

ANNEX I

MANIFESTO OF THE BAHUTU

NOTE ON THE SOCIAL ASPECT OF THE INDIGENOUS RACIAL PROBLEM IN RUANDA

Government authorities will no doubt have learned from the Press or from reports received by word of mouth about the present state of relations between the Muhutu and the Mututsi in Ruanda. Consciously or not, these relations affect a situation which we regard as serious, one which might mar or even wreck one day the magnificent work which Belgium is accomplishing in Ruanda. The indigenous racial situation is of course a domestic matter, but what can remain purely domestic or local nowadays? How can it remain hidden from view now that the indigenous and European political positions appear to confront each other? Political, social and economic conditions are complicated by a racial conflict which seems to grow increasingly acute. The advantages of modern civilization are, it would appear, being made available through education, predominantly to one recipient - the Mututsi - thus making for more difficulties in the future than are presented by what is often called today "the difficulties which divide us". No solution of the Mututsi-Belgian relations can be durable until the fundamental difficulties between the Mututsi and the Muhutu are settled.

We will endeavour to shed some light on this matter. We thought it would be helpful to give a brief sketch of the painful reality to the Administering Authority which is here to care for the entire population and not for a caste representing barely 14 per cent of the total.

The main causes of the present situation are to be found in the state of affairs resulting from the old political and social structure of Ruanda, in particular the institution of buhake, in the thorough and widespread application of indirect administration, and in the disappearance of some old social institutions, which left a gap that has not been filled by corresponding modern institutions on the Western pattern. Thus, we would welcome a rapid growth of the trade union movement and efforts to assist and encourage the constitution of a strong middle class. The fear, the inferiority complex and the "atavistic" need of a guardian, commonly attributed to the Muhutu, if they exist at all, are but the

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surviving relics of the feudal system. If they exist, the civilization brought by the Belgians would have been of little effect if no positive effort had been made to remove these obstacles in the way of the emancipation of the whole of Ruanda.

I. Trumped-up objections to the advancement of the Muhutu

Many are the objections being made to the advancement of the Muhutu. Without discounting the weaknesses of the Muhutu, we feel that each race and each class has its own and we believe that some action should be taken to correct them instead of relegating the Bahutu forever to an inferior position. It is claimed specifically:

- (a) "That the Bahutu used to be chiefs in the country". This is a subtle anachronism, the present does not fully confirm.
 - (b) "The social virtues of the Mututsi are such that he was born to rule." The same virtue may take a different form in an Italian than in a German, in an Englishman than in a Japanese, in a Fleming than in a Walloon.
 - (c) "What have the educated Bahutu done for the advancement of their fellow tribesmen?" The prevailing atmosphere and especially the buhake system which often influenced appointments, the lack of sufficient freedom of initiative within an autocratic structure, the economic inferiority to which the Muhutu are doomed by the social system, and the subordinate functions to which they have been systematically relegated - all these have handicapped the educated Muhutu's efforts on behalf of his fellow tribesmen.
 - (d) "Let them in Heaven's name come forward as candidates or wait until they have got over their inferiority complex." To become a candidate presupposes a sense of democracy; but in fact this excuse betrays a leaning towards the buhake, which the people have abandoned (without, however, losing their respect for authority). In this connexion, we would recall the remark of a Hamite notable: "The Bahutu should be elevated not by the whites, but by the traditional Mututsi method."
- We do not think that the ancient practice of ennoblement should be revived in the present European-African situation.

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(e) "And the crowd will follow." That the élite can influence the masses is undeniable, provided that the élite belongs to the masses. At the bottom of all this there is a colonialism in two stages: the Muhutu must bear with the Hamite and his domination and with the European and his laws; which always pass through the channel Mututsi-leta bmligi and leta Mututsi. The method advocated in the formula "White-Hamite-Muhutu" should not be contemplated. There is many an example to show that "the crowd" does not always follow automatically.

(f) "All Bahutu claims should be forgotten in the interest of union, of the presentation of a united front to achieve the country's independence." It is highly doubtful that union of this type - a single party - is really necessary if indeed emancipation is ripe for the plucking.

Let us add that the section of the population which the departure of the Europeans might plunge into worse slavery than before would at least have the right to refuse to co-operate in the efforts to attain independence save by working very hard and drawing attention to the shortcomings which in its opinion should be remedied first.

II. The essence of the indigenous racial problem

Some people have asked whether this is a social or a racial conflict. We think that that is idle speculation. In reality and in the minds of men it is both. It can, however, be narrowed down for it is primarily a question of a political monopoly held by one race, the Mututsi, and, in view of the social situation as a whole, it has become an economic and social monopoly. In view, also, of the de facto selection in education, this political, economic and social monopoly has also become a cultural monopoly, to the great despair of the Bahutu, who see themselves condemned forever to the role of subordinate manual workers, and this, worse still, after achieving an independence which they will have unwittingly helped to obtain. The buhake has of course been abolished, but it has been more than replaced by this total monopoly, which is the principal cause of the abuses of which the population complains.

The political monopoly. The so-called ancient Bahutu chiefs were the exception which proved the rule. The conditions which allowed for those exceptions no longer exist; there can obviously be no question of re-establishing

the old custom of ennobling the Bahutu. As for the famous cross-breeding or the "mutation" of Bahutu into Hamites, only statistics, a well-established genealogy and perhaps medical experts can give objective and sound information to refute the old wives' tales which are invoked for many purposes.

The economic and social monopoly. The privileges of their brothers who command the hills have always helped to uplift the Mututsi. Certain social functions were even "reserved" for the nobility and the present civilization by indirect administration has served to reinforce and, so to speak, to generalize the "reservation".

The recent distribution of cows clearly illustrated the weakness of ownership, at least where cattle are concerned. The land itself in more than half of Ruanda, that is to say, the most "Hamitized" areas, can hardly be regarded as the property of the occupants. This precarious occupancy is hardly conducive to working the land, and people who have nothing but their own hands with which to increase their wealth are therefore at a disadvantage. We shall not refer to the system of corvées of every kind, the only monopoly of the Bahutu, as the Mututsi has always had every chance to improve his domestic finances.

The cultural monopoly. Here again, the true Hamitic nature of certain persons may be disputed, and the de facto selection (by chance, perhaps?) practised in secondary schools is obvious. There is no lack of argument to show that the Muhutu is unskilled, that he is poor, and that he is uncouth. The lack of skill remains to be proved; poverty is his lot under the existing social system; and as regards manners a more liberal spirit would be desirable. Soon diplomas will be requested, and rightly so, but they will all go to one side; the Muhutu will not even know the meaning of the word. And if perchance - which God forbid - other forces were to intervene, knowing how to substitute numbers, bitterness and despair for diplomas! The racial element will step in and there will no longer be any need to ask whether the conflict is racial or social.

We believe that this complete monopoly is at the bottom of the abuses of every kind of which the population complains. Some facts and current tendencies will show the real state of affairs today:

- (1) The Muhutu young people (and some of the Batutsi who have fallen into complete decay share the same fate), whose motto is "In itineribus semper", inside and outside the country, fleeing the corvée, are no longer

adapted to modern conditions and psychology, and never or seldom accept the discipline of constraint, which, moreover, gives rise to the abuses of which the authorities appear to be ignorant.

(2) Fathers who barely feed their families have perhaps unconsciously adopted a kind of political programme of antipathy towards Europeans. Some of them even think that the Belgian Government is in collusion with the nobility to exploit them utterly.

(3) On the other hand, however, thoughts like the following are still prevalent: "Without the European, we should be condemned to more inhuman exploitation than before and to total destruction". "It is a pity that Europeans do not become chiefs, sub-chiefs or judges." This is not because they believe Europeans to be perfect, but because they must choose the lesser of two evils. Passive resistance to the orders of the sub-chiefs is merely the result of this uncertainty and uneasiness.

(4) The Bahutu deplore the fact that they are systematically relegated to subordinate positions. This policy of relegation no longer escapes notice, except in a few cases. It is but one step from all this to a civil "cold" war and to xenophobia, and from there it is but one further step to the popularity of ideas likely to propagate communism.

III. Proposal for immediate solutions

Some solutions can be suggested, but cannot become effective unless the political and social system of the country is changed radically and soon.

The first solution is a "state of mind". Let us abandon the thought, the pet method of the Administration in our country, which is sarcastically called "Umuco w'Igihugu", "respect for the culture and customs of the country".

The economic and social situation. We want institutions to be set up to help the Muhutu population, handicapped as it is by a native administration whose aim seems to be to keep the Muhutu in poverty and thus to make it impossible for them to claim the effective exercise of their rights in their own country. We propose:

(a) the abolition of the corvées. The labourers would be replaced by a Public Works Service (public or para-national), engaging really voluntary workers, protected by social legislation, which has advanced considerably.

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The Service might be planned and established in a manner similar to the REGIDESO, so far as we know it. The abolition of the corvées would give the people some free time for useful individual work. The lazy ones - and they exist even among the castes of the élite - would be supervised by a more humane system.

(b) The legal recognition of individual land ownership in the Western sense of the word, each person having an adequate area for planting and stock-raising. The bikingi pasture lands in the middle clans would be abolished, at least to the extent that they are customarily countenanced and defended. For such legislation, a competent service should determine what area would suffice for a family of six or eight children in the light of the productive potentialities of the soil of Ruanda-Urundi. All those in effective occupation of such land at the present would be registered by the sub-chiefdom as the real owners in the Western sense of the word; the rest would come gradually, with the help of the migratory movement which is taking place in certain parts of the country.

Measures with regard to land ownership should not be taken too rapidly, even at the proposal of the High Council many members of which might be inclined to view the problem unilaterally or might fail to take into account the difficulties or real aspirations of the ordinary worker on the land.

(c) A rural credit fund. The fund would be used to promote rural projects (national farming and various crafts). The fund would make loans to villagers wishing to establish themselves as farmers or artisans. Loans should be made available on terms within the reach of the ordinary Muhutu.

(d) Economic union between Belgian Africa and the metropolis. This union should be organized in accordance with principles to be defined and laid before the public and the responsible leaders before being approved.

(e) Freedom of expression. There has been talk of the disruptive efforts of certain local, indigenous or European or even Belgian publications which tend to divide the races. For our part, we believe that some exaggeration may have occurred, as in all journalism, particularly at the present stage of development of the countries concerned. We also believe that certain expressions may have offended certain people who are unaccustomed to being

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opposed in covertly doing whatever they wish with the unimportant and the weak. That may have been a shock in a system just emerging from feudalism. We also believe that as freedom of expression in Belgian Africa with regard to specific problems affecting the inhabitants has not really existed for more than three years, some authorities who are not accustomed to democracy and perhaps are not altogether in favour of it have grown alarmed. But we also believe, that it would be wrong, on the pretext of avoiding division, to suppress comment on conditions which exist or tend to exist to the detriment of a great many people and to the advantage of the often abusive monopoly of a minority. We are convinced that neither Belgian justice nor the Belgian Government would accept a union achieved over the dead bodies of a population which seeks conditions and an atmosphere in which it can work better and develop. Before perfection is required of the Press, should it not be required of the indigenous courts and administration, which are much more important and all too frequently give occasion for criticism by the Press? Surely freedom of expression, in the proper meaning of the term is one of the foundations of true democratization.

Political situation. While we agree that the current Mututsi administration should participate more and more in the government of the State, we feel that a warning should be issued against a method which, while tending to eliminate white-black colonialism, would leave a worse Hamitic colonialism over the Muhutu. The difficulties which might arise from the Hamitic monopoly over the other more numerous races which have lived in the State for a longer time, must be eliminated. To this end we wish:

- (a) That laws and customs should be codified. It is true that some customs cannot be abolished by a stroke of the pen but we believe that almost superstitious respect for the fetish of "custom" is a handicap to the integrated and soundly-based advancement of the population. Accordingly, in order to clarify matters, to ensure fuller equality before the law and to reduce confusion and abuses, we ask that the laws enacted by the Belgian authorities and the customs which are still in force and which are useful, reasonable and not an obstacle to the democratization of the State should

be embodied in a code which could be regularly revised and amended in the light of the stage of development reached.

The work that has already been done by scholars and legislators in the two fields will facilitate the speedy completion of this urgent task. The indigenous and European courts and administrations and expanding private initiative in all fields need such a guide. The brandishing of the sword of local custom (umucco w'igihugu) by the monopolistic interests is not likely to promote the necessary confidence nor to establish justice and peace having regard to the present aspirations of the population. Codification is necessary to determine and correct the deficiencies that exist and to give more encouragement to private initiative which is now often blocked by local exception or interpretations devoid of social meaning.

(b) That Bahutu should in fact be promoted to public office (chiefdom, sub-chiefdom, judges). In particular, we believe that it is high time that the councils concerned or the taxpayers elected their sub-chiefs, chiefs and judges. In areas which are still considered too backward, the authorities might put forward a panel of two or three candidates from which the voters could choose their guide.

(c) That appointments to indigenous public offices should be for a specific term, at the end of which the people may elect a new candidate or re-elect the outgoing office-holder if he has given satisfaction. Such a system, while not racist, would give the Muhutu a better chance and would constitute a warning regarding the abuse of a life-long monopoly.

(d) That the provincial chiefs should withdraw from the councils at the chiefdom level.

(e) That the High Council of the State should consist of delegations from the chiefdoms: each chiefdom would send a delegation in proportion to the number of its taxpayers, including European permanent residents in the chiefdom. We do not think we are begging the question in accepting Europeans who are permanent residents of the area, for once they are settled in this way they have specific interests to defend. Legislation must become increasingly broad and less discriminatory and Europeans are at least as useful as a Mututsi residing in the region.

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Measures of the kind we propose are in our view essential if the Government wishes to build work for the future without favouritism. We appreciate the need for caution, but we believe that the experience of nine centuries of Mututsi domination and fifty-six years of European trusteeship is more than enough and that delay may jeopardize what is being built without these foundations.

Educational situation. Tomorrow diplomas will be demanded and rightly so. The selection hitherto affected at the secondary and higher levels has been all too obvious. Naturally pretexts are not lacking and some are not wholly devoid of foundation: they take advantage of a system which systematically favours the political and economic advancement of the Hamitic population. We ask:

(1) That particular attention should be paid to the supervision of education. We ask that a more realistic and modern approach should be adopted and that the selection whose effects are apparent at the secondary level should be abandoned. We ask that attention should be given to this matter from the beginning so the choice will now be virtually confined to Batutsi in the fifth year. There may be no actual intention to effect a selection, but it is necessary to avoid a de facto selection, ceteris paribus.

If there are not enough places, use can be made of the particulars in identity cards to maintain the proportion. Not that we must go to the opposite extreme of favouring the Bantu rather than the Hamite, as in the past. Present social position should have no influence whatsoever on admission to school.

(2) That the awarding of scholarships much of the cost of which is financed by taxes paid by the predominantly Muhutu population should be supervised by the Administering Authority, to ensure that the Bahutu are no longer exploited for the benefit of a monopoly which keeps them permanently in an intolerable position of social and political inferiority.

(3) In regard to higher education we believe that the institutions in Belgian Africa are adequate, but that as many students as possible should be admitted, although it may well be desirable that highly capable students should receive specialized training in Belgian universities. With regard to the university in Ruanda, it would be wrong to waste funds from a budget

which is said to be unbalanced; vocational and technical instruction, which is almost non-existent in the State, should be improved first, since it is the key to economic emancipation. It would be wrong to prevent the entry into European universities of carefully selected candidates who intend to undertake specialized studies of immediate use to the country. //

(4) That handicraft, vocational and technical training in the country should be given priority in the allocation of funds in the coming budget period; that courses should be as rapid as possible, and should be cheap enough to allow the children of ordinary people to take them. We observe more that the few experimental handicraft training centres seem to be destined to accommodate the overflow of Mututsi youth, for whom there is no room in the secondary schools or who lack the ability to enter them.

We hope that in the very near future, in connexion with the preparations to develop vocational and technical facilities, each chiefdom will be provided with an elementary rural training centre, offering a course of at least two years, continuing practical primary education and providing training in a manual trade for all children who do not go on to the secondary schools. This, in our view, should be the chief and immediate objective in the field of education of the C.A.C. which are, after all, largely financed by Muhutu taxes. The funds expended for the Biru (Court drummers) and Dancers, who are usually recruited from the nobility, suggest that it is more money that is lacking.

(5) That social centres for the ordinary people be established and increased in number for the benefit of young women and girls from the rural areas, who are unable, because of their limited means, to attend the aristocratic domestic science schools and schools for monitors. The provision of basic education of this kind is necessary to ensure the balanced development of the family.

✱ In short, what we desire is the integrated and collective advancement of Muhutu. Those concerned are already working along these lines in the time left to them after their various corvées. But we are also calling for positive and more determined action from above. Belgium has, we are bound to admit, done a great deal in this direction but her benevolence must not be allowed to falter

halfway. We are not asking for a halt to be called: we agree that the MUTUTSI High Council should be able to participate progressively more effectively in the affairs of the State. But we urge the Administering Authority and the Mututsi Administration to take more positive and decisive action to bring about the economic and political emancipation of the Muhutu from his traditional subjugation to the Hamites.

In general, we ask Belgium to stop obliging the Muhutu always to take second place to the Mututsi. For instance, in social relations the Muhutu should no longer be required (tacitly, of course) to agree to follow Mututsi patterns of behaviour. In view of the talk about respect for different cultures, the differentiations of Ruandan culture should also be taken into account. It may be that the Hamite has practices which are pleasing to some of those in authority, but we have yet to learn that all the other black people must copy his ways. It is difficult to demonstrate the need for the permanent subordination of the Muhutu to the Hamite, the need for the indefinite continuance of this political, social, economic and cultural subordination.

People are not unaware of the support the indirect administration gives to the Mututsi monopoly. Therefore, in order to keep a close check on this racial monopoly, we strongly oppose, for the time being at least, the discontinuance of the practice of entering Muhutu, Mututsi, or Mutwa on official or personal identity cards. Its discontinuance would make it even easier to practice selection, by concealing it and making it impossible to establish the true situation statistically. Moreover, it has never been agreed that the Muhutu is ashamed of his name; what he objects to is the privileged position of a favoured monopoly which threatens to reduce the majority of the population to a position of systematic inferiority and to an undeserved sub-existence.

In seeking to throw more light on a problem that is of grave concern to all who genuinely love this country, we are motivated by a healthy desire to make a constructive contribution and to collaborate. These are problems in which the responsibility of Belgium, the Administering Authority, is all too heavily involved. It is not as revolutionaries (in the pejorative sense of the word) but as collaborators, aware of our social duty, that we have sought to warn the Authorities of the dangers which will inevitably be created sooner or later by the

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de facto maintenance - even if only in a negative fashion - of a racist monopoly over Ruanda. Some representatives of the people have already drawn attention to this anomaly; passive resistance pending the intervention of the white Administering Power, is likely to be strengthened in view of the abuses of a monopoly which is no longer accepted. We trust that it will serve as a warning.

We hope that the authorities will see in this brief note a more or less systematized account of the thinking and specific desires of the people to which we belong, whose life we share and with which we experience the frustrations resulting from an atmosphere which blocks the road to genuine democratization, the goal envisaged by generous Belgium and earnestly desired by the people, which longs for a viable politico-social structure and the integrated and collective advancement of the people.