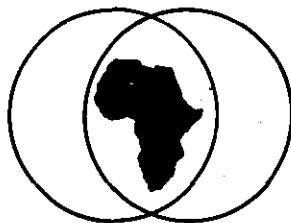


**THE RHODESIAN AGREEMENT:
ASPECTS AND PROSPECTS**

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THE SOUTH AFRICAN INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS



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The Agreement signed in Salisbury on 3 March, 1978, marked a most significant milestone in the 88-year odyssey to majority rule. The signing of the accord marked the beginning of the end of white minority rule in Rhodesia. As unequivocally stated in the last of the five-part Agreement, the dead-end of this rule is 31 December, 1978. At the end of that day, Zimbabwe will be unmistakably born. The period between 3 March and 31 December, 1978, is for the process of the transfer of power from the white minority to the majority. To be explicit, it should be pointed out here that while minority rule excluded any meaningful participation of the blacks in government, majority rule will be inclusive not only of the whites, but of all the people of the country.

The 3 March Agreement was a very remarkable achievement. Bishop Abel Muzorewa of the United African National Council, Mr. Ian Smith of the Rhodesia Front, the Rev. Ndabaningi Sithole of the African National Council and Chief Jeremiah Chirau of the Zimbabwe United Peoples Organisation, ought to be commended for their achievement after three months of tortuous talking in their pursuit of untying the Rhodesian constitutional gordian knot. The achievement of these parties was momentous for at least two reasons:

Firstly, because they succeeded where many, including invincible political wizards, had failed. Bishop Muzorewa, Mr. Sithole and Chief Chirau were able to reach an accord with Mr. Smith where Sir Harold Wilson, then as Prime Minister, Sir Alec Douglas Home, Mr. Joshua Nkomo, Dr. Henry Kissinger, Mr. Ivor Richard and Dr. David Owen and his come-lately American colleagues, had all failed.

Secondly, because the Agreement is a genuine mechanism for the transfer of power from the minority to the majority on the basis of one-person-one-vote which has been the main objective of African nationalism since the advent of white settlers in that part of Africa.

It is important to understand that the Agreement of 3 March in its proper perspective; in so far as it is a mechanism for the genuine transfer of power from the minority to the majority on the basis of universal adult suffrage, it addresses itself precisely to those aspirations of the black majority which drove them into the liberation struggle to the extent of giving their very lives. The African nationalist struggle in Rhodesia has been for the transfer of power to the majority.

When white colonists and settlers came to our country, our forefathers resisted their intended subjugation. The resistance culminated in the so-called Ndebele and Shona rebellions of 1896-97. In these resistances the indigenous people were defeated on the battlefield and the white-superior and black-inferior pattern of relationships in a white minority dominated territory was initiated.

However, it should be noted that although this was the pattern of relationships established, the blacks have never in their hearts of hearts accepted the automatic right of the white man to dominate the black in the white man's established Rhodesian society. Because of their defeat on the battlefield due to the white man's superiority of weapons, the blacks resorted to other methods of trying to redress their forced status of submission to colonial rule. Their refusal to accept imposed white-settler rule was unmistakable. As one superintendent expressed it in the 1920s, "There can be little doubt that the natives... are not in a contented frame of mind."¹ The blacks tried to organise themselves and engaged in the politics of protest.²

The period from 1897 through to the 1950s saw various attempts on the part of the blacks in Rhodesia to organise themselves into formal political associations so that they could act together at a territorial rather than a local or regional level.³ Consequently in September, 1957, the Southern Rhodesian African National Congress (an amalgamation of the old Bulawayo-based Congress and the militant Youth League in Salsibury) was formed.⁴ The formation of the SRANC was quite important because it was a national organisation born out of the uniting of two regional movements. It was the SRANC which set the stage for all the subsequent main African nationalist political parties in Rhodesia up to the present time. The SRANC served the following purposes:

It was given the representative role of articulating the disaffection of the rural and the urban blacks at their domination by a small community of white settlers.

It became the means of making direct representations to the government, demanding changes in unpopular legislation.

The general strategy of the SRANC was that of exerting domestic pressure on the settler regime.⁵ It stated its objective as that of trying to achieve basic constitutional reforms which would provide the blacks with a meaningful share in the running of the country's affairs.⁶ It was the SRANC which enshrined this as the people's objective in its constitution and coined the slogan "one-man-one-vote" for its popular expression. The SRANC was banned by the Southern Rhodesian Government on 26 February, 1959.

In January 1960, the National Democratic Party was founded to continue the pursuit of the objectives established by the SRANC. The NDP combined the policy of exerting domestic pressure on the Government with intensive lobbying of British Government ministers. The intention was to push Britain to use her claimed authority to influence white Rhodesians to come to terms with the black majority.⁷ The NDP strategy seemed to work in so far as its pressures contributed to the 1961 constitutional proposals which Joshua Nkomo initially accepted at the 1960-61 Constitutional Conference, but later reneged on his consent because the people at home disliked the proposal's provisions for the franchise - qualified franchise with two racial voters rolls and parliamentary representation (50 A roll and 15 B roll). It was at this time that British will and sincerity in trying to solve the Southern Rhodesian problem began to become suspect and its claim to wield any real power over the minority regime became questionable. Because of such a situation, the NDP changed its strategy to that of "creating sufficient disorder and lawlessness" inside the country in order to move the British to intervene militarily and impose an acceptable constitution.⁸

The NDP was banned on 9 December 1961, but a week later (17 December) it reconstituted itself as the Zimbabwe African Peoples Union. ZAPU involved the same people who had been in the banned NDP and they followed the same policies. ZAPU was banned in September 1962 although it continued to function outside the country.

By 1963 the African nationalists' continued lack of success within the country led to a crisis of confidence in Joshua Nkomo's leadership among his executive colleagues. A "dissident" group of party officials became quite critical of his style of leadership. Nkomo hence concentrated his political activities and energies on "the infinitely more sympathetic, and apparently more fruitful international environment."⁹ There were strong feelings that Nkomo as leader should be inside the country, and therefore his decision to form an Executive-in-Exile resulted in a split on 9 August 1963, which saw the Rev. Ndabaningi Sithole leading a group that formed the Zimbabwe African National Union. Nkomo at once formed the Peoples Caretaker Council - Not technically a political party but which identified itself with the banned ZAPU - in order to provide a legal alternative within Rhodesia, to the newly formed ZANU. (The latter also subscribed to the objective of "one-man-one-vote".) Both ZANU and PCC were banned on 26 August 1964.

The next significant African political party in Rhodesia was the UANC formed on 16 December, 1971. It is a grass-roots party among whose most important achievements was the ability to unite the people of Zimbabwe who had been bitterly and fatally divided on the personalities of Joshua Nkomo and Ndabaningi Sithole. The UANC brought in a new era of unity and was readily popular among the young people, who did not associate themselves with ZAPU or ZANU which had been banned while they were quite young. The UANC is the majority party led by Bishop Muzorewa, the most popular leader in Zimbabwe today, and it spearheaded the rejection of the Smith-Home 1971 proposals. Among the specific reasons given for the rejection of the proposals are the following:

1. Qualitative franchise
2. Time to majority rule too indefinite and too long
3. "the two races (blacks and whites) should work as a team in restoring peace and making the country a shop-window in the world where races can live harmoniously"¹⁰

What one has been trying to show in this exposition of the development of African nationalism in Rhodesia is that since 1957, when the SRANC set the platform for the struggle for the liberation of the blacks in Rhodesia, up to now, the objective has been universal adult suffrage or "one-man-one-vote". The UANC, formed after an eight-year lull in African party politics inside Rhodesia, inherited, revived, continued, and now has achieved, the consistent and treasured goal of universal adult suffrage. It is no secret that although there were four parties involved in the Salisbury talks, the real contending forces were two: Bishop Muzorewa, the popular leader of the representative majority party, the UANC, and Mr. Ian Smith, the popular leader of the whites.

This is the appropriate context within which the March 3 Agreement must be seen; it provides a firm bridge for crossing from Rhodesia to Zimbabwe; it addresses itself to the heart of the subject of the Rhodesian problem, which someone more ably expressed thus:

"The crux of the Rhodesian problem is this - do the settlers genuinely intend that majority rule should come, that power should be yielded to an African Prime Minister and predominantly African cabinet? Or do they in fact intend... to retain rule for as long as possible - perhaps by some miracle, for good?"¹¹

The terms of the Agreement lay any such concern to rest. Our March 3 Agreement has been subjected to a lot of criticisms and propaganda based on all kinds of motives by all sorts of critics. Among our critics are, of course, Mr. Joshua Nkomo and Mr. Robert Mugabe, the so-called external leaders of the Patriotic Front. And behind them are the so-called front line Presidents - Machel of Mozambique, Nyerere of Tanzania, Neto of Angola, Kaunda of Zambia and Khama of Botswana. And behind these are, among others, some invisible powers with perfidious tentacles. Another set of strange critics consist of Dr. Owen and his interchangeable American colleagues.

A pertinent question may be posed here: what are the credentials of these presumptuous critics of ours?

It is no secret that the war that has been going on in our land has been a popular war. As long as the people felt that it was a war for a worthy cause, they supported it and identified with it in pursuit of their set objective. They were willing to risk their very lives, either as guerillas holding arms of war, or as supporters in kind. The parents understood what their children were engaged in. The consequences of the war have been death and untold suffering.

Those who are inside the country are part of the death, bloodshed and suffering. With our extended family system virtually everybody has lost either a friend or a relative or both in the war. Those inside know what this suffering and dying means; the people inside are authorities on the experiences of the war. This is one of our people's credentials for solving the war problem; the success of the war has depended to a great extent on their involvement and willingness to support it.

But can any of this be said of these critics who, as far as we know, are all the time either jetting from capital to capital or wining and dining in the world's best hotels? In fact one wonders whether Nkomo and Mugabe have any longer minds of their own. They seem to have no choice but to do and say only what is within the framework of their hosts and the latter's masters.

Now let us look at some of the criticisms that have been raised concerning the Agreement:

1. It has been said that those who took part in the negotiations excluded the Patriotic Front leaders, Joshua Nkomo and Robert Mugabe.

This is not a fact. From before the negotiations started, it was made abundantly clear that the PF leaders were, and are, free to come back to join the others in the transitional period. The invitation to them is still standing.

2. It has been said that the Transitional Government will not be able to stop the war.

Plans for a ceasefire are being made. They are being made with all seriousness without intending to fail, but to succeed in achieving a real ceasefire. It is possible that a ceasefire may fail, but it must be emphasised and made clear that if it should fail, it is not because of any reason concerning Nkomo and Mugabe and their Patriotic Front. It is a fact that there is nothing in terms of a political or military structure known as the Patriotic Front. It is a gimmick in the form of an abstract marriage of convenience between Nkomo and Mugabe designed on the one hand for the expediency of Russia, and on the other for the attempt by some of the frontline states' leaders to impose their respective trojan horses as leader in Zimbabwe.

It should be noted that the fighting men themselves have made it clear that they are not fighting to put any particular person on the throne, but for the liberation of Zimbabwe. The fighters have expressed their strong feelings against any leader who wants to promote himself by claiming possession of them, as if they were pieces of property. What all this means is that the war will be stopped, not by some individual leader's authority, but by the convincing nature and strength of the evidence of the achievement of the goal which drove these persons to fight and die.

3. The Agreement has been criticised for allowing white minority safeguards for the purpose of creating white confidence. So that whites can remain in Zimbabwe. The UANC does not want to be pretentious; it accepts that some whites have no other home except Rhodesia. It further realises that it is the majority of these whites who have the necessary skills and know-how for the economic stability and development of the new society. As the UANC President expressed upon his return from overseas on 19 March 1978, the UANC wants neither "a nation of beggars and paupers" nor a country dependent "on blood sucking expatriates". He went further to say:

"I know some countries in Africa which are run by expatriates, mercenary workers, get-rich-quick adventurers who take out short term contracts, cause a mess and then return to their home with fat gratuities made up of valuable foreign exchange. By this Agreement Zimbabwe shall be run by Zimbabweans of all races for Zimbabweans."

Bishop Muzorewa said that he knew that some national flags in Africa now stand for hunger, but we in Zimbabwe do not want to be a land of hunger.

Also it must be noted that some of the so-called white safeguards are in fact guarantees for the good of all. For instance, the entrenchment of a justiciable Bill of Rights will protect the interests of persons of all races from the evils of bad government, and the entrenchment of the independence of the judiciary will ensure that no politician shall order a judge to interfere with the due process of law.

4. It has been said that the three black leaders who negotiated with Mr. Smith have played right into the hands of Smith, a master trickster. But it is clear that the war, sanctions and other pressures have had an effect on Mr. Smith. The Smith who was sincerely adamant that there would be no majority rule in his life time - not in a thousand years - has will-nilly somersaulted.

Also we of the UANC have refused to be victims of our mistrust of Smith, whereby we would be paralysed into inactivity. Being certain of the goal of the people of Zimbabwe and confident of our ability to fight for our case, we took Mr. Smith on his acceptance of majority rule and we achieved our goal. Mr. Smith has put his signature to the agreement that white minority rule shall end on 31 December, 1978.

5. Instead of dilly-dallying and shilly-shallying, the British ought to be courageous enough to accept the Agreement. Their fears of the continuation of the war are based on the wrong premises. The real freedom fighters have been fighting for majority rule and not for some favourite personality, nor for some alliance entered into for the convenience of attempting to wrest power. If the war should continue, it is not because Nkomo and Mugabe are not participating in the Transitional Government. It is because of other far deeper reasons perhaps known to those who are well acquainted with the inside story of the Zimbabwe liberation struggle and its inner conflicts within conflicts and wars within wars. And because of this no one is under any illusion that the war will suddenly stop.
6. The British have every reason to embrace the March 3 Agreement. It meets the six principles stated in the H.M.S. Tiger Proposals in December 1966:
 - (a) The terms of the Agreement and the transitional structure responsible for the process of transferring power are such that they ensure the "unimpeded progress to majority rule".
 - (b) The terms of reference of the transitional structure, the small number of white MPs in the majority Government, and the entrenched clause prohibiting the white MPs from entering into a coalition for the purpose of forming a government provides the "guarantees against retrogressive amendments to the Constitution".
 - (c) The composition, equal status of the members and the respective powers of Executive Council and the Council of Ministers evidence the "immediate improvement in the political status of the Africans".
 - (d) One of the specific duties of the Transitional Government is the removal of discrimination which responds to the fourth principle of "progress towards ending racial discrimination".
 - (e) The terms of the Agreement make it clear that there is no possibility for the oppression of majority by minority and vice versa, as required in the sixth principle.
 - (f) The only principle not yet met is the fifth one, viz. that of satisfying the British Government that the proposed basis for independence is acceptable to the people of Rhodesia as a whole.

Here Mr. Smith has yet to hold a promised referendum but according to the majority of blacks, as represented by the three signatories to the Agreement, there is no problem of acceptance. But even the response of the white electorate to Mr. Smith has been quite good.

Thus the British are obliged to accept the March 3 Agreement, but they seem to be looking over their shoulder afraid to act positively.

7. The attitude of the frontline leaders and of the OAU they represent is characteristically inconsistent and incomprehensible. At the OAU 8th Summit meeting of Heads of State in June 1971, at Addis Ababa, it was declared that the Manifesto on Southern Africa, i.e. the Lusaka Manifesto - unanimously adopted by the OAU and endorsed by the UN and the conference of Non-aligned States - "... is the only objective basis for any meaningful solution to the problems of... racial discrimination and colonialism in Africa".¹²
8. To show the hypocrisy and reprehensibility of their attitude, let us refer to what they so eloquently proclaimed and pledged themselves to in the so-called Lusaka Manifesto.¹³
- (a) "... we affirm that only the people of a society, acting together as equals, can determine what is for them a good society and a good social, economic or political organisation" (Article 2).
 - (b) "... we are demanding an opportunity for all the people of these states (i.e. of Southern Africa), working together as equal individual citizens, to work out for themselves the institutions and the system of government under which they will, by general consent, live together and work together to build a harmonious society" (Article 8).
 - (c) "As an aftermath of the present policies, it is likely that different groups within these societies will be self-conscious and fearful. The initial political and economic organisations may well take account of these fears, and this group self-consciousness. But how this is to be done must be a matter exclusively for the peoples of the country concerned, working together. No other nation will have a right to interfere in such affairs" (Article 9).
 - (d) "If peaceful progress to emancipation were possible or if changed circumstances were to make it possible in the future, we would urge our brothers in the resistance movements to use peaceful methods of struggle even at the cost of some compromise on the timing of change" (Article 12).
 - (e) "Rhodesia, like the rest of Africa, must be free, and its independence must be on the basis of majority rule" (Article 16).

The March 3 Agreement more than adequately meets all these conditions. If those who set them meant what they said, then they are in honour bound to respond positively to the Salisbury achievement.

Let us now turn to the future and to some of the policies of a UANC future Government. As the Party representing the majority of the people in Zimbabwe, we hope and are working very hard to win the first majority rule election, and are planning to provide the best and most efficient Government worthy of the trust and co-operation of the people of Zimbabwe as a whole.

NON-RACIALISM

I would like, at the outset, to state the unequivocal stance of the UANC against racialism and its commitment to establishing a society in which the accident of a person's pigmentation shall not be allowed to determine what the person shall or shall not do in the society. The UANC stands for non-racialism.

People have given their very lives to fight against a racist system of things. The Party believes that all persons whether they be black, white, brown or yellow are equal in the eyes of God.

The UANC shall, therefore, work towards the total and complete change of all racial and racist systems and establish a non-racial society on justice for all. Any person, regardless of race, ethnic origin, culture, sex or religion, who identifies himself or herself as a Zimbabwean, shall be given equal opportunity to contribute fully towards the development of the country. A UANC Government will not permit the exploitation and oppression of one citizen by another or by any other person or body.

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

In all international relationships or otherwise the UANC believes that its sovereignty shall not be compromised. The Party's international policy is one of non-alignment. The UANC is committed to the principles of human equality and human dignity and will work for the fulfilment of these ideals in order to establish a peaceful and stable society.

THE ECONOMY

I thought we should spend a little more time on what I consider to be the backbone of any thriving nation, namely the economy, and the UANC future policy regarding its management and development.

Our analysis of the current situation of the economy shows that its health is not good. The gross domestic product in real terms during 1977 declined by nearly 6%.

In real terms incomes have fallen to the level which prevailed in 1968/69. Manufacturer activity declined in 1977. Commercial turnovers have fallen in both absolute and relative terms. The volume of mineral production has declined by almost 10 per cent since the end of 1976 (although the value at present is being maintained). The construction industry is almost at a standstill because of political uncertainty.

Concerning financial matters, the gross debt of the central and local Government has increased from R550-million in 1965 to well over R1 100-million in 1978 - much of this expansion took place in the past three years.

Because of the absence of growth in revenues derived from normal sources of income, the Rhodesian Front Government has had to finance rapidly increasing expenditure by broadening the tax base and borrowing on an increased scale.

It is currently estimated that approximately R1-million a day is being expended on either the war or the subsidisation of those sectors of the economy most seriously affected by the economic and military situation.

The number of job opportunities being created has fallen drastically in the past three years and new opportunities for school leavers, now estimated to exceed 100 000 per annum, are few and far between.

Inflation rates have averaged 8 per cent since 1974 and reached nearly 10 per cent in 1977. In this context, the Government's wage restraint policy which has held wage increases to below a 5 per cent ceiling during 1977 and early 1978, is placing a great strain on the individual.

We feel that it is quite important for us to understand the current economic situation we are in, for us to plan on what steps to take when we are in Government so that we can maintain economic equilibrium and retain as much as possible the existing economic base as can provide a firm foundation for future growth and development. It is necessary for the new majority rule Government to be ready with a short term economic strategy for coping with current problems as well as long term economic policies and objectivities. The UANC believes in the following broad objectives:

That the economy must become a servant of the people and must provide as far as possible for equal opportunity and decent standards of living for all citizens.

That the State has a considerable role to play in ensuring that an equitable framework for economic growth is provided, a framework which will maintain incentive while at the same time provide for a more equitable distribution of wealth.

As regards a strategy for the immediate future, we recognise that the majority Government will, as per terms of the March 3 Agreement, have the benefit of experienced professional personnel. These people will provide the day to day management within our policies, and strive to maintain economic equilibrium.

At present the "unusual" elements that absorb much of our productive capacity and energy are: the war effort in money and manpower; circuitous transport routes for our export industries which cost the economy anything up to R100-million a year; exclusion from the foreign aid flows made available to other developing countries.

A UANC Government will work tirelessly to overcome the political and economic hurdles that are in the way of economic progress. We feel that the economy of Zimbabwe will be one of the most broadly based and sophisticated in Africa, and we are optimistic that the substantial levels of economic growth which are necessary to meet our peoples' aspirations can be achieved.

Turning now to the longer term and the subject of economic policy and objectives: the application of the UANC principles of the maintenance of incentives within a framework which will provide for a more equitable distribution of wealth and opportunity, will call for many changes in the urban, industrial and commercial sectors. We will support private ownership of housing and those commercial and industrial enterprises which operate within a competitive situation. There are a number of extremely large, privately owned companies which occupy monopolistic positions and obviously these will have to be approached on a different basis.

The black businessman has been discriminated against for many years and therefore has only a limited role in the present business world. Clearly this must be corrected and we will be seeking ways to assist the black business sector. At the same time we will encourage existing business enterprise to ensure that the community as a whole is more adequately represented at every level in the company. There is clearly room for better working conditions for labour. We will be seeking to introduce realistic minimum wage levels for all urban industry and to provide workers with a more stable and secure working environment. Pensions, medical aid and security of employment are not regarded as conditional extras by the UANC. We would also seek to ensure

that the employees of an industry are adequately represented within the decision making systems of the larger corporations.

As regards foreign investment, this will be encouraged on much the same basis as at present. We will expect the foreign corporations, however, to put the interests of Zimbabwe first in their activities within the country.

In the rural agricultural economy, we have an even more accentuated situation where the tribal sector has been very largely ignored when it comes to investment. The commercial sector is highly developed and efficient and we will be looking to the existing commercial farmer for very much higher levels of overall production in the future. What we have to develop is a suitable system of land occupation which will be productive and yet provide security, stability and dignity for the people involved. 85 per cent of our people live in the rural sector and we will be concentrating the bulk of our development effort in this area.

The immediate problem is to ease land pressure in the tribal lands and to halt the deterioration of resources. Thereafter we must provide for the transformation of the tribal sector, the more productive occupation of commercial farm land, and at the same time seek to increase production and exports of farm products. In the latter regard, we recognise our current dependence on the commercial farm sector. While seeking reform of commercial farming, the UANC Government will continue to foster its growth and productivity. More fundamental changes will take much longer to implement.

May I say a word on the subject of the tax structure. We feel that the Rhodesian Front Government made the tax system more and more regressive in character. The imposition of sales tax, now at the level of 15 per cent, and applied to a much wider range of goods than ever before, has exacerbated this situation. The effect has been to increase the tax burden on the poorer sectors of our community very substantially.

It will be one of our priorities to change this situation as soon as possible and to reduce the tax burden on those who can least afford it, while providing for a more progressive tax structure. We do not, however, wish to destroy the incentive for industrial endeavours by increasing income taxes to the point where incentive is penalised, but to give fair weight and responsibility for national financial requirements to those people and institutions who can best support the burden.

We feel that we have in Rhodesia a very sophisticated and diversified economic structure, and it is the intention of the UANC to foster more growth and development in the future. The UANC Government will aim to maintain a mixed economic system with the state providing primary services and ensuring that monopolistic practices do not develop within the private sector. We hope to increase production and to expand industry on a basis more compatible with the social and political situation which will prevail in the new Republic of Zimbabwe.

In conclusion, I would like to say that we are now standing at the threshold of grasping the opportunity to respond to the needs of all our people. Our political goal for which so many have died and suffered is now within grasp. Mr. Smith has agreed to hand over power to the majority and is in the process of doing so; 31 December is the deadline for the end of

minority rule. The more challenging problems lie ahead in the task of creating a new society. Instead of fighting each other, we have to fight and conquer the greater enemies of hunger, disease and poverty. We feel that our ill-motivated enemies should at best let us get on with our plans for peace, progress and development.

FOOTNOTES

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