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4, WALE STREET,

D4

CAPE TOWN.

28.12.42.

Dear Hoernlé and R.J.,

Many thanks for your letter to me regarding the Institute's Council meeting in January, and for your invitation to submit suggestions in connection with the business at that meeting.

As you know, I have always felt the need for a clear definition of the purpose and policy of the Institute. According to the draft agenda this matter is to be raised directly for discussion at the forthcoming meeting. I should like, therefore, to make a preliminary statement of the case as I see it.

I feel there are only two courses open to the Institute to pursue; either -

- (a) To be a practical body tackling the everyday problems of race relations wherever and whenever they arise; or
- (b) To be a research and information bureau collecting and tabulating in a clearly objective fashion data relating to racial problems, and distributing these data to any and all interested parties.

If the Institute chooses the first of these two courses, which is what I would wish it to do, I feel that it must have a clearly defined objective, in the light of which, policy upon each specific issue that arises can be judged. It must declare explicitly what sort of society it plans to help to build in South Africa. That is, it must declare explicitly whether it stands for a truly democratic society in which all the opportunities as well as all the duties of citizenship are to be open to all sections of the community, or whether it stands for some other type of society; e.g., in which segregation will have some place. Without such a definition of objective it is difficult to make speedy decisions and impossible to guarantee consistent decisions on particular issues.

Personally I feel there can be no half way house between (a) and (b) as I have stated them, but if the Institute is not prepared to define its position in the positive terms I have suggested there is really nothing for it but to give up the attempt to deal with everyday problems and to leave the responsibility for dealing with daily issues of race contacts and conflicts to such bodies as the Friends of Africa and the Cape Central Committee on Race Contacts, which have defined their objectives.

What would the adoption of my first course of action by the Institute mean? That is, what would the adoption of the specific democratic objective by the Institute involve?

1. It would probably mean a change in the Institute's constitution since it would be inconsistent with the Institute's remaining a non-political body. Much misunderstanding has been caused by the use of the word "political" in the Institute's present constitution. In

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this connection it has no reference to the issues which divide the present main political parties; issues which in any event have more reference to foreign policy than to conditions in the Union, except in so far as the races of English and Dutch are concerned. In the field of Native policy since the abolition of the Cape Native Franchise, the issues which divide the Union's population are almost entirely of a social and economic nature, such as education, social services, land rights, wages, and trade unionism. These are the principal matters with which those who are avowedly working in the political field such as the Africans' Parliamentary Representatives and the Africans' own leaders, are concerned. They are in fact political issues.

2. It would also probably mean that there would be no need for the separate existence of organisations like the Friends of Africa and the Cape Central Committee on Race Contacts. The Institute, with its greater financial resources, could more adequately conduct the activities now pursued by these bodies.

3. But union with these bodies would have to mean not only the whole-hearted adoption of their purposes and objectives, but of their personnel also. So far as I can see, the activities of the Institute would have to be, at any rate to begin with, exercised by the same people who are at this moment directing those activities through the Friends of Africa together with such members of the Institute as are entirely in sympathy with these bodies. No amalgamation with or adoption of the Friends of Africa in a half-hearted manner, with a view to turning down or frustrating the present policy of that organisation, is worth considering. Similarly as regards the more particularly legal aspects of the Race Contacts Committee, unless the Institute is prepared as a whole to approve and adopt the uncompromising and at the same time co-operative policy actuating all Race Contacts activities, and to a large extent co-opting the persons who are presently responsible for these activities, it would again be useless seeking to absorb this Committee, to frustrate its activities.

4. If these bodies to which I have referred, and their activities, are to be accommodated inside the Institute, the Institute should have not a single advisor, but a Board of Advisors who would have to be persons in full sympathy with the present policy of both the Friends of Africa and Race Contacts Committee, with the avowed intention of seeing those policies are given a fuller expression than has been possible in their separate capacities.

5. To a certain extent the adoption of this line would also affect the policy of the Institute in regard to collecting and tabulating data concerning racial issues, as those problems should first be tackled which will render the greatest assistance to the political and legal objectives now pursued by Friends of Africa and Race Contacts.

On the other hand, it would be the duty of the Fact-finding or Data Committee to bring to the notice of the other Committees taking the place of Friends of Africa and Race Contacts, any position falling in their respective spheres disclosed by the researches of the Fact-finding Committee. Some such scheme covering three distinct Committees of the Executive dealing with (a) Facts and Data, (b) Friends of Africa activities, and (c) Race Contacts activities, must be visualised, and the function of the Advisory Board would be the co-ordinating of these three committees.

If the Institute decides for my (b) line of action the only reorganisation necessary would be such as would follow from its withdrawal from its present activities in the sphere of practical affairs and its concentration on research.

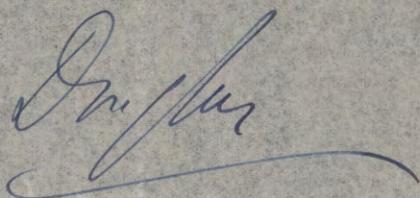
Whatever the decision of the Institute in this matter, I feel that there must be a greater representation of Non-Europeans, particularly Africans, within the Institute than there is at the present time. If the decision is to support my first alternative, extended contact with Africans and all Non-European groups will be essential. Any organisation purporting to work for the progress and development of Africans and other Non-European peoples must declare a policy and develop a technique which commands the confidence and enlists the active co-operation of the leaders and organisations of such races. This can only be done through the constant co-operation and consultation with the peoples' organisations and leaders, and as far as possible with the people themselves.

The necessity for such a development is dictated by the fact that ultimately it is largely through the medium of well-organised and disciplined action on the part of the Africans and other Non-European peoples that any fundamental changes in their status and situation can be achieved.

I should be greatly obliged if you would circulate this to all members of Council beforehand so that they may be considering the position as Non-Europeans must be organising now to have their case placed before the Allies Reconstruction authorities. This is a real job for any Race Relations Institute.

With best wishes for many a better New Year,

Yours ever,



D. M. BUCHANAN K.C.