

RHODESIAN OUTLOOK

An alternative to the present British policy on Rhodesia

The following are extracts from the Manifesto on 'The Future of Southern Africa' issued after a meeting of the leaders of 14 East and Central African countries in Lusaka in April, 1969, under the chairmanship of Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia:

"We are not hostile to the Administrations of these States, because they are manned and controlled by white people. We are hostile to them because they are systems of minority control which exist as a result of, and in the pursuance of, doctrines of human inequality...." (Mozambique, Angola, Rhodesia, South West Africa and the Republic of South Africa).

"The question which remains in Rhodesia is therefore whether Britain will re-assert her authority in Rhodesia and then negotiate the peaceful progress to majority rule before independence.....This is the method of progress which we would prefer....."

"....until there is some firm evidence that Britain accepts the principle of independence on the basis of majority rule and is prepared to take whatever steps are necessary to make it a reality, then Africa has no choice but to support the struggle for the people's freedom by whatever means are open."

The editors of Rhodesian Outlook believe that Britain has the duty and the means to avert what will otherwise be a bitter and protracted racial war in Southern Africa. We believe that it is not enough to state a commitment to the slogan 'No independence before majority rule'; a workable means of making this slogan a reality has to be devised and implemented.

The eventual aim of all who believe in democracy must be an independent Zimbabwe under a government elected by a universal franchise. To progress from the present stage of a police state run almost wholly for the benefit of the white 5% of the population to a democratic state run for the benefit of the whole population will require an interim period of not more than five years.

Again, to quote from the Lusaka Manifesto: ".... for the sake of order in human affairs, there may be transitional arrangements while a transformation from group inequalities to individual equality is being effected...."

The purpose of this interim period will be:

- a) to ensure the rapid Africanisation of the civil service, with industry and commerce to follow. In particular, to attract back to Rhodesia the many able graduates who have been forced to leave the country because of the lack of suitable jobs, or because of their political views;



- b) to change the emphasis of African education (which at present aims at producing the maximum number of Africans with just sufficient education to be incorporated into unskilled levels of industry and agriculture). In future, it must provide opportunities for many more Africans to acquire the techniques and education necessary for the administration of a modern state;
- c) to repair the damage done by the sanctions policy. This damage has been threefold: severe African unemployment, a serious lack of long term investment in the country, and an almost complete disruption of Rhodesia's normal trading relations;
- d) to allow a period in which Africans have an opportunity to debate and plan for the future of their own society, rather than simply to accept whatever is imposed upon them by Europeans (whether in Rhodesia or London).

We have suggested that a Commission of Government be set up, and its operation was discussed in the first issue of Rhodesian Outlook. It is inconceivable that any of the present members of the Rhodesian Front would be asked to serve on it. Only those who accept the concept of majority rule would be eligible.

During this interim period, a series of constitutional conferences would be held, the membership of which would be very much more representative of African Rhodesians than in the past. These conferences would work out the details of the final independence constitution which must reflect Britain's responsibility to the whole Rhodesian population as well as the wishes and desires of the inhabitants of the country.

To some of the European community, the whole concept of African majority rule is complete anathema. (But it should be remembered that the European minorities in such African states as Kenya, Zambia, etc. have found majority rule a lot more acceptable than they themselves anticipated). Many of those implacably opposed to living under an African government have all their capital in the territory (as land, houses, businesses etc) and therefore will fight to the very bitter end, as the colons did in Algeria. They will feel they have no option. Furthermore, many of these people emigrated from Britain or from Kenya with British help, and with the tacit assumption that African majority rule was far off. For these two reasons, it seems logical to give these people a way out which is a sufficiently attractive prospect, so that they will not feel bound to stay and fight. We therefore suggest the setting up of a fund which will be used to compensate the Europeans for their land, loss of earnings, etc. These monies will be provided by the British Government from the Defence Budget. The compensation will be provided by a special committee responsible directly to the British Government, but with representatives of the white settlers on it (appointed by the Rhodesian Tobacco Association, the Rhodesian National Farmers Union, etc).

How is this policy to be implemented? Clearly the illegal regime would laugh at it, and the 'moderate' Centre Party has rejected NIBMAR out of hand.

Britain has a responsibility to bring the rebel regime to heel. We believe that a police force action should be mounted, and mounted quickly. It has been suggested that Britain has not got the troops; this is a ridiculous suggestion, with armed forces that are over one and a half times larger than the whole European population of Rhodesia. The Rhodesian security forces have been so over-taxed by the presence of a comparatively few African guerrillas that there is a permanent



South African force present. Secondly, it is suggested that South Africa would not tolerate such a course - especially with its own troops engaged in the country. In fact, South Africa's main concern is not to allow a power vacuum. It does not officially recognise Rhodesia. It does recognise independent African States and is at present attempting (with some vigour but little success) to woo Zambia. A stable African state on its borders would be infinitely preferable to an unstable 'European' one. South Africa cannot afford to come into major conflict with Britain, and would be unlikely to interfere. It would be given time to withdraw its forces, euphemistically termed 'police' (see below). Thirdly, it is suggested that there is no way in which Britain could get troops to Rhodesia. This is absurd. Not only has Zambia offered assistance in terms of staging posts, but the other signatories to the Lusaka Manifesto (as well as the Commonwealth leaders who support NIBMAR) would be morally obliged to offer assistance. In 1964, the R.A.F. made a complete survey of the airfields in East and Central Africa for this very purpose.

The British Government would have to announce both its ultimate constitutional aims (and the stages on the way to independence we have outlined above) as well as the means which it proposes to enforce these aims. A date would be set at the end of which time Britain would take forceful action. In this way, the inhabitants, both European and African, would be in no doubt of Britain's aims, and of her ability and determination to put them into operation. Although this would give the white Rhodesian forces time to prepare, it would also allow the Europeans (and the African members of the security forces) time to ponder the foolishness of resistance.

One argument against such a scheme runs that it is too late - British military action would have been all right if we had taken it immediately after U.D.I. but we now have no option but to accept the inevitable (whether with continuing sanctions and our (comparatively) good name, or without sanctions and a considerable adverse reaction from the Commonwealth). It is accepted that eventual African majority rule is inevitable, but let the Africans seize it for themselves. This ties in with the African nationalist argument that Britain has shown herself so reluctant to take any but the most ineffective action, and is willing to negotiate on a basis which leaves a racist regime almost carte blanche (as the Tiger and Fearless proposals do) that she is both untrustworthy and irrelevant. In the nationalist view, if British forces were used, they would be to protect the white minority against the increasingly successful guerrillas.

The evidence of recent trials and other reports underlines the continuing success of the African guerrillas in Rhodesia. There is no doubt that they are beginning, more and more, to be based inside the country despite the propaganda of the regime to the contrary. But a nationalist victory cannot be expected in the immediate future (they do not expect it themselves) and it will result in the sort of interim chaos that occurred in Algeria and the Congo - with the possibility of internecine warfare between the different nationalist groups. These problems would be overcome, and the country could survive the chaos of such a transfer of power (as indeed Algeria and the Congo have done). But the cost in both human suffering and in the breakdown of the



civil and industrial life of the country would be appalling and is unnecessary.

Britain can, and should, accept her responsibility for Rhodesia, and take action. She should announce a coherent and viable policy so that both the African nationalists and the settlers may see that Britain is concerned for the whole population rather than with only 5% of the population. Power can be handed over in peace and further bitterness and bloodshed avoided. Both the main African nationalist parties have affirmed their commitment to non-racialism, not to a reversal of racial domination.

A new and independent Zimbabwe can be born in peace if our Government has the courage to act.

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