

BRITAIN'S RESPONSIBILITY AND AFRICAN ACTION

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NONE was victorious; no one sought any sense of victory over anyone on any of the topics that were discussed; now the Conference is over. The Commonwealth Heads of State and Government, by the look of things, had frank and forthright exchanges on the vexing subject of Rhodesia. One must assume that most of them were agreed that the racist minority regime in Rhodesia is and must remain an international outlaw until a representative government is substituted in its place. There would then remain the question of responsibility for bringing about the correct solution. Her Majesty's Government has maintained a consistent policy of 'no use of force.' We are able to note that the same said Government of the UK has once more reiterated that the task of solution-seeking remains the responsibility of the Government of England. The problem has thus been fully embraced as Britain's baby-child. The African governments and those of Asia are therefore correct in insisting that Britain adopt effective measures to end minority rule in Zimbabwe (Rhodesia). The results have been staggeringly disappointing and in the absence of any other meaningful joint Commonwealth initiative the challenge must revert to the African people of Zimbabwe, who in the final analysis ought to bear the greater, more painful burden of effecting change. The warnings by President Kaunda on the imminence of a blood-bath in southern Africa are relevant revelations of the inevitable that must ensue from Britain's policy of appeasement in the area. That the proportions of the conflagration stretch beyond Rhodesia's borders is evidenced by South Africa's increasing involvement beyond her own frontiers, and the aggressive policies of Portuguese colonialism are a positive contribution to the worsening of the situation in the area generally. The challenge has therefore assumed international characteristics. It is therefore right that the United Nations addresses itself to this problem and the Commonwealth countries are individually and collectively interested in contributing to what must constitute a correct solution.

The Commonwealth leaders met against the background of a set

of British devised principles on Rhodesia, notable among which is that there would be 'no independence before majority rule'. It is worthy of note that the NIBMAR principle was extracted from a reluctant Britain during the previous Conference. What has happened since that undertaking points to a rebuttal by Britain of what the international community considers fundamental to a just settlement of the constitutional imbalance in Rhodesia. The world has since been treated to a series of goings and comings by British ministers and Commonwealth Office officials, culminating at different times in deliberately staged negotiations between Her Majesty's Government and the racist regime. The character of the document which Britain considers the basis for settlement attests to an unashamed abandonment of NIBMAR. Mr. Wilson's maintenance of the Fearless document should now have satisfied him that the NIBMAR principle has been effectively thrown overboard. His Government must now be in no doubt about the opposition of the African people of Zimbabwe and the twenty-odd Commonwealth states. The NIBMAR bluff has exploded and now the UN and the OAU must reaffirm their support of the liberation struggle in Zimbabwe. The role of nations now should be the direction of material support to the liberation struggle in Zimbabwe.

The discussion exercise during the last Conference has been more revealing than at any other time before. The African people of Zimbabwe have been able fully to assess the support from individual states. The belief that the British Government is in league with the racist regime has been vindicated by her more than passionate belief in the Fearless formula. The position has not changed a bit. The Africans of Zimbabwe are demanding and insisting on no more than what is theirs by right. May I hereunder state the conditions the simultaneous fulfilment of which could lead to a peaceful solution of the Rhodesian problem.

1. Immediate and unconditional release of all freedom-fighters condemned to death and all others in detention and restriction camps.
2. Free and unfettered conditions for Mr. Joshua Nkomo to take full charge and conduct of all the affairs of the African people in order to bring about immediate unqualified majority rule.
3. Dissolution of the racist minority regime and all its institutions.
4. Drawing up of an unqualified majority rule constitution, free from elements of race, class or tribal distinction.
5. Reconstruction of the army, police and administration so that these correspond with the principles and purposes of popular government.

6. All racist and reactionary laws must cease to have effect and must be expunged from the statute.

It is clear that the Commonwealth countries have now exhausted all forms of pressure to change Britain's policy of neglect of the African people of Zimbabwe. We also have no illusions about the African people of Zimbabwe being the decisive factor in the liberation of our country; it is nonetheless our hope that the international community in the Commonwealth, OAU and the UN will continue to reject fraudulent constitutional arrangements that are an endorsement and legalisation of the minority regime and its policies of repression.
