

# U.N. Column

by Laura Parks

## When The Rain Comes

In a matter of weeks the rains will come to Rhodesia. The bush roads will turn into impenetrable foot paths and once again a great fear will fall upon the white settler farms and plantations. In a few weeks time when the sun goes down beyond the western horizons the guerrilla forces of the Patriotic Front will begin their most daring operations against the government of Ian Smith. Their task will be nothing less than the destruction of the Smith Regime.

In the east the guerrilla forces of Robert Mugabe, well trained and equipped, are prepared to move deeper into the remaining white held territories and lay the ground work for penetrating the cities. By Rhodesian standards the Mugabe led guerrillas numbering 15,000 fighting men constitutes a sizeable force, which the Smith Regime has after 10 years of trying has failed to isolate from the general population or defeat in battle.

The Mugabe forces are in de facto control of much of eastern Rhodesia's real estate. Their morale is at an all time high. They are eager to move on into the big cities.

To north the forces of Joshua Nkomo, though smaller in numbers, are just as eager as the Mugabe soldiers, to move onto Salisbury and other Smith batons. The tactics of the Nkomo forces has been to stage raids and then withdraw to safe sanctuaries. With the new offensive the plan is to attack and hold and eventually link up with the Mugabe forces.

Rhodesia's white population, ignoring pleas from Ian Smith, is leaving beleaguered towns and settlements for safer havens in South Africa. Few are returning to Britain feeling betrayed by British policies towards the rebel Smith government.

The guerrilla forces and the political leaders of the Patriotic Front are confident that the tides are renning overwhelmingly in their favor. By contrast the white settlers know that it can only be a matter of time for them before they will be forced to flee their rich farms and plantations.

In view of all of this and the general decline in its economic health, and in spite of flagrant violations of the selective sanctions imposed by Britain, which have been shockingly violated by the oil companies with the sneaky collusion of the Harold Wilson Labor Government, the Smith Regime and its international supporters have come to realize that if anything is to be salvaged for themselves in Rhodesia they must do some quick and fancy foot work.

First move in this game plan was the hastily arranged meeting between Ian Smith and Joshua Nkomo. With Smith supporters Abel Muzoreqa Sithole and Chirau proving useless black puppets both London and Washington advised Smith to meet with Nkomo in the hope of arriving at some kind of compromise settlement. Meeting collapsed because Smith was transparently trying to split the Nkomo people away from the Mugabe group.

Following hard on the heels of this ill conceived meeting the South Africans appointed as Prime Minister the hardliner Mr. Botha, a man known to favor the use of massive force to preserve the dwindling white fortunes in all of Southern Africa. He promptly announced that he would not permit the United Nations to supervise elections in Namibia and that he was prepared to back the Smith government in its moment of supreme crisis. Perhaps drawing some wrong conclusions from the Smith-Nkomo meeting, one of which might have been the hope that Nkomo and Mugabe might be split apart, politicians in London and Washington devised plan to invite Smith to Washington to further the white Rhodesian cause, and to widen any and all breaches in the loosely constructed black alliances in Southern Africa.

Smith, in Washington will argue, that a transitional government is a hopeless dream. He will cite the failure of his Nkomo meeting, and will urge Britain and the U.S. to abandon their Rhodesia plan for majority rule and recognize the Smith Regime as the legitimate government

## NEW DAY BEGUN

by

Benjamin L. Hooks



## Hooks Appoints Acting Washington Bureau Director

The Executive Director of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People Benjamin L. Hooks, has announced that Ms. Althea T.L. Simmons will assume the duties of Acting Director of the NAACP's Washington Bureau, effective January 1, 1979. Ms. Simmons, who will succeed the retiring Washington Bureau Director Clarence Mitchell, becomes the first woman to serve in the post that is the major lobbying arm for the Association's legislative efforts.

Althea Simmons is presently the Associate Director for Branch and Field Services, and is a seasoned member of the NAACP. She has formerly served as National Director for Education Programs, National Training Programs, National Training Director, Special Field Representative and Director of the National Voter Registration Project.

The 54 year old, native of Sheveport, Louisiana is a graduate of Southern University in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, where she holds a degree in Business Education. She also has a masters degree in marketing from the University of Illinois and a J.D. degree in law from Howard University.

Clarence Mitchell, who has been the NAACP Washington Bureau Director since July 1946, will continue with the Association in a consultant's position and as Chairman of the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights. In addition, he will serve as a Distinguished Visiting Lecturer in political science at Morgan State University, and will practice law with his son Michael in Baltimore, Maryland.

Mr. Mitchell, who has been affectionately called the "God-father" of the 1964 Civil Rights Bill, after an initial career as a newspaper reporter, started his NAACP career as Labor Director, before assuming the post of Washington Bureau Director. He has served on various governmental committees, including the President's Fair Employment Practice Committee, the War Manpower Commission, the War Production Board and the President's Committee to Employ the Physically Handicapped under the Truman and Eisenhower Administrations. Mr. William Penn, currently the NAACP Director of Personnel, will assume the post of Acting Associate Director of Branch and Field Services, (effective January 1, 1979).

that will then decide how to handle the transition problem.

At this late hour in the affairs of Rhodesia Smith will no doubt appeal to world public opinion citing Rhodesia's crucial role in the western economic and strategic framework and point to the Patriotic Front and Robert Mugabe as hard core marxist creations. Washington then will have to make up its mind whether or not it will support the Patriotic front or back down and support Smith, a course which would surely lead to a wider war in Southern Africa. With the Africans facing a clearly delineated foe their alliances would case harden under the eegis of the organization of African Unity with the strong possibility of Soviet and Cuban aid once again moving into Africa to aid the Patriotic Front.

But one thing is certain that when the rains come much will be washed away in the Rhodesian fields and plantations and the Patriotic Front will hold even greater power and authority in 80 percent of the land.

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Tommie Jackson

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