



Editorial Notes:

'Confrontation' in Southern Africa

THE OFFICIAL BRITISH account of the Wilson-Smith negotiations (*Rhodesia—Documents Relating to Proposals for a Settlement—1966*; Cmnd. 3171) makes well-nigh incredible reading. Here were two Europeans, neither with any mandate from the people affected, purporting to draw up 'Independence Constitution' under which 4 million Africans are to be governed in an African country. That Wilson should have met Smith at all—the man he himself had branded as a rebel and a traitor—and for such a purpose—was in itself an ignoble surrender. That the two of them should have actually agreed on a draft 'Constitution' acceptable to Smith and his racist colleagues was still worse.

The Constitution which emerged from H.M.S. *Tiger* is permeated through and through with the spirit of arrogant white chauvinism. It provided for a Legislature of two houses; the Assembly and the Senate. The Assembly would be composed of sixty-seven members. Thirty-three of these would be elected by voters on the 'A' roll. To qualify for this roll a voter would have to possess educational and property qualifications which are unattainable for most Africans—so it is guaranteed that there would be a big majority of white settlers on this roll. As if this were not enough there would be a further seventeen

'Reserved European seats'. (We don't know how Mr. Wilson would propose to justify 'European seats' in an African Parliament!) There would be only seventeen seats for which Africans could vote—the 'B' roll, open to Africans over thirty years of age (why so old, Mr. Wilson?) who 'satisfy citizenship and residence qualifications'. That is seventeen out of sixty-seven seats for 4 million Africans; fifty seats for 250,000 white settlers, most of them fairly recent arrivals. The Senate would be even more blatantly racialistic; twelve 'European' seats; eight 'African' and six Chiefs—the Chiefs being in effect government appointees.

That such an unsavoury document should be acceptable to Smith and his gang—self-incriminated racialists and believers in apartheid—is hardly surprising. That it should have been negotiated by Harold Wilson strips him and his colleagues naked of their pretences to socialism, democracy and freedom from race prejudice. Had the '*Tiger* paper' been accepted by the bitter-ender fascists in Salisbury it would have wrecked the 'Commonwealth'—and a good riddance too. As it is it is a standing record of the depths to which bourgeois ideology and finance-capitalism have dragged the British Labour Party leadership.

The *Tiger* agreement virtually handed over on a plate to Smith and the settlers all they had demanded—'legal' independence under white minority rule. They would have been 'recognised' by Britain, the United States and their NATO allies; trade and investments would have boomed; fear of African advancement would have been allayed by constitutional provisions postponing majority rule for a generation. Their rejection of this handsome offer seems inexplicable. Even their best friends—for example *Die Burger*, pro-Government Cape Town daily—query the wisdom of persisting with Rhodesian 'independence'—an 'empty shell'.

But this 'inexplicable' stubbornness becomes more understandable when one considers the two factors which no doubt weigh most heavily with the desperate adventurers and gamblers who proclaim themselves the 'government' of Rhodesia. Firstly, they understand better than anyone how perilously narrow is the basis of support in the country for their regime of terror; how dangerously little in the way of apparent retreat or concessions would suffice to topple their police state in ruins and bring about the triumph of Zimbabwe democracy. Secondly, their whole experience before and after 'U.D.I.' has convinced them that Britain and the 'West' have far too great and profitable a stake in the maintenance of white supremacy, cheap labour and super-profits in Southern Africa to risk a serious showdown. Wilson told Smith that if—after returning to formal legality under a new

constitution—there was a second illegal declaration of independence, his November 1966 undertaking not to use force ‘would no longer apply’. Smith answered that ‘this statement did not influence him and his colleagues. He believed these threats to be of no consequence’. (Op. cit. p. 55.)

For exactly the same reason, the gangsters in Salisbury remain totally unmoved by threats of further ‘sanctions’ by the United Nations or anyone else. They are quite confident that such sanctions, mandatory or otherwise, and whether or not they include oil, will as in the past be openly ignored by their suppliers, and in the first place by the Republic of South Africa; events have proved their confidence to be fully justified. Forced by African and world opinion to raise the question of sanctions against the illegal Salisbury regime at the United Nations, the British representatives were placed in the ignominious position of battling tooth and nail to see that the Republic should be allowed to defy such sanctions without penalty—in other words, to ensure that they would be completely ineffective. The very Labour men who, not long ago, when they were in opposition, were supporting sanctions against apartheid South Africa, were flagrantly and publicly using every possible manoeuvre to see that in no circumstances should there be any ‘confrontation’ with the apartheid regime. Inevitably, the United Nations decision has proved as utterly toothless as the Smith gang anticipated. The French Government has blatantly ignored the United Nations by agreeing to a barter deal which will absorb half the Rhodesian tobacco crop. The United States Government is equally keen to protect apartheid South Africa—and for the same reasons. As the London *Observer* (December 11th, 1966) correctly points out. ‘President Johnson will come under tremendous pressure from American business circles if the sanctions war against Rhodesia spreads south’. The paper trains the spotlight on ‘one of L.B.J.’s close friends’, Charles Engelhardt ‘who is enormously rich, enormously committed in South Africa and enormously generous to the Democratic Party’. Engelhardt is chairman of Rand Mines and a director of the £204 million Anglo-American Corporation of South Africa. The *Observer* quotes him as saying ‘there are not many countries where it is safe to invest, and South Africa is about the best of the lot’. Other Americans too—such as General Motors, Ford and the Chase Manhattan Bank also have very substantial stakes in the maintenance of white supremacy, ‘stability’ and big profits in the Republic.

If the phoney Rhodesia crisis has done nothing else, it has proved once again that the oppressed peoples of Southern Africa cannot look for help from the imperialists, who have sold their interests over and over again—the latest instance being the unhappy fate of Lesotho

under the rule of Vorster's boy Jonathan, imposed against the will both of the majority of the Basotho and their traditional head of state, Moshoeshoe II, with the aid of a British-imposed constitution.

THE REAL CONFRONTATION

By this, we do not mean that the peoples of the Portuguese colonies and the apartheid-enslaved South should not continue, as they have done for many years, to appeal to the *peoples* of the entire world, including those of the imperialist countries, for solidarity and aid in their noble struggle against these hateful racialist regimes, which threaten world peace and mock the United Nations Charter. We do mean that every appeal to the principles of human rights and dignity will fall on deaf ears unless and until these unjust and unlawful regimes are faced with a true confrontation—the confrontation with their victims, the great majorities of oppressed peoples, denied every legal means of opposition and left with no recourse but to hit back with arms against the continuous violence which subjects them.

There are many signs that the national liberation movements of all these areas are fully alive to this truth, and that we are already witnessing, at the opening of 1967, the beginning of a new wave of armed struggle which, however long it takes, and whatever the present formal balance of armed forces, must end with the victory of African freedom from Cape to Cairo.

The most intensive fighting, thus far, is taking place in the 'Portuguese' territories of Angola, Mozambique and Guinea, where more than 520,000 of Salazar's troops are already in the field and more are on the way. In December, 1966, the Portuguese Government announced plans for further stepping up its defences in Southern Africa. Women are to be used extensively in the armed services for the first time; the length of military training, including service on the African battlefield, has been extended from two to between three and four years; no Portuguese youth liable for military service will be allowed to emigrate until he has completed his training. The drain on the Portuguese exchequer is crippling, with little prospect of reward from increasing exploitation of the territories so long as the war situation remains. The Portuguese economy is suffering both from inflation and a shortage of manpower.

Some areas of 'Portuguese' Africa have already been permanently liberated, especially in Guinea, where a new social order is being constructed by the national liberation movement in the freed territory. In portions of Angola and Mozambique the Portuguese are no longer in control in the sense that civil administration has completely broken down, and the Portuguese writ runs back and forth together with

their soldiers. Desertions from the army are on the increase, and the Tanzanian authorities have recently been compelled to deport Portuguese refugees to countries other than Portugal because the refugees were unwilling to return to their home country.

Portugal's African war may well prove to be the graveyard of the Salazar regime. In the course of their struggle, the African people are helping to liberate, not only themselves, but also the oppressed masses of Portugal itself. The Portuguese Government attempts to win support by a belated and miserable programme of 'reforms' at home and abroad, but popular discontent is unappeased and the tide of resistance is still running steadily, with every sign of growing into an unmanageable flood.

Guerilla activity has in the last year or so spread to the remaining territories of Southern Africa—Rhodesia, South Africa and South West Africa. Strict censorship in these countries has prevented all the details from becoming known to the world at large, and more particularly to the population at home, but enough has filtered through to make it apparent that the boast of Smith and Vorster that they preside over peaceful and contented communities is blatantly untrue.

A recent report from a Lusaka correspondent of the London *Observer* in December 1966 said guerilla activity by the national liberatory organisations in Rhodesia 'is significant, and it shows signs of increasing'. The report said that 'since April more than 100 Rhodesian nationalists had been killed or captured, and units of the Rhodesian army are now permanently tied down patrolling the tough terrain along the 440-mile border with Zambia'. Vehicles travelling south to Salisbury from the Zambian border have to proceed in convoy, and the police are ceaselessly active in the white farming areas. Internal resistance in the form of sabotage, bombings of cafés, etc. in the towns, arson against factories and buses, attacks on white farmers' crops and livestock, testify to the considerable organised support which the guerillas enjoy among the local population. Moreover, despite the lying claims of the Smith communiqués, the morale of the guerillas is high and the quality of their leadership of high order. Death sentences meted out by Smith's judges have been met with brave defiance by spokesmen for the accused. Clearly the guerillas do not in any way feel they are fighting a losing battle. They believe the fight they have started can and will be won, and they are prepared to make any necessary sacrifice to ensure the success of their cause.

Most significant of all is that guerilla activity has now spread to the heartland of White Supremacy—South Africa itself, together with its colony, South West Africa, now held by force in defiance of the United Nations order terminating the mandate. As long ago as last

October the South African Commissioner of Police, General Keevy, told the press in Cape Town that fifty-six 'trained terrorists' had been caught in South Africa and South West Africa in the last two years. General Keevy said he had no reason to believe that the attacks would cease, and the police were constantly on patrol in border areas. He had no doubt, he said, that 'the Communists' would continue with their plans to subvert South Africa, and the police had to be ready for anything. All 'terrorists' so far captured, he said, were 'local born', well-trained in the techniques of sabotage and terrorism, and armed with modern Russian and Chinese weapons.

Since that time a number of fresh attacks have been launched by guerillas in South West Africa, some damage has been done to white farms and at least one white farmer shot and injured, while an African headman appointed by and presumably carrying out the policy of the South African Government was killed. Police reinforcements have been thrown into Ovamboland, and General Keevy visited the area himself to inspect operations on the spot. What exactly has been going on is unclear, because a heavy security blanket has been thrown over the area, but again reports filtering through indicate that the police are using helicopters, tracker dogs, local commandos and even bushmen trackers to hunt down guerilla parties, but that the guerillas are managing to fight and survive thanks to support from the local population.

A significant feature of these operations in South West Africa is that they have alarmed the Vorster government sufficiently to compel the extension to South West Africa of all the apparatus of the Suppression of Communism Act, including the death penalty for sabotage or preparations for guerilla warfare. During the 1966 session of the South African Parliament the law was extended to provide for fourteen-day detention without trial of suspected 'terrorists'. A more sinister amendment provided that anyone leaving the country without proper documents in future would be assumed to have done so for the purposes of guerilla training, and would thus automatically be liable for the death penalty unless he could prove to the contrary. A number of guerillas arrested in South West Africa have already been kept for months under the 180-day detention-without-trial clause, while three leaders of the South West Africa People's Organisation in Windhoek have also been detained under this clause. It can be assumed that all have been subjected to torture in an all-out bid to smash this new and most dangerous form of resistance to apartheid aggression.

1967 opened for the Republic of South Africa with the announcement by President Swart—on the eve of his retirement from a long and infamous political career—that conscription for military training

would be extended to make it compulsory for 'all male citizens' (the word 'citizen' automatically excludes non-whites) and the period of training prolonged. This follows some wild boasting that the government would defy the United Nations decision ordering it to quit South West Africa, that it was prepared to take on the whole world to hold on to its illegally annexed territory, and was confident of the ability of its army to defeat any United Nations invading force 'before breakfast'. Such boasts are made with confidence simply because Vorster and his co-conspirators are sure their friends in the imperialist countries which dominate the United Nations will see to it that there never are realistic measures to establish independence and self-determination for South West, or do anything else practical to endanger the apartheid regime.

When it comes to the impending confrontation with the masses of oppressed people, however, spearheaded by determined, trained and armed freedom-fighters, it is a very different matter. Here is the fatal weakness of the racist regime, and they know it. That is why White Southern Africa is in a state of chronic crisis and instability, feverishly preparing for war, ruled by terror, arbitrary mass detentions, torture and murder.

Unconquerable Vietnam

THE UNITED STATES of America, the world's biggest and most powerful imperialist state, is conducting a war of extermination—the most savage in human history, not excluding Hitler's war—against the relatively small and economically undeveloped nation of Vietnam. There are at the time of writing over 400,000 American troops in the area, together with the troops of the puppet Ky regime and those of United States satellites such as Australia, New Zealand and South Korea, comprising an army of more than one million men, backed up by the most terrible weapons advanced technology can devise. Daily, on the villages of the South and the industries and populated areas of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, in the north, American aircraft are dropping a higher tonnage of bombs and explosives than those dropped by both sides in Europe at the height of the Second World War.

In this most atrocious of campaigns of planned mass murder, Johnson and the other American war criminals have not hesitated to make use of methods of indiscriminate destruction long outlawed and condemned by international conventions, including the use of