

THE BLACK SASHCIRCULAR NO. 16/197856 Victory House,  
34 Harrison Street,  
JOHANNESBURG  
19th September, 1978.

Dear Everyone,

The police raids on Crossroads and its obviously impending destruction have filled us all with horror and sorrow and an awful feeling of impotence during the last week, and certainly make our campaign on Squatters all the more urgent and relevant.

Cape Western has been very deeply involved in the situation, and our members were present during the night of Wednesday 13th, offering support, assistance and legal representation. Noel Robb's and Moira Henderson's daughters were both arrested under the Riotous Assemblies Act. They are out on R50 bail, reduced from R200, and are remanded until 12th October.

After the first raid Cape Western arranged for the legal defence of 477 people, charged in the Langa Court for being illegally in the area, who paid fines amounting to R20,000 and 58 people charged in the Athlone Court for illegal harbouring of wives and children, who paid out fines amounting to R1425. 300 people were arrested in the second raid, and our incredible workers in Cape Western have managed to get all these people organised, their names and addresses in alphabetical order, so that legal defence could be provided for them. In addition they visit Crossroads, provide coffee, sandwiches, blankets and help in any way they can, showing the people of Crossroads that there are white people who care about their plight. I'm sure all the other Regions join me in extending warmest congratulations to our marvellous friends in the Cape.

In Johannesburg we have mounted two stands to catch in-and-out - going traffic. We stood, one at a time, for two periods of 1½ hours each, holding a placard reading, "Cruelty at Crossroads. We Will All Pay the Price" Unfortunately there was no press publicity for this here, though something appeared in the Cape papers, but the public displayed a great deal of animosity. There are to be two public meetings, at the University and in the City Hall, in both of which we shall be participating.

We also sent the enclosed quote from Micah to 11 Cabinet Ministers.

I am sure that other Regions have demonstrated. I know that Natal Coastal held a stand. We cannot allow ourselves to be hamstrung by all the restrictions placed upon protest, but must continue to stand up and be counted in any legal manner we are able to devise. Even if protest is ineffective in its impact upon the Government it is exceedingly important that those who suffer from Government action should be aware that we are deeply concerned about them.

When Dr. Motlana was banned for a month Sheena and I stood, one at a time, outside the University carrying a placard reading "For God's Sake Don't Ban Motlana. Listen to Him". This received a good deal of publicity, particularly in POST, and we are told that the people of Soweto were very heartened by this, including Dr. Motlana himself.

We have written to Minister Jimmy Kruger requesting him to receive a deputation to discuss the whole question of banning, preventive detention and punishment, without trial, but have not as yet received a reply.

Our landlord has requested us to vacate our offices as soon as we possibly can, despite the fact that our lease does not expire until October of next year. He says he has had complaints from other tenants about the number of black people in the building and using the single lift. This places us once again in the unenviable situation of a move, and all the disruption this represents, together with the difficulty of finding suitable accommodation at a reasonable price. Oddly enough this seems to have provoked more Press interest than anything else has done in a long while, and we have been besieged by reporters asking for the next instalment.

And now to get down to practicalities.

Jane Prinsloo of Cape Western, with her unerring eye for detail, has pointed out a couple of anomalies in the Minutes of the Special National Conference, which must be altered accordingly.

The words between, "This application" and "wishes to join" in Clause 3 (a) (viii) on page 3 must be deleted. They do not make sense.

In Discussion of Clause 6 on the top of page 4 the words between "and it will" and "to leave" must be deleted. Sheena feels this would more adequately reflect her sentiments.


The potential inclusion of men as ordinary members was omitted from the Minutes as being irrelevant to the Special National Conference but Cape Western has been asked to give timeous notice of an amendment to the Constitution if it wants this matter brought up at National Conference.

There is also an error in the Membership Forms, both of them. Under the list of objectives of the Black Sash, Section 1, the words "conduct propaganda and" must be deleted. These words were deleted from our Constitution at a National Conference some years ago, but somehow the membership forms were never amended accordingly, and I'm afraid I did not notice this when I was amending them after the Special National Conference. I hope you are all still able to do this without too much inconvenience.

With regard to Associate Members we have decided, for book-keeping purposes, to list them in an entirely separate column in our books. This will simplify the records and avoid confusion when we are toting up our number of paid up ordinary members to calculate the number of delegates to which we are entitled for National Conference. I commend this suggestion to you.

The National Campaign on the New Constitution for S. A. and the New Foreigners is proceeding, though it is requiring a good deal of patience and diplomacy. There will be another meeting late in October where we hope there will be more extended attendance, and I will let you know the outcome of this whenever I am able to do so.

Good luck with all your endeavours.

Love,   
JOYCE HARRIS  
NATIONAL PRESIDENT.