

TOPIC : COLONIAL ADMINISTRATION IN RHODESIA

SUBTOPIC : UNILATERAL DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

OBJECTIVES

BY THE END OF THE SUBTOPIC, LEARNERS SHOULD BE ABLE TO:

- ✓ Outline the reasons for the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI).
- ✓ Discuss policies and developments during the UDI.
- ✓ Evaluate the impacts of UDI policies on indigenous people.

Introduction



Smith signing the Declaration

- The Rhodesian front party which came to power in 1962 was firm to turn Rhodesia into a white colony.
- Their perceptions of the Africans was centred on their daily contacts with farm labourers as most of them were farm owners.
- African Nationalists were thorn in the flesh as they challenged them.

- Winston Field, the leader of the party, showed signs of hesitation when called upon to arrest African Nationalist leaders.
- In 1964, the leadership of the Rhodesian front party removed him from power after he had failed to arrest African Nationalist leaders and he was replaced by Ian Smith.

Unilateral Declaration of Independence

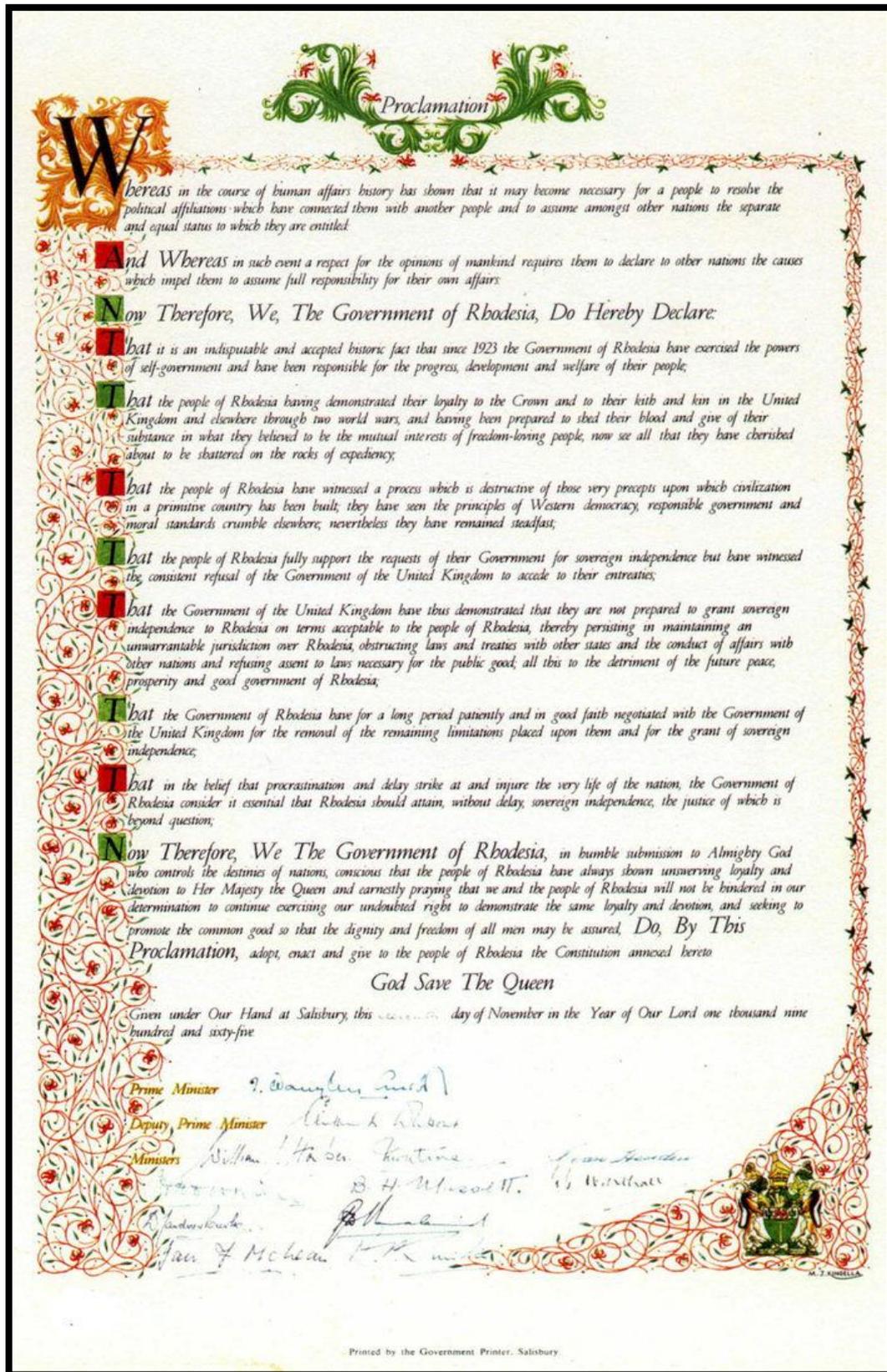
- Unilateral declaration of independence is a formal process leading to the establishment of a new state by a subnational entity which declares itself independent and sovereign.
- This is done without the formal agreement with the national state from which it is succeeding.
- When Ian Smith came into power in 1964, he persuaded the British government to grant independence to Rhodesia.



Ian Smith

- Britain, United Nations and Commonwealth did not grant Ian Smith his wish as they sympathised with the oppressed.
- Ian Smith and his cabinet agreed that if Britain refused to grant them independence, then they would simply take over Rhodesia.
- On November 11, 1965, he unilaterally declared independence from Britain.

- The Unilateral declaration of Independence was a rebellion between African Nationalism and Britain.



The Unilateral Declaration of Independence

Reasons for the declaration of the U.D.I

- With the rise of African Nationalist leaders, Ian Smith declared the UDI for a number of reasons which are:
 - (i) The Need to introduce a new Constitution that exploits Africans and serve the interests of whites.
 - (ii) The need for more government powers without consulting Britain.
 - (iii) Ian Smith wanted to be able to declare a state of emergence.
 - (iv) He wanted to be able to institute press censorship and ban the African daily news.
 - (v) He wanted the constitution to modify the 1961 provisions.
 - (vi) He wanted powers to declare war, arrest or detain Africans without trial especially nationalist leaders.

Education during the U.D.I

- African pupils were trained for industrial skills at a local level.
- The government proposed the building of new schools.
- 37, 5% of primary school leavers would go to junior secondary where they would train as semi-skilled labourers.
- 12.5% of primary school leavers would be allowed to go on a full secondary school program.
- The skilled apprenticeship and skilled manpower development Act as well as the Industrial conciliation Act prevented African from training and working in the technical field.
- White Trade unions also used their power to stop blacks from getting technical training.
- The bottle neck system in education made sure that Africans were always dependent on whites.

Legal system during the U.D.I

- The law was used as a system of oppression and under development.
- Laws were passed to rob Africans of their land, force them to work for Europeans and exploit their resources such as the Land Tenure Act.

Land Tenure Act 1969

- The land tenure Act replaced the unpopular Land Husbandry act of 1951 on the other hand it was the modification of the land Apportionment act of 1930.
- The act aimed at creating different areas for Africans and Europeans.
- The Land Tenure act divided land into three categories that is:

Europeans	45 million acres
Africans	45 million acres
National Land	6, 5 million acres
- The native reserves were renamed as the Tribal Trust Lands and this meant that Africans were to live permanently in those land, Africans were denied of living in European lands.
- Laws were also introduced to prevent competition between blacks and whites in terms of profit making.
- These laws were used to stop African Nationalism.
- Africans were not allowed to possess firearms and ammunitions for the security of the whites.

Policies and developments during UDI

- The metropolitan power through Harold Wilson responded to the Declaration of the U.D.I by imposing what was termed "limited economic sanctions" against Rhodesia through the United Nations.
- It is clear that Britain half-heartedly imposed the sanctions.
- This is because the ruling class in Britain were not hostile to the ruling class in Rhodesia.

- Britain had mixed feelings about the constitutional development in Rhodesia.
- Just before the unilateral declaration of Independence, Harold Wilson assured Ian Smith that should he declare independence unilaterally, Britain will not send troops to enforce its will here.
- The economic sanctions were of little importance as industrialized countries continued to trade with Rhodesia illegally.
- The Sanctions did not cause any problems in Rhodesia.
- In 1971 Ian Smith allowed the Pearce Commission to test opinion among the Africans on a proposed constitution which gave them nothing.

British talks with Smith

- The labour government of Harold Wilson pursued with Ian Smith and aimed at returning Rhodesia to legality.
- Other countries called on Britain to use force to bring Rhodesia to legality.
- However, Britain barred such resolution thus giving comfort to the Rhodesians but she continued to negotiate with Ian Smith.
- On December 2 1966 at the Tiger meeting, Wilson asked Smith to submit his resignation to the governor of Harare who will later request him to form a new government which is acceptable to the British government.



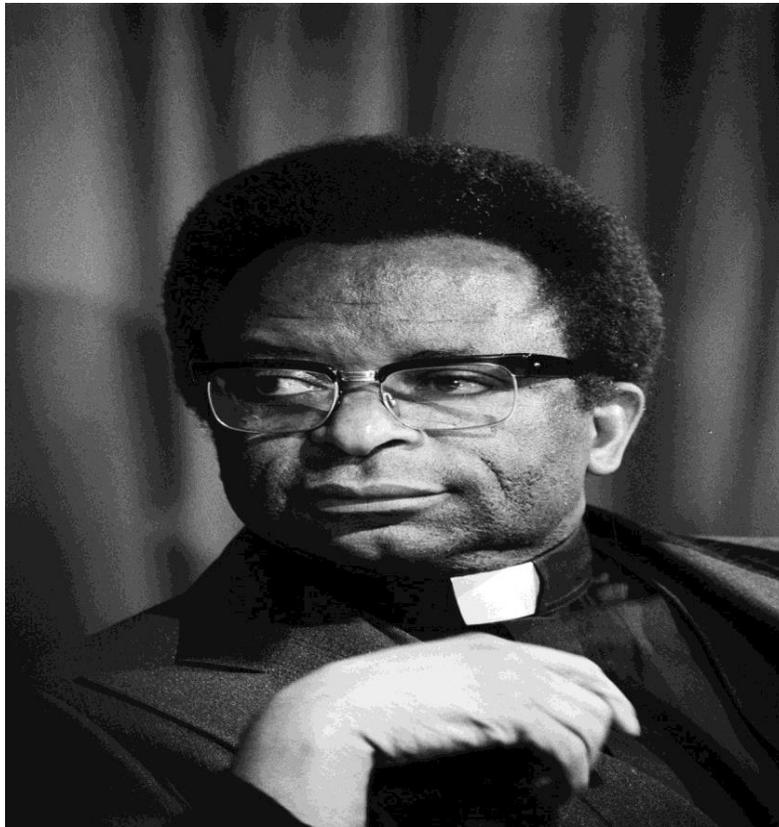
Wilson and Smith aboard the Tiger

- Smith agreed to the suggestion but when he discussed it with his cabinet, they announced their rejection on December 20 1966.
- The United Nations later imposed an oil embargo against Rhodesia.
- Wilson further announced that all offers that had been made to Smith had been withdrawn and there would be no independence without majority rule.
- In March 1968, a number of Africans were sentenced to death for participating in guerrilla activities.
- The Queen of England exercised her prerogative of mercy with Ian Smith but the Rhodesian government rejected it.
- This action undermined the power of the Queen.
- In October 1968 it seemed that Ian Smith was willing to settle and Harold Wilson was prepared to give him almost everything he wanted.
- Six principles with which a settlement framework was to be reached remains as follows in the Fearless talks:
 - (i) The principle and intention of uninterrupted progress towards majority rule contained in the 1961 constitution must be maintained.

- (ii) There must be guarantees against retrogressive amendment.
 - (iii) There must be immediate improvement in the political status of Africans.
 - (iv) There must be progress towards ending racial discrimination.
 - (v) The British government must be satisfied proposed independence is acceptable to the people of Rhodesia as a whole.
 - (vi) Ensure that there is no oppression of the majority by the minority and vice versa.
- Ian Smith later rejected the Fearless proposals on the ground that the last proposal would give the British government additional powers.
 - Once the proposals were rejected Wilson proposed in the House of Commons on October 22 1969 that an international committee should handle petitions on constitutional changes in Rhodesia.
 - In the general elections of 1970, the Conservative party came into power in Britain and the task of sorting out the problems in Rhodesia was one of their priorities.
 - The conservative party highly criticised Wilson and they felt that Wilson's treatment of white rebellion in Rhodesia was too harsh.
 - The settlement terms of Ian Smith and Goodman betrayed African aspirations.
 - The principle of unrestricted progress towards majority rule was met by a new clause which was to be enshrined in the constitution.
 - The clause would entitle Africans to one additional seat for every three thousand extra votes that would be registered.
 - The only hope for Africans was that the British government insisted on testing public opinion in Rhodesia on the acceptability of the settlement package.

The Pearce commission

- Lord Pearce was appointed to lead a commission into Rhodesia to establish whether or not Africans accepted the settlement terms.
- The Commission was welcomed at the airport with a large placard carrying crowd denouncing the settlement.
- The crowd referred the settlement as the betrayal on African aspirations.
- The activities of the African National Council an organisation led by Abel Muzorewa, did much to rally opinion against the Pearce Commission.



Abel Muzorewa

- To intimidate Africans, forms which had to be filled by those who participated were distributed.
- On the first day of the exercise about 5000 Africans completed these forms.

- European employers now distributed these forms at work urging their employees to accept the settlement terms in a bid to intimidate them.
- The workers did not only refuse to accept the terms but also staged demonstrations against the settlement.
- The (ANC) under the chairmanship of Abel Muzorewa organised anti-Pearce Commission demonstrations.
- Various demonstrations were staged the major cities and towns in whole country.
- Some of these demonstrations became violent leading to the death and arrest of several people.
- Among the people arrested in the country were Josiah Chinamano and Edson Sithole.
- In the end, the ANC achieved its mandate of organising African people to reject the proposals.
- It, however did not disband as was expected and once more the African people were divided along party lines.
- The commissioners released their findings in summer 1972, it came as no surprise to both Africans in Rhodesia and the world at large that the Anglo-Rhodesian conspiracy had failed.



Protest against the Pearce commission