due to AIDS.[128]

At the end of 1997, 1471 farms were chosen for acquisition. Mugabe cited Zimbabwe's land history as the reason for this – the colonisers took the best farms.[129] It was not made clear to farmers how they would be compensated, as required by the constitution. Food analysts warned against any move toward nationalisation, saying that they feared a food shortage.[130] Mugabe would not budge.

During the end of the 1990's, ZANU – PF drew up a new constitution, which among other things, stated that the government could seize any farmland and was under no obligation to pay compensation for it.[131] Zimbabwe held a constitutional referendum, and in early 2000 it was announced that the majority of the population voted against constitutional reform. After this defeat things did not look good for ZANU – PF in the 2000 elections. However, Zimbabwean law combined with the 1987 constitution made opposition political affairs very difficult. If the MDC won the majority in parliament, Mugabe could declare a state of emergency and rule by decree. The decision would then go to the High Court, yet all the judges were presidential appointments.

According to Martin Meredith's book "*Our Votes, Our Guns: Robert Mugabe and the Tragedy of Zimbabwe*", after the referendum, an army of former soldiers invaded white – owned farm land throughout the country, and the government supplied them with US$ 500 000.[132] Mugabe once again cited Britain and the farmers as the cause of the problem. This reign of terror and manipulation worked though and, with a split opposition, ZANU – PF won the 2000 elections. The farm invasions did not stop after the elections, and only worsened when Mugabe was re - elected president in 2002.

From 2002 until the present day, the overall situation in Zimbabwe has only worsened. The population is starving, the economy is unsustainable and human rights abuses are rife. Zimbabwe is no longer the democracy it set out to be, and even more troubling, ZANU – PF won the 2005 elections.

CONCLUSION

This chapter shows that land was an important commodity in now Zimbabwe from as early as the 1890's. However, as much as British rule in Rhodesia did create the initial legislation surrounding ownership and division of land, Mugabe has chosen to address

this past legislation violently, by claiming back land. Unfortunately, much of this land has been reclaimed illegally, and the process has been somewhat rushed. ZANU – PF has not upheld so many of the rights that it fought for in order to gain independence.

The human rights fought for and produced by the struggle in Zimbabwe were ineffective because they were neither upheld nor protected. The weakening of the Zimbabwean state highlighted this. As Gerald Gaylard observed in 1993:

> *The establishment of a Shona bourgeoisie, entailing nepotism and corruption, and ZANU's desire and increasing pressure for a one party state meant that opposition had to be silenced. As a result censorship was strictly enforced and the pervasive atmosphere in Zimbabwe was one of 'political correctness' to the party line and a corresponding paranoia of being 'informed upon' as a 'dissident'.*[133]

The liberation struggle in Zimbabwe is an example of how rights are used to mobilize people and fight oppression, yet when the liberation government's comes into power they have an uncanny resemblance to previous regimes.

> *The lack of accountability of the post – independence government is related to the under – development of the concept of citizenship and participatory democracy. The colony conditions remained, the majority of Zimbabweans to acquiesce and comply with decisions and actions taken by politicians, regardless of their independent thoughts on the issue. They were compelled to act as no more than unquestioning recipients, and the cost of non – compliance was always excessive.*[134]

With this in mind, however, one cannot overlook the role that Ian Smith and his white minority party played. Not only was Smith reluctant to give up his position as Prime Minister (even when countries like South Africa were applying so much pressure), but also the white Rhodesians fought hard to ensure safe - guards for whites at the Lancaster House Conference. This meant that the land issue could not be addresses as soon as Mugabe won power.

The significance of Zimbabwean history in terms of land redistribution is obvious – it explains how the issue came about and what internal struggles affected it. The following chapter examined land in Zimbabwe in general, and as one will see, this chapter provides the initial basis on which the next is built.

Endnotes

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[5] Young, K., Op Cit, pp. 26.

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[9] Young, K., Op Cit, pp. 29.

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[11] Hill, G., Op Cit, pp. 50.

[12] Sprack, J., Rhodesia: South Africa's Sixth Province – An Analysis of the Links Between South Africa and Rhodesia, London: International Defence and Aid Fund, 1974, pp. 17.

[13] Hill, G., Op Cit, pp. 54.

[14] Yudelman, M., Africans on the Land – Economic Problems of African Agricultural Development in Southern, Central, and East Africa, with Special Reference to Southern Rhodesia, London: Oxford University Press, 1964, pp. 117.

[15] Ibid, pp. 117.

[17] Ibid, pp. 118.

[18] Ibid, pp. 123.

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[20] Hill, G., Op Cit, pp. 52.

[21] "In 1953 white settlers in Northern and Southern Rhodesia pressured the British government to unite Southern Rhodesia, Northern Rhodesia, and Nyasaland (present-day Malawi) to form the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland (also known as the Central African Federation). The federation, which allowed white settlers in the colonies to consolidate their economic power, had its capital in Salisbury and was dominated by Southern Rhodesia. The federation lasted until 1963 and saw rapid economic expansion, as Southern Rhodesia industrialized and became the second-most powerful economy in southern Africa, after South Africa. The regions of the colony allocated to blacks grew overcrowded in the 1950s, prompting large numbers of blacks to move to the colony's urban areas. By 1960 the white population had grown to 220,000. During this period, black opposition to white settler rule grew more active and vocal. The first African labour unions began to appear in the 1920s, and in the 1950s African nationalist parties formed. As support for the parties grew, the colonial government became

increasingly repressive and resisted the idea of majority rule." – "Zimbabwe" (accessed from http://encarta.msn.com/text_761575825___20/Zimbabwe.html on 25 July 2005), pp. 3.

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[25] Ibid, pp. 50.

[26] Meredith, M., Op Cit, pp. 24.

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[30] Meredith, M., Op Cit, pp. 25.

[31] Ibid, pp. 25.

[32] Ibid, pp. 26.

[33] Young, K., Op Cit, pp. 61.

[34] Meredith, M., Op Cit, pp. 26.

[35] Ibid, pp. 26.

[36] Hill, G., Op Cit, pp. 53.

[37] Meredith, M., Op Cit, pp. 26 and 27.

[38] Hill, G., Op Cit, pp. 53.

[39] Meredith, M., Op Cit, pp. 27.

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[41] Hill, G., Op Cit, pp. 54.

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[45] Hill, G., Op Cit, pp. 54.

[46] Ibid, pp. 54.

[47] Meredith, M., Op Cit, pp. 29.

[48] Hill, G., Op Cit, pp. 55.

[49] Young, K., Op Cit, pp. 68.

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[54] Meredith, M., Op Cit, pp. 30.

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[58] Hill, G., Op Cit, pp. 56.

[59] Ibid, pp. 56.

[60] Ibid, pp. 56.

[61] Ibid, pp. 57.

[62] Meredith, M., Op Cit, pp. 32.

[63] Moorcraft, P. L. and McLaughlin, P., Op Cit, pp. 15.

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[65] Hill, G., Op Cit, pp. 57.

[66] Ibid, pp. 58.

[67] Meredith, M., Op Cit, pp. 33.

[68] Hill, G., Op Cit, pp. 58.

[69] Ibid, pp. 58.

[70] Young, K., Op Cit, pp. 133.

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[72] Hill, G., Op Cit, pp. 58 and 59.

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[129] Hill, G., Op Cit, pp. 102.

[130] It is important to note here that less than 5 percent of Zimbabwe's white population can trace its ancestry back to 1980.

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