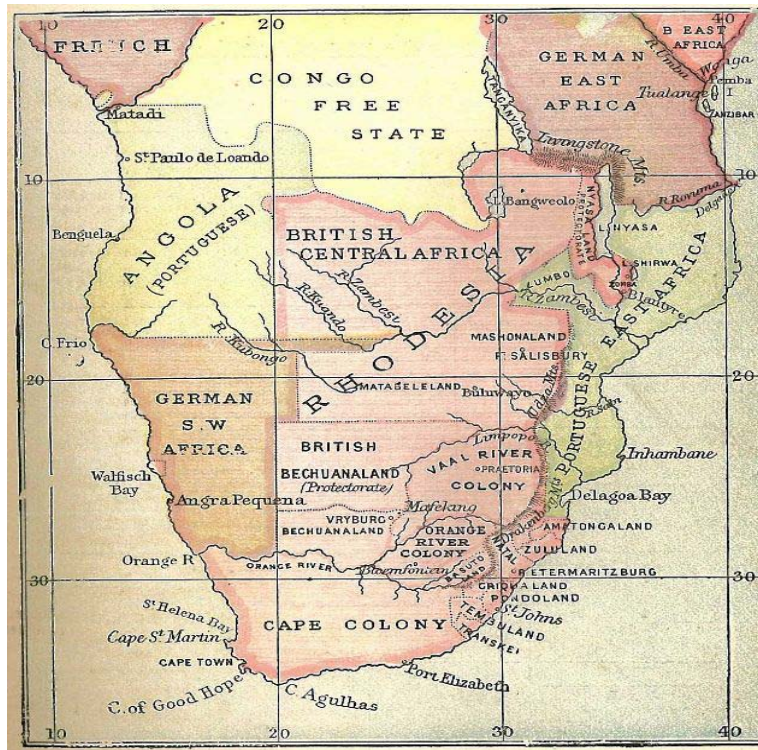


The Story of Rhodesia

Rhodesia was a country formed from a Chartered Company – a trading company with governmentally guaranteed rights to trade and administer the area. In this case, the company was the **British South Africa Company**; its owner was the renowned imperialist **Cecil Rhodes**. Rhodesia was developed at the same time as South Africa but the history of Rhodesia is different.



Rhodesia began as a typical British colony, the white man ruled; the locals were a “burden.” However, Rhodesia was going to be a country that wanted to continue the white rule as long as possible. During World War I, the Rhodesian Regiment fought alongside other British troops. After the war, in 1920, it was made public notice that The British South Africa Company had never paid a dividend to its stockholders. Seen as a failure, the British government took over the company in 1923 and subsequently the administrative responsibilities of Rhodesia.

By 1924, the British Colonial Office had designated nearly **12 million acres** of the best farmland in Northern Rhodesia to white farmers. In addition to this excellent agricultural land, in the late 1920s, copper was found in the area and these large reserves were enough to develop the area into the **Copper Belt**. Southern Rhodesia had poor farm lands but during the 1890s and 1900s there was extensive gold and coal mining in the area. There were some small, independent black mining industries allowed to form but they could never be allowed by the white minority to unionize.

As in their other colonies, the British supported a policy that gradually would allow the African population to gain the right to vote and that eventually would lead to African majority rule.

In **Northern Rhodesia** and **Nyasaland** radical nationalist movements had emerged, mobilizing black urban workers and local peasants. This rise of mass movements alarmed the Federal authorities and the British government. Sporadic disturbances and riots in Nyasaland in 1959 led to a state of emergency. Any nationalist leaders in Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland were arrested and their organizations banned. However, they were only to be replaced by new parties under new names. These disturbances were seen by the British government as future rebellions, acts which changed British international and regional African priorities, it was time for the British to bring decolonization to the areas.

In 1961 and 1962, nationalists in Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia were released from prison and new, non-racial constitutions were drawn up, based on majority rule. In 1963 the Federation of Nyasaland was formally dissolved. The new country was now called **Malawi**. In Northern Rhodesia, the United National Independence Party was formed and their leader, Kenneth Kaunda won the first election based on his campaign for universal suffrage and national independence. The new country was called **Zambia**.

Within Southern Rhodesia however, the white government would not submit to these British policies. Southern Rhodesia was affected by the situation that was continuing between Britain and Ireland. The formation of **Northern Ireland**, also called **Ulster**, created links with Rhodesia. The White Rhodesians, like the Ulster Unionists, drew a clear distinction between the Crown and the British government. In the early 1960s, Sir Edgar Whitehead, Prime Minister of Southern Rhodesia, advocated for his country's incorporation into the United Kingdom on the same terms as Northern Ireland. Southern Rhodesia wanted to retain a local government in the capital **Salisbury** but have a representation in Westminster, the home of British Parliament. This would have made black Rhodesians, like Northern Ireland Catholics, a permanent minority in the United Kingdom.

In 1961 the right-wing **Rhodesian Front Party** was created and won its first election based on a campaign platform of immediate independence from Britain under white control. Britain was unwilling to concede to these demands. The white Rhodesians, who for so long had identified with being part of the British Empire, now became convinced that continued ties with Britain threatened white survival.

In 1965, under the leadership of **Ian Smith**, the **Rhodesian Front** unilaterally and illegally declared Rhodesia independent. In 1969 it became its own republic. Rhodesia then had many economic sanctions placed against them.



Ian Smith

The only country that allied with Rhodesia was South Africa. Although the Smith government was isolated internationally, it refused to meet with African leaders or initiate any reforms. Consequently, a war of national liberation began.

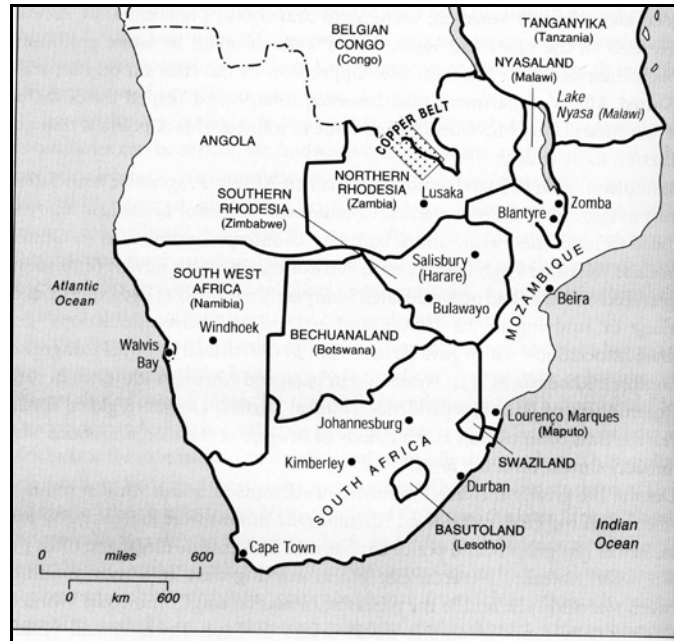
In 1975, Angola and Mozambique had fought similar wars and became independent from Portugal. Under the leadership of **Robert Mugabe and Joshua Nkomo**, the African forces now intensified their attacks on Rhodesia and succeeded in disrupting the economy of Rhodesia. As the war became increasingly unpopular among the white population, Smith was forced to seek a solution. An arrangement was worked out with moderate African leaders to form a new government under African leadership that would continue to guarantee the privileged status of whites.



In 1978 Bishop Abel Muzorewa became the new prime minister. His new government, which included Ian Smith, did not receive international recognition, and the guerilla war continued. In 1979, the **Muzorewa-Smith** government was finally forced to accept a cease-fire and to agree to hold free elections. The elections were to be open to all parties, including the liberation leaders. According to the agreement, the British government would supervise both the cease-fire and the elections.



In 1979, Robert Mugabe, considered to be the most radical of the candidates, won the election with a landslide electoral victory. In 1980, Southern Rhodesia became the new nation of **Zimbabwe**, a name taken from the ancient southern African kingdom of Great Zimbabwe. By 1980 only the Republic of South Africa and South-West Africa remained under White rule.



South Africa in the Mid 20th Century

Despite their political independence, Zambia and more importantly Zimbabwe have more recently faced a great deal of impoverishment (poverty and hardship). The anti-colonial movements were led by a small, middle-class elite, who were supported by a peasant population. With the transfer of power from white to black, the anti-colonial struggles proved short-lived. Ethnic and regional splits emerged, frequently arising from competition over resources than from ethnic tensions.

In 2010, Mugabe still rules Zimbabwe but the country is in desperate need of reform. Recently he has tried to remove all whites from his country, but they are the only ones who know how to keep what little industry and farming remains in the country running. It has one of the highest rates of inflation in the world and is on the verge of political unrest. Opponents of Mugabe have been arrested and jailed. He has become more of a dictator than a liberator from colonial oppression.

Zambia is more stable but still suffers from a poor and often corrupt government, also in need of major reform. The copper industry is still the main source of income and foreign investment for the nation.