

**The Only Solution:**

# African Majority Rule

AFTER their ten-day visit, Mr. Bottomley and Lord Gardiner are due this week to return from Rhodesia. They have not the slightest evidence that Mr. Ian Smith, the Premier, has given up acting as if the white settler minority had already achieved independence.

Indeed, during the whole visit it was Mr. Smith who made the running. Upon his arrival Mr. Bottomley went out of his way to be nice to him, with the assurance that both of them were in the same camp "to save Africa from Communism".

Even this did not make Mr. Smith any kinder to Mr. Bottomley. All it did was to assure him that he had nothing to fear. But the opposition of the Africans is another story. Though Joshua Nkomo and hundreds of other African leaders are in detention, no less than 6,000 Africans greeted Mr. Bottomley's arrival to demonstrate their determination to fight for African majority rule:

*"The Africans were well-behaved, self-disciplined, and apparently self-led, for most of the leaders of both banned organisations are in restriction or detention. The authorities were surprised by the size of the crowd, which pointed to the exist-*

*ence of a much more organised underground nationalist organisation than had been realised."* (Guardian February 22, 1965).

Instead of insisting upon meeting Nkomo at the Gona-kudzingwa camp, where 450 African leaders are in detention, Mr. Bottomley and Lord Gardiner meekly agreed to Mr. Smith's decision that the meeting be held at Hippo Valley, 100 miles from the detention camp and 400 miles from Salisbury.

This was in striking contrast to the meeting near Salisbury, the day before with 600 government-paid chiefs and headmen... launched a series of almost identical (to those of Mr. Smith), on the British Government". (Daily Telegraph, February 24, 1965).

As Nkomo pointed out next day to Mr. Bottomley:

*"After being drilled for almost a week by Mr. Harper (Minister for Internal Affairs) they have acted exactly like a machine. They are mere gramophone records singing a song whose meaning they do not know."* (Guardian, February 26th, 1965).

Mr. Nkomo made it clear that the Africans would have nothing to do with the present Constitution which denies the vote to the African majority and gives the white settler minority the right to govern:

*"Unless this Constitution is scrapped and replaced by a Constitution granting immediate majority rule for the good of all, we see no end to the political crisis."*

(Guardian, 26th Feb. 1965). This is the real issue which faces Mr. Bottomley and the Labour Government. Mr. Wilson's ultimatum last October against any unilateral declaration of independence by Mr. Smith (endorsed by Sir Alec Douglas-Home) did nothing to change actual white settler minority rule in practice.

Mr. Smith has simply gone ahead and acted as if Rhodesia was already independent. This is revealed also in the trade agreement signed with Portugal (which also covers Portuguese colonies in Africa), and the hint of a military pact between them.

It seems clear that Mr. Smith's strategy is to exercise independence in practice by the white settler minority without even waiting for any kind of constitutional sanction.

Already during Mr. Bottomley's visit it was announced in the Rhodesian Parliament that the government-paid chiefs and headmen have been provided with guns "to deal with trouble-makers". It is these gun-men who Mr. Smith claims, are the spokesmen of African opinion!

What is even worse is that it seems the Wilson Government is equally frightened of African majority rule in Rhodesia. It appears to be taking its cue from the *Financial Times* which pointed out that:

*"The U.K. can do nothing to stop Mr. Smith seizing independence... For the British Government, there is thus no alternative for the present but to play for time... People in this country would not stand for the use of force against the white settlers."*

(February 22nd 1965)

It appears that armed aggression against the people of South Vietnam, and the use of Ascension Island for U.S. planes to carry mercenaries to kill Africans in the Congo is



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# AFRICAN MAJORITY RULE

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is quite in order. But white skins are sacred!

Unless effective steps are taken to change this situation, the 200,000 white settler minority will continue to rule over four million Africans. The Wilson Government will be faced with rising opposition throughout the Commonwealth—whose Premiers at the London Conference last July, put the following demands in their final statement:

- (1) *Release of all Africans from prison and detention.*
- (2) *Suspension of the existing Constitution.*
- (3) *A new constitutional conference in London, representative of all political parties in Rhodesia, to frame a new*

*Constitution based on the principle of African majority rule.*

Last Friday, even when Bottomley and Gardiner were still in "discussions", Jomo Kenyatta re-affirmed that the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), would stand by the demands put forward last July. Wilson and Bottomley are defying the wishes not only of Africans in Rhodesia, but all over the continent. This policy can only lead to disaster.

It is time for the Labour and progressive movement in Britain to put more pressure on the Wilson Government before the next conference of Commonwealth Premiers in June.

March 1st, 1965