

## RIDER AND HORSE IN NORTHERN RHODESIA

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*President-General of the banned Zambia African National Congress, now rusticated to a distant district of Northern Rhodesia.*

'PARAMOUNTCY of native interests' was the political sign-post of Northern Rhodesia up to 1948; and this was interpreted to mean ". . . if and when the interests of the indigenous people conflicted with those of immigrant races, those of the former should prevail." This, however, proved too much for those settlers to swallow whose unyielding ambition was the amalgamation of the two Rhodesias and a freer hand with the Africans. And so in 1948, this policy was arbitrarily replaced by one of 'Partnership', which was later to become the foundation stone of the new Federal State.

Lord Malvern, Welensky's co-principal architect of this Federation, has, just like his friends, never hidden his crude scorn for African opinion. As the Federation's first Prime Minister, he described partnership as "the same as exists between rider and horse"—the settler, of course, being the rider and the African the horse. In March this year, he told the House of Lords, in London, "Africans are all liars, until they are very much advanced." (*Northern News*, 26/3/59).

It is to these prophets of apartheid posing, circumspectly, as believers in partnership, that the British Government sold us when they imposed Federation upon us in 1953. They make high-sounding declarations that hoodwink the world into believing that they are liberals, while they quietly manipulate constitutions that in effect place all political power in their hands.

It is one of these constitutions that the Zambia African National Congress, which I was leading, was challenging when it was declared illegal by Governor Benson. Before and up to the time of Federation, the constitution provided a qualitative franchise for all British *subjects*, provided they

- (a) earned a minimum of £200 per year, or had property to the value of £240;
- (b) could fill in a prescribed form in English before a magistrate;
- (c) were of or above the age of 21 years, and were not criminal or insane.

Africans being British *protected persons* were, through this arrangement, debarred. Let it be noted however, that British citizenship was on sale at the profitable price of £5 each—in a country where the average wage of an African was as low as 15/- per month. Africans did not buy this “precious” political commodity, not only because it was too expensive, but also because they believed, as I do, that there is no need for anyone anywhere to buy foreign citizenship in his native country. Thus, up to 1953, only 3 Africans had considered it worthy to invest in this extraordinary debenture.

Fantastically too, in a territory where Blacks outnumber Whites some 30 to 1, the Legislative Council consisted of 12 elected European representatives, 4 Africans strained through all the most obliging meshes, 2 Europeans nominated to represent African interests, and 8 officials.

It was in such a political context that Mr. Nkumbula and I (president and secretary of the African National Congress respectively) presented our proposals to Governor Benson in February, 1958. We demanded 21 elected Africans, 14 elected Europeans and 7 officials, with an elected Speaker. There was to be universal adult suffrage, but Africans were to elect Africans and Europeans were to elect Europeans, with officials holding the balance of power. We also proposed an Executive Council of 3 Africans, 3 elected Europeans, and 3 officials, with the Governor retaining his seat as president.

I must confess here that I thought our proposals so moderate, it seemed to me difficult for the Government to dismiss them. But it didn't take me long to discover how wrong I was.

I remember Governor Benson asking me—“Mr. Kaunda, don't you think Europeans could paralyse government if we accepted your proposals?” In reply I said, “Are you implying, Your Excellency, that for our demands to be met we have got to be in a position to paralyse government?” My question was never answered. Instead, a new constitution was concocted.

The current one provides that there shall be a Legislative Council of

Elected European members (ordinary seats ∴ necessarily European)	.. .. .	.. .. .	—	12
Elected European members (reserved seats)	.. .. .	.. .. .	—	2
Elected African members (special seats)	.. .. .	.. .. .	—	6
Elected African members (reserved seats)	.. .. .	.. .. .	—	2
Nominated members	.. .. .	.. .. .	—	2

Officials	..	..	..	..	..	..	—	6
								—
								30
								—

It also provides for an Executive Council, presided over by the Governor, of

Elected European members	..	..	..	..	..	..	—	4
Africans	..	..	..	..	..	..	—	2
Officials	..	..	..	..	..	..	—	4
								—
								10
								—

The Federal franchise arrangements, which Northern Rhodesia has adopted, divide people into three categories—the *Ordinary*, *Special* and *Ungraded Human Beings*.

- (a) *Ordinary Human Beings* are those who earn £720 per year, or own buildings or land worth £1,500; or earn £480 per year, or own buildings or land worth £1,000, plus a primary school education of a certain standard; or earn £300 per year, or own buildings or land worth £500, plus four years of secondary education of a certain standard.
- (b) *Special Human Beings* are those who earn £150 per year, or own buildings or land to the value of £500; or earn £120 per year, plus a two years' secondary education of a certain standard.
- (c) *Ungraded Human Beings* are those who cannot qualify under (a) or (b).

Note should be taken of the facts that Africans by law may occupy land, but not own it; and that, in any *ordinary* constituency, *special* voters can only count one-third of the *ordinary*. In other words, if in a particular constituency 300 ordinary human beings and 1,000 special human beings voted, the latter could only count as 100. Western values, I believe!

Of the 8 African seats, 6 are called special seats, and are rural. Candidates contesting these rural seats must each get *two-thirds* of the chiefs of the constituency to sign certificates approving their candidature; and, further, each one of these chiefs must approve of the candidature in the presence of a representative of the Crown duly appointed by the Governor. It should be noted that apart from the travel difficulties involved

in these wide-flung constituencies, chiefs are no longer on "chiefs by the people and the people by the chiefs" terms with their people; they are on the government pay-roll, just as are the required representatives of the Crown. Chiefs who show an independent rhythm when the tune is called are soon enough danced out of office.

In view of this, candidates who succeed in obtaining these certificates are, quite naturally, suspected of being in the government's good books, are considered "yes men". In other words, African voters, after qualifying on so expensive a franchise roll, have in rural areas no one but a government-approved candidate to vote for; they do not have, and are not intended to have, real choice.

Equally monstrous is that in practise it is not possible for an African to contest and win any of the 14 "European" seats, or to influence the election of a European, because only a handful of Africans have qualified as *ordinary voters*. On the other hand, however, European pressure-groups have found stooges among Africans to stand on their party tickets.

So far, two of the six special constituencies have not polled, because candidates could not get the necessary two-thirds of the chiefs there to approve their candidature. The Governor has been caught in one of his own political traps. And the results in the six African constituencies that have polled are simply appalling. What we in Zambia feared has come only too true.

Welensky's United Federal Party	..	..	..	—	2
Moffat's Central Africa Party	..	..	..	—	2
African National Congress	..	..	..	—	1
African Independent	..	..	..	—	1

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6

In fact, in the one instance where the A.N.C. has won, the whole show is being challenged by Mr. Beckett of the U.F.P. He alleges he has evidence to show that Mr. Nkumbula was supported by District Commissioners on instructions from above.

According to the constitution, the Governor had to consult Mr. Roberts, leader of the majority party, when making his appointments to the Executive. The 'Northern News' of 27th March reported an unnamed prominent U.F.P. member as saying, "The Governor has met our demands most satisfactorily. In fact we might say 99½% of what we wanted has been granted."

Of the 10 seats, 5 have gone to the U.F.P.—4 Whites and 1 African. Of the nominated African Minister, the '*Sunday Mail*' of 29th March, 1959, says, among other things, "As the caucus of the United Federal Party has unanimously endorsed the new appointments, the only conclusion possible is that Mr. Roberts is satisfied that Mr. Mwamba (African Nominated) is sympathetic towards the aims and ideals of the U.F.P." The remaining 4 seats have been filled by government officials whose past records show that on all major issues—including the establishment of Federation—they have voted with the settlers.

Africans who have been trapped by the new constitution now stand flabbergasted. Even Mr. Nkumbula of the pact-hunting, bargain-striking Congress, who agreed to give this constitution 'a fair trial', has expressed his "extreme disappointment" with the result of the elections. ('*Central African Post*', 23/3/59) On the other hand, settlers are jubilant, and are now busying themselves in preparing another and perhaps final assault on the Colonial Office, in their mad drive to make over Central Africa in the image of the Union.

These are only some of the many reasons why we of the banned Zambia African National Congress chose to oppose and boycott the elections, drawing down upon ourselves as a result the wrath of Governor Benson and his satellites. He has accused us of planning mass intimidation, disorder and violence. I can say no more here than point out (in view of the fact that a commission has been appointed to probe into the banning of Zambia) that if he had evidence to prove his allegations, he certainly would not have hesitated to prosecute us in the public courts.

In view of his failure to do so, I conclude that the banning of Zambia, the arrest and rustication of all its leaders, issue from fear of its policies and demands for *self-government now* based on *one man, one vote*. I might add here that the banned Zambia's cry of "Africa for Africans" was no more than the legitimate cry for *majority rule*. We had, and still have, no desire to drive away Whites from here. Time and again we have said what we still say now, that those Europeans who are willing to work in peace and harmony under a democratically elected African government are more than welcome here.

For us, rustications or no rustications, Zambia or no Zambia, our demand is *home rule and secession* from this fraudulent and abominable Federation now!