

THE BLACK SASH
CIRCULAR TO ALL REGIONS

CIRCULAR NO. 15/1979.

56 Victory House,
34 Harrison Street,
JOHANNESBURG.
29th November, 1979.

Dear Everyone,

National Conference : I have invited Bishop Tutu to open our Conference and he said he was deeply honoured and loves the Black Sash. I am still awaiting written confirmation of his acceptance, depending upon his diary over that period.

Cape Western - I gave you the wrong reply on the telephone. Circular No. 12 asks that notice of resolutions, fact papers and items for discussion reach Headquarters either before the Christmas recess or before 14th January 1980, and I am correcting my error through this circular so that it can act as a gentle reminder to all Regions. I am willing to extend the time until the last week in January which should still leave sufficient time for me to inform all Regions in time for their Regional Conferences. (I promise to do my best not to forget to do this as I did last year !)

If possible please do try to send copies of your fact papers direct to delegates of other Regions if they are ready in time, and please remember to have at least 50 copies of all fact papers available for delegates, observers and the Press - we have a large number of newspapers up here.

Arising out of National Conference, 1979, the following require action or consideration : a revised version of the map ; a campaign for a Bill of Rights ; attention to be drawn to the negation of publicly announced "major concessions" ; the possible marshalling of Natal Coastal's housing figures into a booklet ; Advice Offices to publicise the exploitation of black workers ; call to be made on the Department of Labour to enforce copies of contracts for employees ; spotlight on lack of rural development and the de-urbanisation of blacks ; amendments to the Workmen's Compensation Act ; a campaign on the New Constitution ; a booklet on the violation of children's rights vis-a vis the U.N. Charter for Children ; Squatters ; the dissemination of information about the Criminal Laws Amendment Act ; and the use and distribution of the Women's Charter. Much of this is either on-going or has received attention.

Commission of Enquiry into Security Legislation : A copy of our memorandum to this Commission is enclosed. Receipt has been acknowledged.

Interim Advice Office Report : I'm sure you are all agreed on the excellence of Sheena's Advice Office Report. This went to the usual mailing list and received enormous Press coverage. A copy was sent to Dr. Koornhof with a covering letter from me, and we have since had a call from WRAB to the effect that ministerial instruction to investigate all the cases enumerated in the Report has been received. A copy of the Report and the letter to Dr. Koornhof was sent to Dr. Van Zyl Slabbert. Our office has been absolutely chaotic, with people queueing on the pavement outside the building from 6 a.m., though the pressure seemed to lift somewhat after the Report had been issued - co-incidental?

Removals : According to Rupert Lorimer, whom I contacted over the removal of the Batlokwa people, removals are taking place all over the country that we know nothing about. Certainly Border and Albany have been involved in removals in their areas and Port Elizabeth with the threatened removal of Walmer. We are doing what we can about the Batlokwa, and sent telegrams to all the six members of the new Economic Advisory Committee, formed as part of the Prime Minister's total strategy plans, drawing their attention to the removals and suggesting that they visit the area. Professor Hupkes from UNISA has agreed to do so, if we can

arrange it/---

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arrange it, which we are presently trying to do. Cape Western is keeping a watchful and anxious eye on Crossroads and is deeply involved in the campaign to save what remains of District Six.

Business Lobby : Replies were received from three of the 23 business men we wrote to prior to the Prime Minister's one-day Conference. Judging from what emerged from that meeting not much notice was taken of our appeal to them to give priority to legislation restricting black people.

Premises : There really does seem to be a jinx on us in terms of finding a roof for over our heads. Khotso House will not be ready for occupation until 1st June and we leave our present premises on 14th December. We are therefore taking temporary accommodation in a dirty decrepit, half-empty building 510/511 Voortrekker House, 18 Hoek Street, 2001. Please note the change of address. The new phone number is not yet available.

We are going into recess on 14th December, and shall re-open in the new premises on 14th January, but if you want to write or contact me in the interim, I suggest that you do so to my home address -

29 5th Street, Lower Houghton, 2196 - Telephone 728/2712

as the mail will probably go astray in Hoek Street, while we are not 'in residence'.

Our Morning Market is on Saturday, and we have had such deluges recently that, for the first time, I can't prevent myself from worrying about the weather. In the past I've always been supremely confident. Let's hope I'm worrying for nothing.

Unless something unforeseen happens I shan't be writing again this year, so let me wish you all a very happy festive season and a New Year that will surprise us all by bringing some tangible results to our many years of working for change and a just society.... It's about time!

My love to you all,

JOYCE HARRIS
NATIONAL PRESIDENT.

P.S. 1. Bishop Tutu has accepted our invitation to open our Conference.

P.S. 2. N.B. I think I should emphasize that all mail should come to my home address during the recess, and this includes any Conference material.