

UDI: The International Politics of the Rhodesian Rebellion

by Robert C. Good

(Princeton University Press; 368 pp.; \$12.50)

Randall G. Stokes

Rhodesia's currently faltering movements toward political change make especially pertinent Robert Good's analysis of the international politics surrounding Rhodesia's unilateral declaration of independence (UDI). Good, then U.S. Ambassador to Zambia, devotes most of his attention to the labyrinthine negotiations between the rebel regime and Great Britain. The period covered is from the talks that preceded UDI in 1965 to the abortive "Tory Settlement" of 1971. Throughout Good conveys a balanced and enlightening overview of the contradictory pressures that constrained both Ian Smith and Harold Wilson.

In the course of his book Good casts a far broader light on the realities of post-colonial international politics. He sharply outlines the dilemma of erstwhile colonial powers caught between moral responsibilities to the peoples they have subjugated and their own domestic pressures. Good's sadly unsurprising conclusion is that self-interest has the final voice.

A major question asked and exhaustively answered in the book is why Great Britain proved to be so ineffectual in asserting its authority over the handful of white rebels in Rhodesia. Altogether, there were only about 200,000 whites in Rhodesia, which, as Good points out, is approximately the size of the English city of Portsmouth. Against this tiny enclave in the hinterlands of Africa was set a nation with 400 times the military budget, which, a short twenty years previously, had ruled one-quarter of the earth's population. The conclusion to be drawn from Good's account is that Great Britain, in the person of Harold Wilson, simply found it too expensive in economic and political terms to fulfill its responsibilities to the black masses of Rhodesia.

The full story is, of course, considerably more complex and begins with Wilson's pivotal decision not to use force to assert British authority but to rely on economic pressures to bring the

Smith regime around. The decision to forgo military intervention, declared even before UDI, was rooted in a tangle of economic and political considerations. A major background element was the great sympathy Rhodesia enjoyed from the British public, the so-called "kith and kin" factor. The recency of white immigration to Rhodesia and the heavy postwar outflow from Britain meant that most Englishmen knew, at least indirectly, someone in Rhodesia. Also, Rhodesia's valiant aid in two world wars could not be dismissed lightly; Smith himself was a decorated RAF officer and permanently disfigured from a combat wound. Britain's military links to Rhodesia weighed especially heavy with Wilson's military advisors, many of whom had engaged in joint exercises with Rhodesian forces over the past twenty years.

It is also highly plausible, as several leaders in the Third World have charged, that an element of racism was present in the attitudes of both British leaders and public. In relatively recent times Great Britain had forcefully asserted her colonial rights in India, Malaya, Borneo, British Guinea, British Honduras, the Gold Coast, Nigeria, Nyasaland, Kenya, and Aden. It seems more than a coincidence that all of these conflicts were with darker-skinned peoples. In light of his extremely small parliamentary majority Wilson evidently decided he could not risk the political consequences of military intervention. In fairness to Wilson it must be noted that other factors were also against military action. In contrast to earlier colonial disputes Britain had no standing army in Rhodesia, which greatly increased the logistical difficulties as well as the expense of a military venture. Also in contrast to other situations, Britain had never directly administered Rhodesia, and so had less precedent for intervention.

Having ruled out military means, Wilson set himself the impossible task

of securing the rights of Rhodesian blacks by the use of economic sanctions and subsequent negotiations with the rebel regime. The task was impossible for two reasons, either of which would have been sufficient. First, there was virtually nothing to negotiate. The minimal demand of the Smith government, that whites remain indefinitely in control, was incompatible with Great Britain's, that guarantees be made to insure "early" progress toward majority rule. Given Rhodesian intransigence, the only possible outcome of negotiations was exactly what eventually happened: a slow erosion of British guarantees to Rhodesian blacks, followed by an eventual deadlock when Britain reached the point beyond which no semblance of morality could be salvaged. It is to Wilson's discredit that in the final discussions he insisted upon only the vaguest symbolic gestures toward black political rights. One of the remaining puzzles is why Smith rejected Wilson's final offer, in that it would have insured white domination at least for several decades.

The task assumed by Wilson was also impossible in that he and his advisors grossly overestimated the effect of economic sanctions, at least in the form they were used against Rhodesia. British strategy was to cut off Rhodesian exports progressively, thus denying it the means to purchase vital foreign goods while simultaneously shutting off oil imports. On paper the plan seemed flawless; Britain itself could directly eliminate 40 per cent of Rhodesia's export earnings, and Wilson felt confident that he could rely on world opinion to increase further Rhodesia's economic isolation. Once the economic pinch was felt, Wilson counted on the emergence of a more moderate group of white leaders who would displace Smith's Rhodesian Front and promptly present themselves for the benign dispositions of the British lion.

Because he wanted to apply no more than the "needed" pressure, and thus preserve most of the Rhodesian economy, Wilson elected to impose sanctions gradually rather than to take massive measures at the outset. The result, of course, was to allow Smith time to readjust the Rhodesian economy to compensate for new sanctions as they were imposed. It is a testament to Smith's success that the Rhodesian economy actually expanded during sev-

eral of the years between 1965 and 1971.

The major reason for the failure of British policy, however, was its unwillingness to take the necessary steps to halt the flow of oil into Rhodesia from South Africa. Within a year of UDI sufficient gasoline was arriving from South Africa to fill normal demand completely. Although South African leaders did not approve Smith's declaration, neither could they afford to let Rhodesia fall to black rule. South Africa especially did not want Rhodesia to serve as a testimonial to the capacity of economic sanctions to modify domestic racial policies. With their government's tacit approval, South African businessmen have continued to meet Rhodesia's petroleum needs, despite frequent objections from Downing Street.

Great Britain's refusal to exert sufficient pressure upon South Africa to halt the oil leak can, according to Good, be traced in large part to the great economic stake it had in South Africa. At the time of UDI direct British investments in the Republic were in excess of \$3 billion. More important, perhaps, South Africa was a source of vitally needed foreign exchange. As of 1965, British exports to South Africa were over \$730 million. From this trade Britain enjoyed a favorable trade balance of approximately \$220 million, a key consideration in view of Britain's constant balance-of-trade difficulties. In any case, so long as South Africa was willing to supply oil to Rhodesia and to serve as a conduit for its foreign trade, sanctions were bound to fail.

Good argues convincingly that Wilson's failure to moderate Rhodesian racism has had, and will have, consequences far beyond Great Britain and Rhodesia. For instance, it seriously weakened the multiracial Commonwealth. Wilson's all-too-evident lack of will in the Rhodesian affair led many member nations seriously to question Britain's commitment to nonracialism. This feeling, coupled with Wilson's inconsistency and lack of candor during Commonwealth debates on the issue, created deep and lasting mistrusts, particularly on the part of Zambia.

A second major fallout of UDI was to lead the United Nations into a series of unprecedented acts that further undermined its already shaky credibility. From the beginning of the UDI crisis

Wilson attempted to use the U.N. as an adjunct to British policy while, at the same time, carefully limiting the extent of U.N. involvement. Because he wanted to forestall independent action by the Afro-Asian bloc, Wilson himself raised the Rhodesian question immediately after UDI. Despite efforts by the Afro-Asian members to evoke for the first time Chapter VII, which provides for actions binding on all member states when "international peace" is threatened, Wilson succeeded in limiting U.N. action to a mild resolution supporting selective and voluntary sanctions against Rhodesia. Once British

policy had visibly begun to fail, however, Britain's foreign minister himself invoked Chapter VII, and successfully called for *mandatory* selective sanctions. In Good's opinion this move too was doomed to failure from its inception. The "Resolution of December 16th" proved impotent for two reasons, both stemming from Britain's continuing efforts to avoid confrontation with South Africa: No penalties were provided for violations of the mandatory sanctions and, second, *oil* was not included among the mandatory restrictions.

A blindspot in Good's otherwise ex-



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cellent analysis is that insufficient responsibility for the failure of sanctions is assigned to nations other than Great Britain. In Good's view Wilson is clearly the villain of the whole affair; thus he tends to overlook a virtual conspiracy of the industrialized nations to continue business as usual. The decision of the U.S., for example, to continue chrome purchases from Rhodesia is barely mentioned. Of far more pragmatic significance, most developed nations continued to purchase goods nominally from South Africa that they must have known originated in Rhodesia. Japan, for one, complied with the letter of the U.N. resolution and reduced its imports from Rhodesia by 95 per cent in the first quarter following the resolution. During the same quarter it increased its imports from South Africa by the very same amount. Both the businessmen directly concerned and the Japanese Government certainly knew the source of their

increased purchases in South Africa and, like most of the developed nations, chose to ignore the spirit of the U.N. resolution.

Despite the very limited effect of world economic pressures against Rhodesia, Good closes with an appeal for the indefinite continuation of sanctions. He recognizes that they are not likely to induce Rhodesian whites to change their position radically. In common with many African leaders, Good maintains that it must ultimately be the "...African people themselves who fuel the engines of change in Rhodesia, as elsewhere in Southern Africa," but that international economic pressures against Rhodesia are of crucial symbolic significance in speeding this process. In recent months and weeks the crisis in Rhodesia has intensified. Good's book is an invaluable aid to understanding some of the ingredients in that crisis.

ing effort to explain *the* correct position on such issues as noncombatant immunity and the probability of proportionate good resulting from modern war on the basis of *the* just war teaching of the Church.

At the time of these Vatican II debates some of us thought it was not possible to reach such clear-cut conclusions, because we did not think that the just war tradition was all cut of the same cloth. We saw different sources within the tradition and different emphases, depending on the subject and the historical context in which various moral prescriptions were proposed. Now we have Johnson's detailed treatment of these very points. Since, not surprisingly, the moral and practical problems addressed by Vatican II remain to challenge us, it is well that we have Johnson's book to help us in our continuing efforts to study the question of war.

Two fundamental aims are set forth in this book. First, Johnson undertakes "to explore the nature of the interaction between religion and secular society, not just in the dissolution of just war doctrine but also in its formation...." Second, the book is written in order "to investigate just war doctrine as an ideological pattern of thought, expressive of a greater ideology." Johnson rightly claims that in addressing these aims he is making an original contribution to just war literature.

With respect to the first, Johnson points out that much of just war literature is excessively theoretical. It is markedly lacking in reference to the effects of the doctrine on contemporary society as well as in recognition of the impact of secular thought and behavior patterns on the doctrine. In the latter regard Johnson is particularly concerned with the state of warfare in the centuries wherein the doctrine developed and claims to have consulted a substantially more detailed literature on that subject than have previous writers, a claim he appears to have substantiated.

Johnson's second purpose, reflected in the book's title, is to clarify the role of ideology in just war doctrine. He takes Max Weber's meaning of ideology as his starting point, using the term in a neutral sense "to refer to belief structures that are discretely based and different from one another," without value judgment as to the content. Johnson perceptively applies this concept not only to the Christian practitioners of just

Ideology, Reason, and the Limitation of War: Religious and Secular Concepts, 1200-1740 by James Turner Johnson

(Princeton University Press; 291 pp.; \$12.50)

William V. O'Brien

James Turner Johnson teaches in the Department of Religion, Douglass College, Rutgers University. He has already written some first-rate scholarly articles on just war issues and, with David Smith, is a coeditor of, and a contributor to, *Love and Society: Essays in the Ethics of Paul Ramsey*. His book *Ideology, Reason, and the Limitation of War* fills a major gap in just war literature. Tracing the evolution of just war doctrine from the thirteenth to the eighteenth century, he shows the multiple sources that produced not one but several models of just war. In so doing he convincingly demonstrates the continuities and differences in these models. Such a comprehensive and authoritative treatment has long been needed to correct those who argue just war issues in terms of a single monolithic doctrine bearing the author-

ity of all writers in the tradition back through St. Thomas Aquinas and St. Augustine. Johnson demonstrates clearly the changing content and emphases of just war thinking over the five and a half centuries surveyed.

Some of us have long thought it was necessary to make the kinds of distinctions brought out by Johnson. However, to the best of my knowledge no one has so thoroughly and comprehensively analyzed the stages and content of the evolving just war doctrine in the periods of its greatest growth. It is a pity that this book was not available during the Vatican II debates over war/peace issues in the Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (see *Peace, the Churches, and the Bomb*, edited by James Finn and published by the Council on Religion and International Affairs). At that time there was a continu-