

BULLETIN

AMERICANS FOR SOUTH AFRICAN RESISTANCE

513 West 166th Street

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NOTE: The bulk of this Bulletin quotes a statement released on September 29th by 22 well-known white South Africans. These 22 persons include four representatives of the Non-Europeans in Parliament, the Bishop of Johannesburg, three other religious leaders, a former judge, and eight university lecturers or former lecturers. This Statement is particularly significant. It points out how public attitude toward the civil disobedience Campaign has changed since the Campaign started. Correspondence which came from South Africans several months ago indicated that not only did the African National Congress have no significant following, but the present Campaign could not be pursued in a disciplined fashion. However, since June 26th, when the Campaign started, as has been pointed out in previous Bulletins, it has been shown that the ANC now has uncontested leadership and that it is carrying on a disciplined movement.

In this connection it should be pointed out that the violence which took place in Port Elizabeth on October 19th had no connection with the Campaign Against the Unjust Laws. Officials of the African National Congress deplored the riot and called it "this unfortunate, reckless, ill-considered return to jungle law".

Well over 6,000 Non-Whites have now been arrested in the Campaign.

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"EQUAL RIGHTS FOR ALL CIVILIZED PEOPLE"

We have watched with dismay the situation that has developed from the growth of the Non-European movement of passive resistance against unjust laws. This movement clearly is no sudden impulse. It bears all the signs of careful thought and planning over many months by men who are acknowledged leaders among Africans and Indians and have organized it with a full appreciation of all it implies. The movement has met with very remarkable response both from the mass of the people and from those to whom it appeals for voluntary personal support and for substantial courage and sacrifice.

In these circumstances it is clear that we South Africans face a double challenge. It is a challenge to those who hold the reins of government; and it is, not less, a challenge to all who participate in the exercise of political power, i.e., the whole white community. The challenge comes primarily from those who are excluded by reason of their race or colour from any real form of citizenship.

Considering the movement in this light, we are sure that no good can come from merely condemning it and denouncing its leaders. We Europeans must frame an answer, and adopt an approach to the movement that holds within it constructive possibilities.

Otherwise, we foresee a progressive worsening of race relations, and an even deeper bitterness than is already visible in our country in the relations between its peoples.

We believe that it is imperative that South Africa should now adopt a policy that will attract the support of educated, politically conscious non-Europeans by offering them a reasonable status in our common society. This can be done by a revival of the liberal tradition which prevailed for so many years, and with such successful results in the Cape Colony. That tradition, an integral part of South African history, was based on a firm principle, namely, equal rights for all civilised people, and equal opportunities for all men and women to become civilised. In our opinion, only the acceptance of that fundamental principle can provide the South African Government with the moral basis it now lacks.

We believe that the wise and steady application of this principle will gradually remedy the worst grievances and disabilities which non-Europeans now suffer, since their deepest feelings are stirred by the fact that our laws are not based, as they should be, on tests of civilisation and education, but on race and colour.

On their side, we ask the African and Indian leaders to recognize that it will take time and patience substantially to improve the present position. We ask them to accept the principle we have indicated as a long-term aim, and we do so in the hope that it will make negotiations possible and their success probable.

As an immediate short-term programme of reform we urge all who sincerely desire racial peace and harmony in our country to concentrate on demanding the repeal of the most mischievous measures on the statute-book.

These are measures such as the Group Areas Act, the pass laws, and the Suppression of Communism Act in its present form -- measures which offend the human sense of justice as well as the canons of good government.

Finally, we appeal to all concerned to express themselves with restraint at this disturbing time and to refrain from doing or saying anything that might aggravate the present unhappy situation.

(Signed) Margaret Ballinger, W. G. Ballinger, Edgar H. Brookes, Herbert Coblans, George W. Gale, H. J. Hanson, Ellen Hellmann, A. Winifred Hoernle, Trevor Huddleston, A. M. Keppel-Jones, Julius Lewin, D. M. Malcolm, J. S. Marais, Leo Marquard, Donald B. Molteno, Mabel Palmer, Hugh Parker, Alan Paton, L. I. Rabinowitz, Ambrose Reeves, Saul Solomon, J. B. Webb