

THE BLACK SASH

NATIONAL CONFERENCE - JOHANNESBURG

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PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS.

BY

JOYCE HARRIS.

In May this year the Black Sash will celebrate its 25th birthday. Whether or not this is cause for jubilation is a moot point.

Our founders were incensed by the immorality of the Senate Act in 1955, and since that time our aims and objects have always been to enlist support and aid for the observance of political morality and the principles of parliamentary democracy within the Republic of South Africa ; and to strive to secure the recognition and protection by law of human rights and liberties.

That we should still be striving to achieve these aims after 25 years is a sad reflection upon conditions in our country

Restrictive laws have increasingly circumscribed the methods of protest available to us and limited their effectiveness, but we have not lost heart. We have not permitted ourselves to surrender to frustration or fear and we have not deviated from our principles. We have always been able to reconcile the inevitable differences of opinion within our organisation, achieving a consensus that has enabled us to survive in a largely antagonistic political climate.

For 25 years we have viewed the status quo as immoral, unfair, unjust, exploitative and excessively wasteful of money and people, and have therefore always striven for peaceful change.

At long last there appears to be a growing number of people who recognize the urgent need for change, including members of the Government. Heraclitus said in 513 B.C., "There is nothing permanent except change", and it is about change that I wish to speak to-night.

The concept of change is not a simple one. It does not occur in a vacuum, but arises out of a specific situation. Motivation is an essential ingredient - the whole question of cause and effect, action and reaction.

There is the perception of change, for it often exists in the eye of one beholder and not in that of another. There are the strategies of change, which can and do give rise to conflict. And there are the results of change which are almost impossible to prognosticate but which can never be uniform for all sections of the population.

Any realistic assessment of potential change must of necessity involve an examination of the prevailing climate of opinion under existing conditions.

The climate is one of fear - by the white minority of the black majority ; by whites in South Africa of the growing pressures of liberated black countries on its borders ; by all dissenting people in the country because of the loss of habeas corpus, and of confidence in the due process of law, which is not permitted to operate ; and by all white people because they may reap the whirlwind they have sown and because they feel they have become expendable in the eyes of the outside world.

It is a climate of growing hatred, or, at best, resentment, by black people because of the injustices perpetrated against them. And it is one of suspicion and distrust between English and Afrikaans-speaking South Africans because of the artificially prolonged and exaggerated divisions and rivalries between them.

The conditions are those of a country tragically divided against itself, separated into racial and ethnic groups with in-group solidarity, out-group hostility, conflicting interests, mounting tensions. They are those of a privileged white minority enjoying the accident of skin colour ; of an economy in the grip of inflation which is aggravated by the very high cost of administering government policy involving the unproductive employment of a large percentage of the working force, and the under or non-employment of a vast potential working force ; and of an in-built, dissatisfied, potentially dissident majority.

Before discussing the various aspects of change it might be helpful to examine the changes which have taken place during Mr. P. W. Botha's term of office.

The findings of the Riekert and Wiehahn Commissions have been given qualified effect. More security, improved opportunities and a potentially better life style have been afforded that relatively small percentage of the African people who qualify under Section 10(1)(a) and (b) of the Urban Areas Act. But Section 10 rights are being phased out as homelands become independent and the concessions will apply to a diminishing number of people. Trade Union facilities have been made available to blacks subject to a variety of restrictions, which some trade unionists feel will weaken rather than strengthen black Trade Unions.

Some hotels have been opened to all racial groups, though with the retention of certain restrictions, and provision has been made for the granting of once-only permits for the admission of all race groups to hotels, theatres, and restaurants but not to cinemas, residential areas and schools.

A three-months' moratorium was declared in all areas with the exception of the Western Cape to counteract the immense distress caused by the implementation of the regulation decreeing a fine of up to R500 on employers of illegal labour.

Community Councils have been granted increased powers, and townships are to be opened to white capital providing blacks own 51 percent of the shares. Recently the Prime Minister has spoken of a broadly representative President's Council to devise a new constitution.

The Prime Minister has expressed his willingness to consider alterations to the Immorality Act to make its administration more humane, and to consider land allocation to the 'homelands' over and beyond the limits set by the 1936 Land Act, having appointed the Van Der Walt Commission to investigate the consolidation of the 'homelands'. He has also appointed a Cabinet Committee to

to examine the future of urban blacks.

Crossroads was not demolished and Alexandra is to provide family as well as hostel accommodation, though residents in both these areas must conform with the requirements of Section 10 of the Urban Areas Act.

The Prime Minister convened a Conference with prominent business men, showing a willingness to involve the private sector.

The Schlebusch Commission was appointed to hear and examine opinions on a new Constitution for South Africa and the Rabie Commission to examine security legislation.

The 72 hour curfew may or may not be lifted in Pretoria and Bloemfontein as an experiment.

These changes and potential changes having been acknowledged with widespread euphoria in many circles, it is well to remember that the Pass Laws are still being administered, if anything even more stringently than before. Under the Pass Laws, the Group Areas Act and the 'Black Spot' removals scheme forced removals are continuing unabated. When they have been completed nearly 4 million people will have been uprooted.

District Six is apparently to be finally lost to the coloured people despite protest from all sections of the Cape Town community.

Venda has become independent, swelling the ranks of those millions who have been forcibly deprived of their South African citizenship.

Unisa's Market Research Bureau claims that 78 per cent, R147 million of Bophutatswana's residents' incomes was earned in South Africa in 1977 and most of the buying was done outside Bophutatswana. Four-fifths of Venda's total income is earned in the PWV area (Star. 5/11/79).

The homelands average national income per capita climbed from R101 in 1970 to R253 in 1975. But of this only R32 in 1970 and R73 in 1975 was income generated within the homelands. The rest comprised the earnings of commuters and migrant labour, most of which was spent in 'white' areas.... Only 14 percent of all blacks found employment in the homelands between 1972 and 1975.... An estimated 40 percent or more of all economically active black men are migrant workers. Besides being socially harsh this practice deprives the homelands of the younger and better educated workers (FM 26/10/79).

Assessments of black unemployment vary from little over 500,000 to over two million, requiring job creation at a rate of over 200,000 a year to contain it. (Chester. RDM. 16/11/79) 5,3 percent of the South African labour force has completed secondary school and only one in five have completed even primary school (Relly. RDM. 16/11/79).

Whi' , employers could still get/---

While employers could still get away with employing blacks illegally workers were able to benefit from urban job opportunities even if they had to go to jail as a consequence. A worker coming from Lebowa to Johannesburg improved his living standard by 255 percent a year if he spent three months in jail; by 170 percent if he spent six months in jail; and by 85 percent if he spent nine months in jail. (Dr. Jan de Lange. FM 12/10/79).

Food consumption has dropped alarmingly since 1977. Despite a population increase of 3 percent per year retail trade sales for the Department of Statistics show that the volume of food sales has been declining at an average rate of 5,7 percent a year (RDM. 28/8/79).

Dr. Erica Theron has called for a review of the Group Areas Act. to the end of 1978 374,990 coloured people, 172,156 Asiatics and 8,299 whites had been resettled under the Act. (Star 30/10/79)

Store managers of three national department chains claimed that the Department of Community Development had "unpardonably delayed" decisions on whether to grant them exemption permits allowing all races to use store restaurants...The Department said the delay had been caused by the Pretoria City Council. (RDM 22/1/80)

In spite of enabling legislation - Section 21.3 of the Group Areas Act - not a single permit has been granted to people other than whites to live in central Johannesburg. More than 200 'non-whites' applied but the Department of Community Development has evidently seen no "merit" in any of them (FM. 2/11/79).

An estimated 7000 to 15000 coloureds and Indians are on the housing backlog. Meanwhile there are an estimated 3000 people in Johannesburg who could face prosecution under the Group Areas Act for living illegally in white areas and Actstop has nearly 500 files of people facing prosecution, (FM 26/10/79) and this when accommodation in 'white areas is either standing vacant or being occupied illegally.

The housing backlog in Soweto has worsened since the West Rand Administration Board took over in 1973. The Urban Foundation has estimated that a staggering 32,000 dwelling units are needed immediately to eliminate overcrowding in Soweto. Population growth there has far outstripped the mere 2743 houses built by WRAB since 1973. (Star 16/11/79) This means an average provision of 457 houses a year for an estimated population of 1,2 to 1,5 million, plus the natural increase.

The backlog will swell to between 34,000 and 50,000 houses by 1985 unless a drastic building programme is undertaken, and at present prices it will cost at least R171 million to clear the backlog. (Star 5/11/79).

Officials put the housing backlog outside the homelands at around 200,000. Just to get rid of this would cost over R1 billion...David Dewar and George Ellis have estimated that in Durban there are 350,000 squatters; in Pietermaritzburg 265,000 blacks live in sub-standard conditions; and, in the

Winterveld area near Pretoria, there are at least 250,000 squatters. (FM.2/11/79)
Later estimates range from 250,000 to 750,000 non Tswanas in Winterveld. (Star.
31/1/80).

Detentions without trial, particularly of black leaders, continue unabated - the detentions of the PEBCO leaders being a recent example.

More than 300 people were detained and 78 others convicted under South Africa's security laws in 1979, according to the Institute of Race Relations. (Star 11/12/79).

Professor A.S. Mathews, professor of law at Natal University, has said that he opts for a definition of the rule of law as the legal protection of civil rights. "It is quite clear in present-day South Africa that the rule of law is no longer honoured.....Under the present dispensation it is the blacks who feel the need of civil rights and the rule of law. By the end of the '80's the roles could well be reversed so that whites rather than blacks will crave the protection that these institutions afford against the despotic tendencies of political man". Star 2/1/80)

In the opening salvos of the 1980 session of Parliament Mr. Heunis said, "Of course expectations have been created. But there is a qualification - that they must be reasonable. Not all can be fulfilled". Star 5/2/80).

Mr. F. W. De Klerk said "The opposition is trying to make out as if the National Party is moving away from its stated policies. This is in fact not so" (RDM 5/2/80).

Dr. Koornhof stated that hurtful discrimination would be removed where possible and that he realised that it was dangerous practice to create expectations which could not be fulfilled. (Star 5/2/80).

Change, they say, must be possible and reasonable - possible and reasonable in whose eyes, in whose perceptions, in whose interests? The Government indicates it does not intend to deviate from its fundamental philosophy, yet that is precisely the point at which radical change is most urgently needed.

It would be wise to tune its antennae into black reactions rather than white backlash, for it desperately needs to establish its bona fides and its credibility in the black community.

It has been South Africa's tragedy that a party should have come to power which was not a political party in the true sense of the term. It had its beginnings in the determination of a limited group of people to retain its identity, its language, its culture and its independence, and the National Party has never ceased to govern in the interests of the Afrikaners, subjecting all the people of South Africa to the realisation of its goals.

Every move it makes is therefore treated with suspicion based upon lack of confidence in its motives and past experience of its actions, and nothing it has done to date, as distinguished from what it has said, has even begun to bridge this credibility gap.

The heretoday gone to-morrow pilot plan/ -----

The here to-day gone to-morrow pilot plan to remove the 72 hour restriction on the rights of blacks to be in urban areas which would admittedly reduce the number of immediate arrests to be made during raids and round-ups, would still leave black people vulnerable to all the other laws governing influx control and efflux enforcement.

I concede that peaceful change must of necessity be gradual, and that a start must be made somewhere, nevertheless in the absence of a firm commitment on the part of the Government eventually to scrap the Pass Laws and permit freedom of movement there can be no satisfaction for blacks in this token gesture.

An editorial in POST said, "Just what the experimental suspension of a patently unjust law in two of the country's cities has to do with the totality of our rising expectations is beyond us.....What we are talking about, in plain language, is not an improvement of bad laws but their total eradication from the statute books". (Post 6/2/80).

Yet enough whites felt sufficiently threatened by this to force Dr. Koornhof to back pedal.

Obviously problems are caused by conflicting interests, those of the haves and the have-nots, the privileged and the oppressed, the powerful and the powerless, and these create widely disparate motivations for change.

Enlightened self-interest, allied to outside pressures, are probably the chief motivating forces behind those who enjoy power and privilege, the realisation that their powers and privileges are at risk and that at least some flexibility is required of them if they are to retain any of the advantages they have for so long enjoyed. They are in a comfortably familiar rut and their immediate self-interest would appear to lie in the maintenance of the status quo.

Only threats to the status quo are likely to shake them out of their well-cushioned lethargy, and presumably it is the recognition of these threats which has prompted our present prime Minister, Mr. P. W. Botha, to talk of the need for change, and to institute such changes as have already occurred. Until very recently Nationalist ideology has steadfastly turned its back upon all appeals for change, whether they have been reasoned and peaceable or have taken a more violent form. Recognition of discrimination and the need to abolish it has received little more than occasional lip-service and acknowledgement of the need to change has arisen largely in terms of reaction to pressure.

On the other hand change is in the very obvious interests of the powerless and the oppressed, and requires neither enlightenment nor pressure. People whose lives are ruled by influx control and efflux enforcement; people who have been subjected to or are being threatened with enforced removals from areas where their families may have lived for generations in stable and well-established communities to some 'homeland' which is totally unfamiliar to them; people who are not

permitted to sell their labour on the best/

permitted to sell their labour on the best market but are compelled to languish and starve with their families in the so-called 'homelands' until their labour is requisitioned on an annual contract ; people whose family life is broken up and disrupted ; people who are deprived of their South African citizenship and their share in the total wealth of the country which they have helped to create ; people who have no meaningful control over the manner in which they are governed ; people who have been denied adequate education or the facilities to realise their own potential in skilled and well-paid jobs ; people to whom the status quo offers little for their comfort ; such people do not have to be mobilised to opt for change. In their eyes change of any description is likely to bring only an improvement in their life styles and they are liable to reject anything that smacks of the status quo.

Very real differences therefore exist in both motivation for change and expectations from it, an obstacle to peaceful consensus which requires recognition before it can be overcome.

Coming now to differences in the perceptions of change, these give rise to widely divergent interpretations of what constitutes change - its meaning, its relevance, its value - which are in turn dependent upon the perception of goals.

Mr. Stoffel Van Der Merwe, of the Rand Afrikaans University, has agreed that there are differing perceptions and goals, and that what is functional for some is not so for others. He has described the Afrikaner perception of significant change as that of one from Apartheid, which perceived blacks as inferior and without political aspirations ; to Separate Development, which accepted black aspirations and provided for a horizontal rather than a vertical division, expressing itself in the homelands policy ; to the recognition of the existence and permanence of urban blacks and of human dignity. He said that the Government could not 'fully' meet black political aspirations because if it did so the Afrikaner would lose power and his position would be taken by a black dictator. He finds the reports of the Riekert and Wiehahn Commissions and the institution of Community Councils meaningful and significant for the goal of a consociational democracy and a constellation of states, but only partly so if the goal is an open society, which, he says, is not the goal of the Afrikaners. (Address to IRR : 22/10/79).

Mr. Van Der Merwe's perceptions may well differ from those of some of his fellow-supporters of the National Party, and certainly will from those of non-supporters.

In an article in the Rand Daily Mail, Mr. Martin Schneider said, "The Prime Minister's moves can be interpreted in two totally different ways. For some they are simply an attempt to entrench what has been popularly referred to as a verligte dictatorship.....Others see his moves as an attempt to decentralise power and to offer a substantial number of people meaningful access to decision-making".

At the Economic Conference/----

At the Economic Conference he convened on 22nd November, 1979, the Prime Minister said, "My Government is firmly bound to the ideal of freedom that can be attained only within a framework of order...it fully subscribes to the principles of free enterprise...The political will to co-operate is ultimately decisive in allowing co-operation to thrive fully". (Star 22/11/79).

Reactions to the Conference displayed differing perceptions.

The Prime Minister said, "I have made a good start to-day... The businessmen were most positive in their attitude". (Star.23/11/79).

The New York Times reported that some executives expressed fears that Mr. Botha was enlisting them in a strategy designed to bolster the white position in South Africa. (ibid) Mr. Sam Motsuenyane felt that the Group Areas Act must be abolished, and Mr. M. M. Maubane that blacks were still not allowed enough opportunities outside the homelands. Mr. Tony Bloom said that the conference had raised expectations among businessmen on an increased role for free enterprise and that he was confident these expectations would be justified. Mr. Clive Menell did not share the euphoria induced in others by Mr. Botha's opening address (ibid), while Mr. Harry Oppenheimer described the meeting as the most helpful event in South Africa in years. (Sunday Times 28/11/79).

Dr. Van Zyl Slabbert said "The Prime Minister did not answer the key question of what political changes he envisaged.....Throughout his speech Mr. Botha spoke as if separate development was a given and unchangeable fact of life...." (RDM 23/11/79).

Mr. Tom Manthata dismissed Mr. Botha's speech as "sweet talk" which had turned sour and bitter....."The fact is, until blacks can be seen to be citizens and to have rights to property - whether urban or rural - all that talk means nothing. The proposed system is to keep blacks in their own areas which are economically viable. The infrastructure is based on cheap labour provided by black workers". (ibid)

These same differences in perception are reflected in the broader arena. Changes which possibly large numbers of whites in general and Afrikaner Nationalists in particular have viewed as sufficiently radical to undermine their confidence in the Government and in their own future have not excited similar reactions from blacks.

For instance, the Editor of Post has said "At last we seem to be moving... But problems like influx control, the continual erosion of black rights through homelands, equality in pay an opportunity, equality in education, the right to freehold title are the issues Mr. Botha ought to be looking at... In our view this (change to date) is what we would term removal of 'petty apartheid'. The black people of this country have outgrown that kind of 'concession'. Real, meaningful change is now what is required". (POST 27/9/79).

Dr. Motlana, Chairman of the

Dr. Motlana, Chairman of the Committee of Ten, has warned that the country would be torn apart because of the citizenship issue....Black anger was mounting because the Government ignored the existence of blacks in South Africa. The Government was instead forcing homeland leaders to opt for independence so that in the long run it could say there were no blacks in South Africa (POST 3/10/79).

After meeting with the Prime Minister, the Rev. Alan Hendrickse, leader of the Coloured Labour Party said he and other members of the executive had been "insulted, intimidated and treated like children.....The talks exposed Mr. Botha's attitude towards our people. He wants to consult in his way. He just wants us to do everything he suggests, instead of being prepared to negotiate properly with us". The Government and the coloured leadership appear to be furthest apart on the problems presented by apartheid and how to solve them (Star 10/11/79).

A further editorial in POST states, "For far too long now, the government has been making these "concessions" with the hope that blacks will drop their demand for representation in the decision-making process in the country. The time for "concessions" is long past, and what should be done now is to consider real, meaningful change, and not the cosmetic "concessions approach. Until that happens, blacks will reserve their praise singing". (Post 12/12/79).

All these disparities, in motivation for change, in goals, and in the perceptions not only of change to date but of interpretations of the realities of the existing situation have thrown whites and blacks, government and opposition, into varying degrees of disarray.

The hairline cracks in the granite-like structure of National Party policy are disturbing all sections of the population, which for too long have been accustomed to having their appeals and demands fall on deaf ears. Whether changes to date are considered valid or not there is movement on the political scene, more than there has been for the past 31 years, and this is causing dislocation across the entire political, social and economic spectrum. It is bedevilling the search for broadly acceptable strategies for further change and making some form of consensus in this regard very difficult to achieve.

The black people have had more experience in this regard than other sections of the community. The development of the homeland policy, as part of the Nationalist-perceived process of change, occurred many years ago and unsettled the black community, causing deep schisms as a result of differing reactions. Now the rest of the population is being faced with varying degrees of the same dilemma because of change in other directions.

The problems being created within the National Party are its own affair and need not concern us too much, except to remark that some Afrikaner-Nationalists are at long last beginning to recognise the need to find a way out of the impasse they have created through their pursuit of the policy of apartheid. Suffice it is to say that their acknowledgement of the need for adjustments, at least, if not for radical change, is creating/-----

for radical change, is creating difficulties for them as a result of their long-term indoctrination of their followers with the indisputable and unchangeable rightness of their cause.

But the opposition, too, has been unsettled. Years of painful experience have taught it to knock its head against granite with as little discomfort as possible, but it has had no experience in manipulating any chinks in the armour. It does not know which strategies to pursue, whether to encourage the Government to change still further in the hope that an avalanche of change will be created which the Government will be unable to control - or to have nothing to do with Government strategies.

The opposition's dilemma would appear to be whether to opt for participation or non-participation in the Government's projects. Fundamentally this is at the root of all the present dissent within the opposition, this end, of course, ultimate goals.

The visible white opposition is in Parliament, participating, and apparently not considering disengaging, but the whole question of participation or non-participation does affect extra-Parliamentary opposition groupings and has done so in the past. The decision on whether or not to give evidence to the Schlesbusch-Le Grange Commission of Inquiry into certain organisations is a case in point, causing divisions within organisations.

We all participate in Government policy. We live in this country, most of us obey the laws, most register whatever protest we may have through officially recognized channels. Difficulties arise when different people draw their lines in different places and decide that they are prepared to participate thus far and no further. This is what has happened and is happening across the entire spectrum of those who dissent, and Government moves have complicated the issue.

For the first time in 31 years the Government appears to be offering a degree of participation - through consultation, on community councils, even over constitutional recommendations - but there are differing perceptions of the value or validity of such participation, allied to the Government's low credibility rating after years of playing semantic games, the widespread mistrust of its intentions, and the fact that all apparent political movement is unilaterally controlled.

Nor has the Government been either able or willing to make that "giant step" from consultation to real negotiation. Consultation leaves the Government with its options open. Successfully concluded negotiation would bind it. The suspicion has been created that it is prepared to consult only with those who will fall in with all its plans.

Such doubts are grist to the mill of those who opt for non-participation, and such differing perceptions create dissension in opposition groupings within the groups themselves, and vis - a-vis the different groupings. This is extremely unfortunate, because in many instances the dissension is not over the goals, not over principles, but over the strategies of change, all of which have some value.

11/. There is merit in talking/----

There is merit in talking, in presenting points of view, in having them written into the historical record, in registering protest which, incidentally, has been the motivating force behind all Black Sash activity for 25 years. Even our Advice Offices, which give service, are essentially instruments of protest, though there has been dissension within the organisation over these, and doubts have been expressed as to whether they simply help to make the system work. Thus we, too, have been facing the twin problems of perceptions and strategies. There is merit in using Government-created platforms as instruments with which to articulate dissent.

But there is merit, too, in non-participation ; in avoiding the danger of being imperceptibly, insidiously and subtly drawn right into the system that is being opposed, and thus being emasculated ; in registering absolute and total dissent until such time as it is possible to participate on one's own terms. In this context we understand the disaffection of black radicals for white liberals whom they feel are disarming them with just the kind of reasoning that favours participation.

Both contenders have valid arguments. There are advantages and dangers in both strategies.

But the biggest and the most potentially lethal danger of all is that opposition to the Government should be made impotent by internal fighting over strategies based on lack of recognition of what may well be valid strategies and lack of acknowledgement of common goals. All are more or less agreed that their common goal is change to produce a just society where all will enjoy equal opportunity to develop their full potential as human beings and all will have a say in the manner in which they are governed ; where all are free to make their contribution towards society as a whole and all are enabled to participate in its benefits.

The form such a society should take has still to be agreed. I do not believe that any political or economic system has yet been devised which would best meet the needs and aspirations of all the people of our country. But that is the challenge which faces us - an exciting challenge which should be spurring us on to strive to reach a consensus, one in which none could possibly get everything they want but in which all will get something of what they want so that all can live amicably together.

This will never be achieved peacefully unless there is full and free negotiation between all participants on an equal basis - either in the form of a National Convention or as on-going negotiations.

Some might view the Government's present willingness to consult- albeit on its own terms and albeit drawing its own lines at consultation and not at negotiation - as a beginning which, given encouragement, plus pressure, might still develop into on-going negotiations which could lead to peaceful and generally acceptable change. For peaceful change can never occur overnight and must inevitably be a slow process.

Only confrontation and violence can bring about dramatic change, but it is also uncontrolled and uncontrollable change, causing bloodshed, destruction and bitterness, and providing an unlikely foundation on which to build a stable, peaceful, contented society.

Even if the insidious and slow involvement of the Government in true negotiation is a pipedream, and even if those who refuse to negotiate until they can do so on their own terms are employing the best strategy, nevertheless all chance for peaceful negotiation for meaningful change can be lost forever unless dissident groups can reach agreement in the here and now to stop quarrelling amongst themselves; unless they can accept that there is validity in the strategies of both participation and non-participation and that these may well be complementary and not mutually exclusive ; and unless they stop permitting present Government strategies to undermine and eventually destroy their own, whether intentionally or unintentionally.

The Government has its own problems. I do not believe that it either intended or foresaw that, in dealing with the pressures upon it which have sown dissent within its own ranks, it would at the same time fracture the opposition. But it will be quick to take advantage of such schisms- in fact has already done so in threatening to ignore those members of the Coloured Labour Party who would not fall in with their plans and to find other Coloured people who would. All those who are working for change, by whichever method, should be aware of and guard against this very real danger.

I trust and believe that the Black Sash, which will inevitably be subjected to the same divisive pressures as any other opposition grouping, will resolve whatever problems may arise as it always has - through agreeing to disagree where necessary, and through accepting the will of the majority if consensus cannot be reached. I have no doubt that we will continue to fight for a better future for all our people and for all our children.

I can only express the hope that all opposition groups, and eventually the Government, too, through the concerted pressure of these groups acting in unison even if employing different strategies, will eventually get together to solve the deep and divisive problems of our country peacefully. I hope they will employ the techniques of discussion, consultation, negotiation, and not those of confrontation, to bring about change, and to achieve a mutually acceptable way of life for all in this potentially wonderful land we all love and share. We do not need mailed fists even if they are heavily disguised in velvet gloves. We need hands clasped in friendship and trust as we all move together into the future.

JOYCE HARRIS
NATIONAL PRESIDENT.

March 1980