

# **Black Consciousness Movement of South Africa**

[1977]

EXTERNAL DIRECTOR  
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Gaborone  
Rep. of Botswana

Black People's Convention  
South African Students Organisation  
Black Community Programmes  
National Youth Organisation  
South African Student Movement  
Black Allied Workers Union

Office of the London  
Regional Executive,  
166 North Gower St.,  
London NW1.

BCM/CIR/1

## CIRCULAR ON THE LONDON OFFICE

### Background:

The External Affairs Office of the Black Peoples' Convention was set up by resolution of the 5th Congress held at Durban on 28-30th January 1977. A Director, based in Botswana, was appointed whose duties were;

- "1. to establish an information and foreign public relations service,
2. to handle all programmes of the welfare of refugee members."

This two-fold task of information, publicity and propaganda plus catering for the political, material and ideological needs of our exiled members requires the establishment of a presence and organisation in areas where exiled South Africans are densely populated and where opinion and policy towards the South African regime can be galvanised.

Since the banning of the 18 Black Consciousness Movement organisations on 19 October 1977 there has been a greater urgency to set up decision-making structures outside home whereby the political-revolutionary aspirations of our members can be expressed and through which action-oriented programmes can be set up.

Long before the banning there had been a steep disintegration of BCM forces outside South Africa. This was caused by;

- i) absence of militant programmes by BCM-in-exile.
- ii) the inability of the leadership-in-exile to engage in independent programmes contrary to stated Policy at home; policy which itself was dictated by the exigencies of the repressive political situation at home.

In the years before the BCM organisations were banned by the Nationalist regime, a clear desire became evident of the need for cohesion in the liberation movements operating in exile. This was a matter of grave concern to BCM not only because a united front disciplined and better organised, without the debilitating divisions and strife, but one that would make a better impact and success against the oppressor; it was also our concern seeing that we were formed out of a desire for greater unity and that for ten years members inclined towards both PAC and ANC were able to work amicably together and narrowed down their loyalties away from organisations but to issues pertaining to the struggle for liberation. As many of our members left the borders of the fatherland they became disillusioned by the disunity and, therefore, called upon the Movement to set in motion the process whereby the various Liberation Movements could be brought to a consideration of co-operation or unity with each other.

And accordingly the BCM has had to re-assess its relevance in the liberation struggle in the light of the realities of the situation both at home and abroad and seek means of meaningfully translating its objectives into actions. All this the collective voice of the BCM needs to express itself on. So the Director of the External Office has been charged with the task of;

Poetry/Drama/Music Workshops and readings/performances. To help budding artists, a cultural journal will be published.

Administration:

Haroun Variava has been appointed the Administrative Secretary of the Centre in a full-time capacity. He has the assistance of secretarial staff.

The position of Official Representative was recently dissolved and instead a Regional Committee was elected which will be entirely responsible for running the affairs of BCM in the UK, of course, responsible to the membership in the UK and the External Director in Botswana. The following comrades have charge of the affairs of BCM:

Nyameko Pityana	-	Chairman
Lingam Moodley	-	Secretary
Molefe Pheto	-	Organising Secretary
Nosidima Pityana	-	Treasurer
Nontuse Mbera	-	Education and Welfare
Ujobe Masokoane	-	Publications

The office will be open from Monday to Friday from 10a.m. - 5:30p.m. On Saturdays the office will be open between 9:30a.m. and 1:30p.m.

The following Executive members will be available for consultation at the office at the following times;

N.Pityana (Chairman): Mon. & Fri. between 12:30p.m. and 2:30p.m.

M.Pheto (Organising Sect.): Sat. between 9:30a.m. and 1:30p.m.

M.Mbera (Educ. & Welfare): Mon., Wed. & Fri. after 4:30p.m. by appointment only.

Since all the members are on honorary positions it will be necessary to make an appointment with them in advance through Haroun Variava should anyone want to see them outside these times. All these members are available for discussions with any groups that concern themselves with South Africa. They also welcome invitations to speak. However groups are encouraged to refer speaking invitations to Haroun Variava who will then arrange for a suitable speaker or one that is available.

Conclusion:

This office again wishes to stress that it has no desire to duplicate activities already undertaken by any other organisations. The BCM will accordingly be available and prepared to co-ordinate and co-operate with others in the UK for the general promotion of the struggle for the liberation of South Africa.

Asixila  
*Lingam Moodley*  
Lingam moodley  
(secretary)

- a) Calling a conference of the Black Consciousness Movement in the summer of 1979 at a suitable venue perhaps Botswana, Lusaka, Tanzania or Nigeria.
- b) Appointing representatives of BCM in London, New York, Europe and other capitals of the world.
- c) To open an office which will become the Head Office of BCM until Congress makes the final decision.
- d) To co-opt leaders who shall work with him as an interim Central Committee until elections are held at the summer Congress.

Black Consciousness Centre:

There is in England a very subtle discrimination against refugees, one suspects, particularly if they are Black. It is also clear that many refugees feel a great deal of alienation and loneliness in this strange land. Many of our members come to Europe as students and attendant to that are many problems of adaptation, selection of courses, scholarships and accommodation.

More than this there is a need for a place where one can go for assistance as a first port of call where he can get friendly, understanding assistance and perhaps then referred to another agency or helped to solve his problem. Besides, there is a need for Black South Africans to continue to relate to their situations, to formulate programmes of relevance and to re-inforce each other's commitment to the revolutionary struggle for liberation.

This Centre then has been acquired so that it can be a place where information about the BCM can be readily found and where Black South African students can have their problems in the UK sorted out. But above all this is a Centre for activity. Meetings/Seminars will take place here.

Publications and Communications:

One of the concerns of this office is to inform the public in Europe and the United Kingdom not only about the BCM but also to bring across our own interpretation and views about the contemporary events in South Africa and the world at large insofar as these affect the position of the Black people. In doing this, it is hoped, that we shall not be duplicating the good work done by organisations such as Defence and Aid in presenting factual information. We believe that our views should be heard and thereby engage in a great deal of publicity and presenting little known information to the wider public. In this regard we envisage publication of not only "Solidarity", our London newsletter, but also pamphlets and fact sheets with an in-depth assessment and analyses of situations.

Creativity and Development:

Involved here is the three-fold programme of culture, seminars and library/resource Centre. We intend to establish an informed library on South Africa. This is actually intended for members for easy reference and to keep themselves up to date with the situation at home and abroad. Besides the library, the resource centre will contain any other cultural/musical artefacts that we intend to collect that are truly African in origin. Regular meetings and seminars will be held focussing on the politics of liberation. Symposia and discussions will help inform members about current views and to help continue to evolve policies for the movement. A constant study of matters of concern will continue to be undertaken. Besides meetings, political rallies will be organised. On the cultural front it is realised that there is a shocking lack of relevant cultural groups in which exiles can be involved in. Relevant because they relate to the wishes and aspirations, dreams and goals of South Africa's Black oppressed. Our cultural programme seeks to encourage creativity and development in the widening spectrum of the arts; to foster an interchange of ideas by providing symposia and lectures and to work towards bolstering a new cultural impulse and generate a consciousness that will focus sharply on the Black man's political commitment. There is a sense in which Blacks, far from home, need this cultural base to relate to and be creative about. This, furthermore, will go towards a meaningful consideration and interaction of the cultures at the meeting point. In this regard then are envisaged: