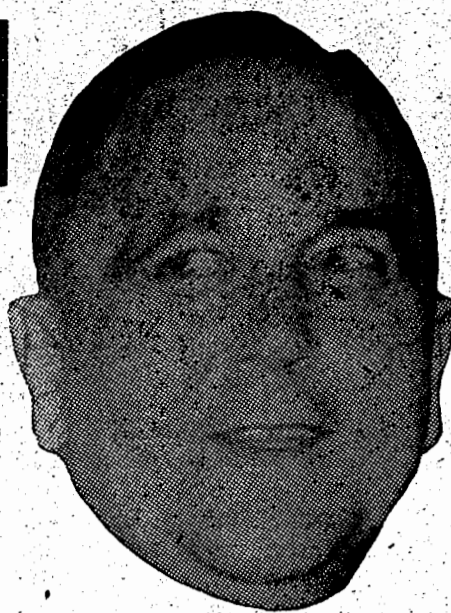


WHAT NEXT IN SOUTHERN RHODESIA?

by Jack Woddis



Roy Welensky... the doomed Premier



THIS month, after ten years of bitter resistance by the African people, the imperialist imposed Central African Federation comes to an end. The Federal Constitution will cease to have any validity; that old reactionary blusterer, Sir Roy Welensky, will have to find himself another occupation; and the Federal state apparatus will begin to be dismantled, although the final winding up might yet take some time.

Two of the component parts of the former Federation—Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland—are rapidly advancing to independent status under African majority rule. Nyasaland will become independent in July 1964, and will probably be renamed "Malawi".

Northern Rhodesia will have new elections in January 1964 under its new constitution based on universal adult franchise.

Although an advance over the previous one, the new constitution is not yet a fully democratic one since it still reserves no less than ten seats to Europeans out of a total Legislative Assembly of seventy-five, and yet the European population is only some 70,000 as against about 2½ million Africans.

Nevertheless, the elections in January will enable the United National Independence Party, led by Kenneth Kaunda, to win a sweeping victory and to press for a new constitution, with a date for independence in 1964. Once independent, Northern Rhodesia will probably be named "Zambia".

ECONOMIC PROBLEMS

For Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia the winning of political independence will be only the first step. Both territories will be faced with tremendous economic problems. Nyasaland has been terribly neglected and has practically no industry. Consequently, half of her adult male workers have had to migrate beyond the frontiers of Nyasaland—to South Africa, to Northern and Southern Rhodesia in order to seek work, often in the European-owned mines.

Northern Rhodesia has a more developed economy, but its main wealth, the rich copper, is entirely owned by British, American and South African monopolies. Northern Rhodesia is now producing about £120 million worth of copper a year—but about a third of that is taken in profits by the copper companies.

Thus both these two territories are faced with the battle for economic independence and economic reconstruction. Once politically independent, they will be in a better position to combine their efforts and to associate with other independent African States for these economic objectives; but the continued retention of economic strongholds in the hands of the foreign monopolies—and especially that of the copper companies—remains a major obstacle to economic progress and higher standards for the people. It is in the third territory, Southern Rhodesia, how-

ever, that the most immediately pressing problem remains. In fact, it would be no exaggeration to say that Southern Rhodesia is one of the most dangerous explosion points in Africa.

END TYRANNY

The thirty-two independent African states which met in May at Addis Ababa recently regard it as such, and have accordingly put it high on their list of issues around which they will mobilise African and world opinion in order to bring to an end the tyranny of white settler rule.

Southern Rhodesia has one of the largest concentrations of European settlers of all the African territories still under white rule. There are 234,000 Europeans, as against 3½ million Africans. Of significance, too, about half the Europeans in Southern Rhodesia come from South Africa, and are heavily influenced by the most racist conceptions.

The Tories will not easily give up their power and riches in this part of Africa. They regard Southern Rhodesia as a key military and political base defending the southern half of Africa from the tide of African liberation which has swept south and is now lapping at the doors of the last imperialist strongholds—Angola, Mozambique, the High Commission Territories, South West Africa and the Republic of South Africa.

Southern Rhodesia is also a base for imperialist pressure against Northern Rhodesia (with its rich copper belt), as well as of strategic importance in relation to the Congo.

Further, it is one of the key areas of British investment in Africa, and possesses valuable resources—gold, chrome, asbestos, coal, tobacco and other commodities.

EUROPEAN DOMINATION

The British Government, and particularly the two men most directly concerned—Sir Alec Douglas-Home and Mr. Duncan Sandys—have a natural sympathy for Mr. Winston Field and his white settler government in Southern Rhodesia, and are anxious to retain European domination in Southern Rhodesia for as long as possible.

ary 16, 1963). For this reason the British Government has allocated Southern Rhodesia the bulk of the Federal armed forces and equipment which will become available with the winding up of the Federation. Southern Rhodesia will receive seven European-manned Air Force Squadrons as well as four Army Battalions of white troops and an armoured car squadron also manned by Europeans.

ANOTHER REASON

After the decision to end the Federation, the British Government announced that the major share of these Federal forces would go to the white settler Government in Southern Rhodesia. Stressing the importance of this decision for British imperialism, the "Daily Telegraph" (November 7, 1963) wrote:

"There must remain a disciplined defence force in Central Africa... The Federal Army of some twelve battalions and the Royal Rhodesian Air Force represent the ultimate stability of this immense and wealthy area" ("Daily Telegraph", Janu-

Old Wine Under New Label

THE labels on Algeria's most famous wine—exported all over the world—will soon be changed. Instead of "Domaine la Trappe", it will be "Domaine Amar Bauchaoui". Nothing could better symbolise the changes sweeping over this country. These changes not only involve an Algerianisation of life here, but give it a new social content.

Amar Bauchaoui was the first young Algerian worker from the vineyards of Henri Borgeaud, owner of the Trappe, to join the resistance movement. In 1956, he killed two French "paras", persuaded six Algerian soldiers to desert with their arms, and together with them, left to join the National Liberation Front (F.L.N.) forces.

He was killed in battle in 1959. It was his sacrifice and that of more than a million other Algerians that made possible the events at Domaine la Trappe last March 30th.

MOST POWERFUL 'COLON'

When Henri Borgeaud, French senator and the most powerful French colon in Algeria, woke up that morning, he found his 108-room chateau and vineyard installations surrounded by troops of the Algerian Liberation Army (A.L.N.).

Not too long ago, it was French "paras" that Borgeaud saw when he peered out his windows. Four units of them were permanently stationed on his estates with their own prisons, torture rooms and death cells.

As it was, even a year after the Evian Agreements which ended the war in Algeria and six months after establishment of the Republican Government only eleven miles away in Algiers, Borgeaud still had a couple of hundred Frenchmen on the estate to whom he paid extra "danger money" to ensure that la Trappe remained French.

But there it was. Outside those solid grey walls, built by Trappist monks a century or so ago, were A.L.N. soldiers.

The walls enclosed the original Domaine of the Trappists, which Henri's

father, Julian Borgeaud, took over at the turn of the century.

The estate had overflowed those walls during Henri's reign and now included 4,500 acres of the most fertile land in Algeria. It was the most important of five Borgeaud estates.

REIGN FINISHED

But March 30th, a soldier delegation marched in through the spiked iron gate and explained the reign of the Borgeauds was finished. Borgeaud left within seven minutes, to fume in Algiers a day or two before flying back to Paris.

His son, Jean-Pierre Borgeaud, stayed on the estate for a few days to ensure that nothing was overlooked in the inventory, taken by a workers' committee, which was presented to the French government later for compensation.

Then the son left, too, with all but two of the 200 French administrative and technical personnel.

"Had there been much sabotage?" I asked thirty-two-year-old Djellali Ouali, president of the Workers' Management Committee.

"No," he replied with a smile. "For months before we had our F.L.N. members here alerted."

"We had one Algerian constantly alongside each French technician to watch like a hawk that there was no funny business. The machinery was in good condition."

WORKERS' COUNCIL

Ouali had been conscripted for France's "dirty war" in Indo-China. He deserted almost as soon as he reached Saigon; was severely wounded in a gun fight with French soldiers who recaptured him.

He spent five years in French prisons, then re-

turned to Algeria to take part in the liberation struggle in the area of la Trappe.

Six weeks after the takeover from Borgeaud, the 488 Algerian workers on the estate who constitute the Workers' Assembly elected a thirty-three-worker council which elected a nine-member management committee, which in turn chose Ouali as its president.

This election, held by the Workers' Management Committee on May 15th, was historic.

It set the seal on the overthrow of the man who symbolised French colonialism in Algeria and whose



continued presence, long after 850,000 of his colon compatriots had left, symbolised French hopes for a neo-colonialist comeback.

Ben Bella attended the final proceedings and embraced each of the nine members of the management committee as the results were announced.

Among those elected were Bauchaoui's father and another sign of the changes sweeping the country—two women.

DECISIONS FINAL

Together with a manager, appointed by the National Land Reform Office to represent the state and handle finances, the Management Committee now directs the affairs of Domaine Amar Bauchaoui.

The decisions of the committee are final, the state-appointed manager having liaison and advisory functions.

"... it is likely that in future military security duties affecting the three British High Commission territories of Bechuanaland, Swaziland and Basutoland will be more conveniently managed from Southern Rhodesia."

The special 50,000 word Memorandum on Southern Rhodesia, submitted on August 2nd, 1963, to the U.N. Security Council by the Ghana Government, has warned:

"The transfer of these forces would constitute a most serious threat to the security of the African Continent and might well involve a threat to world peace." (Para. 17, p. 8)

It was recognition of this danger, as well as a desire to end repression in Southern Rhodesia and help liberate their African brothers that led the Governments of Ghana and Morocco to submit a special resolution to the U.N. Security

Council in September 1963, opposing the transfer of sovereign rights to Southern Rhodesia as long as she remained under settler domination. The British representative used his veto to block a decision.

BRITAIN REFUSES

The resolution then came before the General Assembly on November 6th, where it was carried by

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By Mid-June 1963, about nine months after the government of the Democratic and People's Republic of Algeria was established, a large—but as yet far from decisive—part of agricultural and industrial enterprises in the country was being run by management committees set up by workers.

If the former property of Borgeaud was typical, then they were doing well.

The vineyards and orange groves seemed in excellent condition; a splendid crop of early tomatoes was being harvested; fields of oats, potatoes, carrots and other vegetables on the 2,750 acres under cultivation this year were all flourishing.

"Everybody works with enthusiasm," said Ouali as he showed us over the estate, "because they know the profits are not going into old Borgeaud's pockets, but to build up the country as a whole."

He showed us the remnants of the "gorbi" (shanty) settlements where the Algerians formerly lived. Miserable square mud boxes, barely high enough for a man to stand up in, a single room with packed earth floor for each family.

Leaving their villas the French had smashed everything they could—doors, windows, electric fittings, etc. These were now being repaired.

There was no chance for any sabotage at the chateau. With the A.L.N. on hand, it was taken over intact and is being kept that way as a museum—for the time at least. Later it will become a tourist resort.

Ouali explained that in one corner of the estate—where Algerians were now grading and packing tomatoes into boxes for the Algiers market—there had been a headquarters for a whole battalion of "paras". He took us to see the elaborate concrete pigsties,

converted into a prison by the "paras". Each sty was enclosed with wire netting, and a heavy steel door had replaced the opening for the pigs. A man could lie or crouch here, but never stand.

At the end of the sties were the slaughter pens—still swathed in barbed wire—because it was Algerians, not pigs, who were strung up here to be tortured and slaughtered.

For the time being wages are based on those paid by the French, except that persons doing the same work as the former French specialists now get the same pay as the latter, instead of the one-third or a quarter paid them in the past by Borgeaud.

Ouali expected the basic pay to be substantially raised at the end of the first year, as part of the profits were to be distributed as bonuses, under the principle adopted on state farms.

'LET HIM GET OUT!'

Even now, apart from having moved from hovels into decent housing, workers have enormously improved conditions. A tractor makes its rounds every morning, drawing a trailer heaped with vegetables and fruit—a free supplement to the daily wages for every family.

Answering French critics recently, Bella said: "They say that taking back Borgeaud's land is contrary to the Evian Agreements. Well, if we violate the Evian Agreements by this decision—so much the worse for the Evian Agreements."

He went on to recall that Borgeaud controlled fifty-five votes in the French National Assembly—"fifty-five voices demanding my death when I was in prison. That's Borgeaud for you! We don't need him any more. Let him get out!"

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seventy-three votes to two (Portugal and South Africa) with nineteen abstentions (mainly Western European powers, together with the U.S. and Japan). On this occasion, the British representative refused to participate in the voting.

The resolution adopted by the General Assembly also invited Britain "to hold without delay a constitutional conference in which representatives of all political parties in Southern Rhodesia will take part with a view to making constitutional arrangements for independence on the basis of universal adult suffrage, including the fixing of the earliest date for independence."

The British Government refuses to do this, taking refuge in its falsely claimed lack of constitutional power to call such a conference, and at the same time pretending that the intransigence of the white settlers in Southern Rhodesia represents an insuperable obstacle.

The very fact of handing over powerful Federal armed forces to bolster up

Winston Field's government makes nonsense of the British Government's pretences. It could easily reverse this decision—and block all further supplies of arms to Southern Rhodesia. It could back this up with diplomatic and economic moves which could compel the Winston Field government to retreat.

REAP THE WHIRLWIND

But the British imperialists, while they might try to persuade the settlers to make some small token concession to African demands in the hope of placating African and Asian opinion and quietening opposition at home, nevertheless, have no intention of co-operating with progressive opinion to end white domination in Southern Rhodesia.

This they will only do if compelled by the pressure of the people—at the United Nations, in Africa, and in Britain. It is time that the British people spoke out on this issue.

The African people will not tolerate this blot on their continent much longer. The British Government may not be willing to "go quietly", but if it does not, it will reap the whirlwind.