

Four million Africans baffled

THE four million African people of the British Colony of Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) are now completely baffled by the British Government's attitude towards their legitimate demand for a democratic say in their country's affair.

The recent Commonwealth leaders' conference in London left the oppressed people of Zimbabwe with the feeling that they had only one course open to them for the attainment of their national rights and dignity, because of the flat refusal of the British Premier, Mr. Harold Wilson, to give a time-limit for the convening of a constitutional conference on Rhodesia.

SECRET TALKS

That course is the violent one.

The Commonwealth leaders' conference communique said on Rhodesia, *inter alia*, that Britain would consider calling a constitutional conference if the present secret Smith-Wilson independence negotiations did not make headway "in a reasonably speedy time".

This was seen by the indigenous people of Zimbabwe, led by the Zimbabwe African People's Union, as another attempt by the British Government to shirk her responsibilities over her Rhodesian Colony.

Britain has said, and is still maintaining, that because of the existence of a convention between her and the white minority settler regime of Rhodesia she has no power to deal effectively with the Rhodesian issue without the risk of interfering in the Colony's internal affairs.

The editor of the Zimbabwe Review, SAUL GWAKBU NDLOVU, puts the official view of the Zimbabwe African People's Union

Soon after the Commonwealth conference, the Rhodesian minority leader, Ian Smith, warned Britain that any attempt to convene a constitutional conference on Rhodesia would be regarded by his regime as interference in the country's internal affairs.

WENT FURTHER

Ian Smith went even further. He said as far as he was concerned there were only two questions which faced Rhodesia at the moment.

The first was independence, and the second was whether this would be with or without the Commonwealth.

"As for the first, the issue is clear and decisive. We will have our independence. The only question to be determined is when," he told the minority's House of Assembly soon after the Commonwealth talks.

In the meantime, Britain's Harold Wilson has repeated to the House of Commons that the British Government would not legislate for Rhodesia on those issues within the competence of the Rhodesian Parliament.

The British Commonwealth Relations Secretary, Mr. Arthur Bottomley, ruled out the question of military action against an adamant and rebelling Rhodesia.

This clearly showed the majority of the people of Zimbabwe that relying on Britain to rectify her political mess in her Colony of Rhodesia is tantamount to relying on a broken reed.

For Britain has proved to be treacherously selling out the four million Zimba-

bweans to the minority settler regime. Now all Zimbabwians ask what Mr. Bottomley meant to achieve when he pleaded to all and sundry to refrain from violence, though his own Government is not taking decisive and positive steps to avoid violence.

The Zimbabwe African People's Union does not accept the validity of the British Government's claim that the existence of the suspicious convention has rendered it powerless to act decisively on its Colony of Rhodesia.

Section 34, sub-section 2 of the undemocratic 1961 Constitution says: "*The Governor, acting in his discretion in the manner prescribed in section 45, may at anytime, by proclamation in the Gazette, dissolve the Legislative Assembly.*"

Section 45 states that the Governor, in the exercise of his functions, shall act in accordance with the advice of the Governor's Council or the appropriate Minister, as the case may require . . . provided the Governor shall act in accordance with his own discretion in the exercise of the power of dissolving the Legislative Assembly conferred on him by sub-section 2 of section 34.

LAME EXCUSE

These sovereign powers of the Rhodesian Governor show, therefore, that the claim that the so-called convention between Britain and Rhodesia makes it difficult, if not impossible, for Britain to act effectively on Rhodesia affairs, is a lame excuse by Her Majesty's

Government for ignoring its responsibilities over the Colony.

The African people of Rhodesia rightly feel now that Britain is deliberately treating the Rhodesian issue on a kith-and-kin basis by putting the interests of 20,000-odd white settlers above those of the four million indigenous people of the country.

It is again on this basis that Mr. Wilson's Labour Government is conducting the secret negotiations for independence with Rhodesia's little Hitler, Ian Smith, to the exclusion of the indigenous people's popular leader Mr. Joshua Nkomo.

Smith's determination to promote and immortalise white supremacy in Rhodesia is well known. He is ruthlessly entrenching himself in power.

MORAL LAXITY

He has said over and over again that he does not expect to see an African Government in Rhodesia in his lifetime. He is about 46 years old.

Does such an attitude show reasonableness? Does such an approach deserve sympathy from any democratic country? Does it show any prospect or sign of a peaceful solution to the Rhodesian crisis?

If Smith declared independence unilaterally and the British Government depended only on economic sanctions as a remedial or punitive measure against a rebellious colony, it would be the height of moral laxity and racialism.

The Smith regime would maintain law and order in Rhodesia after a unilateral declaration of independence only by means of violence, just as it does now.

Does this justify Mr. Bottomley's undertaking that force must be ruled out in Rhodesia?

If Smith continues to refuse to attend a constitutional conference on Rhodesia and goes on waving the U.D.I. sword, will the British Government sit glumly and claim impotence?

If she does, as she is doing now, it is quite difficult for us to avoid a violent racial clash in Rhodesia.

ACTION NOW

The present eight-month-long clandestine correspondence between Wilson and Smith has made the African people of Zimbabwe more resentful than ever before toward Britain.

Only an immediate, positive and decisive action by the British Government to ensure the democratic advancement of the four million indigenous people on a one-man-one-vote franchise will change their bitter attitude.

If this is not done immediately without fear or favour, the future of the Rhodesian minority white settlers will remain bleak indeed.

Z.A.P.U., like Dr. Kaunda, President of Zambia (formerly Northern Rhodesia), maintains that justice knows no friend, relative or colour, and that military force must be used by Britain to compel Ian Smith's minority regime to respect justice and fair play.

Both moral and human standards demand that the British Government should stop vacillating on this explosive issue.