

THE BLACK SASH

CIRCULAR NO 6/79

56 Victory House,  
34 Harrison Street,  
JOHANNESBURG.  
10th April, 1979.

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CIRCULAR TO ALL REGIONS

Dear Everyone,

Pressure of work, illnesses, absences all mean that we are not functioning as efficiently as I would like. As a result the Draft Minutes of National Conference were run off in a hurry before the stencils were checked so I hope you do not find too many errors. The imminence of Cape Western's Report Back Meeting sparked off the rush, after a too long delay.

Please will you go carefully through the Minutes and let me know your comments and/or corrections as soon as possible so that they can be finalised.

You will note that we are committed to a great deal of work, both Regionally and Nationally. My concern is obviously with our National Commitments, and I draw your attention to those which I consider require possible joint action or, at least, action from Headquarters based on advice and comment from Regions :-

1. Campaign on a Bill of Rights.
2. Liaison with all Advice Offices regarding the exploitation of Black workers and the marshalling of information for publicity purposes.
3. Turning the spotlight on the lack of rural development and the de-urbanisation of Blacks. *Resettlement. concerned citizens. - high people.*
4. Suggestions and appeals for amendments to the Workmen's Compensation Act to improve the regulations.
5. A booklet on the violation of children's rights with reference to the U.N Charter for Children.
6. Natal Coastal's housing figures to be presented in booklet form.
7. Police Actions and the role of the Police in booklet form. (This emerged from Ruth Imrie's paper and will probably be impossible to implement as a result of the Police Amendment Act).
8. Our on-going campaigns on the Constitution, Squatters and the Criminal Laws Amendment Act.

As I enumerate these it occurs to me that different Regions might wish to take on one or more of these commitments as projects for the year, as I very much doubt whether Headquarters Region will be able to cope with all of them in addition to its work as a Region. We are a bit inclined at Conferences to pass resolutions and thus to commit ourselves to more work than we can handle - as I tried unsuccessfully to point out at the time - but having done so we must make a concerted effort to fulfil our obligations, and so I ask you to consider what it might be possible for you to do.

You also agreed at Conference to set up your own committees to look into SASH and to come to the next Conference with concrete proposals ; that your Advice Offices should keep wage board determinations on files and should give publicity to exploitation ; to lobby employers regarding contracts for migrants and to make public their attitudes ; to lobby Trade Unions and others on contracts for workers ; to think about a charter on living rights and to lobby the Government and employers ; to pressure the Government over U.I.F. payouts,

pensions and Trade Union/---

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pensions and Trade Union recognition ; to participate in a campaign on the rights of prisoners to continue their education ; and to keep track of major concessions which are announced from time to time but which do not materialise.

Headquarters will consider a revised version of the map ; call on the Department of Labour for legislation to enforce contract copies for employees ; and, of course, continue to promote the on-going campaigns. We shall also attempt to undertake those projects you don't enthusiastically claim for yourselves ; Please let me know your thinking as soon as you can.

I'm afraid my previous circular was sent unchecked. If you alter the word "toy" to "try" in the 5th line of the 3rd paragraph, and the word "suitable" to "similar" in the 5th line of the 5th paragraph it will all make more sense.

At the Transvaal Annual General Meeting on 4th April AUDREY COLEMAN was elected National Secretary. JILL WENTZEL is the new Chairman of Transvaal, with Audrey as Secretary and Prue Crosoer as Treasurer.

Five of our members went to join a vigil in the Pretoria Cathedral for the night before Solomon Mhlangu was hanged. Unfortunately Jill Wentzel had a very bad fall in the dark and has fractured all the bones in her foot, which distresses us all immensely.

We had a little publicity for our first stand in the weekly demonstrations campaign last week over Pass Raids and the Pass Laws. This morning we stood over the Police Amendment Bill and were picked up by the Police and taken to the Police Station. A short while later we were released without charge by the Security Police.

We continue to monitor Group Areas evictions and cases resulting from them, and at present are deeply concerned about the stepped up evictions from Alexandra and the demolition of the overnight squatter camp outside Daveyton. Despite the heartening decisions over Crossroads it seems that the Government is relentlessly pursuing its policy of evictions, removals, stringently imposed pass regulations, and we must all surely fear for our country where so much resentment, anger and bitterness must inevitably be building up.

It all seems to be becoming more than we, the Black Sash, can reasonably contend with, but certainly we must continue to oppose, dissent, protest and render help however and wherever we can.

I wonder how many of you saw Rev. Hendrickse, leader of the Coloured Labour Party, on T.V. last night. He made a most impressive showing, and our campaign on the new constitution is becoming increasingly topical. I hope we shall have something worthwhile to offer in the form of representations to the Parliamentary Committee when the time comes.

My love to you all,

JOYCE HARRIS  
NATIONAL PRESIDENT.

G.J. Roussouw  
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Det. BS. prepared to  
Spencer will pay  
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