

ALL OVER AFRICA

Notes on Current Events

NIGER The Political Bureau of the Sawaba Party has called upon the people of Niger '... to take up arms in order to destroy the anti-national and anti-democratic regime imposed upon them by foreign forces'. It calls for the whole population to rally behind the country's Democratic Front, and for all revolutionary movements in Africa to give fraternal aid to the revolutionary forces in Niger. In its resolution, the party declares that in 1958 the French army of occupation set up a 'reactionary coalition in foreign pay in place of the legal Sawaba government'; that as a result legal administrative organs such as municipalities have been arbitrarily dissolved, all political parties and trade unions have been banned, all civil rights and personal liberties have been abolished, and '... for nearly six years the people of Niger have been submitting and continue to submit to all forms of repression' including imprisonment, confiscation of property, torture and political assassination. It declares that, in these conditions, armed uprising is '... not only their inalienable right but the sacred duty of all patriots worthy of the name'.

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LESOTHO In the course of a well-considered resolution on problems of the international communist movement, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Lesotho states: 'Our country lies in the zone that the Chinese comrades have described as the focus of the contradictions in our time. It is a small country surrounded on all sides by the Republic of South Africa with its notorious policy of racialism and apartheid. The country is under the rule of the British imperialists. The main economic activity of our people is to work on the farms, mines and industries of South Africa. Our workers migrate to work in South Africa on contract and return home on completion of their contracts. As far as land relations are concerned, they are prefeudal. The land by law belongs to the Basotho nation and is held

in trust for the nation by the ruler Mosheshoe II. There is no individual ownership. The interest of the British imperialists who have vast interests in the Republic of South Africa has been to ensure the efficient flow of labour to that country. Inside Basutoland itself no serious economic development took place. There is not a single factory in Basutoland. Agriculture is at a subsistence level. The governmental system is simple, and the apparatus of coercion is insignificant. We have no national bourgeoisie.

‘In these conditions the Communist Party of Lesotho believes it is possible to unite the workers, peasants and intelligentsia under the leadership of the working class party into a revolutionary force capable of carrying out revolutionary changes by peaceful means. Provided there is a guarantee against imperialist counter revolution, the internal enemies have not got the means to suppress the revolutionary people.

‘And what would the process of development be after the working class took power in such a country as ours? Taking over a country with communal tribal land relations inhabited by workers with experience of working on the mines, industries and farms of neighbouring South Africa, the first task would be to lay the foundations for a modern economy and to introduce agrarian reform. Such an economy to begin with could hardly be called a socialist economy nor would it be capitalist. It would be more correct to refer to it as a non-capitalist economy. The state form would be a national democracy—an independent national democracy. Then we would move to socialism and finally communism.’

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RHODESIA The Smith minority government is intensifying its regime of repression against the people. With over 2,000 political activists in concentration camps, it has passed new measures including compulsory death sentences for those found in possession of bombs or grenades, and twenty years imprisonment for possession of ‘offensive weapons’. At the same time, special repressive powers are being given to the tribal chiefs who recently attended Mr. Smith’s secret ‘indaba’ at which the chiefs are said to have voted for independence of Rhodesia under the white dominated present constitution. Chiefs and headmen are being given firearms, and provided with special powers to deal with what the government terms ‘troublemakers’, including powers

of banishment. Government loudspeaker vans have been touring all African townships, threatening the opposition and stating that Africans will never again be allowed to form political parties.

In an attempt to bolster the Smith regime, Verwoerd's government has signed a trade treaty with Rhodesia which will give Rhodesian manufacturers easier access to South African markets, a form of economic subsidy to help Smith's regime survive the economic crisis. South African industrialists, particularly in the clothing trade, have always bitterly opposed any such step, because they fear competition on South African markets from Rhodesian factories paying lower wages. What *quid pro quo* Smith has given Verwoerd for this concession has not been revealed.

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MALAWI Five ex-ministers of Dr. Banda's government—three summarily sacked by Dr. Banda and the others resigned in protest at the sackings—issued a slashing attack on Dr. Banda and his policy. 'Banda must be regarded as an enemy of Africa worse than Tshombe . . . a puppet of Portugal and her allies' they stated immediately after the sacking. The five, Messrs. Chiume, Chisiza, Chirwa, Chokani and Bwanausi allege that Dr. Banda has appointed a member of the Portuguese security forces to be Malawi consul in Mozambique; that he has increased his country's trade with South Africa in defiance of all-African calls for boycott; that he has ordered Malawians working in the Republic of South Africa to obey Verwoerd's laws; and that he is negotiating an exchange of territory with the Portuguese, to enable the Portuguese to form a buffer strip on its Northern frontier for use against Mozambique freedom fighters who have been reported in action in the area.

Dr. Banda has taken special emergency powers to detain without trial anyone whose detention is '. . . reasonably required in the interests of defence, public safety or public order'. Another amendment to the constitution is designed to deprive the five ex-ministers and a sixth, Mr. H. Chipembere, of their seats in Parliament; it empowers the Prime Minister to dismiss from Parliament any M.P. who 'ceases to represent' the party for which he stood at the time of his election.

SUDAN Popular revolution, led by the National Front which unites all democratic forces in the country, has overthrown the military dictatorship headed by General Abboud, and set up a new National Front government. The military regime, which seized power by *coup d'état* in 1958, two years after the country's independence was proclaimed, survived an earlier popular insurrection in November 1959 through bloody repression, during which the leaders of political parties and trade unions were arrested and deported and their organizations outlawed. The National Front has grown in illegality. The general discontent of the population against the regime of repression has grown immeasurably during the past year due to the sharply deteriorating economic conditions and prices which have risen by as much as 30 per cent.

The National Front government has undertaken to restore democratic liberties at home, and follow a consistently anti-imperialist policy abroad. First fruits of this policy have been seen in the freeing of all political detainees, the restoration of political rights to political parties (including the Communist Party, which is represented in the Government), and the rendering of considerable aid to the anti-Tshombe forces in the Congo. A start has been made towards restoring the unity of the southern population with the northern—mainly Arab—a unity which General Abboud's policy of repression in the south shattered. The new government has promised elections before March, and a new constitution to be placed before the people for discussion and adoption. Under strong pressure from members of the armed forces who sided with the peoples' uprising, all the members of the Armed Forces Supreme Council which headed the military dictatorship, have been arrested, and a democratic purge of the army's ranks is imminent.

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THE OPPENHEIMER EMPIRE South Africa's sprawling industrial and financial giant, Anglo-American Corporation, already well entrenched in South Africa, Rhodesia, Zambia (copper), Tanzania (diamonds) and elsewhere has announced a new, large scale venture in Mozambique—a £1 million first investment in a fish canning and freezing industry at Porta Amelia. Anglo-American will be the main shareholder with Portuguese interests and South Africa's fisheries' monopolists, Irvin and Johnson, in what will eventually be a £15 million investment, to be known as Industries de Peize

Nostra Senhora de Fatima, which will employ eventually 800 whites and 10,000 Africans. The technicians will be mainly South African and Rhodesian. Managing Director Oppenheimer said recently that his company would like to expand its stake in Tanzania; it was prospecting for gold, copper or nickel but had not yet found anything worth while.

Another growing South African mining-financial concern, Federale Mynbou, with good political connections with the Verwoerd government and close economic ties in many joint ventures with Anglo-American, is reportedly negotiating a take-over of the Portuguese oil company, Petrofina, which produces oil in Angola. The negotiations are said by South African reporters to be conducted through the Portuguese Government, and to include a Federale Mynbou application for an oil prospecting concession in Southern Angola. Angolan oil, widely seen in South Africa as the means to break any future U.N. oil sanctions against the country, would be shipped to Walvis Bay—another good reason for Verwoerd's determination to cling to South-West Africa.

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ZAMBIA The British South Africa (Chartered) Company, raised its revenue from Zambian copper by over half in the year ended September 1964, to a figure of over £15 million after paying 20 per cent of its net mineral revenue to the government. The Company's claim to continuing royalties for every ton of copper mined in Zambia—a claim which the Zambian independence movement has always opposed as bare-faced robbery—has been ended by the payment to the Company of £4 million, half paid by Zambia and half by the British government.

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KENYA Immediately after presiding over Kenya's independence day ceremonies on December 13th, President Jomo Kenyatta opened the Patrice Lumumba Institute at Kamiti, seven miles from Nairobi. The school, dedicated to the memory of Lumumba, '... for his firm championship of genuine political and economic independence and socialism in Africa', will train one hundred and eight students at a time as cadres of the party. Journalists, civil servants and promising party members will be trained in the K.A.N.U. party spirit in theory and practice of African socialism. The school was paid for by donations from Afro-Asian and socialist states.

NIGERIA The General Election at the end of December was effectively boycotted in many regions by the main opposition parties headed by the National Convention of Nigerian Citizens (N.C.N.C.) because of the reign of terror during the election period maintained by the ruling Northern People's Congress. Over 16,000 opponents of the government were arrested, and troops opened fire on demonstrators. Widespread dissatisfaction exists with the Abubaker Balewa government, which has allowed Nigeria to become a prey of neo-colonialism, hindered African unity and even backed Tshombe. The elections were a farce, the boycott being complete in very many regions. A number of court cases are pending to unseat candidates 'elected' in these conditions. Nevertheless, influenced by Dr. Azikwe, a strong upholder of Nigerian unity who fears tendencies to balkanization under the weak Federal constitution imposed by British imperialism, the N.C.N.C. has decided to give the Federal Government 'a fair trial'. The Socialist Workers' and Farmers' Party, based on Marxist principles, is gaining strength as a unifying, progressive, anti-feudal and anti-tribalist force.

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ANGOLA The O.A.U. 'Committee of Nine' (Committee for the Liberation of Africa) has decided to recognize the People's Movement for Liberation of Angola (M.P.L.A.) and to give it technical and material aid. Previously the Committee had recognized only Roberto Holden's 'Provisional Government' (G.R.A.E.) which is backed by the Congo (Leopoldville) Government. The Cairo O.A.U. Conference last July appointed a special committee for reconciliation between the different liberation movements in Angola, particularly between M.P.L.A. and G.R.A.E., but Holden refused to appear before this Committee. The Committee heard a report from M.P.L.A. representatives, as a result of which it decided to go to Brazzaville and even visited one of the military bases near the Cabinda frontier. As a result it was convinced of the military and organizational strength, the sincerity and patriotism, of the M.P.L.A. It decided 'the M.P.L.A. is a serious movement, active and capable of leading an effective struggle'. Therefore it will receive aid and assistance, but the Committee of Nine will continue to make efforts at conciliation between the two movements.