

Colonial experience and administration in southern rhodesia.



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Zanzibar, formerly Southern Rhodesia has a unique colonial history. Phase one of its colonialism was conducted by a British charter company, and then British rule was consolidated by a settler economy regime, with an extremely racially marshalling rule. Southern Rhodesia experienced both regimes of mineral exploitation, and of direct rule under settler economies, without the direct involvement of the British government.

This essay will outline its colonial progression till the sass, and analyses the administrative and institutional mechanisms used by the European settlers to nominate the indigenous population. Privatized imperialism dominated Zimbabwe's early days of colonialism, via rule of companies interested in exploiting the natural resources of the territories. The British South Africa Company [BASS] is a unique example which maintained sovereign authority and establish 'privatized hegemony over Rhodesia In state formation period .

British adventurer and capitalist Cecil Rhodes obtained mining and speculative rights from the local Ndebele leader in 1888 to search for diamonds and gold in what became Rhodesia. In the early steps of the phase of conquest- from sass to eve of World War - Rhodes was able to defeat the Ndebele in 1893 to move carefully chosen, influential white people into the area. In 1895 the land was renamed Rhodesia. Despite strong Ndebele and Shona uprisings against the occupation in 1896-97, the BASS successfully occupied Rhodesia .

Although an agent for colonization, the BASS was not really a government, as Herbs points out: occupation does not equal administration . The formation of this colony was seen as a continuation of the British Empire's

plan to bring the whole of the "uncivilized worlds under British rule", based on the notion of white supremacy and a paternalist attitude towards responsibility towards the inferior Africans. As the administration continued, European settlement in Rhodesia increased, and tensions between the BASS and the settlers surfaced.

The settlers demanded political and civil rights, which included prosperity, security and protection from the locals during uprisings. The BASS was unable to provide an acceptable solution for the settlers, and they therefore began a movement to attain control over Rhodesia. By 1917, the BASS was tired of administering Rhodesia- their efforts to mine gold had failed -not yielded expected returns-and they planned to end their rule in Rhodesia.

The measures taken by the BASS to develop alternatives to mining laid the basis for the political economy of white settler colonialism in Zanzibar. Between 1917-1922 negotiations between the British Government, the European settlers and the BASS continued to determine the future of Rhodesia: options included to either integrate with the South African Union, or become a crown colony under the British. In 1922, governing colony and in the colony of Rhodesia was formed. Thus began the second phase of colonialism in Rhodesia, consolidation, which covered the BASS.

The BASS administration had been based on an economic regime centered on mineral exploitation, for Southern Rhodesia was considered mineral rich after the discovery of water in the region. After 1923, the Southern Rhodesia climate had attracted many European settlers, and Rhodesia primary colonial economic activity and revenue generation became large scale farms owned

by Europeans, e. G. Tobacco and beef. A settler based rule was established and as Young predicted of such societies, the state became an intermediary between the settlers and the colonized .

Settler rule refers to the type of colonialism in Southern Africa in which European settlers imposed direct rule on their colonies. In order to thrive in the colonies, settlers demanded special political and economic rights and protection. Security and prosperity for the settlers depended on economic exploitation and political oppression of the African population that vastly outnumbered the settlers . Consequently, settler rule was characterized by its harsh policies toward the indigenous African population In this settler system, European settler farmers needed land and labor.

To meet these needs, the colonial governments instituted unpopular policies that removed good farm land from the local population and forced men to work as laborers on European controlled farms. The nature of the Southern Rhodesia colonial state is unique in that the British government did not contribute to it much. Despite disagreeing with the reclaimed aspect of settler rule, the British Government did not inhibit the growth of a segregated society - a fact that gave the settlers' local internal autonomy in all aspects of administering the colonial state .

The four main spheres in which the settlers set up institutions and administrative mechanisms to control the colonized population were land expropriation, urban control with pass laws, limited educational and consequently Job opportunities in wage economies, and finally the exclusion of blacks from political life. Other means used to dominate the local

population include the squatter system and the migratory labor system, but this analysis will focus on the above four only. Beginning with Land Expropriation: According to I.

R. Euphemist, prior to the establishment of an elite Capitalist agricultural sector, African peasant production was the main supplier of food to the colony, especially the mining industry . Within a few years of occupation, the settlers had taken over the fertile land owned by locals, constructing road and train networks to facilitate development of their mining and agricultural industries . The locals were moved to small, distant reserves with deplorable conditions on which cultivation and even mere survival were difficult .

The division of land in Rhodesia was formalized in 1930 with the Land Appropriation Act. This act divided the land into European and African areas. Even in African areas, the allowed to hold or occupy land in European area except " under condition that he would supply labor to such [European] owner or occupier" . Not only was this segregation of land, but also a racial segregation of the people. Another form of political domination of the locals was through urban controls.

In 1897, Southern Rhodesia Native Regulations Act was promulgated, establishing the structure for administering the African population . Under these regulations the logic of direct rule was implemented throughout the African areas by the Native Affairs Department. The Native Affairs Department also administered the pass laws which required certain members of local population to get passes to enter and move about within urban centers. A 1902 act required all adult males to register with native

commissioner upon reaching the age of 14 and to carry a registration certificate at all times.

The Native Registration Act of 1936 augmented methods of urban control and required that in addition to the registration certificate, also called he setups, Africans in towns needed to carry at least one pass . The settlers dominated the locals by monitoring and restricting their movements in the urban centers. Since mining and crop farming had become important to the Rhodesia settler economy, in addition to land, plentiful supply of cheap labor was needed - characteristic of any settler economy.

The settlers heavily taxed the locals to have them contribute to the settler's revenue base. This practice of taxing locals began a few years after the Abacas conquest of Southern Rhodesia, but the amount of tax due ad substantially increased during settler rule. This provided locals with incentives to discontinue their peasant production and Join the wage economy . Because wages offered were very low and conditions deplorable, African reluctantly Joined the wage economy.

However, the whites could not allow blacks to compete with them in the wage sector, and so legislation was introduced to protect white worker rights by severely limiting the Job opportunities open to blacks, and their scope for progress. The Industrial Conciliation Act of 1934 prohibited Africans from entering skilled trades and reversions, thereby controlling access to employment opportunities . The term 'employee' was defined to include only white workers and thus, Africans were completely excluded from the terms of the act.

Additionally, the IAC also guaranteed white control over scarce skills by preventing Africans from learning new skills. It also instituted the practice of 'equal pay for equal work', which resulted in the Africans getting only unskilled, poorly paid work. To compensate, in the sass, the government also formulated the 'two-pyramid' or parallel development policy . This claimed that Africans could reach any professional heights within their own parameters. Simultaneously, however, regulations on training and education barred the African from learning skills to be a doctor, lawyer, priest etc.

This kept the monopoly of skills in white hands and thus ensured white political control. A further development secured this control. The Public Services Act of 1931 completely restricted all jobs outside the government sector . Thus, blacks were completely excluded from political life and political representation. All these show the attempt to completely exclude the blacks from political life in Southern Rhodesia. But it also demonstrates an economic basis for the colonialism of Southern Rhodesia, for the sustenance of the European settler economy.

This supports Manhood Maiden's view that there was an overwhelming economic motivation behind Africans colonization . However, evidence from this essay shows Young argument about the extent of the use of force involved in the colonizing of Southern Rhodesia to be accurate. It is true that the colonial state managed to assert 'a powerful hold on subject society', whether through the physical force of the BASS r the force through legislation intended to politically dominate the population.

In conclusion, the former British colony of Southern Rhodesia provides a unique look into the formation of its colonial state and also colonial administration.