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COMMUNICATION FROM THE "MOUVEMENT DEMOCRATIQUE REPUBLICAIN  
(PARMEHUTU)" CONCERNING RUANDA-URUNDI

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PARMEHUTU

Mouvement démocratique républicain  
Gitarama, Ruanda

MDR

Parmehutu  
B.P. 54 - Gitarama  
Ruanda

MANIFESTO AND PROGRAMME OF THE  
MOUVEMENT DEMOCRATIQUE REPUBLICAIN: PARMEHUTU

(Umutwe urenganura Abahutu)

On the national plane, the aim of the MOUVEMENT DEMOCRATIQUE REPUBLICAIN (PARMEHUTU) is steady progress towards democracy and the real unity of all the inhabitants of Ruanda.

As long as education in Ruanda - particularly secondary and higher education - and a large part of the national wealth continue to be monopolized by the Tutsi group, despite the fact that numerically the latter is in the minority, PARMEHUTU will strive to replace this feudal and discriminatory régime of favouritism by a perfect democracy.

Such genuine democracy must govern the administration of the country, the dispensing of justice, the land tenure system, teaching and State education, and the management of the public funds fed by the taxing of ordinary citizens.

Democracy must also be the principle and basis of all the institutions of Ruanda.

The MDR PARMEHUTU therefore rejects all colonialism of whatever type. It affirms that the way to true independence can be prepared only by the abolition of feudal, traditional or "capitalist" colonialism. That is the sine qua non of

the national unity which is essential if the country is to proceed normally along the path of true and harmonious progress.

The Mouvement démocratique républicain PARMEHUTU has no feeling of racial hatred for the Tutsi. Our desire to improve the lot of the Hutu group, enslaved by the feudal system, has nothing in common with racial hatred for our brothers. The Bahutu who will unite to liberate their brothers are already happy at the prospect of brotherly collaboration with true Tutsi patriots, who are aware of the oppression visited upon the Bahutu, the Batwa and even the poorer Batutsi.

Our party will respect and support all constructive claims made by minorities, so long as they are really constructive and do not prejudice the legitimate rights of majorities.

To achieve the emancipation and harmonious progress of the Ruandese people, the MDR PARMEHUTU will spare no effort to carry out the following programme in all the public assemblies of the country, from the highest to the lowest.

#### I. POLICY OF THE MDR PARMEHUTU

The Mouvement démocratique républicain will press for a judicious separation of powers, thus ensuring the legislative and judicial branches' independence of the executive.

It will demand the co-operation of the trade union and financial powers, and of the political parties, for the Common Good of the Nation.

##### A. Organization of the Executive in the projected democratic régime

The MDR PARMEHUTU will do its utmost to ensure the continuation and effectiveness of the institutions established at the National Congress held at Gitarama on 28 January 1961, namely: a legislative assembly, a government based on the majority party, a supreme court, and a presidency at the head of the Republic.

It is in favour of the prefecture and the commune as administrative and technical units and will demand that the members of the legislative, administrative, judicial and technical bodies of the prefectures and the communes be selected or appointed in a democratic manner.

We shall always insist that terms of office shall be for a definite period, and that the office-holders may be re-elected on the basis of their worth and the electors' appraisal of them.

B. Organization of the Legislature

PARMEHUTU favours the establishment of democratic assemblies at three levels:

- The communal council, composed of members elected by direct universal suffrage by the inhabitants of the commune concerned, for a period of three years. The Council will elect its own chairman, who shall not be the head of the commune.
- The council of the prefecture, composed of members elected by indirect ballot and presided over by a chairman elected from among its members; the Prefect, who may attend meetings without participating in the debate, shall not be eligible for election as chairman.

The council's legislative competence shall include all regional matters for settlement and determination by law.

- A legislative assembly, at the national level, composed of deputies from all prefectures, elected by universal suffrage.

C. Organization of the Judiciary

PARMEHUTU supports the Government's present plan and calls for its democratic implementation as soon as possible.

D. Special recommendations

The MDR PARMEHUTU will, within the limits prescribed by respect for public order and law:

- support the republican régime in Ruanda to the utmost;
- oppose the restoration of any kind of feudal institution;
- take part in the referendum on the question of the Mwami and publicly denounce any manoeuvre to restore the Tutsi feudal and colonialist régime.

PARMEHUTU will demand the right to vote, and the right to be elected, for Ruandese women. We were the first to support these rights, and we are therefore determined that no discriminatory law shall prevent anyone from exercising them.

We have not yet forgotten that formerly, under the feudal system, women were whipped with their husbands on corvées; we have not forgotten the many portionless widows reduced to the level of beggars in their husbands' families because their husbands had been killed in the wars waged by the Bami of the Tutsi.

## II. PUBLIC FREEDOMS AND STATUS OF RUANDESE CITIZENS

The MDR PARMEHUTU will guarantee the enjoyment of public freedoms in their country by adult men aged 18 and over, without any discriminatory rule or custom:

1. Freedom of movement, guaranteed by the citizen's carrying of an identity book for identification purposes both inside and outside the State.
2. Freedom of thought and opinion, unrestricted by any legal or customary bar.
3. Freedom of assembly and association, with due respect for the exercise of the same right by other citizens. The legitimate exercise of this freedom will enable private individuals to take action for the common good by disseminating throughout the State good newspapers and all other popular education media likely to promote the people's awakening and emancipation, such as the radio, the cinema, social welfare clubs, and popular teaching and instruction. Our party rejects any written or customary law likely to restrict this fundamental freedom.
4. Freedom of the individual and equality of all citizens: the State needs a written code summarizing both written law and custom, purged of all practices militating against the progress to which the State aspires or involving the continuation of camouflaged colonialism in any form.

## III. SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC SYSTEM

1. Under its wages policy, the MDR PARMEHUTU will press for a more equitable increase in the wages paid to ordinary workers, so that the public funds, whatever their level, may be used for the benefit of the community in any public services likely to provide the country's inhabitants, especially young people, with the work which they need for a living. In the case of heads of families, the total wage will be calculated according to the number of dependents.

Our party will see that the establishment for civil servants (a) prescribes salary scales which are not out of proportion to the budget of the Ruandese Exchequer; (b) does not discriminate against employees occupying non-established posts, as at present, when employees in established posts earn very high salaries.

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2. We favour the extension of co-operatives of every kind, throughout every region of the country, and the creation of farmers' unions, designed to promote agricultural progress in a State which will be dependent mainly on agriculture for many years to come.

3. FARMERS, LISTEN TO THIS: Agriculture and stock-raising are the twin pillars on which the country's economic progress must rest. For this reason, PARMEHUTU would rather agree to its own dissolution than accept any written or customary laws that might impede the development of agriculture. When under feudal domination, and government by a non-agricultural race, Ruanda has been unable to achieve any progress in this vital field of national life. Here is PARMEHUTU's position on this point:

- Any custom relating to the ownership of land must be based on recognition of the exclusive right of private individuals to own land, implying, for the owner, the right to exploit his land rationally in whatever way he wishes, under the guidance of agricultural specialists, and to sell it if he emigrates.

- We reject the custom of pastoral fiefs (ibikingi) in the areas where this Hamitic tradition still exists. Our position regarding the ibikingi is this:

- (a) Individual ownership of pastoral domains must be abolished: each former owner of a pastoral fief must be given a plot of land large enough for his cattle - bearing in mind the cattle population in the area without pasture-land - or, if he has no cattle, a normal estate.

- (b) The rest of these domains must be distributed among the farmers in need of land or, if no such need exists, converted into communal pasture-land.

- (c) The smaller circonscriptions must have at their disposal collective pasture-land reserved for farmers who own cattle, such land being administered by the officer in charge of the communal agriculture department.

- Privately owned land must be marked out and registered so as to reduce the number of disputes, which are prejudicial to friendly civic and social relations. Ruanda must therefore have a land registration office responsible for this work, and for settling disputes and removing abuses connected with it.

- Young unmarried men will be helped to carve out adequate estates for themselves in the best localities, according to their choice.

- Our policy is one of opposition to the resettlement of farmers who are already settled, except at the wish of the person concerned and provided that he is free to sell the land he owns. This means the final abolition of the custom called "land tenure in escheat" (inkungu).

- Our party will regulate the right of succession and inheritance, on the basis of views to be expressed by the people's parties and associations, the communal councils, and the old and young men concerned.

- In regions where the bukonde system is in force, the MDR PARMEHUTU will demand the restoration of fields which have been unjustly expropriated, if a claim for them is made. The land registration office must give priority to the settlement of this question. This programme will be carried out by joint action on the part of the agriculture department and the persons concerned, with the advice of the chairman of the communal council.

- PARMEHUTU will press for an increase in the number of roads and by-roads, without forcing the inhabitants to move, and for the construction of an international airport in Ruanda as soon as possible.

- It will pay special attention to anything likely to accelerate the electrification of the country, which will increase the prosperity of private undertakings; and it will promote cheap and comfortable bus transport.

4. The MDR PARMEHUTU will apply the following policy in favour of traders:

- Lighten the prohibitive tax burden, which is an insurmountable obstacle to the success of small traders' private initiative.

- Extend, to the most isolated localities, enough trading centres to facilitate the task of traders and craftsmen, without discrimination or preference.

- Our party will press for a system of loans to handicraft and commercial enterprises, and for a review of the customs regulations as between Ruanda and Uganda, Tanganyika and the Congo, in accordance with the views expressed by the Ruandese middle class through their professional associations.

- PARMEHUTU calls for taxation proportionate to the real wealth of the taxpayers.

- The MDR PARMEHUTU will promote the establishment, with all foreign peoples, of relations of friendship and trust conducive to the investment of foreign capital in the country, either as loans to the Ruandese community as productive investments,

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such as the financing of electrification as mentioned above. This is one of the reasons why our party will strongly oppose any policy inspired by xenophobia or hostility to foreigners.

#### IV. DEMOCRATIZATION OF EDUCATION

Everybody knows the extent to which the Hutu and Twa groups are in practice debarred from opportunities for higher education. The very few exceptional cases of Hutu who have won access to Congolese and metropolitan institutions of higher learning will not suffice to settle the social conflicts arising out of Tutsi selfishness which affects this crucial factor in national progress.

Everyone knows that education is financed mainly from the taxes paid by the people. For that reason, higher education should not be the privilege of the higher aristocracy; the whole community should not bear the cost of higher education mainly for members of that class, who use it in support of their claim to be the only ones capable of replacing their fathers or uncles in the feudal system, and so for the restoration of their out-dated feudalistic colonialism.

That is why PARMEHUTU calls for the reorganization of education along democratic lines, since this is a sector of primary importance for national progress. In this connexion, it will strive to achieve the following objectives:

1. Institution of the "two-stream system", at least in the lower classes of the primary schools. Our party wants two types of education, to be given side by side - education directed towards the training-up of competent leaders and higher servants of the State, and instruction designed to eradicate illiteracy, which is still too wide-spread in Ruanda and militates against the healthy progress of our citizens.
2. Compulsory school attendance for all children living within six kilometres of the school, from the age of six until that of at least fifteen.
3. Addition of at least two years of training in each school operating a full six-year programme, with the object of teaching a remunerative trade to pupils who have no prospect of proceeding to secondary school.
4. Abolition of the boarding system in primary schools, because this is where the Bahutu are eliminated through a system of selection based on financial means and favouritism. The courses now given in the boarding-schools would be continued and completed in day schools open to all children.

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5. The regrouping of pupils preparing themselves for secondary education by a seventh year of primary studies. This will ensure that the parents and children concerned are free to choose the kind of secondary education which is in line with their desires, and will militate against the manoeuvres of favouritism which we have so frequently denounced.
6. The extension of the free education now received by indigent orphans to the children of the citizens who were enslaved by feudalism and corvées during the period 1940-1959.
7. The establishment of an education council in all central schools. This council would be responsible for supervising the admission of children of all races to secondary schools, and for settling disputes about unjustified refusals of admission. It could thus help to eliminate the educational and social discrimination which was roundly denounced in the first Bahutu manifesto as an impediment to progress in Ruanda.
8. The index-cards of the pupils in all schools should continue to be marked "Hutu", "Twa" or "Tutsi", so as to facilitate the task of those who will prosecute the campaign against discrimination in education.
9. Once again, the publication is requested of a special chapter in the annual report of the education department, mentioning the number of Hutu, Twa and Tutsi pupils and the reasons for the backwardness of any particular race as compared with the others.
10. With regard to secondary and higher education, our party calls for the following system which, with due regard to possible budgetary limitations, the requirements of true democracy and the need to train up competent cadres, constitutes the best procedure for organizing a form of national State education that is no longer governed by colonialist considerations or by manoeuvres in the interest of preferential treatment or favouritism.

PARMEHUTU demands:

- (a) That education properly so called should be clearly separated from accelerated "post-primary" courses.
- (b) That general secondary education should from the outset be separated from technical secondary education.
- (c) That technical secondary education should be fostered and organized in accordance with the country's real needs.

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- (d) That higher secondary education should not be a mockery, producing merely "assistants" for colonials concerned to retain their positions in an Africa which is moving towards full emancipation.
  - (e) That within the shortest possible time a higher institute of agricultural education, medical education and social education be established in Ruanda, since our party believes that in these fields the country has needs for the satisfaction of which it can no longer make shift with foreign technical supervisory personnel.
  - (f) That the Government should establish a democratic system of granting scholarships or fellowships for specialized training in foreign universities.
  - (g) That the primary, secondary and higher education of girls should receive full attention from the Government and the education authorities.
  - (h) That an organic law on State education should be passed, abolishing the colonialist régime of feudalism and favouritism which has hitherto dominated education in Ruanda, and satisfying the country's real needs and the necessity of democratizing all the national institutions.
11. The MDR PARMEHUTU proclaims full freedom of education, implying the possibility for the State, the missions, private firms and any competent citizen to found and direct, as they see fit, any kind of school, provided that the common programme laid down by the State is adhered to. These different types of school have an equal right to official grants, without discrimination or favouritism.
12. We also affirm that parents cannot be forced, under any written or customary law, to adopt a system of education which they do not desire for their children.
13. In this respect, the MDR PARMEHUTU pays a formal tribute to the educational and training work of the missions, and urges them to accept the reforms recommended by our movement, without seeking to undermine them.
14. We desire that draft conventions on education should be submitted to our party for its opinion before they are ratified and put into force.

If, despite all this, higher education continues to be the privilege of a single race, the taxpayers of that race must be the only ones to bear the taxation required for its financing.

In any event, PARMEHUTU will pursue its unflagging efforts to democratize secondary education, with a view to its being so organized that it can lead to a higher or university education which is truly national, is free from any form of discrimination, and involves no unbearable tax burden for the people of Ruanda.

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## V. FOREIGN RELATIONS

Our party rejects anything liable to keep Ruanda in its present position of a small, isolated country deprived of economic and political ties with foreign Powers.

We wish to point out, at the same time, that the fact of being a small country is no sufficient justification for that country's absorption by larger States surrounding it; while at the present time isolation is the surest road to a country's being swallowed up by great Powers. Ruanda's relations:

### With Urundi:

- PARMEHUTU favours a policy of "decentralization", whereby an independent Ruanda and an independent Burundi will be established, to the end that the national independence of both countries may be better assured.

- In order to facilitate this task, PARMEHUTU calls upon the Bureau colonial at Usumbura to make an inventory of both countries' assets which it administers as a single unit, and to publish it.

- PARMEHUTU demands that the Government state, as soon as possible, which bodies for economic or financial co-operation should remain common to Ruanda and Burundi, for the greater benefit of both.

- PARMEHUTU considers that such a policy is more African, and is better, than the "unitary and composite State" recommended by certain theorists or by interested colonialists.

### With Belgium:

- FARMEHUTU will be happy to see lasting friendly relations freely established between Ruanda and Belgium. To achieve this, it is necessary that: (a) Belgium should spare us the chaos which occurred in the Congo; (b) Belgium should relieve us, before independence, of certain saboteurs who are interested more in the retention of their own positions than in the full emancipation of the country; (c) the representatives of great-hearted Belgium should stop conjuring up the spectre of feudalism's wreck; (d) Belgium should be willing to be the first foreign Power to provide Ruanda with the financial and technical assistance which it will need when it becomes independent.

With other countries:

- especially with the African countries. We urge the Government to take timely action to establish any alliances which may be helpful to the progress of Ruanda, so long as they do not infringe our national sovereignty.

- PARMEHUTU considers that, in the torrent of ideas now sweeping over Africa, Ruanda's only hope of salvation lies in its transformation into a truly democratic State allied to the many African republics.

VI. THE INDEPENDENCE OF RUANDA

- The MDR PARMEHUTU will energetically pursue its efforts to lay the foundations of a real national independence which will not enslave the country to the feudal colonialists or the neo-colonialists and will preserve the Ruandese people from the disorder and anarchy which are prejudicial to the real emancipation of Africa.

- Our party is opposed to civil war in any form, and to everything liable to provoke it. The following are the conditions for a well prepared independence that will promote the progress of Ruanda:

1. The establishment or strengthening of the political institutions which meet the nation's wishes and the country's real needs.
2. The disposal of the colonial problem of "Ruanda-Urundi", mentioned above.

- Our party calls for the granting of national independence as soon as possible, and not later than during the first half of 1962.

Gitarara, 27 August 1961

For the MOUVEMENT DEMOCRATIQUE REPUBLICAIN, PARMEHUTU, the Executive Officers:

C. MULINDAHABI  
Secretary

B. BICAMUMPAKA  
Vice-President

G.R. KAYIBANDA  
President

and all the PARMEHUTU leaders and propagandists known to you.

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