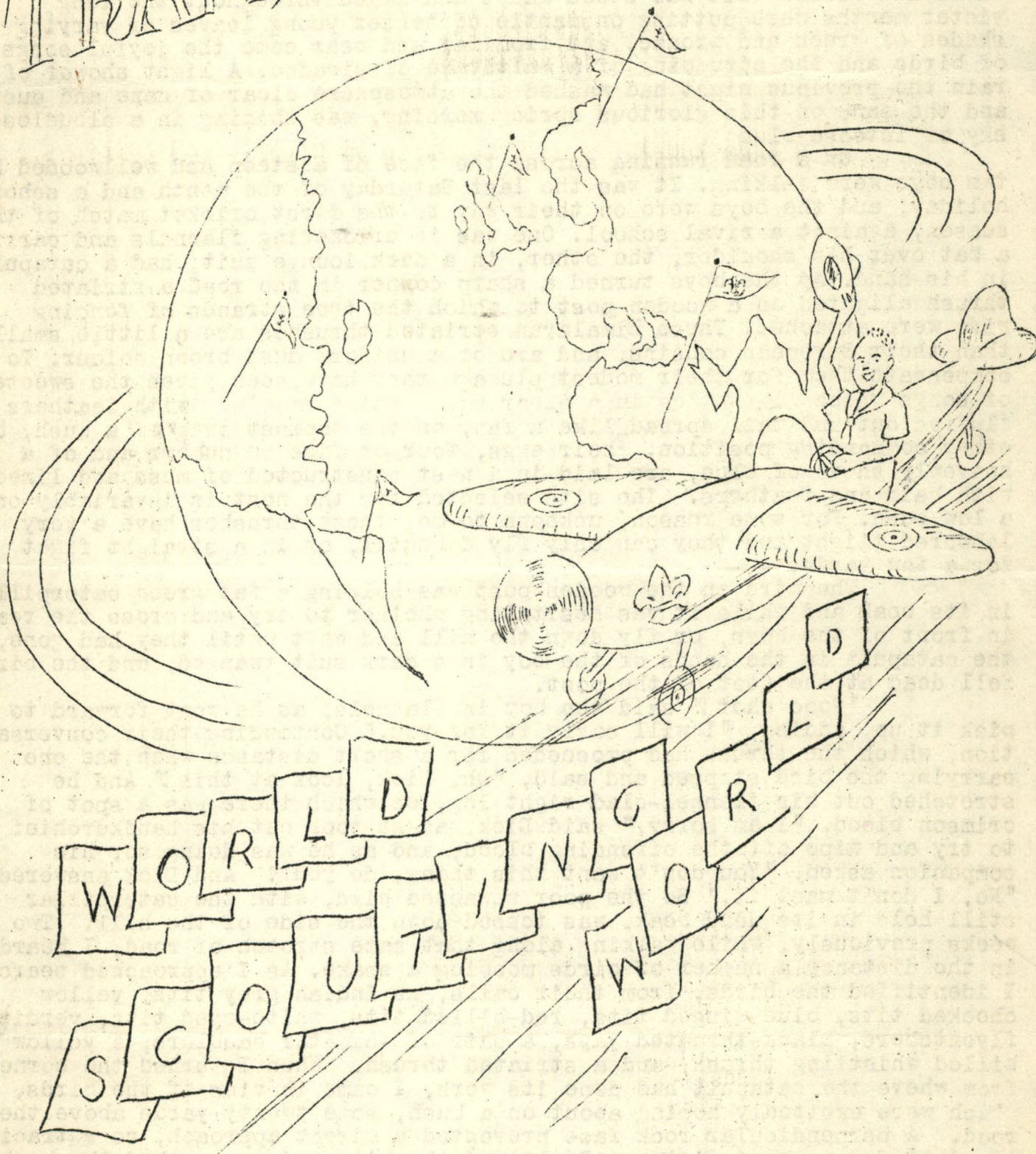


19.29.2372

# THE TRANSVAAL NEWS SHEET



NO. 25 MAY 1955.

IN THIS ISSUE:-

HALT! YOUR ATTENTION, PLEASE!	PAGE 1
HALT! YOUR ATTENTION, PLEASE!	PAGE 2
STARS.....	PAGE 3
AFRICAN SCOUTING IN TERRITORIES	PAGE 4
FOR YOUR GAMES BOOK.....	PAGE 5

by JIM CORBETT

From World Scouting April 1955.

Colonel Jim Corbett will need no introduction to readers of his books, *MAN EATERS OF KUMAON*, *THE MAN-EATING LEOPARD OF RUDRAPRAYAG, MY INDIA*, and *JUNGLE LORE*. Should any Scouter not know those books he is advised to read them as soon as possible since they are rich in material for good yarns for Scouts. Few men, if any, have the wealth of knowledge of jungle life that Jim Corbett gained during his long years in India. He is now living in retirement in Nyeri, Kenya, in the very bungalow in which B.P. spent his last days. It is appropriate that this yarn, specially written for Scouts, should have been addressed from Paxtu.

It was spring in the Himalayas, and all Nature was rejoicing. Trees and bushes that had stood gaunt and naked throughout the long winter months were putting on mantle of tender young leaves of varying shades of green and bronze, and from far and near came the joyful songs of birds and the strumming of a multitude of cicadae. A light shower of rain the previous night had washed the atmosphere clear of haze and dust, and the sun, on this glorious spring morning, was shining in a cloudless sky of intense blue.

On a road running across the face of a steep and wellwooded hill two boys were walking. It was the last Saturday of the month and a school holiday, and the boys were on their way to the first cricket match of the season, against a rival school. One was in cricketing flannels and carried a bat over his shoulder, the other, in a dark lounge suit, had a catapult in his hand. As the boys turned a sharp corner in the road a striated thrush alighted on a wooden post to which the tree strands of fencing wire were attached. These Himalayan striated thrushes are a little smaller than their European cousins, and are of a uniform dust brown colour. To compensate them for their modest plumage they have been given the sweetest of songs which they sing in a clear voice while dancing, with feathers fluffed out and tail spread like a fan, on the topmost twig of a bush, or other commanding position. Their eggs, four or five in number and of a heavenly shade of blue, are laid in a nest constructed of moss and lined with hair and feathers. The site selected for the nest is invariably on a low bush. For some reason, unknown to me, these thrushes have a very laboured flight and they can only fly downhill, or in a straight fight for a few yards.

The bird on the wooden post was holding a fat green caterpillar in its beak and while it was hesitating whether to try and cross the road in front of the boys, or fly down the hill and wait until they had gone, the catapult in the hands of the boy in a dark suit twanged, and the bird fell dead at the foot of the post.

"Good shot!" said the boy in flannels, as he went forward to pick it up, adding, "I will carry it for you." Continuing their conversation, which the thrush had proceeded for a short distance when the one carrying the bird stopped and said, "Oh, Dick, look at this!" And he stretched out his flannel-clad right leg, on which there was a spot of crimson blood. "I am sorry," said Dick, as he took out his handkerchief to try and wipe off the offending blood, and as he was doing so, his companion asked, "You don't want this thing, do you?" And Dick answered, "No, I don't want it." So the poor unwanted bird, with the caterpillar still held in its dead beak, was tossed down the side of the hill. Two weeks previously, while walking along that same stretch of road, I heard in the distance a number of birds mobbing a snake. As I approached nearer I identified the birds, from their calls, as Indian grey tits, yellow checked tits, blue-winged tits, red-billed tits, white-eyed tits, verditir flycatchers, black-throated jays, a pair of scimitar babblers, a yellow billed whistling thrush, and a striated thrush. When I turned the corner from where the catapult had done its work, I came in view of the birds, which were excitedly hoping about on a bush, some twenty yards above the road. A perpendicular rock face prevented a direct approach, so retracing my steps for a short distance I climbed the hill and approached the bush from above. The birds paid little attention to me and as I neared the bush I saw a black rock snake about six feet in length lying near it, and protruding from its mouth was the tail of a striated thrush it was in the act of swallowing. I was carrying what in the Himalayas is called a "khud stick", and in Europe an Alpine stalk. With this stick I killed the snake, and picking it up by its tail, dropped it into a deep cleft in the rock.

With their enemy gone, the birds soon dispersed leaving only one of their number, a striated thrush, sitting on the bush near which I had killed the snake. As I passed the bush I saw a thrush's nest in its upper branches and in the nest were four fledglings which had very recently seen the light of the day, for the shells of the blue eggs from which

Halt! Your attention, please! Continued.

they had just emerged were still lying round them. It was in defence of this nest that wook bird had lost his life. For two weeks the devoted mother, single-minded, protected and cared for her young until on that glorious spring morning she too fell a victim, not to a natural enemy, but to a boy with a catapult. And now as she lay, unwanted, on the hillside the fledglings sat in the nest throughout the long day, opening their beaks to every sound they heard. A heavy rainstorm came on during the night, and weakened by hunger and lacking the warmth and the protection of their mother's body and feathers, the fledglings died.

When my sister and I came to Nyeri in January 1948 we were given Paxtu, the cottage that had been built for Lord Baden-Powell founder of the Boy Scout Movement. Lord Baden-Powell occupied the cottage during the declining years of his life, and many friends he made in Nyeri, and who still speak of him with great affection, tell me he spent much of his time either sitting in the sun on his lawn delighting in the company of the birds he had collected round and looking across the Chania valley at snowcapped Mount Kenya, a view he never tired of, for the mountain is always beautiful, and it changes its colour from hour to hour or sitting on the veranda writing and painting. As long as he was able to do so he visited his friends' farms in the neighbourhood, sitting for hours sketching and observing wild life, of which there was abundance and for which he had a great and an abiding love.

In the five years that elapsed between Lord Baden-Powell's death and our arrival in Nyeri the birds he had collected had scattered and gone, and when we took over Paxtu not a bird was to be seen. Wherever we have been my sister and I have always cultivated the friendship of birds, and of animals too were possible, so one of the first things we did was to clear place and to scatter breadcrumbs and crushed maize on the small cement platform that Lord Baden-Powell constructed near the bird-path at the foot of the steps leading up into the veranda. Nothing happened for several days, and then one morning when we returned from breakfast-our cottage is situated in the grounds of the Outspan Hotel and we take all our meals in the public rooms - we saw a cardinal waxbill picking up the crumbs we had scattered on the platform. The little bird, one of smallest in Africa, was nervous and on seeing us flew away. Next morning there were three waxbills on the platform, and the morning after, the waxbills were joined by two masked weavers, birds about the size and with much the same colouring as a canary.

And now our family of birds started to collect round us, until today you can count them by the hundred, and some are tame enough to feed out of our hands and identify twenty or more varieties. Many of our birds have been with us for seven years. An American on a world tour was having coffee with us on our veranda a few mornings ago, and when he held out his hand with a few crumbs on a white-eyed flycatcher, followed by its young one, alighted on his hand and very deliberately started to feed the young one. When the meal was over the American said, "My! This is the most wonderful experience I have ever had." Our birds have been photographed and filmed by birdlovers from many parts of the world, among them being the Chief Scout, Lord Rowallan, of whose clan we have the honour of being members. Lord Rowallan is as interested in and as fond of birds as Lord Baden-Powell was, and I can imagine how grieved he would have been if he had seen Boy Scouts do what the two boys did on that spring morning in the Himalayas. Boys are not deliberately cruel, but they are at times thoughtlessly so, and feel sure that if those two boys had paused to consider what they were doing the thrush and her young would not have died. For they were not hungry and did not want the bird for the food. They werenot collectors and did not want the bird for a museum. Then why merely kill to toss their victim down the hillside? And again, they were unobservant for it was spring when birds are nesting - in proof of this the thrush was carrying a caterpillar - when all true sportsmen, be they young or be they old, put away their catapults and their guns. I have often wondered, when I have seen boys with catapults or airguns shooting at every bird they saw, and for which they had no use, whether they, or those who provided them with the means of killing, ever paused to consider how silent, dull and uninteresting our world would be if there were no birds in it. I walked on one occasion for five miles through a forest of giant trees where not a single bird was to be seen or heard and I have never felt so lonely or unknown miles to be so long. On countless other occasions I have walked from dawn to dusk through forests, or along roads, where there birds to be seen or heard and I have not felt lonely for a moment, or been conscious of.....

Halt! Your attention, please! Continued.

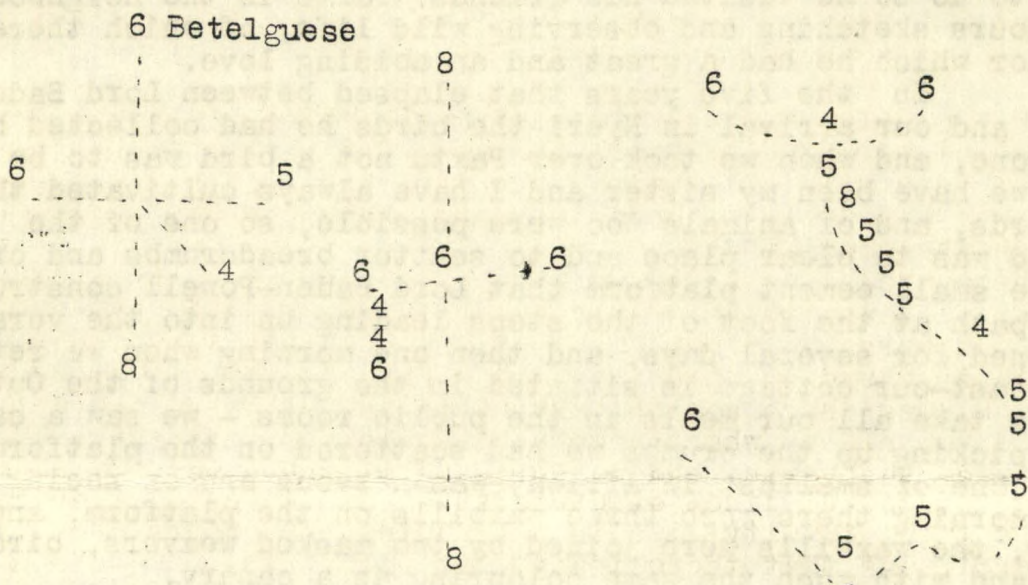
been conscious of the miles that have passed under me.

Wild life in general, and birds in particular, have many enemies and few friends and I can think of nothing that would have given Lord Baden-Powell greater pleasure than to have known that the great and honourable army of Boy Scouts which he founded was carrying out his wishes of being kind to wild life. Championing wild life brings no honours, but a Boy Scout does not seek honours: his duty is to protect the weak and the helpless and his reward will be the satisfaction of knowing that in doing his duty he is contributing to making this world a happier, a brighter and a more cheerful place for all to live in.

S T A R S.

(Extract from S.A.H.Q. Bulletin - March, 1954.)

Don't be alarmed when Scouts ask questions about stars. The names of constellations are not of the first importance, though you should make sure of the position and names of some of the well known ones, and be able to point them out during a breather in a night wide game. e.g.



SOUTHERN CROSS

ORION

SCORPION

The Southern Cross is in the milky way, and is small compared with the other two. The figures give positions of stars and comparisons of approximate brightness.

THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH.

If you can hand on something of the love of books to your Scouts, you will be giving them friends which will never fail them.

---  
"B.P."

African Scouting in the Territories (World Scouting March 1955)

B E C H U A N A L A N D.

An extract from the annual Report reads:

"We are trying gradually to give some special project to each group or interest suited to their geographical position and environment, and so introducing a novel slant to camping, expeditions and troop work. Camping and tramping as such have no novelty-appeal to Bechuana boys, who more or less live a life of camping at the cattle posts to which they trek alone or with other herd-boys on foot or on donkeys as far as fifty miles from home. It is therefore necessary to infuse new ideas into camping if we wish to be attractive to the Bechuana Boy; even though to a British Scout, this bushveld country is ideal camping country which is full of interest and adventure.

"A Bakwena District camp was attended by 150 Scouts and Scouters from Molepolole, Lentsweloletau and Gabarones, who camped at a hill called Dithejwane between Molepolole and Thamaga for four years. Some 110 years ago David Livingstone had a Mission at Dithejwane, but the site has been completely lost. Needless to say, the Scouts are now keenly hunting for traces of it. The hill was also strongly fortified by a rebellious sub-chief during the last century. He built a strong stone wall all round the hill near the top and defied the ruling Bakwena Chief there for some time. A camp in such a setting has naturally stimulated local interest in the history of the area.

"Several troops are specializing on certain interests which fit into local conditions. For example, the 1st. Owanyaneng Groups have for some time been carefully collecting, mounting and naming specimens of plants used by witch-doctors as medicines and charms, and recording their uses alongside the specimens.

"There are, in addition to the flora and very considerable and varied selection of fauna, areas where ancient rock paintings and artefacts can be found; others where ancient ruins of Zimbabwe type lie hidden in the bush; places where the old initiation schools are still run by the Witch Doctors; places where agates, amethysts and other semi-precious stones can be picked up; places where according to legend, the first man of a tribe emerged from the earth, and so on. Each of these sets of conditions offers exciting and useful lines of exploration and investigation to Scouts.

"The main difficulty lies in persuading the Scouts who live amongst these conditions that there is anything about them that is usual or worth investigating and recording."

B A S U T O L A N D

The first Wood Badge Course was held in January when twenty-eight Scouters were in camp. The members of the Training staff came from Natal, the Transvaal and Basutoland. The course was well appreciated by the several distinguished visitors. It is now hoped that, on this basis, it will be possible to strengthen the Movement considerably.

A large parcel of used stamps has been sent to the International Bureau, and it is planned to send others.

K E N Y A (World Scouting April 1955)

"An outstanding success was the Good Turn Hike. All Patrols cleared thorns from the track and at one time another helped to carry loads, including those of women, which means something considering the social aspect of Africa. They helped cultivators with various jobs, including rounding up a flock of goats that had gone astray." I hope this idea commends itself to you. It is many years since we first ran a Good Turn Hike as part of a Wood Badge Course. If the opportunities exist it can have a remarkable effect upon the relationship between the Training Ground and the immediate neighbourhood. "Both these courses were held in danger areas so far as the emergency is concerned. The first course was of a special nature as the majority of those who took part in it were not warranted Scoutmasters but those who are almost certain to fill vacancies in the Kikuyu country at this vital time.

A simple statement but a courageous thing to do, and what an example to the rest of us who think to have difficulties.

### KIM'S GAMES FOR SCOUTS

#### Compass 'Lay - Out'

The usual collection of articles (16 in number) are arranged in a circle. One of them is taken as the North point and the others placed on the remaining points of the compass.

After a few minutes' scrutiny, the articles are removed, and Scouts questioned with regard to them. This variety of Kim's game can easily be used as the basis of a competition between two teams. A member of the first team will name one of the points of the compass and the corresponding member of the second team will reply with the name of the article at that point.

If the answer is correct the team will score one point. If incorrect, then the questioner must name the article. If he does so successfully, his team will score a point, but if he fails his team will forfeit a point.

Team No. 2 will then ask the question and so on, each member of each team taking it in turn to question and answer. The game can be varied by naming the articles and requiring the compass point to be given.

At the end, every player should be required to write down a list of all the articles and their compass points. The average score of each team will be taken and added to their score from the questions and answers.

#### A Group Compass 'Lay - Out'

This is a demonstration of the value of correlation (correlating) your articles. They are laid out in a circle as before but with some definite relationship (no matter whether logical or nonsensical)

I still remember a lay - out which had a knife at the North point ("N" for "Knife"!) Scissors in the South, Eraser in the East and Waistcoat button in the West. The grouping was carried out like this:  
Knife, pencil, sharpener, pencil, pen, eraser, and so on.

The next stage is of course to advise some scheme of pseudorelationship where none actually exists; as an aid to memory. Your Scouts will be interested to find out how much easier the "grouped lay-out" is to remember; after which it should not be impossible for you to help them to pass to the next step.

#### Kim's Game by Touch.

Blindfold the Scouts and then pass down the line a series of small objects (say about a dozen), which they have felt to recognize by touch and remember. When all the things have been felt by everyone tries to write down a list of the things in their proper order.

#### Kim's Game by Listening.

Here again everyone is blindfolded while the Scouter makes a series of noises such as blowing his nose, dropping a pin, etc. Each Scout then writes down his list as in the previous game.

#### AND ANOTHER FOR ESSEM. SIGNALLING KNOTTING GAME.

Patrols in any group formation at one end of Troop Room or designated outdoor area, rope length on ground in front. Scoutmaster at other end, signals (Morse or Semaphore) a certain Patrol number, then the name of a knot. The Scouts called catch up the rope, run to the Scoutmaster and his Assistants, and tie the knot. Patrol point for first correct knot correctly tied. Each Scout must read the signals for himself, and must not run before the word is completed. For variation knot names may be spelled backwards, or in code previously worked out with Patrol Leaders at Court of Honour.

#### "GOING UP RECORDS"

The Pack Scribe should prepare a list of the Cubs showing their birth dates, with the oldest Cub at the top of the list, then the next oldest, and so on down to the youngest Cub. This list could be kept in the Pack record book so that Akela can tell at a glance when the next Cub will be going up to Scouts.

The list is also valuable when choosing Sixers and Seconds and in deciding what Cubs should be given extra training to earn their Second Star and Leaping Wolf before going up to Scouts.

**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.