

EDITOR: RONALD M. SEGAL

OFFICE: 2 VLAM GEBOU, PARLIAMENT STREET, CAPE TOWN.

April 3, 1956.

Dear Mr. Paton,

I was very shocked by your letter of March 25. I write not to ask you to reconsider your decision, I quite understand that if you cannot trust the Editor of a magazine, you cannot be expected to work in close co-operation with him. I write only to explain myself - which you must have patience with me for, I know it is always tiresome and hardly ever satisfactory. Because I do sincerely believe that what has been repeated to you could not have been precisely what I originally said. We have a number of friends in common. They have all spoken to me of your great kindness and generosity, and I can only assume that it was under considerable provocation that you wrote to me as you did. For all that though, the major part of your reaction is probably justified.

When I was in the States, I had not been in South Africa since the middle of 1952. This is not an excuse, it is an attempt to explain myself to you. My attitude to the Liberal Party was explicable perhaps, in terms of what I then knew. It is certainly no longer so. I have learnt a great deal since I returned. I admit quite freely to what must amount to grave near-sightedness in the past. If I spoke to anyone in the States then about the Liberal Party or your personal approach to South African problems as suggested in your writings, it was because I was out of touch with developments in this country and convinced that only a revolutionary stand was justifiable or indeed practical at the time.

I realise now how differently our problems must be faced. One cannot control revolutionary movements, they turn and run in different directions from those one plotted. I am deeply conscious of the need for a Democratic Front, an intellectual megaphone for all those who believe in a sane settlement of the South African dilemma. I am appalled by the growth in Black Nationalism, and that more than anything else has decided me upon the road I am taking.

I am interested only in accomplishing something in South Africa to keep us from falling into the final insanity. For that reason I gave up a Fellowship in America and my whole academic career. And for that reason I am prepared to acknowledge mistakes I have made in the past and ask for their generous consideration.

I know that what I have written will not change your attitude at all. It is sincerely meant for all that. I would ask you to remember that I wrote to your wife offering you the opportunity of an article-length personal column each issue, making quite clear that you would be free to write exactly what you pleased. It is my greatest disappointment that the magazine, and so the purpose for which it was founded, will now lose the support of someone as necessary to it as yourself.

When you return to South Africa, I hope I shall have the chance of explaining myself to you personally. Meanwhile, I should be grateful if you would write to Dr. Ellen Hellman of the Institute of Race Relations. She is a very close friend of mine, and initially responded to the magazine as you have done, for much the same reasons. She has now agreed to sponsor the magazine and write for it, and I think she will assure you of my integrity and the very real change that has taken place in my approach.

I ask of you only this, though of course, I have no earthly right to do so - that you will not finally commit yourself till you

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have had the chance to speak to me about the matter personally, if only to receive a personal apology. If you would give me an afternoon on your return, perhaps I could fly up to Durban to speak to you.

Yours sincerely,

Ronald M. Segal.

Ronald M. Segal.

P.S. I am sending a copy of this to your South African address in case you should already have left the States.

Lynton Road,
KLOOF,
Natal.

8th May, 1956.

Dear Mr. Segal,

I received your letter of April 3 and I must say that as far as I am concerned it removes the difficulty that I felt to exist, namely, that we would enter into an unreal relationship. I assume from your letter that you are a straightforward person and I would not think of writing to Dr. Hellman on the matter. I saw Marion Friedman on my return to South Africa and told her that I had received a letter from you and no longer felt the same objection to writing for AFRICA SOUTH.

I do not think, though, that you should rely upon me as a columnist, and this for the very simple reason that I lead a very irregular life. Perhaps we could work out a better arrangement than that. Do you know the work of Jordan Ngubane, an African writer living here in Natal? I think very highly of it, but you may feel it does not reach the standard you are setting for yourself. He is just the man for a columnist. He is asthmatical and has to lead a quiet life. In case you would like to write to him, his address is:- Emandleni, P.O. Inanda, Natal.

Do not trouble to come up to Durban for the special purpose of coming to see me, although we would be very glad to see you if you are in these parts. There is just one thing I should like to make clear to you - whatever you said, I took to be fair comment and would not dream of asking for an apology.

Best wishes for AFRICA SOUTH.

Yours sincerely,

Collection Number: AD1169

Collection Name: Alan Paton Papers, 1952-1988

PUBLISHER:

Publisher: Historical Papers Research Archive, University of the Witwatersrand

Location: Johannesburg

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