

Settlement of Rhodesian issue is imperative to foil Communists' design

THERE is a breathing space in the Rhodesian talks. It is a good time to take stock. I have recently been in Rhodesia. I believe the vast majority of Rhodesians long for an honourable settlement of the dispute. Their reasons naturally concern in the first place the inconveniences which the situation has brought. These are important.

But a stocktaking should also bring out certain other facts of far-reaching consequence. These may be even more urgent reasons why a settlement is imperative.

In Japan, Korea, India, Pakistan—in fact, around the world—Rhodesia is front page news. Many forces deliberately make it so. They are forces that have no particular interest in Rhodesians, black or white. They are interested in the Rhodesian issue as a lever to shift world alignments.

Their aim is to divide the coloured races from the white races around the world. They aim to divide white men from black men throughout Africa. They aim to divide Africa from Britain and Asia from Europe.

Rhodesia is their cleaver and the gainers are the Communists and the extremists. Without expressing any views on the rights or wrongs of the situation, one can say that, on the facts, the Rhodesian issue is being used as much as any single issue today to Communise the world.

Dangers are real

The dangers of Communism are real. Rhodesians stand united in their resolve to resist strenuously every Communist effort to press their plans on the country.

But it will take more than resolution to bring an answer. It will take an understanding of the way they work, and a way of outmarching their strategy of division with a flood tide of unity.

The whole world, and certainly the free world, is subject to great stresses and strains. There is very little cement to hold the free world together. Communism seeks to break down the bonds of friendship between the free nations in Europe, Africa, Asia and the Americas, and to establish alignments of a common bitterness that further their ends.

Division

In the present Rhodesian issue they are not concerned with right and wrong, but with division. Their agents fan the selfrighteousness and the bitterness on both sides simultaneously in order to keep division alive.

The same agent who in Rhodesia will rant about the wickedness of Mr. Wilson, will in England extol the iniquities of Mr. Smith. It deepens division, and division is their fuel and fodder.

The question is inevitably

By

BREMER

HOFMEYR,

*a senior member of
Moral Re-Armament
in South Africa*

charged with passionate feelings. The danger is that whenever the political crisis comes up for discussion, as it does day and night, people leap to blame whomever they are convinced is in the wrong.

So much so that an eminent Rhodesian recently said: "We are now run less and less by what we love and stand for, and more and more by what we hate." Simply arguing, "Who is wrong?" deepens division.

It would be a giant step forward if for "Who is wrong?" there could be substituted in thousands of conversations the simple point, "There must be a settlement." For it is, I believe, what people want.

Under pressure

There is a second reason why a settlement is so urgent. The moderate leaders of Africa are fighting for their lives. They are under a barrage of pressure to align themselves more with China. Their enemies constantly spread the belief that the white man is perfidious and the natural enemy of the black man.

They use the present crisis to further this idea and to undercut those African leaders who still want teamwork and friendship between the black and white races.

An Ambassador of an African State very important to Rhodesia said of the present conflict: "It is a torpedo blow to all the moderate leaders in Africa and they may not survive it."

Very few Rhodesians would like to see President Kaunda toppled. But it is a fact that the present troubles have greatly strengthened the hands of his enemies.

If Rhodesians can measure this crisis not only in relation to their own troubles, but in relation to the onward march of mankind, it will be statesmanship of the highest order. And if there ever was a moment when the world needed statesmanship, this is it.