

Nkomo's Plea Before the United Nations' 17-Man Committee on Colonialism

(Usually referred to as Watchdog Committee)

Your Excellencies,

IN a series of original compacts, our hereditary rulers, did under pressure from the British Government and representatives of the British South Africa Company; grant certain mining concessions in the late eighteen eighties to the said Company. The operation of these concessions brought a considerable number of immigrant races (mainly of British stock) to our motherland.

The immigrant races quickly organised themselves into powerful economic and political groups, so that in 1922 the British Government granted self-government status to these minority settlers.

May it be stated here that the Chiefs and the African people were never consulted on this major constitutional step.

Thus for the past thirty-eight years the European immigrant races have been ruling Southern Rhodesia without the consent of the majority of the people—the African people. Throughout these years no African has ever set foot in the Parliament of the land. No African has ever held a senior administrative office in any of the branches of state machinery.

The African people have been debarred by laws from all rights and privileges of men; European settler sentiment, more powerful than law frowns us down. We are everywhere shut out from all senior Civil Service Offices. We are compelled to contribute to the resources of a country which gives us no protection. We are denied freedom of speech, the right to assemble and petition, except with police consent and supervision. We are taxed without consent.

This has been our lot for thirty-eight years! Southern Rhodesia has a population of three million Africans and 280,000 European settlers!

Your Excellencies,

We wish to state that self-government is the last stage of any country's political evolution, and the British Government in a singularly shameful



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manner decided to hand us over to the whites and caprices of a minority settler community.

The significant fact about the self-government status of Southern Rhodesia is that for thirty-eight years the British Government have been shy to advance Southern Rhodesia to independence because they are and still are conscious of the moral mistake they committed in 1922.

For the past one and half years, we have been involved in some constitutional negotiations with the British Government and the European settler Government of Southern Rhodesia.

At the end of it all, the British Government and the settlers brought out a Constitutional Scheme which has within its embryo seeds that would germinate into another South Africa within a few years if implemented.

They propose a Parliament of 65 members elected through a dual

Roll system. That is, there shall be an "A" Roll and a "B" Roll, both based on a high qualitative franchise.

The "A" Roll voters will elect 50 of the 65 members. So far, of the 280,000 Europeans, 84,000 qualify for and have registered on the "A" Roll, of the three million Africans only 1,000 qualify for the "A" Roll. The disparity is too obvious to demand an explanation.

To qualify for the "A" Roll one needs:—

- Either (a) Income — £720 per annum
or (b) Property — £5,000.
and (c) Education — able to read, write and comprehend the English Language.

Further See Annex No. 1.

The 15 other members of the 65 members legislature shall be elected by the "B" Roll voters. May it be stated here that the Constitution does not state that the fifteen shall be Africans. It merely stipulates that these shall be elected by the "B" Roll voters.

The settlers maintain that at least 50,000 Africans can qualify for the "B" Roll, but our estimates show that hardly 15,000 Africans can qualify for the "B" Roll.

It may be stated here that from the total of 280,000 settlers, 84,000 are on the "A" Roll and 196,000 are unregistered and what is there to stop them from registering on the "B" Roll. In that event the 196,000 Europeans would easily swamp the African voters even if they number 50,000 or 15,000.

Your Excellencies,

The above analysis does show that either on "A" Roll or "B" Roll, the African people can never hope to be really represented.

The political plot is very obvious. The British Government intend to grant independence to the European minority settlers in Southern Rhodesia by the back-door. Their basic aim is to have a Parliament in which the settlers will be in absolute majority with a few black stooges. Then Her Majesty's Government will urge this pseudo multi-racial Parliament to move a motion for

independence; excusing themselves that the motion has been supported by peoples of races.

This is the most dangerous aspect of the present constitutional proposals for Southern Rhodesia.

Your Excellencies,

Because of the aforesaid reasons, we the 3,000,000 African people of Southern Rhodesia have thus resolved; (a) To reject the present Constitution for Southern Rhodesia. (b) We have organised that no African in our motherland—Southern Rhodesia should register as a voter on the basis of the present arrangements. Because of this stand and the support given to us by the toiling 3,000,000 African masses, our nationalist movement, the National Democratic Party, was banned on December 9, 1961 and not only was the Party banned, but the National Leaders plus Provincial and District as well as Branch Leaders numbering 5,000 are prohibited to appear in public nor address any public gatherings.

See Annex 2 and 3

Apart from all this the settlers went further with the paternal sanctions of the British Government and confiscated our Party property valued approximately at £80,000. On December 17, 1961 we created a new Party—the ZIMBAGWE AFRICAN PEOPLES UNION under the banner of genuine democracy—the principle of "ONE-MAN ONE-VOTE". The ZAPU stands clear on this particular principle including the boycott of elections and the refusal to get any African on the fake Voters Roll, not only do we dispute this as being impolitic, but we dispute it fundamentally on the basis that Southern Rhodesia is an African country. And as such, we stand for no compromise, but universal franchise.

Your Excellencies,

We have uttered our complaints to the British Government but they have been unattended to but met only by alleging the peculiar circumstances of the country. All hope of a favourable change in Government of our country is thus extinguished in our bosom and we are now beginning to look to you to help by:—

- Bringing this serious matter openly in all the Commonwealth Councils.
- Bringing it up immediately at the United Nations with a view to urging the world body to put pressure on the British Government and the settlers, and that a United Nations Commission be set-up for this purpose.
- That the present proposed Constitution must not be proceeded with and that a fresh Constitutional Conference be convened to draft a Constitution transferring power to the majority on the basis of "ONE-MAN ONE-VOTE".

Our demand is simple: A Constitution based on the principle of "ONE-MAN ONE-VOTE". Therefore, in the name of humanity, in the name of freedom and justice, in the name of peace and security, we appeal to Your Excellencies; and earnestly and respectfully, ask that our case be regarded with the urgency consideration to which the peculiarities of our struggle entitled us.

In the name of our suffering peoples and their Party, the Zimbabwe African Peoples Union, we humbly submit this our Memorandum for your consideration.

ANNEX I

New Franchise Qualifications

The proposals provide for an "A" Roll and a "B" Roll.

2. The following requirements will be common to both Rolls:
 - (a) Citizenship: Citizen of Rhodesia and Nyasaland.
 - (b) Age: 21 years or over.
 - (c) Residence: Two years' continuous residence in the Federation and three months' residence in the constituency and electoral district concerned immediately preceding application for enrolment.
 - (d) Language: Adequate knowledge of the English language and ability to complete and sign the prescribed form for registration (except in the case of duly appointed Chiefs and Headmen).

3. The following are the different additional qualifications respectively required:

- "A" Roll
- (a) Income of £720 during each of two years preceding date of claim for enrolment, or ownership of immovable property of value of £1,500.
or
 - (b) (i) Income of £480 during each of two years preceding date of claim for enrolment, or ownership of immovable property of value of £1,000; and (ii) completion of a course of primary education of prescribed standard.
or
 - (c) (i) Income of £300 during each of two years preceding date of claim for enrolment, or ownership of immovable property of value of £500; and (ii) four years' secondary education of prescribed standard.
or
 - (d) Appointment to the office of Chief or Headman.
- "B" Roll
- (a) Income at the rate of £240 per annum during the six months preceding date of claim for enrolment, or ownership of immovable property of value of £450.
or
 - (i) Income at the rate of £120, per annum during the six months preceding date of claim for enrolment of ownership of immovable property of value of £250; and (ii) two years' secondary education.
or
 - (c) Persons over 30 years of age with—(i) Income at the rate of £120 per annum during the six months preceding date of claim for enrolment or ownership of immovable property of value of £250; and (ii) completion of a course of primary education of a prescribed standard.
or
 - (d) Persons over 30 years of age with—Income at the

rate of £180 per annum during the six months preceding the date of claim for enrolment, or ownership of immovable property of value of £350.

or

- (e) All karaal heads with a following of 20 or more heads of families.

or

- (f) Ministers of Religion.

ANNEX 2

JOSHUA MQABUKO NKOMO

To

WHEREAS I have reason to believe that feelings of hostility

between one or more sections of the community on the one hand, and any other section of the community on the other hand would be roused, or that subversive statements are likely to be made, or that passions and emotions are likely to be roused which might occasion or lead to serious public disorder if you, the said

JOSHUA MQABUKO NKOMO

were to attend a public gathering;

NOW, THEREFORE, in terms of subsection (1) of section 11 of the Law and Order (Maintenance) Act, 1960, I do hereby prohibit you from attending any public gathering (other than a gathering in respect of any bona fide sport or entertainment, or a bona fide religious gathering)

within the following area for a period of three months reckoned from the date of the service of this order upon you.

The area comprising the Magisterial Districts of:—

BELINGWE
BULAWAYO
CHARTER
GWANDA
GWELO
HAKTLEY
LOMAGUNDI
MARANDELLAS
QUE QUE
SALISBURY
UMTALI
VICTORIA

excluding any reserve or other tribal area as defined in the Native Affairs Act, Chapter 72.

Given under my hand at Salisbury this 20th day of December, 1961.

Signed: STUMBLES

ACTING MINISTER OF JUSTICE
AND INTERNAL AFFAIRS.

ANNEX 3

NOTICE IN TERMS OF
SECTION 53A(4) (b) OF THE
NATIVE AFFAIRS ACT
(CHAPTER 72), AS
AMENDED.

To JOSHUA MQABUKO
NYONGOLO NKOMO
R. C. NO. 18334 MATOBO
4100 New Highfield

SALISBURY

Take notice that under the provisions of paragraph (b) of sub-section (4) of section 53A of the Native Affairs Act (Chapter 72), as amended, I do hereby prohibit you from entering or remaining in any reserve or other tribal area, unless travelling through such reserve or area along a public road.

Failure to comply with this Notice renders you liable to prosecution. The Notice will remain in force until it is revoked.

Signed: MORRIS

Chief Native Commissioner

Date 20 Dec. 1961

