

CIRCULAR NO 1/1979.

THE BLACK SASH

56 Victory House,
34 Harrison Street,
JOHANNESBURG
23rd January, 1979

CIRCULAR TO ALL REGIONS.

Dear Everyone,

Here we all are, back at the grindstone, and I hope you all managed to have a good holiday and rest and are once more ready for action, for I feel convinced that 1979 is going to bring us much of that.

Firstly - Conference.

We are experiencing great difficulty in finding a speaker for the opening night of Conference. Just in passing I should like to mention that, in the search for a speaker, I had a number of conversations with three Stellenbosch University professors and lecturers, and was amazed and gratified by the warmth and sympathy with which my approaches were received. This makes me wonder whether we are not missing potentially valuable contacts within the ranks of the Afrikaner intellectuals and whether this is not something we should pursue in the coming year. Unfortunately none of them was able to accept my invitation. I also tried Professor Andre Brink of Rhodes with similar results.

I'm afraid I have now passed the buck to Cape Western, and have left it to them to find us a speaker. I shall report as soon as I have heard from them.

I imagine that you are all aware of the disaster that befell the Institute of Race Relations in Cape Town and, with them, our own Cape Western Region. There was a fire in the building housing both of them on New Years' Eve which did a great deal of damage. This type of urban violence is despicable and we all extend our sympathy to the Institute and Cape Western.

Mary Burton tells me that fortunately the Advice Office is able to continue functioning while repairs are being made to the Building, but naturally work has been considerably disrupted and records have been damaged or lost. This adds to the burden of Cape Western in arranging Conference and we should all make their task as easy as possible by providing them with the information they request as soon as possible.

I would be grateful if you could let me have your material for Conference - resolutions, fact papers, items for discussion - as soon as possible. Time is getting short and all Regions must be given the opportunity to discuss the contributions of all other Regions before coming to Conference. There is also the problem of the Agenda, which can only be devised when all material has been received.

Please don't forget about the Advice Office Workshop, which is scheduled to take place on the Monday afternoon prior to Conference, the 12th March. You have not notified me whether this will be convenient or possible for all those who wish to attend. May I remind you that Cape

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May I remind you that Cape Western also put forward the suggestion of a tour of places of interest in the area on the same afternoon for those delegates who would not be attending the workshop. This will be difficult for them to arrange until they know whether delegates will be available.

Deputation.

Dr. Koornhof has agreed to meet a deputation from the Black Sash in Cape Town at a time convenient to us, and I have spoken to his Private Secretary suggesting Friday, 16th March as a possible date. He has promised to contact me. I suggest that the deputation should consist of myself, Sheena, Noel, Solveig and Trudy Thomas, but would be happy to include representatives of the Advice Offices in other Regions if you want this.

In my letter to Dr. Koornhof I included copies of our Memoranda to the Cillie Commission of Inquiry into the Riots at Soweto in 1976 ; to the Riekert Commission of Inquiry into Legislation Affecting the Utilisation of Manpower, and to the Urban Foundation on Housing ; the Johannesburg Annual Advice Office Report for the year 1977/1978 incorporating a paper on the New Foreigners ; and an Interim Report from the Johannesburg Advice Office. In his courteous and charming reply he said that he had read these enclosures with great interest.

You may be interested to know that I wrote in your name to Mr. Colin Eglin and Mr. Vause Raw congratulating them on the stand they had made over the Department of Information debacle and suggesting that they persevere in the call for a National Convention. Replies were received from both of them.

I shall be going to Grahamstown for a Mini-Congress consisting of Albany, Cape Eastern and Port Elizabeth on Saturday, 24th February.

The New Constitution campaigns continue to make progress, though there is obviously now a sense of urgency with the very real possibility that legislation might appear before Parliament in the coming session. I am optimistic that our activities during the year won't turn out to be entirely unproductive, though naturally our ability to influence events is minimal. However you shall hear more of this at Conference, when we shall be able to have a little get-together on the Wednesday evening.

Good luck to you for the coming year. One of the best personal things about the Black Sash is the knowledge that everyone of us has friends everywhere else who feel as we do and who care. I look forward to seeing you all at Conference.

Love, *Joyce*

JOYCE HARRIS
NATIONAL PRESIDENT.