

Crossroads

CROSSROADS - NYANGA BUSH DESTRUCTION MAY 18 - 26.

Black Sash involvement and reaction.

Sunday
May 18

At midday National vice-president Margaret Nash was called to New Crossroads, went into Nyanga Bush with a reporter and local escort and saw the police casspirs deep in the camp next to the burning at Yamile's camp and between there and Toise's camp where burning was started at about 2.30 p.m. This first-hand evidence has been used in a variety of subsequent activities involving political analysis of developments and trends.

Monday
May 19

Cape Western Regional Executive and National President considered available evidence, sent a telegram to the State President calling for a judicial commission of inquiry into the role of the police in the townships, and helped to convene a meeting of the Crossroads Support Group comprising representatives of various concerned organisations. This meeting decided to call a public meeting at lunch time on Tuesday. National President and vice-President also engaged in contacts with political and commercial sectors.

Tuesday
May 20

Well-attended meeting at Metropolitan Methodist Hall addressed by Rev. Sid Luckett, Nyanga Bush representatives and M Nash, and chaired by Bishop David Russell. Inputs were also made from the audience, e.g. mention of action sought through Legal Resources Centre, and a call to women to act. (Serious reports received re police/vigilante action in Paarl last weekend)

Wednesday
May 21

Lunchtime: Members involved in joint organization of public meeting in Cathedral Hall: "No more police beating of children in schools". A member of the audience reported that she had just come from Crossroads where she had seen an official-looking van loaded with guns and gained the impression that these were to be distributed to "witdoekies". A Sasher promptly enlisted her to make a statement to the Legal Resources Centre.

Afternoon: Advice Office interpreters assist LRC in taking statements from refugees. Members begin work in relief agencies.

Evening: Black Sash co-sponsors public protest meeting (organised mainly by ECC and UDF area committees) against cross-border raids. Growing consensus concerning relationship between local police-supported assaults (reported in Nyanga Bush, Paarl, Ashton, etc) and the cross-border raids on the very day Commonwealth EPG was due to have important talks with cabinet re negotiations with ANC.

Thursday
May 22

Black Sash National Executive meeting pursues the political analysis. Decides to set up special consultative meeting with other Regions; also to compile a dossier comprising affidavits, background information and political analysis.

Evening: Black Sash takes part in Koeberg Alert meeting calling for Southern Africa to be a nuclear-free zone. (Analysis by chairman Thomas auf der Heyde related closely to the conflicts detailed above. Also included report that when NUSAS met with ANC they were told latter wanted a non-aligned stance with nuclear free zone status for future South Africa).

Friday
May 23

Crossroads Support Group meets again to strengthen co-ordination and liaison with the refugee groups. Child Action Group decides to link Focus on Children planned for coming week with events in Crossroads. Contact with Red Cross and other interested parties re shelter for refugees (tents, plastics, etc.) Advice Office continues assistance with affidavits, and serves as channel for information and offers of aid.

Saturday
May 24

Members assist with relief work in Nyanga East and New Crossroads. Informal meetings and discussion with other organisations.

Sunday
May 25

Black Sash members of Christ Church Constantia fetch Nyanga Bush mothers who address congregation at services concerning their plight. M Nash takes part in NUSAS organised press conference. Members attend open-air religious service at Nyanga site convened by LAGUNYA Ministers Fraternal. Also UDF rally at Mitchells Plain.

Monday
May 26

Regional Council reviews situation with reports from many sources, and resolves to support the right of the refugees to return to the site from which they have been driven, and also to call on members to develop an active informed response to the struggle of the refugees. (Decided also to draw up this report of the involvement of members). Representatives continue to be occupied with a variety of consultations, co-ordinating networks and support action proposals (relief and protest/resistance).
Lunchtime: Children's focus week begins
Afternoon: A temporary interdict brought by squatter leaders (represented by the LRC) is granted by the Supreme Court in Cape Town restraining police, soldiers, and "witdoekies" from unlawful attacks on people or property in KTC.
Afternoon and evening: representatives visit Crossroads, while others attend meetings called by the Red Cross and other organisations.

JENNY DE TOLLY

BLACK SASH -- CAPE WESTERN REGION.

Review of some events relating to Crossroads, since October 1984, with special reference to documents in Black Sash and BSAO files:

- Oct. 1984 - Minister of Co-op. & Dev. Viljoen announced resettlement of legal and illegal squatters at Khayelitsha on site-and-service basis.
- Dec. " - rivalry between squatter leaders to control (and "taxes") led to conflict, mainly in Nyanga Bush area.
- Jan-Apr. 1985 - Mr. Ngxobangwana in gaol, after addressing a meeting of approx. 1 000 (organised in conjunction with UWO, CAYCO); 11 'comrades' arrested too; acquitted in June
- Feb. " - Tswana-speaking removal squad at Khayelitsha; conflict between police and youth in Old Crossroads area (16 dead; 230 seriously injured)
- " - approx. 35 000 accept offer of 18-month residence permits and move to Site C in Khayelitsha, but important groups refuse to move.
- " - rent struggles in New Crossroads (led by UWO, CAYCO, WCCA): police vs. residents; activists vs. 'collaborators'
- " - rivalry between Old Crossroads heamen (with whom youth allied) and the Executive (e.g. Langa, Naphakade); on his release from gaol, Mr. Ngxobangwana switches his favour from the Executive to the headmen (now disenchanted with 'comrades')
- 26 Oct. " - State of Emergency extended to W. Cape
- Nov. " - bail money collected for 169 women arrested on public violence charge over rent boycotts
- Dec. " - first attacks by 'witdoeke' on the 'comrades' of New Crossroads
- Jan. 1986 - intensified struggles between 'witdoeke' and 'comrades' in Old and New Crossroads; UWO deputation to BSAO on 13 Jan.: see 'Chronological Report of Events in Old/New Crossroads'
- Feb. " - 2 white policemen killed in Old Crossroads
- Mar. " - 2 New Crossroads Committee members killed, allegedly by 'comrades'; within 48 hours, 7 'witdoeke' killed by 'comrades' in course of attack on New Crossroads; approx. 250 women marched to Gugulethu police station demanding an end to intimidation by men over bail money (this time for the release of the men arrested in Jan.); 3-man deputation from Old Crossroads visited BSAO tell their story on 19 Nov.
- April " - a number of those said to be implicated in the deaths of the two New Crossroads Committee members arrested or taken in for questioning; when out on bail, some of them made statements at the BSAO (see copies of statements); allegations regarding police action with respect to these people (many of whom are minors) include: assaults, e.g. slapping (at the police station, in the police van, while still in bed at home), with one girl taken to hospital; insufficient or no food (consisting entirely of brown bread) for those kept over weekend in the cells; not given time to dress (had to dress in the van); one asked to spy; open use of an informer to point out persons to arrest.
- May " - destruction of squatter settlements by 'witdoeke'; see: 'South Africa, May 1986: At a Political Crossroads?'
- 12 June " - Declaration of State of Emergency