

INSTITUTE OF CURRENT WORLD AFFAIRS

CM-12  
East and Central Africa -  
Decade of Development or Disaster

Meikles Hotel  
Salisbury, Southern Rhodesia  
April 24, 1964

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Dear Dick:

Contrary to the impression which missionaries and explorers have generally, if unconsciously, created, a good part of Africa south of the Sahara is a land of milk and honey compared to the subcontinent of Asia and to much of Latin America. Observers who have served in all three continents find that in per capita terms and in terms of health and subsistence, the African tribesman is better off than his counterpart in Asia or Latin America. Yet if there is any area of the world where the lid is likely to blow and the West will awaken to find a communist-dominated continent, it is Africa.

It is hard to believe this as I sit in this plush, seven-story hotel, (the African nannies and chauffers are accommodated out back for 40 cents per night plus 40 cents per meal) having just returned from a tobacco auction and a meeting with leading Salisbury merchants in what must be one of the finest auction houses in the world. Salisbury might be St. Petersburg or Kansas City. Nairobi might be Des Moines. Farms and homes are as numerous and comfortable as middle or upper class homes in comparable sized communities in prosperous parts of agricultural America. Nairobi and Salisbury are studded with modern 10- to 15-story buildings. Shops tempt buyers. Now and then a Jaguar (and I don't mean the animal) roars down the street and Mercedes are common. To the south are Johannesburg, Pretoria, and Capetown, even more prosperous and cosmopolitan than Nairobi or Salisbury.

But Nairobi and Salisbury are stagnating. Houses, businesses and farms are on the market and find few takers. Europeans are slipping away to England, Australia, South Africa, and the United States. Capital outflow exceeds its inflow.

The reason is African nationalism, headquartered at the moment in Dar-es-Salaam in Tanganyika, where no less than nine African liberation movements are located.

One wonders how long African nationalism, rather than communism, can be blamed for this stagnation. Agents from Peking, Moscow, and East Germany are already preying on the frustrations of the nationalists who seek independence. They are also making headway with Africans who have achieved independence only to find that "Uhuru" doesn't automatically mean prosperity, or peace, or freedom to govern oneself. Communist Bloc and Chinese funds are flowing into

Dar-es-Salaam for use by African refugee groups, into Nairobi for use by one member of the Cabinet and a number of members of Parliament, and into Southern Rhodesia in the form of explosives. Zanzibar has virtually fallen into the hands of communist trained elements which pull the strings on the puppet President Karume, and there is serious doubt whether the projected merger of Tanganyika and Zanzibar means that moderation will prevail, or just the opposite. There is a rumor that Lumumba University may be transferred to Zanzibar. African refugees from Portuguese East Africa have been trained in Dar-es-Salaam and elsewhere and await only the signal to move. Refugees from European-dominated African states are being educated in Bloc countries at a rate of ten to every one who goes to Western Europe or the United States. Radio Peking and Radio Moscow come in as loud and clear as the BBC. The Voice of America is virtually inaudible on my 10-transistor short wave.

In Dar-es-Salaam, where some 35 nations now have diplomatic representatives in residence, all but two Bloc states are represented. But from Latin America, there is only Cuba, and from the Far East, only Communist China.

The Sino-Soviet split has not yet been felt in communist activities in this part of Africa - or at least the split is not deterring their activities. The super-powers of the communist world are pursuing their common interests which in Africa, thus far, coincide.

The Chinese seem to find the African stakes particularly intriguing. They may be interested in the open spaces, feeling cut off from access to already heavily populated Asia where they might run into military trouble with the British or the Americans. They are leap-frogging south Asia and have recently proposed sending 15,000 coolies into Somalia to help on a railroad construction project. The Chinese probably also see Africa as an opportunity to pit the colored races against the white and thus, in time to establish Chinese hegemony in the world communist movement. Africa offers the Chinese opportunity at small cost (subversion being cheaper and more disruptive than development aid) to make an impact like a great power. And finally, they are undoubtedly intrigued by the wealth and industrialization of the Rhodesias and South Africa, which they hope will fall like ripe plums into the hands of African nationalists and then into the hands of the Communists.

Russian interests in Africa are more general. Africa is a continent of opportunity for the spread of socialist influence. Russia offers African nationalists something different from what is viewed as the exploitation of the former colonial powers, and something somewhat similar to their own tribal societies, which are dictatorial and socialistic in nature. While at one time nationalism was associated with capitalism - the most nationalistic states being those which went to the greatest extremes to protect their entrepreneurs - since the war nationalism has become associated with socialism. The African nationalist is ready to adopt socialism as the economic means by which nationalism is expressed.

He tends to do this whether or not socialism is in fact the best means to serve his interest by bringing the greatest freedom and wealth to the greatest number of people in the shortest period of time.

The communities upon which I base these observations are Nairobi, Kenya; Salisbury, the capital of Southern Rhodesia whose independence is not yet assured; and Dar-es-Salaam, Tanganyika. A word about each.

Kenya acquired her independence from the British in December 1963. The Government is African, headed by Prime Minister Jomo Kenyatta, and governed by an African cabinet with one minister of European extraction who has opted for Kenyan citizenship. Despite the fact that the Government is 100 per cent in the hands of the Africans, the economy of Kenya is owned and controlled by Europeans. (Population: 6,500,000; of which European, 68,000; Asian, 175,000). Kenya poses the question of whether economic power (European) and political power (African) can exist side by side and in a stable relationship. Only time will tell. But if Kenya can Africanize its government and not at the same time drive European economic development from the country, Kenya may set a significant pattern for Africa - a pattern encouraging to the West.

Southern Rhodesia is a self-governing British Colony under the complete political control of Europeans who also control the economy.\* Southern Rhodesia poses the question of how long a white minority can maintain both political and economic control over a nation which has 18 Africans for every European. (Population: 4,000,000; of which European, 220,000; mixed blood and Asian, 20,000) If a peaceful accommodation can be worked out between economic power and the politics of majority rule, Southern Rhodesia could become one of the most influential states of Africa. This does not seem likely.

Tanganyika became independent in December 1961. The ratio of Africans to non-Africans is over 300 to one and there is no significant long-term problem of African-European relationships. (Population: 9,000,000; of which European, 25,000; Indian, 80,000; and Arab, 20,000) President Nyerere is one of the most competent African leaders of liberal persuasion. But he is in trouble, having survived the January mutiny of dissident non-coms only by the grace of Her Majesty's aircraft carrier Centaur and a company of Royal Marine Commandos. At the moment 500 imported Nigerian troops are maintaining internal order until Tanganyika's own forces are reorganized from the ground up. Tanganyika poses the question of whether a moderate all-African government can maintain economic and political stability during a period when external economic problems with its neighbors are increasing, when internal

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\* In Southern Rhodesia it is the white government which is seeking independence from Britain on the theory that control by the white minority will thus be assured for many years. It is the Africans who insist that independence should not be granted until there is assurance that the majority African population will be able in a reasonable time to control the government.

tensions are rising because Africans are not getting enough of the good things of life fast enough, and when the communists are moving into Zanzibar, 20 minutes by air from the capital of Tanganyika.

While question marks in the futures of Kenya, Southern Rhodesia, and Tanganyika are serious enough to challenge the most competent administrators and politicians, they are exacerbated by the aggressive tactics of Bloc and Chinese representatives who see opportunity to advance the interests of communism.

How are the Europeans and Africans responding to the dangers implicit in this worsening situation?

In general the Africans are complacent about any threat of Bloc or Chinese penetration or capture of their African nationalist movements. A good many feel that the West, and the United States in particular, sees Africa "through the eyes of Moscow" - meaning that the U. S. is interested in Africa only when there is a communist threat and that there is no basic interest in African development as such. African nationalists will accept help from wherever it may come. The most responsible African leaders believe that delays in granting independence and the continued existence of minority governments as in Southern Rhodesia and South Africa force the African nationalists farther and farther to the left.

The attitudes of Europeans toward African nationalism and its manifestations can be illustrated by brief profiles of three Europeans whose lives are being changed. To maintain their anonymity, I will call them the Smiths of Salisbury, the Martins of Nairobi, and Mr. Williams of Salisbury.

Mr. Smith of Salisbury is an accountant. His wife is a librarian. I met Mrs. Smith quite by chance when I heard her inquire at the American Consulate for information about Oregon. When it turned out that the Consulate's information was meager, I volunteered to tell her what I knew about Oregon. The Smiths are leaving for Oregon in August. The 100-acre farm which they bought in 1955 for \$45,000 and have extensively improved might be sold today for \$25,000, if they could find a buyer. The Smiths think they will like Oregon because of the climate. But more important, they understand that Oregon "has no racial problems and we want to get away from this beautiful place which could blow up at any moment." They may not make it.

Mr. Martin settled in Nairobi in 1950, having become acquainted with Kenya when he served there with the Royal Air Force during the war and where he met his wife. Martin is a businessman with varied interests - including a radiator factory, a gunshop - described as the world's best, but because of tension in Nairobi it is prohibited to display guns publicly - a women's luxury dress shop, a beauty salon, and a young men's shop. Martin has four children aged 5 to 18. His eldest son is serving in Burundi in the British equivalent of the Peace Corps.

Mr. Martin describes himself as a "strange bloke" because he is betting that Kenya with an African government will succeed. At a time when many Europeans are trying to get out, Martin is increasing his investments in Kenya. He has recently raised half a million dollars in London and bought a tea plantation and a smaller coffee farm. He has opened an African women's dress shop operated exclusively by Africans, is on the verge of opening a shop dealing in wedding dresses, and has brought Africans on his Board of Directors. His net profit in 1960 was about \$1,500. In 1963 his profit exceeded \$35,000, and he expects to clear \$45,000 in 1964.

Mr. Martin is betting on free enterprise and stability in Kenya. He feels that Prime Minister Kenyatta (former head of the Mau Mau) realizes that Kenya needs to keep its European capital and encourage new investment. Martin believes that a new European mentality is required toward investment in Africa. The day of enormous profits is gone, but he expects a good steady return on his investments. He views Kenya, and Africa generally, as a challenge to the private entrepreneur. "Of course there are risks" he says, "but free enterprise is built on taking risks. Our risks here don't begin to compare with those Americans took when they developed their continent. I may lose, but never let it be said that Martin didn't do his best to make free enterprise work in Africa."

Mr. Williams of Salisbury is a leading figure in the tobacco industry - the greatest hard currency earner in Southern Rhodesia. He was born in Rhodesia. He intends to stay. Forty-five years of age, he intends to keep a white government in control "for my lifetime", even though he admits there may be a time in the distant future when the African majority may control the government. He says he is not anti-African, but he is not willing to lower the standards of society by turning it over to people unprepared to maintain order and who "can't think with shoes on." What Williams wants now is for the United Kingdom and the United States "to leave us alone and let us work out our own problems. We don't intend to be intimidated by small gangs of thugs which would disappear if we could have stability enough to get them employed. This country has grown and prospered under our management. It would have been nothing without what we did without external help. As conditions improve, the Africans will find their living conditions will get better. We thought the United States was a leader and stood for moral principles, but to our horror we find that you do not lead the Afro-Asian bloc, but you follow it. The United States does what is expedient, not what is right. The Africans lie and your chap Yates at the U. N. eggs them on and no one calls their bluff. The U. S. may criticize our democracy, but educated Africans with an income can vote on the same basis as the whites. Do you think an African government would be democratic?"

"Take a look around our town and see how peaceful and beautiful it is. Our children walk the streets without fear. You can even go into the African townships in safety."

But that very day, the top-ranking African leader, Joshua Nkomo, was arrested and "restricted" - up to twelve months without trial. The next morning a demonstration of several hundred African women - many with babies on their backs - broke out immediately in front of this hotel. Order was restored shortly with police dogs and by hauling 130 of the demonstrating women to the police station. The following day Africans for the first time openly attacked whites in a downtown department store.

What to do - flee, adjust, or fight if necessary to keep control? Get out while the getting is possible; stay and work with the Africans accepting their political control because they are in the majority and hoping the African's self-interest will protect the white minority, or stay and fight it out? This is the problem of the individual white man in this part of Africa.

The problem of the free world is more impersonal. Broadly speaking, the question is whether continued white domination of Southern Rhodesia, the Union of South Africa, and Portuguese East Africa serves as a bulwark against, or an invitation to, communist domination.

Every African nationalist failure - the mutinies in Zanzibar, Tanganyika, and Kenya, disorder in the Congo, one-man dictatorships, ostentatious living by the new African elite, border incidents, and native massacres - strengthens the belief of the hard-line European that if he will just hold on long enough and be tough enough with the Africans, in time world attitudes will mellow and Africa will be saved for the West. The white European believes there are already signs in the United States that "the penny is dropping" and there are doubts whether the pressures the United States has been exerting are the right ones. "We are not going to be quite so isolated...We must stick to our guns and refuse to bow to outside pressure"

Every restrictive move by the white-dominated governments - apartheid, arrest, restrictions - convinces the African nationalist that only extremism will succeed in wresting control from the minority. He will turn for help where he thinks he must and if the fabric of society is broken and greater poverty the price of majority control, he's willing. To the African nationalist, dictatorship by an African is all right; dictatorship by a European minority is all wrong.

The issue between the extremes has long since passed into an emotional stage which makes a rational settlement virtually impossible. And yet there is one area of agreement - strange agreement - that the United States somehow holds the key to a peaceful resolution of the issues. The African nationalist is convinced that if the United States were to throw its full support behind the nationalists - if the United States were willing to use its

economic power to support the concept of "one man, one vote," the African white domination would be broken and then, with American help, these states would grow and prosper.

The majority of the white communities are convinced that if the United States would stop lending moral support to African nationalists and preach a positive program of development - building on what exists - there would be a gradual increase in African influence and education and in time the African continent would prosper and the continent would be saved for the West.

The appeal of the extremes is for the United States to abandon the role of honest broker and to choose sides. Once again the United States finds itself in the position of the great power expected to take sides in a highly emotional dispute.

This is not the decade of reason in Africa.

Sincerely yours,

  
Carl Marcy

Received in New York May 22, 1964.