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Rhodesia: White man, what now?

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community, though a number of problems are still unresolved. No rules have yet been agreed upon for gradually dismantling tariffs, nor were guidelines hammered out for a joint trading policy. And it will be even more difficult to regulate joint and binding prescriptions for the free movement of persons and capital and for equal rights of residence. Experts are of the opinion that all such decisions will be strongly influenced by Nigeria, for two thirds of all the inhabitants of the ECOWAS region reside there, and economic prospects of Nigerian development are more favourable than elsewhere because of proven Nigerian oilfields. Though the Nigerians have declared that they do not intend to lord it over the other members of ECOWAS, tensions between Nigeria and the other member states may very well evolve in the future. In this case, ECOWAS's actual date of birth might be delayed even more. mk.

Rhodesia

White Man, What Now?

The independence of Mozambique will surely have a strong effect on the political and economic development of Southern Africa. Especially the two remaining white minority regimes will have to adapt themselves to the new political reality. It is uncertain to what extent strong economic interdependence will enforce fundamental changes radiating from one part of Southern Africa to all its neighbours. Rhodesia's foreign trade, for example, depends up to more than 80 p.c. on the ports of Mozambique. Because these ports have been almost completely paralysed since the Portuguese revolution, Rhodesia's foreign trade has dropped steeply, since also in Durban, the South African harbour, Rhodesian export goods are piling up. The power shift has suddenly stopped the boom. The Rhodesian balance-of-payments deficit mounted unexpectedly high in 1974; its exports income in foreign currencies continues to decline; many production plants have been forced to close down, and unemployment affects increasingly also white employees. Rhodesia is justifiably worried lest the Frelimo administration close Mozambique's frontiers, which might lead to economic strangulation of Rhodesia. But such measures would also cause great harm to Black-African countries, notably Zambia and Malawi, which are dependent on Rhodesia's rail and road network, and which depend, as does Mozambique, on income earned in the markets of "White Africa" for goods and labour.

What frightens Rhodesia even more than the possible closure of its frontiers is the potential loss of South African support. Its old partner has been withdrawing his support progressively, because

South Africa tries to practise détente for a strategy of its own survival, in which Rhodesia has now only a nuisance value. Should Vorster intend seriously to force concessions upon Rhodesia, this would give the UN sanctions their first chance of success. It is a decisive question for how long Rhodesia can withstand such economic and political pressure from the outside. Whilst South Africa is a highly-developed and wealthy country, which could, at a pinch, survive without foreign relations, Rhodesia as a completely landlocked state, with Black-African neighbours on almost all its frontiers, is a highly vulnerable entity. zz.

Federal Republic of Germany

Good-Will Journey

The recent African tour of the Federal Foreign Minister, Hans-Dietrich Genscher, led him to Liberia, Ghana, Zambia, and Malawi, where he pursued aims of world as well as trading and development policy. A major part in his talks was played by problems of raw material and energy, preparing the UN's special September conference.

Commodity problems were the main subject of the talks especially with the Liberian and Zambian governments. Liberia supplies the Federal Republic with as much as 20 p.c. of all its iron ore imports, and Zambia supplies 15 p.c. of all German copper imports. There is no doubt that the two African states agree with the Federal Republic's view that topical problems of commodity and energy policies can be resolved only by co-operation, not by confrontation.

Their good bilateral relations with Bonn are sufficient proof for the extent and the strength of their willingness to cooperate. However, whether Genscher's appeal to show more and better co-operation also within international organisations and to give up the formation of mutually hostile blocs has found the desired response may well be doubted.

The talks held in Ghana and Malawi were devoted to a smaller measure to commodity questions; their main purpose was general trade and development. Bonn is the third most important trading partner of Ghana, and in Malawi, German development aid has staged several successful projects. On the other hand, the Federal Republic also maintains close trading relations with the neighbouring states of Rhodesia and even more so with South Africa. The Foreign Minister has used the opportunity to emphasize the high German interest in trading with Black Africa. At the same time, it is probable that he has been able to dispel some fears and misunderstandings on the sides of the Black-African states. mk.