

13 Knox Street,  
Waverley,  
Johannesburg.  
30th March 1957.

TO REGIONAL SECRETARIES.  
(Chairmen for Information.)

Dear Mrs. Corrigall,  
Petition against Native Laws Amendment Bill and  
Separate University Education Bill.

I regret that I have not notified you sooner of the final decision made with regard to the Petition against the Native Laws Amendment Bill and the Separate University Education Bill.

There have been endless and prolonged meetings, and every aspect of the possible results of organising such a petition was thoroughly considered. The following points were raised:-

- (i) That whilst a petition of this type entailed a considerable amount of work, it could do little good; in fact, it could do harm. It could do harm if we found that the majority of the electorate would not sign - or found that fewer signed than signed the Senate Act Petition. Nationalists might use as propaganda for their bills the fact that we had not been able to get a good response, which they could claim was proof that people were in favour of the measures they proposed;
- (ii) It was very necessary to have something simple to present to the members of the public who would be asked to sign the petition. This Bill was so difficult, and the meaning behind some of the clauses so very obscure, that it was almost impossible to reduce the implications of the Bill to a short, telling preamble. Race Relations have already filled some 17 pages with their comments, and have by no means completed their analysis!
- (iii) The public were not particularly concerned with the Separate University Education Bill, and had very little conception of what the implications of the utterly iniquitous Native Laws Amendment Bill were.
- (iv) It would be far more effective if a campaign could be planned; if all the big organisations like the Churches, the local authorities, industry and commerce etc., who were affected by this Bill, could be encouraged to co-operate; and if the people, through simple propaganda, could be made to realise the full implications of the Bill: and then a spectacular demonstration could be organised.
- (v) It was felt that if the Black Sash worked to arouse public opinion, and changed that public opinion, then a petition might be re-considered.

As a result of protracted meetings and discussions, and after deep consideration, it was unanimously agreed by the Central Executive that, for the moment, we do not organise a petition on either the Separate University Education Bill, or the Native Laws Amendment Bill, subject to a campaign being planned. The situation may alter, and then a petition might be re-considered.

I regret that, after telephoning you so urgently, I have left you waiting so long for the final decision. This was a decision which was so grave that it could not be made before many experts were consulted, and all possible points of view were considered.



Regional Secretaries.

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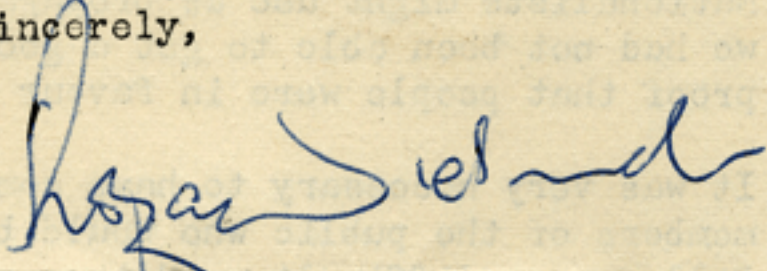
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The Propaganda Committee has met continuously to consider schemes for a spectacular demonstration, and to compile adequate propaganda. I will let you have these plans in due course. In the meantime, I have sent you Race Relations pamphlets 41, 42, 43, and these will be followed up by Nos 50 & 55. Mrs. Fisher, of the Parliamentary Committee, has drawn up a special leaflet, and Cape Western has sent you, through me, the comments of their Parliamentary member, Miss Steyn.

The Central Executive feels that this is one of the worst pieces of legislation the Nationalist Government has tried to put through Parliament, and it is of paramount importance that people are made to realise just how dreadful the Bill is.

I know that you are all very busy, but the Central Executive urge that you study the various analyses and pamphlets on the Bill and awaken the horror of all your members, so that they can stir up public opinion throughout the country.

Yours sincerely,



R. A. Dietrich,  
Hon. Secretary Central Executive.

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