A crucial watershed in Southern Rhodesian politics

The 1961 Constitutional Process and the 1962 General Election
Abstract

The thesis examines the political development in Southern Rhodesia 1960-1962 when two processes, the 1961 Constitutional process and the 1962 General Election, had far-reaching consequences for the coming twenty years. It builds on a hypothesis that the Constitutional process led to a radicalisation of all groups, the white minority, the African majority and the colonial power. The main research question is why the ruling party, United Federal Party (UFP) after winning the referendum on a new Constitution with a wide margin could lose the ensuing election one year later to the party, Rhodesian Front (RF) opposing the constitution. The examination is based on material from debates in the Legal Assembly and House of Commons (UK), minutes of meetings, newspaper articles, election material etc.

The hypothesis that the Constitutional process led to a radicalization of the main actors was partly confirmed. The process led to a focus on racial issues in the ensuing election. Among the white minority UFP attempted to develop a policy of continued white domination while making constitutional concessions to Africans in order to attract the African middle class. When UFP pressed on with multiracial structural reforms the electorate switched to the racist RF which was considered bearer of the dominant settler ideology.

Among the African majority the well educated African middleclass who led the Nationalist movement, changed from multiracial reformists in late 1950’s to majority rule advocates. After rejecting the 1961 Constitution they anew changed from constitutional reformists to supporter of an armed struggle.

Britain’s role was ambivalent trying to please all actors, the Southern Rhodesian whites and Africans but also the international opinion. However, it seems to have been its own neo colonial interests that finally determined their position and its fault in the move towards Unilateral Declaration of Independence and the civil war was huge.

On the main research question the analysis points to two reasons. Firstly, the decision by the Nationalists to boycott the election and the heavy-handed actions they took to achieve this goal created a white back-lash against the ruling party and the loss of the second vote advantage. Secondly, when the ruling party decided to make the repeal of the Land Apportionment Act a key election issue they lost not only indifferent voters but also a major part of its normal electorate. They threatened the Settler State’s way of life for the white minority.
Table of Contents

Abbreviations.................................................................................................................4

1. Introduction ..................................................................................................................4
   1.1 Background .............................................................................................................4
   1.2 Statement of purpose and questions of inquiry ......................................................5
   1.3 Limitations .............................................................................................................5
   1.4 Theoretical considerations .....................................................................................6
       1.4.1 The Settler State concept .................................................................................6
       1.4.2 Democracy, Constitution-making and Constitutionalism .........................7
   1.5 Hypothesis, method and sources ..........................................................................9
       1.5.1 Hypothesis ....................................................................................................9
       1.5.2 Method ..........................................................................................................9
       1.5.3 Sources .........................................................................................................12

2. Historical background to the period under investigation .........................................13
   2.1 Colonial penetration - Company rule ......................................................................13
   2.2 The formation of a settler state ..............................................................................14
   2.3 Multiracialism ........................................................................................................16

3. Investigation ................................................................................................................17
   3.1 Constitutional changes – process and result 1960 - 1961 ......................................17
       3.1.1 The historical environment 1960 .................................................................18
       3.1.2 The position of the main actors before the Constitutional Conference .........19
       3.1.3 The Constitutional Conference ..................................................................24
       3.1.4 The position of the main actors after the Constitutional Conference ..........27
   3.2 The General Election 1962 ....................................................................................33
       3.2.1 The strategy of the African majority ..............................................................33
       3.2.2 The British strategy ......................................................................................34
       3.2.3 The positioning of the main contenders in the 1962 General Election ..........35
       3.2.4 The Election Campaign ..............................................................................37
       3.2.5 Election Results ..........................................................................................41

4. Analysis .........................................................................................................................43
   4.1 The Constitution ....................................................................................................43
   4.2 The Significance of the Settler State .......................................................................46
   4.3 The impact of the African majority’s stand .............................................................48
   4.4 The impact of the British position ..........................................................................49

5. Conclusions ...................................................................................................................49

6. References .....................................................................................................................51

Annex ...............................................................................................................................54
Abbreviations

ANC  African National Congress  
BSAC  British South African Company  
BSAP  British South African Police  
CAP  Central African Party  
DP  Dominion Party  
HoC  House of Commons (UK)  
ICA  Industrial Conciliation Act  
LAA  Land Apportionment Act  
LAD  Legislative Assembly Debate  
NDP  National Democratic Party  
NLHA  Native Land Husbandry Act  
RF  Rhodesian Front  
RH  The Rhodesian Herald  
RRP  Rhodesian Reform Party  
UDI  Unilateral Declaration of Independence  
UFP  United Federal Party  
ZAPU  Zimbabwean African People’s Party

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

The 1960’s was the decade when 'the wind of change' swept over Africa. The English and French empires crumbled and one state after another became independent. However, in southern Africa the Portuguese colonies remained, the dominion status of South Africa prevented Britain to exercise influence on transformation to majority rule and Southern Rhodesia (S.Rhodesia) confronted the colonial power with a unilateral declaration of independence. It required protracted wars of independence in Angola, Mozambique and S.Rhodesia and another decade before all three obtained independence. For South Africa apartheid and minority rule lasted into the mid 1990’s. S.Rhodesia became the only English colony (South Africa was not a colony but a dominion) which moved against the de-colonization current in Africa during the 1960’s. One reason was that S. Rhodesia was not a traditional colony with colonial administration and imperial troops safeguarding imperial rule. It was a Settler State more like the British Dominions e.g. Canada and Australia, with far-reaching independence in all territorial matters and with a military force set up, paid and controlled by the Settler State. S. Rhodesia was never governed from London - it was a continuation of Cecil Rhodes British South Africa Company’s rule from 1895 till 1923.
The Constitution of 1923 laid down very clearly this independence. The only colonial civil servant in S. Rhodesia was the British Governor.

In the wake of growing African nationalism and among multiracial tendencies a process towards a new constitution started in late 1950’s. The ultimate result, the 1961 Constitution, was accepted by the white minority in a referendum. However, the election in 1962 based on the new Constitution indicated a more radical position both within the black majority group, the white minority group and from the colonial power. The end result was the Unilateral Declaration of Independence by S.Rhodesia in 1965.

1.2 Statement of purpose and questions of inquiry

The purpose of my investigation is to find out how the Party opposing the new Constitution could win the first election based on it only one year after the voters in a referendum had accepted this Constitution with a wide margin. The purpose could thus be formulated as

*Why did the ruling party UFP, winning the referendum on a new Constitution in 1961 with a wide majority, lose the first election based on this Constitution in 1962?*

There are a number of other questions to be answered in relation to the main question.

- What role did the history of a Settler State play?
- What position did Britain take on the Constitution and its effect on a future democratic State?
- What was the white opposition’s view on the 1961 constitution?
- What messages were communicated during the election in 1962 by the government? By the white opposition?
- What role did the majority position play in the constitutional process and in the election?

1.3 Limitations

The investigation will take a starting point in the Constitution of 1923 but will be limited to the period 1959 – 1962. During this period multiracial ideas developed and gave an impetus to the start of reconsidering the 1923 year’s Constitution. Also African nationalism influenced the development in S. Rhodesia as did the decolonization process in neighbouring countries. These influences will be noted but the focus will be on how they impinged on the development within the minority white group in the country and on the result of the election in 1962. The problems related to S. Rhodesia being part of the Central Africa Federation will not be covered. Naturally the process and the resulting 1961 Constitution will be analyzed and related to sentiments within the white society. The position of the black majority and the colonial power will be analyzed but only in relation to their effects on the white minority’s standpoint and the effects on the election 1962. The struggle within nationalist movements and domestic struggle in Britain will not be covered. These areas are well covered in research literature during and after the period under investigation.
1.4 Theoretical considerations

1.4.1 The Settler State concept

According to Mandaza\(^1\) the white settler colonialism in Southern Africa, seen as a social formation, was unique and in many aspects different from the colonial situation elsewhere in Africa. His analysis builds on a model of *race-caste-class* where the white settler colonialism was aimed at, both in “mission” and design, a Dominion (permanent colonialism) with the white classes as a whole forever in the top of the hierarchy. This was a complex creation producing class dynamics both within the white society and the colonised people in general. Land alienation became the main instrument for destroying the feudal order of the traditional African society and to establish a base for a capitalist development process. In this process it was the State which tried to manage and mediate different class forces to fit into the *race-caste-class* model by seeking a world of compartmentalisation into White and Black.

The same reasoning is followed by Mamdami\(^2\) when he argues that the main destructive feature of colonial rule in Africa was the mode of *domination* not the mode of accumulation. The State was organised around the concepts of Citizens – Europeans – and Subjects - Africans. The former enjoyed rights in the civil sphere while the latter fell under the ‘despotism’ of customary law institutionalised through the chiefs’ indirect rule in rural areas. Also other scholars emphasise that the (Settler) State took the form of a particular kind of centralised bureaucracy promoting a capitalist development in the society.

Other scholars focus on the, at times, sharp division in settler states among bureaucracies and the divided class and political purposes they were set to rule. This was particularly obvious in the field of ‘Native Administration’ versus e.g. Agricultural Administration.

> “the colonial state should not be seen simply as an instrument of intervention, but also the bearer of complex and conflicting values, with internal tensions and disputes about the most appropriate way to rule”\(^3\)

Racism in its various manifestations was a key feature in colonial ideology. In settler states there was a strong feeling of white supremacy in relations to the black people they conquered. It is however, important to examine the interplay of the century-old colonial ideology of white superiority and the specific historical and socio-economic features of the settler state under investigation.

A Settler State according to Weitzer\(^4\) is founded by migrant groups who take on a dominant position towards the population they have subordinated and build self-sustaining states which are de jure or de facto independent from the colonial state. It is organised around the settlers’ political domination over the indigenous population and

---


\(^2\) Mamdani, Mahmood. *Citizen and Subject*. Princeton 1996 p. 18


which in the case in Rhodesia is based on economic exploitation. To constitute a Settler State the descendants of settlers must remain politically dominant over the indigenous population which however, present at least a potential threat to the settlers’ supremacy. 5

According to Weitzer there are three important pillars on which the Settler State rests. The first one, contrary to a normal colonial state is that a settler state has “achieved autonomy from the metropole in the exercise of political authority and coercive power.”6 This pillar is crucial as the control over the State’s coercion empowers the settler regime to resist domestic threats and foreign plots. According to Weitzer this makes attempts to transform settler states much more problematic than those to decolonize conventional colonies. The second pillar thus resting on the monopoly of coercive power is the ability to consolidate its power to control the indigenous population – prevent political mobilization, unrest and avoidance of metropolitan intervention on the indigenous population’s behalf. The third pillar finally, to manifest settler dominance is to maintain settler caste solidarity and the state’s cohesion. Ideological glue and material incentives becomes important to safeguard the cohesion in the white community.7 The weakening of one of the pillars does not endanger settler rule in the short run but a serious threat against one or more of the pillars will in the long run make the Settler State crumble.8

1.4.2 Democracy, Constitution-making and Constitutionalism

The thesis deals with issues related to the process of constitution where the process takes place in a colonial environment. Constitution is closely related to the concept of constitutionalism and Catá Backer emphasizes that “Constitutions are distinguished from constitutionalism—the latter serving as a means of evaluating the form, substance and legitimacy of the former”9 In very broad terms modern constitutionalism requires that limits are set on the powers of government, adherence to the rule of law, and the protection of fundamental rights.10 Kamba adds a fourth element, democracy.11 Ake deals in depth with this latter point. For him the concept of democracy is neither complex nor confusing, “it means popular power or in a famous American version, government of the people, for the people and by the people.”12 However, Ake deems that the original concept of democracy has been replaced by liberal democracy. Even if this new concept has significant affinities with democracy the differences are as significant. It focuses on individual rather than collective claims, it replaces government by the people with government by consent of the people and it advocates sovereignty of the law over sovereignty of the people. It repudiates popular power and instead

---

5 Ibid. Page 24-25
6 Ibid. Page 26
7 Weitzer.p. 28
8 Ibid. p. 29-30
10 Ibid. p. 124
12 Ake Claude. The feasibility of democracy in Africa. Dakar 2003 p 7
addresses “the fear that popular power would pose a grave threat to privilege and especially private property.” According to Ake the concept of democracy in its liberal form has been reduced to multi-party electoral competition and the bottom line is Thomas Hobbes thesis that ‘the government which governs least, governs best’.

Catá Backer arrives at the following five core elements of constitutionalism:

- It is a system of classification,
- the core object of which is to define the characteristics of constitutions - those documents organizing political power within an institutional apparatus
- to be used to determine the legitimacy of the constitutional system as conceived or as implemented,
- based on rule of law as the fundamental postulate of government - that government be established and operated in a way that limits the ability of individuals to use government power for personal welfare maximizing end,
- grounded on a metric of substantive values derived from a source beyond the control of any individual.

The written Constitution cannot be considered legitimate unless it is not written in accordance with the parameters of constitutionalism.

From this theoretical perspective of constitutionalism we can move on to a more concrete model for analysing the Constitutional documents of Rhodesia i.e. 1923 and 1961 year’s Constitutions. Kamba suggest that the following main points should be considered in such an analysis:

- Supremacy of the constitution and the rule of law( is fundamental for constitutionalism)
- The doctrine of the separation of governmental powers (is central to constitutionalism.)
- The electoral system( is one of the pillars of the parliamentary democratic process.)
- The Bill of rights (is fundamental for constitutionalism)

Even if the two Constitutions analysed in this thesis are developed in a non-democratic society it is possible to examine to what degree they adhere to normative elements of constitutionalism referred to in the above model e.g. protection of the higher law status of the constitution both in its written form and the appropriate mechanism in the form of judiciary or constitutional court system, rule of law, limited government powers, respect for human rights and the franchise system.

---

13 Ibid p10
14 Catá Backer p 110
15 Kamba p15-23
1.5 Hypothesis, method and sources

1.5.1 Hypothesis

A first hypothesis is that the Constitutional process started a process of radicalisation of all three main actors in the Rhodesian political environment; the white minority, the African majority and the Colonial power. A second hypothesis directly related to my research question is that reasons for the white minority to choose the racist opposition party before the moderate ruling party can be found partly in the Settler State concept and partly in the belief that the opposition to the constitution giving the black majority a small but some influence in governing S, Rhodesia, was able to negotiate independence with a better result for the white minority than the ruling party.

1.5.2 Method

The figure below depicts the way the investigation was performed. It should be observed that the figure is not a model of analysis but rather an attempt to visualize the different stages in the investigation. The historical development during the period 1890 – 1959 plays an important role especially with regard to the formation of the Settler State and the emergent Multiracial and Nationalist ideas so an introductory chapter of this development will precede the Investigation part. To construct a base for the investigation and testing the hypothesis, especially the historic development of the Settler State has been elaborated in some detail. This chapter will take us up to 1960 when the processes under investigation start.

In the figure the blue boxes show the analysis path where the first part of the investigation will examine the Constitutional process is to be able to grasp the positions of the main actors. In the figure the red boxes entail the main influences and the white boxes secondary influences on the different processes. The white minority, which is in focus of this study, will be examined through the standpoints the two main contenders, the ruling party, UFP and the opposition, DP and later RF, took in the process. I will use citation from the debates in the Legal Assembly to illustrate their points. The other two main actors the African majority and the colonial power, Great Britain will be treated as one entity (each) although among them there were a number of political sub groups. Minutes of debates in the Legal Assembly and in the British House of Commons, minutes from the Constitutional Conference and newspaper articles will be used as primary source material.

The second part of the investigation will examine the 1962 election which in turn could give material for an answer to the research question – why the electorate voted the opposition into power. Here the election strategies, election material, use of newspaper advertisements and debates in the Legal Assembly will be examined to understand the outcome of the election. Also here citation will be used to demonstrate arguments used to influence the electorate. With regard to citation you will find sometimes uppercase
and/or bold being used. This reflects how it was presented in the sources used. I have widely used citations to give a deeper feeling for the actors’ way to see and reflect on his situation.

The analysis part to arrive at an answer to the research question is built up around influences of the constitutional process, the significance of the Settler State, the role of the African majority and the role of Britain.
THE 1950’S

- Liberal Multiracialism 1956-58
- Re-thinking in Great Britain on colonies
- Multiracialist ideas
- Nationalism in Africa
- Creation of Central African Federation
- Migration pattern

Conservative multiracialism 1959-1961

- Liberation movement in NR and Malawi
- Great Britain S.Rhodesia policy
- Racist opposition
- Nationalist movements in S.Rhodesia

Constitution of 1961

- Government’s election strategy
- Racist Opposition (RF) propaganda
- Nationalist movements’ policy

General Election 1962

- Racist Settler Ideology dominant
1.5.3   Sources

The primary sources used in this thesis have been available at the National Archive in Harare in the form of Debates in the Legislative Assembly (So-called Hansard which are detailed word-for-word accounts of the debates), newspapers, minutes from the Constitutional Conference and the Statutory law of 1923 and Statutory Instrument of 1961. The following debates were read and form part of the analysis: The no confidence debate 30/6 1960, the Constitutional review debate 3/8 1960, and the white paper debate 20-21/6 1961. The newspaper coverage of the main processes was recorded from the main (independent) paper in Rhodesia, the Rhodesian Herald, some issues of the Daily News and some issues of the ultra right paper, the Rhodesian. The periods covered were February 1961 (the Constitutional Conference), and December 1962 (General Election). Also the official minutes from the Constitutional Conference, election material from the two main parties in 1962 years election (United Federal Party and Rhodesian Front) and population statistics from CSO (Central Statistical Office) were made available, read and analysed.

In addition a large amount of secondary sources has been used. Biographies by important actors give of course biased but inside information. Ian Smith’s book *The Great Betrayal* gives an account of the processes thirty years later benefitting from hindsight of development in late 1990’s Zimbabwe to condemn the British position in mid-1960. Nathan Shamuayrira’s *Crisis in Rhodesia* is written during the period under investigation and provides an account of the thinking among African nationalists. Articles and books depicting the settler state concept, the British position, the nationalist position, the Rhodesian way of life and attitudes, election outcome analysis have been abundantly used.

I consider the primary material as both fully reliable and also adequate for my purpose. I have carefully scrutinized the ten one-thousand pages volumes of Hansard covering the period under investigation and there seems to be no other debates covering or touching on the problem under investigation. With regard to newspapers of course more months could have been covered for the different processes. Strangely enough, though, even the election articles and advertisements started late, not more than three weeks before Election Day. Maybe the two-three months coverage of elections in Sweden could be a recent phenomenon - in mid 1960 it might have been the same situation as it was in Rhodesia.

The secondary sources will have to be treated more carefully. There is of course a difference between sources close to the events and analytical scholarship recently undertaken. In view of the detoriating situation in present day Zimbabwe there could be a tendency to treat the behaviour and actions by the white minority in the 1960’s in a more understanding way. I will try to choose sources and present views as well
documented as possible so that readers could go back to the original piece of work to judge by themselves.

2. Historical background to the period under investigation

Besides a short Portuguese occupation – 1629-1663 – the Zimbabwean high Plateau was ruled by Shona speaking kings until the onslaught of the Ndebeles in early nineteen hundred. Great Zimbabwe and later the Munhumutapa kingdom were the greatest economic and political powers south of Zambezi from late fourteenth century based on trade, gold and development of a sophisticated clientilistic feudal system. Led by strong kings like Mzilikatze and later his son Lobengula the Ndebeles in the 1840’s subjugated all major Shona chieftains to their rule.

In the late 1880’s the penetration from the south by both British and Boer concession hunters started. A number of treaties between Cecil Rhodes and Lobengula were signed. The final one, “the fraudulent Rudd concession was used to justify occupation, conquest and colonization of Zimbabwe in the 1890’s”16 Orally, Rhodes emissary, Rudd, promised that only ten white men would be sent to organize mining and that they should work under the direction of the Ndebele King. Such clauses were not included in the written Rudd Concession – Rhodes wanted more than mineral rights. His intention was to establish a British settlement to control the land between Limpopo and Zambezi and to cut off the Boers from the area.

2.1 Colonial penetration- Company rule

Already at this stage the weakness of the colonial power to control Rhodes and his settlers was evident. In the original concession, Lobengula gave Britain the right ‘to win and procure all metals and minerals in my kingdom’. On this basis Rhodes persuaded the British Government to grant a Royal Charter to the BSAC in 1889 -including powers of government and administration-which, as British officials made clear, he would need Lobengula’s permission to execute. However, the most significant powers arrogated by the company to itself, especially the right to administer the settlers and their problems and appointment of a British Resident Commissionaire was fiercely protested by Lobengula, a protest not disclosed to the British authorities. Deception, collusion and confusion of Company and Crown interests thus played a significant part in the establishment of European presence in the territory. 17

As long as the white settlers concentrated on mining the African majority could find a new source of income by growing food for the settler population. However, when it became apparent that the gold deposits were limited, land became the main asset for the settlers, and a rapid process of land alienation started. This led to an uprising by the

Ndebeles in 1893 and another more serious one in 1896 by the Ndebeles as well as the Shonas,

However, with superior arms the Settlers crushed the uprising and annexed the whole High Plateau - the foundation for the settler state of South Rhodesia was consolidated. In 1898 Rhodesia's first constitution allowed for a strong measure of imperial control as neither the Company nor the colonists could be trusted with unfettered authority over the Africans. Legislation was subject to veto and a Resident Commissioner was the 'imperial watchdog' in Salisbury. In theory the system was non-racial but in practice discrimination persisted.

Even with these measures in place, Britain retained the BASC as its delegated government which implemented the white settler domination\textsuperscript{18}. The Ndebeles who before the colonial penetration had occupied 21 million hectares were in 1894 pushed into two reserves measuring 1 million hectares. As Mamdami puts it “The net effect of this was that citizenship was racialist and the population of Rhodesia bifurcated into ‘citizens and subjects’”\textsuperscript{19}. The citizens, the whites, were privileged to own land while the subjects, the Africans were denied to participate in economy and politics.\textsuperscript{20}

\section*{2.2 The formation of a settler state}

The structures on which the Settler State is built were laid already during the Company period. The traditional colonial \textit{hut tax} – to drag the African society into money economy and force Africans to sell his labour to pay the tax - was imposed already in 1894. To further safe guard availability of cheap indigenous labour force the \textit{African Labour (Identification) Act} was promulgated in 1911, essentially to prevent unskilled labour going to South Africa. In 1914 a Commission recommended changes in the reserve areas, reducing them both in size and quality.\textsuperscript{21} When a decision was taken in 1923 to annex Southern Rhodesia to Britain as a colony with a ‘Responsible Government’ established, the second pillar according to Weitzer “the ability to consolidate its power to control the indigenous population” (see 1.4.1) was already firmly in place. This pillar could be seen as the Structure through which the settlers dominated the Africans.

With the Responsible Government in place the first pillar, to achieve “\textit{autonomy from the metropole in the exercise of political authority and coercive power}”, (see 1.4.1) could now be instituted. The Legislative Assembly comprising 30 members, all white, had the full power of law making with some powers reserved for the Crown related to “native” matters, arms supply, mining revenue and railway matters. The Government (Prime Minister and six Ministers) also got the control of the British South Africa
Police (BSAP). The control of its own military force placed them in a quite different position from e.g. Kenya, Algeria and other Settler States. Alongside the BSAP the settler tradition in Southern Rhodesia was to have a core of militaries in the form of a police reserve of armed volunteers. Britain had the power to veto racialist legislation in the country, but in practice did not do so. This pillar defines the **Power** through which the settler conducted business.

The third pillar, “to manifest settler dominance by maintaining settler caste solidarity and the state’s cohesion” (see 1.4.1) was successful up to mid 1950’s with the same party in power (under different names) with exception of 1936-37. The Settler State is particularly active and interventionist in order to create a cohesive state. The main areas of intervention during the forty years following the establishment of the Responsible Government were to establish control over land and labour. This pillar defines broadly the **Ideology** of the Settler State.

With the Power firmly established – lawmaking and control of armed forces – the settlers moved to reinforce the Structures controlling land and labour through legislation. In 1930 the *Land Apportionment Act* was passed and also approved by Britain. As Kenneth Good put it “This law may rightly be regarded as the foundation stone of the ‘Rhodesian way of life’”23. Under this Act segregation as an ideological tool was formalised with regard to land. It was divided into European Areas (all fertile soil), Native Reserves, and Native purchase Areas and Forestry Areas. The Act also introduced differential tenure where in European Areas land was considered private property with title deeds whereas in the Reserves land was held as communal property without title deeds and with power of chiefs to allocate land. Native purchase areas with poor soil were kept as a middle land between the races where Africans with money could buy land. The Act confirmed the very skew distribution of land by allocating 50 percent to whites (5% of the population), 33 percent to Africans (95% of the population) and the rest remaining unallocated by the State.

In 1934 the promulgation of the *Industrial Conciliation Act* (ICA) Africans were excluded from the definition of workers preventing them from forming or participating in trade unions and engaging in collective bargaining. They were still to be governed by the *Masters and Servants Act* (MSA) from 1901 until 1959 when ICA was revised25. The MSA was an exploitative act into which forced labour was build and gave early mine-owners semi-feudal power over the lives of Africans.26

The 1946 *Native (Urban Areas) Accommodation and Registration Act* required employers and local government authorities to provide minimum housing for African

---

22 Good Kenneth. *Settler Colonialism in Rhodesia* 1974 p. 20
23 Austin p. 34
24 Raftopoulos/Mlambo p. 67
25 Ibid. p.103
26 Ibid p. 64-65
workers and families. At the same time it empowered local government (which were in total white control) to remove unemployed from towns.

The next major Act regulating land to be introduced was the *Native Land Husbandry Act* (NLHA) in 1951. It introduced rigorous conservation measures to force African farmers to de-stock and modify land tenure practices. It was introduced and implemented without consultation with Africans, and it was fiercely resisted. One major objective with this law was to ensure that those who could not be accommodated in the overpopulated Reserves would be available as cheap labour in the emergent manufacturing sector.

These Structures continuously put in place gave the whites the material incentives which according to Weitzer were one important part of the third pillar in a Settler state. In Austin’s words “*throughout the history of the settler occupation it has been possible for whites to impose this humiliation upon blacks, apparently with pride, and certainly without regret.*”

The Ideological glue, the other important part of the third pillar can be exemplified by some quotations from leaders of S.Rhodesia. Cecil Rhodes held that “*We are the finest race in the world . . . and . . . the more of the world we inhabit the better it is for the human race.*” Godfrey Huggins, Prime Minister 1933 – 1953, described, in a classical pronouncement, race relations in the country: “*The Europeans in this country can be likened to an island of white in a sea of black, with the artisan and the tradesmen forming the shores and the professional classes the highlands in the centre. Is the native to be allowed to erode away the shores and gradually attack the highlands? To permit this would mean that the leaven of civilization would be removed from the country, and the black man would inevitably revert to a barbarian worse than before.*” Finally Ian Smith when he spoke to the white community after declaring UDI “*we have struck a blow for the preservation of justice, civilization and Christianity.*”

The ideological glue binding the White Rhodesians together was that they consider themselves a people who stood up for basic Western and Christian values which communists and black nationalists tried to undermine and which the large majority of Black Rhodesians were not ready to inherit. Racial superiority was a basic truth for most members of the white community.

### 2.3 Multiracialism

During the 1950’s it became obvious that the imperial order in Africa was under dispute. The British Empire had already in late 1940’s seen the “jewel” of the empire, India, receiving independence and far-reaching discussions for independence of Ghana was held in mid-1950’s. In such a changed atmosphere multiracial blacks and liberal

---

27 Austin p. 28
28 Austin p. 29
29 Goodwin, Peter and Hancock, Ian ‘Rhodesians never die’ Oxford 1993 p. 15
whites attempted to create bridges between the two wholly different worlds of races in S.Rhodesia. Even if the participants in this movement often had very divergent views on content and pace of development they shared the very optimistic view that racial harmony was the way to a prosperous future.  

Reforms must, however, be gradual to avoid anarchy. The African elite, embracing multiracialism, were often educated in rural missions and saw co-operation as a mean to erode segregation and at the same time ensure stability and prosperity.

Prime Minister Garfield Todd introduced a number of reforms during 1957-58 – a new Industrial Conciliation Act, a new Franchise Act and a Five-Year African Education Plan – which were cautious attempts to improve the Africans’ situation. However, when he was overthrown in a cabinet coup 1958 for his extreme liberalism, multiracial zenith was passed. In the ensuing election the multiracial United Federation Party won a slim majority over the racist Dominion Party and the white electorate had given the warning “this far but no further.” At the same time faith in reformist ideas among Africans dwindled and Pan-African ideas spread. As Leaver states, “Post-conquest colonialism was initially paternalistic, authoritarian and segregationist. Later it became supremacist, reactionary and racist. In between there were liberal and multiracial hopes that a minority of whites and blacks worked to substantiate.”

When we now approach the time period for the investigation, i.e. 1960-62 all three pillars of the Settler State are under threat. The Power pillar because Britain in the wake of decolonisation is beginning to take responsibility for the reserve clauses in the Constitution and is not going to accede Independence to the minority based on 1923 year’s Constitution. The Structure pillar keeping African in place are threatened by the spread of nationalist and Pan-African ideas and events in Algeria, Kenya and Congo are startling reading for the white community in S.Rhodesia. The Ideology pillar falters due to a divided electorate and a battle between liberal and racist ideas.

3. Investigation

The investigation covers two strategically important processes determining the political development in S.Rhodesia all the way up to the independent State of Zimbabwe in 1980. The first examines the process of constitution making 1960-1961, and the second the General Election 1962

3.1 Constitutional changes – process and result 1960 - 1961

The first hypothesis that the constitutional process led to a radicalization of the actors involved will be examined in three phases. After a brief summary of the historical environment in the beginning of 1960 the first phase the three main actors’ position before the start of the constitutional talks will be assessed. The analysis of the second phase will cover the constitution making process and the new 1961 year’s Constitution.

---

30 Leaver, John David Multiracialism and nationalisms: a political retrospective on 1950s southern Rhodesia (‘colonial Zimbabwe’) 2006. p. 3

31 Ibid.. p. 4
The third phase will assess the significance of the new constitution for the main actors and their political positioning at the end of 1961. This will then be the starting point for the assessment of the next process, the 1962 election.

3.1.1 The historical environment 1960

As mentioned earlier the internal environment in S.Rhodesia in the beginning of 1960 was characterized by the three main pillars of the Settler State were under challenge. This situation was partly the result of and partly compounded by developments on the continent and in the immediate neighbourhood. After the Suez crisis it became obvious for Great Britain that its African colonial empire had become a burden rather than an asset. As Ian Smith put it “...Britain could no longer call the tune. The United States was now in the driving seat, constantly propagating the philosophy that colonialism was inherently bad and the pace of its elimination had to be stepped up.”

The “wind of change” had started blowing long before McMillan in his famous Cape Town speech 1960 used the phrase. Ghana became the first independent country from the British Empire in 1957 followed by Somaliland and Nigeria in 1960 all three based on universal suffrage. Most of the French Empire was transformed into independent republics 1960 and US forced the Belgians to hastily grant Congo independence the same year. The Mau-Mau uprising in Kenya and the violent mutinous chaos in Congo sent frightening signals to the white community in S.Rhodesia.

Full independence from Britain in the form of becoming a dominion had been a main objective for the governments in S.Rhodesia since the end of World War II. In 1953 they saw this objective more easily achieved if they joined the Federation of Central Africa together with Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland. Each territory should maintain its standing constitutional status. S.Rhodesia was a self-governing colony while Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland would remain British Protectorates. This was a fatal flaw condemning the Federation to a short life for even if the S.Rhodesians were of the belief that the Federation was indissoluble, Britain was probably from the beginning of the opinion that the Federation should not interrupt the march of the protectorates towards independence based on universal adult suffrage in line with the rest of the Empire.

African nationalism had developed much further in the protectorates and both Kenneth Kaunda’s United National Independence Party in Northern Rhodesia and Hastings Banda’s Malawi Congress Party in Nyasaland were better organized and vis-à-vis Britain much more influential than the nationalist movements in S.Rhodesia.

---

32 Smith, Ian  The great betrayal  London 1997 p. 34
35 Smith p. 32, Wood p. 12
3.1.2 The position of the main actors before the Constitutional Conference

3.1.2.1 The white minority position

During most of the Responsible Government period since 1923 the same party but under different names had governed S.Rhodesia relatively dominantly. However, during the era of multi-racialism a clear division in the electorate between the staunch settler ideologists and the moderate multi-racialists became apparent. The thesis will examine the white minority position from these two perspectives on the Rhodesian way forward.

The United Federal Party – the party in power

_Whitehead’s UFP_ (United Federal Party) secured a slim margin of five seats majority over DP (Dominion Party) in the General Elections in 1958. His ambition was to secure full independence from Britain by removing the reserved powers which Britain had retained in the 1923 Constitution’s granting of limited self-government for Southern Rhodesia. The reserved powers were related most importantly to legislation affecting relations between the races. Whitehead had to manoeuvre in environment characterised by increasing African nationalist propaganda and an increased British interest to influence the political development in S.Rhodesia. What characterised his rule during 1959 – 1960 was a strategy of ‘carrot and stick’.

In order to comply with the British demands for increased African participation in the society at large Whitehead continued the _multiracial reforms_ the party had started during the Todd led government. During 1959 -1960 he initially implemented some modest reforms like establishment of multi-racial hotels and restaurants in white areas and amendments to the Industrial Conciliation Act allowing multi-racial trade unions. However, also some substantial reforms proposals were introduced most importantly the (partly) repeal of the Land Apportionment Act (LAA), removal of pass laws and admittance of non-whites to all levels in the Civil Service. Of these the repeal of LAA was the most controversial but with full support of the UFP backbenchers in the Legislative Assembly. The new reading contained among others the establishment of townships on Crown Land in designated white areas in which Africans would have freehold title and the right of Africans to live on Crown Land in a white area if they were students in respected institutions or receiving treatments in Government hospitals.36

A gradual development of partnership remained a U.F.P. ideal. As such it was a vague, indefinable policy but an acceptance that Africans should play an increasing role in national affairs and that racial discrimination should be removed. In a longer perspective the races could not follow separate lines of development - Africans like Europeans must share the rights, privileges, and obligations of full citizenship.37

The partnership programme had a firm support within the party which the subsequent citations from debates in the Legal assembly illustrate:

---

36 Wood p. 54-65
37 Barber, James. _Rhodesia: The Constitutional Conflict_ 1966, p. 460
African nationalism in my analysis has an appeal to Africans because it restores to him his full dignity. African nationalists in fact tell the Africans ‘you have a place in this world on an equal basis with all other races.’ If we are to win this battle against African nationalism, we have to undermine its one appeal to the African. We have to make it clear to the African that as he emerges in the way of education, his knowledge of events and his stake in the country he will enjoy his full citizenship rights and that is expressed in the policy of partnership.”

“It is far better for them [the Africans] to take part in party politics and to express their views freely than first to interest themselves as they do at the moment in purely nationalistic movements.”

However, alongside these carrots, the African nationalistic ideas gaining support in primarily urban areas demanded firm security measures to calm the white electorate. It must be remembered that the white were fed daily with horror stories in the press about atrocities from the Mau-Mau rebellion in Kenya and the upheaval in Congo so even rather small unrest among the Africans caused alarm. State of Emergency was proclaimed in February 1959 after violence broke in the other parts of the Federation as a pre-emptive move to quell any protests in S.Rhodesia.

The Unlawful Organisation Bill was introduced banning all major nationalistic movements. It was followed by the Native Affairs Amendment Bill tightening the control of the Native Reserves and e.g. prohibiting any meeting of more than twelve people. When these pieces of legislation were implemented in July 1960 Salisbury townships erupted and scattered Whitehead’s picture of the satisfied and peaceful Africans in S.Rhodesia. This led to the Emergency Powers Bill which among others allowed arbitrary arrest and detention in the interest of the public (read the white public!). Also the Vagrancy Bill allowing the police to arrest anyone who could not show that he was living by honest means. The most controversial piece of legislation was the Law and Order (Maintenance) Bill introduced in October 1960 which gave sweeping powers to Attorney General, Ministry of Justice and the Police. It caused the Federal Chief Justice to resign calling the Bill “evil and a threat to the rule of law.”

In summary the UFP position in 1960 was a gradual development of partnership to calm Britain and attract ‘civilised’ Africans coupled with stern security measures to catch the white electorate.

The Dominion Party – the party in opposition

Harper’s Dominion Party (DP), the opposition party, had a much more racist approach. They were not willing to concede anything with regard to increased franchise. As the

---

38 Hirsch MP UFP Legal Assembly Debates Report 47 column 908 (LAD 47/908)
39 McGray MP UFP LAD 47/1196
40 Shamuyarira p. 55
42 Shamuyarira p. 65
new spokesperson of DP, McLean concluded on the question of widening the franchise: “Those sources forget that the whole basis of our life in this country is based on certain standards and if we lower standards in anyone field we have to lower them in all fields.”

They considered the partnership approach by the UFP as “...racialism is the biggest concern of people in this country today and with that the policy of partnership advocated by the Government How can people possibly have confidence in them.”

The same sentiment was expressed by McLean: “Southern Rhodesia comes first, last and always forever and ever Amen as far as I am concerned. If this sounds as blasphemy I would point to a greater blasphemy which is contained in the doctrine of partnership, if it can be called such, in so far as it is being applied with such hypocrisy.”

Their views on the African majority followed certain stereotypes developed during the Settler State and reinforced by recent development on the continent at large and especially in the immediate vicinity. The Rhodesia Herald headed one of its reports on the demonstration in Salisbury: Africans of Southern Rhodesia "the same as" Congolese where Starling, another spokesman for the Dominion Party (DP) was quoted as saying, "The African is not interested in partnership. He is interested in exterminating the Europeans. And it is no use anyone getting up and saying the Southern Rhodesian Native is different.”

McLean dismissed that the unrest in Salisbury was an expression of discontent with unemployment, poverty and powerlessness and concluded “The sort of blind, beastlike unreasoning nationalism which has shown on many occasions that it is ready to destroy not to construct ... the simple explanation is merely that they are being initiative of events elsewhere on the African continent.” Instead a number of DP backbenchers considered “The African people have appreciated the protection of the police, the happiness and the opportunity to go about their daily life without being molested”

With regard to the National Democratic Party (NDP) the DP concern was how the Prime Minister would react to their view in the booklet “The African case” in which they advocated one man – one vote. Starling noted that “...one man – one vote. That is their particular doctrine. They wish to dominate this country and now we must ask the PM whether he is going to stand fast or whether he is going to appease these people. Whether there is going to be a Munich in Southern Rhodesia.”

They applauded Whitehead’s efforts to gain full independence but considered UFP too soft for achieving the goal or as McLean put it “These people go cap in hand cringing servile subservice to UK government when they should go robustly and forthrightly and

---

43 McLean DP. LAD 47/890
44 Van Merden DP. LAD 46/109
45 McLean DP. LAD 47/822
46 Rhodesia Herald, (RH) 31.3.60.
47 Pichanick: LAD, 47/.2188)
48 Starling DP.LAD 47/893-94
say ‘We are Rhodesians and we will tolerate no nonsense whatsoever from you’. We have the backing of 27 years of responsible government, 37 years of progress in this country. We have a tremendous case to put before the UK government.’ 49

The repeal of the Land Apportionment Act aroused fierce opposition from DP which held the Settler opinion that this Act was ‘the Magna Charta of the Europeans in S.Rhodesia’. 50 Harper called the repeal a ‘sledgehammer blow at European Settlement in S.Rhodesia’. 51 He promised to make LAA the sole issue in the next election. In summary the DP considered that the franchise should remain unchanged, that the ordinary Africans were content with the state of affairs, that the nationalist were a dangerous and destructive force, that LAA was “sacred” and that Unilateral Declaration of Independence from Britain was a feasible option.

3.1.2.2 The African majority position

The first modern African nationalist party, the African National Congress (ANC), in S.Rhodesia was launched in 1957 “Its aim is the national unity of all the inhabitants of the country in true partnership, regardless of race, colour or creed. It stands for a completely integrated society; equality of opportunity in every sphere; and the social, economic and political advancement of all.” They considered themselves stand for Professionalism, Non-racialism, Humanism and Pan-Africanism. 52 In words not very dangerous programme but when they started co-operation with the ANC’s in the other countries of the Federation the government imposed State of Emergency. Under the ensuing harsh security legislation the party was banned in 1959. Its follower the National Democratic Party (NPD) came into being in January 1960. The new party emphasised constitutional rather than social reconstruction and made one man – one vote its primary aim 53 - according to the first paragraph in its constitution “To work for a speedy constitutional reconstruction of a better Southern Rhodesia Government elected on the principle of one man-one vote”. 54

The new party started attracting educated Africans who until then had had faith in the multi-racial credo from the liberal whites. As mentioned above when Todd disappeared from the stage the zenith of this movement had been passed. As Takawira said “We are no longer asking Europeans to rule us well. We now want to rule ourselves.” 55 Instead of approaching the white government they called on Britain to launch a constitutional conference which should dismantle the Native Affairs Department, reform of land tenure, end racial discrimination through a Bill of Rights and extend the franchise to all

---

49 McLean DP. LAD 46/86
50 Shamuyarira p.80
51 Wood p.50
52 Shamuyarira p. 46 citation, 49-56
53 Ibid. p. 60 Day p.222
54 Shamuyarira p. 60
55 Shamuyarira p.59
adults in S.Rhodesia. They considered the existing franchise as undemocratic as it reserved the votes for the rich and would only produce ‘stooges’ as African MPs.\(^56\) In addition the party was concerned to find a spiritual and cultural base for African nationalism. The party encourage supporters to value African customs, names, music, dress, religion etc. The new party also took a more militant position and started physical resistance to the settler rule – they considered the party as a “vigorous political vanguard for removing all forms of oppression.”\(^57\) The NDP also added another dimension to Rhodesian nationalism, emotion. Nationalism is basically emotional if it is going to succeed. Instead of continuing to be reasonable a change of attitude is necessary by openly attacking the white establishment and what it stood for and destroying the white values and concepts copied by the majority of missionary educated Africans.

Josuha Nkomo became the first president of NDP and he warned Britain “There are only three methods possible – negotiations, economic breakdown or bloody revolution. I warn Britain that if she does not act now I will quit the present nature of politics that we have been following.”\(^58\)

The NDP’s position was made clear at the last Congress before the Constitutional Conference where the following points were agreed

- The Party should boycott all General Elections until universal suffrage was in place
- The Party called for a Constitutional Review Conference with all political parties participating
- The Party called on Britain to intervene in the ongoing tensions in S.Rhodesia by suspending the current constitution until a new constitution was in place
- The Party demanded the repeal of all restrictive and discriminatory legislation\(^59\)

However, in a Executive meeting just before the Conference they “insisted on parity of seats in the Legislative Assembly, thirty African and thirty European.”\(^60\)

3.1.2.3 Britain’s position

It is obvious that during almost 30 years after the so-called Responsible Government was created Britain almost never interfered into the internal affairs of S.Rhodesia. Britain had reserved powers in the Constitution dealing with arms, railway and most importantly with relations between the races. However, even such a racist type of legislation as the Land Appropriation Act from 1930 handing almost half of the land (100% of fertile land) to the small white minority did not rouse any objection from the colonial power. As Mr Palley pointed out that according to the earlier Prime Minister in S.Rhodesia later the Federation’s PM Lord Malvern “The British Government knows

\(^{56}\) Wood p.35, Shamuyarira p.61
\(^{57}\) Shamuyarira p. 60 - 63
\(^{58}\) Citation from Ibid. p.74
\(^{59}\) Baxter p.308
\(^{60}\) Shamuyarira p. 160
that in practice the reserve powers in the constitution which were roughly the same as those proposed in the Federation Assembly are not worth the paper they are written on”.  

A later Prime Minister, Ian Smith, describes in his autobiography his feelings in 1953 when the Legal Assembly voted to join the Federation as a quicker move towards full independence “This sounded sensible and right, and the important thing was that we were working with people we could trust, the British. We had always worked together for our mutual benefit and stood by another when the need arose. We were in the fortunate position of dealing with proven friends.” The title of the autobiography, The Great Betrayal, suggests that he later would regret this belief.

As mentioned earlier the Suez crisis triggered a revaluation by Britain of the benefits to keep the Empire and a process of decolonisation swept the world. In view of the global anti-colonial atmosphere and the challenge by the Labour Party on the Home Front the British PM MacMillan held his famous Wind of Change speech indicating that the future independence of the colonies should rest on universal suffrage. A MacMillan strategy of appeasement of African nationalism was in clear conflict with the White Rhodesian ambitions. The reserved powers in the S.Rhodesian Constitution had such a high symbolic value both to the British Parliament and the nationalists that to even talk about removing them would arouse deep suspicion and could even lead to increased violence.

During 1959 and 1960 a large number of meetings between Whitehall and British Colonial Secretaries and Commonwealth Secretaries lead to very little advancement of Independence for S.Rhodesia. It was obvious that Britain tried to buy time awaiting an inevitable cessation of the Federation before talks about the future of S.Rhodesia could start in earnest. With hindsight you could term the British manoeuvring as a kind of betrayal of the whites expectations as Britain never told Whitehead frankly about their position.

When they finally agreed to a Constitutional Conference it was obviously with the hope that the outcome could be satisfactorily for the white minority, the African majority and the British public.

3.1.3 The Constitutional Conference

Initially the Rhodesian Government did not want to invite the Nationalists – NDP- to such a Conference but Britain was adamant and when the Conference started in January 1961 all political parties were represented – UFP, DP, NDP, CAP (Central Africa Party, a multi-racial liberal party), the Coloured Community and the Asian Community. During a two-week period under chairmanship of Whitehead and without British

---

61 Palley Independent MP. LAD 47/900
62 Smith The Great Betrayal  p.32
63 Wood p. 25-66
participation an examination of the 1923 Constitution was undertaken in a surprisingly relaxed atmosphere.\textsuperscript{64} It was the uncontroversial subjects which were covered while the knottier problems were left for Sandys, the Commonwealth Secretary, to take up and find a solution to.\textsuperscript{65} There were five major problem areas and after one week of deliberation all parties except the Dominion Party stood behind the recommendations in the report of the Conference and invited the British and S.Rhodesian Governments to take appropriate steps to implement the recommendations. This is a short summary of the five tricky areas based on the report from the Conference and the summary in Rhodesian Herald:\textsuperscript{66}

- A Declaration of Rights – not a Bill of Rights as originally proposed – enshrined in the Constitution. It should follow certain principles e.g. all fundamental rights and freedoms should apply to all without distinction of race, colour or creed. But there could be exceptions when the State would need to exercise powers necessary for defence and public safety, for maintaining law and order and for public health and morality.

- A Constitutional Council of 12 members to check on mainly discriminatory legislation. Their role was advisory and delaying and legislation could be passed in the Legislative Assembly by two-third majority or after six months delay, simple majority.

- The most controversial issue was Representation and Franchise and in the report Sandys summarised the different parties position as follows:
  1. UFP recognised the need for increased African participation but stressed the importance of not lowering qualifications for franchise.
  2. DP No change and instead eliminating the present Lower Roll (which gave a certain indirect influence on election results to Africans).
  3. CAP advocated a simple franchise qualification of literacy in English.
  4. NPD one man – one vote the only realistic solution.
  5. The Coloured Community asked for two seats reserved for them.
  6. The Asian Organisation considered universal adult suffrage as the ultimate goal to be achieved in phases.

No group could get agreement to their position. Nevertheless, while maintaining their respective position, all parties except the DP agreed to a scheme proposed by the UFP backbencher Hirsch should be introduced. (It is a rather complex scheme and it is annexed to the thesis as Annex 1). NDP however accepted only after Sandys indicated that Whitehead could call off the Conference if they did not agree.\textsuperscript{67} The main principles are that there are two rolls A with higher qualifications and B with lower qualifications. 50 Members are elected from the A roll and 15 from the B roll. A second preferential vote is included.

\textsuperscript{64} Wood p.71
\textsuperscript{65} Shamuyarira p.157
\textsuperscript{66} Report from Constitutional Conference February 7, 1961 and Rhodesian Herald February 8, 1961
\textsuperscript{67} Shamuyarira p. 160
• Basic clauses in the Constitution cannot be altered without consent or referendum of the four principle races voting separately or by consent of the British Government
• The British Government was prepared to remove the reserve clauses which allow it to withhold consent to Bills and to annul Acts already passed by the Assembly. It will relinquish the control it holds over Native Department matters. Sandy considered that the Constitutional Council and the possibility to appeal to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council (in Britain) over matters of discriminatory legislation were enough safeguards for Britain to relinquish its reserved powers.

From a S.Rhodesian perspective the Constitutional Conference was remarkable because this was the only time before the Lancaster House Conference in 1979 that all political parties met to discuss the future of the country. However, the Constitution did not satisfy the two extreme groups the African Nationalists and the right-wing Europeans and the development during 1961 among these groups became decisive for movement towards UDI and a protracted civil war.  

The Rhodesian Herald’s editorial held that “majority of whites are not in any way opposed to African advancement, always provided that standards are not lowered and, equally, clearly that the white man is not prepared to sacrifice himself on the altar of McLeodlike expediency, which bows only to African nationalism”.  

The Constitutional process continued after the Conference with party Congresses in UFP, DP and NDP reacting on the agreement reached. In Britain two white papers were prepared – one summarizing the changes in the Constitution and one detailing the provisions – and they were published simultaneously in London and Salisbury. It was like most constitutions a compromise which represented the maximum what the Whites of S.Rhodesia would concede and the minimum what the Nationalist could accept at the end of the Conference (however only for short cf. below). The resulting papers were both complex and confusing and were printed in eighty thousand copies and put forward to the electorate (in principle only whites) in a referendum in July. They were also subject of a formal debate in the British House of Commons in June. Whitehead assured that the Constitution set out the white papers would be the ‘New Constitution’. The proposal got an almost 2:1 approval by the electorate. In Britain the Southern Rhodesia (Constitution) Act was passed in the House of Commons in London in November 1961, promulgated in December but became fully operational only one year later.
3.1.4 The position of the main actors after the Constitutional Conference

During the period February – December 1961 major development took place in the S.Rhodesian political environment leading up to establishment of the two key forces shaping the destiny of the country the coming twenty years – A radicalized African Nationalist party(ies) and an obdurate right wing European Party.

3.1.4.1 The white minority position

The two main European parties, the UFP and the DP, had taken radically opposite positions during the Conference. These positions were going to be continuously strengthened up to the election in December 1962.

The United Federal Party

Whitehead had the dual mission to convince both the white electorate and the African majority that the outcome of the Constitutional Conference was benefitting them both. Initially, according to Shamuyarira, he concentrated on the claim that he had secured virtual independence for the country instead of emphasising that the Constitution offered a basis for reconciliation between the two races. The Minister of Justice, Mr. Stumbles, went far in arguing that European voters needn’t worry about an African majority for ‘a very long time – or even longer.’ It was obvious that the first priority was to convince the Europeans about their gain of a new constitution as they were the ones going to decide its fate in the referendum.

In late February the UNF Congress voted for the agreement reached during the Conference. Of 400 delegates only one, the Chief Whip, Ian Smith voted against arguing that the new franchise with special seats for Africans was against the party’s non-racial principles. It was according to Smith obvious that “cabinet colleagues did have serious reservations...but sadly they had been unable to influence Edgar (Whitehead). While on the surface Whitehead might have appeared as soft and pliable, once he had made up his mind he became immune to other ideas, almost as if he had been ‘God sent’.”

It is obvious that Whitehead already from becoming Prime Minister in 1958 had been fixated to remove the reserved clauses in the 1923 year’s Constitution. He stated “During these last years there have been rather ominous signs of an intention to try to interfere in our affairs...and seeing this I became more than ever determined that the reservations on the Constitution must go.” So it was with great pleasure that he assured the Congress in February 1961 that “once it becomes law (the new Constitution) we shall never suffer this interference again from outside.” In the white papers prepared by the British Government it was also very clearly stated that “It will eliminate all the reserved powers at present vested in the Government of the United Kingdom

---

74 Shamuyarira p. 166-67
75 Smith p.42
76 Peck p.32
77 Ibid p.35
save for certain matters set out in paragraph 50.”  

As we will see later, this writing in the white paper on which the referendum was held became very different in the final Constitution.

In the debate on the white paper in the Legal Assembly in May 1961 Whitehead anew tried to calm the white electorate by emphasising “1st safeguard: All laws in force are unaffected by the Declaration of Rights. “2nd safeguard simple majority can after 6 months overrule Constitutional Council delaying power. We will also have the powers to amend the constitution. A Rhodesian will be appointed Governor.” He finished his presentation by saying “I will always make it perfectly clear that the A-roll must control the majority in the House at all times.” During the debate the opposition maintained that it was enough with 18 African seats out of 50 from the A-roll for their majority. Whitehead’s strategy during the time up to the referendum seems to have been to calm the white electorate and to emphasise the benefits the removal of the reserved clauses gave the country.

After the referendum he was anxious to see Africans register on the B roll and UFP continued its reform program. Amendment to the Entertainment and Censorship Act was gazetted in October allowing multi-racial cinemas. Swimming-pools in Salisbury became opened for all races and a bill to remove all restriction on the supply of liquor to Africans was published. The UFP Congress endorsed to completely repeal the Land Apportionment Act after the general election and remove all discriminatory legislation. However, as we will see below these measures were taken in an environment distinguished by increasing violence and opposition fuelled by the NDP propaganda.

The Dominion Party
The Dominion Party was the only participant in the Conference which did not signed the agreement. They made it very clear that they could not accept 15 African seats in the Legal Assembly in a bargain for removal of the reserve clauses. In a Press conference after the Conference Harper maintained that the British Government still had the right to pass restrictive measures affecting Southern Rhodesia if it so wished. In the same Press conference he warned Great Britain “that if the people demanded it [Independence for Southern Rhodesia] the country should resort to force to gain its independence” The Party continued to oppose a new Constitution based on the Conference agreement. Harper contended that there was much that was admirable about the proposal but he could still not accept the franchise and the representation and he argued that the 1923 Constitution was better.
He put forward six points reflecting his party’s position: to reject the present proposal, to maintain the 1923 Constitution, to campaign for dominion status, to promote better economic conditions to convince whites to stay in the country, to press for the return of vital powers and to reject the need for any new constitutional conference. On the eve of the referendum the opposition to the white paper according to Ian Smith “was indeed interesting: on the left were ex-Chief Justice Tredgold and Garfield Todd; on the right were Winston Field and the Dominion Party, with Nkomo and Sithole and the black nationalists adding their weight. So I found myself in the company of strange bedfellows!”

On the opposition side significant development took place during the latter half of 1961. Ian Smith the former chief whip of UFP’s Federation group aligned himself with the Dominion Party leader Winston Field also on Federation level. They gave up their Federation seats and returned to S.Rhodesian politics. After having secured the backing of financial heavy-weights they formed a new party inaugurated in December 1961, the Rhodesian Reform Party. During the first quarter 1962 negotiations with the Dominion Party (and two smaller parties) resulted in amalgamation of the parties under the name of Rhodesian Front.

3.1.4.2 The African majority position

The NDP represented by Josuha Nkomo and Sithole had signed the agreement reached during the Conference and Nkomo said of the franchise “We don’t support the franchise but we don’t stand in its way.” However, almost immediately dissenting voices were heard from the party’s executive and the most damning response came from Leopold Takawira, the party’s London representative, who in a famous cable wrote:

“We totally reject Southern Rhodesian constitutional agreement as treacherous to future three million Africans. Agreement diabolic and disastrous. Outside world chocked by NDP docile agreement. We have lost sympathy of friends and supporters. We have undermined Northern Rhodesia constitutional Conference. Unless you take firm stand in Sunday Council meeting future means untold suffering and toll. Pray you denounce uncompromisingly and reject unreservedly conference agreement. Demand immediately reversal of present position. Future of three million Africans depends on immediate action.”

After a heated NDP executive meeting a few days after the conference the party unanimously rejected the franchise and representation proposal but accepted everything else. In a sort of careful wording Nkomo conceded that “You have an organisation which is bigger than the individual. It is bigger than me. If I have failed, I must sink. The organisation must remain.” In relation to the British Government Nkomo

---

84 Smith p.43  
85 Shamuyarira p.161  
86 Shamuyarira p. 163-4. Baxter p.310  
87 Shamuyarira p. 164 Woods
maintained that Sandys had misunderstood him and when he had accepted “consider it” it did not mean “agreed”. It was up to the party congress to decide whether to accept or reject the proposal and whether the party would participate in the referendum and ensuing elections. 88

The Congress agreed unanimously that participation was conditioned on that
- The ban on meetings in the Reserves was lifted
- All detainees from the party were unconditionally released
- The land question was resolved to NDP’s satisfaction
- The Federal Government stopped interfering in Northern Rhodesia
- The election procedure to the Constitutional Council was acceptable to NDP 89

The Congress also rejected the franchise proposal. A warning was aimed at Great Britain “... the voteless Africans are still left outside the appropriate constitutional provision to exercise effective control of government. They have no alternative but struggle from the position in which they have been left, that is, outside the Constitution.” 90

When these demands were rejected, NDP decided to hold its own referendum and to boycott government’s referendum (where only a handful-4000-Africans was allowed to vote). As mentioned above the whites overwhelmingly accepted the white paper proposal and a little more than 60,000 voted. The NDP referendum among the Africans rejected the proposal with 467,000 no votes and 500 yes. 91 When the result was presented in London Nkomo was bluntly told by Duke of Devonshire that ‘Southern Rhodesia has a complicated advanced economy. We could not possibly hand it over to be run by untrained hands’ whereupon Nkomo replied ‘If development in Southern Rhodesia is an obstacle to the political freedom of the black people then we shall destroy that development....So if factories in Southern Rhodesia are an obstacle to our advancement, we shall have to blow up those factories.’ It was at this time (July 1961) that NDP decided to send young men for military training in China, Soviet Union and Egypt. A first step was taken for the armed conflict which finally became the only way to get a franchise based on one man – one vote.

In the party Congress in late October the NDP confirmed its rejection of the new constitution in its entirety and decided not to take part in the General Elections in 1962. It was also decided to convince Africans not to register for voting and if registered abstain from voting. As the Constitutional Bill approached its final stage before becoming law violence and rioting became daily incidents.

89 Day p. 232 Shamuyarira 164
90 George Siluka(Secretary General NPD) in Shamuyarira p. 165
91 Day p.234
3.1.4.3 The British position

The British position was influenced by conflicting interests. On the global scene both within the Commonwealth group and the UN anti-colonial atmosphere dominated, also among close friends like the US. At the same time the Conservative government met great sympathy among its electorate for kith and kin in Southern Rhodesia but it governed only with a slim majority. The Labour Party was strongly against any continuation of supreme white rule in Rhodesia. Also the triumphant feeling Sandys felt directly after the Constitutional Conference when all key actors signed the report changed dramatically when Nkomo and NDP immediately afterwards reversed their position.

However, Sandys refused to change the original acceptance and he followed the agreement reached that Britain should present a white paper on the Constitution to be placed before a referendum in S.Rhodesia. This white paper was presented in the House of Commons in June 1961 and met with scathing criticism from the Labour opposition. Many of their MPs questioned why S.Rhodesia was going to be treated differently from other colonies – “Fifteen seats, or it may be as many as 18 seats, are to go to the representatives of nine-tenths of the inhabitants, and 50 seats, or perhaps 46 seats, to the representatives of one-tenth of the inhabitants. How strikingly different this is from what has been found necessary and desirable in Nyasaland and Kenya”.92 According to Hilary Marquand a special treatment of S.Rhodesia could have repercussions on Britain’s position in the whole of Africa.

The Conservatives however defended the paper and Braine who presented the paper in the House of Commons voiced the opinion “that the National Democratic Party does not speak for all Africans in Southern Rhodesia. There were other distinguished Africans present at the Constitutional Conference, representative of the hereditary chiefs of the country, and also representatives of other political parties who do not share the National Democratic Party's political beliefs and do not approve of its tactics.”93

In the end no changes were made to the white paper which the electorate in S.Rhodesia voted to accept a month later, in spite of a final emotional appeal by Marquand “. Do not let us give cause for hatred to grow. Do not let us allow them to be led to think that their trust has been betrayed. Let us try to learn the lessons of the past and of the history of too little being done too late in Ireland, India, Cyprus and elsewhere. Let us think again. Let us take the opportunity of this debate, and let the right hon. Gentleman in speaking tonight accept the Amendment [by the Labour Party] or its spirit, and let us try again to find a decent solution.”94

---

92 United Kingdom House of Common debate 22 June 1961 (HoC June 61) contribution by Mr. Hilary Marquand
93 (HoC June 61) contribution by Mr Bernard Brain
94 (HoC June 61) by Mr Hilary Marquand
Shamuyarira in his book Crisis in Rhodesia published in 1965 held that “Therefore he [Sandys] and the British Government he represented are largely responsible for the impasse to-day and the possible consequences tomorrow. It is he who must be charged in the dock of history for acquiescing to and even initiating the betrayal of the interests of four million Africans and the baptising the fraud as a miracle. We blame each other, but we blame Sandys most.”

There was a second reading of the Bill in November 1961 before it was promulgated by the Order in Council in December. There were some interesting contributions with reference to the political situation among the whites in S.Rhodesia. On a direct question from a Labour MP if the Honourable Wall (Conservative MP) would “feel as happy about the future of the Africans if he knew there was a possibility of the success of the Dominion Party under Mr. Harper?” The answer from Wall indicated that he was out of touch with the reality of S.Rhodesian political environment when he answered: “Quite honestly, I should not. But there is no chance of that now. The Constitution makes every candidate responsible both to the black and to the white electorate on both rolls. I should think that that would effectively rule out the success of many candidates of the Dominion Party.” The same sentiment was heard from Mr Sandys when he argued that “Things cannot be decided by an unofficial referendum organised by some outside party. Reference was made to the N.D.P.’s independent referendum, but when there is an electorate set up under a constitution, some attention must be paid to it. It was remarkable that the electorate approved this new Constitution by a large majority. That is a measure of the practical spirit of co-operation between the races which is daily becoming more apparent.”

Another interesting point raised by Mr. Marquand was related to Britain’s ambiguous economic interests in S.Rhodesia. “Southern Rhodesia is becoming an increasingly industrialised country, because large numbers of United Kingdom firms have interests there and because of these interests of the United Kingdom and of powerful financial groups and companies in the Rhodesias generally, it was felt that Africans could not be trusted with the same extension of political power that they have in the less developed parts of Africa. That is the impression that they [the Africans] were left with.”

No changes were accepted during the debate but probably the Labour arguments had some effect on Sandys because in the final Constitution promulgated in December a small but vital addition had been made in the form of Section III which went unnoticed for some time. It could be seen as an act of treachery against the whites in S.Rhodesia. According to Ian Smith it implied a substantial deviation from what had been agreed, retaining for the UK the right to intervene by Order-In-Council everything else to the contrary of the Constitution notwithstanding. This meant that full powers were reserved

95 United Kingdom House of Common debate 08 November 1961 (HoC Nov.61) contribution by Mr. March
96 (HoC Nov.61) contribution by Mr. Wall
97 (HoC Nov.61) contribution by Mr Sandys
98 (HoC Nov.61) contribution by Mr. Marquand
for the Crown to amend, add to, or revoke certain sections in the Constitution by Order in Council. This was in direct conflict with the provision in the white paper where it was explicitly stated “will eliminate all the reserve powers at present vested in Government of the United Kingdom, with the exception of those affecting the position of the Sovereign and the Governor.”  

With a stroke of a pen all gains for the whites in the new Constitution had been removed!

3.2 The General Election 1962

1962 became a decisive year for S.Rhodesia. It was characterised by increasing political violence, the establishment of a racist right-wing European party and increasing international pressure for a democratic settlement of the Rhodesian problem. At the end of the year a General Election drastically changed the political landscape.

This chapter will focus on the strategies employed by the key actors in the running up to the election. To lay a base for analysis of the inquiry into why the white electorate changed from support of UFP in the constitutional referendum to RF (Rhodesian Front) in the general election, special focus will be on the white political parties and their behaviour during the year. This focus will be dealt with under two headings, the pre-election period (January – November) and the election campaign period (December). To relate the effects of the activities of the secondary actors, NDP and the British Government, to the main actors performance the order of presentation will be reversed compared to the preceding chapter.

3.2.1 The strategy of the African majority

NPD reacted to the promulgation of the new Constitution by staging sit-down protests mainly by women in Salisbury but also with more violent protests outside police stations. Whitehead responded to this challenge to the government’s authority by banning NDP. However, no arrests were made of its leaders. In defiance of the ban Nkomo and followers established a successor party, ZAPU (Zimbabwean African People’s Union). The party aimed at establishing a democratic state based on one man-one vote and therefore rejected the 1961 Constitution, the registration of African voters and refused to participate in the forthcoming election.

The party followed two lines of actions to achieve its goals. Intimidation and petrol bombing of chiefs, African representatives of UFP and registered voters contributed profoundly to the low registration of voters and later to the low turnout among the registered African voters. At the same time the party also used democratic means to convince the Africans to boycott the election. Sithole stationed in Dar-es-Salam sent a letter reading “Have nothing to do with the next election. You will be committing suicide if you vote. We demand majority elections, and not minority elections. The country is ours by birth, not by immigration or naturalization. We shall not help immigrants to

99 Smith p.43
establish their racialist rule over us.” During the year preparation for what was to come, the liberation war, started. Young recruits were sent for military training and smuggling of explosives and weapons started.

The second line of action involved the bypassing first the Government of S.Rhodesia, later the British Government to finally bring the issue of the S.Rhodesian Constitution to the table of UN. A number of meetings and resolutions on this issue took place during 1962. The UN Trusteeship Committee described S.Rhodesia as a ‘non-self governing territory within the meaning of the UN Charter’ and therefore called on Britain to ensure an immediate suspension of the 1961 Constitution, cancellation of the general election, an immediate Constitutional conference and the urgent introduction of basic political rights especially the right to vote for all inhabitants.100

This resolution was adopted by the General Assembly in October 1962. In short this was the full want list of ZAPU! A party not any longer legal in S.Rhodesia – it was banned in September 1962. All leaders were arrested and restricted for three months (i.e. till after the General Elections) to their ancestral homes in the Tribal areas under strict surveillance. To the scare of the white population also coffers of explosives and fuses were found in the houses raided. The banning of the party and the detention of its leaders did not stop violence and arson and the intimidation of African voter by African nationalists continued unabated.

In summary the Nationalists put up no candidates for the election, called upon all Africans to refuse registration to the voters’ roll and on the already registered not to vote.101

3.2.2 The British strategy

Initially Britain felt convinced that the new constitution with a certain power for the B roll voters i.e. Africans could influence the outcome in the A roll constituencies, should secure a victory for the multi racial party(ies). During 1962 Britain’s position was to defend the 1961 Constitution in all fora. It emphasised that the constitution aimed towards the principle of universal suffrage. The First Secretary of State, Central Africa Office, Butler was the one to support this position vis-à-vis UN, the nationalist and to back Whitehead and his government. However, although condemning ZAPU’s intimidations at home he did not persuade ZAPU to stop the electoral boycott action when visiting S.Rhodesia in May. His statement that no adjustment to the 1961 Constitution was necessary made ZAPU upset and they refused to see him as he obviously had ‘no concern for the problems of the African people’.102

In the UN Butler maintained that Britain could not interfere in the internal affairs of S.Rhodesia. As a final effort to influence the UN Trustee Committee Whitehead was

100 Wood p. 119
101 Barber p.462
102 Wood p.103
offered a place in the British delegation to the Committee. Whitehead argued that the white minority had no intention to cling to power adding “I have no doubts that African will have a majority within fifteen years” and that his Government tried to build a multi-racial society. As reported above Whitehead did not convince the Committee.  

3.2.3 The positioning of the main contenders in the 1962 General Election

The two contenders in the upcoming election had very different conditions at the beginning of the election year. UFP came from a resounding victory in the referendum while the opposition party, the DP was in shambles. However, with the country, the region and the whole continent in turmoil the most important thing was to read the mood and aspiration of the electorate correctly. One party did the other did not!

3.2.3.1 The United Federal Party

As we saw above Whitehead concentrated before the referendum to sell the Constitution to the white electorate while after the referendum his main aim was to convince the Africans to register for voting in the upcoming election. A number of reforms were introduced and the party launched its Build a Nation Campaign aiming at getting 50,000 Africans to register on the B roll. “He passed legislation removing redundant racial discrimination and embarked on his well published Build a Nation, campaign encouraging black people to participate in the new scheme which for the first time in our history included special seats for our blacks.” Many observers note that Whitehead over-estimated the referendum victory believing that he had the white electorate behind him for drastic reforms - but as Shamuyarira states ‘they [the electorate] voted more for independence than reform’.  

As we saw above the NDP very early launched a campaign for boycott of the elections and by argument and intimidation ruined Whitehead’s Build a Nation campaign. In December came the answer in the form of a ban on NDP. The new ZAPU created immediately after the ban continued the campaign against the elections. Peter Baxter states that “With his fingers in his ears and his eyes clamed shut, Whitehead pursued the black vote in as determined a manner as he ignored evidence of gathering white backlash”.  

Another historian, J.R.T. Woods remarked that ‘the over-confident Whitehead made a fatal blunder’ when he in January pledged to repeal the Land Appropriation Act if UFP won the next election. Whitehead pointed continuously to his reform program in order to convince the Africans to register and vote but already during the first quarter of 1962 it became apparent that the campaign was a failure with less than 10,000

103 Wood p.119  
104 Smith p.44  
105 Shamuyarira p.167  
106 Baxter p. p.323  
107 Wood p.98
registered (20% of the plan). The NDP activities made it improbable that many more
would register.

Mr Whitehead found himself between the rock and a hard place. As Welensky Prime
Minister of the Central African Federation put it ‘if he acted against ZAPU he would be
condemned by UN if he did not act he would certainly lose the election.’ Britain,
having a hard time to defend its stand on the Rhodesian question internationally,
dreaded what was to come. Whitehead declared ZAPU an unlawful organisation and
arrested its leaders (see above). To many observers Whitehall had now become the
greatest liability for the UFP as Peck later stated “while it is painful to have to attack
one’s former leader, it is essential in the interest of Rhodesia that the record be set right
– What the Electorate rejected in 1962 was not, Sir Edgar’s liberalism, but Sir Edgar
Whitehead.”

3.2.3.2 The Rhodesian Front (RF)
In March 1962 the four white right-wing parties in the Federation, the Federal DP, the
S.Rhodesian DP, the Southern Rhodesia Association and Field’s and Smith’s Rhodesian
Reform Party joined hands in RF to stem the tide towards African majority rule and the
threat of UFP’s appeal of the Land Apportionment Act. They agreed on fourteen
main principles among them

- The Party affirms its loyalty to the Independent Country of Rhodesia.
- The Party will ensure that the Government of Rhodesia remains permanently in
  responsible hands.
- Total opposition to Communism and Communistic Ideologies.
- The Party will ensure the permanent establishment of the Europeans in Rhodesia
  and to this end will encourage to the utmost European immigration.
- The Party will uphold the principle of the Land Tenure Act.
- The Party will uphold the principle of the preservation of the Tribal Trust lands
  and will promote their development.
- The Party opposes compulsory integration and believes that the peaceful Co-
  existence of people can only be achieved when communities have the right and
  opportunity to preserve their own identities, traditions and customs, and
  therefore recognises the obligation of Government and respective communities
  where necessary to ensure the provision of such separate facilities as will make
  this possible.
- The Party will ensure that law and order are maintained.

The base for an election strategy can easily be seen. Catch words like independence, law
and order, government permanently in responsible hand, no forced integration and

108 Wood p.115
109 Peck p.109
110 Wood p. 115
preservation of the Land Tenure Act will from now on be the message which RP will send to the electorate. The response according to Smith was overwhelming “A political awareness had suddenly gripped Rhodesians, as there was a general feeling that the hour had come and if they did not arouse themselves they were going to lose their country altogether. The response was tremendous.” Only once during the year RF raised the issue of the 1961 Constitution in a policy statement in September when they declared that the intention in the Constitution was to bring about premature African dominance and therefore they would amend it if they came into power.

Before the election campaign started in December there had been an exodus of UFP members to RF and also big business had abandoned Whitehead and money now flowed to RF. However, as a coalition it contained actors with a wide spectrum of ideas and ambitions- from the pure racists in DP advocating apartheid like principles to a large number of liberal former UFP members emphasising merit before race. What kept them together was the internal and external threat to their way of life- ‘the alliance was always an uneasy one’.

3.2.4 The Election Campaign

This chapter will be based mainly on newspaper clips from the main newspaper Rhodesian Herald in the form of advertisements, posters and reports from election meetings. To a large extent it will be the voices heard during the month of December when the campaign started in earnest. It will be structured along the main issues dividing the electorate. I have chosen three main issues: constitution/ independence, integration/segregation (closely connected to the Land Apportionment Act – the LAA) and majority advancement.

If we study the advertisement UFP relies on full page advertisements of well-known faces of elderly statesmen making an appeal for a sensible decision to support the party which during decades has made Rhodesia rich and well developed. They also used comic photo montage to forward their messages. RF on the other hand delivered a number of well formulated and informative advertisements often addressed to young families.

It seems as if the RF set the agenda for the election by attacking the repeal of the LAA, integration moves and the advancement of the African population. This forced the UFP to defend their position and the only offensive moves were to emphasise that they stood for almost forty years of responsible government. It must at this point be emphasised that it was only European parties competing in the election both for the 50 seats of the A roll (almost only white in the electorate) and the 15 seats for Africans. As we saw above the Nationalist party boycotted the election and the small CAP played a minor role

---

111 Smith p.47
112 Godwin/Hancock p.19
3.2.4.1 Constitution/Independence

This issue had a rather low profile from both main parties. It became closely connected to the question of who was most suitable to govern the country in the very volatile environment prevailing both internally and externally. The ruling party used the old well known faces to defend the party’s position. 

Sir Roy Welensky - the Federal Prime Minister - appears in an advertisement where he defends the Constitution, repeal of the LAA and the continuation of the Federation in rather vague words but warned for regime change which would lead to “economic disaster, retrenchment and the greatest threat to defence and security.”

Lord Malvern – former Sir Godfrey Huggins - was a real heavy weigh in Rhodesian politics and served as Prime Minister in S.Rhodesia 1933-53 and Prime Minister in the Federation 1953-56. In another advertisement he declared (far seeing) that “Opposition plans would mean complete disaster. If you, who are the bulk of the electorate put a reactionary Government in now not facing the reality of the situation what will happen? You will play into the hands of the extremists. You will forfeit the friendship of the Africans. You will pave the way for violence on a scale we dare not imagine.”

Sir Edgar Whitehead on the other hand behaved as the unguided missile he was considered to be among many of his followers by declaring on the eve of the election “In my new government there will be one African who later will be joined by another three to four and in the end the government will have six Africans and five Europeans members.”

For many this pronouncement spelled disaster for UFP.

Among the comic full-page phomontage which UFP presented one shows a rider in the middle of a cascading river fully submerged except a hand holding a RF marked portfolio over the head and with the text “This is no time to change horses midstream”.

The President of the RF, Winston Field accused the UFP for appeasement politics vis-à-vis Britain and the nationalists. He declared “If you give me the power in the election I will go to London immediately and declare our independence”. In an advertisement outlining RF’s main policies it is emphasised that: “Our constitutional position is, with and without the Federation, to seek independence under suitable constitutional sovereignty within or outside Commonwealth.” This points towards what was coming, the UDI.

But the main thrust from RF was as an advertisement appearing every second day in December presenting two editorials from January 28, 1962 by Sunday Mail and asking

113 RH Dec.9 1962
114 RH Dec. 1, 1962
115 RH Dec.12, 1962
116 RH Dec. 10 1962
117 RH Dec. 7, 1962
118 RH Dec.7, 1962
the question Who should govern? The editorials are a frontal attack on Whitehead and the main message is “For good or ill we are now in possession of a Constitution that is tailor-made for a hand-over of control to non-whites long before they are fitted to wield it. WHETHER IT IS SO HANDED OVER DEPENDS ON THE MAN AT THE HELM. We have pointed out weaknesses in the Constitution, but these weaknesses do not have to be fatal if control remains in the hands of a leader who appreciates that undue haste can and will end in disaster.” Naturally the editorial did not consider Whitehead to be that leader!

3.2.4.2 Integration/segregation

This is an issue which became the main thrust of the RF campaign. They considered that the UFP proposal to appeal the LAA would make integration in schools, hospitals and nursing homes unavoidable. And some letters to the editor confirmed that this troubled the electorate “The Constitution recognises different racial groups but Sir Edgar does not...with the free hand he has demanded his intention is to allow Africans to swamp hospital wards, schools and every other European amenity.”

The RF invested in this anxiousness stating “The repeal or otherwise of the LAA is one of most important single decision facing the Electorate next Friday. If the ruling party is returned to power it means Forced Social Integration at all levels...and in all residential areas not just the three Salisbury suburbs mentioned in the article. The Front accepts that where there exists a demand for socially integrated communities, conditions should permit this. But it refuses to accept the principle of Forced Integration which impinges upon the freedom of the individual MAN MUST BE FREE TO LIVE WITH HIS OWN KIND.”

It was also here that RF used a photo montage advertisement ‘The Leg ad’ showing the legs of African and white schoolgirls marching into what appeared to be classrooms. According to Shamuyarira this advertisement had tremendous impact during the campaign.

In a wider perspective RF was also the white landowning elite’s party so they advanced the issue in another advertisement announcing that: “The Front believes that, as people of Southern Africa differ in many respects, the pattern and principles of racial differentiation in the ownership, use and tenure of land established under the LAA must be maintained. The front adheres to the principles in the constitution and in the LAA namely, that the ownership, use and occupation of land must in the main and in the interest of harmony and stability be preserved to persons of a given race. This in no way implies the adoption of rigid segregation.”(original accentuation)

119 RH Dec.6, 8, 10 1962 Original editor January 28, 1962
120 RH Dec.1 1962
121 RH Dec.11, 1962
122 Shamuyarira p.214
The Front recognizes that in the national and individual interest specified and commercial areas must be open to all races and where needed certain multi-racial residential areas."\textsuperscript{123}

Rather late UFP recognised the need to counter this propaganda and a few days before the election they presented in a full-page advertisement what they termed “An election bogey” from which the following excerpt are taken:

“In their attempt to frighten the European voter into supporting them they have left no stone unturned to paint as black a picture of the result of racial integration can be.”

“To us the integration bogey the Rhodesian Front has been using as a scarecrow should be treated with the utter contempt it deserves. Africans are as natural as any other human race in the world and would not wish to associate with anyone who does not welcome them. What they strongly resent is to bear the stigma of being kept away from certain prescribed areas for no other reason than that their colour happen to be black. This is an insult against which they will continue to fight whether or not the Rhodesian Front is in power.”\textsuperscript{124}

This is a very clear issue of fundamental ideological differences between a multi-racial view and a pure racist view.

3.2.4.5 Advancement of the African population

UFP preached the necessity for African advancement in an orderly, gradual pace and Whitehead predicted that within 15-20 years they would take over the power. RF made some lip service to African advancement but a deep down rooted belief was later expressed by Ian Smith with his infamous words: ‘I repeat, I do not believe in majority rule - not in a thousand years’.\textsuperscript{125}

The preceding part also dealt with issues of African advancement. On a wider scale the UFP tried to convince voters of the inevitable, that the time for change had come. In another full-page photo montage showing a large photo of man with his head buried in the sand. “This man is a menace. He won’t face facts, the future or world opinion. He is going to vote for privilege and prejudice with his head firmly in the sand.”\textsuperscript{126} Lord Malvern tried to put the appeal of LAA also in a wider perspective: \textit{The RF wants to hang on to it [LAA] as their most prized possession their Magna Charta. But Magna Charta brought liberty not division.”\textsuperscript{127}

Mr Field on the other hand meant that the pressure to hand over to Africans will slowly disappear when the world becomes aware of how badly they perform “I think that the chaotic conditions this policy has created will soon become apparent to the whole

\textsuperscript{123} RH Dec.10 1962
\textsuperscript{124} RH Dec.12, 1962
\textsuperscript{125} BBC \url{http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/1138865.stm}
\textsuperscript{126} RH Dec.7, 1962
\textsuperscript{127} RH Dec.1, 1962
world.” With regard to S.Rhodesia he maintained that “In 1923 we were given self
government. Only in the last two years have we experienced interferences. We
maintain that nothing can be impost on us that we as Southern Rhodesian do not
wish”.  
Also here is a gulf between the opinions of the two contenders. However, it was not an
African but a white electorate which was going to decide the outcome of the election.

3.2.5 Election Results

The election took place on December, 14 and was the first election under the 1961
Constitution. The electorate was divided into A and B rolls (see annex 1). The
nationalists i.e. ZAPU did not participate but through its campaign for boycott
influenced the outcome to a high degree. Their quest for refusal to register had met with
great success. In the election only around 10,000 eligible voters were on the roll to be
compared to the aim of UFP to put 50,000 Africans on it. The second part of the
campaign, to convince registered voters to abstain from voting met with the same
success – only around 22% voted. It must be emphasised that even a registration of all
eligible Africans for the B roll meant that only 3% of the grown-up African population
could vote.

The A roll (95% were Europeans) had around 90,000 eligible voters out of a white
population of almost 240,000. Even with reduction of children the white population of
voting age amounted to almost double the number of registered voters. One reason for
this was that only Rhodesian citizens were allowed to vote, and many Rhodesian Whites
had never bothered to take out citizenship although e.g. Britain allowed dual
citizenships. The turnout on the A roll was almost 75%.  

The result became a big surprise as UFP was expected to win ‘Establishment always
win in Southern Rhodesia’. The RF won a large majority in the 50 Constituencies (A
roll seats) 35 seats to UFP’s 15 and also a majority in the Legal Assembly as the UFP
gain of 14 of 15 seats in the Districts (B roll seats) only gave them 29 in total and in
addition there was one independent B roll seat won by the white Dr Ahrn Palley. On the
A roll RF got 70% of the seats with 56% of the votes. This is a “normal” outcome when
“first-past –the-post” principle is at work. A party can win a number of constituencies
with a small margin and beat a rival party even if this wins with wide margins in the
constituencies they secure.

If we look at details in the 1962 election there are certain facts which must be
remembered. Firstly the constituencies are comparatively small with an average size of
only 1,800 voters. Secondly, there is a requirement that at least 18 Constituencies must
be rural. With the increased urbanisation taking place after World War II it became
more and more difficult to meet this requirement and also not to go below the

128 RH Dec.12, 1962
permissible minimum of 1530 (85% of average) voters. A delimitation process could take the form of gerrymandering benefiting the party in power. The RF victory depended to a large extent on the rural vote when it gained 17 out of 19 rural constituencies. The ones lost were one already considered ‘rururban’ close to Salisbury and one where RF almost got the majority (49%).

With regard to the urban areas UFP dominated Salisbury with 11 against 8 seats while in Bulawayo RF took 7 against 3. Overall in most constituencies the majorities were small from 20 votes to 200 in most of the constituencies.130

A couple of years after the election (1966) Stephen Hintz made a study based on a sample of 300 voters to try to also establish how, depending on “social aggregate” (close to the concept of social group) they voted. For the years 1958 and 1962 it looked like the following:

Table 1--PRO-EUROPEAN PARTY (DP 1958 AND RF 1962) SUPPORT BY SOCIAL AGGREGATE131

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Aggregate</th>
<th>1958</th>
<th>1962</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Afrikaners</td>
<td>80.0 per cent</td>
<td>90.9 per cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labourers</td>
<td>77.3</td>
<td>86.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerks/Salesmen</td>
<td>49.0</td>
<td>66.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmers</td>
<td>42.1</td>
<td>69.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economically Inactive</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>57.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managers</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>56.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professionals/Technicians</td>
<td>28.9</td>
<td>44.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highly Educated</td>
<td>20.5</td>
<td>31.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Sample Result</td>
<td>43.4</td>
<td>61.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actual Result</td>
<td>47.2</td>
<td>56.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table shows that DP in 1958 attracted the two low income categories Afrikaners (poor whites from South Africa) and the white labourers. These were the groups lowest down the white ladder closest to the emergent African “elite” labour force feeling the threat of competition of jobs. All other groups were safe in the hands of UFP. In 1962, however, the table shows a substantial flight from UFP to the newly created RF in all groups. Only the highest paid and the most educated part of the electorate still supported UFP. Obviously wealthier and better educated Whites rejected what was seen as the right-wing extremism thriving in RF In four of the groups RF gained a more than two third majority. This trend was most pertinently expressed in the farmer category probably connected to the threat of repeal of the LAA.

130 Ibid p.520
131 Table from Hintz Stephen,.The Political Transformation of Rhodesia, 1958-1965 p.175
Hintz also analysed how racial issues during the different elections played a role in the voting patterns. For the 1962 election he not surprisingly chose the repeal of LAA issue. He found a majority supporting the RF refusal to appeal the LAA in all social groups also in the two groups of wealthiest and best educated population. However, he also found that in all groups the support for RF was less than the support of their stand in the LAA question. Around two thirds of the UFP voter in the 1962 election did not agree with its party’s key policy on LAA. Of the switchers from UFP to RF almost 90% condemned the proposed appeal.\textsuperscript{132}

A small but interesting comment is made by Shamuyarira. He maintains that UFP lost on small things like making swimming pools non-segregated. According to him UFP lost two constituencies by small margins in Salisbury in areas where whites normally used communal pools as they were not rich enough to have their own pool.\textsuperscript{133}

4. Analysis

Part 3 has shown the temporal events, positions and changes among key actors during the years surrounding the 1961 Constitutional process. Based on this presentation this chapter aims at answer the research question why the winner with a large majority of the Referendum on the Constitution, the UFP, lost the ensuing General Election based on this Constitution one year later. The analysis will be structured around a number of secondary questions:

- Did the content of the new Constitution influence the outcome of the Election?
- What role did the concept of Settler State play?
- Did the position of the Nationalist movement influence the outcome?
- What role did Britain play?

4.1 The Constitution

As we saw there were a number of tricky issues during the Constitutional Conference which were left for Sandys to solve. If we concentrate on how these issues affected the white electorate and the Africans we might understand the impact Constitution had on the election outcome. I will concentrate on three main parts of the Constitution, the Declaration of Rights, the Franchise and the Reserved Powers.

The Declaration of Rights seems at a first glance to fulfil all internationally agreed conventions. It covers all important rights and it covers all citizens. However, as we saw there are a number of limitations to the Declaration all of which are aimed at the African population. These limitations were against what constitutionalism demands. Firstly, all laws in force when the Constitution was promulgated will remain in force even if they infringe on the spirit of the Declaration. The Law and Order(maintenance) Act for example is a breach of the rights to speak, to associate and assemble. Secondly, in

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{132} Hintz, p.179-181
\item \textsuperscript{133} Shamuyarira p. 214
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
contravention of the declared rights actions can be taken ‘in the interest of defence, public safety, public order or morality’ which leaves e.g. the police with wide power to act against the spirit of the Declaration. Thirdly, even if the Constitutional Council can stop a discriminatory law it only has a delaying power. The law can be passed immediately with two thirds majority or after six months with single majority. The fourth limitation is perhaps the most wicked as it gives a Minister a possibility to circumvent the Declaration. “If a certificate in writing is produced to the court signed by the Minister that in the opinion of the Minister the law in question is necessary ...in the public interest, that law shall be deemed to be necessary.” 134 To cite the Independent MP, Palley “It is ridiculous!” 135

It is questionable if the Nationalist representatives had read the Declaration carefully when they maintained also after they rejected the Constitutional proposal that the Declaration was OK. Another sinister reflection could be that with all its limitations it was much better for the Africans than the situation prior to the new Constitution. In any case it could be a point for refusal of the proposed Constitution. For the whites the Declaration did not pose any threat and Whitehead was eager to emphasise point one and three above during his referendum campaign.

The Franchise and representation became the trickiest issue during the Conference and even more so after the Conference. The solution became bewildering complex with four lists of voters to fit the idea of two separate rolls. (See annex 1) It has been widely held that as a compromise the Constitution represented the maximum what the Whites were willing to concede and the minimum the Africans would accept. With regard to the franchise and representation I would say that this is not correct. On the Nationalist side their representatives had a mandate to negotiate a minimum of equal representation. Why they initially accepted the proposal of 15 seats out of 65 (23% i.e. less than half) was probably not due to lack of understanding of the complex proposal as they were highly educated and one delegate, Herbert Chitepo, had a high degree in law. As Shamuyarira indicated, the blame falls on Sandys who obviously was eager to reach an agreement. In separate meetings with the NDP representatives he apparently warned them that Whitehead might call off the Conference if NDP did not accept the representation proposal thereby throwing away a Declaration of Rights, the Constitutional Council and the promise of a land reform. The NDP reaction will be further discussed below when we discuss the role of NDP in what was to come.

On the White side the proposal was in line with the multiracial aim for gradual expansion of African electorate to ultimately reach majority. It met complete refusal from the right wing DP which emphasised that it was a racial Constitution as it introduced race as a factor in the form of a the B roll giving Africans 15 seats. The old constitution according to their view was non-racial as franchise and representation was

135 LAD 49-50/ 5909
based on merit only. This may be an important point to keep in mind when we discuss the outcome of the election. The Constitutional process stirred racial issues and made these important in the election campaign.

It is of interest to try to understand Britain’s (and Sandys’) acceptance of a franchise which prevented 97% of the Africans voting rights. It was totally against the constitutionalism which International Law prescribed. Probably they could understand the sentiment of the whites in Rhodesia when they looked back on its own history. The franchise was only slowly extended to all British citizens in the beginning of the 20th century. The British upper-class (The Conservative Party had always represented it) at the time like the whites in Rhodesia had been afraid of being swamped by an uneducated mass having no respect for their way of life or their property.

When we look back on the result from the referendum the two to one acceptance was probably based on willingness by the white electorate to buy Independence for a small representation of Africans. It was a vote for greater freedom from Britain and believed to establish a better foundation for economic development but also a vote against the Nationalists who opposed the proposal. In short it was a vote for preservation of existing conditions. Mr Whitehead, however, seems, according to both the opposition and his own party members, to have misinterpreted it. He took it as a mandate to advance his reform program throwing his own party into disarray.

On the Reserved Powers it seems clear that they were given up almost in full in the version of the Constitution presented in the two White papers the electorate voted on. Equally clear, when we read the Statutory Instrument is that, what was considered by Britain as a minor point, the addition of section III, retained the powers authorizing the British Government to make vital constitutional changes unilaterally. Also this is against the concept of constitutionalism, which emphasise that if the Constitution is changed it must be with the acceptance of the people. Still no one knows if Mr. Whitehead was forced to accept this in a late stage, badly advised legally or simply as unaware of its meaning as almost everyone else. However, at the time of the election this was not a point raised and the white electorate was not aware that the price they paid in the form of African representation in the Legal Assembly was for something not delivered – far going Independence.

The Constitution did not become an issue in the election campaign among the participating parties, a little strange perhaps considering the opposition’s firm refusal of it. However, it instead came in through the back door in the form of a debate on who is most capable to rule the country. It is interesting to see that RF is using it as a lever to change not the constitution but the leader. When coming into power the RF accepted the Constitution as a base for negotiations with Britain. Probably, the RF advertisement with the editorial from Sunday Mail had more influence than the old UFP figure heads’ appeal to support the party as Whitehead met with increasing heckling during his election speeches.
4.2 The Significance of the Settler State

In section 2.3 it was concluded that in 1960 all three pillars supporting the Settler State was in peril. In this section the three pillars will be analysed from a perspective how the two contending parties treated issues related to them and also how they approached the electorate from such a perspective.

The **Power Pillar** is closely connected to the Constitutional process and the removal of the reserved powers. As we saw in the preceding section it never became an issue in the election campaign as a matter of S.Rhodesia’s power to mind its own business. This matter was considered solved (alas wrongly) by promulgation of the new Constitution. The RF though indicated on and off their willingness to proclaim unilateral independence as Field said “under suitable constitutional sovereignty within or outside (my accentuation) the Commonwealth”. With regard to the power to rule the country it of course became the first priority but in that respect it was the handling of the other two pillars by the parties, which became crucial.

The **Structure Pillar** refers to the necessity to dominate the Africans. This includes both means to control the economy and dominate politics as well as measures to keep the Africans in check. I will concentrate on these three issues which I find influencing the election most.

In politics the RF warned for too hasty and rapid advancement of Africans and indicated that they might even constitutionally revoke the B roll and keep the franchise as before, wholly on merit. This was an issue which had seen a number of UFP members shift party and it can be safely assumed that also certain parts of the UFP electorate would have done the same. However, unwise (in a tactical sense) statements by Whitehead probably played even greater roll. His vision of majority rule in 15 years and his willingness to take on African Ministers immediately indicating also majority in Government in a foreseeable future meant a knell to white supremacy. If the acceptance of the Constitutional proposal meant ‘so far but no further’ these statements were against the majority view of a S.Rhodesian future. Even if the electorate accepted the inevitable of majority rule sooner or later they obviously would like to delay it for as long time as possible. In that respect the RF propaganda was more palatable. It is also important to put the election into a global perspective. The Congo crisis had left deep scars in the mind of the White Rhodesians as a main part of the white stream of refugees from this country led through S.Rhodesia. This made African majority rule even more scaring.

The Magna Charta or the Foundation Stone of Rhodesian way of life, the LAA, was the very basis of white economic power. The decision to announce that UFP if winning the election would repeal the whole Act was another tactical blunder. It was done when it became obvious that the NDP campaign against registration and voting by Africans had won the day. This implied that the announcement could only scare away the white electorate and win very few African votes to counteract this. It played in the hands of
RF which concentrated much of its messages on this issue which they connected to forced integration and probably correctly emphasised that “The repeal or otherwise of the LAA is one of most important single decision facing the Electorate next Friday.” For the white electorate in general the RF credo, 'that man must be free to live with his own kind', was tempting. The UFP’s attempt to counteract this by calling it an ‘election bogey’ probably only contended the two groups standing up for the UFP in the election, the wealthy and well educated. Multi-racialist ideas were not fashionable 1962. For the specific group of white farmers the RF vision of the necessity to keep LAA and “that the ownership, use and occupation of land must in the main and in the interest of harmony and stability be preserved to persons of a given race” meant a huge swing from UFP to RF – RF went from 42% to almost 70%.

The third issue, the Power to Control the Africans did not become an open argument during the campaign. It was the actions taken against the increased Nationalist activities and propaganda the past two years which probably influenced the stand of the electorate. It is obvious that Whitehead during this time had taken a number of sweeping measures to quell violence and Pan African propaganda. A number of rigorous laws had been passed, not least the notorious Law and Order (Maintenance) Act. But it was the timing of some of the measures which probably marked Whitehead as being too lenient. Many observers could for instance not understand how the banned NDP leadership immediately was allowed to form ZAPU with identical program and activities. They were then allowed to operate ten months before they were banned and arrested.

The third Pillar Ideology has been touched upon above and this was probably where the two parties in their programme and election campaign differed most. It was so clearly drawn racial lines between the parties that the voters could not avoid realize the policy distinctions. At the same time there is a risk to believe that RF supporters have very different views on the African population from the ones of UFP supporters. Instead there are some basic stereotype views on Africans shared by most whites. You have civilized Africans, Nationalists and the mass of Africans. Civilized Africans are considered a small group denouncing the Nationalists and to UFP ready for political advancement. The Nationalist are by both parties considered relatively few, paid by foreign interests and who for their own power hunger intimidate the masses to support them. The masses are by both party supporters considered happy, supporting the government, ignorant of anything political and in need of protection from the evil of the Nationalists. UFP advocated for their advancement while RP recommend a separate development led by traditional chiefs. A majority of the whites did not consider they were racialists rather that they behaved in a certain way because they understood (in contrast to Britain) the social and cultural differences between the races.

However, there were also far-going differences between the two parties. Deep inside the RF supporters felt threatened by African advancement and Starling (see page 17) expressed perhaps the most bizarre comment when he saw Africans not as partners but
future executioners of the whites. Against this UFP leaders talked about friendship and partnership with the Africans.

With this as a background the most obvious difference during the campaign was related to their views on the above mentioned structural changes implied in the UFP program - the land issue and the ‘forced’ integration. Both were highly racial issues and they were closely interrelated. Hintz made an interesting attempt to assess the impact on voters of the UFP proposal to repeal the LAA (see page37). From his results it is safe to conclude that it was a tactically disastrous decision by Whitehead to make the appeal of LAA his main election topic. Wrongly or not this appeal was considered a measure which would open flood gates for Africans to swamp white schools, hospitals, and residential areas. In their heart most whites supported the segregated life they had enjoyed for generations.

From a Settler State perspective the RF is the custodian of settler ideals. As mentioned above also in the debates in the Legal Assembly the racist backbenchers (DP up till 1962) referred more often to discussions with their constituent members and they spoke the same language, political and colloquial as their supporters. They were closer to the grassroots and that made the difference in the election. UFP policy maker were not even aware of their supporters views on the LAA and that led to an alienating type of election platform. For a change the establishment was defeated by a kind of populist movement declaring that Whitehead’s policies were going to threaten the whole basis for the white way of life in Rhodesia i.e. the Settler State life.

4.3 The impact of the African majority’s stand

In one way the Nationalists decided the outcome of the election. By launching their campaign of boycott they prevented the UFP to win with the help of second preference votes. B roll voters could cast a vote on A roll candidates and even if their votes could only amount to a maximum of 25% of the A roll voters it would probably had been enough to swing many closely contested seats in the favour of UFP. Of the few B roll votes cast in the constituencies the trend was that 85% voted on non-RF candidates. If the Nationalists had participated in the election they had certainly won the 15 B roll seats and at the same time helped UFP to win a majority of the A roll votes. With African voters allowed to register and vote, UFP would have gained a 50% share of A+B votes in the Constituencies with the trend 85% non-RF votes by B roll voters while RF had gained 48%. Instead, as we saw above, RF got 56% and UFP 42% in the election.

Two questions arise from the NPD behaviour during and after the Conference. Firstly, why did their delegates accepted the franchise and representation proposal during the Conference and secondly why did they denounced it almost immediately after? The most probable explanation for their initial acceptance lies in the threat that if they did not accept the franchise and representation clause they would be left with the 1923 Constitution. Therefore they took the little that was on offer: a platform in the
Legislative Assembly giving them greater status both internally and abroad, a watered down Declaration of Rights but better than none, a Constitutional Council to oppose discriminatory legislation.

However, what they had not calculated with was the hostility they met from within the party. It became obvious that they had to denounce the agreement from the Conference to save party unity. It also became obvious that Britain would not give in on the agreement so preparation for a different kind of struggle started. From a constitutional struggle the party now switched to preparation for an armed struggle. Another question relates to their boycott of the election. They must have been aware that their strategy would certainly lead to a victory for the racist RF. It has been proposed that this was part of their strategy. They judged that the establishment of a racist regime would force Britain to intervene and establish the same policy they had followed in the other African colonies – giving independence based on universal suffrage. This, however, did not happen.

4.4 The impact of the British position

During the election Britain kept a low profile but also here the optimistic spirit from a year before had changed. It became obvious that the NDP and later ZAPU effectively had killed the expectation that the B roll voters could influence the outcome in the (white) Constituency election. Gone was the conviction expressed in the House of Commons only one year earlier that a racist party could not win. Britain’s betrayal of the whites and most of all of Mr. Whitehead on the reserved powers, added through the back door into the Constitution, was obviously not known to the electorate otherwise it would have had prominence in the election debates.

However, there remains one question unanswered. Why did Britain choose a different path for Independence in S.Rhodesia compared to the rest of its Empire? The UN refused to accept the British stand on S.Rhodesia and considered what happened there a British responsibility as it was a non-self governing territory’. However, successive governments, also the one following McMillan’s Conservative, the Labour Government under Wilson, tried to negotiate Independence for S.Rhodesia on terms not very far from the RF vision. With the statements made by Labour MPs in the debates in the House of Commons (see page 31-32) it seems a very unlikely development. Maybe it points to what Mr. Marquand hinted to (page 32) and the remark by Duke of Devonshire (page 30) that Great Britain had large economic interests in the country which they were eager to defend. Its position rested on a neo-colonial attitude.

5. Conclusions

All main actors made far-reaching miscalculations which would contribute to a bleak future for the country the coming twenty years. The ruling party, the UFP, misjudged the sentiments in the electorate and lost the election and would later, in the next election
be wiped out. The African Nationalists misjudged Britain’s interests in the country and the expected intervention for democracy was checked by neo-colonial interests. The Rhodesian Front misjudged the support of the masses to the Nationalist movements and their determination to acquire democratic rights. Britain misjudged both the determination of the white government to go for Unilateral Declaration of Independence and the Nationalist movements to go for an armed struggle. These misjudgements led to a protracted Civil War ending in 1979 with a new more democratic (not fully) Constitution based on one man – one vote!!

The hypothesis that the Constitutional process led to a radicalization of the main actors was partly confirmed. The process led to a focus on racial issues in the ensuing election. Among the white minority UFP attempted to develop a policy of continued white domination while making constitutional concessions to Africans in order to attract the African middle class. When UFP pressed on with multiracial structural reforms the electorate switched to the racist RF which was considered bearer of the dominant settler ideology. So far but no further was the electorate’s reply. Probably the switch also supports the second hypothesis that RF, willing to go for UDI, was a better negotiator for white supremacy in the talks with Britain.

Among the African majority it was the well educated African middleclass who led the Nationalist movement. During late 1950’s they had supported multiracial ideas but with the ousting of Garfield Todd and with the increased power of Pan African ideas on the continent they changed from multiracial reformists to majority rule advocates. After rejecting the 1961 Constitution they anew changed from constitutional reformists to supporter of an armed struggle. Britain’s role was ambivalent trying to please all actors, the Southern Rhodesian whites and Africans but also the international opinion. However, it seems to have been its own neo colonial interests that finally determined their position and its fault in the move towards UDI and the civil war was huge.

With regard to the research question there were two main reasons why the successful party in the Referendum lost the General Election to its opponents. Firstly, the decision by the Nationalists to boycott the election and the heavy-handed actions they took to achieve this goal created a white back-lash against the ruling party and the loss of the second vote advantage. Secondly, when the ruling party decided to make the repeal of the LAA a key election issue they lost not only indifferent voters but also a major part of its normal electorate. They threatened the Settler State’s way of life for the white minority.
6. References

Published sources and literature


Good, Kenneth. *Settler Colonialism in Rhodesia* African Affairs, Vol. 73, No. 290 1974


Kaplan, Marion *Their Rhodesia.* Transition, No. 23 (1965), pp. 32-44

Leaver, John David *Multiracialism and nationalisms: a political retrospective on 1950s southern Rhodesia ('colonial Zimbabwe')* Journal of Third World Studies, 2006

Legislative Assembly Debates. Report 46. 47, 49-50


Shamuyarira, Nathan. *Crisis in Rhodesia.* London 1965. Andre Deutsch Ltd


United Kingdom House of Common debate 22 June 1961 vol 642 cc1696-739 (Internet address see Internet sources: HANSARD)

United Kingdom House of Common debate 08 November 1961 vol 648 cc1042-112 (Internet address see Internet sources: HANSARD)


Wood, J.R.T. *So far and no further.* Johannesburg 2005. 30° South Publisher.


Newspapers

Daily News February 1961
The Rhodesian. June 1961
The Rhodesian Herald. February 1961
The Rhodesian Herald December 1962

Internet Sources

BBC [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/1136865.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/1136865.stm)


Annex

The franchise

All persons 21 years of age and over were eligible for the vote. Two registers were compiled for each constituency and electoral district, namely an ‘A’ roll and a ‘B’ roll. The qualifications for these rolls were as follows:

‘A’ ROLL
1. Income of at least £795 for each of the two previous years, or ownership of immovable property worth not less than £1,650; or
2. A Standard VI education and either (a) an income of at least £528 for each of the two previous years or (b) ownership of immovable property worth not less than £1,000; or
3. A Form IV education and either (a) an income of not less than £330 for each of the two previous years or (b) ownership of immovable property worth not less than £550; or
4. Appointment to the office of Chief or Headman.

‘B’ ROLL
1. Income at the rate of not less than £264 per annum (£22 per month) during the six months prior to enrolment or ownership of immovable property worth not less than £495; or
2. A Form II education and either (a) an income at the rate of not less than £132 per annum (£11 per month) during the six months prior to enrolment or (b) ownership of immovable property worth at least £275.

Persons over the age of 30 were also eligible for registration on the ‘B’ roll, subject to the following qualifications:
1. A Standard VI education and either (a) an income at the rate of at least £132 per annum (£11 per month) during the six months prior to enrolment; or (b) ownership of immovable property worth not less than £275; or
2. An income at the rate of £198 per annum (£16 10s. 0d. per month) during the six months prior to enrolment or ownership of property worth at least £385.

All kraal heads with followings of twenty or more heads of families, and ministers of religion who could not fulfill the above qualifications were automatically entitled to enrolment on the ‘B’ roll.

Each voter had two votes, one in his constituency and one in an electoral district. Under a system of cross-voting the total number of ‘B’ roll votes cast in any constituency could not exceed 25 per cent of the ‘A’ roll votes in that constituency. By means of a special formula, ‘B’ roll votes could be devalued to maintain the 25 per cent limit.

Similarly, in the electoral districts, ‘A’ roll votes could not exceed 25 per cent of the ‘B’ roll votes.

The purpose of this system was to ensure that ‘A’ roll voters dominate the fifty Constituencies and ‘B’ roll voters dominate the fifteen electoral districts.