Case Studies: Southern Africa

“From (Southern) Rhodesia to Zimbabwe”
Why Study Rhodesia-Zimbabwe?

- British settler society

- only ‘settler society’ who sought its own Independence from Colonial Rule

- re-shaped parameters of African ‘Liberation War’

- critical role in larger region
Why Study Rhodesia-Zimbabwe?

- independent Zimbabwe:
  reflects difficulties of land reform (‘Key’ issue in former Settler colonies)
  reflects legacies of intense racism common in former Settler colonies
  reflects corruption of ‘power’ common in many newly independent countries
Rhodesian Self-Government

Colony attained Self-Government (from Britain) in 1922:

First ‘local’ Settler Government, 1923
Rhodesian Self-Government

A Landmark in History: painting commissioned to mark opening first session Rhodesian Parliament 30 May, 1924
Rhodesian Self-Government

Land Reserve System c.1930

Map 4—Land Apportionment, 1930 (from Christopher 1971)
Rhodesian Self-Government

Education: Africans given clear sense of where they belonged
Post WWII:

- emerged strong economically (import substitution; cash-crops -- tobacco)

- dominated Central African Federation from 1953 (milked Northern Rhodesia through taxes)

[see “Economic Potentialities of CAF”, 1954, in ‘Resources’]
- links with South Africa strong: increased after Nationalist victory 1948

[Case Study: South Africa, Apr. 3-10]

-legacy Cecil Rhodes ‘Pioneer Column’ (settled Southern Rhodesia –named after himself), mining interests

cultural similarities among British ‘whites’
From (Southern) Rhodesia to...

Political movements continued to build throughout Central African Federation era (1953-63):

- African political activities in North, Nyasaland supported by Britain
- independence 1963-64 (Zambia, Malawi)
- Southern Rhodesia on own to negotiate with Colonial government
- Britain refused to grant independence until it agreed to Black majority rule
1961 “compromise constitution”:

- awarded Africans small role in government
- pleased neither Africans nor Settlers
- emergence strong, right wing group led by Ian Smith (supported, encouraged by South Africa)
Video Excerpt:

Basil Davidson

‘Rise of Nationalism: Rhodesia: Ian Smith’
[43:40 – 44:43]
Continued to demand full independence, Britain continued to refuse: 11 Nov. 1965

"In the course of human affairs, history has shown that it may become necessary for a people to resolve the political affiliations which have connected them with another people, and to assume amongst other nations a separate and equal status to which they are entitled."

- Ian Smith explaining his Unilateral Declaration of Independence on Rhodesian radio

[from BBC Story of Africa “Hanging On”, second audio clip]
Britain responded as Colonial Master for whom this was treason:

“... the British Government condemn [sic] the purported declaration of Independence by the former Government of Rhodesia as an illegal act and one which is ineffective in law. It is an act of rebellion against the Crown and against the Constitution as by law established, and actions taken to give effect to it will be treasonable. ...
... The Governor, in pursuance of the authority vested in him by Her Majesty The Queen, has today informed the Prime Minister and other Ministers of the Rhodesian Government that they cease to hold office...

The British Government wish [sic] to make it clear that it is the duty of all British subjects in Rhodesia, including all citizens of Rhodesia, to remain loyal to The Queen and to the law of the land, and to recognise the continuing authority and responsibility for Rhodesia of the Government of the United Kingdom.”

[see UDI , ‘Additional Readings’ ]
Soviet Union responded as Cold War Rival: using discourse of anti-colonialism and anti-capitalism

“The colonialists have committed a new crime against the African peoples. On November 11 the racialist régime of Ian Smith proclaimed the "independence" of Southern Rhodesia. …
These actions are aimed at perpetuating in Southern Rhodesia a colonial system based on inhuman oppression of the Zimbabwe people, four million strong, by a handful of racialists and on ruthless suppression of the lust struggle of this people for real independence, freedom and social justice. . . .”

[see UDI, ‘Additional Readings’]
From (Southern) Rhodesia to...

Britain immediately imposed economic sanctions:
- little impact
- Rhodesia imported through South Africa and Portuguese Mozambique

Rhodesia moved to become police state:
- full media censorship; most papers closed down (including liberal ‘white’ papers)
- no political opposition permitted
From (Southern) Rhodesia to…

African attempts at nationalist parties:

- 1961: Zimbabwe African People’s Union (ZAPU)

- leadership: Joshua Nkomo

Joshua Nkomo, left; ZAPU flag, above
From (Southern) Rhodesia to…

African attempts at nationalist parties

- 1963: Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU)

- split from ZAPU, leadership Herbert Chitepo

Herbert Chitepo, left; ZANU flag, above
From (Southern) Rhodesia to...

... Were immediately quashed.

- leaders arrested

- others fled into exile in now independent, sympathetic, Zambia (formerly Northern Rhodesia)
“Zhii”: war cry in Shona/Ndebele meaning ‘devastating action or destroying completely’:

- term applied to civil actions 1960
- became widespread riots
- everything associated with state targeted
- sabotage campaign: property not people
From (Southern) Rhodesia to...

For Africans:
- seen as early stage of political war

For Settlers:
- portrayed as isolated riots, actions of violent individuals
  - refused to acknowledge politicization – and therefore, political acts -- of Africans

No Choice but to make it into armed struggle... [Robert Mugabe, ‘Rise of Nationalism’ video]
Political activity difficult to support within country:

- most leaders in exile
- most Africans intimidated by state
- ZANU-ZAPU guerrillas in training by fighting with FREELIMO in Mozambique

[see Case Study Mozambique]
- 1964: beginning of attacks launched from Zambia (later Mozambique)

- intensified after 1965 (UDI)

Video Excerpt:

Basil Davidson

‘Rise of Nationalism: Rhodesia – the armed struggle’

[YouTube, 44:43 – 47:40 min., Additional Readings]
3 March 1970:

- Ian Smith declared Rhodesia a ‘Republic’

- finalized severing relations with Britain begun with UDI five years earlier

  ['Rhodesia becomes a Republic’, YouTube video, Additional Rdgs]

- generated new phase of war: Africans leaving for training China, Soviet Union

1971:

- British initiated constitutional talks: legal recognition Rhodesia, lifting economic sanctions in exchange for progress to majority rule (no set timeline)

- agreement by ALL Rhodesians (234,000 whites, 5,000,000 blacks) necessary to put in place
From Rhodesia to ‘Republic’

1972:
- Pearce Commission found proposed settlement not acceptable internally
- Sanctions, international refusal to recognize Rhodesia continued

War continued to escalate!
(United) African National Council:
- formed under Bishop Able Muzorewa to opposed 1971 settlement
- seen as spokesman for Black Rhodesians

(ANC congress, 1974)
From Republic of Rhodesia to...

(United) African National Council:

- But: rejected policy of violence, armed struggle

- throughout 1970s: moved towards ‘transitioning’ to majority rule government by negotiation
From Republic of Rhodesia to...

April 25, 1974: beginning military coup d’état which overthrew Portuguese Dictatorship

- new regime handed power to African colonies, including Mozambique

- victory of FREELIMO gave new base of support guerillas

- more Africans left Rhodesia to join with armies Zambia and Mozambique
Armed attacks into Rhodesia from Mozambique expanded along eastern border:
From Republic of Rhodesia to…

1975-76: American brokered agreement (Geneva):
- offered ‘power sharing’ (Smith, Bishop Abel Muzorewa)
- transitional government for “Rhodesia-Zimbabwe”
- rejected by Patriotic Front (ZAPU-ZANU)

War Continued!

Ian Smith in Geneva, 1976
African War of Liberation (1966-1979) known by Shona word ‘Chimurenga’ – meaning ‘struggle’ (or ‘revolutionary struggle’)

- originally used to refer to 1896-7 resistance against British colonialism

- ‘First Chimurenga’ led by religious spirits

- ‘Second Chimurenga’ led by ZANU-ZAPU forces

- drew on ‘history’ and tradition
Songs also played important role (today there is a whole genre of music called *chimurenga*)

'Take up arms and liberate yourselves.'

We are hurrying to the war, indeed,
We are deploying submachine guns,
We are using anti-air missiles,

'Take up arms and liberate yourselves''

[see ‘Songs of War’ in ‘Additional Readings’]
Rhodesian View of World 1978-9

Rhodesians equally ‘fierce’ in defense of country:
Rhodesian View of World 1978-9

Rhodesian Soldiers, 1970s

Executed raids into Zambia and Mozambique
They too responded with songs, poetry:

_We're all Rhodesians_
_And we'll fight through thick and thin,
_We'll keep our land a free land,
_Stop the enemy coming in,
_We'll keep them north of the Zambesi_
_Till that river's running dry,
_And this might land will prosper_
_For Rhodesians never die!_

[folk-singer Clem Tholet, 1979 – son-in-law to Ian Smith; see ‘Songs of War’, Additional Readings]
By 1978 guerillas army (mostly ZANU fighters) won control large part of territory

- much of the country under Marshal Law
By 1980 – most of the country under Marshal Law

Settlers (Rhodesian Front) turned to Britain for help
Lancaster House Accord London:
- mediator: Lord Carrington
- parties: Patriotic Front and ‘Rhodesia-Zimbabwe’
- sought agreement on: Independence Constitution, cease fire conditions, right Britain to oversee elections
- ZANU (Mugabe) not in favour but finally forced to agree
1980: Britain accepted to hold elections
- ZANU (largely Shona) won by landslide under Robert Mugabe
- ZAPU (largely Ndebele) took few remaining seats under Joshua Nkoma
- left large segment Ndebele population feeling marginalized, voiceless
- whites retained 20% seats (under provisions of Constitution)
Zimbabwe

Robert Mugabe
Land: “Black against White”

‘Third Chimurenga’: the Land Question

Map 5—Land Apportionment, 1970 (from Christopher 1971).

Land Reserve System 1970
Lancaster House almost failed over Land:

- issue: how to ‘regain’ (at least some of) 40% best land held by White Farmers?

- British, American governments ‘willing to buy’ land from white settlers who wished to leave, were ‘willing to sell’
Lancaster House almost failed over Land:

- fund established to operate from 1980-90

- first phase (partly funded by Britain):
  resettled 70,000 on some 20,000 km² land

- 1981 British pledged additional £630 million development aid
Land: “Black against White”

Video:
Basil Davidson

“Africa: Legacy -- land reform in Zimbabwe”

[YouTube, 41:59 – 47:57min, Add’l Rdg.]

(Mozambique’s Samora Machel introducing ‘People’s Revolution; continues into Zimbabwe, ends with words of Robert Mugabe)
Land: “Black against White”

Optimism 1980-81 disappointed:

- much of pledged ‘aid’ not forthcoming

- promised ‘willing to buy’ money not sufficient to significantly affect White land ownership by 1990

- accusations the Government supporters receiving land while ZAPU (Ndebele) being left out
Land: “Black against White”

Davidson’s comment that:

‘this self-help was the hope for the future’

sadly short-lived.
Land: “Black against White”

[The following *slide quotations* are taken from]

“Zimbabwe: special reports”
(BBC News 1997, 1998),
in “Resources”
December, 1997:

“... President Robert Mugabe has said it is pressing ahead with its plans to nationalize more than five million hectares of farmland, most of it white-owned, in order to resettle black farmers currently living on a subsistence level. ... the land was stolen during the British colonial era and is now being taken back.

So 1,503 large-scale commercial farms and ranches - nearly half the total in the country - have now been listed for seizure...

[all but about 60 of them are owned by White commercial farmers]
Nov. - Dec 1998:

“[since 1980] ... much awaited land reform has yet to be carried out. Redistributing land has been on the political agenda since independence, but Zimbabwe's current economic crisis, the worst ever, has fuelled even more hunger for land.

Most black farmers are struggling to grow enough to eat on tiny plots, while the huge commercial farms growing tobacco, Zimbabwe's largest export, are in the hands of white Zimbabweans.”
“...The next people on Mr Parham's land [white tobacco farmer] could be the Dambaza family, whose head, Constantine, has recently led his neighbors onto a nearby white farm, to squat and plant crops.

A lifelong member of the ruling party, he wants action, not more promises.

‘The war has been won, the freedom is ours,’ he says.”

And the land as well!!
Land: ‘Black against White’

Wayne Parham (right)

Constantine Dambaza (below)

The battle between whites and blacks for Land in Zimbabwe
Nov. – Dec. 1998:

“…White farmers near Harare say their farms have been besieged by people waving machetes and demanding the redistribution of land to black Zimbabweans.

Earlier this week the government issued letters to nearly 850 white-owned farms informing them that the government had acquired their land as part of a policy of redistribution to black peasant families. …”
Land: 'Black against White'

Here a Zimbabwean woman tills a tiny piece of land in the shadow of a sign that says ‘Cultivation prohibited’.
Impact: production dropped drastically and quickly
Aftermath of Land Seizures

2001: No Longer About Race!

“... farm workers at Bita Farm... allegedly attacked resettled farmers and ZANU (PF) supporters, ...Both men were assaulted and subsequently killed with axes, steel chains, spears, knobkerries and stones. Resettled farmers and war veteran militants burnt the 60 huts of unnamed farm workers. The arson attack was in retaliation to the killing of the two resettled farmers by farm workers.”
2003: No Longer About Race!

“About 900 000 people, consisting mainly of farm workers and their families, have been displaced by the recent takeover of white-owned commercial farms in Zimbabwe. The occupation of the farms by veteran independence fighters and "land-hungry" villagers is supported politically by the government as part of a land redistribution plan. ...
...”
Aftermath of Land Seizures

Within five years of initial seizures:

- farms have no fresh water: unable to keep pipes/pumps in repair, cannot afford water purifying chemicals

- drinking from dirty streams, dammed pools

- cholera and other water-borne diseases widespread
Aftermath of Land Seizures

Within five years of initial seizures:

- no toilets, most people cannot afford to dig latrines (‘Blair toilet’, reference to Tony Blair, British PM at the time)

- raw sewage seeping back into water used for domestic purposes
"The situation is deplorable; we know the risks of waterborne diseases such as bilharzia, cholera and dysentry that we could catch, but there is really no choice," said Savious Sibamba, a liberation war veteran resettled at a farm in Odzi, about 30 km outside Mutare, Zimbabwe's fourth largest city. He said that most settlers hoped the government would quickly move to provide basic sanitary facilities on the farms, now that the land acquisition process was said to be complete. ..."
Zimbabwe: legacies of struggle

Conclusion:

- situation exacerbated by lack government sponsored health centers

- inability international organizations to reach farm-workers

- now among worst hit with HIV/AIDS (and most difficult to treat)
Zimbabwe: legacies of struggle

Conclusion:

- economy in shambles as export sector (tobacco) undercut and food production grossly insufficient

- ‘black-on-black’ violence the norm
Additional Problem: lagging behind of Women

“… During the first phase (1980s) there was a bias towards men in the resettlement model. This is because “land was given to individual households, which tended to include male households.” The second phase of LRRP saw an intensification of land redistribution. “War veterans, squatters, ruling party militants and state officials,” were the main beneficiaries of the second phase of the LRRP programme. At this time, women were again missing from the programme....
... President Mugabe announced in October 2000 that female-headed households would receive 20 per cent of redistributed land”. However, this did not include married women…”

[Why not, former vice-president was asked?]

“I would have my head cut off if I gave women land… men would turn against this government,” …[giving wives land or even granting joint titles would] …destroy the family.”
Zimbabwe: legacies of struggle

Woman Farmer, nr. Harare 2010: maize crop lacking water
[the]...male bias in Zimbabwean society, reflected in the Vice President’s statement stems from colonial times where ‘changes in social structure … eroded women’s rights to land along with the erosion of women’s status in general’. In pre-colonial times women did have access to land. “

The ongoing ‘Land Issue’ is not only a problem for women attempting to raise families in poverty, with husbands seeking work far away -- it is a problem for the larger economy and the future of Zimbabwe.
Zimbabwe: legacies of struggle

April 2010 - Update: (from Zimbabwe Human Rights Forum NGO report)

“[It is] glaringly evident that the so-called land reform programme is more an exercise in the political subjugation of the people on the commercial farms than in land reform. Alongside the controlling nature of the programme, the handing out of the farms has been done on a patronage system that simply rewards loyal supporters of the President....
“...The programme has failed to create jobs and productivity so abysmally [because] ... it has not been carried out according to the rule of law....

None but a handful of the hundreds of thousands of people that have lost homes and livelihoods through violent evictions, were given eviction orders from a court or received any sort of compensation. As a result, the “new farmers” cannot be given good title or any real property rights. No lending institution will help farmers who cannot produce collateral. ..."
“The cornerstone of agricultural productivity in Zimbabwe has therefore been kicked out from the foundations and the billions of dollars of capital in titled land in Zimbabwe has essentially died...

It is the human tragedy of the so-called land reform programme that is the most distressing ... there has been precious little [focus] regarding the farm workers who have suffered such immense abuse.”
The break down of the rule of law in rural Zimbabwe seems to be something that nobody in power is prepared to grapple with or even admit, let alone try to restore. The stage is being set for much more severe violence in the future.”

Here, the land-reform question is clearly highlighted as the catalyst not only to economic and health disaster but to the political violence and Human Rights issues that today characterize contemporary Zimbabwe.
Post-Script: March 16 2013

-Zimbabwe voted to accept New Constitution
[see “Zimbabwe votes…”, Additional Readings]

Mr Mugabe's Zanu-PF is in a shaky power-sharing deal with Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai's Movement for Democratic Change (MDC).

The two parties agreed to share power in 2008 to resolve a violent dispute over the result of Zimbabwe's last presidential election.
The draft constitution limits the president to two five-year terms, but will not apply retrospectively. So 89-year-old Mr Mugabe will be able to stand for re-election in a poll expected in July (2013).

“We Want Peaceful Elections (in 2013)”. Mugabe is expected to run for a fifth term.