

**Non-European Unity Movement**

**(UNITE FOR FREEDOM)**

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**“THE BASIS OF UNITY”**

**(By B. M. KIES)**

**“THE BUILDING OF UNITY”**

**(By I. B. TABATA)**

**TWO ADDRESSES DELIVERED AT THE**

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**Joint Secretaries: P.O. BOX 3475, CAPE TOWN.**

## THE TEN-POINT PROGRAMME

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**THE AIM** of the Non-European Unity Movement is the liquidation of the National Oppression of the Non-European in South Africa, that is, the removal of all the disabilities and restrictions based on grounds of race and colour, and the acquisition by the Non-European 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 100 years ago.

These Democratic demands are contained in the following 10 points:

- I. The Franchise, i.e., the right of every man and woman over the age of 21 to elect and be elected to Parliament, Provincial Council and all other Divisional and Municipal Councils.**
- II. Compulsory, free and uniform education for all children up to the age of 16, 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.**

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## EXPLANATORY REMARKS ON THE PROGRAMME

### Point

- I.** This means the end of all political tutelage, of all communal or indirect representations, 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. The same right to inviolability and privacy at present enjoyed by the European should apply to all Non-Europeans. All rule by regulations 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. The 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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## THE BASIS OF UNITY

(By B. M. KIES)

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Mr. Chairman and Members of Conference,

It is my task to introduce the discussion on the "Basis of Unity" and not to deliver an address in the usual sense of the term. On behalf of the Continuation Committee I shall move the relevant resolution on the agenda paper, namely, "That this Conference re-affirms the 10-Point Programme as the basis upon which Unity is to be built and the fight for full democratic rights prosecuted; it thus urges upon all organisations and members of organisations not only to make known to the people throughout the country the principles and implications of the programme, but to wage the fight for Unity and full citizenship upon this basis."

And so I shall very largely confine myself to the clarification of certain misunderstandings of the programme which have become apparent

during the past year; to replying to certain criticisms levelled at the programme; to focussing attention more keenly upon the main points of the programme, and to an explanation of its real significance and implications.

Before we set out upon this task, let us briefly review the history of the 10-Point Programme during the year in which it has first seen the light of day. It was in December, 1943, at the Preliminary Unity Conference in Bloemfontein, attended by delegations from the All-African Convention and the National Anti-C.A.D., that the Programme was provisionally adopted as the basis of Unity. Immediately after this, in January, 1944, the 2nd National Anti-C.A.D. Conference not only ratified the action of the Anti-C.A.D. delegation to the Preliminary Conference, but also adopted the 10-Point Programme as the basis of the Anti-C.A.D. movement in its struggle against the C.A.C. and C.A.D. and for full democratic rights. In July, 1944, the Executive of the All-African Convention, meeting in Johannesburg, endorsed the action of the Convention delegation to the Preliminary Unity Conference. Immediately after this, the 2nd Unity Conference was held at Kholvad House, Johannesburg, and it was precisely on the basis of, and because of, the 10-Point Programme that there came a parting of the ways between the Unity Movement and the leadership of the S. African Indian Congress. Then in December, 1944, the Annual Conference of the All-African Convention ratified the decisions of the delegation and the Executive and endorsed the 10-Point Programme as the basis upon which Unity can be built. This is the point we have reached, and it is one of the tasks of this, the first all-in Unity Conference, to accept, reject or modify the 10-Point Programme as the basis of Unity.

Let us turn now to a consideration of certain misunderstandings and criticisms of the Programme. These, roughly speaking, fall into four groups. First, there are those who read through the Programme, agree with it, feel that it embodies their aspirations, and therefore say, "I accept the 10-Point Programme," now feeling that they have done as much as could reasonably be expected of them. They are like the man who, tired of repeating the Lord's Prayer every night, wrote it out and added a postscript reading, "These, O Lord, are my sentiments." After that he never found it necessary to pray again. Second, there are the politically immature, who have read many revolutionary leaflets and stirring accounts of other people's militant struggles for liberation. They have such strong r-r-revolutionary stomachs that they swallow a mere 10-Point Programme with the greatest of ease, no effort and no thought. They now feel that they can call for action of a revolutionary character. They have no sooner baptised the baby than they want to marry him off. Third, we have the criticism that the 10-Point Programme is only a "long range policy," an ultimate goal upon which everyone is agreed. But, it is argued, a short-range policy is needed, a policy which applies to the day-to-day struggle of the people; we must come down to the every-day needs of the masses, we need a bread-and-butter policy for the short-range. This argument usually comes from a section of the left, but it is actively seized upon by the right and distorted for their own unprincipled purpose—collaboration, compromise and betrayal. The right pretends to accept the idea of full democratic rights, but only as an ultimate ideal, a star shining over a promised land; in the meantime, until the promised land is sighted, they feel that they have "to make the best of a bad job." In practice this means negotiations and "gentleman's agreements" and not doing anything to ruffle the white Herrenvolk, e.g., the leadership of the S.A.I. Congress; it also means treachery and careerism, e.g., the members of the N.R.C. and C.A.C. They all claim to be striving for the same goal as the genuine fighters, but allege that they are using different methods of reaching it.

Fourth, there is the plain, blunt person, who aggressively announces that he wants action. He foams at the mouth and asserts that theory doesn't matter, that only practice will put things right. To him it doesn't matter if the programme has 5, 10 or 20 points. "We all want

the same things," he says, "so let's get down to some action. Let's stop talking and do something."

We shall now attempt to reply briefly and categorically to these. The fuller reply to each of these misunderstandings and criticisms will be more evident from our remarks on the main features and implications of the Programme.

To reply to the first group—those who accept the Programme and think their responsibility ends there. This is a grave misunderstanding, but one that is well within our reach to correct. It is not enough merely to accept the Programme, no matter how sincere and loyal you may be. We are looking for independent and determined fighters, conscious of their goal and of the road they must take. We have no use for sheep, for dumb followers, blindly trailing along behind the bell-ram. We have no use for people who think that the real struggle is going on elsewhere and who feel that their local difficulties are so insurmountable that they will have to leave most of the fighting to someone else in some other place, where it is easier to struggle. So the country thinks that the real struggle must go on in the towns; the Northern Provinces think that the real struggle must be fought in the good old Cape, "the home and well-spring of all political movements"; the Cape Province thinks that Cape Town is the real storm-centre; the Africans have a great admiration for the militant and plain-speaking Coloured people; the Coloureds thrill when they read of the strikes, demonstrations, marches and bus-boycotts of the Africans. **Everyone is shifting the struggle on to someone else's shoulders.** This attitude we must root out. We must break the outlook of those who are content to back their team from the grand-stand. Every oppressed person must be brought to the realisation that the 10-Point Programme is an arsenal providing every oppressed Non-European in every dorp and district with the weapons with which to carry on the struggle in whatever place he finds himself. It must not be buried so as to be brought out one day when the sun rises blood-red; it must be used every day in every phase of the struggle against oppression.

To reply to the second group—the fire-eaters. They will have to learn, as we all must learn, that while the adoption of the 10-Point Programme is a great and momentous step forward, it is **only the first step.** The vanguard of any movement should never fall into the fatal error of confusing the most advanced section of the leadership with the masses themselves; it is one thing to pass a resolution, but it is quite another thing to live up to it. The adoption of the 10-Point Programme signifies the direction in which we are travelling, but it does not mean that we have arrived. **The building of real Unity on the basis of such a programme is the work of years and years.** It is both irresponsible and idiotic to try to rush your fences in S. Africa, because great things are happening in Europe and because the social revolution is maturing there. Events in Europe will have repercussions here, profound repercussions, but there is no need for people to think that the struggle in S. Africa will not take years and years. And it would be well to remember that in Europe it will take many, many years before the common man comes into his own. Events in Europe may shorten the struggle in S. Africa, but they will never make it unnecessary to struggle here and now.

In reply to those who, in good faith, assert that the 10-Point Programme is only a long-range policy, an ultimate goal, we may say immediately that they are completely and dangerously wrong. It is not merely an ultimate goal. **It is a point of departure.** It must become the spring-board for all our political activities. It must become the basis of our day-to-day struggles. In these day-to-day struggles we must insist upon the relevant point of the Programme as a **minimum.** We cannot and must not ask for less. "But," the critic will ask, "is this practical? In our day-to-day struggle we are fighting for little reforms here and there, trying to get some relief from the intolerable burden of exploitation and oppression. Must we ask for full equality?"

Must we refuse to accept less?" Without any doubt or hesitation, my answer is "Yes, definitely, yes!" Reforms and concessions are a **by-product** of militant struggle in which you demand exactly what you want and not what you think you may be able to squeeze out at that particular time. In any case, the Government will carry through whatever plans it feels it has strength enough to carry through. **They**, the oppressors, always seek to put on fresh chains. **They** will tighten the old screws if they can. Why should we help them? **They** will deceive by "compromises" and "agreements." Why should we be a party to the deception?

The 10-Point Programme covers both the so-called long-range aims and the so-called short-range demands. **The two are really one.** Why do we say this? Because it is only by insisting on the 10-Point Programme in the so-called short-term, that we will ever get nearer to the so-called long-term goal. **The end is the means:** to reach the end or goal of the 10-Point Programme, we must use the means of the 10-Point Programme. We will never reach the fulfilment of the 10-Point Programme in the "long run" by demanding anything less in the "short run." Moreover, **we must insist upon this.** Otherwise we will be opening our ranks to opportunists who use the prestige and power of the Movement for carrying on their old reactionary games, entrenching themselves by paying lip-service to the "long term" and making merry in the "short term."

Fourth, we come to the "activists" who despise "talk" and who feel that "programme" and "theory" do not matter. These ideas we shall have to change or we may find ourselves provoked into all manner of adventurist sallies. The Programme **does** matter. Theory is important. Your political theory means the way you sum up things, where you consider the interests of the oppressed to lie. This determines your direction; it determines the type of demand you make and the type of organisation you admire or follow or join; it determines your political activity. Indeed, we have become so used to the harsh practices of the S. African Government that we usually forget that these harsh practices are based upon a **theory** — the theory that the Europeans are the Herrenvolk and the trustees of the Non-Europeans; the theory that the natural resources of S. Africa should be harnessed for the benefit of the minority of shareholders and not for the majority of the workers.

What we feel is the result of putting this theory into practice. When we say that the Programme is of **prime importance**, we mean that without the right programme, the right theory, we will never get the right practical activity and the desired practical result. **Without a correct evaluation of the forces of oppression and the goal and resources of the oppressed, our faces will not be turned in the right direction and we will not spend our time in activities bringing us nearer to our goal.** The only thing any political movement without a programme can do, is a great deal of harm.

We turn aside now from the misunderstandings and criticism of the Programme, to focus attention upon the main points and implications of the Programme itself.

Because we have called it a 10-Point Programme, far too many people have missed the main point altogether — and the main point is contained in the preamble or introduction to the actual formulation of the ten points or principles or demands. At the risk of being told that everyone here can read and understand as well as I can, I am going to read from the preamble because I am convinced that it is absolutely necessary to drive home certain fundamental aspects of the Programme.

Let us look at Points I—IV of the preamble.

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 political and economic 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 serve the interests of the European ruling class (the minority) and 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 advance and upliftment of the Non-Europeans.

IV. That during the 33 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 underprivileged (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 33 years have been marked by a process of cumulative oppression, of more brutal dispossession of the Non-European, of more crippling restrictions in every sphere."

The central idea contained in parts I—IV above, is that the oppression of the Non-European is a deliberate plan or design on the part of the rulers, who have no intention of ever allowing the Non-European to develop economically, politically, educationally or socially. It is of the utmost importance that we should all understand this, because it means that we will be throwing overboard once and for all the idea which has retarded our progress for so many tragic years, namely, that the oppression of the Non-European is the result of misunderstanding, that it's all a dreadful mistake, that the rulers are really Christians who will change their hearts once we have shown them the error of their uncharitable ways. Once we realise that our oppression is calculated and deliberate, we will also realise that we have to adopt new methods of struggle.

Points V—VII make an equally vital departure from the old paths, for they state in unmistakable and uncompromising terms that the only solution, the only way of effecting the advancement of the Non-Europeans and of S. Africa as a whole, is by the granting of full citizenship on a basis of full equality.

"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 to the Nazi system of *Herrenvolk*, although it may lead to temporary prosperity for the ruling class and race, must inevitably be at the expense of the Non-Europeans and lead to their ruin.

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 peoples: such 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."

The stress laid upon the absolute necessity of obtaining equality of rights should be carefully noted, because it sets our movement on a certain level, the level of men and women demanding full recognition of their manhood and womanhood, refusing to consider themselves wards or minors or inferiors.

Points VIII and X are equal in importance to any other point in the preamble. Indeed, at the present stage, they may perhaps be said to take priority over most of the others, because they represent one of the most dangerous rocks upon which Unity may suffer shipwreck. They refer to the enemy within our gates, the segregationists in our own ranks.

"VIII. The recognition that Segregation is an artificial device of the rulers, and an instrument for the domination of the Non-European, is at the same time a recognition that the division, strife and suspicion amongst the Non-European groups themselves is 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 whatever form, serves only the interests of the oppressors.
- (c) That our fight against Segregation must be directed against the segregationists within as well as without.

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 distrust and suspicion between the Non-Europeans. This breaking down must start from the top and come down right 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 become a living reality."

For a very long time, especially during the initial years, we shall have to wage a very determined battle on two fronts: against the segregationists without and against the segregationists within. We cannot slacken on either front, because defeat on either one front inevitably means defeat on the other.

Closely connected with points 8 and 10, is point 9, that we are building an anti-Segregation and not an anti-European front.

"IX. As representatives of the Non-European oppressed 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 instruments of the ruling class) are welcome to this anti-Segregation Unity Movement."

It is impossible to over-emphasise this point. It is impossible to repeat it too often to European workers and Non-European oppressed. We, the Non-European oppressed, must never confuse the European worker, aristocrat of labour though he may be to-day, with the European ruling class. It may not be very apparent at the moment; it may be a very difficult lesson for the majority of us to learn, but nevertheless the irrefutable fact remains that the European worker must ultimately become the ally of the Non-European oppressed, for economic exploitation and national or colour oppression spring from the same root, even though the branches of the tree seem to point in entirely different directions. The agencies of the White rulers within the ranks of the White working class will go out of their way to use the Unity Movement to increase the existing racialistic feelings between black and white workers; they will spread the poison that we are anti-White, that we want to replace the White Herrenvolk by a Black Herrenvolk. But the more they do this, the more we must insist and the more we must show in practice that we are not racialist: we are not anti-White, but anti-Segregationist.

Within our own ranks we will have trouble on this score, too. I do not merely refer to the Non-European Segregationists who will try to incite race hatred, but also to those people who, blinded by so many decades of oppression by a White ruling class with the acquiescence or support of the majority of the White working class, have become chauvinists who believe that everything white is wicked. These people will be able to point to dozens and dozens of so-called Radicals and Socialists and Communists who paid lip-service to the emancipation of



the Non-European, while they rode into Council or Parliament on his back, or grew rich at his expense by organising trade unions which were more interested in collecting subs and being on friendly terms with the bosses, than fighting for increases for the workers. Names of persons and organisations will be mentioned, and we will be told that "All these . . . Whites are the . . . same." It is going to be difficult, but we shall have to do battle with these chauvinists in our own ranks; we shall have to teach and teach and teach them, until they understand that with the growth of a powerful Unity Movement and with the increasing frequency and depth of the economic crises facing S. Africa to-day, the White worker will be forced to find his way to his real ally, the Non-European worker. Let us not be so blinded by the poisons from the cancer of Segregationism that we shut the door to the White worker. For come he must and will—on the basis of full and equal citizen rights for all in this country, on the basis of a 10-Point Programme.

Points XI and XII, the final points of the preamble, contain the very core or heart of the programme and of the Unity Movement. They state a truth which will be hard for many to learn and to carry out in practice, namely, that because our disabilities flow from the lack of political rights, the political struggle must be the central point around which our struggle revolves. We shall have to make a break with our past in this respect. For we shall have to put an end to the dissipation of our energy in a thousand and one different directions. We shall have to learn to conserve our energy and concentrate it upon the main fight—the struggle for full democratic rights. The rulers emphasise what they call "social welfare" and the Liberals emphasise "charitable work and social uplift" for the very reason that they wish to keep us from the main struggle, the struggle for citizenship rights. We must learn, however, not to turn ourselves into small change but to keep ourselves big money. We must learn that if you hammer at the keystone, the arch must fall. If you go for the big thing, the little things will come your way; but if you fritter away time and energy on the myriads of little things, you will never reach the big things at all. That is why we have to learn points XI and XII by heart.

"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, 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;
- (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 attached to this Unity Movement to unfold to the people the meaning of the following programme, a programme not for bargaining but representing the minimum demand and funda-

mental needs of all sections of the people."

All these points of the preamble together comprise a whole outlook, a new outlook, for the overwhelming majority of both the mass and the leadership. It is with this new outlook that we wish to build the Unity Movement. Only when you ignore this preamble do the actual 10 points named in the Programme appear to be something that everyone can accept—collaborator and non-collaborator, C.A.C. or N.R.C. men and genuine fighters. Only then can you speak of a long-term policy or a distant, nebulous goal. The preamble lays down a complete change of orientation in the present and not at some future, unknown and unknowable date. This is why acceptance of the Programme implies something more than merely reading the 10 points and agreeing to them. The 10 points flow from a definite attitude towards the oppression of the Non-European and prepare the way for a definite type of struggle—a political struggle.

I shall not enter into any discussion on the actual 10 points themselves, other than to say that these 10 points cover the fundamental needs common to African, Coloured and Indian oppressed, and state their minimum demands. If we mean what we say when we lay claim to full citizenship, then we cannot possibly demand less. Many, perhaps, would go further in their demands. But here in the Unity Movement we are not much concerned with those; we are concerned with the finding of a minimum basis upon which to unite and in the 10-Point Programme we have it.

At the same time, there is a further reason why we must insist that Unity can only be built upon a Programme and upon this Programme: it is necessary as concrete evidence to all sections of the oppressed, who are suspicious, that one section is not trying to use the other as a means of obtaining concessions for itself. Any section and any organisation not accepting the letter and the implications of the Programme immediately becomes suspect and is unacceptable in any Unity Movement. No matter how slowly we may thus be forced to build, we must be sure that we are building solidly. The time is more favourable now than it has ever been for laying the foundations of real Unity. That is why we must build carefully, for the greater the promise the greater the set-back if the promise does not materialise. We have not travelled far, but we have travelled farther than any previous attempts at Unity, so we must tread very warily. If we fail, we make it much more difficult to begin all over again; we increase despair and suspicion.

Furthermore, we may add that this Programme of the needs and demands common to all sections, and active political work on the basis of such a Programme is one of the most powerful means of breaking down the racial barriers between one Non-European and another.

To sum up, then, these are the main reasons why we have to reaffirm the 10-Point Programme as the basis upon which Unity has to be built. But let us assume for one moment that this Conference does reaffirm the Programme. What do we do about it then? What do we expect all the people here assembled, and those whom they represent, to do about it? Very briefly, we shall attempt to answer these questions.

First, as a Unity Movement, we have to take the Programme to the people, we have to explain it to them, we have to activise and lead them upon its basis.

Second, we must see to it that the members, all the members of our respective organisations, understand the Programme and work towards its attainment.

Third, upon the basis of the 10-Point Programme we have to declare war upon the Segregationists and other reactionaries within our own organisations and within our own particular racial group.

Fourth, we must see to it that we, personally, fully understand all its implications and the responsibility it places upon us and the new direction it gives us.

Fifth, we must realise that it is our task, organisationally and individually, to see to it that the spirit and the letter of the Programme

are assimilated by the mass and the leadership and translated into political practice. We have already called the 10-Point Programme a Charter of Liberty. We will have to do a great deal of hard work to ensure that these words obtain a real meaning in the history of this country.

On behalf of the Continuation Committee, I move:

**"That this Conference reaffirms the 10-Point Programme as the basis upon which Unity is to be built and the fight for full democratic rights prosecuted; it thus urges upon all organisations and members of organisations not only to make known to the people throughout the country the principles and implications of the Programme, but to wage the fight for Unity and full citizenship upon this basis."**

## THE BUILDING OF UNITY

(By I. B. TABATA)

Mr. Chairman and Members of Conference,

Yesterday you listened to a long speech on the Basis of Unity. I do not intend to take up half the time. It is my task to introduce the discussion on the Building of Unity. Judging from what took place yesterday there is going to be a good deal of discussion. Yesterday it would have seemed that there could be no two opinions on the subject under consideration, yet there was a good deal of controversy. To-day we are faced with one of the most contentious problems of Conference. Yesterday Conference accepted a new policy, a new outlook, but it is no use accepting this new policy unless we are prepared to put it into practice. We have to create channels, we have to create a vehicle through which to carry this policy to the masses. It is the nature of this vehicle, the **organisational form** of the Unity Movement, that we are now called upon to discuss.

Controversy will be inevitable. In a big Conference of this nature there will be differences of opinion, which must be expected, for the people represented belong to many different schools of political thought. We shall anticipate a few of these. First of all, there are those who do no work and only wake up when they come to Conference. They take it upon themselves to defend imaginary masses against imaginary misleaders. They confuse their own feelings with those of the masses, and they are most vocal. But as they have no programme we need not worry about them overmuch. Their only danger is to create a confusion, and Conference must take care not to allow itself to be confused by them.

Then there is a second group who have political ideas. They have read a lot of books on politics, have followed the activities of political parties overseas and have a lot of political theories which they would like to try out in practice. But they have not the organisation to practise their ideas on. Their task is to create an organisation which will give them a home. They take themselves seriously and they have suggestions to make to Conference. They have to be watched pretty carefully.

There is a third group which is politically immature. They are the young hot-bloods who see the Unity Movement as already powerful and irresistible, ready to sweep away oppression. They visualise a single national organisation springing up overnight, brushing aside everything and settling scores immediately with our oppressors. They are inclined to skip stages and fail to realise that it is necessary to take cognisance of the different stages of development of a people and their struggle.

There is a fourth group which may be divided into two sections: (a) They do want Unity, but they do not want this particular Unity. They are afraid that this organisation will swallow up their own organisation, which they have taken years to build up; (b) there are those who really do not want Unity. You may ask: how can a Non-

**European in South Africa not want Unity?** Last night a member of Conference mentioned that amongst the Indians there is already crystallised a bourgeois class. While he mentioned this, he failed to draw the proper conclusions from it. This class is afraid of the Unity Movement because it is a threat to its own economic position. This is the Indian merchant class. Now it is important to know who are with us and who are not with us, so I propose to say something more on this subject.

Since before December, 1943, the idea of Unity was being discussed throughout the country and federal bodies were expected to come to Bloemfontein on that date to the Preliminary Unity Conference. The one group not represented was the South African Indian Congress. When we speak of the S.A.I.C. we do not speak of the Indian people. The Congress is in the control of the Indian merchant class. Why have we not been able to draw in this class? Because our aspirations are totally different from theirs. For us, Unity is a means to our liberation. That is why we want to put it on a sound programmatic basis. But for them, for the Indian merchant class, Unity is a weapon with which to threaten the Government, something to be used for striking a bargain with the Government, for gaining concessions for themselves. That is why they were the first to come out with the idea that it was time for the Non-Europeans to unite. But when it came to the actual Conference of the S.A.I.C. held in June, 1943, the Unity Resolution was watered down. "This Conference of the S.A.I.C."—thus ran the resolution—"resolves that the time has arrived for this Congress and its affiliated bodies as representing the Indian community of South Africa to co-operate on such specific questions which the Executive of the S.A.I.C. or its affiliated bodies may deem fit and proper, with representative Non-European organisations, with the object of safeguarding and promoting the political, economical and educational interests of the Non-European peoples of South Africa."

The important point is, this resolution was not carried to the Indian masses. It remained a dead letter. When the Pegging Act was passed, the Indian merchant class played with Unity, and the Government recognised that though they spoke of Unity, they too were afraid of it. Smuts played for time and came out with the Pretoria Agreement. Meantime other sections of the Non-Europeans had been taking definite steps to put Unity into practice and the Second Preliminary Unity Conference was held in Johannesburg in July, 1944. There, the S.A.I.C. broke with the Unity Movement on the basis of the 10-Point Programme. This was a signal to Smuts, who came down on the Indians with the Natal Segregation Ordinance.

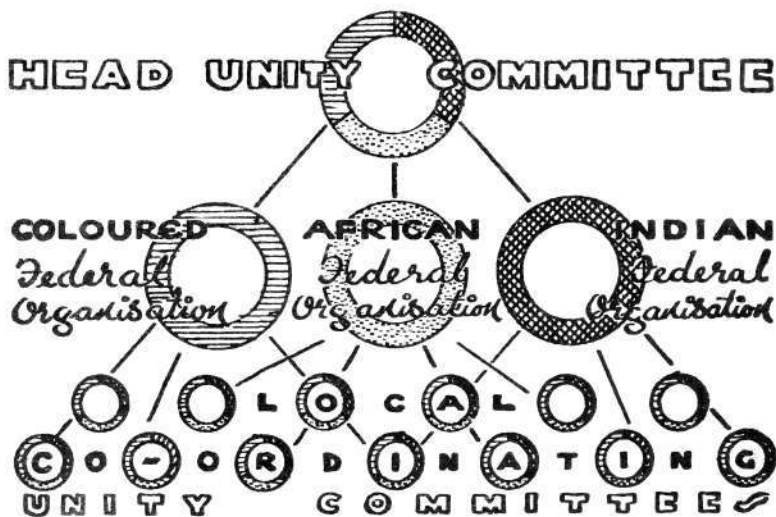
We have looked into this subject with some detail, because it is necessary for us to know our forces. Before we start building we must know our resources. We must know what materials we have at hand. We must know who are with us and who are not with us. No section must use the Unity Movement as a pawn in the game for its own benefit. The Indian merchant class want room to play about and use Unity for the purpose of bargaining. But the 10-Point Programme shuts out all possibility of bargaining. The Indian merchant class, like all bourgeoisie, is mortally afraid of the working class. They are fully class-conscious and clear-sighted; their vision is not blurred by the colonial issue; they transcend the demarcations of colour, see the real class issue and take up their position alongside of their class-brothers. The time is past when we could have a bourgeois that is progressive and revolutionary; at a crucial moment they will turn against the working class. This holds true of the bourgeois throughout the world.

But what about the Indian people, who still belong to Congress? We want them! I must here remind delegates that this Conference does not in itself constitute Unity, but marks the beginning of a long struggle for Unity. We are prepared to try and get in all those elements whose interests are with us, who through the Unity Movement are helping themselves and the Non-Europeans as a whole. We shall go out and fight along with them, but only on the basis of the 10-Point Programme.

Added to these groups we have discussed above, there is yet another, this is a little group within a section. Conference must watch out for those elements here present who will be expressing the sentiments of the absentee opposition. This group will try to put obstacles in the way of Unity at Conference.

We must next consider the problem of how to carry out the programme we agreed upon yesterday. After 300 years we have only now adopted the 10-Point Programme, only now have we decided to change our whole outlook, only now have we grown to full maturity. But we must be careful of trying too hard to make up for our past slowness. The decisions made yesterday have still to be taken to the country and still to be understood, for it takes time for an idea to become part and parcel of a human being. Again I issue a warning against those who will propose an all-embracing National Organisation all at once. At the present stage we are all organised according to separate national groups; each is trying to create its own federal group, its own voice for the people. This form of organisation is in the order of the day. There is the All-African Convention and the Anti-C.A.D. and the Indians too have their federal body. We must view the whole struggle in motion. We cannot skip stages in development. We must realise that, so well have we imbibed the ideas of the ruling class that our segregationist outlook has not been and cannot be overthrown overnight. In order to create a vehicle which will carry our new outlook, we must know what we have at hand, namely, various nationalist bodies. First we must keep these bodies and not abolish them. Let us not create a new body at every Conference. What we have to do is to give a new function to the existing federal organisations and make them more powerful. For example, the Anti-C.A.D. has plenty of work to do, fighting segregation, spreading the new outlook among the Coloured people; and the other federal bodies likewise have to build up their organisations and organise people on the basis of this new outlook. I repeat that this Conference does not constitute Unity: it is only the first step, which is, to give a new function to existing organisations, namely, co-ordination and co-operation among the different organisations.

I suggest that the Conference shall agree to the creation of a Central Unity Executive Committee which shall be made up of representatives of the three federal organisations representing the three racial groups—African, Coloured and Indian—as is shown in this diagram:



This Central Unity Executive Committee must rest on and draw sustenance from the three federal bodies representing the three racial groups. As I said before, in order to understand the situation as it is to-day, we must view things in motion. There is no use having a static picture of the situation in our minds and on that building something artificial. Most people make just this mistake of regarding things as static and therefore fail to understand their real nature. We must take into account the constant process of change, the continuous motion. The tendency to-day, then, is for each social section to form a federation of all organisations within that section. We must strengthen these existing federal bodies, and they must take root amongst the people. Already the Anti-C.A.D., for example, has formed local committees all over the country, and all Coloured organisations in a locality are represented in these committees. The All-African Convention is also building up local committees whose primary task is to work among the Africans so that not a single organisation is left out of the committee.

In this way the Anti-C.A.D. and the All-African Convention are attempting to find roots among the people. In the same way the Unity Movement must find root among the people by creating a new function for those local committees. It must teach them co-operation, and they must come together in Local Co-ordinating Unity Committees.

(Mr. Tabata made use of a large diagram to illustrate the inter-relationship between the Central Executive Unity Committee, three federal organisations and the Local Co-ordinating Unity Committees.)

Supposing a measure is passed by the Government against any one section of the Non-Europeans, then not only the local committee of that section will take up the struggle, but also the local committees of the other two sections shall be asked to join in the fight. This co-ordinating function rests with the Local Co-ordinating Unity Committee.

What I have been trying to describe has already been demonstrated in Cape Town, the only place in which the Anti-C.A.D. Local Committee and the All-African Convention (W.P.) Local Committee exist side by side. When the Government raised the bogey of the "influx of Natives" into towns and painted a lurid picture of Africans pouring into towns to take the bread out of the mouths of the Coloured people, the Government propaganda machine was set in motion amongst the Coloured people to stir up feeling against the Africans. The scare went so far that the European Ratepayers' Association of Maitland invited the Coloured people to come along with them to discuss this "Influx," and the Government Minister Lawrence was prepared to lead a deputation on their behalf. A Crown Minister, mark you, leading a deputation to his colleagues in Parliament! But the A.A.C. Committee (W.P.) and the Anti-C.A.D. Committee united in a campaign to expose this piece of propaganda. They pointed out to the people that it was an attempt to nip the Unity Movement in the bud; they broke up the meeting and defeated the attempt to stir up race-hatred between the Coloured and the Africans. At the very time that Harry Lawrence and his Cabinet colleagues were professing to be terribly alarmed at the "influx" of hordes of Africans and sanctimoniously beating their chests in their concern for the Coloured men whose bread was to be swallowed up by these black hordes, the Government was running two or three special trains a week—bombelas—which brought thousands of Africans into town! There is one thing that the Government does not like to see and will do everything in its power to break, and that is the Unity of all Non-Europeans. In the example I have quoted we see that Unity was not only preached in leaflets and from platforms, but Coloured and Africans came together in action. Here was Unity in practice.

But it must be clearly understood that these Local Co-ordinating Unity Committees are not there merely for defence, i.e., to wait until Government passes some new measure against one or other section of the Non-Europeans. There are many laws which have already been passed against us and against which we have to fight. The Local Co-ordinating Unity Committees are going to organise the people, draw

the community into the struggle, prepare the masses for a concerted onslaught against oppression and rally them in the fight for liberation.

From what I have already said it will be seen that our task at this juncture is to teach co-operation to the people. This is in itself a step towards complete Unity. But we must be careful not to break Unity by trying to go too fast. We must recognise the problem of the various stages of development that history presents to us. It is not that we wish to see each group separated; this is how we find it. If we try to ignore historical processes we shall break our necks. We cannot in one day rid the people of the prejudices that have been part of their whole outlook all their lifetime. We have not destroyed those prejudices by adopting the 10-Point Programme at this Conference. We have still to go to the country and teach the people its full implications and we have to do this not only in words but in actual practice. The theory and the practice, i.e., the actual struggle on the basis of the 10-Point Programme, will teach the people to forget about their racial groups and think only in terms of their common oppression. When that stage is reached there will be no more need to perpetuate sectional organisations, which will be out-dated. Then we shall be able to talk in terms of Unity Committees and not Co-ordinating Unity Committees. I repeat, at this present stage of our development we must have Local Co-ordinating Unity Committees.

I therefore have much pleasure in moving the following resolution:

**“In view of the fact that the Non-European people of South Africa have for generations accepted the Government’s policy of ‘divide and rule,’ and have become steeped in the segregationist outlook, so that to-day they find themselves organised according to their separate racial groups, and in view of the fact that this policy of racial exclusiveness and segregation, carried out by the Non-Europeans themselves, has led to the weakening of our forces and made it possible for the oppressors to attack each section of the Non-Europeans in turn, until to-day all are reduced to a position of virtual slavery, this Conference, after full realisation of the disastrous effect of the policy carried out by each section in the past, now decides:**

- (1) To reject segregation, not only between black and white, but also within the ranks of the Non-Europeans themselves.
- (2) That the prerequisite for an effective struggle against oppression and for liberation is the establishment of Unity of all oppressed peoples of South Africa. To give effect to this, this Conference resolves:
  - (a) that a Central Unity Executive be established, consisting of a Chairman, 2 Vice-Chairmen, 3 Joint Secretaries and a Treasurer, with representatives from the three federal bodies representing the three racial groups, in the proportion of 8 Africans, 4 Coloured and 4 Indians;
  - (b) that the representatives of the Unity Executive be elected by each of three federal bodies representing the three groups, African, Coloured and Indian, and that the officials referred to in (a) above, be elected at this Conference;
  - (c) that Local Co-ordinating Unity Committees be established throughout South Africa.”

# Organisations Represented at Conference.

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- A.P.O. Central Executive  
A.P.O. Branches:  
Calitzdorp  
De Doorns  
Heidelberg, Cape  
Kimberley  
Lansdowne  
Paarl  
Soar
- African Democratic Party  
African Voters' Association, Claremont  
African Voters' Association, Healdtown  
African Voters' Association,  
Fort Beaufort  
African Voters' Association,  
Western Province  
African Commercial and Distributive Workers'  
Union, Johannesburg  
All African Convention—Executive  
All African Convention—Western Province.  
Anti-C.A.D. Committee—National  
Anti-C.A.D. Local Committees:  
Cape  
Cape Flats  
Kimberley  
Paarl  
Wellington  
Anti-Segregation Council—Durban  
(representing 25 Natal organisations)  
Athlone Weldadig Genootskap  
Bantu African Teachers' Union  
Caledon and District Vigilance Association  
Cape African Voters' Association—Kimberley  
Cape South Western African League—George  
Cape Sawmill Workers' Union  
Claremont Political Study Group  
Combined Elsties River Ratepayers' and  
Vigilance Society  
Combined Organisations of De Aar  
Coneron Players  
Co-op. Workers and Burial Society—Central  
Co-op. Workers and Burial Society—  
Branches—  
Claremont  
Langa  
Queenstown  
Co-operative Society—Glen Adelaide  
Council of Non-European Trade Unions,  
Port Elizabeth  
Dairy Workers' Union—Cape Town  
Diep River Welfare Association  
Dowerville Emergency Committee  
Flagstaff African Teachers' Association  
Fourth International Club  
Garage Workers' Union—Cape Town  
Garment Workers' Union (No. 2 Branch)—  
Johannesburg  
Genadendal Ratepayers' Association  
Genadendal Welfare Association  
General Building Workers' Union — Cape  
Town
- Gleemoor Civic Association  
India League  
Kenilworth Table Tennis Club  
Kensington People's Action Committee  
Kroonstad Ministers' Association  
Lansdowne Moravian Church Congregation  
Left Club—Durban  
Livingstone High School Past Students' Union  
National Liberation League—  
Cape Town  
Kensington  
New Era Fellowship  
People's Action Committee—Goodwood, Vasco,  
Elsties River  
People's Club—Cape Town  
Porterville Welfare Association  
Public Organisation—Aberdeen  
S.A.R. and H. Non-European Workers Union  
S.R.S. Old Boys' Club—Durban  
Stellenbosch Vigilance Association  
Students' Socialist Democratic Party  
Students' Socialist Party  
Sweet Workers' Union—Cape Town  
Tea, Coffee and Chicory Workers' Union—  
Cape Town  
Teachers' League of South Africa — Central  
Executive  
Teachers' League of South Africa—Branches:  
Athlone  
Beaufort West  
Bellville and District  
Bredasdorp and District  
Caledon District  
Cape Town  
Claremont  
Ceres  
George and District  
East London  
Goodwood-Vasco  
Heidelberg-Riversdale  
Langeberg  
Maitland  
Oudtshoorn  
Paarl  
Port Elizabeth  
Saron  
South Peninsula  
Stellenbosch  
Uniondale  
Vredenberg and District  
Willowmore  
Worcester  
Wynberg  
Textile Workers' Industrial Union—  
Cape Town  
Durban  
Johannesburg  
Workers' Civic League—Mossel Bay  
Young Kokney Moslem League