

THE BLACK SASH

CIRCULAR NO. 4/1980.

CIRCULAR TO ALL REGIONS

510 Voortrekker House,
18 Hoek Street,
JOHANNESBURG
1st April, 1980.

Dear Everyone,

I hope that those of you who attended Conference found it as stimulating and enjoyable as I did. Thank you all for coming and helping to make it the success I think it was, and congratulations on your contributions. It was lovely to be able to renew old friendships and make new ones.

I never cease to be amazed at the amount that is achieved by all our Regions, including and especially the smaller ones, who so often become disheartened, feeling that they are not doing enough. Maybe none of us ever does enough, but their contribution is out of all proportion to their size.

Draft Conference Minutes : I am enclosing copies of these. Please study them carefully and notify as soon as possible any amendments or additions you may wish to make so that they can be finalised. May I suggest that you keep them on file and refer to them during the year, for they provide a number of pointers for possible projects and interests. The precis of the talk delivered by Mr. Mazibuko has not been included in the Minutes, but it is available should you require it. It may be possible to publish it in SASH.
Some Matters Arising from the Minutes :

For your convenience I shall list these fully at a later date, but in the meanwhile I wish to report that I have written to Mr. Mugabe enclosing a copy of the Conference resolution referring to his statesmanship, and have sent a copy of the resolution referring to the withdrawal of Bishop Tutu's passport together with a letter from me to the Minister of the Interior.

I would like to send copies of all other resolutions, concerning what we consider to be necessary government action, to the relevant ministers, as I can see little purpose in passing resolutions and not informing the people concerned. But this I cannot do until the Minutes have been confirmed by all of you, so I await your comments.

Will all Regions please treat as a priority the drawing up of memoranda concerning Pensions, as Conference decided that an approach must be made to Dr. Koornhof in this regard and agreed that a letter from me be accompanied by as much factual information as we are able to present.

I am following up the correspondence with the Department of Labour with regard to copies of contracts for employees, and have written to the Department as instructed by Conference.

Bobbie Melunsky has written from Port Elizabeth that there is every chance that Cape Eastern will be resuscitated as a Region, which is cheering news. We await developments from Border.

Cape Western Coloured Preference Area : Having heard my report at Conference on my visit to Dr. Koornhof, accompanied by Joan Grover and Noel Robb, I'm sure you were all as shocked as I was by his recent statement that Influx Control is to be even more strictly implemented there.

I immediately wrote to him expressing my dismay and pointing out that there was no way in which more 'efficient' administration could at the same time be more 'humane'; that his Department must be out of touch with the true situation if it could behave in this manner; that I was bitterly disappointed in view of what had transpired at our meeting; that I was writing to him instead of to the Press, as he had requested, but without much confidence; that if this proved futile we would have no option but to go to the Press; and that we believe that no-one in our country should be given the opportunity of saying, "We did not know!" I begged him to listen to the pleas of black leaders, who all speak with one voice about the anger of their people.

Demonstrations/---

Demonstrations: We are continuing with our weekly demonstrations. Last week the posters read, "Respect Black Leaders, Don't Persecute Them" and "We Must Adapt' ...P. W. Botha, 7/8/79' When?" Next week we intend to stand saying, "Income Tax slashed for Those Who Vote" and "Bread Price Up for Those Who Don't,"

National Office Bearers: At our first meeting after Conference Gita Dyzenhaus was unanimously elected Magazine Editor and Robin Harvey re-elected National Treasurer. The post of National Secretary has still to be finalised.

Transvaal Office Bearers: At its Annual-General Meeting on 26th March, Audrey Coleman was unanimously elected Regional Chairman. Judy Wrensch was elected Treasurer, and Jill Wentzel, Toni Lomborg and Freda Lloyd were elected to form a joint Secretariat.

Please remember to notify all Regions of names, addresses and phone numbers of office bearers, as these are no longer reflected in SASH. I would be happy to circulate all of you with the relevant information if I can rely on you to notify me as soon as it is available.

Free Mandela Campaign: Transvaal Region is getting involved in the collection of signatures. May I suggest that all Regions follow suit? It seems that all that is necessary is a lined page of foolscap, numbered for signatures, and headed, "We call on the Government to free Nelson Mandela". This campaign requires co-ordination and organisation if it is not to prove counter-productive, and I believe we should support it. I am aware that the question arises of all the other political prisoners, but I understand from black people that to them Mandela is both an individual and a symbol, the spearhead of their campaign, and they would not wish it to be blunted in any way. N.B. Riotous Assemblies applies to petition tables.

Constitution Campaign: A successful and well-attended meeting of this group discussed the problems of differing strategies.

I hope that Conference recharged your batteries and that you are all rearing to go, for I have little doubt that there will be much to "go" about. I hope too, that you derived some benefit from the discussion on strategies, for although it was impossible to reach any definite conclusions, it did seem to me that we agreed that strategies must be tailored to circumstances and weighed against immediate objectives and long term goals, and this helps to clarify our thinking in **difficult and complex times.**

Good luck for the coming year.

My love to you all,

Joyce
JOYCE HARRIS

NATIONAL PRESIDENT.