

# Declaration of Unity and the Ten Point Programme .

## Statement Approved by the Continuation Committee of the Preliminary Unity Conference of Delegates from the AAC and the National Anti-C.A.D., December 17, 1943<sup>1</sup>

### PREAMBLE

These three organisations of the Non-Europeans, which in themselves are not political parties, but federal bodies embracing various political, economic and social organisations and parties of all shades of opinion from every walk of life, have met together in Conference upon 17th December at Bloemfontein.

After frank and friendly deliberations on questions affecting all Non-Europeans in South Africa, the Conference has come to the following conclusions:

I That the rulers of South Africa, who wield the economic and political power in this country, are deliberately keeping the Non-European people in economic and political oppression for the sake of their own selfish interests'.

II. That the entire constitutional and economic structure, the legislative, ! educational, fiscal, judicial and administrative policy, is designed to i serve the interests of the European ruling classes (the minority) and I not the interests of the people of the country as a whole.

III. That despite protestations to the contrary, it is the firm determination of this ruling class to prevent the economic advancement and upliftment of the Non-Europeans.

IV That during the thirty-three years since the formation of the Union, the promises of the rulers (who have assumed the self-appointed role of 'trustees') that they would use the economic resources of the Union for the benefit of the under-privileged (those in trust) have been flagrantly broken. Instead of a process of civilisation, of reforms leading to a greater share in self-government and government, to a greater share in the national income, to a greater share in the material and cultural wealth of South Africa, to a more equitable distribution of the land-these thirty-three years have been marked by a process I I of cumulative oppression, of more brutal dispossession of the Non- It Europeans, of more crippling restrictions in every sphere.

V. That not only the future welfare of the Non-Europeans in South Africa, but their very existence as a people demands the immediate abolition. of 'trusteeship", of all constitutional privileges based on skin colour, privileges which are incompatible with the principles of democracy and justice.

VI. That the continuation of the present system in South Africa, so similar J li to the Nazi system of Herrenvolk, although it may lead to the temporary prosperity for the ruling class and race, must inevitably be at the expense of the Non-Europeans and lead to their ruination.

VII. That the economic prosperity and all-round advancement of South Africa, as of other countries, can only be achieved by the collaboration of free people: such a collaboration can only be possible and fruitful as between people who enjoy the status of citizenship, which is based on equality of civil and political rights.

VIII. The recognition that segregation is an artificial device of thee rulers and an instrument for the domination of the Non-European is at the same time the recognition that the division, strife and suspicion amongst the Non-European groups themselves are also artificially fostered by the ruling class. From this it follows:

- (a) That no effective fight against segregation is possible by people who tacitly accept segregation amongst themselves;
- (b) That the acceptance of segregation, in whatsoever form, serves' ,. only the interests of the oppressors;

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<sup>1</sup> To facilitate scanning, a copy of this document was obtained from Karis and Carters "FROM PROTEST TO CHALLENGE Volume 2, page 352 and seq.

(c) That our fight against segregation must be directed against the segregationists within as well as without, and (d) That the unity of all Non-European groups is a necessary precondition for this total fight against segregation.

IX. As representatives of the African, Indian and Coloured People, we have come together in the full recognition of the above, in order to lay the foundation for real unity amongst the Non-Europeans. As the purpose of this unity is to fight against segregation, discrimination and oppression of every kind and to fight for equality and freedom for all, such a Unity Movement cannot and must not, for one moment, be considered as directed against the Europeans (an Anti-European Front). It is an Anti-Segregation Front and, therefore, all those European organisations and societies which are genuinely willing to fight segregation (as distinct from those who profess to be against segregation but in reality are only the instruments of the ruling-class) are welcome to this anti-segregation Unity Movement.

X. In view of the heavy legacy of the past still in the ranks of the Non-Europeans, the task of this movement will be the breaking down of the artificial walls erected by the rulers, walls of mistrust and suspicion between the Non-Europeans. This breaking-down must start from the top and come right down to the bottom. This is the organisational task of Unity. Provincial Committees must follow, then Regional Committees and finally Local Committees, where this Unity will be a living reality.

XI. Indeed, all Non-Europeans suffer under the same fundamental disabilities-the lack of political rights. This lack of political rights is the main cause of the poverty of the Non-Europeans, the main impediment to their progress and future. It is through lack of political rights that laws were passed, Land Acts were passed, depriving the Non-European of his land, prohibiting him from buying land and forcing him to stay on the land as a semi-labourer and semi-serf.

It is through lack of political rights that laws were passed making it virtually impossible for a Non-European to become a skilled worker (the White Labour Policy, the Apprenticeship Acts, etc.) and keeping unskilled and semi-skilled labour on the very lowest plane, and even below the minimum subsistence level. It is through lack of political rights:

- (a) That his education is deliberately starved;
- (b) That he is starved of medical facilities, hospitals, maternity homes and clinics;
- (c) That he is forced to live in locations, bazaars, hovels and sheds;
- (d) That he is forced to carry passes and cannot move freely;
- (e) That the system of taxation is unjustly applied against him, and (f) That he is not allowed to form Trade Unions.

XII. In view of the fact that all the above disabilities, economic, educational, social and cultural, all flow from the lack of political rights, the struggle for full democratic rights must become the pivotal point of our struggle for freedom. But while recognising that our struggle is chiefly a political struggle, we must not neglect any other form of struggle so long as it serves the cause of Liberation. Thus it is the duty of every organisation in the Unity Movement to unfold to the people the meaning of the following programme, a programme not for bargaining but representing the minimum demands and fundamental needs of all sections of the people.

## PROGRAMME

The aim of the Non-European Unity Movement is the liquidation of the National Oppression of the Non-Europeans in South Africa, that is, the removal of ' all the disabilities and the restrictions based on grounds of race and colour, and the acquisition by the Non-Europeans of all those rights which are at present enjoyed by the European population.

Unlike other forms of past society based on slavery and serfdom, democracy is the rule of the people, by the people, for the people. But, as long as a section of the people are enslaved there can be no democracy, and without democracy there can be no justice. We Non-Europeans are demanding only those rights for which the Europeans were fighting more than a hundred years. These democratic demands are contained in the following Ten Points:

I. The Franchise, i.e. the right of every man and woman over the age of twenty-one to elect, and be elected to Parliament, Provincial Councils and all other Divisional and Municipal Councils.

II. Compulsory, free and uniform education for all children up to the age of sixteen, with free meals, free books and school equipment for the needy.

III. Inviolability of person, of one's house and privacy.

IV. Freedom of speech, press, meetings and association.

V. Freedom of movement and occupation.

VI. Full equality of rights for all citizens without distinction of race, colour and sex.

VII. Revision of the land question in accordance with the above.

VIII. Revision of the civil and criminal code in accordance with the above.

IX. Revision of the system of taxation in accordance with the above.

X. Revision of the labour legislation and its application to the mines and agriculture.

#### EXPLANATORY REMARKS ON THE PROGRAMME.

I. This means the end of all political tutelage, of all communal or indirect representation, and the granting to all Non-Europeans of the same, universal, equal, direct and secret ballot as at present enjoyed by Europeans exclusively.

II. This means the extension of all the educational rights at present enjoyed by European children, to all Non-European children with the same access to higher education on equal terms.

III. This is the elementary Habeas Corpus right. The present state of helplessness of the Non-European before the police is an outrage of the principles of democracy. No man should be molested by the police, nor should his house be entered without a writ from the magistrate. This same right to inviolability and privacy at present enjoyed by the European should apply to all Non-Europeans. All rule by regulation should be abolished.

IV. This point hardly needs explanation. It is the abolition of the Riotous Assemblies Act, directed specifically against the Non-European. It embodies the right to combine, to form and enter Trade Unions on the same basis as the Europeans.

V. This means the abolition of all Pass Laws and restriction of movement and travel within the Union, the right to live, to look for work wherever one pleases. It means the same right to take up a profession or trade as enjoyed by Europeans.

VI. This means the abolition of all discriminatory colour bar laws.

VII. Relations of serfdom at present existing on the land must go, together with the Land Acts, together with the restrictions upon acquiring land. A new division of the land in conformity with the existing rural population, living on the land and working the land, is the first task of a democratic state and Parliament.

VIII. This means the abolition of feudal relations in the whole system of justice-police, magistrates, law courts and prisons-whereby the punishment for the same crime is not the same, but is based upon the skin colour of the offender. There must be complete equality of all citizens before the law, and the abolition of all punishment incompatible with human dignity.

IX. This means the abolition of the Poll Tax, or any other tax applicable specifically to the Non-European or discriminating between Europeans and Non-Europeans. There should be one, single, progressive tax, and all indirect taxation that falls so heavily upon the poorer classes should be abolished.

X. This means specifically the revision of the Industrial Conciliation and Wage Acts, the elimination of all restrictions and distinctions between a European worker and a Non-European worker, equal pay for equal work, equal access to apprenticeship and skilled labour. This means the liquidation of indentured labour and forcible recruitment, the full application of Factory Legislation to the mines and on the land. It means the abolition of the Masters and Servants Act and the establishment of complete equality between the seller and buyer of labour.

It also means the abolition of payment in kind, and the fixing of a minimum wage for all labourers without distinction of race or colour.

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