



# WHAT WE EXPECT FROM THE MULTI-RACIAL CONFERENCE

## FINAL DETAILS OF MULTI-RACIAL CONFERENCE

(Continued from page 1)  
● political arrangements in a multi-racial society.

A plenary session will discuss "the necessity for further deliberation and action" and the "findings" of the conference.

Apart from the Rev. Mahabane, leading South Africans who have agreed to deliver addresses at the conference include Prof. I. D. MacCrone (on the main theme of the conference); Dr. Sheila van der Horst on the economics topic; Mr. Alan Paton and Mr. W. M. Ngakane on the civil rights item; Prof. G. H. Le May on "political arrangements in a multi-racial society"; and the Bishop of Johannesburg, the Rt. Rev. Ambrose Reeves.

The addresses to the conference will be prepared some time beforehand and circulated to all participants, together with factual material on a number of topics, including population distribution and trends; the chief political organisations in the country and their policies; administrative organisations such as the Departments of Native and Coloured Affairs, advisory boards and tribal authorities; group areas proclamations and the extent to which they have been implemented, land ownership, and so on.

The conference organisers are confident of getting an expression of agreement to form the basis for all races living peacefully in the country, a spokesman told New Age. Further conferences might be necessary in the future to develop common ground, he said.

**?  
HAVE YOU SENT A  
DONATION TO  
NEW AGE**

**"A proper reading of the South African situation calls for co-operation and inter-dependence between the various races comprising the South African nation."**

—From the Declaration of the Bloemfontein Congress of the African People, October, 1956.

**I**N rejecting the root conception of apartheid, the historic Bloemfontein conference did not fall into the easy trap of seeking to replace White domination with Black. It rose superior to the narrow racialistic thinking prescribed by South Africa's rulers. Without hatred or bitterness it advanced the lofty ideal of a South Africanism broad and human enough to enfold all the sons and daughters of our country. In this lay a great moral victory for the oppressed millions of our country, and history will recognise it as such.

It was a natural consequence of this far-reaching and large-minded decision that the delegates at Bloemfontein last year should have sought to carry this new South Africanism further at a conference where not only Africans but all sections of the population should be represented. Such is the background to the multi-racial conference which will be held in Johannesburg from the 3rd to the 5th December this year.

### DIFFERENT VIEWS

Already, individuals of all races, from various walks of life, and of differing political views, have come together to sponsor and prepare for the conference. Naturally they have not had identical opinions about the scope, form and techniques of the conference, but with goodwill and readiness to compromise on all sides these differences have been overcome in friendly debate, and the plans have gone ahead. This spirit augurs well for the success of the conference and proves the correctness of the Bloemfontein conception that a real basis for co-operation exists.

Many members of the African National Congress participated in the Bloemfontein conference. Congress welcomed its decisions, which are in harmony with fundamental democratic Congress principles, with enthusiasm, and will work earnestly for the success of the multi-racial conference. Congress believes that all the racial groups in our country share common basic interests and a great common destiny. Unity of the various racial groups, based upon equality of rights and opportunities, upon mutual respect and confidence and a common patriotism will, we believe, unleash the vast potentialities of our people which are buried under the mountain of racial discrimination, fettered by race prejudice and fear.

Congress will therefore actively support, in every way open to it, every move to bring the races closer together and break down the barriers to understanding. We regard the multi-racial conference as an important step in this direction.

### WHAT TO EXPECT?

What does Congress expect and hope for from this conference? Perhaps, at this stage, it would be easier to begin answering that question by saying what we do not expect from it.

We do not expect that the con-

ference will be able to agree on a detailed programme for the future of South Africa.

We, in common with our closest allies, have in the course of hard struggle and sacrifice, evolved our own programme, the Freedom Charter. And we have no intention of abandoning or changing the principles of the

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African National  
Congress**

Charter. We know that others who come to the conference will have their own diverse plans and solutions for the future of the country, to which they are earnestly wedded.

At such a conference such diversity is only to be expected and, indeed, warmly welcomed. But it would be futile and disastrous if everyone at the conference were merely seeking to use it as a recruiting base for the specific programme and policy of his own organisation. We shall not achieve uniformity of outlook on all matters at a single conference; to attempt to do so would not draw us closer together but drive us apart.

What we must bear in our minds and bring to the fore is not the area of our disagreement, but the broad field upon which we are at one: the very matters which have brought us all to the conference. The multi-racial conference will have made a great contribution if all those present will strive to find and express these points of agreement, and decide upon common endeavours to achieve them in practice.

Perhaps the broadest single principle upon which the conference is bound to find agreement is that the future of our country cannot be decided by any one racial group acting, whether benevolently or otherwise, on behalf of all the others; but must be decided by representatives of all the South African people. This principle is implicit in the very coming together of the multi-racial conference itself.

It would for this reason be quite unrealistic to expect the upholders of racial supremacy—call it baaskap or leadership or trusteeship—to attend or to play any useful and constructive part at such a conference.

### NEGATION OF APARTHEID

The conference, too, is a negation of all that is commonly understood by and experienced under the slogan of apartheid. One may justifiably expect that all present at the conference, whatever their shades of democratic belief, will find common ground in their rejection of apartheid as a mischievous and profoundly harmful doctrine, and seek practical ways and means of defeating and overcoming it. The Bloemfontein declaration proclaimed that "Apartheid constitutes a serious threat to race relations in the country," and we feel justified in the confidence that the multi-racial conference will go forward, not retreat from, that stand.

While dealing with matters of broad general principle, the multi-

racial conference would prove fruitless and academically remote from life were it to ignore some of the burning problems which to-day face all sections of our population.

The threats of censorship and suppression to freedom of thought and expression, the profound aspirations of the people for their rights to many-sided human education, to freedom of worship, to



Adv. Duma Nokwe.

freedom of movement and assembly, to civil liberties and security of their homes and livelihoods, the urgent need of the great majority of our people for alleviation from the shocking conditions of poverty, malnutrition and wretchedness under which they suffer to-day—all these are matters of urgency which the conference dare not ignore if it is to have any vital significance for the people of this country.

Coming as it does, at a critical stage in the turbulent history of our country, the multi-racial conference holds out a glorious, and perhaps a unique opportunity to mould the future of our country in the pattern of peaceful and harmonious development towards a multi-racial democracy.

### EQUAL SHARE

Let there be no mistake about it: the non-white peoples of our country are arising to claim their share, as full and equal citizens and partners in every aspect of the social, political and economic life of this, their country. We cannot and yet shall not be denied. Sooner or later, whatever the difficulties and obstacles, we shall attain our goal. We seek that goal through the paths of peace rather than through those which can only leave a heritage of bitterness and thirst for revenge. But we shall not be deterred or cheated.

If we come to the multi-racial conference conscious of the mighty stage of South African and world history on which we appear, as statesmen and thinkers, not as petty politicians seeking momentary advantages and debating points, the conference can write an unforgettable chapter in our annals. It can be a shining beacon for millions of South Africans, and countless millions of friends of our country beyond our borders, giving them fresh courage, inspiration and confidence in the unconquerable spirit of Man.

It is with these glowing hopes that we of the African National Congress will come to the multi-racial conference in December.

# UP MY ALLEY

**T**HE boys on Hanover Street were kicking their heels around the entrance of the Portage's cafe when I rolled up for a packet of the old lung-poison. After handing a couple of cigarettes around I joined the conversation. Topic: Hollywood's latest productions. The boys like fast-shooting stuff, guys with stubby chins and dangling cigarettes and tied-down guns. The conversation was a little blood-thirsty, and I'm glad they don't allow tied-down guns in this town. Then one of them asked: "You ever hear of a place called Cripple Creek, Colorado? And Tombstone? Funny names for towns."

"I read in the paper about a place called Little Rock, Arkansas," another added.

So the conversation turned to what has been happening in Little Rock, and the United States went down several notches in the estimation of Hanover Street.

The general consensus of opinion turned out to be: "What kind of a place is it where they have got to get soldiers to keep Coloured kids out of school, and more soldiers to get them in? According to the pictures, the States is one place where everybody, black and white, gets equal treatment, and no trouble."

"Just shows you," growled one

of the boys, spitting into the street in the true Western style. "You can't go by the bio. Lot of lies."

**A**ND speaking about Little Rock, Arkansas, Louis "Satchmo" Armstrong doesn't like what's going on there either. In fact he doesn't like Ike, and said so. "The government can go to



By **ALEX  
LA GUMA**

hell," he trumpeted in comment. "It's getting so bad a Coloured man hasn't got any country."

Louis cancelled his government-sponsored trip to the Soviet Union. "If the people of Russia ask me what's wrong with my country, what am I supposed to say? If I ever go through with this trip I'll do it on my own."

A radio station blackballed the great jazz man, but that didn't stop artistes Lena Horne and

Eartha Kitt joining him in his opinions of God's own country.

**T**HE United States Information Service, no doubt conveniently forgetting that there is such a place as Little Rock, is still going full blast about Hungary. They are offering articles free of charge. Read all about it. Students in Soviet Orbit Rebel Against Thought Control. Intellectuals Feed The Flame Of Freedom. Hungary's Terrible Ordeal. Pictures thrown in free of charge.

Looking through the list I didn't see any articles titled Hungarian Woman Begg In The Streets of Johannesburg. Or about the bunches of Hungarian youths, all refugees, hanging around Red Cross House in Johannesburg, hoping for the last year to find a job. Or of the thousands going back home to Budapest.

**T**HE Municipal Association of the Transvaal is perturbed over the fact that scantily clad circus performers are seen by Non-European audiences. Well, I still have to see the girl on the flying trapeze performing in a fur coat.

**I** DREAMED I attended the Commission on Undesirable Literature in my Maidenform.

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