

INSTITUTE OF CURRENT WORLD AFFAIRS

JCB-21 Sir Roy Welensky

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3 Richmond Close
Highlands
Salisbury, Southern Rhodesia

Mr. Richard Nolte
Institute of Current World Affairs
366 Madison Avenue
New York 17, New York

Dear Mr. Nolte:

While Heads of State in the rest of Africa were meeting at the summit at Addis Abbaba, a small Southern Summit Conference was held at Betty's Bay, South Africa, when Dr. Verwoerd and Sir Roy Welensky, Prime Minister of the crumbling Federation of the Rhodesias and Nyasaland, went fishing together.

Sir Roy could not represent the Southern Rhodesian government in any official way: His Federation is breaking up and he will soon be a man without a job. But in spite of this he is still considered a power in politics here and his actions receive careful scrutiny.

During the last 25 years he has worked his way through the "tough school of politics". He entered political life first as a union organizer and then head of the European Railwaymen's Union in Northern Rhodesia's copperbelt. Over ten years ago he and Sir Godfrey Huggins, Prime Minister of Southern Rhodesia (later Lord Malvern), together sold Britain on the idea of a federation of the three central African territories, Northern Rhodesia, Southern Rhodesia and Nyasaland. He succeeded Lord Malvern as Prime Minister of the Federation in 1956.

From the beginning Africans in Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland, where there are very few Europeans, distrusted federation. They saw Europeans in the three territories uniting to control their rising aspirations. As the tide of Black Nationalism



swept over Africa the governments of both Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland have become African-controlled and Britain can no longer support a Federation in which they refuse to participate. Thus at the beginning of this year, when self-government was announced for Nyasaland, it was clear that the life of the Federation could be numbered in months.

Sir Roy has done everything in his power to avoid this break-up. He charged the British Government with dishonesty; he walked out on MacMillan and finally refused to have any part in dismantling what he had worked so hard to create. But today he is in Victoria Falls for the dissolution Conference - the final settling-up in the divorce of the three territories.

Tea and talk in a time of change

My meeting with Sir Roy came between his return from South Africa and his departure for the Falls Conference. He was clearly showing the strain. He is a big man, literally as well as figuratively, and that morning he seemed to spill over in all directions, sagging his massive frame. When pouring tea, or even lifting his own cup, he couldn't prevent his arm from shaking. But all this considered, his warm attentive manner and his charming smile demonstrated why his supporters retain great confidence in him.

Over tea he delivered what might be called the funeral oration or eulogy over the dead Federation. In essence he said, "Historians will look back on the events of the last nine years (we are too closely involved now to be objective) and will record that more development took place in that time than in the previous half-century. The territories have prospered economically; businesses have been growing and services improving. Since the announcement of the break-up business has suffered. Where one company plant and headquarters sufficed, three are now needed. Some can't afford to decentralize to such an extent, and those who can may suffer losses due to the resulting overhead.

"The territories need each other. None of them has a large or rich enough market to support needed secondary industry; together they do. Outsiders must realize that these are African countries; not Western. Can these territories be economically viable? Viable by what standards? Take Nyasaland for example. It has most of the unemployed in the Federation; many of its people work outside its borders. The people there live on a bare subsistence level, earning an average of maybe \$60 a year. They live off the soil; a bad crop and they starve. The country's resources are all agricultural. Its viability means that it can get along on a very low subsistence level.

"The Federation has pumped a great deal of money into development; the railway has been improved, we have an excellent airways and we have built the Kariba Dam. And how are we going to divide these and how can they function in three parts? We have a debt much too large for any of the territories separately to handle, even when divided. Britain will have to shoulder most of it. Economically the break-up is disastrous and ridiculous."

As he talked his disgust for Britain showed more and more. To an outsider it would seem that he should blame Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland for their determination to break up the Federation rather than Britain. He seemed to feel that somehow Britain could force the three territories to remain together. He was distressed that he had not been consulted before Britain made up its mind. When talking of the Federal debt it was easy to see that he feels Britain should be saddled with the whole thing.

Blacks and Whites together...

'Racial Partnership' was formulated as the Federation's way of evolving a cooperative European and African society. As far back as 1957 Sir Roy realized that little or nothing was being done to make the African feel a welcome partner. At that time he said, "I have lost patience with those who see in the removal of the pin-pricks the doom of the white man."

"The truth is just the reverse, for if we go on treating the African who is educated and has achieved a standard of culture akin to our own as inferior for all time, then I believe we are making a clash on racial issues inevitable."

Now that the inevitable clash is upon the Federation, he can only say, "Partnership has not been discredited. We accomplished a great deal. Public service has been opened to Africans; there is no racial bar to their employment or advancement. Africans have served in senior positions in the Federal Government. We founded the non-racial University College of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. We have seen the restrictions drop on restaurants, movies, swimming baths and hotels. Two of the three territories now have African governments. We would have been able to do more but African affairs are in the hands of each territorial government. Africans today have everything they were demanding five years ago. But today they want all; their leaders are not satisfied with anything less."

"Racialism is worse today than ever before. The changes that are taking place on this continent and throughout the world have not given partnership a chance to survive."

"A letter to the editor of a London newspaper has just come to my attention. The writer complains that he has been treated with indifference and has been discriminated against in restaurants, hotels and theatres. It was signed 'A Whiteman'. This is the case in many parts of Africa, England and America where the Black man is given special treatment and privileges.

"Kennedy will go all out to win the support of the Negroes and he will force others to go all out to stop him. This is a dangerous situation - and for what good? It creates a dangerous influence on Africa and engenders further hostility among the races.

"I have never met such racial hatred as I found among the Whites in the United States. Even the Europeans in South Africa do not have such hate; they are more paternalistic. Race relations have deteriorated in the last ten years, not improved. Although Africans have greater political rights today, racial feelings are much more intense and they are dominant. The lights are going out all across Africa, at least for a while."

I asked if he considered a bill of rights in the Constitution as some people in South Africa demand, a Constitutional Committee as it exists in Southern Rhodesia, or an African Advisory Board as in the Federation, as a protection of the rights of those people not in power.

"No, the only protection is the honesty and integrity of the government in power." He went on to say that Southern Rhodesia, if left alone, could work out an equitable cooperative government of Europeans and Africans. But the country will not be left alone.

The solution to the South?

Although, on his return from the fishing trip at Betty's Bay, he said that matters affecting central and southern Africa were discussed only in general terms, most observers felt sure he was there to sound out what help a White Southern Rhodesia could expect from White South Africa when it was cast adrift from the Federation. Information that has leaked out would seem to indicate that Dr. Verwoerd was not prepared to do much to help. He would only add to South Africa's problems if his government took an active supportive position. To tie the few Rhodesian Europeans to the Republic he would also have to accept responsibility for the large number of non-Europeans in Southern Rhodesia.

He is also supposed to have told Sir Roy that Southern Rhodesia's 'Partnership' policy had already gone too far in mixing the races for a policy of Separate Development to be effectively enforced here.

South Africa will probably continue to support Southern Rhodesia in traditional ways; cooperation on railways, airways, trade and police security. But Southern Rhodesia will have to face its main battles alone. When Sir Roy returned to Salisbury it was quite evident that he was exceedingly tired and low in spirit.

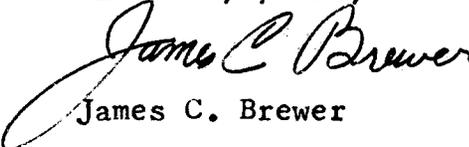
The future?

He now looks forward to his retirement from political life after the dissolution of the Federation as a relaxed time when he can write about the last seven years, the years in which he has been the Prime Minister. He has already received several lucrative offers to put his views on record regarding the Dag Hammarskjold affair and Katanga's fight for independence. He claims he will not take part in Southern Rhodesian politics. But when I suggested that it would seem to me impossible for a man who had been as active as he had for a quarter of a century to give up public life altogether he made no comment.

Kenneth Kuanda has stated publicly that Sir Roy will be Prime Minister of Southern Rhodesia in a year's time. The length of time may be wrong; Sir Roy cannot enter into affairs here until the Federation has come to an official end. But his observation comes as no surprise.

When Federation ends the economic picture is bound to deteriorate further and political unrest will grow. The Rhodesian Front Party, now in power, stands for the status-quo and offers no solution or compromise between Black or White supremacy. When the economic and political climax is reached, Sir Roy's followers believe people will turn to him to help them find a way out of their troubles.

Sincerely yours,


James C. Brewer

FEDERATION OF RHODESIA AND NYASALAND

