

NORTHERN RHODESIA'S TIME FOR CHANGE

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THE Northern Rhodesia Government banned the Zambia African National Congress in March, 1959, and restricted the leaders to rural areas where no political organization had ever taken root. The local African population was warned to keep away from the "evil" men of Zambia; but, with the help of the teachers and those who had radio sets and could thus keep in touch with the outside world, the people in the rural areas soon discovered that the Zambia leaders were fighting for their rights as well.

When the United National Independence Party (U.N.I.P.) was formed, the leaders were still in detention, and their enforced contact with rural areas meant that branches were steadily established where none had existed before. U.N.I.P. soon spread rapidly over the whole of Northern Rhodesia.

Zambia was banned because it denounced the last general elections as a sham, boycotting them on the grounds that the electoral arrangements discriminated severely against Africans. The average wage of an African is £60 a year, while that of a European is £1,200. Yet the franchise qualifications were deliberately set high—an income of £720 per year or £1,500 in immovable property for an ordinary vote; and £150 a year or £500 in immovable property for a special vote. Most Africans who qualified at all became accordingly special voters only; and a special vote is worth just one third of an ordinary vote. It is therefore not surprising that there were 7,000 African voters registered at the time of the elections, compared with 30,000 European—out of a population of 3 million Africans and 70,000 Europeans in Northern Rhodesia.

Ex-officio members of the Executive Council were reduced from 6 to 4; the European unofficial member who used to represent African interests was removed and replaced by 2 African "Ministers" selected by settlers; and the number of settler unofficials was increased from 3 to 4. Europeans thus gained ground at the expense of both the Africans and the Colonial Office. For the first time, they have Africans in the Legislative Council whom they themselves select.

U.N.I.P. was created with the pledge to kill this iniquitously racialist constitution.

During their visits to Northern Rhodesia, Mr. Macmillan and Mr. Macleod heard Africans (including the so-called 'moderate' Africans) demand the break-up of Federation, and immediate African majority rule in Northern Rhodesia before October 1960. The Africans complained they were being treated as a separate and inferior class. White immigrant foreigners enjoyed greater privileges than Africans who had fought on the side of Britain against those very foreigners. Africans found themselves strangers in their own country, and debarred by law from the senior civil offices.

U.N.I.P. has proposed a Legislative Council consisting of 44 Africans, elected one from each of the administrative districts, and 14 non-Africans elected from the constituencies under the present constitution. For the interim period, certain portfolios would continue to be held by the ex-officio members of the Government. Mr. Nkumbula's recent proposals on behalf of the African National Congress are identical with these—thereby ensuring a united African front. Anything less is utterly unacceptable to African opinion.

On his return from a very successful lecture tour of the United States, Mr. Kenneth Kaunda, National President of U.N.I.P., met Mr. Macleod again to press for changes. The settlers had already pressed Mr. Macleod to make it clear to Mr. Kaunda that "U.N.I.P.'s claim that independence was round the corner was a damnable lie," and Macleod duly expressed himself "gravely disturbed by reports that, despite what the Governor said to U.N.I.P., there had been widespread propaganda by U.N.I.P. members . . . that a major constitutional change would be made this year." He then proceeded to use the occasion as a propaganda platform by declaring his delight that Mr. Kaunda had "renounced violence in all circumstances whatsoever;" and made it clear that no changes were contemplated for Northern Rhodesia until the results of the Monckton Commission and the Federal Review Conference were known. He even tried to brow-beat U.N.I.P. by threatening to take "vigorous measures", saying that he had "already assured the Governor of full support in any measure which he might find necessary."

Mr. Macleod's reply to Mr. Kaunda's demands was circulated all over Northern Rhodesia "in order that the public . . . should

clearly understand the position.” The reaction of the Africans was immediate and indignant—and it is now no secret that there would have been widespread civil disturbances in October had there been no change in Britain’s policy. On 5th September, 1960, a U.N.I.P. Emergency Conference had resolved that if the private talks between Mr. Kaunda and the Governor were being unduly delayed, the Party would take “positive action of a non-violent nature”. The *Central African Post* of Lusaka denounced this as a threat—“aiming a pistol at the Government’s head.” But the paper admitted that “no other organization has yet held such a large representative conference in Northern Rhodesia.”

The danger of fresh crisis was only averted on 29th September, when Mr. Macleod announced at the last minute that there would be a constitutional conference on Northern Rhodesia after all, either before or concurrently with the Federal Review Conference. It seemed that the Monckton Commission was of the opinion that there should be a change in the Northern Rhodesia constitution.

The atmosphere in Northern Rhodesia is tense. Our neighbour, the Congo, has been the victim of the policy of “divide and rule”, and efforts are still being made by outside forces to disrupt the Republic and displace Premier Lumumba. U.N.I.P. is still banned on the Copperbelt—which of course borders on Katanga. The African political leaders are not permitted to enter several areas in which U.N.I.P. itself is *not* banned. Chiefs have been instructed to deport any political leaders in the area, whose homes are outside the jurisdiction of their chieftaincy. In the Northern Province, 2,349 U.N.I.P. membership cards have been confiscated by the police; and since the birth of U.N.I.P., no meetings have been permitted throughout the area. In contrast, Chiefs throughout Northern Rhodesia are allowed considerable freedom to oppress their own subjects—burning and demolishing huts of villagers unwise enough to oppose their rule.

While there is at present a country-wide campaign to disarm Africans, Sir Roy Welensky has announced the formation of white “local defence units” in the Copperbelt towns. Yet he prohibited the transmission of cables from Mr. Kaunda to Mr. Macmillan, Mr. Macleod and Mr. Hammarskjöld, stating that this concerted arming of the white inhabitants alone was creating “an atmosphere of war”. A Northern Rhodesia Association, led

by Mr. John Gaunt M.P., has been formed, with "What we have we hold" as its slogan. There are reports of active military training, and even women are being taught to use revolvers. A Mr. Colin Cunningham has started a Federal Fighting Fund to support Sir Roy Welensky, both in the federal and territorial spheres, and to organize opposition against the boycott of South African goods in Northern Rhodesia.

The determination of Africans to achieve their legitimate demands, however, has not been shaken.

The Monckton Report has undoubtedly come as a shock to Sir Roy and his supporters. Despite the volume of official evidence which was to have formed the basis of its Report, the Commission has come out openly against an imposed Federation. Though the Commission was not expected to consider secession, it was compelled to do so in view of the overwhelming African demand for it. The British Government had declared that the Federation was "here to stay", that it was opposed to secession by any territory, and that the Review Conference could not consider secession. Far from reducing African opposition to Federation, these declarations by the British Government succeeded only in hardening African opposition. The Commission therefore found it necessary to recommend secession under certain conditions. On top of everything, Mr. Habanyama, Welensky's personal nominee, is believed to have initiated the idea of the Minority Report signed by himself and Mr. Manoh Chirwa, which came out strongly in favour of the immediate break-up of the Federation.

Welensky has accused the Commission of "gross discourtesy". He has doubtless forgotten his own words in the Federal Parliament when he announced the formation of the Commission: "We believe that the appointment of this Commission is an imaginative and constructive step. . . . Its purpose will be to make available to the 1960 Conference the advice of eminent and able men as to the best means of securing the objects which we all had in mind when the Federation was first inaugurated."

He complains that he had no opportunity to give evidence against secession because he thought it was outside the Commission's terms of reference. Surely if he gave evidence in favour of the continuance of Federation, he was giving evidence against secession!

It is now rumoured that he has threatened to boycott the Conference if secession is discussed. The British Government

know that Africans will boycott the Conference if secession is excluded. Welensky must wish that Lennox-Boyd were still at the Colonial Office! In those days Welensky had things all his own way. And it does not seem that Macleod can be so easily flattered into co-operation. Perhaps it was even good fortune in disguise that lost the Labour Party the last general election, for torn by splits from the left, right and centre, Labour might well have been unable to deal with Welensky.

There are a number of people who take the view that the Monckton Commission has in effect recommended the break-up of Federation, since its actual proposals (e.g. parity of representation in the Federal Parliament), are obviously unacceptable to Africans. There is the larger school, and this includes most African nationalists, which regards the Monckton Commission as an ingenious trick. Africans want secession because they want to determine their destinies for themselves. We have had enough of oppressive foreign-controlled governments. Welensky may have lost much with the Monckton Commission Report, but we have made no positive gain—such gain still depends on our own initiative, in intensifying the struggle for the final dissolution of Federation, and the establishment of independent and fully democratic governments in Central Africa.

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