

## EDITORIAL NOTES

### On Guard for Peace

BEHIND all the talk which one hears so often in Africa about "neutrality" and "non-commitment to power blocs" there often lies a certain line of thought. It is this: there are two great groups of countries, the "West" (i.e. the imperialist powers and their clients and hangers-on) and the "East" (i.e., the socialist countries). Now, it is argued, the danger of world war arises from the stubbornness and intransigence of both these "blocs", each of which is assumed to be equally bellicose and responsible for the cold war; and the conclusion which is drawn is that we, the uncommitted, the holy, must say "a plague on both your houses," or at any rate try to act as mediators to talk the nuclear powers into a more reasonable frame of mind, and thus avert the dreadful menace of war. It is a plausible line, often well meant. The trouble is that it rests on a fundamental misconception and confusion.

True, war is a dreadful menace, to Africa no less than to any other part of the world. It requires vigorous action by peace-loving people all over the world if we are to be spared the calamity of a nuclear holocaust which each month of the latter part of 1961 seems to be bringing nearer to reality. But effective action rests not on good intentions but on clear thinking and understanding. No such clear thinking is possible if it does not recognise the basic fact of the present international situation: the root difference between the policy of the socialist camp and that of the imperialist camp. The socialist countries stand for peace. The imperialist countries live by war; they have been continually at war for the past half-century, and the one thing that deters them from the ultimate horror of World War Three is their fear of losing it—that is, their fear of the strength of the Soviet Union and its fraternal allies of the socialist camp.

Not for one moment have the imperialist powers laid down their arms. Since the end of the second world war they have been constantly fighting all over the world; all over Asia—in Burma, Malaya, Indonesia, Viet Nam, Korea and other countries, where British, French, American and other colonialist troops fought wars of conquest against patriots seeking national emancipation; all over Africa—in Kenya and the Congo, in Algeria and Angola, where the

N.A.T.O. powers are still fighting wars of conquest against African people today ; and in Latin America where the leading imperialist power, the United States tried, successfully, to overthrow a democratic republic in Guatemala, and, unsuccessfully, to do the same in Cuba.

### **PRETTIFYING IMPERIALISM**

There is a school of thought which tries to cover up this reality, to prettify imperialism, by painting it as a generous benefactor, conferring the gift of independence upon grateful colonial peoples. For instance, the Cape Town fortnightly "Contact" edited by Mr. Patrick Duncan, a leading member of the Liberal Party, known for his obsessive hatred of Communism, writes (July 27, 1961) :

"All the European powers, except for Portugal, have given or are giving independence to all their colonial possessions in Africa and Asia. The West is thus the friend of colonial freedom."

No African patriot or freedom fighter will need to be told that this grotesque picture painted by Mr. Duncan is the very reverse of the truth. We remember the long, bitter and bloody struggles that had to be waged against the colonialists before they could be forced to retreat from their ill-gotten colonial "possessions." How does this picture of "Contact" fit in with the fact that scores of leaders of African and Asian countries—Nehru of India, Nkrumah of Ghana and now Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya—have emerged directly from imperialist dungeons to become recognised leaders of their countries ? And we suppose that tomorrow, when Angola wins her struggle after bloody battles and countless deaths and sacrifices at the hands of the Portuguese fascists, Mr. Duncan will paint Salazar, too, as a benign emancipator and "friend of colonial freedom." It would seem, according to this strange reasoning that when you finally manage to kick someone out of your house, after he has entered it by force and has long been lording it there and robbing you of all you have, you are expected humbly to thank him—for getting out !

No imperialists ever got willingly out of their colonies. If we have seen a glorious tide of national liberation sweeping over Asia and Africa in our times, it is not because of any kindness and generosity of the West ; it is because of the heroic struggles and sacrifices of millions of Asian and African patriots who stood up to take their freedom for themselves ; it is because, weakened in the course of the second world war, imperialism was no longer able to resist

the irresistible liberation movements ; and *it is above all because of the existence in the world today of a mighty, militarily and economically powerful alliance of socialist countries, irreconcilably opposed to colonialism, which has unfurled the glorious banner of freedom and national independence throughout the world.*

### **THE LESSON OF SUEZ**

The imperialists have not lost their appetite for colonies. They strive, by all means within their power, to get in through the back door after they have been thrown out of the front door—to regain through economic domination, the stranglehold they once held by political domination over economically-backward (backward *because* of their rule) countries. And if it were not for the constant challenge of the world socialist system, which they hate and fear but cannot destroy, they would attempt to restore direct colonialism tomorrow. Let us not forget the lesson of the Suez incident but a few years ago, when mighty Britain and France, invaded Egypt, backed up behind the scenes by the U.S.A. and openly by the army of Israel. The Egyptian people resisted gallantly—but it was the stern warning of the Soviet Government that sent the imperialists scuttling from Egypt with their tails between their legs : a warning that was backed up, as they well knew, by the might of a great power second to none in the world.

This is a lesson which we, and especially we Africans, can never afford to forget. We are proud of the many independent African States that have come forward in the past few years to claim their place as equals in the world family of nations. We know that their independence was dearly bought by our people in the course of desperate struggles against the colonialists. We know, too, and every African and Asian leader knows (though not all would be honest enough to admit it) that the brilliant and inspiring advance of national liberation in our times has been and still is made possible because, *on guard for peace and national independence*, stands the powerful alliance of the Socialist Commonwealth of nations, and in particular the formidable might of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics, armed with a scientific, industrial, military and moral advantage—the fruit of forty-four years of socialism and workers' power—which imperialism cannot and dare not challenge.

As we are writing, a conference of uncommitted states is taking place in Belgrade, and many of our young African Republics are attending it. They have every right to do so, and indeed, for

many of them their presence marks part of a healthy process of moving away from the "sphere of influence" of imperialism which they previously occupied. Nor can we doubt that the countries of Africa and Asia have a profound and important contribution to make to the cause of world peace. The speeches and resolutions of the conference strained to demonstrate its "impartiality" as between "East" and "West"; "favouring neither one side nor the other." A delegation was sent to Premier Khrushchev, another to President Kennedy. Calls were made, and properly so too, for disarmament, the banning of nuclear tests and weapons, great-power negotiations. But the crucial questions went unanswered: who in the world today stands for war, and who for peace and national independence? Although, in his heart, every delegate at Belgrade knew that not one of the States they represent would exist—there would be no Republic of India nor of Ghana, no socialist Yugoslavia—but for the existence and the strength, the vigilance and the preparedness of the socialist camp. And if, for whatever reason, that vigilance were to falter, if the imperialists were allowed once again to gain a preponderance in the world, it is precisely the "uncommitted," the smaller countries, the newly-liberated nations striving to overcome the crippling heritage of colonialism, that would be the first to suffer. And they know it.

## DISARMAMENT AND NUCLEAR TESTS

Only against this background can we adequately consider the stormy problems of present-day international affairs; the mounting tension over the proposed Soviet-German peace treaty; the extra 3,000-million dollars announced for U.S. armaments, followed by the Soviet resumption of nuclear tests. The Soviet Union has always demanded the outlawing and destruction of nuclear weapons. She was the first nuclear power to volunteer, unilaterally, to discontinue tests in the hope that others would follow her example. The immediate reaction of the Western powers was to intensify nuclear tests and it was only reluctantly that the United States and Britain, impelled by overwhelming public opinion, later suspended them.

It was therefore "with a heavy heart" (in the words of its official statement) that the Soviet Government announced its decision to resume tests of nuclear weapons, and this sadness and disappointment have been shared by many of its admirers and sup-