

the interior autonomy of conscience to the rejection of its external autonomy.

The problem of religious liberty is only barely outlined in what we have said. That men should be free in their interior relations with God, and in their worship of Him, however erroneously they may interpret these obligations, appears clear; and to declare this formally perhaps would mark the final step in a freeing of the question from a politico-religious confusion that began with the Constantinian association of the Christian Church with secular power. But the practical problem of where to draw the limitations of this liberty when it extends to external manifestation (in public teaching and policy) which may disturb the security in faith and morals of the community at large has not, and perhaps never can be definitely solved. But enough may have been said to show at once the importance and the delicacy of the decisions confronting the Council.

Colour Bar or Community

REFLECTIONS ON RHODESIA

HENRY G. TOWNSEND, S.J.

The Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland is dead. It was buried in January of this year, just ten years old. For its epitaph some would write 'A Great Experiment That Failed'; others, nearer the truth, 'The Unwanted Partnership.'

Economically the Federation was a great success. Each of the constituent territories—Northern and Southern Rhodesia and Nyasaland—benefited much in its own way. Southern Rhodesia enjoyed a remarkable boom, years of extraordinary expansion in industry, commerce and immigrant population, the most striking memorial of which is the present skyline of Salisbury with its soaring buildings. In Northern Rhodesia too there was rapid development and the Copper Belt lived through years of fantastic prosperity. Even Nyasaland, the poor relation, experienced substantial if less spectacular gain. Now all that is over.

Expansion has given way to contraction. This is especially marked in Southern Rhodesia, which is now suffering from an economic recession, unemployment, shortage of overseas investment and a large exodus of valuable white settlers. Worse still, there is great political uncertainty and civil unrest breaking out intermittently into violence, which occasions more and more Draconian laws.

The inquest on the premature death of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland is still going on. Books are being written to fix the blame. Some allege foul play. But there can be little doubt that the Federation died of a fatal disease, failure to win the support of the African people. When federation was being planned they were not consulted. As it was being built they were not courted. No doubt it seemed senseless to the planners to consult a mass of ignorant peasants who could hardly be expected to understand the plan at all. Very few Africans were educated enough or experienced enough to have views. That was so. But little attempt was made to win their interest by opening opportunity to them, until too late. To all appearances the few advanced Africans at first accepted federation in Southern Rhodesia and even welcomed it. Four years elapsed before they reacted against it and formed a political party of their own to influence the course of events. But from the first the handful of educated Africans in the two northern territories regarded the link with Southern Rhodesia with suspicion and, in the case of Nyasaland, with aversion. Their suspicions were confirmed and their aversion aggravated when Salisbury was chosen as the Federal Capital, because Salisbury was the capital city of Southern Rhodesia where the colour bar was entrenched by law and where policy would now be made. Under the Federal Constitution African affairs, and therefore racial policy, remained in the hands of the territorial governments, and even if it had so desired the Federal Government had no authority to impose the racial policy of Southern Rhodesia on the two northern territories, which continued to be partly under the Colonial Office in London and to pursue different policies. Nevertheless anxiety was felt by advanced Africans in Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland, which was accentuated when they visited Southern Rhodesia and found themselves subject to the humiliations of the colour bar.

Unfortunately, association with the two northern territories did not lead in the early years to any significant political or social adjustment to the new situation on the part of Southern Rhodesia. Consequently from the beginning the image of Federation in the north was an ugly one which bore the features of Southern Rhodesia. The very word was a

term to rouse deep emotions of hatred and fear. Irrational much of the tension may have been, but it must not be forgotten that South Africa lay across the border, a bad omen indeed. For when the four territories which are now the four Provinces of South Africa were linked under a constitution framed in London, the effect over the years was not the assimilation of the two Boer Republics—the Transvaal and the Orange Free State—to the liberal outlook of the Cape and Natal, but the permeation of all four Provinces by the dour and narrow spirit of Kruger's republic.

The articles of incorporation of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, the Federal Constitution, described the resulting association as a 'partnership' of all the peoples it included. Nowhere was the term 'partnership' defined, and different interpretations led to divergent expectations. Most of the Europeans (as white people are called in Africa) evidently took it for granted that it meant an economic partnership in which the Europeans would continue to manage the business, and what they expected was increased economic efficiency and prosperity, not a change in the political and social set-up. This interpretation and expectation was especially evident among the Europeans of Southern Rhodesia, where the institution of segregation was taken for granted as a normal socio-political arrangement which should continue indefinitely. Few anticipated its removal in their own lifetime. Whenever segregation has been challenged, there has been an immediate stormy reaction by many Europeans. One of the earliest challenges made in the life of the Federation was the project of a multi-racial university in Salisbury. The British Government undertook to foot the bill for the University College of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, under the wing of London University, but only on condition that the College opened its doors to students of all races without distinction even as regards hostel accommodation. At first there was a storm of protest in Southern Rhodesia, but the Federal Government, whose concern it was, accepted the condition and gave its blessing to the University. In its short life the University has done a notable service to the country, not only in higher education but also in widening racial horizons. But it has earned not a little local hostility in doing so.

Close association between the three territories has in fact had more effect on Southern Rhodesia than on Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland: they influenced her development more than she did theirs. Growing antagonism in Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia to the whole idea of the Federation, and political pressure from the new African political party in

Southern Rhodesia, the African National Congress, which gained confidence from association with African political movements in the north, had their effect: the barriers of the colour bar in Southern Rhodesia were shaken, and some began to fall. A few influential Europeans added their weight; others angrily condemned the changes as craven appeasement to black nationalism. But even so, the main structure of the colour bar stood.

Those Africans in Southern Rhodesia who were aware of what was happening when federation was introduced took 'partnership' to mean the end of their wardship and of the colour bar, and expected to be admitted as equals into places and positions from which they had always been excluded. When they realized that no such change in their status and prospects was contemplated, they were disillusioned and embittered. Believing that the key to their emancipation lay in political power, they formed the African National Congress to fight for it. But they had no intention of working in with the existing set-up. Under the old (1923) Constitution of Southern Rhodesia, Africans could qualify for the vote on the same conditions as Europeans, but few could satisfy the condition of education and property. In terms of the Constitution emancipation was a long way off; for there was no provision in the law or in social custom to admit advanced Africans who qualified for the franchise to the full freedom of citizenship individually: they remained under the restrictions of the colour bar. Even today when under the new (1962) Constitution of Southern Rhodesia there are fourteen African Members of Parliament, they enjoy no exemption from the colour bar outside the House.

It is difficult to believe that 'partnership' as envisaged by those who drew up the Federal Constitution in London meant no more than a closer economic tie between the three territories. No definition was attempted, but the term seems to have been intended to signify a new relationship which, it was hoped, would be realized progressively over the years between the territories and their peoples, until Africans were ready to take an equal part with Europeans in the political and social as well as the economic life of the country, and that the day of their emancipation was near for some and not too distant for others. In other words, 'partnership' was meant to supersede 'trusteeship', the concept which emerged from international discussions at the end of the 1914-18 war to govern the new relationship between colonial powers and colonial territories at that time. As Smuts, its strong supporter, proclaimed, 'trusteeship' meant that the interests of the ward were paramount, 'a sacred trust of civilization'. It is therefore legitimate to infer that 'partnership'

meant the proximate attainment of his majority by the ward, the African people, and his entry into the adult world with all it implied.

In all probability the assumption was that Africans would be assimilated individually into the dominant European section as they acquired education, experience and the franchise. No such assimilation was sanctioned in Southern Rhodesia. The general view was that the few advanced Africans, even those who graduated at the University, would have to wait until their fellow Africans caught them up at some remote future date. When a well known African barrister who had qualified and practised at the Bar in London returned to Salisbury to join the Southern Rhodesia Bar, he could not for a time rent chambers in the city because it was by law a European preserve where Africans could engage in work only as employees of a European. Understandably, advanced Africans became embittered and turned their backs on the European set-up to plan a take-over, by force if necessary. Instead of developing as a steady element of professional men, Africans of ability and education have been driven out into a hostile political camp which is bent on bringing their European overlords down, even if it involves the destruction of much that is good in what they have built up.

Events have shown that 'partnership' is a fatally ambiguous concept which merits to be buried with the Federation. But to inter it is not to solve the problem of the future relationship between the races in what was the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. In Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland, both now self-governing, a new relationship is being worked out. So far it is moving in the direction of a relationship of 'community' in which Europeans will have no special status or privileges, but in which, it is to be hoped, they will be allowed to live unmolested and be able to live happily. One of the merits of the concept of 'community' is that its general meaning is defined by what is found in other countries of the West which have developed freely and attained a satisfactory degree of unity and stability. There it is seen to be a unity in diversity rather than a flat uniformity. Needless to say, the ideal political community is nowhere to be found. In human societies there are always tensions at work which mar and sometimes threaten unity. In the newly independent countries of Africa the tensions are peculiarly sharp and sometimes violent. It still remains to be seen how quickly these tensions can be controlled in Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia, and how quickly their new masters can adjust themselves to the responsible use of power and create essential unity without smothering freedom. For Europeans, who no longer have power or control, the present is an anxious time.

What makes the situation especially dangerous in Southern Rhodesia since the end of Federation is that the tensions at work are not tensions within a community already in the process of growing, but tensions preventing a community from being born. 'Partnership' has gone, and 'community' has not been accepted. Indeed, at the last election the majority of European voters dramatically turned their backs on it. For one of the main causes of the defeat of Whitehead's party is generally held to have been his electioneering promise to remove all the colour bar laws. Under the new (1962) Constitution of Southern Rhodesia there can be no reversal of existing legislation nor any new legislation discriminating against any of the races, and a Constitutional Council, appointed independently of Parliament, has been installed to act as an independent referee. The decisions of this court of appeal and the restrictions imposed on new legislation by the Constitution have irritated many Europeans, and it is unrealistic to imagine that the present pressure for independence for Southern Rhodesia from Great Britain is unrelated to the restraint imposed by the Constitution and the Council. Within the past two or three years there has been a notable swing of white opinion to the 'right', which in southern Africa means towards the shape of things in South Africa.

The true friends of Southern Rhodesia in Britain today are not those people whose main concern is for the economic prosperity of the country, or for the retention of control by Europeans, or for loyalty to their kith and kin overseas, but those who are concerned especially about the obstacles and opposition within the country to the genesis of a true community of all its people.

The obstacles are partly natural, partly artificial. Sharp differences of cultural background and wide disparities of education and experience separate most Africans from most Europeans. Such natural obstacles stand in the way of unity in Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland as well, but the number of Europeans there is very small. Only time and goodwill can wear these obstacles away. But in Southern Rhodesia the natural obstacles to unity are reinforced by law and custom, which erect artificial barriers to block the levelling process of time. The colour bar effectively ensures that white people and black people live apart, think apart, plan apart, and so grow no nearer to each other with the passing of the years.

Both black people and white people in Southern Rhodesia live under the same government, the same laws, the same economy and the same system of taxation. In other parts of the world wherever this measure of unity is to be found there is held to be one community; but in Southern

Rhodesia the assumption of most white people is that because of their racial and cultural differences, Europeans and Africans form two distinct communities only loosely associated. The practice of many years has conditioned them to believe that they are right and realistic in making of the accidental differences between the races, rather than of their essential similarity of nature and the unity they have already achieved, the principle of the social order. Instead of seeing two sections of one community, they persist in seeing two distinct communities. Consequently, 'justice' has come to mean not the giving to each and every person what is his due but the balancing of the 'rights of the European community' against the 'rights of the African community'. The talk is almost invariably about 'rights', seldom about 'justice' which is concerned with the shape of the whole community with its social and political arrangements.

Fear for the future, especially the future of their children, should black men gain political control, greatly influences the thinking of most white people. They are afraid that under an African government they would have no security, and perhaps no place in the country. The threat to turn them out has not been made in Southern Rhodesia, but the speeches of African politicians and the violence of their youth gangs give no grounds for confidence, and after the Constitution was altered in 1962 in their favour (there are now two voters' rolls, one with lower qualifications and less political influence, and fifteen out of sixty-five seats in Parliament reserved for Africans) they repudiated it. They will be satisfied with nothing less than 'one man, one vote' and complete political control. The view of most Europeans is that it would be suicidal to give the vote to masses of African peasants of little or no education and no political preparation and experience, and that such people would be easy victims of African politicians and political intimidation. The upheaval in the Congo to the north, moreover, is contrasted with the stability of South Africa to the south, and the moral question of *apartheid* is submerged beneath considerations of expediency.

Exclusiveness breeds exclusiveness, and the temper of a growing number of African politicians and their followers is such that they will not countenance any dealings of Africans with Europeans, except what is necessary for work and to wrest political power from them.

The omens for the timely birth of a community in Southern Rhodesia are certainly not favourable. And time is not on the Europeans' side. No longer can there be mere peaceful co-existence: fear on the one side and bitterness on the other have produced too much tension. There are all

the elements of tragedy in a situation in which two peoples, in many ways complementary to each other, whose economic co-operation in the past has been so fruitful for both and in whose immediate interest it is to come together and make one community, should obstinately take their stand on their supposed and mutually contradictory 'rights', and refuse to take a step nearer to each other and approach that way of life together in which real justice can live.

At the present time Southern Rhodesia is like a boatload of people shouting and struggling while the boat is being swept on nearer and nearer the rapids, because one group is too bent on wresting the tiller from the other to row and the other is too occupied in trying to hold on to it to steer. The rapids towards which Southern Rhodesia is drifting are increasing bitterness, racial fear and hate, growing lawlessness and economic collapse—in short, chaos. And chaos will suit the interests of nobody but the communists in their midst who know so well how to exploit it.

That communist agents are busy in the country nobody can doubt. The inequalities and injustices which abound make it an easy situation for them to utilize. One would think it obvious that to counteract communism the first and indispensable step is to remove whatever favours it by repealing discriminatory laws, making a more equitable distribution of land, increasing African wages (the majority of Africans are living on or below the breadline) as fast as possible. Instead, the chief reaction to the communist threat is emergency legislation against it and vexatious security precautions. The need to watch out for communism induces a state of nerves which magnifies the danger and sees evidence of it in every form of opposition to official policies: communism in all African leaders; communism in a critical press; communism even in those Europeans who attempt to remove the chief catalyst of communism in Rhodesia, the colour bar.

The cure for Southern Rhodesia's social ills does not lie in independence but in a change of heart and direction among its leaders and people, white and black. Independence may be a legitimate aspiration, but until there is consciousness of community, whose independence would it be? Christianity, one would expect, would be the wonder-worker to change hearts and effect the cure. But it must be admitted that Christians in Southern Rhodesia, who form a large proportion of both sections of the people, are no more dedicated to the cause of unity than other people.

In their joint pastoral letter of 1961, *Peace through Justice*, the Catholic bishops of Southern Rhodesia briefly and clearly sketched the change

required. 'This vast and complicated problem of racial harmony', they wrote, 'is not simply one of social adjustment but of social justice.' Not only was the statement welcomed and endorsed by leaders of other Christian communions, but on more than one occasion the leaders of the main communions, Anglican, Congregationalist, Presbyterian, Wesleyan and Catholic, have acted in concert, issuing a joint statement to the effect that the problem of racial harmony is a moral one, and protesting against the use of bad means to good ends. Their interventions have been resented and criticised by many as clerical interference in politics, and Catholics have not been wanting who have spoken and written against them.

There are, however, many among both black and white sections who still bear goodwill to the other side. But too often their goodwill is combined with great ignorance of the other side. As a result of the colour bar, less than one European in a thousand has an African friend, and it is not open to Africans to make the first advance to win a European friend. The choice for all in Southern Rhodesia lies between colour bar and community. It is not possible to have both. The task of the Catholic Church is to persuade her children and others through them that there can be no real choice for them. But it is proving a very difficult task to do so, because the problem is not only complex but something new.

Basically the problem is one of a changing and shrinking world. Habits of thinking and living which were valid enough in the first half of this century are not valid in the second: habits, for instance, of thinking that Europeans can live in Africa in the same way as they live in Europe but with the economic advantages of living in Africa, as a master race. In Africa, North America, the Common Market countries of Europe, and elsewhere ancient structures and divisions which were built into our lives and on which we based our expectations are crumbling and opening out to new unities. Habits of thinking and living have to be revised and an *aggiornamento* made in ourselves. There is no room for choice. For we are entering into a new age, adventurous but anxious until we see the shape it will take—the age of *socialisation*, as Teilhard de Chardin called it. What is needed in Southern Rhodesia as elsewhere is the vision and courage of Pope John, who at the opening of the Vatican Council dismissed the prophets of woe with the assurance that God is preparing something new in human relationships.