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TREATMENT OF PEOPLE OF INDIAN ORIGIN
IN THE UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA

Letter dated 7 March 1951 from the Deputy Permanent Representative of
the Union of South Africa to the United Nations, addressed to the
Secretary-General.

New York, 7 March 1951

I have the honour to refer to your letter No. SCA 264/2/01 of 6 December 1950, transmitting the text of the resolution entitled "Treatment of People of Indian Origin in the Union of South Africa" adopted by the General Assembly on 2 December 1950.* The text of the resolution was communicated to the Union Government as requested.

I have now been instructed to inform you that the Union Government are unable to accept the General Assembly resolution referred to as providing a basis for any Round Table Conference, since the terms of the resolution constitute intervention in a matter which is essentially within the Union's domestic jurisdiction. The Union Government are further unable to accept that part of the resolution relating to the establishment of a three-member commission to assist the parties in carrying through appropriate negotiations in the event of failure of the Governments concerned to hold a Round Table Conference before 1 April 1951.

Although the Union Government consider that resolution unacceptable and continue to hold that the matter concerned is outside the competence of the United Nations, they wish to make it clear that they adhere to the policy agreed upon at the conclusion of the talks with Indian and Pakistan representatives at Cape Town in February of last year, in spite of the attitude taken up since that date by the Government of India. The formula accepted by the three Governments

* See General Assembly resolution 395 (V).

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on that occasion was as follows: "It was agreed that a Round Table Conference be convened to explore all possible ways and means of settling the Indian question in the Union of South Africa. It was agreed that neither discussion under this formula, nor the holding of the Round Table Conference itself, would involve any departure from, or prejudice to, the standpoint of the respective Governments in regard to the question of domestic jurisdiction".

The Union Government continue to be prepared to participate in a Round Table Conference with India and Pakistan on the basis of this formula which allows the widest freedom of discussion to all parties without any further conditions. Their attitude has undergone no change whatever since the formula was agreed upon, and they have at the United Nations and elsewhere reiterated their willingness to proceed with negotiations on the basis of the Cape Town talks.

The obstacles to the summoning of a Round Table Conference lie, therefore, not with the Union.

(signed)

J.R. JORDAAN
Deputy Permanent Representative
