

HRR/9/1

12th March, 1954.

Kenneth Kirkwood, Esq.,
University of Natal,
P. O. Box 1525,
DURBAN.

Dear Ken,

INTER-RACIAL CONFERENCE

You will have noticed in the Minutes of the Executive Committee meeting held in January that we were asked to arrange further inter-racial conferences such as the one held at Adams College last July, when leaders of thought from the European and African groups met together behind closed doors for full and frank discussions. This conference had very valuable results in that certain common ground was achieved and those present gained far deeper understanding on points of view of the groups represented than they had previously possessed. No formal findings were arrived at, however, and publicity was carefully avoided in case the position of anyone who had attended should be jeopardized.

I have been wondering whether it would be helpful if your region were to arrange a similar conference at which carefully selected leaders of European thought (no politicians) could meet Indian leaders.

Will you please let me have your reaction to this suggestion.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,

Quintin Whyte,
Director.

QW/PvK.

12
APR 1954

12th March, 1954.

Dr. Sheila van der Horst,
S.A. Institute of Race Relations,
18, Orange Street,
CAPE TOWN.

Dear Sheila,

INTER-RACIAL CONFERENCE

You will remember that the Executive Committee asked us to arrange further inter-racial conferences such as the one held at Adams College last July, when leaders of thought from the European and African groups met together behind closed doors in full and frank discussion. As you know this conference had very valuable results in that certain common ground was achieved and those present gained far deeper understanding upon points of view of the groups represented than they had previously possessed. No formal findings were arrived at, however, and publicity was carefully avoided in case the position of anyone who had attended should be jeopardized.

I have been wondering whether it would be helpful if your region were to arrange a similar conference at which carefully selected leaders of European thought (not politicians) could meet Cape Coloured leaders.

Will you please let me have your reaction to this suggestion.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,

Quintin Whyte,
Director.

QW/PvK.

Mr. Whyte

SOUTH AFRICAN INSTITUTE OF RACE RELATIONS

(INCORPORATED) W.O. 219

Head Office: P.O. Box 97, Johannesburg.

Regional Officers for the Cape Western Area:

Chairman—Mrs. W. F. GRANT.

Regional Representative—Mr. D. B. MOLTEÑO.

Hon. Reg. Treasurer—Mr. P. D. SANTILHANO.

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Regional Office—18 ORANGE STREET,
CAPE TOWN.

~~Postal Address—P.O. Box 1998, CAPE TOWN.~~

21st April, 1954.

in reply please quote

The Director,
S.A. Institute of Race Relations,
P.O. Box 97,
JOHANNESBURG.

23 APR 1954

Dear Mr. Whyte,

re: Inter-Racial Conference

In reply to your letter of 15th March to Dr. van der Horst, the matter was discussed at the committee meeting and the Committee felt that a conference similar to the one at Adams College would be useful, although the financial implications would be formidable.

A one-day conference, it was felt, would be too hurried and of little use. The Committee would like to hear your further suggestions.

Yours sincerely,

E. de Groot

REGIONAL SECRETARY.

correspondence

Copy of letter also sent to D.C. Office
A/KEG

REF: A/RR/9/1.

7th May, 1954.

Mrs. E. de Grooth,
Regional Secretary,
S. A. Institute of Race Relations,
18, Orange Street,
CAPE TOWN.

Dear Mrs. de Grooth,

I write with reference to your letter of 21st April, 1954.

The Adams Conference was on a national scale and people had to be brought together from all over the country. It was, therefore, very expensive.

What I had in mind for Regional Committees was -

- a) The possibility of a mixed group meeting over a week-end, Saturday and Sunday, say in a private house. Such a group would be local, small and well selected, and might include one or two people from the "opposition" camp. The expense for getting together such people from a local area would not be great, - travel, cost of food, and perhaps hotel accommodation for one night for some of them. The idea is to get people together on an informal basis and not, as is usual, round a committee table or at a formal conference.
- b) The type of local conference which Cape Town convened on housing, i.e., a conference called to discuss some urgent local matter - for one day. The conference in Johannesburg on the University and its function in a multi-racial society brought together representatives of S.A.B.R.A., the D.R.C. (Transvaal Synod), Potchefstroom University - and an acceptance from the D.R.C. (O.F.S.), though a wire informed us that its representative had fallen ill and was sorry he was not able to come.
- c) A long week-end conference of persons drawn from the local area. Such a conference would be more expensive, e.g., hotels, food, etc.

For/.....

Mrs. E. de Grooth.

7th May, 1954.

For conferences (a) and (c) it is suggested that the number be limited to leading members of the communities concerned, e.g., six from each of the European and Cape Coloured community, making a total of 12. Such a number allows for everyone to speak and to contribute, and for intimate and less formal discussion. Such a conference could well include persons of opposing views. The idea is not to produce resolutions or statements, but rather to secure contact at high levels, to have views expressed which would not be formally expressed in an open conference, to get to know each other.

A conference of type (b) is a familiar type. Here again I do not consider it so necessary to have resolutions of protest and demand, as a reasoned statement on opinion expressed and attitude taken. Where common ground is achieved, the attainment of such would also be expressed in any statement issued.

And I would suggest that even smaller groups meeting in an evening for and/or after supper are of tremendous value in dispelling mistrust and ignorance, e.g., of Institute attitudes and policy. The more such contacts are repeated, the more likely are we to reach some modus vivendi and help to prevent the complete break between white and non-white.

The very greatest appreciation has come from all sides, of the Garden Party given in Johannesburg by the Institute. Similar expressions have come in over the one-day University Apartheid Conference. The social evening given by the Indian Community in Port Elizabeth in January was a very happy experience, and it is my belief that the Institute will be more effective in the future in achieving its purpose of "peace, goodwill and practical co-operation" by means such as this, than by protests which usually avail nothing. By saying this I do not underestimate the value of critical analysis of legislation and the issuing of reasoned and informative statements which help other people to clarify their thinking, but I do believe that Institute authority for the latter will be infinitely strengthened by the pursuance of the former. I also believe that it is important to strengthen the morale of those non-whites who remain loyal to the Institute, and one way of doing this is by bringing them more and more intimately and less formally into the councils of the Institute.

I do hope this is helpful and of use to the Regional Committee.

Yours sincerely,

Quintin Whyte,
Director.

P.S. I understand that Mr. Golding has changed his attitudes towards whites and the Institute over the past few months. He might be very useful in this form of work.

Director.

C.C.: To Regional Secretaries - for information.

Copy of letter also sent to P.E. Office
A/REC.1/6/2

REF: A/RR/9/1.

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copies sent to PC & Durban.

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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

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