

25.2-11

c/c/1/1

12

RR.58/60
8:3:60. MO.

SOUTH AFRICAN INSTITUTE OF RACE RELATIONS (INC.)
SUID-AFRIKAANSE INSTITUUT VIR RASSEVERHOUDINGS (INGELYS)

SOUTHERN TRANSVAAL REGION

THE NEED FOR UNITY

by

Rev. W.J. Bergins

CONFERENCE OF THE COLOURED COMMUNITY

held in the Rheinallt Jones Memorial Hall,
Auden House, 68 de Korte Street, Braamfontein,
Johannesburg, on Saturday 19th March, 1960

CONFERENCE OF THE COLOURED COMMUNITY

THE NEED FOR UNITY

by

Rev. W.J. Bergins

I have chosen to speak on "The Need for Unity" as I am gravely aware of the disunity that exists within the ranks of the Coloured People and through this means would endeavour to advocate a coming together of all organisations attached to the life of the Coloured People in order to realise a fusion of all the bits and pieces which are supposed to stand for the needs and welfare of this race group in the Union of South Africa. Might I also state that this paper will be an attempt to cover the Coloured People not only of the Transvaal but of the entire country as never before in the history of this country is there a more urgent necessity for all Coloured men, women and children to stand together to create a united front against all kinds of inroads made on their life, politically, socially, economically and otherwise.

Meeting as we do at a time when the country proposes to celebrate the founding of Union some fifty years ago, it is, therefore, necessary for us, as a section of the non-White population of the Union of South Africa, to take stock of all the events of the past half-century as these have affected us down this tumultuous period in the life of our country. Like all the other race groups in the country we have also been requested to express our loyalty as citizens of the State to celebrate Union and, whilst there may be some who would see the reason for doing so, I am very much aware of the thousands throughout this country who are not as enthusiastic to throw in their lot for the common cause. In order, therefore, to elaborate more on this aspect I will now proceed to describe as briefly as possible the political background leading to Union and its nature as it can be interpreted by accompanying events.

1. The Idea of Union.

During the latter half of the nineteenth century the Cape Coloured population enjoyed some form of liberalism mostly through those political leaders who had been influenced by events overseas whereby the rights of the individual were to be safeguarded and the human personality regarded as

sacred and to be protected against hostile groups. The largest concentration of Coloured People were in and around Cape Town stretching along the valleys of the Western Province. The ruling powers of the day granted to these people many privileges and rights, compared to the restrictions placed upon their compatriots in the two northern colonies of the Orange River Colony and the Transvaal Republic. In fact, since the formation of these republics all political rights were denied the Coloured People and although certain property rights were granted them in the Free State they were not given 'burgher rights' as provided for in the Constitution which very largely sought to protect the rights of the Whites. The Transvaal Republic expressed a more determined attitude through the 'Thirty-Three Articles' confirmed by the Volksraad in 1849 that no 'bastard' would be allowed to sit in their meetings and no burgher rights would ever be allowed persons of colour.

Thus, seen against the background of conditions in the northern colonies, the Coloured People in the Cape were in a more fortunate position as they had the right to the franchise under the old Cape Parliament largely on account of the 'colour-blind' policies of contemporary politicians. Of course, the strong and uncompromising liberal spirit of the British Government of the day had much to do with the granting of such privileges to the Cape Coloured community. "After the granting of the first Constitution in 1853, the Cape franchise was available to all adult males, irrespective of colour or race, who fulfilled certain property qualifications. This non-racial franchise was mainly the result of insistence by the British Government, which would not have sanctioned a franchise which drew a colour or race distinction; it was, however, accepted by the Colony, though not without some opposition." (1)

On the eve of the founding of Union the last vestiges of political privileges the Coloured People had, centred around the right of the franchise and even here there were ominous signs that they were bound to lose this. It was particularly evident from the uncompromising delegates from the northern provinces at the National Convention of 1909 that they were not prepared to tolerate any political privileges being granted to the Cape Coloured population and it is a sad commentary, indeed, on the attitude of the Cape Liberalists that they capitulated to the demands of the die-hards from the north who looked down on the Coloured man as being of no value to his country and that he had to remain in a perpetual state of serfdom - as a drawer of water and a hewer of wood.

Prior to /.... 3.

(1) Sheila Patterson: Colour and Culture in South Africa, p.33

Prior to the passing of the South Africa Act of 1909 the Coloured People in the Cape enjoyed three political rights, viz., the right to vote; the right to stand and serve as an elected or nominated representative and the right to be regarded as an elector in cases of re-allocation of seats. At the time of Union, however, these rights were dwindled away but for the provisions contained in the Entrenched Clause safeguarding the franchise right which could only be changed by a two-thirds majority of both Houses of Parliament. The British Government of the day thought that this entrenched clause would never be tampered with as such a two-thirds majority would never be realised. How wrong they were was proved when in recent times the Nationalist Government forced the issue by artificial methods to obtain such a majority and, thereby, to place the Coloured Voter on a Separate Voters Roll with separate representation in the House of Assembly and in the Senate.

Since the day Cape Liberalism compromised with Northern Extremism politics in the Union of South Africa came to be controlled by Afrikaner Nationalism with strongholds at Stellenbosch in the Cape, and at Pretoria in the Transvaal. The founders of this National policy were bent to destroy everything which did not sanction its methods, the chief aim of which was to establish the Afrikaner at the summit of all rule and authority and to displace the British Government from the throne it had held for decades. Thus, the founding of Union favoured the view of white supremacy and provided a security measure against so-called aggression and hostility from any opposing quarter.

All these setbacks and many more had to be the cause for the Coloured People to speak as one person in order to obtain their rights. For instance, the Coloured population of the Witwatersrand and the Orange River Colony were the first to launch out against their political oppressors. They were accustomed at the Cape to a traditional spirit of liberalism and having come to the Transvaal during the gold rush were intent to maintain this attitude towards them by others. However, they were rudely awakened when faced with antagonism from Boer and Briton in the north regarding their franchise rights. In spite of supporting the British morally during the Anglo-Boer War of 1899-1902 and in spite of a sympathetic Lord Milner who was then British High Commissioner in South Africa, and contrary to utterances by the British authorities, that as far as the Coloured People of the Transvaal and the Orange River Colony were concerned, "the legal position of Coloured persons will, however, be similar to that which they held in the Cape Colony",⁽¹⁾ the Coloured population were informed after representations had been made by them to the British Government that

political /.... 4.

(1) J.S. Marais: The Cape Coloured People, 1652-1937, p.276.

political rights and privileges would be restricted to the Whites. Thus, all efforts to obtain political enfranchisement in the new Constitution of the northern colonies were lost. But, perhaps more significant to the student of history is the fact that those who withstood the Coloured man in his fight for political recognition were not only the Boer from whom he never expected any fellow-feeling, but, alas, also from the British, including the Transvaal Uitlanders who previously had protested against their being exploited by the Boers who wanted to deny them the right to vote during the Republican era. They who clamoured for enfranchisement by the Boers turned around next to oppose the enfranchisement of the Coloured, and by the British Government refusing to grant enfranchisement to the Coloured community they indicated that they were quite prepared to support the Boer principle of disfranchisement on grounds of colour and race.

This concerted drive by the Coloured leaders of those days shows the present generation how essential it is to shed all differences there might be among them as a community when it comes to the question of fighting an issue which affects them all no matter whether the odds are overwhelmingly high. These men felt and were entirely convinced that they had to close their ranks, to fight their own battles instead of merely handing over their difficulties to the Europeans and thereby remain the inactive and unconcerned, as is so much evinced by the Coloured population of today. In fact, it was as a result of these protestings by the Coloured People that the African Political (later People's) Organisation was formed. We have need today for one Organisation to speak out in the name of the Coloured People of the Union, instead of being allowed to disagree amongst ourselves as to who is to be recognised as the mouth-piece of the people. There are many splinter organisations all concerned with the welfare of the Coloured People here in the Transvaal and elsewhere, but which differ on important matters of principle. The policy of 'divide and rule' has widened the gap among the Coloured community and the sooner they can come to realise this the better their chances of achieving their ends. It is, therefore, obligatory that in these days of challenge and change the Coloured People stand on their own feet politically and shake off the spirit of lethargy and laissez-faire. If there was a reason for union and a need for unity then, that situation should be seen today among the Coloured People and instead of rejoicing in a unity far from their own, a unity which is foreign to theirs because of no making of their own, let them take to heart the words of Matthew Arnold: "Without some strong motive to the contrary, men united by the pursuit of a clearly defined common aim of irresistible attractiveness naturally coalesce; and since they coalesce naturally, they are clearly right in coalescing and find their advantage in it."

Before leaving this aspect of the Idea of Union it is necessary to draw attention to the underlying reason for this apathy on the part of the Afrikaner towards the non-White in general and the Coloured in particular. The Coloured People were up against a very rigid barrier of prejudice from the Afrikaner. There has always been a tendency on the part of the majority of the White population to discriminate against any person of colour in South Africa. Happily, in these rapidly changing times there are signs of this tendency losing ground even among the dominant group in the country who are beginning to see the writing on the wall. The Law has always been called in to intervene on behalf of the White man to preserve his supremacy and to reduce the status of the Black man to that of no equality. Differentiation was, and is, based not on culture and achievement, but on race and colour. Today this tendency has permeated all facets of our South African life and it is only by living according to absolute moral standards that we can ever hope for a change.

Perhaps it would be needful to recall at this time the wise words of the then Prime Minister of the Cape, Mr. Merriman, on 17th January, 1908, when speaking in the Cape Town City Hall, he said: "It is impossible to govern large masses of men unless we give them the same political rights under the peculiar circumstances of the country I believe the one thing we are all agreed on in this country is that we have adopted this course, and this course I would not under any circumstances retreat from."⁽¹⁾

No, I am convinced that there is little cause for our people to take part in the Union Festival, at least not by men and women who have recourse to the historical pattern laid down and followed in this country by men and women whose philosophy of life based on the perpetuation of a single race group and the subjection of all others diametrically opposed to theirs, not necessarily of their language group or religious convictions, has shaped the course of present-day events. How can we be expected to show our co-operation with the forthcoming Festival of Union when at the outset it was a Union which stood for uniting the ideals and interests of the White man and not for the protection of the fundamental rights of all race groups in this country of their birth. Whenever there is talk of a South African nation does that ipso facto mean all the people of the Union or a certain privileged section only?

Union in the real sense of the word should be a bringing together of all sections of the country and not as Smuts held "the welding of the various sections of its White people into one compact nationality inspired

by /..... 6.

(1) Report of Commission of Inquiry Regarding the Cape Coloured Population of the Union - U.G. - 54 - 1937, para. 1115, p.224.

by one common pervading national spirit."⁽¹⁾ If together we share in the spoils of the past fifty years of union the resultant attitude would be far different to what it is now. The time has come for political leaders of all shades of opinion not to look back into the past and search for inspiration there to combat the present dilemmas. Let us look forward and around us to see the tide gradually turning; menacing to some, but hopeful for others who are oppressed. The only salvation for this country is to form a common platform on which to meet the common issues facing us all; to form an ideology not based on fear or mistrust but on mutual agreement in the spirit of mutual consultation. Here I can only but quote John R. Mott when in his plea for closer co-operation of all men and women imbued with a Christian spirit, he says: "What is the secret of the most fruitful co-operation and of triumphant unity? To begin with, there must be apostles of reconciliation. They must be men with the contagious power and the staying power which comes to a man who has a sense of divine mission. At the back of every great advance in the drawing together of Christians in deeper understanding, mutual sacrifice, and constructive achievement has been a group. By advocacy, by example, and by all other efforts its members have built bridges of communication and mutual helpfulness between groups which had been formerly isolated from each other, or perhaps had misunderstood and opposed each other."⁽²⁾ The question of political rights and privileges cannot be solved by the Whites only but by collaboration with the leaders of non-White sections of the population and at the same time by noting stirrings in the northern parts of this African continent.

The Union Coat of Arms reads: "Union is Strength". Whilst that may be a very sound slogan it is very doubtful whether we in the Union of South Africa have really been sincere in our application of our motto. We have strengthened the minority and weakened the majority. We have vested a very small portion of the population with untold rights and privileges whilst the rest have been denied these by all kinds of legislation. We can readily understand why there should be large-scale celebrations by the Afrikaner section of the community, for this moment means the realisation of their dreams, the crowning of all their past struggles to gain the peak of national life. It should, therefore, be a Festival of their own, while those who have been robbed in the process of gaining such distinction, if one may call it such, should not be expected to show any signs of interest.

2. THE HISTORY /.....7.

-
- (1) "Fifty Years of Union": Prof. L.M. Thompson: Evening Post, Port Elizabeth.
(2) John R. Mott: The Present-Day Summons to the World Mission of Christianity, pp. 188-9.

2. The History of the Coloured People.

The Coloured People of the Union have found themselves in a peculiar position in that they are not quite sure of their origin and to which race group they actually belong. It is, therefore, necessary to sketch the origin of the Coloured People in order to determine the mixed-ancestry from which they have come. As I see it, the different strains to be found in the Coloured population are also responsible for this difference existing among them and should not of necessity prevent a feeling of unity being established among them.

There are four strains responsible for this mixed-ancestry.

1. Descendants of slaves brought to the Cape during the 17th and 18th centuries;
2. Intermingling with aboriginal Hottentots who inhabited the Cape about the middle of the 17th century at the time of the arrival of White settlers;
3. Intermixture with Europeans from the Continent of Europe and
4. Contact with the aboriginal Bantu stocks.

According to documents the slaves who were imported to the Cape came from the mainland of East Africa and Madagascar and were, therefore, not racially homogeneous. There were also Malays and various other races from the mainland and islands of Southern Asia, all of whom mingled with one another at the Cape.

The second constituent in the formation of the Cape Coloured is the aboriginal Hottentots who had been at the Cape when the first European settlers arrived. Up till now the Hottentots had been economically independent but with the coming of the White man they felt it necessary to enter their employ and thus came into contact with the slaves, the result being intermingling. On the other hand slaves also made contact with Hottentot women, thereby bringing about further unions. When the European settler arrived during the early years of the Settlement they were not averse to marrying non-Whites. European women were scarce with the result that the settlers married slaves and Hottentots. "A variety of European peoples, mainly from the male side, have thus contributed to the racial composition of the Cape Coloured, among whom are to be mentioned, Dutch, German, French, Portuguese to a smaller extent, and from the early 19th century onwards, British in increasing number." ⁽¹⁾ European blood, therefore, forms an important constituent in the appearance of the Cape Coloured.

The last important contribution to the formation of the Cape Coloured is the Bantu. Although the aboriginal Bantu stocks lived far from the

Cape Coloured /....8.

(1) Report of Commission of Inquiry Regarding the Cape Coloured Population of the Union - U.G. - 54 - 1937, para. 5, p.8.

Cape Coloured, i.e. geographically, there were instances, especially in the East and North, where they came into contact with one another. Because of this, racial intermingling resulted, especially between the lower classes of Cape Coloured and the somewhat detribalised Bantu - in locations situated near towns and cities. This gave rise to a group we may term "Coloured" as compared to the Cape Coloured proper. Here in the Transvaal and to a large extent in the Eastern Cape this "Coloured" group is to be found.

Apart from these four strains there are sporadic Coloured groups consisting of small clans, e.g. the Buys Family in the Northern Transvaal numbering about 300 and who are of mixed European and Bantu descent. Another tribe, the Dunns, in Natal have about 200 individuals. We also have people of mixed European and non-European descent who have come to the Union of South Africa from the islands of St. Helena and Mauritius - their European admixture being mainly British in one case and French in the other.

It is no easy task to define a Cape Coloured as is evident from repeated attempts by the State. The Commission of Inquiry of 1937 set up to investigate the position of the Cape Coloured Population recommended that in view of the difficulty of finding an adequate definition it would be feasible "to include under Cape Coloured in addition to the Malays all persons not of unmixed European descent, or of unmixed Bantu descent, or of Asiatic descent unless ordinarily accepted as Coloured people."⁽¹⁾

Having briefly described the origins of the Coloured People, we now have to examine the unfortunate fragmentation of the Coloured People.

Reasons for Fragmentation. It is a common feature of the Coloured population that they tend to hive off into sections or classes of their own and that they encourage class attitudes and prejudices to dominate their relationships with those of their own race group as well as those outside the group. One of the main reasons for this fragmentation is the tendency for certain Coloured persons to cross the racial barrier, if they are light-skinned, to associate with Whites and thereby to despise their own group. This creates a class in itself which is very detrimental to building up of unity among the Coloureds. Various reasons for "passing" have been advanced; chief among these being for social and economic reasons. It should be remembered that many of these Coloureds who thus cross over to the society of the Whites have had a cross between a White and a Coloured. Another reason

for /.....9.

(1) Report of Commission of Inquiry Regarding the Cape Coloured Population of the Union - U.G. - 54 - 1937, para. 16, p.10.

for this state of fragmentation is the tendency for a number of associations to be established within the Coloured community. Here in the Transvaal there are quite a number of these organisations or associations each with its own Constitution and principles guiding its aims and objectives. One is tempted to ask: why have these organisations been called into being? These have been created to compensate for the leadership extended by the European in the fields of politics, law and economics and also, I daresay, religion (church life). Another reason why these groups have been formed is because of the application of apartheid by the dominant group who resents meeting with people of colour. It has been suggested that "the number and diversity of associations amongst the Coloured People appears to correspond to the degree of education, urbanisation, leisure and economic position." (1) A preponderance of such small-scale organisations is to be found in cities and larger towns where the home or the family no longer assumes that important place it once had on the platteland. In the larger urban centres social life has reached such a high tempo that the people are controlled by what is happening around them and consequently cannot resist the temptation to "belong" to some club, lodge, association, etc. It would also appear that the larger and older organisations with specialized aims are confined to the professional and skilled classes in the community. There are many social organisations within a community and these again could be sub-divided into special groups to indicate their main functions: 1. For purposes of social intercourse; 2. Recreation; 3. Culture; 4. Welfare and 5. Religion. The upper and middle classes of Coloureds belong to these organisations.

Further fragmentation is to be seen in the manner churches have been established of late. Years ago, in the Transvaal, there were only two or three "recognised" denominations serving the religious needs of the Coloured People. Today, I believe there are no less than twenty separate religious bodies competing with one another not so much for saving lost souls but for mere purposes of social prestige and honour and to have the assurance that "ours is the true and proper religion". There is a very strong tendency among the Coloured community not only in the Transvaal but throughout the Union to rid themselves of European control and leadership, for example, expressing the desire to be served by Ministers of their own colour and to administer their own Synods and church management. Thus, the Volkskerk van Afrika was formed in 1922 to bring about a unity amongst the Coloured People of the Union. Of late, there has been a break away from the Dutch Reformed Mission Church in the Cape by a fair number of its members and the establishment of the South African Calvinist Protestant Church with headquarters in

Cape Town /.....10.

(1) Sheila Patterson: Colour and Culture in South Africa, p.152.

Cape Town.

Again, one notices further evidences of fragmentation through the manner in which the Coloured People have formed various political organisations or associations. Once again members of the upper and middle classes who have been accustomed to meeting with Europeans have felt the need for running their own associations. Mostly those with a fair amount of education, who have more leisure at their disposal and are perhaps economically better off belong to these associations. Of course, we still have political organisations which do not recognise racial considerations and where persons of every race group are enrolled as members. Today, it might be necessary to form our own political organisation and to endeavour not to add to the existing number. I believe that the tendency is more towards the establishment of an association based on racialism. In the early days of the Cape Coloured communities there were strong attachments to the European and an utter dislike of association with the African. "Those Coloured men who qualified for the franchise in the old Cape Province voted 'European' instead of forming their own parties and putting up their own candidates. Theoretically, they might have joined with African voters to form a united Non-European party and a powerful pressure group. However, Coloured voters in the past seem to have felt, and been encouraged to feel, that their interests were similar, if not the same as, those of the Europeans, and equally threatened by the 'blanket-Kaffir'." (1)

In 1902 just before Union the African Political Organisation - later the African People's Organisation (A.P.O.) was formed under the leadership of a Cape Malay, Dr. Abdurahman, as they felt that the European political parties were not safeguarding their interests. In the 1920's a rival party was established in the African National Bond. While the A.P.O. advocated extending the franchise to Coloureds outside the Cape Province and gave support to the South African Party, this new party supported the policy of General Hertzog of complete segregation of the African and second grade status for the Cape Coloured, next to the European. It was to be expected that both parties received support from the major European parties of the day whilst these non-White parties received support from skilled artisans and small businessmen merely to feather their own nests and to protect their interests.

Today there is a similar tendency on the part of political parties among the Coloureds, especially in the Transvaal. It is a pity that we

should /..... II.

(1) Sheila Patterson: Colour and Culture in South Africa, p. 159

should have these parties working against one another. I cannot see any good resulting from this as it would only retard the need for unity among the community as long as the leaders are engaged in battle over who should be the voice of the people. Again, one should be willing to admit that this present spate of political associations among the Coloured people would never have arisen had it not been for the colour-prejudice of the White community towards the non-White race groups. As has so often been said since the Nationalist Government came into office the non-White communities have been brought closer together more than ever before. There are Coloured leaders who feel that there should not be a purely Coloured political movement as that would not enable them to speak with a strong voice. There are those associations which seek unity with Europeans on a cultural basis whilst there are others which seek unity with non-Europeans on a colour basis. The latter has been effected on account of the advancement made by other non-Europeans in the academic world and of cultural development and also because the sufferings and injustices experienced by one non-White group have been felt by other non-White groups.

The manner in which fragmentation could be minimised will depend very largely on the unselfish attitude of our Coloured leaders. Will they be willing to merge their differences into one common pool? Major determinants of class distinctions that have arisen like education, occupation, property, appearance, birth and ethnic origins should not be allowed to prevent us from coming closer together. The time has come that from this Conference there should go out a lead, a directive to the other race groups in the country that the Coloured man and woman is about to build up a genuine community feeling. Have we got an inner direction, a feeling of belonging together? It has been said and with a great measure of truth as well: "They lack a separate political, legal and economic structure, or even a proportionate share in the administration of this structure within the larger group."⁽¹⁾

Let us not be ashamed of our pigmentation for surely it has pleased the Almighty to bear us into this world of His, but let us at the same time explode the myth that ability is not to be equated with colour or race but with God-given qualities that can and will stand their own against all kinds of competition. The Coloured People should be educated that they must be willing to pay the price if called upon to do so by their leaders and not shrink from duty as has so often been the case and leave their leaders in the lurch. At the same time the Coloured leaders should

learn /..... 12.

(1) Sheila Patterson: Colour and Culture in South Africa, p. 169.

learn not to appeal to other outside groups when they should direct such an appeal to their own. In the last resort our interests in all departments of life will lie not with the European, better off and privileged as he is, but with those of our brethren who have been denied the meagre privileges we have obtained. We are to be concerned with the needs of the masses down in the valley instead of thinking in terms of our own comforts on the mountain peaks. Let us shake off this dearth of common effort and organisation so prevalent among us today. Can it be said of us today as was found by the Commission of Inquiry of 1937? "Still, taking the size of the Cape Coloured population into account, one is struck by the relative paucity and limited size of organised effort among them, and Cape Coloureds themselves complain of the difficulty of getting their people to co-operate with one another, especially in larger organisations".⁽¹⁾ Our greatest stumbling-block to such common effort and free intercourse is our class and group distinctions.

How to Overcome our Political Differences. In making an honest attempt to overcome our political differences let us face these facts:

- (a) There are those among our number who feel inclined to work in the interests of the Government;
- (b) There are those who would want to have nothing to do with the Government;
- (c) There is the matter of our colour prejudice and
- (d) There is the consideration that all non-Whites should unite in order to get somewhere.

It is true that as a Coloured group we have not gone far on account of the differences found amongst us and neither have we shown a real willingness to come together to iron out these differences. That this Conference would be instrumental in aiding us to that end is the sincere desire of most of us, if not all gathered here. Deep divisions have been made in our political life in the past especially if we recall the divided opinions expressed on the creation of the first Coloured Advisory Council in 1943 under the Department of Social Welfare and again of late in the setting up of a new Sub-department of Coloured Affairs and of the Union Council under its aegis. There are those who want to support the Government in obtaining first-hand information regarding the problems and difficulties of the Coloured community. There are those, too, who feel that the creation of the Sub-department of Coloured Affairs would be undermining the morale of the Coloured man and woman as it is yet another instrument of State whereby apartheid measures are being forced upon the

Coloured /.....13.

(1) Report of Commission of Inquiry Regarding the Cape Coloured Population of the Union - U.G. - 54 - 1937, para. 44, p.16.

Coloured People after they had to lose their hard-fought rights and privileges to the same dominant group who now want to extend to them a weapon concealed in a velvet glove but whose purpose it is to bring about our destruction. It is only by having frank discussions on these and other allied matters that we can hope to see the other man's point of view and by sharing our experiences, see a new structure being erected before us which machinery would bring about better race relationships in our country.

Yet another important matter in these days is for us to shed our colour prejudices. The upper classes of Coloured maintain that the Europeans look upon all Coloureds as being their inferiors even if there be Coloureds who are their superiors economically and socially. "Not infrequently the Cape Coloured are inclined to hold that the European takes but little real interest in their welfare, except possibly, in the field of religion."⁽¹⁾ On the other hand, there are some Europeans who hold that the non-European is in no way inferior to the European and when given opportunities would rise to an equality with him.

Be that as it may the main concern of us should be to rid ourselves of colour prejudice among us as non-Whites in this country and not to think of one race group as being superior to the other. For example what should be the real attitude of the Coloured to the African? Do we still think that because we have White blood flowing in our veins and because of our attachment to western culture we are any better than the African? That might have been the case some twenty to thirty years ago but the world has changed so tremendously that one who still holds to such views can only be regarded as being fossilised: of course we know that in all cases the deciding factor will be a man's cultural achievements, his intellectual development and all-round social standing irrespective of race or colour.

As for the prejudices engendered among the Coloureds themselves a lot has already been said. Let not our economic standing or family reputations, or differences of religious convictions, differences in physical appearance prevent us from coming closer together and thereby help to overcome our political differences.

At such a time as this when we are thinking in terms of celebrating Union let us be more concerned in working first for a unity among the non-White races in South Africa and after we have achieved this to extend a hand of friendship to those Europeans who would want to work

for /.....14.

(1) Report of Commission of Inquiry Regarding the Cape Coloured Population of the Union - U.G. - 54 - 1937, para. 31, p.14.

Collection Number: AD1715

SOUTH AFRICAN INSTITUTE OF RACE RELATIONS (SAIRR), 1892-1974

PUBLISHER:

Collection Funder:- Atlantic Philanthropies Foundation

Publisher:- Historical Papers Research Archive

Location:- Johannesburg

©2013

LEGAL NOTICES:

Copyright Notice: All materials on the Historical Papers website are protected by South African copyright law and may not be reproduced, distributed, transmitted, displayed, or otherwise published in any format, without the prior written permission of the copyright owner.

Disclaimer and Terms of Use: Provided that you maintain all copyright and other notices contained therein, you may download material (one machine readable copy and one print copy per page) for your personal and/or educational non-commercial use only.

People using these records relating to the archives of Historical Papers, The Library, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, are reminded that such records sometimes contain material which is uncorroborated, inaccurate, distorted or untrue. While these digital records are true facsimiles of paper documents and the information contained herein is obtained from sources believed to be accurate and reliable, Historical Papers, University of the Witwatersrand has not independently verified their content. Consequently, the University is not responsible for any errors or omissions and excludes any and all liability for any errors in or omissions from the information on the website or any related information on third party websites accessible from this website.

This document forms part of the archive of the South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR), held at the Historical Papers Research Archive at The University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa.