

THE BLACK SASH
CIRCULAR TO ALL REGIONS

RECEIVED 19 OCT 1979

CIRCULAR NO. 12/1979.

56 Victory House,
34 Harrison Street,
JOHANNESBURG
11th October, 1979

In terms of Section 6 of the Constitution of the Black Sash notice is hereby given that the next National Conference of the Black Sash will be held in Johannesburg from Monday 10th March at 8 p.m to Thursday 13th March 1980 inclusive.

Each Region is entitled to representation at National Conference on the basis of its paid up ordinary membership as at the end of the previous financial year according to the following scale :-

<u>PAID UP ORDINARY MEMBERS</u>	<u>DELEGATES.</u>
For the first 100 members or part thereof	3
For each additional 75 members or part thereof	1

CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS. We remind you that if you wish to propose any amendment to the Constitution of the Black Sash Headquarters is obliged to send notice of such amendment to each Region at least thirty days before a National Conference.

Therefore if you wish to propose any such amendment it should reach us by 31st January, 1980 without fail.

OTHER RESOLUTIONS AND ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION. Headquarters should circulate to all Regions items submitted for inclusion in the Agenda in time for these items to be discussed at Regional Conferences which will probably be held in the first week in February. It will be very helpful if you could let us have such items either before the Christmas recess, i.e. before 14th December, or before 14th January 1980.

We will aim, as we always do, for a flexible agenda, with adequate time to discuss matters which might well arise between now and the Conference. It is not our intention to confine you in any way by asking now for agenda items, but you probably do already have certain matters in mind which you will wish to bring up at Conference, and it is a great advantage if all Regions have the opportunity to discuss them first.

Joyce Harris

JOYCE HARRIS
NATIONAL PRESIDENT.

CIRCULAR NO 12 CONT/

Dear Everyone,

I've been away, so you've had a respite from circulars, but now there are are a few matters to catch up on.

Black Sash Constitution : The question has arisen of a person living in Umtata in the Transkei wanting to join the Black Sash. As he does not "ordinarily reside" in South Africa he might well not be eligible according to our constitution. I am taking legal advice regarding the interpretation of the constitution, and it may or may not be necessary to amend it in order to cater for independent Homelands. I therefore give you warning now that I may be calling for amendments to Clause 3 (a) (ii) and (vi) to include the words "or in any country previously incorporated in the R.S.A" after the words "South Africa" ; and to Clause 3 (a) (viii) to include the words "or within any country previously incorporated in South Africa" after the words "South Africa".

Commission on Security Legislation. I am preparing a memorandum for presentation to the Rabie Commission on Security Legislation. It will include a preamble emphasizing the loss of individual rights and freedoms for all people ; specific criticisms such as the loss of habeas corpus, the vagueness of definition of crimes, the breeding of contempt for the Law, the cruelty of punishment without trial, and the arbitrariness which is so open to abuse; and recommendations such as the restoration of habeas corpus and the Rule of Law. If you have any further suggestions please let me have them as soon as possible. If I have not heard from you by the end of October, I shall submit it as it stands.

Campaign on Rural Poverty, Migrant Labour, Unemployment : This has not made much progress. We are co-operating on a committee organised by Dr. Selma Browde and co-chaired by Dr. Motlana which is trying to establish the extent of the problems and the areas of need with a view to supplying temporary, palliative assistance. We are also exploring the possibility of lobbying some of the prominent members of the business community who have been invited to participate in the Prime Minister's Conference in November on resolving some of the problems besetting the economy.

Dr. Morrison replied to my letter to Dr. Koornhof (Circular No. 11/79) to the effect that the matters of unemployment and urban poverty are receiving consideration and that a further letter would follow, but did not reply to my request to publish my letter as an open letter. I have accordingly written again.

Moratorium. Dr. Koornhof's moratorium expires on 31st October, after which there will be very many people who will no longer be able to earn through working illegally in the urban areas. This will seriously aggravate the already serious rural poverty, and I hope you are all doing your best to collect information on this to bring to Conference to help us devise some course of action. In the meanwhile our Advice Office is being pressured almost beyond endurance and we are becoming increasingly unpopular in the building, because of the huge crowds seeking help.

Constitution Campaign. Car stickers saying "No New Constitution without Blacks" were printed but have not yet been distributed as the feeling here is that it is a cold issue at present. Too much else is happening, and we shall have to time their use, and also that of envelope stickers, which have not been printed as yet.

Pensions in Kwa Zulu. On my return I found a reply from Chief Buthelezi to my letter asking him to meet me, together with Solveig Piper, Mary Grice and his minister, Dr. Madide. He has agreed to do so and I have written to ask him to name a convenient day, but in the meanwhile Solveig and Mary had a very unsatisfactory meeting with Dr. Madide, who is bitter against what he terms "white liberals".

International Year of the Child. In my absence Jill Wentzel attended a general meeting of the IYC sub-committees, and pressed for the statement, a copy of which I sent you with my last circular, to be sent to the head committee in Cape Town.

Removals/---

We are deeply concerned that, despite/
Page Three/

Removals. We are deeply concerned that, despite the unexpected flexibility being shown by the Prime Minister, removals are continuing unabated and are presently being enforced in the Pietersburg area. We have made statements and written letters to the Press and are experiencing the usual frustrations of impotence.

Prime Minister. I am considering writing to Mr. Botha to congratulate him on his courage, pointing out that unless words are followed by appropriate action they are counter-productive, and asking him to direct his attention to such fundamental causes of dissatisfaction as mass removals, the citizenship issue, the Pass Laws and migrant labour. I would appreciate your immediate comments. I feel the Black Sash should be flexible in its behaviour, though never on its principles, but there are some up here who disagree.

National Conference. Headquarters suggests the following possible speakers for the opening night of Conference - Bishop Tutu, Dr. Motlana, Mr. Kane Berman, in that order. Please let me know as soon as possible whether you are in agreement or whether you have any other suggestions, as I should like to issue an invitation in the near future.

SASH Our magazine editor, Janet Sahli, has had to resign temporarily as she has three young children and cannot cope. She has edited the November issue, for which we are very grateful. We feel that she has done an outstanding job with the magazine, and are very sorry indeed that she has found it necessary to give it up for at least a year, and of course are now hard pressed to find an editor. Pat Tucker is giving it thought and I sincerely hope that she will find it possible to edit next February's issue, and perhaps to take on the whole job. Contributions for the issue (February) will be most welcome.

N.B. Cape Western has requested that names, addresses and phone numbers of office bearers be deleted from the back page of SASH as their members are being pestered. Headquarters has decided that only head office particulars shall appear in future, and that Regions should make it their business to ensure that all Regions are kept informed of changes in particulars regarding their office bearers. Will you all please take note.

Office Premises : This matter is now becoming urgent, as we have been given an ultimatum to get out of our present offices by 31st December at the latest and have not yet found alternative accommodation. We are presently negotiating with the S.A.C.C to see if we can come to terms over space, rent and date of occupation.

There has been very little correspondence from Regions of late. Please do try to keep in touch. Comments, criticisms, suggestions are always welcome.

My love to you all,

Joyce

JOYCE HARRIS
NATIONAL PRESIDENT.