

A

DECLARATION

TO THE

NATIONS OF THE

WORLD

FROM THE

NON EUROPEAN UNITY

MOVEMENT

JULY 1945

"A Declaration to the Nations of the World."¹

Statement of the Non-European Unity Movement,

signed by:

REVEREND Z.R. MAHABANE – PRESIDENT
DR. G.H. GOOL – VICE PRESIDENT
E.C.ROBERTS - SECRETARY

We address this Declaration to all the Nations of the world, to all the peoples who fought against the tyranny of Hitlerism and who fight against every form of tyranny. This Declaration speaks for the 8 million non-of the Union of South Africa, Bantu, Coloured and Indian-the preponderant majority of this country. The defeat of Hitlerism in Europe marks the end of a dark chapter in human history. And because we are confident that the peoples in the world share our conviction that the suffering and the travail of the last ten years were endured so that a new beginning might be made, a new chapter opened, we address ourselves to them. For if the peoples of the world are to eradicate forever those dark forces of Fascism which spread like a scourge over three continents, from Ethiopia in Africa to China in Asia, and Spain in Europe, then it is of prime and urgent import that the ills of tyranny assailing every country and every people should be brought into full light before the forum of the Nations of the World.

Moreover, these ten years of bloodshed and war have taught us that peace is indivisible, that there can be no real peace when tyranny is eliminated in one continent but left undisturbed in another. If a new beginning is to be made, if the foundation of the peaceful world is to be secure, then the scourge of Hitlerite tyranny must be uprooted not only in Europe but also in South Africa and every corner of the globe.

The peoples of the world who were horrified by the inhuman record of Nazism may be unaware of the fact that the Non-Europeans of South Africa live and suffer under a tyranny very little different from Nazidom. Lest it may seem to people far removed from South Africa, that this comparison is either an exaggeration or a figurative expression, we shall demonstrate in more concrete form how closely the life of the Non-European in South Africa is akin to the suffering under Nazi tyranny.

The main characteristics which distinguish the Hitler tyranny from all the tyrannies of the past, may be briefly summarised as follows:

- a) the Herrenvolk ideology which transformed itself into a mania;
- b) the ruthless trampling underfoot of all human rights;

¹ To facilitate scanning, a copy of this document was obtained from Karis and Carter's FROM PROTEST TO CHALLENGE Volume 2, page 357 and seq.

c) the erection of one system of law and of morality for the Aryans and a different system of law and of morality for the Non-Aryans.

The Union of South Africa, although it is represented abroad as a democracy with a system of parliamentary government, manifests itself essentially the same characteristics as the three enumerated above.

Nazi Germany provided a classic example to the world of how a people could become obsessed with the idea of their racial superiority and divine mission to rule. What originated as a cunning propaganda design by the Nazi leaders to divert the attention of the people from their real enemies and to make scapegoats of the Jews and other minorities, eventually grew into a malignant obsession with a large section of the German people. The duped masses, drugged by the incessant propaganda from school, pulpit, wireless and press, began to believe in the Messianic mission of the German, the Aryan, to rule over all Non-Aryans--their ordained slaves. This is the very essence of the Herrenvolk ideology, the doctrine of 'thinking with your blood'.

No less classic, although less known to the outside world, is the case of South Africa. From earliest childhood the poisonous racial arrogance of the Herrenvolk ideology is assiduously injected into the White people of this country by School and Church and State. From the cradle to the grave, every phase of life is consciously regulated and moulded in order to preserve and perpetuate the division of the people of South Africa into the European--the Herrenvolk, and the Non-European--the slave, divinely ordained to minister to all his needs.

So deeply has the poison of racial superiority been infused into the life of South Africa, that it has reached the very vitals, and no single phase of public or private life remains untainted by it. And it is a tragic fact that even those who might have been expected to display more fellowship towards the Non-European as a natural ally, namely, the Labour Party, and the Trade Unions, are no less contaminated by the Herrenvolk mentality. While they may speak abroad of equality for all and opportunity for all, they do not for a single moment include the Non-Europeans. For, at home, they act in full accord with the Herrenvolk creed of South Africa. The success of this racial indoctrination may be measured by Field-Marshal Smuts' claim in the House of Assembly on 14th March, 1945, that all in South Africa are agreed upon the mission of the Europeans to rule over the Non-Europeans in perpetuity, all--except those who are 'mad, quite mad'. Indeed, to such a pass has this Herrenvolk ideology reduced South Africa, that every European who does not conform to it is vilified as insane; everyone, European or Non-European, who in any way attempts to effect racial harmony by eliminating the artificially fostered racial prejudices and artificially erected barriers of race hatred, is branded and hounded as a disturber of the peace who is sowing hostility between the races. In a word, the Herrenvolk mentality of South Africa in no way lags behind that of Nazi Germany. But it is when we compare South Africa with Nazi Germany in respect of the second characteristic of Nazism, the ruthless trampling underfoot of human rights, that the essential similarity between the two becomes even more palpable.

If in Nazi Germany it was the Jew who had to distinguish himself as an outcast by wearing a yellow patch, in South Africa a brown or black face makes the patch unnecessary; but in addition the Non-European is stigmatised by having to carry not one, but many 'passes' of different kinds--one proving he has paid his taxes, one permitting him to walk in the street, one permitting him to look for work, one for the day and another for the night! An outraged world recoiled in stupefaction at the trampling underfoot of all human rights in Nazi Germany, so that the Jew was debarred from education, the professions and skilled trades; he

was denied the right to own property, the right to trade, to serve in the army; he was prohibited from entering places of entertainment, from cultural institutions and the like. But the world has yet to learn that all of these outrages have been, and are still, characteristic of the normal, everyday life of South Africa. The Non-European is debarred from education. He is denied access to the professions and skilled trades; he is denied the right to buy land and property; he is denied the right to trade or to serve in the army--except as a stretcher-bearer or servant; he is prohibited from entering places of entertainment and culture. But still more, he is not allowed to live in the towns. And if it was a crime in Nazi Germany for an "Aryan" to mix with or marry a Non-Aryan, it is equally a criminal offence in South Africa for a member of the Herrenvolk to mix or marry with the slave race. When a man is denied the right to hire or build a dwelling for himself and his family, the right to sell his labour on the free market; when a man is stripped of all other elementary human rights in his own country, then there can be no two opinions but that he is living under a Nazi-like tyranny.

No less complete is the similarity between the two systems in regard to the third characteristic of Nazism, the erection of one system of law and of morality for the Aryans and a different system of law and morality for the Non-Aryans. In the majority of instances there is a separate law for Europeans and a separate law for Non-Europeans; in those rare cases where one Act legislates for both, there are separate clauses discriminating against the Non-Europeans. While it is true that there are no Buchenwald concentration camps in South Africa, it is equally true that the prisons of South Africa are full to overflowing with Non-Europeans whose criminality lies solely in the fact that they are unable to pay the Poll-tax, a special racial tax imposed upon them. But this law does not apply to the Aryan; for him there is a different law which makes the nonpayment of taxes not a criminal, but a civil offence for which he cannot be imprisoned. But if there is no Buchenwald in South Africa, the sadistic fury with which the Herrenvolk policeman belabours the Non-European victim, guilty or not guilty is comparable only to the brutality of the SS Guards. Moreover, the treatment meted out to the Non-European in the Law Courts is comparable only to the fate of the Non-Aryan in the Nazi Law Courts. But the fundamental difference in law and morality is not only expressed in the different paragraphs of the Legal Statutes, it lies in the fundamentally different concept of the value of the life of a Non-European, as compared with the value placed upon the life of a European. The life of a Non-European is very cheap in South Africa. As cheap as the life of a Jew in Nazi Germany.

From the foregoing it is clear that the Non-Europeans of South Africa live and suffer under a tyranny very little different from Nazism. And if we accept the premise--as we hope the Nations of the World now do--that peace is indivisible, if we accept that there can be no peace as long as the scourge of Nazism exists in any corner of the globe, then it follows that the defeat of German Nazism is not the final chapter of the struggle against tyranny.

There must be many more chapters before the peoples of the world will be able to make a new beginning. To us in South Africa it is indisputable that there can be no peace as long as this system of tyranny remains. To us it is ludicrous that this same South African Herrenvolk should speak abroad of a new beginning, of shaping a new world order, whereas in actuality all they wish is the retention of the present tyranny in South Africa and its extension to new territories. Already they speak of new mandates and new trusteeships, which can only mean the extension of their Nazi-like domination over still wider terrain. It is impossible to make a new start as long as the representatives of this Herrenvolk take any part in the shaping of it. For of what value can it be when the very

same people who speak so graciously abroad of the inviolability of human rights, at home trample ruthlessly underfoot those same inalienable rights? It is the grossest of insults not only to the 8 million Non-Europeans of South Africa, but to all those who are honestly striving to shape a world on new foundations, when the highest representative of the Herrenvolk of South Africa, Field Marshall Smuts, who has devoted his whole life to the entrenchment of this Nazi-like domination, brazenly speaks to the Nations of the World of ;'the sanctity and ultimate value of the human personality' and 'the equal rights of men and women'

We, the Non-Europeans of South Africa and the majority of the population, are the ones who are vitally concerned and genuinely determined that there shall be a new beginning. We declare emphatically before the peoples of the world that we have no territorial demands. We seek no aggrandisement and we do not covet any territories. On the contrary, we who have fought against German Nazism and Italian Fascism to the fullest extent that we were permitted, declare unequivocally that we are opposed to the handing over to the inclusion in the Union, of the Protectorate of Bechuanaland, Basutoland, and Swaziland. We are opposed to such inclusion on principle and on the grounds that it will be detrimental both to the people of the Protectorates and to the Non-Europeans in the Union. For, however intolerable the conditions under which the people in the Protectorates live, there can be no worse fate than their falling under the domination of the South African Herrenvolk. Therefore we dissociate ourselves from all such claims on the part of our rulers.

Nevertheless we have demands. But our demands are not at the expense of other peoples. Our demands can only advance the cause of building a peaceful world on new beginnings. We are a peace-loving people. We have no enmity or malice towards the Europeans, for we wish to live side by side with them in peace and harmony. Yet we can only live side by side with them in peace and harmony as equals and not as inferiors. We are also a constitutional people.

And if we make this Declaration directly to the Nations of the World and not through the Government of the Union of South Africa, it is because it must be clear from all the foregoing that it would be both ludicrous and futile to appeal against the tyrants through the tyrants. Our demands are that the Herrenvolk ideology be eradicated in South Africa, that there shall be an end to this system whereby the rights of the people are trampled underfoot by a small minority, and that there shall no longer be one system of law and morality for the-Non-Europeans and a different one for the Herrenvolk. To effect these it would require the practical application of the following 10 fundamental human rights:

I. The Franchise, i.e. the right of every man and woman over the age of twenty-one to elect, and be elected to Parliament, Provincial Councils and all other Divisional and Municipal Councils.

II. Compulsory, free and uniform education for all children up to the age of sixteen, with free meals, free books and school equipment for the needy.

III. Inviolability of person, of one's house and privacy.

IV. Freedom of speech, press, meetings and association.

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V. Freedom of movement and occupation.

VI. Full equality of rights for all citizens without distinction of race, colour and sex.

VII. Revision of the land question in accordance with the above.

VIII. Revision of the civil and criminal code in accordance with the above.

IX. Revision of the system of taxation in accordance with the above.

X. Revision of. the labour legislation and its application to the mines and agriculture.

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