

On all grounds Portugal must remain a member of Nato

MR JUDD (Portsmouth, West, Lab) said the massacre was only a symptom of a long on-going story, the evidence of which had been there for 50 years.

There was a phoney nature about the sudden resurrection of the alliance. It should be remembered that at the end of the Second World War flags flew at half-mast in Portugal when it was announced that Hitler was dead.

No other single country had done more to sustain the rebellion of the Smith regime. It was strange that Britain should be giving this fulsome welcome to the leader of a country which, by its policies, was determined to shore-up racialism and oppression in South Africa and Rhodesia.

MR BIGGS-DAVISON (Chigwell, C) said that Mr Wilson had scraped the barrel when he tried to smear the Portuguese with racialism. That was ludicrous because ever since Henry the Navigator, who was half-English, Portugal had been non-racial.

There is no colour bar in Portuguese Africa (he said). The trouble about the criticism of Portuguese policy in Africa is that people in this country feel a little guilty.

In our hearts, and we have men like General Amin to remind us, we know that a more gradual advance to self-government would have benefited the poorest and most helpless of Africans in the territories for which this House used to be responsible. The pace was too fast.

MR STEEL (Roxburgh, Selkirk and Peebles, L) said the case today was not proven; equally, there was a case to be answered. There was sufficient corroboration from priests in Italy and Spain to be answered.

We cannot accept from an undemocratic government (he said) that some sort of an inquiry by an army officer is in any way satisfactory.

The most important demand from this House should be for an impartial inquiry by some impartial internationally respected body.

MR HASTINGS (Mid Bedfordshire, C) said there was a classic and well established method of evaluation of intelligence, of reports of any nature, which should

be known to the editor of any main newspaper. He was not at all certain that *The Times* had sent anyone to corroborate this story. If not, were they to do so?

Who was the source of the report? Clearly not the Editor of *The Times*, but what was his or their motives in publishing it?

What sort of evaluation could be put on this report, all this dishonest and provocative rubbish published just before the visit of the Portuguese Prime Minister? He would like to know what it was that seriously persuaded Labour MPs that they knew better how to deal with affairs in that part of central Africa than a nation which had administered it for more than 450 years. The administration in Portugal was by comparison with a Marxist one fair and highly imaginative.

MR LYON (York, Lab) said there was no evidence anywhere in Africa, where this pattern of events had happened before, that communists had gained a solid foothold once independence had been obtained. If he were to take sides he would be wholeheartedly on the side of the freedom fighters.

MR WALDER (Clitheroe, C) said the Scottish verdict of not proven would most fit the case. He did not feel justified in voting on either side tonight. His belief was suspended and so was his vote. The whole matter was widely inappropriate for the House. (Conservative cheers.)

MR FAULDS (Smethwick, Lab) said a *Sunday Telegraph* correspondent had tried to discredit the heartfelt cries of the Spanish priests by the sort of irresponsible reporting he had indulged in from a point south of Tete. This rubbish could only be disregarded for the juvenile journalism that it was.

SIR FREDERIC BENNETT (Torquay, C) said that those Conservative MPs who put down a motion alleging double standards against the Leader of the Opposition had been amply justified. The House had witnessed an old practice—that when you were having internal troubles with the party you led, you sought to divert attention. Friendship with the Portuguese people had been

traded against a bargain on 25 companies. (Conservative cheers.)

MR GUY BARNETT (Greenwich, Lab) said there were a large number of people who found the Portuguese regime repugnant and the form of colonial rule pursued by Portugal in Africa utterly inhuman. (Conservative cries of "Nonsense".)

It was a disgrace that the Government allowed the visit to take place.

MR HASELHURST (Middleton and Prestwich, C) said that if the debate was raised on the alleged massacre it was a somewhat risky foundation for a wholesale condemnation of the Government's policy. It was rushing to judgment in the most irresponsible way.

MR FOOT (Ebbw Vale, Lab) said if absolute certainty was to be established about the allegations that were published in *The Times* that certainty could not rest solely on the information that had already been received. That was why *The Times* when it published the information called for some kind of inquiry to try to establish whether they were justified in publishing those facts or whether they were true or not.

I do not (he said) accept any investigation by the Portuguese Government as being satisfactory in this state of affairs.

MR PAGET (Northampton, Lab)—Is not the right tribunal here a British jury? *The Times* have made an allegation and I understand writs will be issued by the people whom they have libelled. Then let *The Times* prove it.

MR FOOT—*The Times* was justified in publishing the reports because of the long history of this kind of atrocity in Angola, Mozambique, and other territories.

Some Conservative MPs would rush to the defence of the forces of law and order in whatever guise they might appear. He could imagine how deadly might have been some of the editorials by *The Daily Telegraph* in defence of King Herod.

There were various interlocking reasons why they should oppose the visit. Portugal was a fascist state, was engaged in three bloody colonial wars, and in attempting to frustrate British policy in Africa. (Loud Labour cheers.)

There had been a fine display from what appeared to be the Portuguese Party on the Conservative side. Three or four MPs had been defending Portugal's policies to the limit. The Foreign Secretary had better say whether he agreed with them.

MR HASTINGS sought to intervene but Mr Foot refused to give way. There were loud Conservative protests.

MR FOOT said he had spoken like he had because Mr Hastings had acted like a second-rate South African policeman. (Loud Labour cheers and Conservative protests.)

MR HASTINGS—I do not know whether what Mr Foot said is parliamentary language, but in my experience when somebody makes that sort of attack he should have the guts to give way.

MR FOOT—The reason why I used that language is because it is gravely damaging to the reputation of this country that racial tyranny should be defended in this House. (Prolonged Labour cheers and Conservative protests.)

They were so strongly opposed to this visit because by inviting this fascist leader, and by winning and dining and applauding him, the Government gave the impression that they agreed with the racialists.

The wind of change had been blowing hard and Britain would have to take a stand on what was to be their attitude to the people who were struggling to be free. The Foreign Secretary should try and remember that the kind of cries he heard from the Conservative benches were the same kind of backing he had in 1938. (Labour cheers and loud Conservative protests.)

SIR A. DOUGLAS-HOME said the House could not take seriously the motion so quickly slapped on the order paper without even a pretence of weighing the evidence. (Conservative cheers.) The Opposition might well listen to what the Lord Mayor had to say at lunch today. (Labour laughter.)

The debate had been given a twist which raised a very different matter: whether Portugal should be expelled from Nato. The Government's answer was unequivocal. Portugal had a valuable part to play in the Nato alliance. Her membership in terms of security

was necessary.

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If he thought they were going into a situation in which they would be on the wrong side of a racial divide he would be concerned; but of course they were not.

They might say all sorts of things about Portuguese metropolitan policy and the Portuguese in Africa, but the Portuguese were not racial and the Africans knew that Britain's friendship with Portugal and the alliance with Portugal was concerned with the defence of Britain, the Atlantic and the European area.

The Opposition seemed in the world of today to be out of touch with reality. (Conservative cheers.) The Government were trying as hard as they could to get away from ideological barriers and establish good relations between all states. That was what Helsinki was about.

To say the least, it was anachronistic for the Opposition to fasten on the alleged errors of an old friend when the Government were trying to build cooperation with a whole series of nations.

Mr Wilson had suggested—and he (Sir A. Home) hoped it was not a promise—that Portugal should be thrown out of Nato. I hope (he continued) that it is the same sort of promise that he gave when he said he would revise the Nassau agreement. (Loud Conservative laughter.)

If the Labour Front Bench were serious in this proposition, they must be denounced before the whole country as careless of British security. On all grounds Portugal should remain a member of the alliance.

It was totally irresponsible of the Opposition to make promises, proposals to pledges in advance that Portugal should be thrown out of the alliance. That was not what the Opposition in this Parliament ought to put forward. (Labour shouts of "Oh".)

Thank goodness (he concluded) we can thank our lucky stars it is now certain that after the speeches from the Opposition Front Bench, never again will the public of this country put Mr Wilson within reach of anything like the power to do that. (Loud Conservative cheers.)

The motion for the adjournment was rejected by 299 votes to 271—Government majority, 28.