

THE GUILTY PARTNER

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AT the risk of infuriating every reader of *'Africa South'*, from Capetown to Calgary, I am going to say that I do not blame Sir Roy Welensky for the present state of affairs in Central Africa and the disastrous course of events that seems bound to sweep a nation to destruction.

I don't blame Sir Edgar Whitehead either. Indeed, I may as well go the whole hog and say that I blame none of the other Rhodesians who at present have their fingers on the levers of power—some silly, some amateur, some crafty, some pig-headed, and all politically myopic.

I think the people to blame are 5,000 miles away—in London. I think the power to prevent a fearful racial explosion, potentially as great and as ruinous as the one that hit Algeria seven years ago, rests in the hands of a few men in Whitehall. I believe that Mr. Harold Macmillan, who is the key member of this group, could summon the rest of them at any time of his own choosing, within the space of no more than fifteen minutes, and take action.

Perhaps I can make my point by recalling the case of the strolling players who presented *'Hamlet'* in a small Mississippi town long ago. It was the pioneer days, when the paddle-wheeler showboats took culture to the little towns along the river banks.

Watching the oily machinations of King Claudius, one angry man in the audience eventually reached the point where he could bear it no longer. As the King prepared to send the Prince off by ship to certain death, this man jumped to his feet shouting: "Bust him on the snoot, Hamlet!"

I cannot say that I am much more attracted to Sir Roy Welensky or Sir Edgar Whitehead, or to the politics of partnership, than I am to the personality of Queen Gertrude's second husband. But after watching the relentless unfolding of the political drama this past year, in London and Salisbury, I have acquired the deepest conviction that it is only self-deception to think that the Rhodesian members of the cast are capable of behaving very differently from the way that they have done so far. All are, in the last analysis, dangling on strings which

could be yanked sharply and decisively if the puppet master in Whitehall could only be brought to the point of decision.

My theme, then, is that the impending disaster is avoidable, and that the power to achieve this lies in London. Oddly enough, I suppose this ranks me among the optimists; for there are many observers of the African scene—including African politicians in Rhodesia itself—who have come to the negative and hopeless conclusion that really no one is anymore in control; that the strings are entangled or cut, and that the puppet master has deserted his post of responsibility.

Let me come down from generalities to specific fact with a good hard bump. The Rhodesian federal authorities have just published their Economic Report for 1961. It contains two resounding figures which lie behind all the tortured complexities of the political battle in the Federation. The average annual income of wage-earning Europeans is £1,209. The average annual income of wage-earning Africans is £87.

This means that the average African wage-earner is taking home £7 5s. per month. Now the apologists for the present structure of the Federation are likely to take you aside for five minutes and make out a pretty good case for why this African figure is not so near the poverty-line as it looks. You will be told about the elaborate free housing that is provided, or the new, low-cost housing schemes near the big towns that will now enable an African to buy his own home (built by someone else to an arbitrary, mass-produced design). They will tell you, as the Mayor of Salisbury proudly remarked on a recent visit to London, that Africans are spared the burden of being asked to pay local rates and taxes.

And if you ask, as did the correspondent of the London *Financial Times*, if it would not be a good thing to re-arrange matters so that the Africans *should* pay taxes and thereby assume a certain responsibility and a stake in the community, then you will find people asking if you are a Communist or a man from outer space.

The £87-a-year African is, in fact, the victim of a paternalism which is not of his own choosing, and if he baffles the white Rhodesians by failing to be grateful, then this only sign-posts the gulf between the black and the white way of life, a gulf that seems to the visitor in Salisbury the dominating feature of the Rhodesian landscape and every bit as impressive as Kariba.

The parallel figure to the one for wages is that for land. It

comes as an inescapable and stunning recognition, when one tours the Federation, that 8,000,000 Africans are suffering from land hunger and 297,000 white people are not.

Again, this can be explained away and interpreted by the apologists for the white settler administrations. It is undoubtedly true that, had the Africans been given full legal control to most of the land at the time of white occupation in the last century, many of them would have been persuaded to part with it by now, because the attractions of ready cash would have been too great. The early settlers foresaw the danger of unscrupulous estate agents and mortgage sharks, and put through measures that were, at least in part, protective.

But having said that, it is hard to see the excuse for perpetuating those early measures in their present, discriminatory form. Mr. Joshua Nkomo, the leader of the National Democratic Party which speaks for the majority of politically-conscious Africans in Southern Rhodesia, made this the cue for his dramatic exit from the recent constitutional conference in Salisbury. Perhaps the chairman, Mr. Duncan Sandys, Britain's Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations, who had flown especially from London to guide the conference, may have felt some twinge of conscience when Mr. Nkomo departed. Presumably Sir Edgar Whitehead, who went on to extract a miraculous list of concessions from the British Government, felt no twinge at all.

Not long after Mr. Sandys had departed for home, bringing with him the final draft of the new constitution—which leaves the land problem unresolved—Sir Edgar put his long-promised land reforms through the Southern Rhodesian parliament.

The infamous Land Apportionment Act of 1930 erected a most effective wall of agricultural apartheid. Now, in a number of important ways, that wall has been breached. But the basic and damning discrimination remains.

The Land Apportionment Amendment Act of 1961 removes 2 million acres from the category of European land and transfers them to the Africans. But look at the balance that remains. For the 220,000 fortunate people of Southern Rhodesia who happen to have white skins, there is still a total of 41 million acres—earmarked, untouchable, inviolate.

For the African there will now be 44 million acres of "Native Land" instead of 42. But, as it happens, there are TWO AND A HALF MILLION Africans.

As Mr. Joshua Nkomo has been pointing out, with increasing indignation, the white man has put aside land for his own use at the rate of 10 to 1, compared to what he allows his conquered compatriot, the African. And make no mistake about it—the settlers of Southern Rhodesia, who still celebrate Occupation Day as a national occasion, have not forgotten that they took over this territory by force of arms. They smashed the Mashona and the Matabele, and took their land to deal with as it suited them. To be fair, they established the “Native Reserves” so that the Africans would not lose the land still left them through inexperience in the ways of commerce. But the very name stinks in the nostrils of Africans today, as does that of the unfortunately-titled Native Affairs Department. This wilful blindness to African sensitivities extends even to recreation; where but in a community obsessed with racial differences could anyone seriously create a category with the title of “European National Parks”? It is, however, only to the visitor that the built-in contradiction of terms is apparent; the privileged citizens in this lunatic society see nothing odd about it. For the Africans the joke is too big to be really funny; there are 4 million acres of “European National Parks.”

The new Land Act is not all bad; far from it. There is an important section providing for a new system, by which Africans will have access to outside capital by means of mortgages. But when it comes to the towns, there has been a tragic failure to face up to what has undoubtedly the greatest single impact on race relations—the hard line of discrimination that operates so coldly and so effectively against the African who wants to operate a business in the ‘white’ part of town, or to live (or even stay overnight) in the white suburbs.

This is the indefensible system that serves not only to keep up the daily, infuriating friction between black and white Rhodesians; it also leads to the embarrassing incidents which from time to time put Rhodesia in the international headlines. The Kabaka of Buganda, whose ancestors were on the throne in Kampala long before the British royal family moved into Buckingham Palace, caused severe embarrassment to the Rhodesian authorities when he decided to stay the night at Salisbury between planes. The Federal Government managed to persuade the Ambassador Hotel to accept him as a guest—but the condition was imposed that he had to eat all meals in his room. Diplomats from India find themselves frequently involved

in tiresome and humiliating episodes. When Mr. Jagannath Rao, a young attaché, was abruptly ejected from the Mazoe Hotel in Salisbury, the affair reached the ears of Mr. Nehru, who declared publicly that further incidents could lead to a break in Indo-Rhodesian relations. The Federal Government apologised.

It illustrates the great gulf that exists between the races that Sir Roy Welensky, who is usually the shrewdest of politicians, has described such episodes as "the pin-pricks" of a multi-racial society. Nothing could be more inaccurate, for an African. I have put this very point to three outstanding Africans, each the acknowledged leader of the nationalist movement in his territory. Dr. Hastings Banda, Mr. Kenneth Kaunda and Mr. Nkomo have all said that, far from being pin-pricks, these discriminatory practices make complete nonsense of "partnership."

So there are three basic inequalities that lie at the root of all the day-to-day battles in the political power struggle of Central Africa. Black people are unequal in pay (1 to 14), unequal in land (1 to 10), and unequal in social status.

In fairness, it can be said that the two northern territories, as protectorates under the British Colonial Office, have been taking steps to eliminate the colour bar. But this, as the Monckton Commission pointed out, does not blot out the hard fact that when any politician comes to the Federal capital of Salisbury, he will—if his skin happens to be black—come under the full vindictive weight of the racial laws of Southern Rhodesia.

Just to give the knife of discrimination one final vigorous twist, the Rhodesian authorities in their wisdom have made the Nyasaland leader, Dr. Banda, a "prohibited immigrant" in Salisbury; and the same regulation has been applied against Northern Rhodesia's leader, Mr. Kenneth Kaunda. This means that these men—both of them likely to emerge as prime ministers when their territories advance to full self-government—have to confine themselves in the rectangular concrete box that is the waiting room at Salisbury Airport, when they change planes there. Whatever the concept of partnership may be in the mind of Sir Roy Welensky and his colleagues of the United Federal Party, it does not include the right of Dr. Banda or Mr. Kaunda to sit in the visitors' gallery of the Federal Parliament, for example, just to watch the debates. This leads to the ultimate absurdity—that when these two men have wanted to

meet in the past year with Mr. Nkomo, they have had to go *outside* their own country, in Nigeria last October, and in London last December during the Federal Review Conference. When Sir Roy exchanged a few halting words with Dr. Banda during the week-end arranged by Mr. Macmillan at Chequers, at the time of this conference, it was reported to be the first time that these two leaders had met in a dozen years.

It is against this background that the three African nationalists have been directing their present campaigns. The lucky one, undoubtedly, has been Dr. Banda. Prompt action by Mr. Iain Macleod, soon after taking over as Colonial Secretary, had brought about his release from prison and the subsequent conference in London which established a new constitution. With a wide franchise and a majority of African faces in the new Nyasaland legislature assured, he had only to go ahead with a straightforward campaign to lead his Malawi Party to certain victory in the first election.

Indeed, Dr. Banda was even confident enough in his control over Nyasaland affairs to stick an unsolicited oar into the troubled waters of Mr. Nkomo's territory. '*Malawi News*', the official organ of his party, went out of its way to express warm approval for the actions of a splinter group, led by Mr. Patrick Matimba and Mr. Michael Mawema, which recently split off from Mr. Nkomo's N.D.P. to form a rival organisation, the Zimbabwe National Party. Dr. Banda had, even before this split occurred, referred to the "spinelessness" of Mr. Nkomo and his colleagues of the N.D.P. during the conference under the chairmanship of Mr. Sandys.

The history of African nationalist movements is one of constant splintering, usually with the most radical, inflexible and 'pan-African' group achieving power in the end. The classic pattern was set in Ghana, then the Gold Coast, when Dr. Nkrumah broke away from his more moderate colleagues to build the dynamic party machine that carried him to power. Mr. Mawema and Mr. Matimba have some of the qualifications needed for this rôle: both have been arrested by the white authorities, both have served in prison, both have sensed a growing impatience among the rank-and-file of the orthodox nationalist movement at the seeming slowness and moderation of the leaders. They have issued a dynamic manifesto calling for all the reforms in the book, from 'one man, one vote' to repeal of the Land Apportionment Act. The only trouble is

that the N.D.P. has all these points in its platform already.

From Lusaka, now that the constitutional proposals for the Northern Protectorate have been made public at last, there have also been rumblings of discontent. It must strike the well-stocked mind of Mr. Kaunda as suitably ironic that now, in his forties, with a family of six children and a great party organisation which he had built up from nothing, he has his own potential splinter group to fear. There is a smokescreen of loyalty blotting out the details at the present time, at least for those outside the tight circle of the U.N.I.P. leadership. But it is clear that again there is a younger, more inflexible, militant group which wants less negotiation and more action.

The effect of this, for the British Colonial Office, is most significant. The new constitution, with its complex arrangements for a triple-tiered legislature of 45 seats, appears in its final form to give the vital edge of advantage to the United Federal Party. It was this final revision, with a dozen subtle changes wrought into it since the provisional draft worked out at the round table conference in London, that provoked from Kenneth Kaunda the angry and disillusioned declaration that Britain "has sold us to Welensky."

But in fact Mr. Macleod has been quietly hoping that after a cooling-off period Mr. Kaunda and the U.N.I.P. high command would see things his way. The Colonial Secretary remains doggedly optimistic about the whole affair, despite the critics who have called it "a dog's breakfast" (James Callaghan M.P., Labour's spokesman on colonial affairs) or "the Computer Constitution" (*Central African Examiner*).

Mr. Macleod apparently hoped that the multi-racial Liberal Party led by Sir John Moffat might come to some kind of electoral pact with U.N.I.P.; or that the two parties might at least arrange things in the vital contest for the 15 'national seats', so that they would not overlap and might therefore blot out the Welensky forces in a straight fight.

But such hopes have now been blown sky-high by the blood-stained developments of August, when spontaneous African violence broke out in scattered parts of the territory, particularly in the north. Mr. Kaunda has a personal antipathy towards Sir John, which he has tried to stifle since the Liberal leader went on record as saying that he and his party are working towards one goal, the introduction of majority (i.e. African) rule. Mr. Kaunda's goodwill was first strained when Sir John seemed to

forget these splendid sentiments in a moment of unguarded exhilaration at the end of the constitutional conference in London last February.

Mr. Kaunda still had fresh in his memory the encouraging words spoken to him at the Chequers week-end by Mr. Macleod. Taking the U.N.I.P. leader aside in a friendly way, the Colonial Secretary had promised him "something similar to Nyasaland." To Mr. Kaunda that could mean only one thing—indeed, the recommendation made by the bulk of the Monckton Commission—majority rule by Africans.

In mid-January, however, the Colonial Office began using the word "parity", though optimists assured Mr. Kaunda that this was only a sop to the Welensky forces—and to the dinosaurs of the Tory party at Westminster, led by Lord Salisbury and Robin Turton. The terms announced by Mr. Macleod at the end of the conference, a month later, seemed weighted against U.N.I.P.—Sir John's elation added to Mr. Kaunda's suspicions—but, on the other hand, the Welensky forces regarded it as a severe defeat. Although he had formally rejected the Macleod Plan, Kenneth Kaunda let himself be coaxed by the Colonial Office into a tour of the Copperbelt to sound out the European response.

The result was quite unexpectedly good. The warmth of his reception at meetings made the U.N.I.P. leader feel that perhaps his pessimism had not been justified; he and the Liberals between them might make a clean sweep of the 15 'national seats' in the next election. With U.N.I.P. sure to win all 15 seats on the lower roll, a clear African majority seemed likely in the legislature.

Then came the final round of consultations with the Governor, Sir Evelyn Hone, in Lusaka, when it became obvious that Sir Roy and the U.F.P. were prepared to fight like tigers to reverse the whole spirit and balance of the Macleod Plan. The nightmare that obsessed the Federal Prime Minister then—and still does now—is of two great African delegations coming down from the northern protectorates to take their places at the final stages of the Federal Review Conference, one group led by the Great Kamuzu from Nyasaland and the other by the Incorruptible Kenneth, the missionary's son from Northern Rhodesia.

In such circumstances, Mr. Nkomo's embarrassing existence and the power of his movement in Southern Rhodesia could scarcely be concealed from Britain and world opinion. The

U.F.P. would be seen for what it is—a settler-dominated administration elected on a minority franchise—and white rule in Central Africa would be at an end.

Fortunately for Sir Roy, he had ready-made allies in London in the right-wing back benchers of the Conservative Party. It did not need any skilful hand-outs or dextrous luncheon parties by Voice & Vision to ram home the lesson to Mr. Macmillan; the Tories were split over Africa—over Kenyatta's release as well as the Federation—at a time when Tory unity was already acutely in jeopardy over the Common Market and the economic crisis that was to generate the Selwyn Lloyd emergency budget. It will come as no surprise to any case-hardened African politician to know what was sacrificed—Africa, and not for the first time in European imperial politics.

That was when the Macleod Plan Mark II was banged through, with a dozen devious amendments rammed into it by the subtle hands of Mr. Julian Greenfield and Mr. Taffy Evans, in order to swing the balance back to the point where the U.F.P. seems certain to emerge with the largest block of seats in the Northern legislature at the next election. The *'Central African Examiner'*, saying that Mr. Macleod ought to have resigned on a point of principle, concluded that Britain had, by the stroke of a pen, "produced the possibility of very great disaster." She had also denied herself the very thing she wanted—"a period of transition to majority rule without hostility or resentment."

Mr. Kaunda and the national executive of U.N.I.P. announced their "total rejection" of the new constitution, and a special party congress gave them full mandate to put into effect a special secret "Master Plan" to shake the foundations of government. The London *'Economist'* declared editorially: "There seems now no room left to manoeuvre, and both sides find themselves increasing speed towards the collision."

The crash came sooner than many had expected; provoked, without the sanction of U.N.I.P.'s leader, by younger members who felt Mr. Kaunda was not giving the militant direction that was needed. There was an eerie parallel with the Nyasaland of 1959 in these explosions, the bridge burnings, the trees felled across roads to ambush white settlers, the inept killing of Africans by armed police and security forces. And the ultimate irony came when the present Executive Council of the territory ordered the inevitable military crackdown. One of the Members

of the Council, collaborating in the decision to call in Federal troops from Southern Rhodesia and to ban U.N.I.P. in designated areas, was the very man Mr. Kaunda had been told to look upon as an ally, Sir John Moffat. Had the U.N.I.P. leader taken that ill-starred advice, he would no longer be U.N.I.P.'s leader today.

"The British people themselves would not accept the constitution their government is now imposing on us," Mr. Kaunda said, on the day the Royal Rhodesian Air Force began flying in men of the King's African Rifles to put down the demonstrations. "There can be no permanent solution in dealing with the effects instead of the cause—which is simply the new constitution. My patience is completely exhausted. I cannot sit by and see my people shot down."

In this same week of August Mr. Joshua Nkomo, despairing of a fair deal for Africans in Southern Rhodesia, had flown to London to protest against any imposition of the new constitution upon his people—the Whitehead-Sandys Plan. Its defects have been too often examined in print to warrant detailed analysis here. It is enough, perhaps, to point out that it hands over final control over all internal affairs to the white settler administration in Salisbury, including the appointment of the Governor. It establishes a split voters' roll, with the introduction of second-class voters (Africans, of course) on a "B" roll. There is a Declaration of Rights, so riddled with exceptions as to be almost valueless, and a Constitutional Council intended as a watchdog of minority rights which is vitiated from the paws up by the fact that its membership is to be conservative and pro-Establishment while its decisions can be over-ruled after a six-month cooling-off period by a simple majority in parliament. Most dismaying of all, however, is the cunning device entrenching the African seats as a permanent minority. Africans will have only 15 seats out of 65 in the new Southern Rhodesian Assembly. And since any revision of seats or franchise requires a two-thirds majority, it will be beyond the power of the Africans to increase their representation. On the other hand, they will be powerless to prevent the remaining 50 members of parliament—just nicely over the two-thirds figure—from crushing or removing them altogether once the enabling legislation has been smoothly pushed through the British Parliament.

During his waverings, comparable to those of his friend Kenneth Kaunda up north, Mr. Nkomo was obviously tempted

by the plea of Mr. Sandys: "Look, it's as good as you can possibly hope to get for a start (there are no Africans in the present territorial legislature), and by a little horse-trading with the other parties, the N.D.P. can improve its position."

In this line of persuasion Mr. Sandys is basing himself on the same false premise that seems to have misled Mr. Macleod over Northern Rhodesia. Both men, raised in the sophisticated school of Westminster politics, where there are party whips to exert discipline and no militant wing ready to resort to physical violence, seem unable to make the effort of imagination needed to see that an African party is just not a party in the London sense of the word.

Mr. Nkomo could accept the Sandys formula and last just about 24 hours in office; after that he would be out in the wilderness, just as surely as the ineffectual Dr. Danquah is in Ghana today.

Shrewdly, Joshua Nkomo and his party colleagues took a deliberate gamble and allocated more than £1,000 of precious N.D.P. funds on an African referendum, held to coincide with the official one organised by the Whitehead régime. Then he flew to London, bearing the results. The Africans, working by full adult franchise, polled 467,000 votes to 584 against the new constitution. In the official referendum, the 64,000 voters (fewer than 5% African) approved it two to one. Mr. Nkomo went to London with his Vice-President, Mr. Malianga, to tell the Commonwealth Relations Office that the proposed constitution was being "put through at gunpoint", against the express wishes of the majority of the people of the territory.

He told the Under Secretary of State: "We have negotiated passionately. Now we are putting negotiations aside. We shall do everything in our power to break the new constitution."

And so the stage is set for Act Five of the Rhodesian Tragedy. And yet one man can still, if he chooses, intervene decisively to prevent disaster. He is Harold Macmillan. It is in his power to prevent Britain from sowing disaster in Central Africa. I doubt that he will act.