THE   ROAD   AHEAD......

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A summary of the general approach of the South African Institute of Race Relations to the present problems of South Africa, prepared in consultation with the Institute's Executive Committee.

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When the South African Institute of Race Relations was founded in 1929 to work for "peace, goodwill, and practical co-operation between the various sections and races of the population of South Africa", it had no preconceived programme for the achievement of this purpose. Then, as now, it believed that the pursuit of truth is a value in itself, and that by the examination of each situation on the basis of ascertained fact and in terms of generally accepted ideas of justice, it would be making a contribution to greater understanding.

Implicit in this approach is the recognition of the inherent worth and dignity of every human being and his right, by virtue of his humanity, to the fullest development of his innate potential: belief in the values of democratic society with its accepted freedoms, rights and duties: respect for the rule of law and the safeguarding of individual liberty.

In 1952 the Commission on the Socio-Economic Development of the Native Areas within the Union of South Africa (known as the Tomlison Commission) requested the Institute to supplement the written evidence it had already presented by appearing before the Commission to answer a number of questions relating to the political and social implications of the "economic integration" of Africans. In its evidence, the Institute had documented in detail the economic interdependence of all racial groups, the growing shortage of white skilled workers and the likelihood that with continued economic development, primarily industrial, there would be accelerated economic integration of all groups. The supplementary memorandum submitted to the Commission was published under the title **Go Forward in Faith.** With this publication, the Institute for the first time formulated its basic philosophy and the broad outlines of the pattern according to which, it had come to believe, the future of South Africa should be shaped. The Institute has continued to serve its central purpose to improve inter-group relations according to these principles.

Throughout its history, the Institute has paid due regard to opposing views sincerely held and, as laid down in its constitution, it has not been associated with any political party, nor has it supported any party political doctrine. Both in its practical work to improve educational, welfare, and social facilities for the less privileged, in its continuing endeavour to promote contact and dialogue with all groups, and in its examination of legislative action and administrative measures, it has sought to define its own attitude and action in the light of both moral validity and pragmatic feasibility.

1

In the years since 1952, race relations — both internally and in their international context — have been a dominating concern of the government and people of South Africa. Every session of Parliament has brought onto the statute book new Acts which have significantly affected the rights of all the people of this country, but particularly those of the African, Coloured and Asian peoples. In the early years of National Party rule, these Acts were framed in accordance with the policy of apartheid: from 1959 onwards, when the concept of Bantu homelands crystallized into that of national units with sovereign independence as a possible ultimate goal, legislation was framed in terms of the policy of separate development. It therefore seems appropriate for the Institute to state, as briefly as possible, its approach to the situation that now, in 1972, obtains, in the light of investigations it has undertaken, analyses it has made, conferences and Council meetings held, and the statements, findings, and resolutions consequently formulated.

THE HOMELANDS

The necessity for the vigorous and effectual development of the homelands (areas formerly referred to as the Native Reserves) has been recognised for many years. The stagnation and economic deterioration of the Reserves has for long been a cause of great concern. Forty years ago, the Native Economic Commission said that throughout the Reserves, with few exceptions, "the carrying capacity of the soil for both human beings and animals is definitely on the downgrade: a state of affairs, which, unless soon remedied, will within one or at the outside two decades create in the Union an appalling problem of Native poverty". This is now apparent. In 1966/67 the total product of the Reserves was estimated to be R157m, (1.9% of that of the country as a whole); their population (6,9 million in 1970) was 32% of the total population.

The Institute, in the realisation of this acute problem of poverty, has over the years pressed for measures to be instituted for the development of these underdeveloped areas. It is therefore glad to note that accelerated efforts are now being made to increase the agricultural productivity of the homelands. It notes, too, that the ban on private white industrial enterprise in the homelands has been relaxed and that provision is being made for white entrepreneurs to operate there on an agency basis. While it welcomes these indications of development, it regrets that this has come about as part of a policy directed to the severance of the homelands from the Republic of South Africa.

The process has now reached an advanced stage, particularly in so far as the creation of new political structures within the

homelands is concerned. The expectations that have been aroused, the vested interests brought into being, the forces generated are creating new political and social realities. The further implications for Southern Africa of this process are matters demanding of the most earnest attention. The Institute considers that the concept of a single South African nation, comprising all members of all population groups permanently settled within the present territory of the Republic of South Africa, must be accepted as a fact, at least, until one or more sovereign independent Bantustans with a distinctive and separate nationality for their citizens come into being as the outcome of a decision freely made by them in negotiation with the South African Government. It is at the same time of the utmost importance to stress that, irrespective of the stage of political development of the homelands, South Africa carries a continuing obligation to assist those areas to develop their economic potential. The South African Government has a duty to ensure that the problems of poverty and malnutrition, of soil erosion and of poor agricultural techniques, of inadequately prepared settlements and unemployment, and of lack of requisite infrastructure for appropriate industrial development, are progressively resolved in these areas. The African inhabitants must likewise play a positive part in the development process and must be given the opportunity to do so.

THE COMMON AREA OF THE REPUBLIC

The Institute maintains that in the remainder of the Republic, an area comprising 87 per cent of its total land surface, the policy of separate development, on analysis, reveals itself as a system of White domination. It exposes all who are not White to gross political, economic and social discrimination. According to the 1970 census there were within this area 3,8 million Whites, 8 million Africans, 2 million Coloured people, and 620 000 Asians. Yet political control vests solely in the White group, which in consequence enjoys freedom of movement and association denied to one or more of the other groups. It enjoys economic, educational, and other opportunities either markedly superior to those available to the other groups or totally denied to them.

According to government spokesmen, the problem in South Africa, unlike that in other countries with a racially heterogeneous population, is not a problem of racial accommodation, but of multi-nationalism. The government postulates that the White, Coloured and Asian groups will each develop independently towards the full realisation of its separate nationhood. It claims that it gives expression to the right of each "nation" to govern itself in accordance with its own national traditions and aspirations. Latterly, however, the realisation has grown that multiple governments cannot exercise equal powers

3

within the same territory and that it is physically well-nigh impossible to provide independent homelands for the Coloured and Asian groups. In effect, therefore, the official policy of "parallel development", as it applies to the Coloured and Asian groups, would leave political power in the hands of the Whites. The few delegated powers that have been and may still be transferred to the representative councils of Coloured and Asian citizens do not alter this basic fact.

In so far as Africans are concerned, whether they live in or outside the homelands, they are all regarded as citizens of their appropriate ethnic homeland, entitled to exercise all the rights of citizenship in their particular homeland, but denied the exercise of all such rights in what is called the "White area", where they are to remain aliens in perpetuity.

The Institute finds this multi-national approach unacceptable: though in theory it professes to treat the different nations on a basis of equality, in practice its operation entails marked and seemingly permanent inequalities of status, rights, and privileges. These depend not on the national or cultural but on the racial group of which an individual is a member. Though Afrikaans- and English-speaking citizens differ widely in language, cultural and historical traditions, they have similar — and superior — status, rights, and privileges. These are even shared by recent non-citizen immigrants, always providing they belong to the White racial group. The Institute regards it as unacceptable that the privileges normally enjoyed by all permanent residents of any Western society should, in fact, only be granted to those belonging to the White racial group. In 1952, the Institute set out its view that "South Africa is a multi-racial society in which all ethnic groups are to a greater or lesser extent inter-dependent". Developments within the last 20 years have strengthened the Institute in its conviction that the South African people are so inextricably inter-dependent that the only way in which the country can establish a just society is by progressing towards the goal of full citizenship for the Coloured, the Asian, and all African people permanently domiciled outside the homelands, together with the Whites in a shared society.

In essence, this means the acceptance of a two-fold development : maximum possible effort to enable the homelands to match economic with political development; and in the remainder of the Republic, the acquisition by all its peoples of political and other rights, the goal of policy being the attainment of full citizenship by individuals of all races. The Institute believes that only along these lines will it be possible to bring about racial accommodation and peace in South Africa in a manner consorant with the fundamental principles of right and justice.

It believes that there can be no long-term political stability for South Africa, nor any acceptance by the nations of the world, unless a means is devised to effect the transition to a system of government in which political power is shared by all races, and in which each race has a sense of real participation. The Institute realises that there are grave difficulties in framing and applying a democratic political structure in a multi-racial society in which there are different cultural backgrounds, different levels of education, and marked numerical disparities between the various population groups. But it believes that these difficulties can be overcome. The Institute is of opinion that at this stage there is widespread support for gradual change of this nature.

In evaluating the total situation, there must be recognition not only of existing cultural differences but also of the even greater extent to which all the peoples of South Africa — Whites, both English- and Afrikaans-speaking, the Coloured people, Asians, and Africans, more particularly the millions of permanently urbanised Africans — share what is commonly called "Western civilization". The process of culture contact and adaptation does not lead to the obliteration of all cultural differences between and within the different racial groups. While the basic political, economic, legal, and educational systems will necessarily be common to all the peoples of South Africa, different ethnic and social groups, each with its own cultural heritage, will continue to differ to the extent of forming different sub-cultures. This should contribute to the cultural enrichment of the country as a whole, provided there is the unifying bond of a broad South African identity held in common by all. This broad identity does, in fact, exist. It has repeatedly been stressed by community leaders of the Coloured, the Indian, and the African peoples that they consider themselves South Africans, with a total commitment to South Africa.

Because the White group, as a minority, is fearful that it will lose not only its cultural but also its physical identity — and has not infrequently been exposed to the deliberate aggravation of these fears — it is necessary to stress that the concept of a common society does not necessarily involve the physical or biological assimilation of the various groups within that society but that, fundamentally, it signifies adherence to a common or shared set of values and system of government. Furthermore, in the light of the fears that exist, it should be emphasised that social association will remain, as it is now, a matter of personal choice. In point of fact, it has been established that the people with whom an individual associates generally form a relatively limited network of individuals of a similar interests and of the same socio-economic level.

As a realist body, the Institute is aware of the extent of existing prejudice within the different racial groups. Likewise it accepts the need to take into account linguistic and cultural differences. The Institute appreciates that the manifold changes entailed in adapting from the present to a common society in the future can only be brought about over a number of years. But separation for the sake of separation must be speedily eliminated. Certain rights should be restored immediately: for example, that of universities to admit students irrespective of their racial affiliation; that of political parties to co-operate on a multi-racial basis if they so desire; that of voluntary social welfare organisations, which so wish, to have multi-racial controlling bodies and committees; and that of professional and scientific associations to have a multi-racial membership without thereby losing State financial support. The Institute believes that State control in matters such as these is undesirable, and that the right to free association should not be fettered. The need to commence dismantling the unnecessary apparatus of compulsory segregation in public facilities and in other areas, such as sport and entertainment, is clamant. Action along these lines is likely to enjoy considerable support from Whites of divergent political views.

URBAN AFRICANS

The people on whom the present dispensation weighs most oppressively are the Africans who live in what are called the "White areas", which comprise 87 per cent of South Africa's territory. At the time of the 1970 census, there were eight million in all, 4,4 million in the "White" urban and 3,6 million in the "White" rural areas. (The corresponding figures for whites were 3,2 million and 0,5 million respectively.) It is estimated that of the eight million in the "White" areas, there are approximately one million migrant workers (of whom 150 000 are women) temporarily absent from the homelands, and over half a million from countries outside South Africa. The remaining 6½ million, although the vast majority live their whole lives in the "White areas", are officially regarded as citizens of the homelands who cannot expect ever to exercise any rights in the "White areas".

African townsmen, the majority of whom have qualified to remain in the town on a basis of birth or length of employment there, are nevertheless regarded as temporary sojourners. They are, to quote the words of the Minister of Bantu Administration and Development, "present in the White areas in a casual capacity" to carry out "such exempted labour" as the authorities may permit. What for all others are inherent rights — the right to work, the right to marry and live with wife and

children, the right to a home — all these are for urban Africans treated as privileges which can be withdrawn.

They are denied the right to own a home or trading premises. Only those who bought a home or business premises prior to a directive issued by the Department of Bantu Administration and Development in 1963 are permitted to continue exercising these rights "until further notice", but they are not permitted to bequeath the property to an heir. At the same time the housing situation has deteriorated alarmingly over recent years. There are, for instance, over 13 000 families on the waiting lists of the Johannesburg Non-European Affairs Department; in Port Elizabeth, the figure is 12 000 houses. Local authorities are experiencing increasing difficulty in obtaining loans for urban family housing, the central government having set as its priorities the erection of hostels for "single" Africans in the towns and of family housing in the homelands.

The harsh operation of influx control makes it very difficult for any woman not herself qualified to live in a town to obtain permission to join her husband, even if he has the requisite qualifications for urban domicile. Influx control, together with the provisions of the Bantu Labour Regulations which restrict entry of African workers into the towns to male contract labourers only, are increasing the number of migrant workers. The predictable consequences are shown in the disruption of family life, the high proportion of irregular unions and illegitimate children in both rural and urban areas, and disturbing increases in prostitution and homosexuality. These control measures create a sense of deep insecurity.

This all-pervading sense of insecurity, associated with the inevitable maladjustments caused by the process of traumatic cultural transition which urban Africans are undergoing, results in heightened instability. Obstacles are put in the way of urban African families attempting to take root in the towns. Urban communities are not given the help they need in their efforts to shape new patterns of ordered existence.

It is clear that the labour of the African worker in the existing industrial complexes is indispensable. From 1946 to 1970, the number of Africans employed, for example, in the manufacturing industries increased from 163 636 to 629 300, and the percentage they formed of the total labour force in manufacturing grew from 45 to 53. In the same period the White percentage decreased from 36 to 24, that is, by a third. Between 1960, when the border industry programme was first instituted, and 1970, the average annual increase of workers in the border areas was some 8 000 a year, while the average annual increase in the African labour force in manufacturing industries alone

was 27 230. It appears indisputable that the dependence on the African worker in the present industrial centres will not decrease significantly even if the growth of decentralised industries in specified areas bordering the homelands takes place. Moreover, with the increasing shortage of White workers, the need for Africans in other than unskilled occupations in the metropolitan areas is mounting, which means that the need for stable African workers with developed skills is likewise increasing.

The Institute submits that the attempts to increase the proportion of migratory labour in the White areas are indefensible on economic, social, and moral grounds and cannot succeed. Nor does it believe that plans for long-distance rapid transport between the urban areas and the homelands are economically feasible, quite apart from their cost in human terms. An elaborate series of technical committees under the umbrella of Interdepartmental Transport Committee has been set up to plan such means of rapid mass transport, on a heavily subsidised basis. The Institute is of opinion that the very concept of planning transport facilities to take workers daily to homes within a radius of 113 km., and weekend commuters between place of work and family home as much as 644 km. apart, is basically misconceived, and that, if taken further, it will prove wasteful of the country's resources and onerous in the extreme to the individuals concerned.

It is of paramount importance for South Africa's future development to recognise that a permanent urban African population has come into being. It is entirely unrealistic to suggest that the aspirations of these millions, among whom is an appreciable and ever-increasing proportion of academically, administratively, and technically trained and skilled Africans, can be met by according them citizenship of a homeland and expecting them to exercise their citizenship rights in an area where they do not live. Employment opportunities in border industries can at best absorb only those homelands' men and their natural increase who cannot find jobs in the homelands — and a fact strikingly presented to the Institute in a paper read by the Economic Adviser to the Prime Minister in 1970. Moreover the Institute fears that the already acute frustration being experienced by Africans will mount to dangerous levels of resentment and bitterness unless the fact of their permanence is recognised by giving them a secure status in the towns where they live, making it possible for them to progress in accordance with their ability, and according them the rights normally exercised by people in the area where they are in fact living.

8

POVERTY, WAGES AND WORK OPPORTUNITIES

The population of the Republic is increasing rapidly. In the last intercensal decade it rose from 16 million to 21¼ million or by 5 288 000 in the ten-year period. Every year there are over half a million new South Africans to be fed, clothed housed, educated, and eventually to be given employment. Of these about 70 000 are White, 400 000 Africans, and about 60 000 Coloured and Asian. The rapid population growth, especially that of the African, makes it imperative to maintain a high rate in the real growth of the economy if poverty and mass unemployment are to be avoided.

Although the South African national income has increased tenfold over the past half-century, estimates of its distribution show little change in the relative position of the members of the different racial groups. If anything, they show a slight deterioration in the relative position of the African. Comparative estimates of the purchasing power of members of the different population groups for 1962 and 1967 show a decline in African purchasing power relative to the other groups, although the purchasing power of members of all groups increased. In 1967, the estimated purchasing power per head of Whites was shown as 13,7 times the African, 6,9 times the Coloured, and 4,9 times of the Asian purchasing power. A survey of claimed average household incomes in 1970, conducted by Market Research Africa, showed the average White household incomes to be 11 times that of the African, 4 times that of the Coloured, and 2½ times that of the Indian household.

Among the main reasons for these disparities are the marked wage differential between skilled and unskilled wages, a difference which largely corresponds with a division on colour lines; industrial colour bars, both legal and conventional, which restrict the mobility and work opportunities of all workers who are not White; lack of comparable educational facilities; and differential salary scales for equal qualifications (e.g. starting salaries per year for Senior Sisters in State employ in 1972 are R1 692 for Whites, R1 140 for Coloured and Asians, and R900 for Africans).

In 1945/6 average African earnings in manufacturing and construction were 25% of those of Whites: by May 1970 they had fallen to 17%. Average monthly earnings in manufacturing by this time were R287 for Whites, R71 for Asians, R68 for Coloured and R50 for African workers. This increase in the differential between White and other workers is a reflection of the shortage of skilled workers, a shortage which results from barriers to the industrial advance of Coloured, Asian, and particularly African workers, and the ready availability of unskilled labour.

9

The Institute has for close on 30 years drawn up family budgets based on estimates of the minimum expenditure required to maintain physical efficiency. It has drawn urgent attention to the fact that average unskilled wages have throughout been far below the Poverty Datum Line (PDL) which is an abstract index, not of the actual cost of living, but of a limited number of basic items of expenditure. The Institute calculated that in Soweto the PDL for an African family of five was R69,64 per month in 1971, yet average monthly wages for Africans employed in the manufacturing industry amounted to R52,30. The Minimum Effective Level — an index amounting to 150 per cent of the PDL, which would be R104,46 — is regarded as the income required if the essential requirements of a family are to be met. This is a level very much higher than the wages earned by the overwhelming majority of even semi-skilled and white-collar Africans, and of a considerable proportion of Coloured and Asian workers. All surveys have revealed the acute poverty of the mass of Africans, both in towns and on White-owned farms. According to the latest available agricultural census, the average annual cash wage of African farm labourers was R83 in 1963/64.

The exclusion of Africans from registered trade unions, the prohibition of African trade unions from registration, the prevalence of large-scale unemployment in the homelands, and the precarious position of Africans in the towns all contribute towards the maintenance of low African wage scales. Since 1948 the Institute has pressed both for the admission of African workers to registered trade unions and for the right of African trade unions to be registered. It regards these measures as essential for the protection and fair treatment of the African worker. It recorded its objections to legislation passed in 1953 and 1956, the effect of which was to exclude all Africans from registered trade unions and to prohibit the registration of new multi-racial unions. The Institute is firmly of opinion that all workers should be given the right to participate in the decision-making process of the industrial conciliation machinery.

It will likewise continue to press for a narrowing of the gap between skilled and unskilled wages, for a closer relationship between wages and productivity, and for the same rate of pay in occupations where equal qualifications and responsibility are required. Together with many industrialists and businessmen, trade union leaders and economists, whose voice is being increasingly heard, the Institute will continue to urge the need to provide significantly increased training opportunities, both within industry and at educational institutions, to enable African, Coloured, and Asian workers to qualify for occupational advancement. It is convinced that this is essential in the South African national interest, necessary not only to make full use

of the country's human resources but also to bring into being the increased purchasing power required to make mass production possible.

THE ROAD AHEAD

A hallmark of the present world scene is the speed of social change. In South Africa, although the existence of this process is acknowledged frequently enough, it yet seems that the necessity for adjusting to the demands of this accelerating process is not sufficiently appreciated. One significant aspect of the changes now taking place on a global scale is the universal demand that the category of race be eliminated as a determinant of status, of the rights an individual may exercise, and of the opportunities that shall be open to him.

The South African Government has striven to meet this universal imperative in terms of its policy of separate development. But while certain new areas of political expression and of independent activity have been created for Africans in the homelands, and for some members of the Coloured and Indian communities, the evidence of continuing racial discrimination and inequality throughout the wide areas of "White" South Africa is indisputable. This discrimination, this rejection through separation, and the harshness of the law as it affects daily living, are the dominant realities in the lives of almost all the ten and a half million African, Asian and Coloured South Africans in the common area of South Africa. These realities affect them far more than do developments in the homelands or "parallel" institutions.

Severe restrictions have been imposed on the freedom of association, of movement, and of expression. The resort to banning and house arrest, to banishment, to retrospective legislation, and above all, to indefinite detention without trial has eroded the rule of law and caused wide-spread intimidation. The African, Coloured, and Asian peoples in particular are exposed to the full rigour of these laws. Moreover, their freedom of political expression except through government-sponsored forms of representation has been drastically curtailed. The result has been to curb and, for many years, virtually to suppress the expression of their dissent. But the absence of open protest did not mean acceptance of the existing dispensation: it means no more than enforced acquiescence.

There are now many signs of deep resentment and growing antagonism not only to the regime but to the White people as a totality. Official insistence that nationalism is colour-bound and that the South African nation is for Whites only is generating the predictable response of African and, to a lesser but

11

sharply growing extent, of Coloured withdrawal. A younger generation of Black people has arisen which speaks in the tones of Black consciousness. To some this means a call for self-reliance, mobilisation of the collective resources of the Black people, and of renewed recognition of cultural worth and pride, in the continuing struggle for equality of rights within the State. To others it means a call for confrontation between rival racial nationalisms, rejection of inter-racial co-operation in any form, and systematic preparation for a final trial of strength.

This Institute is of opinion that the point of no return has not been reached, and that a long period of acknowledged inter-dependence between the different racial groups has created among the African, Coloured, and Asian people a fund of good-will and preparedness for co-operation which is not yet exhaust-ed. But unless decisive steps are taken to make manifest a change of direction and of basic policy, the possibilities of inter-racial co-operation will diminish and the likelihood of peaceful transition will recede. Because the Whites control all the sources of power in South Africa, the onus to take the neces-sary initiative to commence resolving the country's racial difficulties rests on them.

The immediate task facing South Africa is the progressive elimination of racial discrimination, which will require pro-found changes of attitude primarily, though not exclusively, among the White people of South Africa. Only in this way can the goals of social justice and internal security, and the restoration of sound international relations be brought nearer realisation. For South Africa this is the pre-eminent need, which will not become less urgent even if one or more inde-pendent African states, excised from it, come into being. This task is one requiring much sustained effort at many levels and in many spheres by all people of goodwill in the land working together. It is a task, moreover, of the greatest urgency, for there are indications that the time left to effect peaceful recon-ciliation is running out.

There are welcome indications of a ferment of re-thinking and reappraisal among the intellectual, religious and business leaders of the White community, and among White university students of both language groups, pointing to the recognition of the need to reduce racial discrimination by tangible changes in behaviour and administration. It is essential that this re-appraisal should be extended to the ranks of white collar and skilled White workers, who have until now been subjected to powerful influences strengthening both fear and prejudice. These numerically significant sections of White society must likewise become involved in our national rethinking.

12

As in the past, so in the future, the South African Institute of Race Relations will seek to develop co-operative inter-group attitudes, in the conviction that the road ahead for South Africa lies in this direction. It rededicates itself to the service of one South African nation, composed of different racial language groups united in common nationhood.