

## AN OPEN LETTER TO MR. IAN SMITH, PRIME MINISTER OF RHODESIA

by Arthur Shenfield

*Dr. Shenfield, prominent English economist and barrister, is director of London's International Institute for Economic Research and president of the Mont Pelerin Society. During the third seminar of the Center for Constructive Alternatives, The Politics of Babel: Utopia Revisited, he presented this open letter to Hillsdale College students and faculty. During the 1973-74 academic year, Dr. Shenfield will be visiting professor of economics at Hillsdale College. Dr. Barbara Shenfield, well-known British sociologist, will be visiting professor of sociology.*

The Pearce Commission (appointed by the British government to sound opinion on a settlement with Rhodesia) has reported that you and your country are once again declared to be outcasts. The concessions which you made to meet the views of the British Government have counted as nought. In retrospect it is now clear that neither the agreement which you made with the British Government, nor any agreement designed to preserve a system of law and liberty for the people of Rhodesia, white or black, could have passed the Pearce Commission's tests.

International sanctions against you therefore remain. You will no doubt circumvent them in the future, as you have done in the past. But the sting in them will also remain. The venom of the world will continue to be discharged against you. In the United States powerful efforts will continue to be made to reverse the decision to allow the import of Rhodesian chrome. In Britain you will be declared to be an Untouchable, finally revealed to be too leprous to be worthy of any further attempt to bring you back within the camp. Almost all of the rest of the world will cry to high Heaven against your alleged sins, and the World Council of Churches will redouble the financial blessings which it has showered upon those who, in this wonderful age of fantasy, style themselves Freedom Fighters.

I write this letter to you not to commiserate with you but to congratulate you. I believe that in sending you to Coventry the world has done you a monumental favor. It has given you an opportunity to confound it which you would not have had if you had been tied by the terms of your agreement with the British

Government. The verdict of the Pearce Commission has not harmed you. It has blocked one road but opened up a better one. If you had been allowed to take the first, you would have missed the second.

The world is sick. No one is in a better position than you to grasp the nature of its sickness, for you are a victim of the poison which the sickness has produced. You know that the Rhodesia of November 11th, 1965, was by any reasonable tests a peaceful, orderly, progressive, humane, and as far as possible racially harmonious Society, unmatched for these qualities in all Africa. Yet it was adjudged, alone among the dependent territories of the British, French and Belgian Empires, to be unfit for independence. You also know that in the general pattern of the African States north of the Zambezi, there is not peace but war, not order but turmoil, not progress but retrogression, not humanity but cruel inhumanity, not racial harmony but racial discord descending in places to genocide. Yet these States were willingly, almost eagerly, accorded the independence which Rhodesia was denied. A world must be gravely ill which treats you as a leper but Mr. Kaunda and Mr. Nyerere as statesmen; which blockades Rhodesia but lavishes aid on countries whose governments are amongst the most odious tyrannies of our time. For that matter your experience of negotiation with Mr. Harold Wilson no doubt taught you that Britain must be sick if it could twice elect such a man to be Prime Minister. As the *New Statesman*, the British Left's own *journal d'opinion* said on May 25, 1972, "his very presence in Labor's leadership pollutes the atmosphere of politics". And the readiness of the

im·primis (im-pri' mīs) adv. In the first place. Middle English, from Latin *in primis*, among the first (things) . . .

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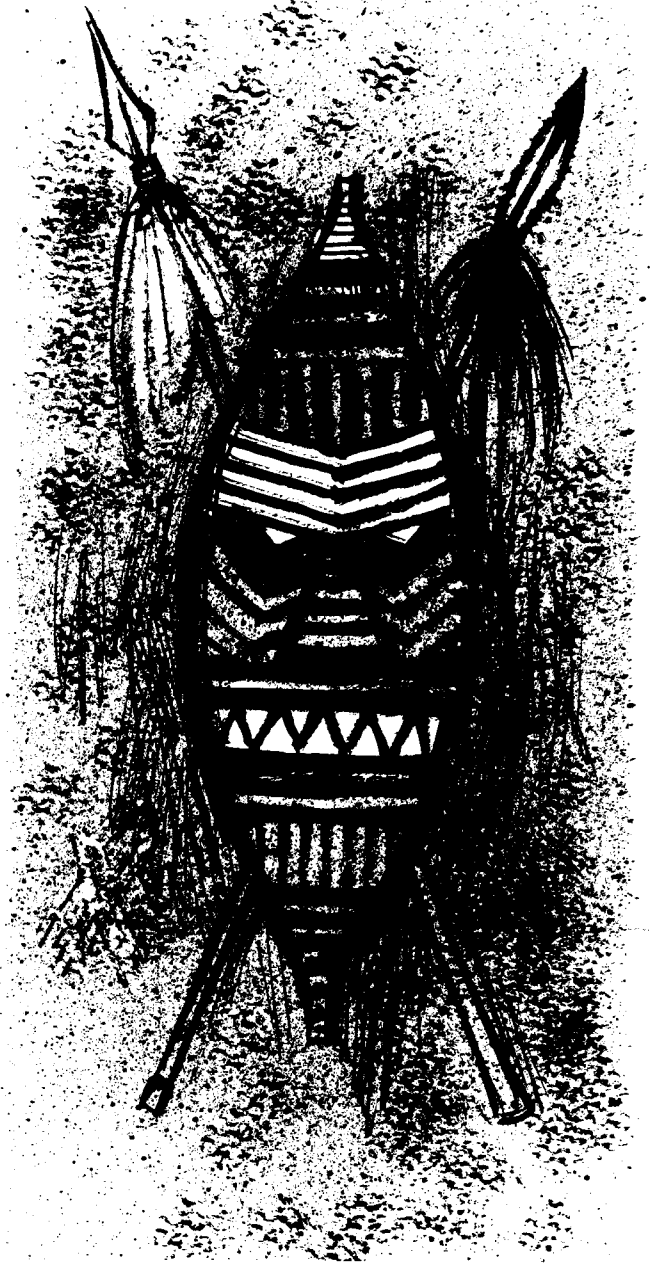
United States to apply sanctions against Rhodesia (contrary to the cogently reasoned advice of, amongst others, the late Dean Acheson) simply to appease its enemies in the Afro-Asian bloc demonstrates a deep sickness in America also.

It goes without saying that in the Communist world millions yearn to escape to any country where there is a glimmer of freedom. What is a new phenomenon, as yet little appreciated, is that all over the Western world there are now people looking for escape. What is especially striking is the fact that for the first time in its history the United States has become a country that people wish to leave (aside from the utterly atypical former cases of men like Henry James and T. S. Eliot). Have you heard of the new Republic of Minerva? It has been founded on a reef in the Pacific for those who yearn for a return to the liberty under law, the government of laws not of men, of the original American design. Of course, it is pitifully small and hence is more symbol than fact; and so Americans who look for escape can turn only to a country like Australia, which has the attractions that California once had but which clearly remains part of the infected Western world. Thus it is that many look for a haven but few can find it.

Here is your great opportunity. Already you are attracting non-African immigrants at the rate of 10,000 a year – a remarkable achievement for a maligned and beleaguered country. But you need many more; and the world needs a sizeable country, such as is yours, as a center of moral and political regeneration. The key to this opportunity is the rejection of the current fetishes of the Western world. On this footing I make bold to suggest lines of policy which would make Rhodesia the embodiment of the humane, liberal principles which once fashioned the West, and hence would make it a center for the rehabilitation of those principles.

First, the franchise. The world denounces you because you reject the concept of "one man one vote", though you did reluctantly agree to the slow application of the British formula of "unimpeded progress to majority rule" in order to reach the agreement that the Pearce Commission has torpedoed. Throw the denunciation back in the denouncers' teeth and teach the world a lesson in true liberalism. The great liberals of the 18th and 19th centuries knew the difference between liberty and democracy. They knew that majority rule could be an engine of peaceful political change, and therefore praiseworthy; but they also knew that it could be an engine of tyranny over minorities, which is exactly what it has become in the countries of "progressive" taxation of the West. Hence they viewed the extension of the franchise with misgiving, and did all they could to slow it down and establish entrenched safeguards against the unlimited use of majority power. They regarded the franchise as a trust, not a right, and they hoped against hope that if it passed to the masses the concept of the trust would not fade and die.

In Europe and North America it may be fanciful to contemplate a return to the limited franchise on which constitutional government was founded. The United States Supreme Court's redistricting of constituencies for State elections has pushed the principle of "one man one vote" to the nth degree. Our efforts must therefore no doubt be directed to teaching the majority itself to see the evil of the unbridled use of its power, a daunting but perhaps not utterly hopeless task.



You are not in our position. In Rhodesia majority rule would not mean the slow decay of liberty which it has meant in Europe and America but its speedy extinction, now typical of Africa. Declare, therefore, that in Rhodesia the answer to the cry for majority rule is No, No, Never.

Let me hasten to correct a misunderstanding which may immediately arise. There are Rhodesians who now say No, No, Never to majority rule. Shun them. Their purpose is to preserve white rule. Your purpose should be to preserve constitutional and responsible rule, as you yourself have often said. In fact such rule will for a long time be white rule, but that is not its justification. Your purpose should also be to reconcile the races, to protect life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness for all Rhodesians, white and black; and it is for this purpose that you should declare your adherence to the limited franchise.

But how to limit it? Here you have an opportunity to destroy one of the great fetishes of our time. In your negotiations with Britain you were propelled into accepting education as the paramount qualification for the franchise. It is not. Education, as measured or evidenced by schooling or certification, does not produce wisdom. It does not produce the tolerance, restraint, self-reliance, absence of self-pity, or simple common sense, which make responsible citizens. In Europe and North America the worst excesses of the behavior which, unchecked, would destroy the free and humane Society which our generation has inherited, are found on the university campus; while its defense finds ready support and widespread appreciation amongst, as an example, the hard-hats of little formal education.

Property, not education, is the right qualification for the franchise in a free humane Society; which is why it was chosen for that purpose by the men who guided the West before it began to decay. It is property which inspires stability. It is the man of property who can best be relied upon to use the franchise as a trustee because, contrary to one of the most typical superstitions of our time, the institution of property is the shield and protector alike of the man of property and of the man without property.

Does this mean that the Good Society is ruled by propertied boors or ignoramuses? No, of course not. Men of property generally give themselves an excellent education; and propertied elites, like for example the founders of the American Republic, tend towards education of an extremely high order. But their propertied roots hold them fast against the arrogance and utopianism which education often brings, and which can be seen in all the enemies of our Society, from the Jacobins of the French Revolution to our modern Maoists.

In Rhodesian circumstances there is a special reason why property is uniquely fitted to be the qualification for the franchise. The pursuit of private property is the only way in which black Rhodesians can elevate themselves without peril to white Rhodesians, and hence without peril to the civilization which white Rhodesians have brought to their country. To establish property, and property alone, as the qualification for the trusteeship of the franchise, is to put before the black Rhodesian an aim which he not only has a right to achieve but which he also can achieve without

despoiling his white fellow-citizen. All other aims call for the black Rhodesian to think of himself as one of a mass, and naturally of a black mass. In this mass feeling lies the seed of the tyranny and poverty in which almost all black Africa is gripped. Open the road to property for the black Rhodesian and you open the way to African liberty and security.

With government securely in the hands of men of property, you will have no need for discriminatory laws to protect your white minority. The temptation to enact such laws is great, but to succumb to it is fatal. The way of "baaskap" or apartheid is the way of disaster. You cannot build security upon it nor, obviously, liberty or the rule of law, which requires all men to be equal before the law. Nor, above all, can you hope with it to escape the just, as distinct from the unjust, condemnation of the world.

Repeal, therefore, as fast as you can your embryonic apartheid in the division of land between white and black Rhodesians. You cannot defend it on the principles upon which you mainly stand, and you do not need it. If the rights of private property are sacrosanct, then property owners, white or black, may discriminate as they please amongst those who may wish to buy or rent land from them. Those who wish to reserve land for any racial, religious or cultural group may freely do so, and those who do not need not. Where land is held in tribal possession, this leaves it open to the tribe to reserve it to itself. Thus your present land tenure system is not needed to protect tribal lands, nor should it be needed to protect white-held lands.

Ignore the sneers of those who will say that this will be apartheid with a vengeance. The right of private discrimination is a fundamental human right, envisaged as such by, for example, the American Constitution until the rise of the egregious Supreme Courts of recent years. Private discrimination does not offend against the principle of equality before the law. Neither does the lawful protection of private discrimination so offend. But public discrimination, embodied in law or otherwise, does offend against it. Public discrimination ultimately breaks in violence. Undesirable private discrimination fades away slowly and peacefully.

However, as long as private discrimination is widespread, it may be necessary to protect those who, freely and without coercing others, wish to practice nondiscrimination. Exceptional vigilance and the full protection of the law may be necessary against any form of overt or disguised coercion exercised by white or black racists to prevent social or business intercourse between the races. If you are firm on this, inter-racial contacts will slowly spread in private life as well as in public life, and entrenched race prejudices will dissolve away with a minimum of bitterness.

At the same time it is also possible that the effects of the dissolution of racial barriers will open the door to racially mixed groups dominated by white and black experts in subversion, bent on

sabotage of your non-racist regime by arousing race hatred under the banner of the right for the poor against the rich, the "have-nots" against the "haves." The great weakness of Western Society is its proneness to subversion by those who seek profit from the exploitation of envy, and by the exacerbation of racial hatred under the guise of anti-racism. You will have every right, indeed the duty, to take the strongest measures against such infiltrators and subverters.



Ignore also, the sneers of those who will say that property and public non-discrimination will be a charade to hide the perpetuation of white rule. They will not. If white Rhodesians remain in the lead for many years, so be it. It will harm neither the rights nor prospects of black Rhodesians. Their descendants will compare their lot with that of Africans north of the Zambezi, and they will live to praise you.

Within those broad areas in which both black and white citizens are permanent residents, you should not only ensure the Blacks genuine and unchallengeable access to the franchise by the acquisition of property, but also the right to acquire skills and the right of untrammelled access to the bargaining table in all employments. If you achieve these objectives, the standard of living of many black Rhodesians will rise so far above the levels achieved by Blacks in other African countries that those in the West who are now opposed to you, but whose minds are not wholly poisoned against you, will be forced to change their attitudes.

However, we must also reckon with the likelihood that success by you in these respects will induce new demands by insatiable "liberals" in the West (especially in organizations like the World Council of Churches) for military aggression against you. Hence the prospect of a peaceful solution of the problems of race relations may lead at first to more desperate attempts to frustrate your endeavors. There is a powerful vested interest among self-styled "liberals" in the continued poverty and social inferiority of black Africans; for their reputation for compassion, their influence and their power, rest upon the continuance of a situation in which it can be made to appear that black Africans need their championship. It was their fear of black Rhodesian progress under your 1961 Constitution which mainly inspired the maliciously false propaganda and lobbying which resulted in sanctions.

Your present independence gives you an opportunity to construct a better Constitution. If it is framed on the principles which I have suggested above and shall suggest below, you will not get approval from black leaders hungry for immediate power or from their white supporters and promoters in Britain, the United States, and elsewhere. You will be right to face them with firm hostility. At the same time you will be right to have every confidence in victory over them; for in time the facts will strip down their pretensions and display their enmity against you in its naked evil.

Having established your State on the twin pillars of property and public non-discrimination, provide it with a Constitution which will capture the hearts of men as the American Constitution once did. But make sure that your constitutional liberties are safeguarded in a way that the American founding fathers could not foresee to be necessary. Write your constitution so that the State's activity is absolutely limited to external defense and internal law and order. Restrain it with hoops of steel from the provision of social services or engagement in any economic enterprise. Immense evils have sprung from the belief that the relief of poverty and the instruction of the young are proper functions of the State. They are not. Tell the world proudly that in Rhodesia poverty and ignorance are relieved by private enterprise and charity. You will end with less poverty and sounder education than the countries that will scorn you. As long as your State attempts to provide education, you

will open your flank to your enemies. You cannot provide it satisfactorily from reasonable taxation for the 4½ million black Rhodesians (who pay hardly any tax), and you ought not to provide it, as you now do, for the 250,000 affluent white Rhodesians.

Immense evils have also sprung from the incursion of Governments into economic activity. Write your constitution to make it impossible. Go further and establish three other fundamental laws for your new Republic.

First, erect it as an inalienable right of your citizens to buy, sell or hold whatever they choose to use as money; and restrict their monetary freedom with no legal tender laws. In practice they are likely to choose gold if your State's currency is not gold or as good as gold. In this situation of individual monetary freedom, you will find that you will not be able to tax your citizens by inflating your currency, because they will flee from it into gold. Nor will you ever be able to impose the tyranny of exchange control upon them. Thus you will be forced to make your currency the world's strongest, and your citizens, and ultimately the world, will bless you.

Secondly, when sanctions come to an end you will be put under pressure to protect the industries which have sprung up since U.D.I. Resist it. Make it a fundamental constitutional rule that, apart from the needs of public order, no infringement may be made of the freedom to move goods across your frontiers. If you need a revenue tariff, certainly impose it. But let it be a revenue tariff, not a protective tariff. Thus you will make the Rhodesian economy the freest in the world, and your prosperity the wonder of Africa.

Thirdly, restrain the power of your trade unions, for if you do not they will restrain your power to

build a model Rhodesia. This will be your hardest test, for it is clear that some of your most fervent present supporters are white trade unionists. Yet you must pass the test. Whether labor monopoly is in all cases a fundamental enemy of the free economy may be debatable, but in Rhodesian circumstances it may be the most baleful influence that you will have to meet. You must know, though few in the Western world do, that the apartheid, for which South Africa is condemned, originated with the trade unions. They, not Governments, employers, or other influences, first demanded that jobs and occupations should be racially classified. Thus were the best jobs reserved for the Whites, and the advancement of the other races blocked. In Rhodesian circumstances trade unionism is inevitably preponderantly white. Unless restrained it will block the advancement of black Rhodesians and prevent them from elevating themselves and the Rhodesian economy, not to mention becoming property owners. Do not heed the contention that black freedom to compete for white jobs will undermine the white standard of living. This is the old mistake of the Luddites and of protectionism. The truth is the reverse. As the Blacks move up the ladder they will displace Whites but push them higher. They will act in the same way as new machinery or technology, which forces a worker out of one job but provides opportunity for a better one, or destroys one job but creates two in its place. Teach your white workers not only this truth. Teach them also that if they seek to hold their black fellow-citizens down, the result will be an explosion which will blow them sky high. And they will deserve it.

Do these things, Mr. Smith, and you will save Rhodesia by your exertions and the free world by your example.

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## PRIME MINISTER SMITH ANSWERS

*Mr. Ian Smith, Prime Minister of Rhodesia, sent Imprimis the following answer to Dr. Shenfield's open letter:*

The contents of the open letter are certainly thought-provoking, but the suggestions made by Dr. Shenfield would appear to be rather more theoretical than practical. In extenuation of this, it further appears that the writer has only a rather broad knowledge of Southern Africa, and Rhodesia today, in particular. Furthermore, it seems that the Doctor's whole thesis is based probably more on his knowledge of the U.S. Negro, and his position vis-a-vis his white counterpart in America, rather than that of the European and the Bantu in Southern Africa.

However in more specific terms, a few of the following matters alluded to in the letter are open to criticisms.

- (1) The Franchise. It has never been the policy of the Government that majority rule could be obtained on the basis of an extended

franchise, whereby the concept of "one man one vote" could be obtained.

In Rhodesia the franchise is deemed a privilege not a right, and is limited to those persons, irrespective of colour, who are able to comply with its requirements. In effect, such requirements cover the spectrum of education, property, financial stability, citizenship and legality.

This has produced a fair modicum of responsible citizens of all races who are capable of exercising their voting powers with tolerance, restraint, self-reliance and simple common sense.

- (2) Embryonic apartheid. The division of land between black and white in Rhodesia goes as far back as 1923, when, with the British Government's backing and approval, the land was divided between the two races under the Land Apportionment Act. This was necessary for a very good reason. The majority of Africans live under Native Law and Custom in their tribal areas, and in

order to protect them from being exploited by the more sophisticated European and Asian races, it was necessary to legislate, so that they could progress at a pace more in tune with their ability, without being swamped by competition.

The Land Apportionment Act has now been repealed by the Land Tenure Act, which regulates the ownership, leasing and occupation of all land in all areas, and preserves the special status of the Tribal Trust Land within the African area.

To call such legislation "embryonic [immature] apartheid" only proves that Mr. Shenfield neither understands the necessity for such legislation, nor indeed the proper meaning of the word apartheid. The private right to discriminate is inherent in Rhodesia as it is elsewhere, but it is not, as it appears from the letter referred to, based on colour. All races, and indeed classes, no matter what their colour, have certain basic factors which make them wish to discriminate from each other. Such as

- (a) Standards
- (b) Values
- (c) Cultures
- (d) Religion
- (e) Morals.

So you get various nations, races, tribes, discriminating against each other, as history and ordinary contact in every day life shows.

Discrimination whether private or public, is bound up with these factors, and until they are eliminated into one common factor relative to all, you are unlikely to find that property in itself is the open sesame to the problem.

The process of advancement for backward races is a long, slow, but careful process, coupled with infinite patience, and a genuine desire to help one's less fortunate fellow man.

The opposite result is only too plainly to be seen in the unhappy results in giving independence to states quite unprepared and incapable of running a country, with all the modern technology and complexities involved, and where inter-racial contacts and race prejudices have certainly not been dissolved away, even amongst their own kind. For example the Watutsi and the Bahutu in Barundi or the Untouchables in India.

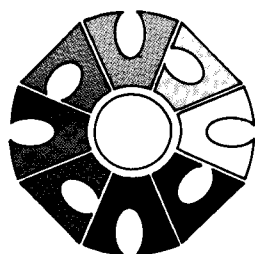
(3) Trade Unions and apartheid. Dr. Shenfield has obviously mixed up "baaskap" and "apartheid." The former meaning the white race in charge or boss, and apartheid meaning separate development.

Baaskap is not practised here.

In Rhodesia, by mutual consent of the great majority of both black and white, separate development in what might be described as the private sphere of life, is practised in schooling, health facilities, residential locations, etc., but in the work-a-day sphere such as factories, shops, mines, farms, building, public transport and so on, the races all work together, and receive the same emoluments grade for grade.

The statement that apartheid originated from the trade unions, is proof that Dr. Shenfield again does not understand the meaning of the word and is mixing it up with baas kop. Apartheid, or separate development, truthfully can be said to have started when Van Riebeck first settled in the Cape, but in fact, is practised in some form or another all over the world.

I trust that a consideration of the above facts will show that Rhodesia is making every endeavour to demonstrate to the world her aim to make this country free and self-responsible.



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In a recent letter to the members of the American Conservative Union, Mr. M. Stanton Evans, chairman of the ACU, urged the membership to subscribe to IMPRIMIS. Mr. Evans, who is editor of the *Indianapolis News* and a renowned author, went on to say:

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Mr. Evans was a valued participant in the first seminar of the Center for Constructive Alternatives, *Recycling the City: Alternatives to Decay*.