

BRITAIN TRIUMPHS — FOR NOW

After more than seven weeks discussions in London, the British Government has succeeded in doing what it set out to do — to put off the date for Kenya independence, and to create fresh problems for the national liberation movement of Kenya.

When they were compelled to concede the right of elections in Kenya in 1960, the British Government introduced a franchise which eliminated a large section of the workers and peasants, hoping that 'better-off' and 'more educated' Africans would vote for more 'moderate' candidates. Their calculations came to naught, and KANU, with some 500,000 voters, emerged as the strongest party, KADU, pet of the British Governor, obtaining only 150,000. Both parties had pledged not to take office until Jomo Kenyatta was freed — but KADU, with British encouragement, jumped the gun and formed a minority government with the inclusion of Sir Michael Blundell (a leader of the settlers who had only been elected to the Legislative Council with the support of KANU which he then immediately deserted,) and supported by other 'members' nominated by the Governor.

In August 1961 the British Government was compelled to release Kenyatta and to gradually remove all the restrictions on his political activities. Kenyatta strove to unite the two parties, refusing at first to join either in the hope that by doing so, unity would be more easily attained. All his efforts failed because KADU, under British influence, was not concerned with forging anti-imperialist unity but only with maintaining its privileged position as a minority government and with preventing Kenyatta and other militant leaders of KANU coming to the leadership of the government.

Despite these manoeuvres, the British government could not postpone indefinitely talks with the Kenya leaders who, with the backing of their people, were pressing for an early date for independence. In fact, already last autumn, Jomo Kenyatta, who had accepted the leadership of KANU in October, was demanding independence by February 1962.

Time to Talk

It was in answer to this challenge that the recent constitutional talks have been taking place in London between the British Government and representatives of KANU, KADU, of the European Settlers' parties, of the Indian Community, and other groups. In preparation for these talks British imperialism took a number of steps, all of them calculated to put off the fixing of a date for independence and to promote disunity within KANU itself. The essence of these steps was: first, to foster regionalism in Kenya; next, to create a sense of insecurity, crisis and division in the country; finally, to work for a split within KANU.

For the past few months British propaganda has been working full blast to create a crisis atmosphere. There has been a flight of British capital from

Kenya (rumoured at £1 m. a month) and constant panic-calls of 'economic breakdown'. Stories of 'Mau Mau' revival have gone along with anti-communist hysteria and rumours of 'secret communist funds'. Tales have been spread that KANU is breaking up and that a new party is about to be launched. The British press has had a spate of articles about the 'impending secession' of the Somali peoples in northern Kenya, or the 'crisis' over the Kenya Coastal Strip and the claims of Zanzibar. The future of the British base in Kenya, and the question of the fate of land at present in the hands of the European settlers — these, too, have been utilised by British imperialism to place further difficulties in the way of Kenya's independence.

It is against this background that one has to examine the proposals of KADU for a regional structure for Kenya, as well as the efforts to disrupt KANU.

Unity — or Federalism

KANU, with mass support from the various peoples of Kenya, stands for a united Kenya, for the formation of a strong central government with adequate powers to enable it to plan for the country's development and to stand up to imperialism. KADU, with the full backing of the Governor, has proposed a regional federation which would give full scope to tribal, separatist and parochial tendencies, lead to disunity and leave Bri-

But the British government seized hold of the regional idea — which it undoubtedly had a hand in sponsoring — and has used it as its main weapon to hold up the date for Kenya's independence. The British Colonial Secretary, Mr. Reginald Maulding, visited Kenya in November and, on the very day of his arrival, stated that "there could be very great advantages in a federation"—thus straightaway giving backing to the KADU plan. A week later, in a fuller statement, he rejected Kenyatta's proposed date of February 1962 for independence, and came out specifically in support of the KADU's regional proposals, favouring the idea of regional "governing authorities" with "their own defined rights which do not derive from the Central Government."

These statements foreshadowed the aim of the British government — to use KADU and its 'regionalism' as a battering ram to force KANU into concession after concession — even without a date for independence.

The London Talks

The talks began on 14th February, 1962. Already in the opening days the first crisis loomed. KADU, falsely claiming to speak for "the minority tribes", refused to put forward its detailed proposals unless the principle of regionalism was conceded. It was part of KADU's case that KANU represented only the main peoples, Kikuyu, Luo and Kamba, and that the 'minority tribes' feared being dominated by these peoples through a central government under the leadership of Kenyatta and KANU.

KADU refused to budge from its basic position, Mr. Martin Shukuku, general secretary of KADU, going so far as to threaten that his party were prepared

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tish imperialism in the background but with decisive control in its hands.

It was at the beginning of October that KADU first put forward its plans for a "regional government system" which would establish five (now increased to six) regional governments in a country of some seven million people.

"The details of the plan" said *The London Times* "were worked out by KADU's European associates."

The launching of these proposals was quickly followed by threats of "civil war" by KADU leaders if their proposals were not accepted. In reply, Kenyatta rightly warned: "Regionalism leads to a Congo situation and we don't want that to happen in Kenya."

to do without national independence for another ten years (!) if it did not get its way over regionalism. KADU, clearly inspired by the British Colonial Office, maintained this attitude of obduracy throughout the talks — in relation to regionalism, to the question of a bicameral system of parliament, to control over land distribution, and to control of police.

The aim of this stubbornness on the part of KADU was two-fold. First, to compel KANU to make concessions; and, secondly, if that failed, to produce a situation in which the British Government could claim that since there was no agreement between the main African parties themselves, the question of a date for independence would have to be set

aside. Beyond this, British imperialism was hoping to isolate the most anti-imperialist forces in KANU and to produce some new form of alliance between KADU and the less resolute forces of KANU.

The Wrecking Crew

It is significant that, on the eve of the discussions and during the first critical week, a number of apparently inspired articles and comments appeared in the British press, all of them advocating and talking of the possibility of a new coalition of forces based on the 'healthy' and 'moderate' elements in both KANU and KADU.

Thus Sir Michael Blundell, Kenya Minister of Agriculture, wrote a special feature article in *The Times* (12.2.62), in which he referred to "many men in both parties who think alike", singling out such men as Mr. Ngala and Mr. Muliro in KADU, and Mr. Tom Mboya and Mr. Gichuru in KANU, as being of this character. Then, after a number of attacks against the militant Mr. Oginga Odinga, and warnings against the "danger of communism", Sir Michael made an appeal for "a regrouping together of the political forces dedicated to the creation of a modern country."

The following day the *Daily Mail* carried an article supporting Sir Michael Blundell's argument, and stating "No

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firm date for independence will be mooted unless guarantees of responsible government are forthcoming." (In English political terms, "responsible" means "ready to co-operate with British imperialism"). On this day, too, the *Daily Telegraph* carried a feature by Eric Downton, stating that Mr. Mboya "is considering a walk-out from KANU" and adding that "Mr. Ngala says he would welcome such a move, and has hinted he is prepared to discuss a political realignment."

This, and the talks which followed, made it clear that the British Government was working for such a new alignment, in place of independence — such a coalition government ostensibly to be 'on trial' but, in fact, intended to give KADU a longer lease of political life by allowing it to maintain governmental status. There is no doubt that the formation of the coalition government under these conditions — and formed in London, too, under the auspices of the British government (a completely unprecedented action) — could pave the way for the sort of political alignment of KADU with compromising elements in KANU, for which the British ruling class is obviously working.

No Holds Barred

It is significant that Mr. Fenner Brockway, the Labour M.P. sang the same tune in the *Tribune* as Sir Michael Blundell did in *The Times*, calling for a "temporary coalition" which would "bring new alignments within the parties."

The *London Times* launched an extraordinary attack against Jomo Kenyatta in the final days of the talks, at a time when the difficult questions of land control and police were still unresolved. Headlined "Kenyatta as Obstacle to a National Government", the article not only opposed the idea of Kenyatta becoming Chief Minister, but even called for his removal from the leadership of KANU. "It is suggested in official quarters that there can be no solution until Mr. Kenyatta has been removed from his present position." The article ended with the significant remark that "Mr. Tom Mboya, who is the only man who could lead the necessary breakaway from KANU, would be willing to serve in such a Government" (i.e. one led by Mr. Ngala of KADU).

This incredible threat — which in fact had been disclosed to British correspondents at a briefing session on the eve of the conference — was the trick card which the British Government kept up its sleeve all the time. On the one hand, KADU threatened a walkout from the talks and 'civil war' at home; on the other, there was the threat to pull out Tom Mboya and tear KANU into two, the latter threat having the aim of forcing KANU's leaders to make concessions in order to avoid disunity.

The Pay-off

As a result, the British Government, through its puppet KADU, has achieved basically what it set out to do. This is clearly seen if one examines the final proposals put forward by Mr. Maudling "to break the deadlock" — proposals which have been accepted by both KANU and KADU. On the question of Parliament: KADU wanted a two-chamber system, KANU one chamber. Mr. Maudling's proposal is for two chambers. (Any constitutional change affecting the regions will have to secure 90 per cent of the votes in the upper chamber, which is based on regional representatives. In effect, this means that a mere 11 per cent of the upper chamber representatives could block legislation affecting the regions as a whole.) KADU wanted regionalism, KANU was against. Mr. Maudling's proposals are for six regions deriving their powers from the Constitution, not from the central Government. These regions are to have their own exclusive legislative, administrative financial and executive powers, and will have a decisive control over land and police.

The details on the latter two questions are of interest and significance. All Crown lands and trust lands come under the regional authorities. Scheduled land

(including the valuable White Highlands) comes under a special central land board; but this board is composed of six regional nominees and only one from the central government, plus an 'independent' chairman.

The police force, too, (which is a paramilitary force, greatly outnumbering the army) comes under regional control. True, there is an Inspector General appointed by the Head of State; but each regional contingent of the police will be under a Regional Commissioner, responsible to the regional authority. The Inspector General will not be able to post any of his central reserve forces into a region except at the request of the Regional Commissioner; no Central Government Minister will have power to give directions to the Inspector-General; and even the central national security council will be dominated, like the land board, by regional nominees.

Not the End — Not Yet

And this is the basis on which it now proposed to set up an interim KANU-KADU coalition government. No wonder the British press remarks that Mr. Maudling was smiling on the final days of the conference, and that Mr. Ngala said that Mr. Maudling's proposals "give us a very high percentage of what we set out to fight for."

Commenting on Mr. Maudling's proposals, Jomo Kenyatta said: "We were very disturbed that there was no mention . . . about a date for independence. All we want is our independence. That's my only song, and I sing it every day."

That is the song that the people of Kenya are singing, too. But they will find little satisfaction in the outcome of the London talks. British imperialism has scored a temporary success. It has delayed independence for Kenya, and produced the framework of a constitution which will prove a real handicap to the government of an independent Kenya.

But the last work has not yet been spoken. The people of Kenya — whose real wishes were set aside by the British Government in the recent talks — will continue their struggle, determined to have real independence at the earliest opportunity and not be fobbed off with its shadow.

