

An address delivered to the
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A Role to be Played in Africa

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I COUNT it a great privilege to address this gathering at a time when Rhodesia is undergoing a great testing. You know how much we in South Africa feel for you, and how heartily we wish you a happy outcome from your trials. I also believe that the time will come when you will look back on these difficult days as the forging of a nation, for it is my observation that all Rhodesians, regardless of political views, have today a far stronger sense of nationhood than two years ago. And I doubt whether any great nation has been forged in other fires than the fires of tribulation. So, to our sympathy for your troubles we add our great faith in your future.

When I come to Rhodesia I am conscious that this country was founded by a man who had a vision that extended from the Cape to Cairo. He believed sincerely in a civilising mission. And while his vision in its political form is and to march in a manner worthy of incapable of fulfilment today, his sense of the unity of Africa is more relevant than ever. And I do not think that any of us in Southern Africa should think in smaller vision—not if we want to be relevant to the march of history the great men who trod this land before us.

It has often been said that Africa is the continent God kept in reserve. The question is, "In reserve for what?" It is important to think about this, because history will judge us White people of Southern Africa not by whether we succeeded in maintaining an outpost of White civilisation on this continent—though I am frank to say I do not believe we can fulfil our mission in Africa without maintaining that civilisation. History, I believe, will judge us by whether we were true to the vision of men like Rhodes, and whether we had the largeness of heart, the largeness of mind and the large-

ness of will to help this wonderful continent make a unique contribution to mankind.

My life, like the lives of many of us, is wrapped up with the whole African continent. Four of my uncles gave the best years of their lives in Nyasaland—now Malawi—until they were gripped by blackwater fever. My wife's brother was killed in the war in Ethiopia and posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross. He lies in an unknown grave.

My wife's father lies in Nyeri cemetery in Kenya next to Lord Baden Powell. He was killed by the Mau Mau. A relative of my wife's, Derek Bryce-son, sits in the Cabinet of Tanzania. I have worked in 27 African countries. I was in the Congo through its worst times. I was arrested and robbed. I had three men on my back and a knife at my throat.

But when I have been abroad and I come back to Africa, whenever the plane first lands on this continent I feel I have come home. I feel not only South Africa is my home. In a larger sense I feel that Africa is my home.

Africa is seeing tremendous changes and what the White man has done in developing Africa is a tremendous feat. Take your city, Bulawayo—all this has grown in less than 80 years. Take the spectacular rise in education—the spectacular fall in infant mortality. Take the mines of Johannesburg and Zambia and Katanga. Take the Kariba Dam, the largest man-made lake in the world. These are stupendous achievements—not to mention heart transplants and Dr. Heynse's contribution to easier childbirth.

But you take Africa as a whole. The development has hardly scratched the surface. I was in the Congo at independence. There was not yet one Congolese doctor. I don't need to go into

long details. But on one hand you have in Africa a crying need for every conceivable skill—education, medicine, agriculture, veterinary science, industry and finance. And here in the South you have a vast reservoir of those skills. Somewhere that need and those skills have got to be linked. And unless we do it others are going to do it.

Now at the moment it is hard for South Africans and harder for Rhodesians to move about Africa. But I believe this is going to change. President Senghor of Senegal just this week urged an African Scientific Congress in Dakar to treat scientists as scientists and not as politicians and to welcome all who had a contribution to make. Dr. Robert Gardiner, an African from Ghana who is head of the economic side of the OAU, has urged the African countries to develop economic links with the South in spite of the political differences. It is not a popular line for an African leader to take and I honour him for it.

I believe we White people have a pioneering role to play in the technical field that is going to be absolutely fascinating. But I do not think that this is our biggest job. You look at the turmoils and bloodshed of Africa today—and it is not due to lack of development aid.

I have just been in Swaziland—a country that will be independent before 1968 is out. A very reasonable African, Dr. William Nkomo of Pretoria, was addressing a conference. He was tackling head-on the corruption and drunkenness that are going to sabotage the country's independence if they are not answered. He spoke of Swaziland's need for material help. But then he said, "But no nation has ever decayed for lack of material things. Nations have decayed because they have chosen a decadent way of life."

WITH IMAGINATION

If we look at Africa honestly, that is where the collapse has come—corruption, tribalism, drunkenness, dishonesty. And these human problems are far harder to grapple with than technical problems. But unless we tackle them as imaginatively as we tackle a Kariba Dam project, our material help will not save Africa.

Take Nigeria, the country on which so many hopes rested. Today it is in a bitter and bloody civil war. Tens of thousands have been killed, over a million refugees have fled with nothing but their clothes. They had to get back to their tribal areas or be slaughtered. But remember this, the coups and counter-coups began when the poor became poorer and the rich became richer because they got power and abused it. Corruption became so rife that revolt became inevitable. Naturally you ask what has this to do with the White man. I will tell you. When contracts were awarded to overseas firms it became standard practice to add five or ten per cent. as a commission for the minister or the official

awarding the contract. The firms, largely from Europe, said, "It is not the way we would choose, but if that is the way the Africans want it, that is their business." So it continued. The ministers built more houses, rode longer cars and even bought golden beds until violence overtook them. But suppose the European firms doing business had regarded the fight for standards of integrity as their battle, not just for the sake of a clear conscience, but as the essential battle for the stability of the country, they would have made a far greater contribution than they did, and things could perhaps have been different.

Just before the independence of the Congo we were staying at a large hotel in Luluabourg. The Belgians had done a big development job. The standard of life of the Congolese had risen in a remarkable way. But the way they dressed, their insensitivity to the feelings of those they ordered around was so flagrant that we asked, "Why do you do this? Do you want to be raped when independence comes?" They laughed. But you know the horror they endured.

EXAMPLE

My wife is from Kenya. One day shortly before his death, she and her father visited a Mau Mau detention camp. They met men whom they recognised, who had been educated in a mission school, and asked them, "Why have you who were good Christians gone over to the bestiality of Mau Mau?" These men gave an answer my wife has never forgotten. They said, "We were taught that it was wrong to get drunk on beer. But we saw White men getting drunk on whisky. We were told to have only one wife, but we saw White men out with other men's women on Saturday night and singing hymns in church on Sunday morning. We were taught to clothe our nakedness. But the way White women dressed on the streets and in the bars and on the beaches made us say, 'Why should we do what the White man talks about but does not live?'" So they got bitter and cynical and turned to Mau Mau.

Now, please don't misunderstand me. I am not trying to say the Whites in Africa are worse than others—I think we stand up very well by comparison.

But when you have a small White minority watched by a vast Black continent—which we are; when you have men of alien identity trying to discredit us and take over—which we do; and when you have a chance to affect the history of a key continent in the world—which we do, then the demand for great and heroic living are far greater than on those who do not live in the face of such staggering opportunities. For this is sure that unless we can fill this character gap in Africa, our financial and technical help will not save her from disaster.

And what about the African, what is his distinctive role in the world? When we measure him by the things by which western civilisation sets store, the African falls very short. But if

God has kept him in reserve, is it for a purpose? Is he just going to pick up the worst habits of the White man because it is easier to assimilate the bad things than the good in another culture? Or has he a contribution to make at this juncture in the world. I think a lot about this, because you cannot in truth say that the African has yet made his real contribution. So I am on speculative ground. But I will mention a few things I see.

OVER-SOPHISTICATED

It seems to me that the Western world is becoming an over-sophisticated society. Someone has claimed that we have amassed as much knowledge in the past ten years as in the previous ten thousand. But have our hearts grown with our heads, or are we in danger of becoming a civilisation of swollen heads and shrunken hearts? Africa is a continent of the heart. If you speak the language of the heart you will be understood in Africa. It is a continent of heartpower, humour, spontaneity, simplicity, family loyalty. An African can go to any relative anywhere and expect to be cared for as one of the family. In this quality of the heart I think there is something our over-sophisticated western society needs to re-capture.

There is another thing allied to this: it is their love of life. They take life as something to enjoy, to savour. Take a very extreme case. An African said to me, "White man very stupid. Work very hard sixty years. Sit under tree five years. Me—I sit under tree all my life." I suppose we have all suffered under this approach and I am not here to advocate laziness, because Africa is going to learn to work, and work hard. But this is the point. That man measures his life by how much he enjoys it and not by the amount of wealth he amasses. They cannot understand why we make such a rat race of life. I asked one African in South Africa what their general impression was of us White men. He said, "It seems to us that they are always cross and always in a hurry."

But don't we have to stop in our tracks and ask why, in an age when man's material needs are met more nearly than at any other time in history, we have unparalleled mental disease, suicide, divorce and delinquency? Have we got to recapture the simple values of living?

But the greatest thing I believe is in the realm of faith. Western civilisation is less and less a civilisation of faith in God. It is a faith in man and man's brain. And so wealth is not bringing satisfaction.

Leopold Senghor, the President of Senegal, has said that the African may be a Christian, a Muslim or an animist, but he is never an atheist. And I have found this to be true in 27 countries of Africa in which I have worked. Anywhere in Africa I find that when you face a problem you can say, "Let us be quiet and ask God." It is not a strange statement as it would be in Europe. You don't have

to explain it. It is a simple, sane approach. And here I believe may yet be the greatest contribution of Africa—to bring back to mankind the knowledge of how thin is the veil between the seen and the unseen world.

The last thing I want to touch on is Africa's place in the ideological struggle between the Communist and non-Communist world. China, as you know, has brought off a number of nuclear explosions, the last on Christmas Eve. They will soon be in a position to deliver them on chosen targets. Russia, of course, has been in this situation for a long time. But there is a fundamental difference. Russia does not want to lose tens of millions of people. China, on the other hand, says openly that she is ready to lose 300 million people. It would alleviate one of her problems, and human life does not count in the same way there. What this means is that it is more urgent than ever to seek to solve the ideological deadlock, without being blackmailed into submission and betraying the things we hold most dear.

Now I raise this for your thought. Communism seeks to come from Asia into Africa. Is it conceivable that the answer to Communism may come from Africa to Asia? Where America cannot go, where Europe cannot go, is it conceivable that Africa may go with an answer?

DILEMMA

I have seen something to support this view. One country, not Asian, but a Communist country—Yugoslavia. There are African students there who come to the Moral Re-Armament training conference in Europe and go back and carry on a widespread programme. They use a film called FREEDOM, made and played by Africans. It presents the moral and spiritual basis for freedom in the world. Now the Communists are in a dilemma with this film. They, of course, have long pretended to wave the flag for Africa's freedom. Of course what they meant was Europe to get out, we get in. But ostensibly they have been the champions of African freedom. So it is very hard now for them to stop the Africans from showing a film about the freedom they pretended to support, without putting themselves in a reactionary position. In fact, the matter went to the chief of police of Zagreb. He summoned the Africans and said, "I hear you are showing an imperialist film, and it has got to stop." They said, "We take a dim view of that remark. We have fought for our freedom, we have won our freedom and we have made a film about our freedom. We want to see it. If there is anything imperialistic in it you must point it out. But we think that anyone who is not in favour of the freedom portrayed in this film is no friend of Africa's." That, of course, put him in a very difficult position. So he saw the film and told them to go ahead.

So you have the remarkable situation of Africans in a Communist country advancing the ideology of freedom

under God with the blessing of the Chief of Police.

This is a small thing. But in my mind it opens all sorts of vistas for the future, in the great issues of life and death, freedom and slavery, that face the whole human race today.

Finally, a word about the young people of Africa. I read last Sunday a summary in the Press of the views of youth here in Rhodesia on various current matters. I am not here to say tut tut or something, because I think a similar questionnaire would

get a similar reply in most countries of the world. But I do think it shows one thing—the lack of a great purpose. It is the same in South Africa. The head of national security said to us: "I have dealt with the Rivonia plot and other attempts to undermine the country, but I still say that the biggest threat to the security of our country is the lack of a great purpose, especially in our youth."

In response to this challenge there is growing up a movement in South African youth, springing from Moral

Re-Armament, known as Springbok Stampede.

They want to rouse their generation through their musical shows to stand for decency, discipline, patriotism, purity, faith, and above all, a determination to help the whole African continent find the right way. And if anyone wants to do an imaginative thing for the youth of Rhodesia, I would say, get this Springbok Stampede here, let them meet young Rhodesia and they will make common cause for the good of Africa.