



The great Mosque of Khartoum

SUDAN

PERSONAL CONSOLIDATES POLITICAL

Sayed Ahmed El Mahdi is the senior grandson of El Mahdi, the spiritual leader who achieved freedom from foreign rule for Sudan in 1885. Some years after the Anglo-Egyptian reconquest of 1898 it was Sayed Ahmed's father, Sayed Abdul Rahman, who made honourable peace with the British and became the chief architect of Sudan's non-violent progress to independence in 1956.

Sayed Ahmed has been a Cabinet Minister and is now responsible for the spiritual care and welfare of some six million Ansar, Mahdi followers. Long associated with Moral Re-Armament, he gave his views on Christian-Muslim relations in MRA's London centre this week.

I HAVE CROSSED THE CHANNEL to Britain often. But this time on the ferry I suddenly thought, 'Now is the time to visit Canterbury.' So my wife and I drove there and stayed that

Saturday night. Our visit to the Cathedral next morning coincided with a service commemorating the Battle of Britain. From all over the country ex-airmen came. Some were disabled, some even had to be carried in. There was a wonderful atmosphere and for me it was a very spiritual hour.

On the way out I noticed a memorial tablet which said, 'This brave officer was stabbed to death by the dagger of a Mohammedan fanatic.' It was saddening to recall how much of Britain's history has been bound up in violent clash with Arab and African people.

Cost of statesmanship

My father was a close observer of the British who governed Sudan. His conclusion was that those of them who made the greatest contribution to our country were those living their Christian faith. In 1924 the Mahdists, with their stronghold Aba Island in the White Nile, were the chief concern of British security in Sudan. Yet the Governor-General, Sir Geoffrey Archer, a man of deep faith, had the courage to step into Aba unprotected. After long conversations with my father he acknowledged publicly that we were a constructive force in the country. This was a turning point in Sudan's history.

My father said of Archer and others like him, 'I was astonished on close contact with these people to find they were living a moral code not different from ours.'



Sayed Ahmed El Mahdi

P. Everington

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We have had a number of conflicts in Sudan since independence. A few years ago our Ansar people were being ill-treated by the Government. Some of them were led into a policy of armed uprising which cost hundreds of lives. I spoke out against that policy but was nevertheless imprisoned by the Government. After my release I felt an inner compulsion to seek trustworthy people on the other side through whom we could make peace. President Nimeiri joined in prayers with our people, and the 'National Reconciliation' caught the imagination of the whole country.

In this I felt God's guiding hand and the example of my father. I also remembered a letter written to me in my student days twenty years before by Frank Buchman, initiator of MRA, saying that I was a future statesman for my country.

Statesmanship is not easy. It requires sacrifice. At the point of decision you have to put the interests of the nation before yourself and your family.

Pool resources

Our civil war between Muslim North and Christian South was especially painful. I was Minister of Interior at the height of it. We failed to solve it then but gave our full support to those who made peace later. It was an amazing experience to welcome the former guerilla commander General Joseph Lagu to my home. Our new constitution states that the Christian religion should receive equal respect to Islam. So we now have a better chance than most countries to make Muslim-Christian relations work. But we must urgently consolidate in our personal relationships all that has been gained politically if it is to last.

In my opinion, the peace and future of the whole world depends on whether Muslims and Christians can pool the resources of our great faiths, learn to listen to and respect each other, and find a common strategy in the face of militant materialism. This is my appeal to you.

A simple thought came to me the other day: 'The conflict between Christians and Muslims led us nowhere, so perhaps it was not what God wanted.'

Perhaps it is God's will that we now try different patterns of response to each other.

ZIMBABWE OF SWORDS AND PLOUGHSHARES

Both Lord Carrington, the British Foreign Secretary, and Lord Soames, the Governor during Rhodesia's transition to Zimbabwe, have used the word 'miracle' to describe Zimbabwe's path to independence.

A booklet published this week, *Dawn in Zimbabwe*, looks at what lay behind that settlement. It was written by Hugh Elliott, who spent 33 years in government administration in Nigeria, before and after independence, and has worked closely with black and white Zimbabweans in their efforts towards a settlement. It includes extracts from the recent documentary film of the same title in which some of these Zimbabweans tell of the work of reconstruction and reconciliation they are doing.

The booklet looks also at the massive tasks ahead. 'If what has begun with such promise is not to founder,' writes Mr Elliott, 'the "miracle" has to be maintained. Its secret, therefore, is important—and not only for Zimbabwe, but for the world.' Here we print extracts, taking up the story in 1979:

THE WAR WAS steadily getting worse. To the rising rate of killings within the country was added the raids by Rhodesian security forces on the guerrilla camps in Zambia and Mozambique. Civilians as well as guerrillas in both countries suffered greatly. The war became more and more dangerously internationalised. With homes and farms abandoned, as villagers fled for security to the towns, there was no planting in many areas, cattle were destroyed and there began to be serious food shortages. The prospects in 1979 seemed to be unending war and mounting chaos.

At that point the unexpected happened. Lord Carrington, the Foreign Secretary of the new British Government which had taken office in the spring of 1979, decided that a new initiative must be made. His predecessors had worked hard to end the deadlock but without success. He won over some of his colleagues with difficulty, but during the year people began to be conscious that a new note was being struck by Britain: 'We are responsible. We cannot let this go on—and we must take risks we have not hitherto been prepared to take.'

The next unexpected development took place at the Commonwealth Heads of State

conference at Lusaka in August. Most commentators prophesied a disastrous meeting which might split the Commonwealth on the Rhodesia issue.

But the 'Commonwealth magic' got to work, helped by the Queen's visit to Tanzania and Zambia, Mrs Thatcher's unexpected readiness to listen and the constructive role played by President Nyerere and others. In the informal atmosphere, away from the press and at the crucial point over a weekend, the leaders of Britain, Australia, Jamaica, Nigeria, Tanzania and Zambia, with the Commonwealth Secretary-General, finally reached agreement on a nine-point plan for a settlement, which the rest of the Commonwealth accepted.

The Lancaster House talks in London, where the opposing sides in the war met to work out the details with the British Government, followed in September. It was an extraordinary sight. Bishop Muzorewa, the leader of the existing government, with Ian Smith, sat round a table with Nkomo and Mugabe and other leaders of the Patriotic Front, including guerrilla leaders of the forces with whom they were still murderously at war. Neither side having been defeated, at many points a breakdown was imminent. The conference dragged on for 12½ weeks. But finally by December 5th an agreement was reached, thanks to the combination of a number of factors—the adroit leadership of Lord Carrington; the major concession by Bishop Muzorewa in agreeing to step down and submit himself to new elections; the pressure on the Patriotic Front leaders from the Front-line states, notably Presidents Machel and Kaunda of Mozambique and Zambia; the urgent pleas from their people at home: 'We have suffered enough—for God's sake settle!'

What followed the elections was perhaps the most remarkable development of all. When it became clear that ZANU (PF) was heading for a big majority, there was a moment of dangerous tension. There were fears of a mass exodus of the whites, who were convinced that such a result would bring chaos. There were also fears of an armed coup by a section of the white-led security forces. During the election cam-

paign, relations between the Governor and Robert Mugabe seemed to have got worse and worse. Many of the leaders of the rest of Africa fully expected Lord Soames to find some technical reason for disqualifying ZANU (PF). But, the counting complete, Mugabe was invited to form a Government.

That evening, 4th March, the new Prime Minister made his historic broadcast to the nation. He went a long way to reassure the whites and he challenged his countrymen: 'Let us beat our swords into ploughshares... Forgive others and forget. Join hands in a new amity together. Let us constitute a oneness derived from our common objective and total commitment to build a great Zimbabwe that will be the pride of all Africa.' Next day Ian Smith, who had earlier warned everybody to expect the worst if ZANU(PF) came to power, called on the whites not to leave.

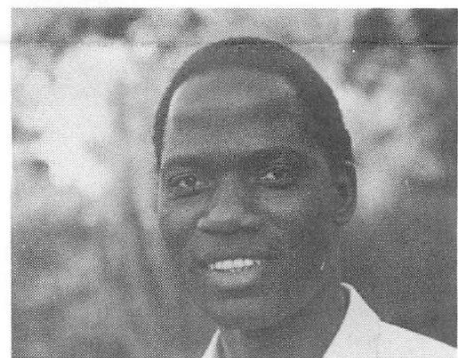
During the next six weeks Lord Soames and Prime Minister Mugabe not only worked closely together but became real friends. At Mugabe's request, Lord Soames stayed on longer than he had expected. Independence celebrations in April saw the unbelievable spectacle of the troops from opposing sides who had been shooting each other marching together in a guard of honour. Lord Carrington was quoted in *The Times* as saying, 'I think we are seeing something of a miracle.' When Lord Soames finally left, Mugabe saw him off at the airport with the words, 'Now we are both changed men!'

The film *Dawn in Zimbabwe* gives some vivid examples of the subtle healing art which has been uniting former enemies. There are many other examples, which may also be pointers to the action needed in the difficult months ahead.

During all this time an informal group, nicknamed the 'cabinet of conscience', drawn from different backgrounds and often opposing parties, had been meeting regularly to consider how to lay the foundations of peace.



JOHN MUZEKIWA, farmer, Mount Darwin: 'WHEN I SAW bodies of young black and white men dead, I began to see that violence was not the only way to win our country. A clear voice came to me saying, "Is this the way you want to liberate your country?"'



STEVEN SIBARE, Selukwe:

'I DON'T THINK our freedom will stick unless we find the answer to tribalism. I am Shona. Coming from a major tribe I have always felt superior and secure. I have always thought low of anyone who belonged to any other tribe. When I apologised to them, I started to make friends. And now I am learning Ndebele.'

NORTH LOOKS SOUTH

One such initiative has been the widespread showings of the MRA film *Freedom* in many parts of the country. Written and acted by Africans from all over the continent, and shot in Nigeria before Independence, this film portrays a situation not unlike Zimbabwe's today and shows how the true freedom of a country struggling for black majority rule can only be built on reconciliation and forgiveness. More and more requests for showings have come in. It was decided to dub this film into Shona and Ndebele. A cast of volunteers was got together, the funds raised and the Shona version of *Freedom* is already complete.

Another initiative was to approach, before any settlement was in sight, both the Prime Minister Bishop Muzorewa and the white leader Ian Smith with the suggestion that they might encourage some of their top men to attend the international conference for Moral Re-Armament at Caux in Switzerland. Both leaders responded. In August 1979 seventeen Zimbabweans, white and black, met there, including a Cabinet Minister, two white former Cabinet Ministers, and black MPs, as well as exiled Zimbabweans from opposing parties. In the unique setting of Caux, together with leaders from other countries, they found a new perspective and a remarkable unity.

Two weeks later the Lancaster House talks began in London. Some of those who had been in Caux took part, or worked in the background. Others arrived from Zimbabwe. During these crucial sessions these men strove to build bridges between the parties. Often up all night, they confronted the politicians with the urgent need for peace and an end to the sufferings of the people rather than a struggle for power. Both the BBC and *The Guardian* referred to the part of 'intermediaries', as they described them, in helping the leaders reach a settlement.

Back in Zimbabwe, as the election campaign developed and violence got worse, the 'cabinet of conscience' considered what they could do to change the climate of the power struggle in the country. The result was a manifesto published in the press, headed 'The Zimbabwe we want'.

It drew an immediate response in letters and calls from many parts of the country. It reached far and wide. One of the signatories, risking much, took it to the guerrillas who were still in the bush, fearing that the 'assembly points' might prove to be a death-trap. The manifesto caught their attention, and night-long discussions followed. Many decided to go into the assembly points as a first step in trust towards the new Zimbabwe for which they had been fighting.

Another signatory took part—as he feels, through the guidance of God—in bringing about a meeting at a crucial moment. During the election campaign the thought grew in him at a 'cabinet of conscience' meeting that some way must be found of bringing Ian Smith and Mugabe together. It was extremely difficult, but the thought persisted—and so did he. *The New York Times* later described what happened:

'The encounter was improbable; a white

MANY THIRD WORLD COUNTRIES, wary of entanglement with the world's great powers, have turned to the Nordic countries for aid. Last week 160 people from Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden met to consider how they could help their countries face up better to the responsibilities this has laid on them. As Finnish businessman Paul Gundersen asked, 'Are we worthy of the trust we have been given?' He went on to talk of periods of greatness in Nordic history, and said, 'The next great phase will come when we become servants of the world.'

The conference had three themes—the work at grassroots that cures selfishness and awakens concern in people; the battle for the political leaders to have the will to work for a new world order; and the changes at home which will mean the Nordic countries have a relevant contribution to make to the Third World. 'The mission of the Nordic North will become reality only as we make these our life-long commitment,' the invitation stated.

J E F Mhina, the Tanzanian Ambassador to the Nordic countries, in his key-note speech suggested ways in which the unjust trade relationships between rich and poor could be rectified. Recalling the examples of Mahatma Gandhi and William Wilberforce, he pointed out that 'it is possible to influence people in our countries' to bring about the needed changes.

The Swedish-language version of the new film *Dawn in Zimbabwe* was launched at the conference. 'Africa has many values from which we can learn,' said Eva Westling, a secretary who has spent several years in Africa, introducing the film. 'There is an ability to forgive, and a belief that your bitterest enemy can become your friend.'

Campaigns with the film were announced for each of the Nordic countries. The Swedish campaign will start in the city of Karlstad later this month.

Anton Skulberg, formerly Norway's Minister of Education, spoke of the economic difficulties facing the Nordic countries. He had come to the conclusion that, far from this making it more difficult to help the Third World, 'our own crisis may help us to live better into their problems'. And many problems were common to both, said Inga-Stina Roennlund, a Swedish hairdresser, telling of her determination to fight the corruption she saw going on in Sweden. 'The United Nations has held a Year of the Child and an International Women's Year,' she said. 'Why not now a Year for Honesty?'

leader whose government detained Mr Mugabe and other nationalists for 11 years, then fought a war for minority rule that cost 25,000 lives, driving across town to a suburban house that Mr Mugabe as a black could not have owned under the segregation laws enforced by Mr Smith. The two men knew each other from negotiations in London and elsewhere, but had never shaken hands. The meeting was a success....'

The two men talked honestly and did shake hands. Next day Prime Minister Mugabe made his historic broadcast and Ian Smith made his. The meeting came at just the right time.

Prime Minister Mugabe and his government, most of whose Ministers had been in exile for the past ten years, face mountainous responsibilities.

Much will depend on whether large numbers of displaced people, refugees and ex-guerrillas can be successfully settled on the land. Massive aid for agriculture and land-resettlement is needed. The country has enormous potential. It could be the granary of central and southern Africa.

The future of Zimbabwe will depend on whether the men who have taken the courageous initiatives described will be able to enlist many others in a country-wide programme of reconciliation and nation-building. And on whether we in Britain and elsewhere in the West will move beyond our obsession with our own economic problems and give the aid needed—financial, moral and in trained men.

If the miracle of the settlement that ended

the war can be matched by a miracle of peace-building, the new Zimbabwe will profoundly affect the future of Southern Africa and of the entire continent.

'Dawn in Zimbabwe' by Hugh Elliott, published by Grosvenor Books, 54 Lyford Road, London SW18 3JJ, price 50p, with postage 66p.



D. Channer

ALEC SMITH, son of the former Prime Minister Ian Smith:

'WHEN I SURRENDERED my life to God, it changed me from the bottom up. I was reunited with my family. I began to see the racial divisions in our land. And I began to see the part I had played in them.

'My wife and I have decided to live in Zimbabwe. Prime Minister Robert Mugabe has said that this nation must have new men in a new spirit. We want to show that this is practical; that there are many of us living out that idea.'

Beyond a joke

by Paul Campbell

THE LABOUR PARTY CONFERENCE last week was faced with an issue at the heart of today's society: how to find the leadership which can unite people, help them face facts, and give them the determination to take appropriate measures.

Poor leadership in our society has led many to give way to despair and cynicism. When hope is at a minimum and cynicism at a maximum, the task of motivating people to act even in their own best interests is Herculean.

In a television interview last week, Eric Heffer MP, a member of the National Executive of the Labour Party, was asked who would be the next leader of his party. He replied that nobody knew—it could be Benn, Healey—it could be Jesus Christ for all he knew. What was Jesus Christ's standing as a member of the Labour Party, the interviewer asked.

Uttered in jest, Mr Heffer's remark may have more merit than fancy. It could be an election winner.

Ambition

In the early days of the Christian community, the question of leadership was settled after discussion, prayer and taking a vote.

Their prayers were not just pious phrases. They searched their hearts for any wrong relationship, lack of charity, dishonesty or corruption—knowing that these could imprison people in self-centredness and so influence policy. They knew too, from experience, that people's lives could be transformed. Maintaining compassion for

one another, they set themselves resolutely against complicity in attitudes that were at variance with what they had learned from their Master.

They were seeking not their own position, but the leadership of God's spirit in their discussions. Their formula was to seek first God's rule in people's lives. Then all else would be added—a common mind, heart and will, insight into problems and the power to cure.

Ambition can make people so absorbed in promoting their own schemes that they are unable to consider the interests of the whole nation, the whole community. Then they start using others for their own ends and are tempted to hide facts and attitudes which might lose them support. Mistrust and individualism grow and paralyse the leadership they might otherwise give.

Quick to engage

Self-centred people, however brilliant, cannot make any system, left or right, work for long. As we look at the future, it is clear that if we are to survive we will need a new kind of leadership: people who listen to each other, however opposed they may be; who have the common sense to make what is morally right the touchstone of their policies; who incorporate honesty, unselfishness and genuine care for all groups in their living; who nourish relationships and extend their circle at every opportunity, particularly to those in the opposite camp. We need people who are quick to admit where they are wrong, quick to apologise for hurting or excluding others, quick to engage in the battle to right what is wrong in society—and so see the people around them becoming different.

Christ, to whom Mr Heffer referred, had a revolutionary idea of leadership; that he who would be first, must be the servant of all.

Keeping faith with Hardie

ON THE EVE of the Labour Party conference, BBC Radio 2 presenter Nick Page took a look at the role of Christianity in the Labour Party, past and present. 'One hopes that some of the present Labour leaders were listening,' commented Norman Hare in the *Church Times*.

Mr Page interviewed the former Labour Education Secretary, Shirley Williams, about the relationship between faith and politics. Christianity, she said, meant 'fighting the battle in every field the whole time,' not just

'going to church on Sunday, being honest, paying bills and so forth'.

The programme looked at the Christian roots of the Labour Party through an extract from the play *Keir Hardie—the man they could not buy* which a grassroots cast associated with MRA has been presenting all over Britain on the invitation of constituency Labour parties and trade union branches.

In the scene presented, Hardie speaks of his goal: 'We're going to set men free from everything that degrades them. Bitterness degrades a man and enslaves him, and doesn't cure what's wrong.... "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven"—there is a real goal for society. We are fighting for more than fair hours and wages. Workers of the world free as God means us to be. This is more than politics; it is a faith.'

New TV series— 'As we want the world to live'

A NEW TV SERIES has been launched in the city of Portland, Oregon, in the United States. For the next 11 weeks, MRA feature films will be presented, and a new interview series, *As we want the world to live*, will draw out how people of faith can relate their convictions to the needs of their community.

The series started last week with the film *Mr Brown comes down the hill*, which asks how Christ might be treated if he came to earth today; and an interview with Charis Waddy, author of *The Muslim Mind*.

The interviews are conducted by Michael Henderson, a British journalist working in Portland. In the TV schedule he describes MRA as 'a world-wide fellowship of men and women of all ages, races and nations who want to see God's will prevail in the lives of individuals and nations.' The schedule, in a full page launching the series, describes it as 'much more than just entertainment—all about what the ordinary man and woman can do to influence events'.

All-India link

'LIFE LINES', an Indian newsletter for Moral Re-Armament, was launched last month. A four-page production, printed in Bombay, it is being produced at the request of people across India who feel the need of a nationwide link between those who have taken on MRA's challenge to build a hate-free, fear-free, greed-free India. The newsletter's editor, Linda Pierce, writes in the first issue, 'The need is urgent for caring men and women who will live relevantly not only to this country's future but to those in greater need in Asia and elsewhere.'

The first issue carries news of students in action on their return home from courses at Asia Plateau, the MRA centre in India. One tells of enlisting his friends to help with the needs of a nearby leper colony; another of a broadcast he has made on All-India Radio Kohima, about MRA and its outreach. One has written a play challenging social evils, and it has been presented twice; while others meet weekly with 30-40 fellow-pupils in their school who want to find a faith and pass it on.

There is news too of workers and management meeting regularly in factories to continue the frank dialogue they had established at industrial sessions at Asia Plateau, and going to other factories to tell of their new approach.