



**FOREIGN POLICY**  
**OF THE**  
**UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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*Statements by Dr. the Honourable  
D. F. MALAN, Prime Minister and  
Minister of External Affairs*



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*Issued by the State Information Office of the Union of South Africa*



# DANIEL FRANCOIS MALAN

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DR. DANIEL FRANCOIS MALAN, Prime Minister and Minister of External Affairs, is the fourth Premier of the Union of South Africa. He was born on a farm near Riebeeck West on May 22, 1874, and received his school education at Riebeeck West. At Stellenbosch University he qualified in Theology and gained the M.A. Degree in Philosophy. He taught for a time, and in 1901 went to Holland where he continued his studies at the University of Utrecht, taking the degree of Doctor of Divinity with a thesis on the philosophy of Berkeley.

After his return to the Union, he accepted a call to the Dutch Reformed congregation of Heidelberg (Transvaal), and afterwards to congregations at Montagu and Graaff-Reinet.

On July 15, 1915, he became the first chief editor of the daily newspaper *Die Burger*, official organ of the National Party. He had already become known as a fervent protagonist of the Afrikaans language and of the unity of Afrikanerdom. He was one of the leaders of the Second Afrikaans Language Movement, and it was the late President Steyn and the late General C. R. de Wet who urged him to accept the editorship of *Die Burger* and to enter politics.

Three months after leaving the pulpit he was actively engaged in politics as Chairman of the Inaugural Congress of the National Party in the Cape Province. In 1918 he became member of Parliament for Calvinia, a constituency which he represented until 1938, when he exchanged it for Piketberg. As leader of the National Party in the Cape Province, Dr. Malan was assured of his place in the first Hertzog Cabinet of 1924. In that year he became Minister of the Interior, Health and Education. On his initiative, some far-reaching legislation was introduced and carried through. The recognition in the Constitution of Afrikaans as an official language of the Union, the Nationality and Flag Act, the revision of the Immigration Acts, and an Act instituting a system of postal voting were passed on his initiative and insistence. Next to General Hertzog, he became the man of the greatest weight in the Cabinet.

In 1933, when General Hertzog decided to go into coalition with General Smuts, Dr. Malan was not prepared to co-operate with the new Government and went into opposition as leader of the National Party. A fierce struggle awaited him and his party. He became Prime Minister in June, 1948, after being leader of the Opposition for about fifteen years.

Dr. Malan has been married twice and has two sons from the first marriage. After the death of his first wife, he married Miss Maria-Ann Louw, of Calvinia.

He is one of the best orators that South Africa has ever produced.

# MESSAGE TO THE PEOPLE

*Dr. the Hon. D. F. Malan, Prime Minister and Minister of External Affairs, on the inauguration of his Government, on June 4, 1948, spoke to the people of South Africa in a nation-wide broadcast. Before dealing with matters of internal policy, he said:—*

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The new Government, constituted as a result of the recent general election, today assumed office. As head of that Government I wish, in all modesty, to avail myself of this opportunity to extend our sincere greetings to all sections of the South African population.

As the then Opposition, we went to the polls in order to obtain from the nation a mandate more specifically in regard to certain outstanding problems. That mandate has been entrusted to us and we intend fulfilling the task imposed upon us to the best of our ability. To that end we need the full trust and support not only of those who, by voting for us, called us to this onerous task, but also of all other well-disposed citizens who wish to contribute to the successful implementation of the accepted policy of the state. That is what we ask of you now.

As is generally known the term "National" appropriately describes the character and general policy of this Government. In our own minds that word has no exclusive meaning; we use it in an inclusive sense to embrace all sections of the South African population whose welfare and happiness, and mutual friendship and co-operation, we sincerely wish to promote. On the other hand that word also denotes that in this country of ours there dwells our own South African nation; that we wish to encourage in all sections that awareness of our national existence and that sentiment of national pride upon which we can build national unity on a common national foundation; and finally that we shall always place the interests of South Africa before those of any other country in the world, however firm the bonds of our friendship with that country or countries may be and however close our collaboration with them for common purposes. Our Government will serve our own South Africa and its population with undivided loyalty and devotion.

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We unreservedly recognise our membership in the community of nations. We do not, therefore, in any way subscribe to a policy of isolationism. In regard to our membership of the United Nations Organisation, however, we wish to make it very clear that we, together with our predecessors in government, accepted it on the unequivocal understanding that there was to be neither external interference in our domestic affairs nor any tampering with our autonomous rights. On this foundation we shall continue to build, and we shall steadfastly refuse to allow any country or power or organisation to guide our destinies—that will be our duty.

We also readily acknowledge the uniquely friendly relations existing between our country and the United Kingdom and other members of the British Commonwealth of Nations. It is the desire of the Government that those friendly relations shall be continued. We must, however, emphasize that co-operation for common purposes will be possible only if such co-operation does not detract from our status and freedom of action as a sovereign independent State, and only if in such consultations no attempt is made by any external agency to interfere in our domestic affairs.

It will be generally conceded that, with the recent accession to the Commonwealth of new members having equal rights, the danger of interference cannot be regarded as imaginary, especially if South Africa's experiences at Lake Success are borne in mind. This inevitably leads to the question whether this universally desired friendly co-operation would not be more effectively achieved by means of separate contacts between the individual members of the Commonwealth rather than through discussions at joint and inclusive conferences.

# *THE INTERNATIONAL SITUATION, 1949*

*On April 8, 1949, on the eve of his departure for London, to attend the Conference of Prime Ministers of the Commonwealth, Dr. Malan, as Prime Minister and Minister of External Affairs, addressed the Senate of the Union Parliament. Referring to the international situation, he said, among other things:—*

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Mr. President, I am glad to comply with an undertaking which I gave to this House that before I went overseas I should make a statement in this House about the international situation. I think it would be best for me first to make a few general remarks, and in doing so to indicate what really is the basis on which we are building, what are the essential principles of our foreign policy.

The first cardinal principle of our foreign policy is that we regard South Africa as an country which is not isolated, nor can be isolated, from the rest of the world and from the community of nations in general. It has been the custom for a considerable time, both when the members of this party were in opposition, and even since the new Government has come into office, to characterise us as a party, and as a Government, that stands for isolation. I am able to say here—and I can say it with full justification—that that is not the policy of this Government, nor of the party which the Government represents, and that it has, indeed, never been their policy. It would be nonsensical to think that a country could remain isolated from all other countries, that it could have nothing to do with what, in general, is going on in the rest of the world. If that had been the National Party's policy then something would not have taken place, through us, which marked a new departure in South Africa's foreign relations. The former National Party Government, when it came into office, took such a lively interest in our friendly relations with foreign countries that it was the first South African Government to think of appointing foreign representatives. The fact that there is a diplomatic service to-day is due to the National Party's first Government.

It is clear, therefore, that we are not in favour of isolation. That is the last thing we want. Our diplomatic service has been considerably extended; and as diplomatic relations are usually based on a principle of reciprocity the diplomatic representation of other nations has been correspondingly extended here in South Africa. Moreover, during the past year, since the present Government came into office, an important change has been made in that we are no longer satisfied to be represented in certain foreign countries by Ministers, but have decided that the time has come for us to be represented in certain cases by Ambassadors.

A change has also come about in the status of High Commissioners. There has always been the question whether the High Commissioners of countries of the Commonwealth should retain the title of High Commissioner or whether some better title could not be found for them. The title of High Commissioner still suggests the idea of subjection, a position which no longer exists to-day. The suggestion that High Commissioners should be accorded the title of Ambassador has not yet been decided. It is still under consideration by the various members of the Commonwealth; but about one matter they have agreed—namely, that the High Commissioners, who have enjoyed a lower status hitherto than the envoys of other countries—not even to mention Ambassadors—should be given the status of Ambassadors even if they do not have the title. That has recently been put into effect here in South Africa.

## *The United Nations*

I think it is, perhaps, necessary here, while I am referring to isolation, to say a few words in regard to the United Nations Organisation and our relations with it. One of the proofs that neither I nor the party nor the Government I represent has ever been in favour of isolation is the fact that we have never, whether as the Government or as the Opposition, been against our membership of the League of Nations. On the contrary, when our National Party was previously in office, we supported the League of Nations. We came to Parliament year after year and asked for the money which was expected from us as a member of it. Similarly we were not, in principle, opposed to the new world organisation, the United Nations Organisation, when that was brought into existence; on the contrary, we supported it. We stated our point of view and at the time we announced in Parliament on what basis we thought the United Nations Organisation should exist. And if Hon. Senators would to-day refer to that motion, which I myself introduced just before the San Francisco Conference, they would see whether I or the Party for which I spoke judged the situation so wrongly.

The United Nations Organisation is there, but is there anyone here to-day, or is there anyone to-day in a responsible position in the world, who will say that the United Nations Organisation does not have its—shall I call them—its weaknesses, does not have its shortcomings, and serious shortcomings? What are these shortcomings?

The first thing that I should like to say is that a mistake was made—for it is recognised to have been a mistake to-day—when the ultimate power, the most important power, was left in the hands of a single nation to exercise, if it wished, the right of veto. That right of veto, the individual right of veto, was given to the five great nations, and what has happened? Before San Francisco we had already given warning that the individual right of veto would eventually paralyse the Organisation so that it would be powerless and be unable to complete the task that rested on its shoulders. What has happened? Russia has used the veto time and time again. The whole organisation is against Russia on a particular point. The will of the world is expressed, but Russia makes use of the right of veto and puts a stop to it. The Organisation can get no further. A great deal of the trouble that exists in the world to-day, most of the dangers to which the world is exposed, are due to the granting of that individual right of veto, which has been abused. That is one of the weaknesses which affects UNO to-day.



There are other weaknesses which affect it, and one of them is certainly—it touches South Africa very closely—that UNO has gone outside its jurisdiction as expressed in its own Charter and is concerning itself, intervening, in the domestic affairs of members of the Organisation, particularly here in South Africa during the past few years. The complaint which we have, for example in connection with the Indian question, is that UNO is concerning itself with matters of a domestic nature in South Africa while it is very clearly stated in the Charter of the United Nations that nothing in that Charter must be taken as conferring on the Organisation the right to intervene in the domestic affairs of any of its members. If UNO continues on this course, then it is simply going to bring about its downfall; the more so because South Africa is not the only country to-day which is complaining about intervention in domestic affairs, or which fears such intervention. There are countries—and among them some of the most important powers, especially those which have colonies which they govern—which fear that intervention to-day, just as we fear it. That is another weakness which affects UNO.

But there is yet another. This is not simply a weakness which affects UNO. It is one which affected even the old League of Nations, though at the meetings of UNO it is seen to a greater extent. This weakness is the fact that scarcely any matter is discussed or decided on its merits. The meetings of UNO have to a great extent—and we are not the only ones who complain about this—become a platform for propaganda. And not only a platform for propaganda. To get anything agreed which you regard as being right, you have to go behind the scenes to the representatives of other countries. I do not suggest that only South Africa is doing this now; it is a practice that is followed by pretty well every country in connection with virtually all questions. You tell the delegation from another country: “Look here, you want to get this and that through at the meeting of the United Nations; we shall support you, but you in turn must support us in this”. And so it is a matter of trading behind the scenes, continual negotiation and bargaining behind the scenes and in fact there are few things which are dealt with on their merits. That was a weakness which affected the old League of Nations, and it is a weakness which is now cropping up to a greater extent at the meetings of UNO. And all that I can say is that if this is to be taken as an indication of the form which a world parliament should take, then such a world parliament would be a disaster for the world. If our Parliament had to be conducted in that way, if it were an assembly of independent members, none of them under the control of a party or of a caucus, and each of them went round and told the others: “If you want to get this for your constituency I shall support you, but then you will have to support me in turn in connection with another matter”, then it would become a body in which there would be intrigues from morning to night, and from January to December, and in which nothing was dealt with on its merits. That is unsound administration.

That is unfortunately the position in regard to the meetings of UNO. Nevertheless I say that UNO, if it can be relieved of its shortcomings—and we should like to assist in bringing that about—will be not only a useful but also a necessary organisation for maintaining the peace and co-operation of the world.

# *The Commonwealth*

Apart from our relationships with other countries and with UNO, I should like to say that another cardinal point of our policy, our internal as well as our external policy, is that we stand for our independent status as a country. We are striving for that, and where we have achieved it we want to maintain it to the full. We are striving to be a free, independent country among the free, independent countries of the world. A nation cannot be a nation unless it is independent. If it has not yet achieved independence it must struggle for it until it has it. Nationhood, nationhood of one's own, is dependent upon it; it is the life of a nation. In South Africa there has been a struggle for years now to achieve more freedom for South Africa. Fortunately, after the wars that have taken place and the difficulties that have arisen, that struggle has been fought in a constitutional way. And that constitutional road has eventually brought us to this position, that even though we are a member of the Commonwealth, even though we are associated with other nations, which are our sister nations, we can nevertheless claim in the fullest sense of the word that we are an independent nation, and that we are entitled to call ourselves that. There was quite a dispute not so very long ago about the question whether we were independent, and objections were raised against the word independence. Well, I do not think there is any section left in South Africa to-day which wishes to take up the attitude that we are not independent. That is the basis to-day of the British Commonwealth, and so far as we are concerned we stand squarely by that and we are not in favour of anything that is detrimental to the free, independent rights which we possess to-day.

Now in this connection the question arises: What then, is our relationship towards that Commonwealth? On this point I have already, on several occasions, made statements, not only since we have been the Government, but also when we were in opposition. I did so again in a radio speech immediately after the new Government came into office. I should like to repeat here to-day what I said then; and that is that, so long as nothing is done which is detrimental to those free, independent rights of the separate units of the Commonwealth, we have no intention of leaving that association. We regard ourselves as being so free, with the rights that are generally recognised to-day, that no limits are placed to, no restrictions imposed upon, our free development. No limits are placed on our development, even if we should, as a people, decide to become a republic. If we want to do that we have the right to do it. It is one of our free, independent rights. So long as that is the position we are anxious to remain associated with the other members of the Commonwealth and to regard ourselves not merely as belonging to the wider circle of the peoples of the world, but more particularly as belonging to a narrower circle of sister nations who are associated with one another because they have very great common interests which they can and wish to discuss in common and deal with in common. That is the attitude which we, as a Government, adopt.

I should like to add in this connection that for that reason I have no objection, as Prime Minister, to attending a meeting of the Prime Ministers of the Commonwealth if circumstances permit me to do so. I said at the

outset that if circumstances justified it, if I thought that South Africa could be done a service, if there were common matters which we could discuss, I should have no objection to attending a conference of that sort. And that is what I am going to do in the immediate future. There are matters, or there is one specific matter, which is of common interest; a matter which I think affects South Africa to such an extent that it would have been wrong on my part not to attend that conference. Unfortunately, I cannot to-day go into the specific matter. I can only say that there is only one single question which is to be discussed there. The whole conference will not last longer than a week. If other matters are discussed, it will be outside the conference and they will have to be discussed only informally.

## *Communism*

I now come to the world position, and if there is one thing to-day which fills us with concern it is the general world position, the question of peace, of the lasting peace of the world. Now there is no need for me to say—we all know it—that in spite of the existence of the United Nations Organisation, in spite of the enormous devastation which the world war brought about and of which the world has had proof in two world wars, it seems to-day that the possibility of war in the future is not to be excluded. It seems to-day as if the clouds of war are again gathering on the horizon. The position is that unfortunately there are set up against one another in the world two ideologies which are not reconcilable with one another. There is a chasm between what we might call the East and the West which seems to be unbridgeable. And the result of the last war has been that those two ideologies have eventually come into closer contact with one another—that is to say, territorially, in the physical sense—and they are drawn up directly against one another in Central Europe to-day. It is not impossible, naturally, under present conditions, that a spark might be put to the powder barrel. The place, the point, at which the two are ranged directly against one another, is not a matter of hundreds of miles. It is not even a question of miles. They are ranged only a matter of yards from one another. That is in Berlin. We know the position in Berlin, and the point of danger is there. But then also—and it is felt, I think, on both sides—there is the position that if Berlin as a whole should go to one side or the other, it will decide the future. If the Allies had to withdraw from Berlin, as the Russians are trying to force them to do, if they had to give up Berlin, then I think that Germany would be lost to the Allies. And if Germany had to become Communist—not of its own free will, but forced to become that by military might—then I fear that nothing will be able to check the Communist tidal wave in Europe and in the world. And it was for that reason that we, as a Government, decided, as we did at the request of the British Government, to lend a hand and help there in Berlin so that the position might be maintained. It is my intention when I have completed my work at the conference of Prime Ministers just to touch at Berlin in order to make contact with our representatives there who are helping to save the position.

That is the position in general. The situation has become more grave during the past year because a country that was anti-Communist—I think predominantly anti-Communist—Czechoslovakia—has been subjugated as the result of internal machinations and has to-day become a Communist-dominated country. So far as the East is concerned, Communism has

increased, and, except for a comparatively small area, China is in the hands of the Communists to-day. You can imagine what an enormous influence that in itself will have on Asia. Fortunately there are in Asia also anti-Communist forces. I am glad to be able to say, in spite of the dissension that exists between us and India, that so far as one can judge to-day, and according to public statements that have been made, India is also strongly on the anti-Communist side. That will mean quite a lot in the future, and we hope that they will stand by it. That there is danger is undeniable, and we must face up to that danger.

What can we do to meet it? This question has naturally had the careful consideration of the countries concerned. Measures for protecting the peace of the world have been considered, and when it began to become apparent that UNO was not in a position to guarantee the peace of the world other means were sought which might well provide that guarantee. There was nothing else for it but to fall back on the old attitude which existed in the past and that the best guarantee of peace was to be prepared for war. Let us, then, say: "Fall back on that if we cannot do otherwise, however undesirable it may be. Fall back on rearmament, on preparedness to defend ourselves." However undesirable it may be, I repeat that there is no other alternative for the peace and safety of the world. That has been appreciated.

## *The Atlantic Pact*

Out of this attitude there has now been born the Atlantic Pact, the co-operation of countries which are included among the Western democracies. It began in this way. At the outset it was realised that it would avail nothing to prepare direct measures against—let us state it openly—the Communist tidal wave which is threatening to flood Europe from the East. As the countries of the Continent of Europe, including England, lie still paralysed and powerless as a result of the last world war, the first thing to which attention must be devoted is economic regeneration. They have been worn out by the last war. To a great extent the devastation is still there, but fortunately a statesman in America, Marshall, came to light with a scheme which was eventually adopted by the American Congress and which was put into effect, with the result that to-day the economic regeneration of quite a few of those countries is going ahead. When they have been regenerated economically they will be in a far better position, not only to look after their own economy, but also to see to their own defence, or to a joint defence against a danger that threatens them. So the rebuilding of Europe has been undertaken, and we are glad that America, with her almost inexhaustible resources, was in a position to make her contribution, her extremely important contribution, towards it. Later it was realised that it would have to be carried further than that, for the position did not improve in the international sphere; it grew worse. So, first of all, there was brought into being the Western Union. The countries of Europe itself agreed to stand together, not only to assist one another economically, but also to assist one another in a military sense. They were England and France and what were called the "Benelux" countries—the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxemburg.

That Union came into being, the Western Union; but it was felt that it would be of no value even if they did stand together if that mighty overwhelming tidal wave from the East rolled on, and it was therefore

urged to America that she should go further than merely giving financial aid. There were negotiations. America was prepared to help. Canada also joined in. There were discussions, and so the Atlantic Pact, which was signed a few days ago, came into existence. It has been entered into for 20 years, definitely for the first ten years and then it may be extended for another ten years if necessary. This agreement also has its military aspect. It is not intended only to assist in rebuilding but is, at the same time, an alliance for defence, for military defence, if that should prove necessary. The Atlantic Pact has been extended by invitations directed to certain other countries. Denmark was invited and has joined. The same applies to Norway. Portugal was invited and a short time ago also decided to join. An invitation was also sent to Italy, and Italy has also decided to adhere to it. The question was put to me in the other House whether South Africa was going to join the Atlantic Pact and my answer—naturally it was merely given casually—was that we were waiting for an invitation. What I meant by that was that joining the Atlantic Pact was not done by way of application; it was done by way of invitation, and so long as we have received no invitation to join we have no need to consider the matter. That was really the meaning of the one sentence which I used, just in passing, in the course of the debate in the other Place. Now the Atlantic Pact is non-aggressive. That we must clearly understand. If it had been aggressive, then the majority of those countries of Europe who are now members of it would have had nothing to do with it. It is there for defence only in the event of an attack. Nor is it in conflict with the Charter of the United Nations, for the United Nations Charter makes it clear that there may be regional agreements for common defence.

I have spoken about the rebuilding of Europe. Now let me just say this, that if there is one thing about which I am delighted, and I think we all are, it is that a more lenient spirit is beginning to reveal itself in regard to Germany, and more especially Western Germany which is occupied by the Western Powers, than has been the case for years. There was undoubtedly a severe feeling, I fear in many instances a feeling of revenge. But one idea has more particularly begun to prevail in recent times, and that is that the interests of the West are also dependent on the future of Germany. As I said just now, upon what happens to Germany, whether it becomes Communist or anti-Communist, will depend the whole future of Europe. Economically Germany also lies in the centre, and the question whether Germany goes under economically or flourishes economically will also have repercussions in all directions. And for that reason the feeling is growing more and more that the former enemy should be treated, and if necessary assisted, so that it will become a friend, a valuable friend, to us. That is why I am glad to be able to say that conditions in Germany, so far as the feeling and the future of Germany are concerned, have in recent times undergone a change which I think we should welcome. I do not believe that the German people are inclined towards Communism. I do not believe it. I do not even want to accept it of that part of Germany that is occupied by Russia. And I hope the day will come when there will also be freedom for the oppressed peoples on the Continent of Europe, among whom I include Russia's satellite states—Rumania, Bulgaria, Jugoslavia (which is only partly a satellite), Czechoslovakia and Poland. I hope that these countries will again have the freedom to live their own lives as they please. These are countries in which nationalism has, through all the years, been very strong. And I want to express the idea here that the hope of getting the better of the danger from the East, and of breaking

it, does not lie, and cannot lie, only in the military power which the Western Powers can mobilise and use. I think that the national spirit of these smaller peoples that have been overwhelmed constitutes a force that is just as strong, if not stronger.

## *African Charter*

Finally comes the question: How does all this affect Africa, the Continent of Africa, and how does it affect our own South Africa? The Atlantic Pact is limited to countries north of the Tropic of Cancer. Africa is naturally excluded from that, but the question does arise for us: What is going to happen if war breaks out? The countries of the Atlantic Pact will be in it; how is it going to affect Africa? In the first place we must not lose sight of the fact that quite a number of those countries have possessions, colonies, in Africa. England has, Belgium has, France has and Portugal has. These are countries which are members of the Atlantic Pact, which may be involved in war, and all of them have interests and colonies in Africa. Could these countries be involved in war and their colonies remain out of it? I think that is inconceivable. Therefore we must take it that if war breaks out, and the countries of the Atlantic Pact are in it, then Africa will also be affected, not only high in the North, but also further South.

How are we in South Africa affected? In regard to this matter I have made statements before, in the House of Assembly, which amounted to this: That if war should break out our sympathies would, without the least doubt, be on the side of the Western Powers. I am speaking here, not on behalf of one section of the people of the country, but on behalf of all sections of the country. I am speaking on behalf of Afrikaans-speaking people and on behalf of English-speaking people. If war should break out, then so far as our sympathies are concerned, there will never have been an occasion in South Africa when there has been a state of war, when the people of this country will have stood together to such an extent as they will then; and I have said that we should not be able to remain neutral. That is the statement which I made previously and which I again wish to stress here. A war between anti-Communist countries and Communist countries would create a danger for us here in South Africa which would be greater for us than that created for other countries, for the simple reason that the Communists have been making propaganda here in South Africa for a long time. They are still doing it to-day. They are doing it openly, only partly openly; to adopt the words used by Gen. Smuts, they are doing it in the dark, and in the dark they are preaching, as he called it, their devil's gospel. And it is taking root among the non-European population of the country, there is not the least doubt about that. Since we came into power we have received reports, based on inquiries that have been made, about the conditions which prevail here now and which prevailed under the previous Government. They are to the effect that the position in regard to communist propaganda and communist activities here in South Africa is definitely serious and dangerous, and that it is time, high time, that steps should be taken in regard to it. It led to such a state of affairs that when a member of the Other Place who is a Communist, an open Communist, wanted to go and propagate his Communist ideas in places where they would definitely have led to trouble, and even in locations, we said that we should make use of

the powers that we had and prohibit meetings of that sort. That is only an indication of our general attitude and of our intention to deal with the matter and to deal with it seriously. It is because the danger is there, a serious danger to us as to other countries, it is for that reason that we cannot stand aside and remain neutral.

The extent to which we shall be able to take part in such a war naturally depends, in the first place, on what the situation is in South Africa itself so far as our internal security is concerned. Our first duty is to see to the safety of the people here in our country. If we are sure of that, then it is self-evident that we should devote our attention to the safety of the territories here in Africa which lie to our north. Waging a war is not what it once was, and the base from which an attack may be made is no longer your borders but may be hundreds of miles away from you. Whether we shall be able to do anything more than that is not a matter with which we need concern ourselves to-day. It is a matter to be decided in the circumstances and at the time. But we here in South Africa will have to be prepared for all eventualities in the future, just as the countries sharing in the Atlantic Pact and other countries of the world are of necessity, and to their regret, having to do it.

In regard to the Atlantic Pact and ourselves, I can say this: I know that we shall in any event have to understand one another in regard to contingencies. There might be a very good opportunity of doing, as I have thought for a long time now, something which is very necessary in regard to South Africa's interests in general, and that is that the peoples in Europe who have interests here, who have possessions here, should have a conference with one another in regard to a general policy for Africa, and should understand one another. During the last session it was pointed out in Parliament that the countries of America, North and South, understand one another, they have their charter. Europe is engaged to-day in getting its charter as well. A certain amount of progress has already been made in that regard towards the obtaining of a charter for Europe. There is no doubt about it that the countries of Asia are coming closer to one another and trying to reach an Asiatic understanding with one another. It is therefore time for us to get a charter for Africa, the Continent to which we are connected and of which we are part.

Whatever happens to Africa will necessarily affect us as well. If Africa should become the settling-place of the surplus population of Asia, as is taking place in a part of Africa farther to the north, will that not affect us here in South Africa? Will that not create problems in South Africa which are already difficult enough to solve but which will then become completely insoluble? That is one problem, a problem in which we too have an interest. If they are going to militarise the Natives of Africa, does that not create for us here in South Africa a danger, a serious danger, and a threat? There is not the least doubt about that. We have an interest in Africa not being militarised.

These and other similar problems exist, and I think that in regard to these matters the Powers that have possessions in Africa should meet and confer with one another, not only in regard to the defence of Africa—that is one matter—but also about these other matters which I have mentioned. I hope that, since the Atlantic Pact will need us, and we shall need the Atlantic Pact, the opportunity will possibly be created for us to arrive at an agreement in regard to these matters in Africa, and in regard to an Africa policy. I think that the opportunity is there. The weakest place in which to make an attack, the most vulnerable point is the Middle

East. The Russian bases are close. The bases of other countries, of other Powers, are far away. It is not impossible that the Suez Canal may be destroyed and that the passage round Africa will become absolutely necessary to the West if it wishes to retain any contact with the East. They need us in such a case, they need our co-operation, our goodwill. But it may also be that, in view of the dangers to which I have referred, here within our own borders, we too may need those Powers, or other Powers that have interests here in Africa. For that reason I hope that it may be possible for us to find a point of agreement and that we may be able to make progress in that respect.



# NEW STRUCTURE OF THE COMMONWEALTH

*On his return from the Prime Ministers' Conference, on May 11, 1949, Dr. Malan made the following statement to the Union House of Assembly when the vote Prime Minister and External Affairs came under discussion:—*

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Before the debate on this Vote begins, it will be expected of me first to make a statement with regard to a matter in which not only are all the Members of this House greatly interested, but in which great interest is also taken in our country and in many other countries in the world, more particularly among the members of the Commonwealth. I attended the Prime Ministers' Conference in London, and I can say that the results of the discussions that took place there are of the utmost importance, as I think we all fully realise. It undoubtedly constituted a milestone in the history of the development of the Commonwealth itself and relations between the various members of the Commonwealth.

As I said before my departure to Europe, the Prime Ministers' Conference was to be confined to one subject only. It was not possible at that time to give more information. But that programme was adhered to. The only subject that was discussed at that Conference was the position of India, the fact that India was to become a republic in the near future, and India's request, notwithstanding that event, to remain a member of the Commonwealth. This was the only matter that was discussed at the Prime Ministers' Conference. It is true that I had discussions with individual Ministers, more particularly with certain British Ministers, with regard to matters of importance to South Africa; but those discussions were outside the Conference, they were of an entirely informal nature and I need not therefore make any reference to them.

The Conference was faced with a specific problem, an involved and delicate problem. One of the members of the Commonwealth had decided to change its form of Government and to declare a republic. That was not all. A unanimous resolution was passed at the same time, in the discussions that were held in India by the Constituent Assembly, which was charged with the task of drawing up the constitution for the future, to the effect that India wished to remain a member of the Commonwealth in spite of the fact that it was becoming a republic. That was the problem with which the Conference was faced. At the discussion two things were eliminated, from the nature of the case. The first was that,

having regard to all the circumstances, no attempt would be made to try to persuade India not to take the step it proposed to take. In the first place there was the resolution that was passed unanimously by the Constituent Assembly, and secondly there was the fact that the leaders of India had deeply compromised themselves with regard to this matter. Not only had they made promises to their own people in this connection, but they had committed themselves as far as this matter was concerned in the eyes of the whole world; and it would have been useless in those circumstances to attempt to persuade India to retrace her steps. For that reason, from the nature of the matter, no attempt was made at these discussions to persuade India to abandon her intention of becoming a republic.

## *India and Ireland*

There is another matter that was also eliminated at the discussions and that was the possibility that India should steer a middle course, that is to say that India should occupy more or less the same position in which Ireland is placed to-day, a country that was also a member of the Commonwealth but later withdrew and to-day stands outside the Commonwealth but nevertheless occupies a position unlike that of any foreign nation. It was Ireland's wish to be outside the Commonwealth, but at the same time to remain associated with all the members of the Commonwealth jointly on a treaty basis. Any discussion with regard to this matter was eliminated because there was a definite request from India to remain a member of the Commonwealth and because she had previously intimated that that was her desire. Notice of that fact had already been given to the various Prime Ministers before their departure for London, that India definitely did not wish to occupy the same position as Ireland. She wanted either to remain entirely outside the Commonwealth, not associated with it, or to remain an ordinary member of the Commonwealth as hitherto. In those circumstances that possibility was also eliminated.

I must say that, when all the facts were placed before me before my departure by the delegate of the British Government, Sir Percival Liesching, I personally came to the conclusion that it would be wrong and dangerous, particularly for South Africa, to accept the second possibility to which I have referred, namely that India would be associated with the Commonwealth on a treaty basis. I came to that conclusion for this reason: that as soon as any country enters the Commonwealth on a treaty basis she is in a position in which she is able to impose conditions, and those conditions, in connection with India's relations with us, could cause great difficulties, especially for South Africa. In this respect the position of India differs completely from that of Ireland. Ireland is much closer to the members of the Commonwealth in many respects, perhaps in all respects, than India. The agreement between the members of the Commonwealth and Ireland affects the question of Immigration and of the mutual recognition of citizenship, and it was on that basis that the agreement with Ireland was entered into. But it is clear to everyone that there is a great difference in the relations between India and the various members of the Commonwealth, jointly and separately. If we endeavoured to retain the association on a treaty basis we might plunge, not only South Africa, but other members of the Commonwealth into great difficulties. For that reason this possibility of a permanent association on a treaty basis was eliminated.

What remained therefore was just this: firstly, there was the fact that India proposed to declare a republic in the near future. I understand that the date on which this will be done has already been fixed, viz., August 15. Then there was the further important fact that a request had definitely been made by India to the Commonwealth to remain a member of the Commonwealth, just as she had been in the past, even if she became a republic. This definite question, this specific request, was put to the Commonwealth and it was necessary to give a candid reply to this straightforward question. The reply could only be "no" or "yes". That was the problem that faced the Conference.

Now I should like to explain from what standpoint I approached this matter as the representative of this House and as the representative of South Africa. In the first place, my standpoint was explained, partly at any rate, when I made a statement of policy in the Senate before my departure. In that speech, the attitude that I adopted was that the members of the Commonwealth were free and independent nations and that there could be no meddling in any way with that freedom and independence. Our policy is to protect the freedom and the independence of the separate members of the Commonwealth. That was the first point. The second point was that that freedom and independence of the separate members of the Commonwealth included the fullest right to determine their own destiny; it implied something that was mentioned years ago, a factor that played a great role in international or inter-Commonwealth discussions—namely, that every one of the separate members of the Commonwealth possesses to the fullest degree the right to determine its own destiny. That was the second point. But the third point was this, that so long as the Commonwealth remained faithful to its own character and so long as the Commonwealth did not impose restrictions on the freedom and independence of its members, or closed the door to further constitutional development on the part of the separate members of the Commonwealth, so long would we in South Africa remain a member of this closer circle of sister-nations known as the Commonwealth. I adhered to the attitude that I had explained here on a previous occasion, and at the Conference I approached the whole question under discussion from this point of view.

## *“No” or “Yes”*

The question for the Conference then was whether it should say "no" or "yes" to this specific request on the part of India to remain a member of the Commonwealth. Both possibilities and their implications had to be carefully considered. I think I am justified in saying that that was done at the Conference, not only by me but by all the other members. This matter was very carefully considered. Now I just want to say a few words with regard to each of the two possibilities, that we could say "no" or "yes".

I want to deal first with the possibility that we might have said "No" to India's request to remain a member of the Commonwealth notwithstanding the fact that she was to become a republic. What would have been the implications if we had said "no"? In the first place I want to say that if India had not made this request to us and had nevertheless declared a republic, the position would have been very simple; it would

have been comparatively easy so far as the other members of the Commonwealth were concerned. We might have said to India upon receiving notice that she intended to become a republic: "England, in relation to whom you were a subordinate State, granted you Dominion status; your Dominion status includes the right of self-determination; you have exercised your right of self-determination by deciding to become a republic, and since you have done so, and you were entitled to do so, we have nothing further to say about it; we very much regret it but we cannot quarrel with you about your decision." We could only have added: "Leave the Commonwealth and leave with our blessing." That was all we could say and we might have added that we hoped that, in spite of the fact that India was becoming a republic, she would in the future always remain a good friend of the Commonwealth and of the individual members. That would have been very simple and easy.

But India put forward this request, in spite of the fact that she proposed to become a republic, to remain a member of the Commonwealth. The question that occurred to us was this—and it was a perfectly natural question: If we lost India as a member of the Commonwealth, a territory with a vast population of 400,000,000, would we lose India alone or would we lose even more? Well, I think everyone will agree that we would have lost India's goodwill. If India had not made this request to us to remain a member, then the position would not have been so difficult, but since she had made this request, if we refused to agree to her request, then, from the nature of the case, it could only have meant that we would have lost India's goodwill. And it might have resulted in great harm, particularly in the sphere of trade as affecting certain members of the Commonwealth, and not least of all Britain, if we had lost India's goodwill. But apart from the fact that we would have lost India's goodwill, it would also have meant that if India could not be on friendly terms, as a fellow-member of the Commonwealth, with the other members of the Commonwealth—and every country must have friends nowadays—she would seek her friends elsewhere. Quite possibly she would look for friends in Asia and she would perhaps look for friends outside Asia. In this connection we must not lose sight of the position generally. As I said in the Senate before my departure, India is anti-Communist and in the present dangerous state of world affairs, that means a great deal to us. Asia—and I am thinking more particularly of China—is becoming more and more overwhelmed by Communism. If we lose the goodwill of India, if we lose the co-operation of India, then not only the Commonwealth but the anti-Communist Western Powers will lose a foothold, an extremely important foothold, in Asia, and that may have a tremendous influence on, and prove a tremendous disadvantage in, the dangerous world situation with which we are faced to-day. That is what we stood to lose and what we might certainly have lost if India's request had been rejected.

But there is yet another point of view which is important and which must not be overlooked. I refer more particularly to the position of the Commonwealth in the world. In recent years, certain parts of the Commonwealth have broken away. Ireland has left the Commonwealth. Burma has declared herself an independent republic outside the Commonwealth. Egypt is perhaps to-day further away from the Commonwealth than before. India has declared her intention to become a republic. The impression may easily be created in the world that the Commonwealth is disintegrating, that it is no longer a powerful force in a world in which

we are facing a dangerous situation, in which there is the possible threat of war in the future, and the threat of aggression from Russia, from Communist countries; and that the Commonwealth will then be so weakened that it will no longer be a power in world affairs. The decision that was taken at this conference to allow India to remain a member of the Commonwealth was undoubtedly a decision that will give the world a different impression, and it will make the world realise that the Commonwealth is still a power in world affairs. It proves that the Commonwealth still exists with its various ties and that it is still intact. It was of the greatest importance that that impression that the Commonwealth was collapsing should be removed in the interests of everyone concerned.

Those were the implications of saying "no":

## *New Basis created*

The only other reply that could be given as a candid reply to a straightforward question was to say: "Yes, let India become a republic if her people so decide, but let India remain a member of the Commonwealth as heretofore." That was the reply, and the implications of that reply had to be investigated and considered. Well, in the first place the implications of that reply were these: If a country like India, having accepted a republican form of government, remained a member of the Commonwealth, it inevitably entailed a broadening of the basis of the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth would remain a Commonwealth, but its basis would have to be broader than had been the case hitherto. The other implication was that if a republic were allowed to be a member of the Commonwealth it involved a change in the position of the Crown. India, by becoming a republic would break her ties with the Crown. The link with the Crown in the case of the other members of the Commonwealth remained. The question arose what the position of the Crown was in those circumstances in relation to India which remained a member of the Commonwealth? Those were the implications that had to be investigated and considered if the reply was to be in the affirmative, that India could remain a member of the Commonwealth.

Hon. members have seen the declaration that was issued towards the close of the Prime Ministers' Conference. That declaration is self-explanatory. It means in the first place that the reply that was given to India was in the affirmative. Although India is becoming a republic she will remain a member of the Commonwealth. What is the significance of this in relation to other members of the Commonwealth which are not republics? The position remains unchanged. No change has come about so far as their position is concerned. It further means that we will now have the position in the Commonwealth that the King will form part of the government of all the members of the Commonwealth except that of India. In our own South Africa Act the government of the country is described as consisting of the King, the Senate and the Assembly. That is also the position in the case of the other members of the Commonwealth; but in the case of India the King will not form part of the government of India. He does not form part of India's constitution.

Another matter that arises from the declaration is that the relationship of the individual members of the Commonwealth towards the Commonwealth as a whole remains unchanged. That is to say, any country that is a member of the Commonwealth retains the freedom that it has enjoyed

hitherto in practice; the individual member of the Commonwealth is not bound by any policy laid down at a Commonwealth conference or Prime Ministers' Conference or at the Imperial Conference as it was known before. Members bind themselves to consult one another and, as far as possible, to co-operate with one another. We can take it that to that extent they bind themselves morally. But nevertheless every member has the fullest right to differ from the other members and even to go so far as to oppose other members at international conferences; it has the right to adopt a different attitude, as we have seen in the past at San Francisco, for example, in the case of Australia, and as we have seen time and again at international conferences. That freedom of every individual member of the Commonwealth remains intact; and that is of the utmost importance because it means that the highest authority vests in the members of the Commonwealth themselves, and that every one of them remains a free and independent unit, a free and independent State.

There is another thing that remains unchanged and that is that there need not be any uniformity amongst the members of the Commonwealth with regard to such matters as immigration, or the granting of citizenship. This is nothing new. This has been the position for many years. South Africa has its own immigration laws. Those laws differ completely from those of England. Australia adopts the policy of "White Australia"; that is to say that Australia, just like South Africa, does not allow inhabitants from abroad who are not Europeans to enter the country. There is no uniformity between the various members of the Commonwealth. That position also remains unchanged. Every member of the Commonwealth has the fullest right to decide for itself what the composition of its population will be and to what extent it is prepared to grant or to refuse citizenship to others. That position, in any event, remains unchanged. That is the meaning of the declaration that was issued at the Conference.

## *No Super State*

The declaration met with the approval of India. It was not difficult to get India to agree. Since she continues to belong to the Commonwealth, as a unit in the Commonwealth, since she remains a member of the States forming an inner circle among the nations of the world, a community of sister-nations, she agreed that the King would continue to be recognised by India as the symbol, as it is put in the Statute of Westminster, of the free association of the various members of the Commonwealth. Those words, which are used for the first time, bring the position as it is up to date—the symbol of the free association of free and independent nations of the Commonwealth. That expression is used. In the declaration reference is made to the fact that, whilst India remains in this inner circle, she will continue as in the past to regard the King as the symbol of the free association of independent and free nations of the Commonwealth, and in that capacity as head of the Commonwealth of which India is also a member.

In this connection I had certain objections to the words "head of the Commonwealth". My objection was that, in describing the King as head of the Commonwealth, it might give rise to misunderstanding; it might create the impression that there was a super-State, that the Commonwealth was a super-State and that the individual members of it were, to a certain

extent at any rate, in a subordinate position. I explained to the Conference that it was necessary, particularly in the case of South Africa, that there should be no misunderstanding with regard to this matter, because in South Africa the Statute of Westminster had been submitted to Parliament for approval and because at that time there had been an important difference of opinion with regard to its interpretation. One school of thought maintained that the Statute of Westminster means that the rights of the various members of the Commonwealth were tantamount to this: That they had the right to secede if they wished to do so; that they could remain neutral in the event of war, and in the event of any member of the Commonwealth being involved in the war; or that the Crown was not indivisible. The other side had another point of view. There was a difference with regard to the interpretation. That difference was of a serious and important character. Parliament was called upon to take a decision in this matter, and at that time Parliament placed this interpretation upon it: that there was no super-State either in name or in practice. This was a matter in regard to which there was a serious difference of opinion in South Africa. We have come a long way since those days. I do not think there is any member in this House to-day, and I do not think there is anyone who is acquainted with the facts, who still maintains that there is a super-State or that we have not got the right to remain neutral or the right to secede. In the meantime that right to secede has been exercised by Ireland and it is now again being exercised by India and no one denies their right to do so. There is no one to-day who adopts that attitude, and I must say that I was pleasantly surprised to find at the Prime Ministers' Conference that there was not a single member at the Conference who still accepted that erroneous interpretation that was placed upon the Statute of Westminster.

One and all emphasised that there is no super-State, that the Commonwealth cannot be described as a super-State and that those rights to which I have referred are part and parcel of the rights of every individual member of the Commonwealth. I was pleasantly surprised to learn this, but nevertheless, with a view to possible misunderstanding, I deemed it necessary to ask the Conference to put that interpretation in black and white. A resolution was then unanimously passed stating that where the expression "the King is head of the Commonwealth" is used, it must not be interpreted to mean that it alters any of the existing rights of the various members of the Commonwealth, and that the King—although he is indicated as head of the Commonwealth—fulfils no constitutional function as such. I feel that the resolution that was adopted there has once and for all put this matter beyond any doubt and that this position will never be misinterpreted again in the future. I believe that this is the first time that the position has been stated authoritatively.

The question was raised by me and others whether the declaration that was issued required legislation; whether or not it would still have to be submitted to the various Parliaments by way of legislation in order to validate it. The legal advice that I obtained from our own side, and the legal advice that came from the British Government which also had gone into this matter thoroughly, was to the effect that legislation was unnecessary. It was argued that that provision, that the Commonwealth consists of a number of members freely associating with one another, and that the link between them would be their common allegiance to the King, did not form part of the Statute of Westminster, but that it was only the preamble, that the preamble must only be regarded as a declaration, and that the

declaration of the Statute of Westminster could be replaced by this new authoritative declaration. In other words, no legislation is necessary to bring about this change so far as the composition of the Commonwealth is concerned.

## *Solidarity*

Now I should like to make a few general remarks which I feel are necessary. The first is that the trend of events in recent times has revealed a feeling of solidarity among the various members of the Commonwealth that was probably not expected in the world outside and that probably surprised even members of the Commonwealth itself. That feeling of solidarity has been tested and it has stood the test. To begin with we had the case of Ireland. Ireland wanted to become a republic, nothing could stop her, and she eventually became a republic. This did not open the course that was followed by India, perhaps because this course of action did not occur to Ireland and, on the other hand, it might not have occurred to the other members of the Commonwealth. For that reason it was simply accepted that Ireland, in becoming a republic, was placing herself outside the Commonwealth; that she would no longer be a member of the Commonwealth.

But at the same time Ireland felt that she would like to remain associated with the Commonwealth, if not from inside, then from outside. An agreement was therefore entered into with Ireland in which it was stated on both sides—on the part of England and on the part of the other members of the Commonwealth—that Ireland was not to be regarded as a foreign country; that the Irish were not to be regarded as members of a foreign nation. What did this show? It showed that in spite of the fact that Ireland herself would remain outside the Commonwealth she did not lose her feeling of solidarity with the rest of the members of the Commonwealth; and all I can say is that if this course that India adopted and that has now been agreed to—namely, to become a republic and yet remain inside the Commonwealth—had been held out to Ireland, I wonder whether Ireland would not have been a member of the Commonwealth to this day. But this matter has been disposed of. Whether the position can be changed is a matter in regard to which one can only speculate; we do not know what will happen.

There is the case of India. In many respects India is not so close to the other members of the Commonwealth. For reasons of her own she decided to become a republic, but the feeling of solidarity on the part of India was still so strong, in spite of all her real or imaginary grievances, that she decided, simultaneously with the decision to become a republic, to apply for continued membership of the Commonwealth. I say that the solidarity of the Commonwealth has been tested and it has stood the test. That has been demonstrated here in the clearest fashion. The question arises why that is so? That phenomenon—and it is a noteworthy and important phenomenon—requires an explanation. The only explanation I can give is that, in the first place, there are common interests between the various members of the Commonwealth, and it is in that light that they see the position. Furthermore, they have a common or general outlook on life. There are some members who are closer to each other than others, but politically they have a common outlook; even in the case of India, which is otherwise perhaps furthest removed from the other members of the Commonwealth, she has decided to model her constitution on the



lines of the British constitution and our constitution in this country. In other words, India will be a republic, but a democratic republic, and her method of Parliamentary government will largely remain the same as it was before. Moreover, as I have stated here before, India, like the rest of the world, is to-day taking her stand with the anti-Communist countries. She regards Communism in Asia, or Communism which is trying to gain a foothold in India also, as a danger, just as we regard it as a danger. Well, there are common interests; there is a general, common outlook. It was felt that the nations of the Commonwealth were standing together and that if it was at all possible they want to remain together.

## *Adaptability*

But the main reason, in my opinion, why the Commonwealth can remain together, in spite of the changes and developments which have taken place, is that the Commonwealth has shown an ability to adapt itself to changing conditions in a changing world. In other words, what I have said here implies that it respects freedom—not only freedom for all the members jointly, but also freedom for every member as distinct from the Commonwealth. It has the quality of adaptability. We have seen that in our time in connection with South Africa as well. In our younger days most of us lived in this country under the domination of an Empire—a British Empire. That meant that the executive power was vested in one centre overseas. The remaining countries in the Empire were subject to the will and the domination of that one central authority. But in our lifetime we have also seen the British Empire transformed along peaceful constitutional lines into something else, a community of free and independent nations, as far as the Dominions are concerned, linked together by certain bonds but in which one Dominion, either with regard to its domestic or external interests, did not occupy a subordinate position in relation to any other. The British Empire had such a degree of adaptability that it converted itself into something practically new. That same ability to adapt itself to new conditions in a changing world has been revealed again at this Conference and in the decision taken there. It has often been said—and I believe my hon. friend on the other side of the House (Field Marshal Smuts) has often emphasised it in much stronger language—that the British Empire is not an organisation; that there is no such thing as a British Empire except England and her colonies; that the Commonwealth is not an organisation but a living organism, and a living organism cannot continue to live unless it has the ability to adapt itself to new circumstances. And the fact that the Commonwealth has again shown that it has the ability to adapt itself, and has shown that it is not an organisation but an organism, made it possible for it to exist and to remain in existence in the past and makes it possible for it to remain in existence to-day. If there had been any rigidity in the basis of the Commonwealth it would have collapsed long ago. This is a matter that must undoubtedly be taken into consideration in expressing an opinion with regard to the important step that was taken in this case.

What does that prove to us? The step that was taken at the Conference goes to show that what is stated in the preamble to the Statute of Westminster—namely, that the Commonwealth is based on a common allegiance, in other words that all the members must, and in actual fact do, recognise the Crown and form a link with the Crown—is not the only bond holding the Commonwealth together. I go further and say that it

is not even the most important bond holding the Commonwealth together. I do not want to detract in any way from the value of the bond of common allegiance in certain cases. I do not want to detract in any way from the importance of the role that the King plays in some member-countries of the Commonwealth; but I do want to say with regard to the Kingship in England where the King is head of the State, where he is continually in touch with his people, where he continually comes into contact with them and is in every respect one of them, that the bond there differs from the bond elsewhere. I also want to concede that the Kingship in the case of some other member-countries of the Commonwealth is a unifying force. I refer more particularly to those members of the Commonwealth with a homogeneous population and a homogeneous population of British descent. I refer more particularly to Australia and New Zealand. I accept the fact that there the Kingship plays an important role in promoting unity. But there are other member-countries of the Commonwealth that are in a different position. I take South Africa by way of example. The population of South Africa is not uniform. South Africa has a history which differs completely from the history of other members of the Commonwealth, and in these circumstances the Kingship cannot constitute the same bond of unity. I am not only referring to unity in relation to the world outside, but unity in this country, within our own borders. On the contrary, that link is frequently maintained at the expense of unity amongst our people.

That was the position in the case of Ireland. Ireland's circumstances were quite different from those of other States of the Commonwealth. For seven hundred years they struggled for their freedom. They have their whole history behind them. This led to discord in Ireland and unity was only brought about in Ireland when she took the step that she eventually took and when she severed that link. In the case of India one found the same thing. Whilst that outside link existed, the link with the Crown, India was unable to achieve unity. I am not referring now to India and Pakistan because there were other reasons that led to discord between them. But eventually India achieved unity again; I think this step that she has now at last taken in severing her link with the Crown has brought unity to India. The only conclusion that I want to draw from that is that the link of common allegiance to the Crown is not the only bond holding the Commonwealth together. There are other bonds as well—those I mentioned a moment ago—which are stronger than the bond of Kingship, and I think the present trend of events had demonstrated that most clearly.

I want to conclude on this note. What has been done in this case will not result in breaking up the Commonwealth; on the contrary it will build up the Commonwealth; it will preserve the unity and the power of the Commonwealth, and the impression that the world would have gained, and undoubtedly did gain, that the Commonwealth was in the process of disintegrating is now being removed. The unity of the Commonwealth, and with it its strength and its power in the world, has been maintained and, in my opinion, strengthened.

## *South Africa's point of view*

As far as South Africa is concerned there have always been two schools of thought, not only in recent years, but for years and for generations, namely, the republican idea on the one hand, and the other concep-

tion on the other hand that we must be linked up with a nation overseas. We have failed to reconcile those two standpoints and we will not and cannot succeed in reconciling them. But I can say, with regard to these opposing standpoints, that my opinion has always been, and I want to re-state it here, that the greatest unity will be obtained in the case of South Africa too when we become a republic.

I want to add to what I have said on previous occasions that at the present moment there are other issues, important issues of vital importance to this country in respect of which the population of this country, English-speaking and Afrikaans-speaking and members of all parties, hold the same view to a large extent. These are urgent problems that must be solved and in order to be able to do so, we must seek unity and stand together. But one thing is certain, and that is that the declaration issued at this Conference has brought us closer together than we have perhaps ever been before, so far as our different standpoints with regard to the constitutional position are concerned. There are some of us who are republicans, there are others who believe in the maintenance of the link with the Crown; but I make bold to say that that side of the House and this side of the House, all sections in South Africa, are agreed that we want to remain in the Commonwealth if no restrictions are placed on our freedom, if our right of self-determination is not affected.

Has there ever been such an opportunity in the whole political history of our country for all sections of the nation to stand together? There is the danger of aggression from Russia; from the forces of Communism. What is our attitude? I assume that we are all agreed that it is a good thing that the Western Powers want to stand together, even in the military sphere, and that they have been able to form the Atlantic Pact. We on this side of the House have adopted the attitude that our sympathies lie with the Western Powers. We are anti-Communist and we want to throw in our weight with the anti-Communist countries. If this situation leads to war we cannot remain neutral. I believe that, so far as external dangers are concerned, we as a nation have never had such an opportunity of presenting a united front as on this question. Previous world wars have divided us. If a war breaks out in which we are threatened by the Communistic danger, we shall be able to present a more united front than we have ever witnessed in this country. But whatever the future of South Africa may be in the constitutional sphere, however much we may differ with regard to the question of a republic or the retention of the link with the Crown, on one point we are now agreed and stand together, and that is that, whatever the circumstances may be, we would like to remain in the Commonwealth for reasons that I have already indicated.

I hope therefore that, since the declaration of the conference was received with acclamation in England, even by the Conservative Party and even by Mr. Churchill, from whom one might have expected adverse criticism as leader of the Opposition—but he offered no criticism, on the contrary he gave his wholehearted support to this declaration—since it was received with acclamation, so far as we can judge, by other members of the Commonwealth, with an exception here and there, I hope that it will be possible to say the same of this House and of South Africa, and that this will be regarded as an important declaration that will tend to retain the Commonwealth as a world Power, a Power that will exercise tremendous influence in the interests of security in the present dangerous world state of affairs, and finally that it will also make a contribution towards bringing the population of South Africa closer together than we have ever been in the past.

# REPUBLICAN ASPIRATIONS

*Replying to the debate which followed his statement, on the London Meeting, and in particular to a question put to him by the Leader of the Opposition, Field Marshal the Right Honourable J. C. Smuts, the Prime Minister referred to the republican aspirations of the National Party in the House of Assembly on May 12, 1949, and said, among other things:—*

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The Hon. the Leader of the Opposition asked me what our policy is in view of the statement which I made here yesterday on the results of the conference held in London. Arising from that question, unfortunately—and I say unfortunately in view of the circumstances—a lengthy debate developed on the merits or demerits of a republic. Quite a struggle ensued—pro-republic and anti-republic. I want to say that in one respect I am sorry that a debate of this nature should have arisen, because, as a matter of fact, it has nothing to do with the matter on which I reported to the House. I feel that it in fact clouded the entire question which was put to the House for its approval and which, as I believed, is being welcomed by all sides of the House, namely the statement which I made in regard to the London conference. I am sorry that this is the position; however that may be, it arose from the question put by the Hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

Seeing that the question was put, I want once more to state explicitly what I stated before in passing when I gave my statement in the House yesterday, namely that nothing has been changed in the policy of the National Party in connection with the establishment of a republic. I clearly said that my personal view and the view of my Party is that if we want to achieve real unity between the various sections in South Africa, such unity must be based on a common patriotism; it must be based on a unity of loyalty, and that unity of loyalty can only be achieved in South Africa when can be eliminated what has been the bone of contention over all these years—not our mutual relationship here in the country, but the relationship between South Africa and countries abroad. It is my personal opinion that, in the interest of all, that unity can best be achieved by establishing a republic in South Africa. I have not changed my conviction at all as far as that matter is concerned.

I want to add however: Do not misrepresent the policy of the National Party. The policy of the National Party in regard to our ideal of a republic has been stated very clearly. The National Party will not call into being or attempt to call into being a republic, unless

there is absolute certainty that the majority of the voters in this country, the majority of the people, are in favour of it. That has been expressed in the words: A republic can only be established on the broad basis of the will of the people. That is as plain as a pikestaff, and it is quite obvious that this is the case, or in other words, that no republic will be forced upon the people. The people will have to decide themselves. That is a sound principle. Does anybody object to it? If it is the will of the people, will anybody maintain that it should be prevented by force?

## *The People will decide*

Another principle is that in order to make sure what the will of the people is, we must not take the question of the establishment of a republic in conjunction with other issues which are before the people and we must not ask the people to give a decision on that issue at the same time when it has to decide about other matters. In other words, the people's decision on this issue must be given in such a way that a decision is given on that matter and on that matter alone. One cannot make it an issue bound up with a hundred and one other issues, which are put before the electors at a general election. That is a sound principle. One wants the people to decide and one must give the people an opportunity to decide on a clear issue. That is the policy of the Party. But we went even further and said at the last general election: We have certain questions which are of urgent national importance. There is the complicated and difficult and serious colour problem. It must be tackled and solved in some way or other and in those circumstances we want to give the assurance—which already appears in our Programme of Principles—that during the life of the Parliament which will be elected at this general election, we shall take no steps to establish a republic. In other words, we will not abuse a vote which has been given to solve the colour problem, by using it for achieving something else; we will not use it for establishing a republic. We gave that assurance because we knew that there are hundreds and thousands of people in our country who desire a solution of the colour problem but are not in favour of a republic although on the question of solving the colour question they are wholeheartedly on our side. For that reason we gave the assurance, and we shall not deviate in the least from that viewpoint, from that assurance. That is the position, and furthermore nothing has changed in our point of view, and if the Leader of the Opposition wants to know whether we still adhere to our point of view as I clearly stated it, then I can candidly say "Yes".

## *Another Commonwealth*

Various other matters have, however, been raised in this debate and I just want to repeat once again that we are now faced with another Commonwealth than the one that existed immediately after the Statute of Westminster had been accepted, and especially after the interpretation which was given to that Statute when it was passed in this House in 1931, and more particularly after what has now been stated by the London Conference, a declaration which has taken the place of the declaration on which the Statute of Westminster was based. As I explained, we had first the Empire, the British Empire, and if you want to take it literally the British Empire no longer exists. It has been transformed into a

community of free, independent peoples with common interests, a community which as such from time to time discusses and furthers those common interests. It has completely changed its character, and that basis of the Commonwealth is now being changed once more, being broadened, so that members of the Commonwealth can now be Commonwealth members, exercising their right of self-determination; and one has exercised it in such a manner that it has broken off all ties with the Crown whilst still remaining a member of the Commonwealth. That is the further and important change which has now been brought about.

All I can say at the moment is this: We are dealing to-day with a Commonwealth different from what it was before, and if no obstacles are placed—I repeat it once more—by the Commonwealth (and it will have to do that only if it is going to change its own character), if no obstacles are placed by the Commonwealth in the path of the freedom and independence of its separate members, and if no obstacles are placed in the way of exercising the members' right of self-determination to become republics, then we will remain a member of that Commonwealth. I have not the slightest objection to it, because the character of the present Commonwealth is that it is in no way binding on its members, since it in no way encroaches upon the members' rights of self-determination; if a population, the population of a constituent member, decides to become a republic, the Commonwealth as such will raise no objections. It has been assumed that the Commonwealth will not interfere with the self-governing rights of the separate members of the Commonwealth which they now possess, and possess much more definitely than before. As long as that is the case I have no objection to remain, together with the members of the Commonwealth, within a society which will consult about common problems, and as far as South Africa's interests are concerned and point in that direction, also to co-operate with them. That is the position.

## *Interests of South Africa*

*At a reception given by his Party—the National Party—in the Cape Town City Hall on May 20, 1949, Dr. Malan referred to the political growth of South Africa and to her present situation in the Commonwealth.*

Dr. Malan began his speech with a short survey of the struggle of the Afrikaner people for independence and freedom. He thus glanced back 44 years over his own life to the time when he left the pulpit to take his part in the political struggle.

When he saw where South Africa stood to-day, he said, it seemed to him incredible that so much progress could really have been made in that time. In these years there had grown up a sense of nationhood of which some would see the ultimate completion and others not.

He went on to show that 44 years ago freedom and unity were accepted as corner-stones in the struggle for full independence. This ideal had to-day reached great heights. To-day, after the Conference in London, there was general recognition—even among political opponents—that South Africa had, for example, the fullest right of neutrality. If she so chose, South Africa could remain neutral when other countries of the Commonwealth went to war.

She could even leave the Commonwealth if she so desired. If the position had never been clarified in the past, then it had now been done at the Conference in London. Members of the Commonwealth could now manage their own affairs. They could become republics if they chose. "Thus if South Africa wishes to become a republic, the will of South Africa is sovereign", declared Dr. Malan.

Dr. Malan added that if South Africa wished to leave the Commonwealth, it would not be because she did not possess the fullest freedom within it. It would be for some other reason. South Africa was now her own mistress in the fullest meaning of the word. "The principle is 'South Africa first' and we work according to this principle. If we wish to become a republic and still work with the other members of the Commonwealth, then we can do that too without impairing our freedom", stated the Prime Minister.

"And if we to-day wish to leave the Commonwealth, after the declaration issued in London, that is the position. South Africa is not bound to remain in the Commonwealth. It just depends on ourselves what in our judgment, are the interests of South Africa."

## **THE DECLARATION OF LONDON, APRIL 28, 1949**

*The following statement was issued by the Prime Ministers of the Commonwealth on April 28, 1949:—*

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During the past week the Prime Ministers of the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, India, Pakistan and Ceylon, and the Canadian Secretary of State for External Affairs, have met in London to exchange views upon the important constitutional issues arising from India's decision to adopt a republican form of constitution and her desire to continue her membership of the Commonwealth.

The discussions have been concerned with the effects of such a development upon the existing structure of the Commonwealth and the constitutional relations between its members. They have been conducted in an atmosphere of goodwill and mutual understanding, and have had as their historical background the traditional capacity of the Commonwealth to strengthen its unity of purposé, while adapting its organisation and procedures to changing circumstances.

After full discussion, the representatives of the Governments of all the Commonwealth countries have agreed that the conclusions reached should be placed on record in the following declaration:—

“The Governments of the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, India, Pakistan and Ceylon, whose countries are united as Members of the British Commonwealth of Nations and owe a common allegiance to the Crown, which is also the symbol of their free association, have considered the impending constitutional changes in India.

“The Government of India have informed the other Governments of the Commonwealth of the intention of the Indian people that under the new Constitution which is about to be adopted India shall become a sovereign independent Republic. The Government of India have, however, declared and affirmed India's desire to continue her full



membership of the Commonwealth of Nations and her acceptance of the King as the symbol of the free association of its independent member nations and as such the Head of the Commonwealth.

“The Governments of the other countries of the Commonwealth, the basis of whose membership of the Commonwealth is not hereby changed, accept and recognise India’s continuing membership in accordance with the terms of this declaration. Accordingly the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, India, Pakistan and Ceylon hereby declare that they remain united as free and equal members of the Commonwealth of Nations, freely co-operating in the pursuit of peace, liberty and progress.”

These constitutional questions have been the sole subject of discussion at the full meetings of Prime Ministers.

## *Dr. Malan’s interpretation*

*Dr. Malan’s interpretation of the term “Head of the Commonwealth” was recorded as follows in a Minute of the Meeting which formed part of the Declaration:—*

In reply to a question raised by Dr. Malan, the meeting agreed that it should be placed in record that the designation of the King as Head of the Commonwealth does not connote any change in the constitutional relations existing between the members of the Commonwealth, and, in particular, does not imply that the King discharges any constitutional function by virtue of that Headship.

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