

*Rhodesia situation
not considered
one of priorities
by Britain's
Heath*

a period during which he hopes the Africans might have second thoughts about the Anglo-Rhodesian proposals; he has no expectations that Britain might get Mr. Smith to agree to anything more than the last set of agreed proposals; he is determined to stand by Britain's Five Principles; he expects no great difficulties in getting the Tory Party to renew sanctions in November, even though he is no great believer in the value of sanctions other than as a means of inconvenient pressures on the Smith regime. In short, his position is typically (but not surprisingly) Micawberish. As for Prime Minister Heath, he shows no inclination to make Rhodesia one of the priorities of 10 Downing Street, nor is he likely to do so unless the issue becomes divisive within the Tory Party, which it is not yet.

(5) Even if effectively applied, economic sanctions will not by themselves succeed in toppling the Smith regime. But they remain of crucial importance for reasons that will be presently discussed. They are already doing far greater economic harm than is usually supposed.

(6) Because Rhodesia is deeply embedded in the Southern African sub-system, its future is intimately bound up with developments in that area. The Smith regime would be greatly helped if Zambia's President Kenneth Kaunda were to fail in his current efforts to establish his effective authority over his country; on the other hand, it would be seriously undermined if the Front for the Liberation of Mozambique (FRELIMO) were to succeed in seriously undermining Portuguese rule, especially in strategic Tete Province, wedged between Rhodesia, Malawi and Zambia.

(7) The African states can, as yet, play only a limited role in directly helping to change Rhodesia's internal power structure. They can, and they do, help the Zimbabwe guerrillas; they give moral and economic support to the ANC; they can contribute toward making sanctions more effective; and they can keep up pressure through the United Nations and the Commonwealth. But increased African pressure — and especially more effective guerrilla operations — must reckon with the possibility of South Africa's active intervention.

(8) The situation inside Rhodesia will change fundamentally only when the black factor becomes a serious challenge to white rule. This is unlikely to happen until the country's internal security and its economy are in serious jeopardy and external pressures are intensified, perhaps in response to greater internal black pressure and to what happens in Mozambique.

(9) The overriding single reality about Rhodesia is that the struggle there is over the maintenance of white supremacy, although different in degree and character, this is the dominant determinant of the policies of all the white-ruled countries in Southern Africa.

Long-term settlement

What conclusions can be drawn from this range of assumptions? The most immediately obvious conclusion is that a settlement of the Rhodesian problem is long-term rather than short-term: it calls for patience, persistence and commitment, and it leaves no room for the kind of facile optimism to which Harold Wilson was inclined to treat us from time to time. It is not, in its present phase, a problem amenable to peaceful negotiations, either between the black and white parties directly involved or through third-party intervention.

The Pearce Commission findings amply demonstrated that an Anglo-Rhodesian agreement negotiated without African participation or consent will fail to meet the British Fifth Principle — the test of acceptability. This is not to say, however, that there might not be a resumption in the future of direct talks between the British Government and the Smith regime, with some possible arrangement to seek to implement a new agreement without the help of a Pearce Commission — perhaps even through a secret ballot, which is increasingly favoured by the Rhodesia Front. Such an exercise might get Britain off the Rhodesian hook, but it cannot bring any assurance of stability to the peoples of that country.

Another fairly obvious conclusion is that the Smith regime will move vigorously to repair the breaches in the Rhodesian Front dikes opened up by the brief political holiday allowed to Africans during the operations of the Pearce Commission. The one lesson they have failed to learn — indeed, are incapable of learning — is that the majority of black Rhodesians do not like, or accept, white rule, and least of all Mr. Smith's rule.

Despite the clear evidence of the futility of relying on tribal chiefs, Mr. Smith has announced his intention of reinforcing their position by giving them powers far in excess of their authority. The implications of such a policy are further political repression of blacks and the elimination of the ANC and of Bishop Muzewu in much the same manner as ZAPU and ZANA and their leaders, Joshua Nkomo and the Reverend Sithole, were eliminated. The predictable outcome is a further intensification of black bitterness and a