

23rd February, 1962.

Mr. Quinton Whyte,
P.O. Box 97,
JOHANNESBURG.

Dear Quinton,

Thanks for your two letters, one acknowledging the Native Revenue Account and your second one commenting on my speech of the 30th January. I did not realise that what I said in all innocence could have so many interpretations put on it and I accept your observations as a friend !

Kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

Fa2

SOUTH AFRICAN INSTITUTE OF RACE RELATIONS

HEAD OFFICE: AUDEN HOUSE, 68 DE KORTE STREET, JOHANNESBURG
REGIONAL OFFICES IN CAPE TOWN, DURBAN AND PORT ELIZABETH

PRESIDENT: THE HON. O. D. SCHREINER
DIRECTOR: QUINTIN WHYTE
ALL COMMUNICATIONS
TO THE DIRECTOR

P.O. BOX 97, JOHANNESBURG
TELEGRAMS: UBUNTU
TELEPHONE: 835-1781

20th February, 1962.

21 FEB 1962

P.R.B. Lewis, Esq.,
P.O. Box 2543,
JOHANNESBURG.

Dear Pat,

Speech - January 30th, 1962.

I am starting on page 16 on the above speech.

With regard to your eight basic principles, I think that they are quite unexceptionable. I myself would most fully endorse 4, and it has been something I have sought to obtain and I think that apart from other circumstances and developments, which emphasized the necessity, I have succeeded. I agree very much on the need for practical work (para. 6 p.17). There has to be talk, analysis, and discussion but such must result in practical action as you suggest. Similarly with paragraph 7 - to build and not destroy. But this rather brings out the point that not until people meet and have to face a difficult situation such as the boycott will they realise what they are handling and what the problems are. The business community for years avoided this disagreeable necessity, and during the last Alexandra boycott I feel that the Institute and do-gooders should not act as a buffer between the Africans and the business community. It was suggested at the time that the Institute was guilty of a dereliction of duty, yet I think the results were good. This also illustrates the need for analysis, discussion etc. i.e. sane talk, for the cost-of-living surveys of the Institute were used or they had been and by the secretary for transport for years before in adjusting fares throughout the country. The business community had tended to ignore the findings of commissions that the basic problem is poverty.

On page 18 -

1. I agree about the sense of belonging - that freehold tenure is one way of trying to ensure this. There are, of course, many others required for a total identification but these may not be "practical politics".
2. Non-Europeans wanted to be consulted on matters affecting them

but, increasingly, consultation which results in action in which they have no real say is regarded as inadequate. I agree about moderate leadership in the past but would suggest that something more dynamic than consultation is needed now if we are not to say in five or ten years what we say about moderate leaders of the past. There is a big reservoir of goodwill.

3. Agreed about the reserves.
4. A distinction might be made between "justice" and the administration of justice. There is the justice of laws passed and the justice or handling by the police administratively. The police cannot be divorced from the administration of the laws. They have to carry them out. It is how they do it that is important for police-Non-White relations. The basic thing is, of course, the laws passed.
5. They do want a greater executive say in the administration of their own affairs. They also want to have part in a wider responsibility locally and nationally.

On page 20 -

If I remember rightly you were criticized largely for some of the next six points:-

1. You apparently attribute viciousness and cruelty to the African people as if it were a characteristic of the African people as a group. Even although you say "many of our Native people", it does not really limit the implied generalisation. The vast majority of Africans hate this as much as you do; the vast majority are law-abiding and reasonable; the vast majority have pleaded for years for protection, street lighting, civilian guards, etc.; the vast majority are deeply concerned about juvenile delinquency. But as they have no power, the vast majority can only plead.

While even in Britain there may be gangs and others who slash with razors (cf. Glasgow at one time, New York, Chicago today, and, if I guess rightly, Bombay, Paris, Naples, etc.) we do not attribute to the Americans, the Glaswegians etc. the characteristics of a group. The Chicago gun-man is as accurate with a gun as an African criminal with a knife.

yes. // The implication of the last sentence is what? It is probably true that Africans suffer more from African criminals than from White criminals. But this is not what you are implying. Are you not saying, and indeed generalising from this particular instance of criminals, that the Black man treats a Black man worse than the White man treats him.

It is a problem of crime, of law and order, and of the protection of citizens from criminals.

2. The rate of illegitimacy amongst our African people is high, I believe, though statistics are presumably difficult to obtain, and therefore comparison with "White" countries in Europe is difficult. My impression is that illegitimacy is very high now in Britain and that in countries like Sweden there is no moral stigma attached to it. The fact that this may be so does not justify illegitimacy or its acceptance as normal, but the implication is that the African people are immoral.

If the rate of African illegitimacy is high, one asks why. You yourself elsewhere give the answer - break down of old tribal customs and the difficult transition period which Africans are undergoing; migrant labour and the preponderance of males in urban areas; and because of this a new approach by men and women.

3. To me one of the biggest factors which has maintained stability in South Africa has been Christianity and the work of the Christian missionary churches and indeed of many of the so-called sects. This does not mean that "magic" and "witchcraft" do not still play a large part in African life but again your implication is that Africans do not have a "religion" or that the religion they have does not suffice for a faith to give a purpose in life, or that they are more governed by magic and witchcraft than by whatever religion they have. One can also reflect on the magic and witchcraft, i.e. superstition which pervades European Christian society still.
4. I agree that African women do show a tremendous sense of responsibility. In fact, for years I have stressed the vital rôle of African women here and elsewhere in Africa. Again one must ask why, and not attribute, without adequate reason, to African men an irresponsibility which social conditions may make almost inevitable for many. The insult to male dignity, male self-respect to which treatment under the pass laws and liquor raids etc. subject the male whose children see him carried off, imprisoned, fined and treated with disrespect. How responsible does a man feel to society and to his own family under such circumstances?
5. Catching trains. I have seen peak hours in London tubes and in New York and while it may not be as bad as with Africans, this may be due to greater "civilization" or to better, faster services. What happens at the Alexandra bus queues? In any case what is the implication you have in mind by asking the question in 5?

6. I would check with Biesheuvel about this. We all want leisure; many work in order to enjoy leisure more completely. Work, which is a part of life itself, is undertaken in order to obtain not only the basic needs of life but also the pleasure to be enjoyed in leisure. Again by saying "many Natives", is not the implication "all" Natives when taken in the context of the other paragraphs. Compare also the present attitudes of the British working class, and, I may add, the mismanagement of the managerial classes in Britain. To what extent can Africans advance themselves in wages, in status, and in other ways if they are efficient, hard-working, and intelligent in a job. They have no trade unions behind them and are dependent upon the appreciation, or lack of it, of an employer.

These are some of the points I wish to make. Boiled down, what I feel is that there is an implied generalization from particular observations, that there is no mention of other factors in the situation which are not the result of Non-White action but of White, and that your remarks tend to re-enforce the stereotype of the African as lazy, immoral, cruel, uncivilized, even although you do not intend this.

So I write as a "friend" not as a "lover", and I hope you will not take anything amiss.

Yours sincerely,



Quintin Whyte.

Collection Number: A1132

Collection Name: Patrick LEWIS Papers, 1949-1987

PUBLISHER:

Publisher: Historical Papers Research Archive, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa

Location: Johannesburg

©2016

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.

This collection forms part of a collection, held at the Historical Papers Research Archive, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa.