

## SALISBURY AND LONDON

DENIS GRUNDY

*Rhodesian Journalist and Special Correspondent of 'Africa South' in the Federation.*

THE Comet IV is a very quick plane rather than a comfortable one and lands you in London doing the splits, one leg still pinned-down in Salisbury. The Christmas weather was far too warm for the bric-a-brac protective clothing habitually donned against any lightening visit to Europe; these had to be unwound immediately, and even the overcoat eventually followed.

Such unusual climatic warmth was matched by the glow of 'we've never had it so good'. Compared with three years ago everybody acted so rich, so unworried, so generous. 'How pleasant it is to have money, heigh-ho' sang through the petrol-fumed air, leaving no doubt that in an age given over to materialism, materialism works.

In this atmosphere it would have been astonishing to find any large section of the population impressed, or depressed, by the menacing situation in the Central African Federation. It was therefore a pleasant surprise to come across quite a number of little pockets of interest, set in widely different social garments, containing a few moderately knowledgeable nuggets. The idea that all Pommies are equally and absolutely ignorant on all Rhodesian political affairs is yet another Salisbury myth, sanctified perhaps by an instinct of self-preservation.

In London the African is taken entirely for granted. He is a permanent part of the establishment of the London Passenger Transport Board. He reigns over one kingdom of the entertainment world. At midnight mass he was by my side. At a most conventional wedding, one with no pretensions whatsoever to fashionable eccentricity, he was as comfortably inconspicuous as any other guest. The notorious trouble-spots are sordid theatres of gang-warfare, where provocation through race-insults, or any other kind, is part of the hostilities. If there ever was a time when the British at home shared, sympathized with, or even understood, intense feelings of race antagonism, they do not recollect it to-day. To win mass support in the mother country, white Rhodesians need only to sell the idea that they are a heavily oppressed racial minority.

At the time of writing, just after the selection of the last three members of the Monckton scratch team and on the eve

of Macmillan's first visit to Salisbury, it seems somehow remarkable that everybody so far whose opinion I have canvassed, whether interested amateur or political professional, is quite certain that the two Protectorates of Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland will 'go black' in double-quick time. And no regrets, no crying over the spilt white milk of yet another British raj.

On the question of whether the Federation will, or should, be unscrambled, opinions divide. One school believes that the winning of responsible government by the two northern territories will almost immediately establish the African as the senior and controlling partner of the entire Federation. It seems to envisage thereafter a sort of Ghana, with the European remaining on as an administrative and technical coadjutor. The other considers federal dissolution more likely, with Southern Rhodesia probably joining the Union of South Africa. When taxed with the iniquity of handing over two-and-a-quarter million Bantu to the tender care of Verwoerd, it sometimes weakly counters with the suggestion that perhaps Southern Rhodesia could successfully 'go it alone', provided the policy of 'partnership' were genuinely implemented.

However naïve some of these views may seem, they do show a just appreciation of the pace, power and direction of the African advance everywhere (except in the Union), and a conscientious study of the facts of Federal life as presented by the English press. They can hardly be blamed for lacking any conception of what the white settler, and his allies elsewhere, might really be up to. After all, it is often incomprehensible, even incredible, to those in the know.

However liberal it may sound, the prognosis offered by the first school—with its end-product of black nationalism tempered by unofficial expert European experience—denies Garfield Todd's view that a multi-racial parliamentary democracy can arise out of the present chaotic situation. The Central African Party realizes, even if it doesn't admit it, the extreme unlikelihood of any significant support from settlerdom, and that only through a considerable widening of the franchise can it come to power, on the back of African votes. It envisages thereafter a truly multi-racial parliament, government and cabinet. The first school would seem to argue that Todd's position in such a political mixed marriage is likely to prove as insecure and short-lived as was Kerensky's at the beginning of the Russian Revolution. Having served their limited purpose, Todd and his white

following stand an odds-on chance of yet another political assassination. *Et tu, Brute!*

Although it is probably unaware of it, the second school is plotting almost the same course as the Dominion Party in Rhodesia, however different the ultimate haven may be. For this right-wing opposition, the secession of Southern Rhodesia from the Federation and all its pitfalls now takes precedence over the older scheme for a 'Central African Alliance' (Southern Rhodesia plus the line-of-rail territory, including the copper mines, of Northern Rhodesia), a far more equivocal and cumbrous arrangement. The Dominion Party, as could be guessed, plans a 'two-pyramid' state on lines of 'parallel development', euphemisms for a firmer, extended policy of apartheid not too distinguishable from the Bantustan model. Naturally some accommodation with South Africa is not ruled out. In any case, genuine 'partnership' in Southern Rhodesia will be somehow circumvented by any political party dependent upon the settler vote, almost unto death. Compare Whitehead's continual protestations of liberalism with the Salisbury Municipality's ability to torpedo plans for a multi-racial theatre, already *in situ*, through the regulations of an archaic bye-law governing multi-racial lavatories.

It is conceded here that Welensky has a most persuasive manner and a formidable reputation with several important Tory Ministers, though on what solid grounds nobody can say. It is true that he handed on to the House of Commons two highly contentious measures, the Constitution Amendment Act and the Franchise Act, 1958, in a form that the British Government found able to support and steer through parliament. But one would suppose that a price was agreed upon, while the only goods Welensky has so far been able to deliver are the worst racial troubles ever experienced in Central Africa and a rapidly disintegrating federation. On the other hand, Macmillan is rated shrewd and quick enough to penetrate any of Welensky's protean disguises, and capable of screwing the most out of a man willing to sacrifice lightly-held convictions for the sake of a firm bargain.

Although the mass of the electorate will obviously continue to treat colonial upsets as minor nuisances, far away from their obsessive concern with having it even better at home than just 'so good', some important elements of the Establishment already recognize that the Central African Federation could prove

another Suez. Welensky has just executed yet another somersault by again stressing his determination to secure freedom from outside interference and complete independence for the Federation, with—of course—the suppression of that awkward watchdog, the African Affairs Board. As this was the line he took at the General Election last November in order to rout the Dominion Party by appearing to don their garments, it is clear that his weather eye is again fixed on the danger of a violent shift to the right by the European voter. The African, of course, doesn't materially matter, though during and just after the Emergency he was explaining that what he really meant by independence from the Colonial Office was a far greater degree of autonomy for the Protectorates, but within the Federation. He ended 1959 with the year's two greatest impertinencies. In New Year messages to an English Sunday newspaper he claimed that the country had shown its ability to stand firm in the face of danger, and generously welcomed to his house any man who has had a bath. How many of the population—ninety-seven per cent. non-European—staunchly resisted their brothers? How many well-washed Africans have been entertained at Greendale?

In London it is comparatively easy to demonstrate convincingly to almost anybody that 'partnership' was, and still is, a confidence trick, played with white domination as the loaded stakes; that almost all sentient Africans were against it at the start; that now all of them are implacably and militantly hostile; that nothing will induce them to wear Federation much longer in any style of dress for the sake of less than three hundred thousand Europeans; and that any extension of the Federal writ will be met with violent active opposition. How long will the majority, but by no means all, of the Rhodesian settlers stubbornly fail to acknowledge that it will be an African Africa right down to the Limpopo within half a decade? And then? How long, O Lord, how long!