

Letters to The Times

African Annexation Opposed

South West Africa Does Not Desire To Come Into Union, It Is Said

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NEW YORK TIMES:

The history of South Africa's dealings with its own non-European citizens is not such as to inspire any democrat conversant with the facts with any degree of confidence in this country's ability or desire to extend elementary human rights to the Africans living in South West Africa, who, if General Smuts has his way, are now to be brought into the Union of South Africa.

In an assessment of the true position, regard should be had to the fact that this dominion, with a population of nearly 11,000,000 persons, extends the right to vote only to its 2,500,000 white citizens. The African, although a taxpayer, has no rights of citizenship. He is debarred from entering skilled industry, his trade unions are not recognized by law and he is denied the right to strike and the right to collective bargaining with his employers. Discriminatory legislation prohibits him from acquiring land in the urban areas; makes it, generally, an offense for him to possess or to purchase liquor, and forces him to carry a pass in order to restrict his movement and thereby deprive him of the right to seek free employment.

Over 100,000 Africans are thrown into our jails every year for contraventions of these laws, which are directed solely against our non-white population. Neither socially, politically nor economically is the non-European given opportunity of equality with his white compatriot.

Misery and Malnutrition

Taxation and economic compulsion drive the African from the reserves to the mines, where he is housed and segregated in barracks. His average wage, while so employed, is approximately £54 per annum. In the towns he is forced to live in townships or in municipal compounds under conditions of squalor and misery. At least 70 per cent of the Africans suffer from malnutrition, and medical services are unable to cope with the incidence of disease.

Even today, over twelve months after the end of the war, war emergency regulations, originally passed for the ostensible purpose of dealing with the supporters of fascism in this country, and seldom invoked for that purpose, are still retained for use against the African in order to deprive him of his elementary rights.

War Measure 1425 makes it a criminal offense for and imposes heavy penalties on Africans who gather in

American public for a vast building program we do not make it appear that the needs of the veterans can be met only if we deny sanctuary to a few hundred thousand men, women and children whom we would consign to a living death. * * *

After this statement had been made to the entire gathering the Catholic and Protestant representatives informed me and others that they concurred in these views.

SOLOMON ANDHIL FINEBERG.
New York, Nov. 10, 1946.

Communists in France

Recent Elections Considered Not to Presage a Communist Government

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NEW YORK TIMES:

Many American comments about the French elections are pessimistic and seem to convey the idea that France is doomed to be ruled by the Communists. I don't agree.

If you consider the figures, you see that the Communists have picked up only 26 per cent of the votes, which means no gains since the elections of last year, while the moderates (Popular Republicans and Radical Socialists), have obtained, together, 31 per cent of the votes. As for the Socialists, who received 21 per cent of them, it is fit to observe that they have lost to the Communists many constituencies, so that their elected men represent chiefly the anti-Communist faction of their party.

If a coalition of moderates is achieved in the near future, many of the Socialists would probably join it. This coalition, consisting of the Popular Republicans, Radical Socialists, some Socialists and other now isolated elements, would gather more than 50 per cent of the seats in the new Assembly.

Things being as they are, it is probable that no change will occur in the composition of the Government until the election of the President of the Republic, at the beginning of December. It is almost certain that no Communist candidate has any chance to win. Probabilities are rather in favor of such leaders as President Herriot or General de Gaulle, although both of them have fought the new Constitution.

If the new President should offer the Government to the largest party, the Communists, they would be unable to rule, even if the Socialists consent to support them. Communists and Socialists together have only 47 per cent of the seats.

Then France would be a witness of the same events as in 1936-37, when a Socialist Government, apparently strong and actually weak, was obliged