

new countries of Malawi and Zambia, was withheld from them. The Africans, not unnaturally, took the opposite standpoint — they could not understand why, if freedom was granted to their brothers in the North (and indeed elsewhere in Africa), it should be withheld from them.

The grant of independence was — and still remains — a matter for decision by the British Parliament exclusively. But the Rhodesian situation was unprecedented. The normal pattern had been to accede to demands for independence from self-governing colonies. The stage had long since been set with the white Dominions and, within a decade of the transfer of power in the Indian subcontinent, the process of de-colonization went on apace. But Rhodesia was unusual in two respects. First, because the electorate represented mainly the white minority and took little account of the four million Africans (now five million) who outnumbered the Europeans by some 20 to one. Secondly, because, throughout the history of Rhodesia, the British Government had never itself been in control on the spot. During the 30 years of company rule and the by now 50 years of self-government, the British Government had no one under its authority stationed in the country with powers to act on its behalf — whether officials, armed services or police.

These factors governed the response of the British Government. It could not in equity agree to an independence constitution which did not make fair provision for the Africans. But it had no power to impose a solution of its own. It sought to take account of the needs of all the peoples in the territory and made its views clear in terms later known as the Five Principles.

Negotiations between the two Governments in the early 1960s failed to reach agreement. Indeed, at successive elections the European electorate moved to the right, as did a rapidly changing sequence of Prime Ministers. Eventually on November 11, 1965, the Government of Ian Smith made a unilateral declaration of independence (UDI). This was rejected by the British Government as illegal. Britain exerted financial pressures, secured diplomatic isolation and imposed economic sanctions. On British initiative sanctions were endorsed by the Security Council of the United Nations and, in December 1966, made mandatory.

Danger of holocaust

Leaders in other African countries have vociferously demanded — at the United Nations and at Commonwealth meetings,

and, indeed, with some support — that Britain should assert its power by the use of armed force. But the case against the use of force is strong; some of the reasons are severely practical, some psychological. The overriding consideration, however, is that, once what would in effect be a war between white and black had been started in Southern Africa, who could tell where the blood bath would end? The South African Republic would not have stood idly by and terrorist organizations, aided perhaps by the Communist powers, might well have intervened. The first shot could have started a holocaust.

Aim of sanctions

Sanctions were originally imposed in the hope that international action would act as a shock to the European community, would rally the moderates and would lead to the formation of a new administration with which a reasonable accommodation could be found. This hope was shown over the years to be without substance and elections demonstrated that, far from losing support, the regime gained strength with the European electorate. Nevertheless sanctions have taken their toll and have corroded the progress of the Rhodesian economy. They have also made Rhodesia dependent on South Africa to an extent that probably neither side wants — because Rhodesia, whatever can be claimed against its treatment of Africans, does not adhere to the full doctrine of *apartheid* and South Africa, however strong its sympathies, does not wish to add to its area of responsibility a vast territory containing more than five million Africans.

There is a further factor. In South Africa, the proportion of blacks to white is four and a half to one; in Rhodesia it is over 20 to one. No small minority can hope in the long run to dominate an overwhelming majority of this order. The European must recognize, at least in his own mind, that ultimately his survival depends on the acquiescence of the majority; if the Africans are driven into the hostility of despair, there will be no future for the European.

Harold Wilson, when Prime Minister, sought to achieve a settlement in discussions on board HMS *Tiger* (December 1966) and HMS *Fearless* (October 1968), but, in spite of Mr. Smith's willingness to consider the terms proposed, these were rejected by his Cabinet. As the years passed, the economic — and particularly foreign-exchange — difficulties of Rhodesia increased and further contacts with the regime were established by the new Con-