

**TOPIC : COLONIAL ADMINISTRATION IN RHODESIA**

**SUBTOPIC : COMPANY RULE**

## **OBJECTIVES**

**BY THE END OF THE SUBTOPIC LEARNERS SHOULD BE ABLE TO;**

- ✓ Outline the formation of the British South African Company.
- ✓ Describe the political, economic and social policies of the Company Rule in southern Rhodesia.
- ✓ Outline the effects of the Company Rule to the natives.
- ✓ Analyse factors that leading to the collapse of the Company Rule.

## **Introduction**



BSAC flag

- After colonization of Southern African people's way of life completely changed as people were forced to become servants of a group of whites who came from Europe.
- Chiefs lost their power to plan direct the political, economic and social destiny of their lives.

- The British South African Company was incorporated on 29 October 1889 by a royal charter given to Cecil John Rhodes and the company occupied southern Rhodesia, acted as a police force and developed settlements for white settlers.
- The BSAC was given the right to establish its political administration so as to protect itself against Africans.
- The BSAC was to develop southern Rhodesia without costing the British tax payer.
- The developments brought by BASC were a complete transformation of the lives of the Zimbabwean people from being a communal society to commercial communities under colonialism.
- The economy of Zimbabwe became a settler colonial economy and the colonial government established laws that revolved around natural resources.
- The pillars of the settler economy were mining and agriculture.
- The occupation of Zimbabwe by the BSAC was based on the idea that the country had plenty of minerals such as gold.



Aims of the company rule

## **Policies under the company Rule**

- The company began to establish proper Government and laws were backed back by legal system.
- In 1898, Southern Rhodesian Order-In-Council established the following under law:
- The official name for the country became 'Southern Rhodesia'.
- The BSAC was to govern the country with laid down, specific rules and a specific administrative structure was established on how to administer the country.
- An administrator was chosen to head the legislative function of government.
- All regulations affecting Africans were subject to British government approval.
- Laws that restricted African movements and farming, taxing them and forcing them to submit labour were enacted with British approval.
- The British Government did not stop exploiting blacks in Southern Rhodesia.

## **Economic Policies**

- The economic structure of the Zimbabweans completely changed soon after the colonization of Zimbabwe in 1890.
- The way of life for the Zimbabweans changed the dimensions.

## **Characteristics of the economy**

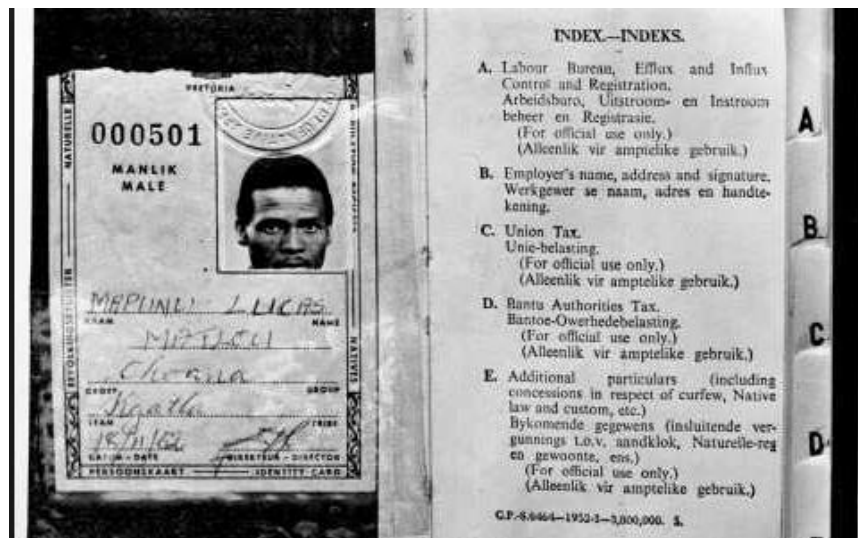
- The economy in Zimbabwe under the Company rule was based on the following factors:



Factors of Settler economy

#### (a) Pass laws

- For the settlers to completely control the Africans they instituted a number of measures which included the pass laws which controlled the movement of Africans.



Pass book

- The Pass laws were applicable to men and they controlled the movement of men looking for jobs in towns.
- After 1902 at the age of 14 male children were required to register at the pass office and these pass books were issued with identification certificate.
- Without identification it was illegal for men to work for more than 4 days.
- The pass enabled African men to travel into white man's areas between 9 p.m. to 6 a.m.
- The pass laws were burden to the Africans as they were subjected to prosecution because of these pass laws.
- These fines were source of revenue for the Government.
- Africans used different ways to resist these laws such as manipulating certificates, refusing to produce them and using other people's passes.
- Women did not carry pass registration books because African women were regarded as children thus could not make any decisions concerning the capitalist economy.
- It was because of this, till 1982 an African woman could not own property on her own name, could not get married or get divorced.
- Women were paid a less salary for the same job with men for example teachers.
- Women were therefore controlled by men.
- To restrict the women movement, the Europeans began refusing to allocate urban housing to women.

## **(b) Industrialization**

- The first industry to develop in southern Rhodesia was the mining industry.
- The BSAC rulers had hoped to get the riches quickly in Southern Rhodesia.
- The whites faced problems in extracting gold due to the scarcity of gold deposits.
- New minerals were discovered like coal, chrome, lead and copper.
- African labour became the basis of settler economic development and Africans were forced to work under poor working conditions.
- Mine workers faced a number of challenges in the work places that is:
  - They were poorly fed.
  - They were paid low wages.
  - They lived in dirty and overcrowded compounds.
  - There was no privacy in their accommodation.
  - They had no protective clothing and were easily killed and injured.
  - Workers were sent home without compensation and had no system of medical treatment.
  - Poor sanitation facilities.
  - Workers were forced to work over time.

## **C) Recruitment of labour**

- Settlers faced serious labour shortages on their farms, and mines.
- There were two kinds of labour in Southern Rhodesia namely:
  - i. Direct forced labour and
  - ii. Indirect forced labour.

(i) Direct forced labour

- It involved state officials who dragged men from villages and forced them to work in the mines.
- Deserters were being shot and it was a form of punishment used.
- In 1901 it became clear that the method was not an effective method to obtain labour from Africans in southern Rhodesia.
- They also began to use migrant labour from Nyasaland, Mozambique and Northern Rhodesia but the method of migrating labourers became expensive.

(ii) Indirect forced labour

- After the failures of the direct forced labour the settlers began to use Southern Rhodesian labour.
- From 1896 to 1934 settlers imposed different taxes and closed down other economic opportunities available for Africans.

Examples of draconian taxes imposed

- Officials collected 2 611 heads of cattle in Mashonaland as tax (1895)
- Wife tax – 10 shillings per year to be paid for every wife (1903)
- Dog tax (1912)
- Grazing fees imposed in Matabeleland (1912)
- Cattle- dipping was made compulsory at one or two shillings per cow (1912).
- 2 shillings and 6 pence tax on each slaughtered cow (1931).
- A tax of 10 shillings per adult male per year called hut tax (1894).
- The Government used the Rhodesia Native Labour Bureau (RNLB) to make Labour available in mines and farms.
- It recruited labour and forced Africans to sign contracts for long period.

- To obtain cheap labour settlers also grabbed land from Africans which was a means of production.
- Natives used land for grazing, mining minerals, hunting and gathering fruits.
- Africans were moved into unproductive, overcrowded, infected with tsetse fly, dry and hilly reserves.
- By 1902 more reserves were created in Matabeleland and Mashonaland.
- They were able to attract more white farmers and the creation of reserves was a method to obtain cheap labour from Africans.

### **Expansion of peasant Agriculture**



Peasant agriculture

- The effects of the company rule benefited local agriculture in the early years.
- Peasant agriculture prospered because of the following reasons:



- The capitalist system created market and the peasants began to produce for sale and subsistence.
- The hut tax system under colonialism forced African men to become farmers so as to get cash to pay taxes.
- The Africans also used new tools such as the plough which made the cultivation of land much easier.
- The Africans had control over land.
- Improved transport in the form of railway lines.
- Agricultural productivity increased and the expansion of peasant meant that settlers had fewer labourers.
- With the success and expansion of peasant agriculture, Africans could pay for their taxes from their produces.

### Collapse of peasant Agriculture



African agriculture vs settler agriculture

- The expansion of peasant Agriculture disadvantaged the settlers in terms of labour.

- The Rhodesian government implemented and introduced measures that ruined peasant Agriculture.
- These measures had negative effects as they destroy the agriculture industry of peasants in 1930.
- The white settlers took away African livestock, for about 80% of Ndebele cattle were taken.
- The 1894 Order-in-Council created the Gwaai and Shangani reserves.
- In Mashonaland and Manicaland grain stores were destroyed and taken in the 1896-97 war.
- They took the fertile land from the Africans and they reduced the size of the land set aside for Africans.
- The Rhodesian Government ruined African agriculture by creating white farming community that was heavily subsidized by government.
- This became a turn for settlers as they saw the benefits of agriculture.
- They grew similar crops to those grown by Africans.
- In 1930<sup>s</sup> African commercial agriculture had become almost insignificant and a number of laws were enacted to destroy African agriculture.

## Settler agriculture



Peasants working in field

- Due to the scarcity of minerals, European miners became broke, companies were forced to close and they considered farming as a better option.
- The first serious action came from the directors of the BSAC who set up a land settlement committee in 1905 followed by an Estates Department in 1908.
- The Rhodesian government created the Department of Agricultural Journal.
- The company began to work on crops like tobacco and citrus fruits and cattle ranching.
- To promote settler agriculture a number of incentives were introduced such as the reduction of land prizes and Europeans got land with watered rich soils.
- These agricultural policies resulted in a rise in the production of maize, tobacco, soya and cattle.

- European agriculture began to grow for the export market in Britain, Belgium, Congo and Northern Rhodesia.
- Africans who remained on European land refused to enter into labour agreements and were forced to pay the excessive grazing fees, dipping fees, hut tax and dog tax among others.
- In order to obtain wealth Europeans stole African cattle, employed Africans and dismissed them before pay and also demanded wide range of high fees.

#### Effects of company rule on Africans

- Laws were introduced to legalise the oppression and exploitation of Africans.
- Numerous commissions were set to force Africans off the rich soils and to surrender their labour.
- These included the 1901 importation of labour ordinance No. 18.
- 1907 mines and mineral ordinance.
- 1911 native labour regulation ordinance No. 16.
- Native registration ordinance and 1922 Gwaai and Shangani reserves Development Fund.
- Africans lost wealth and freedom.

#### **Factors that led to ending of company rule**

- Southern Rhodesia was ruled by the BSAC from 1890-1923.
- The company rule ended with the coming of Responsible Government in 1923.
- A number of factors led to the collapse of the company rule such as:
  - Loss of income

- Policies of the settlers were not always the same as the company's.
- There was often a conflict between the settlers and the company.
- The war of dispossession, of 1893 was costly.
- BSAC lost men in the war.
- The company resources, horses, cattle were killed.
- Deficit in administration- the company had borrowed money to run the economy.
- Mines were not working and BSAC was not making a profit.
- Involvement in the First World War proved to be costly to the company.