

RECEIVED 8 AUG 1979

THE BLACK SASH

CIRCULAR TO ALL REGIONS

CIRCULAR NO 11/79.

45 Victory House,
34 Harrison Street,
JOHANNESBURG.

2001

2nd August, 1979.

Dear Everyone,

National Conference Minutes. As there has been no further comment I suggest that these, as amended according to my Circular 10/79, be the final Minutes.

Weekly Demonstrations. Headquarters has decided to call a temporary halt to these, and will consider their continuation probably to coincide with the next session of Parliament, though we agreed to hold isolated stands whenever we feel they are indicated. I believe that the weekly stands were a worthwhile exercise in that at least one small section of the community was regularly bombarded with our posters and we must work on the premise that no public exposure is wasted.

Moratorium. Dr. Koornhof's moratorium combined with the preceding legislation has resulted in the Advice Offices being positively inundated with people seeking information about procedures. We have been seeing up to 100 people a day and have had to keep one worker permanently on the telephone answering the endless calls. Because we were responsible for so much of the initial exposure of the dislocations and problems resulting from the legislation we have enjoyed a great deal of press publicity, and have even provided the 'Star' with one of our workers, Beulah Rolnick, who has been operating from their offices answering their phone. But our resources have been stretched to breaking point.

Campaign on Rural Poverty, Migrant Labour, Unemployment. Following a General Meeting addressed by Sheena on the findings of the Riekert Commission and the exposure of the degree of rural poverty and unemployment, both of which will be aggravated by the implementation of the findings, we have decided to mount a campaign dealing with these and with migrant labour, which is an integral part of the whole system. Of course these have all been targets of our on-going protest over the years so this campaign will be nothing new. However we feel very strongly that the situation is reaching crisis proportions and that the public should know that pushing people back to the Bantustans does not feed them or find them jobs, and that because poverty may be out of sight it does not cease to exist.

We are only at the planning stages at present, but it seems to me that this should be a three-pronged campaign involving the dissemination of information, temporary palliatives and concerted action to tackle constructively the fundamental problems of too few jobs for too many people and the prevention of workers from seeking work and selling their labour. We would like to alert the business community to the seriousness of the situation, especially rural poverty and unemployment.

A copy of my letter to Dr. Koornhof, to which I appended a note asking for his views regarding its being published in the press as an open letter, has been sent under separate cover.

Constitution Campaign. There have been problems over the envelope stickers as the new Electoral Act makes it compulsory to publish names and addresses of publishers and printers on handouts, stickers etc., so final arrangements for printing them have not yet been made. Car Stickers saying "No New Constitution Without Blacks" will be printed shortly. Only Albany has asked for envelope stickers, no-one has asked for car stickers, and Natal Coastal and Natal Midlands have asked for pamphlets, the devising and publishing of which we intend deferring for the moment. I assume that you are either printing your own or else do not wish to participate in these particular projects.

Pensions in KwaZulu/---

Pensions in Kwa Zulu. Dr. Madide, Minister of Health for Kwa Zulu, launched an impassioned attack against the Black Sash in the Kwa Zulu Legislative Assembly as a result of the article in the Conference issue of SASH on "Pensions in Kwa Zulu". He bitterly resents the implied criticism, says Kwa Zulu is aware of the problems and is attempting to rectify them, and objects to 'white liberal' criticism of blacks who are doing things for themselves. Solveig Piper has been in touch with him, having offered to make Natal Coastal's files available to anyone who wishes to examine them, and I have written to Chief Buthelezi suggesting a combined meeting between him, Dr. Madide, Solveig, Mary Grice (who wrote the article) and myself - this because I am anxious to make contact with him in regard to the Constitution campaign. He has not as yet replied. It would be a pity not to retain the good relationship which has always existed between Natal Coastal and Kwa Zulu.

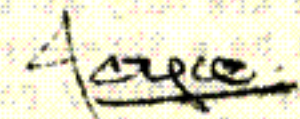
International Year of the Child. I reiterate the request from Pat Tucker for relevant case histories from your Advice Offices to enable her to complete her booklet on the rights of children in South Africa in relation to the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of the Child. She is most anxious to hear from you as soon as possible.

I have sent under separate cover a copy of a statement I was instrumental in drawing up which the Johannesburg Committee is circulating for discussion. Perhaps you may be able to press for something similar in your Regions, because it does, I think, introduce a different perspective into the current activities.

Headquarters. I shall be away from 7th August till 24th September, and Sheena from 9th to 30th August. During Sheena's absence Gita Dyzenhaus will act for me. On Sheena's return she will take over from Gita, who is also going away. As you will gather we shall be pretty thin at the top for the next six weeks or so but no doubt we shall muddle through in our own inimitable fashion.

I feel guilty to be going off when there is so much to be done, but am nevertheless looking forward to shedding all the problems for a while. I hope all goes well with all of you and that you are bearing in mind all the recommendations of National Conference as outlined in my Circular No. 8/1979 - that's in case any of you are short of work!

My love and good wishes to you all.


JOYCE HARRIS
NATIONAL PRESIDENT.