

CENTRAL AFRICA (IV): NORTHERN RHODESIA AND FEDERATION

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The Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland was imposed against the strongly expressed disapproval of the entire African population of the two Protectorates of Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland. In Southern Rhodesia the decision was taken by a referendum of the White Settlers. In Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland, the Legislative Councils decided. It is important to note that in the Northern Rhodesian Council only two out of the 22 members were Africans, and they voted against it. The White population was then 40,000, as against 2,000,000 Blacks. Is it any wonder then that when finally Her Majesty's Government decided in favour of creating the Central African Federation, the Africans believed they had been betrayed?

During that fateful month of August, 1953, there was strong tension and hostility in all places where Africans and Europeans met. The customary queues of African customers at their pigeon-holes outside European-owned shops disappeared, and uncanny silence prevailed as troops stood by to stamp out any opposition that might show itself. Fortunately, the African National Congress had not forgotten a previous occasion, when Government troops had been used to break a miners' strike for higher pay. Seventeen Africans had been mown down and killed by machine-gun fire, while over 50 lay wounded. Harry Nkumbula, leader of Congress, and his colleagues were determined that no opportunity should be given for a similar tragedy, and the occasion passed without incident.

This spirit of circumspection was interpreted by the Government to signify that the hostility of the Africans to Federation had died down!

Her Majesty's Government declared that 'partnership' was going to be the order of the day—no race should dominate over the other in the Federation. But of this 'partnership' Africans have seen no sign. Everywhere instead are scattered the foot-prints of 'apartheid'. The newly created Federal House of Assembly has been White-dominated from the start, and Africans have asked repeatedly in vain—where is the 'partnership?'

It is little wonder that they rallied to the support of the African National Congress, which had assumed an unquestioned leadership in the campaign against their oppression.

The struggle began in 1953, when Africans began to defy both the written and unwritten laws that discriminated against them in public places such as post offices, railways, shops, hotels, parks, cafés and restaurants. Men, women and children went to gaol for what they believed to be natural rights of which no man or government could deprive them. The struggle has gone on since, and not without successes. Post offices, shops, and, early this year, hotels, are some of the places where racial discrimination has been fought and defeated. But a lot remains unchanged, especially on the Copper Belt, which is the main-spring of most of these troubles.

One of the saddest features of our labour scene is the rigid maintenance of the colour bar in the realm of Trade Unionism. It is saddening beyond measure to see White workers excluding all Coloureds from their unions in an attempt to maintain their privileged position. The following table will show the disparity in wages between Black and White for the year 1956:

MONTHLY AVERAGE WAGE RATES IN NORTHERN RHODESIA

<i>Occupation</i>	<i>White Worker</i>	<i>Black Worker</i>
Miners	£200	£15
Carpenters and Bricklayers	£60	£10
Clerks	£60	£5
Farm and Factory Labourers	—	£2 10 0

In June this year, it was announced that there were 206 Africans who had been promoted to higher jobs in the mining industry and were receiving salaries of more than £540 per year. And the Government boasted that the Civil Service, which employs thousands of Africans, possessed 86 Africans earning more than £668 per annum.

The State-owned Rhodesia Railways top the list for discriminatory practices. Over the border, in the Congo, a paternalistic Belgian Congo Government trains Africans for such skilled jobs as fireman, shunter, engine-driver, guard, conductor, station foreman and station master. But Africans on our side are quite different, or so the official line proclaims. They are not ambitious enough to want to progress to skilled jobs, or, if they are, they have not the ability to absorb the technical

training, or, if they have, there are no resources available to train them, and so on. Meanwhile the Federal Government is spending public funds (to which Africans are no mean contributors) on importing untrained White workers from Europe and the Union of South Africa, some of whom do not even speak English, and trains them in preference to Africans. And yet it is Sir Roy Welensky, the Prime Minister of the Federation and instigator of these policies on the railways and elsewhere, who urges Africans to look to him and not to the Colonial Office. Africans have only one reply to effrontery like this—that if for the present they must suffer White rule, the Colonial Office is by far the lesser of the two evils.

The rise in the cost of living—foodstuffs jumped 10 points on the official price index during the nine months to September last year—affects Europeans and Africans alike. But when it is remembered that the average wage of the farm and factory labourer is as low as £2 10s. 0d. per month, it is small wonder that there is serious malnutrition amongst Africans. Not infrequently the assertions made about the quality of African labour can be traced to this cause.

In this new State dedicated to 'partnership', there are the water-tight compartments of the 'housing areas'. Whites are isolated in their commodious houses, Asians in their Reserves, Euro-Africans in theirs, and Blacks in their own slums, called 'locations', where roads cease to be macadamized and where the ordinary decencies of town-life, such as adequate sewage disposal, are non-existent. A short while ago there were frightened suggestions in the press that flies from garbage heaps in the African locations might be carriers of polio germs. It was even proposed that it might be a good thing if the refuse were removed, since some of the Europeans might contract the disease. (This was in Lusaka, the Protectorate's capital). You may think this is a very odd approach to African municipal problems, and I can assure you that my fellow Africans find it odd as well!

The poison of 'apartheid' rots every aspect of government: separate hospitals for Europeans, seemingly palatial, with ample funds and equipment; hospitals for Africans that are a pitiable mockery of the whole spirit of modern medicine: separate schools for Europeans that equal the best in building and equipment anywhere; schools for Africans which underline the intentions of the Government to reserve for them the lowest

paid and least skilled jobs. One day a Christian Bishop in Northern Rhodesia decided to practise a little of his Christianity by bringing his influence to bear in support of a two-year Congress proposal to build a multi-racial secondary school. But he reckoned without the unspoken motto of the Federal Minister of Education—'Suffer little White children to come unto me', and the school remains unbuilt. The statistics are fierce in attack:

NORTHERN AND SOUTHERN RHODESIA (1956—July '57)

	<i>Territory</i>	<i>Population</i>	<i>Amount Spent</i>
African Education ..	Northern Rhodesia ..	2 $\frac{1}{4}$ million	£1,800,280
African Education ..	Southern Rhodesia	2 $\frac{3}{8}$ million	£1,736,446
European Education ..	Both Rhodesias	220,000	£4,660,000

The political pattern is equally disfigured. Of the 26 seats in the Northern Rhodesian Legislative Council, four are reserved for Africans, who get there by far-fetched methods, and two for Europeans nominated to represent African interests. Twelve of the seats are for elected European members, and eight officials hold the rest.

There is a common roll. But to get onto it you must fulfil the following conditions:

(a) be a British Subject; (Africans are British Protected Persons, but they may become British Subjects by paying a sum of £5 to the Crown);

(b) have an annual income of £200,

OR

own property to the value of £240; (Africans cannot buy and own land by law);

(c) be able to complete a prescribed form in English, unaided, before a magistrate or any officer appointed;

(d) be 21 years of age.

In preparation for Dominion status, the Federal politicians have concocted two Bills—the Constitutional (Amendment) Bill and the Franchise (Amendment) Bill. The first sets out to enlarge the Federal Assembly, which was so small with its 35 members that a few absentees in a divided House could have put power to sway policy into the hands of the African representatives. It sets out ultimately to eliminate the African Affairs Board, one of the few original "safeguards" for Africans. It reduces the number of members actually chosen by Africans from 11.5 per cent. to 6.8 per cent. of the whole Assembly.

Finally, the African representatives will go from the Constitution one by one, whenever an African is elected by a common roll constituency. This is the Bill which has received "the Royal Assent" in the face of the first protest ever lodged by the African Affairs Board.

When the Franchise Bill is passed, there will be only four Africans chosen by Africans out of an Assembly of 59. Federal politicians claim the democratic purity of the "common roll", and then proceed to load the principle with special rules that assure a White majority. Both Bills are formulated with one object alone in mind, to preserve a White majority that will assiduously maintain White supremacy. There are to be two rolls, the Ordinary and the Special. No one can have an Ordinary vote unless he has considerable wealth and a rather high degree of education. I quote some figures below:

PROPOSED QUALIFICATIONS

For an Ordinary Voter:

(a) Income of £60 per month (£720 per year) or the occupation of immovable property to the value of £1,500 plus a literacy test;

OR

(b) Income of £40 per month (£480 per annum) or occupation of immovable property to the value of £1,000 plus a Std. VI pass;

OR

(c) Income of £25 per month (£300 per annum) or occupation of immovable property worth £500 plus a matriculation pass.

For a Special Voter:

Income of £180 per annum, with sufficient knowledge of English to fill in unaided a prescribed form of application for registration as a voter.

Africans contend that becoming British Subjects would lead to the loss of their Protected status. And then, what next? Is it surprizing that only 11 Africans have naturalized themselves?

It is clear that for all practical purposes the Ordinary vote will be the property of the White man, and the Special a sop thrown to the few thousand Africans who will manage to qualify for it. Indeed, the Federal Minister of Law himself said recently that there would probably be 83,000 European Ordinary voters and 3,000 African Ordinary voters. Claiming that there would be 34,000 Special voters, of whom 23,000 would be Africans, he comforted his European supporters with the assurance that, in an electorate of 120,000, the Ordinary voters would heavily outnumber the Special ones.

Now note that, out of an Assembly of 59, forty-four Ordinary

Constituency members will be elected by 83,000 Europeans and 3,000 African Ordinary voters.

The eight elected African representatives and one European elected to represent African interests will be chosen by 83,000 Whites and 3,000 Blacks with Ordinary votes, and by 23,000 Africans and 11,000 Europeans on the Special roll.

The two Europeans to represent Africans in the Protectorates will be nominated by the respective Governors.

Four Africans will be chosen by African Councils in the Protectorates.

Mr. James Callaghan, Labour Party Shadow Cabinet Secretary of State for the Colonies, has declared (September, 1957) that the Federation needs stable forms of government at the moment and not changes in the Constitution. The Federation is not ready for Dominion status. Africans, however, go much further than this. They demand secession, for it is the only thing that they believe will save them from going the desolate way of their brothers and sisters in South Africa.

Before Federation, there was a loose pooling of inter-territorial resources and an undemocratic co-ordination of some services under the Central African Council. This body, reconstituted with democratically chosen delegates from the three territories and representatives of the United Kingdom, could be given the task of liquidating the Federal Government's powers while preserving such joint services as do not conflict with the basic political, social and economic independence of the three territories.

The alternative is genuinely democratic governments for all three parts, freely consenting to work together for their common good. There is no sign of this alternative being even remotely considered, and so we must waste no time in considering it ourselves. We must concentrate on the first proposal, the negative plan of secession. Let the two Protectorates revert to their former status of countries administered under Treaty by Great Britain, until such time as she shall fulfil her pledged policy of helping them to freedom and independence.

In demanding this we do not ask for the moon or even the Soviet Sputnik, but for something within our grasp and something we intend to get and know how to get. It is, we think, the only peaceful solution to the problems obtaining in our multi-racial society, where the pursuance of 'apartheid' policies is increasingly becoming the order of the day. Arrests and

imprisonments (sometimes without any trial), deportations, the banning and prohibition of African political and industrial leaders from travelling in and outside of the Federation, are just some of the developments that have come to us with the fist of Federation.

Africans feel that the fears they have had all along have been shown to be entirely justified. And they know that they must now devote their energy and courage to the struggle for an entirely elective government. For only when they are at last their own governors, will they enjoy the rights to which they believe themselves naturally entitled and which they have for so long so unjustly been denied.

TAKE IT EASY, SIR ROY

"The struggle for Africa is on . . . But we are not helped by the long-haired idealists of the Left overseas."

Sir Roy Welensky.

The intellectual leftist guy,
Though beardless, often wonders why
In Britain he is feared
For his Bohemian beard;

While in America it's said
He has no hair upon his head—
An Egg-head he is called
(They're sure that he is bald);

But now Sir Roy has made it plain
He has a long and flowing mane
And his subversive hair
Drives Settlers to despair.

The African, one must admit,
These harsh descriptions do not fit:
His hairless chin escapes
The foliage of apes;