

# Anglo-American Plan for Control of Colonies

By George Padmore

**W**HAT portends the visit to London of Field Marshal—or, as he modestly prefers to be styled, General—Smuts and his entry into the conclaves of the supreme Imperial Directorate, the War Cabinet?

When it became necessary at the end of the First World War to drape "the crudity of conquest in the veil of morality," General Smuts, willing collaborator of the British Imperialism, devised Article 22 of the League of Nations Covenant, which became the basis of the Mandates System. This covering device enabled Britain and her Dominions to carve over 500,000 square miles out of the prostrate carcasses of the German and Turkish Colonial Empires.

Today, Germany has no overseas empire, and the Italian Empire, in Mr. Churchill's words, "is irretrievably lost." But only to Italy, of course. Some other Power or Powers will most readily assume the "white man's burden" for these territories. And as things are, these Powers can be only Britain and America. France, who shared the spoils with Britain in 1918, is now disqualified.

America, however, has indicated through Mr. Henry Villard, Assistant Chief of the State Department's Division of Near Eastern Affairs, that its "Government, in keeping with its traditional policy throughout the world, has no designs on the colonial possessions of other nations, and no desire to carve for its exclusive benefit any portion of Africa."

This, then, leaves Britain alone to take advantage of any colonial spoils. With the prospect of approaching triumph, therefore, there is pressing need of a formulated colonial plan which will present an international facade to the world. Whatever democratic camouflage the politicians may decide upon, however, any plan for reconstitution of Empire must encompass at least three objectives:

1. Retention of political sovereignty of its colonial territories by the possessing Power;
2. Accommodation of America's commercial and strategic requirements. For the U.S.A. will emerge from this war as the dominant imperialist power, whose needs for new markets, sources of raw materials, air and sea bases, etc., will have to be satisfied.
3. Appeasement of the aspirations of Colonial peoples for self-government.

Here at once are contradictions which can be resolved only with extreme difficulty, if they can be resolved at all. So British imperialists have once again called in that master of political legerdemain, General Smuts, who aided by the late Lord Lothian, Ambassador to Washington, so ably designed a cloak

*Apparently the last thing the British intend to give up are their colonies, but in order to justify holding them and adding others, she must work out some plan with a democratic facade, and this General Jan Christiaan Smuts has very cleverly done*

for colonial depredations after the last war. The General has not been found lacking, and has evolved a scheme which is being boosted under the title of "Regionalism."

Inasmuch as this Boer politician has been built up by the City of London—whose interests he so ably represents in South Africa against the intransigent Afrikanders—as a man remarkable for his statesmanship and probity, his proposals are vested with extreme authority. Moreover, the very fact of his being Dutch and not British, is less likely to arouse the suspicions of the City's Wall Street rivals.

## Smuts' Plan

Roughly, General Smuts's plan proposes to group the various colonial territories of the several powers into loose geographical regions. Each group of territories would be covered by a Consultative Regional Council, on which would sit representatives of the various powers possessing colonies in the respective zone, and also of states having strategic and/or commercial interests in that area. Thus the Caribbean territories — British, French, Dutch, etc.—would be united into a West Indian Region under a joint council in which the possessing powers, and also America, Canada and Newfoundland, because of strategic and commercial interests, would participate. The various colonies of the Indian Ocean and South Pacific (Ceylon, Mauritius, Dutch Indies), would be grouped into another region; while a Mediterranean and Near East zone would incorporate Malta, Cyprus, Palestine, Syria, and North Africa.

The West African colonies of the Gambia, Sierra Leone, the Gold Coast and Nigeria, together with the adjoining French colonies



*British Combine Paramount Chief Azzu Mate Kole of the African Gold Coast broadcasting an appeal to his people to increase their support of the war effort by producing more palm kernels and palm oil. Behind the chief is his boy attendant carrying the gold mounted Sword of State. Big colonial question is: will these chiefs be permitted to broadcast for Four Freedoms after the war?*



(French West and Equatorial Africa), Portuguese Angola, and the one or two strips of Spanish territory, would be brought into a West African Region under a Franco-British-Portuguese-Spanish Regional Council. Here again, America would be offered certain interests, because of the proximity of points like Dakar and Bathurst, Freetown and Monrovia, to the South American countries (Brazil in particular), who might also seek representation. In East Africa, a similar group would comprise Kenya, Tanganyika, Uganda, British, French and Italian Somaliland, and parts of Abyssinia, under joint South African, British, French and Italian control. (Count Sforza, Marshal "poison-gas" Badoglio's Charlie McCarthy, is plugging for an Italian mandate over Abyssinia.) The mandate of Southwest Africa and the Protectorates of Basutoland, Swaziland and Bechuanaland would be annexed to the Union of South Africa; and these, together with the two Rhodesias, Nyasaland, and the Belgian Congo and Portuguese territory of Mozambique, would be linked up to form a Greater South Africa region. It is within this regional group that South Africa hopes to exert the dominant influence.

Behind General Smuts's regional plan for Southern Africa, euphemistically described as "Pan-Africanism," is a conscious drive for wider internal markets for the output of the commodity interests which the war has inaugurated and expanded in the Union. The factories now producing for the war will be turned over to consumer goods when hostilities have ceased, in order to stave off unemployment and economic collapse. As well as with Britain, one of the big post-war problems facing the Union Government is the absorption of demobilized army men.

This "Regionalism," as a matter of fact, will give every assistance to the annexationist proclivities of the European settlers in South Africa, as it will provide them with a screen for the alienation of those native protectorates which the Colonial Office has been loath to turn over to them against progressive British public opinion.

### Function of Regionalism

"Regionalism" will allow these territories to be incorporated into the new political set-up without opposition. General Smuts has already accepted in principle a recent resolution from the completely white legislative assembly of the mandatory territory of South-West Africa for incorporation of this country in the Union as a fifth province. South-West Africa has a white population of about 25,000 and a native one of 250,000, and is presumed to be a ward of the League of Nations. General Smuts, therefore, not to antagonize public opinion in America at this time, has tactfully suggested to the European settlers that the matter should be left in abeyance until the whole problem of the redistribution of colonies is settled at the end of the war. The incorporation of this and

other neighboring territories into the Union is also aimed at tapping greater reserve of native labour for the mining industries and large-scale agriculture.

In general, "Regionalism" will consolidate the power of the white minorities in South Africa by bringing the various European communities within broader political frontiers. "Regionalism" propagandised as "Pan-Africanism," has an appeal for all Europeans in Southern Africa, but different sections in each of the territories concerned look to it to foster their own particular interests. For instance, the 20,000 Boers in Southern Rhodesia would like that country to be included in the Union, but the 40,000 Anglo-Saxons, while in favour of Smuts's "Pan-African" idea, do not wish to be brought under Afrikaner domination. Rather, they desire to carry on their own little Anglo-Saxon imperialist expansion, although quite willing to cooperate with the Afrikaners in the Union against the "black menace."

A constant fear of all these European settlers, Dutch and British, is the possibility of their being swamped by the overwhelmingly larger black populations, and it is thought that the new regional groupings would incidentally provide new lands for the increased white immigration which their governments intend to promote as a means of swelling the European minorities. The Union of South Africa is particularly sensitive to this problem and would like to see an influx of 20 million Europeans. Sir Godfrey Huggins, prime minister of Southern Rhodesia, too, has under consideration a scheme for introducing 500,000 more Anglo-Saxons into the country. The settlers lament that their number is limited to 60,000, and they consider their augmentation necessary on the grounds that European domination in Rhodesia will be eliminated unless a large white population is established; and this they maintain would be most disastrous for the native population, for whose progress the presence of white overlords is an absolute necessity. And where do these white settlers look to augment their numbers? To the little island of Britain, with its 46 million inhabitants, already declared by Mr. Churchill to be too small for power politics. Pity the poor Britons!

Viewed realistically, General Smuts's scheme will offer opportunities for colonial annexation for which the Mandates System has prepared the way. But we should now take a look to see how it will also meet the other requirements indicated above.

### Question of Sovereignty

Coming first to the question of sovereignty. General Smuts has declared that a provision of the Regional Councils is that they shall be purely consultative and have no administrative or executive powers. This idea has been endorsed by Colonel Oliver Stanley, Secretary of State for Colonies. A principle of the Regional Scheme is that the possessing powers shall retain political control of their col-

onies. The question of sovereignty is a fundamental one, for political control reserves the right to the colonial power to place its own nationals on the administrations, and gives it economic prerogatives, even though these will have to be shared with America in certain regions.

For the potentialities of United States production have increased enormously during the war, and even its vast continental domestic market will be absolutely unable to absorb its output. Wall Street is also accumulating greater and greater financial reserves for which it must seek avenues of investment abroad. General Smuts believes that the participation of America in his "regional" set-up would offer here those spheres for capital investment of which she will stand so much in need, and markets for capital goods and machinery. All of this will be a welcome necessity to the settlers in South Africa and the Rhodesias who have not themselves the resources to expand their industries. Referring to America's role in the form of post-war colonial cooperation, General Smuts told Reuters special correspondent in Pretoria on August 27 last that he was "all in favour of the Americans coming to Africa, and I support the idea of consultative councils on which America, as well as Britain and other interested countries, would be represented. America wants to trade and is opposed to imperialism or annexation."

It is quite true that American Big Business does not seem anxious to acquire political control of colonies, at any rate in Africa. Dollar diplomacy can secure the United States all the advantages it seeks without the responsibilities of policing overseas territories with Marines. This attitude is not evidence of any unique aversion of American Imperialism to expand territorially, but is rather the outcome of its world economic superiority. America today stands in that unique position which Britain occupied in the middle of the last century, when she was the workshop of the world, its banker and shipper; when Disraeli could say "colonies are millstones around our neck." Today Britain's industrial and financial supremacy has been superseded by that of America, and it is Mr. Roosevelt and not Mr. Churchill who can describe colonies as "millstones around our neck." Thus, the President has declared for Philippine independence before the due date in 1946, and has also recommended to Congress that the natives of Puerto Rico be allowed to select their governor as a step towards either self-government or inclusion as another state within the U.S.A. When you are rich you can afford to be generous!

Whether, however, America participates in any scheme of international cooperation or resumes her inter-war role of isolationism is all one as far as her world economic dominance is concerned. In an imperialistic age, she, the greatest imperialist power, must play lead, and all other interests will finally be subordinated to hers.

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## Smuts' Internationalism

International cooperation such as that envisaged in General Smuts's proposal will, there is no doubt, provide a means of satisfying the "Open Door" policy and "the Most-Favoured Nation Principle" which leading Americans are demanding, although others, in particular Wendell Willkie, look upon any retention of the old political Empire structure as standing in the way of Yankee interests. Mr. Willkie represents that point of view which believes that if colonial territories are free of the direct political control of European Government, especially Britain, the native Asiatic, African and West Indian bourgeoisies are more likely to turn to Wall Street than to the "City" of London for the capital machinery and financial assistance they will require to establish some kind of modern industry within their new sovereign states. This is the basis of Mr. Willkie's advocacy of colonial independence, which is a very clever manoeuvre, since it enlists the sympathetic support of large sections of public opinion in America and the Colonies.

If "Regionalism" will offer likely accommodation of American interests, how will it achieve appeasement of the national aspirations of colonial populations? Among the proposals put forward is one for "association" of natives on the Regional councils, and behind this can be detected a very tricky device to put off the self-government of those territories which are considered to be almost "ripe" for it at the present time, while the need of independence of more backward countries cannot possibly have any *raison d'être* in a regionally constituted world.

The British Tories intend to meet the national aspirations of the native peoples, which have been stimulated and reinforced by the lofty ideals embodied in the Atlantic Charter and Roosevelt's Four Freedoms, by offering satisfaction in very minor representation by members of their intelligentsia on councils, commissions and legislative bodies, and a wider participation in local administrative services, hitherto exclusively preserved for Britishers. Already fourteen natives from the colonies of British West Africa have been brought to this country under the aegis of the Colonial Development and Welfare Fund to be trained in social service. When they have graduated, these men will be returned to their countries to take over from the ignorant chiefs who at present administrate under the benevolence of indirect rule, and will be used to put a brake on the African independence movement.

To this end, a native elite will be sponsored and groomed for government service. While satisfying the ambitions of this section of the middle-class intelligentsia, this method, so like the French pre-war system of "assimilating" certain natives, will deprive the mass of workers and peasants of their potential leadership.

Considered from the angle of the three

objectives posed, General Smuts's scheme would seem to contain possibilities of meeting the post-war needs of British capitalism in the colonial sphere. Even as the Mandates System carried over British Imperialism between the First and Second World Wars, "Regionalism" will contrive to carry it over into the Third World War. For this third war is inevitable, and any scheme endeavouring to accommodate all the insoluble conflicts inherent in capitalist-imperialism can only be a patchwork one, a hand to mouth contrivance capable only of temporary service. It is impossible to devise any plan to control the uncontrollable complexities of a competitive system, in which diplomacy has finally to seek its political objectives in war.

## Social Security

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and funds for preventive medicine and for research.

The cost of all this is to be paid by contributions of 6% of their pay from wage earners and 6% of their payroll from employers, plus 7% of their income from the self-employed, up to incomes of \$3,000 in each case. Persons who are self-employed get the benefits provided in the bill for old age insurance, survivors insurance, (i.e. payments to widows and young children of those who die prematurely) permanent disability payments, and medical and hospital care, but not cash payments for unemployment, sickness, or temporary injury. This cost is admittedly high. The authors of the bill intended it to be high in order to provide a sort of compulsory savings which would lay up a fund now when wages are high and there is full employment in order to take care of the unemployment that most people expect will develop after the war. Ideally some of the funds should be provided by the government out of money raised by general taxation, including taxes on big incomes, inheritance, corporation profits, and the profits from gambling in real estate,

## Mumbled Words

Gay, carefree, brotherly,  
Friendly soldiers;  
A happy circle, they.  
But when I pass,  
Serving our country too,—  
What are those mumbled words, they say?  
BOOKER T. MEDFORD

## Buy and Hold War Bonds

The best way to help America in the war, the best way to back up our boys on the battlefronts of the world is to buy War bonds. The best investment in Freedom and the future is War bonds. Not only buy them, but *hold* them.

or on the stock or commodity exchanges. Many supporters of the bill believe that the method of raising the funds should be changed in this way either before the bill is passed or shortly after.

Despite the obvious need for better social security which would include more people, raise the rate of benefits, and provide cash and care for the sick, the bill has been attacked by reactionaries on the ground that it creates a system of "Socialized Medicine." The bill does nothing of the sort. Under the terms of the bill any doctor who is licensed to practice medicine by any state can provide medical care and get paid for doing so. Any person who needs medical care could select any doctor to give it if he has any particular choice; if he has none he would be assigned a doctor from those physicians who have voluntarily joined the panel of doctors to provide medical care under the bill. Thus there would be complete freedom of choice between the patient and the doctor which is the essence of private practice and the opposite of socialized medicine.

The chief difference between medical practice now and under the Wagner-Murray-Dingell bill would be that if the bill were passed physicians could and doubtless would give greater care to poor patients without having to worry about getting paid for such work; and their decisions to give or recommend more treatment would not have to be influenced by wondering whether or not the patient could pay for it. This would tend to increase the total amount of medical care available, and particularly to increase medical care available for poorer people or in poorer localities where it is now most lacking and most needed.

## What Soldiers Think

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His wisdom He chose to give them dark skins. That American soldiers, many of whom are paying with their lives for the fundamental concepts of simple fair play, should be thus dehumanized must come as a shock to the conscience of humanity.

Let us assume that you are a colored service man and that you were faced with any of the aforementioned insults. If after your white commanding officer had in a lecture declared that he was going to see to it that Negro soldiers suffered their full share of casualties in this war, what would be your attitude? If after you had been abused and insulted and then expected to demonstrate a high degree of *esprit de corps* and you found that you were incapable of being a super man, what would be your state of mind?

I shall attempt to answer the above questions in the next and final installment of these articles when I shall bring you the thoughts of the Negro soldier as he looks toward the post war world.