

SPEECH BY FIELD-MARSHAL SMUTS ON THE OCCASION OF THE
CONFERRING OF THE DECREE OF DOCTOR OF LAW HONORIS CAUSA
BY THE UNIVERSITY OF JOHANNESBURG ON H.M. QUEEN WILHELMINA
ON 28th MARCH, 1942.

The first half of the speech was delivered in Afrikaans, the second half, which follows below, in English:

I am glad to be present at this distinguished ceremony, and to have the privilege to congratulate Her Majesty Queen Wilhelmina on the honour which the University of the Witwatersrand has just conferred on her.

In honouring her to-day the University has received even greater honour from her. For the name of Queen Wilhelmina will outlast the memory of all of us and remain engraved on history's page aere perennius.

But this honorary degree will at least serve this purpose, it will express to Her Majesty something of the depth of feeling with which all South Africa honours and admires her, something, too, of the pride which we of Dutch stock feel in this high example of noble womanhood.

We honour and admire her for the high personal standard she has set throughout her life and long reign. We honour and admire her no less for what she has been in the greatest ordeal of our age, perhaps of all time.

Her loyalty to truth and honour, and to her people in their martyrdom, her devotion to the cause of freedom have added another great name to the array of outstanding sovereigns which the illustrious House of Orange has given to history.

Our pride in her and gratitude to her are greater than words can express. We remember with emotion and awe what she has passed through in this war - the unprovoked, unexpected, sudden attack by the greatest bully power in the world, the shame, horror, destruction and ruin brought on her country by a neighbour to whom Holland had always been a friend, to whose last sovereign Holland gave refuge, hospitality, protection in the hour of defeat.

We see how the people of Holland, animated by her high example, is once more reviving the heroic spirit which centuries ago enabled them to endure the sufferings of the eighty years' war without flinching, and under the inspiration of William of Orange, his sons and grandson, made them lay the foundations of European freedom, which we are once more defending in our day.

That flame of freedom, burning in the same stock transplanted to the Cape, added the most illustrious page to the history of South Africa, a page on which Her Majesty's name is also written for the service she rendered to our beloved President Kruger.

And to-day South Africa's war effort is proof that that spirit still burns brightly in all sections of our South African people and is fusing them into a new nation on the battle fronts of this war. Even in the distant islands of the Pacific this same spirit is inspiring the Dutch in their heroic struggle against overwhelming odds.

We watch that Pacific struggle with the most poignant interest.

Great as are the Dutch possessions, the spirit of their people is greater still, and will yet carry them through to a glorious resurrection.

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Luctor et emergo was the motto of the Province of Zeeland and it applies no less aptly to the Holland of today.

In honouring the Queen today we also honour this undying spirit of her people, the little people, who, in the rise of modern Europe, upheld the freedom of commerce and the seas, the freedom of conscience and worship, the rights of man and the reverence due to human personality and the human soul as something divine in its origin and destiny.

We also remember their pioneering achievements and the paths they opened up in far off lands and seas for the future advance of European civilisation: through stormy northern seas for ever associated with the names of Harendtz and Hoemskerck, which today form the northern sea route for succour to Russia in her heroic self defence: here in this South Africa of ours, which they were the first to settle, and which today is fast becoming one of the great life lines and ways to victory for the united Nations in the war in the Middle and the Far East: in North America, which the Dutch were among the first to settle at New Amsterdam, now New York, and where today a great President of Dutch stock leads the mightiest world power in its task to ensure final victory.

To Queen Wilhelmina we do homage today, to her country and people, and to the lasting contribution they have made to the modern world.

What is to be the fate of the world?

The issue lies between Hitler's dream with its relapse of Europe under Nazi tyranny, a tyranny far worse than that of Philip II in the sixteenth century, or a new birth of freedom which will fulfil the promise of a richer, freer life implicit in the European advance of the last four or five centuries, in whose dawn Holland played so great a part.

For free men, after four centuries of freedom, a Hitlerian relapse is unthinkable. Rather a renaissance of freedom, a great new advance of the world will become possible.

All will depend on our nerve and exertions, our loyalty to what is highest and best in history.

Already, in spite of harrowing ups and downs, we can begin to discern, in dim outline, the outcome of this vast struggle.

After two and a half years of unexampled victories Germany has made no progress with the Battle of Britain. The battle of Russia, announced as the final blow, has passed its climax and the German advance has been halted and flung back.

In the battle of the Atlantic the Allies have, and keep, the upper hand.

In the battle of the Mediterranean and the Middle East Italy has been knocked out and our chances of beating Germany are also fair, especially if the Russian front continues to hold.

In the battle of the Pacific Japan has for the moment a clear run, but she cannot possibly stay the course for long against the gathering might of America. Her Pacific advance will melt away like the morning mist.

The Axis cannot possibly win this war; they cannot even bring about a stalemate. The war will inevitably end in their colossal crash, and with their fall will arise the opportunity, unequalled in the history of the world, of rebuilding this world of ours on fairer lines.

We hope and pray that mankind may at least have learnt its lesson of human understanding and cooperation, and that freedom may come into its own.

With the lure and the inspiration of that vision of the future before us, and the example of a glorious past behind us, let us redouble our efforts in the present ^{and} with all our might fight out the last fateful bitter rounds of Armageddon this year, and if necessary, next year.