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THE CRISIS

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INTRODUCTION

THE PHILOSOPHY OF J. A. PROFFER (2)

THE CRISIS

"THE PHYLOSOPHY OF S. A. TRUSTEESHIP" (?)

"The first duty of the white man is to himself. Whatever the right of the Native may be, they have no right to call upon us to do anything which might jeopardise our Supremacy" — Gen. Hertzog during the debate on the second reading of the Representation of Natives Bill in Parliament. 4 / 3 / 36

INTRODUCTION.

Whatever adverse opinions may be held as to the sentiments I have dared to put in cold print in these pages, whatever fears my friends of whatever race or nationalities may have as to the consequences in the event the challenge be accepted, whatever my countrymen may say in condemnation of the statements of cold facts contained herein, I am satisfied that until and unless Bantudom realises the dangers of the discriminatory legislation and accepts the nationalism forced upon her by the Government of this country, the inevitable destiny of her children and posterity will assuredly be one of perpetual slavery. Who, among my countrymen, does not know the conditions existing in rural areas which since 1913 have forced thousands and thousands out of the land or converted those who remained into virtual slaves without homes, houses, land to plough and to graze their stock, and whose families have to give labour without any pay or consideration therefor save just an acre or two allotted to them by way of raising rations?

I have to thank the All African Convention for giving the inspiration contained in the most reasoned and cautious resolutions on the Native Bills. The uncompromising attitude of the Prime Minister towards our Deputation and the shameful bargain for political reasons which has rendered the Cape Native Vote worthless and impotent, have prompted the ideas expressed in this paper. But above all, let me confess that Prof. Eric Walker's diagnosis of the Government's Native policy awakened in me the sense of appreciation of the real danger which I hope these pages will fully magnify and reveal. I earnestly hope my countrymen will be fired as I have been, and combine as never before to resist domination based on hatred and pagan militarism.

H. S. M.

FOREWORD.

In 1910 the Bantu people were less influenced in Western culture, less tutored in its diplomacy, less suspicious of its cupidity, than they are at the present time. It did not seem that their condition, by no means happy or prosperous, would be made into one of permanent suppression since the insistence on the retention of the Cape Native Franchise, granted in 1853, gave them a promise of ultimate equality and a full share in the privileges of citizenship. There was a liberal spirit abroad in Europe, one manifestation of which was England's refusal to hand over the Protectorates to the newly founded Union because concessions which she demanded for them were refused.

In South Africa, subsequent legislation—Masters and Servants Act, stricter codification of Native Law in Natal, Urban Areas and Squatters Laws—showed a strongly retrogressive philosophy and a bolstering up of an unstable economy. During times of depression and national conflict, the Bantu was made the scapegoat. Finally in 1936 he is confronted with permanent exclusion from the control of the country in which he lives and works.

This is a matter which must arouse active emotions amongst not only all black men in the country, but amongst all those Europeans who have no dogmatic attitude to unproven theories of racial inferiority and superiority, and who stand for a culture wider than one of colour. They neither feel that the indigenous Native was a "savage" in his own surroundings, nor do they consider that he is incapable of absorbing and contributing to a new culture. They realise that exclusion of the Bantu from industry in the Union would be impossible and disastrous to the Europeans, and that complete segregation is therefore but an impracticable theory of equality. Racial interdependence is not a fact to be deplored, it can enrich the content of both cultures, which in time may even fuse and be one.

Nationalism, either white or black, is a dangerous policy. The point of view expressed in the following pages illustrates the beginning of an intense and bitter nationalism which is set up as the ideal of the Bantu, one which they have not arrived at spontaneously but to which they have turned as a last refuge and escape, a rallying point for self-respect as well as

self-preservation. National movements are hastening Europe to a world war, and to civil wars. Fascism in Germany has temporarily averted eyes from its internal bankruptcy by its brutal attack on minority groups. Italy in desperation is seizing by force that which its own internal policy could not give it in peace.

By the compromise on the Native Bill, politicians averted a split in the House, and consolidated the interests of the majority at the expense of the Native Vote. The writer of the pamphlet urges disillusionment to the masses of his people, and a courageous realisation that neither pious hope nor virtuous resignation alone will lead them to prosperity and freedom.

HILDA KUPER.

March, 1936.

THE CRISIS.

The All African Convention has been called to meet again on the 29th June, 1936, at Bloemfontein. The Executive Committee will then give a report on the resolutions of the Convention presented to the Government, invite discussion thereon, and determine the future attitude of the African people in consequence of the decision of the powers that be. This decision in effect implies that "the Africans are not part of the South African community and that the interests of the country can be considered as distinct from their interests." According to Prof. Eric Walker, this decision denotes that "the Bantu people were to be treated as a separate dependent community, and their country was presumably to be the 12 per cent. of the area of the Union which was covered by the existing reserves and projected released areas."

I sincerely hope the Convention will keep constantly before it this cardinal principle of the Government's policy. It underlies the Native Bills and undoubtedly constitutes the reason for attacking the Cape Native Vote as well as for limiting the size of our country to 12 per cent. of the whole area of the Union. Whatever steps we may decide to take to protect our interests, we should not forget that if Parliament places on the Statute Books (which I have no doubt it will) the Representation of Natives Bill and the Land Bill in its present form, the principle that we are not part of the South African community, and that we are to be treated as a separate dependent community, is definitely laid down as the Magna Charta for White South Africa.

The reason the Cape Native Vote has been attacked is to destroy every vestige of interest heretofore taken in our affairs by members of Parliament who owed their seats to the influence of the vote of Africans in the Cape Province. That gone, in terms of the compromise, the Cape Africans will have three representatives against 150 for the whole of the Union who can never hope to influence Parliament one way or another. In other words, if General Hertzog failed to abolish the Cape Native Vote he certainly succeeded in making it impotent and ineffectual by the compromise which has been accepted by the champions of the old Cape tradition of liberalism. The declaration that the Africans are not part of the South African community has thereby been vindicated and

definitely established as the policy of this country.

Again, the reason for limiting the size of our country to 12 per cent. of the whole area of the Union is to insure that the African people shall be a dependent community whose existence will be tolerated for so long as they minister to the material needs and serve the interests of the white race. One and a half millions of people are to own 88 per cent. of the land and some six millions only 12 per cent. The inference is clearly that, inasmuch as the 12 per cent. of the land will not accommodate all the six million people, such of them as shall become landless must needs surrender themselves to the mercies of the privileged group and accept conditions which only starving and helpless people can accept.

But the words used are: "The Bantu were to be treated as a separate dependent community." This would suggest that they would be given an area large enough to make them a separate community, yet politically dependent on the South African community. In other words, the Africans, as a separate community, would enjoy the right of self-development subject to the protecting arm of the white parliament. That seems the logical conclusion to which any reasonable person can arrive; therefore it must follow that if the interests of the country could be considered as distinct from theirs, there is to be no political, economic—indeed, any other relations between White and Black in this country other than the authority necessary and inevitable for the purpose of preserving peace and the boundaries.

The Native Land and Trust Bill, however, negatives this conception of the Government's policy in that it limits the whole area to be set aside for the occupation of the six millions only to 12 per cent. At the same time the areas scheduled under the Natives Land Act of 1913 are reputed to be congested (see General Smuts's Memorandum, 1926), and the land acquired since by permission of the Governor-General is only sufficient for the present occupants and owners; so that the seven and a quarter million morgen proposed to be released cannot reasonably absorb

- (a) the surplus population in scheduled areas;
- (b) the estimated 900,000 squatters who must be driven out of private lands owned by Europeans;
- (c) the ever-increasing "superfluous" population in urban areas caused by the enforcement of the White Labour Policy.

Moreover, the Natives (Urban Areas) Act of 1923 lays down and maintains the principle that local authorities should provide housing accommodation for such Africans as are required for the reasonable needs and serve the material interests of the Europeans. It does not purpose nor intend to recognise any African as having a right to establish for himself a permanent domicile in the urban areas.

Only recently the Government appointed a Committee "On Natives in Urban Areas" to recommend measures to be taken to prevent the influx of Africans into urban areas and to remove superfluous Africans therefrom. The terms of reference of that Committee are a distinct contradiction of the accepted policy of the distinctness of European interests from those of the Africans. It envisages the limitation of the African population to the requirements of the employing class. Here there is no question of a complete segregation. Hence the query: Wherein then are European interests distinct from ours if our services are yet required even to a limited degree? Similarly, in the Native Land and Trust Bill are certain provisions in Chapter IV, which suggest that labour-tenants may be retained at the rate of five families to one European farmer. Why, if there is no community of interests?

If the All African Convention were to examine critically and dispassionately the policy adumbrated in the Native Bills it would find two strikingly contradictory extremes. The first concerns the fervent desire on the part of the majority of Europeans (judging by the support General Hertzog is receiving in Parliament) for the removal of every African from the country so that South Africa could become a white man's country. Fortunately they do not know where to transport them en bloc. Others have the audacity to agitate for the commitment of a part of the race into labour colonies where they would live under prison regulations. In the meantime, every effort is being made to narrow the field of labour that Africans may be deprived of the means of livelihood, so that by a process of poor or inadequate nourishment their vitality and physique may be undermined and crippled in order to accelerate their gradual extinction or considerable reduction in numbers. This, I feel sure, the next census will substantially prove. The White Labour Policy is the thin end of the wedge in that direction, and it is being driven with the energy of a lion.

When we could grow our food to live on and mother nature smiled benevolently at us, every moral and even legal device was used to induce us to leave the land. Sugar plantations, mining industries, railways and roads wanted labour. The Africans, it was openly said, must come out and help to develop the country and to build railways and the highways of the country. Nothing was done to encourage agriculture and scientific methods of treating the land. Indeed, recruiters for labour scoured the country with the doctrine that man cannot live by tilling the land but by going to industrial centres and helping the white man who had the money which the country or land could not give. Now that almost the whole country has been industrialised, we have all (or as many of us as are no longer required) to "get out" of European areas. This reminds me of what an old African sage once said: "If you find a river swollen and the only man available to help you cross it is Satan, accept his offer, but make sure that you politely thank him with a rough dismissal." That is our experience. We are under order to leave European areas, and the question is: Where must we go? Nobody cares where, for the sooner we disappear like the Red Indians the better, for this country must be made safe for the white man to live in. This is one extreme—to compel six million people, more or less, to crowd together with their animals and posterity in just 12 per cent. of the whole area of the Union to starve or die.

Another extreme which, to me, is most likely and more in keeping with the present economic system in vogue the world over except in Russia, is one which seeks to limit the area of our alleged country as distinct from Europeans. Read this in conjunction with the Native Administration Act No. 38 of 1927 which legalises polygamy and therefore insures the rapid increase of the population, intensifying within a single generation congestion in the 12 per cent. area of our country. Chapter IV. of the Native Land and Trust Bill naturally and significantly betrays the sinister motive underlying that policy. One has to remember that Chapter IV. of the Bill guarantees the farmer and other employers of labour in the agricultural industry a supply of free labour to the extent of five families. The head of the family will be registered, and he it is who must contract with the farmer and indenture the labour of his wife and children. The moment he is registered

all his dependants, i.e., his wife, unmarried daughters and sons under a certain given age automatically fall within the terms of the contract. A man with five wives and twenty children becomes a great asset to the farmer, who thereby becomes entitled to the free labour of all. In addition, the farmer is authorised to use the oxen belonging to the labour-tenant. To give another undue advantage to the farmer over the labour-tenant, the Bill refrains conveniently from setting out the terms and conditions upon which he may engage the services of this man and his family. It is obvious, therefore, that a farmer who takes on his farm five families secures all the labour he requires without cost except, at his discretion, to mark out an acre or two for each family by way of producing sufficient rations. What the acre is worth to the farmer, neither the law nor the labour-tenant need know. Yet it is supposed to be given out in lieu of wages for the labour-tenant, his wife and children and to include grazing rights for his stock. I have been told that a highly developed land is capable of producing no more than between twenty and thirty bags of maize per acre, and that in the Eastern Transvaal grazing rights cost 2s. 6d. per season per head. So that if a labour-tenant has ten head of cattle his grazing costs would amount to £5 per year. The price of mealies for a long time has only averaged 5s. per bag, so that the poor labour-tenant earns between £5 and £7 10s. a year, including the labour of his children and wife. Be that as it may, the question which every African must ask himself, now that all of us who are dispossessed of the land and are not in the employ of any European shall have to be labour-tenants, is, what is the value of a labour-tenant, and if the consideration thereof is paid in kind, what is the just equivalent thereof?

Another sinister aspect of this arrangement is that while the farmer may use the oxen belonging to the labour-tenant there is nothing in the Bill that bestows any reciprocal advantage. If the Bill had suggested that such use of oxen compensated for grazing subject to a fixed number of days within a year for which the oxen may be used, it would have removed the suspicion of an undue advantage over the plight of a man who is dispossessed of the land.

That is the other extreme, namely, to contract land in order to expose thousands to conditions of economic slavery. This reminds me of the causes which led to the Great Trek

of 1836. A historian wrote giving as one of the reasons therefor, that:

“The practice of slavery had continued until its abolition in 1833 by the ransom payable by the English Government to the owners of slaves. The Boer Colonists deeply resented that act and decided to leave the country. The Government confined its efforts to discouraging the emigration and to reconcile the malcontents. Those efforts, however, proved fruitless; and the people held to their project with resolute fearlessness and self-confidence, and were even content to sacrifice their farms and homesteads.”

When in 1926 and 1930, the Imperial Conferences granted to the Dominions “sovereign independence,” Great Britain scarcely suspected that her magnanimity and greatness of heart were being exploited by people who sought to revenge themselves upon the aborigines for the emancipation of slaves a century ago. Who could have thought that in this age of enlightenment, and from the children boasting of two thousand years of civilisation, that memories one hundred years old could be resurrected to the extent of annulling a right conferred on a people seventy-five years ago merely to have the satisfaction of having righted the wrong committed on their forefathers?

THE CHALLENGE.

My friends and countrymen, let us now admit, both publicly and in our conscience, that Parliament and the white people of South Africa have disowned us, flirted and trifled with our loyalty. They have treated us as rebels, nay, they have declared we are not part of the South African community. Whatever it means, I am satisfied in my mind that if we do no longer form part of the community which constitutes Parliament and the Government of the Union of South Africa, we have to belong to some authority other than the present, or we shall have to admit that we are slaves and outcasts in our fatherland. If we refuse to be made slaves then we should seek emancipation by such means as the dictates of self-preservation may lead us to.

In one of our resolutions, we have expressed a desire “to appeal to the King and Parliament of Great Britain as the

present representatives of the original beneficent donors of the Cape Native Vote, for an expression of their opinion in the event of such treasured gift being abrogated by His Majesty's Government in the Union of South Africa without reason." That resolution has not been transmitted, for its terms convey the meaning that such an appeal will be made immediately the Executive Committee is assured that the measure approaches its final stages. In any event, it is not my business nor my place to decry, but to act in faith and honesty as directed. What is uppermost in my mind is that we have reached a point in our national life where and when we should have recourse to the law of self-preservation, which is in the hands of the highest tribunal of our conscience as a race. I believe it is nothing but right, as we did with the Union Government, to protest as never before and say, whatever is the result of this colossal blunder, we wash our hands of it and accept the challenge.

What do we mean or what should we mean when we say we accept the challenge? What is the meaning of this challenge to us? General Smuts, in his rectorial address at St. Andrews University in Scotland, told the world that **"to suppose that in the modern world you can dispense with freedom in human government, that you can govern without the free consent of the governed, is to fly in the face of decent human nature as well as of the facts of history."** To me, therefore, it means that we have been thrown out of the purview and tutelage of the Union Government. The idea of a trusteeship, even of the kind a stepmother may possess, has been abrogated. It is therefore for us to choose whether or not we shall approach the situation thus created for us in a cringing attitude, begging to be taken over once more like unrequired foster children to be dealt with anyhow by the callous and iron-hearted stepmother. Or accept the challenge by demanding our freedom as completely as it is the privilege of people who do not form part of the community to which the Government of the day belongs. In other words, if we accept that we are a separate community from that represented by the Union Government, are we willing to be dependent on its grudging benevolence? General Hertzog has told the world that the first duty of the white man is to himself, and that we have no right to ask the Government or Euro-

peans of South Africa to do anything that may jeopardise their supremacy.

My candid and conscientious reply to the question is that **we can no longer loyally serve and be subject to a government which has openly disowned us and told us in brutal language that we can never, never be free.** The choice therefore is not ours. The law of self-preservation demands that we should seek avenues likely to lead us out of this incubus to which we have been thrust against our will. We have it on the authority of General Smuts, the present Minister of Justice, that **"freedom is the most ineradicable craving of human nature; without it peace, contentment, and happiness, and even manhood itself, are not possible."** If we feel we are sufficiently human to have the craving for freedom, and feel that we cannot surrender our freedom whatever it is or give up what chances we had heretofore for eventually reaching the highest pinnacle of our manhood, then it behoves us to accept General Hertzog's challenge by declaring our refusal to be made slaves and to suffer him to traffic with our freedom in order to uphold the white man's supremacy. If we feel we cannot conscientiously accept the challenge, all I can say, as a man and patriot, is that: it were better to die now than to live to see our children carried into economic bondage and into a dungeon to perish of hunger. For me, it is better indeed to spend the remaining years of my normal life behind prison bars than witness with my own eyes the misery of the children I swore before God to protect, love and cherish as a gift more precious than life.

I am under no illusion. I know that behind this brutal injustice is the reliance of the powers-that-be on the stupendous and murderous modern weapons of war and the advantage they have thereby against us—defenceless people. In spite of a well organised defence force, of all the deadly instruments of war and the most pagan militarism that can be given play, if my countrymen are possessed of a soul which can never perish by machine guns and artificial war devices, that soul will fight a righteous battle under the invincible captaincy of the gods who made our worthy forefathers what they were. We owe it to them that we have so far, in humility and self-sacrifice, made ourselves indispensable in every walk of life and refused to be extinct as the Red Indians

and other aborigines who no longer are. If we have the soul to resist the machinations of the oppressor, I know of no power in the world and under the sun to conquer us; I know of no influence capable of persuading us to suffer degradation and shame and to suffer ourselves to be made the pawn in the big game of "topdoggism" and arrogance. That, my countrymen, is the challenge.

THE ALTERNATIVE.

I see in the horizon two alternatives indicating the way to freedom. The vision which gave to the Colonists a century ago the determination, the will and self-denial on the emancipation of their slaves to search more land for them to be free, makes me feel its presence and power in this crisis. I am able to see that we have no alternative but to accept the position as created by the Native Bills, that is, that we are not part of the South African community and that the interests of the Europeans are not bound together with our own. In other words, that between the European and ourselves there is no longer any community of interests.

This means to me that, that being the case, and as we share the country with the Europeans who have chosen to segregate us from them territorially, economically, politically and otherwise, it behoves us to demand a complete segregation on a fifty-fifty basis to enable us to establish our own State and government wherein to exercise our political, economic and social independence without the inconvenience of islands dotted all over the country. This alternative has already been advanced in our resolution on the Representation of Natives Bill, viz.: "The political segregation of the two races can only be justly carried out by means of the creation of separate States." I repeat, it is not our choice and of our own volition. We have in our resolution informed the Government that this creation of two States is undesirable. But the Government has decided that we should think about it and agitate for it as never man sought his freedom. No sacrifice, however bitter, should deter us from seeing to it that we ultimately gain this objective. For my part, I do not see why the Government should not seize on it since it is by way of completing its programme for making this a white man's

country.

Another alternative is contained in the book, "Bayete," by the distinguished champion of the Native Bills, Chairman of the Native Affairs Commission and the Honourable Member for Zululand, Mr. G. Heaton Nicholls, M.P., to whom we owe an irredeemable debt of gratitude for this book. In this book, Mr. Nicholls indicates to us the way and method we should adopt to seize the reins of government and regain all the freedom we have lost since the advent of the white man in this country. It is the only way short of the creation of two States. It calls for no machine guns, no bombs nor aeroplanes. That weapon is a power in itself in that it is the power of the soul, the indestructible something that is in man—the Sword of God. It is the will and determination to be free, the ineradicable craving of human nature, without which we certainly must agree to perish or be made slaves.

I have used elsewhere the expression that we should agitate. But what type of agitation do I mean? Agitations may serve to create mob psychology, but may not rouse and fire the soul, create determination and self-denial for the cause of freedom. Yet in the end, mob psychology is an element for good, and simplifies the task of the leaders whose soul is fired with the desire to disarm the enemy. We must have intense organisation and persistent education of the masses along systematic and persuasive lines, capable of removing mental inactivity and usher in knowledge of the dangers of our existing relationship with the Europeans who seek domination and economic subjection. When that knowledge has increased and our people are conscious of their fate, then shall we hope and begin to see visions and to dream the dreams of freedom. Let us not forget that the white man, who has made us believe he is better civilised than we are, has had to descend so low as to resurrect century-old memories that he may find a pretext with which to appease his conscience when he avenges himself upon us for the "wrongs" alleged to have been committed by Great Britain against his forefathers. We have in the past succeeded in aping him in many things—some extremely undesirable. Why cannot we emulate him now in this crisis and make ourselves a free people?

The practicability of the first alternative depends on the government and the white people who feel that this country

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is not safe for them if they live side by side with us. To achieve the ideal of a White South Africa which does not entail the enslavement of the African race, they need not hesitate to establish two territorial States on an equal basis. Their sense of justice (if there be any left) should persuade them to release one-half of the area of the Union and have "Whiteman Territory" and "Blackman Territory." They cannot have it both ways. We should therefore demand that the present Native Land Bill be withdrawn and another introduced forthwith giving effect to a vertical territorial segregation. I used the word "demand" advisedly, for is not this loaf baked by the white man? If we have to accept it, let us have the whole. There should be no halves about it.

The second alternative depends upon ourselves. I see in this crisis the hand of Fate stretching out to free us. General Hertzog and all his lieutenants may prove yet the instruments by which we will forge our liberation. Bantudom now sees the clouds gathering in the horizon and seeks to gather her children under her strong wings. Shall we prove cowards and flee from her strength? God forbids. Perhaps in this crisis we may live, if we dare, to witness the fulfilment of General Smuts's philosophy broadcast to the world in these great words:

"To suppose that in the modern world you can dispense with freedom in human government, that you can govern without the free consent of the governed, is to fly in the face of decent human nature as well as of the facts of history."

We may live to see, if we have the soul and the righteous determination to do and dare, the history of the overthrow of the Russian Empire by the governed, repeated in this our dear Fatherland.

NKOSI SIKELELA I AFRIKA.

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