

THE BLACK SASH

56 Victory House,
34 Harrison Street,
JOHANNESBURG.
JUNE 1979

D E P O S I T I O N

TO

THE PARLIAMENTARY JOINT COMMITTEE

ON

THE CONSTITUTION OF SOUTH AFRICA.P R E A M B L E.

The Black Sash welcomes the opportunity to state its opinions and make recommendations to the Parliamentary Joint Committee created to consider the design of a new Constitution for our country, South Africa.

The Black Sash is convinced that, in order to be effective, any constitution requires the consent of the governed.

South Africa contains a wide diversity of peoples, and the requirements and aspirations of all its peoples must be catered for in any new constitutional dispensation.

Any constitutional plan which ignores this reality will court disaster for our country, which can surely achieve a peaceful solution for its manifold problems by calling upon the goodwill and co-operation of all its peoples to assist in the search for mutually acceptable solutions.

Only if this is done can South Africa look forward to peace, progress and prosperity for all.

THE BLACK SASH BELIEVES :

1. That all the people of South Africa love their country, South Africa, in its entirety, and reject its fragmentation.
Furthermore, the African people resent the loss of their South African citizenship, and the homeland citizenship which has been and is being forced upon them. They are, and are entitled to be, citizens of South Africa.
2. That any new Constitution must make provision for all the people of South Africa, including the African Section of the Black population.
3. That all the people of South Africa are entitled to participate on an equal basis in the formulation of a new Constitution, as all are subject to its control.

THE BLACK SASH REJECTS :/---

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1. The present Government proposals for a new Constitution or any amendments to them, because they specifically exclude Blacks from the Constitution itself, because Blacks were totally excluded from participation in their formulation, and because they entrench discrimination.
2. The Principle of drawing up a Constitution without the full participation of all citizens and statutorily-created ex-citizens.

THE BLACK SASH RECOMMENDS :

1. That because there are presently no multi-racial political parties as a result of the Political Interference Act, broad representation truly reflective of the political and constitutional aspirations of all the people can only be ensured if all shades of opinion in every ethnic group are invited to participate in devising a New Constitution for South Africa.
2. That the findings of the Du Preez Commission of the Labour Party and the principles underlying its Constitutional plan which, it has reason to believe, enjoy widespread support in the Black community, be adopted as a basis for consultation.
3. That certain amendments to this Constitutional plan may be necessary in order to accommodate the requirements of other population groups.
4. That there be discussion and consultation between the Du Preez Commission and the Slabbert Commission which formulated the suggestions of the Progressive Federal Party in an attempt to reconcile these two proposed plans, which have much in common.
5. That all White and 'Coloured' Political Parties be invited to participate in such consultation.
6. That the Reform Party and representatives of other opinions emanating from the Indian community be invited to participate.
7. That representatives of Inkatha, the Black Consciousness Movement and the independent and non-independent Homelands be invited to participate.
8. That all sections of the population of the whole of South Africa be included in consultations.
9. That a new Constitutional plan for South Africa be the result of an all-embracing National Convention or on-going Consultation, in order to reach an acceptable consensus of all views and opinion.
10. That the urgent need for fundamental change be recognised and given expression, and that no attempt be made to disguise the status quo in different verbiage.

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C O N C L U S I O N.

The Black Sash has reluctantly been compelled to suggest ethnic representation at the initial consultative stages of the planning of a new Constitution because the country has been divided on ethnic lines.

The Black Sash believes that the ultimate objective of a new Constitution for South Africa must be to provide for a unified country in which all people shall have meaningful representation in one Government, which shall be accountable to all the people.

JOYCE HARRIS
NATIONAL PRESIDENT.
THE BLACK SASH.