

LIBERAL PARTY OF SOUTH AFRICA

(Transvaal Division)

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LIBERALE PARTY VAN SUID-AFRIKA

(Transvaalse Afdeling)

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Johannesburg.
Posbus 5495,
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Telefoon: 22-8637.



15th July 1960.

Dear Peter,

As you may have gathered when you spoke to me, I was delighted to hear from you; and when I told our people that you had spoken to me, they were as excited and happy as I was.

I can't begin to tell you of what we have all felt these last few months. Your arrest stunned us, and we then thought that it would only be hours before most of us would be in prison. But, as you know, the pattern was obscure and even today we haven't understood it. As the weeks dragged by we wondered how you were bearing up. The small amount of news told us that you were in good heart, and when we heard of your decision to refuse the conditions that were offered you we knew you were in fighting spirit.

Alan has probably told you of the deep admiration that your decision evoked when it was announced at the National Congress. Certainly it enhanced enormously the prestige of the Party and the public's respect for it.

In the Transvaal our members have stood strongly with us and given us generously of funds and their time. Hannah Jaff was able, in a few days, to collect over £1500 and place it at the disposal of Defence and Aid for the assistance of detainees and their dependents. Tony Brink organized in Lady Selbourne and guaranteed a living to the families whose bread-winners had been taken. Someone wrote to the paper and said that only the Liberal Party today had the moral authority entitling it to comment on the emergency. People continued to join the Party, more especially Africans from Pretoria, and our folk worked hard at the jobs they were given. I should especially tell you of the wonderful work that has been done these last few months by Jill White and Audrey Cobden, and among the infantry men Robin Scott-Smith and Vaughn Stone should be mentioned in dispatches.

There is much more that I could say, but it should wait until I can see you.

You asked about Sharpeville. I recently read the arguments presented to the Commissioner and prima facie it is a formidable indictment of the police. 75 policemen fired more than 700 bullets from sten guns, service rifles and service revolvers at short range into an unarmed crowd of Africans, 69 of whom were killed and 180 wounded. Well over 70% of the bullets entered the legs, body or head from the back. It appears that machine-gun bullets do enormous damage if they strike bone and some of the wounds were so startling as to suggest initially the use of dum-dum bullets. It is, however, quite clear that such bullets were not used.

The evidence tended to show that many people were killed while moving in a North-Easterly direction from the police station. As the guns of the lined-up police were pointed west, there is a possibility that the persons fleeing were mowed down by police standing on top of the Saracens at the North-West corner of the police station.

At the moment there is pending a trial of a large number of people on a charge of public violence arising from these incidents. Most of them were arrested after their release from hospital and we are speculating as to what evidence is available to prove the charge against them.

All our people are well and they seem to be possessed of a special type of calm that their experience must have given them.

Beryl and I send Phoebe and yourself our very kindest regards,

Sincerely,

JW - Jill W. entzel

PP Jack.

Kate H. Miller