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## NO INQUIRY: NO WELCOME

Mr Harold Wilson has felt it necessary to call on the Government to halt the visit of Dr Caetano, the Portuguese Prime Minister, to Britain in a few days' time unless his government can show that the report of the massacre in Wiriyamu, first published in *The Times* yesterday, is untrue. In fact the Portuguese Government, with notable celerity, have denied outright that any such atrocities took place and indeed have denied that Wiriyamu can be found on the map. Such a denial hardly meets Mr Wilson's demand that before Dr Caetano comes his government should "clearly and convincingly" show that the report by the Catholic missionaries, for all its detail, is false. The immediate question is how the Portuguese authorities can satisfy the world that the slaughter of some four hundred Frelimo sympathizers in a village called Wiriyamu (or something like it, mapped or unmapped) did not occur last December.

It is at least to be hoped that the promptitude of the Portuguese rejoinder indicates that Lisbon fully realizes the gravity of the missionaries' allegations, and the need for a convincing reply. Further thought may convince them that there must be a proper inquiry, and that a purely Portuguese investigation would not meet that need. The world, and very specially the Roman Catholic community within it, will not be easily persuaded that Christian missionaries are involved in some grotesque fabrication of evidence, or are suffering from some collective hallucination, unless people whom world wide public opinion knows and trusts form part of any investigatory process. It is in the nature of a regime like Portugal's which allows no free expression of opinion, that its unchecked and uncheckable pronouncements are always distrusted. To be credited,

they must be confirmed by some supplementary and outside witness.

The obvious body to which to turn for such witness would be the United Nations, but Lisbon would certainly reject any participation from a quarter which it regards as committedly hostile, though it may be noted that on the sensitive issue of South West Africa (admittedly a directly UN concern) the South Africans allowed Dr Waldheim to visit them and South West Africa itself.

Granted that the UN's good offices are unusable, is it possible that the International Red Cross could be employed? As, however, all that now exists is a report of a past event, not a current situation to be investigated, it is probable that the IRC would be unable to cooperate—and of course it can only move when governments request it to do so. No such request is likely, lest it constitutes an admission. Other bodies, like the International Jurists, would also be ruled out. In short, Portugal on the one hand does not enjoy the sort of international reputation that would make its own actions acceptable, but is obdurate in refusing facilities to the independent action of outsiders.

Possibly a way round this impasse might be found by Vatican diplomacy. The Roman Catholic Church is obviously concerned in the truthfulness of its missionary orders. It has a real interest in getting the Wiriyamu allegations confirmed or disproved. It is true that the Portuguese authorities have clashed with Churchmen, even bishops, in Mozambique over their attitudes. But even so, the authorities realize that the Church can be no tool of the state and that its flock in southern Africa is more black than white—though its black flock supporting Frelimo is not necessarily larger than its black flock supporting Portugal.

It would therefore seem that the Vatican might be able to frame proposals which Lisbon would have to take seriously—perhaps some tripartite arrangement consisting of Portuguese officials, some Church representatives (who need not come from Mozambique) and some respected international observers who have not taken sides over southern African matters. Portugal is a Catholic nation, and its people would be concerned to learn that their government, arbitrary as it may be, has rejected Catholic suggestions from Rome. There is another point here. The Church in Spain is often at loggerheads with the Government there, which may account for the latter's disinterest in the fate of the Spanish missionaries in Mozambique prisons, but now that the matter is in the open the Spanish Government can hardly shrug its shoulders. It has its own reasons to want to stand well with United Nations and African circles, as well as with Rome.

Obviously any such moves cannot be made before Dr Caetano is due to arrive in London, and Mr Heath declines to prejudge any issues by accepting Mr Wilson's suggestions. Of course if any adequate inquiry is promised judgment must be suspended on Wiriyamu until it is complete. If it is refused, then the world is left with the choice of believing either that the massacre took place more or less as the missionaries described but is denied uninvestigated by Portugal for its political ends, or else that it was elaborately invented by a group of Spanish missionaries for some extraordinary reasons of their own. If Dr Caetano is prepared to have an adequate inquiry, then he is a most welcome guest. If he attempts to dismiss or disdain the missionaries' report, then, whatever the official civilities, he will be a most unwelcome guest to a large section of British opinion.