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## LAND & LIBERTY

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### AFRICAN FEDERATION CONDEMNED

The project of a Central African Federation to embody "self-governing" Southern Rhodesia and the Protectorates of Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia is being much discussed. Sir Godfrey Huggins, the Prime Minister of Southern Rhodesia, has been visiting England to press on the matter, urging his views in many speeches. He has had all the publicity and patronage but the Government has refused to receive the African delegates from the two Protectorates and hear what they have to say. Everything points to the Cabinet enforcing a project which also the Attlee Labour Government favoured, notwithstanding the determined stand the Africans have taken against it. No attempt has been made to deny this opposition; it is met only by pretentious assurances that African interests will be safeguarded.

The present negotiations revive the Victoria Falls Conference which broke off in September, 1951. The tentative scheme of the then Labour Government (Cmd. 8233) provided that a Minister for African Interests could, after local permission and if he saw fit, make appeal to the Colonial Secretary on matters affecting the Africans. That safeguard is anything but real. The African representatives at the various conferences have so far firmly refused to jeopardise what freedom their countrymen enjoy—a freedom derived entirely from the power of British public opinion. In the projected legislative body they would form a small minority and would be virtually powerless.

In the present controversy, the Africans are not heard. All the publicity is for the Rhodesian mining, farming and trade union interests. Those groups are no different from others who seek to conserve privileges which they, no doubt honestly, consider to be essential in African economy. The simpler operations on mining land and farming land are to be performed by cheap African labour disciplined by Pass Regulations; and a colour bar will see to it that the higher paid jobs are reserved to European trade unionists.

Speaking on July 12, 1934, Sir Godfrey Huggins interpreted the "partnership" in these words: "It is time for people in England to realise that the white man in Africa is not prepared to accept the African as an equal, socially or politically."

It is this view that is in danger of dictating the fate of Central Africa by the federation for which Rhodesian interests have been agitating for over twenty years. And it is significant that the abolition

of customs barriers forms no part of the argument. The Labour Government's scheme left open the maintenance of customs duties between the territories and proposed a centralised tariff policy against the outside world. It was not concealed that this would entail denunciation of the Congo Basin Treaties at present applying to Nyasaland and part of Northern Rhodesia. Nyasaland enjoys a material progress which alarms Rhodesian interests by checking their labour supply and that is what makes federation, as they would devise it, so urgent to them.

The total populations of the three countries do not differ much, the two Rhodesias each with two, and Nyasaland with two and a half millions. The disparity in density, however, and in mineral resources is striking. Southern Rhodesia, sparsely populated in relation to area, has rich mineral resources. Northern Rhodesia, with fewer people to the square mile, is even richer in minerals. Nyasaland, one of the most densely populated countries in Africa, maintains itself by agriculture only, apart from the earnings brought home by labourers who work periodically on the Rhodesian mines and farms. Nyasaland's material prosperity has been advancing at a higher rate than that of its neighbours, and the effect has been to keep the Nyasalanders on their own holdings.

The land and taxation policies of the Rhodesias developed under the Chartered Company which inaugurated their institutions. By declaring specific areas native reserves, the Company was able to reserve the balance for sale to Europeans. Then, by the levy of a high enough hut or poll tax, natives were forced to work for European mining or farming undertakings, the revenue so obtained enabling the Government to relieve the landed and the mining interests from taxation they would otherwise bear. This was called "opening up the country." The aggregation of large numbers of detribalised Africans in camps opened the way for the discipline of Pass Regulations by which the employer was given legal powers over the labourer. This again made it easier to institute a colour bar, as demanded by the white trade unions. It is noteworthy that the Labour Party of Northern Rhodesia, which dominates the Legislative Assembly, ardently supports federation. Nyasaland, which has no colour bar and virtually no Pass Regulations, is a neighbour whose example is too dangerous to tolerate.

By historical accident and perhaps because of the absence of minerals, Nyasaland escaped the Chartered Company phase. In 1891, when the Protectorate was proclaimed, Europeans who could prove claims to land were registered as owners. But since then the Government has alienated land only sparingly and for a long time protected native rights without interference. Thus only a low Hut Tax was necessary. Under these favourable conditions population increased and industries such as the cultivation of tobacco, cotton and tea were established. Missionary influence, stronger here than in the Rhodesias, helped to preserve personal freedom and enabled Africans to acquire every kind of technical skill. No native reserves on the Rhodesian pattern have been proclaimed, and on occasion the Government has deliberately promoted peasant agriculture with the object of checking the efflux of labourers. These measures

and conditions have come accidentally rather than from deliberate policy. In recent years official interference has been rife and there seems even less understanding than before of a sound land and taxation policy. Under federation the granting of vast land concessions to some (probably) State-cum-private monopoly, together with appropriate marketing regulations and a sharp increase in taxation, would soon "prove" peasant agriculture to be unprofitable. The peasants turned adrift would eagerly seek work on the Rhodesian mines and their competition for such favour would keep wages low. The insidious processes leading to that desired objective would pass unnoticed.

The tenacity of the African delegates has been admirable, but their case would be stronger if it was presented as part of a positive movement for reform. To "give the land to the Africans" is no solution of the land question, neither can it solve the taxation problem. It might mean private rent for African landowners, heavier taxation for all, and even more labourers driven by the consequences into submission to Pass Regulations and racial discrimination. Moreover, it is as wrong to exclude a European from land as to exclude an African. Land should be available to all on equal terms, none enjoying any special privilege. The only way these requirements can be met is to recognise that the value of any land (apart from any buildings or improvements thereon) arises by the presence and activities of the community. It

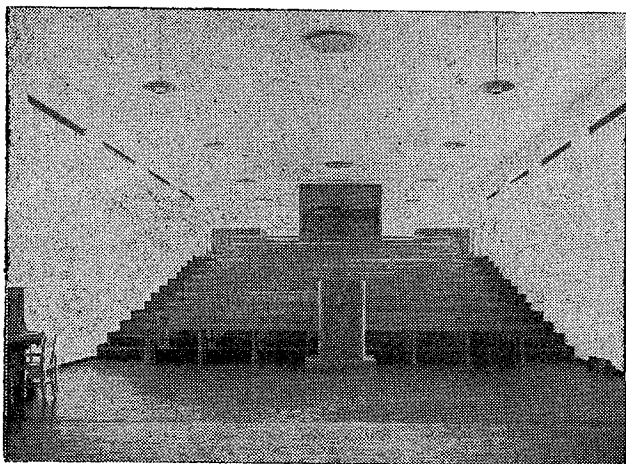
therefore belongs to the community. This joint property and equal right is ensured by every landholder paying to the community the rent of his holding, namely the annual value attaching to the land alone, apart from the value of any improvements thereon. Taxation would take an entirely different form from what it takes to-day. It would be assessed upon the value of land, as described, and all buildings and developments resulting from labour or capital expended would be tax-free. On this principle it would profit no one, either European or African, to hold valuable land without putting it to good use. It would profit no one to monopolise land against his fellow man, nor could he engage anyone to work for or with him, except upon such terms as that other, as free as himself, could now command. No European could exploit an African any more than an African could exploit a European. The situation would be the same for each, the vast and incalculable resources of nature thrown open and public revenue so derived that there would be, and could be, no poll or hut tax used as an instrument of coercion nor any taxation robbing labour and capital of their just return.

Such a society of free people living in harmony, co-operating to mutual advantage, enjoying to the full the blessings of the freedom to produce and the freedom of trade, could so easily be established—and anywhere.

F. D. P.

## INTERNATIONAL UNION NOTES AND NEWS

**Forthcoming Eighth International Conference convened jointly by the International Union for Land Value Taxation and Free Trade and the Danish Henry George Union**



THE LECTURE HALL AT THE FOLK HIGH SCHOOL

### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

*I believe that the 8th International Conference to promote Land Value Taxation and Free Trade to be held at Odense, Denmark, July 28 to August 4, 1952, will be the most vital and fruitful Conference in the history of the International Union.*

*There will be reports of important progress in many nations, and full opportunity to discuss with outstanding leaders ways and means to establish in every community, state or nation, sound legislation to promote the general welfare.*

*The joint organizing Committees in Copenhagen and London are also planning an attractive social program.*

*Looking forward to seeing and welcoming you at Odense on July 28, I am*

*Sincerely yours,*

San Francisco,  
California.

J. RUPERT MASON,  
*President.*

The Conference is being held at the Folk High School (residential college) situate near the city of Odense in the Island of Funen and belonging to the Association of the Smallholders, peasant proprietors, in that Island. Membership is open to all accredited members of the International Union who in addition contribute the special Conference Fee of £1 or \$3. An earnest invitation is again extended to all our supporters to join the International Union (minimum annual subscription 5s. Od. or \$1) and to *join the Conference*, an invitation that embraces also those who cannot be present. The latter, by their association will give the participants, in their deliberations and decisions, invaluable encouragement besides enabling the Convenors to present such list of adherents as will enhance the influence of the Conference and lend strength also to the movement. All enrolled members will receive the papers and reports presented at or issued by the Conference, whether in English or in