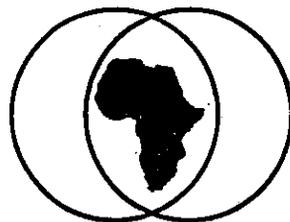


RHODESIA : QUO VADIS ?

by

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THE SOUTH AFRICAN INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS



DIE SUID-AFRIKAANSE INSTITUUT VAN INTERNASIONALE AANGELEENTHEDE

The Rt. Hon. Sir Roy Welensky K.C.M.G. was Prime Minister of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland from 1956 to 1963. This paper - reproduced from a tape recording with a minimum of editing - contains the text of an address to a meeting of the Witwatersrand Branch of the Institute on 11 December, 1972, as well as the discussion which followed the talk. The Institute is grateful to Sir Roy for permission to reproduce his address and his answers to questions.

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Sir Roy Welensky

At the outset I want to make my own position clear. I do not want anyone to have any misapprehensions as to where I stand. I am a political opponent of my Government. In your assessments of my analysis you must understand that I have always considered UDI an unmitigated disaster. There are pros and cons that I am prepared to concede, but I have believed that this was a monumental error of judgement for which we are paying now and for which we will pay in the future. But it is all water under the bridge. I am a Rhodesian and am most anxious to see Rhodesia survive. Circumstances are not easy. I intend here to try and give you a picture of the position as it is. But before I do that, let me give you a little background on Rhodesia's past.

You are our closest neighbours. In many ways many Rhodesians spring from your loins. There has always been very close contact between South Africa and Rhodesia. I am an example of it. But I do not believe that the average South African can really understand the Rhodesian situation without me re-capping to some extent, the history of the years since 1922. To understand the present, to try and look into the future, we need an appreciation of the past because as far as the British Commonwealth of Nations is concerned Rhodesia was an exceptional case which I shall try and explain.

Rhodesia's case was unique. I wonder if many people appreciate that Rhodesia was never for an hour under the direct control of the British Government. Rhodesia from the advent of the column in 1890, under Rhodes' direction, soon moved under the control of a Chartered Company, a Royal Company, authorised by Queen Victoria and they set up government. The first government, other than the African governments of previous days that existed in Rhodesia, was a Chartered Company, and from the Chartered Company we went straight to responsible government, and it is this that I want to discuss, because to a large extent it explains some of the special difficulties that Rhodesians have faced.

It is always difficult to try and get people to go back and grasp the feeling that existed at a specific time. I want to remind you that Rhodesia was established at the time when the British Empire was moving towards its peak, when imperialism was not a dirty word, and neither was colonialism. Those were the days when the Empire builders were considered - certainly by the man in the street - to be the salt of the earth, and of course Cecil John Rhodes epitomised what Rhodesia developed into - an extension of the British Empire.

The period of time I am talking of must be borne in mind as well as the type of men who eventually followed the column into Rhodesia. These people were a very tough adventurous lot, the type that did not stay at home. They were the type who left home to seek pastures new, often for commercial reasons. Some people thought for worse reasons. However, they had guts and wanted to go, and in my opinion, often represented the best from their own countries. These are the people that moved into

Rhodesia after the original struggles with the Matabele and Mashona were over. These were the people that populated Rhodesia and these were the circumstances. Try and take your minds back to the type of people that started Rhodesia - people who were firm believers in the concept of the British Empire. Many of them believed that they were empire builders and that what they were doing was spreading Rhodes' concept of painting Africa red from one end to the other, from Cape to Cairo.

It was not very long before this type of Rhodesian began to clash with Rhodes' company, the Chartered Company who were running Rhodesia. There was a running war between them for quite a while. It is true that eventually the Chartered Company introduced a legislative council, and the Settlers began to be represented in the councils of government, but this did not satisfy the people. Remembering for a moment the type of people we are dealing with it is not surprising that they were not satisfied. These men and women were the type that had ruled themselves. And it was not very long before it became obvious that there was going to be a serious clash between the Settler community and the Chartered Company. Fortunately there was a considerable amount of common sense on both sides.

This period coincided with certain events in South Africa - and about 1922/23, when this issue was coming to a head, Rhodesia was considered as a possible partner in the then dominion of South Africa. In fact I think it was in 1922 or early 1923 that Rhodesians, as a result of the talks between General Smuts, Sir Charles Coughlan and Winston Churchill, gave us, the Rhodesian electorate, the opportunity of choosing whether we would link up with the then Dominion of South Africa, or whether we would go it alone under a form of Responsible Government.

When one hears the sanctimonious nonsense that one has to listen to these days, it makes my blood boil to remember that it was only 15 000 Europeans - those were the people who were on the voters' role - who took the decision as to whether Rhodesia should "go it alone" or link up with South Africa. There were only 1 500 more in favour than there were against. My former Federal leader, Lord Malvern, (Sir Godfrey Huggins, who was later to be Prime Minister of Southern Rhodesia for many years) was in fact all in favour of Union. I regret to say that I did not have a vote as I was only fifteen or sixteen at the time, but my family were all for Rhodesia "going it alone" and we did whatever we could in the circumstances. One need not argue the rights or the wrongs of it. However, I want to remind you that it was 15 000 voters that took the decision to decide whether Rhodesia would "go it alone" or whether it would link up with South Africa. This is to be borne in mind when thinking about our problems and our history.

I wish here to make an assertion which is not very popular, nor is it very new. It has always been my contention that from the moment Winston Churchill gave white Rhodesians this choice of Union or of going it alone - and that is what he actually did in 1923, (I doubt whether there were a dozen Africans on the voter's role) - the real surrender of power in Central Africa took place. In 1923 the British Government really surrendered power to the settlers in Rhodesia. It is true that the British Government tried to maintain some apron strings by means of special clauses in the Constitution - Africans could not be sold liquor, Africans could not possess firearms etc. There was a degree of discrimination, but the discrimination was mainly in favour of the African.

There was also a law, or at least it was a constitutional fact, that no discriminatory legislation should be passed without the consent of the British Government. I once tackled my old friend, Lord Malvern, on this - asking whether in the 22 years he was Prime Minister of Rhodesia, there was ever a threat by the British Government to use the powers that appeared to exist in the Constitution. The answer was in the negative. It is true they used to discuss any changes that he was planning to make. Do not forget that the much criticised Land Apportionment Act that one hears so much about in Rhodesia today was in fact introduced in Malvern's time, and it was introduced with the consent and acquiescence of the British Government.

In passing let me tell you a little tale. The last time I saw General Smuts he said to me, "Welensky you were a boy when I tried to get Rhodesia to come into South Africa", and I said "yes Sir". Then he said, "I am going to tell you a little bit of history which lots of people will not like. Do you know that Winston Churchill said to me : Smuts, if the Rhodesians vote to go in with South Africa, I will give you more than Rhodesia, 'I'll throw Northern Rhodesia in as a gift'." That was his attitude to Northern Rhodesia. This is a snippet of history which many people would prefer to sweep under the carpet these days.

I have made a very serious assertion here. My assertion is that the British Government in fact surrendered power in Rhodesia in 1923, and I want to give chapter and verse for that statement. Those of you who remember the creation of the Federation over which I once presided as Prime Minister, will recollect that there was a series of conferences that led up to its formation. At these conferences the Government of Southern Rhodesia was represented by Sir Godfrey Huggins as he then was. The British Government's deputation was, I think, under Lord Salisbury or Lord Swinton with several other Ministers in attendance. There were Northern Rhodesian representatives of which I was one, and there were representatives from Nyasaland, from the Government's side.

We reached agreement and we hammered out a constitution. But remember one thing - whilst the British Government accepted the Constitution and subsequently passed legislation to bring about the state of Rhodesia and Nyasaland as a Federation - as far as Southern Rhodesia was concerned the issue had to go to a referendum of the electorate in spite of the Government's agreement. I point this out because it supports my contention that whilst the Government had agreed that federation was in Rhodesia's best interests the electorate had to put the date stamp on it. In fact the referendum was held in 1953 and the electorate of Rhodesia voted in favour of a federation. Then we come to the 1961 Constitution where the issue was purely a Southern Rhodesian one - the question of a new constitution. Mr. Duncan Sandys negotiated on behalf of the British, Sir Edgar Whitehead negotiated on behalf of Rhodesia. They hammered out a constitution and the Governments reached agreement. That was not the last word. Although the British Government accepted it; as far as Southern Rhodesia was concerned it had to go to the electorate for approval.

Whether one agrees with the idea of referenda or not is beside the point; I am merely emphasising that this had become the tradition and the custom in Rhodesia. So the 1961 Constitution, in spite of agreement between the two Governments, was in abeyance until the electorate of Southern Rhodesia decided that they would accept it, which they did by a two-to-one majority. I hope it will not be thought that I am exaggerating when I say that this was a custom that was firmly established in Rhodesia.

When it came to great issues, any great constitutional question would have to be referred to the electorate before the Government in fact could put the final seal of approval on it. To me this means that if the British Government could no longer say that Rhodesia would do so and so they had already effectively surrendered power in Rhodesia.

This is the background that ought to be understood. Rhodesia, never for one moment of its history, since the coming of the white man has been governed from Downing Street. It has been either the Chartered Company or responsible government. We are only a handful but we have provided government of ourselves and for the people of the country. I hope I have made my point in regard to the past and it will give some idea of the reasons for the strong feeling of independence that Rhodesians have. They have always felt they had run their own affairs and, just in passing, let me remind you that no-one paid for anything in Rhodesia bar Rhodesians. They may have borrowed money on the British market and elsewhere, but everyone, including the Governor, was paid from the pocket of the Rhodesian taxpayer. The British taxpayer did not pay anything in Rhodesia.

From the past I want to turn to more recent developments. I want to remind you - and I should imagine it is hardly necessary - of the period when UDI took place in 1965. I have been asked by several South Africans on this trip: "Why did Rhodesia take UDI?" Now I have already made my own stand clear. I thought it was a monumental error of judgement. But in spite of that I understood it. It must be realised that in party politics politicians have the habit of making promises. And the Rhodesian Front Party, when they came into office in 1962, had quite clearly indicated to their own supporters that they were going to implement their own policy. And when they got into office they found that constitutionally they could not make the necessary changes. This is the short and the real reason why UDI was taken - so that the Government of the day would be able to do things that they were inhibited from doing under the 1961 Constitution.

At this point I ought perhaps to explain one other thing. There was a conference at the end of the Federation, held at the Victoria Falls. This conference was to deal with the deathrites of the federation, and I can tell you in no uncertain terms that I tried to persuade the Prime Minister of Southern Rhodesia not to go to the Falls Conference until he had an assurance from the British Government that Rhodesia would receive, not better terms than the two African states, but no less favourable terms. After all, Rhodesia had enjoyed responsible government since 1923 and this was 1963. They had an excellent record of governing themselves for forty years and I thought that the request was an eminently reasonable one. I persuaded Mr. Winston Field for two months not to go. Eventually he gave way to the blandishments of R.A. Butler who represented the British Government and Rhodesia went to the Falls Conference and we know the result.

To me the tragedy was this - that this was the last chance when this issue could have been settled with honour for all three countries. All three countries should have been told that they would move forward together to independence. The Federation was breaking up and each country was going to achieve independence sooner or later and they would all move along this path together. I am quite satisfied that the two African States under the leaders at that time would have accepted this and it would have satisfied Rhodesia. However, the one factor that was not present at the Victoria Falls Conference was statesmanship. It is true that at that

moment of time there was the feeling that African Nationalism was irresistible; it coincided with the intention on the part of the British to pull out of Africa and we now see the result - the mess that to a very large extent exists in Central Africa.

I now come of course to what I describe almost as the middle period, and a much more dangerous one, the immediate present and the future into which we are going. You know that there were these various meetings: "Fearless", "Tiger"; and in Salisbury and then Lord Goodman and Sir Alec Douglas Home. You name it, we've had it! We have been up the hill, we have been down it, we've been up it, we've been down it and I can tell you that it is quite a trial to have your hopes buoyed to the top, and then slapped down. Rhodesians have got fairly blasé about it, but nonetheless the basic fact remains and the basic fact is - that it is in the best interests of everybody, white and black, for us to reach an agreement with the British Government. This, I have not the slightest hesitation in saying depends now on the fifth principle.

You all know the history of Lord Pearce's visit to Rhodesia. I am one of those people who is on record (as early as 5th January in public) of warning that the thing had gone wrong, and that the Africans were not going to judge the proposals on the question as to whether the new constitution offered under the Home/Smith agreement was better than the existing 1969 constitution, but that they would judge it on matters on which the Commission had not been asked to assess an opinion. And I regret to say, I was proved 100 per cent right. I did my best to warn in every way I possibly could, but the result was inevitable. And I want to say this. I am quite satisfied that the verdict returned by Lord Pearce and his assessors was a true reflection of African opinion in Rhodesia, but for a wrong reason. I will give you an example of what I mean.

I am not going to try and go into the intricacies of the Constitutions; they are much too difficult. If it will amuse you I can tell you that when the Alec Home/Ian Smith Constitution emerged there were parts of it I did not understand - not that I profess to be a Solomon, I am anything but. However, I just did not understand it. I had to wait for Sir Colin Crowe of the United Nations to expand on one aspect of it before I knew what it meant. This Constitution at least held out to the Africans the prospects of majority rule. It did not give a date. I do not believe that dates should be given. I am frank about this, but I also equally believe that we should not deny to the African people the fact that at some stage they are going to govern Rhodesia. This is a hard reality which I will come back to. I do not say it should be done tomorrow, I do not say it should be done in ten years, I do not know when it should be done. I do believe in a qualitative franchise, but I also believe that the yardstick of the qualitative franchise should be merit, not the colour of a man's skin, or the colour of his eyes, or the colour of his hair. As far as I am concerned I do not have any qualms about this.

I believe that the proposals under the Home/Smith Agreement offer the Africans an opportunity that they will not get under the constitution we now have - the '69 Constitution - and I want to explain one point on this. The present Constitution which is called a Parity Constitution, says that never can either the whites or the blacks have more than 50 per cent of the seats in the Parliament. This is the Constitution. It is laid down as the criterion. However, representation in Parliament is based on income tax paid, not overall tax paid - but on income tax only. The Africans in the latest figures available paid 2 per cent of the total of the income tax paid. Europeans pay 98 per cent. A very generous

government has given the Africans an advance representation and they have, I think 12 or 15 members in the House now. Under the 1965 Constitution they had eight elected and some nominated Members. So that the 1969 Constitution would not actually reduce their membership of the House; they were given an "advance" of eight Members on credit by our generous Government - which they will of course have to work off! This was necessary because the Income Tax ratio of two to ninety-eight would not entitle them, I think, to a single sitting Member. I do not, in my own mind, have any doubts that under the present Constitution they are hardly likely to get an increase in Membership this century.

Now the Home/Smith Agreement was vastly different. It got rid of many of these difficulties and it did hold out for the African the promise that some day, never mind how far distant, he in fact could govern the country. This has been turned down. This was what the Africans rejected. There are other facets with which I am not going to bore you. The point I am trying to make is that in fact the Pearce Commission received the evidence that was given - and although the "nos" that were recorded were based on a wrong concept - it does not alter the fact that it was a "no" and the Commission had to report accordingly.

I want now to turn to the present and the future. Where do we go from here? You will have seen that "Talks" have been on again and off again and on and off. My own feeling is, and oddly enough the man in the street has this feeling in Rhodesia, that we are probably nearer to reaching something positive between the two governments than we have been for a long time. What he bases it on I am not certain. I have heard several versions from different people. One is that as soon as Mr. Heath is through with the Common Market and does not have to keep an eye on the left wing in his Party, he will be anxious to get rid of this last relic of Empire and therefore there will be no difficulties in coming to a settlement with Mr. Heath's Government. This is a view. I do not share it. I believe that it does not take into account the difficulties that the British face within the Commonwealth and also with the United Nations. However, this feeling is quite widespread now in Rhodesia that there will be a settlement.

Strangely enough, I believe that it is a possibility but for other reasons. I believe that the Africans themselves are beginning to realise that in rejecting the Smith/Home Agreement they have to a very large extent indulged in the satisfaction of kicking the white man in the teeth, but at a considerable cost to themselves. They do want changes, they do want to play a part in the Government of the country and they do want progress for their people. But they are certainly, in my opinion, not going to get it on the basis of the present Constitution - certainly nothing like what they will achieve under the Home/Smith Agreement.

I do have feelings about these discussions. I feel that it is wrong that we Rhodesians should consider it necessary for people outside to come in and try and persuade us to talk. I am satisfied that there is sufficient leadership in Rhodesia to do the talking. I go further. I believe that whatever Mr. Smith says (he like most politicians, including myself, has had to swallow his own words) will sooner or later start talking to the Africans. I think it is only a matter of time, and I say this for the simple reason that the only thing that prevents us from achieving independence today is the fact that we have not demonstrated that there is responsible African opinion behind the request. This is now the only bar to a settlement.

I do not believe that it is impossible for us to obtain this, but the lead must come from the Prime Minister of Rhodesia - he is head of the country - and it is my contention that Mr. Smith should take the lead and start talking to the ANC, who are after all at this moment of time the only people who can speak with any authority for the Africans outside of the tribal areas. In these circumstances I feel strongly that the Government ought to give a lead, and I cannot see that the Prime Minister would lose any dignity whatsoever in starting talks. I believe that talks are the start that could lead to something else, and if we do not talk there are no prospects of starting anything.

Furthermore Mr. Smith should go ahead on the question of talks as soon as possible. I have met Bishop Muzorewa. I do not know him. One does not learn to know a man in a two-hour conversation. But he struck me as being someone very quiet, as being an individual one could argue with reasonably. I imagine though that he has got people behind him, just the same as Mr. Smith has people behind him, that he has to satisfy. However, I could not help but feel that if we cannot talk to Bishop Muzorewa, then I am afraid it may be a long time before we find anyone we can talk to. I think this man struck me at least as being willing to listen, and willing to argue his case, and I believe most firmly that these talks should start - and start as soon as possible.

Now for an even more serious side of what is happening in Rhodesia. I want to talk of the ramifications of the Pearce Commission. I explained earlier how complicated the Constitution produced by the British Foreign Minister and our Prime Minister was. And yet the African masses were given the power of veto, and this is what the fifth principle did. The fifth principle gave the African masses in Rhodesia the right to say "yea" or "nay" to a decision that the two Governments had reached agreement on. This is irrefutable. This was a fundamental departure from everything that had ever happened in the past. In the past the Africans had been consulted but they had never been given the power of veto. Earlier I explained why the Africans had rejected the offer. Do not forget that they argued that they were not consulted. Neither were the Europeans consulted. But Africans have said to me "that is true, but at least it was a European Government that was negotiating, and they were bound to look after the Europeans' interests. We had no-one to look after our interests". This was the African viewpoint. No-one, at this moment of time, can absolve our Government from its share of the responsibility of what has happened in Rhodesia. The fact that the fifth principle was accepted by both governments, British and Rhodesian, is a clear indication that they were both either misled or did not understand what was happening in Rhodesia. Yet there were much lesser mortals that understood the resentment that existed amongst the African people at the time.

But where do we go from here? If the Africans in the early part of this year were considered fit and able to say "yea" or "nay" to one of the most difficult constitutional problems I have examined how can one now say that they should not be consulted about lesser problems? You may have noticed recently in Rhodesia that there appear to be a number of moves that indicate that we are moving towards a greater degree of petty apartheid. What the reasons for this are I do not know. But the hard fact remains that Rhodesia can never be the same pre-Pearce and post. The African masses are now aware of the power they wield. They have experienced the ability to stop the two Governments from doing something that they had agreed to do.

With the commitment now to carry the masses with us, a very different situation exists in Rhodesia. But in spite of that I am convinced that if our Prime Minister will take the lead, there is still sufficient goodwill, tolerance and understanding in the country to win reasonable African support for us and our independence. After all the British and Rhodesian Governments have come to an agreement. This is the only item outstanding and I believe that it can be done and nothing should stand in the way of us trying to achieve it. I am quite convinced, as I have already said once this evening, that we will be talking within a year.

I want to present a few figures to show why the need for a settlement is so urgent. We are now in the eighth year of sanctions. It would be nonsense to say that sanctions have not hurt us. Of course they have, but there has been both good and bad in it. Our secondary industries have developed as a result of sanctions, but our agricultural industry is in the doldrums. I should say a very large percentage of the farmers are bust. I am a farmer myself and I should hate to have to live on the profits I am earning on my farm.

The farming industry which was the largest single employer of labour in Rhodesia has had an extremely difficult time. Let me remind you that in seven years of UDI the total increase in African wages has been one Rhodesian dollar. I do not think I am exaggerating when I argue that the cost of living has probably gone up between 25 and 30 per cent in those seven years. I want you to realise the kind of hardship this is inflicting on the African people. It is no use saying that the agriculturist ought to pay more. They cannot because we are in the unfortunate position of selling and buying under the counter which means that you pay more for everything that you buy - and you get less for everything you sell. This is common sense and common knowledge. Now this is the position that Rhodesia is in and it is one of the reasons why I say we want a settlement. We need capital and development.

I am going to give you a few figures which illustrate the problem that we are facing in Rhodesia. We have an African population of 5½ million of whom more than 50% are under the age of 17. We have a European population of somewhere round about 270 000 to 280 000. The European birthrate is running at 18,1 per 1 000 - the live birthrate. The Coloureds and Asians 22,3, and African 67,6 per 1 000. In fact the natural increase in the African population is 3,6 per cent per annum, one of the highest birth rates on the continent. It is worth noting that the natural increase per annum of the African population almost equals the total number of Europeans in the country. This is the measure of our problem. We have got to find employment, we need capital, we need development. I believe the Rhodesian African is generally the type of man who wants from life what any one else does - an opportunity to work, to feed and clothe his family. They are not a difficult people - I think recent years have proved that - and I believe that if we are given a reasonable chance, Rhodesians can work out a settlement to this very thorny issue.

It would be nice to say that I am 99% certain that this thing is going to be settled this coming year. I do not believe that. I know the British are anxious for a settlement because I have just come back from the Old Country. I know this and I speak from knowledge, not from sucking my thumb. Any agreement has to be a reasonable one, and one that can stand scrutiny in the House of Commons. It must also be able to stand up to scrutiny at the United Nations. All this can happen, and the next five or six months are absolutely crucial, because basically I believe if we do not reach an agreement with the present British Government

(I do not know how long it is going to last - Mr. Heath is probably in a much better position to speak on that than I am!) it is very unlikely that we will reach agreement with the present Opposition if they should come to power. So there is a limiting factor and this is one of the reasons why I press for our own Government to do everything it possibly can to try and reach a settlement in the immediate future,

I should like to speak on two other matters. I am not going to talk on South Africa's affairs because I am a great believer in minding my own business. I can speak about Rhodesia; my mother went there in an ox-waggon and my father fought for it in the '96 rebellion; so I have a right to stand up and speak - never mind my own political record. I want to talk to you for a moment about terrorist activities. I am old enough to know that the terrorist of today is the martyr of 20 years time. One has seen this so often in one's own lifetime. I want you to understand that as a white African - and I am as much an African as is any black African - I am convinced that the key to fighting the terrorist movement in the sub-continent depends on our having the goodwill and the support of our own African people.

Now this guerilla war which has gone on, certainly in the Portuguese territories, is in its eleventh year. I think it is a very serious affair; many people do not. I am not prepared to discuss the detail, but I believe that the repercussions could go much further and much wider than many people appreciate. And one of the urgent reasons for keeping the Africans on our side is that without their help we cannot, in my opinion, successfully beat off the terrorists. We have got to carry the African population with us and I definitely believe this can be done. I believe the goodwill exists. In Rhodesia today our African troops are bearing their full share of the brunt of the incursions by terrorists into Rhodesia. But I do not underestimate the threat. The threat is a serious one. I cannot speak about what is happening in Mozambique. I do not know much more than the average individual does but certain facts are there. This thing has gone on for eleven years and that is a long time; furthermore it seems to be increasing in intensity at this moment of time.

One other matter that affects Rhodesia, and I think yourselves and the Portuguese, is the question of isolation. I am becoming increasingly concerned at the degree of isolation into which the sub-continent is being pushed. I gave tongue the other day on the question of sport. There are lots of things I do not understand, but one thing I do appreciate and that is however cynical we think the United Nations is - and believe me there is no-one in this room that has had more experience of dealing with the United Nations than I have (remember Katanga, 1960!)- They are double-crossers of the first order, and that is a mild way of putting it, and their standards are altered to suit the occasion; nevertheless the hard fact remains that the United Nations is not becoming reduced in power in this world. In my opinion it is gaining strength and stature. It is true that one man one vote is making a mess of things there, but in due time that will be altered because people will learn that the vote of the United States of America is worth slightly more than the vote of Guinea. Sooner or later they will learn it, and sooner or later this will become effective. But what frightens me and worries me is the degree to which the South Africans, the Portuguese and ourselves are being isolated.

I gave tongue the other day about the prospects of governments in exile. You will have seen that already the United Nations are allowing representatives of the terrorist groups to sit in as observers. I believe this is only a

prelude to the next step - that is the granting of recognition to governments in exile. In our own interests we ought not to underestimate what this means. This is not a situation to be treated lightly nor to be laughed at.

I want to close, if I may, on this note. I think many of us are going to have to do a lot of rethinking on our attitudes to race. I am not one who advocates integration - I hate to admit it to you but there are many Europeans that I do not want to associate with. It is not a question of colour, and I imagine there are thousands and thousands of Africans who do not want to associate with me and do not want to mix with me. But I come back to the theme that I believed in during the days of Federation, and that is - that as far as governments and public life is concerned, we ought to use one yardstick - the yardstick of merit. I believe in a qualitative franchise and I believe it is the answer. I also believe that governments today, and my own race in particular - the whites - are far too obsessed with trying to decide what is going to happen in twenty years time. Let twenty years from now look after itself. This is one of the major mistakes we are making. One cannot lay down the Laws of the Meades and the Persians. We are living in a world that is changing so rapidly that if you have statesmen that can see five years ahead, you are not being badly served.

DISCUSSION

Question

I want to ask the speaker if he could possibly comment on what he thinks world reaction towards an independent Rhodesia could be. I speak of a Rhodesia which is independent through a possible agreement with Britain. Would reaction be hostile towards such an independent state or would they accept it on merit as a fellow independent state?

Answer

I think it is a pretty reasonable question and it is one that is exercising the minds of many people both in Britain and in Rhodesia. What will the attitude be if there is agreement? My own feeling is that one will not be able to satisfy the extremists, white or black, whatever is done. But if white Rhodesians and black Rhodesians can reach agreement, then I think the outside world can go and jump in the lake if they do not like it. That is my feeling.

Question

Could we have an explanation of why the Labour Government would not accept a settlement as the Conservatives might?

Answer

Is that not a question that ought to be directed to Mr. Harold Wilson rather than to me?

Question

Could Sir Roy tell us whether in his opinion under the existing circumstances, the material welfare of the African is being reasonably safeguarded and whether in the matter of land and so on a reasonable future is being planned for him?

Answer

I would answer that by saying that within the means of the Government of Rhodesia today they are doing what they can. Land is always a touchy subject, almost in any country in the world. Again what may be reasonable today may be unreasonable in ten years time. But I believe that at this moment of time the situation is not a very dangerous one in that sense. What disturbs me about the situation in Rhodesia is that we are getting between forty and fifty thousand, if not more adult males coming on the market on every year for work and the jobs are not there. African women are now coming into industry and coming into domestic work and jobs have got to be found for them. We are educating Africans at our University. They are finding difficulty in getting jobs. Now this is where the danger lies and this to a large extent is what sanctions are achieving. They are denying us the right to find opportunity for the people we are training.

Question

Would Sir Roy tell us if there are signs of a white backlash developing in Rhodesia, so that if at some stage in the future the prospect of agreement between the Government seems possible, would the white Rhodesian electorate perhaps reject the agreement that seemed possible a few months ago and would he comment on the position that might arise in this regard in, say, a year or so?

Answer

I think that there are elements that are against the agreement and I think they have been consistent all the way through because they hold the view - which I will now put to you - their view not mine. They hold the view that the agreement was a sell-out. They say that in fact the Home/Smith Agreement will eventually lead to African government and that this is a breach of the promises that the Rhodesian Front Government originally made when they came into power. There is that element. And I think they have been consistent in their views and they are holding to them. But I do not consider that they represent a white backlash. I think this is a view that they have held for a considerable time, from well before Sir Alec Douglas Home and Mr. Ian Smith reached agreement. I personally would find it difficult to believe that other than that kind of opposition there is likely to be any backlash. I think most Rhodesians - I do not want to stick up purely for my own countryman because they are Rhodesians - get on extremely well with Africans, and most Africans get on extremely well with white Rhodesians, their fellow Rhodesians. In fact if it had not been for the good relationships that existed in the last two or three years, the position could have been a lot more difficult than it is today. No, I do not fear any white backlash, but then I am only seeing this as an outsider, I do not really know the inside position.

Question

Could I ask Sir Roy how it is that Rhodesia has lost its independence? I think you said, and I have always thought that was the case, that Rhodesia was originally not directly under the British Government at all, and now they apparently are. Whereas they previously were independent, they now have to seek independence.

Answer

Mr. Chairman, this really is a very intelligent point and it escapes a lot of people. The truth is that nominally we were not independent but in practice we were independent in days gone by. This is one of the reasons why I always feel that UDI was such a monumental error. We then declared Independence unilaterally and became illegal. The British Parliament in

theory took over the running of Rhodesia, though they admit they are powerless to do anything about it. But legally they are now running Rhodesia. In practice, *de facto*, we, that is, the Rhodesian Government, are running Rhodesia. We enjoyed independence, though in fact, there were apron strings in the Constitution before UDI, but they were not effective and were not applied. In fact there was a clause in the Constitution of 1961 in which the British Government agreed that they would never legislate for Rhodesia except at the request of Rhodesia. That was before UDI. But after UDI, when we went into rebellion the British Government then, by Act of Parliament took control of Rhodesia. They may as well have jumped to the moon for their effectiveness.

Question

I want to ask Sir Roy whether he feels that the average white Rhodesian today accepts the view that inevitably in the future they will have to give the power to the blacks.

Answer

The answer is no. I think the vast majority of Europeans do not accept that. I think this is part of the problem. In the long term, when you look at the figures there are now 20 to 21 Africans to every European. In eighteen years time there will be forty to one. One could come to the conclusion that the answer is almost irresistible. But I think, it is fair to say that the majority do not accept it.

Question

I should like to ask Sir Roy if Britain became involved in a third world war, whether Rhodesia would be likely to come to her aid or whether perhaps seven years' sanctions would take pre-eminence over blood ties?

Answer

I personally have no doubt that Rhodesians would do what they have always done. I know there have been slanging matches, and hard things have been said, but basically I think that Rhodesia is still very very well disposed towards the Old Country. You know of course that I must admit that I am not terribly impressed with the arguments that are used about the sacrifices that we made in the last war and the First World War. We did make sacrifices like the rest of the Commonwealth, the Empire and the Allies. But we were fighting as much for our own skins as we were fighting for the skins of the British. Let us face it and be realists about it. If Britain had gone down in the last war and the Nazis had won, what would have happened in Rhodesia? We know only too well. I accept the kith and kin issue as having greater appeal because it is emotional and we do have common ties. After all I have just brought a new immigrant from Yorkshire to Rhodesia!

Question

Mr. Chairman, does the fact that the British Parliament now rules Rhodesia directly make Rhodesian citizens also British, and if so has the Rhodesian Government explored the possibility of expediting a settlement by exporting surplus population?

Answer

If we are going to get into these realms, would it not be a bad idea for us to ask South Africa to lend us some money to pay their fares?

Question

I would like to ask Sir Roy whether partition would be any solution to Rhodesia's problem.

Answer

Mr. Chairman, I have spoken already on this here in South Africa. I do not think it is practical politics now. It might have been at one stage. I do not see how it could be done physically, and, of course financially it is just nonsense. We just could not face up to it because if you are going to try and partition the country then the degree of wealth has got to be spread properly. I would not dare to intervene in your politics. You may still be able to make a success of it. I think we have got well past that point, past the point of non-return. We are already fighting the terrorist war to a large extent with African troops. Our University is multi-racial - we have only got one. Our police force is very largely Africanised. Africans already share many of the facilities that Europeans have and believe it or not the sun still rises in the East.

Question

To what extent does the African in Rhodesia today have sufficient faith in (a) the white population and (b) the African leaders who have the discourse with the white population to negotiate a settlement favourable to the general mass of Africans in Rhodesia today? To what extent are these forces irreconcilable or reconcilable as they stand today?

Answer

This really is the nub of the question. Is it possible to reach agreement? This is why I say tolerance and patience is necessary, and this is one of the reasons why I am sorry to see my own Government taking the steps that it is presently taking in regard to petty apartheid, because this must raise resentment among the African people. I just do not know. The other part of the question is whether there is any African leader who can stand up and say I agree or disagree and the African people will support me. I do not know the strength of Bishop Muzerewa. He was able to demonstrate that he could organise the Africans to reject the Home/Smith Agreement. But whether he is capable of organising the Africans to back the acceptance of any other thing, I do not know. But I sincerely hope, both for the sake of the African and the European that something like this is happening because the alternatives are pretty grim to contemplate.

Question

Would Sir Roy tell us if in his opinion there is any feasible step that Britain could take that would ease a long term settlement?

Answer

Well as a matter of fact at this moment of time I think Britain has gone some way to do just that. I have always argued that the settlement must come from Salisbury. I have resented the suggestion that the British must step in and settle our problems, or that anyone else should do so if it comes to that. I think that it is now accepted that any settlement that emerges must come from Salisbury. I do not want to rake over the past but you must understand that the fifth principle is not a British creation. The fifth principle arose out of promises that were given by Mr. Smith on behalf of Rhodesia that he had African majority support for independence for Rhodesia. So it is not purely a British problem. The problem rests in Salisbury. At this moment of time I know perhaps some

people will think this is an over-simplification but I believe it to be the truth - the position is that what we need is to be able to go forward with substantial responsible African opinion saying they endorse the settlement. And I believe that if we can do that we can get independence. And perhaps I was a bit facetious with someone who talked about the general question of settlement and people becoming involved. But this really is the issue. The issue is in Salisbury now; it is no longer in London. The British really have no say in Rhodesia, they have had no real say since 1923, but what we have got to do is demonstrate our ability to go forward and say that there are Africans, responsible Africans, and responsible Europeans who have reached agreement on the spot and I cannot see how the House of Commons could possibly refuse us our independence. As far as the United Nations are concerned, I believe that, if any nation objected to an Agreement to which Africans and Europeans in Rhodesia had agreed, then quite frankly I think they ought to be told exactly where they get off!

Question

I wondered whether Sir Roy would comment again on his statement in his reply to an earlier question that he does not think the average Rhodesian is prepared to accept black majority rule in the future. Now this to me seems really the heart of the whole issue. He gave figures which he himself said led to the irresistible conclusion that had to come. He also said that he feels himself that during this year the question of the settlement is really going to come to a head. How can it possibly come to a head unless people really are prepared to be realistic. Without putting down any time limits surely they must be prepared to say that this is a possibility they have got to accept. Could he comment on that?

Answer

Need I comment? Are you people in South Africa prepared to accept this? The same position applies here. The numbers are greater there, but the numbers are also greater than the whites here. You all know, as well as I know, that in your heart of hearts eventually this is what is going to happen. But that is a very different thing to selling it to the electorate and getting them to vote for you if you say it. This is the quickest way of being chucked out of Parliament. Let me assure you of it. Never mind what the realities are, and anyone who does not recognise the realities is a fool, because it is a very different thing to get people to admit it publicly - yet there is no argument against it. You have only to go on for 36 more years and the odds will be 80 to one. I mean the thing speaks for itself. That is a very different kettle of fish to getting people to vote you into Parliament on the basis that you recognise this and this is practical politics. There is nothing wrong with what I said to you. What I said to you was the truth. Many Europeans will no doubt admit it in private but in public they will not agree to it.