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UNION AFRICANS' REACTION TO APARTHEID.

by

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APARTHEID AND THE AFRICANS IN THE UNION OF
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The Union Delegation at the United Nations seems desperate and picking at straws.

In his speech of 16th November, 1948, before the Trusteeship Committee of the United Nations, Mr. Eric Louw, Leader of the South African Delegation, seems to be in a desperate mood to score points at any price. In doing so he appears to have made no attempt to claw his facts. In fact his quotations of statements alleged to have been made by Messrs. J.R. Rathebe and C.A.R. Motsepe, he did these African leaders as well as the African people a disservice and a grave injustice by taking statements out of their context to give the false impression that they were made in support of apartheid when in fact they were made in opposition to the Government policy of apartheid.

Mr. Louw is reported by Sapa, Paris, 1551/16/11/48 to have said: "The Polish Delegate, who had anticipated racial conflicts resulting from the Union's discriminatory policy, might be interested in statements by Native and Coloured Leaders such as the President of the Transvaal Teachers' Association, Mr. C. Motsepe, who had said that, so far, the Government had done little that the Natives would not like it to do and the education grant of £6,000,000, was higher than anything received before, and of Mr. J. Rathebe who had told a meeting of the Johannesburg Joint Council of Europeans and Africans that the Natives would accept apartheid if it was total segregation."

Mr. Louw did not quote other points raised in Mr. Motsepe's speech. He dared not tell the Delegations of the Trusteeship Committee that, among other things, Mr. Rathebe said:- "Africans had tried to be subservient and had done all the menial work of the country, but in spite of this they had not been able to satisfy the Europeans. They realised that they needed the guidance of Europeans who had the advantages of education and an older civilisation, but felt that because of their own contribution in labour to the country's wealth they should be given equality of opportunity. They were no longer willing to be regarded as serfs or articles for exploitation, they wanted to be considered equal partners in the land of their birth. If this could not be achieved then total apartheid would be welcomed by them. But they knew that the "apartheid" envisaged by the Nationalists was quite a different thing from that for which they hoped the Nationalists wanted them to continue as "Hewers of wood and drawers of water". Africans were well aware that it was futile to try and quarrel with the Europeans, as they had the machine guns, and for this reason and because they were so frustrated, they thought the only way to achieve harmony would be for the Europeans, who possessed 87% of the land, to give them territory and let them go their own way and build up their own civilisation, with the help of Europeans of goodwill."

Africans hoped that UNO would not be influenced by the S.A. Government's attempts to prevent the discussion of the Union's domestic affairs at its meetings. Naturally they felt that the rest of the world should know of the racial discrimination in South Africa."

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I could go on quoting Mr. Rathebe to prove that Mr. Louw's quotation misrepresents him and must have misled most of the Delegations who had no reason to doubt the presentation of facts by the Honourable ^{member} Delegation from South Africa, Mr. Eric Louw.

We strongly protest against Mr. Louw's use of facts about the Africans' attitude towards apartheid and colour discrimination in South Africa. We agree with him and the Government that South Africa must not be misrepresented abroad and the only way not to misrepresent our country is for all concerned to admit the existence of colour domination and discrimination and do all in their power to remove the stigma. I hope Mr. Louw will correct his statement at the General Assembly in the light of the document I am sending him.

Africans in South Africa are opposed to the Union Native Policy of apartheid and segregation as being a euphemism for exploitation. 87% of the land of the Union of South Africa is reserved for the 2½ million Europeans and 13% for the 7½ million Africans. European children have compulsory education with adequate funds and a school feeding scheme. The African children depend on schools provided by Missionary Bodies and subsidized by the State. Because of lack of sufficient funds only about 40% of African children may be accommodated in existing Mission School buildings. The rest, 60% must be without schooling, without discipline. European death rates from Tuberculosis are about 33 per 100,000 and African death rates have been quoted up to 1000 per 1000000. Africans have no free access to land and are landless and hopeless.

In a Parliament of 150 members then 8,000,000 Africans are represented or misrepresented by 3 Europeans and in a Senate of 44 members there are the so-called Senators representing Africans under the Representations. The other members and Senators represent the 2½ million Europeans.

Mr. Louw in the same speech of 16/11/48 before the Trusteeship Committee referred to 12 Natives who visited Dr. Malan and "assured him of the steadfast loyalty of the Native Community of the Eastern Province to the Government of the Union."

There are Africans who, for the sake of self-Preservation and personal reward believe and practise that the best way to get along with most Europeans is to tell them what they would like to hear.

What does Mr. Louw think of the results of the elections of European Candidates for Senators representing Natives in Natal and the Orange Free State?

There were four Candidates in all. Two were Apartheid Candidates supported and assisted by the Representatives of the Government Party. The Apartheid Candidates polled 130,000 votes in round figures in spite of pressure from Government Party Agents and Official Representatives including the Minister of Native Affairs.

The other non-Governmental sponsored ^{candidates} polled among themselves about 1,000,000 votes in round figures, and these votes were communal in the hands of conserve Africans.

The Provincial Congress of the African National Congress rejected apartheid and its Candidates at East London, Bloemfontein, Pretoria and Durban. The President General of the African National Congress rejected the overtures of the Government Party representative on October 9th, 1948, requesting the National Leader of the African National Congress to lend his support for the Government Candidates as Native Representatives.

The Midlands African Interdenominational Ministers' Association which includes Port Elizabeth, rejected apartheid as having no support in the Holy Scriptures.

Today another Government sponsored Candidate for Native Representation in the Union House of Assembly lost his deposit in the Cape Western Circle. Out of 4728 votes cast he polled 194 votes, less than one-twentieth of votes cast.

This briefly indicates the Africans' reactions to the Government policy of apartheid which is an aggravation of the previous Governments policy which was also not acceptable to the Africans.

How does this compare with the internationally publicised deputation of 12 Natives who met Dr. Malan at Port Elizabeth? Whom did they represent?

The Africans are not opposed to any particular European party or Government. They are opposed repression, colour domination and *colour discrimination.*

In a multiracial and multicoloured society like the Union of South Africa, we consider health-promoting to the welfare and well-being and progress of South Africa to have her problems ventilated at home and abroad to the end that "we see ourselves as others see us."

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