

Mrs. Green

CIRCULAR NO. 55.

THE BLACK SASH. - HEADQUARTERS REGION

TO ALL REGIONS.

4 Oakdale,
Main Street,
NEWLANDS. C.P.

26.1.61.

DECLARATION OF 69:

A copy of our letter to those who published the Declaration of Beliefs and the reply from their Secretary, is forwarded, for information.

NATAL CONVENTION:

The Natal Midlands Region have asked for permission to attend the Convention which is to be held in the Pietermaritzburg Town Hall on April 5th, 6th and 7th, 1961. A copy of the invitation sent to them is forwarded to you for information. We consider that this Provincial Convention is an excellent idea and are wondering whether it would not be a good idea to get similar conventions arranged in the other Provinces and would like your views.

CIRCULARS TO REGIONS:

As there are now only eight Regions and it is possible to make eight copies of anything on a typewriter, I am wondering whether Regions still wish us to roneo circulars and send them the 5 or 6 copies normally sent to them in the past. It will be appreciated that it will speed matters up and reduce costs, if there is only one typing and no roneoing involved.

The danger of this suggestion is that the one and only copy sent might go to someone who was away at the time, or who did not open the post immediately and that therefore the Region would not be aware of the circulars as quickly as is necessary.

I am not particularly in favour of the scheme, but would like your views. In any case, I would like an up-to-date list of the people to whom circulars are to be sent, and the numbers required.

Our present practice is to send a copy to Chairs, Secretaries and Treasurers of each Region and additional copies when requested by the Secretaries.

E. STOTT.

NATIONAL PRESIDENT.

COPY OF THE INVITATION SENT BY THE NATAL CONVENTION, TO BE HELD
IN THE TOWN HALL, PIETERMARITZBURG, ON APRIL 5th, 6th and 7th,
TO THE NATAL MIDLANDS REGION.

405, United Buildings,
Longmarket Street,
Pietermaritzburg.

13/1/61.

Sir/Madam,

You will probably know that at a large public meeting recently held in Pietermaritzburg, it was decided that a Natal Convention would soon be held, at which Natalians of all races would meet for frank and friendly discussion. It is hoped that by meeting one another and having a frank exchange of views, Natalians will get to know one another and also evolve a working programme of action calculated to improve human relations and to do justice to all groups and individuals.

The Convention is not to be a meeting of any one political party, or group of parties, or even of one school of thought and invitations are being sent to the widest possible variety of organisations, societies and groups, to send representatives to the Convention.

The Convention will be held in the Pietermaritzburg City Hall, on April 5th, 6th and 7th, 1961. The plans are well under way and I would like to know whether your wishes to be represented at the Convention.

I should add that the Convention will not be able to offer representatives travelling expenses.

I will inform you later of the more detailed plans for the Convention, but I would be pleased if you would in the meantime let me know whether you wish to be represented at the Convention. "

Yours faithfully,

(sgd.) A.S.K. PITMAN.
HON. SECRETARY.

COPY OF LETTER SENT BY NATIONAL PRESIDENT TO THE
SECRETARY, THE DECLARATION OF BELIEFS, P.O. BOX 6010,
JOHANNESBURG, ON 27th OCTOBER 1960.

" The Black Sash is delighted that, as evidenced by the Declaration of Beliefs, white people of different political opinions are at last recognising that the present race policy in South Africa needs to be changed.

The Black Sash believes that what is needed now is a round table conference at which leaders of white political groups and leaders of non-white opinion (elected by their own people and not appointed by the Government) can get together to exchange ideas and to learn to understand and appreciate the points of view of other groups.

Only when there is a full understanding by all groups, of the view points and aspirations of all other groups, can a sound foundation be laid for improving the present state of race relations in this country.

The Black Sash, which has been striving ever since its inception to bring about better understanding between the many divergent political and race groups in this country, would be most willing to give every practical assistance possible in the organising of such a round table conference and we shall await a reply to this letter with the deep and sincere hope that we shall hear from you that something in the nature of this suggestion is going to be undertaken. "

REPLY FROM THE SECRETARY, P.O. BOX 6010, JOHANNESBURG dated 14/12/60.

" I must tender my profound regret for the delay in acknowledging your letter of the 27th October, and your subsequent letter of the 2nd December.

A very large number of letters have been received and I am afraid that the response to your own communication which involves careful consideration has been held over unduly.

In regard to your specific suggestion that a round table conference be held, I have some doubt whether anything of a formal nature could be tied in with the activities of the Subscribers to the "Declaration of Beliefs" at this stage. I know that a number of Subscribers are extremely anxious to establish small informal groups, in the first instance to stimulate contact between the two white language groups, but shortly thereafter to encourage informal and frank discussions between members of the different colour groups.

Lack of contact and of bridges between the different groups is undoubtedly one of the major causes of the appalling lack of understanding which at present appears to exist between members of different groups, and it could well be that the building of a solid foundation of contact and understanding is an essential pre-requisite to any meetings or conference of a more formal nature.

I have taken steps to secure other opinions on the comments I have made in this letter and hope to communicate with you further early in the New Year.

Wishing you the Compliments of the Season,

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