

THE SECOND LOOK — analyzing world issues of interest to students

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WHO RULES RHODESIA?

By John C. Heinrich

"The Rhodesian rebellion is regarded by officials here as the gravest situation confronting the world at this time!"

This statement by William McGaffin, a CHICAGO DAILY NEWS writer on December 4, 1965, refers obviously to the action of Rhodesia's 217,000 white people who declared independence from Britain unilaterally on November 11, 1965. The rather obvious purpose was to be able to dominate politically four million African Rhodesians.

To understand the importance given the Rhodesian issue, which is often compared these days with Vietnam, it has to be placed in the wider perspective of southern Africa and Africa as a whole.

Great Britain, if she is to maintain her prestige and influence in Africa and the world, cannot afford to back down in the face of a handful of people. The United States, while on the surface leaving the tactics to Great Britain, has a great deal at stake also.

In the first really successful flexing of its muscles, the Organization of African Unity got nine African nations to break relations with Great Britain. Two of these, Tanzania and Ghana, were Commonwealth members.

The one issue on which all of the O.A.U. members can agree is that the white domination of southern Africa by "four million people with pink skins sitting on twenty-nine million people with darker skins" must end.

Although the Zambesi river (the boundary between Zambia and Rhodesia) is the current political Mason-Dixon line, a degree of white control extends over Zambia, Malawi, and the Katanga Province of the Republic of the Congo.

Malawi, for example, has more citizens employed in Rhodesia than in Malawi. She is also heavily dependent on Rhodesia for coal and on Mozambique for a rail line by which she can export agricultural commodities to the port of Beira.

Zambia uses almost half of the power output of the great Kariba Dam, but the power station is on the Rhodesian side. Heretofore all Zambia's exports have had to go out on rail lines running through Portuguese or Rhodesian territory.

Her copper mines (third largest in the world) are also heavily dependent on Rhodesian coal.

Only if the British airlift backed by the U.S. and others, plus improvements to a road link through Tanzania, are effective can Zambia survive Rhodesian counter-measures. There is speculation that the British delay in announcing further sanctions against Rhodesia is to allow for stockpiling in Zambia and the provision of alternate means of transportation.

If these can be found and Zambia stops her annual imports of \$100 million worth of goods from Rhodesia (over 30% of Rhodesian exports), Smith's regime will really be hurting.

Portuguese policy is determined by the tension between the desire to help Smith and the fear that if she is seen to do so the United Nations and the hostile African states will have an excuse for interfering in Angola and Mozambique.

South Africa faces the same dilemma and her role is crucial. If she decides that the Smith regime is going down anyway and withholds overt support, the Smith government is finished. South Africa herself is very vulnerable to an oil embargo. Her chief trump card is the fact that she supplies 70% of the "free world's" gold.

The U.S. has taken the position that Rhodesia is an internal problem for Great Britain to handle and has consistently supported British decisions in the area. American imports from that country totaled about \$11 million last year, with chrome and asbestos accounting for more than half. Exports to Rhodesia amounted to approximately \$24 million, about half of which consisted of agricultural and road machinery. There are currently some restrictions on imports and exports by the U.S. and African nationalists would be happy to see the range of them extended.

What about the internal situation in Rhodesia itself, a landlocked country about the size of Colorado with high, comfortable plateaus and low lying, hot, dry, fertile river valleys waiting to be irrigated?

Effective, continuous white occupation dates from the arrival of a pioneer column from the south in 1890 under the auspices of the mining entrepreneur Cecil Rhodes. Effective African opposition was suppressed by 1896 and from then until 1961 white supremacy was not seriously challenged.

White politicians like to point to the relative material prosperity of Rhodesia, the high percentage of African children who find a place in primary schools, and the theoretical non-racial character of the 1961 franchise qualifications.

Africans point to the following facts:

Under the terms of the Land Apportionment Act, 37 percent of the land in Rhodesia is reserved for the use of 217,000 Europeans, while 46 percent of the land is reserved for 3,970,000 Africans.

The 40 million acres of African Tribal Trust Land is 17 percent suitable for annual crop cultivation and 9.5 percent is under cultivation. This is nearly 3/5 under cultivation and is reasonable, maximum use under the circumstances.

The 33.4 million acres in European areas is 52 percent suitable for annual crop cultivation and 2.8 percent is under cultivation; the cultivation percent is less than one-eighteenth of the "suitability" percent.

The optimum conditions of good soil plus high rainfall are found 98 percent in European areas; whereas 2 percent of such land is in African areas.

Ten times as much is spent annually by the government on a white child's education as compared with an African's. While most African youngsters can find a place in primary school, fewer than 5 percent can get any kind of secondary education (post 8th grade) and in 1965 the total enrollment of Africans at the Form VI level (entrance level to the university) was 56 out of a total population of nearly four million people.

The list could be extended almost indefinitely to cover a discriminatory franchise, censorship, arrest and detention without trial, the banning of African political parties, deportation of missionaries and teachers sympathetic to African nationalism, etc.

It all boils down to a fundamental spiritual crisis: the refusal to recognize the black man as a fully human child of God and the refusal to extend to him, as Adam's child, the hand of fellowship.

Today in many rural areas of Rhodesia every white man goes armed. They carry rifles in their cars and are jumpy as cats. Almost every home in the white suburbs has burgler bars on all the first floor windows. There has been, since 1962 when the African political parties were banned, widespread arson against white properties including mission schools and churches.

What does the future hold? This observer, after eleven years of residence in Rhodesia and a total of nearly fifteen years of studying the Rhodesian scene, does not expect the Smith regime to fall from either black or white internal opposition.

The crucial decisions will be made in London, Washington, Lusaka, Lisbon, Pretoria, and Dar-es-Salaam. There appears to be a chance that economic sanctions

will either bring the Smith regime down or force further negotiations with Great Britain.

If they don't, the alternatives would be a British or U.N. military intervention or a long period of sabotage and ultimately armed guerilla warfare by Africans on the pattern of Angola and Mozambique. There is at this point no evidence of the existence of such armed guerilla force in Rhodesia.

Further information on Rhodesia and southern Africa is available through the National Student Christian Federation Committee on Southern Africa, Room 754, 475 Riverside Drive, New York, New York 10027. Ask for the Rhodesia News Summaries, Witness to the Mozambique Revolution, and Focus/Southern Africa.