

HENRY KISSINGER'S AFRICAN SAFARI :

PRESSURING RHODESIA WHILE BOLSTERING APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA

Dear Friends:

More profitable and "adventurous" than hunting big game in "wild" Africa is the global reach of Pax Americana into 300-year-old and neo-fascist-settled-apartheid-South Africa. It isn't that Secretary of State Henry Kissinger doesn't appreciate being backed up by \$1.5 billion American private investment there, much less that private capital is reaping the highest rate of profit anywhere in the world. And he certainly does admire the great experience in the daily practice of counter-revolution of Vorster's South Africa that much exceeds Professor Kissinger's previous concentration on "balance of power" politics of Metternich's 19th century Europe.

So enamored indeed is he of his new role in "far distant continents" that he has been trying to brainwash the public to the effect, that South Africa cannot at all be compared to "European settlements" in Africa like Rhodesia. Supposedly the fact that the Dutch came to South Africa 300 years back has erased their exploitative, oppressive, racist Eurocentrism. Why then today's forced cheap Black labor, and why when apartheid was first projected as so-called "Bantu education" in 1953⁽¹⁾ by the white supremacist Nazi predecessor of Vorster, Verwoerd, did he shout: "There is no place for him (the African) in the European community above the level of certain forms of labor."

Just as the native Africans rightly declared then that this was "education for slavery", so today the Black liberation struggle has widened and expanded to the point of actual foundations for social revolution, which is exactly what compelled Kissinger's ominous African Safari. That is to say, in opposing the developing social revolution which binds US imperialism to apartheid South Africa, the Secretary of State has found

a new form for conducting the global struggle with Russia in which he failed when he tried stopping the Angolan revolution.

No need to track back no less than 300 years of imperial oppression, or even as close to our times as 1953 (not to mention World War II when apartheid South Africa was openly with Nazi Germany) to get a view of the injection of Big Power struggle for single world domination into the liberation struggles. No, the imperial new emerged, and full blast at once, with the fall of fascist Portugal in 1974.

As the revolution in Portugal deepened and the fight for independence of its former colonies succeeded, that was the moment NATO saw itself being undermined at its Southern European "underbelly". At the same time the U.S.'s global reach in Africa disclosed NATO's globally militaristic-banking-Oedipus (Big White Father) complex. The red hot climax was reached when the MPLA, which had gained the aid of Russia and Cuba, won out against the nationalist (FNLA, UNITA) factions that had become the puppets of Zaire-South Africa and U.S. (with China standing at a not too far distance away). It isn't that Russia didn't have its own imperial interest at heart. It is that the Angolan Revolution was genuine, was not deflected, which doesn't mean it won't ever be deflected. The very life of the Angolan Revolution demands that it does not close its eyes to Russia's state-capitalist nature, and not only of its exploitative nature in Russia and its East European satellites, but because Russia's global reach far outweighs Angola in Africa, even as China, from its end, makes sure that Africa be burdened with the Sino-Soviet embroilment.

The dialectic of revolution/counter-revolution need move no further than June-October, 1976, as Vorster's South Africa joined the cabal headed by U.S. imperialism which allowed it to shift from the totality of crisis within South Africa to allegedly supporting "majority rule" in Rhodesia "within two years".

On June 16 apartheid South African police fired into a peaceful march of 10,000 Soweto⁽²⁾ youth opposing the forced study of the Afrikaans language. The spontaneous youth revolt was by no means limited to the opposition of studying their oppressors' language, but developed other totally new aspects, centering around a Black Consciousness Movement and the

slogan Amandhla (power). No sooner had the bloody week ended, with 168 Blacks (and 2 whites) lying dead, officially, and many more unofficially, and hundreds dragged into jail, than Henry Kissinger met secretly with John Vorster in West Germany. That week Kissinger did not consent to be photographed with Vorster, but let out word that "progress" was being made.

As it turned out, however, not a word was said by either on Soweto; what they talked about was Rhodesia.

Throughout July there were more maneuverings on Namibia, with Vorster refusing so much as to talk to the universally recognized SWAPO as the voice of Namibia while continuing his illegal occupation of that country. The intensification of guerrilla fighting for the freedom of Zimbabwe (Rhodesia) did bring about another Kissinger meeting with Vorster, this time in Zurich. This time the two were photographed but not shaking hands. Kissinger covered up his imperialist designs by saying the two—South Africa and the U.S.—are "seeking to ensure peaceful change".

Again, however, South African counter-revolution was not the subject; Rhodesia was.

The deepening of the revolt in South Africa erupted in August with a general strike. This time the students, with a constant change of leadership from below as the repression became more brutal, revealed that the masses were not only being called out under the slogan of Azikwelwar (Do not ride), but a great dynamism of ideas was proceeding apace in the underground with the reading and discussion of Frantz Fanon's Wretched of the Earth, the Autobiography of Malcolm X as well as Rev. King's "March to Freedom!"⁽³⁾ Even the official apartheid press had to admit that this was not just a student action, but that the overwhelming majority of the Black proletariat did not report to work. The whole South African economy came to a standstill for three full days.

It was just then that Kissinger decided to go directly to Pretoria. The demonstrations against his appearance, the South African police shooting

the demonstrators, killing six and arresting scores of others, did not stop our phony peacenik ("transition to majority rule via peaceful means") from propping up bloody apartheid rule as he shook hands with Vorster, announcing joint agreement for "majority rule within two years"-- in Rhodesia.

The secret agreement he would present to Ian Smith in Rhodesia was kept secret. Not a single word was spoken about South Africa itself, beginning with Soweto in June, through Johannesburg in August, Cape Town and now Pretoria in September. Yet, at least 300 Blacks lay dead, thousands were injured and countless more were in jail. One way official statistics claim "only 821" arrests is by brazenly announcing that the other 2,500 arrested were not Freedom Fighters, but "tsotsis" (young hooligans). And how does our Professor-specialist-on-history square that with the coalescence of still newer revolutionary forces like the "Coloureds" (South African designation for those of mixed blood), who, for the first time, acted in unison with Black protestors?

On September 2, Coloured and Black Africans marched together in Cape Town and for the first time the largest action took place in the area reserved for whites. On Sept. 6, the new militancy of the "Coloureds" shook up the whites who, operating on the old principle of "divide and rule", granted the "Coloureds" certain privileges both in owning property and not being subject to the pass laws. Instead, they now heard one Coloured intellectual say: "One thing that seems very clear is that they are not only rejecting the entire system of separate development, but they are also rejecting our traditional leaders."⁽⁴⁾ Indeed, one of the old organizers, who himself had been shorn of his passport by the authorities -- 65-year-old head of the Coloured Labor Party, Sonny Leon -- not only admitted as much, but seemed to approve what the young Coloured were doing. As one young girl put it: a few years ago, they all wanted to be "like the whites. Now we know we are the victims of a system that must change, and that is our only demand, an immediate end to inequality."

The Ominousness of Henry Kissinger's role in South Africa at the very moment when the coalescence of revolutionary forces in South Africa

itself has opened a new chapter in the fight for freedom can't however, either be separated from Russia's ambitions, or be easily aided by some Black African leaders who do hope for a solution to the problem of Rhodesia. The sudden near-hero role of the Secretary of State of racist USA cannot be just laughed off; it is the real tragedy of present political realities in Rhodesia, and it is to that we must now turn.

When the five Black African presidents of the five front-line states--Nyerere of Tanzania, Kaunda of Zambia, Khama of Botswana, Machel of Mozambique and Neto of Angola--first rejected the Ian Smith-Kissinger plan for alleged "majority rule" in Zimbabwe (Rhodesia), it sounded revolutionary: "The Presidents have carefully studied the proposals outlined by the illegal and racist regime which, if accepted, would be tantamount to legalising the colonialist and racist structure of power... A lute continua "(Portuguese: "the struggle continues").⁽⁵⁾

Unfortunately, this was followed up with private assurances that they meant only to reject Ian Smith's interpretation, not Henry Kissinger's agreement. With it came suggestions on how to get from under "the assurances" Smith said he got from Kissinger and which became the basis for his consent to "majority Black rule." In any case, here is what Smith said he agreed to:

The interim period to majority rule "within two years"⁽⁶⁾ would consist of:

(1) A council of State, which would be half white, half Black, with a white president presiding.

(2) The Council of Ministers would supposedly have a Black majority, but the Ministers of Defense and Law and Order would remain in white hands.

(3) Though ZIPA (the Zimbabwe People's Army) is not part of the Kissinger plan, the Black presidents of the front line states are supposed to see to it that the guerrilla war ends the minute the interim government is installed.

(4) Not only is the UN, too, at once to drop its sanctions against Rhodesia, but what is a great deal more assuring, a hefty "International Fund" is to be set up to help the Rhodesian economy and to pay the whites to keep them from fleeing the country.

No wonder the five Black presidents not only at once declared any such agreement "tantamount to legalizing the colonialist and racist structure of power", but made it clear that, far from "diplomacy" having achieved the few miserable concessions, it was the people's struggles that compelled the confrontation with realities of Rhodesia(Zimbabwe): Six million Black revolutionaries against 270,000 whites lording it over them:

(1) "The struggle of the people of Zimbabwe, the African and international solidarity in the implementation of sanctions and coordinated action of all anti-colonialist forces and States, have together brought the isolation and collapse of the illegal racist minority regime in the British colony of Southern Rhodesia. "

(2) The Presidents "hailed and congratulated the people and fighters of Zimbabwe, whose hard and heroic armed struggle forced the rebel regime and the enemy in general to recognise and accept the inevitability of majority rule, the need to establish immediately a transitional Government to implement this principle. "

(3) "Now that the pressures of armed struggle have forced the enemy to accept majority rule as a condition for immediate independence, the five Presidents call upon the colonial authority, the British Government, to convene at once a conference outside Zimbabwe with the authentic and legitimate representatives of the people".

The last point--the calling of a conference, not under Rhodesian chairmanship, but British, not in Lusaka but outside of Zimbabwe--was won. But it hardly speaks well for "democracy" that two such entirely different versions could be given of what it was that Kissinger said of "Black majority rule." Nor can we forget that Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia was so very anxious to come to some agreement with Rhodesia that he could have, months back, even accepted Vorster as a "negotiator" with Ian Smith. The positive features are that ZIPA is not a party to the Kissinger plan,

is continuing its struggle, and that South Africa itself is seething with revolt.

What Kissinger, in his "farewell address" to the UN on September 30, said of the Russians more especially characterizes Pax Americana: "Their performance is in inverse ratio to their rhetoric."⁽⁷⁾

The ominous feature of Kissinger's African safari is that it, at one and the same time, injected the global struggle between the two nuclear titans for single world domination into the African struggles, and granted respectability to the universally hated apartheid South Africa. While the excuse for the latter was supposed to be that South Africa, and only South Africa, could have pressured Rhodesia to the negotiating table, the truth is that South Africa did so just in order to give itself more time for its total counter-revolution--and not only in South Africa but everywhere on that continent. It is that, just that, which makes South Africa so very attractive to U.S. rulers. But, while no one doubts that, ideological confusion abounds on all other issues.

When the African Revolutions first unfolded, in the late 1950's and early 1960's, it electrified the world not only because in a single decade it had reshaped the map of Africa, but also because the banner of liberation it raised was charged with dynamism of ideas, contrasting sharply with the most famous monopoly of all--the U.S.'s underdeveloped intellectuals who were then expounding "the end of ideology". *

By now, the many military coups have so far removed the leadership from the masses that one can hardly distinguish "Left" from "Right". One thing, however, did remain incontestable: the political independence won from imperialism would never be total so long as there was no true economic independence, so long as South Africa remains untouched. In this era of confrontation--in the period since the Portuguese Revolution and the independence of Mozambique and Angola, when the Goliath itself is faced--there can be no illusions that the approach to that final battle will be aided by "taking sides" between the two nuclear titans--Russia and the USA.

*The Appendix of my pamphlet, Nationalism, Communism, Marxist-Humanism and the Afro-Asian Revolutions, is herewith reproduced.

There was a time, when the Sino-Soviet conflict first burst out, that Mao remained the pure revolutionary who stood for "continuous, uninterrupted revolutions", and thus would not rest still until not only Russia was brought down to size, but that most powerful and evil of all imperialisms--the U.S.--would be destroyed. As I wrote, first in Marxism and Freedom, and then in Philosophy and Revolution, and since then in the Political-Philosophical Letters, a K.S. Karol and the whole Left were not only willing to forgive Mao all the errors he had committed, but also leave a few blank pages for any he might commit until death--all on the basis that he, and he alone would fight U.S. imperialism to the death.

And what is the legacy he left--the "Cultural Revolution"? Well, logically, of necessity, and in fact, this raising of superstructure above actual production relations could not but have led to the very opposite of the conclusion he claimed to have drawn from it about continuous revolutions--THE THROWING OUT OF THE MASSES IN GENERAL AND THE WORKING CLASS IN PARTICULAR, LEAVING, HOWEVER, INTACT THE PARTY, HIS THOUGHT, THE INTELLECTUAL, AS THE SUPREME RULER. And that is how it now is: from Mao's China sans Mao to every petty-bourgeois egoist-carcenist everywhere as well as the actual powers that be. None more so than Kissinger and "his" Pax Americana. His African Safari was but one step in rounding out the globe for that Pax Americana. Now he will return with added glory to the Middle East, and to Europe, West Germany in particular, which still remains the key to Europe and the western world.

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FOOTNOTES

(1) I have written much of the year, 1953, as it has been historically important as the year that, on the one hand, saw the death of Stalin, and, on the other hand, the East German Revolt, the very first ever from under totalitarianism. What I haven't written about before is its relationship to Africa. Because it was also, on the one hand, the beginning of the awakening of the revolutionaries on the continent, and on the other hand, Verwoerd's fascistic "Bantu education", it became the transition point in Russia's interest in Africa. It saw the publication of the first contemporary Russian book devoted entirely to Africa, a publication of the Academy of Sciences--The Imperialist Struggle for Africa and the People's Liberation Movement. If you will recall back to 1955 we were the first to publish Mbiyu Koinange's The People of Kenya Speak for Themselves, and I laughed heartily when, in 1957, I found their Afrikanski Etnographicheski Sbornik (African Ethnographic Miscellany) quoting Koinange. Naturally no credit was given to us. The work done in 1953-1959, however, when first the Sino-Soviet Conflict erupted and China started contesting Russia's stake in "The Third World", has now come full circle in the interjections by Russia and China into the African Revolutions, trying to subordinate them to the global struggle for single world domination. (See also African Studies in the USSR by Mary Holdsworth.)

(2) Jennifer Davis, the South African economist research director for the American Committee on Africa, has written a fine short article, "Soweto 1976--The Struggle Against Apartheid" which was published in Christianity and Crisis, July, 19, 1976, and a reprint of it can be gotten from the American Committee on Africa, 305 E. 46th St., NYC, 10017.

(3) See the article in Washington Post, 9/26/1976, by their Black correspondent, David B. Ottaway.

(4) New York Times, 9/7/1976.

(5) Of the daily white press, only The Manchester Guardian Weekly (10/3/1976) has the brief statement of the "Five Black President's Reply", which we will quote further later. But the same issue has the most curious and reactionary two pieces, "Kissinger promises more than he can perform", and "Smith's Concessions and Conditions".

(6) Ian Smith's Address was produced in full in the New York Times, 9/25/1976.

(7) Henry Kissinger's 75 minute speech was not produced in full or even in part, though both a front page article, and a sort of "eulogy" by James Reston appeared in the New York Times, 10/1/1976.