

THE SMILE ON THE FACE OF THE BOTHA

(or: Why bother to read the small print?)

by VORTEX

1. We wish well to the black people.
We are determined that there shall be no discrimination against them.
(All that we intend, to safeguard our own position, is that they shall have no power whatsoever in the land of their birth.)
2. The President's Council is a sign of our good faith.
It is a sincere attempt to resolve the problems of our country.
(The only proviso, a small one, is that there shall be no black members and no discussion of the real problem.)
3. We are launching into remarkable reforms.
We have modified petty apartheid; we have made concessions on removals; we are beginning to offer a new deal for migrant workers.
(These changes have been made possible by our knowledge that other regulations, new and old, ensure that the status quo remains essentially unaltered. In several respects our concessions have distinctly tightened our grip on the blacks.)
4. We cannot understand why the international community doesn't recognise the independent homelands.
What could be more generous than to carve up our country in order to allow blacks to be free?
(Indeed the whole scheme is beautiful: the whites retain all the economic advantages while shedding responsibility for people whom our policies cause to starve.)
5. Our military position is obviously an honest one.
We have a defensive army.
(Admittedly we have invaded Angola, and various other countries; and we are determined not to leave Namibia, though SWAPO would win a free and fair election if we were willing to let one take place.)
6. The aims of our army are clear.
We are fighting against the Russian-Communist threat from the North.
(It is true that the men we shall actually fight against are black South Africans who are dispossessed and desperate; but that is a military secret.)