

Southern Rhodesia

The question of Southern Rhodesia received more attention at the United Nations during 1962 than any other single colonial issue. During the first half of the year the political situation in the territory was considered at length by the first resumed session of the sixteenth Assembly, by the Special Committee of Seventeen and again by the second resumed session. It was expected to be a major item on the agenda of the seventeenth session.

Immediately after the opening of the seventeenth General Assembly in September 1963, Sir Edgar Whitehead, the Prime Minister of Southern Rhodesia, banned the African nationalist party, the Zimbabwe African Peoples Union (ZAPU), and arrested its leader, Joshua Nkomo, holding the party responsible for the great increase in incidents of terrorism and arson in Southern Rhodesia. The Fourth Committee, therefore, took Southern Rhodesia as its first item of business and on October 8 passed a resolution urging Britain to take steps to secure the release of Nkomo and other arrested leaders and the lifting of the ban on ZAPU. The resolution [1755 (XVII)] was adopted by the Assembly on October 12, 1962, by 84 votes in favour to 2 against, with 11 abstentions (including Canada). Britain did not participate in the vote.

During the rest of October, the Fourth Committee discussed Southern Rhodesia at great length, hearing numerous petitioners and a statement from Sir Edgar Whitehead, who claimed that his party favoured the abolishing of racial discrimination and the gradual granting of political rights to Africans. On October 31, a resolution [1760 (XVII)] was approved both in the Fourth Committee and by the Assembly by 81 in favour, to two against, with 19 abstentions (including Canada). This resolution noted with regret that the British Government had not fulfilled the requests made in earlier resolutions and requested it to suspend the constitutional conference and to grant full political rights to the whole population of Southern Rhodesia. The Secretary-General was also requested to lend his good offices to promoting conciliation among the various sections of the population.

In the elections held in Southern Rhodesia on December 14, 1962, the United Federal Party, led by Sir Edgar Whitehead, was defeated by the Rhodesian Front, a party led by Mr. Winston Field, which advocated more strongly the retention of white control.

South West Africa

The Fourth Committee, after considering the report of the Special Committee for South West Africa set up by the sixteenth session and the report of the Special Committee on Colonialism, passed a moderate resolution on South West Africa by an almost unanimous vote. The resolution [1805