

THE BLACK SASH
CIRCULAR TO ALL REGIONS

RECEIVED 18 JUN 1977
503 Lestar House,
58 Marshall Street,
2001 Johannesburg.
15th June, 1977.

CIRCULAR NO. 7/1977.

Dear all of you,

It is difficult to write a circular now when we are all thinking only of what may or may not happen this week. You will realise from the newspapers that things are very tense here.

1. One of our interpreters, THAKANE PHOLOSI, was detained last Tuesday (7th June) at 3.15 a.m from her home. We were all most worried and concerned and could get no information about where she was being held. Maimie Corrigan in Pietermaritzburg made valiant efforts to get news of her. As her brother has been in detention there for some months we thought she might have been there. Much to our joy she was released on Thursday afternoon. She had been held at Krugersdorp under the 14 days for interrogation provision.
2. We have had a communication from the Treasurer of the Cape Eastern Region announcing that that Region is now defunct but I have not yet heard from Anne Warren and have no details to give you. It is sad but it seems we must accept that they are no longer able to function. I hope, when I hear from Anne, to find that there are some members who want to keep up their membership and can be taken under Albany's wing. I will let you have full details and the Headquarters arrangements when I have them.
3. Arising out of Conference :- We have received no alterations to the draft minutes. To save Esther re-typing the whole thing will you please remove the word "draft" from your copies and regard them as the minutes of National Conference 1977 until they are ratified and signed next year.
4. Here is the reading list promised by Shirley Moulder to Conference delegates :
GENE SHARP - The Politics of Non Violent Action, Boston, Porter Sargent 1973
HUGO BEDAU - Civil Disobedience, New York, Pegasus 1969.
THOMAS R. HALL The Morality of Civil Disobedience, New York Harper Torchbooks 1970
Shirley says there are many more but feels it better if we read and discuss these three so that we have all been doing the same thing when we meet again.
5. I enjoyed seeing so many of you on that rushed roundabout for NUSAS last month. It was only Border and Albany who were left out. I was most impressed and excited by the Student's Africanisation campaign. It is an attempt to encourage English-speaking white students to regard themselves as truly part of Africa and it has lessons for us all and much encouragement. I think you would enjoy meeting with students in your areas to ask them to elaborate on the programme and to discuss it with you. As five of our key S.R.C. representatives at Wits were arrested on Friday night we are going to have to defer such discussion here.
6. Natal Midlands has, as usual, been doing fantastic work this time with a small squatter community in Pietermaritzburg which is now to be rehoused and employed with the use of Civil Emergency Funds set aside by the City Council. This is the result of Maimie and Bunty Biggs finding the facts and lobbying a very active and determined woman Councillor. In fact there is so much going on in all regions that it is impossible to report on it all. Housing, squatters and unemployment seem to be the main concerns everywhere and in the Transvaal we also have the looming independence of Bophuthatswana.
7. We sent a National Memorandum written by Joyce Harris to the Inter-departmental committee set up to investigate the financing of Administration Boards. We have also made representations to the Law Society and Bar Council on the Lower Courts Amendment Bill which has serious implications when taken in conjunction with the new Criminal Procedure Act. Border got us going on the question of children being held in detention in terms of Section 6 of the Terrorism Act but, sadly, there is little we can do except express our revulsion.
8. Elizabeth Rowe, who is one of our key Advice Office workers here, has suggested that we nudge a registered Welfare Organisation into establishing an emergency rent fund for people who are falling into arrears because they cannot find jobs and who are facing losing their houses. She suggested directing the appeal for donations to people who live rent free in company houses, or who pay nominal rentals. You might care to pass this on to Welfare Organisations in your areas if you are finding the same problem. Black Sash must NOT do it ourselves.

Love to you all,

SHEENA.

It was pointed out that multiracialism is a white concept which blacks have rejected, and that whites are now going to have to accept black nationalism.

Blacks look at political and economic alternatives and want a participatory and sustainable society, but there is a desperate power struggle going on in the black community, with a conformist majority and articulate young radicals, the latter dominating the scene at present. They generally reject whites, and whites, through lack of adequate lines of communication and also because of a lack of consensus among blacks, have no idea what sort of society the black majority is eventually going to structure.

We must emphasize the cause of black gradualism and the idea of the need to share. We must stop thinking of different groups and different ideas and think in non-racial terms. We always work from the assumption that whites will continue to have the prerogative in this country. This is no longer true. We must accept our lack of power and act as a pressure group to bring about change.

Suggestions were made for self-taxation of whites to assist black community programmes and the holding of a National Convention of women of all races.

There was consensus on the need for contact and bridge building between all the different peoples. We must seek ways of minimalising the destructive things and should consider Dr. Leader's constructive ideas about intermediate groups.

JOYCE HARRIS
NATIONAL VICE-PRESIDENT.