

THE NEW ZIMBABWE

By Joe Gatner

At midnight on April 18, 1980 the British Governor, Lord Christopher Soames, handed over power to Robert Mugabe's black-majority government elected some six weeks previously. The establishment of the new Republic of Zimbabwe ended seven years of protracted guerrilla fighting and repudiated the Unilateral Declaration of Independence declared by Ian Smith on November 11, 1965. This article provides some background on the events and characters before and after the establishment of this new Republic.

With an area that almost matches that of Newfoundland the new Zimbabwe is surrounded by five African countries which were involved in various ways in its journey to independence. To the North lies The Republic of Zambia; to the East The People's Republic of Mozambique; to the South The Republic of South Africa; to the Southwest The Republic of Botswana; and to the West the probable future state of Namibia or South West Africa, as it has been known up to recent times.

Zimbabwe's population is estimated to be approximately seven million, which is somewhat less than Ontario's. Approximately 96 per cent are Bantu or black. The remainder consists largely of whites and a small number of asiatics and coloureds.

Zimbabwe is hot and humid in the valleys along the Zambezi and Limpopo rivers which respectively delineate a good part of its northern and southern boundaries. These lowlands are cluttered with forests of teak and mahogany and harbour the breeding grounds of the tsetse fly, carrier of the dreaded sleeping sickness. In the interior of the country the altitude rises in a series of fertile plateaux with corresponding modification of the tropical climate. The areas that are not forested by tall trees are under cultivation principally by white landowners. The months from May to September are relatively dry while the rainy season lasts from October to April.

Almost half of Zimbabwe's border with neighbouring Zambia is demarcated by Lake Kariba. Held back by the 420 foot high Kariba Dam, Lake Kariba is one of the largest man made bodies of water in the world. It stretches some 175 miles up the Zambezi valley to the Southwest. Its Dam provides hydro-electric power to both Zimbabwe and Zambia. One of the most remarkable sights in all Africa is Victoria Falls located on the Zambezi River above Lake Kariba. The tremendous expanse of the Falls can be visualized by comparing them to the Canadian Horseshoe Falls on the Niagara. The Victoria Falls drop 355 feet at their highest point exceeding that of the Canadian Falls by a ratio of more than two to one, while the breadth of Victoria at the point of their drop is approximately 4,500 feet compared to 2,600 feet for Niagara.

The origin of modern Zimbabwe dates back to 1889 when the British South Africa Company was granted a charter to govern the area; an arrangement which lasted 34 years. After opting not to join what was then the Union of South Africa, Rhodesia became a self-governing colony within the British Commonwealth in 1923. Some thirty years later the British established the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland which lasted for 10 years. When the Federation came to an end on December 31, 1963, Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland were given indepen-

dence as the states of Zambia and Malawi. Southern Rhodesia also asked for independence but Britain refused to grant it in the face of black African demands and United Nations pressure for majority rule before independence. The white-dominated minority government, however, refused to give up an electoral system which was based on a qualified franchise. When Ian Smith, who became Prime Minister as head of the Rhodesian Front Party on April 14, 1964, failed to come to any agreement with two successive British Prime Ministers, Sir Alec Douglas-Home and Mr. Harold Wilson, he declared a state of national emergency and issued a Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) on November 11, 1965.

During almost 15 years of self-declared independence recurring efforts at arriving at a settlement ended in failure. The first years of negotiation were carried out with Britain but in subsequent years Smith attempted to come to some arrangement with black moderate leaders inside the country. These efforts bore some fruit. On March 3, 1978, Mr. Smith signed a constitutional agreement with black nationalist leaders Bishop Abel Muzorewa, the Rev. Ndabaningi Sithole and Chief Jeremiah Chirau. Even though it eliminated the white minority rule and brought Rhodesia its first black majority government, this agreement did not obtain wide acceptance. It was opposed by the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity. The Patriotic Front represented by Robert Mugabe and Joshua Nkomo, whose liberation movements had been carrying on active guerrilla warfare against the entrenched Rhodesian regime since 1972, also rejected the nationalist government. When the Lancaster House talks were commenced in London on September 10, 1979, under the auspices of the newly elected Conservative Government of Margaret Thatcher and her Foreign Secretary Lord Carrington, few people looked to them with much hope. Yet when they were formally completed on December 21, 1979 a new settlement had emerged.

THE LANCASTER HOUSE TALKS

The Lancaster House talks resulted in part from the response of Mrs. Thatcher to criticisms raised by black African states at the Commonwealth Heads of State Conference in Lusaka, Zambia from August 1-7, 1979. At this Conference the British leader agreed to hold a cease-fire and constitutional conference on Rhodesia and put forward a plan offering

a particular framework within a definite timetable.

The Lancaster House conference of 1979 was attended by Patriotic Front leaders Robert Mugabe and Joshua Nkomo, Bishop Abel Muzorewa, Prime Minister of the National Unity Government of Zimbabwe, the Rev. Ndabaningi Sithole, and former white Prime Minister Ian Smith. The host of the talks, British Foreign Secretary Lord Carrington, taking advantage of the right moment in history, was able to get the interested parties to accept a peace settlement and come up with proposals for a new constitution. The Lancaster House agreement, after some 14 weeks of hard bargaining provided for the establishment of a ceasefire, the return of Rhodesia to temporary British colonial status, the acceptance of specific conditions for a new constitution and free elections for a sovereign Republic of Zimbabwe.

The cease-fire arrangements, which were agreed to after the constitution proposals, called for: the establishment of a Commonwealth cease-fire monitoring force of some 1,200 men; the effective control of the Rhodesian air force against making raids on guerrilla bases; the cessation of all cross-border activity; the disengagement of some 45,000 Salisbury forces along with their confinement to base — a situation that was to be monitored by the established Commonwealth force; the similar movement of some 28,000 guerrilla forces to 16 designated assembly points around the country and British guarantees, especially with regard to South Africa, that no military or political involvement from the outside, other than that designated, would be permitted. Finally it was agreed the implementation of the ceasefire would be carried out under the direction of a British governor. Considering that the country had been in a state of virtual civil war for the past seven years the limited altercations that did occur during implementation of the cease-fire is a credit to the handling of the situation by British Governor, Lord Christopher Soames, as well as to the goodwill of the Salisbury regime and the guerrilla leaders.

The proposals for the constitution were forged after 38 days of often heated bargaining. They provided for a President as head of state and formally empowered to appoint all Cabinet Ministers, including the Prime Minister, heads of the armed forces and the police, members of the High Court and the Public Service Commission. Parliament consists of a 40-seat Senate with power to delay, although not block,

legislation and a 100 seat House of Assembly. To protect white European interests, whites are permitted to choose 10 of the 40 Senators and elect 20 of the 100 Members of the House of Assembly. This reserved white representation is protected for the first seven years of the existence of The Republic of Zimbabwe. During this period the Constitution can only be amended with a unanimous vote in the House of Assembly and by vote of not less than two-thirds of the Members of the Senate. After seven years the same provision will still apply to the Senate vote but in the House of Assembly an amendment to the Constitution will then only require a 70 per cent majority.

The President is elected by Members of Parliament for a six-year term with the right to be re-elected for a second term. In the Senate the 10 white seats are chosen by an electoral college consisting of the 20 Members of the Assembly elected on the white roll. The remaining 30 Members of the Senate are chosen by three means: 14 by an electoral college consisting of the 80 Members of the House of Assembly elected on the common roll; 10 by the Council of Chiefs; and 6 to be nominated by the President on the advice of the Prime Minister. Elections for the House of Assembly must be held within four months of the dissolution of Parliament; elections of Members of the Senate would follow within 28 days.

The judiciary consists of a High Court with an appellate and a general division. While the Chief Justice is appointed by the President, on the advice of the Prime Minister, other judges are appointed by him on the advice of the Judicial Service Commission. This Commission will consist of the Chief Justice, the Chairman of the Public Service Commission and two other members appointed on the advice of the Prime Minister.

THE ELECTION

The election provisions of the Lancaster House agreement were an important step preceding the legal independence of Zimbabwe. The elections were to be supervised by a British Election Commission assisted by a Commonwealth Observer Group of about 100 observers, including a small number from Canada. The voting system for the common roll was arranged according to the party lists in which the latter submitted names of candidates equal to the number of seats in each of the eight districts. Seats were awarded in proportion to the votes cast and candidates

were numbered in the order of the particular party's preference. The elections were held on February 14, 1980 for the 20 seats reserved for the white population and from February 27 to 29 for the 80 seats on the common roll for the black voters.

The Rhodesian Front under Ian Smith won all 20 seats reserved for the white voters. The black voters on the common roll had 10 different parties to choose from. First of all there was Bishop Abel Muzorewa's United African National Council (UANC) party which had obtained the majority of seats in the previous elections of April 1979. The most important parties turned out to be Robert Mugabe's ZANU-Patriotic Front and Joshua Nkomo's ZAPU party, which simply campaigned as the Patriotic Front. Both these parties were the political wings of the guerrilla forces. Among the smaller parties only two, Rev. Ndabaningi Sithole's Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU/S) and James Chikerema's Zimbabwe Democratic Party (ZDP), were considered contenders. The remaining five other parties played only minor roles in the election.

The election resulted in an overwhelming victory for Robert Mugabe's wing of the Patriotic Front. His party captured 57 seats while the party of the "father" of Zimbabwe nationalism, Joshua Nkomo, could obtain only 20 seats and Bishop Abel Muzorewa's UANC elected a mere three members.

THE NEW GOVERNMENT

Prime Minister elect Robert Mugabe's first words and actions were conciliatory. He called for reconciliation to heal the wounds of the seven year war and when appointing his cabinet two white members were included. Dennis Norman became Minister of Agriculture and David Smith was given the Commerce and Industry portfolio. Both came to Rhodesia early after World War II. Smith had been Minister of Agriculture in Ian Smith's Government from 1968 to 1976, after which he became Minister of Finance. Dennis Norman came to Rhodesia in 1953. He owns a number of farms and has been chairman of several Agricultural Committees. He became President of the Rhodesian National Farmer's Union in 1978. While only two in a cabinet of some twenty ministers, they represent a greater portion of the government than the whites do of the country's population.

Uppermost in the Prime Minister's mind apparently has been the desire to reassure the white population that it has a future in the new Zimbabwe.

Mugabe undoubtedly is aware that with their high level of education and skills and because of their capital resources, the white people of Zimbabwe are uniquely suited to make a significant contribution to the development of the country. If they need any further assurances that the white man still has a place in the new Zimbabwe, they can look to such appointments as that of Garfield Todd to the Senate. Garfield Todd is a former Prime Minister of Southern Rhodesia and an opponent of the Smith regime under which he shared both imprisonment and detention with the current black leadership of Zimbabwe. Similarly, the appointment of a former white Judge, John Fieldsend, to the High Court of the land gives further proof that white people will be given opportunities under the new regime. The retention of Lieutenant-General Peter Walls to integrate the two guerrilla forces into a new Zimbabwean army, in light of the fact that he had led the Rhodesian armed forces against them in battle over the years of war, is another indication of such priorities.

One of the most difficult problems for Mr. Mugabe has been the allocation of a portfolio for his ally and rival Joshua Nkomo. After some bitter negotiation, during which Nkomo refused the largely symbolic Presidency, he was forced to accept a diluted Department of Internal Affairs. A few days after the announcement of Nkomo's portfolio, Mugabe took away the responsibilities for intelligence services and the management of local affairs, leaving Nkomo only with immigration and control of the police. Undoubtedly, the rather ordinary cabinet portfolio along with the poor election showing of his party have been bitter blows to Nkomo and his supporters. Some of his most faithful lieutenants, including his deputy, Josiah Chinamano, and his press secretary, Willie Musururwa, both of whom had shared long periods of imprisonment with him, did not even get into Parliament.

The important cabinet positions went to Mugabe's men. Simon Muzenda, the oldest member of ZANU's national executive, became Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Affairs Minister. Edgar Tekere, ZANU's secretary-general became Minister of Manpower, Planning and Development. He spent most of the decade up to 1974 in detention and left with Mugabe for Mozambique in 1975. Enos Nkala, the Minister of Finance, was one of the few members of

ZANU's Central Committee to remain in the country for the duration of the war. He was in detention most of that time and was only released after the arrival of British Governor Soames. Simbi Mubako, Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, is a former editor of the Roman Catholic newspaper, *Moto*. Another important portfolio went to Dzingai Mutumbuka who was given the Ministry of Education. He was educated in Rhodesia, Zambia, Ireland and Britain. He was responsible for providing schooling for thousands of refugee children in Mozambique during the war. The only woman in the cabinet is Teurai Ropa Nhongo, a guerrilla commander and wife of one of Mugabe's generals. She has been given the Youth, Sports and Recreation portfolio.

Robert Mugabe who is now the most important political figure in Zimbabwe was born on February 21, 1928, the son of peasant parents. He began his education at Kutama Catholic Mission schools in the Zvimba Tribal Trust Land. He taught school briefly and in 1949 got a scholarship to study at Fort Hare University in South Africa's Eastern Cape Province. On his return home he again taught school but became disenchanted with the low pay given to Africans in Rhodesia. In 1958 he moved to Ghana where he taught at St. Mary's Training College. There he met his Ghanaian wife Sarah Hayfron. It was from Ghana that he came back home to go straight into Zimbabwe politics. Mugabe became publicity secretary of the National Democratic Party (NDP) in 1960. After the NDP was banned in 1962 he took a similar post with ZAPU. He became Secretary-General of his present party, ZANU, when it was formed two years later. He held that post when he began his decade of detention in 1964 under former Prime Minister Ian Smith's government. In 1975 he took refuge in Mozambique with his guerrilla forces from where he triumphantly returned to become the first Prime Minister of the new Zimbabwe.

As head of state Mugabe named the Rev. Canaan Banana who became President of the Republic of Zimbabwe on April 18, 1980 when Britain handed over power to the new state. Banana, 44, organized support for Mugabe's ZANU party for the February elections in the important province of Matabeleland but did not win a seat in the Assembly for himself. He had been an ally of Bishop Abel Muzorewa in the