



A day that I imagine...

I imagine myself coming in to the Asiatic bazaar one day and finding it as closed and lifeless as it usually is on Sundays and holidays. I imagine myself coming up there in the evening and finding the shopping throng absent; the many young boys to be found hanging around the verandahs, and leaning on the walls and pillars, not there. The group that play the dice, and like hyenas crowding a dead deer, stoop businesslike over the white stones, are not there. The group that jive to a Mbaqanga hit blurring from a juke-box in the restaurant, jiving diligently as if they would be paid, also not there. Even on Sundays and holidays the shopping is much reduced, but still the cafes and restaurants remain open, and figures stream in and out with articles bought, for some daring Indians open the backdoors of their shops to many of us who had forgotten to buy paraffin or candles. Now these too are gone.

On the day that I imagine, coming around there in the evening, nothing meets me but dead silence. For then the cafes and restaurants are closed, with no more daring Indian to do backdoor-selling. Why so? Because the Indians are ordered to close their shops and sell them to African traders. But I don't believe it; it must be a day I imagine! Nothing greets me on coming but that spooky silence abounding in dark alleys. No Indian standing in front of his shop, eager to persuade prospective customers. No incessant shrieks of youthful voices. Nothing but the glare of astounded window panes who find no human eyes boring into them. And the stoep floor feeling very light without the weight of thumping feet. This silence of thudding boots and shoes, hard on its belly, amazes it much. The whole area is stunned and asking the question: what's wrong with the world? where are people? is life ended?

If I were in Zambia I would know what the place is like after the withdrawal of the trading-licence of non-Zambians, after the demand that they sell their shops. I can't say how it would be over there but in S.A. I know. Here, Indian shops have clubbed together so that next door there is always an Indian shop. Just imagine if they all closed and there were no buyers! Vorster's government has been hinting at this for some time. Not very long ago a minister said that he was sick and tired of seeing Indian boys behind counters and warned them now to start looking for other jobs.

In S.A. the Group Areas Act has already been on the neck of the Indians, and now Separate Development is on their necks too.

It is Vorster's policy that Indians trade among Indians, and Africans among Africans. From the point of view of an African trader, this policy seems advantageous. To the black man who has been denied an opportunity to trade and hasn't enough money to compete with the Indian trader who started ages ago, this seems good. The African has been exploited for so long. (If it seems a disputable allegation that Africans are exploited, a just measure of exploitation is unequal pay for the same job on the basis of colour. The African has been oppressed economically — he can't do business where he likes, influx control through the passbook strangles him. Now there is only one place where he can do business: it is in the Bantustan.)

True, we can't blame the Indian for this, but on the other hand, the fact that the Indian has suffered under the thumb of the white

trader too is no fault of the African. How can I blame Zambia's policy of Africanization when the African there has been economically pressed down before the advent of independence, so that on the coming of freedom the African found himself a hundred miles behind economic competitors belonging to the other racial groups? No one can catch up in a race with able athletes when the latter start a hundred miles ahead of him.

The aim of Africanisation or socialism is not to do a deliberate injustice to the others, but to correct a wrong, lest it becomes chronic. It is essential to bring the African to the level of the others who, through the aid of colonial racialistic laws, started unfairly, otherwise independence would be meaningless.

In free Africa, the motive behind trade licence withdrawal is nationalism. But in South Africa the motives behind the policy are different. It is Separate Development that comes to the aid of the African trader. Can this be an advantage? An African tycoon five years ago, could have afforded to say yes. Not now, when under Separate Development he has got to quit his business in town, and start it in the homelands. The municipalities are buying out African businesses; in most locations the African shops are merely leased to their rightful owners. The Rand Daily Mail (23 January 1969) said that powers are sought for the Minister of Bantu Administration and Development to declare Africans unemployable in so-called white areas, at his whim Separate Development, far from coming to the aid, means the death of the African trader.

For example, my father a self-made business man, mender of leaking pots and bicycles, reels between the location and a 'Bantu area' in Sekhukhuniland. He sways there and back unable to make up his mind what to do, knowing very well that if he leaves the urban area, a gigantic Berlin wall will spring up at the whim of 'influx-control' and stop him from coming back. At the Bantustan—a soldering rod for people with no pots but those of clay? Bicycle repairs for people who ride ponies? What businessman would not groan at this?

In another case, the Greyhound bus service, a white concern had just bought an African bus company and route which was owned by an African in my location. This dispossessed African was compelled to run buses in a Bantustan, conveying people who had nowhere to go but to till their fields. What trader would go to such blighted areas when he is in desperate need of an injection of capital from entrepreneurs with capital to spare?

Even staunch apartheid supporters among the African businessmen, like the Shabalalas, are now quitting S.A. for Swaziland to start their business there. And in the meantime they howl "Bantu education is good" and they send their children to study in Swaziland. They howl "Bantustans are a sound idea", and they run to establish businesses in neighbouring Swaziland. They shriek, "Africans are not persecuted by white domination", and they remove their families and relatives from the clutches of white rule, and build for them mansions in Swaziland.

The government started pressure on the complacent African trader after the failure of the border industry venture. White indus-

alists would not go to such blighted areas.

Now South Africa practises some kind of socialism-fascist socialism—by taking ownership of railway transport, and larger shares of the Iscor Steel, Pretoria, and Escom powers, and controlling every manner of business of the black man. It has Stalin-like central planning to enforce economic separate development, with laws like Job Reservation, 90-day detention, house arrest, Sabotage Act, and the Suppression of Communism Act. All these laws are characteristic of a fascist-socialist country. Why must S.A. pretend it belongs to the Western bloc, when by the nature of its rule it does not? Perhaps it is because the Western countries are holding major investments of capital here. But these Western states are fooled if they think S.A. is in any way a Western-type democracy.

When three-quarters of the population of a country are ruled and oppressed by a quarter of that population, the minority of rulers forms the only bureaucracy, and since the minority are the only ones that can launch political parties, the country becomes a one-party state. The political parties of the majority are banned. The two white parties in S.A. only differ in their squabble on how best to oppress the non-white. They are merely the hawks and doves of white domination. They are in fact one party, since true opposition belongs only to the majority which is suppressed. This is therefore a one-party state.

Under this system, private property belongs only to the bureaucrats, the minority rulers. The 'public' is the embodiment of a particular group of individuals who hold property, i.e. the bureaucrats, the minority rulers. In S. Africa the minority possess everything, and any deals and contracts of investment the free world makes with such a country, it makes it with the bureaucrats, the minority rulers. (The Western Powers know this as they are trading with S.A.) The Black majority owns virtually no property, that is no land and no houses. The Black man is a migrant labourer in the urban area where he lives. Everything he has is leased to him, and it can be taken from him at the whim of a superintendent, who often says he must own in the Bartustans. So since the bureaucrats in S.A. own everything as a group as in communist countries, there is no private ownership of property in South Africa.

White rule does not tire of harping on a seeming state of peace in S.A. Yet over 99% of P.A.C. members released from jail are banned and banished. They live with gun barrels at their temples. That is the kind of peace existing here. Now to crowd a group of people in a concentration camp, with guns pointed at them, and then howl "there is peace in the camp" is the vilest form of self-deception. It is the vilest form of contempt for human intelligence to expect mankind to believe you.

Peace is a voluntary state, arising from contentedness. It is not a compulsion on people, facing them with horrible spooky monsters and nightmares. If you silence a crying child by thrusting a lizard at her, never assume that she is at peace. Peace is not to be maintained by the gun or by fear. One is not going to whip a child who wailed when he saw a snake under his bed; one will rather proceed to kill the snake, but you who will whip the child and not kill the snake, have yourself planted the snake there. You do this because it is not the subordination of the child that you want to achieve, but his death.

Our death is what you have always sought. But you want to destroy us imperceptibly. It has been your aim to make yourselves, the whites, the majority in this country, and you realised your immigration policies do not do this quickly enough. For I can tell you that unless you resort to outright genocide, you are not going to have the extinction of the Black man in this country. For every man you kill, we give birth to three.

Yes, I would like to remind you of what might happen in future. Don't cry about the Indians in Zambia. It is not the Indians you will see suffering in the future in S.A., it is yourselves. Oppression is exercised by the white minority. We might forgive an error of knowledge, but not a breach of morality. Hanging freedom fighters in Rhodesia, with full knowledge of what you are doing, knowing that your judgment of man is the pigmentation of his skin—that's not an error of knowledge. Likewise when you persecute African traders, you turn them against yourselves. Watch.

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can the majority hope that government will act in their interests. This is the very basis of democracy. It is not the whole of democracy, for that includes some rights for minorities too. But no one has previously suggested that the problem of ensuring justice for minorities can be satisfactorily solved by giving the minority in a state total power over the majority.

I do not wish to be misunderstood on this point. I am not now arguing for immediate majority rule in Rhodesia. I am arguing that there must be no independence before that majority rule has been achieved. If Britain, or Ian Smith, were saying that the majority in Rhodesia are not ready for independence yet, so colonialism has to continue, I might disagree. But my disagreement would be of the same kind as other disagreements we have here. It would be a disagreement about timing, about techniques—not about a principle. But as it is, we are disagreeing about a principle. For we are disagreeing about handing a majority over to the control of a minority. And once that is done there is no going back on it. Even if the British Government decided later that it had made a mistake, it could not undo it. The minority would already have the power—and would be using it.

Yet the implication of some of the remarks which have been made, in the Conference and outside, is that by insisting on NIBMAR as the only basis on which independence in Rhodesia can be recognised we are somehow being undemocratic. It is said that only the people of Rhodesia themselves can decide whether they are willing to accept any particular constitutional proposals; it is not up to Commonwealth members, or anyone else, to decide on their behalf.

This argument sounds very nice. For the right of a people to decide their own destiny is what all the argument is about. It would be possible for the British people, tomorrow, to decide to hand over their government to an aristocracy, to a dictator, or to impose educational qualification for the vote or membership of the Government. They could decide to pass responsibility for the administration of this country to Germany, U.S.A., or anyone else. The rest of the world may be amazed or appalled at such a decision, but it would have no right to interfere if the British people had freely come to the conclusion that this is what they wanted.

The Czechoslovakian people could have accepted the Russian occupation; they did not do so. But suppose the Russian Government had found some stooges to take over the Czechoslovak Government; in the course of time this 'new government' would almost certainly have held a referendum to legitimise its authority. Would the rest of us not have looked with some scorn at the result? We would have done so for very good reasons. It would not mean that we rejected the right of a people to decide to be occupied by foreign troops, and governed by those installed by those troops. Our scorn would have been the result of knowledge that a 'test of opinion' made at the point of a gun is meaningless.

Mr. Gorton made the same point in relation to Vietnam. He said that Australia hoped to see the people of South Vietnam freely able to choose their own form of government in a manner that was not only free but seen to be free; it was this outcome that the Paris talks must secure.

I understand that. I also understand why the South Vietnamese elections were not held in areas effectively under the control of the Vietcong. It was argued that the people in those areas could not be expected to vote against the Vietcong, because to do so would be to invite reprisals from the Vietcong. The act of voting would not make the Vietcong go away even if that was what the people wanted, so no effective choice could be offered to them. To organise an election in that area, even if possible technically, was not only meaningless, it was also highly dangerous to the participants.

This is exactly the position we take in Rhodesia in relation to 'principle No.5' of the Fearless Proposals.

First, we in Tanzania regard it as highly suspicious that Britain should think of asking the people of that country whether they agree to being governed by a minority which is distinguishable by its money, its privilege,—and largely by its colour. We cannot understand why Britain wishes to do this in Rhodesia, whereas elsewhere

she insisted on majority rule. But although this seems to us peculiar, we have no objection to the people being offered a real and free choice on this matter. Only we do have the same reservations about 'tests of opinion' in Rhodesia as we have in communist countries. Just as it is no use asking Australia — or Tanzania — to believe that people will express their real opinions about a police state if that police state will still have control over them after they have voted, so it is no use asking Tanzania — and I hope not Australia — to believe that people will express their real opinions about a Rhodesian minority government, if that minority government remains in effective control whatever they say.

Yet that is the position in Rhodesia under the Fearless Proposals. We are told that there will be a 'test of opinion' taken by a Royal Commission. If 'the people of Rhodesia as a whole' say that they are willing to accept the Fearless Proposals, then the Smith Regime will stay, and be recognised by Britain. If the 'people of Rhodesia as a whole' say they are not willing to accept these proposals, but insist upon majority rule before independence, then the Smith Regime will stay and will not be recognised by Britain! In both cases the oppressive and discriminatory regime continues to govern the people. In fact the people are not being given a choice about their own government; at most they are being asked to agree that Britain should recognise the legality of their oppression. Ian Smith put it slightly differently according to yesterday's paper; he said the question at issue was 'a sort of trade agreement'.

Let us not make any mistake about the unreality of this choice. For real and justified fear of an oppressive government does not only exist in communist states. It exists in Rhodesia now. Organised opposition — by Africans especially — to the minority government has been smashed by the ruthless use of police power, of intimidation, and of economic pressures. In fact communism and racial minority rule of this kind are both based on the principle of government by coercion. And to ask a people to express their opposition to this coercion in the full knowledge that having done so they will be at the mercy of it, is exactly the same as asking people to vote contrary to the instructions of the man with the gun. A few brave people may do so; but none of us would regard the result as telling anything except what the gunman wanted.

Nor do I see how conducting this 'test of opinion' through a Royal Commission makes the result any better. We are told there will be complete immunity for the witnesses to the Commission, and the members of it will be free to move anywhere and talk to everyone. But the Commission will be operating in an area under the control of the minority regime, where the police and the army are working for the illegal and minority administration. The safety of the members of the Royal Commission will be looked after by these people — the Regime's representatives will go with them everywhere. Is this 'immunity' really very meaningful under these circumstances? Of course it is most unlikely that the Smith Regime would arrest, harrass, or restrict a witness the same day, or even the same week. But what about when the Commission has moved on? Are we really so sure that 'evidence of subversion' will not suddenly be discovered, or a licence be withdrawn for 'trading reasons' and so on?

Nor is this the only reason for questioning the validity of this 'test of opinion'. The Commission is supposed to be finding out the people's views on a complex set of constitutional proposals, — and remember that these people are said to be unready to vote for their own government! Yet is there going to be any opportunity for African nationalist leaders — assuming they have the courage — to campaign for, AND AGAINST, these proposals throughout the length and breadth of the country? Will they be able to hold meetings in towns and villages where the people live or where they work, to explain the issues to the people? The answer is that it will depend upon the minority government; the illegal regime will decide who will be restricted, and what meetings can be held etc. And on questions of detention and restriction there will be an appeal — to a Tribunal which has 2 Rhodesian nominees and 1 nominee of the Lord Chancellor!

Really, this talk of the people of Rhodesia deciding sounds

very nice. So does a lot of similar talk elsewhere in the world — but we don't accept it there. We have a look at the real meaning of the words. And in Rhodesia we have to recognise that certain conditions would have to be fulfilled before a real 'test of opinion' could be held.

There would have to be a British — or international — administration, with effective control of the police, army and air force. That British administration would have to allow free political activity over a period adequate for all the people to be able to hear the arguments and understand the choice they were being asked to make. And that administration would have to assure the people that if they vote for independence under minority rule it will be effected, and if they vote against it then British rule will continue until there is majority rule — however long it takes.

We are told that this is unrealistic talk, and that the illegal minority regime would never agree to allow the British to take over control of the country for this purpose. That may be so. But in that case why do we talk about the people of Rhodesia making their own decision about whether to accept promises which run counter to the declared policies of the persons making them? Either the people can make a free choice or they cannot. If the Regime which is in control of the people's lives now is not prepared to allow conditions for a real choice to be made, then that is the end of the matter. We have to carry on without giving the people a chance to opt for continued racial discrimination, minority rule, and so on.

This brings me to my final point. We are told that a settlement, even if not ideal, is necessary to save Africans of Rhodesia from the growth of apartheid and so on. Yet no evidence is brought forward or can be brought forward, to justify the suggestions that an agreement will reverse this trend. For years and years the minority, controlling, community has been moving consistently in this direction. We have now got to the point where the people who used to be called 'extremists' are now the moderates if they have not changed along with the majority. 'Separate Development' is one of the principles of the Rhodesian Front Party — one of its aims and objects. And Smith is put forward to us as a moderate because he wants to plan for five years before introducing it in its full vigour! He just wishes to continue as at present — introducing more and more legislative discrimination piece by piece as convenient to him and his government. It may well be that one of the things he is hoping to achieve before his five years delay has expired is a settlement with the British Government — on Fearless basis, or the basis of the next warship talks.

But even if the British Government does achieve a settlement with Smith, they will not have achieved a settlement of the Rhodesian question. The Rhodesian problem will remain, just as the South African problem remains. The problem is there anyway: Why does the Commonwealth, or any member of the Commonwealth wish to surrender the principles on which we exist for the sake of a piece of paper? Is it because sanctions are too expensive for Britain? Or what is the reason?

If every other country in the world gave up sanctions and recognised the Rhodesian Regime, still no Commonwealth country could do so and us retain our boast to be united in our anti-racialism. This Commonwealth stands for something basic to the future of mankind; but only while it stands firmly against racialism and minority racial domination. The fact that we are not strong enough to achieve the result we need quickly must not cause us to give up our principles. We have simply to keep on. Maintain and strengthen sanctions; withdraw the Fearless proposals now before they have smirched our reputation for non-racialism and honesty; and reiterate the pledge to NIBMAR. We must do all these things. For NIBMAR is either a commitment or a gimmick; only if it is the latter can the Fearless Proposals be made compatible with it. But I do not believe that this Commonwealth deals in gimmicks. Let us therefore leave no doubts in anyone's mind. Let us all, unanimously, reaffirm the principle of NIBMAR as the only basis on which we can recognise an administration in Rhodesia, or

From Natal
The central No.