

THE BLACK SASH.
NATIONAL CONFERENCE
1965.
HEADQUARTERS REPORT

OFFICE BEARERS.

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| <u>PRESIDENT</u> | : | MRS. JEAN SINCLAIR |
| <u>VICE PRESIDENTS</u> | : | MRS. M. W. CLUVER MRS. D. HILL |
| <u>HON. SECRETARY</u> | : | MRS. M. W. CLUVER |
| <u>HON. TREASURER</u> | : | MRS. G. DYZENHAUS |
| <u>MAGAZINE EDITOR</u> | : | MRS. D. GRANT |

Although there seems to be a swing to the right among the Whites of South Africa, there is no feeling of despondency in the Black Sash Headquarters. Some Regions have had a very difficult year, but on the whole we have had increasing support from the Press and an infusion of new blood in this Region. Our tenth birthday party was a tremendous success and we were truly delighted to see that our guests, who were very numerous, were those people whose opinions and support we value very highly. The party gave us all a great thrill. - It was something indeed to have survived our ten years to tell the tale.

For those of us who have been in the Black Sash since its inception it seemed like looking back after a lifetime and not the relatively short ten years. We have changed in this period. The conviction that many of the more naïve among us had that we were going to change the political situation has, alas, disappeared and a great deal of the excitement and lightheartedness of those early days is gone. What remains is our conviction that we are right and our determination to continue to stand for the principles in which we believe. If anything we are more sure to-day than we were ten years ago that the events of these years have only served to strengthen our belief that what we stand for is what South Africa needs.

Professor Le May wrote an excellent article on the Black Sash which was published in the Star and also in the Magazine. There was also a leader on the Black Sash in the Star.

At the beginning of the year there were difficulties with Advice Offices in several regions. Warnings were received in Durban, and East London, that these offices were infringing the Bantu Laws Amendment Act. The offices in Durban, East London and Port Elizabeth were closed temporarily, and Mrs. Sinclair visited these Regions and Cape Western to clarify the position. A satisfactory solution was finally made.

We were all shocked at the raid on the Cape Town Advice Office, but the valuable work continues there and in other regions. As we said last year, our consciences are clear and this form of intimidation does not affect us.

Mrs. Sinclair and Mrs. Roberts visited Natal Coastal Region on 17th August to take part in a Brains Trust on Apartheid. This was a very successful meeting, the hall being crowded to overflowing. Two Nationalists were on the platform and also Archbishop Hurley. It proved a most interesting and enlightening evening and Natal Coastal are to be congratulated on a splendid effort.

There have been no National demonstrations during the year. Other Regions are informed by Headquarters of demonstrations planned, but it is not always possible to hold demonstrations at the same time all over the country, and Headquarters feel it is better to leave it to Regions to decide whether they hold similar demonstrations to those being given in Headquarters Region.

We wish to record our warm thanks to all the office bearers and the staff for their hard work during the year. Mrs. Sinclair is a tower of strength and has been most ably supported by our Secretary Mrs. Cluver. These two have carried the chief burden with the able help of Mrs. Kirk who really has an onerous job since she has taken on the Advice Office work aswell. We are all more than grateful to her for her patience with us all and her never failing support and hard work.

Mrs. Grant deserves our very special thanks for her splendid magazine, which she has produced under great personal difficulties. The standard of the magazine is extremely high - quite remarkably so for such a relatively small organisation, and this is entirely due to her efforts.

We have missed the services of Mrs. Davidoff who has been confined to her house for months after an accident in January. She has been anxious to remain in contact and has in recent months become more active. We will all be glad to have her restored to health and vigour as we need her energy and drive.

Mrs. Dyzenhaus has had a difficult year as Treasurer as she fought a Provincial Election in March. We were all proud of her magnificent effort, and thank her warmly for continuing in office in these difficult circumstances.

Special mention must be made to our legal advisers Mrs. F. Kentridge and Miss, R. Hayman. We seem to be seeking their advice continually and although they are extremely busy women they always give most careful consideration to our problems and never make us feel we are a nuisance. It is difficult to imagine what we would do without them.

Our Honorary Auditor of ten years standing kindly continues to do our books and we would like to record our thanks to him.

We would like to record our thanks to all the Regions, to Chairmen, Committees and other members both for their co-operation with Headquarters, for their tolerance and understanding and for the sterling work they have done to further the aims of the Black Sash and keep it in vigorous life.

Finally our thanks to our friends among the public who have helped us financially and given us assistance in other ways when we have needed it. Their help and encouragement plays a great part in keeping us alive.

In this category we must mention first the Black Sash husbands, whose patience and support is so vital to each of us.

It should be realised by the other Regions that the Headquarters Region is required to make great sacrifices by being the Headquarters. The service of the National office bearers are largely denied to the Region, which suffers in consequence. We are hoping that our new young members will come forward to take office and build up the Region, which has undoubtedly suffered from a long period of being the Headquarters.

ADMINISTRATION/

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1. Headquarters, the Transvaal Region and the Advice Office continue to share the offices and the expenses at 37 Harvard Buildings : Mrs Kirk and Mrs. Radale continue as our Secretary and assistant. The latter is also our Advice Office Interpreter. She is extremely valuable in this capacity with her understanding of the clients.
2. Headquarters sent to Regions 19 Circulars dealing with various aspects of our work.

PUBLICITY AND PROPAGANDA.

NATIONAL STATEMENTS.

1. 19/2/65 Statement on inroads on personal liberty.
2. 21/3/65 National Statement on Defence Policy.
3. 23/3/65 National Statement on Race Classification.
4. 9/7/65 Article on "Family Day".
5. 8/7/65 Statement on Raid on Athlone Advice Office.

LETTERS TO THE PRESS.

1. 5/11/64 Sunday Express - Reply to Mr. Neame's statement that Black Sash is not a political organisation.
2. 17/12/64 Rand Daily Mail - Banning of Professor Roux.
3. 17/12/64 The Star - Reply to Mr. Fouche's speech at Dingaanstad.
4. 13/ 5/65 The Star - Banning of Mr. David Craighead.
5. 7/ 6/65 Rand Daily Mail - 180 Day Detention of State Witnesses.
6. 29/ 7/65 The Star - The "Homeless Servant" Act.
7. 30/ 7/65 The Star - Endorsing out of wives in Welkom.
8. 31/ 8/65 The Star - Congratulations on Mr. Robinson's article on "Liberalism".
9. 5/ 9/65 Rand Daily Mail - Banning of Coloured teachers from Political parties.
10. 11/ 9/65 Rand Daily Mail - The Heyman Affair.
11. 16/ 9/65 The Star - Snoektown calling programme.

We have been kept very much in the public eye through Mrs. Sinclair's indefatigable writing of letters to the Press. She is unwilling to let any issue pass without comment from the Black Sash. This is a tremendous task, as hardly a day passes without something happening which meets with our disapproval. These letters not only keep our name before the public but, we hope, also put a rational point of view before a public which has become sadly muddled in its thinking. The whole Black Sash must be grateful to her for what has entailed a tremendous amount of hard work.

As instructed at the last Conference, letters were written to the Editors of those newspapers which had given us such notable support during 1964.

PLANNING.

At the last Conference Headquarters were asked to form a Planning Sub-Committee. This has been done under the chairmanship of Mrs. J. Davidoff, whose report has been made separately.

DORA HILL.
NATIONAL VICE PRESIDENT.