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SOUTH AFRICAN PATHFINDER COUNCIL

Chief Pathfinder's Office,

P.O.Box 1176,

JOHANNESBURG.

3rd July, 1931.

To Divisional Councils.

The Transvaal Divisional Council has asked me as Chairman of the South African Pathfinder Council to place before the Divisional Councils a matter of prime importance to the Pathfinder Movement, and to ask each Divisional Council for a clear expression of opinion on the issues which arise.

Owing to opposition from certain of the members the Transvaal Council has not yet adopted the Constitution of the Pathfinder Movement, the main objection originally being the provisions which explicitly place in the hands of the S.A. Scout Council a veto upon all decisions of the S.A. Pathfinder Council. More recently there has arisen the more fundamental objection: that non-European boys are not enrolled as Scouts.

A short historical statement here may help the Divisional Councils to understand how these difficulties have arisen:-

During the Great War, representatives of the non-European communities waited on the Transvaal Scout Council with a request for the formation of Scout troops among non-European boys. The proposal was not favourably received and on its being referred to Lord Buxton (then Chief Scout for South Africa) he, after consultation with General Botha (as Prime Minister), expressed strong disapproval of any action being taken during the war.

In 1918, or thereabouts, the Rev. Ray Phillips of the American Board of Missions in Johannesburg, organised a group of Native boys as "Trackers" adapting the methods of the Scout Movement as known in America to the special needs of these boys. In 1922 the Rev. S.P. Woodfield, then Vice-Principal of the Diocesan Native Training College, Pietersburg, having recently arrived from England, with considerable experience as a Scout Master, began to train some of the students of the College as Scouts, and he applied to the Transvaal Scout Council for the registration of the troop. At about the same time representatives of the Coloured people in Johannesburg again approached the Transvaal Scout Council.

A conference between the Transvaal Scout Council, and representatives of the various Missionary bodies made it clear that the Scout Council was not prepared to admit non-Europeans as Scouts, fearing that the admission of non-Europeans would destroy the Scout Movement among European boys. The conference resulted in the establishment under the auspices of the Scout Council of a special organisation for non-Europeans on Scout lines, but having a separate name and uniform. A Constitution and Regulations were drawn up and the Pietersburg troop was enrolled as the first troop of Pathfinders. The Constitution provided that the control and direction of the Movement should be vested in the Transvaal Scout Council.

The Movement grew and in 1924 the Transvaal Scout Council set up an Advisory Council (with no explicit executive authority) to guide the work. The Council was composed of representatives of the various Church and Mission bodies likely to be interested and representatives of the Transvaal Scout Council. A new Constitution and amended Regulations were prepared in consultation with the Advisory Council. The Constitution still vested the control of the Movement in the Transvaal Scout Council. This was in force until early in 1929.

On the re-organisation of the Scout Movement in South Africa on a national basis, with supreme authority vested in the Union Scout Council, this Council adopted a new Constitution on similar lines for the Pathfinder Movement. This Constitution gave the South African Pathfinder Council the Divisional Council's executive authority but provided explicitly for the right of veto being vested in the Union Scout Council.

It is to this new Constitution that certain members of the Transvaal Pathfinder Council raised strong objection mentioning particularly (a) the right of veto and (b) the nature of Pathfinder representation on the Union Scout Council.

To meet these objections the Transvaal Pathfinder Council submitted a number of amendments through the S.A. Pathfinder Council. These were rejected by the Union Scout Council, the Pathfinder delegates (who had not been present at the S.A. Pathfinder Council meeting) voting for rejection.

The amendments were again submitted, and on this occasion the Scout Council appointed delegates to meet representatives of the Pathfinder Movement to discuss the situation. This joint Committee met in November 1930 and submitted recommendations to the following effect:-

- (a) Alteration of the title of the Pathfinder Movement in the Constitution to show that the Movement is "of the S.A. Boy Scout Association".
- (b) Numerous alterations to place more responsibility for appointments on the S.A. Pathfinder Council while retaining final control in the hands of the Union Scout Council.
- (c) Providing for the right of the three representatives of the Pathfinder Movement on the Union Scout Council to speak and vote in Pathfinder matters only.
- (d) Suggesting the formation of a Joint Committee - equally representative of the Scout and Pathfinder organisations - to consider all questions affecting the relationships of the two Movements.

These recommendations were adopted by the Union Scout Council at its meeting in February 1931.

Prior to this meeting the Transvaal Pathfinder Council submitted to the S.A. Pathfinder Council the following question for submission to the Union Scout Council:-

"That the South African Pathfinder Council ask the South Africa Scout Council whether its policy is the ultimate admission of all non-Europeans as Scouts without distinction".

This was altered by the S.A. Pathfinder Council to read as follows:-

"That the South African Scout Council be asked whether its policy provides for the ultimate admission of non-European troops as Scout Troops, and the South African Pathfinder Council suggests that if necessary this question be referred to the proposed joint advisory co-ordinating committee"

The reply of the Union Scout Council was given as follows:-

"That the South African Scout Council is not at present prepared to alter the general principles governing the Pathfinder Movement".

This reply has led certain members of the Transvaal Pathfinder Council to urge that one of the following actions be taken:-

- (a) Separation of the Pathfinder Movement from the Scout Movement, or
- (b) Establishment of a Non-European Boy Scout Association for the organisation of non-European boys into non-European Scout troops, or
- (c) Organisation of a Movement for non-European boys on lines entirely different from Scouting and more suitable to African needs.

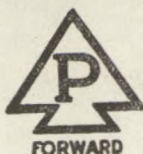
It is felt by the Transvaal Pathfinder Council that issues of such major importance ought to be communicated to the other Divisional Councils and that their views ought to be ascertained. The Transvaal Council also suggests that a special Conference of delegates from all the Divisions ought to be held to consider these questions, although it realises that it will be by no means easy to arrange such a Conference. In any case there will be an ordinary meeting of the S.A. Pathfinder Council in Bloemfontein on October 3rd.

The Transvaal Council has also asked whether I would arrange to attend meetings of Divisional Councils, if they should wish me to be present when this communication is being considered. I am ready to do this so far as it may be possible. Will you please let me know if your Council wishes me to attend its meeting, and give me sufficient time to make my own arrangements accordingly.

Yours fraternally,  
J.D.Rheinallt Jones,

CHIEF PATHFINDER, S.A.  
& CHAIRMAN S.A. PATHFINDER  
COUNCIL.

# SOUTH AFRICAN PATHFINDER COUNCIL



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To Divisional Pathfinders.

Dear D.P.

By this post you might receive the minutes of the last meeting of the South African Pathfinder Council. I am sorry that they are so late in being despatched, due partly to my long and frequent absences from Johannesburg and partly to the illness and subsequent absence of our Secretary, who I am glad to say is now well again.

I feel that I might supply you with at least a running commentary upon the Minutes since there was only one Divisional Pathfinder present at any of the sessions. This was unfortunate as much of the business was of prime importance and as Chairman I felt keenly the need of the knowledge and experience of the Divisional Pathfinders.

Dates of Council Meetings. Undoubtedly the date of the Council meeting was very inconvenient to most of the members, and it is hoped that future dates will prove more convenient. You will notice that it was agreed to hold the next meeting at Bloemfontein during the September-October holidays. I suggest that the Council meet on Saturday, October 3rd, at 9 a.m. Will you please let me know whether or not, this is likely to be a convenient date for you and other members from your Division.

Amendments to the Constitution and Regulations. The Scout Council has agreed to the amendments to the Constitution and to the Regulations passed by the last two Pathfinder Council Meetings, and I have prepared a schedule of all the amendments to the Regulations that have been made to this date. Please note these carefully, and see that your Divisional Council and all officers know of them.

Formation of Divisional Councils. In some cases Divisional Councils have not been formed in accordance with the Constitution. This should now be done wherever possible, and the amendment recently passed should also be acted upon.

This is an opportunity for bringing into the Movement helpful influential individuals who can be co-opted under clause 2 (d).

Relations with the Scout Movement. The amendments to the Constitution in this connection represent the findings of the Joint Committee which strove to overcome the grave objections that have been raised in the Transvaal Divisional Council to the control over the Pathfinder Movement which the Constitution placed in the hands of the South Africa Scout Council. The Transvaal Council has not accepted the Constitution for this reason.

It may be helpful to explain here just how this situation developed.

Before the reorganisation of the South Africa Scout Council in a central instead of a federal basis, The Pathfinder Movement was almost entirely a movement initiated and controlled by the Transvaal Scout Council which had appointed an Advisory Pathfinder Council composed of leading Missionaries and others specially interested in Non-European, particularly Native boys. With the framing of the new Scout Constitution it became necessary to frame a Constitution for the Pathfinder Movement. A special Committee was appointed by the newly formed South Africa Scout Council to do this, and on it served two members who were engaged in the Pathfinder Movement. The Committee's draft was adopted, with minor alterations by the Scout Council in Kimberley in 1929. The new Constitution placed the Pathfinder Movement on a South African basis and placed in the hands of those engaged in the Movement full executive powers subject only to the ultimate veto of the S.A. Scout Council. Some of those who had done excellent service for the Transvaal Pathfinder Council would not accept the explicit veto of the Scout Council, even though in actual fact it had been in existence all the time under the Transvaal Organisation, and actually embodied in a written constitution. This objection has led to the raising of the more fundamental question - Why cannot Pathfinders become Scouts?

It will be seen that the S.A. Scout Council has not found it possible to withdraw the veto, although the amendments do indicate more nearly what I believe is the spirit in which the Scout Council deals with Pathfinder matters. Short of complete independence the Scout Council wishes the Pathfinder Movement to be autonomous.

The direct question as to the ultimate admission of Pathfinders as Scouts was replied to by the S.A. Scout Council as follows:→

"The South Africa Scout Council is not at present prepared to alter the general principles governing the Pathfinder Movement".

The wording of the reply no doubt lacks grace, and it hardly reflects the time of the discussion which preceded it. I wish it had been possible for the Scout Council to declare itself definitely in favour of the full recognition of the fundamental principle of the Scout Movement-the essential brotherhood of all boys, regardless of nationality, race or colour. The Scout Council fears the racial prejudice existent in South Africa and more than one member declared that to say "yes" to the question put to the Council would cause disruption in his district. One Divisional Scout Council however sent a resolution expressing its readiness to accept Non-Europeans as Scouts in troops, not individually.

I believe in the principle of Scouts brotherhood and regret the reply of the Scout Council. Nevertheless, I believe that to seek the separation of the Pathfinder Movement or to establish a Non-European Scout Movement (which could not secure recognition) would not be in the interests of Non-European boys or of racial peace. Encouraged by the great improvement in the attitude of Europeans generally, and of the Scout Movement particularly, towards the Pathfinder Movement, I would urge all concerned to continue in their endeavour to make Scouting a real

social and moral force in the lives of our non-European boys, never ceasing to labour to develop the goodwill that will secure the recognition by all Scouts in South Africa of the essential identity of all boys regardless of race or colour.

I trust that for the present no further effort will be made to force this issue, but that all our thoughts will be devoted to the development of the Pathfinder Movement and to the adjustment of its syllabus to the actual needs of the boys. We have enough power and freedom to make what we will of the Movement, and any disagreement between ourselves and the Scouts can be dealt with by the Joint Committee, representative equally of the Scout and Pathfinder Councils, which has been agreed to by the S.A. Scout Council for this purpose.

Amendments to Regulations. I am preparing a full statement of all amendments to the Regulations and Syllabus that have been proposed. This will be circulated shortly and I shall welcome other suggestions as well as criticisms of the proposals already made. Full consideration should be given to these before the next meeting of the Council.

"The Pathfinder" I hope you like the new bulletin, and that it is getting into the hands of the Officers, and through them to the troops. I know what Divisional Pathfinder Master Sykes will welcome notes from you and suggestions for increasing the usefulness of the publication.

Extension of the Movement. It will be a real pleasure to welcome representatives on the Pathfinder Council from Southern and Northern Rhodesia and the Protectorates at the next meeting of the Pathfinder Council. The somewhat formidable character of the Pathfinder regulations and syllabus must not be allowed to obscure the essential oneness of our problem: How can we best adjust the African boy to his changing milieu? The problem varies in degrees, not in kind. I am certain that by the extension of the frontiers of the Pathfinder Movement, we shall also be extending the frontiers of our knowledge of the task.

Reports of the Divisions. The reports sent in by the Union Divisions could not be included in the Minutes. I hope to be able shortly to arrange them in a form suitable for circulation. They show that the Movement is gathering momentum. Divisional Secretaries are being asked for statistical returns. Will you please see that these are sent to Headquarters without delay?

Visit of the Chief Scout. The Chief Scout and the Chief Guide will soon be in South Africa. Arrangements have already been made for a review of Pathfinders and Wayfarers at Johannesburg on Saturday June 13th. This will take place on the great new sports ground recently opened. Will you please write to Mr. Kenneth Fleischer (The Honorary Secretary of the S.A. Pathfinder Council, P.O.Box 631, Johannesburg) if you wish to arrange for a review by the Chief Scout of the Pathfinders in your division? This should be done at once.

Chief Pathfinder's Tours. Since my return from America and Europe I have visited all the Union Divisions, and it has been a real pleasure to meet you and other officers as well as to inspect the troops. I greatly appreciate the splendid work put in by so many officers and also the friendly help given by Scouters. What we need more than all now is to realise the great possibilities of the Movement and to let the boys feel that

they are part of the great African brotherhood and a world confederacy of boys. I look forward to being able to make fairly frequent visits to all the Divisions and renew my faith and vision through contact with you and all my other colleagues.

Letter to Divisional Secretaries. I enclose a copy of a letter I have addressed to Divisional Secretaries. Many of the matters should appear on the Agenda of your next Divisional Council Meeting.

With the most fraternal of greetings,

I am, Dear D.P.

Yours sincerely,

*Herbert Jones*

CHIEF PATHFINDER.

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