A few years ago it has been pointed out that there is a growing feeling among Africans that the policy to which they should give their support is the future of the policy of non-co-operation. Certain sections among them look upon this as the most suitable reply to the European policy of apartheid which is also based on an agreement to a policy of non-co-operation.

But whether it is enforced by Europeans or by Africans, the policy of non-co-operation is not compatible with the common life of black and whites in this country. The logical outcome of the policy of apartheid of the Europeans would be the partition of the country in the same way as the division of India into Hindustan and Pakistan or the suggested division of Palestine into an Arab state and a Jewish state. The advocates of apartheid contend that the idea of such a division of South Africa into separate states is not contemplated by them, but there can be no doubt that if the Africans did accept the principle of partition, it is in the sense of an absolute partition of the country into two politically independent units with contacts between the two separate states reduced to an absolute minimum. The idea that there must be free movement of peoples between the two areas, with Africans particularly coming over to the European state to provide labour on a migratory basis would obviously not be adhered to by the European state which would as rapidly as circumstances permitted deport its subjects from leaving its borders in order to go and contribute to the development of what would then be a foreign state. Such an African state would similarly endeavour to reach as rapidly as possible...
a situation in which it was for no way dependent
upon Europeans for services of any kind. In
every sphere of life the aim would be to dispense
with the service of Europeans and in order to build up
a self-reliant independent African state. For from seeking
co-operation with the neighbouring state, the African state
would undeniably enter into treaties of mutual assistance and
co-operation in trade with other foreign states
such as Russia, India, China, Great Britain etc.
just as the Union of South Africa today
her independent sovereign status often
shows a tendency to strengthen the relations with
countries other than Great Britain with which
she was most closely associated in the past.
Similarly the African state would want to build
up its connections with states other than
the Union. The African state would also refuse to
participate in the Union's wars in the future and
in other ways steps would be taken to sever all
links with the Union.

These is the further point that when Africans
speak about non-co-operation with the Europeans
for them the economic logical outcome of that
policy would be the development of African
nationalism and the adoption of a policy of
Africa for the Africans. The ultimate aim of such a
movement would be the eventual capture
of the whole country for the majority of the population
and the removal from the country of those Europeans
who are not prepared to live in the country on
terms of equality with its African nationals. The Africans
Europeans who talk so glibly about the
repatriation of 250,000 Indians may not realize
that the African nationalist, the repatriation of
2½ million Europeans does not
appear any more
preposterous or unpracticable.

The European who today appears to be in an
unassailable position may be inclined to discount
the possible effects of an African decision not to co-operate
with the European and to regard the idea of an independent
African state on this sub-continent as utterly unthinkable.

He may feel confident that the rest of the white world
would never tolerate such a situation without stepping
in to consider, to what extent that white world and continue
to aid and abet. The Union’s policy of domination and
how long the Union’s domestic imperialism will be
tolerated by the non-white world.

In short, the point I am trying to make
is that the policy of non-co-operation is not
consistent with the maintenance of the South African
state as an integral whole and is bound in the
long run to unleash passions that would be
difficult to channel within certain prescribed limits.
For that reason it seems to me that all South
Africans who care the welfare of the country and
its inhabitants as a whole should at heart shun
set their faces steadfastly against the policy
of separation or apartheid and should embrace
and work for the policy of co-operation.

I state the word co-operation advisedly
because it emphasises the fact of working
with together. Too many of the words we employ to
describe our policies the active principle
of national policy is not evident nor is it clear that
that joint action and not unilateral operation is the only satisfactory basis for the policy of a multi-racial society. Thus the word assimilation implies becoming alike, which gives rise to conceptions of uniformity, uniformity which cannot command the consent of either the white or the black. Similarly integration implies a kind of passive becoming in which things happen to the individual instead of the individual consciously shaping his own destiny. The same objections may be raised to cooperation and co-ordination. The word co-operation best describes the real facts of the South African situation. South Africa has become what it is as the result of the working together of its peoples. Some people in considering the achievements of the country tend to emphasize the contribution of the white, others the contribution of the black, but all we are and hope to be is a compound of the efforts of both sections of our people.

A possible objection to this policy would be any attempt on the part of one or other group to reserve for itself the operating and control of the other. The European does not want to become a mere subject or a class of European residents. He wants to look after his own welfare; he does not merely want to be consulted about his affairs as happens at the present time. In the different institutions, such as the Representative Councils, Boards, etc. (which have been established for him), he wants to take part, to be an equal, at all levels of our national life. It is for that reason that he demands direct representation in all governmental institutions, national, provincial and local.

It may be argued that even if the European were prepared to accept and put into practice the policy
of co-operation. The African by reason of the present state of his development is not yet in a position to co-operate with the European on terms of equality. Admittedly not every African is ready for this co-operation. But the same thing can be said about the European and not every European is ready for co-operation. There are Africans in the country today who are more westernised than many a European just as there are Africans about whom it can be said that it will be many generations before they will be able to participate in the business of modern government. But is there any sound reason why all Europeans should be lumped together as politically wise and all Africans as politically unwise? Surely the most sensible thing to do is to remember that in every institution the unit of co-operation is not the group but the individual and the emphasised should be placed upon individual merit not upon group lack of it.

It may be objected that the policy of co-operation might lead to a situation under which individual Africans may be put in a position of authority over Europeans which is contrary to South African tradition under which positions of authority are the special monopoly of Europeans. As long as that attitude of mind prevails we shall search in vain for peace and harmonious relations between black and white in South Africa.

The question may be asked as to whether the policy of co-operation would not mean the abolition of the separate institutions which have already been established in the country. To my mind that would not necessarily follow. Separate institutions might well continue to exist, but they would do so
in a voluntary rather than on a compulsory basis, or on an agreed not an imposed basis, as a result of a bilateral not a unilateral decision. It would take us too far afield to examine here all the detailed implications of separate development. It will suffice at present to outline the principle underlying the African policy. The African is not alone in feeling that separation has outlived its usefulness as a guiding principle for the regulation of the relations between black and white in this country. As General Smuts put the matter in his famous address with members of the Native Representative Council: "When the late General Smuts put his legislation through Parliament ten years ago, he thought he had settled our whole Native Policy. He thought that the laws that he had passed for native segregation and for the Native Representative Council would fill the bill. But what has happened in these last ten years since then? We have seen in spite of his legislation, a great migration of the native population to the great urban centres. Quite new problems, a new situation have arisen. It has not been possible to segregate the Native Reserves. The Native Reserves have proved only a partial solution of the problem, and one of the most pressing problems today before us is how to deal with this immense influx of native people into the urban and industrial centres of the Union." Later, the then Prime Minister, went on to say: "Providence has put us both here. Bantu and European came to this country at the same time. Not a wonderful century in history – the eighteenth century – brought both of us here. You came from the North by land, we came from the South by sea, and here we both are, and here we shall both remain. It is our country; it is your country. We must try and build up a human society that will be as happy as any human beings can be happy." These are not the words of a politician but of a great and far-seeing statesman who recognizes
that by their common experiences, and common labours and common sacrifices in this country, black and white have become intricately bound together, not in any physical sense but in the spiritual sense which is more fundamental. The clear implication of this view is that any policy based on the assumption that we belong that to one country must to the entirely wrong.

Co-operation alone can constitute a suitable watchword for a strong and united South Africa.